

SOS Follow-up – Newsletter #2

FAQ's

1) You mentioned you had meetings with “representatives” from the 4:00pm congregation. What took place and why was I not invited?

We wanted to get feedback from a diversity of folks who regularly attend this service, trying to see past any personal preferences to the bigger picture of the group. Under these circumstances, there was only so much time and opportunity to have some people participate. It wasn't meant to be personal, just pragmatic, scheduling these meetings around my other duties.

2) What are the “updates” to the existing 4:00pm service you mentioned? (I like it just fine the way it is.)

In general, based upon meetings with pastors and congregants, here's a general guideline for what's to come. (As things roll out, constructive feedback will be key.)

- a- Details like transitions (between songs, between spoken and music, between different leaders etc.) {Lk. 14:28}
- b- Overhaul system of “loving accountability” and clarified expectations--what's best for ALL--for band members. {Prov. 27:17}
- c- Seamless use of technology that *enhances* worship but doesn't draw attention to itself, (don't just use something because we *can*.) {1 Cor. 10:23}
- d- Move away from the word “contemporary.” It means limited, or differing things to different people, especially new ones. Definitions more in light of: *non-traditional, casual, P & W, DYNAMIC/VIBRANT* {Job 11:7}
- e- Keep encouraging congregational participation (use as few explanations as possible in service); include familiarity (create a ‘canon’ of music associated) but creatively introduce learning of new music periodically = *freshness*. {Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:24-25}
- f- Various church/denominational backgrounds of folks; be willing to “teach” a moment to help explain the ‘why’ behind the ‘what.’ {1 Cor. 12:27-28}
- g- More ways to use congregants more—readings etc.? {Eph. 4:11-13}
- h- Eclectic mix of music is OK, particularly when lyrics are known (i.e. *updated hymns*) {Ps. 104:24}
- i- Liturgy ‘intends’ to bring: historical grounding, rich theology, clarified beliefs, etc. Look for ways to keep this intent within the stylistic contexts of this service. (*sung prayers/creeds; updated verbiage, modern versions of liturgical pieces {possibly} incorporated without becoming static and the same week to week*) {1 Cor. 14:9}

3) My favorite leader this past year was _____. What's going to happen to them?

Hope benefitted from a variety of talented, dedicated musical leaders. Everyone, within varying degrees, is still on call if they are needed again.

- a- Dennis continues to direct the music program at Hope Lake Weir Campus.
- b- Mary Jo continues to do the same for the program at Hope at the Everglades Rec Center.
- c- Susan remains a dedicated volunteer, giving of her time within multiple ministries at Hope in all three campuses.
- d- Abe still lives in East Florida with his family, willing to help us out as needed.
- e- Caleb leaves for SEU in Lakeland on 8/18 but may be able to return for a few services this upcoming year.
- f- Bruce continues to live locally in TV area and remains ready to return when needed.

4) How often are you (Ken) actually going to be there on Saturdays?

My present plan is to be in front of the congregation 2-3 Saturdays per month. (I will also be present on Sundays at Central about that much too.)

5) When you (Ken) are not there, will there still be consistency in all these alteration?

The short answer is, "Yes, hopefully." All substitute leaders (in my absence) will be encouraged to adopt these updates, as well as using any volunteer musicians who may be on board. Some folks, while skilled, may not possess the experience or background needed to work with a group of volunteers. (Often this can take extra time, so it remains to be seen how things play out.)

6) I remember last year when the band was bigger. Are all those folks coming back?

There is no limit to the number of qualified musicians who can be placed on the roster for the SOS Band. Yet, everyone will be evaluated equally, regardless of any past relationship with me or Hope. This can include any previously involved vocalists or instrumentalists.

7) What is the audition process for someone who wants to join the band?

The process details are being fine-tuned as I write this. All interested singers need understand this is NOT a choir experience (where a vocalist could hide in the comfort and safety of a larger section.) Instrumentalists need to be capable of playing one or more of the listed options from the video... <https://youtu.be/FpeZ5pNNPlc> Everyone will fill out a digital questionnaire detailing some basic abilities and experiences. Specific types of music reading (notation, lead sheet, tabs) are encouraged but not necessarily mandatory, depending upon your function in the group. Then a personal audition will

be scheduled, and the individual will be given a list of expectations with materials to prepare on their own within about a week's time. Each audition will wrap up with a confidential discussion. Passing the audition is good for life. Anyone who doesn't pass may re-audition in an agreed-upon timeframe. {Eph. 2:10; Phil. 4:8}

8) When will the SOS Band rehearse?

