

# THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF WORSHIP PLANNING

## A Crash Course in Collected Wisdom from 200 Congregations

J. Witvliet  
Calvin Institute of Christian Worship  
Calvin Symposium on Worship and the Arts

Version 3.0 (2007 Edition)

*Note: The goal of what follows is to offer every congregation, every pastor, every worship leader, two or so ideas (o.k., maybe three) that can make your work more joyful, effective, and spiritually edifying. . . Listen prayerfully, discerningly for what that might be for you in your context. . . .*

### SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

**PROVERB 1: Broad (lay) participation in worship planning and leading can be fabulous, provided there is provision for training, learning, growth, and a shared commitment to the deep meaning and purpose of Christian worship. Worship planning requires more than good intentions.**

Goal: build learning into every process

#### Strategies

1. annual worship planners/leaders retreat
2. monthly worship committee discussions re article, book, video
3. weekly worship planning discussions re article, book, video
4. common presentations in adult *and children's* education (we learn when we need to teach)
5. attend a worship conference with your whole worship committee—as many are this week

To be sure: Ongoing learning/discipleship is not sufficient for the task of worship leadership, but it is necessary.

Note: CICW Webstories: 50 or more ready made discussion guides. . .
---

**PROVERB 2: Worship planners and leaders need more than skills and understanding of worship; they also need pastoral virtues.**

They are spiritual leaders, not just technicians. In the early church they would be office-bearers, when offices had more to do with worship leadership than attending meetings. We need to constantly call attention to this aspect of the job. Here is a list of virtues for the worship planners and leaders for starting a discussion in your church (have your committee work on editing and adding to this list, realizing that none of us has all these virtues). The goal here is to lift up these virtues and to aspire to embody them collectively.

- *compassion* for the congregation's needs, and concern about how those needs are addressed in worship
- *discernment* about who is gifted to lead worship, and in what way
- *cooperativeness* for working on a team of people who are involved in planning and leading worship
- *knowledge* of God's word, and which portions of God's word are especially important for a given congregation to hear (and when and why and how)
- *wisdom* to understand the psychological and theological issues that are involved when there is conflict about worship
- *patience* when the congregation is slow to participate fully in certain acts of worship

- *imagination* to generate ideas about which songs, scripts, prayers, and elements will engage a congregation with the power and meaning of a given scriptural theme
- *discipline* to avoid too much innovation. Planning worship is different from putting on an art fair or writing poetry. When we plan worship, we are planning something for a community's use. No community can sustain endless innovation. No community can truly pray with words that are entirely unfamiliar or are creative for their own sake.

Put these in job descriptions. Discuss them. Refine them.

**PROVERB 3: Begin worship planning with prayer, scripture reading, and reflection on the needs of the congregation [and many individuals within it], and rich will be your spiritual rewards.**

A large part of the spiritual/pastoral task of preparation for worship leadership is truly entering into the experience of how other people, very different from yourself, will experience the service.

Recovering a priestly sensibility for those who lead worship.

Note the danger of the phrase “pray with me,” and even the subtle danger in the otherwise very good phrase “lead worshiper.”

It is healthier to think of the “collective body” as the main human agent in worship, rather than a gathering of “individual consciousness-es”—though it is a resolutely countercultural act to do this.

**WEEKLY PLANNING**

**PROVERB 4: Worship planning should begin with a scripture text; therefore, worship planning begins with the preacher. But naming the text and theme are not enough. Neither is finding a hymn that refers to the text. Happy are they who involve all worship planners in textual study.**

We need to ask questions like: What action will sermon inspire? What act of confession is appropriate to the theme? How will we pray differently in light of this theme?

	<u>Sample 1</u>	<u>Sample 2</u>
Text	Genesis 1	John 15
Theme	The power and imagination of divine creation	Sending of the Spirit
Related Texts: Psalms	8	104
Related Texts: Texts from other testaments	Hebrews 1: 1-4, John 1:1-4	Ezekiel 36, 37
Other texts the sermon will refer to	Proverbs 8	Romans 8
<u>Particular Approaches to Aspects of Worship</u>		
Praise/Thanksgiving	God as creative, all-powerful	God as triune
Penitence	Confess our spoiling of the environment	Confess our presumption, our seeking to live on our own power

Intercession	Prayers for the restoration of all creation	Prayers for the sending of the Spirit
Dedication (action to which the sermon calls us)	Praise—a deep awareness of the immensity and pervasiveness of God’s created power	Discernment—learning ways of discerning the spirits of the age; refusal to limit our vision of what the Spirit might be doing
Lord’s Supper	Highlight notion that bread and wine are gifts of creation that bear spiritual blessing	Highlight notion that the Spirit is the main agent in our communion with Christ—not our own power of imagination or the strength of our own piety

Over time, worship planners develop better capacity to think through how scripture shapes every element of worship.

