

VCI Worship Evaluation Notes

May 27, 2014

Karen Booth

Members present: Karen Booth, Barb Gripton, Lynne Richmond

May 31 Worship Workshop

We hope to have the following questions answered during the workshop:

- What is the role of liturgy in worship? Is liturgy about form or participation? Marcie McFee is a big proponent of liturgy (done well), but we are not finding any signs of it in the churches we are visiting. See below for more thoughts on liturgy.
- What aspects of worship speak to people of all ages?
- What aspects of worship turn people off/away?
- How do we create passion? Inspire? Uplift?
- What does experiential/participatory worship look like?
- How can we design worship that will connect a diverse group of people to God?
- What resources would be helpful?

Liturgy (Wiktionary): (noun) 1. A predetermined or [prescribed](#) set of [rituals](#) that are performed, usually by a [religion](#). 2. An official worship service of the Christian church.

Liturgy (<http://www.episcopalcafe.com>): It is likely that one of the first “facts” you learned about “liturgy” was the meaning of the Greek word *leitourgia*: **the work of the people**. Like many popular derivations of words, someone disassembled a word into its root forms: *laos*, the people and *ergas*, a work. Thus, liturgy must be “a work of the people.” Unfortunately, that’s not how the word was actually used. *Leitourgia* actually describes acts of public service, performed by private citizens at their own expense, such as building a bridge for the community, fixing a road, or building a civic structure. The meaning transfers to the work done by anyone in offering public service to the gods.

It’s not about us

One of the worst things that happened to Christian worship in the last century is the reversal of subject and object represented by this mistranslation: “work *OF* the people.” Liturgy is not about us; it is about God, and is an action we undertake for the transformation of the universe. As Paul put it in Romans, “Creation anxiously awaits the revealing of God’s children.” This work, accomplished by God’s work in us for God’s world is why we engage in liturgy. Worship is joining in God’s work for God’s people, recreating God’s universe. But it is more than crucial, given some unfortunate current trends in liturgical churches, to underscore that the “for” of this work is not something done by one part of the church (the clergy) for another (the laity), but rather a work done in and for the whole church by God, and a work done by the whole church for the life of the world around it.

Liturgy (umc.org): The UMC site did not specifically address the meaning of liturgy. It did have a section on the **liturgical year** (<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/liturgical-year>). “What will happen during a typical worship service?” was listed under the FAQ about worship and addressed the form of the service as follows:

A typical worship service at a United Methodist church may include a greeting and opening prayer, time for people to greet each other, scripture readings, silent prayer and meditation, an offering, the Lord's Prayer, a children's message, the sermon, special music and hymns, and a closing prayer.

Communion may also be served. All are invited to celebrate communion, but you can choose whether or not you wish to participate.

Often churches will print words and responses in the bulletins to help those who are unfamiliar with United Methodist worship.

There will be some differences in the services from church to church. Some churches have a more formal style, while others may have more casual or contemporary services. Some churches will offer more than one type of service.

Worship Workshop details:

- *Attendees:* Karen Booth, Gary Cooper, Ron Zuker, Vicki Zuker, Mark Erbes, Jim Grace, Barb Gripton, Jim Post, Karen Post, Jake Burmeister, Jean Burmeister, Brad Hilleary, Brad Dean, Lynne Richmond, Jenn Miles, Glenn Chilson, Dena Chilson, Mary Swisher, Diane Thompson, and maybe a couple of visitors from a Lutheran Church. Karen will check with some other people who normally attend worship events and send out a reminder by Thursday.
- *Set-up:* Jim Reese is going to need an easel, screen, and a projector that he can connect to his laptop. He will bring newsprint; we need to supply markers. We will plan on meeting in the space at the back of the sanctuary, using five round tables of 5-6 people each. We will have to meet in Fellowship Hall if we get more than 30 people.
- *Hospitality:* Begin serving at 8:45 am in the lounge. Keep it simple. Here is what I (Karen) am thinking:

Coffee and tea (from church)
Orange juice - 2 large containers
Pop (cans)
Water (pitchers)
Grapes or other easy to eat fruit

Coffeecake (Lynne Richmond)
Donuts, muffins, or pastries
Some other snack
Napkins, small paper plates, plastic cups

I think it is easiest to purchase what we need. Unless someone else really wants to take care of this, I will just shop for it and deliver it to church on Friday. I will be at church by 8:20 am to make sure we are ready.

Visiting other churches/next meeting:

No one is available to visit another church or meet again until late in June. We hope to visit Sparta UMC on a Sunday at 5:00 pm.

Other discussion points: They are not listed in any particular order and may not include everything that we talked about, as we covered quite a bit of ground.

- *July Harbor Light:* 1) Ask people to wear their nametags. 2) Underscore the reason behind changes in worship and other areas of the church---our mission is to make disciples. If we are not making disciples, we need to change.

- *Christ Candle needed:* 1) Mary asked for one. Karen is checking to see if she has something specific in mind. 2) Is this something that Mary will carry in? Is that something for the worship leader to do?
- *Our mission:* Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Think about where we can post this (tastefully) so that everyone learns it. We should be able to say why the things we do will make disciples.
- *Our vision:* Welcoming all. Empowered by Christ. Sent forth to serve. Our vision is how we will accomplish our mission.
- *Announcements:* Try to keep them short. Use this time to invite people to stay for coffee hour and Sunday School.
- *Website:* We are glad to see some that some of the Mystery Guest report concerns have been addressed. We are hoping to see more pictures soon.
- *Churchy language:* Be more aware of using language that is only used in church, especially if it is not explained well. On that same note, change to a more contemporary version of the Lord's Prayer, i.e. you and your rather than thee and thy.
- *Inclusivity:* Be more aware of our language in many different areas:
 - Worship Service names: Early Service and Celebration Service (not first and second).
 - Greetings: Welcome to Lake Harbor (not welcome to a particular service).
- *Diversity:* As we learn to be more inclusive, we will probably become a more diverse church. We are not convinced that we will ever look more multicultural than our surrounding community. Instead it will probably mean we have a mix of people of different ages, marital status, "family" arrangements, political leanings, educational level, employment status, socioeconomic status, etc.
- *Message:* We see the need to have at least some of the message easy to understand for unchurched guests and new disciples, but cannot ignore the need to have messages with substance for more mature believers.
- *Music:* How would a song leader change the way we sing in worship? What is the role of the choir? Should we look at other types of small musical ensembles in worship? The Presbyterian Church on Sherman does this. Visit them in June. **Note after the meeting:** Check out this very timely article on congregational singing at <http://worthilymagnify.com/2014/05/19/crash/>. On a similar note, here is another take on choirs that came out earlier this year, <http://www.worshipideas.com/i-hate-choirs/>. Don't be turned off by the article's title; it is not negative.