

Potomac Hills

Presbyterian Church, PCA

WELCOME TO POTOMAC HILLS!

[Date]

Please click the link below to fill out our digital Connect Card if you're worshipping online, new to PHPC, or would like to be contacted by one of the Pastors:
<https://www.potomachills.org/connect-card>

Our Worship Service can be found on our YouTube channel:
<https://youtube.com/@phpc>

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Something is happening when we worship. Something happens to us, something happens between us and the people we worship with, and, most importantly, something happens between us and God.

The God of the universe appears and meets with His people, and by His sovereign and gracious power He changes them. It's unlike anything this world could ever offer. And yet how easy it is to forget that something this spectacular is happening when we come to church.”

– Jonathan Landry Cruse, What Happens When We Worship, pages 1-2.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE

Our worship service is a time for us to come together as a community to learn, be encouraged, and be challenged by God's Word.

On each Lord's Day, we praise and glorify the Lord through word-centered worship that draws from the rich well of music, which is the church's heritage. Our Worship Ministry seeks to provide people with a means to draw near to God through the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in modern and traditional styles. We love to hear the congregation singing along, not just sitting back and listening to a performance. So, our songs are chosen primarily based on their theological and Biblical content and on singability.

When we start, we want everyone to think about where we are — at a worship service. As our lives are often hectic and scattered when we first approach worship; we should take a moment to prepare ourselves.

Thanks. We're glad you're here.

GATHERING HYMN

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER

Pray that the Lord would bless our time of worship, focus us upon worshipping Him, and speak to us through His Word.

[The following times are approximations]

10:30 ~ Gathering Hymn – Historically called “The Opening Hymn,” this is a musical signal to the congregation that formal worship has begun. It calms people down and helps them to begin worship.

10:35 ~ Greeting & Announcements – We want to warmly welcome everyone to the worship service of Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church, and ask visitors to fill out the online connect card.

Responsive Call to Worship – Worship always begins with an invitation from God, reminding us that we approach the God of the universe only because of His grace and mercy. We typically use a Psalm or another Scripture related to the passage for that day’s sermon. This serves to call our attention to the Lord — both who He is and what He has done for us (Heb. 12:28-29).

Opening Prayer – Historically called “The Invocation.” As sinners who are inclined not to worship God, we ask for His help. We “call upon” or “invoke” God to be present with us, to orient our hearts and minds toward Him, acknowledging that we can only approach Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, and asking that He send His Spirit, who gives us the power to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24)

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAISE

Feel free to stand or sit, open or close your eyes, raise your hands or keep them down. Please do that which, for you, is most honoring to God.

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER

Prayer – where we humbly ask God to be active in our lives, in our church, and in our world – is a vital part of the worship of God. We pray expectantly, showing God to be great, and demonstrating our faith in a God Who is near enough to know and care about our every need, yet powerful enough to help us.

Reading of a Psalm and Responsive Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

CONFESSION OF SIN & ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Prayer of Public Confession

Prayer of Private Confession

Assurance of Pardon

WORSHIP THROUGH OFFERING AND A SONG

We believe that the offering is an act of worship. Giving to the work of the church in building God's Kingdom is a strong reminder of our dependence on Him.

Children ages 3 - 6 may come to the front for a children's prayer time before being dismissed to Children's Church.

10:40 ~ Worship through Praise – Music has the unique capacity to communicate God's truth to us, and to express our hearts to God, in a way that words alone cannot. During this part of service, we sing our praise to God and celebrate His presence among us (Psalm 66:1-2; 105:1-4; Col. 3:16).

10:55 ~ Worship through Prayer – Historically called “The Pastoral Prayer.” Normally during this time, one person introduces the topic of that day's prayer and then leads in a responsive prayer, as together we join in faith to ask God to change our lives, our church, and our world (Phil. 1:3-11; 1 Tim. 2:1-6). This is immediately followed by a pastoral prayer. On occasional Sundays we take extra time for special prayer needs (missionaries, etc.).