**PROVERB 5. Worship planning—in ANY style!—requires a solid, balanced template or default pattern.**

Without it, congregations are subject to the whims of a single leader, to endless innovation, and to a likely imbalance of worship actions. Let spontaneity and improvisation arise out of form and discipline—just like in good jazz music. A good template: a) Features a balance of worship actions (praise, penitence, dedication, prayer, scripture, etc., b) features a pattern that alternates between God’s words to us and our words to God (and helps us experience each for what it really is—not just as another nice song), and c) may exist in greater detail than appears in a printed bulletin.

SEE: [www.calvin.edu/worship/stories/list](http://www.calvin.edu/worship/stories/list)

**Planning Contemporary Worship Services** Posted 08/18/06

Do you know how to look beyond the style of a “traditional” or “contemporary” worship service to find its worship vision, structure, and theology? Ron Rienstra says it’s a question more worship planners should ask and answer.

Major “movements” in worship	<u>Worship Bulletin: Congregation A</u>	<u>Worship Bulletin Template: Congregation B (minimalist bulletin—but still with all the actions in column A)</u>
Gathering	<u>Praise</u> ↓ Call to Worship (scripture) ↑ Acts of Praise ↓ Greeting (scripture)  <u>Confession</u> ↓ Call to Confession (scripture) ↑ Prayer of Confession ↓ Assurance of Pardon (scripture) ⇄ Passing of the Peace ↑ Response of Thanksgiving	Call to Worship and Songs of Praise   Confession of Sin, Declaration of God’s Grace, Exuberant Thanksgiving
Proclamation	↑ Prayer for Illumination	Scripture Reading and Sermon

	↓ Old Testament Reading ↓ Psalm ↓ New Testament Reading ↓ Sermon	
Response to the Word	↑ Song or Hymn of Response ↑ Creed and/or Testimonials ↑ Prayers of Intercession/Pastoral Prayer ↑ Offering ↑ Offertory Prayer	Responses in Prayer, Testimony, Offering
Lord's Supper	↓ Invitation to the Table (scripture) ↑ Great Prayer of Thanksgiving ↓ Words of Institution (scripture) ↑ Prayer of Consecration ↓ Communion ↑ Thanksgiving	Lord's Supper
Sending	↑ Song or Hymn of Dedication ↓ Call to Service (scripture) ↓ Blessing/Benediction (scripture)	Call to Service in God's World and Blessing

**PROVERB 6: Make sure that all leaders can answer two things about every element in worship: Who is it addressed to? What action is it accomplishing?**

Create two lists of verbs:

- a) Singing, Standing, Sitting, Listening, Shouting, Gesturing, Lifting hands, Kneeling
- b) Praising, Praying, Confessing, Thanking, Pondering, Promising, Lamenting

Be able to explain how each element hooks up at least one verb from each list. Allow this to shape your transition words.

**(PROVERB 6b: Blessed are those who help the congregation also to come to that understanding.)**

**PROVERB 7: In all aspects of worship, make sure there is a balance of familiar things and things that will stretch the congregation.**

An entire service of unfamiliar music will not enable the congregation to participate. An entire service of overly familiar or often-used examples can lead worship to become cliché. It's too easy then to have worshipers go on automatic pilot. Balance is the key!

**PROVERB 8: Start and end strong.**

Every service will probably have some unfamiliar things in it. But those can be disconcerting if they are placed at the beginning or end of the service. A sturdy congregational song to start and end the service is the first step toward encouraging greater participation.

**PROVERB 9: Leading prayer is a discipline that requires more than our own personal experience.**

Use externally generated prayers to help expand the range, imagery, and focus of the prayers you speak. Try, for example, designing a pastoral prayer as a paraphrase of Psalm 23. Use *Book of Common Worship* or *Worship Sourcebook* prayers as a template. These are valuable even if you pray extemporaneously.

