

Worship Nuts and Bolts:

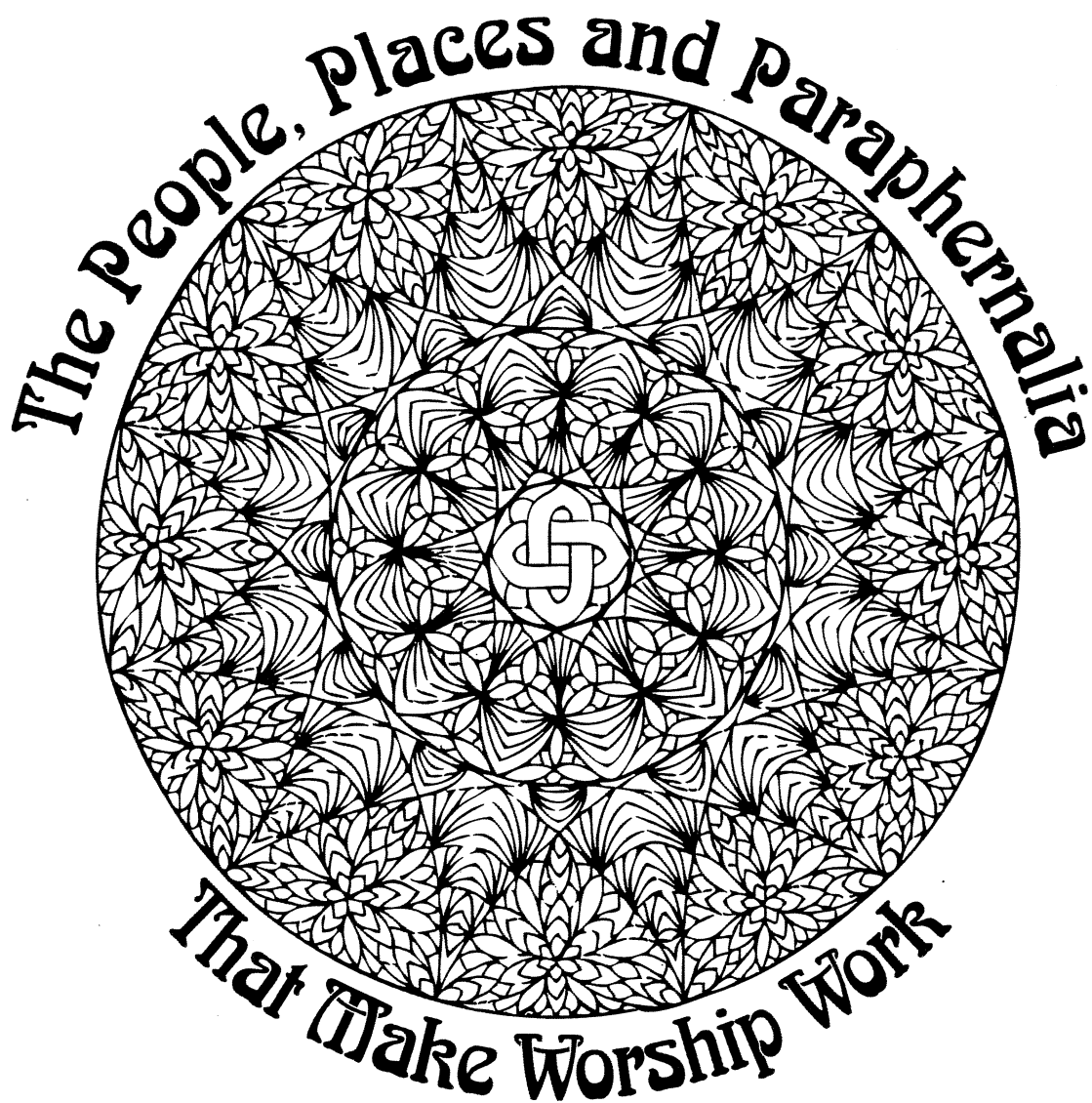


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Our cover art was hand drawn by Rev. Bruce Sayre of Macedonia UMC in Mullins, SC. This art form is a mandala - a generic term for any plan, chart or geometric pattern representing the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically, a microcosm of the universe from the human viewpoint. A mandala can be used during meditation as an object for focusing attention, and the eyes are naturally drawn to the center.

NOTES

WORSHIP NUTS AND BOLTS: THE PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PARAPHERNALIA THAT MAKE WORSHIP WORK

This publication has been prepared by the Commission on Worship of the South Carolina Annual Conference to help persons involved in worship, whether clergy or laity, answer some of the questions they may have about the way to “do worship.” For the most part, there is no “one way” to handle the organization of worship in your church. Worship Nuts and Bolts will provide you with some ideas, terminology and worship basics. Here you will find information about the people involved in worship services (committees and individuals); the worship places and spaces in the church; and the paraphernalia used in worship services – the dishes, linens, candle lighters, etc. We’ve included sections on sacraments, children and worship, the Christian Year, and references for those desiring more information on specific topics.

THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE



Worship Committee

The committee membership may be inclusive of the chairpersons of all of the work groups involved in worship (Head Usher, Head Greeter, Altar Guild president, etc.), anyone interested in worship or some combination of the two. The Worship Chairperson is usually elected at Charge Conference. Members of the committee may be appointed by Church Council or join because they want to be involved. Members of the sub-committees may be recruited, elected or volunteer. The Pastor, Music Director and/or the Organist/Pianist should attend meetings of the Worship Committee.

The Worship Committee’s role is described in the Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation Series in Worship: Creating opportunities to meet and respond to God. This booklet, available from the Cokesbury Bookstore, is a good place for every Worship Chairperson to start. Next, look at your own church. What role does the Worship Committee actually play? Who does the work of the committee? How are the responsibilities divided? Speak with your minister. What special needs does s/he have for the committee to address?

The work of the Worship Committee is very “hands on!” There are Poinsettias and lilies to order and arrange, flowers to be placed on the altar each week, drapes to be prepared for the cross, Christmas trees to set up and crèches to assemble, and sanctuaries to decorate and un-decorate. You will be busy. You have an important job. You will want to get as many members of the congregation involved as you can. Ushers, greeters, acolytes, pew stewards, communion stewards, altar guild, and liturgists may need to be recruited and trained. Some Worship Committees are even responsible for securing parking lot attendants!

Through it all, take time to remember why you are doing this work. Worship is integral to the life of the congregation. But also remember to take time for your own spiritual life. Guide the committee to work prayerfully. It is important to ask the question, “How can your work help the congregation worship God?”

