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Biblical and Historical Foundations

“Corporate worship is a real meeting between God and God’s people.

Like any meeting, this one takes place through dialogue.”-Constance Cherry, *The Worship Architect*



Biblical



Historical

Throughout the biblical narrative, meetings between God and God’s people take place through dialogue:

- God initiates the conversation/the person answers.
- God reveals his plans/the person (often) questions or resists God’s plans.
- God offers reassurance and (often) some material sign of his presence with the person.
- The person accepts God’s plan (usually) and is sent forth to participate in it.

Historically, Christian worship tends to follow this same dialogical pattern:

- God calls his people together/the people gather.
- God speaks his Word/the people respond in praise, confession, thanks, doubt, etc.
- God’s Word becomes flesh in Jesus/the people receive the material sign of Jesus’ body and blood.
- God sends his people to participate in his purposes/the people respond in lives of obedience.

Based on these foundations, Worship, Music and the Arts at JKPC values corporate worship that...

- ⇒ names and praises our Triune God and points to the reality of Jesus in and among the gathered community.
- ⇒ takes seriously what God is saying to the community and offers a high level of worshiper participation as the avenue through which the people respond to God in honest, shared ways.
- ⇒ tangibly enacts God’s relationship with his people through Jesus around the Lord’s Table each Sunday.
- ⇒ is practically lived out in obedience to God’s mission in the world.

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Music and Arts Emphasis



Music

—King David envisions God being present in the praises of his people and sings, “I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you,” (Ps. 22:3, 22).

—The author of Hebrews attributes these same words to Jesus (Heb. 2:12), the Minister of heaven’s sanctuary who leads God’s people in the songs of praise, revealing his presence through song.

—In addition to being a tool for uniting worshipers’ voices in prayer and for conveying various experiences of emotion, music is an affirmation that some things that are real remain unseen—a conduit through which God who is spirit is made (invisible) flesh.

—Paul seems to envision the idea of Christ dwelling richly in and among his people taking place through a richness of expression through psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, (Col. 3:16, see Ralph Martin, *Worship in the Early Church*).

—Through music, we also have an opportunity to lend our voices to the songs of Jesus’ followers through the ages and across the globe.



Arts

—Culture, including the arts, “is the stuff we make of the world. And it is the sense we make of the world. Culture is material, and material is meaningful,” (David O. Taylor, *For the Beauty of the Church*).

—The artist “sees the unseen in the seen, hears the no-longer heard in the heard, and perceives forms and relations in what has become disjointed,” (Eugene Peterson, in *For the Beauty of the Church*).

—While words have the advantage of being applied to linear storytelling and of handling the abstract with precision, art has the ability both to illustrate the concrete and to unleash the imagination into the world of the abstract.

—The work of visual and performing arts can act as windows through which worshipers see the things of God as well as the world God loves from God’s vantage point.

—In being less precise than words, the arts make space for God to reveal himself in different ways to different people.

Based on these foundations, Worship, Music and the Arts at JKPC values corporate worship that...

- ⇒ supports and guides the work of musicians and artists in our midst.
- ⇒ offers a variety of available music/arts materials in worship and around our campus as expressions of Christian worship’s trans-cultural, contextual, counter-cultural and cross-cultural dimensions.
- ⇒ values both word and image as means through which worshipers hear from and respond to God.
- ⇒ answers a missional summons to cultivate relationships beyond the walls of JKPC through a shared interest in music and the arts.

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Marking Time by God's Deeds in Christ

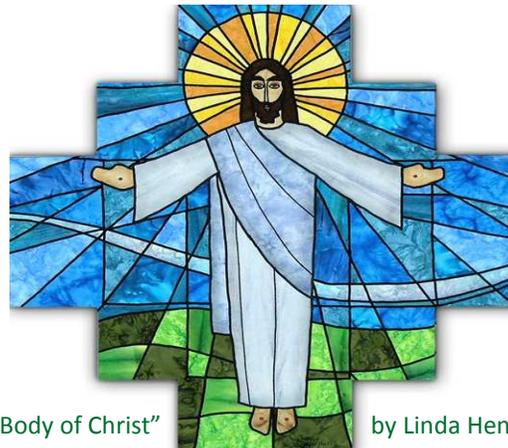
Everything was created by and for Jesus—including time, (Colossians 1:16). From the evening and morning of the first day, time finds its meaning and purpose as it is ordered according to God's deeds, (Genesis 1:5). In Jesus, the eternal Son of God entered history, and his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension are past events in an historical sense. Yet in a cosmic sense, the various dimensions of the Christ event are a revealing in history of eternal realities—"events" that exist in and through Jesus without beginning or end.

As followers of Jesus share his life by faith, the past and future of God's redemptive activity are ever available to us in the present through our unity with Jesus in the Holy Spirit. By participation in the daily cycles of prayer and devotion, weekly gatherings of worship, and the two major cycles of the Christian year (the cycle of light and the cycle of life, *see below*), God's *kairos* (the fullness of time) finds expression in our *chronos* (calendar time), both as a witness to the gospel of Jesus in the world and as a means of ordering and forming congregational spirituality.



