

Notes for Worship Planners @ 930

Energy for worship planning is waning a bit, as evidenced by difficulties filing the roster.

The fact of lay worship teams involved in worship planning and leading at Pilgrim is a gift we don't want to lose:

- it helps us live out our value and commitment to diversity within unity
- it gives expression to the UCA's theology of the priesthood of all believers
- it puts us in good company with congregations around the world that offer space for the Spirit to move within and amongst the people rather than investing it solely in a hierarchical structure represented by privileged leaders

...in other words, it's a faith and justice thing

The goal for this meeting was to re-energise ourselves for worship planning and leadership.

We first identified some thoughts about:

What take energy away

- feeling like we have to make it all up from scratch every time
- feeling alone and unsupported
- feeling like there is too much to consider and do in order to create a worship experience
- feeling like there is no room to create something fresh
- feeling that worship planning and leading is a duty rather than a joy

and

What gives or recovers energy

- doing the work in stages
- working within constraints
- working creatively within the constraints
- working beyond the constraints

Then we embarked on a process to help minimise what takes energy away and maximise what recovers energy.

Working in stages:

This workshop was about stage one of worship planning:

- a. gathering initial insights and questions to explore
- b. brainstorming ideas based on first impressions

(see weekly notes to follow)

Working within constraints

We acknowledged that worship at 9.30 operates within the following constraints:

Time:

from 9.30 to 10.25 (or 10.20 if using technology that needs to be put away)

Flow:

gathering, taking something in, engaging with it, responding to it, going away with it

Content:

the following items can be assumed as per the patterns and traditions of 9.30:

- welcome
- acknowledgement of land
- songs sung by the community (usually 3-4)
- prayers of who we are
- offering
- communion on 3rd Sunday
- passing the peace
- using the lectionary or other biblical resource
- witness/reflections
- prayers for others

Values:

participation
personal engagement
connecting to each other
relating to God (however known)
seeing from new perspectives
inclusivity: language, accessibility (including being able to hear), 21st century ideas & terms
diversity
positive energy, having fun
a metaphor: the congregation is not a set of empty vessels waiting to be filled but full glasses waiting to be tapped so that the tones of their inherent wisdom ring out
Structure:
pews
technology - microphones, AV, etc.

Working creatively within the constraints

the content can be creative & the delivery can be creative

Working beyond the constraints

Connecting weeks by theme in form and/or content.

Transcending the 50-55 minutes of gathering with content that extends into people's lives.

These notes were taken from the worship planning session for 9.30 worship planners on the 4 August 2013
Rev Jana Norman led the Planning Session and recorded the responses.