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ABSTRACT

The Mooroolbark Salvation Army is a place of welcome and acceptance for people with disabilities. However, people with intellectual disabilities often have limited opportunities for engagement in corporate worship. The act of worship is a practice everyone should be able to participate in, but barriers often limit engagement for people with disabilities. This project thesis explored and sought to address these barriers and create opportunities for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities. A small diverse group of people from the Mooroolbark Salvation Army came together for ten weeks commencing in February 2022 to consider how to attend to engagement opportunities in worship. During the weekly sessions, the group explored the topics of worship and liturgy. Theological themes such as the body of Christ and the *imago Dei* were also discussed in relation to full participation. The group also spent time participating in a variety of liturgical practices. These practices were then reviewed, and consideration was given to how each could be used or adapted to facilitate full participation for people with intellectual disabilities. The group then constructed twelve liturgies that seek to provide a variety of ways for people to engage in worship. These liturgies are the beginning of a journey to foster full participation for the people of the Mooroolbark Salvation Army who live with intellectual disabilities.

Liturgical Practices for Full Participation:
Creating Opportunities for Engagement in Corporate Worship for People Living with
Intellectual Disabilities at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry


By

Catherine Jane Spiller

May 2023

This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate Catherine Spiller, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry

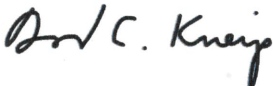


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To my husband and best friend, Rhys. There is no one else I would rather do this wild journey of life with. To Joshua, who teaches me what it means to live joyfully each day.

And to Bethany, you inspire me with your love for life and others.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Disability and the Australian Church

One in six people in Australia reports living with a disability or chronic health condition.¹ This equates to approximately 4.4 million people, which is a significant percentage of the population. Researchers have noted that people with disabilities are at a greater risk of disadvantage, particularly in relation to employment and social activities that the general population takes for granted.² This exclusion can negatively impact a person's well-being and lead to long-term health issues.³ The more severe the impairment a person lives with, the more likely the person with a disability will experience this exclusion.

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *People with Disability in Australia* (Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020), 1.

2. Language is important when discussing disability. The terms used to refer to someone who lives with a disability need to come from the disability community. There are two main ways the disability community speaks of disability. The first way is person-first language, which places a person before their disability. This acknowledges the primacy of personhood. The language used would be *a person with a disability*. The second way is identity-first language where “it is impossible to separate a person from their disability, and that it functions in the same way as any other identity marker. Disability is part of how a person identifies and experiences the world, and therefore is indivisible from them.” Kerri Cassidy, “Disability Culture,” *Voices Autumn Edition* (2021): 4. The language used in this instance would be a *disabled person*. I am following the decision that the Disability Resource Centre uses, which is to use person-first language. The Disability Resource Centre is an organization that advocates for people living with disabilities in Victoria. Additionally, people with disabilities run the organization.

3. Nathan J. Wilson et al., “From Social Exclusion to Supported Inclusion: Adults with Intellectual Disability Discuss Their Lived Experiences of a Structured Social Group,” *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 30 (2017): 848.

Despite this disturbing picture, there is good news for people living with a disability in Australia because 86 percent of churches have self-reported in the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) that they have at least one provision for people with disabilities.⁴ At first glance, this NCLS statistic looks like great news. However, there is a concern with the data provided by the NCLS. The metric used focuses on accessibility rather than the ability of a person to participate in the life of the church. There appears to be an assumption behind the data: if a person can access a building, they are able to participate in whatever is occurring inside. This is not always the case, and often, people living with a disability find themselves experiencing the same exclusion in the church that they face in society. Erik Carter warns:

Contemporary conversations about inclusion in churches tend to be limited in two ways. First, they frame inclusion as a construct primarily concerned with physical location. Such a narrow lens neglects the primacy of relationships, which can still be limited or altogether absent even when people with and without disabilities navigate the same spaces. Second, they do not place the personal perspectives of people with disabilities and their families at the forefront of the discussions. Such an omission can inadvertently lead congregations to adopt practices that ultimately do not lead people to feel welcomed and valued.⁵

To overcome these limitations, the church will need to build upon the current understanding of disability inclusion to recognize that it does not only mean having an accessible building. To build a safe and welcoming space that fosters participation, the

4. The National Church Life Survey is an interdenominational survey conducted every five years. Congregants and church leaders comment on a series of questions based on nine core qualities. In the most recent survey, respondents commented on four areas relating to disability: major physical facilities (e.g., ramps/lift, disabled toilet, reserved parking); minor physical facilities (e.g., hearing loop, wheelchair space convenient for services); program-related provisions (e.g., intellectual impairment adapted Bible studies, social support, education to congregation); and active culture of inclusion (e.g., teaching and practice, adapting curriculum for children, special needs catered to). The fifth option was none of the above. Miriam Pepper, Nicole Hancock, and Ruth Powell, *Disability Inclusion, Provision, and Care among Local Churches in Australia* (North Sydney: NCLS Research, 2017), 6.

5. Erik W. Carter, "A Place of Belonging: Research at the Intersection of Faith and Disability," *Review and Expositor* 113.2 (2016): 169.

church must have a relationship with people with disabilities in their congregations. Part of this relationship means being willing to listen and learn. A slogan from the disability activist movement in the 1990s sums this up: “Nothing about us without us.”⁶

Purpose of the Project

We like to think that the church is a welcoming space where everyone can participate. However, providing opportunities for people with disabilities to fully engage in worship can be challenging. Often, people with disabilities are not on the radar of the people who plan worship and other church activities. When we are not aware of people with disabilities, we do not see their needs. When we do not see the needs of others, their needs often go unmet. This can result in people with disabilities being left out. Therefore, this project developed a series of liturgies to help facilitate full participation in corporate worship for people who live with intellectual disabilities. The project was undertaken at The Salvation Army Mooroolbark Corps.

Chapter 1 of this project thesis will consider the context and the challenges that arise with disability in the church. Chapter 2 will look at the theological underpinning of worship and how our understanding of worship frames our understanding of full participation for people with disabilities. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology used for the project. Chapter 4 will explore the project’s findings, and chapter 5 will discuss the conclusions and ongoing implications of this project intervention.

6. James Charlton, *Nothing about Us without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

Description of the Ministry Context

The Salvation Army Mooroolbark Corps was established in 1964 and is situated in the outer eastern suburbs of metropolitan Melbourne.⁷ Over these many years, the people of the corps have continually been active in mission, seeking to make a difference in the lives of the people in the church and community. The church has sought to do this through multiple avenues such as our emergency food relief program, friendship groups, or through church members taking the opportunity to share with others the difference that Jesus has made in their lives.

Like many other Salvation Army churches in Australia, the Mooroolbark Corps has borne witness to the decline in the church throughout the Western world. Amid this decline occurring in our church, I observed an anomaly. Over the four years I was in leadership at the corps, we witnessed an increase in the number of people attending the corps who had a lived experience of disability.⁸ The new people attended our worship service or connected through our weekly preschool music program.⁹ I decided to explore why we were seeing an unusual increase of people with connections to disability attending the corps. As a parent of a nineteen-year-old son who lives with disabilities, I

7. The Salvation Army historically has used the British military as a model for its structure. The terminology used reflects this. We do not always refer to our congregations as churches; we often use the term *corps* when speaking about our faith communities. We do not use the title of pastor or minister for people in leadership; we refer to someone as a corps officer and refer to them by their rank (e.g., Lieutenant). The international leader of The Salvation Army is the General.

8. This was between 2017 and 2020. It is impossible to comment on this trend continuing because of COVID-19 and the church only sporadically meeting in person in 2020–2021.

9. In 2017, five people living with disabilities attended the corps regularly, three adults and two children. With my arrival and my colleague's arrival, we added one adult and three children to the tally, bringing the total to nine. Since then, eleven more adults and children with disabilities have started attending worship regularly. This is an increase of 220 percent. In addition, we have had six children with disabilities attending the preschool music program over that time, four of whom still regularly attended as of the end of 2020.

had some theories about what was happening in the church. However, I was also aware that as I began this journey, I was one of the corps officers; therefore, my initial experience was privileged and potentially biased.¹⁰ I spent some time in pastoral conversations with carers in my church and sought out the expertise of three people who work in the disability sector and are also people of faith. *Carer* is a common term used in Australia to describe someone who has an unpaid responsibility to provide care and support to another person living with a disability or chronic illness. Carers are often family members and can be adults or children.¹¹

As a result of these initial conversations, I discovered that all the carers I spoke to in my congregation felt welcomed. They did not think that they or their family members had experienced judgment. This is significant, as people living with disabilities or their family members often feel judged by others. This sentiment is validated by theologian Amy Jacober, who works at Christian summer camps with teenagers who live with disabilities. Brian Brock notes this about her research:

Jacober has also done extensive surveys of the experiences of children, teens, and families in churches. In her interviews, she asked the neutrally worded open-ended question, What is your experience with church? [*sic*] What she found

10. I was appointed as the Associate Corps Officer at The Salvation Army in Mooroolbark in January 2017. I served in this capacity for four years. In January 2021, I was appointed to Eva Burrows College, where I am currently the Coursework Coordinator. My family and I are still attending the Mooroolbark Corps, where we have been active in ministry.

11. According to the Carers Australia website: “Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue, or who are frail aged. . . . Caring may include help and support with any of the daily activities of living of the person being cared for. It may include physical and personal care such as dressing, lifting, showering, toileting, feeding, or providing transport. Commonly, carers are responsible for the management of medications and also provide emotional and social support.” Young carers are children up to the age of twenty-five who have caring responsibilities for family members, often parents or other siblings. There are approximately 235,000 young carers in Australia. Carers Australia, “Who Is a Carer?” accessed 9 September 2021, <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/about-carers/who-is-a-carer/>.

agreed with other research showing that people with disabilities (and their families) very often experience church as an unwelcoming environment.”¹²

Some of the carers I had conversations with spoke of their previous experience of attending a church where this type of judgment occurred, often due to behavior connected with a disability. This caused three families to stop attending church for some time. Stanley Hauerwas says that the church should “be the place where parents” and children living with disabilities “can be without apologizing, without being stared at, without being silently condemned. . . . For this child is not the child of these biological parents, but this child is the child of the whole church, one whom the church would not choose to be without.”¹³

In addition to sharing the sense of welcome and acceptance they felt at our church, carers also told me about the importance of participating together in the life of the church through many shared stories about specific events in the corps. However, I have also observed that the more significant the impairment that someone lives with, the harder it is for them to actively engage with what is occurring in our church. This can result in exclusion from an activity for a disabled person with a more severe disability.

As part of my initial conversations with carers in my church, I also talked with three experts who work in the disability sector.¹⁴ I wanted to gain a broader perspective of what was occurring within my church. One of the first themes from these

12. Brian Brock, *Disability: Living into the Diversity of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 9.

13. Stanley Hauerwas, “The Church and the Mentally Handicapped: A Continuing Challenge to the Imagination,” in *Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas' Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology*, ed. John Swinton (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2004), 59.

14. Two of the three people from the disability sector whom I spoke with have a lived experience of disability. One lives with a disability, and the other is the carer of a child with a disability.

conversations was guilt and shame and how it plays out in the church. In two of these conversations, these experts shared about the sense of guilt that they felt when they were unable to participate fully in the life of the church due to disability. The experts felt that often the church fails to understand the impact of disability on a person's life. People truly wish to contribute; it is not a lack of commitment. Yet these disability experts talked about the guilt and shame that they felt when they could not contribute. One of the experts raised the concern that she could not participate in ministry opportunities due to the pressures of her life. Another expert told me about the exclusive language used during a church service where everyone was asked to participate by standing up to sing as remaining seated was a sign of laziness. She was at church wanting to participate, and this language created a sense of shame because she was physically unable to participate in this way.

During these conversations, there were other themes that I noticed, such as the importance of including people living with disabilities at all levels of the church and the importance of having people living with disabilities visibly included in the church. All the disability experts spoke of the importance of asking people with disabilities what is needed to accommodate their needs and not making assumptions and decisions on their behalf. The warning also lingered that there are consequences of having poor practice in this area of ministry. Exclusion can have detrimental and long-term effects on people living with disabilities, where people walk away from God and the church and live with the emotional pain of the damage caused.

This warning is a reminder of the importance of having a robust process of theological reflection. Hurt and harm can occur when we do not take the time to stop and

reflect on our practices and continue to repeat patterns of behavior that may be damaging and destructive. Theological reflection provides an avenue to confront our understanding of disability that may not reflect Scripture. An example of this can be found in how we determine the worth of a person. In the Western world, we have a tendency to determine people's value by what they contribute to society. This attitude can shape our view of disability because people who struggle to contribute are deemed *less than*. However, a biblical worldview that God created all people in God's image contrasts with this, giving all people value and worth. In his book, *Wondrously Wounded*, Brian Brock states, "A Christian vision of the human places a high value on all those consigned to outsider status by merely human visions of perfection and human community."¹⁵ This biblical value should be the starting point for the church as it engages with people living with disabilities.

Although the carers at my church said that the Mooroolbark Salvation Army was good at welcoming and including people, it should also be noted that there is still work to do. Firstly, the terminology that we use needs to be challenged. Often the go-to word we like to use is *inclusion*. However, this is problematic when we engage with people living with disabilities. Samuel Wells confronts this and says, "Inclusion is a word the comfortable use to say, 'We are a bunch of people in the centre whose lives are normal and sorted and privileged, and we really ought to open the doors and welcome people in and be a bit more thoughtful and kind and generous.' That makes inclusion a patronizing

15. Brian Brock, *Wondrously Wounded: Theology, Disability, and the Body of Christ* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 74.

and paternalistic model.”¹⁶ According to Wells, inclusion is something that people with power do to include people without power. However, the powerful still hold power. Amidst the power differential, there is also no acknowledgment of the importance of mutuality. Inclusion is a one-way street where the person including often does not expect to receive anything from the person being included.

Whether intentionally or not, the term *inclusion* devalues or even dismisses the contribution that people on the margins, such as people living with disabilities, can make to the life of the church. Brock indicates agreement saying, “The language of inclusion suffers from the same deficits as the earlier Christian model of ‘charity toward the unfortunate.’ Both presume a ‘we’ positioned against a needy ‘them’ whom ‘we’ need to help become part of the social domain that ‘we’ inhabit.”¹⁷ One of the disability experts offered a suggestion about how to overcome the baggage associated with the term inclusion by using the term *full participation*.¹⁸ This terminology moves away from the language of the powerful. It acknowledges that there is an opportunity to contribute and receive when one fully participates. It also gives permission and autonomy for people to choose to participate and contribute as much as they are able. As Nancy Eiesland avers in *The Disabled God*, “Today most denominations and many local congregations realize that church facilities should be constructed or altered to encourage the presence of

16. Samuel Wells, *A Future That’s Bigger Than the Past: Towards the Renewal of the Church* (London: Canterbury Press, 2019), Kindle edition, introduction.

17. Brock, *Wondrously Wounded*, 201.

18. Disability expert, personal conversation with author, 21 August 2020.

persons with disabilities. Yet little effort has been made to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in the life of the church.”¹⁹

Description of Personal Context

While my ministry context is important because the project intervention sits within this context, it is helpful to note my personal connection to disability as this also informs the project thesis. My desire to see people with disabilities participate fully within the church is because I am a parent of a nineteen-year-old young man who lives with an intellectual disability. My experience as a carer cannot be separated from my experience as a minister. Through observing my son as he engages with the church, I have gained a sense of what participation could be for someone who lives with an intellectual disability. There are two significant events that have contributed to my thinking in this area.

The first was an invitation to attend a Catholic mass at my daughter’s primary school. It was a requirement for all families of students to attend a mass on a particular weekend. My son had never attended a liturgical church service before, yet I was amazed to witness him begin to join in with the responsive parts of the liturgy. I had never seen him engage in a worship service in this way before. This experience started my thinking that perhaps there were ways that people with disabilities could participate in worship.

The second pivotal event in his life was in December 2017. The Mooroolbark Corps had planned a Children’s Celebration Sunday where the children were invited to lead worship. My son was asked to lead the final song. He proudly stood up and led that

19. Nancy L. Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 20.

song to the best of his ability. After this, I observed a fundamental shift in his engagement with our church. He began to walk around like he belonged and started to serve by welcoming people at the door when they came to worship. My son was given an opportunity to participate, and then he began contributing to the life of the church. This chance to participate was transformational for him. Not all individuals with intellectual disabilities enjoy the same opportunities to participate in the worship service within their faith communities, but my son's experience began to open my eyes to the possibilities of full participation.

Statement of the Problem

That said, while this one event was pivotal for my son's journey, this shift in mindset from inclusion to full participation is challenging. It may involve confronting the fear of disability and may also require giving up power to provide opportunities for others to contribute and flourish. Full participation requires being open and willing to receive, particularly from people who may have been dismissed or marginalized because of their disability. Everyone should be given an opportunity to contribute to the life of the church as much as they are able. Therefore, the problem in the Mooroolbark Salvation Army is that people living with disabilities have fewer opportunities to participate in corporate worship and thus become full participants. The activities associated with this project are designed to address this deficit.

Statement of the Purpose

This project thesis has created liturgical practices for the Mooroolbark Salvation Army that provide opportunities for full participation in corporate worship for people living with intellectual disabilities. While a series of liturgies were created to offer

engagement opportunities to all attendees at the church, they were particularly developed for people living with disabilities.

There were several steps taken throughout the intervention to develop these liturgies. First, a small group of people was selected and invited to participate in the practices development group. The group consisted of a diverse mix of ages and genders and sought to include people who live with a disability. The group consisted of eight individuals who met weekly for ten weeks.²⁰

The practices development group participated each week in various liturgical practices. As the group experienced these practices, they began to develop a series of liturgies designed to be accessible to all church attendees. Their task was to think about how the liturgies provide opportunities for full participation for people who live with a disability. At the conclusion of the project, the group had constructed twelve corporate worship experiences. These liturgies were collated in a booklet and will be offered to the leadership team at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army.

Basic Assumptions

Several assumptions are being made for this project thesis. The first is that the Mooroolbark Salvation Army is accessible and a place of acceptance for people with disabilities and their families. Therefore, I assume that the wider congregation will receive this project well, and I will not need to engage in a church-wide educational campaign. The second assumption is possibly more significant. I am assuming that people who live with disabilities would like the opportunity to participate fully in the life

20. The original group consisted of eight members and one participant observer; however, one participant was never able to commence.

of the church. Therefore, I am assuming the reason that people have not previously participated fully in corporate worship is because the church lacks awareness of people in the congregation who experience disabilities. This is not due to a lack of welcome or acceptance but because the wider congregation has not considered people living with disabilities when planning corporate worship. Brock comments that often “disability lives in the outer reaches of most Christians’ consciousness.”²¹

Definition of *Disability*

This lack of consideration could also be linked to a lack of understanding of disability. However, there is a significant challenge when defining disability. According to the Australian government, *disability* “is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions; all of which can interact with a person’s health condition(s) and environmental and/or individual factors.”²² The Australian Disability Discrimination Act definition covers a wide range of disabilities from physical disfigurement and learning disorders to mental health issues that “affect a person’s thought process, perception of reality, emotions, or judgment or that result in disturbed behavior.”²³ The Australian Network on Disability defines disability as affecting one or

21. Brock, *Disability*, 11.

22. Felicity Murdoch et al., *People with Disabilities in Australia: 2019 in Brief* (Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019), 1.

23. Office of Parliamentary Counsel, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: The Australian Government, 1992), 5.

more categories: physical, intellectual, mental illness, sensory, neurological, learning, physical disfigurement, or immunological.²⁴ Rosemarie Garland Thomson states,

Disability is in an overarching and in some ways artificial category that encompasses congenital and acquired physical differences, mental illness and retardation, chronic and acute illness, fatal and progressive diseases, temporary and permanent injuries, and a wide range of bodily characteristics considered disfiguring, such as scars, birthmarks, unusual proportions, or obesity.²⁵

These definitions cover a wide range of ailments that many people would be able to identify with. Some may think of these categories as disabilities; others may not. Brock takes the definition of disability to a new level by stating:

Taking a close look at these different experiences of disability highlights the reality that there is no *one* thing called disability, no *single* disability experience. In fact, in a way few terms are, the term “disability” is an artificial category, a category that does not obviously refer to a single thing. This does not mean that the physical and mental conditions to which it refers are not real—far from it. It means only that the category is so wide and diverse that it can sometimes mislead more than it illuminates.²⁶

Due to this extreme variance in the definition of disability, it would not be possible to discuss full participation for every disability named above. The scope of the research would be too broad, and it would be impossible to consider the needs of each disability in a corporate worship setting. To engage thoroughly on the topic of full participation for people with disabilities, this project thesis will focus on people who live with intellectual disabilities. However, some of the findings of this research may have applications beyond this and apply to people who live with other forms of disability.

24. Australian Network on Disability, “What Is Disability?” accessed 27 October 2022, <https://www.and.org.au/resources/disability-statistics/what-is-disability>.

25. Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 13.

26. Brock, *Disability*, 18.

Definition of *Exclusion*

In working toward full participation, it is essential to understand the opposite of this—*exclusion*. Exclusion is not a simple construct, and experiences of exclusion can occur for various reasons. The most basic form of exclusion is inaccessibility, in which a person with a disability cannot access the physical space where an activity occurs. Another form is when a person can physically access a building but cannot participate in the offered activity. This could be due to challenges with verbal communication or literacy. Often corporate worship activities assume basic literacy, particularly the ability to read. This barrier can cause exclusion for a person with a disability who is physically present. Exclusion can also occur when a person is present but ignored or overlooked by the other group members. Another form of exclusion is self-exclusion. This is where either a person living with a disability or their carer simply does not have the physical energy to engage in an activity. Sometimes, people’s day-to-day challenges are enough to drain them of their energy resources. Yet another form of exclusion exists when a person does not have the financial resources to participate. “Studies consistently show that people living with disabilities are disproportionately poor” and “face extra costs of living.”²⁷ People may desire to participate in extra activities, such as a youth group outing, but they may not have the financial resources to do so, resulting in exclusion.

The above examples of exclusion could be viewed simply as problems that need to be solved. In other words, people are excluded, and all we need to do is address the

27. Sophie Mitra et al., “The Hidden Extra Costs of Living with a Disability,” The conversation, published 25 July 2017, <https://theconversation.com/the-hidden-extra-costs-of-living-with-a-disability-78001>.

inequalities and include them. However, this does not take into account the underlying issues that are at work. Miroslav Volf names exclusion for what it is—sin.

An advantage of conceiving sin as the practice of exclusion is that it names as sin what often passes as virtue, especially in religious circles. In the Palestine of Jesus’s day, ‘sinners’ were not simply ‘the wicked’ who were therefore religiously bankrupt, but also social outcasts, people who practiced despised trades, Gentiles and Samaritans, those who failed to keep the Law as interpreted by a particular sect.²⁸

Volf highlights that the religious people were attempting to avoid those who were “unclean” to remain pure, yet in doing so, they were excluding people in their community, committing the sin of exclusion.²⁹ “By embracing the ‘outcast,’ Jesus underscored the ‘sinfulness’ of the persons and systems that cast them out.”³⁰ Volf’s words are a reminder that in addition to addressing the practicalities of exclusion, there is also a need to name and confess the systemic sin of exclusion in the church. From this foundation, the church can begin to tackle systems of injustice that lead to exclusion.

Delimitations of the Project

There were several delimitations for this project thesis. First, the project took place at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. The primary focus was the Sunday corporate worship experience. The practices development group developed the liturgies using Salvationist theology. Some readers might see the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s

28. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 72.

29. Volf, *Exclusion*, 72.

30. Volf, *Exclusion*, 72.

Supper as natural opportunities for full participation. However, The Salvation Army is a non-sacramentalist church, and so the practices reflect this stance.³¹

As I have noted above, another delimitation concerns the overarching definition of disability. The definition is extensive and would make the scope of the project thesis too broad. It would be impossible to address the issues of full participation for each specific disability listed in the above definitions. Therefore, the focus is on full participation for people who live with some form of intellectual disability.³² This decision was also because of my son's journey of living with an intellectual disability. Part of my drive to explore full participation is to enable him to engage at our church in the best possible way. In addition, I am aware that a number of people at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army live with intellectual disabilities and thus would be served by this intervention.

Limitations of the Project

Along with the delimitations stated above, this project has some limitations. The people in the practices development group were asked to commit to weekly attendance as much as possible during the implementation of the project. It was essential to acknowledge that this likely would not be possible for people living with disabilities. I

31. This project will not be addressing the theological position that The Salvation Army has taken on the sacraments. For a more in-depth examination of this topic, see The Salvation Army, *One Faith, One Church: The Salvation Army's Response to Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1990).

32. The American Psychiatric Society has defined intellectual disability, stating it "involves problems with general mental abilities that affect functioning in two areas: intellectual functioning (such as learning, problem solving, judgment)" and "adaptive functioning (activities of daily life such as communication and independent living)." There are three levels of diagnosis for a person living with this type of disability: mild, moderate, and severe. American Psychiatric Association. "What Is Intellectual Disability?" accessed 10 July 2021, <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/intellectual-disability/what-is-intellectual-disability>.

did not want to guilt or shame the participants with disabilities into attending if it was not workable. Therefore, I tried to extend grace to participants who could not participate in all of the sessions. Absences by the group members may raise concerns about the project's integrity. However, these absences are also a true reflection of some of the daily challenges that people who live with disabilities face. When someone is living with limited energy, their priority is well-being. I intended to honor these decisions. Finally, I am aware that my pool of experience and data are small and limited as my focus is The Salvation Army in Mooroolbark.

Conclusion

The Mooroolbark Salvation Army is a warm and welcoming place for people with disabilities and their families. However, work still needs to be done to facilitate more complete participation for people with intellectual disabilities. To do this, there will need to be an understanding of what worship is and how liturgical practices can be created or adapted to foster full participation. Chapter 2 will begin to address these foundational understandings by exploring the biblical and theological foundations underpinning this project thesis.

CHAPTER II
THEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

Biblical Foundations

Before I turn to explore the theological themes for the project, it is helpful to pause and consider the biblical foundations underpinning this. While Scripture does not explicitly address *full participation* in worship, the Bible is filled with the call of God to embrace and include the *other* or the *outsider*. The Old Testament has many narratives that contain a biblical triad in which God beckons Israel to care for and include the orphan, the widow, and the alien.¹ While the orphan and the widow could be considered part of the community of faith, the call to embrace the outsider, the alien, would have challenged Israel. The Old Testament prophets also called Israel to live justly and to consider their treatment of those who were vulnerable and on the margins of society.² Bryant Myers emphatically states, “The prophets repeatedly judged the nation of Israel and its political and religious leaders on the basis of the faithfulness of their worship and the well-being of the widow, orphan, and the alien.”³ One should not be separated from the other. The care of the vulnerable is a practical outworking of a life of worship.

1. This triad of the orphan, widow, and alien appears numerous times throughout the Old Testament. See Deut 14:29; 24:17–20; 26:12–13; 27:19; Jer 7:6; 22:3; Ezek 22:7; Zech 7:10; Mal 3:5.

2. See Amos 5:10–24 as an example where God calls Israel to consider the impact of their behavior on the people who were vulnerable in the community.

3. Bryant L. Myers, *Engaging Globalization: The Poor, Christian Mission, and Our Hyperconnected World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 211.

The New Testament continues this call to see and embrace the other. There are some selected passages in the New Testament that form the main biblical foundations for this project. The narrative of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10–11 is a profound example of this, where Peter and the Jewish believers were required to consider what it meant to include people they considered *outsiders* within the community of faith. In his commentary on Acts, Richard Thompson calls this text a “game changer” and states, “Luke’s account depicts an inclusive understanding of the church with both Jewish and Gentile believers. His narrative points the reader again and again to the divine initiative that led to that understanding. The inclusive nature of the church was the result of God’s purposes and guidance. It did not result from human instigation or political correctness.”⁴

In this passage, Peter experiences a vision from God in which a sheet is laid before him containing a variety of animals, both animals that are considered clean and those considered unclean. Peter immediately objects to the request to “kill and eat” these animals (Acts 10:13 NRSV). However, he heeds the divine voice telling him, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane” (Acts 10:15). While this experience is puzzling for Peter, he is able to understand its significance as he encounters and embraces Cornelius, an outsider, and is then provided with an opportunity to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 10:17–43). As Peter is speaking the Holy Spirit “fell upon all who heard the word” (Acts 10:44). As Peter recognizes the Spirit at work, he tells the Gentile believers to be baptized. Thompson emphasizes the importance of this event by saying, “To deny these Gentiles baptism—a Christian rite of inclusion in Acts—would be to refuse to recognize

4. Richard P. Thompson, *Acts: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 2015), 216.

God’s obvious inclusion of them among the people characterized by God’s saving work.”⁵ However, this event creates further challenges for Peter.

