



Worship

A Divine Invitation



CHRIST COMMUNITY
CHURCH
Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.

Worship:

A Divine Invitation

Introduction¹

There are many questions that we could begin with to try to get at what is most important about congregational worship. These include questions of style, preference, order of the service, or elements. However, there is one question that should orient us before we seek to address those (and many other) questions: *Do you view Lord's Day Sabbath worship as a blessed necessity or an optional luxury?* Another way of framing this question is: *Do you view Lord's Day Sabbath worship as a critical component to your relationship with God or a commodified opportunity to opt in or out of based on how you feel?* According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, our "chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever."² This means that our chief end is to worship God who has called us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength!³ Our worship needs to reflect this relational reality as we seek to glorify and enjoy God, thus it becomes a blessed necessity that we should prioritize because of His value to us.

Tim Keller defines worship as *seeing the worth of God and giving God what he is worth*. This means that worship is NOT foremost about you and how it makes you feel. It is not primarily judged by what you get out of it emotionally or practically. Worship is foremost about God's glory displayed in what we gather to do in His name according to His Word. According to *BCO 47-2*, "God is present in public worship not only by virtue of Divine omnipresence but, much more intimately, as the faithful covenant Savior."⁴ In every service, God is present, and we have the opportunity to respond in reverence and awe.

God's promise to be present with His people when we gather for worship means that He invites us into His presence as opposed to us inviting Him into our midst. This is why we

¹ This material is adapted from our Membership Manual in CCC: A Worship Community: Our Worship.

² WSC Q. 1

³ Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Mark 12:29-30

⁴ Matthew 18:20

begin our services with a Call to Worship from His Word to which we reply with a response, prayer, and singing of a praise song. We recognize that we are not worthy to summon Him but have been welcomed into His holy presence in Christ as reflected in confessing our sin together and receiving the blessed assurance of pardon in Christ as declared by God's word. Again, we respond with singing in praise of Jesus and prayer for the help of the Holy Spirit before we prepare to feast further on God's word from the sermon and the sacraments when offered. We close with a song of sending and a final word from the Lord in our benedictory blessing. Our worship is shaped by the Triune God's character and the historical contours of redemption so that we would be shaped further into the image of Christ in order to display God's character for His glory, our joy, and the life of the world (see **The Shape of Our Worship** on page 8).

This makes the aim of public worship to be "the perfecting of the saints and the addition to its membership of such as are being saved- all to the glory of God" while also teaching us how "to serve God all the days of the week in (our) every activity, remembering, whether (we) eat or drink, or whatever (we) do, to do all to the glory of God."⁵ In short, our worship serves as part of the equipping of you the saints for the work of the ministry in your spheres of influence. Thus, regular attendance to and preparation for worship are critical to your maturation as a Christian which further evidences worship is a blessed necessity for us.

Given the gravity of congregational worship, we want to be careful not to be casual or flippant about our approach. Our time of worship should spark a reverence and awe that focuses our attention on the Triune God and His Word (see **How to Make the Most of Worship at Christ Community Church** on page 9-10). **BCO 47-6** beautifully captures this idea:

From its beginning to its end a service of public worship should be characterized by the simplicity which is an evidence of sincerity and by that beauty and dignity which are a manifestation of holiness.

⁵ BCO 47-3

For these reasons, we have structured our corporate worship according to the regulative principle which is “the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.”⁶ While the Bible does not clearly prescribe fixed forms for public worship, we do know that the Word was prayed, read, sung, and preached. This is why our worship services are saturated with God’s Word and our liturgical elements are Scripturally based (see **Our Liturgical Elements** on pages 11-12). This is also why we don’t try to get too creative beyond the Biblical frame and over-contextualize. Worship serves as a counter-cultural act with its own context. The Word is truly “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”⁷ Thus, it doesn’t require us to make it profitable or palatable by our own efforts.

Our hope for this sermon series is to help us to engage in Lord’s Day Sabbath worship as a blessed necessity because of who and Whose we are in Christ. We desire for you to be better equipped to glorify God week in and week out in congregational worship. It’s all too easy to forget why we worship or the reasons behind our liturgy. Join us in praying that the Lord would vivify our worship and refresh our joy in our salvation in Christ for His glory, our joy, and the life of the world.

