Planning Worship at McCormick

The order for worship at McCormick, which consists of four basic movements, is rooted in the Bible and reflects the both the traditions of the universal church and the Reformed heritage.

Within this order there is ample space for creativity and flexibility, according to the various religious traditions represented at the seminary, and the various cultural and social contexts from which we come.

Suggested Order for Worship

Gathering around the Word:  The first movement of worship pulls people together and places us before God. During this time, we acknowledge our dependence upon God, our need for God's presence and power in our lives, and God's great goodness. That is, we praise and thank God, and name our humanity in the presence of the divine.

In the Reformed tradition, the gathering portion of worship normally includes a corporate prayer of confession, which is the tradition's way of claiming our humanity and our need for God's healing and forgiveness. It is also a prayer through which we can pray for one another, acknowledge our complicity in the systemic injustices of society, and, at times, discover weakness in ourselves that we have not yet admitted. A corporate prayer of confessions is not required in worship, but if it is not included, some other resource that claims God's goodness and our need for God's grace should be used.

Proclaiming the Word:  During this movement of worship we focus on God's word as we find it in the Bible, and consider how it might speak to us today. We read the scriptures and proclaim their message. In response, we express our faith and commitment and offer prayers for human needs -- from local to global. Psalms, hymns, spirituals, anthems, and/or solos may be sung at various points during this portion of worship.

The Eucharist:  During this movement, hearing becomes doing. Offerings of the people are gathered and the table is set with bread and wine. The Eucharist liturgy includes:

* an invitation to the people to come to the table and enjoy the feast
* a prayer in which the work of the triune God is remembered with thanksgiving and the Holy Spirit is invoked
* the breaking of bread and pouring of the cup
* the sharing of bread and cup with the people

Sending:  During this final movement of worship, the people are sent forth with God's blessing to serve and live as God's people in the world. This movement creates a balance with the opening movement. Think about how you might design it to complement the gathering moment for your worship service.
Worship Preparation Checklist

___ Contact worship team (including seminary musician) with the scriptures you plan to use before the initial team meeting

___ Set initial meeting time. Normally teams meet on Tuesdays at lunchtime, from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm at least two weeks prior to the date on which they will be leading worship. At the initial planning meeting, the Dean of Students, seminary musician, and/or the worship EA will be available to work with you.

___ Plan a service that follows the four-fold movement suggested order for worship (link to Suggested Order for Worship page) and provides a meaningful and faithful worship experience for the congregation.

___ Determine worship leadership roles.

___ Determine who will prepare the bulletin. Remember to get the print-ready bulletin to the Worship EA at least 24 hours in advance of the service.

___ Determine which members of the team will do the following:

___ Usher

___ Prepare elements and set up communion table (presider normally supplies bread)

___ Serve the bread and cup

___ Clean up: rearrange furniture, replace hymnals and gather printed materials, wash and replace communion ware, fold and replace tablecloths and other material resources

___ Notify the seminary musician about your final decisions re: hymns, psalms, responses, instrumental requests, or arrangements you’ve made for any of these. Discuss the participation of the choir in the service.

___ Set up a meeting time immediately prior to worship for last minute rehearsal, final determinations about procedures for serving communion, and sharing prayer before worship.

The Planning Process for Services of Word and Sacrament

The liturgical team seeks in its leadership to weave together from human concerns and the living Word a drama which both sustains and challenges the McCormick community as individuals and in our life together. This calls for spending sufficient time together to enable the distinctive gifts, theological perspectives, and ethnic heritage of each to be expressed and affirmed, while at the same time working together in a manner that is collegial and collaborative.
LITURGICAL YEAR

McCormick’s worship is shaped by the rhythms and forms of the liturgical year. Together we celebrate Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, the baptism of Jesus (baptism renewal service), Ash Wednesday, Lent, Maundy Thursday, and Easter.

ORDER

Plan an order of worship whose dramatic structure has four movements: gathering, proclaiming the Word, the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, and sending. Within this basic framework, you are encouraged to use your creativity.

SCRIPTURE

Decide on scripture passages to be used. We suggest following the Common Lectionary (see the Book of Common Worship, pp. 1035 ff or the Presbyterian Planning Calendar), specifically the passages for the Sunday following your weekday service. However, you are not obligated to use those passages and other appropriate readings may be used.

MUSIC

Use the seminary musician’s expertise and/or invite other musicians to join in planning the service. Think of possibilities for use of musical instruments in addition to or in place of the piano. Inform the music director of this in advance. Make a special effort to let the musician know well in advance the selection of hymns and service music so s/he will have adequate time to prepare to play or conduct. It is always a good idea to include the seminary musician in the initial planning meeting for your worship service and then keep in close contact with him by e-mail.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Carefully plan the level and character of the involvement of the community in the service. Consider worship that includes responsive readings and times of silence in prayers. If prayer concerns are requested, make sure that they are included in the Prayers of the People. Community involvement in worship occurs through physical movement as well. When will the people stand and sit? How will they move through the room? Do you have enough greeters to hand out bulletins and provide any special instructions or symbols that may be included in your service?

