



CELEBRATING the past **WELCOMING** the future

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Worship at the Center of our Lives

Newport's five pastors each share their vision for worship and describe the worship traditions that began during their years at Newport.

Pastor David Meekhof • 1959-69

The worship of God was the primary purpose for the establishment of Newport Presbyterian Church. From the beginning, worshipping God was central in all our planning, activities, and dreams for the future of the church.

Our early services of worship were in the multi-purpose room of Sunset Elementary School. Our principal liturgical symbol above a home-made pulpit was the basketball hoop!

Worship was guided by the *Directory of Worship of the Presbyterian Church (USA)*. We pretty much followed the order of worship from the *Book of Common Worship*, with emphasis upon the events of the Christian Year, although I did not follow the lectionary.

While I took preparation of the sermon seriously, ours was a service of worship and not a preaching service. The response of the people - in prayer and singing, in listening to the Word, in participating in the sacraments, and in leadership - was the focus of the service.

When it came time to plan for a church building, our worship of God again became the controlling principle. We built the sanctuary first, when many were recommending starting with a multi-purpose room. The sanctuary is visually central to the whole building. We saw ourselves as a community gathered around the Communion table.

(I proposed a church in the round - but did not win that argument.)

With the arrival of Harriet Boorkman and Ruth Sweet, both experienced and knowledgeable in church liturgy and music, the vital role of the choir became important to our worship together.

Pastor David Yeaworth • 1970-81

Two identical services were held at 9:30 and 11:00 with the Sanctuary Choir singing at both. The intent of worship was to hear God's word speaking to us through scripture, music and sermon and for us to respond with song, prayer and offering. (see Isaiah 6)

In the late sixties and early seventies, many new worship materials became available in response to changes inspired by Vatican II. One popular source of worship ideas and contemporary hymns was Pastor Richard Avery and his choir director Don Marsh of First Presbyterian Church in Port Jervis NY. Our music director, Virgil Griep, incorporated many of these hymns into worship. During that time, Bev Roth inaugurated the Handbell Choir.

Another change was the increased use of Liturgical art. In addition to existing banners that hung over the Communion Table, several members created new banners for special Sundays to hang from the beams over the nave. Banners were also created for a new worship service that honored the *Book of Confessions*.

I did not preach from the lectionary, but followed the liturgical year. The bulletin was mimeographed in different colored ink to acknowledge each liturgical season.

At Thanksgiving we began the tradition of the five kernels of corn.

During Lent and Advent, we conducted evening services. On Advent Sundays, youth lit candles in the hanging Advent Wreath and we had a service of Nine Lessons and Carols with Lay readers. Over 400 people worshipped at each of three Christmas eve candlelight services.

For several years, many families wrote devotionals for Lenten and Advent Booklets to link our corporate worship with personal and family devotion.

During the summers, a multi-generational hike to Sheep Lake in the Cascades concluded with an outdoor worship service.

I am grateful for the strong foundation of worship leadership that was set by David Meekhof and the other leaders of Newport at that time

Pastor Dennis Hughes • 1982-1990

With a minor in Liturgical Studies from Notre Dame, I finished my dissertation and graduated when I was at Newport. In the 1980s, I was connected with the General Assembly's *Joint Office on Worship*. Newport was a test site for new liturgical materials which, in 1993, were incorporated into the *Book of Common Worship*.

During my time, we still had two identical services. I followed the Lectionary and Lay readers read Scripture.

Worship was enhanced with a greater selection of prayers available for Holy Communion (from two to about three dozen) and more litanies and call-and-response prayers. I also encouraged the use of the *Daily Prayer*, which recaptured an ancient Biblical and traditional practice.

We increased the frequency of celebrating Holy Communion to once a month, even more frequently during Advent and Easter, and also added “high holy days.”

We celebrated the Triduum, the three days of Easter: Good Friday, Holy Saturday and introduced an Easter Vigil from 11 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. (and then did a sunrise service at 6:30!). The Confirmation Class led the Vigil which included ten readings from Salvation History. At midnight, we changed the colors of the liturgical banners and stoles and sang *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*. This was followed by Baptism and Communion.

We used the very rich new service for Baptism which emphasized a more generous use of water, included a prayer of Thanksgiving for water, and greater participation by the congregation.

The decade of the 80s was unquestionably the most exciting era of worship renewal for Presbyterians since the Reformation, building upon the monumental reforms of Vatican II, and paralleling developments in almost every Christian denomination. It was a great time to be pastor at Newport, with talented and creative partners in worship renovation and leadership.

Pastor Gary Schwab • 1992-2002

In 1993 the new *Book of Common Worship* was published and I attended an introductory workshop soon after.

Much of the liturgy (order of worship, prayers, sacraments of Baptism and Communion) were drawn from that resource in my years at Newport. I have been a lectionary preacher since seminary; the majority of my preaching focused on the Gospel text, though I also preached from the OT or Epistle lessons. In most of my time at Newport we had an Associate Pastor. Peter Crouch was the first, followed by Brad Buff as an Intern, and then Heidi Calhoun. The Associates preached one Sunday a month. Lay readers were involved, usually reading either the OT or the Epistle.

Jay Wilkey arrived in my time and he introduced us to use of the Psalm of the day; he would often compose the psalms for congregational singing and was the cantor.

My interest in the liturgy was heightened during my years in large part because of our relationship with St. Clement’s Episcopal. Fr. Ralph Carskadden is a marvelous liturgist; we became good friends and I learned much from him regarding liturgy — especially the importance of seeing the sermon as just one piece, and not necessarily the most important piece of the liturgy.

The arrangement of the sanctuary, unlike our marvelous remodel, was fixed. Neither the pulpit, nor the font or table were moveable.

We wrestled mightily in those days with the Sunday schedule. We did do an early service in the chapel. It was a small community but quite faithful.

Pastor Jim Patten • 2004-present

I was called to Newport to do several things, one of which was to help create a shorter (50 minutes), informal worship service with more contemporary music and more innovative liturgy. We decided

a second service, to be successful, needed to have as much musical staff support as the traditional service. So we hired a part-time music director, Rhonda Juliano, and pianist, Lori Surrency, to support that service. We have since tried to slowly blend the two services so they would eventually have some of both styles in each service.

The remodelling of the sanctuary moving from pews to chairs, new sound system and screen have given us much more flexibility in seating arrangements and bulletin-free worship. The new pulpit, table and font (built by John Grove) have given us the ability to move the liturgical furniture into different configurations. The new table replaces the old table which was more an altar. The font is larger and emphasizes the importance of Baptism as the entry sacrament into the community.

New Services: Holy Humor Sunday following Easter, Taize services for our Lenten Academy during Lent.

Special events: Joint worship service with the Muslim community in Kirkland and its President, Jawad Khaki.

We have continued to encourage Lay participation in worship leadership which includes children reading scripture, singing, and assisting in Communion. The lectionary is the focus for scripture each Sunday.

