

# Handbook for Worship Leaders

University Hill Congregation  
- The United Church of Canada -  
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## Worship Leadership

Worship leadership at University Hill Congregation is a shared undertaking. On any given Sunday a gifted and diverse group lead the congregation in its worship of God. We are eager to include a wide variety of the congregation in various aspects of worship leadership. It is important that children and youth begin to take on leadership roles as they are able and called to do so. Newcomers to our life are also encouraged to bring their gifts and voice to our shared worship of God. A Worship Leaders Roster is maintained throughout the year by the Worship Ministry team. As we find our places as leaders in worship we seek to match our particular gifts, skills and experience with the variety of leadership roles. Worship Coordination seems best suited to someone who has an eye for detail and prefers to remain in the background, quietly tending to their appointed task. Welcomers feel a calling to hospitality of the stranger, Lectors seek to put their voice at the service of speaking the Word, Children's Elders have a heart for children and a desire to share the story of God's people, while Worship Elders are prepared to practice the discipline of holding the congregation in prayer before God and of inviting the congregation into communal prayer. The Worship Ministry team is glad to assist in discerning ways in which your gifts may be offered in service to God and the congregation in worship.

A lively ongoing discussion within the Worship Ministry team concerns the way in which we speak of the various leadership roles in worship. In order to highlight the spiritual significance of these ministries we have adopted the title "elder" in a number of cases. This is not an indicator of age nor is it an elected position within the congregation. Rather it is our way of emphasizing the significance of these ministries in our worship life. Jesus calls all manner of people - young and old, new to the faith and deeply rooted in the faith - to offer themselves as leaders in worship. This holy calling is what we are seeking to honour with the use of the term "elder". The Worship Ministry team welcomes your thoughts about this as we continue to discuss how best to name the roles of worship leaders at University Hill.

This handbook is intended as a working document, for use by those who are called into the leadership of worship within University Hill and for the information of the whole worshipping congregation. Our liturgical life is a sign of our deep love for the God we meet in Jesus Christ. In worship we gather to seek God, to hear God, to trust in God's promises, to follow God's ways. Our careful planning and attention to detail is intended as a sign of our devotion to God, our desire to offer our best to the One we love and adore. Yet no amount of careful planning can generate the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. When we gather for worship we hope that our preparations and care for detail free the congregation to wait upon God and to be open for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

As you prepare to provide leadership in worship at University Hill we encourage you to pray. Pray for God's Holy Spirit to use your gifts and pray for the faithfulness of the congregation as it seeks to live out its baptismal promises in the world. Should you have any questions as you prepare for leadership in worship please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of our Worship Ministry or the Worship Presider (on most Sundays, the Congregational Minister) to discuss your questions or concerns.

## Worship Ministry

Oversight for worship within the congregation is the responsibility of the Session. Ongoing guidance to worship leaders and discussion of concerns, changes and problems that emerge from time to time is the particular calling of the **Worship Ministry** team. The Worship Ministry group meets regularly during the year, referring important issues to the Session and the Leadership Team for guidance. It intends to be a place for open engagement with the concerns and dreams of those in the congregation regarding its worship life. You are encouraged to speak to any of the Elders appointed to the Session or to any member of the Worship Ministry team if you have particular concerns, suggestions or appreciations to express.

The **Worship Ministry** team normally has on its agenda items such as:

**Evaluation of recent services** and seasons of worship, noting concerns for discussion and action.

**Oversight of upcoming services** and seasons of worship, noting any areas in need of attention and/or support.

**Inviting, training & scheduling** Worship Leaders (Coordinators, Welcoming Elders, Lectors, Worship Elders, Communion Elders, Presiders, Preachers, Ministers of Music and others as needed).

**Preparation & Oversight** of the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion.

**Recommendations regarding special services** (eg: Guest Choirs, Clown Communion, Jazz Worship, etc).

**Reports** from, and conversation with, the Congregational Minister, Minister of Music & Director of Choral Ministry.

**Attending to Chapel** related needs (set-up, sound system, supplies, storage, tidiness) in co-ordination with the Stewards.

**Coordinating offerings of flowers** (as gifts in memory or in celebration as well as for seasonal celebration - eg: Advent, Christmas, Easter).

**Hospitality** following worship (refreshments, coffee, etc).

**Other services** of worship (such as Taizé Evening Prayer, Weddings & Funerals).

This **Handbook for Worship Leaders** is the work of the Worship Ministry team. Like worship itself this book is a work in progress. Your assistance in clarifying, deepening and enriching this handbook is an important part in making our worship life a liturgy (literally: "a work of the people"). The final page in this booklet provides a listing of those currently responsible for stewarding the congregation's worship life. Use it in order to have conversations about the material in this handbook and about your experience of worship at University Hill Congregation. More than that, use this book in order to find your place in our common calling to lead one another in the worship of God.

## Worship Service Coordinator

The ministry of the **Worship Service Coordinator** is to coordinate the variety of tasks that occur each Sunday in order that the liturgy can flow seamlessly. The Coordinator is a helping hand, quietly available to assist in resolving problems and in answering the questions of those participating in the service. The tasks involved complement those of the Sacristan. Much of the Coordinator's work takes place prior to the beginning of the service. During the service the Coordinator is ready should a problem occur.

**Arrival time** for the 10:30 am service is 9:45 am. The doors should be open and the hymn books in place at the entrance of the Chapel (the tasks of the Sacristan). Locate and set out the blue hard-cover Bibles on the table at the Chapel entrance. Check that the number of chairs set out seem adequate and are appropriately arranged. Make sure that a rug for the children is placed in front of the front row of chairs. Another carpet for young children (with soft toys) is placed under the gallery. In order to turn on all of the lights in the Chapel you will need to use the light switch that is next to the doorway to the vestry and sacristy.

Make sure the appropriate **microphones** are in place. Be available to assist Lectors and Worship Elders as they test their voices at the microphones.

Set out the **Order of Service** bulletins on the Welcoming Elder's table in the entranceway to the Chapel. You will find the bulletins in the small blue plastic container on top of the coat rack. In the cupboard that is at the back of the Chapel you will find other materials (Guest Book, Visitor's envelopes, etc) which can be placed near the name tags and on table in the entranceway.

The **Offering plates** should be in or on the cupboard at the entrance of the Chapel. However, sometimes one or two have been left in the Vestry after counting on the previous Sunday. Remind the Welcomer to find four people to act as Offering Stewards. Assist the Offering Stewards as necessary (cuing collection of the offering and carrying the offering forward to the Table). On Sundays when the Eucharist is celebrated the Offering Stewards remain seated until the period of silent meditation is ended by the Minister of Music. They then move to collect the offering, unannounced. On occasions when the seating in the Chapel is re-arranged in an oval around the Table (Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve) gather the Offering Stewards before the service in order to plan an orderly method for receiving the offering.

Put **baskets** for the congregation's gifts of food (the number of baskets may vary depending upon the number of small children present). Fill the baskets as congregants bring gifts of food, making sure there are a few light ones for the smallest children.