INCLUSIVITY

We are a diverse community, full of different worship traditions and tastes. Within the coherence of a single worship service, please do your best to include worship resources and styles that respect our diversity. Check each element of the service to make sure that inclusive language is used overall. If you use one type of worship language in one part of the service, diversify in another.
CREATIVITY

Do not hesitate to develop creative events in worship, but take care to test them for their theological and aesthetic integrity to ensure that they are coherent with the general strategy for the drama of worship. Take time to rehearse these special elements. Consider creative use of silence, physical gesture, liturgical movement, music and engagement with visual arts and symbols. Keep new elements in balance with events to which the community feels accustomed. Bear in mind that as you add elements, you may need to subtract others.

TIMING

Take care to estimate the time each element of worship takes, in order to honor the community expectation that the **Wednesday services begin promptly at 12noon and last no longer than 55-60 minutes.** Evening and morning prayer services should be limited to a half hour.

COMMUNION ELEMENTS

In order to be considerate of the needs of all, we use non-fermented grape juice for communion. Ordinarily, a supply of grape juice is available in the sacristy. Check early to make sure we’ve not run out of juice! The presider, who will conduct the communion, normally provides the bread. Please select a bread that will not crumble excessively. Note: please notify the Dean of Students if juice is unavailable, and s/he will see that more is purchased.

Don't hesitate to use a wide variety of breads, particularly when your service is celebrating the heritage of a particular group represented at the seminary.

RESOURCES

Basic resources for planning are located in the offices of the Dean of Students, the EPRC, and the JKM library. Resources from Presbyterian publications (such as *The Presbyterian Hymnal* or the *Book of Common Worship*), other denominations, experimental liturgies, and online sites may be used. All resources used in worship should be appropriate to our general principles for worship.

BULLETIN

For the sake of consistency, clarity, and the dignity of worship, include items such as the following in the bulletin:

- the order for worship
- appropriate directions for liturgical resources (such as hymn numbers or the book, chapter, and verse of scripture readings)
- indications of when to stand and sit
- directions for the community as it receives communion
- copyright information for any reprinted materials not in the public domain (see below)
• names of all participants in the service.

The liturgical team is responsible for preparing the bulletin. Camera-ready text for the bulletin should be in the hands of the Dean of Students and the designated Student Worship Assistant no later than 24 hours prior to the worship service itself, in order that the bulletin can be duplicated in time for the service.

REPRINTING MUSIC OR OTHER LITURGICAL RESOURCES

Any use of copyrighted work requires permission before any duplication or copies can be made. Any reprinted material needs to indicate that permission has been granted for reprinting. We subscribe to two copyrighting services.

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Copies of all reprinted work need to be given to the worship Educational Assistant (please send a clean cc of the bulletin through campus mail), so he/she can report it to the appropriate licensing groups, and the artists can receive their royalties. If you are unsure whether these licenses cover the reprinting of your material, check the GIA website, the One License website or with the seminary musician.

ROOM ARRANGEMENT
Remember to provide instructions and sensible space for the movement of presiders and partakers during the sacrament of communion. Space should be organized so that people can move without excessive instructions or traffic congestion.

If you plan to have the choir sit in a different place than usual, be sure to reserve seating for them.

MEDIA AND MICROPHONES

The Dean of Students and the Worship Education Assistant will make plans to have microphones available each week. Please plan to use them, as it is difficult for most worshipers to hear individual voices without amplification. If you wish to have additional media, contact media@mccormick.edu at least 24 hours in advance of your worship service. A little more advance is often helpful, especially if you wish to practice the use of a new media for worship. See “rehearsal” section below.

DECORATIVE ELEMENTS FOR THE SERVICE

Cloths for the communion table are stored in the LSTC sacristy. The worship Education Assistant for the service can help you find the coverings you need and also assist you in setting the table. If you have a particular mood you wish to create or materials you wish to use, make sure to coordinate with the Worship EA.

REHEARSAL

Practice, practice, practice—your sermon, your scripture readings, your prayers, media that are new or different for you, and directions to the congregation. Review who on your team will be responsible for which portions of the worship service. Go over your movements. Check timing. Avoid confusion in leadership roles that leaves awkward pauses in the flow of worship. Be attentive to duration; if you have added elements in addition to accustomed elements, what have you eliminated to keep the service within its expected duration?

CLEAN UP

The worship team is responsible for cleaning up after communion. This includes putting any moved furniture back into place, washing the communion vessels and returning them to the sacristy, folding and returning any tablecloths or other material liturgical resources to the sacristy, returning hymnals to the book cart, and picking up stray song sheets or bulletins and putting them away.