

Our greatest joy and pleasure is to be
in the presence of God. Psalm 16:11

Covenant Chapel

Worship and Word

Directional Brief

I had been much impressed by the thought of how, in all our religion, personal and public, we need more of God. I had felt that we needed to train our people in their worship more to wait on God, and to make the cultivation of a deeper sense of His presence – of more direct contact with Him, of entire dependence on Him – a definite aim of our ministry.

Andrew Murray, March 3, 1896

Covenant Chapel--Worship and Word Directional Brief

The following represents a mixture of values, commitments and distinctive characteristics of the ministry God has called us to. It reflects beliefs and assumptions at a deep, personal level regarding the Sunday Experience: Worship and the Word.

1. The Word of God (Theological direction)

- God's authoritative, inerrant Word, the Bible, is the Holy Spirit's primary means to transform lives.
- The Word of God will guide and permeate all we do here at Covenant Chapel. Teaching for life-transformation includes setting people free from lies by the Word of Truth (John 8: 10-12, 31-51).
- Jesus sowed the Gospel on all soils, knowing only the good soil will respond. Good soil is marked by those who practice the truth – sincere seekers and followers of the truth. Therefore, we will teach the Word clearly, directly and boldly.
- The Word of God will be taught with the hope that it will be conscientiously understood; resulting in faith, joy, Spirit-filled obedience, and life-change to the Glory of God and good of man.

The Word of God

Romans 10:17, John 14:17, 2 Timothy 3:16, Eph 6:16-18, 1 Cor 11:23-26

In the liturgy of the Word, Christians listen to God's Word (the Bible) with the aim that all of us grow in faith and become more conformed to the mind and character of Jesus Christ.

Liturgy also celebrates the reality of our redemption through His shed blood and broken body with Communion.

2. God-Centered Worship and Extraordinary Dependence in Prayer (Theological direction)

- We will seek the Lord earnestly with faith and humility for the wisdom, provisions and grace necessary to do His will and expand His Kingdom (John 14:12-16, Ephesians 6:18-20, James 1:5ff).
- True worship is the right response to whom God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has revealed himself to be in the Scriptures. Because worship is a response of the heart, mind and will, our ministry seeks to engage the whole person in order to encourage faith and love in increasing measure.

- In this way, our worship will be both an acceptable offering to the Lord and a witness of His glory, so that “many will see and fear and put their trust in the Him” (Ps 40:1-3).

Corporate Worship

Psalm 111:1-4: *“Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart, In the company of the upright and in the assembly. 2 Great are the works of the Lord; They are studied by all who delight in them. 3 Splendid and majestic is His work, And His righteousness endures forever. 4 He has made His wonders to be remembered; The Lord is gracious and compassionate.”*

Worship should be from the heart, in the company of the church and with the mind in such a way as to encounter the presence of God, while exalting Him for who He is and thanking Him for what He has done.

Prayer

Matt 6:8-13: Jesus taught us many things about worship, prayer and how His revealed will is to shape our lives. We want to reflect our dependence on Him, our worship of Him and our need to hear from His word every Sunday. As we celebrate his pursuit of us as told in the Bible, God is pleased and transforms our lives.

3. Covenant Chapel—Word and Worship Core Values

- It is important for each of us to prepare our hearts to focus on God and give Him our full attention both as individuals and as a corporate body. Therefore, we worship individually through the week and come with anticipation to corporately worship as a church body with our focus on God.
- We long to understand and enjoy worship more deeply, so we need constant coaching, instruction and encouragement. Therefore, we desire our pastor to teach us and our worship leader to lead us to the throne of God in worship.
- As we focus our hearts on God and what He’s done, His Spirit opens our hearts and reveals more of Himself to us in Bible teaching, through reflective-meditative prayer and through corporate fellowship and worship. There can be a holy encounter between God and us, but we must maintain our focus on God throughout our word and worship services.

- Worship is for the whole family. Therefore, we encourage all children from first grade and up to attend. We ask for both patient understanding from all congregants and for parents to also work at minimizing distractions and noise from their children.
- We desire an environment that facilitates and inspires worship. We thoughtfully pay attention to our facility and how we enter it!
- Our worship needs to show reverence to God and respect for each other. Therefore, we take care neither to distract nor to judge one another. Also, during singing and communion, we ask that all participate actively or remain silent. Fellowship is primarily for the Gathering Area and Adult Education Classes. *The Sanctuary will yield to corporate Worship and Word reverently.*
- God accepts us where we are, looks at our hearts, and wants to reach all types of people. Therefore, we accept people however they come to worship and long to make them feel at home with us.
- All music is God's music. All styles of music are used for worshipping Him around the world. Due to different worship cultures, theological backgrounds, multi-ethnic and multi-generational realities, the leadership seeks to serve, listen and then choose a primary worship style that we will utilize (as the Lord leads us) – staying true to the Word of God and honoring our Reform, Evangelical, Presbyterian and Theological roots, while showing respect to other styles. Our future Sunday Experience services will, no doubt, offer a broad-based, multi-generational worship service, and will utilize corporate worship including: liturgy of the Word, Readings, Prayer, Worship Music, Communion and the Arts with attention to a directional theme for the day.
- God is a creative God. Therefore, our worship will reflect the beauty and wonder of Spirit-led, Bible-centered worship, encompassing different expressions of all arts.