The **Candle-lighter** can be found on top of the cupboard just inside the entrance to the Chapel or on window ledge on the left hand side of the hallway that leads to the vestry. Make sure that it has a wick and that it is functioning (extra wicks are kept in a small box in the large wooden cabinet in the vestry). Matches are usually kept in cupboard at the entrance to the Chapel (you may also find some in the hallway to the Vestry). Check to make sure that matches are on hand. The **Pitcher** to be used in carrying water to the font is normally in the cupboard inside the entrance to the Chapel. Fill it with water. The **Pulpit Bible** will be found on the pulpit or in the cupboard inside the entrance to the Chapel. It should be placed on top of that cupboard for the lector. Watch for the lector to arrive and assist him/her in finding assistants to help light the candles and pour water into the font at the opening of the service as well as to help extinguish the candles at the close of worship. Invite the team to work together when they arrive at the table, waiting for one another before they move to sit down. The candle-lighter can be carefully left across one end of the table so that it can easily be picked up at the conclusion of the service.

At 10:25 am please ring the **Chapel Bell** (children often enjoy this act of calling the community to worship). A second, more subdued ringing (only four or five peals) occurs after the Greeting, Hymn Sing, Announcements and Choral Introit (by The Singers). Check for its timing in the printed Order of Service (watch for a cue from the Presider if you are uncertain of timing). Check with The Singers to know if there is an Introit. Signal the Lector who is carrying the Bible and the assistants who are carrying the candle-lighter and the pitcher of water to process with the Bible, water and flame to the table after the second ringing of the Chapel Bell. At the close of the liturgy, following the Postlude, be ready to remind the Lector and an assistant to carry the Bible and light to the Chapel entrance.

**Assist the Welcomer** when needed by greeting late comers, handing them an Order of Service and a hymn book, indicating what part of the liturgy is now occurring and by showing them to some chairs. Be ready to see that extra chairs are set out as needed.

While the children gather at the table go up to the gallery and **count** the number present (keeping a separate tally of children and adults). Write the figures down and place this note in one of the offering plates. Please be sure to include the number of infants and toddlers who are already in the Nursery.

On **Communion Sundays** assist the Presider in preparing teams of Communion Servers for their ministry. During the offering see that the children and teachers are invited back for the Sacrament.

The **temperature** in the Chapel is automatically controlled. If the settings need to be adjusted please contact the office during the week to have these adjustments made. The side doors can be opened during the service if it gets too warm, but keep a watch to see it is not too drafty. You may wish to place a small rock as a door jam to keep the doors from suddenly slamming closed with a gust of wind. Please be sure that all doors are closed and locked following worship.

**At the conclusion** of the service the offering will be taken to the vestry by those assigned by the Stewards as counters for the day. If this does not occur, please seek out one of the Stewards or of the Ministry Team in order that the offering is not left in the Chapel. Put away items that were taken from the cupboard or Vestry or Gallery. Return leftover copies of the Order of Service and notices along with the Guest Book to the plastic containers in the Narthex. Please see that the lights in the Chapel are turned off. In order to turn all of the lights off you will need to use the light switch next to the hallway to the Vestry.

This outlines the regular routine of the Worship Service Coordinator. Of course, it is not unusual for unique problems to arise on Sunday morning and we hope that the Coordinator will provide leadership in resolving these problems (along with the Presider and other members of the Worship Team for the morning). **In case of emergencies** contact the appropriate number as noted below. In all of this, the Coordinator acts as an unobtrusive host, alert and watchful so that the congregation can focus its attention on worshipping God.

## Welcoming Ministry

*"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,  
for by doing that some have entertained angels  
without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2)*

The importance of ministry of welcoming is often underestimated. The Welcomer extends hospitality to each person who enters the worshiping community. In this brief exchange much is communicated. First impressions of the congregation are made in the moments when newcomers and visitors arrive for their initial experience of the congregation's life. Those who are well established members of the congregation arrive in varying states of well-being. All are being welcomed into Christ's church, beloved guests in the household of God's kingdom come. Welcoming ministers are frontline agents of this holy welcome.

It is our intention that the ministry of welcoming can be undertaken by a wide variety of members of the congregation - men and women, children, youth and adults. We encourage Welcomers to arrive at the Chapel early - no later than 10:10 am - and to stand or sit next to the small table at the door to the Chapel. Be sure that the printed orders of service are on the table along with a number of Bibles for those who may wish to make use of one.

As the congregation arrives at the Chapel focus your attention on each one who enters. A warm smile and eye contact along with a genuine welcome is extended to each person - child and adult. Offer a copy of the Order of Service to each person (some may wish to share). It is good to offer children their own copy of the order of service so that they, too, feel the full welcome of the congregation. Hymn books are kept in the book rack just inside the Chapel door. It is a good idea to keep copies of the hymn book on hand at the welcome table to hand out with each order of service. It is often wise to invite another person to assist with welcoming, particularly during the time when most are arriving (between 10:25 and 10:45 am). Remain at the welcome table until the gathering time and community announcements are coming to a close (at approximately 10:45 am).

It is the Welcomer's responsibility to invite four people to act as Offering Elders during the service of worship. This may be done in advance of Sunday morning or it may be done as part of the ministry of welcoming on Sunday morning. It is good to invite a variety of people to undertake the ministry of receiving the offering. A brief outline of the Offering Elder's responsibility is available from the Worship Co-ordinator on Sunday morning.

## Presider

The **Presider** is the formal host of the Liturgy. She/he presides over the Liturgy as a host presides over a banquet. This is particularly evident on Sundays when the Eucharist is celebrated. Then the church recalls that its Sabbath gatherings are always intended to be remembrances of the Last Supper mingled together with experiences of the Messianic Banquet in God's kingdom come. But even when the Table is not spread with bread and wine, the Presider's role is an important one in shaping the liturgical life of the Congregation.

**Before the Liturgy** the Presider gathers members of the Worship Leadership Team in the Vestry at 10:20 am. Here the Lector, Worship Elder, Ministers of Music, Preacher and Presider meet to share any final information or questions concerning the Liturgy. Then the Presider leads the Worship Leadership Team in prayer, asking God's blessing and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Service of Worship.

The Presider, Preacher and Worship Elder **process into the Chapel** with The Singers. The Presider is responsible for **welcoming the congregation** and setting the tone of warm hospitality and of holy reverence. The normal position for the Presider is behind the Table, facing the congregation - a reminder of the central meal which we share. A simple greeting leads to the Music Ministry team leading in a gathering hymn. As the hymn concludes the Presider moves to the mike and invites the congregation to remain standing and to exchange the Peace of Christ:

*The Peace of Christ be with you;  
and also with you.*

Watching the community as it exchanges Christ's peace, the Presider discerns when to make a few timely **announcements** about the congregation's life (and/or to invite particular members of the community to make important announcements). It is our practice to refrain from a lengthy list of announcements and so we make ample use of printed announcements in the Order of Service and of email announcements using our email mailing list. Those wishing to have an announcement given voice at public worship are asked to speak with the Presider earlier in the week (not on Sunday morning). At this time a particular welcome to visitors from near and far is extended, with an invitation to join the congregation following the Liturgy for a time in community over refreshments. This may also be a time when special presentations are made. The Presider hosts these acts of gift giving or of covenanting whenever they occur during the Liturgy.

