
Our Perpetual Obligation

“Gentle Liturgy” - Spiritual

Inclusion of the Differently-abled in

Worship

K. Paul St Germain 2017

Table of Contents

Introduction: “Missing Dance Partners”	1
The Dance Floor: An Exotic of Mosaic and Veneer	1
Autism Spectrum Disorders and the Differently-abled	4
Cognitive Disorders, Alzheimer’s, and The Differently-abled.....	5
Possible Approaches	6
“Gentle Liturgies”	9
Analysis	11
PROJECT THESIS.....	13
Introduction	13
THESIS STATEMENT AND HYPOTHESIS	15
Summary.....	15
The “Gentle Worship” Project	17
In Deep Water.....	17
Background	18
Spiritual Building Blocks: Environment, Liturgy, and Awareness	19
Liturgical Environment	21
Liturgy and Music.....	22
Phase I.....	23
Phase II.....	29
The Unexpected and Uplifting	32
Summary.....	33
Theological – Spiritual Reflection: An Unexpected Grace	34
Introduction	34
PART ONE - The “Differently-abled”, Autism and Other Neurodevelopmental Disorders.....	35
The Differently-abled: Dementia and Cognitive Disorders	37
On Common Ground: The Care-givers	39
From “Outsider” to “Conveyer of Grace”	41

PART TWO - Liturgy and Worship: Holy Time in Holy Places.....	43
Background	44
“Holy” Action, Time, and Place	45
PART THREE - Transformation as Spiritual Movement	49
Conclusion.....	54
Social - Behavioral Reflection: Transforming Community.....	56
Introduction	56
PART ONE - Changing Assumptions.....	57
Inviting Transformation: Four Challenges of Adaptive Change	58
PART TWO - Behavioral Theories – A Third Side	64
PART THREE - Observing an “Identified Patient”	66
PART FOUR - “Reaching Beyond the Expected”	68
Conclusion.....	69
Conclusion: “On with the Dance”	71
Appendix I: “Gentle Worship” Survey.....	77
Introduction	77
Results January to May:	77
Results June to August:	79
Results September to December:	81
Observations and Conclusions	83
Appendix II: “Gentle Worship” Attendance Data.....	84
Introduction	84
Results January to May:	84
Results June to August:	84
Results September* to December:	84
Total Attendance Average:	85
Observations and Conclusions	85
Appendix III: “Gentle Worship” Interviews.....	87
Appendix IV: Document: “Gentle Worship” Order of Service.....	94

Appendix V: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Advent	100
Appendix VI: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Epiphany.....	102
Appendix VII: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Lent	104
Appendix VIII: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Easter.....	106
Appendix IX: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Pentecost	108
Appendix X: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: In Use.....	110

Introduction: “Missing Dance Partners”

One by one, Lord, I see and I love all those whom you have given me to sustain and charm my life. One by one also I number all those who make up that other beloved family which has gradually surrounded me, its unity fashioned out of the most disparate elements, with affinities of the heart, of scientific research and of thought. And again one by one — more vaguely it is true, yet all-inclusively — I call before me the whole vast anonymous army of living humanity; those who surround me and support me though I do not know them; those who company, and those who go; above all, those who in office, laboratory and factory, through their vision of truth or despite their error, truly believe in the progress of earthly reality and who today will take up again their impassioned pursuit of the light.¹

From *Hymn of the Universe* by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

The Dance Floor: An Exotic of Mosaic and Veneer

The last century has seen remarkable change in the composition of worshipping congregations in mainstream Christianity. This evolution has seen dramatic steps towards the inclusion of a wider range of people than before – from increased racial equality beginning with the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950’s, to gender equality with the ordination of women in 1979, and most recently with liturgies for same-sex marriage in 2015. This change in composition has incalculably added richness and a myriad of facets that more nearly reflect the diversity of God’s creation. Yet if we take the elevator (as installed by these preambles invoked by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) to the metaphoric “balcony” of so many Episcopal Churches, there are people missing from the “liturgical dance floor”: namely those who are not able - or have forgotten how to – “dance”. For some it is a metaphor of “mosaic”, true individuality amidst the amazing diversity of a stunningly inclusive word. For others it is a veneer that barely scrapes the surface, but challenges and calls us to delve more deeply into who we truly are.

¹ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), page 1.

Our Baptismal Covenant calls us to be equally respectful of those members of the church who, for whatever reason, may become distanced or separated from the assembled body or find barriers to full inclusion among the faithful. We are asked, “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?” and “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” The response to both is: “I will, with God’s help”.²

Traditionally churches have sought to eliminate physical barriers whenever possible for those with special needs, and to develop ministries for the homebound and elderly who can no longer be in attendance for whatever reason. Yet looking around a congregation on Sunday morning, are there others we do not see? Are there people in society for whom the very nature of what we are doing would be a barrier in itself? Where does our attitude of welcome begin and end for those who are different from what we recognize as familiar and acceptable?

Looking around churches today, it seems we may be missing two very different types of people who could, unusually enough, share special needs that would benefit from an adaptive change to our worship life and forms of pastoral care: those suffering from autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Alzheimer’s disease, and other types of cognitive dementia are often absent. My mother is an example of someone with non-Alzheimer’s dementia – she is sharp and clear but has trouble remembering for more than a few minutes. Is there a way to help those with these diagnoses feel more included in our congregations, and move from being an “outsider” to one embraced as part of the body of Christ?

² *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979), page 305.

Environmental advocate, essayist, and poet, Wendell Berry writes of a “perpetual obligation” that every human being has to be in a caring relationship with creation and our fellow creatures:

Care... rests upon genuine religion. Care allows creatures to escape our explanations into their actual presence and their essential mystery. In taking care of our fellow creatures, we acknowledge that they are not ours; we acknowledge that they belong to an order and a harmony of which we ourselves are parts. To answer to the perpetual crisis of our presence in this abounding and dangerous world, we have only the perpetual obligation of care. ³

This caring relationship becomes intensified as the differently-abled increasingly rely on caregivers for their own physical, psychological, and emotional well-being. An extreme example would be in later term dementia care, where the standard paradigm of care describes a movement into a place where: “all necessary decisions should be agreed upon between professionals and relatives/carers” and the “only valid role is that of ‘patient’”. ⁴ This movement, which can be perceived as a diminishment of humanity will be discussed later, has profound implications for everyone who is part of the world of the differently-abled. In fact, meeting this obligation to care for them may possess its own type of “sanctification” and “liberation”.

As we embrace this obligation to the residents of our planet who may be differently-abled than the composition of the traditional church congregation, we are called to see our worship differently and to extend to them an “invitation to dance.” This image of worship is based on a conversation as to how the very structure of the act of worship may be made more inclusive of

³ Wendell Berry, from “Another Turn of the Crank”, as found in *The Sacred Earth: Writers on Nature and Spirit*, Jason Gardner, ed. (Novato, CA: New World Library, 1998), p. 115.

⁴ John Swinton, *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God*, adapted from Richard Cheston and Michael Bender, “Understanding Dementia: The Man with the worried Eyes” (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999), p.68.

their unique needs and play a nurturing role in their spiritual lives. This is an “invitation” into a relationship of spiritual discovery that will have significant implications corresponding to the depth of each individual’s involvement. As expectations of what liturgical behavior looks like and what a worship environment consists of change, many people will move out of their “comfort zones” and experience the human condition in a greater breadth and depth that reflects God’s grace.

Autism Spectrum Disorders and the Differently-abled

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that one in ten children in the United States have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) tells us that: “ASD is characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts; and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities.⁵ The National Institute of Health reports:

symptoms must be present in the early developmental period (typically recognized in the first two years of life) and cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning.⁶

They go on to say:

⁵ Center for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/features/counting-autism.html, accessed June 18, 2014.

⁶ National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-d/index.shtml#part1, accessed June 18, 2014.

The term “spectrum” refers to the wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels of impairment or disability that children with ASD can have. Some children are mildly impaired by their symptoms, while others are severely disabled.⁷

Those diagnosed with ASD, as well as those who attend worship with autistic children, often have difficulties as these characteristics are usually seen as disruptive to a congregation, and the length of many types of worship experiences are often not conducive to their cognitive abilities. This leads to feelings of exclusion and of being an “outsider”. In most cases, the autistic and their families may choose not to participate in traditional worship and, instead, seek what spiritual nurture they can from accepting support communities and professional care-givers in non-liturgical environments outside of “church”.

The Gentle Worship Project is designed to assure that as “outsiders” are welcomed into a worshipping community they become blessings to most people. However, despite this welcome, it must be recognized that the challenges they face to physically be present are often enormous and sometimes insurmountable. The **Spiritual and Theological Reflection** chapter will look in detail at this concept of blessing, while the Social and Behavioral Reflection chapter will offer some ideas that may help address the issues of inclusion and accessibility, helping move the project from “systemic change” closer to “adaptive change”.

Cognitive Disorders, Alzheimer’s, and The Differently-abled

Dementia is a general term that can be used to describe a number of different diseases. The Alzheimer’s Association defines it as “a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with

⁷ National Institute of Mental Health, nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/index.shtml#part1, accessed June 18, 2014.

daily life".⁸ Of those people suffering from such a significant decline in thinking skills between sixty and eighty percent will be diagnosed as having Alzheimer's disease.⁹

The Association goes on to provide some startling statistics:

One in nine people age 65 and older has Alzheimer's, and nearly one in three ages 85 and older has the disease. One of the greatest mysteries of Alzheimer's disease is why risk rises so dramatically as we grow older.¹⁰

Those suffering from Alzheimer's, as well as those attending worship with a loved one or a caregiver to someone affected by the disease, find barriers and challenges in the environment and structure of worship. These will be looked at in detail in **The Gentle Worship Project** chapter, and include everything from safety and accessibility issues, and environmental agitations (such as loud music). This may require a re-education of many traditional church-goers as to the appropriate behavioral expectations about "church etiquette". For the differently abled and their care-givers, what many of us take for granted on Sunday morning can lead to feelings of unintended exclusion and being an "outsider". They stop attending as the experience has become "overwhelming" to them. If we apply the statistical reference from the Alzheimer's Association to the aging population of our churches it may be an "overwhelming" experience for faith communities as well.

Possible Approaches

There are four possible ways to respond to the worship needs of those who have ASD or

⁸ www.alz.org/what-is-dementia.asp, accessed December 28, 2014.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Alzheimer's Disease: **One** - make changes to the existing Sunday morning worship service that are sensitive to their conditions; **Two** - provide pastoral care and a liturgy inside their own homes; **Three** - create a "webcast" that can be viewed remotely and in the safety and anonymity of their homes; **Four** - create a new service in the church at a different time taking their special needs into consideration.

The first option could negatively impact the existing worship life of the congregation if it meant that, for example, large portions of the service were discontinued or the type of preaching and music changed. Currently some families with ASD or Alzheimer's members choose to try to "adapt" to the liturgy as traditionally presented, but still are challenged and may attend this less frequently than they would like.

Providing liturgy and pastoral care in the home is always part of the response, but that can hardly foster the sense of "inclusion" in community and relationship that John Swinton describes. It may even increase the feeling of being "an outsider" as a "this is what WE do for THEM" dynamic may evolve. A webcast can offer some of the benefits of attending the service but it again holds some of the same challenges to inclusion that "in-home" liturgies and pastoral care do. Both these middle approaches do not model the inclusion into the community of the broader spectrum of creation, and the spiritual gifts we shall see the differently-abled may impart to the wider community (as will be discussed in the chapter on **Theological – Spiritual Reflection: An Unexpected Grace**).

The goal of this project is to undertake the last option: *to create a monthly, "Gentle Liturgy" on a weekday when liturgy does not usually occur at Saint Mark's*. This would effect a substantial

change in the pastoral practice of the parish through crafting a liturgical expression that reflects sensitivity to inclusion of people with special needs or who are differently-abled. It would impact those who have the need, as well as their loved ones and care-givers, who often are more affected by a sense of alienation than those in their charge. Abe Isanon writes: “The spirituality of autism-related conditions is, in essence, a liberatory spirituality, a spirituality that seeks to give meaning not only for the life of the person with autism but also that of the carer”.

11

Both Autism Spectrum disorder and Alzheimer’s disease bring a similar set of behavioral patterns that challenge the typical worship environment. *Social Worker Today* (a web-based periodical for professional care-givers) tells us that the Alzheimer’s Association recommends considering the following:

What objects could cause injury? Identify areas of possible danger. Is it easy to get outside or to other dangerous areas? Focus on adapting rather than teaching: Rather than trying to reteach an elder about safety, identify possible risks and take preventive precautions. Break up activities into simple step-by-step tasks, allowing the individual plenty of time to complete them. Give extra help with tasks that have become particularly difficult... and encourage independence, social interaction, and meaningful activities. ¹²

ASD presents its own unique challenges for space and structure. To quote another commonly consulted website - WebMD - “The parents and the professionals all agree that it takes lots of hard work to help a child with autism get the most out of the classroom experience. It also takes, they say, a good dose of structure and the understanding that every child with an autism

¹¹ Abe Isanon, *Spirituality and the Autism Spectrum: Of Falling Sparrows* (U.K. Athenaeum Press, 2001), preface.

¹² *Social Worker Today*, www.socialworktoday.com/archive/111610p22.shtml, accessed June 18, 2014.

spectrum disorder is unique. That means each child has different symptoms as well as styles of learning. ‘Autism isn’t like diabetes,’ says psychologist Kathleen Platzman. ‘With diabetes, we have two or three things that we absolutely know about every kid who has it. But since it’s not that way with autism, we need an educational model wide enough to take in the whole spectrum.’ That means it’s going to have to be a fairly broad model”.¹³

In other words, as one caregiver commented to me: “If you have met one person with autism then you have met one person with autism”.

“Gentle Liturgies”

The broad model of adapting liturgical space, length, “style”, and expectation to embrace the “different,” referred to here as “gentle liturgy”, has been seen to benefit both those who fall along the ASD and those with other cognitive disorders. Working with pediatric mental health providers, educators, and geriatric specialists, some congregations have begun crafting what is becoming known as a “gentle liturgy” for those challenged by specific special needs, their caregivers and their families.

Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, has been using webcasting technology from their chapel to extend the reach of these services to the most severely challenged, those who may be recovering from a trauma or injury, as well as those physically absent for whatever reason. Reflecting on an Evangelical Lutheran “Gentle Liturgy” held recently in Marion, Ohio:

¹³ *WebMD*, www.webmd.com/brain/autism/features/autism-in-the-classroom, accessed June 29, 2014

The intent is to make worship comfortable and welcoming. Too often, those with disabilities feel out of place in a traditional service, said Molly King, an associate in ministry at the church.¹⁴

Visiting Northwest United Methodist Church in Upper Arlington, Ohio, one sees how components of a current “Gentle Liturgy” include: A congregation tolerant of unconventional and distracting behaviors; a “safe” worship environment, where specialists are trained in keeping the congregation together, exit routes are monitored, and objects that might be damaged or dangerous secured or removed, and a service that is shorter, simpler, and contains a softer musical expression designed not to over excite or encourage flamboyancy. Above all, worshippers can gather in an environment of deliberate acceptance. Jennifer Emberg worshipped at Emmanuel Lutheran’s gentle liturgy with her husband and four children (one of whom is autistic) and said:

It’s very helpful for Matthew because we can do it together as a family. Matthew’s autism is mild, and he sits fairly still, she said. At the same time, it’s nice to know that if her kids act out, “They’re not going to be glared at.”¹⁵

The often repetitive and fixed pattern of Anglican liturgy may make a gentle service in the Episcopal tradition particularly helpful or meaningful when crafted and conducted with the special needs worshippers and their care-givers in mind. Developed patterns and predictable expectations are often comforting and soothing to those who are cognitively challenged. The soothing and affirming nature of “routine” have much in common with ritual behavior – particularly for those for whom what was once a constant is now a variable (i.e., cognitive confidence).

¹⁴ Meredith Heagney, “Church’s ‘Gentle Worship’ Service Aids Those with Special Needs,” Columbus Dispatch, October 23, 2011.

¹⁵ *Ibid*

Analysis

The project will be presented in detail by looking at a series of quantifiable statistics such as attendance, a series of surveys over the course of more than a year, and a number of interviews. These are documented in an extensive appendices section, which also includes materials used in crafting the project.

A chapter on **Theological - Spiritual Reflection: An Unexpected Grace** will look at what it means to be “differently-abled” in the context of this study. Drawing on the work of Gordon Lathrop it will address “holy time spent in holy places” and how the integrity of the liturgy was respected. The last portion of the chapter frame the project as “spiritual movement”, and draw extensively on the work of Henri Nouwen and his work in spiritual direction and as a chaplain to the differently-abled.

The section on **Social and Behavioral Reflection** will discuss how this substantial change in approach, while not yet “adaptive change”, may have within it new directions to move beyond “systemic” or merely a broader way of how we “do” church. From a behavioral perspective, the project will draw on the conflict resolution work of William Ury, offering the model of a changed and more inclusive community as the “third side” to the current options of individual isolation (and non-participation in church) and the side of the status quo (“we have always done it this way...”).¹⁶ This project will result in a disruption of the “homeostasis” of the community for a time. Yet if we apply Friedman’s Family System’s model (based on Minuchin’s *Families and Family Therapy*), we may see the differently-abled as the “identified patient”, with the real

¹⁶ William Ury, *The Third Side: Why We Fight and How We Can Stop It* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000).

change needing to happen within the organism of the worshiping body itself.¹⁷

This project is both liturgical and missional in the life of the church, and seeks to broaden God's kingdom by including those who are challenged by special needs. In return, this offers a celebration of the gifts that diversity brings - including a deepening of our own spirituality and its nearer alignment to the very nature of creation. In many ways it becomes an "embodiment" of St. Paul's analogy for the church in 1 Corinthians:

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. But in fact, God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is there are many parts, but one body.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-14¹⁸

¹⁷Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. (New York: Seabury Books, 1999).

