

Music and Worship Celebration Weekend
A service recognizing the impact and gift of music and worship arts at Grace
UMC.

Psalm 100

May 15, 2022

Rev. Dr. Jenothy Irvine

Prayer: May all that we are be an act of worship in which all that you are is celebrated and made known. Amen.

Reflection:

“Worship is ecstatic, mystical praise and celebration. Worship is what you do inside and outside of church when you DO God’s word.”

-John Wesley

When I reflect on worship - what it is and what it means, I find myself thinking that worship is about people, purpose, and place.

Worship is people - intergenerational, learning and growing together through the act of worship; sharing our stories alongside THE story. Worship is my story informing your story and your story influencing my story and hearing, seeing, and living it all out within THE story. Seeing how they intertwine, support, inform, build up, and challenge one another along the way. It is about milestones and moments shared that recognize and celebrate Christ with us in the living out of our days - births, deaths, accomplishments, achievements, hard work, celebrations, memorials, loud moments, quiet moments, still moments, and even the difficult moments. Especially the difficult moments.

Frederick Buechner writes,

“phrases like Worship Service or Service of Worship are tautologies. To worship God means to serve him. Basically there are two ways to do it.

One way is to do things for him that he needs to have done - run errands for him, carry messages for him, fight on his side, feed his lambs, and so on. The other way is to do things for him that you need to do - sing songs for him, create beautiful things for him, give things up for him, tell him what's on your mind and in your heart, in general rejoice in him and make a fool of yourself for him the way lovers have always made fools of themselves for the one they love. A Quaker Meeting, a Pontifical High Mass, the Family Service at First Presbyterian, a Holy Roller Happening - unless there is an element of joy and foolishness in the proceedings, the time would be better spent doing something useful." *Wishful Thinking-A Theological ABC.*

Worship is about purpose and must have purpose to have impact. That purpose is to be in relationship with the One who created us; to turn and look at God looking at us. Our greatest desire, whether we name it or not, is to be in connection with our creator. Worship provides us time and space for that purpose. We balance our purpose between messages, music, prayer, arts, something old and something new; between challenging, equipping, inspiring, convicting, teaching, encouraging, and leading one another while walking alongside each other.

Worship is about place. It is a place for us to experience the presence of the Holy in the midst of all that goes on in our life and world. It is the act of doing God's word. It is a place to intentionally work on being with God and with one another. It is also a place in which we make a place for God. It's about finding your place - seeking to serve, participating in missions and outreach, as well as volunteering. It's about providing a place for others. A place for people to be who they are and where people are on their journey. It's about recognizing God's place among us whether in a formal or relaxed, planned or spur of the moment, organized or organic way. When the Christ in me honors the Christ in you, we create a place for the divine to work on us both. Worship then is about people, purpose, and place. Amen.