When Peter returns to Jerusalem, he faces significant criticism for eating with the Gentiles (Acts 11:2–3). This offers Peter an opportunity to share what God has revealed to him. Peter, in his explanation, continually points back to God and tells the people that God has initiated the Gentiles’ full participation in the community of faith.⁶ Peter calls for the “inclusion of *all* believers, both Jew and Gentile, due to their common gift of the Spirit,” says Thompson; anything less “would be to oppose God.”⁷

Another passage of Scripture that provides a foundation for this project is 1 Cor 12–14. In this passage, the embrace of people is fleshed out within the context of worship. However, the text moves from the theme of embrace to participation. It is interesting to note that this passage commences by denoting, as in the Acts passage above, that it is God who initiates (12:7). It is God who embraces people and gifts them by God’s Spirit to contribute. God also places believers together and forms them into a body (12:12). While God is the initiator, individuals also have a responsibility. In his work on 1 Corinthians, Oropeza states, “Our apostle challenges the Corinthians to turn from a status-seeking orientation to one of voluntary self-giving for the edification of others.”⁸ Therefore, Paul encourages the church to view itself as a body where everyone has a part to play. Each person is valued and can then contribute to the building up of the body. Again, Oropeza comments, “In this collective body every member counts

5. Thompson, *Acts*, 211.

6. Thompson, *Acts*, 214.

7. Thompson, *Acts*, 215.

8. B. J. Oropeza, *1 Corinthians: A New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 98.

regardless of ethnic and status differentiations.”⁹ While this passage does not explicitly state ability or disability, I suggest that this fits within the “differentiations” that Oropeza highlights. Paul also indicates that as members of the body, we need each other. “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it, if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (1 Cor 12:26). All are to be included.

Paul also seeks to remind his audience that everyone has something to contribute. This particularly applies when the body of Christ comes together in worship. Paul instructs, “When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation” (1 Cor 14:26). In other words, everyone has something to bring to the worship gathering. However, these contributions are not for the edification of the person contributing. They are to build up the body of Christ (1 Cor 14:26).

Paul also encourages his readers to remember that while spiritual gifts are good and are to be used to build up the body of Christ, they are to be used with love. It is dangerous to invite people to participate in worship in an environment that is not loving (1 Cor 13:1–13). The gifts of the Spirit that have been given to build up the community of faith are rendered ineffective in an environment without love (1 Cor 13:1–3). Love is the reason that people are embraced and included in the community of faith. It is also why people are invited to participate fully in the act of worship. Ultimately, we are to pursue love (1 Cor 14:1).

One further and final passage I would briefly like to explore is within the Gospel of John. It is in the Gospels that Israel encounters God in the flesh in Jesus, who shocks the religious elite by dining, socializing, embracing, and healing the people considered

9. Oropeza, *1 Corinthians*, 99.

outsiders. This sense of scandal is seen in John 9, the account of the man born blind. This passage is significant as it brings together the topics of disability and the community of faith.

At the beginning of this passage, John introduces his readers to a man who was born blind. Due to his disability, this man is on the margins of society, needing to beg to eke out an existence for himself. Köstenberger states that begging was “a way of life [and] was a common feature in first-century Palestine.”¹⁰ This was the only way that people with disabilities could provide for themselves.¹¹ Yet when the disciples come along, their reaction is not one of embracing the outsider. Instead, their reaction indicates that they do not see the man; they only see the disability. As a result, they begin to debate the cause of his blindness. Furthermore, I feel certain the man would have heard the questions and conversation; after all, he could still hear! Amy Kenny makes an interesting observation saying, “The disciples interpret this man solely as his disability. They are so caught up in prescribing the cause of his disability that we don’t even learn his name.”¹²

Jesus, however, dismisses this theological debate about the cause of disability and instead focuses on the man. Jesus demonstrates the embrace of this man on the margins, and it is one of healing. However, the healing received by the man is more than the restoration of his sight. Kenny indicates that “the Greek word often used in Scripture for healing is *sozo*, which means ‘to make whole’ or ‘to save.’ It’s the same word used to

10. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 284.

11. Köstenberger, *John*, 284.

12. Amy Kenny, *My Body Is Not a Prayer Request: Disability Justice in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2022), 5.

talk about salvation. Jesus' healing is not purely about a physical alteration but about reestablishing right relationship between humanity and God and, hopefully, between individuals and community."¹³ This miraculous event should have provided the opportunity for the excluded man to be restored back to his community.¹⁴ However, rather than finding embrace, this man is met with hostility and further exclusion. "The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him'" (John 9:8-9). Once again, the man's personhood is diminished, and he is viewed only as a topic of debate.

The reaction from the neighbors is repeated when the man is taken to the Pharisees. In this round of questioning, the Pharisees debate whether the man was actually born blind (John 9:18). His parents are then dragged in for questioning to see if they can shed any light on what has happened. They, too, are stunned by the miraculous transformation. "Perhaps the biggest surprise in this passage," says Kenny, "is that receiving sight doesn't magically improve everything (or anything?) for [the man born blind]. Quite the opposite in fact. It amplifies the way he is ostracized by people who think they understand Scripture better than him."¹⁵ The questions that are leveled at the man to justify the healing and the source of the healing actually push him further to the margins of his community.

13. Kenny, *My Body*, 9.

14. Kenny, *My Body*, 9.

15. Kenny, *My Body*, 7.

Throughout this passage, the people who encounter the man born blind fail to see him as a person. They also fail to recognize who Jesus is. This failure to see results in continued exclusion for the man. According to Beasley-Murray, the Pharisees and community “reject the man, and the miracle, and the One through whom God wrought it.”¹⁶ The ultimate irony is that the only person who can *see* in this narrative is the man who was blind. He is the only one who acknowledges who Jesus really is. In his final encounter with Jesus, he is told that the ones who think they can see are really the ones who are blind (John 9:41).

This narrative is an invitation to the reader to immerse oneself in this story, to imagine what it might have felt like to be on the margins and to be excluded in this way, to be shunned and whispered about, and also to feel the acceptance, embrace, and welcome of Jesus. One can then imagine the questions and exclusion from the people who were supposed to be rejoicing that the man could now see. By taking the place of the man born blind, the readers are challenged to consider what it means to be able to truly see. This account highlights that “Jesus is always tearing down the boundaries we put up, and here Jesus reveals the unnecessary barriers of kingdom exclusion.”¹⁷

Throughout Scripture, people of faith have been called to care for people who are vulnerable and on the margins of society. The struggles that people face are not to be barriers to their inclusion in the community of faith. Once embraced, people are free to be full participants as members of the body of Christ. However, as John 9 indicates, it can be easy to look past the person and only see the disability. I would like to suggest that

16. George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*. WBC 36 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 159.

17. Kenny, *My Body*, 9.

creating opportunities for full participation must go further than embracing people with disabilities. It requires seeing people with disabilities as people. It also involves seeing and naming the exclusion that occurs in worship, whether intentional or unintentional. From this place, we can begin to consider what worship is and how we can invite people with disabilities to participate.

Description of Theological Themes

Worship is not a new concept in Christian communities. The act of worship has been consistently engaged in throughout churches worldwide for more than 2,000 years. While the form of worship may look different from church to church, the object of worship is the same. Glen O'Brien says, "There is a *particularity* about Christian worship—its focus is not on 'the divine' in some vague way, but on a *particular* God with a *particular* history in the world."¹⁸ As a church, when we worship, we are drawn together into the story of God.¹⁹ This story is conveyed through the elements within worship. In Peter Brunner's text, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, he quotes Martin Luther instruction in reference to Christian worship: "nothing else be done in it than that our dear Lord Himself talk (*rede*) to us through His holy word and that we, in turn, talk (*reden*) to him in prayer and song of praise."²⁰

However, worship in many churches today could be regarded as an individual pursuit. One comes to worship for *an audience of one*. In other words, *I* come to worship,

18. Glen O'Brien, *Christian Worship: A Theological and Historical Introduction* (Melbourne: Uniting Academic Press, 2013), 18.

19. Ruth C. Duck, *Worship for the Whole People of God: Vital Worship for the 21st Century*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2021), Kindle edition, introduction.

20. Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 123, quoted in James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 22.

and it is about what *I* do in worship. It is between Jesus and *me*. This individualistic approach to worship is not healthy and limits our understanding of the act of worship. O'Brien highlights, "While it is possible to worship alone, and we certainly should do that, Christian worship is designed to be a community act; it's a 'churchy' thing, a corporate activity of the whole family of God."²¹ As Christians, we may have private times of worship, but when we gather as God's people, something significant occurs corporately. We come together to meet with God and join our neighbors in worship. As we worship together, the Holy Spirit works in us, and we are formed into the body of Christ.

Worship and Liturgy

Before exploring what it means for the church to be formed as the body of Christ, it is helpful to understand what worship is. Ruth Duck says the following: "The word 'worship' itself comes [from] the Old English word *weorth-scipe*—literally *weorth* (worth) and *-scipe* (ship). It means ascribing worth to someone."²² When Christians worship, they give worth and respect to God. Due to the historical understanding of this word—an understanding that links worth and power—one might think that the word carries a sense of duty with it.²³ However, O'Brien sheds further light by framing worship as an act where "worship may be understood simply as the enjoyment of God."²⁴ Ascribing worth to God in worship is not an act of duty; rather it is an act of celebrating

21. O'Brien, *Christian Worship*, 22.

22. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

23. White, *Introduction*, 27.

24. O'Brien, *Christian Worship*, 15.

and delighting in God. Along with the word *worship*, another term that conveys meaning for Christian worship is the German word *Gottesdienst*.

Gottesdienst combines the words for *God* and *service*, which “refer to either the church’s service to God or God’s service and self-giving to the people.”²⁵ Alexis Abernethy would classify this understanding as vertical worship, highlighting the relationship between God and God’s people. The second element of worship that Abernethy points out is horizontal. This horizontal plane indicates a relational aspect of worship through service to each other.²⁶ Both elements are to be present in worship. Brock agrees, saying, “As Jesus’s own teaching and practice conveys, being a Christian is not an individual affair but a collective one. We are to be a community imaging Christ by washing one another’s feet—by serving one another, especially those who are outsiders in our society.”²⁷

This relational understanding of worship is a powerful reminder of the relational nature of the Trinity whereby Father, Son, and Spirit are in relationship with each other. In reflecting upon the Trinity, Gary Tyra declares, “God desires humans to experience the life-giving community (divine dance) that is at the heart of the Trinity.”²⁸ As we worship this relational God, we as the church are drawn into this divine Trinitarian dance through which we are in relationship with God and each other. In serving each other in worship,

25. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

26. Alexis D. Abernethy, “Introduction: Spiritual Experience, Worship, and Transformation,” in *Worship That Changes Lives: Multidisciplinary and Congregational Perspectives on Spiritual Transformation*, ed. Alexis D. Abernethy (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 16.

27. Brock, *Disability*, 121.

28. Gary Tyra, *The Holy Spirit in Mission: Prophetic Speech and Action in Christian Witness* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), Kindle edition, introduction.

we are participating in actions that are life-giving, but we are also inviting others to come and join in with the dance.

This act of Christian worship is about giving God worth while immersing ourselves in the story of God and participating in acts of service to God and each other. The format in which this occurs in many Christian traditions is called *liturgy*. The historical root of this word can aid in unpacking its meaning and its significance for congregations. Duck says, “The Greek *leitourgía*, [is] composed from words for work (*érgon*) and people (*laós*). In ancient Greece, a liturgy was a public work performed to benefit the city or state. In recent decades, church leaders and theologians have stressed this derivation of “liturgy,” since it points to worship as the work of the whole people of God.”²⁹ Liturgy is not one person performing acts of worship on behalf of the congregation. It is the work of all the people. Don Saliers echoes his agreement. “Liturgy is not something done *to* the congregation, but something done *by* the whole assembly with certain persons leading, prompting, and evoking.”³⁰ Paul captures this when writing to the Corinthians, highlighting the importance of participation in worship. “What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up” (1 Cor 14:26 NRSV). Paul speaks of corporate participation with each person having a role to play and something to contribute.³¹

29. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

30. Don E. Saliers, “Toward a Spirituality of Inclusiveness,” in *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice*, eds. Nancy L. Eiesland and Don E. Saliers (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 21.

31. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 2.

Saliers builds upon this basic understanding of liturgy by teasing it out and highlighting three understandings, which lends to a richer and fuller picture. First, Saliers speaks of liturgy from a human perspective. Liturgy involves “speaking, touching, singing, and acting in God’s name.”³² Each of these actions are how we, as people, connect with God and with each other as we gather for worship. They are everyday actions embedded within all cultures. Saliers then says that liturgy is “the glorification of God and the sanctification (or the rendering holy) of all things.”³³ As we worship, we acknowledge the holiness of God, but we also encounter what that means for our own lives. “Authentic liturgy sanctifies and reveals the dignity and sanctity of not only what it is to be human but more fully of everything that is creaturely.”³⁴ Finally, he highlights liturgy as “the ongoing embodied word, work, and prayer of Jesus Christ in and through his body in the world.”³⁵ Therefore, liturgy is grounded in our physical bodies, and it is through our bodies that Jesus continues to work in the world.

The words of Clayton J. Schmit continue to expand this picture of liturgy by focusing on the significance of the word *work*. He highlights the dynamism that is behind the word by stating, “Work is active; it is about going from one place to another, moving something, or moving a project along.”³⁶ Liturgy is active. There is no place for passivity

32. Saliers, “Toward,” 21.

33. Saliers, “Toward,” 22.

34. Saliers, “Toward,” 22.

35. Saliers, “Toward,” 23.

36. Clayton J. Schmit, “Worship as a Locus for Transformation,” in *Worship That Changes Lives: Multidisciplinary and Congregational Perspectives on Spiritual Transformation*, ed. Alexis D. Abernethy (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 31.

in worship. Worship should not be facilitated in such a way that there is a performer and an audience. The congregation, the people, are to be actively involved.

Understanding the different interpretations of liturgy helps us to grasp hold of a more complete picture of worship. It also aids us in thinking about what participatory worship might look like within a congregation. However, there can be a reaction against the use of the word “liturgy,” particularly in evangelical traditions. David Hogue articulates his understanding of liturgy as he grew up: “We saw ritual as hollow and empty, as repetitive recitations from people who read or quoted from rote memory, paying little attention to the meaning of the words. Seldom if ever were people really affected or changed by what happened in these ritual practices, as far as we could tell.”³⁷ This idea of liturgy and ritual may, for some people, conjure up thoughts of dry and repetitious worship devoid of emotion. However, every church follows some form of liturgy whether it is formally called liturgy or not. These patterns of worship may differ from one denomination to the next, but on closer examination, the patterns will be there. O’Brien helpfully points out that “the style may vary from different Christian traditions, but every form of liturgy tells ‘the same story.’”³⁸ In fact, some of the worship patterns used today to *tell the story* can be traced back throughout history.

Historical Patterns

An early example of patterns of liturgy can be found around 150 CE in Rome with Justin Martyr. “The basic order (*ordo*) of Western Christian worship had emerged in

37. David A. Hogue, *Remembering the Future, Imagining the Past* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 116.

38. O’Brien, *Christian Worship*, 16.

Justin's second-century gathering: gathering; reading and interpretation of Scripture; prayers of the people; Eucharist; and [Dismissal] with gifts sent by the deacons to those who could not attend."³⁹ This order of liturgy became more complex in the fourth and fifth centuries. First, the places for worship gatherings increased in size. Second, the status of the clergy was elevated, which led to the co-opting of royal traditions such as processing into the church. All of this added to the length of the liturgy.⁴⁰ According to Duck, the liturgy was structured as follows:

- Extended gathering: greeting;
- At least two Scripture readings, with a Psalm;
- Sermon;
- Offering of gifts;
- Eucharist (with intercessions inserted);
- Blessing from the bishop; [and]
- Deacon charges the people to go in peace.⁴¹

Both of these liturgical structures—the pattern described by Justin Martyr and the one detailed by Duck—would be recognizable in many churches today.

While the structure may not have significantly changed over the previous hundreds of years, our understanding of liturgy has. This is certainly true in my faith tradition. There has been a move away from the work of the people, or in my context, the understanding of the priesthood of all believers, and a move toward the

39. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 4.

40. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 4.

41. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 4.

professionalization of the clergy. Officers receive a wage; they are deemed professionals, and so the work of corporate worship belongs to them. This can result in two diminished ideas about corporate worship. One is that the officer feels the full responsibility of planning and leading worship and will not allow others to participate. The second is that the congregation will not participate because they do not see this as their role. There is nothing corporate about either of these positions. This poor understanding of corporate worship conflicts with liturgy being the work of the people and has significant implications for the church, particularly when considering members of the congregation who live with disabilities. If worship is turned into a professional production, where a small number of qualified or gifted people participate, it sends a message to the rest of the congregation about what is expected in worship, or at the worst extreme, what is acceptable to God because we are acknowledging and praising the giftedness of some. The people who fail to reach these lofty heights are not asked to participate for fear that the standard of worship will slip. This, however, contrasts sharply with Paul's writings in 1 Corinthians.

Worship and the Body of Christ

In *Disability: Living into the Diversity of Christ's Body*, Brock compares the Corinthian church to churches today. He speaks of the church in Corinth as a group of people bickering over who was the most gifted and the most spiritual. "The Corinthian church was divided among groups that each wanted to make one or the other natural skill the premier spiritual gift."⁴² He compares this stance to congregational attitudes today saying, "The pastor is assuming he is the most mature spiritually; the worship leader is

42. Brock, *Disability*, 122.

the closest to God; the board knows what's best—because they know about money, they know how to best manage the church's finances. Paul was writing to a church like that, a church like us, more often than not."⁴³ Brock further comments that Paul describes the church as a body to challenge the bickering in Corinth. 1 Cor 12:14–21 says:

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

Paul confronts the Corinthian church by declaring that "togetherness depends on genuinely different people being unified."⁴⁴ Worship is a corporate act that is the work of the people, it needs to include *all* people, not just the people deemed talented in our eyes. God has arranged the body so that everyone has a place and everyone has something to contribute. As Volf asserts:

The Spirit does not erase bodily inscribed differences but allows access into the one body of Christ to the people with such differences on the same terms. What the Spirit does erase (or at least loosen) is a stable and socially constructed correlation between difference and social roles. The gifts of the Spirit are given irrespective of such differences.⁴⁵

Duck embraces this understanding and acknowledges that worship is genuinely the work of all the people of God.

43. Brock, *Disability*, 122.

44. Brock, *Disability*, 124.

45. Volf, *Exclusion*, 48.

Worship supports local church vitality when leaders seek to make worship respectful and meaningful to all who gather, whatever their gender or sexual orientation, whatever their age or ability, whatever their ethnic or national background. Respect is shown through words that do not demean or exclude and through varied means of participation, through seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, and through listening and speaking, moving and remaining silent, singing and clapping. . . . Worship is the work of the *laos*, the whole people of God.⁴⁶

Stanley Hauerwas also agrees that it is essential to embrace differences in worship.

As we learn to view people with differences or disabilities as fellow members in the body of Christ, we can genuinely embrace others. “We can take the time to walk slowly together to the communion table when one of our own does not walk well or not at all. We can take the time to design our places of gathering so that they are open to many who would otherwise not be able to be there.”⁴⁷ In other words, we can accommodate the needs of others when we begin to see each other as members of the body. However, I believe that Hauerwas does not take this far enough.

Rather than making allowances or accommodations for people with disabilities, we should be actively working toward full participation, where each person with a disability can receive and contribute to the worshipping community with the whole of their being. Additionally, if liturgy is truly the work of the people, this must mean *all* the people and not just some. Schmit asserts, “Something happens to people when they worship. They are brought into an encounter with their Creator. They experience a range of more or less material connections with Jesus Christ.”⁴⁸

46. Duck, *Worship*, introduction.

47. Hauerwas, “The Church,” 61.

48. Schmit, “Worship,” 27.

This encounter, this connection with Jesus, is not reserved for a particular group of people; rather, the whole church is drawn into this experience together.

However, Bethany McKinney Fox warns that we must continually remind ourselves of why we seek to include people with disabilities. She emphatically states,

When we forget the connection between what we do and why we do it, we can begin to talk about accommodating the needs of people with disabilities as an “honorable” act instead of a faithful one. While it certainly can be honorable for people to welcome one another, it is much more than that. When a practice is merely honorable, it can be abandoned when it conflicts with another honorable practice.⁴⁹

The key to the *why* must be love—love for God and love for others.

When our understanding of the corporate act of worship is grounded in love, our efforts to create opportunities for full participation for people living with disabilities go beyond accommodating the needs of a person to acknowledging the contribution that each member of the body of Christ is called to make. When we take the mindset of providing accommodations for people, we are making value judgments on what we think people can contribute. “Receiving those gifts [of the Spirit] depends on our giving up the game of asking who has gifts and who does not. Everyone has gifts. And the Spirit,” Brock asserts, “wants to build up the church through every person. We miss this when we assume that only those who are obviously competent and productive are gifted.”⁵⁰

When we single out and isolate different parts of the body, the church misses out on receiving the very gifts that God has given to bless the church. When people with disabilities are overlooked or deemed unable to contribute, it is not just the person living

49. Bethany McKinney Fox, *Disability and the Way of Jesus: Holistic Healing in the Gospels and the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 186.

50. Brock, *Disability*, 129.

with a disability that misses out; we, as the body of Christ, are missing out as well. We are missing out on encountering the *imago Dei* in others and on receiving the gifts that God has given to build up the church. “Inspired by the Spirit, Christians with disabilities, like children and all other members, bring diverse gifts to contribute to worship. Lest we be deprived of the presence and gifts of these members of the body of Christ, the church must seek to make worship accessible to all.”⁵¹ Duck continues by challenging Christian leaders to draw out the giftedness of each member of the church. She says, “Certainly every gift known to the church is found among people with disabilities, to be discovered, affirmed, and enhanced. Beyond giving access to worship, the church must discern all members’ gifts, rather than focusing on what they cannot do.”⁵²

The Incarnation and Embodiment

The body of Christ is undoubtedly a helpful image that captures full participation for people with disabilities. However, to help unpack the significance of being part of the body of Christ, a person must understand what it means to be embodied. One needs to grasp the importance of our bodies to begin to wrestle with what it means to belong together as a body. The incarnation can help here.⁵³ In *Liturgy of the Ordinary*, Tish Warren says,

Christians are often accused of two wrong-headed views of the body. One is that we ignore the body in favor of a disembodied, spirits-floating-on-clouds spirituality. The other is that we are obsessed with bodies, focusing all our attention on policing sexual conduct and denigrating the body as a

51. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 2.

52. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 2.

53. The author acknowledges that the incarnation is a large area of significant theological thought. There are countless volumes that contain discourse on this vast topic. I do not have the capacity to delve into this vastness in a meaningful way. Therefore, I have chosen to narrow the exploration of the incarnation to embodiment, as I believe this has the most significance for the project.

dirty source of evil. In certain communities at certain moments in history these accusations may have been legitimate. But the Christianity we find in Scripture values and honors the body.⁵⁴

We need only turn to Gen 1:31 to see that on the sixth day, when God had finished creating, God declared creation “very good.” Humanity, our bodies, are part of that declaration of goodness. There was no asterisk that deemed our bodies to be separate from this goodness. The incarnation is a confirmation of this, as Jesus himself willingly embraced the beauty and fragility of the human body. Warren echoes this affirmation. “Christianity is a thoroughly embodied faith. We believe in the incarnation—Christ came in a body.”⁵⁵ It is through this physical body of Jesus that God participated in the act of salvation.⁵⁶

Through our bodies, we experience our world and we experience God. “Faith and wholeness are embodied experiences. We cannot relegate them to the mind/brain or even to the spirit alone. They are grounded in our physical bodies as well. Our thoughts and feelings, our memories and imagination have their homes in neurons, muscles, and bones.”⁵⁷ The incarnation helps us see that our bodies cannot be separated from our experience of God or worship.

Moreover, embracing our bodies allows us to consider our bodies as instruments of worship. However, it is also essential for us to acknowledge that our bodies are all

54. Tish Harrison Warren, *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 38.

55. Warren, *Liturgy*, 38.

56. Craig D. Erickson, *Participating in Worship: History, Theory, and Practice* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 149.

57. Hogue, *Remembering*, 133.

different—different shapes and sizes with varying abilities. Some bodies can do things that others cannot. Our individual experiences of being embodied will be different, and thus, how we experience God through our bodies will be different. Because of this, we need to pay attention to how we provide opportunities for people to worship. Hogue reminds us that “life, vitality, and spirit are grounded in our bodies. In fact, through our bodies we touch, taste, and feel in ways that form the basis for our experience of God. While we are often reminded of the different facets of self, body, mind, and spirit, more often we neglect their deep interconnectedness.”⁵⁸

So often in the church, we restrict our worship experience to the brain. We preach and teach, read Scripture, and expect thoughtful responses from the congregation. We speak of *making a decision for Jesus*. When we focus so heavily on our brains, we can neglect the rest of our bodies. Conversely, when we acknowledge our bodies, we can begin to pay attention to other ways of connecting with God and including people who have impairments to their brains because of intellectual disabilities. We each have a part to play in the body of Christ, just as our physical bodies have a part to play in worship. As a result, “we learn how our bodies are sites of worship, not as an abstract idea, but through the practice of worshipping *with our bodies*.”⁵⁹

Participation

In chapter 1, I stated that the term *participation* was preferable to that of *inclusion*. However, this speaks to more than a choice of one word over another. There is theological significance in using the term *participation*. Erickson highlights that the verb

58. Hogue, *Remembering*, 134.

59. Warren, *Liturgy*, 42.

koinōneō means “to participate in” and “is used to describe the incarnation as a divine partaking of human nature, as Christ’s sharing in the flesh and blood of human beings.”⁶⁰ He continues by stating that the noun *koinōnia* “means ‘participation’ in the sense of an intimate association, fellowship, or communion.”⁶¹ Therefore, as Christians, we not only participate in worship as a physical act or a human act, but we also participate in the mystery of God. As we participate together in worship, we participate with and in Christ. “The vertical dimension of participation in Christ creates the horizontal *koinōnia* that unites Christians.”⁶² It is as we worship that we are formed into Christ’s body.

This desire for full participation for people in worship is nothing new. Throughout the church’s history, there are countless examples of people calling for change to enable others to participate fully in worship. As stated at the beginning of the chapter, Peter wrestled with what it meant to include Gentiles in worship. In Acts 10:45, he witnesses Gentiles receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then Peter is required to explain what is going on to the Jewish people criticizing him for allowing outsiders to be baptized and welcomed as followers of Jesus. Peter explains the vision that he experienced of the sheet and food laid before him and how God called him to embrace people considered outsiders (Acts 11:1–18). As others heard Peter’s message, they too began to embrace the Gentiles and praise God.

There are also examples of full participation from the early days of my faith tradition. Before William Booth founded The Salvation Army in the East End of London

60. Erickson, *Participating*, 184.

61. Erickson, *Participating*, 184.

62. Erickson, *Participating*, 185.

in 1865, he was a member of the Methodist church. Booth believed strongly in John Wesley's methods and sought to assist people who were poor.⁶³ Yet Booth observed that the poor were not attending church, so he invited them in.

The chapel's outer door suddenly shattered open, engulfing a white scarf of fog. In its wake came a shuffling shabby contingent of men and women, wilting nervously under the stony stares of mill-managers, shopkeepers, and their well-dressed wives. In the rear, afire with zeal, marched "Wilful Will" Booth, cannily blocking the efforts of the more reluctant to turn back. To his dismay the Rev. Dunn saw the young Booth was actually ushering his charges, none of whose clothes would have raised five shillings in his own pawn shop, into the very best seats; pew holders' seats, facing the pulpit, whose occupants piled the collection-plates with glinting silver.⁶⁴

After this outrageous display, Booth was accosted by the church deacons, who outlined his inappropriate actions. The poor were welcome at church, but they were not to be visible. They needed to enter through the side door and sit behind screens where they could not see and could not be seen.⁶⁵ This incident had a significant impact on Booth. It formed his ministry as a lay preacher in London with the Methodist church, where he insisted on preaching outdoors to enable the people who were poor or who felt unwelcome in the church to have an opportunity to hear the gospel.⁶⁶ Booth broke with the traditional methods of corporate worship to enable people to participate.

63. David Malcolm Bennett, *The General: William Booth, Volume 1: The Evangelist* (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2003), 109.

64. Richard Collier, *The General Next to God: The Story of William Booth and The Salvation Army* (London: Collins, 1965), 31.

65. Collier, *The General*, 32.

66. Victor A. Shepherd, *Mercy Immense and Free: Essays on Wesley and Wesleyan Theology* (Toronto: Clements Academic, 2010), 197.

Another example of The Salvation Army's non-traditional participation involved singing. William Booth was quite clever and constantly sought new ways to engage with people. One way he did this was by organizing the adaptation of some popular songs of the day. This would involve a Salvationist writing new words to popular tunes. People were then able to join in worship quite quickly. Booth said, "I rather enjoy robbing the devil of his choice tunes, and, after his subjects themselves, music is about the best commodity he possesses. It is like taking the enemy's guns and turning them against him."⁶⁷ One of the famous tunes that was co-opted for this purpose was a song called "Champagne Charlie."⁶⁸ William Baugh rewrote the lyrics, and the song became "Bless His Name, He Sets Me Free."⁶⁹ The original song "was so well known particularly in the South of England, it was heartily taken up by the crowd, and especially by the unsaved in the gallery."⁷⁰ Not only were people able to participate in the singing because of this technique, but they were also singing and remembering the new words which pointed to salvation. After this event, Booth was heard to remark, "I never heard anything more sacred."⁷¹

67. Gordon Cox, *The Musical Salvationist: The World of Richard Slater (1854–1939) "Father of Salvation Army Music"* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2011), 26.

68. This was a popular song written by George Leybourne and Alfred Lee in 1866.

69. Lauren Martin, "Stories of Inspiration Behind the Songs," Others, published 2019, <https://others.org.au/army-archives/stories-of-inspiration-behind-the-songs/>.

