

Worship in Long Term Care Settings

and Especially with Persons
with Alzheimer's Disease/Dementia



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**By Jeremy Bellsmith,
The Vine: Connecting People, Places and Programs**

Leading worship among residents in long term care facilities can be intimidating or confusing, especially when worshippers suffer with dementia, Alzheimer's disease or other forms of cognitive impairment. We want to communicate God's love for each one, affirm the intrinsic value of all people and facilitate a meaningful worship experience for attendees. But how do we do that, accommodating the unique needs of these worshippers, without sounding condescending or disrespectful?

The Reformed, Service of the Word provides a ready tool easily adaptable for use in a long term care facility:

Gathering to Worship God

Call to Worship
Hymn of Praise
Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Hearing God's Word

[Hymn of Praise]
Scripture(s)
Message

Responding to God

Prayers of the People
[Communion]

Going out in God's Name

Hymn
Blessing

Anyone familiar with this worship order can easily shorten the service to about 15 or 30 minutes and use it to promote a meaningful and consistent worship experience for residents. This resource is intended to guide one through that process and to provide a selection of ideas for making worship meaningful.

Our thanks to The Rev. Jean Morris of the Bethany Care Society, The Rev. Charlotte Brown, chaplain, and Nella Uitvlugt of Friendship Ministries for their assistance and advice in compiling this resource.

Creating a Worship Space

Consistently evoke memory.

Many residents of long term care facilities suffer from dementia and Alzheimer's disease. For that reason, the worship space should have cues that residents can use to connect with deep, early memories of other religious services the worshippers have attended. Including classic Christian symbols that say, "worship will take place here," are a great way to accomplish that. For example, place

- A cloth covered table at the front of the space
- A cross and/ or liturgical banners in the space
- A Bible and a lit candle on the table. This can be done as a part of the call to worship (see below), marking the time as different from the regular daily routine. Always consult staff of the facility before using an open flame as some residents may depend on flammable oxygen gas.

Wear clothes that clearly demarcate you as the worship leader. Since many residents' religious experiences will include clerical garments, a collar, robe or some variation on liturgical garb is an easy way to connect with worshippers' memories.

Most long term care homes have a set time for worship services in recognition of how important consistency is. The physical worship environment should be similar every week too. The same worship pattern and sequence should be repeated at each service.

Worship done in community is especially meaningful.

Since worship is about relationship with God and each other, there are things we can do to nurture the sense of community that worshippers experience.

- For larger groups, invite volunteers, guests and persons confined to a wheel chair to integrate. This avoids a segregated "wheelchair island" from forming in the center of the worship space. Many have remarked that the sense of community which results, improves participation from all.
- If the group is small, ask a staff person or volunteer to worship with the group. These people can serve as an important model for the singing and other elements of the worship service.
- Be careful to speak slowly and intentionally throughout worship, making eye contact whenever possible to connect with each resident.
- Use "person first" language, affirming personhood and identity. For example, use the name of the residents whenever possible. In referring to people with illnesses, use person-first language: "our friends with cancer," instead of cancer patients, and "persons with Alzheimers" instead of Alzheimers patients.

The Call to Worship

The call to worship begins the service. It should be similar from week to week communicating in a memorable way that worship is beginning. It may as simple as:

Leader: We are called together as God's people. Come let us worship God together.

Margaret Goodall, a chaplain at Westbury Home for the Aged, describes using an excerpt from the Iona Community *Worship Book* to open their weekly worship services. She writes in *Spirituality and Ageing* that the responses became part of the residents' way of participating, despite some concerns that a written order was asking too

much.¹ The Iona call to worship doubles as an opportunity to introduce each symbol in a clear and simple way, instead of having it already in place prior to the service start. We have revised it here:

Leader: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good

All: God's love endures forever

Leader: In the beginning when it was very dark, God said, "Let there be light"

All: God's love endures forever

(the symbol of light, the candle, is placed on the empty table and lit in silence)

Leader: In the beginning, when it was very quiet, The Word was with God

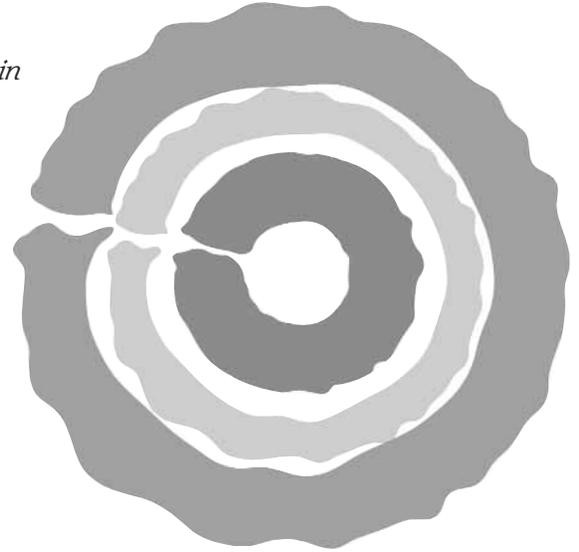
All: God's love endures forever

(the symbol of The Word, the Bible, is opened and placed on the empty table)

Leader: When the time was right God sent his Son

All: God's love endures forever

(the symbol of the Son, a cross, is placed on the table).