11:03 ~ Confession of Sin and Assurance of Pardon – A Confession of Sin is an acknowledgment and admission of guilt. Historically, Christians have incorporated confessions of sin in worship as a practice to invoke the reality that God's people must recognize their need for grace. They draw the people of God into His great work of redemption. This is accompanied by an Assurance of Pardon, which serves as a declaration of God's grace to the sinner. God promises in His Word that He is ever faithful to forgive. He reminds His people that His steadfast love endures forever. We are reminded that He is the One who gives sinners hope that He casts sin as far as the east is from the west.

11:06 ~ Worship through Offering and a Song – We give of our material possessions as an act of faith and as a token of giving our entire lives to God (Rom. 12:1-2). This offering is a response of gratitude for the invaluable gift we've been given in Christ (2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:6-15) A song is then sung that further demonstrates our gratitude to God and our dependence on Him, preparing us to hear the preaching of God's Word.

At this point in our service, our younger children (ages 3 through 6) and their teachers are dismissed to Children's Church, where they can learn more about Jesus in a way easier for them to understand.

READING OF THE WORD

PREACHING OF THE WORD

All sermons are recorded and available for download at www.PotomacHills.org

Sermon Outline

11:10 ~ Reading of the Word – Here we read the Scripture text for that day’s sermon. We are reminded that the Bible is no ordinary book and thus demands our careful attention and obedient response. We are acknowledging that our only hope for understanding God, ourselves, and our world hinges on God’s revealing Himself to us through His Word (1 Tim. 4:13).

The power of God’s Word to save and change us comes not from the ink and paper of our Bibles, nor from the eloquence of the preacher, but from the work of the Holy Spirit. It is in the reading of God’s word that He speaks most directly to His people.

Usually, a prayer for illumination to ask for wisdom and understanding from God immediately follows the reading of the Word. This prayer is offered for both the preacher and the listener, for both the speaking and the hearing of God’s Word. Pray along with the preacher as he asks for God’s help.

Preaching of the Word – This is the central act in the divine drama of Biblical worship. It is no less than God communicating Christ to His covenant people, who are spiritually nourished by His Word (Col. 1:28; 1 Thess. 2:13). The proclamation of the Word of God is the primary instrument used by the Holy Spirit to unite people to Christ (1 Pet. 1:23-25; 1 Cor. 1:21). Learning from God’s Word happens as careful attention is given to the preaching of the Word and an appropriate response of obedience is made, both of which honor and glorify God. For 30 to 45 minutes, the preacher will explain the meaning of the passage and the way it reveals the grace of God to us (2 Tim. 4:1-2). Although the preacher does most of the talking, you can worship by listening actively and applying the message to your life (2 Tim. 3:14-17). Usually there is a sermon outline to assist you in following along and making application.

RESPONDING TO GOD IN PRAYER AND SONG


Acceptable responses to hearing and applying God's Word to our lives include Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication. Take time to thank God that we can worship Him no matter where we are, or what challenges we're facing!

RECEIVING THE BLESSING

11:50 ~ Responding to God in Prayer and Song – At the end of the sermon, the congregation is given a moment to respond to God's Word in prayer (Psalm 116:12). Then, in thanksgiving for all God has done for us this day; we sing our final song, which usually reinforces the message of the sermon.

11:55 ~ Receiving the Blessing – Historically called "The Benediction." This is usually a promise of Scripture telling us that God will be faithful to His Word and will go with us as we take the grace we've received and extend it to our community (Luke 24:50). This is a blessing, not a prayer, so feel free to receive it with hands and eyes open, looking at the minister, or reading the Scripture as displayed (Num. 6:24-26). Just as we began with God's gracious invitation, so we end with one of His gracious promises to us. God gets both the first and the last word in our worship.

