

What is Worship?

Worship frames our relationship to and with God. We live, we breathe, we worship – all is done in the context of God's abiding love for us.

When we gather for worship each Sunday and on special occasions we give communal expression to our love for God & neighbours through liturgy, ritual, sacrament, music and prayer. We listen for God's word to us and respond to the challenges offered. We celebrate God's love for us and are enriched by the lives we share. We are drawn into a deeper awareness of the presence of God.

These five features of worship (taken from the Iona community⁽¹⁾) help us to plan and express the fullness of our life in God.

- **Incarnational** – 'At (the heart of worship) is the belief that God in Jesus Christ became a human being like us to let us know that God loves us, forgives us, makes us whole, desires to give us life in all its fullness. Therefore . . . there is no part of life that is beyond the reach of our faith.'
- **Historical** – '(Worship) draws on the experience and creativity of our mothers and fathers in the faith'. We draw on the experiences of those who have gone before us in our traditions and also from our own particular community. Our historical basis reminds us that we are part of a world wide church.
- **Ecumenical** – 'We are constantly receiving gifts from the various traditions represented in our membership. This challenges us to be open, honest and creative which can be a constant struggle.
- **Inclusive** – 'God welcomes everyone who seeks to worship in spirit and in truth'. Therefore we are attentive to our use of language - we seek to ensure that people are not excluded due to gender, race or culture. 'Liturgy is the work of the people' and therefore people need to have access to all aspects of worship.
- **Creaturely** – 'We are God's creation and we want to respond with our whole selves, our senses as well as our intellects. In movement and stillness, through touch and sight and sound, through smell and taste, we are gifted with many ways to pray.'

Characteristics of worship at Brunswick UC

We honour these features of worship in our community in the following ways:

- We value community – the opportunity to gather together with the common purpose of praising and giving thanks to God.
- We value leadership – looking to our ordained Minister particularly in the areas of preaching & teaching and in the celebration of the sacraments.
- We value lay participation – the opportunity for people to offer their gifts in a wide variety of ways.
- We value the spoken Word – we want to hear what God has to say to us now about how we live and share the gospel.
- We value our music – the beauty and shape it gives to our worship of God, and the way it encourages participation by all who are gathered.
- We value prayer – time to give praise and to confess, to respond to God's love and forgiveness. We instinctively hold fast to the importance of sharing something of ourselves and our concerns, and offering or asking for prayer in this response to God's Word in our lives.
- We value the gift of children & their particular wisdom – one of our ongoing challenges is how best to offer worship that is truly inclusive of all ages.
- We value being open and welcoming, recognising that people come with different abilities - we are strongly committed to practices and language that are inclusive of people's gender, sexuality, life experiences and traditions.

(1) Worship in the Iona Community, Ed. Kathy Galloway et al.