



# How to Enrich Our Worship Experience

**"Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few . . . . Therefore stand in awe of God"** (Ecclesiastes 5:1,2,7).

The purpose of worship is to *glorify and enjoy God*. We do this by *seeking to know Him better and responding to Him in adoration, love and joy*. It is therefore crucial that our worship experience is as meaningful as possible. Following are guidelines for growing in intimacy with God through worship.

1. **Prepare spiritually** before each worship service. If you arrive at church with a heart filled with sin, you will not readily hear God's voice. If you are filled with guilt, it will be difficult to concentrate on the challenges of Christ.
2. **Be early**. Enter the sanctuary in an attitude of prayer. Wait on God during the prelude. It takes time for the dust to settle from our busy lives. Since mornings are such a rush, it is important to be early to have a few minutes to calm down, unwind, and wait on God in silence.
3. **Participate in active worship**. Earnestly and wholeheartedly *seek and respond* to God's presence. Do not treat any worship service as merely "just another service" which you passively attend as a spectator. Actively participate!
4. **Exercise freedom** by worshiping in the way you find most helpful. Unless otherwise instructed by the worship leader, feel free to stand, sit, kneel . . . With raised hands or not, depending on what you find most meaningful at any given time. Allow others freedom and thus do not judge others' worship.

Some of us may find it difficult to sing at times because we **favor certain types of music** over others. We all favor certain types of music! That does not mean we cannot enter into the singing we may not personally prefer. The Bible, God's Word, says: "Speak to one another with **psalms, hymns and spiritual songs**. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, **always giving thanks** to God the Father for **everything**, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:19-20).

We are to worship and praise God "according to His excellent greatness," not according to our preference or feelings.

If you look at the context of these verses, you will see that singing songs and always giving thanks and submitting to one another (v. 21) are evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit. These descriptions are participles pointing back to the command to be



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filled with the Spirit of God. **Worshipping God in various forms, therefore, is an evidence of living in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.**



Notice **three styles of songs** are described: **psalms** — psalms like those of the Old Testament, **hymns** — songs directed to God or others that Christians were accustomed to singing as in our hymnals, **spiritual songs** — contemporary and/or spontaneous songs as in our praise singing.

Paul does not tell us to choose a certain style nor does he say that one style of song is better than another, only that they are different. Each style addresses aspects of our multifaceted personalities — intellectual, emotional, and volitional. **Hymns** tend to focus on content and therefore appeal to the intellect and emotions, although they tend more toward the intellect. **Spiritual songs** are typically very simple in content and more directed to God Himself and thereby cater more to our emotions. **Psalms**, however, tend to do both, though they tend more toward the emotions. All three styles make an appeal to the will (volition). Therefore, to experience the full richness of worship that God plainly expects from us according to His Word we need to experience **all styles**.

5. **Recognize the importance of reverence.** *Silence is golden and quiet reflection* gives depth to our worship. Could it be that reverence is too often missing because there is little, if any, awareness of the presence of the exalted, holy, majestic Creator and Redeemer in our midst?

The following steps will help create a **climate of reverence** in our services:

- **Dress appropriately.** Do not dress in a way that is *distracting* to others who are trying to worship.
- **Be sensitive with applause.** Applause is ok at certain times. For instance, when we want to show appreciation to someone for enhancing our worship experience or when children sing for us and recite memory verses we naturally clap to encourage them and convey our approval. There may be times when we wish to congratulate member(s) of our body for honors received or service given, and clapping is appropriate. But let us always remember, that our worship is to God, not to people, and our clapping should be the same.

Those with visible ministries, whether on the platform, in a drama, in the choir, in the praise band, or in special music, are not performing for us. *Worship is not a performance.* They are only there, along with us, to worship God. Since they are worshipping God, just as we are, it is important that we convey exaltation to God and not approval for good human effort.



Let us also be aware that sometimes the Spirit of God is moving upon the hearts of people, and they need the benefit of silence following a moving word, drama, or song, in order to hear the still small voice of God speaking to them. Applauding may break that spirit of conviction. If we applaud to praise God for some mercy or miracle, spoken testimony, or an uplifting song, then let it be expressed as enthusiastic praise. And if our applause is to show thanks for human effort, then, let us consider our motive, let us be thoughtful, and let us above all, be led by a desire to exalt Christ in every aspect of our worship.

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- Quietly find a seat *in front* so those coming late *will not disturb* the worship service that is already in progress. By sitting in front, you also keep the preacher from feeling so lonely when he sees all the empty pews in front.
- If you are participating in the service up front, be sure to sit in *the front pews* so that time is not wasted by your walking a long distance to the microphone.



- Sit in *the middle* of the pews so people who are seated after you can enter easily without several people having to move.
- Leave *the last pews* empty for guests. This shows them that we think they are special since we make it as comfortable as possible for them to worship with us.
- If you anticipate that you will need to leave the sanctuary at some time during the worship service, please be seated *toward the back* to minimize disturbance as you leave and come back.
- Following the benediction, please leave the sanctuary *promptly and quietly* as the worship team plays the postlude, so at its completion it is quiet for those who stay to be ministered to.
- To show proper respect for Holy Scripture it is important that you *do not speak or move around* at the time it is read.
- To show that you understand the importance of prayer and proper courtesy toward others, it is crucial that you *remain in your seat* during prayer and that you *do not talk*.
- Make sure your cell phone or any other electronic gadget is turned off before you enter the sanctuary.

