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## OUR SERVICE OF WORSHIP

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### WELCOME TO SUNDAY AT THE MARINER SANDS CHAPEL

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God Himself invites His people to assemble in His very presence to worship and enjoy Him. We come as children to our Heavenly Father, those who have been purchased and adopted through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to adore and serve Him, and to be loved by Him. God wants us to love Him with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, so we seek to approach each corporate gathering with meaningful participation by all. To engage in meaningful participation means worship is not simply a Sunday morning gathering, but an all-of-life commitment.

We hope that this commentary on the Sunday service here will add to the meaning of your visit and encourage your full participation. We long to worship God together. As a church, we want worship to be at the center of everything we do.

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### SERVICE OF WORSHIP

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We call it a *service* because in our prayer and praise, we are serving God. God is served both by our works of love in the world and by our praise in the church. However, this is service in a twofold sense – as we are busy serving God, God is also ministering to us, speaking to us, guiding, comforting, and prodding us.

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### ENTRANCE AND CHIMES OF THE BELL

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Entering the Mariner Sands Chapel from our activities and concerns in the world, we have a time to focus, to gather ourselves, to prepare ourselves for worship. This time is an important period of centering ourselves in readiness for our encounter with God in our worship.

When you hear the chiming of a bell, it connects us with a tradition for the mariners on ships. At sea, the boatswain rang the ship's bell on each half hour, probably at the turning of the hour glass. From one to eight bells were rung to coincide with the ship's schedule. We ring "Two Bells," as a call to synchronize our hearts for the purpose of worship.

*(Translation: 9:00 am was two bells, 9:30 am was three bells, and so forth, with eight bells occurring at 8:00 am/pm, 12:00 n, 4:00 pm)*

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## ORGAN MUSIC

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The chapel organ, sends its voice throughout the sanctuary, leading us in to worship. While our organ is a modern instrument, we find the pipe organ has been used almost exclusively for worship for more than a thousand years. A very old instrument, a very complex instrument, the organ uses the air forced through pipes to make its melodious tones. In the same way, our breathing is forced through our vocal chords to create the vibrant sound of music, making a joyful noise unto Almighty God.

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## PRELUDE

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After greeting those who sit beside you, listen to the music of our chapel instruments. The prelude is intended to be more than background sound; it is the first act of worship within the Chapel. Music for the prelude is carefully chosen to reflect the season of the church year or to relate to other music which will be played or sung in the service. This is a good time of prayer, for silent reflection, for looking through the worship bulletin, and preparing for participation in the service.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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As the congregation gathers, we are welcomed by the minister and reminded of the work of the church in Mariner Sands, Martin County, and around the world.

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## GREETING AND CALL TO WORSHIP

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Sometimes it will be spoken in dialogue between minister and congregation; at other times the choir will sing. In so doing we both call ourselves together to worship and invoke the presence of God in our worship.

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## PROCESSIONAL HYMN

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This is usually a glorious hymn of praise and thanksgiving, often selected from among the first hymns listed in the hymnal and sung with the choir processing in behind the uplifted cross.

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## OPENING PRAYER OF ADORATION

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The Minister prays, sometimes with a prayer which is coordinated with the church season or with today's scripture, sometimes leading the congregation in a prayer of confession, in which we confess our sin to God and one another and receive the words of forgiveness.

## PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

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A major part of worship for Christians is the reading and interpretation of our sacred writings. The Bible is a collection of authoritative texts which gives us our identity as Christians, offers us continuing guidance in our daily lives, and reminds us of the truth of Christ. During this part of the service we will listen to the word read, to the word interpreted, and then we will have opportunity to respond to the word. At Mariner Sands, we follow a practice of using a common lectionary as the source for our scripture readings. The Lectionary is used by many Christian churches throughout the world and is a table of scriptures appointed for each Sunday of the year. This gives our service continuity, enables the coordination and planning between preacher and musicians, and links us to the same scripture which is being read on a given Sunday in most churches. You may obtain a copy of the lectionary texts by contacting the chapel during the week or by the digital version available online.