Prayers of Adoration & Confession

A prayer of adoration describes why we worship God, and a prayer of confession acknowledges our shortcomings. These can be customized for the theme being emphasized during that service. For example, if the group is thinking about the Peace of God, the prayer might be:

Leader:

God of Peace, into the darkness and chaos you spoke, bringing light and order.
Prince of Peace, you spoke to the storming wind and waves, saying "Peace, be still."
Though our hearts are sometimes filled with the darkness of doubt and the storms of disappointment, we turn to you.

Spirit of Peace, remind us through your presence with us that we belong to you, and so may we sense again the peace that comes from knowing we are never alone.

Scriptures

In crafting a service of the word for a long term care context, its easy to start with the lectionary scriptures, abbreviating the portions read aloud in order for people to follow easily.

The scriptures should be read with an awareness of how the act of reading evokes memory. For example, read aloud from a large Bible or Bible-like book instead of from notes, or off a page. This connects the action of reading with some residents' memories of the Bible being read in worship services they have attended.

Similarly, how the passage is read becomes important in linking listeners with the scripture's content. Scripture stories should be read with a sense of drama, poems with a sense of wonder and epistles with the love and passion of the teacher. Familiar passages like Psalm 23 or the Lord's Prayer may be read from the King James Version, but the goal of the reading is to keep the scriptures accessible and understandable. Less familiar readings should be read from an easy to understand translation.

¹Goodall, Margaret. "Worshipping with those who have Dementia." *Spirituality and Aging*. Edited by Albert Jewell (Jessica Kingsley Publisher, 1999), pg. 96.

The Meditation

In this context, meditations or homilies work better than sermons. A brief reflection on the text and what it tells us about God can be a potent tool for encouraging and comforting residents. This can be done in four to six minutes. As with many services of the word, the subject of the meditation becomes a theme around which the rest of the service can be oriented.

In delivering the talk, a conversational style will allow for spontaneity while still treating the residents as friends on a common journey instead of subjects to be served. Not only will this avoid any unintended impression of condescension, but it will also connect the worship leader with the worshippers by reinforcing the equality of all.

One way to prepare a conversational meditation is to begin by jotting down an outline of what you would like to say. Then write the meditation. Once complete, reduce it back to an outline by pulling out just those points that are essential to the message. Practise your talk using the final outline, being more concerned with getting the essential points across than with the specific language or words being used.

Use visual aids liberally. Pictures and object lessons allow participants to connect with the message. For example, if talking about belonging to the family of God, bring a picture of a family. Even if a picture isn't available, invite participants to picture their family in their mind's eye. Similarly, when celebrating communion, use a loaf of bread and break it in front of the residents, pour the juice out into a cup. Even if the loaf and juice aren't the elements that will be distributed to the residents, breaking and pouring are visual demonstrations and using visual aids can connect worshippers with the subject the group is meditating on.

Prayers of the People

Bringing the community's needs before God is a vital part of any service of the word. This prayer is the primary opportunity to do so.

It can be done with specific requests, provided the intercessor has received permission to share the specific prayer request publicly. Alternately, generalized prayers are also acceptable. Often experiences are shared by many people. Comfort after loss, peace in times of turmoil, mending of relationships and assurances of God's presence are all general requests that remain inclusive enough to allow many worshippers to say, "Amen."

Benediction

A blessing may be spoken as the worship time ends. It may offer assurances of God's presence and reinforce the theme from the meditation. It can be very meaningful to affirm each worshipper's sense of belonging and connection with others through using *appropriate* touch. For example, The Rev. Jean Morris describes pronouncing the benediction to each person by name, offering her open palm or touching worshippers lightly on the shoulder. This may take some additional time, but it is well spent as you minister comfort and affirmation to the worshippers.

Selecting Music

The Therapeutic Value of Music

Music therapy has been used in hospitals for decades. It is a tool for alleviating pain, elevating mood and counteracting depression, apprehension or fear. In long term care facilities, it is used with residents to increase or maintain their level of physical, mental, social and emotional functioning. The sensory and intellectual stimulation of music can help maintain a person's quality of life. Therefore, music should play an important part of any worship service.