THE WORSHIP PLANNING TEAM

Some churches and pastors chose to design worship services using a team approach. This may be as simple as the pastor selecting the Scripture and asking the music director to select the hymns, or it may involve several people working together to select Scripture, themes and music.

Especially in churches with contemporary/praise and worship services, there may be need to establish a number of teams for planning beyond the traditional worship committee groups. A drama team may select and act out appropriate skits, plays, mimes or other presentations that support the Scripture and the theme of the service. The music team works on the musical for worship. The audio-visual team designs the

graphics that are shown on the projection screen, makes sure the equipment is set up and running, monitors the sound levels and performs other technical tasks. Some churches need a “set-up/take-down” team to prepare space in the church so that it is suitable for worship. A refreshment team may be needed if you offer fellowship time before or after the service.

Some churches have planning teams that receive the Bible text and theme from the pastor and plan the rest of the order of worship. The pastor may be a part of the team, but in some cases, the team does the planning and then passes the plan on to the pastor. In this situation, the team, at the very least, should include a worship leader, a drama resource person, a music resource person and the person doing the audio/visuals.

When building teams, it is important to look for volunteers committed to the task they are being asked to perform. The teams must be small enough to work as a cohesive group but large enough to get the task done. Their tasks must be clearly defined. The pastor is the overall leader. Each sub-committee should have one person who is in contact with the pastor and others needing their assistance.

THE ALTAR GUILD



The purpose of the Altar Guild is to provide care for the sanctuary as a setting for worship. Special attention is given to items within the chancel area, such as flowers, altar brass, and paraments. One person may be named chairperson of the Altar Guild. In some churches, this person is named by the Worship Committee; in some, the nominating committee presents the name for election by the Charge Conference. This person then enlists other persons as needed. In larger membership churches, there may be a group of three or four Altar Guild members serving each month. In

some churches, the Altar Guild is responsible for communion preparations; in others, there is a separate committee of Communion Stewards.

Altar Guilds are usually responsible for some or all of the following:

- a. **Flowers:** The Altar Guild is responsible for having appropriate arrangements in the sanctuary for both regular and special services (such as revivals, choir performances and funerals). Some churches have memorial flowers almost every Sunday, and this group is responsible for booking, getting the correct information for the bulletin then making arrangements for ordering the flowers and billing the members.

In some churches, members assume responsibility for providing (and arranging) flowers. This organization needs supervision which includes setting policies and standards so that the arrangements will be appropriate.

In many churches, members of the Altar Guild carry flowers after the service to members in hospitals or nursing homes or to shut-ins. Many groups use empty 46ounce juice cans which are painted and used as containers for carrying the flowers. Some churches provide braces which prevent the flowers from turning over in the car. One way to make this brace is to take a piece of plywood about 9 inches across, cut in the shape of an octagon. Notches in four of the sides are placed to allow rubber bands to be inserted which can be pulled by a drapery hook to the top of the can on four sides of the base.

- b. **Paraments:** If a church uses the liturgical colors which correspond to the seasons of the church year, the Altar Guild should check the calendar regularly to make certain the right paraments are in place for each service. An additional responsibility is to see to the professional cleaning of the paraments while not in use.
- c. **Brass:** Altar Brass (or silver) can add to the beauty of the chancel area if it is clean but when tarnished, it can detract. If brass has been lacquered, brass polish cannot be used effectively.

Excess handling of brassware by persons with ungloved hands hastens the tarnishing process. Proper cleaning supplies need to be provided, and persons should be instructed as to what they should and should not do.

- d. **Candles:** The Altar Guild should also replace candles as needed and ensure an adequate supply is on hand. If oil filled candles are used, the guild is responsible for keeping them filled. A handy fire extinguisher is a “must have” item in areas where candles are in use.
- e. **Banners:** If your church has banners, the Altar Guild is responsible for maintaining the banners and changing them to correspond to the season of the year or the theme of the pastor’s message. The Altar Guild may buy or make banners, or other individuals in the church may donate them.
- f. **Communion and Baptismal Ware:** The Altar Guild is usually responsible for maintaining the plates, trays, chalices, pitchers and linens used for serving communion. The Guild may be responsible for providing the cups and the bread or wafers for communion as well. Towels and a pitcher may be needed for baptisms. The baptismal font must be kept in good repair.
- g. **Optional Items:**
 - 1. **Advent Wreath:** The Altar Guild may be asked to help provide the wreath. The guild may be asked to help plan for the lighting of it each Sunday. Some churches purchase a stand and frame that can be used every year while others buy or make wreathes from fresh greens each year.
 - 2. **Chrismons:** Many churches use trees decorated with ornaments (Chrismons) which symbolize of the life of Christ. These ornaments are frequently made under the direction of the Altar Guild, and the securing of the tree and its decorations are often also done by this group.
 - 3. **Communion Kneelers:** In some churches, special cushions have been made as kneelers for communion. These may involve needlepoint done by the members.
 - 4. **Funeral Pall:** If your church has a funeral pall, it is usually maintained by the Altar Guild. It must be maintained so it is ready for use at all times. The pall should be used only within the church building. While the pall is in use no flowers should be used on the casket. Flowers may replace the pall as it leaves the church building.
- h. **Sacristy:** Many churches provide a space referred to as the Sacristy. It is the designated space for the storage of communion ware (in drawers or cupboards), unused brassware, and paraments (the best place is a large closet where the cloths can be draped over rods, rather than folded in drawers or on a hanger). Often, the room, or a large walk-in closet, includes a sink for washing and light cleaning.
- i. **Other Information:** The Altar Guild will cooperate with the Worship Committee in developing guidelines for weddings. The guidelines and/or rules must be adopted by the administrative body of the church.

Many churches name one or more communion stewards, but the Altar Guild should be sensitive to any special needs when the Lord’s Supper is being administered.

If the church encourages members to place poinsettias in the church at Christmas or lilies at Easter, either as memorials or in honor of persons, the Altar Guild oversees the procedures for this so that worship is enriched by beauty and relationships are not disintegrated by hard feelings.

The Altar Guild promotes the development and printing of brochures that may interpret stained glass windows, needlepoint designs and/or other symbols in the sanctuary.