## PROVERB 10: The one who attends to transitions shall be blessed.

**The “In Between” Words: How to keep fellow worshipers tuned in** Posted on 1/20/06

As worshipers move from one element of the service to the next, they need help to understand what they are doing and why. Verbal transitions help them stick with the worship dialogue between God and gathered people.

\*Work on your spoken transitions. Worship leaders are the main guides that lead the congregation on their journey through the service. The words that lead from one part of the service to the next are key tools that help in this task. To be honest, many worship leaders don't spend much time at all considering the words they will use. Some refuse to because they react against anything too planned or canned. Some have simply never thought about doing it.

But the words we speak have the power to inspire or frustrate. They can make a visitor feel welcome or unwelcome. They can lead the congregation to focus on the purpose of worship, or get everyone bogged down in mechanics. Many times, when we don't think about the words we say, we end up communicating some inaccurate, dangerous, or hurtful messages. The following are actual lines spoken by worship leaders.

- “Men and women sing the first line together. Men sing the second with the children. Women sing the first and the third. Then everyone finishes it up.”
- “Well I guess that now we have to have the confession of sin.”
- “Well, I didn't really prepare for this next part of the service.”
- “We really haven't had time to rehearse this, but oh well.”
- “Ok? Let's see what is next. Well, next we will say the creed.”
- “Isn't this more fun than in a traditional worship service?”
- “Wasn't that song great? I'll bet they don't sing that way at the church across the street!”
- “Well, our secretary messed up again, and the song number in the bulletin for this part of the service is wrong.”

Often, without intending it, worship leaders say something very different than what they mean. They are utterly confusing. They suggest that worship is routine. They mock another church. They signal that worship is not all that important. They blame someone else for a mistake. None of these comments focuses on the meaning or purpose of what is happening. They are barriers rather than enablers of worship.

To avoid transitions like these, ask the following questions: Are my instructions about the mechanics as concise and clear as possible? Does the transition link two acts of worship, showing how they are related? Does the transition avoid being pedantic or preachy? Is the tone of the transition warm and inviting or cold and inhospitable? Are there especially poignant lines in a song or hymn that you could highlight in your introduction?

Consider these examples:

- “Some of us gather for worship this morning with great joy. Some of us gather with tears. Our opening song is based on a Psalm that expresses both joy and honest pain.”
- “Next, we state precisely what we believe, using the words of the Apostles' Creed. These words are printed in your worship folder. If you are visiting with us today, we would be happy to explain the joy we have because of these statements. Simply ask one of the greeters at the door at the end of the service.”
- “The sermon ended with a call to confession. Our song of response enables us to just that.”

Consider writing out your transitions ahead of time—even if you don't refer to your notes in the service. Even if you speak extemporaneously, you'll do better if you've worked out a written version ahead of time. Then after the service, go back and listen to a recording of what you said. Work together with other worship leaders in your congregation to think about ways to improve the hospitality in your spoken transitions.

**CONSIDERING THE BIG PICTURE**

**PROVERB 11. Music gets too much attention in most congregations** (ouch—painful for a musician to admit). **Make scripture reading and congregational prayer higher priorities.**

We need to attend more to how scripture is read, how thoughtfully we prepare for prayer, how hospitably we celebrate the sacraments. Put music in its place—a significant, but not all-encompassing place.

See Connie Cherry data about how little time we really do spend on scripture reading and prayer (“My House Shall Be Called a House of . . . Announcements”), in *Church Music Workshop* (Abingdon Press).

**PROVERB 12. Music is soul food. God’s people need a balanced diet. Spiritually speaking, we are what we sing. Most congregations really know only 200 songs or hymns. Be fussy about what makes it into your diet.**

Song Diet Evaluation Sheet

Theme	Newly Written	Long-Loved	More Contemplative	More Exuberant	Simple, Accessible	Complex, Challenging
Praise (25)						
Penitence (10)						
Word of God (6)						
Dedication/Offering (10)						
Baptism (6)						
Lord’s Supper (6)						
Blessing/Dismissal (6)						
Advent/Christmas/Epiphany (20)						
Lent(10)						
Holy Week (8)						
Easter (6)						
Ascension (5)						
Pentecost/Holy Spirit (6)						
Morning and Evening (4)						
Special Occasions (4)						
Creation/Providence (10)						
Redemption/Salvation (10)						
Church/Mission (10)						
Forgiveness/Healing (10)						
Prayer (10)						
Home and Family (10)						
Society/Justice (10)						
New Creation/Hope (10)						