At the close of the gathering time, the Presider invites the congregation to focus its attention on God, on behalf of the world. In the silence that follows an Introit may be sung and the Chapel Bell is rung before the Bible and flame process to the Table and Pulpit. Once the Bible is open and the candles are lit, the Presider moves to the Table and speaks words of **Invitation to Worship**. Our common practice is to select some key verses from the Psalm of the day for this Invitation. This, however, should not restrict the Presider from other words that bring the congregation before God. Then the Presider announces the opening hymn.

The Presider returns to the Table once again to announce the **Declaration of Grace**. This crucial announcement signals the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ that lies at the heart of our life together. We invite the Presider to make wise use of one of the great Declarations of Grace of the church or to craft his/her own concise statement of the good news that we discover in Jesus Christ - news that liberates, saves and redeems the world from sin - from its separation from God and neighbour.

The Presider invites the congregation to offer its gifts to God. Once the gifts have been brought to the Table the Presider offers the **Thanksgiving Prayer**. On Sundays when the Eucharist is celebrated the Great Thanksgiving Prayer is recited by the Presider and congregation. On those occasions the Presider is responsible for inviting the baptized to the Table (and making room for the unbaptized who now wish to step forward as disciples of Jesus Christ), co-ordinating the serving of the elements and closing the celebration with prayer. On Sundays when the Eucharist is not celebrated we remember that we are gathered at the Lord's Thanksgiving Table by asking the Presider to lead a brief Thanksgiving Prayer. Here we thank God especially for the good news met in Jesus Christ and offer our life together to Christ's service in gratitude.

When the Eucharist is served the Presider will - prior to the service - invite a team or teams of Communion Servers to share the elements with those who wish to participate in the Sacrament. This normally requires six servers - two teams of three, with each set of servers having one to share the bread (*"The body of Christ broken for you"*), one to share the wine (*"The blood of Christ shed for you"*) and one to receive the empty glasses on an empty tray. It is common to invite the Lector and Worship Elder of the day to join in this ministry. Once the congregation has been served the serving teams serve each other, in turn.

The Presider and the Worship Elder step to the Table following the closing hymn. The Worship Elder commissions the congregation as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world. The Presider gives the congregation a **Blessing** in the name of the Triune God. Both Worship Elder and Presider sit down as the Postlude is played. When the Postlude ends, the Presider and Worship Elder signal the conclusion of worship by recessing together behind the light and word to the Chapel entrance, where they greet the congregation.

## Lector

The reading of scripture is central to our life together. Through listening to and living within scripture we open our life together and our lives as individual disciples of Jesus to a living Word from God. The **Lector's** role in this formative act of Christian life is crucial.

The Lector is expected to join in the congregation's practice of preparing for worship by **reading and meditating on the texts** for the upcoming Sunday during the week prior. Texts for each Sunday in the year are included in the Salt of the Earth Christian Seasons Calendar. We do not always read all four texts provided by the Revised Ecumenical Common Lectionary. Be in contact with our office during the week to determine which texts you are to prepare for public reading. You are welcome to borrow a copy of Voices United during the week in order to prepare to lead the responsive Psalm.

It is our practice to read from the **Pulpit Bible** so that it does not become a prop but is, in fact, the book we read each Sunday. It is helpful to make use of the ribbons provided in the Bible to mark the passages you are to read. The biblical translation that we have chosen to use in worship is the New Revised Standard Version. If you do not own a copy of the NRSV you are welcome to borrow a paperback copy from the Chapel in order to prepare prior to Sunday morning. If you feel that reading from another version is appropriate please discuss this with the Preacher early in the week.

You will want to read the passages aloud during the week (at least three or four times). If you are uncertain about the intention of a passage (and, therefore, what inflection to use) and/or if you need assistance in pronouncing unfamiliar words do not hesitate to be in contact with the Preacher.

On Sunday Morning **arrive by 10:00 am** in order to have a microphone check. Ask the Worship Service Coordinator or the Presider to help you with this. You will also want to be sure that the lections for the day are marked with ribbons in the Pulpit Bible. Go over the readings to become accustomed to the large type face.

At the beginning of the Liturgy the lector is asked to **process the Bible** with an assistant who carries the candle-lighter and lights the candles as well as one who pours water into the font (this occurs after the Greeting time, Announcements and Choral Introit). It is the lector's responsibility to form a team of three for the procession. We hope you can include a child, as it is one of the ways we involve children in providing leadership in the liturgy. If you have difficulty finding two people to assist you please ask the Worship Service Coordinator to help. The Coordinator will give then give you the cue to process. This is an important procession. Walk with dignity, reflecting the awe that you are bringing Holy Scripture into our midst. Place the Bible on the pulpit and open it at the first passage to be read. In order to protect the binding of the Bible, when putting it on the Pulpit place it spine down, then open both covers with care. If the Bible is too heavy for you please ask someone to carry it for you. Perhaps you can light the candles or pour water into the font on this occasion.

While the Bible is being placed on the pulpit one of the Lector's assistants **lights the candles**. Matches and candle lighter will be at the entrance to the sanctuary (the Worship Coordinator will assist). In lighting the candles take care so that wax is not spilled. You may wish to practice lighting the candles prior to the service (note that the candles can be lifted off of the stands, making the lighting of the candles easier). After lighting the candles place the candle-lighter across the end of the table. While the candles are being lit one of the Lector's assistants comes around the font, faces the congregation and **pours water into the font** before placing the pitcher on the table. Be sure to wait until all three in the procession have completed their tasks before returning to your seats. The entry of the Bible, flame and water are dramatic moments in the Liturgy. We encourage you to move with dignity and reverence.

Sit in a location near the table, on an aisle so that you are prepared to come forward to **read Scripture** without introduction following the Preparation for the Word (a time of musical preparation after the youngest children move to class). Announce the passage simply, for instance, "*Reading from the book of ..., chapter ..., beginning at verse ...*". If you wish, you can provide some introductory comments that set the text in context, but any comments should be brief.

Do not lean into the microphone - it will pick up your words from a distance of twelve inches. If you suspect that the microphone is not working properly simply continue to read in as loud and clear a voice as you can manage. The Worship Coordinator will be responsible for dealing with any problems with the sound system.

**Read slowly**, more slowly than you think is necessary. Sound bounces around the room. Reading too quickly makes the syllables tumble over one another and become garbled. **Read clearly** - this comes from reading slowly. Give each word care and attention. Help us to host the text with love and respect, as we would host an honoured guest. Give the reading meaning - lift it off of the page - which simply means to invest it with your interpretation. Bring yourself to the passage and tell us the story as best you can.

**After reading each passage**, announce one of the following declarations. Try not to mumble or whisper the declaration. Say it boldly as this reminds the community that we dare to trust that in hosting these texts the church is opened to the living Word of God.

