

Worship Connections Team

Lake Harbor United Methodist Church

Team Member Guidelines 2015

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Design Team members work with the pastor and music leader(s) to ensure that the congregation is provided with opportunities for worship that will help it live more faithfully as a Christian community. In short, it is your job to help our church offer settings for vital worship.

We take our team's mission statement, adopted from Experiential Worship by Bob Rognlien, very seriously:

"The worship we hope to develop will be rooted in Scripture, centered on Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It will be relevant to local and emerging culture, while addressing the needs of believers and unbelievers alike. Above all, it will intentionally engage people physically, emotionally, intellectually, and soulfully."

What physical, emotional, intellectual, or spiritual need are we addressing in this service so that worship is engaging and a means of making disciples? What question needs to be posed and answered so that we are making disciples?

There are two main avenues for planning worship. The first is through worship brainstorming events. The second is through the design meetings.

Worship Brainstorming Sessions

We have **worship brainstorming sessions** about six times a year. They are **open to everyone in church**. Team members usually attend, but it is very helpful to have people who are not typically on the team to bring in fresh ideas. Pastor Mary prepares for the sessions by choosing the scripture for each week; they often come from the lectionary. She writes a short synopsis of his message for each week and has some suggestions for music and/or media. Frequently, she preaches messages in a series.

The brainstorming sessions take place at a member's home, usually at 6:00 pm on a Monday, several weeks in advance of the messages. We eat together. Socializing plays an important role in making people comfortable enough to speak freely. From 7:00-9:00 pm, we go through the services, week by week looking for ways to bring the message to life through music, visuals, media, drama, dance, and more. If there are videos to preview, we do that as we talk about that week. We don't judge ideas as we brainstorm. We keep track of them all. We encourage people to recall old favorites, pass along ideas from other churches, or bring up something completely outside the box. We don't need to work out details that night. If the messages are part of an overall theme, we try to find elements that tie the weeks together.

Who does everyone include?

Youth. Adults. Life-long members. Seekers. Quiet introverts. Not so quiet extroverts. Experienced worship planners. Newbies.

Worship Connections Teams

We have two design teams. The Early Service Connections Team meets three or four times a month; the Celebration Connections Team meets once a month. Team meetings take place on Monday afternoons at 2:00 pm or Monday evenings at 7:00 pm at church. Members usually join a connections team because they have been asked or recommended by the pastor or a team member. Some choose to participate after going to a brainstorming. Everyone is welcome. No one has to make a commitment to the team without giving it a four to six week "test drive."

Each team makes specific plans for worship using ideas from the brainstorming as the starting point. On any given Monday, the meetings might be used choose music, find and preview videos, recruit volunteers, write and practice short dramas, pull together visuals (props or artwork), develop PowerPoint presentations, review previous worship services, and more. Each team typically has more ideas than time and budget allow, but that's okay.

Team members do not have to shoulder the cost of anything that is used in worship. The Worship Committee has a (limited) budget for supplies, media, music, etc. We also have a large number of supplies and "props" accumulated over the years that are stored in the worship closet and at the back of Fellowship Hall.

The design committees function as teams. As such, it is important to have people with different spiritual gifts, skills, interests, and backgrounds on the team. Many gifts, one spirit. **Team members do not have to be active in every area of worship design.** Team members work together well and take their commitment seriously. Other than the pastor, hardly anyone comes to the team with worship design experience. That's okay. The following verse and devotion from Diane Eble, author of [Abundant Gifts: A Daybook of Grace-Filled Devotions](#) sum it up well:

"Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest."
Ecclesiastes 11:4

So many people are afraid to try unless they can do it perfectly. Here's a verse for the perfectionist. Author Francis Schaeffer used to say, "If you demand perfection or nothing, you will always end up with nothing." There will never be a perfect time to plant or do anything else. You just have to dig in and do the best you can with what is. You'll get a harvest if you do what is necessary, even if conditions are not perfect or ideal.

We work with what we have and it usually works out fine.

If you want to learn more about specific topics, keep reading. If not, stop here.

Digging Deeper: Where “Experts” Begin

“Experts” each approach worship planning from different perspectives. It is useful to look at several different ways to see what we might glean from their experience.

