

What follows are the notes that were taken at the workshop “How We Worship” on Dec. 6, 2003 given by Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs, co-minister at Unity Church Unitarian in St. Paul, Minnesota, (and one of my mentors).

More than twenty members of Atkinson gathered that day to discuss what worship means to them as individuals and to all of us as a church community. The discussions were thoughtful, the hopes and dreams expressed were inspiring.

For those who attended the workshop, these notes (graciously transcribed by Mick Mortlock) will remind you of the discussion that day. For those who weren't able to be there, they will hopefully give some flavor of what we talked about, and perhaps point in the directions we want to move in this worshiping community.

In faith,
Rev.(!) Dana Worsnop

How We Worship AMC – December 6, 2003

The Purpose of Worship

- Draws community together
- Takes you beyond yourself
- New level of understanding
- Replacing ego w/ humility
- Creates a level of acceptance of self
- Feeling that you are important
- To fill a void
- Inspires me to my better self
- To celebrate the divine
- To stretch my ethical understanding
- Family
- Reveals our work together
- Lift up ordinary and moves us beyond
- Builds up worth of self and community
- Trust is the social state of grace
- Bringing more goodness to the world
- Gives me hope
- Create change
- Create the beloved community
- To affirm us all
- To inspire us all

Ingredients of Satisfying Worship Service

- Quality music, meditation
- Candles of joy and concern

- Congregational singing
- Appropriate ritual conducted w/competence and caring
- Inspirational message
- Moment of mystery
- Pastoral prayer
- Good rhythm, flow, continuity, a pattern / tapestry
- Connection
- Spontaneity
- Humor
- Moment of mystery. Grace
- Relevance
- Instruction
- Integrity / wholeness
- Congregational participation
- Inclusiveness
- Consciousness of how time is used and adjusted
- Exposure to vulnerability
- Intimacy
- Ordering of elements
- Silence
- Continuity over time
- Quality of words we share
- Chanting
- Balance for introverts and extroverts

Hopes for Worship (5 Groups Separated with the color used by the groups)

- Start on time
- Keep more music
- Prayer UU Style
- Meditation – guided
- Embrace newness
- Openess and acceptance
- More invitational “welcoming” statements
- GLBT spoken / written welcome statements
- Point out contact person
- Explain outside events for visitors – written or spoken
- Maintain ritual
- Respectfully short Joys and Concerns
- Inspirational thought provoking message
- Excellence
- Inspiration
- Increasing trust in each other
- Grow in community
- Movement and congregational interaction
- Variety w/ continuity

- Ethnic variety & religious diversity / cultural
 - Fun / joy
 - Creative
 - Beauty, visual delights
 - Feed the hunger of adolescent males
 - Feed the hunger of adolescent females
 - Feed the hunger of single adults
 - Multiple worship forms aimed at different groups
 - Lay services using credo
 - Worship becomes most important thing in our life
 - Seamless, flow
 - Announcement – minimal, apply to all
 - Look for other ways to convey announcements
 - Joys and concerns – limit to personal concerns? How are broader concerns appropriately introduced?
 - Personal vs. broad
 - Music – be part of design, integrated
 - Mix of familiar to new
 - Add a covenant verse each week during chalice lighting – same, a ritual
 - Service: familiar, build so people know what / how w/o lots of instruction that interrupts flow of service. Plan that's effortless
 - Themes throughout the year
 - Intergenerational designated throughout year & hope collection
 - Cry room – service piped in to room w / parents / infants
 - No coffee / drinks / food in sanctuary = RESPECT SPACE
 - No applause [dissenting view]
 - Something for everyone
 - Speaks to me personally
 - Find out what everyone needs
 - Things to be beautiful
 - Leads to higher level of consciousness
 - Prompts us to care for others
 - Communication
 - Comfort level with trust
 - Sense of being challenged to make world better
 - ??? GOD BLESS OUR TROOPS—Ways to courageously & effectively make a statement of our faith to create a positive social change and grace
1. That our worship is meaningful enough to our visitors to cause them to return
 2. We hope to have a full time choir and music program of quality and variety
 3. Continue to have quality and inspirational messages
 4. Occasionally have services with a variety of liturgical expression. (Dance, movement, visual arts etc)
 5. A ritual of service – one that is familiar and comfortable
 6. Inspiring and challenging message to be our better selves
 7. Leave with a sense of inner peace
 8. But leave with commitment to positive action

Responsibilities

Dana	Ours	Both
Weddings	Signing checks	Benediction
Memorial services	Perform music	The message
Integrated liturgy	Better instruction	Pastoral care
Contacts	Take care of building	Freedom of the pulpit
Pastoral care	Talk back	Hymn selection
Lay leaders training	Schedule lay led services	Music selection
		Anthem selection

Sources of Authority

- Personal revelation
- Scripture
- Community
- Tradition, heritage & history
- UUA
- Expertise - training