

Combined Service Feedback from December 3 2017

First, thank you to everyone who participated in the conversation and / or gave written feedback. Your input is really valuable to us. It was good to hear that most people are enjoying the greater sense of community and energy in the combined worship. Some are feeling more comfortable than they expected to feel. Others enjoy the variety of worship offered each month. A few are struggling with the combined service and grieving for what was (this includes folks from both 9:15 and 11 am).

The responses to the what do you enjoy question can be summed up in the following order;

- 1. Community:** Greater sense of community – seeing people I don't know
Size of the community /fullness of church
Informal greeting / social time before and after the service
Being one with the congregation - unity – Cooperation
- 2. Variety:** enjoy having both types of music - rotation of Sunday services
- 3. Energy:** from the combined community and big music sound
- 4. Other:** feels familiar - still feel at home

In response to your concerns, questions and ideas:

Time of the Service: For some a 10:30 am start is too late in the day and would prefer a 10 am start.
For some with health issues, a 10:30 am start time is too early but they are trying to make it work.
Clearly, the pastoral response is to remain with the 10:30 am start.

Sound / Volume: Fleet Sound is coming to look at the system / speakers. Stay tuned.

Greeting: Some folks have expressed a reluctance to be a greeter as they are afraid of making a mistake. There is no one right way to greet other than making sure people feel welcome and have what they need for the service. Between meeting folks who we might not recognize from different services and new comers, one expects a few missed steps and that's okay. No one needs to feel uncomfortable and we trust that our regulars will be gracious enough to cut the greeters a little slack and not be offended or tempted to 'correct' them. We will have a training for the combined greeters in the new year to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Gathering Rite: In response to requests for a little less confusion at the beginning of the service, on regular Sundays, the celebrant and crucifer will go to the back of the church. The singers will then take their seats. Either Wendy (1st & 3rd) or celebrant (2nd & 4th) will invite folks into a brief time of silence (15 – 30 seconds) and then we will join in the gathering song. The celebrant will welcome people while standing at the back of the church and ask people to stand for the opening hymn / song. The crucifer and celebrant will process from the back. The singers will join the procession on high feasts.

Periods of Silence: Brief periods of silence (approx. 15 seconds) will be built into the service; at the beginning, before the gradual, before the confession, and after communion.

Liturgical Music: Some folks are missing the *service* music, while, others are enjoying saying the Sanctus and Lord's Prayer. On the 1st and 3rd Sundays, we will sing the Lord's Prayer - a new version for everybody to learn; on the 2nd and 4th Sundays we will sing the Sanctus (setting #735 in *Common Praise*).

Movement during service: Singers are encouraged to limit their movement from the nave to chancel or vice versa and are to discreetly use the side door so as not to cross in front of the communion table.

Passing the Peace: It's good to keep in mind the purpose of passing the peace. After completing the confession and absolution, the community has peace with God. Now it is time to share the peace with each other. Passing of the Peace of Christ is a symbolic gesture. It is not the intention for worshipers to extend this peace to every person in the congregation. Nor is this time for socializing. The time for this is before or after the service. The idea is to share the peace with folks in the immediate vicinity, keeping in mind that not everyone wants to be touched / hugged and that needs to be respected. For some there is never enough time to greet people properly, while others get annoyed at an extended holy hug-about. We will try to land somewhere in the middle, ringing a bell when its time to return to our seats.

Communion; During the singing of the *Agnus Dei*, the musicians and nave singers receive; during *This is the Body of Christ*, the chancel singers receive. Then the rest of the congregation receives.

Why not one 10:30 style service? Because having a variety of St. Paul services is valued and appreciated by most people.

Screen vs book: It was a bit of a surprise to discover that people generally prefer to follow the service on the screen, but people still have a choice as to which they use (except the chancel singers).

Respect for Sacred Space: There are lots of differing ideas as to what that looks like in the church today. Part of hospitality means that people feel welcome and comfortable and not having to worry about whether they are standing, sitting or kneeling at the right time. Children are always welcome and should never be discouraged.

Musicians: All the musicians are now in the transept area near the organ / piano.

There are now three identifiable music groups: while the choir and the praise team maintain their identities, it is exciting to see that a third group is emerging. We have yet to see how this group will evolve. Since it is a combination of singers and instrumentalists it would be good to find a name that aptly describes the group. We are open to hearing your ideas.

Robes: A few have wondered why the choir / chancel singers/ are not robing. Very simply, they discussed wearing gowns and have chosen not to. We are honouring that decision.

Growing Pains and Fine Tuning: It was pointed out several times during our conversation that we are experiencing normal growing pains as we fine tune our combined worship. This document is our attempt to respond to your concerns, suggestions and ideas. **These tweaks will be put in place in January.**

At the end of the day, we know that we come together to worship God, not ourselves. If we come with open hearts and minds, set our egos aside and put the good of the whole church first, we can become the kind of community that would make Jesus proud to call his church.