

# Worship Leading: Where to Begin

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## Resources for Worship Leaders

- I. Worship leading can be a challenge for those who are doing it for the first time. Where does one begin and where are the resources available for one to use? This document will give you a starting point, and suggested resources for getting started. Hopefully, once you begin, your creativity will take over and you can plan a service that honors God and guides the congregation in your unique and gifted way.

Each service is based on three sections. There is an opening, a closing, and basic middle elements. At times the middle of the service will change slightly depending on the special elements added to the service. Here is a sample order of service with only basic elements:

Prelude (begins five or ten minutes ahead of the service)

Gathering songs (usually three songs, unless there is more singing before the sermon)

**Welcome and Call to Worship** (worship leader welcomes all present via live streaming, DVD, or in the sanctuary ... helps the congregation gather ... and introduces the theme) The length of this time should be within 5 minutes. A helpful guide is to write out what you want to say, and if it is three to four paragraphs, this is sufficient (a page or less).

**Scripture reading**

**Offering**

**Children's Time**

**Congregational Song**

**Scripture**

Sermon

Response song

Congregational Prayer

Benediction

Sending Song

In most worship services at Waterford Mennonite Church, you will find that the beginning and ending elements of the service rarely change. The bold elements listed above can change in order based on other special elements that may be added to a service. These elements include:

Confession/Peace Lamp Lighting (sometimes added to the call to worship)

Parent/Child Dedication

Receiving New Members/Baptism

God's Work Among Us (individual stories of God's work in our world)

Drama (this may be related to scripture or children's time)

Sharing (often this is added after the sermon and response song, leading into the congregational prayer)

Advent Candle Lighting and Reading (during Advent season)

Commissioning/Sending

Time of Silence

Remembering the Saints (All Saints Sunday)

Choir, or Special Music

When you begin to plan a worship service, you are encouraged to start with an outline (see final page of this document), and add any special elements as needed. *The worship leader will lead the welcome/call to worship, offering/prayer, possibly scripture, and any transitions before the sermon.* The pastoral team will let you know where to place any special elements added to the service. They have a good sense of the overall length of the service, where to place a special element, as well as what might be shortened if concern for time is a consideration.

- I. Next, you should have received an email with a worship grid attachment. This gives you the information relating to theme, scripture, and others who are involved in leading different elements of the service. You can add this information to your outline and contact these people to let them know a bit more about the service you are planning. Letting the song leader know more about the service will help them select appropriate songs. (or you may have some to suggest) This starting point will help your team work together in planning the service. The placement of songs, or other elements in the service will depend on the order of worship.

II. So a quick review of where to begin:

1. Create a basic outline of the service 10 days before service (use worksheet)
2. Contact Preaching pastor and add special elements if needed
3. Email outline to everyone involved in leading in the service, including church office (office@waterfordchurch.org), pastoral team, song leader, pianist, children's story, and others on the grid. Invite them to respond with their unique perspectives.
4. Add these details to your order of worship
5. Send to church office by Tuesday (5 days) before your service (one of the many reasons for advanced planning is to allow time for power points to be created, pianists accompanying singing to

practice, AV team to prepare, and remaining questions to be answered before Sunday)

The worship leader, pastoral team, available musicians, and others involved in the service will meet together for a time of prayer and final details at 7:30 a.m. before the first service. Any final preparations are made at this time.

After the service: Blow out candles or other flames including the peace lamp. Pastors and ushers will be at back of sanctuary at the time, so this is responsibility of the Worship Leader following each service.

- III. Where does one go to find a Call to Worship, Confession, or other resources to lead a congregation? A great place to start is our hymnal resources. The Hymnal, Sing the Story, or Sing the Journey, all have resources at the back of the book. You will find these related to topic and theme.

Another place to find helpful resources is online. Give yourself an hour to surf the web and do some reading. You will find readings, and prayers. Some are theologically strong and others may be a bit shallow. Running something by one of our pastors is a great idea, as there may be readings that are a better fit than others for our congregation.

Our church library also has resources for worship leading. As you enter the library space keep your eyes on the bottom shelf to the left of the room. You will find a label that says Worship Resources, and there are 36 books in this area. These are based on theme.

The pastors have resources in their offices. They may have something to suggest or a book to loan.

Leader, is a Mennonite Church magazine that is published for different seasons of the year. Advent, Lent, Easter, etc... and our church has a number of past copies of this periodical on file for your perusal.

Whatever questions you may have, there are people here at church to help you find an answer: Their names are Neil, Cindy, Katie, and Terry. (You can contact JD too, but he ranks a bit lower on the wisdom list)

How will you be creative in your approach to worship leading? Consider that we gather to honor our God, to celebrate God's work among us, to learn, and to join in a corporate expression of faith. People gathered together to one thing, worship. With all the planning that we do in advance, we need to be flexible. Even the best plans can change, and often become something even better than first imagined. If we give of ourselves, with first fruits giving, God will continue to take it the rest of the way.

May the blessings be yours as you plan, pray, prepare, and are moved by the Spirit to lead others in worship.

JD

Fill in this WORKSHEET with names from worship grid schedule that has been emailed to you.

Prelude

\_\_\_\_\_

Gathering Songs

\_\_\_\_\_

(list of three songs)

\_\_\_\_\_

Welcome and Call to Worship

(your name)

\_\_\_\_\_

Lighting Peace Lamp

(your name)

\_\_\_\_\_

Song

\_\_\_\_\_

Offering

(worship leader prayer) \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture (passage)

\_\_\_\_\_

(reader if other than you)

\_\_\_\_\_

Children's Time

\_\_\_\_\_

Sermon (preacher and passages)

\_\_\_\_\_

(title, if known)

\_\_\_\_\_

Song of response (book and number)

\_\_\_\_\_

Congregational Prayer (pastor name)

\_\_\_\_\_

Sending Song (book and number)

\_\_\_\_\_

(blow out candles/lamp flame)

(worship leader)

Note: this form will get you started. Other elements can be added throughout the service as needed.