

Preparing For Worship

Vol. 1

Dear Grace Members and friends,

The Convergence Worship Task Force is ready to implement one aspect of the changes in worship they have developed. The aspect is called **Preparing for Worship** and we are hoping to post it on our website for anyone to visit to see what new elements, songs or changes are coming up as we go on this journey together.

So as a first step here are a few things that we looked at as we worked together to create this new worship experience. These are the kind of things we will include for you to read, listen to and think about each week, along with anything new or changing.

Here is an **article** we read and used to help as we designed the worship service.

<http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/combining-two-worship-services-renews-congregation/>

Here is a wonderful devotion that Jack Kean found and I feel captures the spirit we want to engender in worship at Grace each Sunday.

Scotty Smith (**Everyday Prayers 365 Days to a Gospel Centered Life**).

"A prayer for More Freedom in Worship".

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens!

Praise him for his mighty deeds;

praise him according to his excellent greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound;

praise him with lute and harp!

Praise him with tambourine and dance;

praise him with strings and pipe!

Praise him with sounding cymbals;

praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! (Ps. 150)

Most gracious Father, it occurs to me as I meditate on this psalm that I need a much bigger heart for the purposes of your praise. I need the gospel to expand my palate, multiply my taste buds, and increase my capacity to enjoy the rich diversity of worship that is offered by your pan-cultural beloved people.

My tendency is to treat this psalm, like many parts of your Word, as though it were a buffet line from which I pick and choose the items that I personally enjoy. What's worse, I find ways to marginalize or eliminate expressions that don't fit within my bandwidth of beauty. I love harps and lyres and strings and flutes, but trumpets make me cringe as I wait for a sour note, tambourines remind me of bad theology, clashing and resounding cymbals are simply too loud and nonmelodic for me, and there's no way I'm going to dance. Father, all of this I confess as sin. My heart is too small, too turned in on me.

Oh, how I long for the day when the work of Jesus will be complete in my heart, when I will no longer be the measure of anything, and I will no longer offer a measured response to your glory and grace. I long for the day when I will find great joy in celebrating your surpassing greatness with the whole family of God, with all of restored creation, with every single breath, instrument, sound, molecule, and nanoparticle.

Your greatest praiseworthy act of power was in sending, offering, and raising Jesus from the dead for us ---- for me. May the limits of my worship and praise be determined only by the riches and reach of the gospel.

I pray in Jesus' magnificent and merciful name. Amen.

New elements and changes

Lastly coming up for our First Sunday we will be making some slight change to the way we do the **Sharing of Joys and Concerns**. We will continue to refer to the prayer requests in the bulletin but after each category we will pause for any **spontaneous additions** before we all join together with "Lord, Hear our Prayers". This may seem a slight change but it allows for prayerful additions or time for silent prayer.

In place of a song or instrumental offering for the Offering music we will be using **hymn #709** from our new hymnal to sing together as a way of coming together around something new and fresh for all of us. This is one expression on what we want to do to bring us together and around new things. **Please see the Pdf attached to this email.**

Also here is the web link to the music. Place you mouse onto the link and follow the directions. The link is safe.

<http://www.hymnary.org/media/fetch/150496>

We also will be waiting until the end of the service to participate in the **Passing of the Peace of Christ**. We are doing this as a way to greet those around us and end with a way to build community. Sense we usually stand around and greet one another this seems a natural way to build on a strength we already enjoy.

Finally please give these changes a few weeks to become a part of the atmosphere of worship before you communicate your feelings/thoughts. We are working on a method for you to give feedback. Stay tuned as we start this new journey.

Sincerely,

The worship convergence planning team

Kate Jungerman, Gehlin Menti, Jack Kean, Elaine McCann, Julie Bayless, Pastor Craig Sanders