

photo by David Dill © 2008



Christian worship is about meeting God in scripture, in bread and wine and water, in prayer, in praise, and in one another. It is about love. It is about gathering and dwelling in God's love, and it both informs and reflects the ways in which we each are called to a life of Christian action – caring, healing, prophesying, teaching, and the myriad other justice-making ways of God's realm.

Christian worship in an ecumenical setting is especially about love. We are called to be open, patient and generous as we strive to: find ways of worshipping together, share the best of our own traditions, learn about other people's traditions, and discern the patterns that we hold and create in common.

No one group or denomination dominates worship in Marquand. The chapel is here for all, and it is important that as wide a range of people as possible step forward to lead services so that the worship styles of as many as possible of the denominations and traditions on campus and in New Haven can be learned from, developed and enjoyed.

These guidelines are offered as an aid to all members of the community in planning and participating in ecumenical worship services in Marquand Chapel.

Welcome

Worship in Marquand Chapel is a time set apart every morning when the community gathers to pray and give praise to God. It is planned and led by the students, faculty, administrators and staff of Yale Divinity School and is ecumenical in its mission. A different person or group of people leads each day. The Chapel team works with everyone who leads worship in order to balance the chapel's twofold mission as a place where liturgy is learned and as a spiritually nourishing point on campus.

One of the main ways we achieve this balance is by inviting worship leaders to draw deeply on their own denominations' worship traditions while, at the same time, orienting these to make them accessible to as many people in this community as possible. This occasionally means that some liturgies cannot be adapted for a participative ecumenical setting, and planners are advised to draw on an alternative aspect of their tradition.

When you plan to lead worship in Marquand, you will be assigned a Chapel Minister (a student intern) who will work with you in some detail to help you to construct a service which is appropriate to the diverse needs of the particular assembly to whom you will be ministering here. Some of these needs include the following:

Timing

Worship is at 10:30am. From Monday through Thursday, it is thirty minutes long and on Fridays it is forty-five minutes; we must stick faithfully to this time-frame so that the whole community can continue its fellowship over coffee in the Common Room before returning to class or office at 11:30am. Worship services therefore have to be carefully 'timed' in the planning stages and closely monitored in chapel, with adjustments made by the leaders if necessary. For example, if a sermon has lasted for 15 minutes instead of the proposed 10, the presiders will have to abbreviate actions after the sermon, such as prayers and/or hymns.

Because worship is only thirty minutes long, it is important not to address more concerns than can be processed in the time available. This means that: a) services should not be over-loaded; and b) highly emotional or contentious issues should be handled with extreme sensitivity and follow-up support.

Schedule

In general we follow a two-week schedule alternating each day's leadership between student groups, faculty, and the chapel team. However, Wednesdays are always Sung Morning Prayer and Fridays, Eucharist. The rhythm of worship in chapel is based on the liturgical year and seeks to minister to the needs of people as they pass through the academic year. From time to time, worship leaders also honor so-called 'secular' feasts, such as Holocaust Memorial Day, World AIDS Day, or Martin Luther King Day: please talk to us well in advance if you have an idea for such a service.

Please note that, because so many groups want to plan and lead worship, you must advise the chapel team well in advance if you have a particular idea for a particular date in mind.

Fridays

On Fridays, for Eucharist, we provide a loaf of bread, gluten-free wafers, wine and grape juice (which must always be offered). We are equipped to serve communion with either a ceramic set of 1 large jug, 3 large cups and 2 plates or a silver set of three individual cup-holders (with glass cups) and 3 serving plates. We have white linen tablecloths and global cloths, and we have candles and candlesticks. If you require other items (such as vestments or a cruet set), please provide them yourself.

We hope that chapel will be denominationally educational, and so we ask each individual or group responsible for Friday's Eucharist to include a short paragraph at the end of the bulletin which describes their particular tradition's approach to communion. We also require that the presider be ordained or authorized to celebrate communion according to the polity of her or his own denomination.

Bulletins

It is customary to produce a bulletin for most services. This is an important tool in making unfamiliar liturgical structures accessible to this diverse assembly. The Chapel Team will work with you on the production of the bulletin and will ask you for a final draft three days prior to the service. We ask you to include a few sentences at the end which describe a little about the liturgical roots of the practices you choose to lead. If you are from a tradition that predicts when the assembly will stand, please place an asterisk in the bulletin next to those parts of the service where the people should stand if they are so able (and please remember that not everyone is so able).

Music

We need to sing! The Chapel Ministers will liaise between you and the Director of Chapel Music in order to choose music which ministers to this community. As resident musicians, we have an organist available every day, the Marquand Chapel Choir which sings on Wednesdays and Fridays, and the Marquand Gospel Choir, which sings on regularly scheduled Tuesdays. There are also three student-led *cappella* groups, the Sacramental Winers, the Bible Belters, and the Total Praise Ensemble, in addition to many student and faculty instrumentalists and cantors/soloists who offer their gifts in worship. We aim to have a wide range of liturgical music represented in chapel and so we invite offers of special music, congregational accompaniment or praise-giving in song – please volunteer. We have copyright licenses for church music; so if you wish to suggest the use of a congregational hymn or psalm we can usually copy it directly into the bulletin.

