



The Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting Digital Worship Resources 2023

In this folder, you'll find Stephanie Perdew's sermon, prayers, a tactile prayer experience and music to resource your Sunday service with some of the worship elements used at Annual Meeting.

The lyrics for the song suggestions are below for you to preview as you plan. You'll also find a lead sheet and a piano arrangement for "Whatever Is True," cowritten by your worship leaders at Annual Meeting, Andra Moran & Christopher Grundy. Permission to use these resources for your Sunday services in bulletin inserts, projection and/or live-streaming is granted by the composers.

Song:

As We Gather, Draw Us Nearer

Commissioned in Honor of the Sesquicentennial Celebration of First Christian Church Wilson, NC
Words by Andra Moran, Music by B.F. White, 1844, Scriptural Reference: Psalm 148
Sourced from The Sacred Harp under the tune name *BEACH SPRING*, public domain.

Sing / Praise

As the seagull boldly soaring
Sings a song in wordless flight
As a mother rocks her baby
Humming hope's sweet lullaby
As the stones cry out, "Hosanna"
As the rising of the tide
May our hearts find natural rhythm
Singing praises with our lives

Stretch / Grow

As the redwoods reach to heaven
We extend ourselves to you
As the strings stretch on the fretboard
Let us pull ourselves in tune
As a child draws her family
Favorite crayon in chubby hand
Each encounter of your glory
A new way to understand

Satisfy / Share

As we gather, draw us nearer
In our hunger, find your feast
Deepest longings now are sated
By your presence and your peace
In the wideness of your mercy
May we find ourselves at home
Welcomed warmly at your table
Where we never eat alone

Song:

Whatever Is True (Philipians 4:8)

By Andra Moran and Christopher Grundy with The Bridge Congregational Songwriter Workshop
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Whatever is true
Whatever is kind
Whatever is noble
Keep this in mind
Know you are held
God's love keeps you close
No matter what,
know you are loved
Wherever you go

Open your heart, open your eyes
The love for a stranger,
love for a neighbor
Seeking the Christ

Resources for Worship

PRAYERS by Andra Moran:

Prayer of Confession

Giving God, we admit it: Sometimes we just want what we want, and we are not so good at adjusting when a curve ball comes our way. Sometimes we are hurtful to one another in the quest to get things to happen our way. In this moment, we are gathered here before You, sorry for our stubbornness and our short-tempered, short-sighted selfishness. Open our eyes to see the new life that You provide for us, both individually and as a congregation. Open our arms to embrace new ideas, new hopes, and new vision. We celebrate the best of what we have been, *and* we confess that we have not always been our best. Set us on a course that follows where You lead, out of our past, and into the future of Your dream for us. Encourage imagination in us, O God. Help us prepare to be flexible and responsive to whatever it is you envision for us as a church. We are your people, God. Thank you for your presence with us now and forever. *Amen.*

Prayer Station: Blessing One Another with Anointing

Materials: Small 3 to 5 oz paper cups ("Dixie cups"), cotton balls, one bottle of olive or jojoba oil, optional essential oil (lavender or ylang ylang are recommended).

Preparation: Plan to have one cup and one cotton ball for each end of every pew in which people will sit. Put several drops of oil onto a cotton ball and drop it in the cup. If using essential oils, first apply jojoba or olive oil to the cotton ball to moisten it, and then add one single drop of essential oil. Be sparing, as the essential oil aroma can be overpowering to some.

Once cups are prepared, put a single cup with a cotton ball in the corner of each end of the pew.

Ask the congregation musician to underscore this time of anointing with soft music, or choose pre-recorded music to play softly in the background. The musician should prepare 3 to 5 minutes of music for this piece of worship.

During worship: Following the sermon, invite your congregation to take part in a blessing in the way of the "Improvised Ritual" as described in Stephanie Perdew's sermon. Draw their attention to the cups in the pews. Most likely, many of your congregants may not have even noticed the cups there.

Introduce the idea of anointing one another as a way of blessing each other to be ready for God's Holy Imagination to be at work within the Church. Invite congregants to make the sign of the cross or the sign of the fish on the back of the hand of the person sitting next to them, and then to take a moment to pray together.

Acknowledge that this might feel a bit awkward, and perhaps it may bring up feelings of shyness or hesitation. Encourage your congregation to trust God's presence in the moment, and to lean into this experience together, even if they feel a bit hesitant. Reassure them that participation is completely optional. If there are those who don't want to participate, they can simply signal a non verbal "no thanks" to those around them.

Allow for approximately 3 minutes for people to exchange anointing on the backs of their hands, and then to share a quiet prayer together.

Call the congregation back together by saying, "Let's continue in prayer together."

Prayer: Holy One, Thank you for giving us each other so that we can join our intentions and our efforts to follow your leading. Guide us in the ways you would have us go, O God. *Amen.*