¹⁸ NIV.

PROJECT THESIS

Introduction

Our current period in history has seen increasing diversity in many Episcopal Churches – from progress in gender diversity to elimination of discrimination based on racial or sexual orientation – and has benefited from the profound gifts these “others” have given to our common life. In many ways the inclusion of what was once “other” has become a true blessing as “parts” become part of a respected whole.

During reflection on this process, a series of conversations in my current ministry setting has led us to ask: “who else may be missing?” This has yielded insights which gave rise to the thesis statement and hypothesis which follow. It raises the challenge that the church, those seeking to build God’s Beloved Community, has a “perpetual obligation” as an architect of that Kingdom to do all in its power to seek and serve all of God’s Kingdom.

These conversations opened the opportunity to create a “Gentle Liturgy” which had the potential to reach the often “unseen” demographic of the cognitively disabled, and at the same time exposed the challenges of that attempt - and those that still exist as we hope to go together into what it means to be “beloved of God” and “community”.

From the beginning, the project faced several logistical drawbacks – including limitations imposed by the initial Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) planning group, in particular restricting the project to the church building. The initial plan was to webcast a high quality,

diverse worship experience (with appropriate permissions) and to send facilitation teams out into retirement communities and rehabilitation centers where they would, on a rotating basis, facilitate viewing the webcast and distribute communion (when appropriate) in a common space. It was felt this would greatly facilitate access of the worship experience to a demographic already identified as being physically challenged. It would also encourage the sponsoring church by knowing their “presence” went beyond the walls of the parish, and their participation would be valued on multiple levels.

This initial proposal was seen as too ambitious in scope. As a result, a different approach to inclusive worship was developed and, as chronicled here, yielded a number of insights, blessings, and challenges as this project seeks to be a co-creator of the beloved community.

The following thesis and paper will attempt to address specifically the spirit of Thomas E. Reynolds, theologian at the University of Toronto, who asserts in *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*:

Each of us is disabled to a certainty of extent in varied contexts, and will inevitably become more so as we age. In different ways, some of us are more vulnerable than others, perhaps living with a greater degree of impairments. But we all participate in a shared humanity.¹⁹

What does that mean? How will the church respond? What is our role as participants of The Baptismal Covenant to be?

¹⁹ Thomas E. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Grand Rapids: BrazosPress, 2008), page 118.

THESIS STATEMENT AND HYPOTHESIS

Liturgical practices may be adapted in manners that offer inclusion for those attending who are experiencing cognitive challenges —or the “differently abled”. Such adaptations will create a new worshipping community inclusive of those who are “differently abled”, positively impact those within that community, which includes care-givers, family members and friends, as well as have a positive impact upon the parish as a faithful worshipping body. This will be realized through increased worship attendance by those within the identified demographic, thus making a positive contribution to their spiritual and emotional lives.

Summary

The following project, which is currently ongoing after almost three years, brings recorded data from an intense fourteen-month period to look at the theological, spiritual, and behavioral insights surrounding inclusion of the differently-abled in worship. It includes how the presence of those identified as “other” may not only benefit from inclusion, but bring to the community as a whole. It is uncovering unexpected and profound spiritual gifts – as well as a sense of the broadness and depth of God’s grace amidst humankind.

It also recognizes the difficulties and the on-going challenges such a project presents. With open hearts and minds we begin this unique and reverent journey, again with words from Thomas E. Reynolds, who shares in *Vulnerable Communion*:

Learning to embrace ourselves and others as we are, in our specific weaknesses, releases us from narcissistic self-enclosure and empowers s to risk the openness of

genuine relationship. Only in relationship is human wholeness possible, a wholeness that comes not despite but through disability and vulnerability.²⁰

²⁰ Thomas E. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), page 118.

The “Gentle Worship” Project

In Deep Water

Nancy Eiesland, writing in *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*, offers a critical beginning to our project:

No single story about the relationship between persons with disabilities and the Christian church can express our diverse, complex, and enigmatic connection. This complicated bond underscores the ambiguities of our common life and highlights the tensions in beliefs about trust and suspicion, shame and affirmation, holiness and defilement, sin and grace... Clearly, disability has never been religiously neutral, but shot through with theological significance.²¹

This project is presented in the light of being one community’s attempt to wade into some very deep theological, spiritual, emotional, and liturgical waters. Many people’s toes got wet, and some even made it up to their ankles. Most were affected – some were profoundly touched.

For me, this was one way the church could attempt to embrace people who are often misunderstood and to give them the opportunity to be in a sacred environment in a safe and non-judgmental way. This path began for me many years ago when, as a youth minister, we had an autistic teenager in our youth group. Other teens were trained in how to help Mike, to be Mike’s “handlers” when he served as acolyte, to look out for his safety during “lock-ins”, and be attentive to ways he could be part of the group (e.g., he had a special gift of memorizing maps which could calm him on road trips). I remember one particular trip when our acolytes went to Washington National Cathedral. Mike’s parents so wanted him to acolyte – but they had

²¹ Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), Page 69.

forgotten his alb. I had mine (as I had been invited to chalice) and lent it to him. In the confusion none of the teens were given an order of service bulletin (particularly important for Mike, as that or a map or some other paper object to occupy his hands would keep him calm). When he emerged after the service the alb was covered in blood. Mike had picked the ends of his fingers raw. It was at this moment I realized that the challenges of bringing up Mike needed to be shared by the faith community. The concern some of his fellow teens expressed when they saw what had happened also showed that the community as a body would be blessed by diversity and inclusion.

Background

Preparations for the launch of “Gentle Worship” at Saint Mark’s in Columbus, Ohio, began six months prior to the first service by the formation of a “Gentle Worship Team” (GWT) solicited by the rector and in consultation with both a psychiatric specialist and the Director of the Center for innovation in Pediatric Practice of a local hospital. The team consisted of the Rector, Pastoral Deacon, Director of Music, Parish Organist, Chair of the Altar Guild, Head Usher, I.T. Consultant, Campus Manager, a child and adolescent psychiatrist (with a specialty in the Autism Spectrum), a professor of nursing, an elementary school teacher, a hospital attorney, and a Church of England priest (visiting on a year-long sabbatical) with a specialty in children’s liturgy, hymnody, and evangelism.

Meeting every few weeks, this team asked questions surrounding the structure of the existing worship service such as: “How do “spirituality” and “worship” touch one another?”²² “What could/should be eliminated or modified to benefit our designated demographic?” “How do we

²² More on this question in the **Theological and Spiritual Reflection** chapter.

best communicate with the community of our ‘target congregants’?” The GWT spent considerable time crafting a Gentle Worship Survey instrument that would be used as part of the evaluation of response and impact on the participants and congregation. Once the service was launched, the Gentle Worship Team would go on for the next twelve months to monitor the service, re-evaluate at mid-point, and make recommendations for modifications. All members and regular participants would later be interviewed and given an opportunity to share the “unexpected and uplifting”.

Spiritual Building Blocks: Environment, Liturgy, and Awareness

Members of the Gentle Worship Team began with an affirmation of the basic building blocks of creating meaningful liturgy. They defined these as “Environment” (a physical space intentionally created for worship), “Liturgy” (the actual worship service – what happens, when, and how) and “Awareness” (communicating the intent of the project as part of our shared life as the body of Christ – fostering a place of recognition, respect and trust where people are accepted and nourished spiritually).

One of the earliest observations or “awarenesses” was discovering the “fluidity” of the spiritual life or journey – and the unique roles that people play who may be somewhere other than we are or will ever go. The differently-abled may find themselves (known or unknown to themselves) not only in a place of special need, but in a place where they may offer unique gifts and perspectives to others who are receptive to them. Spiritual Director Henri Nouwen writes of his relationship with Adam, a “profoundly handicapped” young man from the L’Arche Daybreak Community where Nouwen lived:

His transparency would later enable us at Daybreak and beyond to recognize something of God's unconditional love. His wonderful presence and his incredible worth would enlighten us to understand that we, like him, are also precious, graced, and beloved children of God, whether we see ourselves rich or poor, intelligent or disabled, good looking or unattractive. As a spiritual teacher he would lead us ever so gently to those inner spaces we prefer to leave untouched, so that each of us could live out our true vocations. In relationship with him we would discover a deeper, truer identity.²³

An openness to grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in unusual and unexpected places would be essential, even as the team looked at the ancient liturgies of the church, familiar and beloved to many, in newly accessible yet holy ways. More on this "openness to grace" will be found in the interviews conducted at the fourteen-month mark in the project.

The GWT also acknowledged that as we sought to use new technologies to eliminate barriers to communication, they must be integrated in such a way as to function in a supportive, rather than an entertaining capacity. All projected material would be printed as an "order of service" on heavy card-stock. Our challenge as we observed the first several worship services would be to learn and adapt, setting aside preconceptions, and nurturing an acceptance of differences in both need and response to liturgy.

With these considerations in mind, the GWT prayerfully looked at three areas in light of the differently abled: Liturgical Environment, Worship Service, and Project Awareness (for service participants, the congregation in general, and the community as a whole).

²³ Henri Nouwen: *Adam, God's Beloved* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), page 34.

Liturgical Environment

The GWT began with a conversation around the results of the collaborative report on educating autistic children by the Commission on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism, the Division on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education and the National Research Council of the United States.²⁴ This work is seminal in its field, and serves as a tool to help understand the broad nature of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The report offers “a ‘map’ for each question that represents scientific literature from the authors’ respective fields.”²⁵ These include Epidemiology, Family Support, Diagnosis, Screening, Assistive Technology, the Characteristics of Autism, Features of Intervention Progress and Instructional Strategies brought together in comprehensive programs.

From these discussions, the GWT decided to create a worship environment that would be based on the classroom principles for those with ASD. These included safe, simple, quiet, “unprovocative”, modestly changing surroundings.

Saint Mark’s is blessed with an easily accessible Nave and Sanctuary, with long ramps around the altar area. Fifty choir chairs typically form a half circle behind a free- standing altar (which can be used with the celebrant standing on either the east or west side of the table – e.g., facing the Nave or the Choir). With this configuration, it was quickly concluded that the Gentle Worship service would initially be held in the choir space. Making the area “safe” would be our major concern. Please refer to Appendix X for images of this area.

²⁴ Lord, Catherine and James McGee, eds., *Educating Children with Autism*. Washington (DC: National Academy Press, 2001).

²⁵ *Ibid*, preface.

Here our child psychiatrist helped the Altar Guild know what to eliminate (e.g., breakables and easily knocked over items) and we soon found electric candles and very simple liturgical vessels. Ushers were trained to stand near exit doors to assist care-givers in keeping their charges in the worship space.

Our campus manager painted a white foam board to fit along the length of and under the altar (where a frontal would normally be) on which to project words. The background images were done in the liturgical color of the day, and resembled a contemporary (or sometimes traditional silk damask) altar frontal (see Appendixes V to X). The general goal (after safety) was to make the space simple yet elegant, and to evoke images of “church” for those whom such a memory would be meaningful.

Liturgy and Music

Several operating premises tailored the structure of the liturgy based on our designated demographic. Basically, the service needed to be short, simple (but not “dumbed down”), and the “mood” (as created by lighting, choreography, and music) should be soft and quiet. Participatory tools, e.g., the order of service bulletin, should be as inclusive as possible (words both projected and provided in print format). Several discussions were held on the topic “what does liturgy need to be liturgy?” The group concluded that what defines and unifies the liturgy of our community was Eucharist. This service must be Eucharistic. They also determined that music has been a principal characteristic of our parish, and that, as we are blessed with fine musicians and a magnificent organ, music should be a key component of this liturgy as well.

Searching for the essential building blocks of Eucharist we turned to “An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist” found in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.²⁶ The GWT initially settled on the following elements as “essential” for worship for Phase One:

Phase I

Gather in God’s Name (Opening Prayer)

Hear God’s Word (Gospel Lesson read from “The Message”)

Open God’s Word (maximum 2-minute sermon)

Praise God (Anthem)

Pray for God’s Creation

Peace

Celebrate The Holy Eucharist (with distribution to each person’s chair)

Praise God (Hymn 482)

Blessing

The clergy on the GWT worked on the prayers for this service drawing on *A New Zealand Prayer Book*,²⁷ *Enriching Our Worship I: Supplemental Liturgical Materials*,²⁸ and replacing Sunday’s collect with the corresponding collect from *Additional Collects* (The Archbishop’s Council 2004 -

²⁶ *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Publishing, 1979), page 400.

²⁷ The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *A New Zealand Prayer Book* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1989).

²⁸ *Enriching Our Worship I: Supplemental Liturgical Materials* (New York: Church Pension Fund, 1998).

Church of England).²⁹ These were shorter, more direct, yet retained a beautiful “liturgical” feeling. (See Appendix IV) The propers from the previous Sunday were always used, despite the temptation to mirror the parish’s Wednesday noon Healing Service (which celebrates the resource: *Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Lives of the Saints*). We attempted to create consistency and build predictability within the Gentle Worship structure in a way that allowed the service to have its own integrity. It was also decided to take a step into slightly new territory with the gospel lesson and read from Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* instead of the New Revised Standard Version. More on this decision will be presented in the **Theological - Spiritual Reflection: An Unexpected Grace** chapter.

Music was seen as a critical component to the service. Saint Mark’s organist worked with the parent of an autistic child to “register” the pipe organ to be as soft as possible and expressive of a limited (as opposed to its normally expansive) range within each setting. The director of music felt that, in addition to a hymn that would change at each celebration, there should be a “musical anchor” at the end of the service. He chose as a “standard” close for each service:

482 “Lord of All Hopefulness” *Slane*

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,

Whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy,

Be there at our waking, give us we pray,

Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

²⁹ Church House Publishing and The Archbishop’s Council, *Additional Collects*, (Great Britain: 2004).

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,

Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,

Be there at our labors, and give us we pray,

your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,

Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,

Be there at our homing, and give us we pray,

your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,

whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,

Be there at our sleeping, and give us we pray,

your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.³⁰

³⁰ Church Hymnal Corporation, *The Hymnal 1982*, [New York: 1982].

As we shall see in the interviews, this turned out to be a popular and significant choice, with one mother of a child who was differently-abled saying this caused her daughter to “tear-up when it was sung”. (Interview “PJ”, question 3, Appendix II). It was also felt that including the actual “music” in the bulletin, for those who could read music, in addition to the lyrics would be important whenever possible.

By happy coincidence the initial day and hour chosen for the service (Wednesdays at 5:30 pm) coincided with the conclusion of the Children’s Choir rehearsal, and choir parents agreed that the twenty choristers could stay to attend the Gentle Liturgy up until the Peace and sing an anthem. Vested in their red cassocks these talented young people were immediately very well received, making an impression on the differently-abled children, as well as having an impression made upon them as to the nature of inclusivity and the broadness of God’s creation and abundant love. Many of them attend schools where mainstreaming of children with “special needs” (school language) occurs. Now they could see this extend to church, and some were more comfortable in this environment than the adults! (interview “PJ”, question 2b, Appendix III).

Project Awareness

This phase of preparation occurred on several levels. First, the congregation needed to be educated about the possible need for such a ministry. This involved several adult forums on Sunday morning to discuss cognitive disorders, the Autism Spectrum, and how the church might offer a pastorally sensitive liturgical response. Tom Kitwood in his book *Dementia Reconsidered: The Person Comes First* offers that a positive relationship with a person (or personhood itself) is “a standing or status bestowed upon one human being by others, in the context of relationships

and social being”.³¹ Pastor and theologian John Swinton, one of the foremost authorities on cognitive disorders, explains:

According to this understanding, personhood is not based on the presence or absence of particular capacities. It is a gift bestowed upon people by others. Importantly, Kitwood suggests that the kinds of relationships that counter malignant social psychology are personal relationships. If malignant relationships are marked by misunderstanding, devaluation, and mistrust, the personal relationships within Kitwood’s model of personhood are marked by recognition, respect, value, and trust. Malignant relationships move us away from the individual; relational personhood moves us toward them.³²

Thus, awareness and intentionality about treating everyone as a “child of God”, regardless of the degree of differences among us, was foundational in our education of the congregation and served as a corrective to how society can stereotype and diminish the individual.

The second part of awareness involved the community – reaching out through basic communication tools such a website, newsletter, diocesan publications, and letters to faith leaders of all denominations in the area, as well as support groups for the elderly and the families living with someone on the Autism Spectrum. Throughout these communications we hoped to convey an appreciation for what was discussed and learned in the first part of our intentional awareness.

Finally, the congregation’s “on-boarding” included what to expect at such a service, and making sure that this was a liturgy “of the whole congregation” and not about a distinct demographic. For this to become a reality the Gentle Liturgy would have a congregation made up of many

³¹ Tom Kitwood, *Dementia Reconsidered: The Person Comes First* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997), page 8.

³² John Swinton, *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), page 140.

people, the majority of whom would not have cognitive issues. The importance of recognizing and valuing each individual irrespective of difference meant the service was not about “us” doing something for “them”, but rather the body of Christ in all its diversity celebrating God’s gift of life and grace.

A Fourteen Month Journey

The first service was held in Advent of 2014 when, in addition to twenty-five young choristers, a congregation of almost sixty people filled the choir. (see Appendix II). These included several differently-abled individuals, their families and care-givers, with the largest number of people representing the groups in the congregation who were responsible for the service. Many members of the Altar Guild came, as well as many ushers and parents of choristers. Several clergy representing other denominations were present, as well as a few physicians from Nationwide Children’s Hospital.