- **Pinterest**, an online pinboard, is a quick way to get ideas for visuals and has become one of our primary resources.
- **Len Wilson** and **Jason Moore** of Midnight Oil Productions understand the importance of communicating visually and the power of metaphors, something which we have found very helpful. See the page 4 for a list of their books and digital resources.
- **Scott McClellan** asks what our lives should look like and works backwards from there. See “The Backward Way of Planning a Worship Service” on page 5.
- **Howard Stevenson** plans around a theme. See “Worship by Design” on page 6.
- **Marcia McFee** recognizes that since “liturgy” literally means “work of the people,” we must be creative in order to engage all of God’s diverse children in worship. She has very useful “checklists” that guide the design process. See excerpts from [The Worship Workshop](#) on pages 7 and 8. Our brainstorming sessions and design teams are based on many of her ideas.
- **Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church** (<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship/worship-planning>), formerly the General Board of Discipleship, has a number of worship planning resources that we have found very useful.

Working Out the Details

When it comes time to look at specific worship services, we sometimes need help with the details. **Ministry Matters** (www.ministrymatters.com/) has articles, audio and video presentation about preaching, teaching, and worship based on the lectionary. Its “Worship Connection” offers calls to worship, prayers, litanies, (dramatic) readings, benedictions, and altarscape ideas. “Worship Elements” suggests themes. It is easier to use if you subscribe; the basic level is free.

Film clips, videos, and still images help people connect to the message. Like worship supplies and “props,” we have accumulated over 400 videos. We made some; purchased many individually or as part of a package; and have taken advantage of freebies when they are available. Here are some places to look for worship videos. Some offer still images too.

- **Sermon Spice** (<http://www.sermonspice.com/>) offers a wide variety of videos from a variety of producers. Its search engine has improved, making it easier to find what you want.
- **Preaching Today** (<http://media.preachingtoday.com/>) has a good search engine. It offers a wide variety of videos from a variety of producers.
- **Worship House Media** (www.worshiphousemedia.com) has a good search engine. It offers a wide variety of videos from a variety of producers.
- **The Work of the People** (www.theworkofthepeople.com) produces videos and related still images and loops. They tend to have an edgy, third world feel to them. A membership can significantly lower the cost of individual videos.
- **The Skit Guys** (<http://skitguys.com/videos/>) feature Tommy Woodard and Eddie James in comedies and dramas. They also sell scripts for many of their videos.
- **Midnight Oil Productions** (<http://midnightoilproductions.com/>) produces videos, still images, and layered image (psd) files based on metaphors. They work if you use the same metaphors. They often bundle their products, which can be a very good deal.
- **Dan Stevers** (<http://www.danstevers.com/>) has a gift for making text come to life. His bundled products can be a good value.

- **Deidox** (<https://deidox.com/>) makes wonderful documentaries. They now sell them through Worship House Media.

Here are some places to look for still images:

- **Graceway Media** (<http://gracewaymedia.com/>) is a subscription service, so it is not possible to purchase single still images. It is a good place to go for inspiration.
- **Stuff I Can Use** (<http://stufficanuse.com/>) has jpeg images and layered Photoshop files, most of which are free. This is particularly helpful for anyone who is just learning how to create worship backgrounds in Photoshop.
- **Bigstock Photo** (www.bigstockphoto.com/) sells “clean” photos and vector images for reasonable prices, less than two dollars each if purchased through credit packages.

On a legal note, we need to “own” our images or purchase the right to use them (through a site like Bigstock Photo) unless images are in the public domain. This isn’t any different than the rules for music or videos. Our CCLI license covers music used in worship. Our VCLI license covers movie clips used in worship.

More often than not, we write our own dramas and skits. There are a few sites that have good material.

- **Drama Ministry** (<http://www.dramaministry.com/>) has a wide variety of skits, dramas, and readers’ theaters for an annual fee of \$75.00.
- **The Skit Guys** (<http://skitguys.com/videos/>) sells scripts for many of their videos.