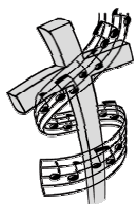
The following terms apply to the items used on the altar:

- a. **Altar Furnishings:** The cross, candlesticks, all altar cloths, the sacramental vessels and linens, and the vases.
- b. **Altar Linens:** Some churches use these formal cloths to cover the altar top (mensa). These are the *cerecloth*, a cloth treated to make it impervious to moisture, which is placed first on the altar; the *protector*, that is placed on the cerecloth; and the *fair linen*, the topmost cloth placed on the altar. Other churches use a parament which covers the top of the altar instead of linens and may use a sheet of clear glass to protect it.
- c. **Chalice:** Cup used in administering wine or juice in Holy Communion.
- d. **Corporal:** Square cloth of linen that is placed upon the fair linen. Sacramental vessels may be placed upon the corporal for Holy Communion.
- e. **Flagon:** A pitcher-like vessel in which the wine or juice is placed for use in celebrating Holy Communion.
- f. **Frontal:** An altar parament that covers the entire front of the altar.

The following items in the chancel area may be the responsibility of the Altar Guild:

- a. **Paschal Candle:** Some churches use the Paschal Candle which is a large candle that is symbolic of two important bible stories, first is the pillar of fire that led Israel by night and the second is for the risen Lord who stands among us at Easter. The candle sits on a stand that is usually 44-48 inches high. The name of the candle comes from the Hebrew word *pesah*, meaning deliverance or Passover and from the Latin "pasch" for the Lord's Passion, thus connecting the Resurrection to the Exodus. Many churches that use the Paschal Candle also use the Easter Vigil Service found in **The United Methodist Book of Worship**. When the candle is used on the Sundays after Easter, it can be either lighted before the service begins or during the service. See **The New Handbook of the Christian Year** for additional information about the Paschal Candle. It is appropriate to light the candle at services such as baptisms, confirmations or renewals of baptism. The candle may also be lighted at funerals.
- b. **Christ Candle:** The Christ Candle is the center candle on the Advent wreath. In churches that burn the Paschal Candle year-round, that candle is often referred to as the Christ Candle. The light from the candle symbolizes Christ's presence in worship with us.
- c. **Processional Cross:** If your church uses a processional cross, the Altar Guild should be responsible for its maintenance.

MUSIC COMMITTEE



The Music Committee is accountable to the Worship Committee. Not all churches have a music committee. Some rely on the music director to select music and the worship committee to provide the feedback.

Membership usually consists of three to nine members, depending on the membership of the church. It is advisable to rotate one-third of the members each year. The committee should consist of individuals who are directly involved in the music of the church as well as those who are not musicians. This will allow for feed-back from the total congregation.

Responsibilities may include:

- a. Relating feedback from the congregation to the Worship Committee, regarding all musical aspects of church life, reflecting their present feelings as well as their hopes for the future;
- b. Fostering and assisting with the total music life of the church;
- c. Assisting the Worship Committee to plan, prepare and carry out the celebration of the Church Year, including regular Sunday worship and special services and activities;
- d. Recommending, planning, sponsoring and supporting special activities designed to support the total musical program for the congregation;
- e. Acting as a sounding board for the minister and director of music regarding their needs;
- f. Monitoring the maintenance and safe storage and appropriate use of all musical instruments, robes and costumes for the church;
- g. Preparing realistic budgets for inclusion in the overall church budget; and
- h. Preparing guidelines for music to be used in worship and in special events, such as weddings. It may be helpful to publish these to be given to those who would use the church for special purposes. Appropriate fee schedules may also be approved for musicians for weddings, etc. These items may be included in more detailed guidelines approved by the Worship Committee and by the church administrative body.

GREETERS AND USHERS

Greeters



It is important for all to remember that Greeters are in ministry to the church and to the world. They should view their work as a ministry and themselves as the “open door” through which the world must pass to become part for the life of the worshiping community. Their demeanor must reflect this. One guest of a local congregation reported that the greeter made him feel welcome by encouraging him with these words, “You are going to be glad that you are here today.”

Greeters may be the responsibility of the Worship Committee, the Work Area on Membership and Evangelism or the administrative body of the church. They may be elected by the Charge Conference. The Work Area on Education may name Greeters for the church school or arrange for this to be done by classes. No matter who selects the greeters or the chairperson, the following guidelines apply.

- a. Greeters for worship services should be in their places well before time for the service to begin (15-20 minutes should be the minimum).
- b. Greeters should be appropriately dressed for the service they are working.
- c. Greeters should try to make people feel welcome and glad they came. This is not the time for a 15-minute conversation with a best friend.
- d. Greeters should encourage visitors to sign the register for visitors or the attendance registration if this is done in the service. In some churches, Greeters will see that visitors have nametags to wear.
- e. Greeters must know the location of the restrooms, the nursery and other classrooms where children may go during the service so they can direct visitors to these places. They should know where the adult Sunday school classrooms are as well.

- f. It is helpful if Greeters learn the names of visitors, spot where they are seated and try to introduce them to the pastor as they leave.
- g. Greeters should help to prevent unnecessary noise in the narthex so that the worship will not be disrupted.
- h. Greeters, generally, should be persons who know many of the church members and who are not afraid to speak to those whom they do not know.
- i. Many churches find it helpful to have couples serve as Greeters and to change Greeters regularly so many have the chance to learn the congregation better.

Greeters will meet four types of persons in the pursuit of their task on any given occasion: 1. a church member they know; 2. a church member they do not know; 3. a guest they know from elsewhere; 4. a guest they do not know. If the person is unknown to the greeter it is a simple matter to avoid the embarrassment of "greeting a member" by saying something as simple as, "I don't believe we have had the opportunity to meet yet. I am ..." This covers member or guest introductions and allows for the happy occurrence of meeting some of the members not yet known. After the necessary introductions, all should be greeted warmly.

Ushers



Ushers have several important roles during the worship service and should be well trained to carry out those roles. They must know the location of the restrooms, the nursery and other classrooms where children may go during the service so they can direct visitors to these places. They must be able to act appropriately in an emergency to summon rescue personnel, evacuate the building or take other actions as needed. It is helpful if ushers can be enlisted in advance to serve for a month.

It is helpful to identify who the ushers are. The visitor can obtain directions more readily and know who they can call on if assistance is needed. Some churches use pins that say "Usher" and others pocket markers in liturgical colors. When liturgical colors are used, the head usher needs to make certain these are changed with the seasons to agree with the color of the paraments on the altar.

The chairperson (or Head Usher) should be appointed or elected by the appropriate body, as indicated above for Greeters. No matter who selects the ushers or the chairperson, the following guidelines apply.