11:59 ~ One Another Time - As the Gospel draws us into relationship with other people, it is appropriate to spend a few moments greeting one another, welcoming newcomers, and getting to know those around you. We are reminded that we came to worship in community, not just as individuals, and we are to leave as a community who love and serve each other throughout the week to come.



CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

*To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest,
To all who mourn and long for comfort,
To all who struggle and desire victory,
To all who sin and need a Savior,
To all who are strangers and want fellowship,
To all who hunger and thirst after righteousness,
And to whosoever would come –
This church opens wide her doors
And offers welcome in the name of Christ.*

CALL TO COME TO THE LORD'S TABLE

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

*"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." **For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world."*

Communion Sundays

We celebrate the Lord's Supper once a month, usually on the first Sunday of the month. The service is a little longer, as we reflect on the meaning of communion.

Call to Come to the Lord's Table

This is a responsive reading of Scripture designed to focus our hearts and minds on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Words of Institution

This reading is a Biblical reminder of the purpose of the Lord's Supper and why He has commanded us to partake in it.

Words for Sinners from an Elder of the Church

CONFESSION OF SIN

Prayer of Public Confession

Prayer of Private Confession

(Silently confess your sins to God in repentance and turn to Christ)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Words for Sinners from an Elder of the Church

Historically known as “fencing the table,” this is a Biblical reminder of who the Table of the Lord is given to and who it is not.

As everyone who is a believer in Christ Jesus is an admitted sinner in need of a Savior, the call to come to His table is a call “*to repent and believe in the Gospel.*” And so, we urge everyone to take this Biblical command to heart, to repent or turn from their sins, and to turn to Christ in faith.

Repentance is a privilege as it serves to remind us of our inability to cleanse ourselves from sin, but leads us to Christ, who joyfully forgives us.

However, 1 Corinthians 11 is specifically addressed to those who don’t take the Lord’s Supper seriously, approach it casually, or presume on the grace of God and don’t earnestly repent.

Confession of Sin and Assurance of Pardon (see descriptions above)

Profession of Faith

We profess our common faith, that is, we publicly state what we believe to be true about God and reality, including the Christian life and salvation. We do this using both Scripture and various historic, orthodox, creedal statements, like the Nicene Creed and the Apostles’ Creed.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

You may come forward to take communion from one of the elders. Please take the elements as soon as you receive them, and then place the cups on the trays. There are gluten-free options for those who need them.

For those unable to come forward, please let one of the elders know and we will serve you where you are seated.

After taking the elements, elders and deacons will be waiting to pray with you, along with your family and/or friends. If you have any special needs or concerns for which you would like prayer, please inform the elder or deacon who will be praying for you.

The front half of the auditorium will come to the front table. The back half of the auditorium will come to the middle table.

Please proceed down the left aisle (as you face the stage), receive the elements, pray with one of the elders or deacons and return going up the right aisle.

If you would like to use this time to pray, but aren't sure what to say, there are some prayers at the end of the bulletin you may use.

RECEIVING THE BLESSING

The [goal] of public worship is the glory of God. His people should engage in all its several parts with an eye single to His glory. Public worship has as its aim the building of Christ's Church by the perfecting of the saints and the addition to its membership of such as are being saved - all to the glory of God. Through public worship on the Lord's Day, Christians should learn to serve God all the days of the week in their every activity, remembering, whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, to do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

– PCA Book of Church Order 47-3.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

We consider the Lord's Supper to be a "means of grace" that will strengthen us spiritually, both individually and corporately.

It is our practice to invite everyone forward to one of the tables to receive the elements from one of the elders.

If you are not a believer in Christ who has identified yourself with His church, please don't come to the table and receive the elements. Rather, we ask you to think, pray, repent, and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You are welcome to come down front and pray with one of the elders or deacons.

Our general practice is that children wait until they have been received into full communicant membership of the church before taking communion so that they are old enough to examine themselves in accordance with the instructions in 1 Corinthians 11.

Receiving the Blessing

(see description above)