We will continue to seek nourishment from the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. Our Calls to Worship will come from **the Praise Psalms 145-150** to help orient our hearts and minds to glorify God. We will respond together from **Psalm 100:1-5** to prepare us to worship with gladness. Our assurances of pardon will come from **Hebrews** to remind us of Jesus as our great High Priest who leads us in worship. The benedictory blessing each week will come from **Hebrews 13:20-21** to send us out equipped with everything good to do God’s will in our spheres of influence. The goal of these various elements is to shape us into a humble, repentant people forgiven in Christ who hospitably invites others into the same pardoning grace.







⁶ WCF 21.1

⁷ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. On Wednesdays, we will pray for various aspects associated with our weekly worship. We also have the opportunity on Saturday to prepare for worship on Sunday as we will participate in a sacrament each week. On Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, we will pray for the means of grace to bear specific fruits in our lives. May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek for the Church to grow in knowing God's unchanging love and living in a way that reflects our gratitude and His glory!

Soli Deo Gloria!

The Shape of Our Worship

Elements	Trinity	Redemptive History	Call/Response
Call to Worship	God the Father	Creation	God calls us to attend to worship
Congregational Response			Our affirmative response to God
Prayer of Invocation			Our recognition of God's faithful presence
Song of Praise			Our praise for God's faithful presence
Confession of Sin			Jesus the Son
Assurance of Pardon		Redemption	The Word's assurance of redemption in Christ
Song of Comfort			Our praise for Christ's redemption accomplished and applied
Song of Preparation			The Holy Spirit
Pastoral Prayer		Our confession of dependence upon the Holy Spirit to illuminate our hearts and minds	
Sermon		God's call to apply His word and our salvation in the world	
Family Additions		Our commitment to the life of the Church	
Sacrament		God's Word made visible to nourish and improve our faith	
Song of Response and Sending		Our commitment to live out what we have heard	
Announced Opportunities to Live Faithfully			Our opportunity to live out our faith in the world
Benediction			God the Father

How to Make the Most of Worship at Christ Community Church⁸

1. Corporate worship grows out of personal worship. Therefore, the most fundamental preparation for Sunday worship is that which flows from presenting yourself as a living sacrifice to God⁹ and having a broken and contrite heart¹⁰ as a result of your personal, family, and communal devotions and service in word and deed throughout the week. We provide materials for each sermon series and in preparation for the observance of the sacraments as well as a variety of discipleship and service opportunities to aid in this process.
2. A person's heart must be expectant and receptive to hear the Spirit of God. Spend a brief time alone with the Lord before coming to church.¹¹ Reflect on and remember God's faithfulness bless His people when they gather to hear His word.
3. Being late (which sometimes cannot be helped) detracts from the worship experience's full intended impact. However, if you consistently miss a particular portion of the service you are communicating that certain elements of worship are unimportant. Wrap up conversations, and plan to be in a seat at least 2-3 minutes before the worship service begins.
4. God is in our presence when we gather for worship; He constitutes us as a worshipping assembly. Come conscious and aware that God is present with us and expect Him to meet you and speak through His word in the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. Worship centers around the Word read, prayed, sung, preached, and heard, for the Word is God's living voice speaking His will to us. Listen carefully to the Word presented throughout the service, and participate with the other saints gathered where appropriate to encourage and edify, seeking to have both your heart and mind engaged. Each service is intentionally designed to communicate one

⁸ These suggestions are adapted from Skip Ryan, Park Cities Presbyterian Church, Texas

⁹ Romans 12:1-2

¹⁰ Psalm 51:1-10

¹¹ Psalm 5:3; 27:3-4

main idea. This means that every element contributes so be focused and process each element for your own edification and maturation.

6. Avoid distracting practices which would affect others being engaged in heart and mind. Turn your phone off, and put it away. Make every effort to stay in the service. Reserve your commentary for after the service.

7. We do not come to worship primarily for what we can “get out of it.” We come primarily to glorify God. Though worship should be pleasing and enjoyable, do not expect to be entertained. Instead, expect to offer and give your worship to God. Avoid banal flattery and senseless critique following the service. Seek instead to celebrate how God was glorified by how His word challenged and edified you so as to live it out in the days ahead. Consider whether or not God was pleased with your worship of Him.