70. Cox, *The Musical*, 27.

71. Cox, *The Musical*, 27.

Theological and Theoretical Frameworks and Models

While these historical accounts can help shape a greater appreciation of participation, the application in worship for people with disabilities can be challenging. Therefore, the theological and theoretical frameworks that shape this project intervention are significant as they provide lenses to view and consider the act of worship and how people engage. Contemplating worship using these frameworks may help people to think more broadly about the practice of worship. I will use these frameworks to guide the intervention and provide a common language for discussing participatory worship. Additionally, there are two models of disability that must enter into the conversation here because they highlight the narratives in society that influence how people think about disability. Both, separately as well as together, are critical to the conversation because they help to develop a greater awareness of worship and how people participate within that worship. The discussion will begin first by examining the two models of disability.

The Medical Model of Disability

Disability is complex to say the least. There are three general models of disability used today that help unpack how disability can be understood.⁷² However, I will be addressing the two that are most widely known—medical and social. Both models have significant implications for people who live with disabilities.

The first model of disability is the most common: the medical model. This model states that disability is a medical problem. It starts with the premise that something is fundamentally *wrong* with a person. This model encourages society to view someone

72. The three models are the medical model, the social model, and the charity model. Mobility International USA, “Models of Disability: An Overview,” accessed 26 August 2022, <https://www.miusa.org/resource/ripsheet/disabilitymodels/>.

with a disability as sitting outside the norm. In other words, they are deemed *abnormal*. The medical model believes that something needs to be done to *fix* the problem or perceived deficit. When this model is used as a lens to understand disability, people are viewed as lacking something and are perceived as aberrant. Therefore, society views disability as a burden on both family units and society as a whole. This is particularly true if a disability is permanent and cannot be *fixed*. Disability is seen as a “tragedy.”⁷³

The Social Model of Disability

Another common model of disability, and the second one that I will address here, is the social model. This model takes the view that disability is a social construct while also acknowledging that disability often results in significant impairments for people. “However, it does challenge the physical, attitudinal, communication, and social environment to accommodate impairment as an expected incident of human diversity.”⁷⁴ The social model seeks to challenge the embedded cultural bias held by society while embracing difference and diversity. This model maintains that people with disabilities have value and the right to participate fully in society. It is the attitudes and systemic failures within a society to accommodate the needs of people that exacerbate a person’s disability.⁷⁵

Unfortunately, the medical model is often the common narrative in disability discourse. Equally unfortunate, the outworking of the medical model in society and the

73. Disability Awareness, *The Social Model of Disability*, accessed 30 August 2021, <http://disabilityawareness.com.au/elearning/disability-awareness>.

74. Disability Awareness, *The Social Model*.

75. For example, a person may be unable to walk and thus uses a wheelchair. It is not the disability that keeps a person from being unable to enter a building; it is the fact that the building is inaccessible because of the stairs at the entrance. This is a social issue that causes the inaccessibility, not the disability causing the inaccessibility. Disability Awareness, *The Social Model*.

church is unhelpful to people with disabilities. Rather than acknowledging personhood by embracing differences and addressing barriers, whether physical or attitudinal, people have been conditioned to focus on a disability. This focus results in a response of pity which is directed toward people who live with disabilities and their families that provide care.

Conversely, the social model calls us to see the barriers that are in place and once they have been discovered, to do something about removing them. This can create discomfort as people who are currently non-disabled may need to give up something to enable a barrier to be removed for a person with a disability. For the church, it is more than removing the church steps so someone can enter a building. We also need to acknowledge the barriers that exist for people with disabilities in worship. To do this, there needs to be an understanding of (1) worship, as a whole, as well as the individual acts of worship, and (2) what it looks like to invite people to participate fully within worship.

Five Theological Emphases of Worship

While this project intervention centers around disability, this theological framework of worship must be examined in order to more clearly recognize the intersectionality between the two, both in general and as it applies to The Salvation Army. The framework enables one to explore the theology that sits behind the act of worship. If we, as the Mooroolbark Salvation Army, can articulate the frameworks that we are using in worship, we can consider more carefully how we are inviting people with disabilities to participate. In *Worship for the Whole People of God*, Ruth Duck outlines

five different emphases of worship: (1) worship as ritual, (2) worship as revelation, (3) worship as response to God, (4) worship as relationship, and (5) worship as rehearsal. It is important to consider that while we may focus more on some of these emphases of worship, a holistic theology and understanding of worship will “include all these dimensions.”⁷⁶

In worship as ritual, Duck explores the idea that rituals are an essential part of life. As people, we are surrounded by rituals from birth through death. Therefore, it should be no surprise that rituals are vital for Christian worship. Additionally, it is the rituals that contribute to forming our “Christian identity.”⁷⁷ Duck says, “religious rituals help to create and maintain cohesive communities, and they have a role in healing life’s sorrows and integrating life’s experiences.”⁷⁸ For The Salvation Army, this framework provides some challenges as we often do not identify the elements in worship as ritual. However, a weekly ritual that we do enact is the call to worship where the congregation is invited to enter into worship. Naming these rituals will be important in the intervention so we can consider how ritual is used to form our identity and participation.

The second theme of worship as revelation places an emphasis on God revealing God’s self to us in worship. Different faith traditions will perceive this element of revelation in different ways. The sacraments would be a common example of revelation in many denominations.⁷⁹ The Salvation Army identifies Scripture as central to worship,

76. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

77. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

78. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

79. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

and we would consider this as one of the main ways that God reveals God's self in worship. Therefore, the Scripture reading and the sermon are of great importance within the worship event.

Worship as response is the next part of this theological framework. Duck writes about Evelyn Underhill, an Anglican who wrote a great deal about worship and who defines worship as "the response of creature to Creator."⁸⁰ When we understand worship from this angle, worship is about our response to everything "God has done, is doing, and will do."⁸¹ This emphasis provides space for creativity and personality as people seek to respond in worship. This is an important part of the framework within The Salvation Army. As the Scriptures reveal God in worship, people are invited to respond. The Salvation Army always has an altar call or response time after the sermon to create the space for response. It is as we respond to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that we grow in grace and holiness.

Within The Salvation Army, worship as relationship ties in with the previous two theological frames where we identify and respond to God's revelation through Scripture. "Worship as relationship brings together God's revelation with our human response."⁸² The liturgical elements in worship, the Scriptures, the sermon, and the songs, reveal God, and we respond to God by expressing our love and devotion through worship.⁸³ "Worship is not complete" unless "the church responds in faith and love."⁸⁴

80. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

81. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

82. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

83. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

84. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

The final emphasis is worship as rehearsal. This does not mean that what we do in church is just practice. This view sees worship as preparing the church to go out into the world and live out “love, justice, and peace.”⁸⁵ Some of the things that would be emphasized in a church that holds this understanding is that worship “would be honest about life within the congregation’s context—naming its joy and suffering, its challenges and resources. It would highlight the ethical dimension of worship not only through prophetic preaching, but also through justice and hospitable practices among the congregation.”⁸⁶ As an activist church, The Salvation Army aligns most strongly with this theological frame, as part of the act of worship is seen as preparing us for mission in the world.

This theological framework provides a lens through which worship can be examined. It helpfully allows one to consider the different ways that we view God’s role and our role in worship. It is as we understand more fully what we are doing in worship that we can reflect upon the opportunities for participation.

Six Types of Participation

While the theological emphases of worship are helpful, it is also essential to consider the ways in which people participate. The six types of participation form a theoretical framework that can aid in this exploration. If we do not have a fundamental understanding of how people participate in worship, it will be challenging to invite people with intellectual disabilities to participate fully. Craig Erickson in *Participating in*

85. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

86. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

Worship states, “Christian worship is to be participatory worship.”⁸⁷ He endeavors to think through the different ways people are asked to participate in worship and has developed six types or categories of participation: (1) spontaneous involvement, (2) silent engagement, (3) interiorized verbal participation, (4) prophetic verbal participation, (5) lay leadership, and (6) multisensate participation. The aim is that congregations would have elements of each of these types and would be able to invite people into a genuinely participatory worship experience. The following section will briefly explore each of the types.

The first is spontaneous involvement, and there are several ways in which this type can be used in worship. The most familiar form of involvement would be through spontaneous prayer, where an opportunity is provided for the congregation to articulate their prayers.⁸⁸ Other forms of spontaneity in worship could be spontaneous singing, the unexpected response from the congregation to the word being preached, speaking in tongues, or sharing a word of knowledge.⁸⁹ The purpose of spontaneous participation is “not to make worship less formal, more friendly, or more ‘folksy.’ . . . The purpose of spontaneity is a very specific one: the edification of the church, the building up of Christ’s body.”⁹⁰

Silent engagement, the second type, may be thought of as moments of silence in worship. However, Erickson highlights that it is much more than just the absence of

87. Erickson, *Participating*, 11.

88. Erickson, *Participating*, 28.

89. Erickson, *Participating*, 26–32.

90. Erickson, *Participating*, 36–37.

noise. “Liturgical silence provides a context, a frame for the hearing of God’s word.”⁹¹

There are multiple ways for a congregation to participate in silence (e.g., silent preparation, prayer, confession, communion, listening, and silent adoration).⁹² “Liturgical silence is not a void or a gap. It is a creative and pregnant silence, from which issues forth the wisdom of God. . . . [It] is a very active form of liturgical participation, in that through it one is engaged by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.”⁹³

Interiorized verbal participation responds to “God’s command to remember.”⁹⁴ As people worship, they remember what God has done, and therefore, they can participate in the “mystery of God who is eternally present.”⁹⁵ This type of participation uses liturgical practices known intrinsically by the congregation. It could be in the form of prayers or creeds that the congregation recites together. People can participate by singing well-known songs that the congregation would know by heart.⁹⁶ It can also be liturgical responses to the reading of the Word or corporate responses in prayer.⁹⁷

The next type of participation is prophetic verbal participation. This is “the gift of proclaiming God’s unchanging word in an improvisational mode, *so that it might be recognized anew.*”⁹⁸ Therefore, this form of participation encompasses a range of

91. Erickson, *Participating*, 40.

92. Erickson, *Participating*, 41–50.

93. Erickson, *Participating*, 52.

94. Erickson, *Participating*, 55.

95. Erickson, *Participating*, 56.

96. Erickson, *Participating*, 56.

97. Erickson, *Participating*, 61.

98. Erickson, *Participating*, 104.

liturgical practices, such as preaching and liturgical forms of prayer.⁹⁹ Ultimately, this type of participation “expresses the identity of the church as a prophetic community, filled with new wine, whose members are called to claim and proclaim the gospel in a personal way.”¹⁰⁰ In The Salvation Army, the testimony time in worship represents this form of participation as people are encouraged to publicly bear witness to God at work in their lives.

Lay leadership is participation by people who are not ordained clergy. It stems from the understanding of the priesthood of all believers, in which everyone can contribute to worship.¹⁰¹ “The leadership of laypersons in worship is an expression of the community’s priesthood. Leadership is a representative act in behalf of the universal priesthood of the church, one that reminds the church of what it is: a royal priesthood.”¹⁰² Through the welcoming of participation by lay leadership, there is an opportunity for a greater expanse of participation within worship.

The final type of participation that Erickson highlights is multisensate participation. This type of participation is modeled on the incarnation. “The God who chose to communicate to human beings through human flesh continues to approach humanity through sensible things.”¹⁰³ The body is therefore viewed as a significant element in participatory worship. This frame of participation explores the different ways

99. Erickson, *Participating*, 105.

100. Erickson, *Participating*, 125.

101. Erickson, *Participating*, 127–28.

102. Erickson, *Participating*, 129.

103. Erickson, *Participating*, 149.

the body engages in worship, from gestures and postures to considering the five senses in worship.¹⁰⁴

We must understand how we invite people to participate in worship, particularly when seeking ways to include people with intellectual disabilities. While not exhaustive, Erickson's forms of participation provide a basic framework to think about how and what we are asking people to do. It also enables one to look at worship through a participatory lens to assess the types of participation used in worship within a congregation and whether one dominates to the detriment of the other types.

Application of Theological and Theoretical Perspectives

Up until this point, this chapter has considered worship and the importance of liturgy as the work of the people. It has also explored theology that is significant to full participation such as the church as the body of Christ. The two most prevalent models of disability have been examined as well as the five theological emphases of worship as presented by Duck. As one considers the theological constructs that attend to full participation by people living with disabilities, one must also address the theoretical framework that impacts this discussion (i.e., Erickson's types of participation). However, the guiding constructs do not end there. This section will briefly introduce a model of theological reflection that will be used as a tool for further discussion throughout the following chapters.

In their book *Talking About God in Practice*, Helen Cameron et al. outline a methodology for theological reflection called "the Four Voices of Theology."¹⁰⁵ This

104. Erickson, *Participating*, 152–55.

105. Helen Cameron et al., *Talking about God: Theological Action Research* (London: SCM, 2010), 2.

model uses four key areas or voices that dialogue with each other to gauge how theology is at work in a given context. The four voices in this model are as follows (see Figure 1): (1) normative, (2) formal, (3) espoused, and (4) operant.

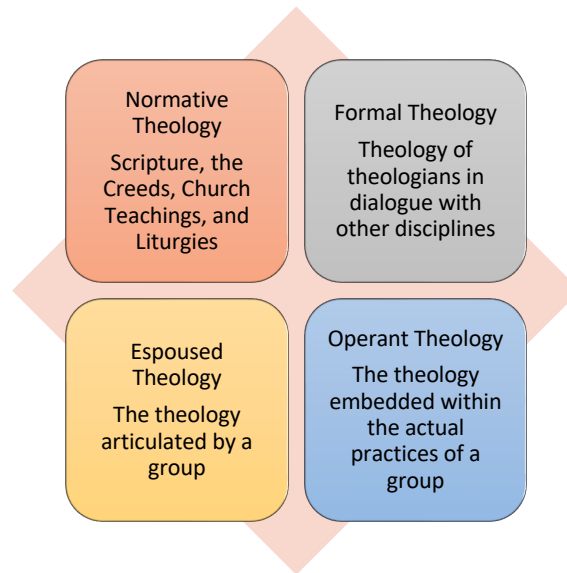


Figure 1. The Four Voices of Theology

This model of theological reflection has been selected for this project as it enables a robust discussion about the intersection or lack of intersection between what we believe, what we say or think we believe, and what we actually do. It is possible to implement a theologically sound change within a church context that, when the outworking of that change is examined, has unhelpful implications for people within the congregation. This model will provide a way to check that theology within this project is aligning with praxis. It will also draw out the potential gaps in our theology and praxis that need further exploration. The following section will briefly outline the four voices of theology.

Normative theology is the first voice that incorporates an exploration of Scripture, the creeds, church teaching, liturgies, or whatever the group believes is “theological authority.”¹⁰⁶ Scripture is central to Salvationist identity and plays a significant role in the development of our normative theology. The first Article of Faith of The Salvation Army says, “We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.”¹⁰⁷ Church history, or more specifically, Salvationist history, is also an influential voice in forming Salvationist identity.¹⁰⁸ However, normative theology is not the only voice in the conversation. Formal theology also has a voice.

Formal theology has been explored in this chapter as we have looked at the theology underpinning this project such as liturgy as the work of the people. While the language of liturgy may be foreign to the people in my congregation, there would be an understanding of the priesthood of all believers, in which everyone has something to contribute. People would also have a sense of what they are doing when they come to worship. Another theological influence identified is Wesleyan thought. William Booth, was strongly influenced by Wesley and thus, The Salvation Army reflects that influence through Booth.¹⁰⁹

106. Cameron et al., *Talking*, 53–54.

107. The Salvation Army, *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 2010), xv.

108. Twenty years ago, the liturgical practice of the Holiness and the Salvation meetings would have been a formative part of our normative theology. Most Salvation Army corps around the world would have held a Holiness meeting, which was the morning church gathering, and a Salvation meeting, which was the evening church gathering. The Salvation meeting has slowly been disappearing in Australia as the church has been in decline.

109. A simple demonstration of this is a comparison between the eleven articles of faith of The Salvation Army and the twenty-five Articles of Religion penned by Wesley. There are significant similarities between the two. For the twenty-five articles, see Stephen D. Long and Andrew Kinsey,

However, theology is greater than the normative and formal understandings. “Christian practices are themselves bearers of an embodied theology,” and therefore, these practices also have a voice or a place within this model of theological reflection.¹¹⁰ Within the four voices model, the normative and formal theological voices can challenge or strengthen the espoused and operant theologies, while the espoused and operant theological voices, as soon will be discussed, have the capacity to challenge and question the normative and formal theology.¹¹¹

Espoused theology is the theological understanding that a group of believers can articulate. In other words, it is what people say they believe. However, espoused theology does not just materialize. It can be drawn from multiple sources such as “Scripture, or from an aspect of church tradition, or liturgy, or from the influence of a theological movement, such as liberation theology.”¹¹² Sometimes, there may be a disconnect for a group between what they say they believe and what they do.¹¹³

Lastly, operant theology can be discovered by observing what a group does. “The faith-carrying words and actions of believers embody an ‘operant’ theology.”¹¹⁴ The question to ask is what can be ascertained about the beliefs of a group from their behaviors and actions. This is operant theology.

Keeping the Faith: An Ecumenical Commentary on the Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith in the Wesleyan Tradition (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012).

110. Cameron et al., *Talking*, 56.

111. Cameron et al., *Talking*, 56.

112. Cameron et al., *Talking*, 53.

113. Cameron et al., *Talking*, 53.

114. Cameron et al., *Talking*, 14.

While a model such as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral may fit comfortably within my own theological tradition, it does not explicitly explore the potential disconnect between theory and practice. It also relies heavily on an intellectual process where *reason* is considered an essential part of theological reflection thus dismissing the contribution that people with intellectual disabilities can make to the process of theological reflection. It is important that the model of reflection used in this project is not exclusive but allows for the experience of people with disabilities to be recognized. People with intellectual disabilities live out their faith in the world, and there is an opportunity to observe and reflect upon their espoused and operant theology. Brian Zahnd makes the following statement that reinforces this idea: “Theology is an activity of the mind, but the ‘experience’ of God belongs to the heart. The less intelligent and less educated are at no disadvantage in experiencing God. The potential to know and experience God is truly egalitarian.”¹¹⁵ The four voices model normalizes and encourages the contribution of all voices, including people with disabilities.

The introduction of the theological voices in addition to the theological and theoretical frameworks has set the stage for a better understanding of the possible gap that exists between espoused theology and operant theology when it comes to full participation in worship for people with disabilities. Moreover, “by naming and recognizing the theological connections across the four voices, the theological embodiment at the operant level in particular will be renewed as its own authentic message comes to light and is more clearly understood by those living it out.”¹¹⁶ While

115. Brian Zahnd, *When Everything's on Fire: Faith Forged from the Ashes* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 102.

116. Cameron et al., *Talking*, 58.

the four voices model is a useful tool for theological reflection, Cameron reminds us, “we must be clear that these four voices are not discrete, separate from one another; each voice is never simple. We can never hear one voice without there being echoes of the other three.”¹¹⁷

Conclusion

Worship is a fundamental practice that shapes the people of God. This worship act should be the work of all people. However, often people with disabilities are left on the margins of the church and are not invited to participate fully in worship. The understanding of disability as a medical problem can clash with and override our theology when people are objects of pity rather than embraced as full and active participants in the life of the church. The incarnation, however, paints a picture of a God who embraces the frailty of being human, and as Christians, we are invited to rediscover the beauty and diversity of humanity that God called *good*. As we embrace this diversity in the body of Christ, we can intentionally lean into a space where we can invite people with disabilities to fully participate in worship. The next chapter will explore the project that the practices development group undertook to produce a series of liturgies that seek to enable people with intellectual disabilities to engage in worship.

117. Cameron et al., *Talking*, 54.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 1 introduced the problem at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army and the purpose of this project, noting that people with intellectual disabilities have fewer opportunities to participate in corporate worship. I also developed a narrative highlighting the unusual growth of people attending the corps who have a lived experience of disability. Chapter 2 explored the theological and theoretical constructs that apply to this project intervention and ministry context. It also introduced a model of theological reflection that will enable discussion between the project's themes and the practicalities of full participation. The following chapter will outline the methodology used to develop the twelve liturgies that aim to foster full participation in worship for people with intellectual disabilities.

Qualitative Research

This project thesis used qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is “grounded in the social world of experience and seeks to make sense of lived experience.”¹ According to Merriam, qualitative research has five key characteristics: “the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation to analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive.”² Qualitative research is the overarching method of

1. Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 57.

capturing data for this project; however, the research was conducted within a group context. Therefore, the project used a more specific approach, that of participatory action research.

Participatory Action Research

As explained in chapter 1, the practices development group was the primary group involved in the project—the group engaged in participatory action research. This type of research is grounded in a local context with multiple participants involved in the process. María Elena Torre says: “Participatory Action Research is a framework for creating knowledge that is rooted in the belief that those most impacted by research should take the lead in framing the questions, design, methods, analysis, and determining what products and actions might be the most useful in effecting change.”³ One of the key assumptions behind participatory action research is that everyone participating in the research process has lived experience and can contribute. Each person can participate in the gathering of knowledge, the decision-making, and the drawing of conclusions.⁴ As the researcher for the project, it was my task to facilitate the practices development group. I endeavored to facilitate the group by promoting collaboration and valuing the experience and contribution of each group member.⁵

2. Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 11, quoted in Sensing, *Qualitative*, 57.

3. María Elena Torre, “Participatory Action Research Map,” MIT COLAB, published 18 June 2019, <https://www.colab.mit.edu/resources-1/2019/6/14/participatory-action-research-maps>.

4. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 58.

5. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 59.

Format of the Intervention

As stated above, the practices development group was the heart of the intervention. The group met weekly from Tuesday 1 February 2022, until Tuesday 5 April 2022. The sessions ran from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. There were ten sessions in total with the concluding session consisting of a group interview and a final examination of the liturgies. The original plan was to have the sessions in person. However, shortly before the group commenced, the COVID-19 numbers in Melbourne increased significantly. As a result, I needed to pivot to Zoom to enable the project to continue.⁶ I made this decision one week before we started our sessions to protect the well-being of the participants.

The group explored liturgical worship practices together, both in theory and practice. As the group engaged in the different practices, they were asked to consider how the practices could be used or adapted to allow for full participation for people who live with intellectual disabilities. I wanted the group to participate in the practices together rather than merely discussing them as theoretical or abstract ideas. Hogue points out that discussing a practice is not the same as experiencing it: “Until a ritual is enacted, it does not exist, and it serves no personal or community function. Reading about a ritual is not the same as participating in it. Until we go through the prescribed symbolic actions of the ritual, we have no experience of the ritual or of the grace it makes available to us.”⁷ The primary goal of the practices development group was to compile twelve liturgies or

6. Our church had stopped meeting in person in January 2022 due to the COVID-19 numbers. When I moved the project to Zoom, I was still unsure if in-person church services would resume in February.

7. Hogue, *Remembering*, 133.

worship services that would foster full participation for the whole congregation at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army, but specifically for people with intellectual disabilities.

Multivariant Sampling

I intended to have the practices development group consist of eight to twelve people. I used maximum variation sampling when choosing the group. This is a process of selecting a diverse group of participants based on demographic differences such as “age, gender, marital status, employment, ethnicity, [and] length of membership.”⁸ As Sensing notes, by including a wide range of people with diverse experiences and opinions, “the value of the information increases. If divergent people share core experiences, then the discovery is of greater significance in answering your question.”⁹

I thought it was crucial that within the practices development group several participants identified as disabled. Brock states, “Too often Christians have positioned themselves to relate to disabled people as the ones who know the truth and who know what disabled people need.”¹⁰ This sentiment was reinforced by the disability experts I spoke with, who shared with me the importance of providing a seat at the table for people with disabilities. I also wanted the participants to have differing levels of engagement in corporate worship, from people who were experienced at leading worship to people who had only attended and participated in worship.

8. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 83.

9. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 83–84.

10. Brock, *Disability*, 42.

The Participants

Table 1 outlines a breakdown of the participants. I was the facilitator of the group and helped guide the discussions. I also utilized a field note-taker who observed the sessions and took notes.

Participant	Approximate Age	Gender	Reason for Invitation
Participant 1	Eighties	Male	Worked with young people with disabilities and challenging behaviors in children's homes. Church member.
Participant 2	Fifties	Male	Worship leader.
Participant 3	Sixties	Male	Church member.
Participant 4	Sixties	Female	Occasional worship leader.
Participant 5	Thirties	Female	Parent of two children with intellectual disabilities. Church member.
Participant 6	Thirties	Female	Lives with a disability, parent of child with intellectual disability. Church member.
Participant 7	Sixties	Male	Lives with a disability. On the preaching team.
Participant 8	Forties	Female	Lives with intellectual disability.

Table 1. Practices Development Group Participants

It is important to note that not all participants who signed on to participate in the practices development group were able to do so. Unfortunately, my decision to move the group onto Zoom due to COVID-19 impacted the group. One group member (participant 8) with an intellectual disability was willing to participate in the group in person. However, they were unable to participate online due to a lack of access to the technology needed for Zoom. Participant 6 also ended up being unable to participate. This participant suffered significant health issues the week before the project commenced and was

hospitalized. Participant 6 hoped to join the group when they came home from the hospital, and so I emailed the session notes for the first several weeks so that they would not fall behind. However, it became apparent halfway through the ten weeks that their health was not improving enough to enable them to join the group, and they decided to withdraw.

The Project Sessions

Session 1: Tuesday 1 February 2022

The first session for the practices development group commenced with a reminder of confidentiality. I asked the members of the group to complete the consent forms. Participants were reminded that being part of the group was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at any stage. The remainder of the session laid the foundation for the group's work. Under the heading "Learning Together," we explored what worship is and why it is important. This session outlined a theological understanding of worship and allowed the group to explore the meaning of words such as *liturgy*. I used Ruth Duck's five theological emphases of worship to assist the group in thinking through what we do when we worship.¹¹ The participants were asked to consider the emphasis they felt The Salvation Army focused on the most. We also spent some time exploring Craig Erickson's types of participation.¹² I wanted the group to think through the ways we ask people to participate in worship and to discuss how they had seen these types in our congregation. We then explored 1 Cor 12:4–27 and spent some time reflecting and discussing what this passage had to say to us about full participation in worship for

11. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

12. See my discussion in chapter 2 on the types of participation. Erickson, *Participating*, 11–155.

people with intellectual disabilities. I also highlighted to the group why the term full participation was important and would be used throughout the intervention. Additionally, the group explored some principles of participation that had been gleaned from previous discussions with the carers in our congregation. One of the group members suggested at the conclusion of this session that the group engage in some homework each week to enable them to prepare for the next session. To assist with this, I sent via email the group notes from the session and a list of the topics that would be explored the following week.

Session 2: Tuesday 8 February 2022

I started session 2 by asking the group to think about the ways in which people had been invited to participate in worship the previous Sunday. The participants in the group began to identify the practices they felt were helpful in worship and noted the different ways people could participate. We then moved into a time of brainstorming where the members of the practices development group began to identify the areas of worship that we called the *non-negotiables*. These were the core practices of the worship experience. Once the group was happy with the list of practices necessary for worship, we thought about the liturgical practices we might like to explore together. We also spoke about various worship resources available for us to use in the planning of the liturgies. The group members decided that we would develop themes for our liturgies rather than use the lectionary. They divided the twelve liturgies into three blocks with an overarching theme for each of the four weeks. The four weeks in each block would then thematically link to each other. This way, a person using the liturgies could pick up a four-week series to implement rather than needing to find twelve weeks to engage each of the liturgies.

The group's homework for the week was to consider what overarching themes we could use in the liturgies and how we might format them to make them user-friendly.

Session 3: Tuesday 15 February 2022

This third session began with a time of reflection. I asked the group to consider the liturgical practices used on the previous Sunday and how people had been invited to participate. We then spent time addressing the homework from the week before and brainstormed ideas for the themes that could be used for the liturgies. I compiled a sample layout for the liturgies during the week and presented this to the group for their feedback.¹³ Once the group decided upon the design and themes, we moved to a time of learning together. The group requested to learn more about *lectio divina* and *visio divina*. We spent some time practicing these together and discussing how these might be used or adapted for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities. Once again, the group went home with homework. I asked the practices development group participants to start thinking about the practices they wanted to include in the liturgies and to consider how they would invite people to participate. At the conclusion of the session, the group elected to practice prayer for the following week.

Session 4: Tuesday 22 February 2022

As we commenced the fourth session of the practices development group, the group spent time looking at the previous Sunday's worship and discussing what had occurred. I asked the group to focus on how people had been asked to participate in worship. We also tried to identify the theological frames of worship that had been used. I then transitioned the group to a time of learning where we spent time immersing

13. See Appendix F.

ourselves in different forms of prayer. We explored praying with objects, using the Psalms as the basis for prayer, praying using images, responsive prayers, photo prayers, mosaic prayers, prayer stations, and the Lord's Prayer. I then used the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

1. Was this helpful?
2. What did you like? What didn't you like?
3. In what ways could this be used or adapted to allow for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities?

We then moved to the task of constructing some of the liturgies by selecting Scripture readings and songs that would work with the themes.¹⁴ As the homework for the week, I asked the group to consider other practices that may be incorporated into the liturgies. We concluded with the group selecting the practice of call to worship as the worship element to explore during the following session.

Session 5: Tuesday 1 March 2022

I commenced the session this week as I had done during previous sessions by asking the practices development group to think about worship the previous Sunday. I gave the group time to discuss what had occurred and how people had been asked to participate. The group then moved into a time of practicing the call to worship in a variety of ways. We looked at using Scripture and responses with added commentary, responsive readings, responses and gestures, and videos. As the group engaged in these practices, we discussed what we found helpful or unhelpful and whether we thought the

14. The Salvation Army's Methodist roots can be seen in how we conduct our worship today. The preaching of the word is central to everything that we do. Everything builds toward this point in worship. Therefore, it was important to the group that the Scripture readings were selected early to enable the remainder of the liturgy to be built around this.

practice could be used to allow for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities. The practices development group then spent time incorporating the different worship practices into our liturgies.