**Lector**

*The Word of the Lord  
God's Word is a lamp to our feet  
Herein is Wisdom  
The Word of God*

**Congregation**

*Thanks be to God  
Thanks be to God  
Thanks be to God  
Thanks be to God*

You also lead the reading of **the Psalm** (or introduce the singing of the Psalm, if it is to be sung rather than read). Invite the congregation to find the Psalm for the day in Voices United and ask the congregation to stand to join in reading responsively. You will need to be sure that there is a copy of Voices United on the shelf in the pulpit prior to coming forward. The **responsive reading** of the Psalm can vary. The lector can be a single voice with the congregation offering the responsive voice. Or the responses can be made by the women and the men, or the left side can be one voice and the right side in the Chapel another, or The Singers can speak and the congregation respond. You are welcome to choose the manner in which the Psalm will be read. Once the congregation is standing the Minister of Music will play the sung response one time, and then The Singers and congregation will sing the response once. The Psalm then begins, with the sung response being offered as indicated in Voices United with an "R".

At the **conclusion of the Liturgy**, following the Postlude, come forward with an assistant. Carefully close and carry the Bible while the assistant extinguishes the candles (using the candle-lighter as snuffer). Be sure to light the candle lighter with the last candle's flame and leave by reverently leading us into the world with the Bible and the flame. Hold the Bible as high as you are able when carrying it so that the congregation can see the Word going on ahead.

## Children's Elder

Within University Hill Congregation children are welcomed into worship from infancy. We understand that the corporate worship of the God met in Jesus is crucial to Christian formation. The ministry of the **Children's Elder** reminds the whole community of its baptismal promise to witness to Jesus Christ by offering hospitality to children in worship and in Christian community. The congregation remembers Jesus' command to his disciples: *"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs"* (Matthew 19:14). In response to Jesus, we intend that the practice of hosting children begins with the arrival of children at worship. Greeters welcome children as well as adults, offering them a hymn book and an order of service. Adult members of the community make a point of conversing with children, learning their names and treating them with dignity and respect.

From Sunday to Sunday, we understand that **the first thirty minutes of worship** are shaped in a way that invites even the youngest in our midst into the rich variety of the liturgy:

**A carpet** is provided at the front of the Chapel and another near the Chapel entrance, along with soft toys, so that infants and toddlers can play quietly

**The Peace of Christ** is passed, with all learning the bidding and response:  
*The Peace of Christ be with you - And also with you.*

**News of the congregation's life** is kept to a minimum in order that the drama of worship moves forward without delay

**A variety of music** and song is offered for children to hear and to share in. Both the Kyrie and Doxology are repeated throughout each season of the church year so that children learn and join in these songs of confession and of praise.

**Prayers** are spoken, silent prayer is offered and the Lord's Prayer is sung (with actions) bringing children into a community shaped by prayer

**The church bell** is rung, the Bible and light enter in procession as the drama of holy worship begins. To a child the Chapel is a very large space, and the gathering of all ages for song, silence, prayer, scripture and communal care offers the gift of a generative memory of the church for years to come.

**Offerings** of food, for the Emergency Food Cupboard at First United Church, are carried forward by our young children. In this act of worship they feel the weight of the world's need and of their part in responding to Christ's call for the community of disciples to respond with sacrificial gifts.

The **Children's Elder** has a particular calling to have a heart for children and to keep an eye open for children as they enter the sanctuary on the Sabbath day. Following the singing of the Doxology the Children's Elder invites children to collect the baskets of food that have been collected and to bring them forward as an offering to God, placed under the Table. A carpet is pulled forward to the Table. The Children's Elder sits on the carpet, gathering the children and briefly sharing a scripture text for the day or speaking with them about the congregation's journey through the story of the Christian year (eg: Advent, Lent, Easter). This ministry is easily tempted to become a "cute" time in which children become an entertainment for the adults in the congregation. We ask the Children's Elder to keep the focus on the story of our life with God as discovered in Jesus Christ.

This is important work, undertaken with diligence and careful preparation. It is not a time for object lessons in how to be good. Nor is it an opportunity to speak through the children to the adults. This is a time to give these youngest disciples the sense that they are beloved by God and that they are being called to follow Jesus. At the conclusion of the time with the children the Children's Elder invites those taking leadership of the Little Ones and of the Elementary class to come forward in order to share in carrying a candle (Elementary) or in bearing a small cross (Little Ones) as the children form a procession out of the Chapel to continue learning the Way of Christ.

Because the liturgy is, literally, the "work of the people" we seek to involve children in offering leadership in worship. This leadership can range from greeting to bell-ringing to carrying in the Bible and candle. As children learn to read we invite them to read the scripture aloud for the congregation. Those children who learn to play an instrument or to sing are invited to add their musical gifts to the congregation's worship of God. From time to time children participate in offering testimony to the working of God in their life and in the life of the church and world. Children are also invited to pour water into the font during the sacrament of Baptism and to assist in serving the elements in the sacrament of Communion. When we forget to invite and include children in the leadership of worship on a regular basis we rely upon the collective memory of the congregation to remind us of our commitment to call children into servant leadership that reflects their gifts and skills.

On Sundays when Eucharist is celebrated the children are invited to be present in the life of the worshipping community. This great thanksgiving banquet is the central meal of Christian communal life. Like family meal tables, this table does not exclude children. In order to prepare children for the Table we seek to regularly teach our children about it, both when we gather at the church and when we speak about the church in our homes. Since the Eucharist is a meal intended for those who have been baptized, and since many of our children are baptized, we do not exclude children from this sacrament. Since we also make room at the Table for those who have not been baptized but who desire to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ in the world prior to their baptism we do not discriminate when it comes to those who reach out to take from the loaf and cup. At the same time, there is no compulsion for anyone of any age to receive the Sacrament of Communion. We encourage families to discuss this matter and to make their own decision as to the appropriate time and place for the reception of the Eucharist. We do invite those who do not wish their young child to receive the sacrament but who would be grateful for a blessing, to simply step ask the Presider for a blessing as they come forward to the Table. The Presider will lay a hand on the child's head and say a blessing. Children and adults may also simply remain seated to watch the drama of the sacrament.

On major festival days the congregation invites those of all ages to worship together throughout the service. On these few days in the year - normally **Christmas Eve, Easter Sunday, Pentecost and Thanksgiving** - the Chapel seating is re-arranged so that the table is central and the whole community is gathered around the festal banquet. The liturgy on these occasions is crafted in order to move at a reasonable pace without a lengthy sermon, extended readings, etc.

