

## **Worshipping Together February 2018**

**History:** 22 years ago, Rob and his council made the decision to create three services to allow room for growth and differing worship styles. That was a good and faithful decision, suitable for its time. We live in a different time. Noting that whenever we combined the 9:15 and 11 am services, there was a wonderful energy in the room along with a richer, fuller sound, we decided to give it a try as a possible way forward.

For the past 6 months, we have been experimenting with a pilot project that moved our BCP service to 8:30 am and combined the 9:15 and 11 am services in 10:30 am start. We chose to combine these two services because they share a common liturgy (BAS and its supplement), a common theology, both use music in worship and share the peace.

We then began a monthly roster of services involving both the BAS and the BSS. And we kept the Iona healing service on the first Sunday of the month.

In December, we felt we were not ready to make a decision but needed more time to incorporate the tweaks you suggested for a little fine tuning. Since then, we have heard from several people that one can never go back to way things were. It simply is not sustainable; not financially, musically or from the perspective of volunteers.

**With that in mind, we go forward – staying with the two services. We recognize though that this is still a work in progress. There are some things to try that we haven't been able to accommodate to date and there will still be suggestions coming from the congregation. We also need to be flexible and able to accommodate suggestions from the new priest.**

The benefits of worshipping together continue to outweigh the costs. Most importantly, there is an energy in the service that is giving birth to a made at and for St. Paul's style of worship. This includes a variety of liturgies regularly scheduled on a monthly basis and a unique blend of music that respects both of our styles.

It was our hope that worshipping together would start to heal some of the divisions and create a greater sense of community as people got to know one another. While we have lost a few people along the way and some are still grieving the changes, most are finding their place. Our first post service pot luck suggests that we are fostering the growth of a community spirit in St. Paul's.

Another of our hopes, was that the congregation would find its singing voice and this is happening. The folks in the sanctuary can hear the congregation singing along with them and it is a wonderful, bigger, unifying sound.

With the more efficient use of resources, we are offering something unique and appealing in this part of the diocese. There is an authenticity about differing styles respectfully worshipping together. There is energy and a witness to being who we claim to be.

Over the past few weeks, we have been responding to your concerns about things like sound and service tweaks. The sound issue has been addressed and more is to come.

In the weeks ahead, we will continue to ask for your service feedback and try to adjust accordingly. In the meantime, thank you for your patience, support and input. It is very much appreciated.

The Worship Committee: Matthew Bassett, Jim Hugessen, Pat, Bob Mosher, Wendy, Deane Zeeman

**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 came and made some changes and our own team made some adjustments.

Folks in the chancel can now hear what is happening in the church and there is much less feedback.

**Greeting:** There will be a greeter refresher shortly.

**Gathering Rite:** On regular Sundays, the celebrant and crucifer go to the back of the church. The singers take their seats. Either Wendy (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>) or celebrant (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>) invite folks into a brief time of silence (15 – 30 seconds). Then we join in the gathering song. The celebrant welcomes people from the back of the church and asks folks to stand for the opening hymn / song. The crucifer and celebrant process from the back. The singers join the procession on high feasts. **We do not process in Lent.**

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

**Liturgical Music:** In response to a request for more service music: On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays, we sing the Lord's Prayer - a new to us all version; on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays we sing the Sanctus: setting #735 CP.

**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:** Keeping in mind that not everyone wants to be touched / hugged and that needs to be Respected, we will try to land somewhere between a holy hug about and minimal exchanges, 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:** People still have a choice as to which they use (except the chancel singers).

**Respect for Sacred Space:** 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 are not disappearing, a third group is emerging. All are now referred to as the St. Paul musicians.

**Robes:** The singers decide when and if they wear gowns. We are honouring their decision.

**Growing Pains and Fine Tuning:** It was pointed out several times 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. At the end of the day, we know that we are 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.