- ◆ Suppose there are 20,000 songs available. You are then identifying the top 1% of extant resources. We have the luxury of being very, very picky.
- ◆ Suppose that 3/4 of all congregation songs/hymns/canticles sung should be from your list of 200. That is, most of what you do can be familiar, but some will be new and challenging.

- ◆ Suppose that no more than 10 of these 200 might change in a given year, and that at least 5 should change. Our core repertoire should constantly grow, but not too fast.
- ◆ Make sure that there are at least a dozen songs on the list that could be sung at a funeral, or at a time of congregational crisis.

**PROVERB 13. When considering children, think child-like, not childish; simple, not simplistic. And make sure you give priority to 6 key texts they can memorize (e.g., Lord’s Prayer, Psalm 100, Lord’s Supper Prayers)**

**Excerpt from *A Child Shall Lead: Children in Worship*. Choristers Guild.**

As you read this list, about think a) what do we already do in our church? b) what ideas sound great, but would never work in your church, c) what ideas sound great, but may work in your church, with some changes in your approach and d) what you already do that didn’t make the list. Here we go . . .

1. In one congregation, worship leaders taught the second and third grade church school class the musical refrain that was used a month later in a congregation prayer. In this way, these children became full participants in that congregational prayer.
2. In another, worship leaders prepared a devotional guide for their members. They challenged their members to make Sunday worship the anchor of their personal and family worship. They advised: On Monday through Wednesday relive the scripture texts, hymns, and prayers of the previous Sunday. On Thursday through Saturday, build up your anticipation for Sunday by studying, praying, and singing the songs you will sing. The result: a spirituality that was truly corporate--rooted in community. And this way, parents could prepare their children for what was coming in worship.
3. In another, worship planners designed a children’s worship folder that gave an outline of the service with questions children could answer as the service progressed. The folder was not simply a coloring book, but rather a children’s guide to the liturgy.
4. In one congregation, fifth-grade pianists participated in worship--but not by nervously playing their recital sonatina as an offertory, but rather by playing a simple melody of a familiar hymn to close the congregational prayer. The music was at once less complicated and more meaningful for everyone present.
5. In another, the annual youth service was canceled. Instead, the congregation made a commitment to involve at least five members of the youth group every month as scripture readers, instrumentalists, and prayer leaders. This was done to communicate that youth were full participants in worship, integrated into the life of the congregation.
6. In another, a profound pastoral moment occurred in the middle of the intercessory prayer--which included a simple, direct prayers of thanks and petition that we rarely hear, one for adopted children and for parents who adopt. The prayer reminded us all worshipers that they are adopted in Christ. This was a profound act of pastoral care for many in the congregation, especially for those for whom adoption was the most significant source of their own sense of self. As you might imagine, kids who were adopted pricked up their ears at that point in the prayer!
7. One congregation did away with the children’s object lesson, a.k.a. children’s sermon, with what has become known as the congregational chuckle--but for a simple, hushed moment where the pastor blesses them, and the children in turn bless the rest of the congregation.
8. Another church provided parents with a pre-service guide to the service to help them prepare their children for worship. For example, the guide might say, “look for the advent wreath today; look for a song that mentions angles.” The idea here is to encourage parents to help their children anticipate what is coming in worship.
9. One congregation printed a monthly reminder in their bulletin or printed worship folder that mentioned the significance of children in worship. They did this to constantly remind the congregation, especially those adults without children, that their inclusion of children was intentional.
10. Another congregationa made this policy: We will use no music in children’s education that we wouldn’t use in worship. And we will use at least two pieces per week in worship that are used in children’s education.

11. letter to parents (Elizabeth Sandell, p. 32)

12. In one church school class, children wrote verses for hymn texts. For example, this was one verse contributed for the hymn "Earth and All Stars":

Insects and birds!  
Come all you creatures.  
Sing to the Lord a new song.  
Bushes and trees.  
Colorful flowers.  
Sing to the Lord a new song.

