

Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship (PGIMF)

Worship Leader Duties

Thank you for your willingness to take on the responsibilities and duties of facilitating worship. This letter provides a brief outline of things you will need to consider in planning the service. As you know, a meaningful worship experience does not just happen but takes prayer, planning, organization, reflection, and usually a few phone calls!

Planning for the service

1. **Contact the Speaker** 9-12 days before he/she is scheduled to speak. Introduce yourself as the worship leader for the Sunday when he/she will be speaking. Find out the theme of the talk, the scripture passage(s), and whether there are any particular hymns or other appropriate elements to include in the service. Make sure the speaker knows a little about PGIMF, the location, the time the service starts, and about the prayer/preparation meeting before the service. Find out a little about his/her work and background so you have the basics of a brief introduction. Be clear that the talk should be about 15-20 minutes long and ask his/her permission to have a discussion time afterward. During discussion, you are the moderator, so the speaker should be seated. Invite his/her family to attend as well.
2. **Contact the Song Leader** as early as possible to communicate the theme and scripture and confirm whether there is special music. The song leader must have time to contact the pianist.
3. **Contact the Congregational Coordinator** (whoever is taking care of the bulletin), preferably on or before Thursday. She or he will need to know who the speaker is, what the theme is, and to confirm the other people who are on duty for your Sunday. If you need anything else printed in the bulletin (scripture, a song, etc.) she/he must have it before Thursday.
4. **Plan and pray:** Think about how the service will flow in terms of active/passive participation. How does the mood tie in with the theme? How can you minimize potential distractions (e.g. when will the offering be taken, when will children have an opportunity to leave for Sunday School). Of course, the unforeseen does come up. Plan, but relax and trust the Holy Spirit to maintain an appropriate worship atmosphere. PGIMF welcomes more than one model and style of worship. Feel free to use reading from scripture, devotional literature, poetry, reader's theatre, and times of silence. If needed, ask other people from the congregation to help you. Asking someone relatively new to the church to read from the Bible is a good way to help them start feeling a part of the group. In addition to the worship tools at the back of the hymnal, you may find resources such as the *Book of Common Prayer*, *The Alternative Book of Services* and other material based on the Lectionary helpful. Worship resources are available in our church library, for example *Gatherings*, which has ideas for prayers, responsive readings, etc.
5. **A note on language:** The Christian tradition is full of rich images and metaphors. The terms "Father" and "Lord" touch on only a fraction of who God is and how God acts in the life of believers and the church. Use creative verbs and adjectives (Living Spirit, Mothering God, Merciful Savior, God of Hope, etc.).

Elements of a service

1. **The Basics:** Call to worship, singing, scripture reading, offering, special music, the message, time for reflection and discussion of talk, time to share joys and concerns, prayer, announcements, benediction (sung or spoken).
2. **Offering:** Time and preparation goes into preparing special music. If you want the offering to take place during special music, ask the musician for permission; some find it distracting. If possible, let the usher know ahead of time when you plan to take the offering.
3. **Time management:** Monitor the time during the service. The service should start on time (10:00 a.m.) and end between 11:15 and 11:30. Out of respect for our Sunday school teachers and the time pressures of guest speakers, we need to finish on time. Use your discretion in cutting off the discussion time if it gets too late (we can always continue informally during the coffee time).

Worship Leader Coordinator: Janet Boldt **Music Coordinator:** Eric Hannan
Worship Speaker Coordinators: Henry Neufeld or Evan Kreider
Congregational Co-ordinator (bulletins): Karen Peters or Andre Pekovich

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4. **Children's feature:** If you include one, plan for it before the children leave for Sunday School. Be aware of the enormous age differences and attention spans between our children.
5. **Prayer before the service:** There is usually a time of mutual prayer and support in the office at 9:45 for all those involved with the service. This is also a time to clarify elements of the service. This time is often led by someone other than those involved in the actual service (remember to invite the speaker to this time).
6. **Acoustics:** Remember to project your voice. You need to speak louder than you think you do in our worship space. Encourage any participants from the congregation to stand up while they do their reading, etc. to make it easier for all to hear.

Thoughts on a theology of worship

(offered by Dr. Gordon Smith, Regent College)

The goal: through worship we should grow in faith, hope and love and we should bless God.

1. The human person is a worshipping being: We are created to respond to what is good, just, and beautiful with joy and praise.
2. True worship is God-centered, not human-centered.
3. True worship is grounded in the acts of God: It is not necessarily about feeling good. The best worship is transforming in subtle ways so that only God receives credit. Authentic worship edifies the worshippers as a result of an encounter with God.
4. Authentic Christian worship is offered in response to the acts of God: Every worship event should take into account God's creation and redemption of all things.
5. True Christian worship is Trinitarian and Christocentric: We worship a Triune God. Our worship originates with the Father, is made possible by the Son, and is effected within us by the Spirit. However, God the Father is delighted when we take delight in his Son, and the intent of the Holy Spirit would be that our worship is consumed by Jesus.
6. True worship is historical: It is a reminder of where our history and God's history intersect. For example, in the Lord's table, Jesus has called us to remembrance of the past, to anticipation of the future marriage supper of the Lamb, and is himself present to us in the elements.
7. All true worship is governed by the Word of God: We worship the One we know from Scripture in ways that Scripture describes.
8. The structure of worship should reflect an encounter with God: Every element should be part of a dialogue, either our speaking, response or offering to God, or God speaking and blessing us.

Be creative - How do you understand worship? Its purpose? How does it tie into our view of God? How does it bind the church community together and connect to the wider Mennonite and Christian world?

Should a conflict arise and you can't lead worship, first consult the worship schedule posted on the www.pgimf.org web site and try to trade with someone else. Then let the Worship Leader Coordinator know the new arrangement. If this fails, call the Coordinator as soon as possible to say that you need a replacement. Leading worship is a wonderful opportunity to be creative, allowing God's Spirit to lead you as you use your gifts to facilitate a meaningful and right worship experience for the congregation. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact someone on the Worship Committee for further help.

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