- a. Ushers need to be in place 15-20 minutes before the service begins dressed in a manner appropriate for the service they are attending. Ushers should "dress" the sanctuary prior to each service. This may include providing a glass of water for the pastor, lighting the Paschal or Christ candle, stocking pews with supplies and straightening up Bibles and hymnals.
- b. Worshipers arriving early may be offered a bulletin and allowed to choose their own seats. (Many of them will have their regular pew.)
- c. When the sanctuary begins to fill, Ushers should lead persons to a pew and give them the bulletin as they enter their pew. (This process helps them to follow the usher to the indicated pew; otherwise, the usher may walk to the front to discover no one is following.)
- d. Ushers, like Greeters, should help to prevent unnecessary noise in the narthex or vestibule. They should see that the doors to the sanctuary are closed at the appropriate time (certainly by the time of the Introit or Call to Worship) and opened to seat late arrivals only when it will not interfere with the service in progress. (Suggestion: Consult with the Worship Committee concerning this.)

- e. Ushers should expect to perform other services, such as counting the number of persons present (even though attendance registration is requested), or adjusting heat, lights and sound systems (if the controls are available to them).
- f. Ushers often take up the offering and should be clear on how the collection is to be handled. Many churches do not leave the money on the altar, but see that it is immediately locked away after it has been presented to the Lord. Others present the offering at the altar and leave it there. In those cases the money is usually picked up by counting stewards after the service. Follow the policy of your church Finance Committee.
- g. Ushers should give thoughtful attention to the flow of the congregation to and from the chancel for Holy Communion. Here, too, ushers should consult with the pastor and the Worship Committee concerning the amount of direction needed or desired.
- h. At the close of the service, ushers may be responsible for cleaning and straightening the pew area, removing papers and bulletins, putting out supplies, and placing hymnals in proper places. Some churches have Pew Stewards to do much of this type of work.
- i. Ushers may be requested for special services (such as revivals, funerals, etc.) and should be trained for any special responsibilities.
- j. Ushers may be requested to complete CPR and/or defibrillator training.

ACOLYTES



Acolytes may assist the pastor in a number of different roles. Each church will use them in the way that makes the service go more smoothly for that worshiping community. Many churches use young people from second or third grade through high school age as acolytes, but where children and youth are not available, adults can also perform these duties. No matter what the youngest age you use, the child must be tall enough to perform the duties of the position. Acolytes usually serve during the regular worship services, but may participate in weddings or funerals if available.

The duties acolytes perform include

- a. **Candle Lighter:** lighting and extinguishing the altar candles.
- b. **Offering Assistant:** giving the offering plates to and receiving them from the ushers.
- c. **Communion or Baptismal Assistant:** participating in the administration of the sacraments as the minister may request.
- d. **Crucifer, Banner, or Flag Bearer:** carrying the processional cross, banners or flag in processions.
- e. **Bible Bearer:** bringing the Bible to the altar or from the altar to the minister.

Acolytes often wear a black cassock reaching from neck to ankles and a white cotta. They may be made of lightweight wash and wear fabrics that are easy to wear and maintain. Cassocks and cottas may be purchased from Cokesbury or other companies that sell robes, or they may be made by people in the church. Patterns are available. In some churches, the acolytes wear cottas only or albs (long white robes with hoods) with rope belts (cinctures) in white or liturgical colors. Other churches have their acolytes dress in regular church attire. Dress should be in keeping with the nature of the service and proper decorum should be stressed as they are worship leaders on that day. Gum chewing is a no-no!

Organizing and Training the Acolytes

In some churches, the young people can't wait to become acolytes. In others, no one wants to do it! If you are in the second situation, you will have to find ways to reward and encourage those who do serve and ways to reach out to bring others to serve. It is important to keep lines of communication open with the parents. The young people can't get themselves to church. The parents must be committed to bringing the child on the day he or she is assigned to serve.

Every acolyte should go through a formal training session or sessions where the roles are clearly explained and there is opportunity to practice each task. A parent should attend the first session, too. Refresher sessions once or twice a year can also be a time for recognition and reward – maybe a party! Here are some of the things each acolyte should know. You'll want to adapt this list to your situation.

- a. The floor plan of the sanctuary and other areas of the church they need to use including the sacristy. You may want to adapt the floor plans from this guide to use.
- b. The correct terms for the altar, the sanctuary, the nave, the narthex and the proper arrangement of furnishings within the chancel.
- c. The duties of the acolytes in your particular church.
- d. The meaning of vocabulary words the acolyte will be using such as: acolyte, Advent, Advent wreath, alb, altar, banner bearer, chancel, choir, epistle side font, gospel side, hymnal, lectern, mensa, narthex, nave, pulpit, sacraments, cassock, cotta, etc.
- e. The meaning of the symbols used in the church building.
- f. The Christian year and the colors used.
- g. How to carry the Bible, banners, flags or processional crosses.
- h. How to light and extinguish the candles.
- i. The order of service and the significance of the order and the relationship of each act of worship.
- j. Where the acolyte is to sit during the service.
- k. How to behave during services.
- l. When the acolyte is to get the candle lighter to extinguish candles.
- m. The significance of Communion and how to help.
- n. How to help with the service of Baptism and what it means

Some churches purchase booklets explaining the role of the acolyte and provide them to each person. Others work up their own handouts. Don't expect them to remember everything from one session! Repetition is important. You may want to invite the pastor to attend a session to talk about any special ways in which he or she wants acolytes to assist.

Installing the Acolytes

Some churches use the following approach: At the appointed time, acolytes and their parents come to the chancel rail. The minister and acolyte advisor will conduct the installation service. A church may wish to present acolytes with a wooden cross to wear during their service. Other churches may prefer to give an acolyte pin that may be worn at other times.

Tips You May Find Helpful

- a. The acolyte advisor trains the acolyte and sets their schedules. This is the person the acolytes contact when they cannot serve as scheduled.
- b. An acolyte parent should be selected to maintain the vestments and help acolytes with vestments, wicks in the candle lighter, matches and any other problem that may arise at the last moment. Some Altar Guilds will maintain the candle lighters.
- c. Provide a receptacle for spent matches. This may save burning down the church! You may purchase butane lighters to use. Some congregations have a Christ Candle that is lit by the ushers or someone else long before the service starts. Then the acolytes can light from the Christ Candle if they are not in a processional.
- d. Make a list, giving names and dates, of serving acolytes. Be sure the church secretary has this in order to list names in the bulletin. Be sure acolytes (and their parents) know whom to call if they find they cannot be present when assigned.
- e. If acolytes use ribbons of the appropriate liturgical color on the processional cross, be sure to keep some extra ones available.
- f. If the acolyte is to assist with baptism by holding a napkin or small towel, place it on one acolyte chair ahead of the service.

