

# **Annotated Worship Leader Guide for a Typical Worship Service**

(revised September 2025)

## **How to Become a Worship Leader:**

In the fall, FMC participants are asked to fill out a Work of the Church form to indicate what things they are interested in contributing to the life of the congregation. One of the things that can be checked is worship leading. If you mark that you are interested in becoming a worship leader, Pastor Deb will talk to you. If you mutually decide to proceed, she will put you on the worship schedule. This schedule is usually for 3 months. If you find that you cannot serve the week you are assigned, please find your own substitute from the worship leader list. Also let Deb and Rhonda know of any changes you make.

## **Preparing for Worship:**

About 1½ weeks in advance of each worship service, Pastor Deb will send all those who have something to do with worship a detailed list of what they are responsible for and a print-out of the scripture. Worship leaders are typically responsible for the following:

- Call to Worship
- Welcome and Prayer
- Inviting the children for the story time
- Offering prayer
- Introduction of visitors
- Asking for the names on zoom
- Work of the church announcements

***\*Note: Sometimes the Advent or Lent Committee may change the order of worship for a season; these special committees frequently also provide the Call to Worship or the Opening prayer.***

As you look over the theme and scripture for the week, think about appropriate opening words, prayers, and the Call to Worship. The pastors welcome your getting in touch with them regarding any questions you might have. Consider spending time in prayer during the week before you lead for the Spirit's guidance and inspiration - both for yourself, the other participants who have some leadership responsibilities, the pastors, and of course the congregation.

***Note: Any information you want to be included in the bulletin on the week you are leading must be sent to Rhonda ([office@fmc-cu.org](mailto:office@fmc-cu.org)) and the pastor who is preaching no later than Thursday morning.***

## **On the Sunday You Lead Worship**

### **Pre-Service:**

Consider arriving at church at least by 8:45 in order to be ready to lead worship without feeling hurried and rushed. It is surprising how many times there are changes that need to take place or some other matter that comes up needing attention. At 9:05 meet in the library with the pastors, musicians, storyteller, scripture reader(s), and anyone else who is part of the morning's leadership. It is the responsibility of the worship leader to go through the service order with everyone, making sure each person is aware of their responsibilities and to clarify uncertainties. One of the pastors will give you an announcement sheet during this meeting which you will use during the Work of the Church section of the service (see the Work of the Church section below). As this meeting ends, the worship leaders pray for the morning's service. If it is your first time leading worship, you may ask one of the pastors to lead this pre-service meeting if you would be more comfortable.

### **Chimes**

## **Prelude:**

During the prelude the worship leader lights two candles (unless instructed otherwise by the pastors). One candle is the Christ candle and the other is candle for our Colombian sister church. Check before the service to make sure the lighter is on one of the candle stands. Also make sure you understand how to use the lighter.

## **Call to Worship:**

The Call to Worship is intended to be an invitation. It might be to invite God's presence, an invitation to quiet ourselves in order to listen to the Holy Spirit; an invitation to praise, an invitation to gather with community, etc. In certain seasons of the year (i.e. Advent, Lent, Eastertide, Creation) the Opening Prayer and the Call to Worship are likely going to be prepared for you (by a committee or found in special materials that will be used). All the rest of the time it is the worship leader's responsibility to come up with the Call to Worship. You are welcome to write an original Call to Worship, format scripture into a Call to Worship, or find something appropriate in one of the many resources available to you. In most cases the Call to Worship is a responsive reading, but that choice is up to the worship leader.

## **Gathering Hymn**

### **Welcome:**

Each worship leader is free to develop a warm and inviting welcome as you wish. In a former worship handout from our pastors they wrote: "The Welcome is truly a welcome; although you are free to share some reflections, it does not need to be a mini-sermon." Some of our worship leaders like to expound a bit on the scripture and/or the morning's theme. Others prefer to offer a brief good morning welcome that doesn't include anything extra. Either style is fine, and you may change your approach from service to service depending on the morning. In any case, be sure to welcome visitors and mention that there will be a time for introductions later in the service. If you surmise that there are indeed new people present, you may also mention that there is a fellowship hour downstairs following the service and then Sunday School classes for all ages. The prayer follows immediately after.

### **Prayer:**

This may be a prayer you extemporaneously speak, one you write, or one you find in some resource (more on that in the Call to Worship section).

## **Praising Hymn**

### **Children's story and offering:**

The worship leader invites the children forward for a story. You may or may not want to mention the storyteller's name and offering project (the storyteller can also do this). After you make this announcement the worship leader sits down and is "off duty" until the offering prayer.

## **Scripture**

## **Sermon**

## **Responding Hymn**

### **Offering Prayer:**

The worship leader returns to the podium and offers a prayer **before** the ushers collect the offering. Once again, this may be an original prayer that you do spontaneously, one you compose, or one you borrow from an outside resource. Return to your seat after the prayer.

## **Congregational Sharing and Prayer**

## **Introduction of Visitors:**

Invite any visitors to introduce themselves by raising their hands for an usher to bring a mic or perhaps to be introduced by someone they are with. Make an appropriate comment after each visitor has spoken: “So happy that you are here this morning.” Or, “So happy to meet you.” Or “we hope to see you again.” or simply “Welcome”. You get the idea!

A second part of this section is for you to ask the person running Zoom to read the names of those who are worshipping with us on Zoom.

## **Work of the Church Announcements:**

At the beginning of this time, invite anyone who has an announcement to come forward. At the pre-service meeting, you will have been given an announcement list. Read all those announcements that no one else covered. As a hospitality reminder...try to refrain from using first names only in announcements. For example, “talk to Marcia if you can host the potluck.” Include her last name, and even better have her wave her hand or stand so newer worshippers can identify who Marcia is. Likewise, avoid using acronyms in announcements. For example, instead of making an announcement about MDS needing volunteers, say “Mennonite Disaster Service.” Better yet, you might give a brief explanation of what Mennonite Disaster Service does.

You are done!

## **Sending Hymn**

## **Benediction**