After this exercise, the congregation sang two or three of these verses in worship over the next several weeks. The printed order of service included a thank you to the children to wrote the new stanzas.

13. One children's choir director developed a new policy for programming music: for every anthem that his choir would sing, there would be at least one piece of service music (prayer response, call to worship, choral "Amen.'). The idea was not to use the children's choir simply to adorn the service with a fun anthem, but to be fully integrated with the service.

14. One congregation that wanted to expand its musical repertoire to include several Hispanic songs realized that their children would be their best teachers. For the children, who attended school each day in with a multi-cultural community, were the most adept at singing in many musical languages. So the congregation invited their children's choir to teach them one new Hispanic song each month.

15. A congregation in Edmonton, Alberta, developed a creative plan to essentially replace (!) their church education program with a worship preparation program. Yes, they still met for "Sunday school"; they still taught Bible stories and song. But everything was geared around worship. They taught the stories and songs that would be used in worship in coming weeks. They taught children about the order of worship, about the roles of various leaders in worship. In short, they turned Sunday school into a worship appreciation (and participation) program.

16. In one congregation in Memphis, Tennessee, one teacher teaches older children to use hymn indices in the back of the hymnal, and then invites them to help choose which hymns are most appropriate for a given Sunday.

17. In a congregation in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, an older youth regularly serves as a worship leader, perhaps reading the scripture lesson for the day or leading one of the prayers. Many of the younger children look forward to the day when they also will be able to function in this role.

18. A congregation in White Rock, British Columbia formed an intergenerational choir for a special service each year.

19. Brown Deer, Wisconsin; bulletin instructions to parents with 2 sentence ideas for teaching children the meaning of what is happening in worship

You may be saying, "we could never do that in our church." Indeed, there are many barriers to accomplishing all these things. But most changes for the good start with a vision. A vision of the way things ought to be. Perhaps these ideas are not possible in your church. But perhaps they will spark another idea that will. Consider using this list as a discussion starter with your church staff. Let them take out a red pen—and "correct" these ideas so that they would work in your church. You might be surprised with how excited they might be for this vision for children in the worshiping community!!

## **PROVERB 14. Work the Weak Side**

At one European cathedral, the ministry staff worked to promote a coffee hour after worship to make sure that their contemplative worship tradition was balanced by lots of community interaction. Conversely, a contemporary-worship-style congregation in the southern United States added a contemplative prayer service alongside their strong suits of community fellowship and presentational evangelism.

A wealthy congregation blessed with especially beautiful space might look to help a nearby less wealthy congregation that is looking to make its space more accessible, and then use the occasion to make sure that its own space welcomes worshipers with disabilities into full participation.



A congregation that meets in a church that looks like a fortress against culture or oasis from culture might need sermons about being “in the world.” A congregation that meets in a church that looks like a theater or shopping mall might need sermons about being “not of the world.”

All churches with the flexibility to do so might find ways of helping musicians find space that allows them the visibility they might need to lead worship, but without the subtle implication that the music is main event, the main way to encounter God’s presence (a burden that, finally, musicians shouldn’t have to bear).

**PROVERB 15. Program for Liturgical Function. At minimum, worship leaders must know why you’re doing what you’re doing. At best, most worshipers do, too.**

“. . . they see to it that the psalms and antiphons are always appropriate”  
—Egeria, fourth century, upon visiting worship services in Jerusalem while on pilgrimage

*Excellent church music is well-written, well-chosen, well-sung (Erik Routley).*

In worship, as in concertizing, programming is just about everything. The context for a piece of music is nearly all-determining for how a congregation will appropriate it. So, be picky. If there are 20,000 anthems in print (look at convention exhibit space for evidence), and your choir sings 40 per year, you have the luxury of picking the most appropriate .002% for your particular context each year. You have the luxury of choosing music that meets textual, musical, liturgical, and pastoral criteria.