The participants acknowledged that due to the limitations of Zoom, there were some practices that we could not engage in together. For example, singing and music would not work well in the virtual space. The group felt they had covered a range of liturgical practices and were comfortable moving forward without exploring further. I encouraged the group to think about the liturgies still needing work as their homework for the week.

Session 6: Tuesday 8 March 2022

The sixth session commenced with the typical pattern I had established, in which we reflected on corporate worship from the previous Sunday and discussed what had occurred and how people had been asked to participate. Then the participants and I moved to construct the liturgies. As each element was added, I encouraged the group to think about how they desired people, particularly people with intellectual disabilities, to participate. Homework for the week was to continue to consider the themes of the liturgies and to think about the liturgical practices we could include. Additionally, the group was to consider how people were to participate.

Sessions 7–9: Tuesday 15 March 2022, Tuesday 22 March 2022, and Tuesday 29 March

2022

The seventh, eighth, and ninth sessions ran with a similar format. Once again, I asked the group to consider worship and how people had participated on each of the previous Sundays. At the conclusion of these discussions, the group continued

constructing the liturgies. Again, I reminded the practices development group to consider the elements needed for the remaining liturgies and how we wanted people to participate. At the conclusion of session 9, all of the liturgies had been completed.

Session 10: Tuesday 5 April 2022

I commenced the final session by asking the group participants to reflect on worship the previous Sunday and how people had participated. We then spent time reviewing all the liturgies and looked at how people would be invited to participate. During the week, I spent time referring to Craig Erickson's types of participation and classified everything in the liturgies we constructed. This exercise aimed to explore whether our liturgies allowed people to participate in multiple ways or if we were stuck within a particular type of participation. I mapped our liturgies on a color-coded Excel spreadsheet to enable the practices development group to quickly and easily see all of the liturgies and the types of participation being used.¹⁵ When the group was satisfied with this process, I conducted a group interview in which the participants spent time reflecting on being a member of the practices development group. I asked the group to consider and respond to the following questions:

1. What have you learned about worship and liturgy from being a part of this group?
2. What does it mean to you to say you are a part of the body of Christ?
3. How do you understand the church's role in full participation for people with intellectual disabilities?
4. In what way do you think these liturgies will help to facilitate full participation for people with intellectual disabilities?
5. Can you describe how being part of this group has impacted you?

15. See Appendix G.

6. Was there a liturgical practice that you felt should have been included that wasn't?
7. If you were going to do this again, is there something you would do differently next time?
8. Is there anything else you would like to say?

At this session's conclusion, each participant was thanked for their contributions to the project.

Evaluation Methodology

The project used a multi-methods approach for the collection of data.¹⁶ This form of data collection “allows various perspectives to engage in a critical dialogue that leads to several sets of rich data, resulting in the possibility for deeper understandings.”¹⁷ I gathered the data from multiple people who have various experiences with liturgical practices and disabilities. The data were generated from the practices development group, an expert, and my reflections as a participant researcher.

Data Collection

Data were collected for this project using the following three angles: outsider, insider, and researcher. Sensing suggests that the three angles for data collection “cover the entire spectrum of the project.”¹⁸ These three angles also allow for the researcher to compare the data by looking for commonalities and contradictions among the sources.

16. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 61.

17. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 53.

18. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 74.

Insider Evaluation

The source of insider evaluation was the group of participants in the practices development group. This group initially consisted of eight people with three group members being people who identified as living with a disability. The group met together for ten sessions. During each session, I used a participant observer who observed the group process and took field notes.¹⁹ The participant observer was present but did not actively engage in group discussions. To help the group to focus, the participant observer had their camera turned off throughout the sessions. The participant observer made notes on the group's interactions while also looking for the themes discussed in chapter 2 of this project thesis. The participant observer also noted any comments relating specifically to disability. An audio recording of each session supplemented the field notes. I used the web-based program Otter AI to transcribe the sessions and then checked and de-identified the transcripts. Each of the participants verbally agreed to the recording of the sessions.²⁰ I felt that having two methods for capturing data would help me to focus on my role as facilitator during the sessions.

The final group session involved a group interview where I gave the participants an opportunity to share their insights on the project. The format for this was a semi-structured interview. While this type of interview has a reasonable amount of structure with preprepared questions, it also allows a researcher to pursue further avenues that arise from the responses given.²¹ As I asked the questions, I gave each group member an

19. The participant observer signed a Research Assistant Agreement Form where they agreed to keep the sessions and data collated confidential.

20. I will destroy the recordings of the sessions at the conclusion of the project.

21. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 106.

opportunity to respond. The participant observer took field notes during this session, and I recorded, transcribed, and de-identified the data in the same manner as the previous sessions.

Outsider Evaluation

The outsider evaluation was from Dr. Andy Calder, the Disability Inclusion Advocate at the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania. Dr. Calder works in supporting and resourcing Uniting Church congregations in the area of disability inclusion and wrote a doctoral thesis entitled “Adults with Intellectual Disability and Their Spirituality.” Calder examined the artifact and provided feedback on the liturgies and how he believed they would or would not facilitate full participation for people with intellectual disabilities. Calder was supplied with a brief background of the intervention, the artifact, and the additional resources produced by the group. I also provided Dr. Calder a list of questions at his request to use as a guide for providing written feedback. Dr. Calder’s evaluation was discerned by his experience and expertise and was not pre-determined.

Researcher Evaluation

As the researcher for the project, I used field notes with three columns. I was able to record my observations after each session, and this enabled me to provide a fuller picture of what had occurred. The participant observer completed the first two columns during each session.²² They looked for the themes from chapter 2 of this project thesis, such as liturgical practices, references to disability, and scriptural themes such as the body of Christ. For the description section, I instructed the participant observer to

22. The participant-observer was Rhys Spiller. Rhys has an extensive background in ministry, psychology, and pastoral supervision. He observed the group and did not enter into any of the discussions.

describe what was occurring on the screen. This was challenging because the sessions needed to move from the original intent of in person to the online medium of Zoom. The participant observer considered questions such as the following: What is happening? Who is participating well? Who is not participating? I also asked them to observe the group's interactions and note what was unsaid with non-verbal cues such as body language. They also completed the column *first impressions* by noting things of importance that arose in the conversation. "The note-taker selects, focuses, and narrows the gaze of observation to those items pertinent to the project's focus."²³ As stated above, I supplemented the field notes with transcripts of the recordings of each session. I used the transcription software Otter AI, and then I went through each transcript checking for errors and de-identifying the data.

It is important as a researcher to acknowledge the power imbalance and potential biases that I bring to the group and research.²⁴ I was the previous Associate Corps Officer in the congregation, and with that role came a significant amount of positional power. I also actively planned and led corporate worship services during this time. Charmaz says, "Researchers and research participants make assumptions about what is real, possess stocks of knowledge, occupy social statuses, and pursue purposes that influence their respective views and actions in the presence of each other."²⁵ It is not possible to overcome these biases or power bases. However, Charmaz goes on to suggest that the way to minimize these issues is being "reflexive about what we bring to the scene, what

23. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 183.

24. Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: Introducing Qualitative Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2014), 27.

25. Charmaz, *Constructing*, 27.

we see, and how we see it.”²⁶ The first crucial step is acknowledging the power differentiation within the group dynamic.

Data Analysis

The methodology that I used to analyze the gathered data was qualitative context analysis. This is a means of analysis that enables a researcher to examine the collected data. In this method, “researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of such words and concepts; they then make inferences about the messages within the texts.”²⁷ The texts, in this case, are the field notes, transcripts from the practices development group sessions, the transcript from the final group interview, and the written response from my expert. Context analysis uses an indicative method when looking for the relationship between words, phrases, and ideas. There are two levels to the analysis: *conceptual analysis*, whereby concepts are analyzed in words or phrases found in the text; and *relational, meaning, and cultural analysis*, whereby “the relationships between words, phrases, and concepts in a text or texts” are examined.²⁸

I used the process of qualitative content analysis to examine the data.²⁹ The following steps were taken: (1) prepare the data, (2) define the unit of analysis, (3)

26. Charmaz, *Constructing*, 27.

27. Samuel DeJulio et al., “Content Analysis: The Past, Present, and Future,” in *Literacy Research Methodologies*, eds. Marla H. Mallette and Nell K. Duke (New York: The Guilford Press, 2021), 30.

28. Graham J. Hill, “Approaches to Data Analysis for Australian Asian Women in Mission and Ministry Project,” unpublished paper, 2021.

29. Yan Zhang and Barbara Wildemuth, *Qualitative Analysis of Context* (published paper, University Texas, 2005).

develop categories and a coding scheme, (4) code the data, (5) assess coding consistency, (6) analyze results and draw conclusions, and (7) report findings and write dissertation.³⁰

Prepare the Data

Preparing the data involves turning all the gathered data into text. I completed the field notes and transcriptions each week after the practices development group met together. I used the software Otter AI for the transcription. Once the program had produced a transcript, I read through it and corrected any transcription errors. I also de-identified the data.

Define the Unit of Analysis

Individual themes were used as the unit of analysis for the data. I had five overarching themes and then several subthemes. I generated the themes from words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs within the text.³¹ My aim was to discover the “expressions of an idea” that may be captured in one word or a large section of text.³²

Develop Categories and a Coding Scheme

The codes used primarily emerged from the theological and theoretical themes I addressed in chapter 2. However, this process of developing categories and a coding scheme also enables the researcher to identify codes emerging from the raw data. To aid consistency, I cataloged the codes used and clarified each concept.

30. Zhang and Wildermuth, *Qualitative*, 3–5

31. Zhang and Wildemuth, *Qualitative*, 3.

32. Zhang and Wildemuth, *Qualitative*, 3.

Code the Data

Coding is the method used to identify themes emerging from the research data.³³ It enables the researcher to “get a handle on the raw data so that it is more accessible for interpretation.”³⁴ The coding that I developed was applied to the gathered text. Since the data sample was relatively small, I coded manually by color-coding each theme and subtheme. The codes emerged as common themes throughout the data generated from the three angles of evaluation—researcher, insider, and outsider.

Assess Coding Consistency

Once I completed the data coding, I rechecked it to ensure its consistency across all the gathered data. This is particularly important when coding is completed manually. “The coders’ understanding of the categories and coding rules may change subtly over the time, which may lead to greater inconsistency.”³⁵

Analyze Results and Draw Conclusions

When I completed the consistency check of the coding, I analyzed the data to form conclusions for the document. During this step, I triangulated the collated data to observe the commonalities among each data source. Data triangulation is “cross-checking the existence of certain phenomena and the veracity of individual accounts by gathering data from a number of informants and a number of sources and subsequently comparing

33. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 202.

34. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 202.

35. Zhang and Wildemuth, *Qualitative*, 5.

and contrasting one account with another in order to produce a full and balanced study as possible.”³⁶

Once the patterns and themes emerged, I analyzed the data for areas of convergence, that is, areas in the data that had “significant overlap.”³⁷ While it was important to look for commonality in the emergent themes, it was equally important to explore areas where there was difference or disagreement in the results (i.e., divergence). This is also known as “slippage.”³⁸ It was an essential part of the process to explore the contradictions in the data and to consider “the best fit between data and analysis.”³⁹ I then analyzed the data for areas of silence. Sensing asks the pertinent question, “What is left unsaid that needs to be examined?”⁴⁰

Report Findings and Write Dissertation

The final step in the analysis of data is the writing up of the findings. This involves careful consideration as a balance needs to be maintained between describing what occurred in the intervention and the subsequent interpretation of the data.⁴¹ This will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

36. Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles and Practice*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 231.

37. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 197.

38. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 197.

39. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 199.

40. Sensing, *Qualitative*, 200.

41. Zhang and Wildemuth, *Qualitative*, 5.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the ten sessions that the practices development group undertook to develop the twelve liturgies that aim to foster full participation in corporate worship for people with intellectual disabilities. I have described the methodology employed to capture, collate, and code the gathered data. The themes or codes that I used emerged from the theological and theoretical themes in chapter 2 and from the data. Once coded, I triangulated the data and explored it for overlaps, silences, and slippages. The next chapter will discuss the results of this work.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The practices development group spent ten weeks together wrestling with liturgical practices and how we can provide opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to participate fully in worship. Chapter 3 outlined the methodology used by the group to construct the twelve liturgies that aim to foster this participation. This chapter will discuss the themes that arose throughout the process and the implications for the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. It will also discuss parts of the artifact we created. I will use the concepts of espoused and operant theology from the four voices model, outlined in chapter 2, to interact with these data.

Evaluation and Findings

Five key themes with underlying subthemes arose from the data for the research project: participation, awareness, exclusion, acceptance, and worship. The following sections will explore each theme and subtheme and discuss the insights gained from the project.

Participation

Participation is a theme that I identified from the outset of this project thesis. The word participation was selected intentionally to avoid the power dynamic attached to the word *inclusion*.¹ Chapter 2 continued to expand the understanding of participation by

1. See earlier discussion in chapter 1, pp. 9–10.

briefly exploring the Greek noun and verb that are linked to the incarnation. These words highlight God's participation in humanity and our participation with God.² I also used the five types of participation identified by Craig Erickson as a theoretical construct throughout this process. This was a helpful framework for the practices development group and became more significant than I initially thought.

Types of Participation

Erickson's types of participation captured the imagination of the practices development group. These types helped the group to think through the many ways that people can be invited to participate in worship. They also helped the group to expand their understanding of participation. I identified this in our session for week two, when the group quickly identified how people were asked to participate when considering worship from the previous Sunday.³ This became the way we commenced our time together each week as it enabled us to think through the types of participation. It also helped us to identify the potential participation gaps (i.e., where there was a lack of options for people to participate in corporate worship). This exercise helped the group to pinpoint the liturgical practices with better participation outcomes than others.

As the group began to construct the liturgies for full participation, we could refer to Erickson's types as a guide for how we would ask people to participate in the liturgies. On the whole, the liturgies covered each of the types well. However, the one type of participation we struggled to cover was interiorized verbal participation. While the group felt singing fell under this category, interiorized verbal participation is used sparingly

2. See earlier discussion in chapter 2, pp. 39–40.

3. Session 2 transcript.

outside this parameter. This reflects our theological tradition, in which we do not participate in the recitation of the creeds and very rarely participate in the Lord's Prayer together. While the group did not indicate a strong desire to build greater participation in this area, there is an opportunity for further development. One way the group did this was by trying to incorporate some simple choruses into the song selection within the liturgies. If these were used enough over time, they would become a part of this particular type of participation. The group also repeated a few of the prayers over the twelve weeks, such as the benediction by the Iona Community.⁴ Continuing with some of the prayers introduced in the liturgies could begin to build a better foundation for this type of participation.

Participation with Our Bodies

One type of participation used by Erickson is multisensate participation. This encourages a worship leader to consider how all the senses are used in worship. In addition, I briefly explored the ideas of embodiment and the incarnation with the group, where our bodies are acknowledged as good and, therefore, important. These two areas fit together well, and the group was encouraged to think about how our senses and bodies can be used in worship. The use of our bodies and our senses is not generally considered in my faith tradition when planning worship.

It was interesting to observe the practices development group when they engaged in liturgical practices that required the use of their bodies. During session 5, the group participated in a call to worship by Sam Hargreaves called "Open Us Up."⁵ When I encountered this prayer on their website, I decided to incorporate gestures to go along

4. See Liturgies 3 and 5.

5. This prayer is from the engageworship.org website. We have included this prayer as a call to worship in week three of the liturgies.

with the words. I put this together for the group to try. The responses from the group were quite exciting. One participant remarked on the power of the gestures within the prayer.⁶ Another participant commented on how the prayer could engage “everyone in the congregation.”⁷ The prayer in this format provides several ways to participate in this liturgical practice. A person can choose to read the prayer. They can choose to participate with gestures. They can choose to do both. Providing options for people allows for greater participation.

There are several opportunities in the liturgies the group has written to participate by using Auslan.⁸ We decided to include Auslan to provide options for people to participate during worship. This also allows people to get out of their heads and use their bodies as instruments of worship. Auslan is the basis for a communication technique called key word signing. This communication strategy is used in Australia to assist children and adults who are non-verbal or have limited language. Rather than signing a whole sentence, signs are used to provide the key ideas. We wanted to build on this principle by using some simple signs as a way to engage the congregation in worship. Key word signing has been used by some of the people with intellectual disabilities in our congregation, so it is a familiar tool. We provided links to the Auslan Signbank in the liturgies so people can view how the words of the particular liturgical practice are signed.⁹

6. Participant 2, session 5 transcript.

7. Participant 4, session 5 transcript.

8. Auslan is Australian Sign Language.

9. The Auslan Signbank provides video images of people performing a particular sign. This makes it easy for someone to replicate the signs suggested in the liturgies.

Movement was also highlighted as an important part of participation. The practices development group identified occasions when movement has been a way to participate in worship. However, often that movement has been limited to getting up to do something, such as moving forward for prayer at the mercy seat or going to greet people when invited to do so in worship.¹⁰ There was less consideration of other types of movement, such as dance. However, participant 4, who is from a non-Western cultural background, identified that she felt comfortable dancing in worship, stating, “You are free to move.”¹¹

Challenges of Participation

The practices development group could identify the types of participation and think through the different ways we could invite people to participate in worship as we constructed our liturgies. However, they also identified some challenges to participation. Participant 1 said this about the congregants with intellectual disabilities: “I think we’ve got to try and meet them where they’re at. And the great difficulty is in trying to understand where they’re at.”¹² He was trying to articulate the importance of participation but highlighted the challenge of incorporating diversity. He continued by stating, “But

10. Session 2 transcript. The Salvation Army traditionally has two altars in the worship space. One is called the mercy seat. Historically, this has been the place where people come to pray for salvation. The holiness table is the other altar. This is where people pray to be sanctified. The distinction is not drawn between the two these days; instead, people are encouraged to come and pray at either one for any reason.

11. Participant 4, session 1 transcript.

12. Participant 1, session 10 transcript.

that does not mean that we should not keep trying and keep the dialogue going between everyone no matter their intellectual abilities.”¹³

Another challenge raised during a practices development group session was not knowing how to create a liturgy that invites people to participate fully. One participant commented that people often do not know what they can do to involve others.¹⁴ He then commented that he believed that the liturgies the group had created would provide a framework and some training for others to see how participation is possible. “This is actually about still doing what we’re doing but giving consideration of how we can bring everybody up, rather than [worship] needing to be anything different.”¹⁵

Principles of Participation

As stated above, I was surprised at how well the members of the practices development group latched onto Erickson’s types of participation. This framework was conducive to allowing the group to see how we could invite people to participate. It also enabled us to categorize our liturgies to identify either gaps or an overuse of one type of participation in worship. As I went through the collated data, I discovered that in addition to our use of Erickson’s work, our own principles of participation began to emerge.¹⁶ I was not expecting the group to develop principles, but they emerged throughout the

13. Participant 1, session 10 transcript.

14. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

15. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

16. I do not think these principles form an exhaustive or conclusive list. However, they are a good starting place for anyone who is considering creating opportunities for participation in another context.

process. The following will outline the principles that arose from the practices development group sessions.

Practice Repetition

The principle of repetition appeared consistently throughout the data. This was not surprising as it had arisen in initial conversations with the carers at Mooroolbark. What was surprising was the number of times this principle appeared and the way it was applied. The group decided to break the liturgies into three blocks with each of the four weeks in the block connecting. The participants agreed that there would be an overarching theme for the four weeks with a subtheme as the focus each week. The first liturgy has the central theme of God's love with the following subthemes: we are created in the image of God; God's love is unconditional; who does God love; and we love God and love others. In building the liturgies in this way, the theme creates the repetition.

In addition to this form of repetition, the group wanted to repeat or recap what had occurred previously to reinforce learning. Participant 2 pointed out, "we spend time going back over the previous [television] episode before we get into the next episode."¹⁷ He felt that if a television series can use this form of repetition, then so can we. He continued, "we're not adding massive, big steps. We're adding incremental steps."¹⁸ The group hoped this would help people in the congregation with intellectual disabilities to remember what we previously looked at and reinforce learning.

Repetition has also been used when introducing new liturgical practices in the liturgies. *Visio divina* is being introduced in block two for the Scripture reading. This is

17. Participant 2, session 2 transcript.

18. Participant 2, session 2 transcript.

where an image is aligned with the reading and is projected onto the screen. People are invited to reflect upon this image for a short time before the Scripture is read. This has been repeated each week in the block to familiarize people with the process rather than introducing it for one week and then not engaging with it for several weeks. The hope is that this repetition will foster greater participation.¹⁹ A participant remarked, “I think with those blocks, it will help people to become comfortable with [the liturgical practice] by doing it week by week.”²⁰

The principle of repetition was also used when the members of the practices development group were writing responsive prayers. As we practiced responsive prayers together, we observed that the responsive lines for the congregation were often different and sometimes long. To facilitate full participation, we decided to keep the lines that the congregation reads together short and the same. This helps a person with low or no literacy to participate as the line is easy to remember and can be picked up quickly.²¹

Use Imagery

As the practices development group members shared in liturgical practices, another principle of participation arose, using imagery. The group felt that visual images would provide opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to participate better.²² Prayer exercises in the developed liturgies are often accompanied by pictures for people who cannot read or are non-verbal to help communicate the prayer topics.²³ In week four

19. Session 3 transcript.

20. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

21. Session 5 transcript.

22. Session 4 transcript.

of the liturgies, a video clip of the good Samaritan is used. This video has no dialogue and shares the story solely through images. Imagery is also used with the practice of *visio divina* outlined above and in several sermon outlines. In each instance, it is hoped that the imagery will enable people with intellectual disabilities to participate in corporate worship by providing an additional way of engaging that is non-verbal.

Show Respect

Another principle of participation that arose was to show respect. In the first liturgy we constructed, we discussed ways that people could participate in the reading of the Scriptures. I found a video clip of Genesis 1 which contains footage of a person painting the passage as it is being read. The video is excellent, but it is designed for children's ministries. After we watched it, we discussed whether it was appropriate to use as we want to be respectful of people with intellectual disabilities. Adults with intellectual disabilities are adults and should be treated as such. The group decided to include the video clip in the liturgy because they felt the content was excellent and engaging for everyone, not just children. "I think where it is appropriate and where the content actually delivers and hits the mark, then I think it's appropriate to use it."²⁴

Showing respect was also raised during the final group interview. One participant remarked that they had learned through constructing the liturgies that we did not need to "dumb it down."²⁵ Full participation should be respectful as we consider how we ask or invite people to participate.

23. See Appendix I. This is a sample of one of the digital resources that we developed to accompany the liturgies. The Scripture is being used as the launchpad for prayer and the pictures have been selected to reflect the text.

24. Participant 2, session 5 transcript.

25. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

Recognize Anyone Can Participate

One of the challenges faced with disability is that people tend to view a person with a disability through the lens of what they cannot do. We see the limitations and not the possibilities. Therefore, I was delighted to hear the practices development group articulate the principle that anyone can participate. Participant 4 remarked, “Participation is not just for the professionals.”²⁶ The openness to others participating in worship leadership is already a part of the DNA at Mooroolbark, and the group viewed it as a necessity that this openness to participation extend to everyone. A comment was made, “It’s not all about . . . the leaders. There is this openness for others to participate.”²⁷

The group also considered how to provide appropriate resources to allow everyone to participate in worship. One of the liturgical practices that the group practiced together was Psalm prayers.²⁸ This practice involves printing out selected Psalms on a handout and then allowing people to select a verse as a prayer to read out. The group liked this idea and thought it would be a practice that would enable people to participate. This resource was developed based on the principle of recognizing that everyone can participate; however, sometimes people do not know how to or are nervous, so they hold back. Thus, resourcing people this way helps limit this anxiety and frees people to participate.

As stated above, another part of this principle is that everyone has a greater chance of participating when there are various ways to engage with a liturgical practice. I

26. Participant 4, session 1 transcript.

27. Participant 2, session 1 transcript.

28. This was a suggested prayer method from Sam Hargreaves and Sara Hargreaves, *Whole Life Worship: Empowering Disciples for the Frontline* (London: InterVarsity, 2017), 35.

stated during session 1, “The more variety you have, . . . the more people are actually going to be able to engage.”²⁹ Therefore, the group spent time considering a variety of ways for people to engage in liturgical practices. This provides flexibility and choice for people as to how they participate.

This is one principle of participation where our formal and normative theology, based on an understanding of the body of Christ, is evident in our espoused theology. Our understanding of the body of Christ informs us that everyone has something to contribute to the church. There was a strong desire from the group to facilitate full participation for people in our congregation with intellectual disabilities, but this consideration was often extended to include other congregants who may be reticent to participate. The group were demonstrating the application of this principle to people beyond our target audience.

While this desire for everyone to participate was evident in the group, currently, there is a disconnect between our espoused theology and our operant theology. This disconnect occurs with who can participate in the leadership roles in worship. The group highlighted that our corporate worship times are not reliant upon the corps officers. In fact, there is a broader group of people able to lead worship, read the Scripture, and even preach. However, the opportunity for a person with a disability to participate in upfront leadership is rare.³⁰ Some work needs to be done in this space so that full participation in leadership roles in worship is not limited for people with disabilities in the congregation.

29. Session 1 transcript.

30. I am not advocating that everyone is gifted to lead during a worship service. Some people are gifted to do this, and others are not. This is the beauty of the body of Christ: we each have a part to play, and those parts will be different. However, I am advocating that people with disabilities are invited and given an opportunity to participate in the leadership of worship. People need to be given a chance to explore how they can contribute and discern the gifts they bring to the church. A way to do this for people with intellectual disabilities is to provide an opportunity for them to try.

As the practices development group met together, I was hoping to detect an understanding of the vertical nature of worship, not just the horizontal. As stated in chapter 2, Abernethy refers to these two axes in worship with the vertical acknowledging the relational aspect between God and God's people and the horizontal the relationship between God's people in service to each other.³¹ Part of the vertical axis acknowledges that in worship, people participate in the mystery of God. It recognizes that the Spirit of God is at work in worship. However, there was no indication of an espoused theology amidst our discussions.

Likewise, there was no recognition that the Holy Spirit ministers to all. Amy Kenny says, "My disabled body is a temple for the Holy Spirit. I have the mind of Christ. There's no caveat to those promises. I don't have a junior holy spirit because I am disabled."³² The group was able to discuss the importance of everyone participating in worship—that is the horizontal axis. However, there was no conversation about the work of the Holy Spirit in ministering to people with intellectual disabilities. I believe this is an important piece that is missing in our formal and normative theology. Just because we cannot measure well what God is doing in someone's life due to intellectual disability does not mean that God is not at work. Without this acknowledgment of the role of the Holy Spirit, preparing worship for full participation could potentially focus on what we do to minister to people with intellectual disabilities in the congregation. In doing so we miss the invitation to participate in the mystery of God.

31. Abernethy, "Introduction," 16.

32. Kenny, *My Body*, 3.

This lack of articulation around the role of the Holy Spirit is also problematic for our operant theology. Duck pinpoints that if we are unaware of the Holy Spirit's work, we will struggle to identify the gifting of people within our congregation. This problem then begins to snowball. If we cannot identify people's gifts, we will struggle to provide opportunities for people to serve. If we are not providing opportunities for people with disabilities to serve, we are not creating opportunities for full participation. Instead, we are perpetuating an inclusion model in which there is no acknowledgment of mutuality. This becomes dangerous territory; Fox, as stated in chapter 2, points out that we often seek to include people with disabilities because it is the honorable thing to do, rather than because of a conviction that God works by God's Spirit in the lives of all.

Be Intentional

Another principle that arose from the data was to be intentional. One of the members of the group who leads worship regularly commented, "I'd never given any thought to how to consider inclusion in what we do in worship, . . . [it] just wasn't even a thought."³³ During the group interview at the end of the practices development group sessions, the same participant remarked about the liturgies produced, "These are just minor tweaks of consideration to ensure that there is a more enhanced opportunity for full participation."³⁴ Being intentional means considering the needs of others and how we are asking them to participate. It is about providing different ways to engage with the liturgy in worship. Participant 2 remarked that it is about being "more mindful" of the process of

33. Participant 2, session 2 transcript.

34. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

planning worship “to allow for greater participation.”³⁵ Participant 1 affirmed this and said, “We can create a worship service and try to engage people.”³⁶

Try Something

Occasionally, while the group was wrestling with including a practice in one of the liturgies, there would be a concern raised about whether a particular practice would help facilitate full participation for people with intellectual disabilities. One group member remarked that things might fail when we road-test our work, but we would not know unless we tried.³⁷ They stated, “We’ve got to try different things.”³⁸ The group was aware that their work on the liturgies was stage one in a process. In actuality, the liturgies will need to be road tested at Mooroolbark to see how well they do or do not facilitate full participation. When this occurs, we can continue our journey of learning and adapt what we have developed. Trying to foster full participation for people with disabilities and failing is better than never trying.³⁹

Awareness

In chapter 1, I made an assumption about this project. I stated, “I am assuming that people have not previously participated fully in corporate worship because the church lacks awareness of those in the congregation who experience disability.”

Therefore, I thought awareness would arise as a theme, and it did. Two subthemes

35. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

36. Participant 1, session 10 transcript.

37. Participant 3, session 9 transcript.

38. Participant 3, session 9 transcript.

39. I will add to this principle that it is fine to try something as long as it has been thought through and will not harm the people being invited to participate. If it could be harmful, then it should not be tried.

surfaced within awareness. The first is lack of awareness, and the second is growing in awareness.