Our Liturgical Elements

- **Prelude:** Instrumental to cue our people that we are starting the service.
- **Welcome (Romans 15:5-7)**
- **Call to Worship (Psalm 95:1-7; Hebrews 12:28-29):** A passage is read to orient our hearts and minds to worship the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- **Congregational Response:** Depending on the sermon series, we will respond to the Call to Worship with a historic confession or prayer together to humbly connect with the historic church.
- **Prayer of Invocation (Psalm 105:1-6):** In this prayer, we thank the Lord for His presence with us.
- **Song of Praise (Psalm 100:1-5):** This song lift our hearts and minds to God our Father.
- **Confession of Sin (1 John 1:9):** During this time, we confess as a congregation that we are sinful in comparison to a holy God and in eternal need of a Savior.
- **Assurance of Pardon (1 John 1:9):** These words are healing, encouraging reminders from Scripture of our union with Christ through faith alone by grace alone.
- **Song of Comfort (Psalm 32:1-11):** This song reminds us of the person and work of Christ who purchased our forgiveness and restored us to our Abba Father.
- **Song of Preparation:** This song prepares us to actively listen to God's Word and be shaped further into the image of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Pastoral Prayer for Missionaries, the Children, and the Gathered Saints (Psalm 127:3-5; Matthew 19:13-15):** This prayer recognizes the blessing and deposit that have been granted to the Church to be overseen with great care to provide for the future of the Church.
- **Sermon (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12-13):** During this time, we exegete the Word of God for encouragement, edification, maturation, conviction, and healing as the Spirit leads.
- **Family Additions (Psalm 61):** Those who are joining our church take their membership vows before the congregation.
- **Sacrament: Lord's Supper and Baptism:** Practiced on a regular basis.
- **Song Response and Sending (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16):** This song grants us a time of praise and response to the Biblical truths that were preached.
- **Announced Opportunities to Live Out Your Faith:** These opportunities for engaging others and living out your faith are listed on the bulletin and in the Weekly Update.

- **Benediction (Numbers 6:22-27):** This priestly blessing serves to empower and encourage our people as they depart to their various missions and callings to apply the Word prayed, read, sung, and preached in the service.
- **Offering of Tithes and Gifts (2 Corinthians 8-9):** Here we recognize God as the Abundant Provider, and we give cheerfully to the work of the Church in order to glorify God and love our neighbors near and far.

Sermon Schedule

Date	Call to Worship	Assurance of Pardon	Benediction	Sacrament
<i>Sunday, 10 /2:</i> 2 Chronicles 30	Psalm 149	Hebrews 2:5-9	Hebrews 13:20-21	<i>The Lord's Table</i>
<i>Sunday, 10 /9:</i> Psalm 95	Psalm 148:1-6	Hebrews 2:14-18	Hebrews 13:20-21	<i>Baptism</i>
<i>Sunday, 10 /16:</i> Psalm 84	Psalm 150	Hebrews 5:7-10	Hebrews 13:20-21	<i>The Lord's Table</i>
<i>Sunday, 10/23:</i> 1 John 1:5-9	Psalm 147:1-6	Hebrews 3:12-14	Hebrews 13:20-21	<i>Baptism</i>
<i>Sunday, 10/30:</i> Hebrews 4:1-16	Psalm 146	Hebrews 7:23-28	Hebrews 13:20-21	<i>The Lord's Table</i>

Weekly Congregational Response

Lord, We come to make a joyful noise with all the earth!

We serve you with gladness!

We come into Your presence with singing!

We know, Lord, that You are good!

It is You who has made us, and we are Yours!

We are Your people and the sheep of Your pasture;

We enter Your gates with Thanksgiving and Your courts with praise!

We give thanks and bless Your name!

Lord, You are good,

Your steadfast love endures forever and Your faithfulness to all generations!

Adapted from Psalm 100:1-5

Weekly Benedictory Blessing

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead
our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will,
working in us that which is pleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen.

Hebrews 13:20-21

2 Chronicles 30

The Week of October 2nd

Monday, 9/26: Psalm 149: Consider the various things that **Psalm 149** encourages in worship. What most affects how you express yourself in worship on Sundays?

Tuesday, 9/27: Hebrews 2:5-9: How does Jesus' kingly reign affect your gratitude for your assurance of pardon in Him?

Wednesday, 9/28: Pray for the coming generations in our church to feel welcome in worship and be shaped by our Trinitarian and Redemptive Historical liturgy.

Thursday, 9/29: 2 Chronicles 30: How do you prepare for worship? Do you come expectant and hopeful of God's redeeming work in our midst?

Friday, 9/30: Hebrews 13:20-21: Give thanks to God for being a God of peace who reconciles us to Himself through Jesus our High Priest.

Saturday, 10/1: Read the preparatory letter for the Lord's Table and ask the Holy Spirit to help you to come expectant and hopeful to witness and participate in God's redemption.