Basic programming skills for worship include:

- *Rhetorical Analysis of Texts*: who is “speaking” to whom in the divine-human encounter
- *Rhetorical Analysis of the Music*: asking not only whether the music of an anthem, chorus, or refrain works well, or relates to the text well, but also whether and how the music itself might help worshipers appropriate the text as sung prayer or proclamation
- *Rhetorical-Theological Awareness of the Service/Liturgy/Pattern of Worship*: understanding where in the context of the service, the listener-worshipers will likely experience music as sung prayer or proclamation

**Music that Preaches**

- ***Integrate the choir into the reading of scripture.*** For an easy example, imagine a reading of Luke 2 that featured the choir singing the “Gloria,” with a reader picking up where the choir leaves off (Randal Thompson’s “Gloria in excelsis” is particularly useful.) The same can be imagined with any portion of scripture. Imagine a “reading” of Psalm 121, with the choir singing Mendelssohn’s “Lift Thine Eyes” (*Elijah*), followed by the reading of the rest of the Psalm, or with the choir interrupting the reader at vs. 4 to sing “He Watching Over Israel” (*Elijah*). In parallel, integrate any creedal texts into the recitation of the creed. Imagine speaking the Nicene Creed on Palm Sunday, but pausing at the “crucifixus” for the choir to sing it from Bach’s *B Minor Mass*. Of course it would slow everything down and virtually demand that the congregation attend to the meaning of the music!).
- ***Integration/combination of choral music within sermons/ homilies.*** For the majority of North American congregations, the settings of “Die Mit Tränen Saen” (Psalm 126:3) by either Schütz or Schein would be treated with either polite toleration, outright uprising, or a quiet siesta. But imagine that a homily or sermon on lament in common life (perhaps after 9-11, or on its anniversary) told the story of the 30 Years War in the century in which the piece was composed, and prepared the congregation to hear this music as a poignant sermon illustration.
- ***Recover [or discover] the ‘Hymn of the Day.’*** The affective range of many choirs is so limited because they are liturgically confined to the “anthem slot” during which time they are expected to sing pretty things that will make everyone feel good. Recover the practice of music that stands parallel to the

sermon (like a Bach Cantata). A particularly compelling recent collection of hymn texts that correspond with New Testament lessons is *Hymns for the Gospels* (GIA Publications, 2001).

- ***Service Music to Support Proclamation***

### Music That Prays

- ***Integrate sung and spoken prayer.*** Don't just sing Ringwald's "Precious Lord" as a stand-alone piece, while the ushers seat latecomers. Sing it out of the hushed silence at the end of the prayers of the people. Or imagine beginning a congregational prayer during Lent with Palestrina's "Sicut Cervus," Marty Haugen's "Shepherd Me, O God," or I-to Loh's "Loving Spirit" (the idea works in any style). Marty Haugen: *Healer of Our Every Ill* (GIA)
- ***Recover historical and cultural context of compositions.*** Now that many Protestant traditions, including evangelical ones, have recovered classical forms of Eucharistic prayers, sing a Mozart or Haydn Sanctus (or other mass movement) the way it was intended to be sung, as part of the Eucharistic prayer. Expand the musical palette precisely at moments in worship (like the Sanctus), designed to call our attention to the whole church (perhaps with the Sanctus of the *Misa Luba*, for example, or *La Misa Popular Salvadoreña*).
- ***Service music to support sung prayer.***

### Advanced programming skills for worship.

The liturgical musician doing the work of programming is like a composer who is shaping an entire event rather than just a single piece. Imagine using basic compositional skills as categories for liturgical programming.

- ***Juxtaposition***—honing especially striking juxtapositions of anthems and texts to evoke prayer or enact proclamation by means of the combination of elements.
  - ***Juxtaposition/Thematic Similarity.*** Imagine the plainchant hymn "Of the Father's Love Begotten" leading without pause into Moses Hogan's "My God Is So High." Imagine the Zimbabwean folk hymn "Come, All You People" (in G) (*Sing!* No. 4) in juxtaposition with *All People That On Earth Do Dwell* (arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams), or *Praise to the Lord the Almighty* (as recorded by John Ferguson, "A Thousand Ages" –GIA). Imagine "The God of Abraham Praise" (think of it as an Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures "Sanctus" in alternation with "Holy God We Praise Your Name" (think of as a New Testament Sanctus)
  - ***Juxtaposition/Thematic Contrast.*** During Advent and Christmas, imagine singing the advent hymn "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" and Holy Week hymn "Ah, Holy Jesus" (with its text 'for me was your incarnation') in alternation. Or "Ride On In Majesty," with "Ah, Holy Jesus" on Palm Sunday. Imagine singing Arvo Pärt's textless setting of Psalm 137 "an den wassern zu babel sa wir und weiten," followed by Mendelssohn's "He Watching Over Israel." Imagine "Christus Paradox" in juxtaposition with "Jesus Loves Me" (complex to simple).
- ***Reprise***—use of repeated material throughout a service (or throughout the year) so that the combination of familiarity and new contexts helps people appropriate music as sung prayer. Al Fedak's arrangement of "Christus Paradox" (see *Sing!* 182) is equally appropriate for Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Christ, the King, as is Walter Pelz's "Splendor Is Coming." Name it as "piece of the year" and program it for each service, allowing new dimensions of the text to be highlighted.
- ***Congregation as Primary Choir/Intergenerational Music***  
e.g, "Lord, God Almighty" (*Sing!* 9), "How Lovely, Lord" (*Sing!* 184)