Lack of Awareness

As mentioned above, one of the participants in the practices development group identified and named a lack of awareness when considering the needs of people with intellectual disabilities in the congregation. They said, “I’d never given any thought to how to consider inclusion in what we do in worship, . . . [it] just wasn’t even a thought.”⁴⁰ The first session I led with the practices development group sought to address this lack of awareness as we discussed full participation and what that could look like for people with intellectual disabilities. While it was good to see this participant name this issue, evidence of this lack of awareness continued to raise its head throughout the group’s process of constructing the liturgies. Even though the whole project’s focus was on full participation for people with disabilities, the group constantly slipped back into the paradigm of “this is what I like” or “this is what impacted me” when discussing what liturgical practices were going to be included in the liturgies.⁴¹ During session 7, I felt I was constantly trying to draw the group back to consider full participation. I would ask, “How are we going to include people with intellectual disabilities in this practice?”⁴² Even toward the end of this session, the phrase “I like” was still being used to justify including a practice within the liturgies.

40. Participant 2, session 2 transcript.

41. Session 7 transcript.

42. Session 6 transcript, session 7 transcript, and session 8 transcript.

I have discovered that this lack of awareness of the needs of others is not something that can be addressed with one sermon or training session. Our default as human beings is to view the world through the lens of *what works for me* or this is what I like or find helpful. While this is not wrong, it rubs up against the idea of full participation, particularly when considering the needs of someone who experiences the world differently.

At Mooroolbark, our espoused theology tells us that we want to include people with intellectual disabilities so we can participate fully in worship together. However, our operant theology at this point lags behind this desire. It appears that people will need reminding about the needs of others for quite a while until our operant theology catches up to our espoused beliefs. However, while progress is slow, it is still evident in the area of awareness for the members of the practices development group.

Growing in Awareness

Over the ten weeks that the practices development group met together, there was an observable growth in awareness that occurred. The group excitedly reflected on the previous Sunday's worship at the beginning of session 6. One of the participants in the practices development group had led worship on that Sunday. This person had taken what we had discussed in the sessions and incorporated this into the way they led worship. The group was able to identify the practices that had been used and how they had made a difference in the participation of people in worship. There was a positive energy in the room as this discussion took place.⁴³

43. Session 6 transcript.

Growth was also evident after a discussion during session 8. The group commenced by reflecting on the previous Sunday's worship and how people had been asked to participate. A video of The Salvation Army's work in Ukraine had been shown during worship. The video was quite confronting and contained the sounds of bombs exploding. The group discussed the experience at length and the impact of having played the video without warning people that this would occur. The participants of the practices development group identified the effect this had upon people with intellectual disabilities in the congregation as well as people who had lived through previous wars.

The growth in awareness was evident in the group interview conducted in session 10. Participant 2 shared that the discussion on the video of the work in Ukraine helped them as they prepared worship and were able to consider the impact that the video had on different congregation members.⁴⁴ The participant then reflected on how this influenced their choice of video content when they were putting the liturgy together for worship. He said that he wanted to make sure "that people felt comfortable" with the content of the video that was about to be played.⁴⁵ The participant took a confronting experience and considered the implications of this when leading worship the next time.

The growth in awareness was not always as dramatic as in the instance stated above. One participant had never been involved in constructing a liturgy before. This participant was able to reflect on the learning that had occurred through their involvement in the practices development group. They commented, "I had no idea beforehand how

44. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

45. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

things were put together. That's really been quite a fun-filled thing for me and a real steep learning curve."⁴⁶

Another example of growing in awareness arose in the group when a member of the practices development group observed a person with an intellectual disability in the church. This person's regular carers were not present in worship on this particular Sunday, and another church member stepped in to assist this person as they participated in worship. Participant 2 observed that this had occurred and then stated that they had not noticed this before.⁴⁷ This was an indication of growing awareness as the participant had begun to see the people in our congregation with intellectual disabilities.

An additional moment of growing in awareness occurred when participant 4 posed a question during session 6. They said, "What are we doing to be inclusive in our services?"⁴⁸ While this question was asked about children and not people with disabilities, it was still a step forward in awareness as the participant began to see and consider the participation of others.

While people's lack of awareness can be frustrating when we are trying to facilitate full participation in worship for people with intellectual disabilities, it is heartening to have observed the changes in the members of the practices development group over the ten weeks. Change is a slow process, and it is essential that the messaging is consistent and clear as we engage people and encourage them to consider the needs of people with disabilities in worship.

46. Participant 3, session 10 transcript.

47. Participant 2, session 4 transcript.

48. Participant 4, session 6 transcript.

Exclusion

Another theme that I expected to arise throughout this process was exclusion. Exclusion is a significant issue that people with disabilities regularly face in all aspects of their lives. The church has been and often still is guilty of perpetuating exclusionary practices.⁴⁹ In light of my awareness of these exclusionary practices and my formal and normative theology, which includes the belief that Scripture teaches that all should be included in God's kingdom, I wanted to make sure that people with disabilities were part of the practices development group. I stated that at least three group members should be people with disabilities. I have also declared that everybody has value and has something to contribute. This is my espoused theology at work. Despite my espoused beliefs, the practices development group became an example of exclusion and thus illustrated a significant gap between my espoused and operant theologies.

Incidents of Exclusion

The first incident of exclusion occurred before the practices development group began. As stated above in chapter 3, COVID-19 impacted the group. The cases of COVID-19 spiked in Melbourne shortly before the group project was about to commence. I needed to decide how to respond to this the week before the group started. Therefore, I decided to move the group from a face-to-face format to Zoom. I believed this was the best decision at the time to keep the participants of the group safe. However, in making this decision, I excluded one member of the practices development group with

49. Several Christians in North America actively campaigned against the Americans with Disabilities Act. Religious organizations are excluded from this act as a result of this campaigning. "The law that finally granted accessible bathrooms, curb cuts, and ramps in public spaces was vehemently condemned by some Christian churches and schools as "imposing burdensome costs . . . [and] needless injury to religious exercise." Kenny, *My Body*, 28.

an intellectual disability. This person did not have the technology to be able to join the group online. My decision demonstrated how easily someone with a disability can be excluded from a group.

The second occurrence of exclusion developed shortly after. Another member of the practices development group with disabilities had a significant medical issue occur. The person was hospitalized as a result. I kept in regular contact with this person and emailed them the notes from each session so they would not fall behind. However, it became apparent after several weeks that this person's health was not improving, and they were not going to be able to participate in the group. This person self-excluded due to health. As defined in chapter 1, self-exclusion occurs when "a person living with a disability or their carer simply does not have the physical energy to engage in an activity." Unfortunately, due to health, participant 6 could not join the group.

With two participants with disabilities unable to participate, I was down to one member of the practices development group who lives with a disability. Participant 7 was an active member of the group and contributed well to the construction of the liturgies. However, in week seven, they experienced a significant personal issue. This impacted their ability to participate as their energy needed to be spent addressing the issue that had arisen.⁵⁰ Participant 7 decided to self-exclude and withdrew from the practices development group.

50. To help explain energy levels to people who are non-disabled, people with disabilities or chronic illnesses can use "The Spoon Theory," developed by Christine Miserandino. (see Christine Miserandino, "The Spoon Theory," *But You Don't Look Sick*, accessed 29 July 2022, <https://butyoudontlooksick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory>). This theory is a metaphor that helps people verbalize "what it is like to live in a body with fluctuating limitations." Kenny, *My Body*, 114. The spoons are representative of the energy levels that people have. The number of spoons available to a person can depend on a variety of factors. Unexpected events can rob a person of the spoons that they normally have available to them, resulting in self-exclusion.

From the outset of this project, I wanted to make sure that people with disabilities had a voice and could participate in the practices development group. However, the result was the exact opposite, as the group concluded without any members with disabilities. This was a disappointing outcome for me and has caused me to pause and reflect upon what I could have done differently. The exclusion was picked up by my external expert Dr. Andy Calder. He highlighted the importance of emphasizing “people’s voice and agency.”⁵¹ It has become apparent throughout this process that my operant theology needs some work. The manner in which I desire to include people with disabilities is not reflected in my practice. These reflections will be explored and expanded upon in chapter 5.

Barriers to Participation

While the practices development group became its own case study on exclusion, some positives arose from this theme. The members of the practices development group began to identify barriers to participation. As the group journeyed together, they began to question and identify ways that people with disabilities could be excluded. An early example is when one participant asked about the colors used on PowerPoint slides.⁵² They wanted to know the best color combinations to give people the greatest opportunity to see what was on the screen. It was encouraging to see this group member beginning to think about tools that we currently use in church that have the potential to become barriers to participation.

51. Dr. Andy Calder, notes from external expert.

52. Participant 2, session 2 transcript.

Another potential barrier was identified when the group was practicing and discussing a specific liturgical element, *visio divina*. As stated above, this practice uses an image to go along with Scripture. People are given an opportunity to reflect on the image, and then the Scripture is read. When the group practiced this together, we used the painting “The Bound Lamb (Agnus Dei)” by the artist Francisco de Zurbarán. This image was paired with Scripture from John 1:29–36. This painting was quite disconcerting to some group members as the lamb’s feet are bound together. The group voiced concerns that the wrong image could become a barrier for someone participating fully.⁵³ The painting we used could be distressing for some people as the lamb is seemingly being mistreated. A person with an intellectual disability may not be able to make the cognitive jump and grasp the connection between the image and the Scripture reading. If a person is distressed by an image, it may be too difficult to bridge this gap. It was good to see the group identifying again that something like a painting can have unintended implications that could become a barrier for someone with an intellectual disability.

Another barrier to participation was something that I observed in the practices development group. Throughout the project, I realized I was expecting a lot from the group as we struggled to compile the liturgies. Some group members had worship leadership responsibilities and were comfortable discussing liturgical practices; others had no experience at all. I had set a large task for the group of compiling twelve liturgies. I realized that I was overwhelming the group with my expectations and began doing some more preparation work each week before we met together. By doing this, I was able to increase the participation of the members of the group as they were not as overwhelmed

53. Session 3 transcript.

by the task.⁵⁴ While this experience was not specifically related to full participation for people with disabilities, it has caused me to reflect on the ways that people can become overwhelmed in worship. Introducing a lot of new elements in worship may have a negative impact because the congregation feel overwhelmed. When people are flooded with new experiences or are unsure of the expectations within worship, they will be unable to participate as well. The group demonstrated that people participate less when they are unsure or overwhelmed. This is where repetition is useful, as it produces rhythm and routine that can help people to participate well.

A final barrier to participation that I identified occurred during one of our practices development group sessions. I had been facilitating the sessions each week, intending to encourage full participation for each participant in the group. I had difficulty drawing out one of the members of the group. Their participation mainly had been agreeing with the other members of the group. Session 9 was a very small cohort of group members. At this session, the participant of concern joined in and participated well in the development of the liturgies. Again, this has caused me to reflect on the underlying reason for this; I believe that smaller groups can sometimes foster increased participation. Overall, our congregation at Mooroolbark is relatively small, and I wonder if this in itself helps foster participation for people with disabilities.

Acceptance

Acceptance was another theme that arose during the practices development group sessions. The group members identified that being accepted is an important part of coming to church. During the first session, each group member was asked to explain why

54. Session 8 field notes, researcher observation.

they went to the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. Several of the participants shared about acceptance. Participant 3 stated, “For the first time ever, I felt accepted as a person.”⁵⁵ Another participant shared, “My whole family is accepted.”⁵⁶ Participant 1 declared, “This is where I belong.”⁵⁷ This desire to be accepted is a part of being human. This is the common ground that we all share. Genuine acceptance leads to belonging, which is the foundation for full participation. Under this overarching theme of acceptance, there were two subthemes that I was pleased to find. One subtheme, the body of Christ, was outlined in the theological themes in chapter 2. The other theological theme, *the imago Dei*, arose from the practices development group.

Imago Dei

As highlighted by the practices development group, the *imago Dei* is a significant theological theme that forms our normative theology or our understanding of who we are and how we relate to each other. Every human is created in the image of God. This is what gives people value. This normative theology then becomes part of our espoused theology. Members of the practices development group articulated this understanding during the first session. They highlighted that we value people not because of what they can do but because they have an inherent value.⁵⁸ Participant 1 commented, “We bring what we have. We can’t bring what we don’t have. Some of us have challenges more than others. But that does not mean that they [people with disabilities] are less in any way.”⁵⁹

55. Participant 3, session 1 transcript.

56. Participant 5, session 1 transcript.

57. Participant 1, session 1 transcript.

58. Session 1 field notes.

59. Participant 1, session 1 transcript.

Based upon the normative and formal theology, the group could articulate their espoused theology, but it was good to see the group taking this further.

This theme also appeared in the liturgies that the practices development group constructed. Participant 7 suggested *imago Dei* as a helpful starting point for the group saying, “I’m thinking of setting the scene for who God is and who we are as humans. The image of God is the foundation. . . . God loves us so much [that] he made us like himself, and then we build on that.”⁶⁰ The group’s espoused theology was becoming evident in their operant theology as they included their theological understanding of the *imago Dei* in the liturgies. Their understanding was informing their praxis.

The Body of Christ

The other significant theological theme for the practices development group was that of the body of Christ. This theme appears in chapter 2 and impacts how we view people’s contributions to worship. As the group explored this theme, they could articulate their understanding of the body of Christ (i.e., the normative and formal theology). The espoused theology, furthermore, was evidenced in two distinct ways.

First, the group included this understanding in the liturgies they developed. The practices development group developed Liturgy Six around the theme “everyone has a place to belong.”⁶¹ This was followed by “everyone has a part to play” in Liturgy Seven, which used the body of Christ as the metaphor for the liturgy. Second, the group could articulate the importance of the body of Christ in the final group interview conducted during session 10. The group was asked, “What does it mean to you to say you are part of

60. Participant 5, session 3 transcript.

61. See Appendix H, Liturgy 6.

the body of Christ?” Participant 2 used a brass band as an analogy for the body of Christ and said, “There’s an individuality to it, but there is a collectiveness.”⁶² They continued, “So as a part of the body of Christ, we actually need everybody to bring . . . all of their abilities and all of their skills [which] means that we can actually play beautiful music.”⁶³ Another participant said, “I am a part of the body of Christ. I am not the whole body. I have just a part. I’ve got to play my part. I’ve got to play to the best of my ability.”⁶⁴

It was encouraging to observe the theological understanding impacting the group’s operant theology, as evidenced by the developed liturgies. Acceptance and belonging for people with disabilities depends on our understanding of the *imago Dei* and the body of Christ. Our understanding that everyone is an image bearer of God and everyone has something to contribute as a part of Christ’s body must apply to every person. There is a danger if our espoused theology only applies to people who are non-disabled as this impacts our operant theology and engagement with people in our world who live with intellectual disabilities.

Worship

The final key theme that came through in the data was worship. This was not surprising as worship was identified as a significant theological theme in chapter 2, and it

62. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

63. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

64. Participant 1, session 10 transcript.

was also the focus of the practices development group. Three subthemes arose under the theme of worship: authenticity, liturgical practices, and challenges.

Authenticity

The practices development group members articulated on several occasions the importance of authenticity in worship. The act of worship is not about being perfect; it is not performative; it is to be authentic. This is an espoused theology that the corps has embodied for many years. One participant spoke about this when describing why they continued to worship at the Mooroolbark Corps. “The reason I love coming to Mooroolbark [is] because it’s imperfect; . . . it’s not about performance.”⁶⁵ In this case, our operant theology supports our espoused theology. There was also discussion in the group about the importance of freedom in worship, that is, freedom to be who you are. If people want to move or dance in worship or prefer to stand still, they can do that. Nothing is forced or imposed upon people.⁶⁶

This desire for authenticity was also evident as the group discussed the need for worship to be grounded in the real world. They felt it important that worship addressed issues of significance in people’s lives and the world.⁶⁷ One participant spoke about people in the congregation who were experiencing challenges. Rather than saying, “I will pray for you this week,” the congregation will pause and surround a person and pray for them during worship.⁶⁸ This authenticity was important to the group and helped to

65. Participant 2, session 1 transcript.

66. Session 1 field notes.

67. Session 1 field notes.

68. Participant 2, session 1 transcript.

facilitate a sense of genuineness in worship. This desire for authenticity ties in with one of Duck's five theological emphases explored in chapter 2: worship as rehearsal. Duck highlights that this understanding of worship demonstrates an honesty about the challenges of life, "naming its joy and suffering."⁶⁹

Core Liturgical Practices

Throughout the weeks that the practices development group met, they were asked to participate in and consider liturgical practices. This was fundamental to the construction of the liturgies. Therefore, it is not surprising that the subtheme of liturgical practices has arisen as part of a key theme. The group members named the liturgical practices I expected to find. Elements such as the sermon, prayer, call to worship, singing, testimonies, and the Scripture reading were all present. However, the significance of some of the practices to the group was surprising. Silence emerged as a meaningful practice for many of the group members. This is one of Erickson's types of participation, but I was not expecting it to emerge as strongly as it did. Participant 3 spoke of the importance of silence in worship. "I get a lot of pleasure and a lot of closeness to God in the silent times."⁷⁰ It was also interesting to note that the group spoke of silence as an active form of participation.⁷¹ Often, silence is considered passive, that we are *not really* participating in anything. Participant 1 commented that silence "can be

69. Duck, *Worship*, ch. 1.

70. Participant 3, session 1 transcript.

71. Session 1 field notes.

a person's participation."⁷² This ties in with Erickson's silent participation type, where he also indicates the dynamic nature of silence in worship.⁷³

Another liturgical practice that was significant for the group was the sermon. The Salvation Army has carried on the Wesleyan tradition where the sermon is the focal point of the worship liturgy. Everything moves to and away from this point. The practices development group thought it was essential to have the sermon outline in place before constructing the liturgy's other elements.⁷⁴ The development of the sermon outlines fell to me, enabling the group to focus on the rest of the liturgies.⁷⁵

I was also surprised to see some old traditional Salvation Army liturgical practices arising from the group's discussions, such as the "Hallelujah Wind Up."⁷⁶ This is a practice that goes back to the early days in The Salvation Army, where a person, during a rousing song, marches around the hall with The Salvation Army flag. The congregation spontaneously joins in marching behind this person while singing and clapping.⁷⁷ While this practice did not end up in one of the liturgies that the group constructed, it was used by a participant in the practices development group when they led worship on one of the Sundays during the time that the group met.

72. Participant 1, session 1 transcript.

73. Erickson, *Participating*, 40.

74. Session 5 transcript.

75. There was limited preaching experience within the group. Some of the members were finding constructing the liturgies challenging enough. I felt that this would push the group beyond their capabilities; therefore, I constructed all of the sermon outlines. The group did go through them all and agree to the content.

76. Session 1 transcript.

77. The Salvation Army, *Canadian War Cry*, March 20, 1897.

Another one of these old practices that did end up in the constructed liturgies was the love feast.⁷⁸ This practice came to The Salvation Army through our Wesleyan roots. However, Wesley was introduced to this practice by the German Moravians.⁷⁹ The love feast “was modeled on the communal meals of the early church during which the believers testified to experiencing the presence of the risen Lord in their midst.”⁸⁰ The love feast is not considered a sacrament and can be practiced using bread and water, cake and tea, or other readily available foods. It “symbolizes feeding on the bread of life, Jesus the Christ, and treasuring the spring of water welling up in the believer, the Spirit given to the church.”⁸¹ Because it is not considered a sacrament, any person can preside over the feast.

The love feast was a practice that some members of the practices development group were unfamiliar with. Some of the group’s older members were able to share stories of love feasts that they had participated in.⁸² While The Salvation Army holds to a non-sacramentalist position, there have always been symbols in our gatherings that have “celebrated the immediacy of grace.”⁸³ The love feast is one of these, along with the mercy seat and holiness table, The Salvation Army flag, and the uniform.⁸⁴

78. See Appendix H, Liturgy 4.

79. Denise Stringer, *How Is It with Your Soul? Class Leader: Class Leader’s Manual for Use with This Day* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), Kindle edition, ch. 2.

80. Stringer, *How Is It*, ch. 2.

81. Stringer, *How Is It*, ch. 2.

82. Participant 1, session 2 transcript.

83. Philip Needham, *Community in Mission: A Salvationist Ecclesiology* (London: The Salvation Army, 1987), 8–9.

84. David W. Taylor, *Like a Mighty Army: The Salvation Army, the Church, and the Churches* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2015), 121.

The Salvation Army has been going through an ecclesial crisis over recent decades. In an attempt to stem the flow of decline within our congregations, we have been leaving behind or ignoring some of our normative and formal theology and have been adopting whatever program or worship style appears to be working in other contexts as part of our operant theology.⁸⁵ The danger here is that we begin to adopt the theological understanding of other groups that may be in conflict with our Salvationist identity.

It was interesting to see some exploration of our historical roots as the members of the practices development group were wrestling with the practices to include in the liturgies. It was fascinating to observe that the historical practices the group homed in on were two that anyone can participate in. The love feast is a sensory experience that sits within Erickson's multisensate type of participation, while the "Hallelujah Wind Up" invites people to embody their worship by marching, singing, clapping, and occasionally shouting out a "hallelujah!" These traditional practices would have provided opportunities for the early Salvationists, who were often poor and uneducated, to participate in worship. Yet, in our attempt to be relevant to our culture and to attract people to church, we have adopted into our operant theology more contemporary forms

85. This can be seen in the loss of our two Sunday gatherings. The morning meeting was always the Holiness meeting that would encourage the congregation to grow in holiness. This meeting was always more reflective as people were encouraged to respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The evening meeting was always the Salvation meeting. This meeting was upbeat and celebrated all that God had done through Jesus. There was always a call for people to respond to Jesus and accept salvation in these meetings. Both held our theological understanding of holiness: as Christians we are called to grow in grace and holiness because God is holy, and salvation, where we hold firmly to the belief that all can be saved. Since we have adopted a contemporary style of worship not only have we lost our hymns, which represented our theology in music, we have lost the distinctives of the holiness and salvation meetings.

of worship, removing the practices that have provided, and could still offer, opportunities for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities.⁸⁶

Challenges

A significant challenge to participatory worship arose during session 4 of the practices development group—a lack of time. One of the participants reflected upon worship the previous Sunday, which they had responsibility for. The participant commented that they had struggled to connect with the person preaching until Friday night, stating, “It wasn’t like I had a week of planning or anything. It was sort of quite late notice. So, it was, let’s just go with what you know. . . . It was pretty much cookie cutter.”⁸⁷ Creating liturgies for full participation takes time as the needs of people with disabilities are taken into account and worship practices are adapted. It also takes time to compile the resources that may be necessary to aid in full participation, such as pictorial prayer sheets.⁸⁸ When planning is left to the last minute, it is harder to take the time to consider the needs of others and creativity is stifled.

In contrast, it was interesting to observe how creativity was able to flourish in the practices development group. The group had time to think about how each liturgy would link to the next. They could discern overarching themes and talk about the use of repetition. People were able to build upon the ideas raised during the group sessions, and as a result, I believe we have a better outcome for the developed liturgies than we would have if I had planned them on my own. Full participation involves planning. People plan

86. I do not want to wage a war between contemporary and traditional worship styles. The point I would like to make is that there is a disappearance of the Salvationist identity as other worship styles are co-opted because the theological rationale is not being considered.

87. Participant 2, session 4 transcript.

88. See Appendix H, Liturgies 1, 4, and 9.

in more creative ways when they are participating in a group. Group planning also provides opportunities for people with disabilities to join in and contribute to the development of the liturgy.

Outsider Feedback

At the conclusion of the ten sessions undertaken by the practices development group, we had constructed twelve liturgies that aimed to foster full participation for people with intellectual disabilities at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. This artifact was sent to Dr. Andy Calder, who provided some feedback on the liturgies. As stated earlier, Dr. Calder is an expert and has researched the spirituality of people with intellectual disabilities. There were several areas that Dr. Calder highlighted that I need to consider.

First, Dr. Calder pointed out the problem with the exclusion of people with disabilities that occurred within the practices development group. As stated above, he underscored the importance of emphasizing “people’s voice and agency.”⁸⁹ Part of the rationale of this project was to always include people with disabilities in the design of the liturgies. While this did not eventuate satisfactorily, there is still an opportunity to address this moving forward. This will be explored further in chapter 5.

Dr. Calder was able to comment on the practicalities of the artifact and remarked that he found the layout to be helpful.⁹⁰ While this may appear to be an insignificant issue, it was important to the group to develop these liturgies in a user-friendly format. If the format is confusing, chaotic, or hard to follow, it will become a barrier to people using it. He commented, “I think you have done a great job in pulling together a series

89. Andy Calder, outsider evaluation report.

90. Andy Calder, outsider evaluation report.

which addresses an area of liturgy which is so often skated over by the church universal, and with particular application to your faith community.”⁹¹ Dr. Calder also liked the emphasis throughout the liturgies on the “alternatives to overusing words” such as “music” and “body movement.”⁹²

While I was pleased with the positive comments, Dr. Calder also discerned an inconsistency. The use of language is important when engaging with people with disabilities. This is something I wrote about in chapter 1. However, despite my awareness of this and my desire to use language appropriately, Dr. Calder commented on my language. Throughout the liturgies, particularly in the left-hand information column, I consistently used inappropriate language that was “othering.”⁹³ The word in question was “those.” Dr. Calder stated that I needed to use “people” instead. While this may seem like a minor issue, ableism and othering language can creep into our vocabulary if we are not careful. Amy Kenny writes about ableist language and states, “We might not have realized it was there to begin with, but once we do recognize it, we can choose to stop upholding its harmful ideas and practices. We can choose to honor the least of these by changing our language and behaviors.”⁹⁴ This is a further example of growing in awareness where my operant theology needs to realign with my espoused theology.

Dr. Calder also provided further feedback on the practicalities of the artifact and highlighted areas of the liturgies that required extra work to explain a particular practice. One issue was regarding the use of Auslan throughout the liturgies. Dr. Calder was

91. Andy Calder, outsider evaluation report.

92. Andy Calder, outsider evaluation report.

93. Andy Calder, outsider evaluation report.

94. Kenny, *My Body*, 26.

concerned that incorporating another language into the liturgies would be too much for people with intellectual disabilities. However, while links are provided to the Auslan website so that people can see how to perform a sign, the purpose of including Auslan was twofold. First, key word signing is a basic communication strategy that uses Auslan signs to convey a message. Rather than signing a complete sentence, only the key words are used. As stated earlier, this communication strategy has been used by some members of the corps who have communication issues. Second, signing also provides another opportunity for people to join in worship with their bodies. Dr. Calder's concerns about incorporating this practice highlighted the need for further work on the artifact so people using the liturgies will understand the inclusion of this practice. He also suggested adding an appendix to the back of the artifact to include some further resources so that people can explore worship or full participation further.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the five key themes that emerged from the practices development group, outsider evaluation, and researcher data. They are participation, awareness, exclusion, acceptance, and worship. From this, I have learned that constructing liturgies for full participation is not an overly complex exercise. It involves considering the needs of others and providing multiple ways to engage with a liturgical practice. It is not hard, but it takes time and effort. It was also good to see principles of participation emerge from the group. This was not intentional on my part, but I think it is helpful to have some guiding principles when constructing liturgies for full participation. These principles may help people on their journey of awareness and steer them away from creating liturgies based solely on personal preferences. I was reminded again by Dr.

Calder that despite good intentions, it can be easy to slip into bad habits that can damage other people. Engaging with people on the margins, such as people with intellectual disabilities, must involve a willingness to listen and learn because, despite our good intentions, we will get things wrong. Additionally, it is essential to check that our espoused and operant theologies are aligning. As noted, the practices development group could articulate the essential theologies of the *imago Dei* and the body of Christ, which impact our understanding of belonging to the church and each other. These are central biblical themes for full participation. As the group continued its conversation, I was also surprised to see some traditional Salvation Army liturgical practices raised by the practices development group. These are accessible practices that deserve continued consideration as to how they could provide opportunities for full participation. Chapter 5 will turn to explore the trustworthiness of this research, the significance and implications, and the possibilities for further engagement and application.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

People with intellectual disabilities, while welcome in corporate worship at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army, are often unable to fully participate. This project aimed to create a series of liturgies to bridge that gap and provide opportunities for full participation for people living with intellectual disabilities. I used a qualitative research methodology to gather the data, which were coded and triangulated from insider, outsider, and researcher angles. This chapter will seek to interpret the data further. It will also examine the trustworthiness and significance of the research and explore the application of the artifact developed by the practices development group.

Interpretations

Chapter 4 explored and examined the research data. There were five key themes that emerged: participation, awareness, exclusion, acceptance, and worship. Each of these themes contributes to understanding the issues at play when considering full participation in worship for people with intellectual disabilities.

The theme of participation drew attention to a challenge in corporate worship where liturgical practices are often overly reliant upon basic literacy. Providing a range of options for engagement within these practices will enable people to choose how they participate in worship, allowing them to engage in meaningful and helpful ways. However, to do this, a worship leader will need to consider not just a person's mind but her whole body as an instrument to be used in worship.

Erickson's types of participation are valuable as they demonstrate the range of ways people can be encouraged to participate in worship. The practices development group saw the worth of these principles and was able to use them during the project to audit the developed liturgies and to look for gaps in participation. I believe that both the types of participation framework and the principles that emerged from this research project will aid the Mooroolbark Salvation Army as we move forward on this journey.

It is essential to acknowledge that the presentation of the artifact to the corps will not be the end of this participation journey; rather, it will be the beginning. The liturgies will not magically transform our congregation and enable people with intellectual disabilities to fully participate every Sunday. Testing the liturgies through use is merely the starting point. The testing will require being aware of the needs of people in the congregation with intellectual disabilities and possibly providing further options for how people engage with liturgical practices.