WORSHIP SPACES/THE SANCTUARY



By history and tradition, we refer to the room in which we gather for worship as the Sanctuary. This term implies a sense of it being a “holy place” and indeed one of the biblical connotations for the term is as a place wherein the presence of God resides.

Again by history and tradition, the space is divided into separate areas, and there are specific pieces of furniture that are part of the sanctuary. While we use the terms loosely, many have specific meanings that need to be used properly. The various areas of the sanctuary (sacred space) are:

- a. **Nave:** the seating area as well as other areas outside the pulpit area.
- b. **Altar Railing:** the railing that separates the nave from the pulpit area. It is the place where the people kneel to pray and/or to receive communion. It is sometimes referred to as the Chancel Railing or Rail.
- c. **Pulpit:** the area inside the altar railing that contains the podium, the altar table, the vessels for the sacraments, etc. This space may be referred to as the Chancel or the Chancel area.
- d. **Transepts:** In churches laid out like a cross, this term refers to the arm pieces of the cross.
- e. **Narthex or Vestibule:** the entry point or “porch” preceding the entrance to the sanctuary proper.

There is no “correct” design or layout of the sanctuary space. Each local congregation will make decisions about the basic layout of their sanctuary depending on their specific theology of the flow and function of worship. Some Methodist churches hearken back to their high church Episcopal roots while others are more closely linked to their “Brush Arbor” beginnings. The focus or purpose of worship is often displayed in the choices about the floor plan of the sanctuary. This is true most especially in the location of the significant furniture in the pulpit area.

There are three basic patterns for the setting of the furniture in the pulpit area. In the first, the altar table is centered and the preaching podium (sometimes referred to simply as the pulpit) is directly behind it. The baptismal font, flower stands and Paschal Candle are arranged around these two pieces as the congregation chooses. The choir might be on the side of the space or it might be directly behind the preaching podium. This arrangement is often used when the focus of worship is understood to be the reading and expounding upon the Word of God. It places the point of reading Holy Scriptures and preaching at the center of the worship services.

The second is often referred to as a “split chancellery” arrangement. In this arrangement, the altar table is the center of the pulpit area with podiums located on either side of the altar table. The table may be in front or behind the podiums (sometimes as far back as the back wall). The two podiums are set in balance. The one called the Pulpit (sometimes the larger of the two) is for the spoken word, and one called the Lectern is for the reading of the Holy Scriptures. The baptismal font and other pieces are arranged as best to avoid obstructing the view of the altar table. This arrangement places the sacrifice of the Christ and the sacrifice of ourselves to Christ at the center of worship. The altar table is the central point.

A third arrangement has a centered altar table with a single podium to one side balanced with a baptismal font on the other. This symbolism here is the balance of three great gifts of God to the Christian believer: the grace of the sacraments, the grace of the proclaimed Word, and the grace of the sacrificial life, death, and resurrection of the Christ.

All of these types of settings will have variations depending upon the specific spaces in which they are presented. Choir and musical instrument arrangements will come into play as well. What is important is that the congregation has some thought-out rationality for what they chose as “their” arrangement. Each church will need to make its own decision about how static the arrangement of the furniture is. Some congregations are more flexible than others about re-arranging the setting for a variety of styles of service. This is a local decision.

The adornments for the sanctuary are dealt with in other articles in this booklet; however, it is important to note the items on the altar table and podium. On the altar table, one usually finds a cross, candle sticks and offering plates. Properly the altar table is associated with the things that represent the sacrifice of the Christ (the cross and the communion elements) or the sacrifice we make of our selves (the offering plates). The Bible is more appropriately located on the podium or lectern symbolizing its centrality to the preaching of God’s Word. Also, there should be some sort of symbol of the sacraments visible at all times (the Baptismal font or bowl) in the sanctuary.

There are also those free-form sanctuaries wherein the ancient and historic settings are discarded in favor of other considerations. This is fine, but every congregation needs to be very careful and intentional about what the layout of the Sanctuary says about the focus of worship when they chose something other than the norm.

Other pieces that may or may not be added to the setting are: Pascal Candles (near the Baptismal font), Flower Stands, banners appropriate to the season or the focus of the service, and seasonal items or thematic objects.

THE SACRAMENTS

Baptism and Holy Communion are the two sacraments of the United Methodist Church. A sacrament is a special symbol of the Lord, using outward signs (water or bread and wine/grape juice) to convey the grace of God. Two excellent resources on these sacraments are **By Water and the Spirit** and **This Holy Mystery**.

Baptism



Through water, baptism becomes an outward sign of the grace of God at work in the life of the person being baptized. The church is bound in covenant with God, and the person baptized enters into that covenant and connects with the community of faith.

Because water is a symbol of God's work, Methodists believe that the ways of Baptism may vary. We baptize by three means: sprinkling (symbolic of the Biblical act of sprinkling to cleanse), pouring (symbolic of the Holy Spirit being poured out on believers), and immersion, and immersion (symbolic of our dying and rising with Christ). The water may be poured from a pitcher into the baptismal font during the service or may be placed in the font ahead of the service. If pouring is the method being used, it may be poured from a pitcher or from the hand. Sometimes a hand sized scallop shell (natural or brass) is used for pouring.

The acolyte may stand beside the pastor with a clean white cloth for the pastor to use to dry his/her hands. The acolyte may bring the pitcher of water (if used) from the altar table to the baptismal font.

Things to Remember

- a. Baptism is a sign of belonging to the family of God.
- b. We are not saved by baptism. It is a symbol of salvation, not the act.
- c. Methodists practice infant baptism because there is scriptural evidence that entire households, including children, were baptized, in the book of Acts. (Acts 16:15)
- d. It is not appropriate for a person to be baptized more than once even if the baptism occurs as an infant. It is the promise of God that never needs to be repeated.
- e. A person who was previously baptized may reaffirm that baptism in a baptismal remembrance ceremony.

Baptism is the sign of inclusion into the family of God. It is the outward sign of inward grace. It is offered to us freely, through the saving work of Jesus Christ. Our Lord has commissioned all who are part of His family to, ***“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”*** (Matthew 28:19). Thus, the command to baptize is an inseparable part of disciple making.

Confirmation is not a sacrament or an entrance into membership of the church if the person has previously been baptized. It is an affirmation of baptism and an acknowledgement that the individual accepts that grace by faith.

Holy Communion (Eucharist)



Congregations are encouraged to offer communion frequently – as often as weekly as it is one of the most visible means of God's grace available to us. Communion is open to all. Persons do not have to be United Methodists to take communion with us. Congregations should ensure that infants and children and those with handicapping conditions are offered the opportunity to participate.

