

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF UPLAND

## Why We Worship as We Do

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ACTS 2: 42-47 *ESV*

Here we are—doing what we do most Sunday mornings. We pull into the parking lot, get out of our cars and converge on the patio, making our way through the sanctuary doors. We see familiar faces and say Hi. Ushers greet us and we feel like we belong. We make our way down the aisle to our regular place—good people up front and bad people in the back. I’m JUST KIDDING!—you’re all bad people. But seriously folk.... Today we’re going to walk through WHY WE WORSHIP AS WE DO.

The first description of the church following Pentecost, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, and Peter’s magnificent first sermon. Here is Luke’s account of what the first Church was like.

[Read Acts 2: 42-47 *ESV*]

## BY INTENTION AND DESIGN

- Why do we worship the way that we do? It isn’t random; it is by intention and design.
- The service has a plot that moves us from alienation from God into right relationship
- “Worshiptainment” vs. “Big hat liturgy”
- Low worship begins with “what I’d like to see” — pleasing show.
- Worship is not a consumer-driven event
- The point is not that the service should please you and me, but that it should please God.
- *“I think God is pleased by what pleases me”*
- *“I think God is glorified by what I like”*
- No, God is glorified by what He likes, so to speak.
- *We worship to glorify God, not to gratify ourselves.*

# THE SHAPE OF WORSHIP

<b>Low Church</b>	<b>High Church</b>
“Synagogue”	Hard traditional
Outreachy	Tribal

- Shape of worship is patterned after human transformation.
- From sin and alienation to right relationship with God
- Worship Bulletin is our outline

## THE GATHERING

- We are gathered—the Spirit’s work
- Announcements are not worship
- Call to Worship—scriptural, not our idea!
- Not an “invocation” He’s already here.
- First, we become aware of God’s presence.

## Adoration

- Acknowledge Who God is, and enter His presence
- Spiritually connect when our hearts remember Him  
and praise Him for Who He is.

## Praise

- Once we acknowledge God for Who He is, we become acutely aware of who we are—less than Him, forgetful of His power and presence, fallen and coming up short in our following as Disciples.
- *When we perceive God as He is, We see ourselves as we are.*

## CONFESSION

- Natural response—automatic perspective
- God is good—we are not
- God is Lord—we are not
- Before God, we are the corrupted before the pure
- We are like small rats before a great Lion.
- We confess immediately remembering God’s saving work in Christ.
- No mooning about and moping in sin.
- We immediately remember and accept the assurance of our pardon.
- We are forgiven, indeed.
- WE PRAISE.

## ACT SICK

Adoration —we praise and adore The Lord

Confession —— we confess our sins

Thanksgiving — we give thanks for all things

Supplication —— we are open to God's work in us

Intercession —— we pray for others & world

Commitment — we prepare to serve Him

Koinonia — we commune with Him and each other

Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

## **The Word**

- Scripture and Sermon are wedded together.
- The Preacher reads the sermon text
- No distance between text and sermon.
- “Listen, *Hear* the word of God”
- “The Word of the Lord” not “This is”

## **Sermon**

The text is the sermon; the sermon is the text.

Any other foundation is something other than a sermon.

Topical sermons? Based upon Bible texts = fine

Expository—walk thru—teaching is part of preaching.

Preaching more than merely teaching, because

*Preaching comes from faithful, believing hearts*

*Teaching comes from unbiased, objective heads.*

Some preachers tell you what to do—how to behave,  
How to raise your children, how to treat your spouse,  
How to spend your money—often undergirded by  
Pop-psychology with a few verses thrown in for support.

Is the center the proclamation of Christ or a  
Christianized therapeutic offering?

Not Scripture-centered; not the Word of God.

Scripture-centered preaching is the Word of God,

Same as the reading of Scripture. HS active in proclamation.

[No credit to the preachers, of course]

“Pastor Noel, when you said. . . .that was meaningful!” [what I never said]

*Holy Spirit as much in the ears even MORE  
Than the tongues of the preachers.*

The Word event is about God's inspiration of us.  
We should listen for God's voice amid whatever is said.  
Not my words, but God's Word to YOU that matters.

The sermon is not an advice session; nor is it an exposition  
Of how clever or smart the preacher can sound—  
It is—like the Bible itself—a hand pointing to Christ.  
It is the Word of God as it reveals Christ, proclaims Christ,  
And truly glorifies the Father.

### **The Offering**

- Whatever God may be doing in your heart on a Sunday,
- We together respond by offering ourselves up.
- Our PRAYERS OF DEDICATION are our surrendering and re-surrendering to God;
- This is our right relationship with Him.

### **Sacraments**

- Then comes the feasts—the Sacraments
- *Remember Sacraments are less about what we do for God  
and more what God has done/is doing/ shall do with us.*

*[Detailed walk-throughs later—so extensive]*

- Sacrament is our response to Hearing God's Word.
- Sacraments are our assurance that we're good with God.
- We can't supply that right standing, so God gives it to us.

### **The Sending**

- We don't want worship itself to be utterly complete;
- Otherwise we would only be Sunday Christians.
- Our greatest response to God's Word takes place
- Once we leave this building.
- We respond to God in mission and service—all week long—in our homes, schools, businesses, and seemingly random encounters.
- Not technically a "benediction" but a Scriptural charge.
- Dr. James McCord.

# THE WORSHIP SPACE

- Catholic, not Reformed
- Cross shaped
- Nave, Sanctuary, Table/Altar, choir in balcony.
- Reformed priesthood of all believers
- No Nave! We all come up into the sanctuary. †

# QUESTIONS

1. What is the order of worship patterned after?
2. Why is the Call to Worship Scriptural?
3. Why are prayers of confession normative?
4. What is the necessary basis of every sermon?
5. What makes the sermon a “Word of God” event?
6. What sets a Sacrament apart from other worship elements?
7. James McCord, former president of Princeton Theological Seminary, teaches that the Reformed version of a benediction is a prayer, with arms down at the side. Why is this and why is it not our regular practice?