Awareness was the second theme to emerge from the data. Lack of awareness was evident and identified by the practices development group. As the group began to learn together, they sometimes struggled with being aware of the needs of people with intellectual disabilities in worship. People reverted to "this is what I like" to decide on a practice for the liturgies. However, it was good to witness that the group members grew in their awareness throughout the process. I have learned that there is a need for constant, clear messaging to help people on this journey of full participation.

This theme of awareness has also reminded me of the possible challenges we may face moving forward. As we implement the artifact, the hope is that it will help the congregation grow in awareness of the barriers people with intellectual disabilities face in

worship. However, for this growth to occur, people will need to have the desire to learn and grow. Without a willingness to learn through listening to people with intellectual disabilities or a desire to respond to what we are learning, change will not happen. Creating the space people need to process changes is part of this journey of transformation. Not everyone will be willing to engage in a worship practice that may differ from what they are used to. It will be important to be prepared for the congregation to be at different places in this awareness journey.

Growing in awareness can also challenge our theoretical constructs and the theology underpinning our practice. The liturgies may uncover biases toward people with intellectual disabilities that arise from the medical model of disability. This is the predominant narrative in society, so it is likely to be the dominant narrative within the congregation as well. Awareness of this and the possible attitudes toward disability will help leaders to be prepared to converse with people if unhelpful attitudes arise in response to the application of the liturgies.

The concept of full participation for people with intellectual disabilities may also challenge our formal and normative theology. This is where theological reflection will need to be a companion on the journey. The Bible contains accounts of people with disabilities, particularly in the Gospels. However, most of these are healing narratives. This may raise theological questions. People may question why we need to create worship that aids full participation for people with disabilities when it is God's job to heal. Working through how to read and understand the healing narratives will be necessary. Focusing on disability may also cause people to question why God allows disability or suffering in the first place. These are two examples of significant theological

questions that may arise.¹ Again, leaders need to be prepared to help people wrestle with these questions if or when they surface.

The theme of exclusion was unfortunately present in the research as it occurred on several occasions within the practices development group. This was regrettable and has potential implications for the trustworthiness of this research. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to see the members of the practices development group identifying potential barriers to participation.

As stated in chapter 4, the exclusion of members of the group with disabilities has caused me to reflect upon my espoused theology and the disconnect between what I say I am doing and what I am doing in practice. I have learned that good intentions are not enough when seeking to create an environment where people with intellectual disabilities can fully participate. Good intentions can still result in unhelpful actions and outcomes that end with exclusion. Notwithstanding this, I still believe there is an opportunity to include the voices of people with disabilities at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. This will be addressed further in the credibility section of the chapter.

The fourth key theme that emerged was that of acceptance. All of the practices development group members identified the importance of acceptance and belonging. The two theological themes that reinforced this were the *imago Dei* and the body of Christ. People have value because they are made in the image of God. Because of this value, we create opportunities for people to be accepted and to belong. When people belong, they are free to explore what they can contribute to the body of Christ.

1. I felt it was important to raise these possible issues even though I do not have the space to currently address them within the structure of the thesis.

Acceptance is the starting point for participation. Full participation will be much harder to achieve if people are not accepted or do not feel like they belong. This lack of a strong sense of belonging creates barriers for people contributing as members of the body of Christ. Genuine relationships are the key.

The final theme that arose was that of worship, in which the group articulated the importance of authentic worship. I also highlighted some of the historical liturgical practices discussed by the group and the challenges of adopting contemporary practices. The group also identified the challenges of preparing liturgies for worship with limited time.

The practices development group has reminded me of the importance of planning worship well. When people are pressured for time, it is easier to put a liturgy together that does not consider the needs of others. Often these liturgies that are born out of time pressures also lack creativity. As the group constructed these liturgies for full participation, there was often an energy present on Zoom. People would share ideas and bounce off each other. As we move forward, it may be worth considering putting together a worship planning team. The team could be tasked with planning the worship liturgies while taking into consideration the congregation's needs. This would be a great way to continue the excellent work of the practices development group. The worship planning team could consist of members who reflect the congregation's diversity.

The expert feedback from Dr. Calder has also reinforced the need to listen and learn. At the same time, it must go further than merely listening. Our learning should impact our behavior. When our behavior is deemed unhelpful or harmful to people with

disabilities, we, as a church, will need to take notice and change. Humility will be an important companion on this journey.

While the practices development group specifically wrote the liturgies for the Mooroolbark Salvation Army, they kept in mind that the artifact may have application outside our context. Again, this is a starting point and not a silver bullet for people hoping to invite members of their congregation with intellectual disabilities to participate fully in worship. The liturgies may provide an example of what full participation could look like. Still, they will need to be adapted to be contextually relevant to another congregation.² This is where the principles that emerged could provide a framework to go alongside the liturgies so that people can develop worship in a way that facilitates full participation. However, before applying the artifact or adapting these principles, it is helpful to examine the trustworthiness of the initial research.

Trustworthiness

Exclusion was identified above as a problem for this research project because the people with disabilities in the practices development group were unable to participate or to continue to participate in the research project. This could impact the trustworthiness of the research as the voices of disability were limited. The following section will seek to (1) unpack the research's applicability, dependability, credibility, and reflexivity; (2) address the issue of exclusion; and (3) propose a way forward.

Applicability

As previously stated, the project was conducted at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army, and the members of the practices development group were selected because they

2. For the liturgies to be meaningful, church leaders will need to draw their congregants with disabilities into a conversation so that the liturgies are relevant and helpful in their context.

attended worship regularly at the corps. The artifact produced was designed for use at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. Therefore, the liturgies contain some practices, such as prayer baskets, that are unique to our context. The use of key word signs also directly applies to our context, as we have members of our congregation with intellectual disabilities who use this as one of their communication strategies. However, worship is not unique to the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. As stated above, the liturgies could have application in other Salvation Army contexts. Because of this, the practices development group tried to articulate in the left-handed column of the artifact how the liturgical practices could be applied. The song section also provides a variety of songs and sources so a person leading worship in another context could easily select appropriate songs for their congregation.

While its applicability is probably best suited to other Salvation Army Corps, it would be possible to use the artifact in other evangelical contexts with some tweaking. The absence of the sacraments may be concerning to some, but those could easily be incorporated. The general principles of full participation could be applied to such additional practices to enable full participation for members of a congregation with intellectual disabilities.

Dependability

Before applying the artifact, the issue of dependability needs to be addressed. The practices development group set out to construct twelve liturgies for full participation. The group was able to do this and produce an artifact. An important element of the methodology was that the group was not merely discussing liturgical practices but practicing them together and exploring how they could be used or adapted. Each session

was outlined clearly and could be replicated in another context. If this were done, I would hope that the artifact produced would be contextually relevant to that group.

Dependability in the methodology is important, but so too is how the data is managed and interpreted. As outlined in chapter 3, I used several methods to check my data. First, I triangulated the data from my three sources. This enabled me to look for inconsistencies or contradictions between the sources. I also followed a qualitative content analysis process to guide the coding of the data. This helped me to check the consistency of the coding used to analyze the data. I have also acknowledged that as a researcher, it is impossible to remain unbiased. Therefore, I remained aware that I bring my biases into the discussion, meaning mistakes in interpretation are always possible.³ Content analysis encourages continual checking of data throughout the process to assist in identifying inconsistencies or shifts in the analysis of data over time. The voice of the participant observer in the field notes was also an essential part of this process.

The three-column field notes recorded the participant observer's initial observations, which could be checked against my own. This allowed me to cross-check my thoughts and feelings throughout the process with their observations. I also recorded the sessions and made transcripts. This enabled me to quote participants directly rather than paraphrase what I thought people said. I acknowledge that misquoting or manipulating the text is still possible, but I have tried to stay true to the voices of my participants. I also provided opportunities for the group to go over the liturgies to correct them or to make comments. Along with the artifact, a summary of how I conducted the research was sent to my external expert. This allowed Dr. Calder to comment on the

3. I also acknowledge that it is impossible to be aware of all my biases.

validity of the project and the artifact. His feedback has pushed me to consider the project's flaws and think about what I might have done differently.

Credibility

The previously mentioned weakness of a lack of representation of people with disabilities could potentially damage the project's credibility.⁴ While it is impossible to fix this problem retrospectively, there is still a way of including people with disabilities as we move forward. This could occur during the testing of the artifact.

The developed artifact will be tested at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. At this stage, the practices development group members could be asked to be involved again. There are two possible ways of inviting people with intellectual disabilities to participate in this process. First, the group members could ask if people with disabilities are willing to be observed over this trial period. This would enable us to monitor and judge whether a person's participation in worship increased over the twelve weeks. The second way would be to invite feedback from the members of the congregation with disabilities throughout the twelve weeks and then at the conclusion. This could be done by requesting people note their thoughts and feelings after each Sunday. This feedback would enable us to see if the liturgical practices are helpful and if people feel they can participate more fully in corporate worship. While this is not part of the scope of the initial project, it is one way I can potentially counteract the limited engagement in the design process.

4. I could attempt to justify this by stating that some of the remaining members of the group still had experience either working with or caring for people with disabilities. However, I know that this is not a firsthand experience and can be used to diminish the voices of people with disabilities. As a carer, it is very easy to speak on behalf of my son rather than allowing him to speak for himself.

This predicament has caused me to pause and consider my original methodology. I had designed ten sessions for the group, which is a large number in hindsight. If I were going to design the project again, I would do it differently to allow for greater participation for people with disabilities without placing such an onerous load on people's shoulders. I think it would have been better for the members of the practices development group to spend time listening to people with disabilities in our congregation before they commenced working on the liturgies. This would allow the group members to listen and learn while providing an opportunity for members of the congregation with intellectual disabilities to be heard. After the design phase, I would get the group members to return to the people they had interviewed, share the liturgies that had been designed, and get their feedback. This would have created an opportunity for people with disabilities to be heard while alleviating the demand to attend the weekly sessions.

Reflexivity

Along with my reflections on how I could have done things differently, I have also considered the personal biases that I bring. I acknowledge that researching in an area I am personally invested in could be problematic. I could be dragging a group of people on my soapbox adventure. I want to see people with intellectual disabilities fully participate in worship because it includes my son. This emotional connection has the potential to cloud my judgment because, as a parent, one does not want to see one's child being excluded. These feelings, along with observing other people with intellectual disabilities in my congregation, have been the driving force behind this research. In

addition, I acknowledge that as a previous officer in the corps, I also bring a certain level of power to the table.

This power, combined with my maternal determination, could be a troublesome combination. I have tried to be aware of this as I have led the group on this journey. I have needed to constantly check my own bias and agenda in the way I have led the practices development group. I have identified that there were occasions where I would have liked the group to take another direction when developing the liturgies because I thought I knew better. Yet, I stepped back and allowed the group to move forward in the way they thought was best. This has resulted in a series of liturgies that reflect our corps. Because of the group's creativity and effort, the liturgies are better than anything that I could have constructed on my own.

This project also humbled me as I saw the genuine care and concern expressed by the members of the practices development group for my son and the people in the corps who live with intellectual disabilities. This demonstrated to me the power of the body of Christ fully embracing its members. I was also moved by the excitement that people had for being part of the project and their willingness to learn and consider the needs of others in worship.

Significance and Implications

Sustainability

For the project to have a life beyond the twelve liturgies developed, there needs to be a conscious effort to continually keep the needs of members of the congregation with intellectual disabilities as part of our framework for constructing our corporate worship. People have a natural tendency to revert to their own frames of reference when making

decisions about liturgical practices. It was through constant reminding that the group could construct liturgies that aim to provide for full participation. However, the group also demonstrated on multiple occasions that growth, and then applying that growth, is possible. The group demonstrated that a shift in the lens we use for corporate worship is achievable. However, I will need to continue to drive the importance of full participation. The long-term change will not occur without this, and the liturgies will fade away as another special program. The beauty of this project is that it is not complicated or costly and does not require extensive resourcing as it is using what we already have access to. With a bit of extra planning, it is possible to continue developing liturgies for full participation.

Personal Significance

I have always viewed myself as a reluctant leader. However, this project has been a confirmation for me of my leadership abilities. Previously, I have shrunk from leadership opportunities and have often allowed others to take on the significant roles in pastoral ministry. However, I observed throughout this project that the practices development group responded well to my leadership. They all engaged consistently throughout the project.

There was evidence that the group was not just listening but learning throughout the process. Participant 3 commented, when reflecting on the liturgical practices one Sunday, “I just kept getting this stupid grin on my face every time something different would come up. . . . It actually made me look at the whole service differently. I could see what we’d been talking about. And it all starts to make sense.”⁵ During the final group

5. Participant 3, session 5 transcript.

interview, one of the participants encouraged me by stating that I had communicated well throughout the process and particularly mentioned the notes I would email out after each session.⁶ This opportunity has reinforced to me that I have something to contribute as a leader and that I have the capacity to influence people in more ways than I thought I did.

The project has also reinforced that I still have things to learn as I seek to include people with intellectual disabilities. This may sound ridiculous since my life as a carer constantly focuses on disability. However, I have learned that my methodology and language in some parts of the project were problematic. My espoused theology and my operant theology were not aligned. There is more work for me to do here as I reflect upon this and try to understand how I can shift my operant theology. To do this work, I need to maintain the posture of a lifelong learner.

Ecclesial Significance

Theological reflection is important and needs to continually include dialogue among our formal, normative, espoused, and operant theology. It is easy to conduct corporate worship in a certain way because that is what we have always done; however, the goal of allowing for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities has presented some challenges to this. I believe at our corps that our formal and normative theology is healthy. We have a good understanding of what worship is, the importance of the *imago Dei* and the body of Christ, and the implications of this for how we conduct worship. This was evident in the practices development group's espoused theology. However, there can be a disconnect between our espoused theology and our praxis or operant theology. It is only through reflecting on our praxis that we have the opportunity

6. Participant 2, session 10 transcript.

to identify and address these inconsistencies both personally and corporately. There are areas in our operant theology that could benefit from further reflection. I identified that while the corps allowed a variety of people to take on leadership roles in worship, there are limited opportunities at this stage for people with disabilities to engage in this way. More work could be done to explore how we can identify and develop the leadership capacity of people with intellectual disabilities within the congregation.

I also hope this project will continue to have a life beyond the practices development group as it is implemented at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. I hope that using these liturgies will enable the corps to see that full participation is possible. I would also like the liturgies to be road tested in a few other Salvation Army contexts to see if they are applicable beyond my corps context. If the liturgies are workable at Mooroolbark and in a few other Salvation Army contexts I believe it will then be possible to provide the artifact as a resource to The Salvation Army in Australia. This would allow the liturgies to be accessed and used by corps around the country. My conversations with colleague officers in recent months have indicated a need in many corps for a resource like this.

Questions Not Answered and Further Research

While there is an interest in the artifact and including people with disabilities in worship, I need to stress that this research project only focused on people who live with intellectual disabilities at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. As stated in chapter 1, the definitions of disability are extremely broad. It would not be possible to complete a research project and focus on every disability contained within these definitions. Full

participation in worship for people living with other types of disabilities will need to be explored and studied further.

In addition to this limitation, the project did not focus on issues of accessibility. I have assumed that people with disabilities can access places of worship. However, there are matters to address in this area. Once inside our corps buildings, people with mobility issues would still be unable to access most platforms because of the stairs. This may seem like a minor issue, but it is hard to give leadership responsibilities in worship to people with disabilities if they cannot access the place from where worship is led.

The research project also did not test the created liturgies as part of the remit. Therefore, this project is still within the theoretical realm. There is a possibility that when the liturgies are implemented, they will need to be reworked. Feedback will need to be gained from the congregation and especially from the members who live with an intellectual disability.

Conclusion

The Mooroolbark Salvation Army is a place of welcome and acceptance for people with intellectual disabilities. However, opportunities for engagement in corporate worship can be limited. Twelve liturgies have been written throughout this project to foster full participation for members of the congregation who live with intellectual disabilities. It is hoped that these liturgies will be a step toward closing the participation gap. While the project failed to engage well with people with disabilities, there is still an opportunity to make sure people's voices are heard as the artifact is implemented. The hope is that these liturgies will create a foundation that can be built upon by the

leadership team at the Mooroolbark Corps as we continue to seek opportunities in worship for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities.

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APPENDIX A

IRB and HREC Approval Letters

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885



September 15, 2021

Catherine Spiller
Department of Theology
Abilene Christian University

Dear Catherine,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Liturgical Practices for Full Participation: Creating Opportunities for Engagement in Corporate Worship for People Living with Intellectual Disabilities at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army",

was approved by expedited review (Category 6 & 7) on 9/15/2021 (IRB # 21-100). Upon completion of this study, please submit the Inactivation Request Form within 30 days of study completion.

If you wish to make any changes to this study, including but not limited to changes in study personnel, number of participants recruited, changes to the consent form or process, and/or changes in overall methodology, please complete the Study Amendment Request Form.

If any problems develop with the study, including any unanticipated events that may change the risk profile of your study or if there were any unapproved changes in your protocol, please inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the IRB promptly using the Unanticipated Events/Noncompliance Form.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Our Promise: ACU is a vibrant, innovative, Christ-centered community that engages students in authentic spiritual and intellectual growth, equipping them to make a real difference in the world.



19 November 2021

Major Catherine Spiller
Eva Burrows College
catherine.spiller@salvationarmy.org.au

Dear Catherine

This letter is to confirm Human Research Ethics Committee approval for your project titled **Liturgical practices for full participation: Creating opportunities for engagement in corporate worship**, reference number 383/21. Your project is fully approved to go ahead without conditions on approval.

Please see the communication from the Executive Officer, CRA HREC below.

I can be contacted at cosborn@divinity.edu.au to confirm your approval and give any further details as required.

Regards,
Carly Osborn
HREC Co-Ordinator
The University of Divinity

The CRA Ethics Committee was most impressed by the careful design of the research project to facilitate opportunities for disabled people to participate in corporate worship. The Committee felt that the ethical issues, such as obtaining voluntary consent and the plans for managing confidentiality of the group, had been well planned. The Committee gave its approval to the project and wishes Catherine well in her research.

Philip Hughes,
Executive Officer, CRA HREC

9th November 2021

APPENDIX B

Field Notes Template

A participant observer will be asked to complete the *Description* and *First Impressions* sections. I will complete the *Fuller Interpretation* section after each practice development group session.

The participant observer will look for the themes from chapter 2 of the dissertation, which may consist of liturgical practices, references to disability, and scriptural themes such as the body of Christ. For the description section, the participant observer will be asked to describe what is occurring in the room. They will be asked to answer questions such as, what is happening? Who is participating well? Who is not participating? They will also observe the group’s interactions and note what is unsaid with nonverbal cues such as body language. They will complete the column *First Impressions* by noting things of importance that arise in the conversation. This may involve questions that need to be explored further, a significant theme that emerges, or an idea as to how a liturgical practice may be adapted.

After each session, I will complete the final column and try to give a fuller picture of what occurred during the session. This will be supplemented by the transcripts of the audio recordings of each session.

I will use a three-column system as a template:

FIELD NOTE - PRACTICES DEVELOPMENT GROUP

- Date:
- Time:
- Place:
- Present:
- Apologies:

Coding (Themes)	Description	First Impressions	Fuller Interpretation

APPENDIX C

Group Interview Questions

Final Practices Development Group

At the conclusion of the practices development group, I will conduct a group interview to receive feedback from the participants on the process. The participant observer will be taking notes throughout this session. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. I will make my notes for each of the questions at the conclusion of the interview. I will be asking the following questions:

1. What have you learned about worship and liturgy from being a part of this group?
2. What does it mean to you to say you are a part of the body of Christ?
3. How do you understand the church’s role in full participation for people with intellectual disabilities?
4. How do you believe these liturgies will help to facilitate full participation for people with intellectual disabilities?
5. Can you describe how being part of this group has impacted you?
6. Was there a liturgical practice that you felt should have been included?
7. If you were going to do this again, is there something that you would do differently next time?
8. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Question No.	Participant Observer Notes	Researcher Notes

APPENDIX D

Participant Recruitment Information

Initial Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: Liturgical Practices for Full Participation: Creating Opportunities for Engagement in Corporate Worship for People Living with Intellectual Disabilities at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army

I am studying ways of engaging people with intellectual disabilities in corporate worship at Abilene Christian University as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. This study is being supervised by Dr. David Kneip.

The aim of the study is to find liturgical practices that allow for full participation for members of our congregation who live with intellectual disabilities. I expect the research to have benefits for the whole congregation at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army as we find inclusive practices that allow for everyone to fully participate in corporate worship as much as they are able.

In order to undertake this research, I would be most grateful if you would be willing to participate in this research. Please note that participation is entirely voluntary, and there are no consequences for you not participating. Participants will be asked to participate in the practices development group. This group will meet weekly on a Tuesday evening for 1 1/2 hours from Tuesday 1 February until Tuesday 5 April 2022. The group will look at the different elements in corporate worship and explore together how we might adapt them to allow for full participation for people in our congregation who live with intellectual disability. At the conclusion of these sessions, we will meet together to discuss the process and what you have learned along the way. You are being invited to participate because you attend the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. There are no costs to being involved. You hopefully will enjoy being part of a small, diverse group of people as we wrestle with what it means to worship as the body of Christ.

I would like to audio record the weekly sessions for the purposes of analysis. Please let me know if you are willing for this to occur on the consent form. If, at any time, you do not wish to answer a question, you can simply say "Pass," and we will move on. It is not anticipated that you will find any of the group sessions difficult to be a part of. There are no right or wrong answers. I am simply interested in your thoughts, your insights, and your opinions. If you wish to withdraw your participation, you may do so by simply letting me know at any stage during the group sessions or up to 2 weeks after the conclusion of the final interview.

All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially. While it must be kept for seven years for legal reasons, it will be kept in a secure filing cabinet at Eva Burrows College. I will be the only person who has access. Any electronic data will be kept on a password protected computer. The following information from this research will be reported in my thesis and in any other articles or publications based on this research: all the data will be deidentified, so no one will be able to work out what you have contributed. Each participant will be given a code, and the data and code will be kept separately. I will be the only person to access both the code and the data.

In return for your assistance, I am happy to offer you a short report of the outcomes of the research.

I am happy to provide further information on the research, and you may contact me at cjs20a@acu.edu.

Please complete the Consent Form if you are willing to assist me in the research, and I will then be in touch to make practical arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Spiller

APPENDIX E

Consent Form

Introduction

Thank you for being willing to consider being a participant in my research project. The following information will describe to you the nature of the project and what the requirements for participation are. Please read through the information carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

You may be able to take part in a research study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you as a potential participant. Please note that if you are providing consent for another person, such as a child, “you” refers to the person for whom you are consenting. You can ask about research activities and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop your participation at any time and for any reason without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Purpose and Description

Worship is an important part of the life of our church. Our corporate worship is focused on God, but it also impacts us and helps us to grow as a community of God’s people. However, for people who live with intellectual disabilities, full participation in worship can, at times, be very challenging. Rather than considering how we can include people with disabilities, we often overlook their needs. The purpose of this project is to think about the many aspects of corporate worship and to consider how we might be able to adapt them to allow for all the members of our congregation to participate as much as they would like to. At the conclusion of the project, the group will have constructed together three months of meeting leads which will have considered the needs of the members of the congregation with intellectual disabilities. This will be presented to the leadership team at the corps.

If selected for participation, you will be asked to attend 10 practices development group sessions with the study staff over the course of 10 weeks. Each session is expected to take 1 1/2 hours. During the course of these sessions, you will be asked to participate in the following procedures: learning about liturgical practices and full participation, a brainstorming exercise, participation in several liturgical practices, discussion on how the practices can be used to facilitate full participation for people with intellectual disabilities, compiling of a series of meeting leads that will be given to the Mooroolbark

Salvation Army to use for corporate worship. The final session will be a group interview to reflect on the process and the project. Each of the sessions will be recorded and transcribed and only accessible by the researcher. The transcription will be deidentified, in other words your name will not be written on or connected with any of the material. A code will be given to each person participating and only the researcher will have access to the list of participants and codes.

Risks

There are mild risks to taking part in this research study. There may be a clash of personalities or ideas within the group that may cause emotional distress. There is also a risk that you may feel unheard during discussions. If you are experiencing distress during any of the sessions, please raise this with me during the session or at the conclusion. You also have the opportunity to leave a session if a topic raised causes you discomfort or distress.

Benefits

While there are no specific benefits for this study, it is my hope that you will enjoy being part of a diverse group where you will be able to share in a meaningful way about how worship can be adapted to include members of the congregation who live with intellectual disabilities.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Any information you provide will be confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the Institutional Review Board (or individuals affiliated with the granting agency). Otherwise, your confidentiality will be protected in the final written report relating to this project. The only people who will have access to the conversations are the group members, one note taker, and myself. I will deidentify each member by providing using a code for referencing purposes. All of the information will be stored on a password-protected computer and will only be accessible by the researcher.

The researchers cannot guarantee your confidentiality outside of the practices development group. While the researchers will take measures to protect your identity and responses as outlined above, we cannot guarantee that other focus group participants will do the same. We encourage all participants to maintain the confidentiality of other participants in the group. The researchers request that you do not share any private information obtained during your participation or any other information that may identify the other participants unless you are legally required to do so. Participants are encouraged to consider the limitations of confidentiality in the practices development group setting. Participation is voluntary. At any time, you may decide not to share information, or you may discontinue participating in the group altogether.

Sharing Results & Publication

The data that is gathered will be used to write a project thesis dissertation for the completion of a Doctor of Ministry degree. The document will be shared in an academic setting and also with the leadership team of the Mooroolbark Salvation Army.

Contacts

If you have questions about the research study, the lead researcher is Catherine Spiller and may be contacted on 0433 818 626, or at catherine.spiller@salvationarmy.org.au.

If you are unable to reach the lead researcher or wish to speak to someone other than the lead researcher, you may contact Dr. David Kneip at Abilene Christian University via email: dck99a@acu.edu.

If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the ACU's Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Executive Director of Research, Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be reached via email at orsp@acu.edu or megan.roth@acu.edu or via mail to Dr. Roth at Dr. Megan Roth, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 320 Hardin Administration Bldg, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, TX 79699 USA.

Signatures

Please sign this form if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Sign only after you have read all of the information provided, and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You should receive a copy of this signed consent form. You do not waive any legal rights by signing this form.

Signature of Participant:
Printed Name of Participant:
Date:

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent:
Date:

Signature of Parent/Guardian:
Printed Name of Parent/Guardian:
Date:

APPENDIX F

Liturgy Template

<p><u>Placement in Series</u> e.g., Series 1, Meeting 3</p>	
<p><u>Introduction of Theme and Explanation</u> What is the meeting about and what is the big idea that we are trying to get across with our theme?</p>	
<p><u>Call to Worship</u> What is the Call to Worship?</p>	
<p><u>Songs</u> List of songs that fit into the theme that you can select from.</p>	
<p><u>Prayer</u> How will prayer be used during the meeting? Are there specific prayers (for the congregation, the world) that we will provide? Are we including the Lord's Prayer etc.</p>	
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u> What else will be included in the service? (Testimony, <i>Visio Divina</i>, Announcements, Offering, etc)</p>	
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u> What is the Scripture Reading?</p>	
<p><u>Sermon/Message</u> What are the main points of the sermon? Do we have any illustrations that might be helpful? Does it include anything special (object lesson, a particular activity for the response time)?</p>	
<p><u>Benediction</u> What is the benediction?</p>	

APPENDIX H

Liturgies for Full Participation

Introduction

These liturgies have been constructed by a diverse group of people from the Mooroolbark Salvation Army. We met weekly for ten weeks to practice different worship activities and to discuss how we participate in worship. The group explored how we could create opportunities in worship for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities.

We believe that everyone in corporate worship should be able to participate as much as possible. However, barriers often prohibit people with intellectual disabilities from participating fully. These liturgies provide various options for participation in the hope that everyone will find a way to participate, minimizing the barriers.

How do I use this resource?


The following resource contains twelve liturgies. The group structured the liturgies in three blocks, each containing four linked liturgies. There is an overarching theme that connects each week in the blocks. Even though they are connected, if you don't have the space to run four together, each can be used independently. Each liturgy contains a variety of worship practices that can be used when putting a meeting lead together.








Look out for this symbol in the liturgies. This means further information has been provided on the worship practice. There are tips on how the practice can be used to create opportunities for full participation for people with intellectual disabilities.

Auslan signs are provided as an option for some of the prayers and benedictions in the liturgies. One communication strategy people with communication difficulties can use is key word signing. This is where the important words in a sentence are signed to get a message across rather than the whole sentence. This communication strategy may be familiar to people within the congregation who have communication difficulties. Using these signs will provide another option for people to participate. Links are provided to the Auslan Signbank. This site provides short videos that demonstrate how to sign each of the words used.