The pastor should be able to stand behind the communion table facing the congregation if at all possible. Only those authorized by the Book of Discipline (Currently Ordained Elders and local pastors serving under Episcopal appointment) may preside at a communion service. They may be assisted in serving by deacons and/or laity. There are several Services of Word and Table available in the United Methodist Hymnal and the Book of Worship, or other resources may be consulted.

Jesus Christ invites us to participate in the Lord's Supper, and the table should be set for a gracious meal with clean linens and polished brass or other tableware. The bread to be broken may be leavened or unleavened. It should look and taste like bread and be free of raisins, nuts and the like. Congregations may want to make gluten-free bread available for those with allergies to wheat.

The loaf to be broken may sit covered on the communion table or be carried forward during the offering segment of the service. The grape juice should be in a pitcher and set on the table or carried forward with the bread. Methodists are encouraged to serve the broken loaf. If pre-cut bread or wafers will be served, they should be present on the table and covered. Pre-poured juice should be on the table in covered servers. Hand sterilizing solution should be available for the servers to use in a discrete manner.

When serving from the loaf, the servers should tear off a piece of the bread and serve it to the communicant. In that way, those coming forward can “receive” from the Lord and not “take.” Communion may be offered kneeling at the altar rail or standing at stations. When stations are used, there should be an opportunity to kneel at the rail for prayer for those who would like to do so.

Kneeling at the altar rail for communion may be done by “Table” where a group kneels at the same time, is served, receives a verbal dismissal blessing, and then departs. Another style is “open” communion where persons leave the altar rail as they finish communing with the Lord and the next person in line replaces them and is served.

Intinction is a style of serving communion where communicants come forward, receive the bread and then dip the bread into the juice before partaking. The bread that will be served should be wrapped in white linens. It is helpful to wrap the base of the chalice in linen as well during intinction. The cloth will catch some of the drips of juice. The bread pieces should be large enough that fingers do not get into the juice. When stations are used for serving by intinction, a place mat or other small cloth may be placed on the floor in front of the individual serving the wine to keep drops off the carpet.

After all have been served, the table should be straightened and the remains covered. After the service, left over elements should be eaten by the pastors or those designated by him, or returned to the earth by pouring, burying, scattering, or burning.

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP



Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14). Does the way in which **your** church worships help or “hinder” the children coming to Jesus, being in his presence? For many, worship has been seen traditionally as being for adults, as a primarily intellectual process involving words and concepts children cannot understand. In recent years this has changed, and congregations have made the effort to create a place for children in their worship. Children need to be included as a part of the worshiping community: no other experience will help them as much to feel a part of that community. And the worshiping community needs children to be included: it may be that from children we learn best what it means to be that community! Following are some suggestions and guidelines for including children in **your** church worship.

The Children’s Sermon

Many churches set aside a time in the worship service to gather the children down front for a children’s sermon. Some guidelines:

- a. May be led either by the pastor or a layperson.
- b. A good time span is 5-7 minutes.
- c. Content and style should vary. There are many books of Children’s Sermon materials available, some containing object lessons (use of everyday objects to teach a biblical truth), some stories illustrating a Biblical truth, and some whose materials follow the lectionary. Remember: an

energetic, expressive re-telling of the Bible story itself often makes for the most effective Children's Sermon! See the Resource List for other helps.

- d. Sit down with the children; sit and talk on their level.
- e. Have the Children's Sermon **follow** rather than precede the reading of the Scripture Lesson(s) for the day; consider tying in the Children's Sermon to the same lesson(s) as for the sermon.
- f. Be sure that the Children's Sermon is directed toward and is primarily for the benefit of the children. Do not use the Children's Sermon to speak indirectly to adults. It is not an occasion to see what cute or funny things children can be led to say (this is simply entertainment for adults at the children's expense.)

Children's Bulletins/Bulletin Insert

- a. Consider the use of a simplified order of service more easily understood by reading children and the use of pictures to illustrate the parts of the service for non-readers.
- b. Let the children design one or more Bulletin covers for special occasions in the year (e.g., Christmas, Easter, Pentecost or Children's Sabbath).
- c. Special illustrated pamphlets are available for placement in the pews for reading and non-reading children that help explain the service of the Lord's Supper.

Worship Bags

Many churches have material available to help occupy younger children during the service. The materials may be placed in Zip Lock bags or small canvas bags that hang from a coat tree or are placed in a large basket between services. Small canvas bags may be purchased in a craft store. You may want to distinguish between two age groupings and use different color or size bags for each group. The Children's Ministry Team can plan age appropriate items for each bag. A preschool bag might contain a Children's Worship bulletin (which corresponds to the Lectionary preaching series, for ages 3 years to 6 years), a pencil, a small box of crayons, small writing tablet, and a bendable toy or hand puzzle. The older children's worship bag might contain almost the same items only the children's worship bulletin should be for ages 7 – 9 years. The children's worship bulletins have to be changed weekly. These bulletins can be ordered from www.ChildrensBulletins.com. Both age-level bulletins of these resources are from Communication Resources, P.O. Box 36269, Canton, OH, 44735.

Children and the Sacraments

- a. United Methodists have always practiced open Communion, allowing all present in the service of worship to receive at the Lord's Table. Children of all ages should therefore be regular participants in the service of Holy Communion. If in your church children generally leave for a Children's Church you should have them returned in order to participate in this part of the service as well as the nursery workers.
- b. Likewise, on the occasion of a Baptism, see that the children are returned to the service of worship to participate.
- c. Consider having the children prepare and bake the Communion bread on occasion!

Children's Choirs

Children's Choirs present an opportunity for making use of a powerful Christian educational medium - music! Some guidelines:

- a. Remember that the purpose of any choir is to lead or enrich the worship experience; children's choirs are not to be a means of entertainment.
- b. A Children's Choir could routinely provide special music for calls to worship and prayer responses, and could be used to introduce new hymns.
- c. See the index to the **United Methodist Hymnal** for possible Children's Choir Selections.

Acolytes, Ushers and Greeters, Lectors, Leading in Prayer

Most churches already allow children to serve as acolytes in the service of worship. Consider having children also serve as ushers, greeters, lectors or prayer leaders on a Sunday morning. In all cases, provide training and oversight and help make the child's experience a **positive** one. This is especially true for children serving as lectors (reader of the lesson(s) for the day) or leading in prayer.

Hymns and other Music for Children

Select hymns easily learned or sung by children. See the index of the **United Methodist Hymnal** under Children, Children's Choir Selections and Choruses and Refrains for possible hymn choices.

