

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 28 July - 10:30AM. Speaker Malcolm Cox
Annual church meeting after the service

Sunday 04 August - 10:30AM.

Sunday 8th Sept: 'Thank you' service for those who serve

Saturday 14th Sept: AIM UK&I - "Family Life"

Sunday 15th Sept: Congregational vision workshop

Sunday 29th Sept: 10:30AM. Speaker Bruce Miller

Sunday 17th Nov: 10:30AM. "Safeguarding Sunday"

Saturday 7th Dec: AIM UK&I - "World Views"

Safeguarding Update



We are registered with the organisation thirtyone: eight to help us manage DBS checks and provide safeguarding training for Malcolm, any future staff, and our Youth and Children's Ministry helpers. Charl is our safeguarding officer.

If you would like access to any courses, please contact me. The following may be of interest to you and are all accessed online:

Safeguarding children and adults, safeguarding for trustees, safeguarding in pastoral ministry, spiritual abuse, managing abusive behaviours, international context, and supporting victim-survivors.

Your sister, Penny (safeguarding recruiter & DBS)

Guidance For Those Hosting Parts of Sunday Worship - Part 1

Today we begin a multi-part series exploring the reasons we do what we do at a Sunday gathering. Additionally, we will discuss how those who lead us in worship can be most useful in *what* they do and *how* they do it.

These guidelines apply to anyone publicly involved on Sunday. That means praying, welcoming, announcing, reading, sharing, leading sung worship, and preaching. By extension, it also involves ushering, serving refreshments, and anything visible on a Sunday morning.

Introduction to hosting

Why do we gather on Sundays? There is a New Testament example to follow and 2,000 years of church tradition. However, what is the purpose? What is the focus, and how does this affect those who lead our worship in all its forms?

The word 'hosting' in the title above is chosen deliberately. Perhaps you have never considered it this way, but I believe hosting is a meaningful way to think about leading the congregation in singing, praying, and speaking.

In his book 'Liturgical Theology', Simon Chan says:

"...the first thing to remember is that worshipers are not in church primarily to welcome one another...They are gathered to meet God; God is, in a sense, the host, and we are being welcomed into his presence."

I agree with Chan in principle and suggest that although God is the ultimate host, he delegates that hosting to those leading us when we gather for worship. Therefore, I see those leading

worship as sub-hosts who help us be aware of the over-host in our midst—God himself.

Question for reflection & discussion: If God is our ultimate host and those leading worship are the local hosts, what does this mean for someone leading a prayer? What are they hoping to achieve? Likewise, for the people leading us in musical worship or learning from God's Word?

New Testament examples and teaching on collective worship.

What do we know about how the early church worshipped when they gathered? NT instruction about collective Sunday worship is sparse, and NT examples of Sunday services are limited. We can be confident they included prayer/singing (collective expressions of worship), fellowship, learning together (preaching/teaching and reading of Scripture), and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2.42-47; Acts 20.7; 1 Corinthians 11.20; 1 Corinthians 14.26; 1 Timothy 4.13).

Suggestion: Read the Scriptures above (and any others you can find that mention collective worship) and write down what you notice about the services of the NT church. What are they doing, and is it possible to figure out why?

Reflection: When you've done that, does anything stand out that should cause us to rethink what we do in Watford?

Aims of collective worship

The aim of gathering together is hard to express in this short article. However, perhaps we can summarise much of what we hope will happen in these quotes from Ron Highfield's book, 'Rethinking church':

"Worship is a God-directed activity that attempts in thought, word, bodily position and movement, or symbolic use of elements of creation to express a fitting response to the being, character, and action of God."

"...we express awe at God's greatness, gratitude for his generosity, praise for his excellence, longing for his presence, and amazement at his love."

In other words, we gather *because* of God to *connect* with God and *honour* God by what we say and do when together. His love draws us together, inspires us to express ourselves in worship of him, and creates an eagerness to learn from him and about him. Then, he (the Spirit) sends us back out into the world to live Jesus' life and tell people about him.

Next week

Next time, we will examine guidance for worship leaders, including context, attitude, connection, themes, overloading, and preparation.

Please tell me your thoughts on these ideas.

God bless, Malcolm

Watford Contribution Details

Church bank account: Three Counties churches of Christ HSBC

Sort Code: 401915

Account Number: 04759613

Watford Media

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watfordchurchofchrist6708>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-1aef90>