On these Sundays, the Little Ones class takes place as usual with the lesson based on the festival being celebrated. Parents of preschoolers, kindergarten and grade one students are welcome to bring their children into the class at any time but the class will move through the various activities as it does every Sunday. Songs that fit the theme of the festival are sung, the story of the festival is read with the children who are invited to participate in the story telling and to wonder about its meaning with the first participants and as we still do today, then various age-appropriate activities based on the story are offered. Sometimes they run like the mighty wind at Pentecost, sometimes each will make a collage of things he/she is thankful for, sometimes they will look into the empty tomb, sometimes each will blow out the candle on a little birthday cake to celebrate the birthday of the church with the tongues of fire. Children are able to choose the activities they wish from a variety of choices. Each activity has been carefully prepared to allow the children to experience the festival in different ways. To connect church with home usually there is something they have made to take home to share with the entire family

In this way we seek to learn Christ together - learning to be the children of God in a community of praise and prayer, formed by the story of Jesus and by our life at the Table together. We imagine that our children are learning this common life even when they do not understand everything that is spoken in worship and when boredom seems to replace wonder and mystery. The discipline of Christian worship is that - a discipline - and it is learned even at a young age by being present in the worshipping community. We hope that the Children's Elder, the Worship Ministry team, the Christian Education team and the Session will strive to keep the congregation mindful of the crucial place that children have in the worship life of the congregation and that the worship life of the congregation has in the lives of its children.

## Worship Elder

The ministry of the **Worship Elder** at University Hill Congregation is an offering of leadership in prayer on behalf of the congregation that gathers to worship. We hope that the following outline of the congregation's common practices and regular disciplines will give shape to the creative energy brought by each Worship Elder to the glory of God.

It is our custom at University Hill to refrain from making use of printed unison prayers in the published Order of Service. Our practice reflects a desire to invite the maximum participation of individuals in an act of corporate worship. While corporate song clearly benefits from unison voices (and harmonized ones, too) corporate prayer benefits from such unison voicing when the refrains are very familiar to all. Unfamiliar written texts often cause individuals to become self-conscious as, for instance, they strive to keep pace (children or foreign speakers) or disagree with the theology implied by the words that they are invited to speak. Instead, we ask an individual to undertake the discipline of attending to the scripture passages for the week while living in the world during that week so that she/he can offer prayers on behalf of the gathered congregation of God's people on the Sabbath day. In hearing different voices offer prayers on each Sabbath day, the community overhears the diversity of faithfulness and of witness that is embodied in this particular congregational expression of the Body of Christ. The Worship Elder is invited to bring his or her own language of faith and to offer public prayers that are different in form from our daily disciplines of private, personal prayer. Of course, the Worship Elder may also decide to choose prayers to read, rather than to write prayers for the occasion. In either case, the crucial issue is to keep the life of the congregation and world in prayer before the God met in Jesus Christ.

**The Prayer of Approach** is directed to God (as are all of the prayers) and has God as the subject matter (not *"we this, we that"*, rather *"You are, You promise, You give ..."*). It focuses on the praise and adoration of God revealed in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Prayer of Approach is our response of awe, wonder and thanksgiving to God. As Worship Elders prepare by reading the texts for the day we ask them to look for the 'Wow' that the texts proclaim about God and to lift up something of this in the Prayer of Approach. In so doing, the Prayer of Approach can enable the congregation to move from preoccupation with itself into the holy presence of God.

**The Prayer of Confession** is an admission of the congregation's need for God when faced with the truth about itself and the world. As public prayer in and for the church, this prayer (like the others) primarily offers the confession of the church (what we as a Christian community confess regarding the truth about us when standing in the presence of God). Since sin is centrally about breaking relationship with God the Prayer of Confession helpfully focuses on the temptations that cause the church to lose faith in God and, instead, to trust its life to idols that masquerade as gods. As a result, there is less need to emphasize only specific misdeeds of individuals (the symptoms of unfaithfulness in relationship with God). It is helpful when the Worship Elder names those temptations that distract the church as a people from living as a witness to the Kingdom of God.

**Silence** is a crucial element to incorporate in all public prayer. In particular, silence can open up a powerful space for personal prayers of confession to be offered. This can avoid the necessity of lengthy lists of the innumerable ways in which we, individuals, may have broken faith with God in Christ. We ask the Worship Elder to not be afraid to lead in prayer by hosting periods of silence. In fact, we encourage periods of silence when we gather for public prayer. Words can be helpful in focusing the mind of the congregation on God, but they can also fill the space in which God waits to speak.

The Worship Elder may choose to end both the Prayer of Approach and the Prayer of Confession with the customary “Amen” (Hebrew meaning “It is true”), indicating that these are two separate prayers or may move from Approach to Confession without stopping to say “Amen”. In either case, it is helpful to speak with the Minister of Music prior to the Liturgy to indicate when the Prayer of Confession will end (in order that the “Kyrie” can be sung at the proper time).

It is important that the Worship Elder remembers **that children are present** for the opening prayers in worship within University Hill Congregation. Children benefit from prayers that are written and spoken with care, brevity and clarity. Children hear prayers that are spoken from the heart. While accessible vocabulary is a gift for children - and adults who are new to English - we do not have to know the meaning of every word that is spoken in order to understand the deep intent of the prayer. We are aware that public prayer is more than words. Pausing in silence can invite the entire community - including children - into the mystery and wonder of communal prayer to God.

The **Prayers of the People** are the best example of liturgy (literally - “a public work undertaken by the few to benefit the many”). William Temple said: “the church is the one institution that exists primarily for its non-members”. It is in the Prayers of the People that the congregation most clearly intercedes for the world in its worship. The Prayers of the People are prayers of Intercession and Supplication. That is, in these prayers the community (1) asks for God’s redemptive presence in the church, world, community and individual lives and (2) offers its own life to God’s mission of healing and reconciliation in the world. Note that at University Hill Congregation it is our practice that the Presider for the day offers the **Prayer of Thanksgiving** at the Table at the time of Offering (and Communion). While thanksgiving may be appropriate as a part of the Prayers of the People, it is not the focal point of these prayers.

In crafting the Prayers of the People the Worship Elder may wish to follow the traditional sequence of petitions:

1. For the church universal
2. For the world
3. For the local community
4. For those in special need

Our goal is to keep the prayers broad in their scope. At the same time, it is helpful to include specific, concrete and current concerns in at least some of the petitions. There should be, so to speak, a connection between Saturday’s news and Sunday’s prayers. On the other hand, this is not an occasion to be explicitly political, or to moralize, editorialize, lecture or preach. Avoid ‘gabiness’ in prayer. Petitions should be short and to the point. Now is not the time to share information. God already has it. If there is something that the congregation should know - like a special happening, a crisis, or a death - tell the congregation before the prayer begins, not during it. Five or six meaty but brief petitions should be enough. We cannot cover all the bases every Sunday. Total time of your prayer should not exceed five minutes.

To avoid a long monologue, the Worship Elder may choose to use a congregational response after each petition. This will keep the community listening and involved and will give it an opportunity to affirm what you are saying to God on its behalf. The congregation should be advised of this procedure before you begin the prayer. In order for the congregation to make a verbal response, it will need a consistent cue line. For example:

Leader:	<i>Lord (or O God) bear our prayer.</i>
Response:	<i>And in your mercy (or, love) answer.</i>
or	
Leader:	<i>Lord, in your mercy.</i>
Response:	<i>Hear our prayer.</i>

An alternative to such responses is the observance of a period of silence between the petitions. It is our practice to include a time in the Prayers of the People for individuals in the community to give voice (aloud or in silent contemplation) to their prayers for others by naming individuals, households, peoples or issues of concern. The Worship Elder invites the community to do so and offers a clear signal when it is the appropriate time for these prayers to be spoken.