Next Steps

Many team members ultimately would like to learn more about designing worship. Some resources include:

- *Publications:* The Fellowship of United Methodist in Music and Worship Arts (FUMMWA) publishes “Worship Arts” magazine. Their online presence is at www.umfellowship.org. You need to be a member to take full advantage of the site.
- *Workshops:* The FUMMWA also offers workshops on music, drama, visuals, dance, etc. Bishop’s Day typically offers some worship planning workshops too.
- *Written resources:*
 - Awesome Altars: How to Transform Worship Space by Mary Dark and Judy Pace Christie. Emphasis: The name says it all.
 - Design Matters: Creating Powerful Imagery for Worship by Jason Moore and Len Wilson. Emphasis: A practical introduction to graphic design for worship planners.
 - Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship by Len Wilson and Jason Moore. Emphasis: The name says it all.
 - Experiential Worship: Encountering God with Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength by Bob Rognlien. Emphasis: Rognlien’s approach mirrors that of teachers using integrated thematic instruction. He emphasizes the need to plan worship for whole people.
 - [re]designing WORSHIP: Creating Powerful God Experiences by Kim Miller. Emphasis: The nitty, gritty of design teams that work. Drama.
 - Taking Flight with Creativity: Worship Design Teams that Work by Len Wilson and Jason Moore. Emphasis: It says what does (and doesn’t) work.
 - The Wired Church 2.0 by Len Wilson with Jason Moore. Emphasis: Using media effectively to communicate the gospel.
 - The Worship Workshop: Creative Ways to Design Worship Together by Marcia McFee. Emphasis: A workbook to help guide worship planning.
 - Worship Guidelines 2001-2004: Guidelines for Leading your Congregation by Daniel Benedict, Jr. for the General Board of Discipleship of the UMC. Emphasis: Assessing our congregation’s worship, naming a vision for where we need to be, and planning vital worship.
 - Worship Ways by Thomas G. Bandy. Emphasis: Planning worship for the people in your neighborhood. You will need to be able to generate a report from Mission Insite for a complete picture of your neighbors.
- *Digital resources:*
 - “Communicating Visually” by Len Wilson and Jason Moore. This six part PowerPoint presentation is from a graduate level class, “Communicating Visually,” at Northwest Nazarene University.
 - “Prodigal Worship” was created to equip pastors and laity with tools to design, develop, create and deliver high-impact celebratory worship that connects God to people’s everyday lives. The DVD includes three keynote addresses: 1) Rev. Mike Slaughter. 2) Len Wilson and Jason Moore. 3) Rev. Olu Brown.
 - Marcia McFee webinars. For more information visit <http://marciamcfee.com/>.

The Backward Way of Planning a Worship Service

By Scott McClellan

There's this old saying, and it's in Latin so bear with me ... *Lex orandi, lex credenda*. Translated it means something like "the law of prayer is the law of belief," but a more applicable paraphrase is something like "as we worship, so we believe." (Note: If that sounds at all familiar, it might be because I [wrote about it a couple years ago](#).) The phrase has also been expanded to look like this: *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex Vivendi*. Or, "as we worship, so we believe, and so we live." Obviously, this statement (which I call the "triple-lex" for short) puts forth an important premise — *our worship* → *our beliefs* → *our lives* — that ought to lead us to a conclusion:

The way we worship matters. It matters to God, it matters to His church, and it matters to the world.

Churches everywhere should be thinking carefully and critically about how their local bodies worship week in and week out because, according to the triple-lex, our worship practices and patterns have lasting effects on individuals, families, and communities.

But maybe, instead of thinking first about what kind of worship services we ought to create, we should put that on the back-burner for a bit. Maybe one implication of the triple-lex is that we should start with *what kind of lives we want to lead people to live*. Maybe we should start at the end of the triple-lex and reverse-engineer our worship services. Here's what I mean:

- Start at the end with *lex vivendi* — we're convinced our lives should look like _____.
- Then move to *lex credendi* — for our lives to look like that, we need to believe _____.
- And end with *lex orandi* — to believe _____, our worship will need to look like _____.

I don't mean to oversimplify worship and spiritual formation. But I do mean to offer a different paradigm for designing and facilitating community worship. Instead of starting with an order of service, let's start with lives ordered around the personal and public expression of the gospel story. Then, we're in a great position to work backwards: *lives* → *beliefs* → *worship* because *worship* → *beliefs* → *lives*.

Rather than seeing worship as something we dream up out of the ether, maybe we should start seeing worship as something *we arrive at* through an intense process of reverse-engineering gospel-shaped lives and beliefs. Through this process, new patterns and practices will emerge, as will creative adaptations of ancient practices and patterns. Of course, other patterns and practices will fall away for the simple reason that they don't move us toward the beliefs and lives we desire in Christ.

It's a relatively simple phrase — *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi* — that has huge implications for all of us. The phrase belies a complex story in which God's people pursue Him, know Him, and embody Him in the world, and that's a story worth telling.