It soon became clear that there were elements missing in the liturgy – particularly for the older members of the congregation who expected certain “key moments” to occur and were jarred as they did not. With a service time of about twenty-six minutes we felt that these concerns could be addressed. Parents of the Canterbury choir indicated that brevity in the service before The Peace (when choristers left) was appreciated. Objections were raised to the use of *The Message* as being an “unfamiliar” translation that would be appreciated only by those “young people” with ASD who would understand any version. Ironically, this latter view discounted the twenty plus members of the children’s choir! It was also noted that some of the older members of the congregation might appreciate *Old 100th* (“From all that dwell below the skies”) at the offertory – which is a frequent (and frequently denied) request at other services. The following

modifications were made to the liturgy in the second (and current) phase – changes in underline:

Phase II

Gather in God's Name (Opening Prayer)

Hear God's Word (Gospel Lesson read from "The Message")

Open God's Word (maximum 2-minute sermon)

Praise God (Anthem)

Peace

Offertory Sentence

The Doxology: Old 100th

Pray for God's Creation (inserted into the Eucharistic Prayer)

Celebrate The Holy Eucharist (with distribution to each person's chair)

Praise God (Hymn 482)

Blessing

The Dismissal

As the months progressed attendance went down, but never below what was needed to feel as though a worship service was taking place (about twenty in addition to the choir – see Appendix

II). There were a number of times when no one who was differently-abled was present, and this took a toll on the morale of those responsible for organizing the service. These occasions came closest to letting the “look what we’re doing” for “them” mood to creep into the environment. One interviewee (care-giver to Alzheimer’s patient) questioned if it wouldn’t be a better use of time if the clergy “just came to visit in the home more often” (Interview “PS”, question 10, Appendix III). The composition of the congregation and several discussions speculating on the attendance figures will be presented in the Behavioral and Sociological Reflection chapter.

At the six month point the GWT held a series of re-evaluation meetings to address several issues. The first was communication, as we discovered that we needed to make a personal connection with a number of social service agencies and support groups, directors and leaders of these needed a “face” (e.g., a contact person advocating the project at Saint Mark’s) to put on the project and this was arranged. We also created a simple flyer which duplicated much of what we put on the website, after discovering that many families dealing with the financial burden of caring for someone who is differently-abled do not have as much access to the internet as we expected. One parent admitted: “when it’s a prescription for your child not covered by insurance versus buying the next version of Windows for the PC – guess what wins?”

One of the most significant changes made to the service was in its day and time. A number of people expressed a difficulty in making the 5:30 pm service time as they had to drive through rush hour traffic from work to pick up family members to attend the service. Several other people expressed the concern that in many retirement communities the evening meal is at 4:30 or 5:00 – and meals are among the biggest “events” in an older person’s day. After much discussion, the GWT decided to move the service to the first Sunday of the month at 9:30 am. This meant losing the wonderful resource of the children’s choir and replacing them with one of

the parish's staff singers to help lead singing. However, this was felt to be an important but necessary compromise.

Since moving to the new day and time attendance has fluctuated, usually coming in at around half of its original number (about ten - see Appendix II). The number of those the service is most designed to accommodate has declined also, with some saying that the Sunday morning time slot is just too early to get a differently-abled person up and ready. In looking at survey data taken from participants in the service, the majority of people "agree" or "strongly agree" that the service plays a "positive role in their spiritual life". Yet the number has dropped from the first statistical period (18 out of 19 with no "disagreements" in January to May) to the second (7 out of 8 with 4 "disagreements" in September to December).

The majority of people interviewed (8 out of 11) indicated that it was "important" or "very important" that the church make this effort. Those who expressed concern over the lack of attendance (10 out of 12) were mostly in the context of "what more can we do to make the public aware of this service." That was the most recent focus of the GWT. Most interviewees (11 out of 12) said that nothing was "missed from traditional liturgy" (one exception missed a "larger congregation") and one said they were encouraged to "pay closer attention because of the brevity" (Question 5, Appendix III). All interviewees responded that the length of the service was "just right" (27-28 minutes).

As the service passes its one year mark and this project as part of the VTS Project Thesis comes to a close, the GWT and Saint Mark's Vestry will have to discuss whether to continue this as part of our regular service offering.

The Unexpected and Uplifting

Some of the most spiritually moving moments of the service happened when a person who is differently-abled was being “at home” and “not judged” (there is one rule of “Gentle Worship”: THIS IS A NON-SHUSHING SERVICE). For example, one boy with ASD liked to lie down near the altar and felt quite at home on the carpet of the chancel. Several people commented positively on this as an event that moved them spiritually into a place of experiencing God’s acceptance (Interview “PM” – question 7, Interview “SA” – question 3, Appendix III). Guest celebrant and member of the GWT, Ally Barrett, commented:

Life and liturgy expect us to conform to tradition. Seeing non-conformity can be liberating. I wouldn’t lie down in front of the altar but it is nice to know I could. Living without certain inhibitions CAN teach us something. It can allow ME to be ME. I wouldn’t want to throw everything we do at church out the window, but sometimes would like to throw out a thing or two - in a calm, measured, and liturgical way!³³

In addition to surveys handed out at each service, fourteen people were extensively interviewed. One of the questions asked was: “If you could sum-up the experience of Gentle Worship in just three words, what would they be?” Some of the word combinations people used were:

Community, Reflective, God-centered

Moving, Inclusive, Quick

Moving service, well done

Reverent, Intimate, Inclusive

³³ (Interview 1, Appendix III).

Quiet, Contemplative, Thoughtful.

Small, Gentle, Worship

Meaningful, sparse attendance

Lovely, alternative service

Short, Sweet, “Lost” Cause (from the spouse of an Alzheimer’s patient)

Rich, Inclusive, Warm.

Liberating, Warm, Peaceful.

Summary

A “Gentle Liturgy” was successfully crafted and experienced by an average of sixteen people for over a year, with several modifications and increased communication which are ongoing. The vast majority of people ranked this project “important” and as playing a “positive part of their spiritual lives”. This included people who were care-givers to those who were differently-abled and members of the congregation in general who felt God’s love and inclusion “modeled” or expressed for them in a significant way.

Theological – Spiritual Reflection: An Unexpected Grace

Introduction

The following chapter unfolds in three major parts. After an introduction in **Part One** to the differently-abled as defined by the parameters of this study, the unexpected discovery that the most profoundly touched were not the “identified target congregation” but rather the “average parishioner” (more on this in the social and behavioral section), and some insights about how “outsiders” in the church can be the greatest conveyers of grace, we shall move on to the theological and spiritual insights this has yielded.

Questions raised in the **Gentle Worship Project** chapter – namely “what does liturgy need to be liturgy?” and “how do worship and spirituality touch one another?” will be the main focus of **Part Two**. This section will draw on material from liturgist Gordon W. Lathrop discussing “holy time” and “holy actions” in “holy places” – and ponder both their challenges and gifts for the Gentle Worship Team (GWT).

Part Three shall attempt to draw the practical, liturgical, and spiritual strands together by looking at a number of sources by Henri Nouwen, the Dutch priest, professor, and spiritual director who spent the last years of his life as chaplain of the L’Arche Daybreak Community in Toronto, Canada. We shall see how the “spiritual movement” of those on the pilgrim’s way may have been enriched, empowered, and illuminated by the “Gentle Worship” experience.

PART ONE - The “Differently-abled”, Autism and Other Neurodevelopmental Disorders

One of the most increasingly diagnosed developmental disorders among children is autism. In her book, *Autism and Your Church*, Barbara Newman asks us to look at our congregations and know that 1 in 100 people (children and adults) have been identified with Autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The church in this project thesis has 1200 active and inactive members. As a pastor, statistically I should know of 12 parishioners on the spectrum. I am familiar with 3. Barbara Newman, prolific author on issues of disability ministry and inclusion, writes:

In reviewing a variety of church attendance statistics, it is obvious that persons with disabilities are vastly underrepresented in our congregations. I believe that God desires to use us to change these statistics. Jesus gave us numerous examples when he reached out to a person with seizures, to a person who was blind, to those unable to speak or hear, to those who were sick or lonely, and to the friends who walked with them each day. Jesus concluded his parable of the lost sheep with these words: ‘In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones be lost.’ Matt. 18:14) ³⁴

The Center for Disease Control offers that the diagnosis of children in the United States with autism spectrum disorder (ADS) has increased by 119 percent from 2000 to 2007. ³⁵

The National Institute of Mental Health tells us that: ASD is characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts; and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. ³⁶

³⁴ Barbara J. Newman, *Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism spectrum disorder* (Grand Rapids: Friendship Ministries, 2006), page 11.

³⁵ Center for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data>, accessed March 28, 2017.

³⁶ Center for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/features/counting-autism.html, accessed June 18, 2014.

The CDC also reports:

symptoms must be present in the early developmental period (typically recognized in the first two years of life) and cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning.³⁷

They go on to say:

The term “spectrum” refers to the wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels of impairment or disability that children with ASD can have. Some children are mildly impaired by their symptoms, while others are severely disabled.³⁸

Those diagnosed with ASD, as well as those who attend worship with autistic children, often experience difficulties in participating in worship as these characteristics are usually seen as disruptive to a congregation and the length and type of some worship experiences are often not well suited to their unique circumstances.

One example of this was a young man who falls along the Autism Spectrum and can be present in worship with little disruption until an object of focus is moved and not returned exactly to its previous position. This could be the gospel book, the celebrant’s order of service, the organist’s hymnal, or, in one case, the chalice. After elevating the chalice during the Eucharistic Prayer the celebrant did not return it to the exact position on the corporal. Christopher ran to the altar and tried to grab the chalice to reposition it with considerable energy and verbalization. The celebrant calmly moved on, and after the event this came to be seen as an example of calm,

³⁷ National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/index.shtml#part1, accessed June 18, 2014.

³⁸ National Institute of Mental Health, nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/index.shtml#part1, accessed June 18, 2014.

caring love that embraced diversity of behavior and was in some ways a “gift” Christopher was able to give the worshipping community who witnessed it. Without the foresight of the clergy and the preparation of the congregation for the unexpected this could be the sort of event after which the family of someone given to Christopher’s kind of behavior might hesitate in participating in worship in a more traditional worship environment.

The Differently-abled: Dementia and Cognitive Disorders

Another disorder with an increasing frequency of diagnosis is dementia, a group of entities primarily affecting the geriatric population. The Alzheimer’s Association reports that of Americans with dementia, the most common form is Alzheimer’s disease.³⁹ The Association goes on to report that:

Alzheimer’s is a type of dementia that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. Symptoms usually develop slowly and get worse over time, becoming severe enough to interfere with daily tasks. ⁴⁰

Those suffering from Alzheimer’s, as well as those attending worship with a loved-one or as a care-giver of someone suffering from Alzheimer’s, may also find the traditional worship experience challenging due to length, expectation of behavior (in a similar way to that we have seen in the story of Christopher), loud or unexpected music (which can be a cause of increased agitation for many), as well as the simple safety issues discussed in the **Gentle Worship Project** chapter outlining the experiment. Trying to deal with these challenges in the context of traditional worship services can lead to feelings of exclusion and of again—being an “outsider” — on behalf of family and care-givers. Interestingly, the very existence of the “Gentle Worship”

³⁹ Alzheimer’s Association, www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_what_is_alzheimers.asp, accessed June 18, 2014.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, June 18, 2014.

service went a long way toward educating the general congregation about diversity and tolerance, and I personally believe the parish as a whole has been enriched and become increasingly welcoming – even to the point where an event such as was described with Christopher earlier would be far less of an “incident” during traditional worship than it would have been before this project was started.

These steps of progress toward “the beloved community” are so important as people are facing some of the most challenging times of their lives. Feelings of exclusion happen at the same time when both the patient and care-givers are dealing with the core issues of what it means to be a human being. John Swinton defines this struggle as “relational personhood and the vanishing self”.⁴¹ More on this on page 42.

As Alzheimer’s progresses, the “identifiers” of personhood slowly disappear – many of the unique characteristics that form identity fade, and questions such as “who am I?” or “who is this person?” may arise. From a spiritual perspective, the importance of “who I am now” as a beloved child of God - and not only “who I once was” - becomes critical. For Swinton, “living in the memories of God” is not something that exists only in the past, but is a present dynamic infused with the power and presence of divine grace and love.

Finding “grace” amidst the “vanishing self” has been profoundly modeled for me by Ted and Mary. Ted was a highly successful attorney who spent many hours away from home building a major law firm. Mary carried out the domestic responsibilities of raising four outstanding children who now help care for Ted and Mary who are in their eighties. Mary has Alzheimer’s

⁴¹ John Swinton, *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdsmans, 2012), page 135.

and is in a facility specializing in treating dementia. While she is “in the present moment” about two thirds of what she says is undecipherable. By “blundering” along with her (trying to understand when to laugh, smile, sympathize, etc.), those around her can make sure she remains happy and usually content. Ted recently told me that while “Mary is really not all here”, he loves spending time with her as much as her care-givers will allow and he wishes he had spent more time with her in years past. These current years of intense care are “all the more special,” he says, “because they didn’t occur in the past.” There is an ephemeral quality to their time together, which if I could describe it effectively would make this less project thesis and more “New York Times Best Seller”.

On Common Ground: The Care-givers

While the range of the Autism Spectrum is enormous and complicated and the stages of a cognitive disorder such as Alzheimer’s varied and difficult to understand, those who provide care for them also face the challenges of communication and evolving relationships. Abe Isanon asserts that those who have the least verbal ability pose the greatest challenge for their care-givers:

I have also sought to give voice to the non-verbal narratives of those at the low end of the (Autism) spectrum. Those who are non-verbal provide us with the greatest challenge; in that they call us to be advocates on their behalf. A genuine and sensitive advocacy demands we enter into a unique relationship with these people. The radical nature of this relationship in turn provides us with a genuine spiritual context. This spirituality of autism-related difficulties is a spirituality that includes the reality of both the carer and the person with Autism. ⁴² (underline mine)

In addition to recognizing the challenges in providing a physically safe worship environment for

⁴² Abe Isanon, *Spirituality and the Autism Spectrum: Of Falling Sparrows* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001), page 11.

care-receivers of all kinds, it is equally – if not more – important to be attentive to the spiritual needs of those who bring them. On several occasions during the Gentle Worship service conducted at Saint Mark’s a service participant would watch a care-giver face a particularly challenging situation with a patience and calm that elicited comments like: “I can’t begin to imagine” or “what a gift to be able to do that,” knowing that they were observing only a tiny fraction of the challenge being faced.

At the same time, being a care-giver astutely attuned to their care-receiver and the nuances of communication that go beyond words in the realm of “beloved” offers its own unique spiritual gifts. In some ways it may share characteristics with the way God sees each of us and offer us reminders of spiritual pathways that put us in touch with the divine. Isanon writes:

In spite of the difficulty in adapting and sensitizing ourselves to the subtleties of non-verbal communication, the rewards are vast if we persist. Non-verbal communication bypasses unnecessary social convention and pretense. Stripped of words, we are forced to stand in silence. From the depths of this silence we learn how to attend to the silence of others as the quality of both our listening and seeing increases. This is a creative silence that puts us perceptively and intuitively in touch with the hearts of others. In silence we hear the primal cry of those we come to serve and begin to recognize it for our own. In the silence of others we perceive the mystery of the Incarnation and come to know it as our own. In silence we recoil from the vanity of words and move gracefully toward contemplation.⁴³

As a liturgist and a pastor, this movement came to me gradually as a letting go of the need for liturgical order and conformity while at the same time being in the midst of liturgical order and conformity. It was not an abandonment of the liturgical expectations we will describe in the section on liturgy and worship, it was a grace and beauty that somehow occurred when the

⁴³ Abe Isanon, *Spirituality and the Autism Spectrum: Of Falling Sparrows* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001), page 118.

unusual happened and yet “life went on”. My own experiences in the Episcopal Church, first as a verger for five years, then a priest for twenty-five, emphasized order and predictability. The grace that came with welcoming the simply unpredictable yet authentically “worshipful” was for me an invitation into further and deeper contemplation of grace.

From “Outsider” to “Conveyer of Grace”

Many of God’s saving acts throughout history involve deliverance of peoples and individuals from oppression and into eventual inclusion in a new order based on the values of God’s kingdom. Biblical examples of these themes include such familiar narratives as the calling of Israel into the Land of Promise through the mighty acts told in Exodus 3-16, the unconditional love expressed by the father in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32, as well as the radical, “kingdom-building” inclusivity displayed by Jesus to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. Frank Anthony Spina describes this inclusiveness in *The Faith of the Outsider* with these words:

Typically insiders do the planting, hoping to transform outsiders into insiders. But that process has been reversed in this instance. A Samaritan woman takes on the role of one of Jesus’ best Jewish disciples and performs not only admirably, but spectacularly. She is the crown Jewel of John’s Gospel. ⁴⁴

This “reversal” from being an “outsider” in every perceived sense of the word to playing a pivotal role in the transformation process is one of the key discoveries of the “Gentle Worship” project. As we will see in the Behavioral Analysis section, there were many ways that the liturgy changed from something the “insiders” (or traditionally-abled) “did” for the “outsiders” (or differently-abled) into a spiritual gift “given” by the differently-abled to the rest of the

⁴⁴ Frank Anthony Spina, *The Faith of the Outsider* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), page 159.

congregation. By embracing the willingness to change how the congregation perceived “normal” worship and trying to transform it, some members of the congregation experienced elements of transformation within themselves.

