

Great Idea!



A word from several of our partner churches...

Where do you locate your children's Bibles in the worship space? Our Quick Sheet church this month, Black Mountain Presbyterian Church has theirs in the pew alongside an NRSV Bible and hymnal. I know that Southminster Presbyterian Church in Boise sometimes has theirs in the pulpit as the Scripture reading of the day. Other partner churches have theirs on bookshelves in the Narthex or in designated areas within their sanctuaries for children. I'm wondering this month where the best location is for all ages to be able to access and enjoy them.

Kathy Dawson, Wonder of Worship Project Director



Montreat Worship and Music Conference

Wonder of Worship was present for the two weeks of the Montreat Worship and Music Conference sponsored by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians each year. This year the conference theme was "Clothed in Love" based on Colossians 3:12.

In the children's Bible study we made stoles that the children could wear on the final day when their choir sang in worship and then take home to remind them of the week. Thanks to the Liturgical Arts Team at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, I was able to take 150 stoles that children could paint with water colors free hand or with stamps and stencils. They were a beautiful reminder of the conference theme, which will hopefully have a long lasting impact/

Regional Gatherings this Fall

Our topic for this fall for Wonder of Worship will be neurodiversity and worship accommodations. We will film another set of experts on this topic and gather for some hands on learning in two locations.
September 13- A one-day event at St. Philip's Presbyterian Church in Houston, TX.
October 28-30- A three-day, two-night event at Montreat.

Registration for these will be coming soon!
We look forward to your joining us for this important topic.



Congregational Singing Videos Now Available

Our filmed interviews with Dr. Tony McNeill and Paul Vasile are now available on the [Wonder of Worship website](#) for all to use regarding congregational singing that takes the presence of children seriously



Spotlight: Family Worship

A Worship Space Where Kids Can Be Kids

WOW!
Wonder of Worship
Quicksheet 1.12
July 2025



In September 2021, in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Black Mountain Presbyterian Church launched a new worship opportunity designed to meet the evolving needs of families with young children. Recognizing a pre-pandemic decline in Sunday School attendance—a trend common in many congregations—we saw an opportunity to reimagine how we gather and worship as a faith community.

As we cautiously resumed in-person worship and programming, the reality was that many families, especially those with unvaccinated children, were hesitant to return to traditional indoor services. In response, we created Family Worship—a service rooted in hospitality, joy, and inclusion.

Welcome

Family Worship is intentionally designed to be child- and parent-friendly. It's a place where children can be themselves—free to move, sing, ask questions, and fully participate. The service is structured to be developmentally appropriate, particularly for younger children, and welcomes people of all ages and stages. Our goal is to create a non-judgmental, joy-filled space where children and adults can grow in faith together.

Each week, we explore Bible stories in engaging, age-appropriate ways and also share non-religious books that echo the core values and lessons of our faith. The service includes music, movement, clapping, dancing, prayer, and storytelling, all within a rhythm that blends playful energy with moments of quiet reflection.

Growing

Over time, Family Worship has evolved—and that's a good thing. We listen closely to the needs of our families and make adjustments as needed. But what has remained constant is our commitment to creating a space where children can encounter God, surrounded by a loving, supportive community. It is a safe place for children to explore what worship means and to experience God's presence in ways that speak to them. At Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, Family Worship continues to be a joyful expression of faith—a reminder that worship doesn't require silence or stillness to be sacred. Sometimes, it looks like crayons and tambourines, storybooks and goldfish crackers. And always, it looks like love.

Brittany Williams is the Director of Congregational Life and Children's Ministry at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, Black Mountain, NC. She is a native of Black Mountain and the granddaughter of two former PC(USA) pastors. She has a background in recreation and community building, and enjoys using her gifts to share the love of God with people of all ages.

Interactive

Intentional

Family Worship is not a "shortened" version of traditional worship—it is thoughtfully crafted for experiential, participatory engagement. The service includes many familiar elements of worship: a Call to Worship, Confession, prayers in many forms, an offering, and the celebration of Communion on the first Sunday of every month. Each element is introduced in a way that helps children understand what we're doing and why it matters. Services last about 30–40 minutes, and we strive to use this time meaningfully. We intentionally leave out some parts of a traditional worship service in order to focus on depth, not length. Worship concludes with fellowship and a snack, nurturing the relationships that are essential to our community life.

