

Welcome & Announcements

The worship service begins with the Welcome and Announcements. The pastor greets everyone present for worship (including guests). And then announcements are given for the congregational community. This reminds us of our identity as a church. We are a welcoming and hospitable people in Christ's name and we are more than just a worship service, but a community that prays for one another and does various ministries throughout the week with each other.

Then we have the Confession and Forgiveness.

Confession & Forgiveness

Right at the beginning of our worship service we deal with the "gorilla in the room" or the "elephant in the room". And this is our sinfulness.

- What do you do if you have a gorilla wreaking havoc in a room? Do you go through the hard work of removing the gorilla? Or do you just ignore it and try to act like everything's normal? (If the gorilla isn't hurting you personally, then it's no problem, right?)
- What do you do if there is an elephant in the room? Do you go through the hard work of getting the elephant out before you have guests come over? Or do you ignore it and just squeeze people in around the elephant?
- In the same way, what do you do when you gather together to worship God, but you know that you haven't loved God in the way that you should, nor have you loved others in the way God has called you to? Do you just ignore this fact and hope God doesn't notice while you are worshiping God? Or do you go through the hard work of honestly owning up to your sins and commit yourself to strive to do better?

So the first thing we do together in our worship is we confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Confession & Forgiveness can be in another spot in the worship service at times. Sometimes it is done right after the sermon and the Hymn of Praise. After hearing God's Word read and scriptures and proclaimed in the sermon, we know that we are called to live according to that word. So the Confession and Forgiveness is a time to not allow our sinfulness from living according to God's Word.

The Brief Order for Confession & Forgiveness has three parts to it.

1. The pastor announces our need for confession and the promise of forgiveness.
2. The congregation and pastor confess our sins together.
3. The pastor confers Christ's forgiveness of sins for all of the church.

Read Matthew 16:19 and John 20:22-23.

- This is Christ's command for us to forgive one another in Christ's name. When we forgive others, they experience Christ's forgiveness through us.

Read Matthew 6:14-15.

- When we forgive, we share God's forgiveness. When we refuse to forgive, we share in God's condemnation.

Read 1 John 1:8-10.

- We confess our sins trusting that God loves us and saves us through Christ Jesus.

Read 1 John 4:19-21.

- Loving God and loving one another are interconnected with each other. You cannot do one without the other.