Liturgy 1

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>	<p>Series 1, Meeting 1 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> God’s Love</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>	<p><u>Theme:</u> Made by a loving God <u>The Big Idea:</u> We are all created in the image of God who loves us.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Repetition is one of the principles that we are using to help people with intellectual disabilities participate. The hope is that people will be able to join in with the responsive line as it repeats all the way through. Let the congregation know the response line before the start to help people participate.</i></p> </div>	<p><u>Psalm 8</u> [All] ¹ O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! [Leader] Your glory is higher than the heavens. ² You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you. [All] O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! [Leader] ³ When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers— the moon and the stars you set in place— ⁴ what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? ⁵ Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. [All] O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! [Leader] ⁶ You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority— ⁷ the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, ⁸ the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents. [All] ⁹ O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! <div style="text-align: right;">(New Living Translation)</div> </p>

<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u></p> <p>2 All Creatures of our God and King 49 How Great Thou Art 56 Praise to the Lord the Almighty the King of Creation 66 This Is my Father’s World 90 O Lord Our Lord How Majestic 264 Shout to the Lord 376 King of Kings, Majesty</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u></p> <p>Creation’s King (Graham Kendrick, Paul Baloche) God of Wonders (Mark Byrd, Steve Hindalong) Indescribable (Jesse Reeves, Laura Story) You are Lord (Ray Chee – Parachute Band)</p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>It is important to convey information in a variety of ways to help people participate fully in worship. Pictorial prayer sheets can be printed and given to people who are non-verbal to enable participation through pointing to the prayer topic during the prayer time.</i></p>	<p><u>Prayers for the World:</u></p> <p>Invite the congregation to break into small groups/threes/or pairs. Select prayer topics around the current issues in the world. The topics can be placed on the screen with accompanying pictures. Ask people to pray in their groups for the prayer topics.</p> <p><i>Note: It is important to think about the selected images as images can cause distress for people, particularly if they are graphic.</i></p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcements Offering Band Message by the Melbourne Staff Band “Indescribable” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6t_AiPCN7_k</p> <p><u>Prayer Baskets</u></p> <p>On the first Sunday of the month at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army, we practice prayer baskets. Prayer topics or the names of members of the corps are prepared in baskets. During the service the congregation are invited to</p>

	<p>come forward and select a slip of paper from the baskets. We will spend time praying for what is on our paper. This time might involve connecting with the person whose name we have and asking them specifically for things to pray for. Each person takes their paper home as a prayer item for the month. Everyone is invited to participate in this.</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>A way to participate is by using our senses. This presentation allows the congregation to hear and see the Scripture reading come to life.</i></p>	<p>Genesis 1:1-31 Quiz Worx “In the Beginning” video clip.</p> <p>Available for free download: https://www.quizworx.com/resources/in-the-beginning-genesis-1/</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p>  <p><i>This is a basic outline that needs to be developed before use to make it your own.</i></p>  <p><i>Throughout the message, there is an opportunity for the congregation to join in with the response “It was good” as the passage is referred to. This could flash up on the screen or the person preaching could prompt the congregation to join in by asking the question “And what did God say?” This is a way for the</i></p>	<p>The Big Idea: We are all created in the image of God who loves us.</p> <p><u>Introduction</u> I remember when my children were born. As people came to visit our baby the conversation always turned to “who do you think the baby looks like?” Then there were general comments about whether the baby had my eyes or my husband’s nose. Whose coloring did they take after most? We all want to know where we fit and who we belong to. Belonging is important to our sense of wholeness. (It is important to acknowledge that this can be painful for people who are adopted because they cannot “see” these identifying marks).</p> <p>1. <u>God Created</u> Genesis 1 tells us that God is a God who creates. Verse 2 tells us that the earth was empty, and God’s Spirit was hovering over the water. This is a picture of chaos. But then God begins to bring order (vs 3-19). God begins to separate the water, and the land, and the sea. Plants, trees, and trees with seeds are created. And God declares “it was good!” Then God begins to create day and night, the</p>

congregation to participate in the sermon as well as reinforcing the message that God declared all of creation, including people, good!

sun, the moon, and the stars. God then fills creation with living things. Fish, birds, animals, wildlife. And again, what did God say? “It was good!”

2. People are the Pinnacle of Creation



We arrive at verse 26 and we see that God decides that he will make people. This is what verse 27 says, “So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.” And what do you think God thought of the people that he had made? “It was good!”

Just like a baby often looks like its parents, God created all people to reflect God’s likeness. Now it is really tricky to say what that is exactly. I don’t think it means that we all look like God and have God’s nose or God’s smile. But often people will say this image of God that we all have means that we are created to love and to be loved – to be in relationship with each other.



But on top of being made in God’s image, people were also given the responsibility to look after everything that God had created. Just like a King would have a steward look after his property, God has asked each of us to steward, to look after, everything that he has made.

3. Being Made in God’s Image is a Sign of Love

Well, that is great that God made everything, including people, and said it was all good. But why did God make us in God’s image? Why did God give people all of that responsibility? It is because he loves us. God created us and patterned us in God’s image because God loves us. And I think we sometimes forget that. We can look at ourselves and we can see all the things that we don’t like about ourselves. We can look at the things that we might wish we could change. But when we do this, we forget that God called everything he created good! Including us!

<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>The aim of this response time is to provide an opportunity for people to respond as they are able or as they would like to. Everyone (without a significant visual impairment) can look in a mirror. You might like to place the words around the mirror to help people remember what they are thinking about. Don't forget to tell people what is written around the mirror before they engage in the response time.</i></p>	<p>Have mirrors set up on the holiness table, mercy seats or in different places around the room. During this time the congregation can be invited to sing or the song can be listened to.</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> He Knows My Name (Tommy Walker)</p> <p><u>YouTube</u> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXsiWoyjw60</p> <p>Invite people to come forward and to spend some time looking at themselves in one of the mirrors. The leader could say, "You might like to thank God that he made you - you are made in his image. You might like to thank God that he loves you. You might like to remind yourself that being made in God's image comes with responsibility and ask God to help you to care for all that he has made." At the conclusion of the time remind the congregation to think about these things when they look in the mirror every day this week.</p>
<p><u>Benediction</u></p>  <p><i>See notes for the Songs section.</i></p>	<p>Sing the benediction.</p> <p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 1036 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow</p> <p><i>Note: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow is a shorter option for the benediction. If people with disabilities in the congregation are tired by the end of the meeting the second option may be too long.</i></p> <p><u>Song Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> The Blessing (Chris Brown, Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, Steven Furtick)</p> <p><u>YouTube</u> The Blessing Australia https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOt7baaVSbE</p>

Liturgy 2

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>	<p>Series 1, Meeting 2 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> God’s Love</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>	<p><u>Theme:</u> God’s love is unconditional <u>The Big Idea:</u> God loves us so much that God restores us.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>This call to worship will allow space for people to prepare their hearts for worship as they listen to the song being sung.</i></p>	<p>The call to worship is a solo based on the 23rd Psalm.</p> <p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 23 The Lord’s My Shepherd.</p> <p>If no one is available to sing, the presentation below could be used:</p> <p><u>YouTube</u> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eIQQayhpak</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 29 Have You Ever Stopped to Think How God Loves You 32 How Deep the Father’s Love for Us 64 How Great Is Our God 181 Let the Weak Say I Am Strong 185 Amazing Love 199 Such Love 467 Then How Much More Shall God Our Father 492 God Will Make a Way 645 He Leadeth Me</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> Deep, Deep Love (Terry Butler) Refiners Fire (Brian Doerksen)</p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>	<p><u>Responsive Prayer – Prayer of Confession</u> Based on the 23rd Psalm using the New Revised Standard Version.</p>



*This refrain
can be spoken
and/or signed
using key word
signs. See below the prayer for
the links to the Auslan
Signbank.*

[Leader] The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
Forgive us for the times when we are not satisfied with
what we have. Forgive us when we hoard our resources
and do not share with our neighbors in need.

[All] Lord, restore us.

[Leader] He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

Forgive us for our busyness, our frantic running from
here to there. We fail to stop. We fail to rest. We fail to
come to you.

[All] Lord, restore us.

[Leader] He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Forgive us for the times when we are determined to
choose our own path and go our own way.

[All] Lord, restore us.

[Leader] Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

Forgive us for the times when we choose fear over trust.
When we reject your protection and peace.


[All] Lord, restore us.


[Leader] You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Forgive us for the times when we have rejected the
blessings and gifts that you have offered to us.

[All] Lord, restore us.

[Leader] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,

	<p>and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. Thank you for not giving up on us. Thank you for pursing us with your love. <i>[All] Lord, restore us. Amen.</i></p> <p>The signs below are the key word signs in Auslan. Repair (this is the closest sign to restore): https://www.auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/repair-1.html</p> <p>Us: https://www.auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/us-1.html</p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcements Offering Video Segment: The Psalm 23 Garden is an example of a church being involved in the ministry of restoration. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9OWiYSk1fo</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>There is an opportunity to invite a person with disability to participate in the Scripture reading.</i></p>	<p><u>Romans 8:28-39</u></p> <p>This Scripture reading uses multiple readers. The version below is from the New Living Translation.</p> <p><u>Reader 1:</u> And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.</p> <p><u>Reader 2:</u> For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.</p> <p><u>Reader 3:</u> And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.</p> <p><u>Reader 4:</u> What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?</p>

	<p><u>Reader 1:</u> Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?</p> <p><u>Reader 2:</u> Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself.</p> <p><u>Reader 3:</u> Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.</p> <p><u>Reader 4:</u> Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?</p> <p><u>Reader 1:</u> (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.")</p> <p><u>Reader 2:</u> No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.</p> <p><u>Reader 3:</u> And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.</p> <p><u>Reader 4:</u> No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed,</p> <p><u>All Readers:</u> nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p>  <p><i>This is a basic outline that needs to be developed</i></p>	<p><u>The Big Idea:</u> God loves us so much that God restores us.</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Last week we talked about how God created us in God's image. God loves us. God called everything God</p>

before use to make it your own.

created, including people, good! I hope you have been reminding yourself that God made you in his image and he loves you as you have been looking in the mirror every day this week. Well, today's Bible reading starts with that exact reminder. Romans 8:29 says this, "For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to be like his Son."


1. Jesus Died for Us

Paul continues and tells us that on top of being created like Jesus, or if you like, created in the image of God, he has called us each to come to him. And God has done this through Jesus. God has given us Jesus, and Paul reminds us that it is Jesus who died for us. It is Jesus who was raised to life again, who sits next to God and pleads or talks to God for us. But why does Jesus do all of this for us? Well, we also talked last week about how much God loves us. And that is the answer here – God gave Jesus for us because he loves us.

2. Nothing Can Separate Us from His Love


God loves us so much that we are told that NOTHING, absolutely nothing, can separate us from the love of God. Paul faced some pretty tough things, and he lists some here. What about trouble? Can that separate us from God's love? What about calamity? Can that separate us from God's love? How about if we are persecuted for following Jesus? Can that separate us from God's love? What about if we are hungry and haven't eaten in days? Can that separate us from God's love? Or if we are cold or in danger? Can that separate us from God's love? No! Nothing can separate us! It is all because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross! Jesus loves us and nothing can change that! Jesus loves you and nothing can change that! Paul is so excited about this that he keeps going:



“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell

	<p>can't keep God's love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all of creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (vs 38-39)</p> <p>3. <u>He Restores Us</u></p> <p>Ok, that's great you are saying. So, what does all of this mean? Well, I think Psalm 23 that we have been thinking about during our meeting today helps here. Because this Psalm reminds us that no matter how hard things get (even though I walk through the darkest valley) that God is with us. This is what Paul is telling us! These tough times can't separate us from God's love. But God is also at work in us. God is restoring us in the middle of all of the strife that is around us. God is inviting us to rest beside the peaceful stream. God is our shepherd, guiding us. Caring for us. Providing for us. Loving us. Restoring us.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>This response time gives opportunities for everyone to participate as they are able or as they would like to. People can come forward and take a picture that is meaningful to them. They could write a prayer on the back if that is helpful, or they could draw their prayer. It also provides a visual image to take home to remind the congregation that through Jesus, God restores us.</i></p>	<p>Reflections on restoration. The images will need printing out [see accompanying file: Week 2 God Restores Us Images or Week 2 God Restores Us Images Version 2] of pictures that symbolize restoration. Place the images on the holiness table or mercy seats and ask people to come forward and select a picture that reminds them that God restores. People could be encouraged to write or draw a prayer on the back of the picture they select.</p> <p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 601 The Power of Your Love</p> <p><u>Song Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> All Things New (Ben Fielding and Dean Ussher) Create in Me a Clean Heart (Andy Gilbert)</p> <p>Think about the many things that we love and spend time and money on restoring. How much more does God love us and want to restore us?</p>

<p><u>Benediction</u></p>	<p>Based on Psalm 23</p> <p>[Leader] Go now with your trust in the good shepherd, and let us love, not just in words, but in truth and action. Believe in the name of Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he has commanded us.</p> <p>And may God be at your side, even in valleys of death. May Christ Jesus be the cornerstone of your life. And may the Holy Spirit abide in you ...and tend you with love and mercy all the days of your life.</p> <p>We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, [All]...In the name of Christ. Amen.</p> <p>Copyright © 2003 Nathan Nettleton LaughingBird.net</p>
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Liturgy 3

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>	<p>Series 1: Meeting 3 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> God's Love</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>	<p>Theme: Who does God love? The Big Idea: God's love is for everyone. God's love has no limits.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;">  <p style="font-style: italic;">This call to worship is from engageworship.org. We have added gestures to accompany the text. This provides an opportunity for participation for people who cannot read the response sections. It is hoped that people can follow along with the gestures as we open ourselves up to God during worship. Have one person lead by reading the leader section and another person model the actions.</p> </div>	<p>Open Us Up Prayer by Sam Hargreaves</p> <p>[Hands begin crossed over the chest] [All] Open us up, God: [Move hands until they are outstretched while the leader says ...] [Leader] for all you have for us today.</p> <p>[Hands over eyes] [All] Open our eyes, God: [Move hands away to uncover eyes while the leader says ...] [Leader] to see you reflected in every human face.</p> <p>[Hands over heart] [All] Open our hearts, God: [Move hands away while the leader says ...] [Leader] to know your love for us, vast as the ocean.</p> <p>[Hands over ears] [All] Open our ears, God: [Move them away while the leader says ...] [Leader] to hear the whisper of your Spirit and the wisdom of your Word.</p> <p>[Fists clenched] [All] Open our hands, God: [Unclench fists with palms facing upward while the leader says ...] [Leader] this is your ministry, your Kingdom, your power, your glory.</p>

	<p>[Hands over mouth] [All] Open our lips, God: [Move them away while the leader says ...] [Leader] That our mouths may sing out your praise. [All] Amen</p> <p>© engageworship.org</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 30 He Giveth More Grace 32 How Deep the Father's Love for Us 264 Shout to The Lord 509 O Boundless Salvation 903 We Are Marching in the Light of God</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> God So Loved (Reuben Morgan) I Could Sing of Your Love Forever (Martin Smith) So You Would Come (Russell Fragar) Thank You Lord (Dennis Jernigan)</p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>The images will help reinforce the words of the Psalm while also providing another way for people to engage with what is being read. The congregation has the opportunity to reflect and pray quietly or to voice prayers of praise or thanks.</i></p>	<p><u>Psalm 36:5-10</u> The Psalm can be read one verse at a time while the pictorial representation and the verse are on the screen. As each verse is read pause and invite the congregation to voice short sentence prayers of praise or thanks [see accompanying file: Week 3 Psalm 36 Prayer].</p> <p>⁵Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. [Image of a cloudy sky]</p> <p>⁶Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths. [Image of the mountains and ocean]</p> <p>You care for people and animals alike, O Lord. [Image of people and animals]</p> <p>⁷How precious is your unfailing love, O God!</p>

	<p>All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings. [Image of a large wing]</p> <p>⁸ You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting them drink from your river of delights. [Image of a banquet table]</p> <p>⁹ For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see. [Image of a fountain and streetlight]</p> <p>¹⁰ Pour out your unfailing love on those who love you; give justice to those with honest hearts. [Image of hearts]</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(New Living Translation)</p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcement Offering</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p> <div data-bbox="305 1136 446 1276" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><i>One person can read the Scripture reading. Ask the person to read slowly and intentionally. This gives people the time to listen intently to what is being read. It may also be helpful to have the words on the screen.</i></p>	<p>Romans 3:21-31</p> <p>¹⁹ Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. ²⁰ For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.</p> <p>²¹ But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. ²² We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.</p> <p>²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵ For</p>

God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶ for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

²⁷ Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. ²⁸ So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

²⁹ After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. ³⁰ There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. ³¹ Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law.

(New Living Translation)

The Message Outline



This is a basic outline that needs to be developed before use to make it your own.

Introduction

Can you raise your hand if you know what social media is? Now, keep your hand up if you are on social media. [I am assuming that will be a lot of people in the room]. Social media can be a great way to connect with people and to encounter new ideas, but it can also stink! Because it can be used to create division and conflict. Some people seem to spend a lot of time on social media arguing. Have you noticed that people think it is acceptable to relentlessly argue with someone via a screen when they would never do that in person? People want to be right and will go out of their way to try and prove it.

Well, Paul was facing this kind of problem in Rome. Not with social media, but there was conflict between the house churches, and people were claiming that their house church was right, and the others were wrong.

1. Everyone Falls Short

So, Paul sets out to address this conflict with the house churches. He was not going to jump in the middle and start mediating about who was right and who was wrong. He instead reminds everyone in the house churches that we all fall short of God’s standards. Verse 23 says “For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.”



2. God Is the One Who Is Good

Having levelled the playing field, by reminding everyone in the house churches that they have all fallen short of God’s standard, Paul then goes on to remind them that it is God who is good. It is only by God’s grace and the work of Jesus on the cross that we can be made right with God. Verse 26 says, “God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.”

But this doesn’t give us license to run around and shoot our mouths off about how great we are. We haven’t done anything to earn this grace—this is all about the goodness of God!



3. God’s Love is for Everyone!




We all have the opportunity to be made right with God. It doesn’t matter what we have done or what we think we have done—it doesn’t matter who we are or where we are from. Verse 22 tells us “We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.” No matter who we are! God’s love, God’s grace, God’s forgiveness is for everyone! And just in case we miss the message in verse 22 that we just read we are reminded of this again in verse 29, “After all, is God the

	<p>God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. ³⁰ There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.”</p> <p>It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what you have done or what you think you have or haven't done. God loves you! God gave Jesus for you! All we need to do is accept his love and forgiveness.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>The images for this response time are diverse to reinforce the message that God's love is for everyone!</i></p>	<p>During this response time images will be shown on the screen of “the whosoever.” [see accompanying file: Week 3 Response Presentation] Encourage people to come forward and pray during this time.</p> <p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 490 Don't Assume that God's Dismissed You ...</p> <p><u>Song Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> So You Would Come (Russell Fragar)</p>
<p><u>Benediction</u></p>  <p><i>By including a line that is repetitive people with low literacy will be able to join in with the simple line. Let people know what the response line is before you begin. It is possible to use key word signs for this line as well. Links are below the benediction for the Auslan Signbank.</i></p>	<p>[Leader] From where we are to where you need us, <i>[All] Jesus, now lead on.</i></p> <p>[Leader] From the security of what we know to the adventure of what you will reveal, <i>[All] Jesus, now lead on.</i></p> <p>[Leader] To refashion the fabric of this world until it resembles the shape of your kingdom, <i>[All] Jesus, now lead on.</i></p> <p>[Leader] Because good things have been prepared for those who love God, <i>[All] Jesus, now lead on. Amen.</i></p> <p>© 1999 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland.</p>

	<p>The signs below are the key word signs in Auslan.</p> <p>Jesus: https://www.auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/Jesus-1.html</p> <p>Lead: https://www.auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/lead-1.html</p>
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Liturgy 4

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>	<p>Series 1, Meeting 4 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> God’s Love</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>	<p><u>Theme:</u> Love God, love others <u>The Big Idea:</u> God loves us and calls us to love others—the question is how do we do this?</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;">  <p style="font-style: italic;">This call to worship states that we all come to worship from different circumstances. It doesn’t matter how you have come—you are welcome. This honest message of participation is something that people may not hear in church. People with low literacy could be invited to join in with “we welcome you.”</p> </div>	<p>What Has Brought You Here by Sam Hargreaves</p> <p>[We Say Together] If you’re splashing in streams of abundance, we welcome you – share your joy. If you’re parched in a desert wasteland, we welcome you – share your doubts. If you’re relaxing in the light of contentment, we welcome you – share your peace. If you’re stumbling on a road of suffering, we welcome you – share your pain.</p> <p>[We Pray Together] God of water, earth, light, and brokenness, we welcome you, as you welcome us. Amen.</p> <p>© engageworship.org</p> <p><i>Note: This call to worship was created to link with the song Blessed Be Your Name (Matt and Beth Redman) as the opening song. It is available on CCLI SongSelect.</i></p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;">  <p style="font-style: italic;">There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful.</p> </div>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u></p> <p>39 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee 165 The Servant King 317 Burning, Burning, Brightly Burning 362 Give Me Joy in My Heart, Keep Me Praising 591 I Would Be Thy Holy Temple 618 O to Be Like Thee! 998 Beauty for Brokenness, Hope for Despair</p>

<p><i>Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> Love the Lord (Lincoln Brewster) Show Me Your Ways (Russell Fragar) The Power of Your Name (Lincoln Brewster & Mia Fieldes)</p> <p><u>Songs Available on Praisecharts</u> I am Yours with Take My Life (Michael Neale)</p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>It is important to convey information in a variety of ways to help people participate. Pictorial prayer sheets can be printed for people who are non-verbal to enable participation by pointing to the prayer topics on the sheet.</i></p>	<p><u>Prayers for the World:</u> Invite the congregation to break into small groups/threes/or pairs. Select prayer topics from the current issues in the world. The topics can be placed on the screen with accompanying pictures. Ask people to pray in their groups for the prayer topics.</p> <p><i>Note: It is important to think about the selected images as images can cause distress for people, particularly if they are graphic.</i></p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>  <p><i>There are no words to this story. They are not always necessary to communicate a message.</i></p>	<p>Announcements Offering Video segment - The Good Samaritan https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMyGa5Z_wbI This video segment tells the story of the Good Samaritan with Lego minifigures.</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>This Bible reading focuses on love. Before it is read, hand out a small paper heart to each person in the congregation. Ask people to participate by</i></p>	<p><u>1 John 4:7-21</u></p> <p><u>Reader 1:</u> Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.</p> <p><u>Reader 2:</u> God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have</p>

holding the heart and thinking about what is being said about love as the passage is read. This is also an opportunity to invite a person with a disability to participate as one of the readers.

eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Reader 1: Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

Reader 2: And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. ¹⁴ Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

Reader 1: All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. ¹⁶ We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

Reader 2: God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

Reader 1: Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. ¹⁹ We love each other because he loved us first.

Reader 2: If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? ²¹ And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

(New Living Translation)

The Message Outline



This is a basic outline that needs to be developed before use to make it your own.



Asking what people remember from the week before is a way people can participate. It is also a helpful way of reinforcing what was previously looked at, which helps us all to remember!

Introduction

Over the last three weeks we have looked at God's love.

Can anyone remember what we have talked about?

Week 1: God love us and created us in God's image.

Week 2: God's love is unconditional—God restores us.

Week 3: God loves everyone!

And this week we are going to have a look at what this all means for our lives.

We are pretty good at using the word “love” aren't we.


What are some of the things that you would say you “love”? [give people a chance to call out some of the things that they love] There are lots of things! Love is an important part of our lives. Our Bible passage today reminds us that love comes from God.

1. Real Love Comes from God

And how do we know what this love looks like? It looks like Jesus and his sacrifice on the cross for us. Verses 9 and 10 say, “God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.”

2. We Trust God's Love

Well, it is pretty easy to say that God loves us, and that real love comes from God, but it can sometimes be tricky to believe it, particularly when things are going badly in our lives. We saw an example earlier of something going badly—we saw the man that the Good Samaritan helped. Life wasn't going very well for him, he was robbed, beaten up, and left to die. But John was writing to encourage us to trust God's love. He tells us in verse 14 that we have all the evidence of God's love that we need. It is right there—it is in Jesus. When the going gets tough we need to hang on to what we know and trust the love of God.

	<p>3. <u>We Love Others</u></p> <p>But the passage doesn't stop there. Because we know that real love comes from God, and because we have decided to trust the love of God, we have a responsibility. John says in verse 11, "Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other." He goes on and says in verse 20, "If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?" So just like the Good Samaritan, when we see someone in our church that is hurting, or is struggling, or is just driving us bananas, our response needs to be to reach out in love to that person. We don't cross over the other side of the road. We don't avoid the person. We step in. John continues by telling us that this isn't just a nice idea or a suggestion. Verse 21 says this is what God is telling us to do—to love God and to love others.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>We often forget to use all our senses in worship. This response time is an opportunity to engage all our senses as we spend time sharing in a simplified version of a love feast.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 1005 Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You.</p> <p><u>YouTube</u> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07FBSrx5Oq4</p> <p><u>Love Feast</u> Today we are going to participate in a love feast. As we take the bread and water, we are reminded of the sacrifice that Jesus made for each of us. In a moment I will invite you to come forward to take the bread and water. Rather than going back to your seat, I want you to find someone in the congregation to share this time with. Offer your bread and water to this person as a symbol of your love and willingness to serve others in our church. Eat the bread and drink the water together thanking God for Jesus. If you are comfortable spend a minute praying together.</p>

Benediction



Often, we ask people to close their eyes for the benediction.

A great way to enable participation is to ask people to look at you as you pray this blessing over them.




Pronounce the benediction slowly making intentional eye contact around the room.


Closing Benediction (based on 1 Peter 4:8-10)

Go now into the world,
inspired by the extravagant love of God.
Live generously, with open hands,
loving one another as if your lives depended on it.
Be good stewards of the gifts you have received,
so that God may be glorified in all that you say and do.
And may the abundant love of God surround you,
may the extravagant grace of Jesus Christ sustain you,
and may the constant presence of the Holy Spirit
inspire and encourage you in every good deed and word.
Amen.

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Liturgy 5

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>  <p><i>This four-week series focuses on Romans 12. Each week will be adding another part of the passage and reinforcing the portion from the week before.</i></p>	<p>Series 2, Meeting 1 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> Our Response to the Love of God is ...</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>	<p><u>Theme:</u> Worship <u>The Big Idea:</u> Our response to God’s love is to worship.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>This Psalm will be read enthusiastically as an invitation to the congregation to worship.</i></p>	<p><u>Psalm 100: 1-5</u></p> <p>Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! ² Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. ³ Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. ⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. ⁵ For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(New Living Translation)</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u></p> <p>52 O Worship the King, All Glorious Above 264 Shout to the Lord 337 I Will Enter His Gates 360 Faithful God 369 I Love You Lord 376 King of Kings, Majesty</p>

<p><i>helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p>382 Majesty, Worship His Majesty 397 This Is My Desire 402 When I Look into Your Holiness</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> 10,000 Reasons (Matt Redman & Jonas Myrin) You're Worthy of my Praise (David Ruis)</p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>This way of praying allows people to participate as the words are provided for them.</i></p>	<p><u>Sentence Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving</u></p> <p>Often people are hesitant to pray out loud because they don't know what to say. By providing a selection of Psalms on a piece of paper, people can select the words that they would like to pray. [see accompanying file: Week 5 Psalm Prayers] Give people a few minutes to quietly read through the Psalms. During the prayer time encourage people to read out a verse as their prayer of praise of thanksgiving.</p> <p>This idea has been borrowed from Sam and Sara Hargreaves, <i>Whole Life Worship</i>, p.35</p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcements Offering <u>Prayer Baskets</u> On the first Sunday of the month at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army, we practice prayer baskets. Prayer topics such as the names of members of the corps are prepared in baskets. During the service the congregation come forward and select a slip of paper from the baskets. We will spend time praying for what is on our paper. This might involve connecting with the person whose name we have and asking them specifically for things to pray for. Each person takes their paper home as a prayer item for the month. Everyone is invited to participate in this.</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>	<p><u>Romans 12:1-2</u> [see accompanying file: Week 5 Scripture Visio Divina] Place the image on the screen and give people an opportunity to engage with the image. After a minute</p>



The Scripture reading today is going to use visio divina. People will

have an opportunity to engage silently with an image and to reflect before the words of the Scripture are read. This is a great way to interact with the Scripture for people who have low or no literacy.

or two have someone slowly read the Scripture reading and allow people to continue to dwell on the image. You may like to have a moment afterward of silent or spontaneous prayer.

The Message Outline



This basic outline needs to be developed before use to make it your

own.



For this message you will need to have a picture of the

Kardashian family on the screen.

Introduction

We live in a world that is obsessed by celebrity. We read magazines filled with stories about what these celebrities eat, what they wear, who cuts their hair, and what car they drive, just to name a few things. We follow them on social media. We buy the products they endorse. All in the hope that we will grasp a bit of what they have. You might even say that there are people who worship famous and wealthy people.

[Put image on screen] Can you tell me who these people are? Just think for a minute about the Kardashian family. They have built their celebrity status off the back of the OJ Simpson trial. They have their TV show, they have been splashed across all sorts of media, and have sold millions of dollars of merchandise. There are people will do or pay anything to become like the celebrity they follow. The Kardashians prove this theory—I believe that the family today is worth around 1.4 billion dollars. This is a form of worship.

1. We Live a Life of Worship

But what have the Kardashians got to do with our Bible passage today? We will get to that!



If I said the word “sacrifice” to you, what springs to mind? [giving something up, someone being killed in a war, an offering to a God]. Often when we think of the

word we get pictures of blood, guts, and gore. A sacrifice is costly. Often something or someone loses their life. When I said the word, you might have thought about the Old Testament and how animals were often sacrificed to God to cover up the sins of a person. It is not a pleasant thought. So, if this is how we understand the word sacrifice, what does it mean when Paul tells us that we need to be a living sacrifice?

Verse 1 says, “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind that he will find acceptable.” The good news for us is that God wants us to be a living sacrifice, not a dead one! This means God wants us to live lives that are holy, that is, dedicated to God. This is what it means to worship God. Worship is not about the couple of hours that we set aside on Sunday. That is an important part of what we do as a church, but the whole of our lives are to be an act of worship. Monday right through to Sunday. Each day dedicated to God. That sounds easy, but how do we do this?