Scripture

Because music may need to be rehearsed some time in advance, we encourage worship leaders to work with the Revised Common Daily Lectionary and use the text or texts for each day. It is also useful to consult this lectionary so that the community has the chance to engage with a range of biblical texts, so that our communal readings will reflect and support the Sunday readings used in many of our churches, and also so that preachers minister to *this* congregation at *this* time (and don't just pull a sermon from the file). The chapel ministers can advise you of the lectionary texts for a particular day.

The Revised Common Daily Lectionary may be found at <http://commontexts.org/publications/> A version of this lectionary organized for our use in Marquand Chapel is found in the Marquand Reader.

If you do not use lectionary texts, please let us know your text selection at least two weeks in advance (so that the music can be planned). Please note that we usually use the NRSV translation of the Bible.

Language

In Marquand Chapel, it is necessary to be attentive to language. This is a community where there is great diversity in people's prayer practices, and language is central to Christian prayer. Making sure that as many other worshippers as possible are invited to join in your prayer and praise is vital, so we ask you to be critical in your use of militaristic imagery, metaphors that elide blackness with evil, and phrases that say disability is sinful.

In particular, we ask you to be attentive to your use of gendered language for both God and humankind. Naming God as Lord, Father, Master, King and He is scriptural and a significant part of much Christian worship; but Christian scriptures and traditions also name God in feminine and non-gendered ways. Naming God only with masculine nouns and pronouns can create the sense that divinity is characterized by maleness, and not by femaleness, and this can both limit our knowledge of God and, potentially, negatively affect our view of men and women, made in God's image. Additionally, for similar reasons, please do not refer to all humankind as 'man' or 'mankind' in chapel.

So if you are from a tradition that uses authorized texts, we ask you to use the most inclusive forms available and pay extra attention to the way you name God and humankind in sermons, hymns, and prayers. If you are from a tradition of free prayer, we ask you also to remain authentic in your prayer practices but to use wherever possible a range of names and metaphors for God. Assistance in developing language for worship in Marquand will be offered by the chapel team.

The community of worship in Marquand joins with Christians throughout the world in seeking profound, expansive and faithful Christian language to use in the present time.

Imagination

People here, as in all assemblies, engage in worship through their senses: touch, taste, sight, hearing and smell. Please think of ways in which you might appeal to the bodily senses of the people you are ministering to here. As a community of scholars and administrators, we tend to live in our heads and too many words will dampen the wonder of God's presence in worship.

Think of how you use the whole space: from when people arrive at the Narthex through to when they leave. Think of the smells in the space, the art or color or imagery on view, and the seating arrangements. Think of the sounds you will make, in voice, in music, in silence. Be imaginative: it is through our imaginations that we are able to worship. Most of all:

Try to create worship that fosters as much congregational participation as possible.

Inter-denominational Liturgies

Although we encourage all worship planners to draw on their liturgical heritage, not all services are strictly denominationally characterized. Sometimes we draw on our unique resources as a multi-denominational community to create liturgies that explore what is shared in Christian traditions. Such services are often (but not exclusively) organized by groups who gather around a common identity or cause, rather than around a common denomination (for example the Women's Center, the Black Seminarians, the LGBTQ Coalition or the Yale Committee for Social Justice). They may also be organized by a group of people from different backgrounds who simply come together to lead worship (e.g.: the chapel team itself). These liturgies might engage a particular symbol, such as water, or they might address a particular theme, such as non-violence or racism, or they might explore and unfold one of the patterns of worship that many Christians hold in common. It is important that the focus of such services remains scripture, prayer, prophecy and praise, so that worship remains worshipful and does not become a "soap box".

Yet other services will reflect our attempts to pray with and grow in friendship with people of other faiths and we welcome initiatives in this growing area of our work.

Etiquette

A few notes on etiquette: please move right into the space and refrain from sitting in the seats closest to the door – if these are filled, there is no place for late-comers or the less able-bodied to sit. Please move into the center of the rows of seats (for the same reasons).

Please do not talk to faculty or administrators or students about work-related issues on their way to or from, or in, chapel – we try to create a time and space that is set aside for all. Please leave your coats and book bags in the narthex, rather than on the seats (but bring valuables with you, and place them under your own seat). And please don't chat in the narthex if the service is underway in the chapel -- we can hear you!

Come with an open disposition and come often: chapel is different every day and the only way to be a part of such a diverse community's worship program is to worship together often.

Evaluation

Chapel is a work-in-progress and so evaluation is just as important as planning and leading and participating. Two days per semester there will be a chapel discussion table in the Common Room where the Acting Dean of the Chapel and Director of Chapel Music will host a conversation about worship in Marquand. This conversation will seek to learn about worship by going beyond subjective tastes to ask searching questions about how an ecumenical community does worship.

Such learning is vital for the development of both the worship program and the curriculum at YDS, so please consider coming along when you can. If you can't make this round-table discussion but have comments or ideas, please email Gordon Lathrop.

Professional Staff:

Acting Dean of the Chapel

Gordon Lathrop

Director of Chapel Music

Patrick Evans

Gospel Choir Director

Mark Miller

Senior Administrative Assistant for Chapel

James Aveni

Liturgical Coordinator

Christa Swenson

Student Staff:

Chapel Ministers

Jennifer Miller

Sean Lanigan

Meredith Coleman-Tobias

Emily Bloemker

Organists

Ahreum Han

Josiah Armes

Timothy Weisman

Marquand Choir Director

Jonathan Richter