

Welcome to worship at Alamo Heights United Methodist Church.

It is our hope that this information will answer questions about the acts of worship. As God's people, we are called to practice weekly worship *with* the community. At the heart of worship is adoration of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In worship:

- we are given words of praise and gratitude;
- we bring the needs of our lives, our church and our world before God;
- we hear the Story of God, God's deliverance of God's people, and the great and unending love that God has for all the world;
- we remember who we are, God's beloved sons and daughters;
- we speak the text that guides our lives and hear it proclaimed;
- we hear that our actions help bring in the Kingdom;
- we remember that we are called to relationship with God, with each other and with our neighbor;
- we remember that Holy Spirit continually leads, guides and surrounds us.

Sunday Morning Worship

in the Sanctuary
at 8:30, 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Rev. David McNitzky, Lead Pastor
Rev. Donna Strieb, Worship Pastor

In the Christian Life Center
at 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Rev. Dinah Shelly, Lead Pastor
Rev. Darrell Smith
Rev. Ryan Jacobson
Rev. Matthew Scott

Taizé Service

First Wednesday of each month at
6:30 p.m. in the Garden Chapel

Rev. Donna Strieb, Lead Pastor

OUR MISSION:

to partner with God in bringing
the kingdom of heaven to earth
by making disciples of Jesus Christ

OUR VALUES: (STARS)

Sonship, Text, Action, Relationship & Spirit

Alamo Heights United Methodist Church

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Sunday Mornings in the Sanctuary

The Acts of Worship

Worship is patterned in four parts; Gathering, Proclamation of the Word, Response to the Word and Sending Forth. The arrows beside the various acts of worship indicate the focus of our act; ↓ from the congregation to God, ↑ from God to the congregation, ↔ from the community to one another. Some acts of worship are multi-directional.

GATHERING

↓ **Prelude/Introit:** This musical offering allows time to prepare our hearts and minds for worship. The acolytes bring in the Light of Christ, symbolizing the presence of Christ with us.

↓ **Call to Worship:** A text is spoken in unison by congregation and leaders that calls us into God's presence with praise. The community is formed, God is present and worship begins.

↓ **Opening Hymn:** A hymn (poem) of praise and thanksgiving is sung by the congregation. Hymns and choruses are sung throughout the service. This is the congregation's song.

↓ **Congregational Prayer:** A prayer is spoken that gives thanks for God's goodness, admits brokenness in our lives, or confesses ways we have been separated from God. The prayer ends with a request for help and guidance. If the prayer is a confession, it is followed by *Words of Assurance* that remind us of God's forgiveness and mercy.

↑↓↔ **Sacrament of Baptism:** This ritual symbolizes entering into covenant with God. The believer is given God's word of grace and responds by committing to lead a life of faith and love. When an infant is baptized, the parents covenant to nurture the child in Christ's holy church. The congregation also commits to surround the newly baptized with a community of faith and love.

↔ **The Peace:** This ancient practice offers the peace and wholeness of Christ to one another. It is a sign of unity and love.

↔ **Children's Time:** Children are invited forward to receive a word based on the scripture lesson.

↔ **Intercessory Prayer:** A pastor-led prayer asks for help for those in need and prayers for the needs of the world.

↓ **Offering:** Participants respond to God's goodness through giving monetary gifts for the work of bringing God's Kingdom to earth.

↓ **Doxology:** A song of praise is sung after the offering as the people's gifts are brought forward as a sign of dedication.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

↓ **The Shema:** A proclamation of this ancient text is spoken before the reading of the scripture lesson.

*Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God,
the Lord alone.*

*Love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your strength,
and love your neighbor as yourself.*

When we frame the act of worship with the Shema, the picture that emerges is an *all-in-ness*. Through the practice of worship, we learn to de-compartmentalize our lives, so that we continually transform into people whose whole lives are lived in praise to God, the Holy One, who is *all-in* for us.

↑ **Scripture Lesson:** This reading of the Scripture serves as the foundation for the sermon. The lessons can be taken from the Hebrew Scriptures or the New Testament.

↑ **Sermon:** The preacher proclaims the truth of the scripture and makes connections between the Word and the lives of God's people.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

↑↓↔ **Holy Communion:** This sacrament remembers Jesus' final meal with his disciples, claims the redemption we share through Christ's death and resurrection, and looks forward with joy to the time when God's world is redeemed and made whole.

↓ **Closing Prayer:** Responding to the Word reclaims our life as people of God and our commitment to work for good in the world.

SENDING FORTH

↓ **Closing Hymn:** A hymn sends the congregation back into the world with a renewed sense of our identity as God's people, ready to honor and love others as we are loved.

↑ **Benediction:** A blessing of the people is proclaimed as we are sent forth with God's protection and peace for the coming week and the service that lies ahead.

↓ **Postlude:** A musical response is offered to the goodness and glory of God.