## SCRIPTURE LESSON

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Usually the first scripture passage read will come from the first part of the Bible, the Old Testament, or the Hebrew scriptures. These are the books of the Bible which came to us from the Jews and are recognized by Christians as essential for our faith. Mariner Sands Chapel has Bibles in the pockets behind the sanctuary chairs. A second lesson may be read from the New Testament. It is usually a passage from apostolic letters (also known as 'epistles') that are found toward the last half of the New Testament.

## GLORIA PATRI

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This is sung at the conclusion of the Psalm, a Prayer of Adoration, or a Declaration of Pardon. We praise the God who comes to us as the Father (Creator), the Son (Jesus the Messiah or Christ), and the Holy Spirit (the empowering and near presence of God in our lives).

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## ANTHEM

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A choral piece, usually coordinated with one or more of today's scripture texts, is sung here. This is a musical, emotional response to the word.

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## GOSPEL

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This is the assigned reading from one of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John). Gospel means "good news," Usually a Gospel passage will be read in a continuous sequence through the season of the church year. For instance, in 2020, the Gospel of Luke will be read. John is read at various points throughout the year, particularly in the liturgical season of Lent, the season just before Easter.

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## SERMON

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The preacher speaks from the pulpit, interpreting one or more of the various passages which we have just heard, applying it to our lives today. Printed summaries of the minister's sermons are available in the chapel lobby immediately after the service. An online summary is also available along with the recorded sermons on our website.

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## THE PRAYERS

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Having heard the word read and preached, having prepared ourselves through music and silent reflection, we are now ready to talk to God in prayer. This prayer takes different forms. Sometimes it is a litany, a responsive prayer in which the minister offers a petition to God and the congregation speaks a response which is printed in the bulletin. Sometimes the minister speaks to God for the congregation, lifting up various concerns and petitions of the people. Usually the prayer focuses upon our needs and the needs of the world.

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## THE LORDS' PRAYER

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We conclude with the prayer that Jesus taught us. (For the words to the Lord's Prayer, you may refer to the lyrics of page 433 in the hymnal).

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## OFFERTORY

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During this culminating act of worship, we respond to God through the offering of our lives and our gifts. Money is collected by the ushers. All of the money which is received during the offering in Mariner Sands Chapel is used both here at home as well as throughout the world. The chapel board of directors has established a benevolence committee to determine where this money will be given after a lengthy process of consideration and validation. The music sung and played here is also an offering to God.

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## DOXOLOGY

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This means “praise.” Our offering is our way of praising and thanking God for God’s goodness to us. Our gifts are signs of gratitude. The ushers bring the plates up to the altar, and the minister, on behalf of the whole church, receives them as we sing this joyful song of praise.

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## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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With the offering plates on the altar, the minister prays a final prayer of thanks to God, recalling some of God’s many acts of graciousness toward us.

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## SENDING FORTH

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Having gathered for worship, having heard God’s word read and preached, having sung God’s praise and offered ourselves and our gifts, having prayed for our needs and for the world’s, we go forth to serve the risen Savior and our neighbor.

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## RECESSIONAL HYMN

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We join our voices in a final hymn as choir and clergy leave the sanctuary. The hymns throughout the service are selected by the minister and the musicians on the basis of scripture appointed for the day and the season of the church year.

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## BENEDICTION

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The minister with arms outstretched, blesses us as we go forth, asking God to be with us. The blessings are often parting words used in the scriptures such as, Jude 24, Hebrews 13:20-21, II Corinthians 13:14, and Numbers 6:24-26.

*The term, benediction, originates from the early church: “bene” meaning good, and “dicto,” meaning word.*

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## CHORAL RESPONSE

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The choir sings a concluding response to the blessing and the service, usually with an ancient term of affirmation, AMEN, meaning “let it be so.”