These steps should ensure that our worship experience is enriched.

*Pastor Lars*

A scenic photograph of a waterfall cascading into a pool of water in a lush, green forest. The text is overlaid in a light green, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, there is a small URL: www.biren.info.

Prayer Service  
Monday, April 29  
7:00 – 8:30 pm  
Come when you can; leave when you must  
Psalm 17:6: I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;  
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

# Service Ministry

Thank you to the many hands that helped make the Health Fair a success! Our church family has many passionate professionals and people who made excellent presentations on several health topics and helped in many areas.

Debbie Anderson, Peter Anderson, Christine & Leanne Austin, Cheryl & Mike Blair, Bob DelBuono, Nancy & Steve Domyan, Crista & Kylie Forstrom, Linda Gustavson, Mindy Hatfield, Alma Kearns, Dan Kellerman, Ali Lindeberg, Steve Lindeberg, Wiley Mullins, Carl & Melissa Otten, Kristian Otten, Jake Otten, Kim & Tori Rieger, Don & Kallie Sebestyen, Cory Sharp, Justin Sharp,



Charlene Skok, Diana Swanson & Veronica, Darien Veerman, and Nancy Wilber.

A few people who visited from around the Easton community didn't know our church existed and wrote some very positive comments.

Working together...  
to serve others

The **HANDYMAN MINISTRY** headed up by Carl Otten will be working on their first project — working in a foster family home in Bridgeport, while also continuing to help out our church members. If you have something in your home or yard that needs repair, please contact Carl Otten.

*Kasia Lindeberg*

## The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport



**April 13, 10 am to 2:30 pm — Annual Youth Leadership Conference** CCGB's Bridge Building Ministry, along with Housatonic Community College and the Bridgeport Rotary Club, will sponsor this year's Youth Conference for high school and college students. The centerpiece of the conference will be viewing the movie, [A Raisin in the Sun](#), followed by facilitated dialogue and dinner. Participants will explore the question: "What happens to dreams deferred?" Contact Richetta Joyner ([richettaj@ccbq.org](mailto:richettaj@ccbq.org)) for more information.

**Janus Center ~ Caring for Youth in Crisis** Needed: **HOST HOMES!** A HOST HOME is a family, household or individual who opens their home to a youth between the ages of 11-17 years old who needs temporary shelter, board and care. They offer a stable and caring environment; the average stay is less than 10 days. Certified Host Homes will receive a monthly stipend for child care. For more information, please contact Dale Holder ([daleholder@ccqb.org](mailto:daleholder@ccqb.org)) or 203.367.8441 ext. 221).

**CO-OP Center ~ Creating Second Chances** Needed: 40 of each of the following: toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, deodorant, shampoo, razor, comb. If you can help, please contact Dan Braccio ([danbraccio@ccqb.org](mailto:danbraccio@ccqb.org)).

**Project Learn ~ Turning Students into Scholars** If you like working with young children, you can be a mentor or tutor with Project Learn every week or every month. The program runs from 3 to 5 on weekdays. If you would rather commit once or twice a year, please consider hosting or funding a summer picnic or holiday party for our kids. Are you a doctor, lawyer, mechanic, teacher, entrepreneur? We're always looking for professionals to share stories about the jobs they do. Or perhaps your business would consider hosting job shadowing opportunities. Contact Sean Campbell ([seancampbell@ccqb.org](mailto:seancampbell@ccqb.org)).

# Positive Thoughts

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I can do  
all things  
through Christ  
who  
strengthens  
me.  
PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Be strong in the Lord.  
Keep your mind on God.  
Be a God pleaser.  
Only say positive things.  
Remember your actions are an encouragement to others.  
Evil never wins.  
When you take a step of faith, God will always meet you.  
Conduct yourself as Jesus would.  
When you plant a seed, it will always grow.  
Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.  
When you don't know what to do, call on God.  
You are always to wear the armor of God.  
You are an ambassador for Christ.  
Every mark you make in life always has an impact.  
Only go where you want others to follow.  
Never be afraid to share Christ.  
God will never give you more than you can handle.  
God will always give you what you need to do His will.  
Your own story is the best testimony.  
Bloom where you're planted.  
All things are possible.  
God won't back down and never should you.

It's very easy to think negatively about everything. But when you put your mind on God and think positively, everything can turn around. And how we handle things teaches those around us. If you keep all of these thoughts in mind, little by little you can change the world.

