

Worship with Seekers Church

A Visitor's Guide

Welcome

Seekers Church is an intentional Christian community that has grown out of the Church of the Saviour, founded by Gordon and Mary Cosby in Washington DC in 1946. During its life, Church of the Saviour has developed a strong commitment to the priesthood of all believers, lived out through an outer journey of service to God's creation, balanced by an inner journey of disciplined prayer and reflection to support individual discernment of God's call.

Since 1976 when Seekers came into being as a separate congregation, we have added to these traditions a commitment to shared leadership, a readiness for conversation among the faith traditions we inherited, and new understandings of Christian commitment, and an invitation to all with full respect for the richness brought by people of different age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or spiritual tradition. We want to be a church for all God's people.

Background

Our worship grows out of our ongoing life as one small part of the Body of Christ. As a focus for the inner journey we use the same lections or weekly readings from Scripture in the Revised Common Lectionary, a three-year cycle of Scripture readings used by many Christian denominations. A list of these readings is printed for each season and available on our web site at <http://www.seekerschurch.org/worship/lectionary> so that all Seekers can have easy reference to these common readings and use them in their daily reflection.

Our worship life each year is structured into nine **thematic seasons**. The year begins four Sundays before Christmas with Advent, when we remember the coming of Jesus into the world as the chosen child of God. Our seasons follow the traditions of other Christian churches through Christmastide, Epiphany, Lent, and Eastertide. We divide the remainder of the year into four seasons.

In the fall we focus on our tradition of **annual recommitment** to the community. All Seekers are invited to make a specific commitment to this Christian community during worship on the third Sunday in October. This tradition, from our roots in the Church of the Saviour, helps us each to be intentional about our journey with Christ as part of the community.

Our Worship

We begin our worship together on Sunday with **community sharing**, gathered in the gallery near the front door. This is a time to welcome visitors, celebrate birthdays, share the joys and sorrows of all who come, hear news about issues and activities that affect our lives, and practice the hymns we will be singing during worship. We light a candle with a prayer for peace and justice, then follow it into the sanctuary to continue our worship with a time of reflection.

We use the same **liturgy** or order of worship for all Sundays in a season. Our liturgies are written by Celebration Circle, the Seekers mission group that structures our worship life. Each liturgy is built around a **worship theme** that grows out of the life of the community and weekly Scripture lessons for the season.

There is a visual composition on the **altar table** beneath the life-sized empty cross. These images and the **bulletin covers** relate to the worship theme for the season. There is a paragraph in the liturgy for **silent reflection** at the beginning of worship. Like the composition on the altar, these readings may nurture reflection on the worship theme for the season. This initial time for reflection includes **music** which is chosen to complement the sermon and the lighting of candles on the altar table by members of the community. This is often an opportunity for our children to help lead us in worship.

The worship is usually led by a member of Celebration Circle. The liturgist is chosen to provide **gender balance** with the person who will be offering the sermon. Our **community prayers** are led by the liturgist, and there is always the opportunity for everyone to offer prayers for individual joys and concerns, silently or aloud.

Each week, as part of our sharing of the Word, we hear **Scripture readings**, usually from the Hebrew Scripture, Epistle, and the Gospel lessons for the week. These are read by Seekers who volunteer to add their voices to the worship in this way.

The sermon is given by a different member of the community each Sunday, or by an invited guest. Sermons are normally drawn from the worship theme for the season, the lessons for the week, the life of the community, or the particular experience of the individual who is offering the sermon. Sermons include personal testimony, thoughts about the life of the community in the world, and teachings about theology or doctrine.

Following the sermon, there is an opportunity for **sharing reflections** by others in the community on the lessons for the week or the experience of worship itself. These community reflections often add depth and contrast to our understanding of the word that we have heard. This sharing is not intended to be a dialog, but often provides a starting point for conversation after the worship service ends, when we gather for **coffee and conversation** in the kitchen.

On the first Sunday of each month we celebrate **communion** or Eucharist. After the bread and cup have been blessed by two of our Stewards, we gather in a large circle to serve one another. All are encouraged to join the circle and share in this time of remembering that our faith is based on Jesus' model of welcome inclusion, forgiveness, and the promise of new life. Those who do not wish to share the elements are invited to join us in the circle.

Come Again

In many ways, we share characteristics of the early churches started by the Apostle Paul during his itinerant ministry in Asia Minor just after the resurrection of Christ. Like the Christians in Ephesus, we come from other traditions. Like them, we have heard the stories of the life and death of Jesus, and the resurrection of Christ. Like them, we have moments when we experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. And, like them, we are far from perfect.

We hope you leave Seekers' worship nourished in spirit and strengthened for your ministry in daily life. We encourage you to come several times to experience the diversity in our life as a faith community. If you have questions, or comments, or concerns, please ask. Our worship grows out of our life together, and now that you have arrived you have a place at the table.

You can find much more information about Seekers Church on our web site: <http://www.seekerschurch.org>.

Seekers Church

A Christian Community

In the Tradition of the Church of the Saviour



***Creative
Inclusive
Working for Peace and Justice***

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Celebration Circle
April 2015