

Our Worship at St. Johns

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your heart to God.
- Colossians 3:16*

1) Public Worship

When we say public worship, we're referring to that time set aside where God's people have the opportunity to gather in our sanctuary for worship. We offer these worship services weekly on Sunday mornings and on special festival days of the Church Year.

In this setting there are two things going on. Those gathered for public worship receive from God and respond to God. What does God provide for us in worship? Every time we gather, our Lord God instructs us. He tells us that we are sinners in desperate need of a Savior. He tells us how he answered that need by providing his Son Jesus as our Savior. He tells us we are forgiven. How does God do that? We receive these blessings as the Bible is read to us. We receive these things in the order of service. We receive them in the hymns we sing. The Holy Spirit works through the proclamation of God's Word to those who are there.

There is another part of our public worship where we receive something precious from our gracious Lord. This tangible blessing of forgiveness, life, and salvation is found in the sacraments. Those sacraments are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Holy Baptism is a part of our public worship whenever the need for baptism becomes apparent. We regularly offer Holy Communion during our public worship service. The Holy Spirit works through these sacraments as he works through God's Word.

During public worship there are four principles we have in mind. They are:

A) Let the Gospel predominate

Throughout the service, we want those gathered there to hear over and over again how Jesus lived, died, and rose for them. This is spoken both by the pastor and in the responses of the congregation.

B) Let the people participate

During our public worship services, we want to provide opportunities for the congregation to participate. This happens through the responses of the congregation, the hymns, the choir, and the offering. We love to utilize the musical gifts within our congregation. Sometimes that means we use the organ. Other times we'll use other instruments. It depends on the gifts and abilities of our people.

C) Let the historic practice of the Church be honored

For our order of service, we often follow a liturgy. Why do we do that? The practice of following a liturgy connects the present group of worshipers with Christians now in

heaven. Many of the responses stem back centuries and are the same responses used by those saints in heaven while they lived in this sinful world. Using the traditions Christians established a long time ago to clearly proclaim Christ in the worship service continue to be of extreme value for Christians today.

While we generally follow a liturgy, we also understand that the Lord gives freedom to Christians today to worship in many ways. At times, we utilize new orders of service as the opportunities permit. When we do that, we want to make sure that the Gospel predominates and the people have the opportunity to participate.

D) We use God's different gifts of music and the arts

We love God's gift of music and how it pairs so well with the proclamation of God's Word and the Holy Sacraments. Our congregation has been extremely blessed with the artwork that adorns our sanctuary. Our stained glass windows picture various parts of Scripture along with historic symbols used by those in the Christian Church. Each year we revise a booklet explaining the different works of art in our sanctuary. [Click to download the booklet.](#)

As far as music, we generally rely on the organ or piano to accompany the order of service and hymns. However, when we are able we also like to use other instruments during the service. This depends on what gifts the members of the congregation have.

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." – Psalm 122:1

2) Bible Studies/Classes

Another area where we are able to worship our Lord God - gather around his Word - is in the various Bible Studies/Classes offered during the week. The schedule for these Bible Studies/Classes changes during the year. During the fall, winter, and spring months we offer Sunday School for children. Catechism instruction is offered for older children to prepare them for Confirmation. For teens and adults at least two are offered weekly.

In these Bible Studies, individuals have the opportunities to discuss the portions of Scripture or doctrine being presented by the instructor. The instructor is usually our pastor. During the public worship service there isn't a time for questions and answers. Bible Class offers such an opportunity.

Our pastor also offers a course for those unfamiliar with our church body or why we believe what we believe. In this Bible Study, he covers the basic doctrine of the Bible. This is offered a few times a year in a classroom setting, but it can also be done individually. If this interests you, please call our pastor.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! – Psalm 119:103

3) Groups/Organizations within our congregation

Another area where our congregation has a more structured form of worship is in works of service which various groups and organizations perform from within our congregation. These groups tend to meet regularly throughout the year and have a brief Bible Study. They often think of ways they can serve others within our congregation and our community as an act of thanksgiving to our Lord God for what he has done for us.

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. – Galatians 5:13

4) Acts of worship in the personal lives of our people

We gather regularly in God's house to hear what he tells us. We do not camp out or stay in our building for the duration of the week. We go to our homes, our schools, our neighborhoods, and our workplaces. As we go, we hope to show gratitude and thanksgiving to our Lord during our week. We pair those acts with personal and family devotions along with prayer and seek ways that we are able to proclaim what Christ has done to others we encounter. We look for ways that we can be of service to those in need by utilizing the gifts that God has provided to us.

You are the light of the world...In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. – Matthew 5:13, 16