



Pastoral Ministry Assistant
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I have been pondering a question for quite some time. As we plan worship services, Sunday school, and congregational activities, when do we keep the traditional elements and when do we try new ways and ideas.

For many people who have been raised in the Lutheran Church, the traditional service and liturgies are important. I fully understand older people holding on to traditions, but I would have guessed that the “twenty-somethings” would want the new contemporary style of worship. However, many prefer the traditional church service that is familiar and meaningful to them. The traditions are what make the service “feel like church.” The traditional elements are what worship is to them.

I was on the Music and Worship committee when the 9:15 service began. I listened to Pastor’s ideas for that service and visited churches where contemporary services were being conducted. I have been one who has encouraged the inclusion of contemporary music, the use of the projector, and changes in the worship service. Over the years, the 9:15 service has become the family service. Last year, efforts were made to include the youth in the opening of the service so that they are involved in worship and realize they are a vital part of the congregation. The kids have surprised me with their ability and poise. Many of our youth are eager to be a worship helpers.

But...the 9:15 service is not the traditional Lutheran worship service, so is it worship? Should we, as a Lutheran Church, compromise our worship traditions? Is it OK to conduct a service that does not include all our traditions? It is enough to be sure that there is a scripture lesson, the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, communion, the Ten Commandments, prayer and the sermon?

Should we include more readings and liturgies?

One of the things we have learned about worship this summer is that we can all come together and have a service that is neither totally traditional nor completely contemporary. However, we do enjoy our own style of worship at our favorite time. There was a very open and interesting discussion at our last council meeting concerning our worship services. The consensus was that we return to our familiar worship services and times.

Our 8:00 worshipers enjoy the traditional, quiet, reverent service that allows them to worship early and have the rest of the day for other activities. Coming to church later in the day simply does not work for them.

Those who worship at 9:15 enjoy the more contemporary service with fewer liturgies. They don’t mind the busyness and noise of the children at the beginning of the service. And they really didn’t want to come to an earlier or a later service.

Those who worship at 10:30 are either physically unable to attend earlier services or they simply like to have a relaxing morning before attending services.

The positives of the discussion were that members of the congregation were willing to adjust to one service for the summer, which allowed the congregation to worship altogether in a full church. However, Zion reaches a variety of people with a variety of needs and a variety of styles of worship. The important issue is that we come to worship the loving God who gave his only Son to die for us so that we might be saved. May we be faithful in our worship of God and reflect His love to each other and to the world.