

Guidelines for Liturgists

Introduction

The worship of God is at the heart of the Christian faith and Sunday morning worship is the main gathering of our community at Brunswick Uniting Church.

You are encouraged to read the document 'What is worship' which gives both a broad definition of worship and how we offer and experience worship. <http://brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Worship-Statement-17.pdf>

Leading Worship

In leading worship we encourage you to think of your task as one of creating "sacred space" for God and the gathered community to meet. This is quite a different task to, for example, being an MC at a function. Liturgists create the shape and flow of worship, guiding the congregation through the various stages of worship. This is done with words, music and gesture.

The creation of sacred space is assisted by your manner as you lead people in worship. Aim to lead the community with confident poise. Give thought beforehand to things such as: the pace and timing of worship, how you stand at the lectern and microphone, making eye contact with people, the ease of your movement. Be aware of the transitions between songs, words and movements – each moment should flow seamlessly into the next.

In guiding the flow of worship it is important to keep our guidance simple and unobtrusive. It is not necessary to announce each segment of the service: give the various participants an order of worship so they know when they need to be ready, a simple glance or nod will be all that is needed to allow worship to flow seamlessly. If you need to give an instruction write it down to avoid repeating yourself.

Please be aware that children will experience the worship space in sensate ways. It is helpful to ask yourself what will children be seeing/touching/smelling/tasting/hearing. As adults we have a heavy reliance on spoken word. Let's attend to the other senses as well. And let's not only ask what will children will do while the sermon is being given – but what are the many invitations implicit in the liturgy that could involve/invite their participation.

Spoken invitations can be made more tangible by going to the place the activity is happening in and showing children something of what will happen there.

Be yourself, bring your love of God, your joy in the offering of worship, your creativity and personal style to your leading of worship.

Resources

- A complete listing of music books and liturgical resources is available on the website: <http://brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Publications.pdf>. These resources can be found in the Tower Room library.
- Many other online resources can be found at <http://www.textweek.com>
- Please feel free to use these resources or to write your own material.

Order of Service

This is not fixed or static, however, the following is an example of a standard order of service

The Gathering	The Response to the Word
Call to worship	Reflective music
Hymn/Song of Praise	Hymn/Song
Prayer of Adoration and Confession	Offering
Declaration of Forgiveness	Prayers of the People
Service of the Word	(Holy Communion - 1 st Sunday)
Bible Reading	Sending Out
Children's Time	Notices
Children's song	Hymn/Song
<i>(Children then leave for Sunday School)</i>	Words of Mission/Sending Forth
Bible Reading	
Sermon	

Checklist for Liturgists

We hope you find this list of 'things to do' & 'things to think about' helpful. After the checklist there are a number of sections which address specific aspects of worship. Tasks to assist with setting up the worship space are provided on the last page.

1. We use Dropbox to facilitate collaboration with preparation of the liturgy. As liturgist you will have access to the BUC Liturgy Dropbox. A folder is created for each Sunday. The folder will contain the liturgy as a work in progress and final product for Sunday worship, song words and/or music and any other material related to the order of service.
2. If you cannot keep your rostered Sunday please arrange a swap with another person on the roster and let the minister/preacher know as soon as possible.
3. Contact the preacher at least one week prior to your rostered Sunday to arrange a time to meet and plan the service.
4. During the week pray about your preparation.
5. Read the Bible readings for your rostered Sunday. The Lectionary is printed in The Olive Branch or at <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu>
6. As soon as possible after the planning meeting contact the music co-ordinator on the roster with the songs that have been chosen. You may also choose to consult with the music co-ordinator for song suggestions before the meeting.
7. Contact the Bible reader and tell them which ones you want read. You let the reader know that we use the NRSV, as this is the version that the preachers use to prepare
8. Contact the person rostered for Prayers of the People to inform them of the theme for the day and any special requirements. Ask them if they have read the current Guidelines for Leaders of Prayers of Intercession. Let them know if you have any particular suggestions for responses during the prayers.
9. Worship leaders need to arrive at least half an hour early. There are guidelines to assist you with setting up the space, they are located in a blue folder in the cupboard in the Gathering Space. You are invited to join with the minister and others involved in leading worship to pray in the Tower Room and prepare the space and materials as well as preparing yourself for your role as liturgist. After worship remember to pack away anything you have used and leave the church tidy.
10. Please aim for worship to run for an hour and please start on time. If you think that worship is going to be longer than this (or if something unexpected happens) please send someone out to let the Sunday Morning Program Leaders know as their time with the children is carefully structured.
11. If a service is going to be longer (see notes) you might like to consider combining the offering with a congregational song.
12. Email saide.cameron@bigpond.com by Thursday evening to confirm that the liturgy is complete and available in Dropbox.

