

Gospel (“Good News”) story, and because we believe that God has promised to meet us here in a special way. We practice “Open Communion,” which means that if you know the Gospel story and have entered into a relationship with God through Jesus, you are welcome to join us regardless of what type of church you normally go to. If you aren’t familiar with the Gospel story or don’t really understand the symbols, we encourage you to use the time to consider whether a relationship with God is something you might want and talk to a pastor or other member after the service. And in case you’re wondering, we use grape juice instead of wine.

BAPTISM might be something you see if you catch us on the right Sunday and is another practice that gets to the very heart of the Gospel story and our Faith. It is a symbol of Jesus’ cleansing, new-life-giving, invitation to us. Talk to the pastor if you are considering baptism for yourself or your children.

In the **OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW AND SERVE**, we are invited to respond to God’s love and join in God’s story. These opportunities are ways to help us know God better, learn what it means to follow Jesus, and share God’s love and the Gospel story with others. Most of these events or groups are open to anyone.

The **BENEDICTION** is like another “Call to Worship.” Just like we were invited to worship together at the beginning of the service, now we are invited and encouraged to worship wherever God might take us during the week.

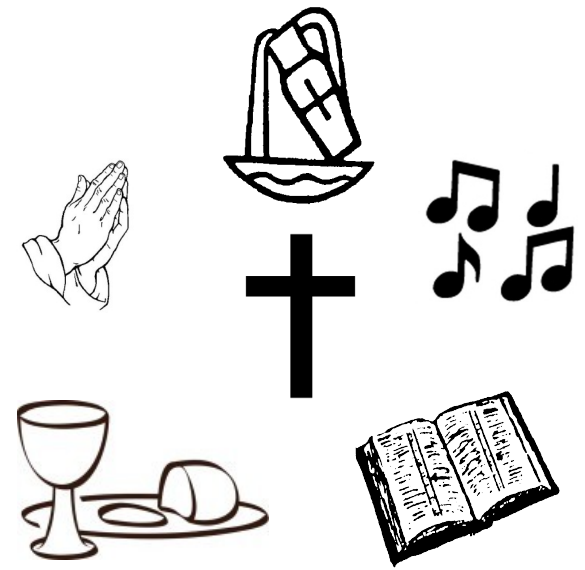
Our **RESPONSE** to the Benediction we call the “three-fold Amen.” “Amen” means “May it be so.” It’s our way of saying, “Yes!” to all we’ve heard and done in the worship service, and a commitment to carry that into our daily lives.

WHOLE-LIFE WORSHIPPERS

Our goal is to become “whole-life worshippers,” where every part of our lives is given to learning, experiencing, and sharing God’s love with others. All these worship activities accomplish their purpose when everyone—from the pastor to the musicians to all in the seats—are engaging in the worship process. So here are some tips to help you to engage in the worship service in a way that helps you to integrate worship into the rest of your life:

1. *Spend time with God throughout the week:* make time to plant yourself in the Scriptures, develop your relationship with God through prayer, and praise God through song.
2. Give yourself time to transition into worship: try not to rush in at the last moment, but have time to set your mind and heart on God and worshipping with God’s people.
3. *Ask God to speak to you, meet you, change you:* expect to encounter God and hear from him; ask “What does God want me/this community to hear this morning?”
4. *Come ready to work:* pay attention to what you pray, sing, hear in the sermon; take responsibility for engaging with God and his Word; avoid an ‘entertainment’ mentality.
5. *Write something down that impacted you:* take something away from the service; a line from a song, a point in the sermon, or a moment in prayer might be God’s way of meeting you here and working to transform your life.
6. *Let the worship service guide your “whole-life worship”:* discuss the sermon with other people; take the bulletin home and think about the reflection questions; spend time praying the prayers during the week in a personal way.

WORSHIP



At Point Place UCC

- What is worship?
- Why do we do the things we do during worship services?
- How can I become a “whole-life worshipper”?

What's Going on Here?!

For some of us, going into a church (especially with a more “traditional” worship style) can be a cause for culture shock! There aren't many other places in our culture where a bunch of people sing together, read aloud together, and participate in ancient rituals. Maybe you're feeling uncomfortable because of all these things. That's natural when we experience something new! We hope you'll stick with us, because we believe that everything we do here helps us to worship. For us, worship happens when we are planted in God's Story (the Bible). As we experience God's love and truth, we blossom into grateful praise, and our lives begin to be changed by that God. Hopefully, the picture below helps. Each activity we do contributes to that process. Most of those activities are laid out in the program (or bulletin), so try following along, and if you get lost, just ask someone around you.



The **PRELUDE** is a time for our hearts and minds to transition from whatever activity we come from into the activity of worship. In silence or as you listen to the piano or choir music, be still, and know that God is God, who has called us into a worshipping community, and who is involved and necessary to our lives.

The **CALL TO WORSHIP** is an invitation to us. The Bible tells us that the whole creation is praising our God! Here, we are invited to join in the symphony of praise and offer our lives to be shaped by this loving, renewing God.

The **INVOCATION** is an invitation to God. It also reminds us that if God isn't here, there's no one to hear our praises or change our lives. We believe God is present as we come to him in faith.

SINGING is a key part of our worship. It's a chance for us to both express our praises and learn God's story. It's important, then, that we are paying attention to the words we sing and engaging our hearts as well. If you are having trouble following along, please be patient and give yourself time to learn new songs. Sometimes we sing older songs that express great truths and sometimes we sing newer songs that help us to express what is in our hearts. Both are valuable for our worship.

PRAYING is another activity that shows up a number of times. Prayer reminds us that our worship is not just a human thing, but a time where we, together, encounter God. Here are a few examples:

The **PRAYER OF ADORATION** is a chance to compliment and thank God for all that he is and has done for us.

The **PRAYER OF CONFESSION** soberly recognizes that there are many ways we turn away from God or ignore his wisdom. Here, we admit where we have been wrong, trusting that God is waiting for us to return to him and joyfully forgive us.

This is where the **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

come in. Even when it's hard for us to *feel* forgiven, we are reminded of God's promises to us.

The **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** are a chance to take our specific needs to God. We have a **SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS** so we can specifically present to God things that are going on in our lives and the lives of others. We pray for our congregation, for the local community, for the nation, and for things going on around the world. When the pastor prays, we invite you to take those words as your own prayer. When there is silence, we invite you to use your own words and present your own needs to God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER was a prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. It gives us a vision for what is truly important for us and God, and helps us to summarize our needs. Sometimes we sing it.

When we do **SCRIPTURE READINGS**, it's because we believe the Bible is God's story, a message that God is speaking to us that helps us know God and how he works in the world. This is the fertile soil that, when we're planted in it, makes us grow.

The **SERMON** is a time to hear God's Word spoken and taught in our time and place. Sermons seek to clarify the Scriptures and to apply the message to our lives and congregation. You are encouraged to follow along in your Bible (page numbers in the bulletin), listen for what God might be saying to you, consider how you can respond, and share any thoughts or questions you have with the pastor or others during the sermon time (if this invitation is made) or after the service.

THE LORD'S SUPPER (aka Communion or the Eucharist) is a beautiful time for us. We do this the first Sunday of the month (and other occasions) because every bit of the ritual draws us back into the very center of our Faith and the