Music has always been known to evoke powerful memories, and the same is especially true for patients with Alzheimer's or dementia. Peter Janata, a cognitive neuroscientist at the University of California, describes it this way: "What seems to happen is that a piece of familiar music serves as a soundtrack for a mental movie that starts playing in our head. It calls back memories of a particular person or place, and you might all of a sudden see that person's face in your mind's eye." When Janata played excerpts from songs that were on the top 100 in the test subject's formative years, the subjects reported that a high proportion of the tunes evoked memories of events and people in their past. This activity is centered in the prefrontal cortex, which is one of the last brain regions to atrophy in Alzheimer's patients and may explain why Alzheimer's patients who suffer increasing memory loss can still remember songs from their distant past. It also explains many caregivers' observations that persons with Alzheimer's and dementia "brighten up" when familiar songs were played.

Asking residents and their families about their favourite hymns and playing music that is familiar to them, allows worship leaders to assist other caregivers in connecting residents with their memories. It may not reverse the disease, but it will improve their quality of life.

Suggested Hymns

Since music has therapeutic effects, hymns should be carefully chosen to evoke experiential memory while not making heavy demands on other cognitive abilities such as reading and learning.

Select hymns based on a few guidelines. Does the piece have a refrain allowing for repetition? Is it familiar to many? Will it evoke memory?

There are ways to sing a hymn that will maximize it for the worshippers. For example, consider repeating the first verse of a familiar hymn instead to singing every verse. Or, try singing a verse, stopping and sharing a reflection on it, then singing another verse.

A worship leader needs to be sensitive to the variety of Christian traditions represented in a single service. A conversation with residents about their favourite or most meaningful hymns is always in order and helps us avoid being too reliant on Presbyterian experience.

Here are some suggestions from The Presbyterian Church in Canada's *Book of Praise* that may accomplish these goals:

The hymns on this list contain a refrain.

- 90 "Up from the depths I cry to God"
- 257 "The strife is o'er, the battle done"
- 306 "Praise God from whom all blessings flow"
- 332 "O Lord my God/How great thou art"
- 363 "All hail the power of Jesus' name"
- 435 "All things bright and beautiful"
- 640 "Softly and tenderly"
- 682 "Just as I am, without one plea"
- 687 "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine"
- 214 "All glory, laud and honour"
- 271 "Let all the world in every corner sing"
- 324 "Great is Thy faithfulness"
- 350 "To God be the glory"
- 373 "Jesus loves me, this I know"
- 498 "Sing them over again to me"
- 650 "He leadeth me"
- 683 "I know not why such wondrous grace"
- 797 "Shall we gather at the river"



These may be familiar, however consider repeating the first verse multiple times.

299 “Holy, holy, holy”

315 “A Mighty Fortress is our God”

330 “O God, our help in ages past”

374 “O for a thousand tongues to sing”

457 “Now thank we all our God”

543 “Here, O my Lord, I see thee”

670 “Amazing Grace”

678 “I greet Thee, who my sure Redeemer art”

685 “How firm a foundation”

749 “Be still, my soul”

313 “Oh Worship the King”

321 “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

357 “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds”

410 “Joyful, joyful we adore you”

461 “Be thou my vision”

619 “The Lord bless you/Aaronic blessing”

651 “Guide me O thou great Redeemer”

671 “I heard the voice of Jesus say”

682 “Just as I am, without one plea”

746 “What a friend we have in Jesus”

794 “Abide with me”

Pastoral Touch

Touch is a powerful way to communicate presence and meaning. An appropriate, pastoral touch can affirm a worshipper’s sense of belonging and personhood.

As with any touch, it is important to remember a few things:

- Wash your hands before and after pastoral touch. Though we are not more vulnerable in long term care settings, hand washing is the single most important thing we can do to prevent the spread of infection in any context.
- Make touch optional. The Rev. Jean Morris recommends offering your hands to a person, with palms facing up. The person is free to respond by taking your hand or declining it. Even if you are declined, the person has exercised their choice at a time in their life when many choices are unavailable to them.
- Make touch appropriate. If the person is unable to respond, limit touching to the hand or shoulder.

Serving Communion

The Lord’s Supper can also communicate meaning and belonging. However faith and personal boundaries need to be considered when offering the sacrament. A service of communion should minister to people from a variety of faith traditions and with varying levels of ability. Here are some things to remember:

- Involve the healthcare staff. They will be able to advise on the best way to serve people with special needs, such as those with feeding limitations.