4. Worship Service Considerations (REFLECTIONS FROM THE WORD; Theological Direction with practical application)

Liturgy: a prescribed form or set of forms for public religious worship

The proper environment of Worship will include major attention on the Word of God and corporate participation in song, giving our offerings and Body-Life news, which can be felt, seen & heard. We will faithfully pursue a balance of the following:

- WORD:
 - 30-35 minute sermon length
 - Power Point and outlines for clear communication
 - Follow-up questions for Interactive Study Guide to be used in Covenant Community Groups
- WORSHIP IN SONG:
 - *Prominent* Music and Worship Style:
 - Contemporary: a blend of modern and traditional music with a good theological base that creates an environment of heart-warming worship (including hymns, melodies, praise music)
 - With spiritual leadership by one possessing the calling, gifting and appointment; one who leads a group that possesses a high degree of musical skill, great vocals and spiritual maturity.
 - Music style: Mainly acoustic-rhythmic with keyboards, guitar, strings, flute, recorder, sax, percussion and drums. We do not want a style that is overly loud, harder rock, talkative, joyless, or slow paced.
 - Though our *Prominent* Music and Worship Style is described above, we wish to experience the breadth of worship and will make room for expressions that match that breadth, including: 1) Joyful praise, 2) Reverential, 3) Meditative/Reflective, 4) Sorrowful/Repentant and 5) Adoring/Loving
 - *Alternate* styles will be pursued and creative arts are honored: a cappella, solos, choirs and quartets; contemporary mix and classical music; dance, skit and video
 - Worship Leader invites and encourages the congregation to active participation
 - When possible, the entire programming of worship, announcements, feel, etc. flows with the Pastor's message
 - Worship is not a place for mini-sermons
 - 3 Songs for Congregation minimum, 1 additional for Offering
 - SACRAMENTS: COMMUNION weekly and BAPTISMS as needed
 - WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP with ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETINGS that both SERVE OUR GUESTS and PROMOTE COMMUNITY LIFE:

- Promoting Body Life News that is brief and appropriate to mission and season of the church. We will likely expand our bulletin to include more detail that can be read, so as to spend less time in audible promotion and taking time and emphasis away from worship.
- We seek to welcome all as we briefly and regularly share Covenant Chapel worship customs/habits (who we are, what we do, how to find things, etc.)
- OTHER SERVICE CONTENT OPTIONS and DIRECTION:
 - Reflective meditation and responsive community worship (Professions of Faith and Historic Evangelical Creeds)
 - Readings and Responsive Reading (OT, Psalms, Gospels, Epistles)
 - Special time for Intercession (with Elders, in solitude, etc.)
 - New Member Introductions
 - Altar calls for prayer and brief counsel
 - Changed life stories / missions / at communion table
- Possible ORDER OF SERVICE
 - PRIOR to BEGINNING the SERVICE:
 - Ushers both outside and inside (Welcome, glad you're here, prepare your hearts for worship, come on in.)
 - 5 Minutes prior (Door closes): A place of quiet reflection to prepare heart with praise/reflective music, slides, video, prelude, etc.
 - 2 Minutes prior: Ushers and Greeters quietly, determinedly and joyfully encourage people to come in, quiet down, prepare their hearts and sit down.
 - One Song and brief GREET YOUR NEIGHBOR time in the middle of the song (Worship Leader)

- WELCOME (*where to find what, CC life and ministry events in bulletin w/ no formal ANNOUNCEMENT time except on rare occasions*), turn it over for the CALL TO WORSHIP (Pastor, *Worship Team Member* or former Announcement Team; mix):
 - Two Songs {Variety:}
 - Offering and Worship with Song {Variety:}
 - Special service programs here: interviews, baptisms, new member introductions, Bible presentations, etc. On Sunday's with "Special Service" needs we will cut one song before offering.
 - PREACHING AND TEACHING THE WORD OF GOD
 - COMMUNION and REPSONSE {with opportunities for responding in a solitary way or in asking for prayer with an elder (on the side of the stage)}
 - BLESSING



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