

Creative Worship Team

July 18, 2023

In attendance: Holly, Jen, Kathy, Leilani, Leslie

Absent: Donna, Rick and Paula

I. Reviewed the draft team purpose statements

Jen Beck distilled the various comments about purpose from the retreat and our prior meeting into the following three possible statements:

1. The Creative Worship Team works to provide a safe and welcoming space that helps participants experience God's love, connect with the divine, and grow deeper in faith. Valuing [questioning,] exploration, and diverse expression, the team promotes worship that energizes, [challenges,] and comforts while also building spiritual community .
2. The Creative Worship Team seeks to provide a worship experience that helps participants connect to the divine, build community, and grow spiritually. Valuing both ritual and diversity, the team promotes worship that comforts and energizes in a safe, sacred space [that is both stable and dynamic].
3. The Creative Worship Team commits to planning worship opportunities that welcome participants with God's love, build community, and promote diverse exploration and expression. Acknowledging the need for an energizing and comforting sacred space [that fills the cup of Spirit], the team will seek ways to employ both ritual and new practices to nurture spiritual growth.

We reviewed the statements, shared items that really spoke to us, and agreed that Jen will work to consolidate these thoughts into a single statement.

Team members are encouraged to continue to reflect on the statements and send additional thoughts to Jen.

II. Explore themes and things for us to try in the fall

We continued the conversation from points raised at the retreat and prior meetings and wondered what we might try/do/do differently for the fall.

- 1) For the start of worship, we will explore using a soft chime or bell as an audible signal at the start of worship. Ideas and suggestions for the chime or placement should be sent to Kevin and/or added into the Order of Worship for September.
- 2) We would like to explore using sung response and or an anthem from time to time. Placement of these should help move the worship and help as we transition from one liturgical action to another, e.g., from readings to message, etc.
- 3) For the end of worship we seek to address the oddness related to the postlude.

We acknowledge that people are standing for the closing song, benediction, Alleluia – and then are made to sit again for the postlude. Even when we have intentionally tried to give permission to people to sit and listen, or exit to the narthex or Harrison Hall; social pressure (and some have said concerns of being shamed) hold people for the postlude. This feeling of awkwardness is not the last impression we wish to leave people as the leave worship.

We explored several ideas and shared that for some this is an opportunity to reflect before leaving, however this is not the case for everyone. Rather than either/or we see to find a both/and solution that is “invitational rather than obligation-al.”

In the fall we will try placing the alleluia before the benediction and adding an invitation to remain, move to Harrison Hall for conversations and connection, or meet the pastor in the Narthex or front lawn.

4) Regarding themes for the Fall

There are three segments based on the calendar and rhythms of the fall,

a. Home Coming – Mid October

A series about hospitality/coming home makes sense and is desirable.

Worship Design Studio has a series called “[Come to the Table](#),” (see series overview in the 2023 Autumn Worship Planning folder and/or more detail on the series of Worship Design Studio).

Kevin will download the series to a folder in Worship Planning and begin working on the Orders of Worship using WDS scripts as a starting point.

Team is encouraged to explore the series and other resources in WDS and suggest music, and other creative elements in the Orders of worship or email CreativeWorship@FirstChurchWoodstock.org (see below)

b. Mid October – Sunday of Thanksgiving week

We will again connect worship to the Stewardship theme. This year the theme is “Because of You our church changes lives.”

There are worship resources, suggested scriptures (which are more about giving and generosity), and faith story guidelines that are part of the campaign. The resources come from the UCC and a [PDF of the campaign resources](#) is in the Autumn 2023 folder on the Worship Planning Drive.

We will create a folder for the worship series and develop a series overview, orders of worship, etc. related to the worship series.

c. Advent

Awe and wonder are the overarching theme for Advent.

This will include the work of Dacher Keltner *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life*. You can read [a transcript](#) of his On Being Interview or [listen to the audio](#).

The team is encouraged to explore the Worship Design Studio series and resources for Advent and into the New Year, especially the advent DIY series “[Awed and Odd](#)” and for the start of the new year about Awe and wonder called “[God is Holding Your Life](#).” The latter series has a song related to the series we can consider, social media, and an introduction video; as well as scripts, prayers, etc.

III. Introduce Worship Design Studio

[Worship Design Studio](#) is the brainchild of liturgist, musician, and artist Marcia Mcfee. She explains the WDS and its resources in this [3 minute video](#).

She has created a number of worship series, training videos, creative ideas to help worship teams facilitate meaningful, memorable, spiritually-grounded worship. We have an annual subscription that allows us access to all of the materials, training, past and future weekly webinars and trainings.