- Welcome all, regardless of ability. Just as children experience God’s love in baptism before they can understand it, communion can communicate love and belonging even to those struggling to understand its meaning because of illness or disability.
- Make it optional. Not everyone will participate. Margaret Goodall describes offering communion to a woman only to hear the reply, “Catholic.” She received this as an affirmation of the woman’s identity, and respected her choice to decline.
- Use intinction. Individual wafers or bread dipped in a common cup is both a powerful symbol and sanitary, especially when one person holds the cup while the leader dips the wafer and serves each worshipper individually. Some may only be able to take half or even a quarter of the wafer; consult with the facility’s staff before serving. But, this method allows all worshippers to participate, regardless of challenges to their dexterity, while keeping the bread and cup linked, making it less likely anyone will forget what is happening.

Sample Services

#1: Regular/Ordinary Time

Theme: God’s Good Design

Scriptures

(Revised Common Lectionary Year B, Proper 24/Ordinary 29/Pentecost 20, abbreviated):

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalms 91:1-4

Mark 10:35-40

Gathering to Worship God

Call to Worship

Leader: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good

All: God’s love endures forever

Leader: In the beginning when it was very dark, God said, “Let there be light”

All: God’s love endures forever

(the symbol of light, the candle, is placed on the empty table and lit in silence)

Leader: In the beginning, when it was very quiet, The Word was with God

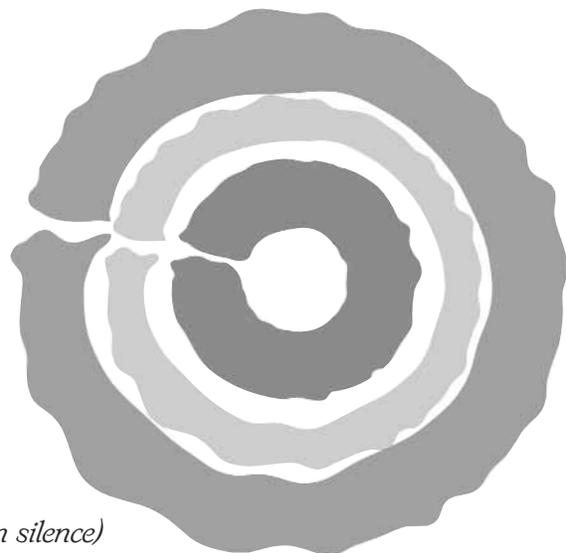
All: God’s love endures forever

(the symbol of The Word, the Bible, is opened and placed on the empty table)

Leader: When the time was right God sent his Son

All: God’s love endures forever

(the symbol of the Son, a cross, is placed on the table).



Hymn #330, “O God our Help in Ages Past”

side? After all, that was the side that had the peppermints in it! James and John wanted to sit on Jesus' sides too, but for a different reason. They wanted the power that came with sitting beside Jesus; sitting beside meant they had some control.

(Holding fork and knife)

Maybe you won't remember this,

(while placing fork and knife beside the plate)

but I wonder if your parents didn't place the fork and knife next to the plate and wait to see the hand you would pick it up with. Some parents didn't want their child to be left-handed, so they tried to make sure the child used the right one.

I think that's what James and John wanted; what so many people want: to control things and so make life safe. They had planned out how their life could go; now, if they could just get Jesus to cooperate.

But, Jesus knew something they didn't know. He hints at it when he responds by saying, "Can you drink the [same] cup...and be baptized with the [same] baptism?" He knew that chaos and darkness were coming; that when the God of light came in Christ to show how much humanity was loved, the darkness and chaos would try to stop him. Did James' and John's plan include suffering and death?

Do anyone's?

Yet, we know bad things *do* happen to good people. Life doesn't always go as we'd planned. It wouldn't for James and John; they would experience the cup and baptism Jesus talked about, and Jesus knew that. Would *they* sit at Christ's left and right? We're not told.

But we are told there was already a plan that included the people who would sit beside Jesus. I think Jesus meant this as a comfort, as if to say, "You make your plans, but God has plans too." And, when we listen to the psalmist and the prophet, we hear that God has the power to fulfill those plans.

The psalmist and prophet say something else too; something that was affirmed through Christ's life. Among the names Jesus was to be called was, "Emmanuel," which means, "God with Us." Not only did God have a plan, and not only does God have the power to bring about that plan, but also God is with us. Jesus says in another place, he will never leave us nor forsake us. The psalmist describes it like a mother bird, spreading wings over her young. There we can find shelter, and refuge, because God is bigger than us, God knows more than us...

...and God loves us, like mother loves a child. God will take care of us.