Group rehearsals will only be on Saturdays, prior to services. The specific time is yet to be determined, but weekly rehearsals will allow for: setting up any personal equipment, attaining acceptable IEM levels, a brief group spiritual devotion time, *read-throughs* (future music), *run-throughs* (detailed arrangements, transitions, etc. for that day), and a firm stop time of no later than 3:20 pm.

*** Note, there is no time set aside for:** *last minute printing at church, exploration of your digital device, your instrument or equipment, changing strings or other maintenance, the 'passing out' of any music on paper, last-minute making up for a lack of personal practice prior to the rehearsal.* {Prov. 6:6-8}

9) If I want to consider joining but not play all the time, is that a possibility?

The digital questionnaire will ask in advance how frequently you wish to participate (i.e. weekly, twice a month, the nine months while we're in Florida each year etc.) Anyone passing their audition will be given a Covenant Agreement to sign, stating their level of involvement and "best effort" agreement to terms (like #8.) This agreement only lasts for up to a year, with the option to renew again annually thereafter (if you want to.) Also, if there are more than the maximum stage number of people on a given instrument (for stage size and/or band balance) then we'll create a system of regular rotation to equally benefit everyone.

10) I know (or, heard) this great (insert instrument here) – ist in the area and think they would like to play/sing here. Is that possible?

We are not looking for "featured soloists" for this group. We are seeking team players, albeit ones who will play different roles and provide different functions. Everyone must accept a level of compromise, personal humility, and a deferential attitude to what is best for the *group as a whole*, and the *congregation* in light of God's direction for Hope and its leadership. Specifically, an air of spiritual awareness is encouraged for everyone, no matter their role. Open-mindedness, winsome curiosity, a softened heart, and a community outlook are all vital. Anyone, from inside or outside the church itself will need to understand and agree to these ideals, knowing at the same time that we are all unique in God's sight. We journey together and as individuals. Worship is a HUGE part of that journey. {1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:15}

11) I hope you play more of the kind of music I like after Sept. 16. Will you?

Obviously, this is a subjective question. There may be an assumption that "traditional" is associated with "older," perhaps more familiar, music (accompanied by organ/piano and choir.) If that were the case, then this alternative service must be "newer" music (accompanied by a band instead.) This is partly true...you won't likely hear an organ at SOS (unless maybe it's a rock organ sound.) You also won't likely hear a large choir (because we don't have the space.) We want to offer a variety of singable music, all of which brings God glory. Hopefully, you will like it (or at least some of it.) Chances are, some you may not prefer. But I hope everybody sees that, as we're encouraged in Psalm 96 to sing a new song to the Lord, we can do this by: 1) learning new music now and then, 2) updating old tunes in a new way, and 3) approaching familiar songs "newly," with our whole heart tuned in. Just like it has been, we may use tracks, play live, or a combination of both. We just want to do justice to the musical offering.

12) I thought Hope South Campus 10:00 am (Sunday) service was kind of similar to this one. Is that one going to change too?

Mary Jo will still lead at Everglades Rec Center 10:00am service. There are some tentative plans to slowly begin expanding the ensemble, at least now and then, with live musicians added to (or occasionally in place of) the tracks that are currently used. Her musical choices will continue to be up to her, regardless of when or if they differ from the weekly set lists at Hope Central Campus 4:00pm. We'll place the same attention to service "flow" and consistency between campuses for each weekend service. We need to offer continuity as one church with three campuses, if for no one else than the pastors who preside at each between Sat. and Sun. Trying to do more than two general service formats each weekend gets entirely too complicated.

13) Why don't you consider making changes to a different service? (I like this idea, but I prefer attending Hope Central Campus on Sunday.)

Within Hope's history and how services and culture have grown, Saturday 4:00pm was always the alternative service to a "higher church," more traditional liturgical structure (more like the settings outlined from within the ELCA resources.) Once we gained the south site also, it became clear there was a desire to offer something similar down there.

Interesting tidbits: Hope has always been in a unique position, given our cultural underpinnings from within The Villages itself. Within other regional areas, congregations more typically grow up with greater demographic diversity, but also shared community experiences steeped in the history of living in one place and doing life together for a longer time. Here, the majority of us have been transplanted from elsewhere, brought by the common dreams of an active retirement and warm climate. Other than that, we

are starting our experiences, and sharing them with new neighbors and friends, from scratch. Only about 1/3 of Hope's members even come from a Lutheran background, prior to their relocation. Within theological and scriptural guidelines, filtered through pastoral discernment, channeled by representative lay leadership, we do our best to offer "as much, for as many" as we can. Of course, there are limitations. The Apostle Paul attempted to become all things to all people (1 Cor. 9:19-23) in order that he might save some. As an institution, Hope will always do its best to follow in those ministerial footsteps, knowing that we are but one part of the overall body of Christ. Yet, to His calling and mission, we must remain vigilant and faithful.