

# WORSHIP 101

Welcome to our church and to one of the most vital things we do: *worship the Living God in spirit and in truth* (John 4:24). We hope that as you worship with us, your hearts will be enriched, your minds opened to the things of God, and your desires shaped to his will.

Below are a few pointers to assist you in joining fully into our worship.

First, worship is a **verb**! We invite you to be an active participant in our services. We seek to make the Sunday bulletin (the tri-fold guide given as you enter) a useful tool, along with your Bible and the hymnal, to help you participate fully. An asterisk (\*) marks the parts of worship when we all stand.

Since we are a worshiping community, we may have a few announcements of common interest before the Prelude, but please read the items of interest in your bulletin. Join us in any of our activities.

- **PRELUDE:** a musical piece planned for reflection and preparation. We recognize that most of us lead very hectic lives. Please calm your heart and be preparing to meet God. Meditation on Scripture or reading over the words of hymns for the service is often helpful.
- **CALL TO WORSHIP:** The service's tone begins with Scripture, reminding us all of our purpose.
- **SINGING UNTO THE LORD:** We welcome you to pray, praise, and witness during our songs. The pastors select hymns or psalms that reinforce the message of the later sermon and also that lift up the Triune God. We use hymns that are time-tested, focused on God, and reverent. Our goal is to bring you into the presence of the exalted God, no less, who joins us in worship.  
*We conclude our songs by singing "Amen."*
- **INVOCATION:** a short prayer, inviting and acknowledging God's presence.
- **CONFESSION:** Often we use historic confessions or creeds to verbalize our faith publicly and to unite us together. Usually, the pastor will identify the time period or setting of an ancient confession. We also use PRAYERS OF CONFESSIONS, with an announcement of PARDON from sin—good news for all believers. We invite you to enter sincerely into these opportunities to acknowledge our brokenness—in thought, word, and deed—and to receive God's forgiveness through Christ.
- **PASTORAL PRAYER:** a time to praise, petition, and communicate with God. We often pray for specific needs of our congregation at this time, as well as use words and phrases from the Bible—some of the very best prayers ever.
- **CHORAL MUSIC:** Our choir is placed in the rear loft so that the focus will remain on God's Word and not on human servants (that is also the reason for the raised, central pulpit). The Choir prepares anthems and responses that are to lead us to contemplate and worship God.
- **OFFERING:** Our church's work is supported by grateful givers and their tithes, which belong to the Lord (Mal. 3:10).
- **SCRIPTURE READINGS:** We believe that God's Word is perfect and cannot fail. Thus, we seek to saturate our worship with as much of God's Word as possible. Every service of worship will feature many portions of God's Word because it is the bread of life.
- **SERMON:** an explanation of the Bible verses read. Our pastors frequently preach through books of the Bible, trusting God's Spirit to apply his Word to your hearts. The sermon's purpose is not so much to entertain as it is to unfold and apply the eternal message of God.
- **BENEDICTION:** (literally, "good word") is taken from Scripture to give a concluding blessing to the service. While the benediction is pronounced, reverently meditate and rejoice in God's blessing.
- **POSTLUDE:** celebratory music played after the service has concluded. During this time, be sure to greet one another and deepen your friendships as an overflow of worship.

We value The LORD'S DAY so much that we worship in the morning (11:00 AM) and evening (6:00 PM). Please join us for evening worship, which is both a great conclusion to a day of worship and a beginning of the new week.

In essence, we seek to worship God as modeled in Scripture, not according to human imagination, custom, creativity, or glamour. This ancient and reverent worship form depends on God's ordinary methods: preaching, prayer, and the sacraments as effective means by which God conveys grace, strength, truth, love, and eternal life. We extend our hands to invite you to join us.

*Please return often to meet with the Living God!*