This was an unexpected element of the project that was identified rather early on as the “Gentle Worship Surveys” results showed a strong number of people who identified as a “member of the general worshipping community” (not differently-abled or a caregiver) as agreeing or strongly agreeing that the service “plays a positive role” in their spiritual life, “offers something” they miss in their spiritual life, and allows them to participate in “a worship experience they would not otherwise be able to do”. (Questions 1-3, January to May results, Appendix I).

This type of “spiritual gift” is consistent with the themes of Miroslav Volf in his book *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*.⁴⁵ In describing our attempt to embrace others with an embrace that resembles God’s embrace of us, he quotes New Testament scholar Luke Timothy Johnson who writes:

(The Gospel’s) fundamental focus is not on Jesus’ wonderful deeds nor on his wise words. Their shared focus is on the character of his life and death. They all reveal the same patterns of radical obedience to God and selfless love toward other people. All four Gospels also agree that discipleship is to follow the same messianic pattern. They do not emphasize the importance of certain deeds or learning of certain doctrines. They insist upon living according to the same pattern of life and death shown by Jesus.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), page 24.

⁴⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus, The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996), page 157.

The “Gentle Worship” experience provides an opportunity to further explore the nature of God’s divine embrace by embracing those who are different from ourselves in a way traditional liturgies are unaccustomed to accommodating. It attempts to model “selfless love” from yet another perspective that may otherwise be often missed. The “participation” or “role” of the outsider (the differently-abled) in this way transcends whatever grace they receive from participating in the liturgy, and they become a conveyer of grace for others. Thus, as we have seen with the adaptive change of inclusion of others who are different than ourselves within the church, the differently-abled can be agents of God’s transformative power in our world.

PART TWO - Liturgy and Worship: Holy Time in Holy Places

The Church is always a visible society of men; not an assembly, but a Society. For although the name of the Church be given unto Christian assemblies, although any multitude of Christian men congregated may be termed by the name of a Church, yet assemblies properly are rather things that belong to a Church. Men are assembled for performance of public actions; which actions being ended, the assembly dissolveth itself and is no longer in being, whereas the Church which was assembled doth no less continue afterwards than before.⁴⁷

Richard Hooker – *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*

From the greatest of Anglican theologians, we have asserted here the concept that the church is somehow “unique” – an encounter of human institution with the divine in a way that sets it “apart”. From these words we may infer Hooker’s belief in a “continuance” of identity, which has significant implications on the “Gentle Worship” experience. Namely, that human souls in whatever place, physical condition, or cognitive place they may inhabit, are part of a great collective body. This “Cloud of Witnesses” offers an exchange of spiritual gifts we shall explore.

⁴⁷ Richard Hooker, *Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints* (New York: Church Publishing, 2010), page 666.

First, however, we must probe into the building blocks of liturgical action which will lead us into some of the fundamentals of “holy time” and “holy actions” in “holy places”.

Background

In 2000 I had the privilege of leading another new worship planning team in another congregation. What resulted was extremely different from the “Gentle Worship” service at Saint Mark’s. For almost a decade a loud praise band, highly theatrical lighting, skits, projection screens filled with an array of multimedia offerings, and even fog machines filled the worship space. Yet crafting that service began in the same way: identification of a target congregation, asking the questions: “what does liturgy need to be liturgy?”, “how do worship and spirituality touch one another?”, and “what are the unique gifts of this congregation that should be part of this process?”

The GWT was in agreement that our liturgy must be canonically correct, and as worship and spirituality come together for us in community represented by the Holy Eucharist, approved texts for those purposes should be consulted. Looking at *Enriching Our Worship I* and *Enriching our Worship II*, as well as the BCP’s Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist, *A New Zealand Prayer Book*, and *Additional Collects* by the Church of England led us to the following outline:

Gathering (walking into to sacred space), A “Centering” **Prayer** (taken from the Church of England’s beautiful yet simple new contemporary collects), **Gospel** Reading (From *The Message*⁴⁸ – by the way adding a “newer” element for the children’s choir), A short **Homily**, **Intercessory**

⁴⁸ Eugene Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002).

Prayers, Peace, and Holy Eucharist. Several elements would be added quite quickly as they were expected and helped the service “flow”: an **Offertory Sentence, Blessing, and Dismissal.**

The GWT also felt very strongly that traditional music is very much a part of Saint Mark’s identity (with six musicians on staff including an organist and a full-time Director of Music). The goal was to add music that would not agitate those on the Autism Spectrum, provide perhaps “holy memories” for those with cognitive loss, as well as be theologically present to the “moment”. One aspect of “holy time”, as identified both with the contemporary “praise” service in the other congregation mentioned and with the “Gentle Liturgy” itself, is being “in the moment”. Any type of pre-recorded music was to be avoided. As we shall discuss in the “Social and Behavioral Social Reflection” chapter, offering a recording of this service for “re-broadcast” later greatly diminishes an ineffable facet of “holy time” and would not be considered either.

Soon the Director of Music and organist went to work identifying musical “chestnuts” that were soothing and might evoke memories. Hymn 482: “Lord of All Hopefulness, Lord of All Joy” was chosen as an ongoing “theme hymn” of encouragement – although one child on the Autism Spectrum described it to her parents as “spooky”! Each of the four clergy who regularly celebrated at this service described the children’s choir, all in their red cassocks, reverently processing into the chancel as one of the most spiritually beautiful parts of the liturgy (and as we discussed in the “Gentle Worship Project” chapter, many participants found this a highlight of the service).

“Holy” Action, Time, and Place

Gordon Lathrop in *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* states:

Meaning occurs through structure, by one thing set against another. The scheduling of the ordo, the setting of one liturgical thing next to another in the shape of the liturgy, evokes and replicates the deep structure of biblical language, the use of the old to say the new by means of juxtaposition.⁴⁹

The “Gentle Worship” service was careful to respect this ordo, both the structure of the pattern of the liturgy (gathering, praying, hearing, praising, sharing, etc.) and the pattern of the church year – what Lathrop calls the “juxtaposition of Christian festal proclamation to both springtime Passover and winter solstice and the whole order of observances that gradually sprang from this juxtaposition”.⁵⁰ To emphasize this importance the propers from the previous Sunday were always used on Wednesday.

Some of the greatest challenges to creating this worship experience revolved around the juxtaposition of “Leviticus and Amos” that Lathrop describes in his section on liturgical criticism. Namely, “those who love Leviticus are easily inclined to absolutize the rituals and evangelize for their importance. In a chaotic time, it is easy for ritual order to seem enough, and for contradictory experiences to be excluded or suppressed”.⁵¹ And yet if we are to be true to this juxtaposition (and indeed the body of Christ), Lathrop goes on to say: “Our liturgical criticism wants to find ritual seriousness that has room for a sense of humor, wants to find a Leviticus that has interiorized the crisis of Amos, wants to find symbols made to speak to Gods word for the poor, want to find bread for a holy epiphany that has been baked by outsiders and sinners”.

So, in a very practical way, after we have convinced the altar guild to use electric candles (so

⁴⁹ Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), page 33.

⁵⁰*Ibid*, page 35.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, page 162.

there is no open flame), ushers to trade in polished black shoes for trainers so they can dash after a “running child”, the organist to play the pipe organ at the level used in a funeral home, and the director of music to choose “overused” hymns that he and predecessors swore would not be heard again within the walls – we now have to prepare a congregation for loud outbursts, unpredictable behaviors, overt sleeping during worship, and all with an Episcopalian’s nod to ignore anything out of the ordinary with their usual good taste and sensibilities! This is the body of Christ being the “Beloved Community” – yet as Lathrop also asks – what are the “holy signs” of when Augustine writes: “the word comes to the element and so there is a sacrament”?⁵²

The signs that apply to “Gentle Worship” – and to which the structures of the liturgy and its leaders were reverently true are Lathrop’s: “Signs of Assembly”, “Signs of Synaxis”, “Signs of Eucharist”, “Signs of Prayer”, and “Signs of Environment”. (Note: we did not perform a baptism or hold a Great Vigil).

Signs of assembly included each person who prepared the chancel (and then participated in worship) or who was a worship leader, conducted themselves reverently, respectfully, and carefully – helping focus on the liturgical moment that was happening – and not any disruption or seemingly “different” circumstance. As was mentioned in the **Gentle Worship Project** chapter, many people found grace when an Autistic child curled up in front of the altar during Eucharist and the sacrament seemed to take place “through” him.

Signs of “synaxis” were carefully observed as well. The parish deacon always proclaimed the

⁵² Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), page 164.

gospel from a book (and fielded questions – often from older care-givers – on the contemporary nature of the translation). The order of gathering, scripture reading, preaching, and intercession was observed (though eventually the intercessions were written into the Eucharistic Prayer to help shorten the portion of the service before the Peace – during which several choir members had to leave for other activities). The homilies were kept to two minutes – which some parishioners who heard the longer version on Sunday called: “the service’s best kept secret”!

Signs of Eucharist minimized movement and the number of vessels used, but it was the “good sterling” and real linens despite any risks. The Eucharistic Prayer was written especially for this service, and mentioned each of the types of differently-abled and their care-givers who might be assembled that day. (See Appendix VII)

Signs of prayer included the aforementioned *Additional Collects* from the Church of England. For example:

The First Sunday of Advent:

Almighty God,

As your kingdom dawns,

Turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness,

That we may be ready to meet you

In our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ⁵³

⁵³ Additional Collects, The Archbishop’s Council (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), page 4.

Easter Day

God of glory,

By the raising of your Son

You have broken the chains of death and hell:

Fill your Church with faith and hope;

For a new day has dawned

And the way life stands open

In our Saviour Jesus Christ. ⁵⁴

Finally, signs of environment saw few changes to what a congregation might experience on a Sunday morning, with two notable exceptions: the candles were electric, and the people were seated in the choir area (which not only was more intimate, but gave them a much closer view to all that was happening – particularly at the altar). This was much more intimate and focused on not only one another, but the liturgical actions as well: a bringing of God’s “holy people” into a “holy place” for “holy actions” in “holy time”. In diversity of need, place in life, and ability, helping all of us make a spiritual connection with the broad and varied “cloud of witnesses” before God.

PART THREE - Transformation as Spiritual Movement

Significant change that leads to transformation involves accepting invitations for spiritual

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, page 16.

growth as they were presented during the evolution of the “Gentle Worship” project. Some of them will be reflected upon in this section within the context of spiritual movement.

Henri Nouwen, who spent the final years of his life as chaplain amongst the differently-abled of L’Arche Daybreak Community in Toronto, Canada, writes in his spiritual classic *Reaching Out*:

Only when we have come in touch with our own life experiences and have learned to listen to our inner craving for liberation and new life can we realize that Jesus Christ did not just speak, but that he reached out to us in our most personal needs. The Gospel doesn’t just contain ideas worth remembering. It is a message responding to our individual human condition. ⁵⁵

Gentle Worship, when embraced most fully (and most fully able to be embraced through the presence of the differently-abled), is an embodiment of God’s reaching out to us. In return, it is the participant’s role to reach out to God at the same time and engage in what Nouwen calls: “The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life”. ⁵⁶

These are “Reaching Out to Our Inmost Self”, where feelings of “loneliness” are transformed into a sense of “solitude” that allows true and healthy relationships to flourish; “Reaching Out to Our Fellow Human Beings”, which involves cultivating true hospitality out of what might have begun as feelings of suspicion and hostility; and finally “Reaching out to God”, subtitled “From Illusion to Prayer.” Nouwen describes this last stage as an “awareness of the illusory quality of many of our strivings” and an *unmasking* of the “illusions of our existence” which make “a real

⁵⁵ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), page 88.

⁵⁶ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), introduction.

spiritual life possible”.⁵⁷

The spiritual dimensions of “Gentle Worship” that we experienced contained elements of each of these movements. Being among those who are differently-abled during worship, often when one does not know the degree or nature of their participation speaks to the first movement. Nouwen describes “holy ground” as simply being with a person (perhaps in silence) and in the innermost silence:

...discover there the voice that calls us beyond the limits of human togetherness to a new communion. In this solitude we can slowly become aware of a presence of him who embraces friends and lovers and offers us the freedom to love each other, because he loved us first (reference: 1 John 4:19).

The power of this experience, as manifested by the embrace of a parent of their differently-abled child with ASD, or a spouse of 65 years of their partner with advanced Alzheimer’s, is a place of “holy ground”. One person interviewed said that they paid more attention to things during the service because it was short and not configured like a traditional liturgy (Interview question 5, response PP, Appendix III). This sense of “heightened awareness” helped open the inner eye of spiritual observation and presence of being in a special place and time. As a worship leader, I was often reminded of God’s love for us through the expressions of love and care these relationships represented, and that allowed me to somehow participate in representing God’s love for both the caregiver and care-receiver.

This holy ground where we find a place for the stranger (or outsider) opens the possibility for true feelings of hospitality to grow. This hospitality is a welcoming of others and, through them,

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, page 113.

a welcoming of the Holy Spirit and God, and, by extension, a living into the hospitality God has for our own human heart. One person who identified as a “member of the general worshipping community” stated that one of the most moving parts of the service was to see a child with ASD curled up near the altar (Interview question 3, response SA, Appendix II). Being in this place is a movement toward an awareness of our own fragility, and for Nouwen, this was at the heart of much of his own spiritual journey (as seen in *The Wounded Healer*⁵⁸, *Adam: God’s Beloved*⁵⁹, and *Reaching Out*⁶⁰). He writes:

To the degree that we have been able to dispel the illusion of our immortality (ie - that our mortal life in THIS world is eternal) and have come to the full realization of our fragile mortal condition, we can reach out in freedom to the creator and re-creator of life and respond to his gifts with gratitude.⁶¹

Henri Nouwen’s final book, *Adam, God’s Beloved*, chronicles the life of a profoundly handicapped young man who was non-verbal, yet possessed a healing inner spirit that touched the lives of many. Nouwen recalls the words of a monk who struggled to define his time spent with Adam:

For many, many years I have tried to live a spiritual life and have tried to help others live it as well. I always knew I had to become empty for God, gradually letting go of thoughts, emotions, feelings, and passions that prevented the deep communion I desired. When I met Adam, I met a man who has been chosen by God to lead us deeper into that very communion. As I spent long hours with Adam, I find myself drawn into an ever deeper solitude. In Adam’s heart, I have touched a fullness of divine love.⁶²

⁵⁸ Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer, Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Doubleday, 1979).

⁵⁹ Henri Nouwen, *Adam, God’s Beloved*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1997).

⁶⁰ Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975).

⁶¹ *Ibid*, page 126.

⁶² Henri Nouwen: *Adam, God’s Beloved* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), Page 70.

While there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit appears to have been present in Adam in a powerful way, it would be a disservice to care-givers to appear to minimize the enormous burden they face – particularly those family members dealing with care-receivers almost continuously. This poses a unique set of challenges for the church as their own spiritual journey is linked with that of their loved ones and/or care-receivers.

I remember the first person I met with Alzheimer's in 1990, a time when we knew much less about the disease, and I only knew that this man could become irrational and lived in a very different reality and "time-line" than his wife. While we lacked the tools to create a "Gentle Worship" service, this is an example of someone with a short attention span who may have benefited from the characteristics of such a worship experience. Their only solution was not to bring him to church at all, and often she was so exhausted with his care that her attendance began to wane. People missed her, and became quite concerned by their absence.

Similarly, decades later, there was a beloved member of Saint Mark's parish family who many people knew had Alzheimer's and people wondered why he was never brought to the "Gentle Worship" service. What few people knew was that this individual got so agitated when leaving the "safe" environment of the Alzheimer's care facility that he could become a danger to himself. Together with other logistical challenges that we discuss elsewhere, this later case would be another indicator that bringing the service into care facilities via webcast would be a logical step.

Having offered these caveats, there is a great deal of transformative power in adapting to a "Gentle Worship" environment and spending sacred time with the differently-abled. Some

constant care-givers may receive the benefit of being able to worship themselves through being in an assisted environment. Members of the congregation who have not been exposed to the different-abled in such a close way may also find themselves on a unique spiritual journey as they ponder issues of diversity, inclusion, as well as the nature and components of worship itself. What does it mean to be part of the “Body of Christ” in its near infinite forms? St. Paul reminds us:

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1
Corinthians 12: 18-23a, 27.

Conclusion

Ultimately, from a theological and spiritual perspective, the greatest gift of Gentle Worship is the presence of the “holy” that comes to us through the planning, crafting, and worshipping in an environment where the differently-abled, those who were once “outsiders”, are present and welcomed. There is no real way, within the scope of this paper or project, to know how the differently-abled themselves (particularly in the most profound cases) may be affected or enriched through the experience except, as already alluded to, from observations from care-givers.

We can say, that for those who are open to it, the spiritual movement toward God of other participants is positive and helps lead us toward a place described by Yvonne, another resident of the L’Arche Daybreak Community in Toronto, Canada. She was a close friend of Adam, whose short life profoundly touched and inspired the lives of so many people. Shortly after Adam’s

death in 1996 she reflected on the fact that the next time she would see this man, profoundly dis-abled (we would now say “differently-abled”) in this life, would be in heaven:

Then she imagined she was walking into heaven. As she walked she saw a radiant-looking young man approaching her. She was puzzled because she did not recognize him but he came right up to her and spoke. “Hi, Yvonne,” he said. “You don’t recognize me, do you?” Yvonne kept looking at him feeling she knew him but not knowing how. Then he laughed and said, “I’m Adam. Your Friend. Do you remember me?”⁶³

This glimpse of the nature of an eternal spirit is at the heart of our ability to see God in others and to welcome God into our lives where we may ask the question: “How will I invite God’s love to shine through me today?”⁶⁴ It is an affirmation for the beloved of those with ASD that this love is an invitation to “wholeness” in many forms we cannot begin to understand. For those who are standing beside a person who is struggling with dementia and cognitive impairment, it offers a promise in their struggle that a day will come “when hearts are brave again, and arms are strong”, and for them it will be on a bright and “yet more glorious day”.⁶⁵

⁶³ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Adam: God’s Beloved* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), page 118.