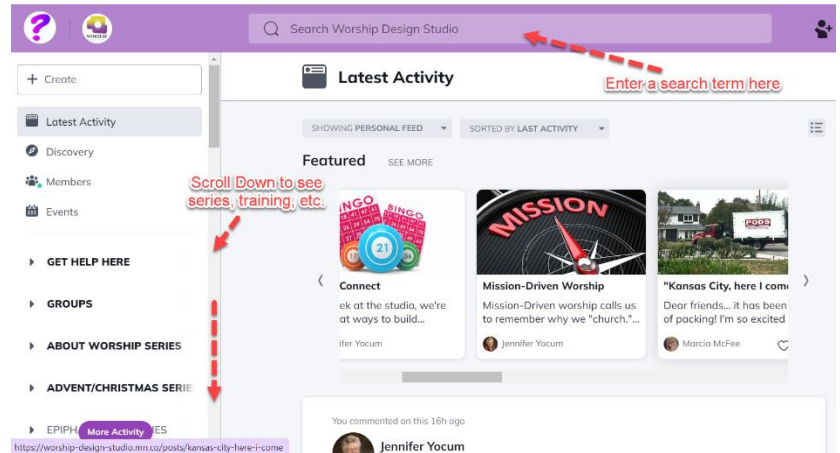
Pastor Kevin has the administrative account and can add team members to grant you access. **He needs to know which email you wish to use.**

Once signed up, **you will receive an email with links and instructions for setting up your account** and connecting it to our subscription. There is a 3-minute video embedded in the email that also explains/shows you what to do and where to click (and how to tell if you have successfully connected to the subscription-based resources).

The site is a bit confusing. Scroll down on the left-hand navigation to find the series and a link to training and events.

Or enter a term in the search field, like “Worship Design Library” or “Collaboration.” There is a [20 minute video](#) from WDS explaining more about site navigation.

A listing of WDS worship series is posted in the [2023 Autumn worship planning](#) folder.



As you explore the site, let the team know if you find interesting series, resources, or videos we might want to watch on our own or collectively. Email the link to the Creative Worship distribution list CreativeWorship@FirstChurchWoodstock.org

IV. WDS virtual retreat Aug 13 - 16

With our subscription to the Worship Design Studio is online access to a worship planning retreat that will be taking place August 13 – 16. There is no extra cost for this. You need not attend all sessions. However, if you plan to attend any part of the live sessions Aug 13 – 16, **send Kevin an email so you can be registered under our team account.**



Retreat Schedule

Times on the website are Central. The times below have been converted to EASTERN TIME. All sessions are recorded and will be available to registrants as soon as each session is over and throughout the year (forever!).

Sunday evening (8 PM): THE CREATIVE PROCESS AND THE LITURGICAL YEAR – We'll lay the groundwork with a look at planning seasonally, team processes, timelines and how to get the most out of your time at this planning retreat.

Monday morning (10 AM): THE ADVENT/CHRISTMAS/EPIPHANY CYCLE – Make plans to start the liturgical year off with deeply meaningful worship that has people talking about "the best Advent season ever." You may choose to use one of Worship Design Studio's fully-scripted series to give yourself a great foundation for training your team in more sensory-rich worship and give you an even greater chance of getting planned WAY ahead.

Monday afternoon (2 PM): THE LENTEN SEASON – Dr. Marcia will offer you glimpses into the possible depths you can offer your congregation in this poignant season that offers personal and

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communal transformation. We will highlight the power of symbols and spiritual practices that flow easily between worship and home, connecting what we do in worship to our daily lives.

Monday night (8 PM): HOLY WEEK – The Holy Week session is an immersive and unforgettable worship experience that illustrates how spoken word, music, visual symbols, and ritual action can all work together to share a powerful message.

Tuesday afternoon (2 PM): EASTER CYCLE AND THE DAY OF PENTECOST – Easter is not just one Sunday, but a whole season! This session will focus on Easter Sunday through Pentecost and the rich journeys your congregation may be ready to embark on during a season that celebrates resurrection and new life.

Tuesday evening (8 PM): THE SUNDAYS AFTER PENTECOST – We'll look at how to manage and plan for this long season, making "ordinary time" extraordinary! Our goal here is to spark many, many ideas that you can easily develop for the second half of the year.

Wednesday morning (10 AM, finished by noon): CONTINUING THE PROCESS – Now that we have broad brush strokes planned for the year, this session will help you know what to do when you go home, how to keep the creativity flowing, manage teamwork and how to get to the nitty-gritty of planning details without falling back into a last-minute rut.

V. Music that Makes Community UCC webinar and one-day workshop September 30th

Music that Makes Community is an intergenerational, engaging, paperless way of leading the congregation in worship and song.

Debby Kirk has introduced some of their music in worship and the SNEUCC annual meeting used some of their music in the form of a prayer.

You can find out more about Music that Makes Community on their [website](#).

[There is a workshop](#) being held Saturday September 30th at Pilgrim UCC in New Bedford. The fee is \$75. Leslie and Kevin are registered to go. If others are interested, **please register and let us know, so we can car pool**. The Church can cover the registration fees for those who wish as a reimbursement – or let Rev. Kevin know and he will register you and pay for it directly. Space is limited, so the sooner we register the better.

VI. Creating/Using a Creative Worship google group

You will be receiving an email to join a google group for Creative Worship. The group is, in essence, a group email distribution list. You can access and participate in the group by emailing and responding to CreativeWorship@firstChurchWoodstock.org. You can, if you desire, also access the group to look back and the conversation history should you miss place or delete an email and, in the future, want to reference it.

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We will continue to use the Worship Planning Google Drive for documents, etc. The distribution list is also a way to ask a question, share an idea, share an interesting article or link.

This will also make it easy for congregants to share their ideas as well by emailing the group without needing to know everybody's email addresses. If you have questions or need a tutorial, please ask Kevin.

VII. Next meeting is the second Tuesday in September at 7pm.