

THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

... the Practice of the Presence of God

Good morning! I am Jeanne Eichelberger, and I am honored to have been asked to speak to you briefly about the Worship Committee.

Being an unrepentant English major, I tend to approach any topic by identifying and defining the key words used in the topic. So what does WORSHIP mean? I Googled it and found it defined as “veneration of something considered holy.” Following this basic rather dry definition was an endless string of related online pages defining worship to extinction. I reckon I haven’t enough years left in my life to deal with this proliferation, so I finally settled on a phrase attributed to a 17th-century monk known as Brother Lawrence: worship is “the practice of the presence of God”.

The practice of the presence of God. I think this covers all aspects of worship and defines what the Worship Committee tries to do.

The Committee’s stated purpose is “to support the Priest and Staff in the Corporate Worship Activities of the Parish and to promote opportunities for enriched personal spiritual growth.” In other words, the Committee’s activities are determined by the requests and suggestions of the priest and the congregation. There is no telling from one year to the next what we’ll be doing.

Some of the activities we have undertaken in the past 2 years are

- organized the Grace and Reconciliation Weekend for the parish with two Brothers from the Holy Cross Monastery;
- discussed and gave presentations on the use of the Common Cup and Intinction in Communion;
- organized two trips to Holy Cross for groups from Grace;
- wrote the guide for visiting clergy;
- helped organize the 3-hour Good Friday service;
- acted on a request to improve indications for disabled seating;
- reintroduced the ringing of the bell before services;
- organized the Acolyte Appreciation Sunday with presentation of crosses;

- regularly help organize and promote musical programs and special services such as Choral Evensong.

Here I should point out that almost everything we have done has cost something. All the enthusiasm we can muster goes nowhere without funding. As we enter this season of Advent, with its contemplative aspects, let us consider, both individually and as a group, what we can do without in order to truly practice the presence of God.

I will close by pointing out that I grew up in this parish. Being involved in the life of this church may have been the most important part of my growing up. I can promise you that the habits of the ritual and the variety of activities—in my case especially the music—shaped some of the best facets of my adult life. In good times and bad, my young years here have enabled me—at least in my better moments—to practice the presence of God. I hope that those of us who are now responsible for the future of this parish will pass on to our young people gifts as rich as those that were given to me.

Amen.

Thank you.