

About Our Worship

Worship is the highest priority of a Christian, and we take the worship of our triune God seriously at Redeemer. Because our liturgy (pattern or order of worship) stands somewhat outside the mainstream of the modern American church, meaning some visitors will find our practice unfamiliar, we thought it would be helpful to share a bit about how we plan services and why.

God's glory is the ultimate end (or purpose) of all He does, and it ought to be the ultimate end of all that we do ([Ezekiel 36:22-23](#), [Isaiah 48:11](#), [John 17](#), [1 Corinthians 10:31](#)). Without doubt, **the glory of God is the central matter in His worship**. The Ten Commandments alone ([Exodus 20](#)) illustrate that at the heart of God's desire for His people is an understanding of *whom* they ought to worship and precisely *how* they ought to go about it. Improper worship has been illustrated throughout the Scriptures so that we would understand how seriously God views the matter ([Leviticus 10](#), [Numbers 15](#), [1 Chronicles 13](#), [Acts 5](#), [1 Corinthians 11](#)). In addition, God has told us in His word that it is possible to worship Him in vain ([Isaiah 29:13](#), quoted by Jesus with direct reference to His audience in [Matthew 15:9](#)). In other words, *sincerity is not enough* in the sight of God. True worship is offered “in spirit *and in truth*” ([John 4](#), [Romans 10:2](#)).

Keeping these matters in mind, we strive to stick very close to the Scriptures as we plan services, doing our best to allow the gospel itself to shape its container. Generally speaking, our Sunday morning services follow the pattern of the progress of the gospel in the soul:

God's Initiating Call (Call to Worship from the Scriptures) **Adoration of God's Character and Ways** (Prayer and Song or Psalm) **Confession of Our Sin Assurance of Grace and Thanksgiving** (Scripture Reading and Song) **Prayer for Assistance and Illumination of our Understanding Receiving of the Word of God** (Sermon, Catechism) **Exhorting One Another to Obedience** (Song or Psalm) **Benediction** (Blessing)

This is in some ways a slightly expanded version of Isaiah's recorded encounter with God ([Isaiah 6](#)), and it is in keeping with the outline of the liturgies of the historic Christian church. Our services are deliberately organized around the pattern of the gospel rather than successful entertainment models. We believe that corporate worship ought to be joyful ([Psalm 103](#)) while being conducted with “reverence and awe” ([Hebrews 12:28-29](#)).

Sunday morning at Redeemer is *not* dull (far from it!); from week to week, we walk through the experience of the gospel: celebrating the character of God and His providential work in His creation, mourning our sin and disobedience, recalling and renewing our hope in the grace that came through the atoning death of Jesus Christ, seeking His intervention in our lives and His Spirit's quickening of our minds, hearing and growing in His word, and encouraging one another toward the good works prepared in advance for us to do.

We sing texts written in the 4th century AD and texts written this year. We likewise use music both ancient and modern. **Our concern is not the embrace of a single style or the appeasing of a target demographic;** our view is that the whole body of Christ, all ages and backgrounds, should (as a part of growing to maturity) learn to compromise on stylistic matters for the sake of others in the body, and that none of us has license to abandon the artistic heritage left to us by centuries of faithful witnesses. Our primary concerns in the use of music are that the songs be biblically sound, theologically driven and musically excellent. After all, the explicit purpose for worshipful singing given us in the New Testament is that the word of Christ might “dwell in [us] richly” ([Colossians 3:16](#)). Our thoughtful meditation on the *text* as we sing ought to drive us to delight in truths about the character of God, the person and work of Christ, and the fellowship of the Spirit. Though clearly important, music is not the focal element of the service at Redeemer. **Our focus, in song, in reading, in hearing, is always the Word.**

We believe God has clearly communicated that the way He saves and grows sinners is through the proclamation (and hearing) of His word ([Romans 10](#), [Galatians 3](#)). Though we recognize that God is certainly capable of using any means He desires to accomplish His purposes, *He has given us no promise to save or sanctify through any other means.* Because He has promised to work in our hearts through “hearing with faith,” and not another way, the word is the center of corporate worship at Redeemer. We believe that it is clear in the Scriptures that as His word is magnified on the earth, God receives the glory, and we are changed into the image of Christ by beholding Him there ([2 Corinthians 3](#)). God breathes life into the dead through His word – the “foolishness of preaching” ([Ezekiel 37](#), [1 Corinthians 1](#)) – so that, as lives are changed, all glory will go to Him rather than to methods, gimmicks, or people.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper, remembering His death until He comes, on the first Sunday of every month.

Though in many of these matters we do not stand in the mainstream of the modern American church, we *do* stand in the stream of the historic Christian faith, in the company of witnesses such as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, the Westminster Assembly, and the founders of the Southern Baptist denomination. We believe that by holding to this course we will promote the gospel and the glory of God in our community, ensure our growth in the grace and knowledge of Christ, see the salvation of the lost, and encourage the exaltation of God in all things. And when God is glorified in us, we find our highest happiness and satisfaction in Him.

For further study, we recommend:

[A Better Way](#) (Michael Horton) [Christ-Centered Worship](#) (Bryan Chapell) [Worship By the Book](#) (ed. D.A. Carson) [Worship and Music Today](#) (free PDF from Terry Johnson - Not Available anymore)