

Ministry What We Do to Achieve Our Mission

We are a Worshiping Community

Who Do We Worship?

We worship the one and only one living and true God, who is revealed in the Bible, supremely in Jesus Christ and who acts in human history, and personal experience as the Holy Spirit. God is for us and with us. God is creator, provider, ruler, liberator, redeemer, sustainer and judge of the universe.

We worship the God of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Leah and Rachel, and the Father of Jesus Christ, who heard our African-American slave ancestors cry and saved us from sin to righteousness, death to life, slavery to freedom and from oppression to liberation. We worship the God of our African-American Christian ancestors, the God of George Lisle, Andrew Bryan, David Walker, Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vessey, Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Why Do We Worship?

We worship God because God is worthy and desirous of worship.

We worship God because we love the Lord our God because of all that God has done and continues to do for us.

We believe on the basis of the testimony of Scripture, and know as a result of studying human history, especially our history as African-Americans and reflecting on our personal experiences that God has done and continues to do great things for us. We, therefore, affirm with the author of Psalm 103 that:

God forgives all our iniquity, heals all our diseases, redeems our lives from the pit, crowns us with steadfast love and mercy, and satisfies us with good as long as we live so that our youth is renewed like the eagles.

God works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. God made known God's ways to Moses, God's acts to the people of Israel and to all people through Jesus Christ.

God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. God does not always abuse, nor does God keep God's anger forever. God does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities.

We are convinced as a result of reading the Scriptures and studying our history as African-Americans that God has worked miracles and wonders and caused terrifying things to happen and is forever opening doors for us.

We have a joyous time in worship as we remember, proclaim and celebrate with each other in the Holy Spirit all that God has done and is doing for us. Our joy is expressed in the preaching, singing, shouting, conversion, prayer, and testimony that take place in our worship services.

What Happens in Worship?

God meets with us in worship. God shares God's self with and addresses us in the reading and preaching of the Word and the observance of the ordinances of baptism and communion. We respond to God in worship by offering praise, adoration, thanksgiving, prayer and sharing ourselves, our time, talent, and resources with God.

Because God meets us in worship we come together in worship in relation to significant happenings in our lives. We celebrate in worship our claiming of the gift of salvation and entry into the fellowship of the church by observing the ordinance of baptism. We celebrate our faith that God in Christ through the Holy Spirit continues with us, and holds us together to nurture and sustain us through this life to life eternal in heaven by observing the ordinance of Communion or the Lord's Supper.

We share together in worship to celebrate God's bringing us together as husband and wife in marriage, God blessing us to bring forth new life, and God's calling us by death to enter into the joy of heaven. In each of these special services of worship God speaks to us that we might know that God is the source of our blessings, and instructs us concerning God's will as to how we are to care for and use our blessings so as to honor God.

We thank and praise God for his goodness toward us. We pledge ourselves anew to God and promise reminded of and proclaim the mighty deeds of God in history. This helps us to recognize the ways that God is active among us now. We hold special worship services to celebrate and proclaim the ways that God has been at work in our history as African-American people and as a local church family.

Who Participates in and Leads Worship?

Worship is a corporate activity. All members of the church family are responsible to worship God and actively participate in each worship service.

Ours pastors are responsible for planning and leading us a church family in worship. The diaconate, music ministry groups, hospitality commission and from time to time various members of our church family share with our pastors in planning, leading, and participating in worship.

What Happens as a Result of Worship?

As a result of sharing with God and each other in worship we come to know who we are as God's people and identify ourselves to the world as God's people.

When we study African-American history we discover that it was in worship that our ancestors came to identify themselves in a manner different from that told to them by their slave masters. This is why slave worship was often declared illegal.

God shares God's self with us as we worship God and empowers us to fulfill the responsibilities and meet the challenges of our lives.

God also empowers us to order our lives in accordance with God's will and to participate in history as God's agents of love, compassion, liberation and transformation.

In worship God in Christ through the Holy Spirit comes among us and says to us even as Jesus did to the disciples;

"All authority in heaven, and on earth has been given to me. God therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18b-20 NRSV

We leave worship empowered as the disciples did to live for, bear witness to, and serve God with our all in all our relationships and responsibilities. We leave worship as did our African-American Christian ancestors, Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vessey, Andrew Bryan, David Walker, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., and countless others empowered to serve as agents of liberation in relation to the poor and oppressed and as agents of transformation in relation to unjust social, political and economic structures.