Since the Prayers of the People include a wide range of concerns it can be helpful to make use of repetitive phrases and/or structures in order to provide cohesion and unity. Poetic adaptations of phrases and/or images from the scripture passages and/or hymns of the day can help to evoke the deep memory of the community in these (and the other) corporate prayers. We encourage the Worship Elder to be in touch with our office by Thursday of the week in order to receive the scripture texts being read and the hymns being sung on Sunday.

It is good to end the Prayers of the People with a short concluding prayer that names the congregation's trust and hope in God and that offers it to the purposes of God in the world. Our consensus about using gender-inclusive language in worship should be observed. While this does not preclude addressing God as Father, Worship Elders are encouraged to broaden the name and titles used for the Deity as reflected in the texts for the day or in other parts of scripture.

On a Sunday when the **Eucharist** is celebrated it is our practice to include the Prayers of the People within the Great Thanksgiving Prayer. On these occasions the Presider will lead the congregation through the recital of thanksgiving for God's wonders and mighty deeds, culminating in Jesus Christ. The printed Eucharistic Prayer which is normally included in the Order of Service will include a heading for "Prayers of Intercession" (on Sundays when the full prayer is not included in the order of Worship the Presider will provide the Worship Elder with a copy of the Eucharistic Prayer). The Worship Elder moves to a designated mike just prior to this point in the Great Thanksgiving Prayer. Since the prayer begins prior to the Prayers of Intercession and concludes after them, we encourage the Worship Elder to carefully craft or select the four or five crucial, short intercessions that need voicing at the Table.

The **Commissioning** is a charge to the congregation (not a prayer to God) to live as faithful disciples of Jesus in the world. The Commissioning is not the **Benediction**, which is a blessing that declares the promise of the Triune God to be faithfully present in the lives of the disciples. It is our practice that the Worship Elder offers the Commissioning, while the Presider offers the Benediction. In the Commissioning the congregation is commissioned (co-missioned) as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world in the days ahead. The Commissioning says: "*Go out for Christ*". The Benediction says: "*May God bless you*". The Commissioning is greatly helped by clarity and brevity. It is not a sermon. The Commissioning is a simple, clear statement that the community is now authorized to live as the Body of Christ in the world and that it is time to go into the world that Christ loves. It is intended as an encouraging and hope-filled call to a life of joyful servanthood.

Normally the Worship Elder enters with The Singers and the Presider at 10:30 am, taking a seat next to the Presider on the south side of the Chapel, facing the musicians. At the conclusion of the service of worship the Worship Elder and the Presider wait for the conclusion of the Postlude. At this time they rise and walk to the Chapel entrance as a signal that the service is ended. The congregation greets the Worship Elder and Presider/Preacher as it leaves the Chapel.

## Preacher

The **Preacher's** ministry is straightforward - to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Word of God as revealed in scripture. Such a straightforward ministry is, of course, anything but simple. At University Hill congregation we take delight in preaching that helps us to wrestle with scripture in a loving, daring journey of discovering what it is to be disciples of Jesus. We ask our preacher to speak the truth as best she/he can about what God is up to in a given text and about what this God is saying to us - as a congregation - here and now.

We invite those who preach within University Hill Congregation to enter into a shared journey with the text for Sunday. We do not imagine that our preacher hides away with the text - though we do intend that the preacher meditates long and hard with the text. We desire to read the text communally. With the use of our email mailing list and through gatherings and groups in the congregation we invite conversation about what God may be saying to us through this text. The preacher hosts the text and the congregation, listening for the living Word of God. This Word may be delightful or terrifying, it may be what we have come to expect or it may be an unwelcome surprise. We seek to practice safe sanctuary for the preacher who comes to witness to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth of the gospel that he/she hears as God's Word for this church at this time, in this place. On any given Sunday the congregation as jury may - or may not - hear the preached word as the truth of God's Word. We will survive sermons that miss the mark of the truth. What we long for are sermons that dare to speak truthfully about the Word of God that lives between and within the lines of scripture. We trust that, over the long term, this practice of sitting with and under Holy Scripture while waiting for a living Word from God will aid in cultivating a community of the Holy Spirit.

When the Congregational Minister is not the Preacher we invite congregants - clergy and lay - to undertake this ministry on behalf of the gathered community. Recognizing that this requires a significant gift of time in preparation we are grateful to those in the congregation who are able to undertake the ministry of preaching without a stipend. We do understand that this is not the case for everyone. Our Worship Ministry Chair and members of the Worship Ministry encourage those who are asked to undertake the ministry of preaching to be honest and open about their need of a stipend. It is our desire to have these conversations respectfully and openly, for the health of the entire community. When the congregation invites preachers from outside its number a stipend is normally provided. The current stipend for preaching is set at \$175.

It is our practice to follow the cycle of scripture readings that are set out for the ecumenical church in the common lectionary. These readings can be found in the Salt of the Earth Christian Seasons Calendar. Normally the preacher will preach a sermon that seeks to locate the congregation's life within one of the four texts of the day. The sermon is an extended meditation on what life lived as citizens of the Kingdom of God looks like when seen through the lens of this particular text. While this is our practice, it is not a requirement. Those who undertake the ministry of preaching may wish to preach on a different text. We invite preachers who wish to select alternate texts to do so in conversation with our Worship Ministry team and Congregational Minister.

## Ministry of Music

The **Ministry of Music** brings together a variety of gifted musicians to accompany the congregation's worship of God. This companionship in song provides opportunity for the gathering to become, literally, one voice before God. The variety of harmonies that shape this one voice provide witness to a rich diversity in which very different voices add to the good news that, in our very difference, we are together being saved into God's future. Because of this good news we cannot help but sing to God together. Besides, we need to practice now in order to be ready to join the heavenly chorus that sings praise to God for all eternity.

Each week our **Congregational Minister** (normally serving as the Presider and Preacher), **Minister of Music** and **Director of Choral Ministry** meet to select hymns and other worship music appropriate to the season and the day. Other worship leaders (lector, worship elder, children's elder, etc) are always welcome to join in this planning session and/or to be in conversation with any of our worship leaders prior to their planning meeting with suggestions of music that seems fitting. In selecting music for congregational song we ask those planning worship to lead the congregation in singing that reflects the historical range and cultural breadth of Christian music. We hope that on any given Sunday the congregation might recognize the sound of a variety of song including gospel, plainsong, German chorale, folk, contemporary praise, Taizé chant, Russian Orthodox litanies along with melodies from Africa, Central America, Korea and more. "Voices United" is the congregation's hymn book. However, we also make use of the other hymn books available to us in the Chapel of the Epiphany - those of the Anglican, Presbyterian and U.S. Methodist churches as well as "More Voices".

The congregation appreciates the use of **both the piano and the organ** to accompany its singing. It understands that normally the piano will be the preferred instrument for accompanying song. However, when the organ is called for by the nature of a hymn the Minister of Music will not hesitate to shift from the piano bench to the organ bench. We seek to encourage **a variety of instruments** in accompanying our worship. It is our hope that those who have the ability to play an instrument will be in conversation with our Minister of Music in order to find appropriate times when that instrument may accompany worship.