Notes

1. During the major liturgical festivals the worship committee will plan an overarching theme or structure for the series of service. You will be provided with detailed notes for the series and Sunday that you are rostered.
2. On Communion Sundays it is reasonable for worship to run for longer but again be aware of the timing as children and their parents can become anxious about 'how long worship is'. Aim for an hour and 10 minutes.
3. There are often also other special occasions (baptisms, confirmations, farewells, blessings, commissionings, welcomes), which may extend the length of the service. You will need to discuss where in the service these occasions will fit within the flow of the liturgy.

Being an Inclusive Community

Be aware of the power of words; they shape our world and convey meaning. Therefore language that shapes sacred space for the worship of the Triune God will not include words that are racist, sexist, derogatory or exclusive in any other way. The use of mainly male language for God is an obvious example and it is worth considering being intentional about the use of feminine imagery or language when referring to God during your liturgy. There are rich and diverse images of God in our tradition that can be drawn upon. Please make sure that the language used for the people of God is inclusive of all, and that a variety (though not a plethora) of images of God are used during the service.

The document 'Meditation on 100+ Names for the Divine' is an excellent resource to use when preparing prayers and thinking about images of God – but don't feel you have to use all of them. Be aware that less is more, risk being simple rather than overly literary. *Note this is currently being reviewed.*

Music and Songs

Music shapes the flow of our worship and enhances the sacred space. We aim to encompass a breadth of musical styles, while allowing the congregation to participate fully.

Our tradition is to begin worship with praise, and so aim to choose a well-known upbeat song or hymn of praise. For the song after the Children's Time, choose one that is particularly accessible to them. The flow continues through worship with a response song after the sermon and a final song which may recapture the theme or be a song of praise, response or commission. There are other creative ways to use songs in worship - as introits, prayers or responses in prayers, benedictions.

Natalie's website Singing from the Lectionary: <http://lectionarysong.blogspot.com.au/> is an amazing resource providing lectionary based song suggestions. Songs suitable for kids are highlighted.

We aim to balance well-known songs with new material. You can check out how often a song has been used by accessing the BUC music spread sheet in the Liturgy Dropbox folder.

Please try to ensure that the language used for God in congregational songs represents the broadness of God's nature. Choose fully inclusive language wherever possible or make changes to the lyrics if appropriate.

Musicians usually choose the music for a reflective time after the sermon and during offering; we have a very strong preference for this music to be instrumental. Let the music co-ordinator for the Sunday know what the focus or theme will be - the more information they have the easier it is to choose; you might also like to make suggestions.

Musical resources are on the shelf marked "Worship Resources" on the shelves in the Tower Room and you are welcome to look through them to become familiar with the range of songs within them. Folders of photocopied music are also kept on these shelves.

Declaration of Forgiveness

This declaration concludes the Prayers of Adoration & Confession. For some of us it can be challenging to find the 'right' words for this short but vital part of the liturgy.