Children's Church



A Children's Church program, in which younger children (generally, pre-schoolers) are dismissed from the church's worship (generally, prior to the sermon), should always be used in such a way as to enrich, rather than detract from, the children's experience of congregational worship. Some guidelines:

- a. Let the dismissal be orderly (perhaps accompanied by a brief instrumental interlude).
- b. Establish as much consistency of lay leadership as possible (e.g., four couples, each serving one Sunday a month)
- c. Strongly consider letting the Children's Church activities tie in with the lesson(s) for the day in the service of worship (perhaps even following the lectionary if your church employs this)
- d. Have an abbreviated Children's Church on Sundays when the sacraments are celebrated, returning the children in an orderly fashion to the service to participate. (See above on Children and the Sacraments)
- e. A helpful resource is the Children's Bible Activities worksheet. These are also age appropriate and include craft ideas, snack ideas, map searches and a Bible story for teaching. The can be ordered on line at www.BibleActivities.com or call 1-800-992-2144. See the Resources page for other Children's Church resources.

Youth

Much of what has been said above about involving children in worship may also apply to teenagers:

- a. Encourage youth to serve as Choir Members, Acolytes, Crucifers, Ushers, Greeters, Lectors and Prayer Leaders on a regular basis.
- b. Consider an every 5th Sunday Youth Service, or other special Youth Sundays for which the youth of the church would have major responsibility, including the sermon.
- c. Select hymns easily learned and sung by youth; see Choruses and Refrains in the index of the **United Methodist Hymnal** or consult **Faith We Sing** for possible suggestions.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR AND COLORS

The Christian Year begins with **Advent**, the period before the Christmas season. It is a season of anticipation, hope, promise and waiting for the Christ Child's birth. There are four Sundays in Advent. The color for this season is purple or royal blue.

The **Christmas Season** celebrates Jesus' birth among us and God's presence in the manger at Bethlehem. It includes the Birth of the Lord, (Christmas Eve and Christmas Day), the First Sunday after Christmas, New Year's Eve or Day, and the Epiphany of the Lord celebrating the arrival of the Magi (January 6). The color for this season is white and / or gold.

The season after Epiphany is **Ordinary Time**. Its length varies based on the number of Sundays between Epiphany and Easter. It often is a time to reflect on the beginnings of Jesus' ministry. The First Sunday after Epiphany celebrates the baptism of Jesus. The last Sunday before Lent is Transfiguration Sunday. The color is white for these two Sundays and green for the rest of the season.

The season of **Lent** is a 40-day period of penitence, preparation and often fasting in remembrance of the 40-day fasts of Moses, Elijah and Jesus. This period does not include Sundays, as all Sundays are a time of celebration. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. There are five Sundays in Lent before Palm/Passion Sunday. Holy Week begins the Monday after Palm/Passion Sunday. Holy Thursday, or Maundy Thursday, is a time for remembering the Last Supper, Gethsemane, and Jesus' betrayal and arrest. The color for Lent through Holy Thursday is purple. Red may be used for Holy Week. Holy Friday and Saturday there should be no color used, and the altar and chancel should be stripped of adornment. Alternately, many churches, during this final weekend, cover or veil the altar cross with unbleached linen as a symbolic shroud. It is removed first thing Easter morning or on Easter Eve if there is an appropriate Easter Eve Vigil service.

Easter Season begins with Easter Eve, Day and Evening. It is a 50-day celebration of the resurrection of our Lord; a time of joy that the grave has been opened, that death has been defeated and that this world did not overcome the great power of God. There are seven Sundays of Easter before the Ascension of the Lord is celebrated on the Sixth Thursday of Easter. The color for the Easter Season is white or gold.

At the end of the Easter Season is **Pentecost Sunday**. Pentecost celebrates the birth of the church. We recall the Holy Spirit's mysterious and powerful descent upon the first followers of the risen Christ and celebrate the Holy Spirit's continued presence with the Church. The color for Pentecost is red. Pentecost is sometimes referred to as the first Sunday in Kingdomtide.

The period following Pentecost is known as **Kingdomtide** or **Ordinary Time**. It begins with Trinity Sunday (white or gold) followed by the Second through Twenty-sixth Sundays after Pentecost (green), All Saints Sunday (white), Thanksgiving (red or white) and the Last Sunday after Pentecost often called Christ the King or Reign of Christ Sunday (white). Kingdomtide is a season of growth and an opportunity to reflect on Jesus' life, teaching and healing ministries. On Christ the King Sunday, we celebrate Jesus' reign on earth and in heaven and remember that our primary allegiance is to the risen Christ and the Kingdom of God.

The Sunday following Christ the King Sunday is the First Sunday of Advent, and the beginning of a new church year.

White is appropriate for Communion and Baptism, as well as for funerals and weddings, no matter what the season. Some congregations use red during some or all of Kingdomtide. The South Carolina Conference Program Calendar names each Sunday, tells which color is to be used, and lists the Lectionary readings for the day. Lectionary Readings can also be found in the **Book of Worship**.

RESOURCES

The following resources will be generally available either through **Cokesbury** (Service Center, 201 8th Ave., South, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202-0801; toll-free 1(800)672-1789) or **Discipleship Resources** (Customer Service, P.O. Box 189, Nashville, TN 37202; Telephone: 1(615)340-7284), and will be designated (C) or (DR) if source is known.

Worship “Nuts and Bolts”