Since we seek to offer God the best we have and are in worship as a gift of our love and devotion we intend to offer music that is beautiful and worthy of offering to God. At the same time, we do not want to restrict our offerings of music only to those that can be made by the highly trained or professional musician. Rather, we invite all who have musical gifts to bring the best they have to offer and to share those gifts with the congregation as part of its corporate offering of worship to God.

**The Singers** gather with the Director of Choral Ministry every Sunday morning at 8:45 am (in the Auditorium beneath the Chapel of the Epiphany) to prepare for their ministry of accompaniment during worship. The Singers are an open, free form group made up of any who wish to participate when and as they are able. The name of the group denotes that it is not intended to be a performance choir who prepare music to be imposed on the liturgy. Rather, The Singers offer music that is at the service of that day's texts and themes. Sitting alongside the congregation - not facing it - The Singers sing with the congregation instead of singing to the congregation. The Singers rehearse the hymns and sung responses for the day, so that they will offer a strong voice that encourages the congregation's voice. The Singers also prepare sung Introits and Anthems as offerings to be shared in worship. On days such as Palm Sunday, Easter and Christmas Eve The Singers offer the Word through specially chosen music. There are some occasions during the year when The Singers join in other special services, not on Sunday morning (eg: Christmas Eve, Good Friday). It is our practice that The Singers and Director of Choral Ministry accompany the congregation from September through June each year, with a break from their ministry in July and August.

**On Sunday** the music for the service of worship normally includes:

**Song before worship** - a hymn prior to the service, to warm the congregation's voice.

**Introit** - a sung invitation to worship may be offered by The Singers.

**Prelude** - after the ringing of the Chapel bell, as the Bible is carried forward and the candles are lit, the Minister of Music (along with accompanying instruments) may play a piece that gathers the congregation in as one people. This time may, at the discretion of the Minister of Music, be kept in silence.

**Hymn of Praise** - an opening hymn that is focused on God. Normally this will be a hymn that is familiar to the congregation.

**Kyrie** - a brief sung response to the Prayer of Confession, this may be a traditional Kyrie ("Lord, have mercy") or it may voice the congregation's longing for God in some similar fashion (eg: "Grant to us your peace"). The Kyrie and Doxology are selected for a Season (eg: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter), so that the congregation becomes familiar with these responses. In the long Season after Pentecost we encourage a change in these responses approximately every two months.

**Doxology** - a brief joyous response to the Declaration of Grace.

**Lord's Prayer** - on Sundays when the Eucharist is not celebrated the congregation sings the Lord's Prayer, using one of two versions (#959 in Voices United or #12 in Songs for a Gospel People). We change the tune of the prayer twice a year, so that our children do not imagine that there is but one sung version of the prayer.

**Preparation for the Word** - After the children move out of the Chapel the congregation pauses to prepare itself to hear God's Word. Up to this point in the service the congregation has been active - greeting, sharing news, singing, praying, gathering its children. Now it pauses to wait upon God. We ask our Minister of Music to lead us into this waiting time. There is no hurry. We can wait for the children to leave. Then we can wait to enter into the mystery of listening for the voice of God. for those with ears to hear the music itself is already speaking this Word.

**Psalm** - We normally sing the response provided in Voices United as we stand to read the Psalm for the day. The Minister of Music plays this response through once, then plays it a second time as The Singers and congregation add their voices, before the Lector begins the Psalm. The congregation joins in the Refrain where it is marked in the Psalter. On some Sundays we sing a version of the Psalm if one is available and suitable.

**Time of Silent Meditation** - Following the sermon we normally keep a time of silence for meditation on God's Word. We ask the Minister of Music to listen to this silence, not rushing us forward into song, but judging when the time is right to move into the hymn that follows the sermon. It begins without announcement.

**Hymn of the Word** - The hymn that follows the sermon and precedes the Prayers of the People is often one that invites God into the life of the congregation. Rather than a declaration of praise or an announcement of our discipleship, this hymn regularly takes the congregation into a place of prayer before God. Music new to the congregation can often be placed here, rather than at the opening or closing of worship. In this way the congregation has an opportunity to begin and to end its worship singing with confidence a song that it knows well.

**Offering** - The Minister of Music (and other accompanists) give an **offering of music** as the congregation participates in the rite of giving itself to God's mission in the world through Jesus Christ. This is not

“background music” intended to fill time. This is the sound of a people returning love and devotion to God. The sound of the congregation’s sacrificial giving is, we pray, music to God’s ears. Perhaps it is like the sound of the music that we hear as the offering plates are passed from hand to hand.

**Baptism** - On Sundays when the Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated a **Baptismal hymn** is sung before and/or following the Baptism. On some occasions Baptisms are celebrated during the Time with the Children (so that the children can be present and participate in the sacrament). On other occasions (when children are present throughout the liturgy) Baptisms may be celebrated following the Sermon and prior to the Eucharist (as on Easter Sunday, for example). At the conclusion of each Baptism The Singers lead the congregation in singing the **Baptismal Acclamation**.

**Eucharist** - On Sundays when the Eucharist is celebrated the Hymn of the Word is replaced by an **Offering Hymn**. Following the Sermon the Minister of Music ends the time of silent meditation with music as the offering is received. Then, as the offering and elements are brought forward to the Table, the congregation sings a Eucharistic Hymn. The Great Thanksgiving Prayer (printed on an insert in the Order of Service) regularly includes a sung **Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation** and **Great Amen**, led by the Minister of Music and The Singers. On most occasions The Singers lead the congregation in **singing during the reception of the elements**. The Singers and musicians usually receive the elements first, then return to their seats in order to lead this corporate song as the meal is shared (selected hymns are noted in the Order of Service).

**Hymn of Sending** - The liturgy draws to a close with a final hymn that sends the congregation into the world in discipleship.

**Postlude** - Following the Commissioning and Benediction the congregation is seated as a Postlude is offered by the Minister of Music and any accompanying musicians. The Postlude providing a final opportunity to linger on the Sabbath in the witness that is the service of worship while looking forward with expectation to the witness that is the service of Christ in the world. Following the Postlude the Lector and an assistant come forward to extinguish the candles and to carry the light and Bible out of the Chapel, leading the congregation into the world.

## Offering Stewards

The **Offering Stewards** undertake the simple but important ministry of receiving and placing the congregation's offering before God. Normally the Offering Stewards are invited to this ministry just before the worship service by the Welcomer. We hope that those who are invited will take their turn as they are able in this ministry. A wide variety of Offering Stewards reminds the congregation that all have gifts worthy of offering to God and that God in Christ calls us to offer a life of sacrificial service.

The Offering Stewards move to the entrance of the Chapel when the Presider steps forward to invite the congregation to offer gifts to God. The Worship Coordinator hands each one an offering plate. Without waiting for direction the Offering Stewards move to the front of the Chapel and begin to pass the offering plates along the rows. This is not simply the time for donations to the congregation's budget. This is a sacred act that symbolizes our response to Christ's call to follow and to give gifts that will cost, to live lives that will bear the burden of another's suffering. It is good to hold the offering plates with this in mind, treating their contents as worthy signs of the congregation's discipleship.