Sunday, 10/2: ^{The} Lord's Day Sabbath ^{with} the Lord's Table: Pray for the Holy Spirit to humble us in awe of the Lord's redemptive goodness displayed in worship.

Psalm 95

The Week of October 9th

Monday, 10/3: Psalm 148:1-6: What role does Creation play in helping to prepare you for worship?

Tuesday, 10/4: Hebrews 2:14-18: How does the humiliation of Christ in His humanity help you to freely worship?

Wednesday, 10/5: Pray for the Lord to provide us a permanent space in which to worship Him and better serve His redemptive mission in our area.

Thursday, 10/6: Psalm 95: Does your participation in singing reflect the joy and gratitude that you feel in being redeemed by God? Why or why not?

Friday, 10/7: Hebrews 13:20-21: Give thanks to the Lord for sending Jesus to serve as our Great Shepherd to protect and guide us in our salvation.

Saturday, 10/8: Read the preparatory letter for Elowyn O'Sullivan's baptism and petition the Holy Spirit to improve your baptism for God's glory, your joy, and the life of the world.

Sunday, 10/9: *The Lord's Day Sabbath* ^{with} *Baptism*: Pray for the means of grace to grow us in gratitude for God's redeeming work in Christ.

Psalm 84

The Week of October 16th

Monday, 10/10: Psalm 150: Meditate on all that you have to praise God for in your life. How might this gratitude be reflected in your worship on the Lord's Day Sabbath?

Tuesday, 10/11: Hebrews 5:7-10: Give thanks for Jesus' suffering on your behalf to grant you eternal salvation. Share this with someone this week.

Wednesday, 10/12: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us to be hospitable in and through our worship to those who visit.

Thursday, 10/13: Psalm 84: Reflect on the Psalmist's desire for worship and the presence of the Lord. What most affects your desire for worship and the presence of the Lord?

Friday, 10/14: Hebrews 13:20-21: Give thanks for the Lord's equipping us for every good thing that we may do His will for His glory, our joy, and the life of the world.

Saturday, 10/15: Read the preparatory letter for the Lord's Table on Sunday and seek the Holy Spirit's help in stirring your desire for worship and God's presence.

Sunday, 10/16: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with The Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to help us persevere with joy despite the challenges of life in a fallen world.

1 John 1:5-9

The Week of October 23rd

Monday, 10/17: Psalm 147:1-6: Do you find singing praises to the Lord good and pleasant as the Psalmist does? What would help you to grow in this?

Tuesday, 10/18: Hebrews 3:12-14: Who is encouraging you in your union with Christ? Who are you encouraging in their union with Christ?

Wednesday, 10/19: Pray for the Lord to bless those who lead us with music so that they may not grow weary in doing good.

Thursday, 10/20: 1 John 1:5-9: If you are forgiven in Christ, then why does John call for you to continue to confess your sins?

Friday, 10/21: Hebrews 13:20-21: Give thanks to God for inviting you into His redemptive work as His beloved son or daughter.

Saturday, 10/22: Read the preparatory letter for Randolph Justus Benn's baptism and cry out to the Holy Spirit for refreshment in the joy of your salvation.

Sunday, 10/23: ^{The} Lord's Day Sabbath ^{with} Baptism: Pray for the means of grace to grant us a renewal in Christ who is the Living Waters that nourishes us to eternal life.

Hebrews 4:1-16

The Week of October 30th

Monday, 10/24: Psalm 146: Given God's redemptive work in your life, how long will you worship Him? How does worship between the Now and the Not Yet prepare us for eternity?

Tuesday, 10/25: Hebrews 7:23-28: Reflect on Jesus' intercessory work on your behalf. How does this affect the assurance that you have in His pardon of your sins?

Wednesday, 10/26: Pray for the Holy Spirit to use our worship to help define and deepen our community together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thursday, 10/27: Hebrews 4:1-16: How is your worship interconnected with and dependent on others in the church? What role does prayer play in this?

Friday, 10/28: Hebrews 13:20-21: Give thanks to the Lord for granting you the ability to worship in Spirit and truth in the power of Christ's resurrection.

Saturday, 10/29: Read the preparatory letter for the Lord's Table and beseech the Holy Spirit to help you serve others in and through your weekly worship.

Sunday, 10/30: The Lord's Day Sabbath with The Lord's Table: Pray for the means of grace to knit us closer together in Christ for God's glory, our joy, and the life of the world.