

Zion Congregational Meeting, “Zion Worships Together,” Oct. 15, 2023: Comments

These are comments on the four questions asked. The participants formed four groups which are designated A, B, C, and D below.

The Worship Committee welcomes any questions or comments. The members are Jan Peterson, Margaret Fast, Margaret Hall, and Myha Tucker.

1. Do our current worship practices fulfill the purpose as expressed by the Worship Task Force: “to discern and uphold what unifies Zion’s worship without imposing uniformity or losing diversity of expression”?

A. Some are quite happy with the uniformity in our current system of 4 styles.

—not a relevant issue anymore. We come to church for a “spiritual break,” so the rigid structure from the main Lutheran traditions is perfectly fine.

—we are not using the diversity seen in evangelical/pentecostal churches, but that is fine. It’s OK to church-shop.

—People who wanted the contemporary style have left Zion. As the membership of organized (mainline?) churches gets older, no desire for contemporary worship.

—question about performance standards in contemporary worship, though the motivation is to lead worship, not perform.

B. Yes, the services do generally fulfill the purpose. Question: do our worship styles suit the people coming to the services who haven’t got a liturgical background?

—Going from 2 services to 1 service has perhaps forced us to offer a variety of worship styles.

C. Generally yes, they do.

—We appreciate: the music, both traditional and contemporary; communion every week; the 4 readings; two styles of service, not four.

—suggestion to involve youth more

—Current practices — not uniformity, or we lose diversity.

—would like to have more contemporary-style songs and to be taught the unfamiliar ones so there would be more participation in the singing.

D. Mix the four styles: don’t stick to the prescribed order of each style.

—Learning new songs: we need the music to do so. So revisit shortening the cross.

—Lyrics of the songs should accord with the scripture (theological meaning).

2. Are you comfortable with the changes in Zion’s worship style from week to week? (Fully liturgical; fully contemporary; blended with liturgical beginning becoming contemporary by the meal; and blended with contemporary beginning becoming liturgical by the meal)?

A. Need for education identified: a simple explanation of what the liturgical forms are and why they are there in the service.

—could have a “word of the day,” ex. “liturgy” or “the Meal,” with a 25-word definition on screen and in the bulletin.

—ex. Pastor Erland Noral gave an explication of Lutheran practice before the start of the service: why do we stand for the Gospel? why are there 4 readings? etc.

—We need to identify the unifying theme through all 4 services, every 6 months. As it stands, there is a confusion of styles.

—We can no longer assume people in the pews have a high level of liturgical awareness, so we need to assume that they don't, and explain everything, from the *basics* up.

—not such a concern these days for which service is being offered the next week, as those people have left.

—People need to understand, and it has to be relatable. They may not be fully comfortable, but we hope they will be open to give and take.

B. Yes, comfortable with all four styles.

—suggestion: highlight when contemporary service is, so may invite people who might be more comfortable with that style, rather than liturgy.

C. Concerned with the quality of sound in the service: always have headphones available and good sound from the pastor's mike, if he is not at the pulpit. Would like to have 6 headphones, always charged.

D. Notes a reduction in the contemporary style. We need a good leader to teach new music and songs.

3. What is it in worship at Zion that equips you for living as a Christian in the community?

A. It depends on the week. The music style may inspire or it may not.

—Wonderful hymns and singing around me, the music of the organ, and the words of the liturgy.

—The blended styles are not uplifting; I am much happier with full liturgical service. I'm never sure I actually got the service: this bothers me. I always leave perplexed.

—3 things: a Bible-based sermon; communion; and religious music led by an inspired Christian music director. Don't take them for granted! All 3 things are needed.

—the presence of the community of the faithful fills the house of God when God's children are there.

B. Being here with people who lift up and support each other. Fellowship and community

—** the message; references to real-life situations

—charges my battery

C. The strength of the community.

—The sermon gives us strength; the lessons.

—We leave Sunday recharged, to serve our neighbours.

—We need Bible or book studies, weekly. This is a challenge: only Naomi Circle does now, and it is monthly. Reinstitute PACE.

D. The sermon: it helps to make us realize what we need to strive to do.

—Communion and the hymns.

4. Each of us has a different reason for coming to worship at Zion. What is your reason for coming?

A. It's my church, my congregation, it's a habit, a part of life.

—It's a way of being a child of God in the house of God.

—I came for a job and stayed here. It's my calling to play the pipe organ here, but if another fine organist were playing it, I would still come to Zion. My gifts are valued and I feel ownership. I also love the liturgy, and it's a part of me.

—People can come to Zion anonymously, and can slip out unnoticed if they wish. Just being left alone is okay—it's refuge, respite. Zion's architecture facilitates this and people accommodate it. This is a place to meet God, not the whole congregation. Privacy and solitude are possible here, as well as community. The organ also facilitates this. You are not singing a solo because the organ is singing inside you. It fills the space with the Spirit or Breath of God.

B. People who support and lift us up, show care and concern. Zion is a *family*.

C. —

D. To love and honour God: the first 3 commandments.

—Communion

—It's part of my lifestyle.

—For the fellowship and community.