⁶⁴ *Daily Prayer for All Seasons* (New York: Church Publishing, 2014), page 42.

⁶⁵ William W. How, *For All the Saints Who From Their Labors Rest* (New York: Church Publishing, 1982), Hymn 287.

Social - Behavioral Reflection: Transforming Community

Introduction

This chapter will be divided into four parts, first asking the question about the *patterns of change* represented by the “Gentle Worship” project in **Part One**: How was the change in liturgy made and what was the reaction? What assumptions were made that needed to be moved beyond? How was the change managed – and could it be classified as “Systemic” - “Technical” change or “Adaptive” change? Drawing upon the behavioral theories work of Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky - and in accordance to the premises of the “Applied Ministry Degree” as outlined in 2012 – I will draw correlations with management theory that illuminate understandings of practical ministry. After an overview, I will unpack four challenges of Adaptive Change - and discover that each was addressed from basically a highly creative, practical yet **technical** perspective.

Part Two will summarize William Ury’s idea of a “Third Side”, and how it identifies a basic dynamic in understanding cultural change within a church setting. I will go on to apply it to one of the fundamental challenges of “Gentle Worship” – looking at liturgy from an “outside” perspective (that of the “non-churched” and no longer attending church).

Part Three will outline Edwin Friedman's concept of the “Identified Patient” and how that identity shifted during the actual conducting of “Gentle Liturgy” from the differently-abled and their care-givers to the congregation in general, as they discovered a spiritual need and depth they had not identified before.

Finally, **Part Four** will attempt to “reach beyond the expected.” I will ask how some of the original goals of the “Gentle Worship” project that were put on hold may be the key components for the future of this type of worship, and perhaps take another step from systemic/technical change to adaptive change that was the focus of Part One.

Hopefully, these perspectives will augment and enhance the deepest desire of this project, i.e., to touch and beautify the spiritual journeys’ of those not only living with the differently-abled, but those willing to open their lives and hearts to them and discover a special grace in return.

PART ONE - Changing Assumptions

From the conception of the “Gentle Worship” project there was a deliberate understanding that this would be the ministry of the entire parish. Early advice from VTS included making sure the worship experience was made up of a wide range of participants, emphasizing that to be a ministry “of the parish” there should be more congregants who identify themselves as “members of the general worshipping community” than “caregiver” or “person with a special need”. This proved to be true during each “survey period” by a considerable margin – with the January to May survey results yielding 19 surveys from the first category and only 2 from the second or third (See part one of Appendix I).

What was not clear, however, was the effect this dynamic would have. There were two early assumptions made about the group identifying as “members of the general worshipping community”. First, it would assist the worship in seeming more “normal” despite the anticipated disruptions of being with people with ASD and Dementia. Given that the liturgy was described as “intimate”, “quiet”, “peaceful” or “thoughtful” twelve times during the interview process, and

only once as “not as quiet and calm as I expected” (Question 1b, response “PB”, Appendix III) this assumption was proven correct for most people.

The second assumption was that the nature of the wider composition would also reduce the “We/They” mentality, i.e., that Gentle Worship is something that “We” (those who identify as “members of the general worshipping community”) do for “Them” (those who identify as a “caregiver” or a “person with a special need”). The fact that half of those interviewed expressed some sort of disappointment in the attendance figures (one interviewee, “PL”, mentioning it three time, and another, “PG,” mentioning it twice, see questions 2, 5, 6, and 10, Appendix III) casts doubt on the merits of this assumption.

Inviting Transformation: Four Challenges of Adaptive Change

The creation of a new, completely “re-thought” and “re-prayed over” type of worship service invited transformation in unexpected ways. At its core, the choice of this response of inclusion to those who are differently-abled can be considered significant, and while the result was not “adaptive change”, it held a highly creative, sometimes controversial, “systemic change” that challenged the community to see, act, and sometimes even feel differently during and about worship. Developing this worship service went far beyond the usual “pastoral response” such as making minor changes in existing liturgies or increasing a schedule of home communions for those who are unable to attend worship regularly.

In *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, authors Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky present four “Challenge Archetypes of adaptive change” which are relevant to the challenges in creating and implementing a “Gentle Worship”

liturgy. They are: “Gap Between Espoused Values and Behavior”, “Competing Commitments”, “Speaking the Unspeakable”, and “Work Avoidance”.⁶⁶ Elements of each of these archetypes are represented to varying degrees in the project.

GAP BETWEEN ESPOUSED VALUES AND BEHAVIOR

In many organizations, particularly often in large professional services firms, there is a gap between the organizations espoused values and its actual behavior when senior authorities advocate collaborative behavior but reward individual performance... Closing the gap is a difficult adaptive challenge because people in the organization have been successful through their patterns of behavior and will want to do what earned them success, especially when they are still recognized and rewarded for doing so.⁶⁷

To some degree, many of the churches organizations responsible for coming together to craft and maintain “Gentle Worship” have long established patterns of behavior, methods of operation, “manuals and customaries” etc. from the Altar Guild to the Ushers and Vergers and Lay Readers and even the clergy. We feel we are “in tune” with what makes “worship work” and now we are asked to deal with “potential chaos”, e.g., children with ASD running about and touching candlesticks and chalices. The musicians, used to the occasional polite cough, hear unexpected cries of excitement or dismay or conversations assuring a dementia patient that they really are in a safe place where people care for them. And yet because we are all here and committed to the “core values” of God’s inclusive love, we seek for ways to adapt, to worship in a new type of environment, where the unexpected comes face to face with the staid predictability we are used to. Each worship leader has skills for which they have been praised in a different environment, now the broader calling of the community challenges each of us to

⁶⁶ Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Cambridge Literary Associates, 2009), pages 77-87.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, page 79.

respond out of grace as we have not be expected to do before. This response is discussed in the spirituality portion of this paper and, for many, has been a source of blessing and personal spiritual growth.

COMPETING COMMITMENTS

To resolve such competing commitments, organizational leaders must often make painful choices that favor some constituencies while hurting others. And this constitutes another adaptive change archetype. Because these decisions are so difficult, many leaders simply avoid making them, or try to arrive at a compromise that ultimately serves no constituency's need well. As a result, the organization's commitments continue to be in conflict.⁶⁸

At mid-point in the "Gentle Worship" project the GWT was faced with a series of scheduling challenges (described in the **Gentle Worship Project** chapter, Section: "A Fourteen Month Journey"). We were approached by several key members of the congregation with family members within the target demographic and told that the time of 5:30 on Wednesdays did not work well because of traffic issues and mealtime in assisted care facilities. It did work very well for clergy and members of the children's choir (who were a very popular part of the service – see Interview question 3 responses PJ, PP, PB, PS, SA and question 7 response PG, Appendix III).

The decision was to move the service for these individuals to a time when the children's choir could not be present and was more difficult for the clergy (Sundays at 9:00 sandwiched between the 8:00 am service and adult Christian formation at 9:30 – a series often clergy-led). While other times were also looked at (such as Sunday afternoon which did not work for any musicians), it was felt the priority of these families took precedence - and that music should

⁶⁸ Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Cambridge Literary Associates, 2009), page 81.

remain a part of the service - so the time was moved to Sunday morning. Attendance continued to decline at this move, though in the months since the conclusion of statistical data presented here there has been a slow but steady growth. The children's choir may be missed, but has been replaced by a staff musician to offer a solo (as well as provide vocal leadership). If this attendance pattern continues, the move may be considered positive.

SPEAKING THE UNSPEAKABLE

Whenever members of an organization come together and have a conversation, there are actually two types of conversation going on. One is manifested in what people are saying publically. The other is unfolding in each person's head. Only a small portion of the most important content of those conversations (radical ideas, naming of difficult issues, painful interpretations of conflicting perspectives) ever gets surfaced publically. Most of the time, the public discourse consists primarily of polite banter or debate that falls short of naming, let alone resolving, conflict.⁶⁹

One of the challenges of this worship experience was to draw worshippers within the "target demographic" of those with ASD, dementia, their families and care-givers. These participants were always most noticeably in the minority although people did not mention this until the interview phase of the project where it was expressed as a concern with "low attendance" or a question of "how do we touch more people?" The issue was clearly on people's minds as it was expressed four times in question 2 ("what was unexpected?"), once in question 5 ("was there anything you missed from traditional liturgy?"), and twice in question 6 (see Appendix III). The spouse of one individual with dementia (who was deceased in the course of this project) summed up the service months after the death with the words "it is short, sweet, and a lost cause" (question 8, response PS, Appendix III).

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, page 82.

Dialogue around this issue is difficult. People tend to be uncomfortable being critical around people who are differently-abled, perhaps out of fear of being perceived as insensitive.

However, concerns about attendance that were documented above, as well as conversations with members of the GWT, reveal surprise that more people do not attend. There is an unspoken (or rarely spoken) attitude that: “all we have to do is ‘make it, make it known, and they shall come’”. As attendance figures show (Appendix II) this is not necessarily the case.

Perhaps the most meaningful result of this effort is a dialogue around the spiritual gifts received from worshipping together with the differently-abled, even when someone may not cognitively be in a place where they know what is happening. For example, does a person with advanced dementia know they are in church and in a worship service? Sometimes not. Do other worshippers receive grace from having that person in their presence? Yes, if they are attentive to the dynamic. Do care-givers and family members benefit from being able to worship with their loved one in an accepting and inviting environment? Sometimes. For example, seven out of fourteen people responded that they were “drawn to attend Gentle Worship” because it was more diverse, liberating, or allowed them to participate with a person who might not otherwise have been able to attend. (Question 1, Appendix III).

WORK AVOIDANCE

The last archetype presented by Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky as part of “diagnosing the system” is work avoidance. The GWT truly modeled a willingness to work, to “show up” and be part of the congregation, and the parish as a whole was supportive and enthusiastic of the project. At no time did we hear “I can’t do that” or “I don’t want to do that”. The only work “avoided” may have been the “inner work” of participants opening themselves to the spiritual dynamic of such

a worship environment/opportunity. One participant commented they “wondered if special needs children found the service meaningful” (Interview question 2b, response PP, Appendix III). Another person interviewed commented they “didn’t know if it was worth the effort for the few who attend” (Interview question 10, response PS, Appendix III). While both are valid questions, they are asked from a position of judgement when transformation and adaptive change is difficult.

Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky comment that one of the classic pitfalls in adaptive change is to “focus only on the technical parts of the challenge and apply a technical fix”.⁷⁰ The Gentle Worship project addressed a myriad of technical issues (such using projection technology and the creation of liturgical “scripts” to be projected and facilitated by the verger). These were designed to foster inclusion of the outsider amidst community – and resulted in something more. “Gentle Worship” came to offer, to some degree, an invitation for spiritual movement within individuals who were not part of the “target demographic”.

Where the project has not yet achieved “adaptive change” is where this invitation has not been identified, communicated, accepted, or sufficiently supported. Perhaps this is because we were still doing “church”, in a “church”, but in a modified way that did not move the community to think too far beyond the walls of tradition and physical space. While creative, the project as implemented was technical and systemic.

In order to cast further light on this struggle for perspective and creative thinking we will now turn to the conflict resolution work of William Ury and the family systems theory of Edwin

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, page 85.

Freidman. We will see that the initial assumptions just described did undergo creative and imaginative change, and its own type of transformation as the Gentle Worship project progressed.

PART TWO - Behavioral Theories – A Third Side

The initial assumption of the Gentle Worship Team (“GWT”) was that there would be individuals who so liked traditional worship (with its quiet reverence, formality, and length) that any deviance would be off-putting. Many of these people would face challenges as the environment of worship was changed – both to accommodate the differently-abled as well as by their presence. The “third side” in this dynamic would be a large turnout by those identified as “members of the general worshipping community”. The “identified patient” theory will offer the idea that perhaps the more established members of a traditional worshipping community may benefit spiritually by the presence of the “differently-abled” and their care-givers.

Applying the “Third Side”

Eight of the ten roles William Ury identifies as part of “the third side” apply to this project.⁷¹ Special teams of ushers, altar guild members, vergers, and musicians were given a special (but short) training session on what to expect during the liturgy that might be different from a typical service. They were encouraged to attend frequently as “core” members of the liturgy. They would serve in preventative roles by preventing a sense of lost reverence (by *providing* stability, *educating* about the differently-abled, and *building bridges* between their care-givers and families and the parish). At the same time, it was expected they would serve as resolvers in

⁷¹ William Ury, *The Third Side: Why We Fight and How We Can Stop It* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), page 190.

being an *equalizing* presence (in ways already mentioned), and perhaps even *healers* for those who are returning to church after a period of isolation or disenfranchisement. It was hoped that there would not be a need for them to serve in a containment capacity (as *witness*, *referee* or *peacekeeper*) – but all of those functions could be called upon given the unknown dynamic of the situation.

What the GWT did not expect as this “third side” mobilized as a community (and began planning and acting in a systematic way during this process) was the degree to which some members of the congregation would be entering into a feeling of change. For some this would even be a transformational process.

For some this was a negative change. The “We/They” attitude returned. They criticized attendance figures, wondering if the clergy could “better spend their time on home communions” and saying this service was a “lost cause” (see interviewee “PS” in questions 8 and 10, Appendix III). There was also a progression in the surveys as the year went on that saw fewer people strongly agree that Gentle Worship “plays a positive role in my spiritual life” and “allows me to participate in a worship experience I would otherwise not be able to” and more people disagree with these statements (see results January to May and September to December, Appendix I).

Yet this type of change was the minority. For others, the change was transformational in a positive way. They saw “church” and “worship” from a different, broader perspective. One participant commented recently that she found such grace in watching a child with ASD (who had wandered up to the altar) “mistakenly” believe that the altar party was “reverencing” to

him as they processed out, and kept bowing up and down in return to their reverences.

“Perhaps, she said, he wasn’t so mistaken after all”. Such “grace-filled” moments are reflections of the spiritual movement that took place for some on the “third side” as they worshipped as “members of the general worshipping community”.

PART THREE - Observing an “Identified Patient”

In *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* Edwin Friedman writes:

A third characteristic of gridlocked relationship systems is either/or, black and white, all-or-nothing ways of thinking that eventually restrict the options of the mind. Paradigms that might begin simply as theoretical differences become hardened into intense, oppositional, emotional commitments even over the most unemotional subject matter. Such polarized thinking and labeling is equally likely to occur in the fields of geology, biology, physics, economics, medicine, therapy, or jazz.⁷²

I would add to these fields the liturgical planning process in local congregations. From the standpoint of a person who is differently-abled and their accompanying care-givers, the outline of worship in many churches can appear “gridlocked” in the traditional. They can attend a service in which it is seemingly “impossible” for them to participate, due to structure, length, and behavioral expectation, or they can stay home. The goal of Gentle Worship from the beginning was change in order to alleviate the gridlock. This would knowingly disrupt the “homeostasis” of whatever worshipping body was gathered at the time in two ways.

First, the structure of the service designed as “Gentle Worship” would be different – perhaps very different – from what was expected in traditional liturgy. The challenge the GWT faced was

⁷² Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. (New York: Seabury Books, 1999), page 39.

to minimize this difference as much as possible by prayerfully and thoughtfully “keeping what needed to be kept, and letting go of what needed to be let go”. Resistance to the changes that were made would be kept at a minimum through education and through a parallel liturgical development that would not make changes to the existing liturgies. The effectiveness of GWT was high, as the only thing those interviewed “missed” from traditional liturgy was “a bigger congregation” (see question 5, response “PL”, Appendix II).

The second disturbance in the “homeostasis of worship,” over which the GWT had little control (other than to be sensitive to stimuli), was the unexpected behaviors of individuals with ASD and cognitive disorders and their effect on others as they joined the service participants. The individuals “misbehaving” would be seen as the “lightening rod” in the situation, and become in some ways, according to Friedman’s Family System’s model, “the identified patient”.⁷³ If the GWT was not careful, the very individuals Gentle Worship was designed to benefit could be seen as problems. If this happened, the real “patient” in need would be those who identified themselves as “members of the general worshipping community”.

Fortunately this did not happen to any significant degree. One interviewee complained the “service was not as quiet and calm as desired” and another “did not like the projection screen, it felt like a bouncing ball” (Question 2b, interviewees “PB” and “PS”, Appendix II). These respondents were care-givers for whom the combination of people with ASD and cognitive disorders did not mix well. Interestingly enough, there was no negative response from their care-receivers, both of whom would have been able to respond if desired.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

The most significant surprise resulting from the disruption of the “homeostatic” quality of the liturgy was the positive impact worshipping with the differently-abled had upon the congregation as a whole. As was mentioned earlier in the section on “Theological and Spiritual Analysis”, there was a transformational element for people when presented with embodiments of divine love. For those receptive to this dynamic, the disruptions themselves made the liturgy even more “theocentric”. In his work *Pastoral Care in Worship: Liturgy and Psychology in Dialogue*, Neil Pembroke cautions that all “worship should be theocentric in orientation. A common misstep in looking at pastoral care and worship is to move the person into the center, and thus create a therapeutic model that diminishes the fullest expression of divine grace”.⁷⁴

The “Gentle Worship”, for the most part, did not fall into this trap, rather those who many would have first seen as “the identified patient” actually became examples of grace and divine love within the worshipping body. As cited in the chapter on “Spirituality and the Differently-abled: Care-givers, On Common Ground”, the example of Adam Arnett of the L’Arche Daybreak Community in Toronto is an example of how the differently-abled may be an example of grace.

