

KIRK OF KILDAIRE, PRESBYTERIAN

Word and Music in Worship

July 28, 2008

From Our Vision and Mission Statement:

God has called the Kirk of Kildaire as a congregation to be disciples of Jesus Christ who are spiritually guided, faithfully following and joyfully serving our Lord.

*To that end, the Kirk of Kildaire seeks **to engage its members in worship**, develop their spiritual gifts, and commission them to be disciples of Jesus Christ*

To fulfill this mission and calling we believe Christ has called us to be:

A worshipping community that invites and creatively engages each individual in communal worship.

This set of guidelines approved by the Worship Committee provides a framework for those involved in preparation for Sunday worship at The Kirk of Kildaire. “Guidelines for Selecting Music,” Guidelines for Preaching,” and “Guidelines for Liturgists” were adapted from guidelines from the Seekers Church, a church in the tradition of the Church of the Savior in Washington, DC.

All are based in the experience of the community and are offered with love and with the understanding that sometimes the Spirit of God moves us to ignore some of the rules and guidelines as worship leaders together discern that movement of the spirit.

Guidelines for Selecting

"In the metaphor of centuries of hymnody, ancient and modern, we discern that God is always more than our human words are able to express. Our reverence for the mystery of God's being invites humility as we seek language that opens human hearts to the good news of God's love for all creation. We acknowledge the limitations of our words while we confess that in Jesus Christ the Work of God became flesh and lived within history.

Where language fails us, we live with confidence that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. Our hymns are a testimony to this ministry of the Holy Spirit. Hymns are far more than the sum of their parts. They become for us a language that transcends human speech. They are the poetry of eternity within time. They are signs of grace that comes from beyond ourselves."

- *From the Forward to The New Century Hymnal*

Based on the experiences of those who have selected music for worship at the Kirk, the responses by members in the congregation to that music, by the experience of those who share the wisdom of the Church through the Directory of Worship in the Book of Order, and ongoing conversations with others who are interested in vital and engaging worship, the Worship Committee offers the following guidelines to those who will be selecting music in the future.

1. **Music should undergird the season's theme, the week's lections and/or the sermon.** Preachers should be consulted when selecting music, but those who select music need to keep the larger picture of worship at the Kirk in mind. Preachers will normally choose the hymns for worship but are open to suggestions of music leadership for those hymns.
2. **Consider the variety of hymnals available:**
 - a. The Presbyterian Hymnal
 - b. Sing the Faith Hymnal
 - c. Music from the Iona Community
 - d. Music from Taize
 - e. Music from a variety of websites. Good links can be found at www.textweek.com
 - f. Inserts of lyrics or music from other sources that include proper indication of copyright permission from CCLI, GIA or copyright holder.
3. **Remember that the hymns are what people are praying.** Teach any new hymns during the announcement, so that people will have a chance to enter fully into them during the rest of worship.
4. **Consider the timing and function or place of each piece of music in the liturgy.**
 - a. Prelude or Gathering Music at 5 minutes before the Worship time begins
 - Normally 5 minutes

- bring us to a common, worshipful state
- set the atmosphere to prepare people for worship

Note: sometimes after the “welcome” a brief piece of music (usually 1 verse or its equivalent of a hymn) may be used to gather hearts together in the spirit of worship as we prepare for the Call to Worship. You may consider it a choral call to worship. (“Choral” being used in the broadest sense to include the congregation)

b. First hymn

- understood as part of the Call to Worship
- spirituals or other songs easy for children to learn
- worshipful, theological content appropriate for both children and adults
- generally upbeat when introducing praise and generally quiet or reflective when meant to help people center for worship (e.g. the season of Lent)

c. Anthem/Music- offered as a way to proclaim the Word of the day through music.

d. Second hymn: response to the Word

e. Offertory

- 2 - 3 minutes
- bring closure to the Word
- matches tone/complete images/....

f. Third hymn

- bring closure to the service
- send us forth to action/mission
- short, or with verses that may be omitted
- not the place to try new hymns

g. Special responses: Special musical responses are chosen during the liturgy of the day. They often follow the Passing of the Peace (except during Lent when we use a “kyrie” form of reflection), the Time with the Children and the Offering. These may reflect liturgical themes of the season. When special responses are not used, the Gloria Patri and the Doxology may be used as the “default” responses.

5. Language and style considerations

- style may be contemporary, classical, traditional, folk, etc. as fits the occasion (see #1)
- language should reflect the theology of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition as described in the Directory of Worship in the Book of Order

“God brings all things into being by the Word. God offers the Word of grace and people respond to that divine initiative through the language of worship. They call God by name, invoke God’s presence, beseech God in prayer, and stand before God in silence and contemplation. They bow before God, lift hands and voices in praise, sing, make music and dance. Heart, soul, strength, and mind, with one accord, they join in the language, drama and pageantry of worship.” (Book of Order- W-1.2001)

- be inclusive - speak to and for all God's people (*see Book of Order- W-1.2002*)
- be mindful that people come from a variety of traditions and differ over theology
- be mindful of the previous selections of hymns and tunes as to avoid unintentional repeating
- be willing to explain musical choices rather than just springing them on the community
- be mindful of the formative power of congregational singing

"Our interest in singing hymns is not antiquarian but communitarian - singing to God from where we are... It is traditional for hymn-texts to be altered.... Language, like music, has formative power....[like] invisible mending, elegant changes [are] close to the spirit, language, and theology of the original."