We might have our plans. We might ask God to cooperate with our plans, only to find out that things don't turn out the way we'd hoped.

But, God has plans too.

And, God has the power to make those plans a reality.

And, God loves us like a mother loves a child.

Life may bring us surprises; we may not be able to control everything about it. So, though mourning the loss of what we'd planned, this can still be our comfort in life and in death: that we belong to God.



Responding to God

Prayers of the People

Leader:

God, too many times life disrupts our plans
And we find ourselves grieving, needing comfort, or coping with pain
Yet, none of these things caught you off guard
And we remember again, that you are working to bring us all
To the time when the lion will lay with the lamb
Swords will be beaten into ploughshares
And darkness will be no more
You are weaving all things to the time
When there will be no more tears
Until then, comfort us with that truth
Encourage us with assurance that you are good
And empower us with your Spirit
to do what we can
As we see our lives as part of your plan
In the name of Jesus, we pray
Amen

Going out in God's Name

Hymn #313 "*Oh Worship the King*" (verse 1-2)

Benediction

(Offer hands to each worshipper, with palms upward; or touching on the shoulder those unable to respond)

May this be your comfort: you belong to God

#2 - Advent III - Joy

(adapted from services used at Bethany Care Society. Used with permission)

Theme: Joy

Scriptures

(Revised Common Lectionary Year C, Advent III, abbreviated):

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Philippians 4:4-7

Gathering to Worship God

Call to Worship:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness.

God's steadfast love endures forever, God's faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 100)

Opening Prayer:

O God of joy, in your presence there is life. We have gathered for worship seeking the life that comes from you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Delight us with your presence and assure us of your promises. We pray in the name of Jesus, who is Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

Hymn #122 - *O come, O come Emmanuel* (1st and 6th verses)

Prayer of Confession:

O God, you make room in your heart for all people. We confess that we have not yet made room in our hearts for the coming of the Christ child. Many other things fill our hearts. We confess that we are often anxious, not trusting you. We confess that we are joyless and hopeless, forgetting the promises of your love and mercy. We confess that sometimes we are hard-hearted and do not love our neighbour as ourselves.

We are truly sorry for our sins against you, O God. Have mercy on us, and forgive us. Give us the joy of knowing your presence in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Assurance of Pardon:

Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Mary bore a son and named him Jesus, God with us. Friends, believe the good news that comes from God, in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

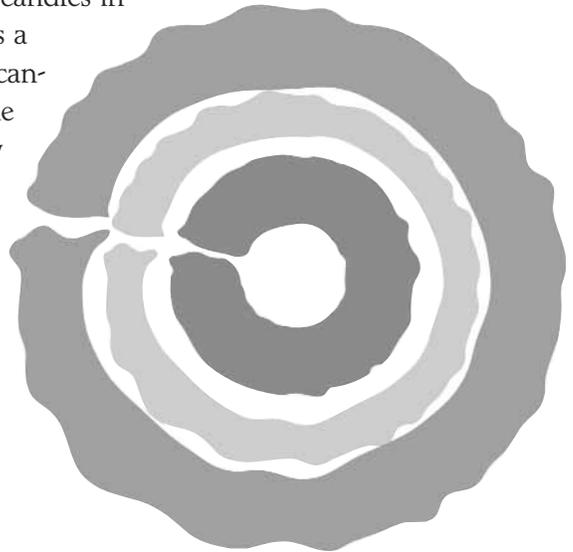
Lighting the Advent Candle:

Today we light the 3rd candle of Advent, the candle of joy. The candle of joy is a special candle, and it is different from the others. The other 3 candles in the wreath are purple. The candle of joy is pink. Pink is a colour of joy and celebration. As we light the Advent candle, in our journey toward Christmas, we remember the joy that God brings us in Christ. We remember the joy that we can give through our lives.

While lighting the candle say:

God of joy, we celebrate your love made known in Jesus Christ. Help us to be joyful people in his name. Amen.

Let's sing a joyful hymn! Let's sing the first verse of "Joy to the World."



Hymn #153 - *Joy to the World*

Hearing God's Word

Scripture Readings:

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Philippians 4:4-7

Advent Hymn #141: Good Christians, all rejoice

Meditation:

It is so good to be with you on this third Sunday in Advent. It is a joy to be here. Joy is the theme of our worship today. Today we lit the pink advent candle, a symbol of joy. We just sang a hymn about Christians rejoicing in the birth of Jesus. The readings from the Bible were about joy. Today we are reminded in many ways about the joy of our faith in Christ.

