

## Congregational Song

In Ephesians 5:19, Paul gives a direct command to the church: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."

**Hymns** are usually made up of single lines of poetry that are grouped together as **stanzas** (verses). We label these lines as poetry because they typically have a fixed length, meter, or rhyme scheme. Length and meter in a hymn both refer to the number of syllables in a line or stanza.

Some hymns have a **refrain**, a line or group of lines that is repeated after each stanza and usually summarizes the stanza. Other hymns may have a **chorus**, which unlike a refrain can be completely detached from the stanzas with little musical or textual relationship. A chorus can be sung on its own without stanzas. Many Contemporary Christian songs contain additional elements such as a bridge, a tag, or a pre-chorus.

The word hymn generally refers only to the **text**. These texts are paired with **tunes**, or melodies, that they can be sung to. These pairings are determined by how many syllables are in a stanza and how many notes are in a tune. Some texts and tunes are almost always paired together, while others more interchangeable.

## Prayer of Confession

1 John 1:8-9 tells us that, "if we say we are sinless then we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The time of corporate confession is marked by a calling to repentance and ends with a reminder of our baptism at the font. In between we confess our sins together as a community, and then silently as individuals. We come before God in confession because we believe he forgives us of our sins - if we repent of them and turn our lives back to God. We come each week and confess our sins in the reality that none of us is perfect, except Jesus Christ, and we need him to be our mediator back to the righteous people God created us to be. We follow the examples of those in the scriptures by confessing our communal sins together in one voice (Nehemiah 9; Numbers 21.)

The time of confession is typically placed immediately before the reading of scripture and the sermon emphasizing the symbolism that we have been washed clean of our sins and more able to receive the words God is speaking into our lives.

# *Sunday Morning Worship*

*A brief guide to what we  
say, what we sing, and  
what we see.*



First Presbyterian

## Paraments

The paraments are the cloth covering the Lord's Table and the two pulpit scarves.

The color of the paraments are determined by the liturgical calendar or calendar of the Christian year:

**Purple** is the color of both penitence and royalty and is used during the two seasons of preparation: Advent and Lent.

**Red** is the color of fire, symbolizing the Holy Spirit and thus used at Pentecost. Red is also the color of blood, and can be used during Holy Week to symbolize the blood of Christ. It can also be used for ordinations, symbolizing the blood of martyrs.

**White** is the color of purity, joy, and light. It is used for Holy Communion and for festive days: Christmas, Baptism of the Lord, Transfiguration, Easter, Trinity, All Saints, and Christ the King.

**Green** is the color of growth, hope, and anticipation. It is used during the two seasons known as "Ordinary Time": the time between Epiphany and Lent and the time between Pentecost and Advent.

## The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer largely comes from the sixth chapter of the **Gospel of Matthew**. As part of the Sermon of the Mount, Christ says "Pray then in this way..." followed by most of what we now know as The Lord's Prayer.

The line "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever" is not part of the original text from Matthew, but was added into the prayer as a doxology (Greek for *glory-saying*) sometime prior to 1662. This line is only used in the Protestant tradition and is not included in the Catholic tradition.

## The Common Doxology

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

These words were written in 1674 by English Bishop Thomas Ken as the last verse to two of his hymns: "Awake, my soul, and with the sun" and "Glory to thee, my God, this night", intended for morning and evening worship, respectively. The text is usually paired with the tunes "Old 100th", "Lasst uns efruen", or "Duke Street".

## Affirming Our Faith

An affirmation of faith or confession of faith is a statement in which the congregation proclaims a **corporate** (group) testimony of their faith. These generally include our beliefs concerning God, human beings, and the created world. The two most common are:

**The Nicene Creed**—This statement of belief was first adopted in 325 at the First Council of Nicea, which settled the issue of the divine nature of God the Son and his relationship to God the Father. It was amended at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 to include sections on the Holy Spirit/Ghost and the church, baptism, and the resurrection of the dead.

**The Apostles' Creed**—This statement of faith was first mentioned in a letter written in 390, and is most likely named after a belief that each of the twelve Apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, contributed a statement. Some Protestants are confused by the use of the phrase, "the holy catholic church", catholic with a lower-case "c" is a synonym for global, universal, or worldwide. Another statement that provokes curiosity is the claim that Jesus "descended into hell", this is a reference to Acts 2:27-31, Romans 10:7, 1 Peter 3:19, and 1 Peter 4:6.