

WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

September 29, 2023

Present: John Sampson, Annie Scavo, Anne Hurd, Bernie Webb, Dave Craig, Dan Mason, Susie Allen, Naj Wikoff, Martha Gallagher, Barbara Juh (second hour)

Topics for discussion:

1. Christmas service schedule – how many services? Which services?
2. Paperless bulletins – how is that going?

Christmas Schedule

Final day of Advent is the same day as Christmas Eve. In the past, 4 Advent services, 2 services on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day service. How can we be faithful at this moment in our spiritual story, and what is practical for all involved? What services would we want to attend?

Committee feedback:

- one Advent, one Christmas Eve service before family dinner (5:00/5:30/6:00)
- no morning service; afternoon service that moves from Advent to Christmas Eve; later Christmas Eve service
- Gist of Advent 4: often our pageant; set-up for Christmas Eve
- Lean toward Advent in morning worship and 1 Christmas Eve service in the evening because they're 2 different services (would not do pageant in Advent service that day) x 3 people
- Feedback: above reflects what John has already heard – morning Advent service, 1 Christmas Eve service earlier, only a few people desiring Christmas morning service; choir does not want to support 3 services
- Conclusion: morning Advent service, before-dinner Christmas Eve service; if lay people want to offer Christmas Day service, we'll do it – at this moment, unlikely

Bulletin

Since August, we have not had paper bulletin for Sunday worship. Feedback has been pro and con.

Committee feedback:

- Great disappointment; graphics oriented person; loves the artwork; also honors the ecological aspects; in lieu, could there be a ½-sheet handout that has art on it and maybe opening reading/meditation (would reduce paper usage)
- Another expression of appreciation of artwork and opening meditation; takes it home for use
- Since services are recorded, artwork displayed (as is already done); can go back and look at recording and look at words of prayers and artwork; fine with giving up the bulletin completely; zoom interface really helps this

- Like bulletins; for people new to the church, it gives information about who we are . . . church information; loss without bulletin for newcomers
- Online worshiper – bulletin hasn't been missed; Dave provides everything needed; good to have something to give to someone who is new; could provide resources for newcomers without the bulletin; image could be like a 'holy card' – small; doesn't save bulletins anyway
- No bulletin – appreciates environmental side of no-bulletin; appreciate the need to provide information for newcomers; appreciates the small handout with image and opening words; people pick it up if they want it – not given to everyone; see how many are picked up
- Liz Jaques – likes the bulletin; number printed is related to attendance; paper is recycled (a lot of energy and resources are used to create paper)
- Bulletin is a distraction; without it, able to settle into the experience of worship
- Someone appreciates the bulletin so [she] could read ahead what she is going to be asked to say – she could see how she is comfortable participating
- Someone in our congregation who grew up hard of hearing; she can't hear what is happening in worship; having the bulletin allows her to understand what people are saying; it allows her to be present
- A number of people have floated the idea of having a smaller piece of paper with image, scripture, reading . . . things that change each week
- Have another card in the pews that gives the structure of worship – weekly handout gives specifics
- Strong feelings from several that they **need** a bulletin
- "We're not going to solve the environmental crisis through our bulletin" – but, it can be seen as modeling certain kind of vision, commitment, intention
- Visceral disagreement with above quoted statement – "when you die, what do you want to be remembered for?"
- There will always be inconveniences from the environmental side
- Have a weaning process . . . offer a smaller handout; revisit
- What is the cost of bulletins through the year? Expect we will save money if we don't have one
- John is leaning toward providing a reduced bulletin – for those who are more visual, having it close and visible matters – it is a visual exegesis of what John is trying to say in worship; respectful to people who are more visual
- Not a binary decision – what is important to have in a way that is supporting a whole spectrum of people in meaningful ways? – abilities, dis-abilities, learning styles
- If we eliminate the bulletin totally, some might experience that as 'we don't count;' important for people to feel heard, what they say to John matters, is regarded
- Looked at a bulletin during the break – seems like a lot of information might not be necessary; propose a small group look at a reduced version of the bulletin
- Part of this decision is hard because we have been used to bulletins; we would likely get used to it over time

- Worship services are available on zoom for a couple of weeks – not indefinitely; no one has asked to see recordings from way back

New Topic

Is there anything in the weekly order of worship that is particularly meaningful or not so good:

- Announcements are still too long; credits are unnecessary; the pause for quiet and centering is the desired way to begin; different mood to this part of worship?
- Another voice – loves how the service begins; appreciates the credits – as a reminder that worship is prepared by many
- Important the way it is done now – we don't always have the same individuals participating
- Another voice – likes thanking people who are participating; Catholics throw in announcements at the end
- Another voice – the way we do it helps people transition from daily lives into worship
- John: when John was on sabbatical, he watched the weekly recordings of worship when Naj acknowledged who helped; it's a piece of how we see church – this isn't John's church and he decides what we do, this is a church that is 'our' church; worship is not the product of one person, we are a community; our prayer time is a reflection of this – we are responsible in prayer; sometimes experiences announcements going long, but feels like the benefits outweigh the challenges

In the current national and global moment, how does worship relate to it? How will we relate our worship to what is going on in our nation and world?

- Peace candle – so impressed with how that happens each week; opens a window to the world; could it be expanded? Could it be done by members of the congregation?
- There are people who already bring prayers for national and global concerns to our prayer time; what is the place of current events to the service?
- Hope that the relationship between worship and the world will happen naturally
- Also, that we can have space for our worship as a separate entity
- There are issues that humanity struggles with time and time again; Scripture reflects this; gives us something to think about longer term; Peace candle gives us a chance to respond in the moment

Worship Committee will go back meeting once every month or two. Next meeting is scheduled for November 3, 10:00 a.m.