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Worship by Design

A guide to service planning.

by Howard Stevenson

1 Peter 2:9-10; Revelation 5:13-14

Here are five planning practices that can prevent worship from falling into dullness and routine:

1. **Find the focal point.** I prefer to center worship on a theme. Sometimes the theme is supplied by the season: Advent or Lent or Easter or Thanksgiving. Other times a special emphasis like Missions Month or Family Sunday suggests a worship theme. The sermon topic is a natural focal point. If the topic happens to be God's faithfulness, or the love of God, or God's sovereignty, it is not difficult to blend the hymns, anthem, and spoken word with the sermon.
2. **List resources.** After determining the focal point, I list resources for that theme. First, I turn to four or five hymnbooks by my desk and check the topical index and Scripture reference index. Then I list appropriate worship choruses. Next, I read the Scripture text in several translations. A topical Bible and concordance help me locate related passages that can be used in prayer or during transitions in worship. Finally, I review the means we have of presenting these items: the spoken word, people who can read interpretively, various musical expressions, and the congregation.
3. **Explore the possibilities.** One principle to remember: The higher the predictability, the lower the impact. So I look at each element of worship from different angles, to see how it might be approached freshly or arranged in creative combinations and yet with dignity.
4. **Remember content and flow.** As the service develops, I look for logical content and emotional flow. We want the content of the songs, readings, and prayers to contribute to the theme. There should be connections—at times overt, at other times subtle—between the different elements of the service. The service should not be an emotional monotone. I also want to avoid jarring emotional shifts. Worship should flow from one part to another.
5. **Encourage authentic participation.** We need to guard against mere performance. One way is to use our worship space better. Sometimes I lead worship from the floor of the sanctuary. Or we'll have people come from the pews to lead a portion of the service. Or we'll engage the congregation in some way. We counter "spectatorism" by giving people plenty of opportunities to participate—songs, readings, and prayers. If a person stands from the pews to read a proclamation, in a sense, everyone does it.

To Discuss

1. What aspects of our worship planning process are going well?
2. What can we learn about worship from Revelation 5:13-14?

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The Worship Workshop: Creative Ways to Design Worship Together

By Marcia McFee

Human desires:

- The need for ritual
 - God's creation is full of cycles.
 - We all crave and create some repetition in our lives.
- The need to engage
 - God came to us incarnated in the person of Jesus.
 - We also have the need to belong, to interact with each other.

Imagination = the act of creating images

Integration = the act of connecting the parts with INTEGRITY

Interactive worship is participatory worship.

- In participatory worship, something happens!
- Participatory worship is “engaging”!
- Participatory worship elicits a response.
- Participatory worship permeates the “fourth wall.”
- Participatory worship is inclusive!

Intergenerational worship...

- Is interactive.
- Uses many different ways to communicate.
- Uses many different people to communicate.
- Doesn't assume the ability to read easily.
- Doesn't assume the ability to hear easily.
- Doesn't assume the ability to move easily.
- Uses inclusive liturgical language.

Interesting worship is diverse. It relates to people based in the ways they are adept (intelligent).

The seven intelligences and how they relate to worship are:

- *Linguistic intelligence*: the sermon
- *Musical intelligence*: music
- *Logical-mathematical intelligence*: single theme throughout the service
- *Spatial intelligence*: visuals, worship centers, placement of readers and musicians
- *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence*: actions, such as communion and drama
- *Intrapersonal intelligence*: mystery, awe, silence, reflection
- *Interpersonal intelligence*: fellowship, passing of the peace

Inspirational worship proclaims “*whose we are*” and what difference that makes in our lives for worship to be both relevant and inspirational.

PUTTING IT ON PAPER

The Order of Worship

We Gather:

Call to worship, greeting, singing

We Proclaim God's Word:

Praying, reading litanies, singing, reading scripture, proclaiming, testimony

We Respond:

Praying, celebrating communion or participating in other actions to "practice what we preach, committing to action, singing, giving offerings

We Go into the World:

Blessing one another, singing, going out

WORSHIP ROUGH DRAFT CHECKLIST

- There is a balance of familiar and new
- There is a balance of community interaction and personal reflection
- Many voices are heard
- The story is told in many ways (words, visuals, actions)
- The language has depth---it is interesting, understandable, and inclusive
- The theme is woven throughout the service
- There is a nice flow of dynamics (not monotonous----a balance of energetic and calm time)

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