Once the Offering Stewards meet, having passed the offering plates throughout the congregation, they select two of their number to bring the offering forward to the Table. On most Sundays the Offering Stewards wait until the music that is offered during this time has ended. Once there is silence, the Offering Stewards walk to the Table and place the plates on it. They then stand back one pace and wait while the Presider leads in a Prayer of Thanksgiving. Then the Offering Stewards turn and return to their seats.

On Sundays when the Eucharist is celebrated the Offering Stewards wait in their seats until the silent meditation is brought to an end by the Minister of Music. They then move to collect the offering as music is played, bringing it forward as the congregation stands to sing the Offering Hymn. The Offering Stewards place the offering on the Table, then turn and leave the Table as two of the Communion servers bring the chalice, cup and loaf to the Table during the next verse of the Offering Hymn.

On occasions when the seating in the Chapel is re-arranged in an oval around the Table (Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve) the Offering Stewards are encouraged to gather before the service in order to plan an orderly method for receiving the offering.

## Communion Elder

The **Communion Elder** plays a vital role in the worship life of University Hill Congregation. The congregation is striving to celebrate the central meal of Christian worship with greater frequency. The table fellowship of the church is known variously as Eucharist (literally: "thanksgiving"), the Lord's Supper and Communion. This meal in the present moment is, at once, a remembrance of Jesus' last supper (and his other meals with sinners and outcasts) as well as a foretaste of the Messianic Banquet in the Kingdom of God. At University Hill our current practice is to celebrate the Eucharist on the first Sunday of the month except in those months when a new Christian season begins or when a major Christian festival calls for the congregation to gather at the Table. These festivals and seasons include Epiphany Sunday (first Sunday on or after January 6), the five Sundays of Lent, Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, All Saints (Sunday closest to November 1) and the four Sundays of Advent. The congregation gathers at the Table on as many as twenty times in a given year (the Worship Ministry team develops a Eucharistic calendar each year). The Communion Elder's responsibility is to see that the Table is set with care on these sacramental occasions.

**Preparation** takes place in the Sacristy - the small kitchen across from the Vestry.

### Elements

- One loaf made by a volunteer or bought. Brought to chapel by baker or left in freezer.
- Six slices of bread, without crusts and cut into small squares by volunteer.
- Rice cakes bought by elder and kept in sacristy cupboard.
- Bottle of white wine, or box of wine (at Advent or Lent) bought by elder, kept in our fridge downstairs.
- Red grape juice, bought by elder, kept in our fridge.

### Equipment

- One small container for pouring wine in the sacristy.
- Paper or Q tips to wipe up spill.
- Two sets of three trays with small glass cups (in cupboard in the adjacent washroom ).
- One turkey baster "
- Two small silver plates "
- One lace doily cut in half "
- One stoneware pitcher in cupboard in the sacristy.
- One stoneware goblet "
- One plate, preferably with a pottery appearance in the downstairs kitchen.
- Two white cloth napkins to cover bread in drawer in the vestry.

### Routine

- Arrive by 9:45 and fetch supplies from the freezer (loaf) and fridge (wine and grape juice).
- Using small wine container fill twelve cups in the top layer of each tray with white wine.
- Using turkey baster fill the rest of the cups in the top layer of the trays with grape juice.
- Leave the middle layer of the tray empty.
- Fill twelve cups in the bottom layer of each tray with grape juice (fill all at Easter).
- Put the trays on the communion table.
- Put the cut-up bread and seven small pieces of rice cake on each of the two doily covered silver plates.
- Cover with white napkins and put on communion table.
- Put pitcher filled with some grape juice, goblet and plate with loaf on the table at the back of chapel.

After the service

Return everything to the sacristy.

Empty all small cups and rinse in the sink, then wash with hot water and a little soap, then rinse again with plain hot water and put each rinsed cup upside down on a tea cloth.

Wash all the other utensils.

Take the wine and grape juice to our fridge.

Put the cloths away in their drawer.

By this time the glasses will be dry and can be put back in the trays.

Time taken for preparation is about 40 minutes. Time taken for clean-up is about the same. An option is to take the cups home to wash in dishwasher.

## Sacristan

The **Sacristan** is responsible for “sacred objects” in a congregation. The Sacristan’s role is particularly important because the Chapel of the Epiphany is a shared space (it is common for there to be numerous services of worship along with other gatherings in the Chapel during the week) and has flexible seating arrangements which result in a wide variety of arrangements being used in the Chapel on a regular basis. The sacristan arranges the Chapel prior to worship and does a tidy up following worship

University Hill is responsible for hiring it’s own Sacristan. Recently we have hired one or two VST or UBC students to fulfill this role. Usually they are individuals who are affiliated with the congregation or VST. (In the past, University Hill’s Sacristan was provided by the Vancouver School of Theology as a part of our lease agreement.). Set up of the Chapel and the Auditorium is usually done late Saturday afternoon or Saturday evening and the tidy up occurs later on Sunday afternoon or that evening. The sacristan has keys to the Chapel and the storage area in the Auditorium.

By 9:00 am Sunday morning the Sacristan sees that the Chapel is set up for worship. This includes ensuring that the seating has been arranged appropriately and that the Table, Pulpit and Font as well as candle holders, microphones, children’s carpets and the greeters’ table are in place. Normally the congregation sits in a semi-circle around the Table with the Font placed in front of the Table and the Pulpit placed behind the Table, beneath the Cross. This serves as a constant reminder that we enter the Christian life through Baptism, that we gather at Christ’s banquet Table where we listen for the Word of God.

On the **Festival Days** of Christmas Eve, Easter, Pentecost and Thanksgiving we sit in a long oval (or “fish” shape) with the Table centered in the Chapel (except on Christmas Eve, when the Table sits parallel to, and near, the eastern wall, with the Nativity scene beneath it). On these feast days we literally gather around the Table to celebrate our Great Thanksgiving (Eucharist) meal. On days when we lay hands on those who are being received through Baptism or Renewal of Baptismal Vows and on those who are being commissioned for a particular mission venture or upon their leaving the congregation we ask the Sacristan to place a kneeling bench beside the Font.

Following worship the Sacristan ensures that the hymn books and bibles are returned to the rolling bookshelves, bulletins and extra items are removed from the chairs, the welcoming table items are put away.

The Sacristan is also responsible for setting up and putting away the furniture and supplies for the two Church School classrooms (Little Ones and Elementary class) at the east end of the Auditorium. This involves pulling out the room dividers to create two rooms, setting out the supply cupboards, carpets, tables, chairs, and cushions. Since the Auditorium is shared with VST, all of these items must be put away before Monday in order that the Auditorium is available for other users.

Should a Worship Leadership team wish to arrange the Chapel differently on any given Sunday it may wish to discuss this with the Worship Ministry group and then to contact the Sacristan (name & contact information is included in the listing on the last page in this booklet) to arrange for an alternate set up. Detailed versions of the set up instructions for the Chapel and the Church School area are available through the office.