PART FOUR - “Reaching Beyond the Expected”

In Chapter One: Project Thesis, there is mention of the VTS. Project Planning team placing a limitation on the acceptable scope of the project. The team required that any Gentle Liturgy would focus on a service within the church, with no technological “push” beyond the physical space. While this proved to be a blessing in implementation, and yielded many of the surprising spiritual gifts for the congregation in general that have been discussed, it also confining.

⁷⁴ Pembroke, Neil, *Pastoral Care in Worship: Liturgy and Psychology in Dialogue* (London: T.T. Clark International, 2010).

The original plan presented included a “webcast” into care facilities, coupled with a trained team (a tech, an usher, and a Lay Eucharistic Minister) that would help a group of differently-abled and family and care-givers gather to watch the webcast, receive the printed Order of Service being used, as well as offer communion. This would happen “in real time”, not as a recording. It would have opened the opportunity for conversation about “sacred time” and “sacred space” to deepen. It also, on a purely practical basis, might have allowed an easier access point for the congregation, the challenges of which have already been discussed.

Whether this would be a logical next step toward Adaptive Change for the church now to consider is being discussed. It would, at least, be an enhanced pastoral response to the differently-abled and offer an Anglican worship experience moved “outside the walls”.

Meanwhile, as we shall see in the concluding chapter, “On With The Dance”, Gentle Worship gently moves forward at Saint Mark’s...

Conclusion

Over the span of two years, Saint Mark’s “unpacked and re-looked” at how it “did” church. Assumptions were challenged, different views and perspectives wrestled with, many imaginative technical and systemic changes were made, and the Holy Spirit showed up. This did not happen how or when or as expected – but it happened and grace was conveyed.

In the case of Gentle Worship most often this happened through a brief, “snapshot of a moment” with someone “other” than ourselves. In the powerful story of Adam from the L’Arche Community we hear of a rich and unexpected journey, layered with a myriad of facets. In some ways, they both reflect the same divine spark. Henri Nouwen writes:

And what is said of Jesus must be said of Adam: “Everyone who touched him was healed” (Mark 6:56). Each of us who has touched Adam has been made whole somewhere; it has been our common experience. Thus, Adam’s story becomes an expression of my own story with all my strengths and disabilities.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Adam: God’s Beloved* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), page 127.

Conclusion: “On with the Dance”

We rarely hear the inward music, but we're all dancing to it nevertheless.⁷⁶Mevlana Rumi (1207 - 1273) on *Cosmic Dance*

In this project, liturgical practices were adapted into the form of a “Gentle Worship” that offered inclusion for those attending who were experiencing cognitive challenges of many kinds or the “differently abled” - for what has now been more than two years. A community was formed consisting of an average of sixteen to twenty worshippers made up of people from the identified demographic of those facing issues of cognitive impairment, their care-givers, family, friends, and the general congregation of Saint Mark’s.

It was formed for the purpose and embodied the premise that liturgical practices may be adapted in manners that offer inclusion for those attending who are “differently abled”. Such adaptations would create a new worshipping community inclusive of those who are “differently abled”, positively impact those within that community which include care-givers, family members and friends, as well as have a positive impact upon the parish as a faithful worshipping body. This would have been realized through increased worship attendance by those within the identified demographic as making a positive contribution to their spiritual and emotional lives.

Survey and interview data collected show that this worship experience was consistently ranked as “important” or “very important” by those attending. Data also showed that a majority of people “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the “Gentle Liturgy” played a positive role in their

⁷⁶ AZQuotes.com, Wind and Fly LTD, 2017. <http://www.azquotes.com/author/12768-Rumi>, accessed February 23, 2017.

spiritual lives. When asked to describe the service, adjectives used, such as “God-centered”, “rich”, “inclusive”, “peaceful”, and “warm” (among many), could overwhelmingly be described as positive.

Increased worship attendance by those within the identified demographic was very modest. The greatest positive contribution to the worshipper’s spiritual and emotional lives came through members of the differently-abled care-givers, their families, and members of the congregation who did not fall into any of the identified “target” or “hopeful” categories. A number of interviews from this latter demographic identified the worship experience as “liberating” and as adding something missing from traditional worship by making the presence of the differently-abled possible. This made a “significant” effect on their own experience of God’s inclusive love and embrace of creation.

Interestingly enough, this new spiritual dimension was more present for the general congregation than the “identified demographic”. One health care professional attending for the first time on January 3, 2016 (after the statistical recording period had ended) was quoted as saying: “I had no idea it would be like this – how wonderful – I will definitely be back”.

What the “Gentle Liturgy” did not do was attract a significant number of people from beyond the parish, or serve (as of yet) as a source of evangelism for the congregation. While the first portion of this observation may be considered a shortcoming, the second was not part of the expressed expectation. Evangelism was perhaps an underlying hope – a “create it and they will come” attitude.

Serious challenges continue to be on the horizon for the future of “Gentle Worship”. The most significant are accessibility of time and space, communication about the service (with those who might benefit from such an experience), as well as considering expanded use of technology (webcasting the service to facilities where the differently abled are located) all may lead to insights for future applications.

The “Gentle Worship” will continue through the end of the program year – and perhaps beyond. Although only modestly in number -- yet powerfully in spirit – the service has fulfilled the thesis requirement of this project with dedication and integrity. The “dance” goes on with new members and a deepened awareness of the diversity and complexity of the “Hymn of the Universe” and the diverse role we are called to play within it...

I call before me the whole vast anonymous army of living humanity; those who surround me and support me though I do not know them; those who come, and those who go... (who) truly believe in the progress of earthly reality and who today will take up again their impassioned pursuit of the light.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), page 1.

Bibliography

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *A New Zealand Book of Common Prayer*, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1989.

Archbishop's Council, *Additional Collects*, London: Church House Publishing, 2004.

Berry, Wendell, from "Another Turn of the Crank", as found in *The Sacred Earth: Writers on Nature and Spirit*, Jason Gardner, ed. Novato, CA: New World Library, 1998.

Biblica, *New International Version Bible*, New York: 1983.

Brock, Brian and John Swinton, eds., *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2012.

Church Hymnal Corporation, *The Book of Common Prayer*, New York: 1979.

Church Hymnal Corporation, *The Hymnal 1982*, New York: 1982.

Church Pension Fund, *Enriching Our Worship I: Supplemental Liturgical Materials*, New York: 1998.

Church Pension Fund, *Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints*, New York: Church Publishing, 2010.

Creamer, Deborah Beth. *Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Eiesland, Nancy, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Friedman, Edwin H., *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*, New York: Seabury Books, 1999.

Heifetz, Ronald with Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, Boston: Cambridge Literary Associates, 2009.

Isanon, Abe, *Spirituality and the Autism Spectrum: Of Falling Sparrows*, Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001.

Jason Gardner, ed., *The Sacred Earth: Writers on Nature and Spirit*, California: New World Library, 1998.

Johnson, Elizabeth A., *Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints*, New York: Continuum, 1998.

Johnson, Luke Timothy, *The Real Jesus, The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels*, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996.

Kitwood, Tom, *Dementia Reconsidered: The Person Comes First*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997.

Lathrop, Gordon. W., *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993.

Lord, Catherine and James McGee, eds., *Educating Children with Autism*, Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001.

Newman, Barbara J., *Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, Grand Rapids: Friendship Ministries, 2006.

Nouwen, Henri, *Adam, God's Beloved*, New York: Orbis Books, 1997.

Nouwen, Henri, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, New York: Doubleday, 1975.

Nouwen, Henri J. M., *Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons*, New York: Ava Maria Press, 2007.

Nouwen, Henri, *The Wounded Healer, Ministry in Contemporary Society*, New York: Doubleday, 1979.

Pembroke, Neil, *Pastoral Care in Worship: Liturgy and Psychology in Dialogue*, London: T.T. Clark International, 2010.

Peterson, Eugene, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002.

Reynolds, Thomas E., *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*, Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008.

Severino, Sally K. and Richard Liew, eds., *Pastoral Care of the Mentally Disabled: Advancing Care for the Whole Person*. Binghamton, New York: 1994.

Shakespeare, Steven and Hugh Raymond-Pickard, *The Inclusive God: Reclaiming Theology For An Inclusive Church*, London: Canterbury Press, 2006.

Spina, Frank Anthony, *The Faith of the Outsider: Exclusion and Inclusion in the Biblical Story*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2005.

Swinton, John, *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2012.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre, *Hymn of the Universe*, New York: Harper & Row, 1961.

Ury, William, *The Third Side: Why We Fight and How We Can Stop It*, New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

Volf, Miroslav, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Appendix I: “Gentle Worship” Survey

Introduction

An instrument created over several meetings of the Gentle Worship Steering Committee, its goal was to provide some quantitative measurement of the experiment over time while maintaining the anonymity of the responder. The survey was available in the Order of Service, online, handed directly to people, and assistance in filling out the survey was also offered verbally over the period of twelve months. A number of people only filled out portions of the instrument or did not provide a date. For the purposes of consistency, the results will be presented using the format mandated for attendance on The Parochial Report of the Episcopal Church.

Results January to May:

1. “Gentle Worship” plays a positive role in my spiritual life.

Strongly Agree – 12 Agree – 6 Do Not Know - 0 Disagree - 0 Strongly Disagree - 0

2. “Gentle Worship” offers something I/We miss in my spiritual life.

Strongly Agree – 6 Agree – 9 Do Not Know – 2 Disagree – 0 Strongly Disagree – 0

3. “Gentle Worship” allows me/us to participate in a worship experience I would otherwise not be able to.

Strongly Agree – 4 Agree – 7 Do Not Know - 3 Disagree – 1 Strongly Disagree - 0

4. The length and physical expectations of “Gentle Worship” are helpful.

Strongly Agree – 12 Agree – 4 Do Not Know – 1 Disagree – 0 Strongly Disagree – 0

5. I/We feel more accepted at “Gentle Worship”.

Strongly Agree – 6 Agree – 4 Do Not Know – 6 Disagree – 1 Strongly Disagree – 0

I am sharing this information as a:

0 - care-giver on behalf of myself.

2 - care-giver on behalf of a care-receiver.

0 - person with a special need.

19 - member of the general worshipping community.

Comments:

“I like my children exposed to individuals with disabilities at this service”.

“I love the intimate setting”

“The feel of the service is wonderful”.

“I wonder if we are too close to the organ so the music is too loud?”

“We attend the Sunday service for ourselves and this service for our son”.

“Well done, don’t change a thing – need to publicize this outside of Saint Mark’s”.

Results June to August:

1. “Gentle Worship” plays a positive role in my spiritual life.

Strongly Agree – 2 Agree – 2 Do Not Know - 0 Disagree - 0 Strongly Disagree - 0

2. “Gentle Worship” offers something I/We miss in my spiritual life.

Strongly Agree – 2 Agree – 1 Do Not Know – 0 Disagree –1 Strongly Disagree – 0

3. “Gentle Worship” allows me/us to participate in a worship experience I would otherwise not be able to.

Strongly Agree – 1 Agree – 0 Do Not Know - 0 Disagree – 2 Strongly Disagree - 1

4. The length and physical expectations of “Gentle Worship” are helpful.

Strongly Agree – 3 Agree – 0 Do Not Know – 1 Disagree – 0 Strongly Disagree – 0

5. I/We feel more accepted at “Gentle Worship”.

Strongly Agree – 2 Agree – 0 Do Not Know – 0 Disagree – 1 Strongly Disagree – 0

I am sharing this information as a:

0 - care-giver on behalf of myself.

0 - care-giver on behalf of a care-receiver..

0 - person with a special need..

4 - member of the general worshipping community.

Comments:

“I like the ambience”

“It really feels like I have been to church”.

“If you had done this I would have come back to church years ago”.

Results September to December:

1. “Gentle Worship” plays a positive role in my spiritual life.

Strongly Agree – 0 Agree – 7 Do Not Know - 0 Disagree - 1 Strongly Disagree - 0

2. “Gentle Worship” offers something I/We miss in my spiritual life.

Strongly Agree – 0 Agree – 2 Do Not Know – 1 Disagree – 4 Strongly Disagree – 0

3. “Gentle Worship” allows me/us to participate in a worship experience I would otherwise not be able to.

Strongly Agree – 0 Agree – 4 Do Not Know - 0 Disagree –3 Strongly Disagree - 1

4. The length and physical expectations of “Gentle Worship” are helpful.

Strongly Agree – 1 Agree – 6 Do Not Know – 1 Disagree – 0 Strongly Disagree – 0

5. I/We feel more accepted at "Gentle Worship".

Strongly Agree – 0 Agree – 1 Do Not Know – 3 Disagree – 3 Strongly Disagree – 0

I am sharing this information as a:

0 - care-giver on behalf of myself.

0 - care-giver on behalf of a care-receiver..

0 - person with a special need..

8 - member of the general worshipping community.

Comments:

"Disappointed the verger, while distributing communion, didn't look at my face – but instead looked beyond me to the other side of the room".

"There is a lot going on besides Gentle Worship on Sunday Morning so it seems less of a focus (and perhaps less special?) on Sunday Morning".

“I cannot get my spouse presentable in time to make this service”.

Observations and Conclusions

The database is relatively small to draw many strong conclusions, but we can make some interesting observations.

- The fewer people representing the target congregation were present, the less the general congregation agreed that this was meaningful spiritually. This could mean that worship with the differently-abled was positive spiritually for the congregation in general.
- The congregation and survey response rate decreased over time.
- More people disagreed as to the positive role of the service when it moved from Wednesday at 5:30 to Sunday morning at 9:00.
- Surveys which had the most “disagree” and strongly disagree” tended to be on the same survey card.

Appendix II: “Gentle Worship” Attendance Data

Introduction

The information collected was taken by the service ushers, recorded in the Service Book of Saint Mark's, and is presented here using the format mandated for the Annual Parochial Report of the Episcopal Church.

NOTE: The figures do not include the 20+ members of the Canterbury Children's Choir which was felt would artificially enlarge the figures – particularly as they departed at the peace and did not receive communion.

Results January to May:

Highest: 26 Lowest: 17 Average: 22.7

Results June to August:

Highest: 10 Lowest: 8 Average: 9

Results September* to December:

Highest: 11 Lowest: 10 Average: 10.25

*September marked the move of the service from first Wednesdays at 5:30 to first Sundays at 9:00 am.

Total Attendance Average:

The total average attendance over the entire period was **16.6**

Observations and Conclusions

Attendance began quite strong due to the excitement of a new service, many members of the Altar Guild and Parish Ushers attending to “get a feel” for their role, and general curiosity on behalf of the overall congregation. They finally settled to an average of about twenty for the initial statistical period (January to May). There were typically 4 – 5 differently-abled and their care-givers among the congregation.

As the June-August period commenced attendance began to drop, which is a typical trend within the overall congregation as many people travel and some “take the summer off” as there is no formal Christian Formation programs during this time. This was also the period when one family who was instrumental in the planning of the service said that this worship time would not work and the committee began looking at alternatives. The decision to move the service to Sundays will be discussed in the main body of the paper.

When the service began in the Fall for the statistical period from September to December attendance was half of the first statistical period. This contrasts with the 2014 November and December (the initial launch period) both of which were in the high twenties.

A number of people expressed surprise (10 out of 12 interviewed) at the “low attendance” and a few (3 interviewed) wondered if this was the best use of time and resources. Interestingly, this

has never been an issue for our Wednesday Noon Healing Service, which at its highest attendance does not reach the lowest participation of the “Gentle Worship”. There was some feeling that if the target demographic was not represented (which did happen about 30% of the time) the service was not “valid” or “successful”. This may be part of the general dynamic within the congregation, a lack of formation around the theology of worship, or lack of appreciation for the fact that the other “Gentle Liturgy” visited had similar attendance statistics. Ironically, many interviewed said that the “small and intimate” environment of the service was one of the most meaningful parts of the service (6 out of 12).

Appendix III: “Gentle Worship” Interviews

What drew you to attend a “Gentle Worship” service?

PK: Anxious to increase diversity at Saint Mark’s.

PK: The peaceful nature of the service.

PL: Interest in mental health issues.

PG: Role with Altar Guild.

PG: Sounded like a good idea.

PJ: Leadership role in Canterbury Choir.

ST: Leadership role in Canterbury Choir.

PA: Good experience for my (differently-abled) child

PA: Intimate, less sensory stimulation

PP: Volunteered (for logistical support).

PB: Wanted a quieter and shorter service for a friend with dementia.

PS: Regular church service is too long.

PM: A way to involve my (differently-abled) child.

SA: A liberating experience that allows “me to be me”.

1) In what ways was the experience as you expected?

PK: Service was brief, intimate, quiet, thoughtful.

PL: Pleasant, intimate service.

PK: Easy for everyone to participate.

PG: People with special needs attended.

PG: Intimate group.

PJ: Good service for target group.

PJ: Very basic liturgy – knew what to expect.

ST: Diverse group.

PA: No expectations.

PA: Good for my child as smaller space, fewer people, dim light and repetitive (nature) helpful.

PP: Short service – music and liturgy brief.

PB: Well described – as expected.

PS: Short – hope it is meaningful to spouse with dementia.

PM: All ways.

SA: How the brevity made the service seem more spacious.

2) In what ways was the experience unexpected?

PK: Use of technology.

PK: How few elderly in attendance.

PL: How difficult to get people to attend.

PG: How few people came.

PJ: Surprised by low attendance.

PJ: Children reacted (better) to different behavior than some adults, probably because of mainstreaming in schools.

ST: Style of sermon

ST: Brevity of service

PA: Too close to the organ – music too loud.

PA: Long walk to seating felt like being on a stage.

PP: Wondered if special needs children found the service meaningful.

PB: Not as quiet and calm as desired.

