



FROM THE PASTOR

“O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker” Ps 95:6

Dear Friends,

Worship is foundational to our life together as a community of faith. That is a statement I think all of us can agree with. The challenge comes when we all try to articulate what meaningful worship is to us.

The challenge has many levels. They include what our worship experience was in our formative years, special moments when a sermon, hymn, or special music touched us, our level of comfort and ease at participation in worship and even the preferred time when we choose to attend worship. Beyond those challenges is generational preferences for what meaningful worship looks and feels like. I have heard it said that today’s typical church service can have up to 5 generations worshipping together in the same space!

Here at FLC we have had two distinct services to try to address some of those differences and preferences. The earlier first service is a traditional Lutheran Service of Holy Communion which we call “Heritage”. The later service we have named “Celebration 2” is led by a praise band, and has a more contemporary and informal order of worship. Since I have been your pastor, I have thoroughly enjoyed presiding and worshipping at both services.

The traditional (Heritage) service evokes the time-tested order of worship that can be traced back to some of the earliest days of the Christian church. So, for me, who was raised in a traditional structured service, it touches me deeply. Here is the familiar hymnody that has blessed Christians over the centuries, especially for our Lutheran part of God’s vineyard where the power of hymns and music are an integral part of the gathered congregation. Here too we have been blessed by our church choir.

The Celebration 2 service picks up with praise songs led by our faithful singers and musicians. The relaxed atmosphere of the service concentrates on the music, the word, and time around the table of the Lord. It really helps those who connect with more contemporary music and culture to hear, worship and respond to God, as God speaks to them. So many of the songs speak of our relationship with God, our desire to draw close to God, and God’s love for us. I find God’s presence in this service, and feel blessed to be part of the worship team.

Since I began as your pastor, I have wondered if the early time of our Heritage service has been a barrier to those who might like to attend this service, or participate in our Fairbanks Lutheran Choir. So, I proposed to Worship and Arts Ministry a slight change in the time of the Heritage Service from 8:30 to 9am, and to move the choir anthem as a sending anthem replacing the sung response after communion on the Sundays the choir sings. I thought the later anthem and service time might encourage more folk to sing in the choir, and perhaps help both our vocal groups to help each other. Council gave their approval on a trial basis for a year to be reviewed after our two-service cycle from September to May in 2018.

I am grateful that our church has both styles of worship, and in consultation with our church music leaders, our Worship and Arts Ministry, and Council, as your pastor, I want to affirm and strengthen both services as part of our life together here at FLC.

Your Brother in Christ,
John

Fairbanks Lutheran Church
1012 Cowles Street
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907-452-3425

Pastor John Van Haneghan



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