-from "Why Do They Keep Changing the Good Old Hymns" by Brian Wren

You sing primarily to give a gift to God, but you also sing to shape discipleship. If a song is specific about what it means to be a disciple of Christ in the 21st century, it should lead to a change in the way we behave.

-John L Bell in an interview on how singing should lead to Christian activity

h. Always leave room for the Holy Spirit

The Time with Children-Tips to Consider

The Children's Word at the Kirk is a time when we intentionally communicate our Christian perspective with the children of our community. We hope that the following points will help you in your preparation.

- The Children's Word should be geared primarily towards the children even though adults always enjoy listening too. Consider your audience to be the 5-6 year olds and use words and concepts that they will be able to understand. Try to keep it simple. If they understand then you know that everyone will understand.
- The time allocated for the Children's Word is three to four minutes. Because of this time limitation it is best if you have only one or two ideas that you want to cover. Stories, concrete examples, or using objects are good ways to build interest and communicate your ideas. Remember to repeat the answer the children gave so all can hear.
- Try to consider the lectionary scriptures in what you have share with the children. If you wish you may want to coordinate with the preacher forth for that Sunday.
- Be sure to have a brief prayer before dismissing the children. Thank you for being willing to share with our children.

Guidelines for Preaching

These are *guidelines*, not rules. The Book of Order gives full authority for selection of Scripture and preaching to the preacher. These guidelines may help those who are invited to preach at the Kirk. (e.g. seminary students) Each of us who offers the Word to the community during worship must, in the end, be guided by God's Spirit as we prepare and present what we have to offer. The Worship Committee seeks to encourage creativity, while maintaining a sense of our faith journey together as a community.

1. As you select the form of your preaching offering, consider the variety - teaching, prophecy, visioning, participative, non-verbal, etc. One of our goals is engaging worship. We encourage variety, and want you to use a form that empowers you. If you want to talk over an unconventional approach, talk to the Sr. Pastor.
2. Make an explicit connection to the Lectionary Scriptures for the week unless there is a theme being used for that Sunday.
3. Consider how your sermon can be related to the theme for the worship season.
4. Consider how your offering is grounded in your personal theological understanding: use your own story as one part of our story as a Christian community.

5. Consider how your offering can build the life of the congregation. Encouragement, teaching and prophetic confrontation all have a place, but the goal is to engage with us as a community and help us be on our journey.
6. Consider how you can invite us to an encounter with God, and a relationship with Christ.
7. Consider how you can invite each of us into a deeper connection with the Kirk as a fellowship of Christ's disciples.
8. Consider how you can invite us to an outer journey in mission as well as an inner journey of spiritual growth.
9. Consider how you can link us to our Christian tradition.
10. Consider how you can shed light on the meaning of Christian Discipleship as we seek to be spiritually guided, faithfully follow, and joyfully serve our Lord.

Guidelines for Liturgists and Lectors

Introduction

In our worship, the liturgist and lector carry these key functions:

- Hold the space so all who are worshipping can relax and open themselves to the unexpected movement of the Holy Spirit.
- Lead the community in prayer by offering prayers that hold up images for praise, thanksgiving and intercession, images that are grounded in the lections for the week as well as events in the world and in the life of the community.
- Lead the community in liturgy in a way that engages people in worship. We encourage variety in developing the liturgy and in prayers.
- Prepare for the reading of scripture so that the Scripture is read in an engaging way that helps the people hear the Word for the day. In other words, we desire for our delivery to be a means by which we hear the word but not an obstacle due to poor preparation.
- Allow for and honor unexpected opportunities for improvisational response to the movement of the Spirit.
- Bridge any gaps in the flow of worship to minimize disruptions for those worshipping.
- Gently bring our worship to completion within the expected time.

It is a tall order, and we all often fall short of the mark somewhere along the line. These guidelines are an attempt to capture years of experience in this approach to facilitating worship. They are not rules, but those of us who frequently serve as liturgist and lector have found them useful as a reminder of what we have found that works for us.

Word in Action and Announcement-

Guidelines

The **Word in Action** (formerly Moment for Mission) is meant to celebrate a mission or ministry of the Kirk that demonstrates how we put our faith into action. We especially encourage people to provide “testimony” of an activity or conference that was meaningful to them. This is an opportunity to inspire others by sharing a special experience. This is especially meaningful when the Word in Action coincides with the theme of the day. (E.g. World Communion Sunday may be a day to celebrate an international mission theme.) We ask that these normally take no more than 2 minutes on regular Sundays and 1 minute on Sundays with communion or baptism.

Announcements will normally be limited to those ministries or events we wish to highlight no sooner than 2 weeks before they take place. The thought is that few people remember verbal announcements longer than that time frame. Also, those wishing to have announcements made should do so in writing and before Sunday morning when possible. The preacher of the day has the discretion regarding which and how many announcements are to be made. Announcements are best used for sharing information with the entire congregation rather than a particular group. In a large congregation, it is time consuming to use worship as the platform for announcements for the many groups that are active at the Kirk.

General

When speaking, speak into the microphone, honor the rhythm of what you say; allow time for people to hear.