

Are you curious to see what we're about, but don't know what to expect? Here's a brief guide to worship at Stonewall United Church.

The structure of our worship service is very simple; there's nothing you need to know in advance. Nobody will call on you or ask you to say anything; you can participate as much or as little as you desire. As you walk into the sanctuary, greeters will offer you an announcements listing and welcome you. The "worship bulletin" will be projected on the PowerPoint screens to help you follow the prayers and responses for the week. Ask for a large-print version if you need one.

Worship is at 10:00, and we usually start on time or within a couple of minutes. If you're running a few minutes late, please don't turn around; the two doors into the sanctuary (that's the room where the worship takes place) are easy to slip in without disturbing anybody.

Worship style

Our worship services are rooted in the United Church of Canada tradition. We follow a particular order - a liturgy, it's called - but it is easy to follow. Everything you need to know is projected on our screens or in the weekly bulletin, and no prior knowledge is needed. The liturgy doesn't vary a great deal from week to week or from season to season. If you come in on a random week, there won't be the feeling that you are "walking into the middle" of a cycle of worship. And don't feel bad if you miss a few lines; to us, worship isn't memorization, it's about the Spirit.

Music

Hymns are scattered throughout our worship services. We use the United Church's Voices United and More Voices and the words will be projected on the screen. Feel free to use the Hymn books in the back of the pews (or under the chair seat) if you want to or use them for the musical notes. So you'll hear (and join in, we hope) on a number of favorites from a hundred years ago and some new songs. Don't worry if you can't hold a tune; we have a great choir to lead us.

Children

About a third of the way through worship, we have our Children's Learning Time, when all the kids (as defined by themselves) gather up near the front for a chat with our Minister. Children's Time ends with a Prayer then a Hymn, in which the whole congregation joins, and then most of the young people go off to Sunday school - though that is certainly not required. We can't emphasize enough that your kids are absolutely welcome at our church, and will probably get a few compliments. We have a large screen T.V. in our Family Room that allows parents who need some privacy to still follow the service. There is a change table in one of the washrooms.

The Lord's Prayer

Is usually said during the service and the words will be on the screens located at the front and side of the sanctuary.

On a related note, our readings are mostly from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), several copies of which are in every pew. We do tend toward inclusive language: for instance, God is usually "God" or "Holy One," not "He" or "Father."

Communion

This takes place on several Sunday's of each year. This happens in two ways – either served or by intinction. Most often communion is served by intinction where individuals come forward and pick up a piece of bread, dip it in the grape juice and consume it before returning to their seat. Trays with individual cups and plates with cubes of bread are passed from person to person reminding us of Christ's call to serve one another. Our policy on who can receive communion is very simple: you can. To us it's a sacrament. But it is God's gift, and we think it would be way out of line for our church to deny it to anyone.

Fellowship

After all this, you are cordially invited to join us for coffee. (Coffee is available before, during and after the service) Somebody may ask you to sign the guest book. Feel free to do so. Or feel equally free to say, "Not today, I'm just looking around."

Dress code

We don't have one of these, either. Some of our members dress to the nines, others dress in cotton and denim. If you want to be inconspicuous, somewhere in between will work just fine.

Still have questions? Call our office and talk to the office staff at 204-467-5469.