PS: Did not like the projection screen – felt like other churches bouncing ball”.

PP: None.

3) *What parts of the service were most meaningful to you - or to someone you accompanied?*

PK: Felt like everyone – people and clergy – were celebrating the service together.

PK: Sense of community and how the final hymn gives structure and continuity every time.

PL: Sermons were targeted (to audience) and short.

PG: Canterbury Choir singing.

PG: Meaningful homily.

PG: Participation by “SA”.

PJ: Children singing.

PJ: Concise homily.

PJ: Communion brought to each person.

PJ: Daughter “teared-up” during closing hymn

ST: Homily provided different take on readings.

PA: Music (not words) of closing hymn feels sad to my child – who became very emotional. This has gradually improved.

PP: Children’s choir, closing hymn, “SA”’s singing

PP: Feeling of inclusion.

PB: Smaller, more intimate

PB: Canterbury Choir.

PS: Canterbury Choir.

PM: Opportunity for my child to (be physically active).

PM: Closing hymn a favorite.

SA: Seeing a differently-abled child curled up near the altar.

SA: Canterbury Choir.

SA: Length of sermon

SA: Having one (Gospel) reading.

4) *Did the service seem too long? too short? just right?*

PK: Just Right

PL: Just right.

PG: Just right.

PJ: Just right.

ST: Just right

PA: Just right.

PP: Just right.

PB: Just right.

PS: Just right.

PM: Just right.

SA: Just right.

5) *Was there anything you "missed" from a more traditional liturgy?*

PK: No.

PL: Only a bigger congregation.

PG: No.

PJ: No, most of the service is all there.

ST: No.

PA: No, length of each part was good.

PP: No, because it is short you pay better attention.

PB: For me, this is not a substitute for regular service.

PS: No.

PP: No.

SA: No, it contained the "bones" needed for transformation.

6) *What would you change?*

PK: Altar Group sit among people.

PL: More attending

PG: Better attendance.

PJ: Time of service very busy for families.

ST: Nothing.

PA: Current time (Sunday 9:00 am) does not work for my family.

PP: Nothing.

PB: Longer homily.

PS: No.

PP: Service time – need more members of my family to be present.

SA: Love having intercessions part of the Eucharistic Prayer.

7) *Was there a favorite moment or part of the service?*

PK: Passing the peace is special in a small, intimate group.

PK: The final hymn.

PL: No.

PG: Children singing.

PJ: Intimate setting.

ST: Organ music before the service quiet and reflective.

PA: Sermon's short, compact message.

PP: Closing hymn.

PP: Intimate, inclusive feeling.

PB: Seeing my friend happy.

PS: No.

PM: Seeing my child accepted (2 personal stories told).

8) If you could the experience in just three words what would they be?

PK: Community, Reflective, God-centered

PL: Moving, Inclusive, Quick

PG: Moving service, well done

PJ: Reverent, Intimate, Inclusive

ST: Quiet, Contemplative, Thoughtful.

PA: Small, Gentle, Worship

PP: Meaningful, sparse attendance

PB: Lovely, alternative service

PS: Sort, Sweet, "Lost Cause"

PM: Rich, Inclusive, Warm.

SA: Liberating, Warm, Peaceful.

9) How important is it for the church to be making this effort?

very important important neutral not important don't know

PK: Important

PL: Neutral

PG: Important

PJ: Very important

ST: Important

PA: Very important

PP: Don't know

PB: Important

PS: Don't know.

PM: Very important

SA: Very important

10) Anything you would like to add?

PK: Touching too few – how do we find a way to include more?

PL: Worth the effort for those who attend.

PL: Nice to do something for (differently-abled) and their families.

PG: Need better attendance – both Saint Mark's and the community

PJ: Meaningful exposure of children to target population.

ST: This is a special community that needs to be served.

ST: How do we reach out to other Episcopal churches?

PA: Important for community to be aware,

PA: Better on a Wednesday night – too much already happening on Sunday.

PP: Should target group be changed or expanded?

PP: Should we have services like this at Christmas and Easter?

PB: No.

PS: Do not know if it is worth the effort for the few who attend.

PS: It would be a better use of clergy time to make home visits.

PS: It is impossible to attend a 9:00 am service.

PM: No.

SA: People who can't cope just won't come.

Appendix IV: Document: “Gentle Worship” Order of Service

Saint Mark’s Episcopal Church

“Gentle Worship”

An Order for the Holy Eucharist

The First Sunday of Each Month

9:00 a.m.

Welcome to Saint Mark’s “Gentle Liturgy” – a monthly worship service offered for those with special needs, their care-givers, and those who wish to offer support and hospitality. Today’s service will last about thirty minutes, and the words in this Order of Service will be projected on the screen beneath the altar. Music for the hymns is also found on the insert. On most Wednesdays the Canterbury Choir will participate in the first portion of the liturgy.

Communion is open to everyone today, and the bread and wine will be offered to each person in their seat. If you would like a blessing instead of communion just mention your preference to the priest when he or she comes by.

Your Comfort is very important to us, and if there is any way we may be of assistance please mention this to an usher. The clergy are hoping to learn from this service to assist other parishes, and will appreciate feedback on the “Gentle Survey” card also found in this Order of Service.

Kindly silence all mobile devices and gather in a spirit of respect for diversity

OPENING HYMN – SEE HYMN CARD (standing, if able; sung by all)

OPENING PRAYER

Leader The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Leader Let us pray.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

ANTHEM (seated) Soloist

THE GOSPEL (*standing, if able*)

Leader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to

People **Glory to You, Lord Christ.**

Leader The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to You, Lord Christ.**

Homily (seated)

THE PEACE (*standing, if able*)

Leader The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING

An offering plate is located at the beginning of the main aisle, and people are invited to make a contribution toward the ministry of the church as they arrive.

DOXOLOGY (*standing, if able; sung by all*)

Old 100th

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (*standing, if able*)

Leader The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Leader Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Leader Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Leader We thank you, loving and gracious God, for your gift of creation and your revelation to your people. We thank you also for this holy time in your presence of listening, prayer and celebration.

As we gather today we pray to you for the peace of the world, the welfare of the holy Church of God, and the unity of all peoples. We remember the aged and infirm, the widowed and orphaned, the sick and the suffering, and those who have special needs or are differently abled.

We also uphold to your mercy the poor and the oppressed, the unemployed and the destitute, prisoners, captives, and all who remember and care for them. We pray for all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and the departed of every generation who have gone before us in faith.

Above all we offer our praises to you for the gift of salvation through our Lord, Jesus Christ. He came to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to

reconcile us to you our loving creator.

And so, heavenly Father, we bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends and said, "Take, eat; This is my Body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me".

After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you; This is my Blood of the new Covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me".

Father, we now celebrate the memorial of your Son. By means of this holy bread and cup, we show forth the sacrifice of his death, and proclaim his resurrection, until he comes again.

Gather us by this Holy Communion into one body in your Son Jesus Christ. Make us a living sacrifice of praise.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever.

People **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Leader Let us now pray in the words the Lord has taught us:

Everyone **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead**

us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

HOLY COMMUNION

Communion will be brought to everyone in their places.

Leader [Alleluia.] Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. [Alleluia.]**

Leader The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Everyone who wishes a closer relationship with God through Jesus Christ is invited to receive the sacrament or a blessing.

CLOSING HYMN 482 – SEE HYMN CARD (*standing, if able; sung by all*)

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader Let us thank the Lord.

People **Thank you God, for this holy meal and time together. May we go forth now in your Name and with your grace.**

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

Deacon Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord.

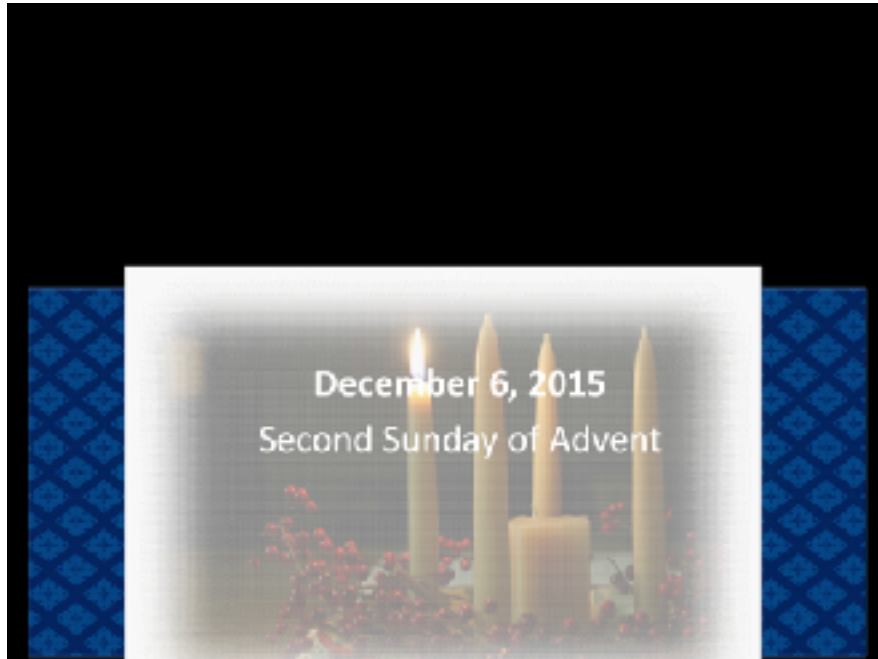
People **Thanks be to God!**

Whoever you are,
wherever you may be on
the journey of the Spirit,
The Episcopal Church welcomes you.
www.SaintMarksColumbus.org

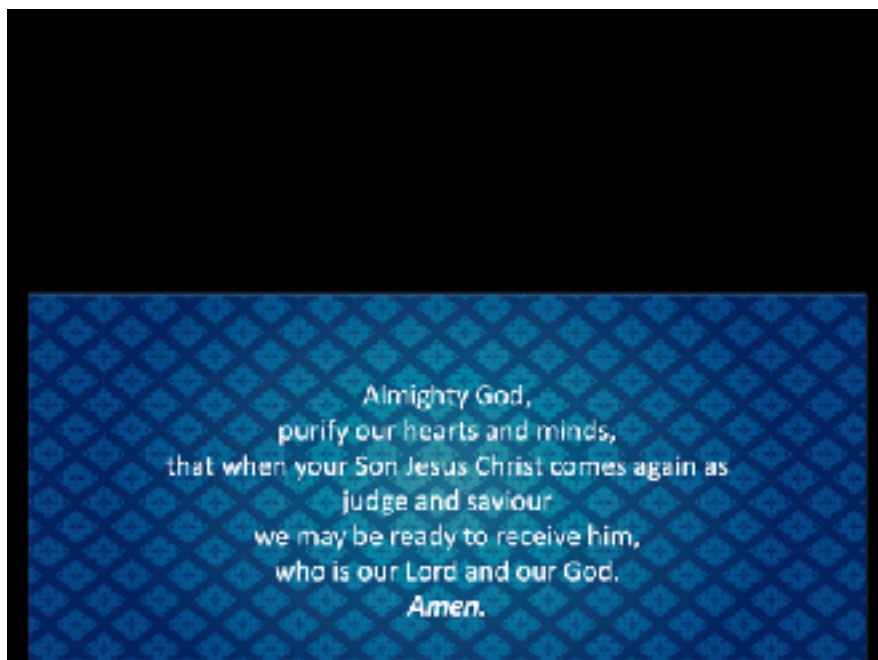
This service draws on the resources of **The 1979 Book of Common Prayer**, *“Enriching Our Worship 1: Supplemental Liturgical Materials prepared by the Standing Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church”*, 1997, and *“Additional Collects”* from Church House