As we move through the season of Advent toward Christmas, there is a festive spirit in the air, isn't there? As we get closer to Christmas, there is more activity, often there are decorations, sometimes there is more singing. At this time of the year people are greeting each other with joyful words "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Holidays". Joy is a part of what Christmas is all about.

But the truth is we don't always feel like rejoicing, do we? Our lives don't always feel joyful. Sometimes there is more sadness than joy. Sometimes there is more disappointment than celebration. We all need joy and want to rejoice, but joy is sometimes hard to find.

That's why there is something strange about Paul's letter to the Philippians. We read a part of that from the Bible a few minutes ago. Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter to some Christian friends. He was in prison awaiting trial. He feels lonely and I'm sure he was afraid. Here's what's strange. Paul, lonely and in prison, uses the words joy and rejoice 14 times in his letter!

In a time and place we wouldn't expect, there is an eruption of joy. Even though Paul is in a lot of difficulty, he can still rejoice and call others to rejoice.

The prophet Zephaniah in the Old Testament also speaks of rejoicing and joy. He says "Sing aloud O daughter of Zion; rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem."

The passages from the Bible today remind us of a kind of joy that comes in Christian faith. It is a joy that is deep down in us. It is a joy that we can experience even in the difficult times of life. It is the deep joy of knowing God's presence with us. Like Paul who was lonely and afraid but still knew God's presence with him, that's true for us too. No matter what disappointments we may have, we still can have the deep down joy of God's presence with us and love for us. Throughout the Bible, there are stories of God's people who had the faith to rejoice even in difficult circumstances. They could rejoice because they were sure of God's presence with them.

Advent is a time of joy, not just because we're approaching Christmas and all the happy things associated with the holiday. Rather, it's a time of joy because God is already in our midst. We are joyful, because God is present with us.

This is the central message of Christmas, isn't it? Emmanuel means God with us. We rejoice that God came among us in Jesus. We rejoice that God became human and knows all the joys and the struggles of our lives. We rejoice that God, in Christ, is with us always.

Paul said 'joy' and 'rejoice' 14 times in his letter to his friends. I'm going to say "joy" and "rejoice" more to remind me and others about God's presence with us and the joy it brings. I hope you will, too.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice"

Responding to God

Prayers of the People

(Tell the residents you are going to lead a prayer of thanksgiving and prayers for others. Ask them what gives them joy and incorporate those responses into the prayer. Move among them as you gather the responses.)

Holy God, we thank you for all the gifts and blessings of our lives. We thank you that you love us with a love that will never let us go. We thank you for coming to us in Jesus, and for the ways he is born in our hearts everyday. We thank you and praise you for the love you give us, the hope you offer us, the joy you send us and the peace you grant us. May these gifts of the advent of Jesus Christ be known in us, and from us, to others. Hear our gratitude to you for those things and people that give us joy...(pray the responses of worshippers).

Gracious God, we pray for your world, that war and harm would be turned to peace. We pray for our families - watch over them and grant them the joy of your presence. We pray for those who are in special need today...for those who are sick, those who are worried, those who are afraid, those who are lonely or sad. Heal them by your Spirit and assure them of your presence with them.

God bless each one of us, that we may be instruments of your joy and hope. We pray in the name of Emmanuel - Jesus Christ - who taught us to pray together saying: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

Hymn #147 - Angels We have Heard on High

Going Out in God's Name

Benediction

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say Rejoice!
Go in peace. Go with joy.
As you go, may the blessing of Almighty God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen

#3 – Sacrament of the Lord's Supper/ Communion Service

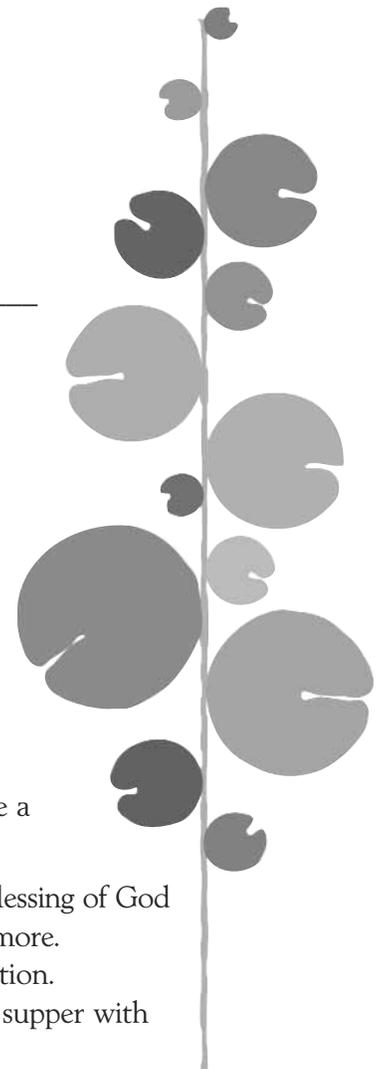
(adapted from services used at Bethany Care Society. Used with permission)

The elements of bread and wine (a full loaf of bread and a chalice) should be visible symbols throughout the service. Traditional responses are included in the prayers. Invite those who know them to join in.