The Cycle of Light

- Waiting in darkness for the coming Light (Advent)
- Welcoming the Light that shines in the darkness (Christmas)
- Revealing the Light to the world (Epiphany)



"Body of Christ"

by Linda Henke



The Cycle of Life

- Self-emptying unto death (Lent)
- Being raised to new life (Easter)
- Humanity gathered into God's presence (Ascension)
- Humanity sent out to proclaim the gospel of Jesus to the world (Pentecost)

As such, JKPC incorporates a Christian rendering of time into its worship life through...

- ⇒ participation in the seasons/days of the two major cycles of the Christian year.
- ⇒ participation over time in the essences of other dimensions of Christian identity (ie: Jesus' baptism, miracles, teaching, transfiguration, etc.), though not usually or necessarily emphasized at JKPC on their scheduled lectionary dates.
- ⇒ pointing worshipers to the gospel focus of life events—especially those events celebrated in a worship context (ie: births/baptisms, weddings/marriages, deaths/memorials, etc.).
- ⇒ affirming a God-given purpose of time as being an arena for life-long growth and transformation.

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Full, Active and Conscious Participation in Sacred Action

- Our culture understands imagination as the world of the ‘seen *unreal*’ (ie: theme parks, advertising, escapist fantasy, etc.).
- The church understands the sacramental (“means of the sacred”) imagination as the world of the ‘unseen *real*’—a world we were created to “see” and be part of. The creation itself is a material expression of God’s presence and activity in the world.
- Jesus and his Kingdom are as real (or more real) than the world of our otherwise un-illuminated experience, and, through sacred action, we catch material glimpses of their real presence this side of new creation.
- Through 20 centuries of Christian thought and practice, **Baptism** and **Communion** are the two primary sacred actions through which followers of Jesus encounter God who is Spirit in and through material.



Baptism: Dying and Rising

- Throughout God’s story, God’s redeemed community (or its representative) passes through drowning waters to represent a colony of sole survivors who ground God’s new humanity, (ie: Noah, the Israelites, Jonah, Paul).
- Signified in our baptism, we’re saved through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom God poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life, (Titus 3:5b-7).
- We live out our baptism through a daily pattern of dying to self and rising to new life in Christ.



Communion: Self-Giving unto Death & Future Glory

- God’s story includes numerous accounts, both in narrative and prophecy, that envision a pilgrim people of God receiving food for their journey as they sojourn toward God’s mountain-feast, (ie: the Israelites, Elijah, Jesus feeding the multitudes, the visions of Isaiah and John’s Revelation).
- In Communion, followers of Jesus remember Jesus’ death, celebrate Jesus’ resurrection, identify as members of Jesus’ body, and look forward to Jesus’ glorious return.
- We live out our participation in Communion by offering ourselves to the world in self-giving love—all in the pattern of Jesus—until God’s Kingdom comes in fullness.

Based in part on this reflection, JKPC’s participation in sacred action seeks to...

- ⇒ affirm a Reformed identity in sacramental thought and practice.
- ⇒ draw from the sacramental thought and practice of other Christian traditions in ways that enrich our understanding of Baptism and Communion’s multi-layered meaning.
- ⇒ teach the sacraments both through “examination of” (information) and “entrance into” (formatonal experience).
- ⇒ offer baptism as often as necessary and celebrate Communion weekly.
- ⇒ offer other material articulations of our relationship with God as appropriate (ie: anointing with oil, healing prayer, ordaining and installing pastors, elders and deacons, commissioning with worshipers to specific service in God’s Kingdom, etc.).

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Worship as the Work of the People

Leitourgia, from which we derive our term “liturgy,” is “a work or labor (*egron*) with respect to a people or community (*leitōs*),” (see Graham Ward in “A Christian Act: Politics in Liturgical Practice),—literally, an act of service for (and probably by) the people. Though a small worship gathering might be organized simply with a sole leader presiding over Word and Sacrament, a larger gathering requires leaders and volunteers to serve in multiple specialized and non-specialized areas.

In addition to the practical necessity of utilizing the service of volunteers, rotating volunteer service tells the story over time that worship doesn’t depend solely on the work of professionals. It also casts a richer, more realistic vision of who God is making us to be as a local community of faith.



As such, JKPC seeks to cultivate leaders and volunteers who serve the ministry of gathered worship in the areas of...

- ⇒ audio/video crew
- ⇒ choir
- ⇒ instrumentalists/vocalists
- ⇒ Sunday am hospitality (greeters, ushers, coffee crew)
- ⇒ those offering words of witness/announcements in worship in cooperation with the sponsoring ministry team
- ⇒ visual/performing artists
- ⇒ worship leaders