Avoid the phrase "And so I declare your sins are forgiven" so that there is no confusion that it is Christ / God who offers forgiveness, not the liturgist. Some people also find the formula "your sins are forgiven" difficult as they feel a metaphorical finger is being pointed at them from the lectern, so it is important when using that frame of words to make it clear that this phrase is a quotation. We've provided some simple, inclusive suggestions in the next section; they are not meant to be prescriptive. The format of a declaration followed by "Thanks be to God" is mostly used. Be as creative as you wish if you are more gifted with words.

Examples for the Declaration of Forgiveness

This is the best of all:

when we are empty, God fills us;
when we are disheartened, God is compassionate;
when we are wounded, God brings healing;
when we confess our failure to love, God forgives.
In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ,
our sin is forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

Sisters and Brothers, believe the good news of the Gospel.
In (Jesus) Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

Friends, believe the Good News that comes from God: In
(Jesus) Christ we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

Hear the good news: we are loved, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

Hear the words of Christ "Your sin is forgiven"
Thanks be to God!

In the name of Christ I declare that 'Your sin is forgiven'
Thanks be to God. Amen

Friends, remember the good news of the gospel:
our sin is forgiven! **Thanks be to God**

Hear and believe the good news: God is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. God reaches out to us again and again, that we may turn away from what is destructive and turn toward what is life-giving. God reaches out to us with forgiveness, assuring us that we are beloved children of God, and equipping us to serve God and our neighbour in the world. God forgives us, encourages us, and frees us to love others. **Thanks be to God**

(Ann J Deibert)

The good news is this: We are loved, accepted and forgiven; we are welcomed home again and again. Receive this good news and live in peace. We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

(Ann J Deibert)

Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. **Amen.**

Let us rejoice as we hear and respond to Christ's words of grace to us 'Your sin is forgiven'

Thanks be to God.

Children in Worship

One of the ways we express the inclusiveness of our life as a Christian community is to recognise children as an integral part of the congregation. Our children are usually present for the first part of the worship service (about 20 minutes).

Work towards engaging the children in the first part of the service through language, visuals, movement, response, repetition and music.

The first Sunday of the month is an All Age Worship service coinciding with the celebration of Holy Communion. Theme based activities are provided in the Gathering Space for the Primary and Pre-school aged children.

Children's Time is usually led by the minister/preacher, liturgist or some other invited person. It is the central teaching time for the children. Guidelines for leading Children's Time are available separately.

When a special event is included in worship, (e.g. Baptism, Confirmation, Welcoming Ceremony, Commissioning) avoid replacing Children's Time with these events. Try and find ways to creatively 'shorten' all elements of the order of service in order to ensure that the children (& everyone who enjoys their time) still have the opportunity to receive this form of engagement.

Offering

When announcing the **offering** be mindful of the role this has in a Christian liturgy (ie making an offering of gratitude in response to all God has done for us. We are not "taking up a collection".)

Use words and a manner that are confident and invite people to joyfully respond! The tradition of standing up as the offering is brought forward is symbolic of the offering of ourselves.

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. The elements are usually brought forward with the offering on that Sunday.

Notices

During the service there is time for **notices**, usually before the final song. Please invite people to come forward, wait at the front and offer any notices. Invite people to say their name & offer their notice in a sentence or two. Remember to announce Morning Tea and its location at this time. If you forget please announce it before the Benediction.

Holy Communion

The current practices for **distributing communion** include the congregation coming forward in groups and gathering in circles around the table or the whole congregation standing in one large circle around the worship space.

- Ray & Saide Cameron make the bread and bring the juice. The elements are prepared by the serving Elders.
- Our minister and the liturgist serve together with two Elders, there may be variations to this at times.
- The servers collect the elements from the rear of the church during the offering and bring them forward with the offering. The minister will receive the elements and place on the table.
- Two children are invited to collect the glasses during the distribution. The children are chosen during the All Age Activities. One of the servers is designated to gather and then stand with the children.
- Servers and the children are invited to stand with the minister for the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving.
- Detailed Guidelines for the Minister, Serving & Setting Up are available, please have a look at them.