Leader:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
This is the table of the Lord Jesus Christ.
He invites all who love him to share in this joyful feast. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are welcome to share in this sacrament.

This sacrament, this sacred act, is a way that we can share in the blessing of God and say, by what we do, that we love Jesus and want to love him more. In this holy time we remember Jesus - his life, death and resurrection. We remember that on the night before Jesus died he was having supper with his disciples, his friends,



and he told them how much God loved them.
We remember that at that Last Supper
He took bread and wine and told his disciples to remember him
and to live their lives like he did.
We remember how he showed people, by what he said and did,
that God loved them with a love that would never let them go.
Today, we remember that we are Jesus' friends and disciples.
In this holy act we remember that we are called to follow Jesus,
And that we are Jesus' friends.

At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread and wine and made them holy.
Today, we remember that this bread and wine are holy for us.
And like Jesus gave thanks to God,
We now give thanks to God.
Let us pray:

The Lord be with you.

Response: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

Response: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Response: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: Gracious God, You made the universe and everything in it and called it good.
You made human beings in your image and called us good.
You have always been with your people, guiding us, protecting us and healing us.
You sent us Jesus to teach us to live in love with you and with each other.
You gave us Jesus to forgive our sin and unite us with you.
You gave us your Holy Spirit to comfort us, guide us and inspire us.
You send your spirit to make us one in Christ.

For these gifts we thank you.
We join our praise with angels and saints saying:

**Together: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

Leader: Holy and merciful God, we thank you that you showed your love for us by sending your
Son, Jesus, who gave his life for us, and rose again from death and lives to pray for us for
ever. We thank you that he has taken away all that separates us from you.
We trust him to overcome every power that can hurt or divide us.
We believe that he will come again and we will celebrate victory with him.

Send your Holy Spirit on us and these gifts of bread and wine
that we may know Christ's presence with us,
and be his faithful followers, showing your love for the world.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour is yours, Almighty God for ever. Amen

Holding the loaf of bread for all to see

The Lord Jesus took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it

Break the bread

And said, "This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me"

Holding the chalice for all to see

In the same way he took the cup saying,
"This is the new covenant sealed in my blood.
Drink from it, all of you."

The minister partakes of the bread and wine

Distribute the elements.

Intinction is the best way to serve - move among the congregants with one person holding the chalice for dipping and the celebrant serving. Use wafers, dipping them into the wine and placing them gently in the mouth of the person.

Be aware of physical disabilities related to swallowing.

Sometimes the celebrant may need to use half or a quarter of the wafer.

*As you serve, you may say "The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." or
"the gifts of God for the people of God" or
another blessing.*

After serving communion:

Leader: Let us pray

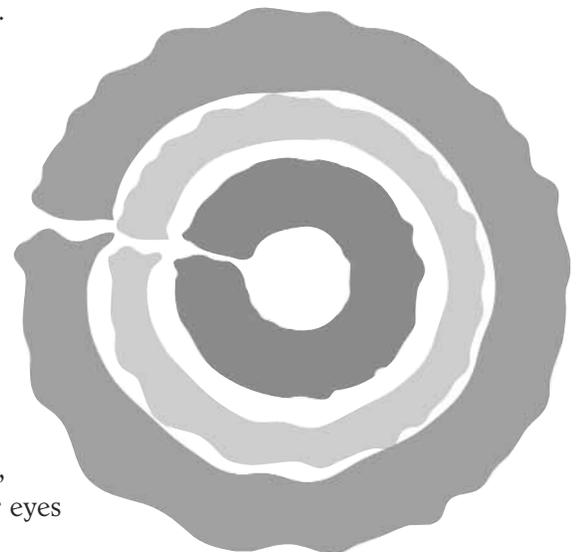
Eternal and tender God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit confident of your love for us and for all, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

Other Ideas for Worship Services

Theme: God calls us.
Image/Object Lesson: Church bells ringing, calling people to church.
Use a gentle gong as part of the worship.

Theme: Jesus, gentle shepherd.
Image/Object Lesson: Use a soft stuffed lamb to talk about how Jesus tenderly cares for us as a shepherd might care for sheep. If possible, pass out soft stuffed animals and have people hold them as the message is given.