Rimsky-Korsakov Lord's Prayer (Sing! 196)

**PROVERB 16:** Provide realistic means for linking worship with every other ministry in congregational life.

**PROVERB 17:** Provide realistic means by which individuals and families can echo worship in their private, personal, and family prayer.

**PROVERB 18:** Promote overall congregational health with good models for organizing people and communication. Don't neglect tasks of supervision and evaluation—which should primarily function to encourage and support the weekly planners and leaders.

FUNCTIONS:	Worship Leadership	Nuts and Bolts of Weekly Worship Planning (selecting participants, choosing music, preparing prayers, order of service, etc.)	Specific Supervision of Worship	Ultimate Supervision of Worship (decisions about number and identity of each service, overall philosophy, etc.)
Example 1	Pastor, Organist	Pastor	Worship Committee	Council/Session/Board—only talk about worship when it's a problem
Example 2	Worship Teams + preacher (5 teams on a rotating basis)	Worship Teams (same team who leads, plans the service)	None—has been disbanded	Council: Little—only talk about worship when it's a problem
Examples generated in this session . . .				

**PROVERB 19.** Worship planners are stewards of gifts given to members of the congregation

Generate lists of spiritually gifted leaders. Chart their involvement. Look for people, especially young people, who could be encouraged to develop those gifts.

People/Gifts Inventory (sample)

Name	Phone	Particular gifts (prayer, scripture reading, drama, musical instrument, etc).	Services in which they participated this year	Notes, Comments
Jorge Maldez				
Mary Smith				
Antonio Langham				
Okke Van Spee				

**PROVERB 20. Worship requires thoughtful spiritually-informed evaluation—not surveys of popular opinions and tastes.**

Questions for Council, Worship Committee Discussions

Note focus not on mechanics of worship, but on larger issues. These larger issues will generate discussions of mechanics and techniques, but then they will be tied to a larger purpose.

1. Which services, acts of worship have been particularly spiritually nourishing?
2. How have we done in really living into scripture in recent services?
3. How have we done in praying—honestly, redemptively, expansively?
4. How have we done in extending hospitality in our worship?

**THE LAST PROVERB: The nuts and bolts are a means to an end, not an end in themselves.**

Hone the ability to work hard, and then to set aside worry, to engage in worship, to enjoy and glorify God:

“We have stuck to founding, building singing, ringing, to vestments, incense burning, and to all the additional preparations for divine worship up to the point that we consider this preparation the real, main divine worship and do not know how to speak of any other. And we are acting as wisely as the man who wants to build a house and spends all his goods on the scaffolding and never, as long as he lives, gets far enough along to lay one stone of his house.”

—Martin Luther (E. Plass, *What Luther Says*, Concordia, 1959, vol. 1, p. 302).

“We have stuck to Powerpoint, sound systems, children’s messages, drama skits, and seekerfriendliness up to the point that we consider this all the real divine worship, and we do not know how to speak of any other. We are acting as wisely as the one who wants to surf the internet, but spends all available resources on a big monitor, and so has none left over for internet service, and thus never has the chance to actually get online.”

—anonymous, January 2001

RESOLUTION:

My take-home resolution is \_\_\_\_\_.

As a (fun) means of accountability I will email this resolution to:

\_\_\_\_\_.

And in trying to putting this into practice, I will pray especially:

In praise: \_\_\_\_\_

In petition: \_\_\_\_\_