- a. **The United Methodist Book of Worship.** United Methodist Publishing House. (C)
- b. **Worship Matters Vol. 1: A United Methodist Guide to Ways to Worship, and Vol. 2: A United Methodist Guide to Worship Work.** Anderson, ed. (DR)
- c. **Guidelines: Worship.** Benedict Guidelines for the Worship Committee Chair for leading the Worship Committee in creating opportunities to meet and respond to God. (C)
- d. **Worshipping with United Methodists.** Hickman (C, DR)
- e. **The Africana Worship Book.** Davis, gen. ed. (DR)
- f. **Official United Methodist Planning Calendar.** Provides the lectionary readings, liturgical colors and Special Day observances for each Sunday of the year. (C)
- g. **United Methodist Altars.** Hickman. Complete guide for Altar Guilds. (C & DR)
- h. **The New Handbook of the Christian Year.** Hickman, et al. A comprehensive guide to planning and leading worship centered around the Christian year. For pastors and other worship leaders. (C)
- i. **The Special Days and Seasons of the Christian Year.** Floyd (C)
- j. **Interpreter.** The Idea Mart in each issue provides suggestions for enriching local church worship. Available from United Methodist Communications
- k. **Worship Team Handbook.** Siewert, et al. Provides information on building and using teams for worship. Includes chapters on music teams(C)
- l. **Designing Worship Teams.** Townley. eBook Mall (www.eBookmall.com) Provides information on putting together teams for planning worship experiences.
- m. **Designing Worship.** Miller. Group Publishing Insights and inspiration from Ginghamburg Church. Includes CD with samples. (C)
- n. **Contemporary Worship for the 21st Century: Worship or Evangelism.** Benedict, Jr., Miller. (DR)
- o. **Handbook for Multi-sensory Worship, Vol. 1.** Ginghamburg Worship Team, Miller. Nuts and bolts guidance on how to prepare and execute worship in a contemporary manner. (C)
- p. **Silver Screen, Sacred Story: Using Multi-media in Worship.** Bausch. (C)
- q. **Seasons for Praise: Art for the Sanctuary.** Fuecht et al. (C)
- r. **The Worship Workshop.** McFee. (C)
- s. **Incorporating Drama in Worship.** Gray. (C)
- t. **Sacraments and Discipleship: Understanding Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a United Methodist Context.** Stamm. (DR)
- u. **By Water and the Spirit.** Felton. About baptism, also available online(C)
- v. **This Holy Mystery.** Felton. About communion, also available online(C)

Specific Worship Job Guidelines

- a. **Guidelines for Leadership in the Local Church: Worship.** The quadrennial publication for local church leadership. (C)
- b. **The Work of the Worship Committee.** Bonn. (C)
- c. **The Acolyte's Book: A Basic Guide for the Church Acolyte.** Hickman. (C)
- d. **Acolyte Handbook.** Van Loon. (C)
- e. **Acolyte Leader's Resource Guide.** Barthle. Everything someone new to leading acolytes needs to know. (C)
- f. **A Guide for the Church Usher.** Clark. A handy pocket guide to ushering. (C)
- g. **The Ushers' Book.** Gilbert, Bates. A concise guide to role and responsibilities of the usher (C)
- h. **Welcome to Our Church.** Schroeder. Making visitors and members welcome, managing crowds and handling emergencies. (C)

Children in Worship

- a. **Gateways to Worship: A Year of Worship Experience for Children.** Brown. An excellent resource for a Children's Church program. (C)
- b. **Always in Rehearsal: The Practice of Worship and the Presence of Children.** Ritchie, Jr. (DR)
- c. **Sharing Faith with Children** Sara Covin Juengst, Westminster/ John Knox Press. This is a good book to read for anyone who prepares a children's sermon. It helps you to think about what you are saying and makes it age appropriate.
- d. **Children's Sermons for the Revised Common Lectionary Year B (A&C).** Philip D. Schroeder, Abingdon Press.
- e. **Sermons from the Mystery Box.** R. Douglas Reinard, Abingdon Press, Object Lessons for Children; There are more of these in the series.
- f. **The Brown Bag series - Another Brown Bag (of sermons for children), One More Brown Bag, by Jerry Marshall Jordan, The Pilgrim Press, New York.**
- g. **Growing Seeds of Faith.** Virginia H. Loewen, The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, Oh. pilgrimpress.com

Music

- a. **Church Music Workshop: Practical Tools for Effective Music Ministry.** A new resource for the local church music program combining sheets for anthems, solos, keyboard works and service music; a magazine with suggestions and helps for their use; an audiocassette of all music selections; a four-month calendar of suggested hymns and psalms; and advice for music leadership based on the experience of nationally known workshop leaders. Published three times a year. Available by subscription from Cokesbury.
- b. **Quarter Notes: For Leaders of Music With Children.** Quarterly publication containing three components: Articles for music leaders, music booklet for children and a record of much of the printed music. Graded Press.
- c. **Jubilate!** A Newsletter for United Methodist Musicians. Available by subscription, Board of Discipleship.
- d. **The United Methodist Hymnal.** United Methodist Publishing House. (C)
- e. **The Faith We Sing.** United Methodist Publishing House. (C)
- f. **Songs of Zion.** J. Cleveland. Songs from the African-American experience. (C)
- g. **Come Sunday.** McClain. Companion to Songs of Zion. (C)

Reference

- a. **The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship.** Davies, ed. (C)
- b. **The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.** Livingstone. (C)

Video Resources

- a. **The Sacraments & Worship Series** includes videotapes on Worship, Holy Communion, and Baptism. For youth and adult viewers. (C)
- b. **Creative Worship: A Video Workshop for Worship Leaders and Teams,** Worship Connection (C)

The Resource Center at the South Carolina United Methodist Conference Center in Columbia provides audiovisual aids and choral music to help with and enhance your ministry and educational programs. Call Betty Stalnaker, Coordinator at (803)735-8798 or 1(888)678-6272 or e-mail BStalnaker@umcsc.org.

ON-LINE RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP

United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, www.GBOD.org, Worship Homepage includes resources and references on many worship related topics. Under General Worship are pages on "Acolytes and Alter Guild" and "Children in Worship." Among the other topics are "Contemporary," "Ethnic," "Teaching Resources for the Christian Calendar and the Church Year" and "Arts in Worship."

Cokesbury
PO Box 801
Nashville TN 37202-0801
Telephone: (800)672-1789
Cokesbury.com

Upper Room Ministries and Discipleship Resources
P. O. Box 3340004
Nashville TN 37203-0004
Telephone: (800)972-0433
Discipleshipresources.org

Willow Creek Association
P.O. Box 3188
Barrington, IL 60011-3188
Telephone: (847) 765-0070
Fax: (847) 765-5046
Willowcreek.org

American Guild of Organists
475 Riverside Dr., Ste 1260
New York, NY 10115
Telephone: 212-870-2310
agohq.org

The American Choral Directors Association
acda.online.org

The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts
P.O. Box 6247
Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6247
For membership: P.O. Box 24787, Nashville, TN 37202

United Methodist Church: UMC.org (select Tools for Ministry)
Cnn.tv
Textweek.com
Sermoncentral.com
Worship.com
Worshiptogether.com
Moreworshipideas.com
Wesleyministriesnetwork.com/bestpractices
Experiencingworship.com
CCLI.com/worshipresources
Experientialworship.com
Resources4worship.com
Bible-dramas.com
Worshipmap.com
Kencollins.com
CrossDaily.com (graphics)
Worshipmusic.com (music, worship art, leading worship and more)
Integritymusic.com
Verticalmusic.com
Comresources.com
Gospelcolors.com
Shindigz.com
Group.org
Youthministry.com
Juniorministry.com
BibleActivities.com
ChildrensBulletins.com.

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