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## POSTLUDE

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The organist plays a final musical offering as we go forth. Feel free to sit and enjoy this last act of worship before you leave.

## THE GREETING AT THE DOOR

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While the doors are opened wide to release believers into the world, having been strengthened during our time of gathering for the worship of God, we meet with others to spread joy, to share in some light refreshments, and make plans together to put these truths into daily practice.

## COMMUNION

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On Sundays when we celebrate communion, also known as the Lord's Supper (or Eucharist) it is celebrated as part of our faith tradition, and observed in several various ways. In order to broaden our approach to an ecumenical gathering of Christians, we may use a common cup (known as a chalice), and wafers of communion bread. Once in a while, we may use a common loaf of fresh baked bread, or use individual cups during the distribution of the elements.

Whenever we use a common cup, those who are receiving the elements will take a wafer of bread from the plate (also known as a paten) and dip it in the chalice, and in this way in one single action they partake of what has been blessed and represented as the body and blood of Christ which has been given to us.

Whenever we use the individual cups on our communion trays, you can identify grape juice by its dark blue color, and communion wine by the light color. Whichever way we observe the Lord's Supper, we do so in remembrance of Him who gave his life for ours on the cross, and in keeping with the instruction to observe this meal until He returns to receive us.

This meal is not to be taken lightly, but reverently and after a spiritual self-examination that we are followers of Christ. Our communion is open to all those who confess Jesus as their Lord and Savior. There are those who are our guests, who are visiting, or who do not know Jesus Christ fully, but may feel a bit awkward remaining in their seats during the time when others are approaching the altar. Also, for those who observe a specific tradition of communion, based on your church affiliation that practices a closed communion, we want to respect your particular theological view on this sacrament during our service. If you cannot for any reason receive the elements, our altar is open to you with the great grace that comes from God our Father. To that end, if you are not receiving the elements of bread and wine, you are welcome to come forward with your arms crossed upon your chest to receive a blessing from the Minister.

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## A WORD ABOUT THE STYLE OF LANGUAGE USED IN WORSHIP

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Why do we care that the language of our liturgy is unchanging? We care because the Christian Faith it expresses is unchanging. Our faith matters too much to be expressed in a language whose meanings are in constant flux, so that we can never be certain from generation to generation if what we are saying still expresses what the Church believes. When that happens (and it does, in languages like English), then we have to rewrite our liturgy to be sure that we're still saying what we want to say.

Rewriting language for liturgy is one thing we should be reluctant to do. For liturgy requires consistency. We want our worship to follow a familiar routine, to minimize the constant pressure for social norms or cultural trends to influence our language of prayer, praise, confession, and thanksgiving. That's why some of our most important prayers in English have kept words that we no longer use in common speech, like: Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name.

*What's with hallowed and Thy; we don't use those words any more. And art — isn't art something you hang on a wall? Why do we retain such archaic words in so important a prayer?* Because the prayer is that important – too important to be continually fiddling with. What happens, then, is that words like thy, thine, thou and thee, words that we no longer use when speaking in English, become words that we use when praying in English. They are reserved for prayer. In contrast, modern English uses the same word for both the familiar and formal address of the second person pronoun: You.

In a period when English was developing as an international language, there were different words in comparative languages for the formal and familiar pronoun, “you.” The Church in its wisdom selected the familiar term of address for God rather than the formal, using Thee and Thou instead of You. Well, history has influenced this familiar form as archaic, but whenever you hear a prayer using Thee and Thou, it is because God wants us to address our prayers in the most familiar, loving, and intimate context of soul communication. Just as when Jesus prayed, He began with a term “Abba,” or Daddy to speak directly to the Almighty. What a wonderful precedent Christ has set for us!

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## THANK YOU FOR WORSHIPPING WITH US

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Feel free to contact the minister with additional questions and comments about your experience of worship with us today.