Theme: Music that soothes the soul.
Image/Object Lesson: Share the story of David soothing King Saul while someone gently plays a guitar, cello or harp. Invite people to close their eyes and let their souls be soothed.



Theme: Eating and feasting in God's Kingdom.
Image/Object Lesson: Talk about the joyous reunions and feasts there will be in heaven. As you give the message, prepare a table in front of the worshippers.

Theme: Being thankful people.
Image/Object Lesson: Hold up four or five items for which people in a nursing home might be thankful. Speak about each for two or three minutes, then, when you say, "And all God's people say...." invite the people to respond, "Thank you, God."

For Further Reading

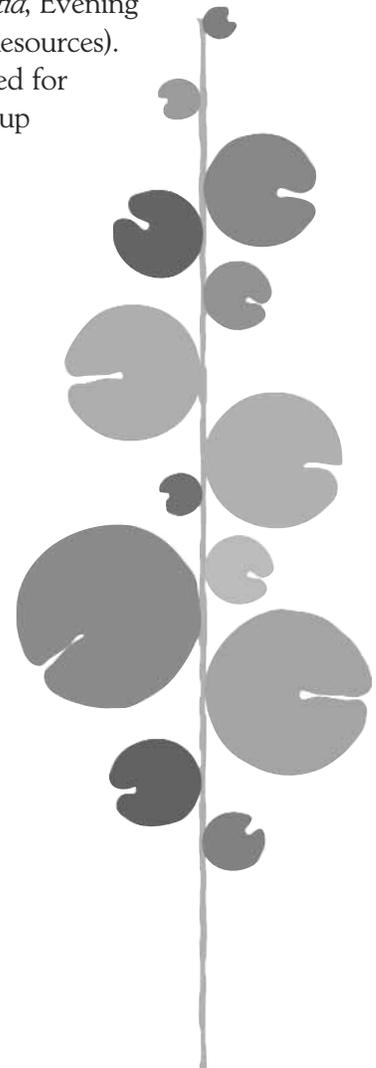
The Tiny Red Bathing Suit of Mr. July, Jean Clayton (Wood Lake Books)

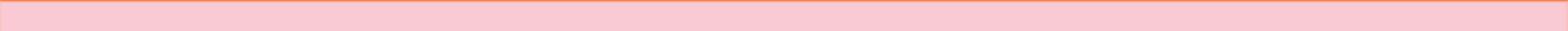
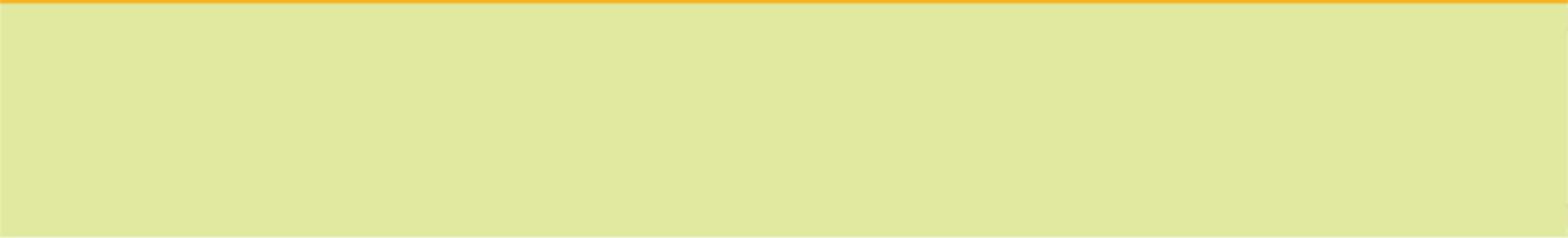
Most books about caring for the elderly and chronically ill take a cold, scientific stance. Not this one. *The Tiny Red Bathing Suit of Mr. July* offers inspiration and help for continuing care providers. Written by hospital chaplain, Jean Clayton, it's an accessible, often humorous, and entirely practical resource for pastoral caregivers and healthcare professionals. With the aging of our population, it's a timely book for anyone with a friend or relative in continuing care. \$13.95 Available from the Bookroom (1-800-619-7301, bookroom@presbyterian.ca)

Handbook for Worship: Christian Worship Experiences for Persons with Dementia, Evening Star, Worship Ministry for Persons with Dementia (available from Faith Alive Resources).

This handbook provides 16 worship service templates that can be used for leading worship with persons who have dementia. It includes follow up activities to reinforce the worship theme in the following week.

\$18.75 Available from the Bookroom (1-800-619-7301, bookroom@presbyterian.ca)





The Vine Helpline
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