

Worship

Bible Passages:

Psalm 95: 6,7 “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.”

Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

Hebrews 10:25 “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Objective:

Our family of believers is to participate in a weekly, meaningful dialogue with God through Word and Sacrament.

Rationale:

As specified in the Parish Assistance Report (page 23), the top priority listed by elected leaders of the congregation, as well as the members, is worship. Yet, according to this same Report (page 33), there has been a 23% drop in church attendance over the past ten years. We see a need to encourage regular weekly attendance in our family of believers. Not only is this a concern we have for established members, in general, but also we see implications projected into the future for such subgroups as the youth, the unchurched, the elderly, those disabled and the straying. St. Johns’ public worship should reflect love and care on a personal and understandable basis while continuing to retain our proclamation of the two chief teachings of Scripture – the Law and Gospel. With the help of God, may the blending of “new” approaches (a great number suggested by members through input sessions) with “established” practices increase the opportunity for all of our family of believers to participate in worship as well as strengthen the faith of all who worship with us.

During the next 7 years:

1. We envision a worship, which preserves our true Lutheran heritage in accordance with God’s inspired word

To make this vision a reality,

- a. Worship that is Christ centered.
- b. Faithful preaching the Word of God
- c. Maintain liturgical worship in a variety of worship services

2. As a family of believers, we envision our worship services strive to reflect Christ's love and care so that a) worshippers know that they are forgiven and loved by God and b) worshippers walk away with a renewed sense of belonging to God.
 - a. Worship will provide regular and frequent opportunity for Holy Communion.
 - b. Worship that clearly states absolution from sin.

3. We envision an atmosphere open to worshippers
 - a. Trained greeters will warmly welcome all to our worship services.
 - b. Ushers, youths and adults, are taught by the head usher ways to make worshippers feel comfortable in our surroundings.
 - c. The Ushers will offer each worshipper a bulletin that clearly outlines the order of service.
 - d. Each worshipper will record his or her name in our friendship register.
 - e. Every member will make a strong effort to visit new members and visitors to form new bonds of fellowship.
 - f. The Pastors will greet worshippers before or after each service.

4. We envision maintaining and improving a variety of music and worship styles.
 - a1. We recommend adding a year round third service on a day other than Sunday.
 - a2. The Worship Committee will consider the possibility of having an afternoon service added in Lent and Advent.
 - b. We recommend changing the duties of the existing Worship Committee to include planning services. (Special music, choir participation, small group participation, instrumental additions, and other member involvement) (Cf. Appendix 2)
 - c. The Worship Committee will continue the use of the variety of orders of service and seasonal services.
 - d. We recommend increased use of audiovisual media before, during, or after the services to enhance the worship service and to enhance the communication among our members.

- e. We recommend promoting and encouraging participation in Junior and Senior choirs. In particular, we encourage males to become involved in the choirs. Set a goal of 40 members in Senior Choir and 20 members in Junior Choir.
 - f. We recommend promoting and encouraging the training and use of God given abilities on organ, piano, and other instruments.
5. We envision a modified physical environment (Cf. Appendix 1)
It is time to do some serious thinking about the viability of our current building. In order to achieve a positive worship environment, we see a need to overcome limitations of our current facility, such as the lack of air conditioning, poor handicap accessibility, small narthex and fellowship hall, poorly located nursery, limited parking, and inconvenient restrooms.
- a. The Pastors will continue Special Communion services.
 - b. The sound system must be improved.
 - c. We recommend making a spot for wheelchairs closer to the front of church, where a wheelchair-restricted individual can still see when everyone else is standing.
 - d. We recommend a staffed, quality nursery during all worship services. For many young families today, this is a very helpful service.
 - e. We recommend a more visible location for the baptismal font.
 - f. We recommend improving the audio-visual equipment.
6. We envision a greater involvement of children
- a. The Pastors will keep children's sermons as part of our weekly services.
 - b. Children will be used as greeters.
 - c. The service planners (Pastors and Worship Committee) will be more mindful of children.
 - d. The Worship Committee will expand the use of children's small groups for singing.
 - e. The Worship Committee will encourage occasional involvement of children/youth in readings, presentations, and service functions.

- f. We recommend the use of children's bulletins.
- 7. We envision a more frequent use of all God's gifts to the church including those given to our members.
 - a. We recommend providing regular opportunities to aid members in discovering and developing their God given gifts.
 - b. The Worship Committee will be expanded to include pastors, choir directors, head organist and at least 4 other congregational members, to provide long term coordination of worship components and to enable sharp focus and supportive elements. This committee could also become involved in sermon development, worship format creation, and post service critiquing. (Cf. Appendix 2)
 - c. We recommend regular art displays on church premises to commemorate seasons, sermon theme and special events. (banners, floral displays, decoration, etc.)
 - d. We recommend lay reports to the congregation before or after worship services about committee project progress or upcoming endeavors.
 - e. We recommend youth (grades 7-12) will be regularly used as greeters and ushers. (Cf. Worship 6b, Youth Ministry 3d)
 - f. We recommend Scripture readings by lay members to be included in worship services.
 - g. We recommend occasional incorporation of lay members (including children) into dramatic depiction of scriptural messages during worship services.
 - h. See Worship 4b,e choir (2) goals.

*Additional Note – We suggest that in October of 2002 and 2005 the Church Council should conduct another worship attendance survey.