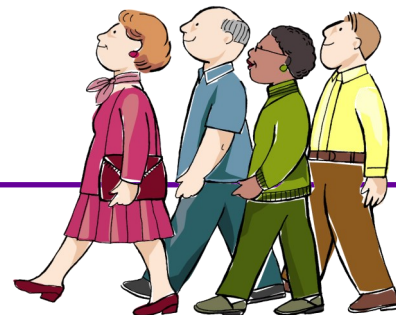
*Snoopi Botten and Blake Roberts*



## Senior Luncheon April 21st

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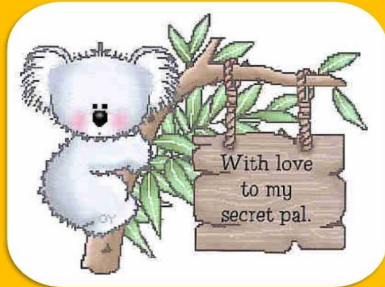
The OASIS senior high students will be hosting a luncheon for all Seniors on Sunday, April 21st after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Worship Service. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Dom Mastrianno. Cost is \$5.00 per person. All Seniors are welcome!



*Calling All Seniors!*

# Secret Pal Brunch

## April 27th, 10:00 am



### Spring is here!

It's time to find out who your Secret Pal has been all year!

Senders, Remember to bring a \$15± gift for your pal.

RSVP to Mindy Hatfield (203-650-2424)

Want to participate in the Secret Pal program?  
Contact Mindy Hatfield.

### RSVP by April 22

## John Schneider Camp Fund

John Schneider was a young man who attended Covenant and died in a tragic drowning accident. A camp fund was set up in his honor for scholarships for young people to attend camp because that was where John received the Lord. Ever since, this fund has helped many children to experience the wonderful ministry at Camp Squanto in New Hampshire.

This year has been especially difficult for some families. Your support is greatly appreciated. If your family is in need of assistance with Camp Squanto registration fees, please see Cary or Roseann Slater. Pilgrim Pines is offering a "Three Tiered" payment option again this year, visit [www.pilgrimpines.org](http://www.pilgrimpines.org). Your offering envelope box contains an envelope for the John Schneider Camp Fund between April 28 and May 5, 2013.

Covenant Church of Easton EASTON, CONNECTICUT	
JOHN SCHNEIDER CAMP FUND	
Amount _____	Name _____
	Amount/Name

# MIDNIGHT RUN

## SATURDAY, APRIL 27

CONTACT: Kyla Trinklein ([kylatrinks@yahoo.com](mailto:kylatrinks@yahoo.com))

We're putting together TWO groups of student & family volunteers – one group for preparing food & one group for organizing clothes. Those planning on going on the "run" will leave the church by 10:00 pm for New York to distribute food and supplies to the homeless.

# Treasurer's Report

The financial results of the Unified Operating Fund for the two months ended February 28, 2013 were as follows:

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	
Unified Receipts	\$72,596
Investment & Other Income	<u>869</u>
Total Income	\$73,465
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>	
Excess of Income over Expenses	<u>\$520</u>

Even though Unified Receipts are well behind the two-month Financial Plan (down \$23,580) and last year (down \$16,567), the Fund still managed to show a small surplus for the year-to-date. The reason for this happy circumstance is that expenses



are lower than the Financial Plan by a slightly larger amount than the downturn in income. The biggest savings are in the personnel area, due to Interim Senior Pastor and Music Director positions. The Financial Plan was based on all of these positions being filled on a permanent, full-time basis. However, all expense areas, with one exception, also

showed savings from the Plan. Income for the month of February exceeded the amount called for in the Plan, therefore the shortfall for the two months is entirely due to January. In order to avoid falling too far behind the needed income for the year, it will be helpful for each of us to review our giving for the first few months and, if it has fallen behind, to bring it up to date. Once we get in the habit of sharing our blessings with the Lord on a regular basis, it becomes a joy to do so.

**Bob Fiscus**  
Treasurer



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 4/2 Leanne Austin
- 4/3 James Miller
- 4/4 Judy Allen  
Richard Pittera  
♥ Sam & Paula Keegan ♥
- 4/5 Estuardo Estrada  
Cassidy Kattler
- 4/6 Lillian Furedy  
Jessica Goddard  
Jamie Capossela
- 4/7 Michelle Wilber
- 4/8 Jeff Munley  
Daniel Bradley
- 4/15 Carl Otten  
Iain Munley  
Erica Anderson
- 4/17 JoAnn Gibbs
- 4/18 Luke Gibbs
- 4/22 Anastasia Svenson  
♥ George & Karen Sheridan ♥
- 4/25 Christina Bradley
- 4/26 Margie Royster
- 4/28 ♥ Ron & JoAnn Gibbs ♥



# APRIL



## Covenant Church of Easton

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*Rooted in Christ - Reaching Out to the World*

# April Worship

**TWO SERVICES EACH SUNDAY - 9:00 am and 10:45 am**

April	7	<i>The Church &amp; Service</i>	Bob Rieger
April	14	<i>The Church &amp; the Sacraments: Baptism</i>	Pastor Lars
April	21	<i>The Church &amp; the Sacraments: Holy Communion</i>	Pastor Lars
April	28	<i>To Be Announced</i>	Pastor Cary