Appendix V: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Advent

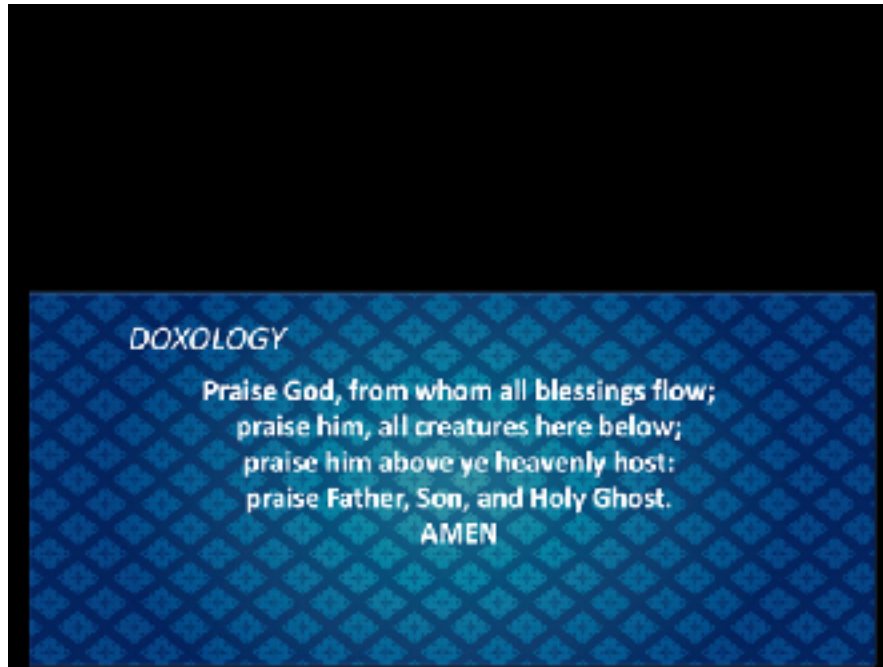
Slide 1



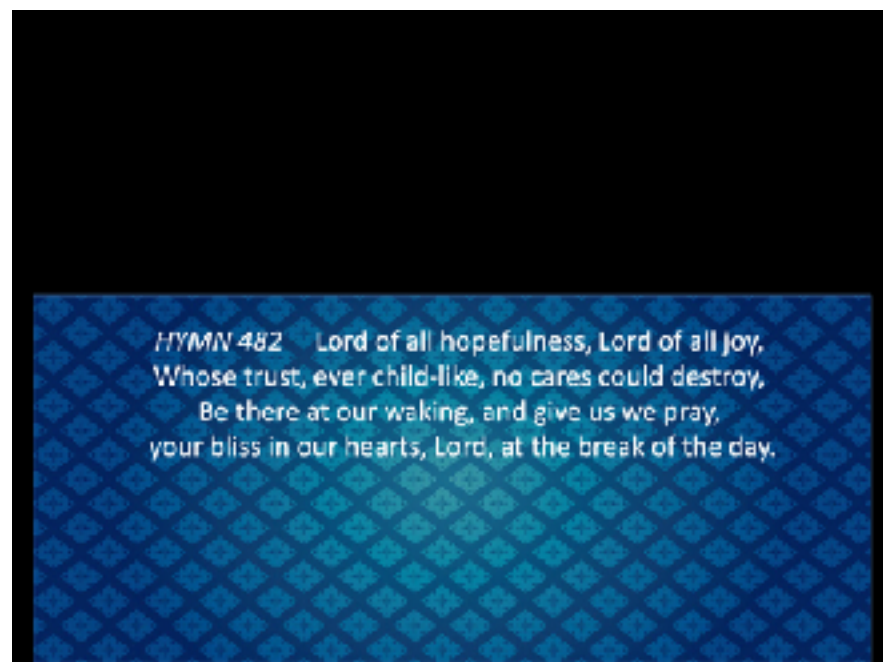
Slide 10



Slide 18

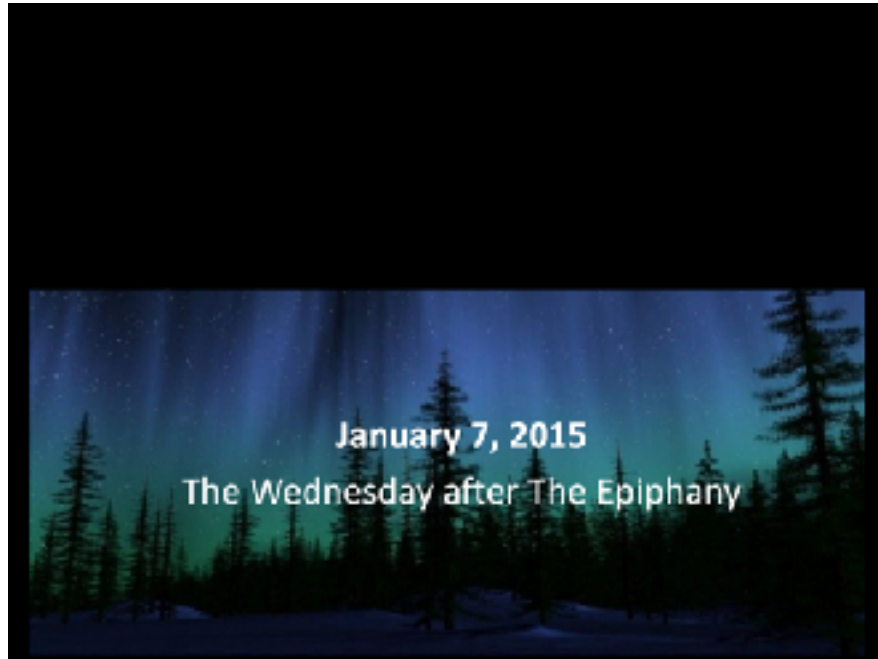


Slide 38

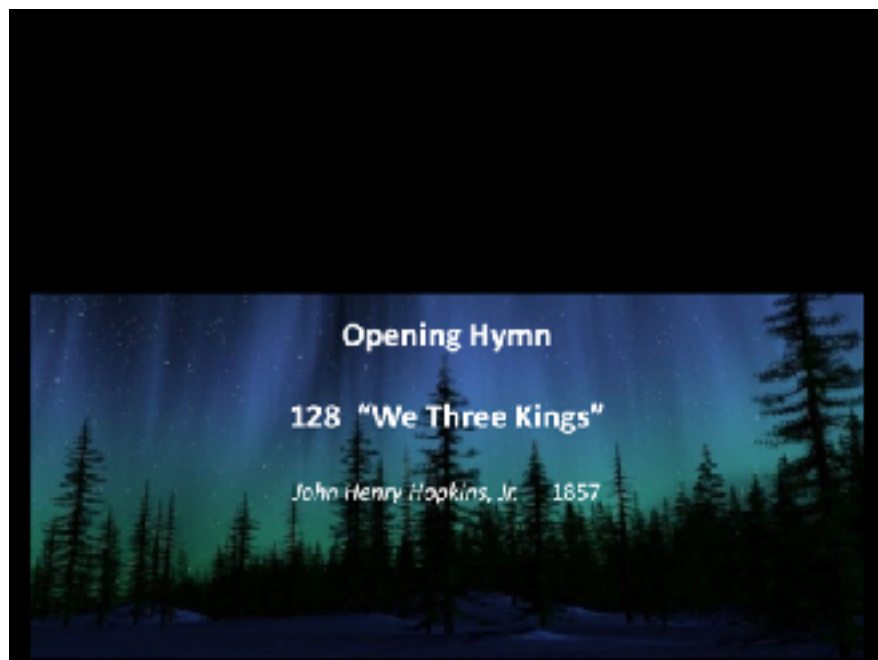


Appendix VI: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Epiphany

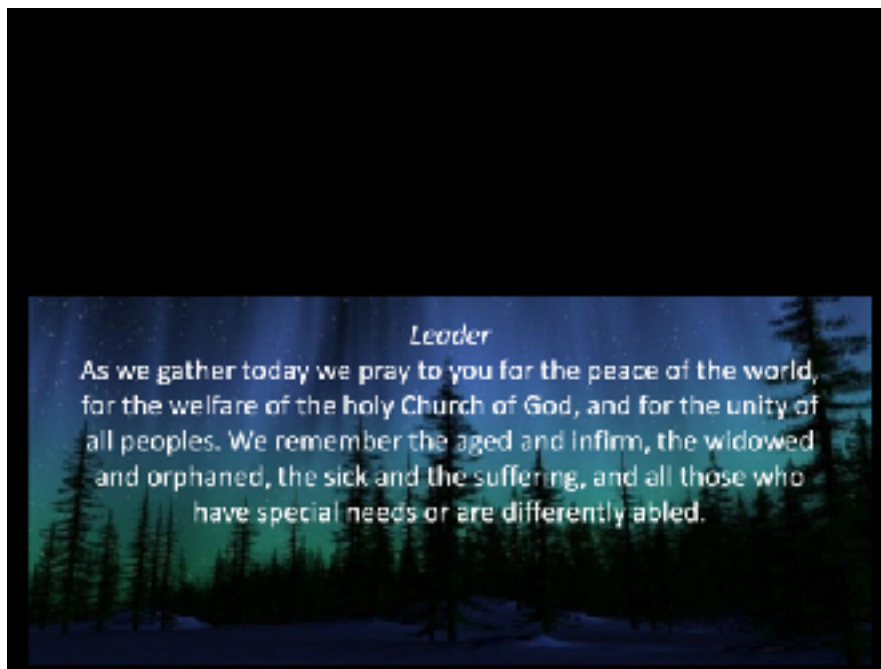
Slide 1



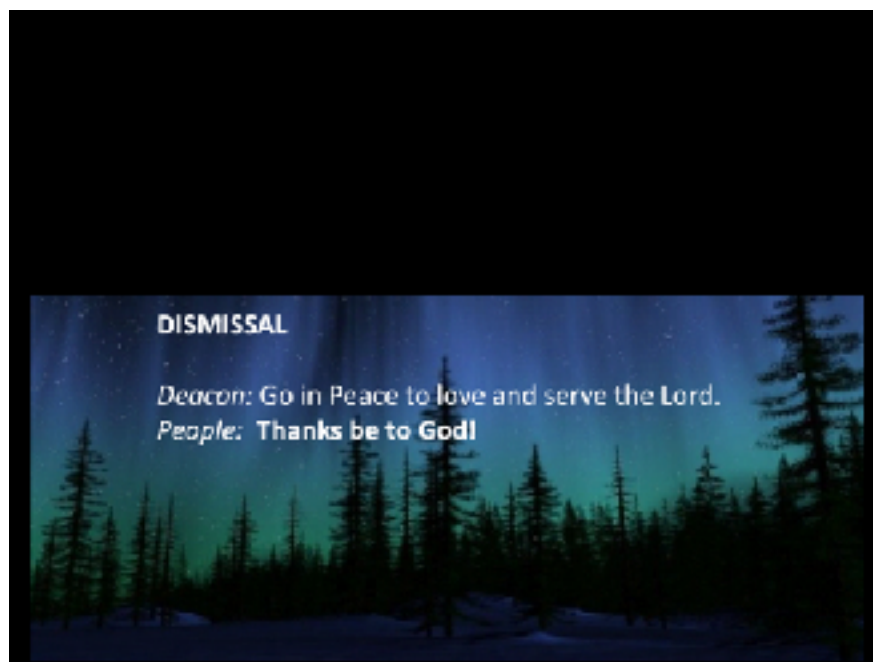
Slide 5



Slide 22



Slide 45

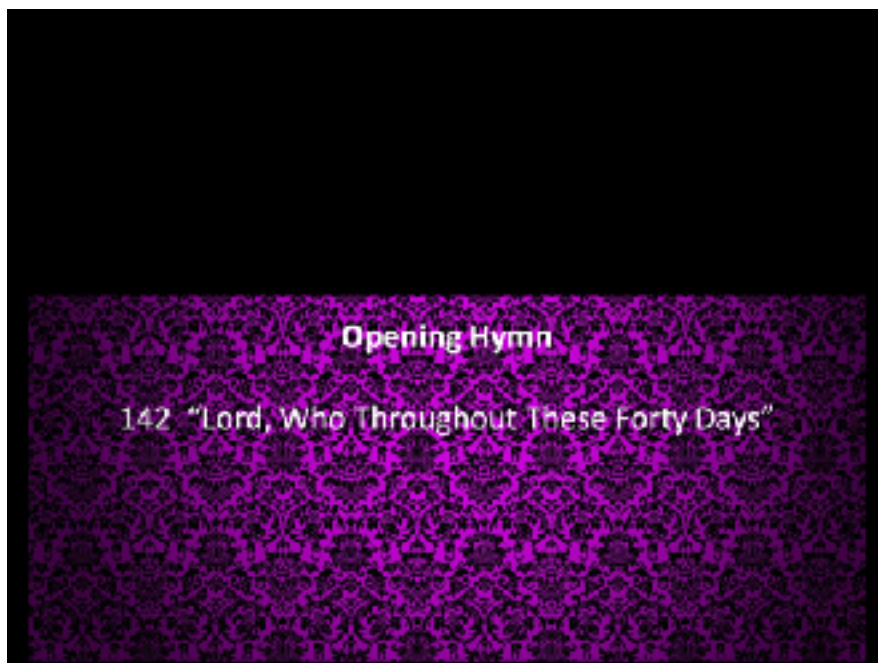


Appendix VII: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Lent

Slide 1



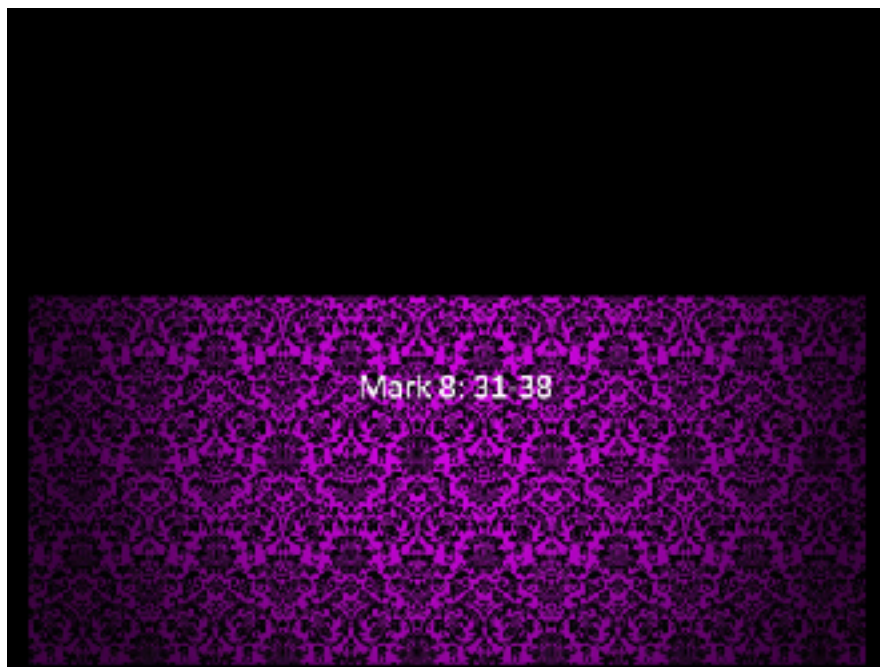
Slide 3



Slide 7



Slide 12

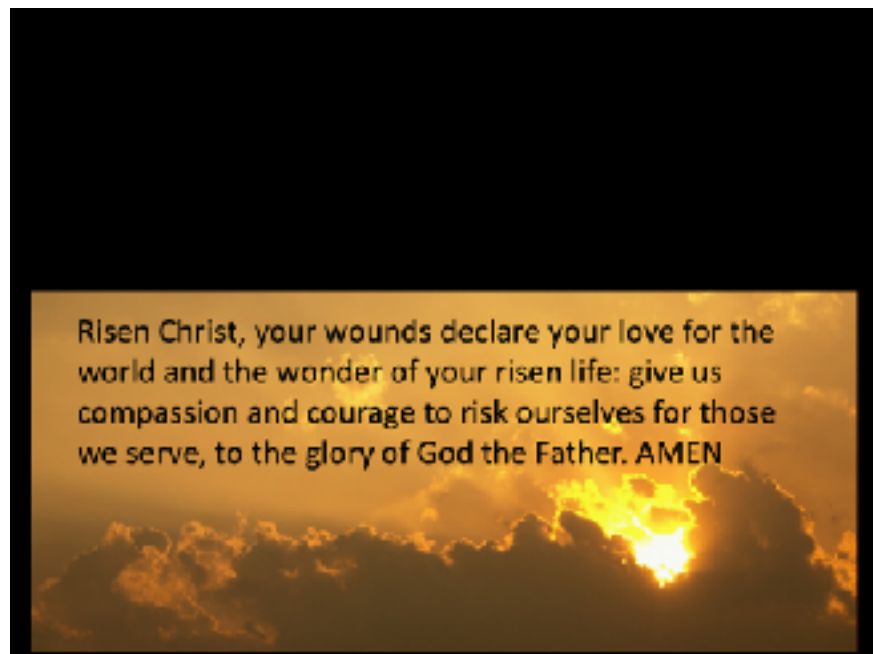


Appendix VIII: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Easter

Slide 1



Slide 8



Slide 9

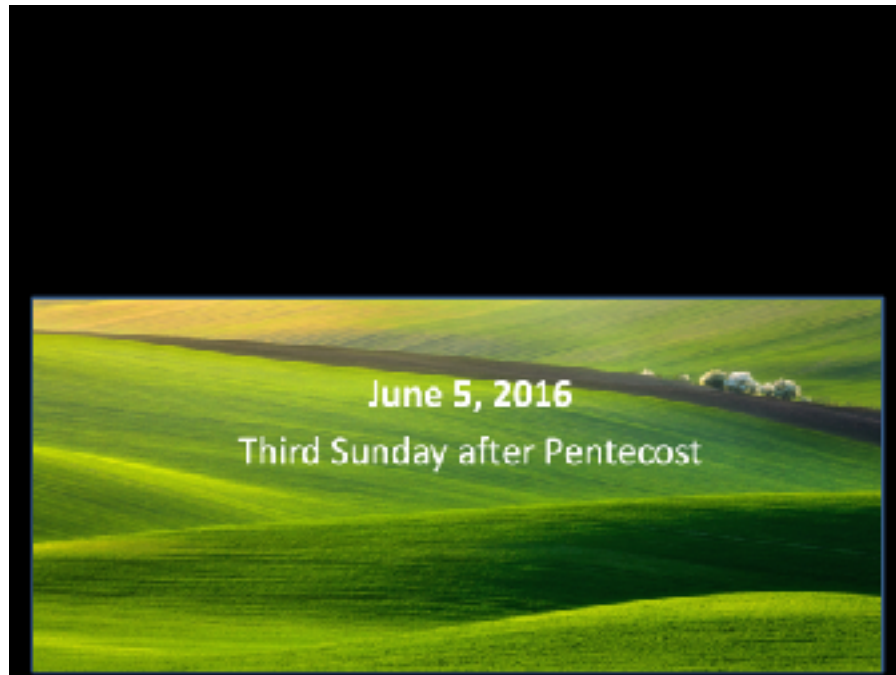


Slide 35

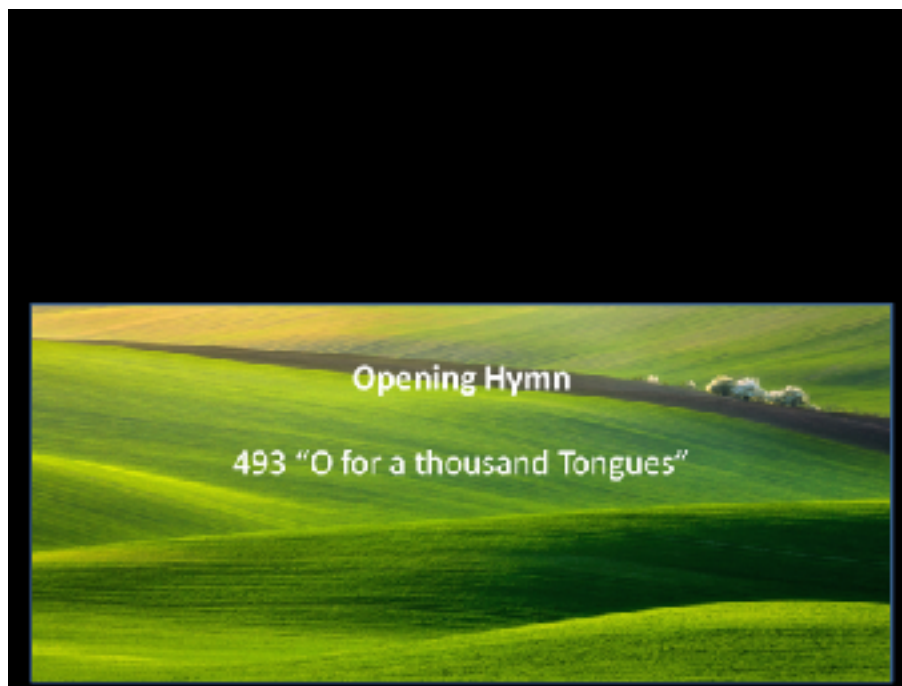


Appendix IX: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: Pentecost

Slide 1



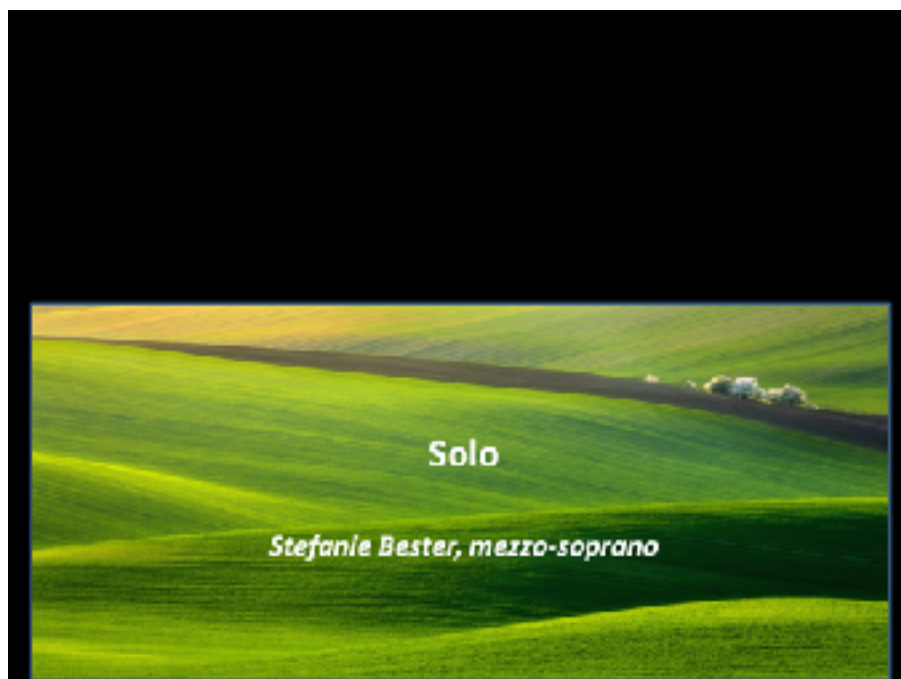
Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 11



Appendix X: Sample: Liturgical Images Projection: In Use



Projection screen in use during liturgy, fitting images perfectly to the altar frontal. “Blackout area” of slides are invisible and not distracting celebrant.



Canterbury Choir’s anthem with projector in foreground. Note: No members of the congregation (seated on opposite side of the choir) were photographed by design during this liturgy.