

MOMENT FOR MISSION

This brief part of the service is devoted to highlighting one of many mission initiatives or projects that are going on. For us, Mission is a Response to the Word, especially outside of the service.

OFFERING SERIES

As a part of the Response to the Word, this includes the Offering and the Offertory. This can take on a variety of forms: time, effort, as well as money. The idea is have an immediate, concrete way to express gratitude for God's gifts.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

This is one of the most important parts of the service. It reflects a place to gather the needs of the community, our nation and world, and put them before God and each other in an intentional way. It's a way to get the congregation all on the "same page" and to work together. From time to time (usually the last weekend of the month) we include a blessing of Prayer Shawls that can then be given away as needed. The Prayer Notebook and the Visitor Slip are both ways beyond calling and emailing to add things to the Prayer List.

SENDING

Just like it sounds, this section should give people a sense of mission, related to the Scriptures used during the service. This includes the last song, Charge & Benediction, Choral Response, Postlude, and time saying goodbye.

SACRAMENTS

In our church, we celebrate two sacraments: Baptism and Communion. In Baptism, we acknowledge that God's grace didn't begin with us and that God makes claims on us. In Baptism, the entire community makes a promise to help raise and teach the person being baptized (usually an infant) in the faith. In our tradition we sprinkle, not because we think immersion isn't necessary but because the act itself isn't what saves: it's God.

In Communion, we acknowledge that God's grace didn't begin with us and that God invites us to be a part changing the world. The Table is a symbol of the table from the Last Supper of Jesus before his crucifixion. The bread and cup are symbols of Jesus' body and blood. Ultimately, what changes at the Table isn't the bread or juice but, hopefully, us.



INTRODUCTION

Our services move in three parts (a nod to the Trinity): Preparation for the Word, Proclamation of the Word, and Response to the Word. Within these are intentional efforts to connect to the theme of the day and the Scripture that inspired it.

Our starting place for worship, both in its planning and implementation is Scripture, the Bible. As mentioned, the service moves around what we do with the Bible. Every part of the service in some way makes use of or is otherwise informed by various verses of Scripture, especially those selected for the service in question. The Pastor is responsible for this ultimately (as well as the choosing of Hymns). The Session (our governing board) is ultimately responsible for everything else but has delegated this responsibility to the Ministry of Worship & Music Committee. While we make great use of the Revised Common Lectionary for planning, it is not guaranteed that the passages you find on a given Saturday or Sunday will match that schedule.

a Brief Guide to How We Worship



Celebrating a Baptism.



If you would like to be a part of helping shape our worship services, writing or presenting liturgy, or even serving on the Ministry of Worship & Music Committee, just let Caroline Massey or David Ealy know!

GATHERING

We gather for all kinds of things. We gather for war. We gather for school. We gather for family reunions. In the end, we take time to move from one place to another mentally, emotionally, even physically for a given purpose. It's the same with worship. We come from so many places in heart, body and mind, we need time, intentional time, to gather for worship. The Prelude, Choral Introit, Opening Song, Call to Worship, Opening Hymn and Gathering Songs (and, really, the Welcome and Announcements) are all a part of this element. The first words spoken in worship come from Scripture, usually taken from one of the passages being used in a given service. The fellowship time enjoyed is part of this as well.

The Call to Worship is blatantly from Scripture, usually one of the Psalms. But the music selections will often make use of Bible passages. All of this is on purpose and with the conviction that Biblical literacy is not a given.

CONFESSION SERIES

This is an essential part of our tradition and also part of our *Preparation for the Word*. Typically, this part of the service moves in three parts: The Call to Confession (why do we do this), The Prayer of Confession (how we do this), and The Assurance of Pardon (the result of this: God's grace). We pass the Peace as a reminder to one another of God's grace and our need for it.

Sundays we usually follow this with the Gloria Patri (literally, "Glory to the Father"). The reality is some days the prayer applies to us and some days it doesn't. There are times when we say the prayer on behalf of others and times when we say it for some really specific situation in our lives. The time of the prayer is an opportunity. Typically for us, the pastor writes this prayer.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

To understand God's Word, then we need God's help. Further, this time is set aside to acknowledge that God's Word is such only with presence of God's Spirit. Whether sung, spoken, done as a skit, or more, this prayer is intended as a big ask from us to God for not just enlightenment, but motivation to really hear and change.



SCRIPTURE READING

Everything centers around a faithful reading (and hearing!) of the stories and ideas that have sustained the Church's faith since its inception. Reading Scripture faithfully can mean more than



just literally reading the Bible. On Saturdays, the reading is often integrated with the presentation of the Sermon. On Sundays, the Scripture Readings come at the very center of the service. For either service and for our tradition, Scripture is the zenith or the top of the bell curve of flow. And how Scripture is heard is just as important as how it's presented.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

This is sometimes a summary/preview of what's going to be said in the Sermon. It is a way to acknowledge that Children are part of the present church, not just the future. It's also a great discipline for a congregation to practice passing on their tradition in an intentional way. With so much of a typical service geared for adults, this part of the service is always age appropriate and tolerable (meaning, short). The short prayer is usually a response to the content of the Children's Sermon.

SERMON

This, of course, can be so many things. A good sermon will reflect a collaboration between being in conversation with the Scripture(s) and be conversant with what moves people and sparks their imagination. A good sermon will also take into account current events or circumstances that are affecting the life of the congregation. In our church, one of the things our Pastor likes to do is involve the congregation in the process by asking non-rhetorical questions. This isn't to "get" people or embarrass them, but rather it's born out of a conviction that the Pastor doesn't have a monopoly on what God wants to say to us as people. The sermon is a shared task. The hope is that everyone, including the preacher, leaves challenged, encouraged and hopeful.