2. We Don’t Get Sucked in by the World

Verse 2 starts with Paul telling us, “Don’t copy the behavior of the world.” It can be so easy to get lured into the ways of the world and before we know it—we have changed. Recently I have been watching a TV show on Disney+ called *The Con*. As the title suggests this show follows eight different stories where people were conned. And I sometimes looked at these people and I would think, how did that happen? How did these people get sucked in? But these con artists often played on the vulnerabilities of people by dangling something in front of them: the need to be loved; the fear of missing out; or the desire to be a success. Once they were on the hook of the con artist, they got reeled in. So, if we don’t want to copy the ways of the world, if we don’t want to follow the ways of the Kardashians, what do we do?

	<p>3. <u>We Change the Way We Think</u></p> <p>Again, Paul tells us exactly how we do this. If we don't want to copy the world, we copy or follow God. It is when we do this that God through the Holy Spirit has the ability to work in us and transform the way we think. It can be easy to get stuck in patterns of the world. We want to keep up with the Kardashians and our neighbor. We want to have nice things. We want to be liked. But when we turn to God, we can be free from all that. As we turn our lives toward God, as an act of worship, God transforms us. And this is a process that is never complete. Think of it as a cycle. We step out each day, we dedicate ourselves again to God, we steer clear of the behavior and customs of the world, those things that drag us down and try to pull our focus off God and onto ourselves. As we do this, God works in us by continuing to change the way we think. This is what Paul means when he tells us that this is "truly the way to worship" God. (vs. 1)</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>People can be invited to either come forward to pray at the holiness table or mercy seats or they could spend time in prayer where they are.</i></p>	<p>Suggested Songs:</p> <p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u></p> <p>66 The Power of Your Love 635 The Heart of Worship</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u></p> <p>10,000 Reasons (Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin)</p> <p>Spend some time in prayer asking that God would continue to renew our minds as we seek to worship him each day.</p>
<p><u>Benediction</u></p>  <p><i>By including a line that is repetitive people with low literacy will be able to join in with the simple line. Let the congregation know what the response line is before</i></p>	<p>[Leader] From where we are to where you need us, <i>[All] Jesus, now lead on.</i></p> <p>[Leader] From the security of what we know to the adventure of what you will reveal, <i>[All] Jesus, now lead on.</i></p> <p>[Leader] To refashion the fabric of this world</p>

<p><i>you begin. It would be possible to use key word signs for this line as well. Links are below the prayer for the Auslan Signbank. This was used as the benediction for week 3. Repeating the same activity is helpful for people. The more familiar it is the easier it will be for people with intellectual disabilities to participate.</i></p>	<p>until it resembles the shape of your kingdom, <i>[All] Jesus, now lead on.</i></p> <p>[Leader] Because good things have been prepared for those who love God, <i>[All] Jesus, now lead on. Amen.</i></p> <p>© 1999 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland.</p> <p>The signs below are the key word signs in Auslan. Jesus: https://www.auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/Jesus-1.html</p> <p>Lead: https://www.auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/lead-1.html</p>
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Liturgy 6

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>  <p><i>This four-week series focuses on Romans 12. Each week will be adding another part of the passage and reinforcing the portion from the week before.</i></p>	<p>Series 2, Meeting 2</p> <p><u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> Our Response to the Love of God is ...</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>	<p><u>Theme:</u> Fellowship</p> <p><u>The Big Idea:</u> Everyone has a place to belong at church.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>This call to worship will allow space for people to prepare their hearts for worship as they listen to the song being sung.</i></p>	<p><u>Song Psalm 24</u></p> <p>Song by Keith & Kristyn Getty</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsOZ3UsUbNA</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u></p> <p>34 I Believe that God the Father 39 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee 506 Lord You Know That We Love You 874 Jesus My Lord Will Love Me Forever 903 We are Marching 971 Onward Christian Soldiers</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u></p> <p>Bind Us Together (Bob Gillman) We Are One Body (Ed Kerr & Paul Baloche) You Are Holy (Reuben Morgan)</p>

Prayer



This prayer has a short repetitive phrase to help people participate. It is helpful to let people know what the response line is before the prayer starts so people with low literacy can join in.

Psalm 24 Responsive Prayer

[Leader] The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.
The world and all its people belong to him.

² For he laid the earth's foundation on the seas
and built it on the ocean depths.

[All] He reigns! The Lord reigns!

[Leader] Who may climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who may stand in his holy place?

⁴ Only those whose hands and hearts are pure,
who do not worship idols and never tell lies.

[All] He reigns! The Lord reigns!

[Leader] They will receive the Lord's blessing
and have a right relationship with God their Savior.

⁶ Such people may seek you
and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob.

[All] He reigns! The Lord reigns!

[Leader] Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.

⁸ Who is the King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty;
the Lord, invincible in battle.




[All] He reigns! The Lord reigns!

[Leader] Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.

¹⁰ Who is the King of glory?
The Lord of Heaven's Armies—
he is the King of glory.

[All] He reigns! The Lord reigns!

Amen.

<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>  <p><i>Hearing the stories of others can be a significant part of worship. If someone is hesitant to share, they could always be interviewed and given the questions in advance. This is a great way to provide opportunities to participate for people with intellectual disabilities.</i></p>	<p>Announcements Offering Testimony: ask someone in advance and give them the theme to speak on such as belonging or God reigns. It is helpful if the testimony fits in with the theme of the meeting.</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>The Scripture reading today is going to use visio divina. People will have an opportunity to engage silently with an image and to reflect before the words of the Scripture are read. This is a great way to interact with the Scripture for people who have low or no literacy.</i></p>	<p><u>Romans 12:[1-2] 3-5</u> [see accompanying file: Week 6 Scripture Visio Divina] Place the image on the screen and give people an opportunity to engage with the image. After a minute or two have someone slowly read the Scripture reading and allow people to continue to dwell on the image. The Scripture will begin at verse one, which will reinforce the Scripture that was read last week. You may like to have a moment afterward of silent or spontaneous prayer.</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p>  <p><i>This basic outline needs to be developed before use to make it your own.</i></p>	<p><u>Introduction</u> Back in 2005 a movie came out with the title <i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i>. The story follows a young girl, Opal, who has moved to a new town with her preacher Dad. Opal has moved around a lot and just wants to find a place to belong. One day she comes across something very special ... [see clip from <i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i> of Opal meeting Winn-Dixie for the first time. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_IQQLmePKs]</p>



The message today has a short clip from the film

Because of Winn-Dixie. *The CCLI CVL should cover the copyright for using this clip in Australia.*


As Opal looks after the mischievous Winn-Dixie, she finds herself encountering a whole range of different people all over town. By the end of the movie Opal has found a place where she belongs, and it was all because of Winn-Dixie.


We all, just like Opal, have a need to belong. And our passage from Romans 12 today gives us some good advice about how we go about this in the church. And today we are going to do something a bit different, we are going to work through our passage backwards!

1. **We Are All Part of Christ's Body**



I want you to stop for a minute and just have a look at your body. Think about all the different parts. Have a look at your hand. Did you know in one hand you have 27 different bones? Just think about all the things that we do with the muscles and bones in our hands. Our hands can do lots of things, but our hands are not feet. Our feet are pretty important, but we can't smell with our feet because our feet are not our nose (just as well we all think because that would be a bit stinky!).



We have so many different parts in our body and each one of them does something different. And for many of us we have parts of our bodies that don't do everything that they are supposed to. I have to wear glasses because my eyes don't work properly, and my glasses help me to see a bit better. Some people don't hear very well and wear a hearing aid or use sign language to communicate. Just because some of our bodies work a bit differently doesn't mean that the parts are not important. All of the parts still have a job to do. This is what Paul is telling us in verse 4. That every part of our body is important and has a unique purpose. He then goes on in verse 5 and tells us that in Christ's body—that is the church—that we are all a part of it. We each belong. And we don't just belong to Jesus, we belong to each other!




	<p>2. <u>Belonging Takes Humility</u></p> <p>Before Paul talks about belonging, he gives some pretty random advice. He says this halfway through verse 3, “Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.” So, Paul is telling us that it is important that we don’t have a big head. We need to have an honest opinion of who we are. But the opposite of this is also true. We don’t want to run around and put ourselves down and think less of ourselves either. This is where we fake humility in the hope that people will shower praise on us. Paul is encouraging us to be honest with ourselves. Just like we are honest with what our actual bodies can do. I know I cannot go out and run a marathon tomorrow. That is not something that I can do. I need to be honest with myself about the things that I am good at and the things that I struggle with or can’t do. It is when we are genuinely honest that we can live in true humility. But why is this important and what has this got to do with belonging?</p> <p>3. <u>When We Know Ourselves, We Can Accept Others</u></p> <p>They way that we can accept others for who they are is by accepting who we are, warts and all. When we puff ourselves up, we look down our noses at others. When we make ourselves small, we tend to be critical of people who can do things that we can’t. When we are honest with ourselves, and accept ourselves for who we are, for who God has created us to be, then we are in the place where we can genuinely embrace others. Remember Paul tells us that we don’t just belong to Jesus, we also belong to each other. When we accept ourselves, we can accept others and when we do this we know that we belong.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>Have a trestle table set up at the front of the</i></p>	<p>Suggested songs to sing/play:</p> <p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 874 Jesus My Lord Will Love Me Forever 875 Jesus Put This Song into Our Hearts</p>

<p><i>church with a large sheet of butcher paper. In the middle in large letters, is “We Belong Together.” People can participate by coming forward and either drawing themselves or sticking a photograph onto the paper. This banner can be hung in the church as a reminder.</i></p>	<p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> With All I Am (Reuben Morgan)</p> <p>Invite the congregation to come forward and to draw a picture of themselves on the paper as a symbol that we belong together. They will need to write their name underneath their drawing. If you are concerned that people will not want to draw themselves, you could ask the week before for people to bring a photo of themselves (warning that they will not get it back). They can then come forward and stick their photo on the banner, writing their name underneath.</p>
<p><u>Benediction</u></p>  <p><i>See notes for the Songs section.</i></p>	<p>Sing the benediction.</p> <p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 1036 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.</p> <p><i>Note: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow is a shorter option for the benediction. If people with disabilities in the congregation are tired by the end of the meeting, the second option may be too long.</i></p> <p><u>Song Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> The Blessing (Chris Brown, Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, Steven Furtick)</p> <p><u>YouTube</u> The Blessing Australia https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOt7baaVSbE</p>

Liturgy 7

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>  <p><i>This four-week series focuses on Romans 12. Each week will be adding another part of the passage and reinforcing the portion from the week before.</i></p>	<p>Series 2, Meeting 3</p> <p><u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> Our Response to the Love of God is ...</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>	<p><u>Theme:</u> Service</p> <p><u>The Big Idea:</u> Everyone has a part to play; we each have a gift to share.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>The call to worship has a simple refrain to encourage participation. It can also be used with key word signs. Links are below the call to worship for the Auslan Signbank. Let people know what the response line is before the start so people with low literacy will be able to participate.</i></p>	<p><u>Psalm 150</u></p> <p><i>[All] Praise the Lord!</i></p> <p>[Leader] Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heaven!</p> <p><i>[All] Praise the Lord!</i></p> <p>[Leader] Praise him for his mighty works; praise his unequalled greatness! Praise him with a blast of the ram's horn; praise him with the lyre and harp!</p> <p><i>[All] Praise the Lord!</i></p> <p>[Leader] Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes! Praise him with a clash of cymbals; praise him with loud clanging cymbals.</p> <p><i>[All] Praise the Lord!</i></p> <p>[Leader] Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord!</p> <p><i>[All] Praise the Lord!</i></p>

	<p>The signs below are the key word signs in Auslan. Praise: https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/praise-1.html</p> <p>Lord: https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/Lord-1.html</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u></p> <p>14 For the Beauty of the Earth 32 How Deep the Father’s Love for Us 326 Thou Christ of Burning Cleansing Flame 355 The Potter’s Hand 397 This Is My Desire, to Honor You 568 All That I Am 861 In Christ Alone My Hope is Found 938 We Have Caught the Vision Splendid 1010 Peace in Our Time, O Lord</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u></p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>This prayer time uses silent participation. A leader will lead the time and provide the topics people can meditate on and pray about. Space needs to be provided between the different topics for silent reflection and prayer.</i></p>	<p><u>Silent Prayer</u></p> <p>In our meeting today we are thinking about the gifts that we have and how we each have a role to play in our church.</p> <p>Spend the next few moments thinking about the gifts that you have. Silently thank God for these.</p> <p>You might also like to think about how you use what God has given you in our church.</p> <p>If you don’t know what your gifts are, ask God to show you.</p> <p>Pray for others in our church family that God will help them to use their gifts.</p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcements Offering</p>

<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>The Scripture reading today is going to use visio divina. People will have an opportunity engage silently with an image and to reflect before the words of the Scripture are read. This is a great way to interact with the Scripture for people who have low or no literacy.</i></p>	<p><u>Romans 12:[1-5] 6-8</u></p> <p>[see accompanying file: Week 7 Scripture Visio Divina]</p> <p>Place the image on the screen and give people an opportunity to engage with the image. After a minute or two have someone slowly read the Scripture reading and allow people to continue to dwell on the image. The Scripture will begin at verse one, which will reinforce the Scripture that was read in the previous weeks. You may like to have a moment afterward of silent or spontaneous prayer.</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p>  <p><i>This basic outline needs to be developed before use to make it your own.</i></p>  <p><i>This message requires a bit of help from the church musicians.</i></p> <p><i>They will need to be willing to go along with the introduction and be willing to be singled out of the group. If this is not possible, there is an alternate introduction. Members of the congregation will be able to participate by calling out answers and enjoying the general silliness of the introduction.</i></p>	<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>You will need to make sure you have sung a song just before the message. This is the song that you will use for the introduction.</p> <p>I am always amazed that bands have a whole group of different things going on all at once but when each instrument is played it makes a beautiful piece of music. Now I wonder what would happen to our piece of music if some members of the band only played half the song, or didn't play at all? Let's give that a go. I am going to ask the guitar to not play, and I am going to ask the piano to only play the left-hand part of the music. And I want the alto line for the singers. On the count of three I am going to ask the band to play. Count with me "1, 2, 3!" How do you think that sounded? Maybe we need to give it another go. [make another mess with the musicians] Was it as good as when we sung this song a few minutes ago? Why not? Every member of the band is important, and we need each member to contribute their part for the song to sound good. When that doesn't happen, it isn't just the band that misses out, we all do.</p> <p><u>Alternate Introduction:</u></p> <p>[Start with Pentatonix "The Prayer"]</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnvzwAPqniU</p>


Acapella is amazing. I am always stunned by how a few voices can come together and make music without the use of any instruments at all. Each person had a part in the music that they sing and when the parts all come together it results in this magnificent song. We just watched “The Prayer” from Pentatonix. What would have happened if Scott didn’t sing his part? [Scott is the blonde bloke—the song just wouldn’t have worked]. Or if Kevin didn’t do his beat boxing? It would have sounded wrong. Every member of Pentatonix is important and every member has an important part to play in the group.

1. We All Belong

Last week we looked at Romans 12:3-5 and you might remember that we were talking about belonging. That we are members of Christ’s body, the Church. We belong to Jesus. Everyone is a different part of the body, and we all have different roles to play. We all can’t be feet. But Paul also reminds us that we belong to each other as well. And the way we help others to belong is by knowing ourselves.

2. We All Contribute

Well Paul builds upon that very idea in today’s section of Romans 12. And he tells us in verse 6 that as part of this body that we belong to, we each have different things to contribute. He says, “In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.” So, we don’t just belong. God has equipped us all to contribute to serve. He goes on and says, if God has given you the ability to prophesy, [that is to declare the things of God], then you are to speak. And you speak out as much as you can with the amount of faith as God has given you. If God has equipped you to serve other people, then you are to serve and in the New Living Translation it is says to serve “well.” If you have the gift of teaching, then you are to use that gift to teach others. If your gift is to encourage others, then go and encourage the people around you with all that you have. If God has gifted you with the ability to give, then you are to give and be generous about it. If God has gifted you to lead, then take that seriously and

	<p>lead others. If you have been given the gift of kindness then be kind, and Paul adds, “do it gladly.”</p> <p>These are just some of the things that God gifts us or equips us to do for his church. But whatever that looks like, you are to grab the gift and run with it. Because it’s not about you. It is about building up the people around you.</p> <p>3. <u>That Means Everyone</u></p> <p>When we belong to God’s church, we are part of the body. This means that Paul’s words apply to us. God has gifted us each. Gifts aren’t just given to the beautiful people, or smart people, or tall people. There is no asterisk on this passage that says it is only for some people. People who are tall, or people who are beautiful, or people who are smart—everyone has been given a gift. Everyone! Verse 6, “In his grace, God HAS given us different gifts.” Every single person in our church, both kids and adults, have been gifted by God and have something to contribute. And whatever that is, Paul tells us to use that gift to the best of our abilities. Because ultimately it will bless others and strengthen the church.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>Have pictures of gifts on the holiness table and mercy seats. Place some pens and pencils out as well.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 623 Take My Life</p> <p><u>Songs Available on Praisecharts</u> I Am Yours with Take My Life (Michael Neale)</p> <p>Invite people to come forward and take a picture of a gift as a reminder that we all have gifts to contribute. If you would like to, write down or drawn what it is God has given you to share. [see accompanying file: Week 7 Response Cards] If people are unsure of their gifting or how they can contribute to the church, you could invite them to come forward after the meeting to have a conversation about this.</p>

Benediction








The benediction today is read by one person as a blessing and charge to the congregation. Invite the congregation to participate by keeping their eyes open and receiving the blessing and charge.

Do not be conformed to the ways of the world,
to its cynicism, fear, and divisions.
But let your mind and heart continually be open
to transformation,
to goodness,
to all the possibilities of God.
Go in peace:
transform the world,
do good,
embody in your life all that is possible through God.
[All] Amen.

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Liturgy 8

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>  <p><i>This four-week series focuses on Romans 12. Each week will be adding another part of the passage and reinforcing the portion from the week before.</i></p>	<p>Series 2, Meeting 4 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> Our Response to the Love of God Is ...</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>	<p><u>Theme:</u> Discipleship <u>The Big Idea:</u> Discipleship is love in action.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>The call to worship today is a video clip of Jesus calling the disciples.</i></p>	<p>Commence with the following clip:</p> <p>Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7xNnBHM5Wg</p> <p>At the completion of the clip: “Jesus calls us each to come. The invitation is for you today. To come, to follow, to worship.”</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 39 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee 165 The Servant King 317 Burning, Burning, Brightly Burning 362 Give Me Joy in My Heart, Keep Me Praising 591 I Would Be Thy Holy Temple 618 O to Be Like Thee! 998 Beauty for Brokenness, Hope for Despair</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> Love the Lord (Lincoln Brewster) Show Me Your Ways (Russell Fragar) The Power of Your Name (Lincoln Brewster & Mia Fieldes)</p> <p><u>Songs Available on Praisecharts</u> I Am Yours with Take My Life (Michael Neale)</p>

<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>The prayer today is a responsive prayer with the congregation being invited to join in with a simple, repetitive refrain. Tell people what the line is at the start so people with low literacy will be able to participate.</i></p>	<p><u>Psalm 25:1-7</u></p> <p>[Leader] O Lord, I give my life to you. I trust in you, my God! <i>[All] Show me your ways, Lord.</i></p> <p>[Leader] Do not let me be disgraced, or let my enemies rejoice in my defeat. No one who trusts in you will ever be disgraced, but disgrace comes to those who try to deceive others. <i>[All] Show me your ways, Lord.</i></p> <p>Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. <i>[All] Show me your ways, Lord.</i></p> <p>[Leader] All day long I put my hope in you. Remember, O Lord, your compassion and unfailing love, which you have shown from long ages past. Do not remember the rebellious sins of my youth. Remember me in the light of your unfailing love, for you are merciful, O Lord. <i>[All] Show me your ways, Lord.</i> <i>Amen.</i></p> <p>Note: This time of prayer could be concluded by singing the song “Show Me Your Ways” from the song list above.</p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcements Offering</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>The Scripture reading today is going to use visio divina. People will</i></p>	<p><u>Romans 12:[1-8] 9-21</u></p> <p>[see accompanying file: Week 8 Scripture Visio Divina] Place the image on the screen and give people an opportunity to engage with the image. After a minute or two have someone slowly read the Scripture reading</p>

<p><i>have an opportunity to engage silently with an image and to reflect before the words of the Scripture are read. This is a great way to interact with the Scripture for people who have low or no literacy.</i></p>	<p>and allow people to continue to dwell on the image. The Scripture reading will start at verse one, which will reinforce the verses that have been read in the previous weeks. You may like to have a moment afterward of silent or spontaneous prayer.</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p> <div data-bbox="305 573 446 716"> </div> <p><i>This basic outline needs to be developed before use to make it your own.</i></p> <div data-bbox="305 835 446 978"> </div> <p><i>Have a short obstacle course set up. You will need to ask someone in the congregation to go through the obstacle course. Once it is completed you will need to ask for a volunteer to do the course blindfolded. They will need to listen to instructions from the first volunteer to get through the course. Others will have an opportunity to participate in this during the response time.</i></p>	<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Over the last three weeks we have been looking at Romans 12 and thinking about our response to God’s love. We respond to God’s love in worship. Can anyone tell me what it means to worship God? [Live each day for God and allow God to change the way we think.] Then in week 2 we talked about what it means to belong. When we follow Jesus, everyone belongs to the church and to each other. Can anyone remember what we talked about last week? [We each have a part to play.] Well today we are going to look at the last part of Romans 12 and to help us to do that I need two volunteers.</p> <p>[For this section you will ask for two volunteers to come and complete the simple obstacle course. The first volunteer can do the obstacle course. The second person is going to be blind folded, and they will need to follow the instructions of the first volunteer to complete the course.]</p> <p>Thank you to our volunteers this morning! The only way volunteer 2 was able to get through the obstacle course was by following the instructions from volunteer 1. Volunteer 1 knew the way because they had been there, they saw what the course was like. We could perhaps say that volunteer 2 needed to be the disciple of volunteer 1 to get through the course. This is a bit like Romans 12. Paul is telling other Christians what it means to follow Jesus, to be a disciple. And he continues with his instructions in our section today.</p>


1. Love Each Other

One of the important things of being part of God’s church is to love each other. And Paul doesn’t mess around with this. He says, “don’t fake it.” Really love each other. In fact, he says to take delight in honoring each other. That means that we are to take great pleasure in being respectful toward each other. Loving each other looks like being there and helping when someone is in need. It also means being hospitable to each other. Being hospitable is more than having someone over for a meal. This is a way of life where we create spaces for each other that are welcoming. That could be in our homes, it could be in our office at work, it could be in our church. If we get stuck on our obstacle course of life and are not sure we are getting it right, we can look at Jesus and how he lived his life. We follow how he loved others.

2. Let People In

Just in case we haven’t got all of that, Paul keeps going and gives us a few more examples to follow. In verse 15 Paul says that we are to, “be happy with those who are happy.” That means we celebrate with the people who have got something to celebrate. It is great to rejoice about the good things in people’s lives. But we are also encouraged to, “weep with those who weep.” We are to share together when life is hard. Did you notice Paul did not say we needed to have all the answers for others? We just need to show up, to sit, and listen.

Part of loving each other means being vulnerable enough to share when things are going well and when they are not going well. Again, if this feels too hard and we aren’t sure we are getting it right on this obstacle course of life—we can look to Jesus and see how he lived. He celebrated with others, but he also wept with others and shared their pain. We look to Jesus to see what it means to live a life of vulnerability.

	<p>3. <u>We Trust God</u></p> <p>“But” I hear you thinking—what about the people we encounter who are just horrible? Do we really need to love them? Again, Paul tells us in verse 14 that we need to “bless those who persecute” us. We are to pray a blessing over them. And then again in verse 17 he says that we don’t dish out evil with evil. That is not the way a disciple behaves. Instead, we are to do everything to live peaceful lives. But what if someone has hurt us? Is it ok to plan some revenge? [maybe nothing horrendous—perhaps just spit in their coffee?] “No,” says Paul. As a disciple it is our job to trust God. We are to leave all of that up to God. Instead, we are told to go and care for our enemies by meeting their needs.</p> <p>None of this is easy, but as we navigate this obstacle course of life as a disciple, we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus because we know that he knows the way, and we follow him.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>If you use the obstacle course as part of the response time, please make sure it is accessible as much as possible to all congregation members.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 589 I’ll Follow Thee</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me (Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, Rich Thompson)</p> <p>For this time of response, you might like to invite people to come forward and stand on the obstacle course or to walk the course slowly (like you would a labyrinth) and spend some time in prayer. As people go along the course, encourage them to pause before each obstacle and invite them to spend time praying for God to guide their steps as they seek to follow Jesus by loving others, even the people whom we find really difficult to love.</p>

Benediction



*See notes for
the Songs
section.*

Sing the Benediction.



The Salvation Army Songbook


959 I'll Go in the Strength of the Lord



Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect



I Will Follow (Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Reuben Morgan)

Liturgy 9

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>	<p>Series 3, Meeting 1 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>  <p><i>This series uses the song Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me. Each week we will reflect on a different verse of the song. The repetition of using the song each week will help to reinforce what we are learning.</i></p>	<p><u>The Big Idea:</u> We have hope and peace because of Jesus.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>The call to worship today is a responsive call to worship. People can participate by joining in with the response. Because the sentence is long key word signs can be used to give an option for participation. See below the prayer for the links to the Auslan Signbank.</i></p>	<p><u>Psalm 84:1-4</u></p> <p>[Leader] King of all the earth, Creator of the universe, Holy Triune God, From everlasting to everlasting, you are Lord. Our souls long for your courts, O Lord of hosts. <i>[All] Happy are we who dwell in your house and are ever praising you!</i></p> <p>[Leader] Our hearts and our flesh rejoice in the living God. <i>[All] Happy are we who dwell in your house and are ever praising you!</i></p> <p>[Leader] We have found a home in your presence, our King and our God. <i>[All] Happy are we who dwell in your house and are ever praising you!</i></p> <p>[Leader] Who is like our God, the One who strengthens his people,</p>

	<p>the One who reveals himself to all who seek after him? This is our God, the Holy One. Come before him with thanksgiving and offer him the sacrifice of praise. <i>[All] Happy are we who dwell in your house and are ever praising you! Amen.</i></p> <p>Excerpted from a longer prayer posted on the Oratiocontemplativa website.</p> <p>The signs below are the key word signs in Auslan. Happy: https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/happy-1.html</p> <p>House: https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/house-1.html</p> <p>Praise: https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/praise-1.html</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u></p> <p>26 Great Is Thy Faithfulness 87 Jesus What a Beautiful Name 114 Here I Am to Worship 231 Praise Him! Praise Him! 373 Jesus, Be the Centre 389 Rejoice! Rejoice! Christ is in You. 628 Thou Art the Way 662 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> Cornerstone (Edward Mote, Eric Liljero, Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan, William Batchelder Bradly) Glory (Let There Be Peace) (Chris Stevens, Matt Maher, Rachel Taylor Popadic) Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me (Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, & Rich Thompson)* must be included as it is the theme song for the month.</p>

<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>The prayer time today will be around the theme of peace. Place prayer topics on the screen (with images that are appropriate) and ask people to pray for peace in the world. A sheet with the images can be printed out for people who are non-verbal so they can participate in the prayer time.</i></p>	<p><u>Prayers for Our World</u></p> <p>Invite the congregation to pray for current world events and situations around the theme of peace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace in the world • Peace in people’s lives/families • Peace in whatever current situation is occurring at the time <p><i>Note: It is important to think about the selected images as images can cause distress for people, particularly if they are graphic.</i></p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcements Offering</p> <p><u>Prayer Baskets</u></p> <p>On the first Sunday of the month at the Mooroolbark Salvation Army, we practice prayer baskets. Prayer topics such as the names of members of the corps are prepared in baskets. During the service the congregation come forward and select a slip of paper from the baskets. We will spend time praying for what is on our paper. This might involve connecting with the person whose name we have and asking them specifically for things to pray for. Each person takes their paper home as a prayer item for the month. Everyone is invited to participate in this.</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>This Scripture reading will be based on lectio divina. The congregation will be asked to reflect on some questions as the passage is read slowly. The passage will be built upon each week and a</i></p>	<p><u>Romans 5:1-2</u></p> <p>[see accompanying file: Week 9 Scripture Lectio Divina]</p> <p>Put the words of the Scripture reading on the screen. Have one person read the verses through thoughtfully. Give some time for silent reflection afterwards. Make sure someone reads the reflection question for people who may struggle to do so on their own. [The</p>

<p><i>different reflection question will be asked.</i></p>	<p>reflection questions are on the PowerPoint file mentioned above]</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p>  <p><i>This basic outline needs to be developed before use to make it your own.</i></p>  <p><i>Introduction will have several words on the screen, people will be asked what the word means. The final grouping of words will be “piece” and “peace.” [see accompanying file: Week 9 Homophones Slides]</i></p>	<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>The English language is a bit strange. There are so many words that sound the same, yet they are spelt differently and have different meanings. You have “there” and “their,” “principle” and “principal,” “wait” and “weight,” “weather” and “whether,” “here” and “hear,” “deer” and “dear,” “serial” and “cereal.” The line, “my husband is a cereal killer” can mean two VERY different things!</p> <p>[note an alternate introduction could be to play the clip “Homophones” by Veggie Tales. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjGiNJU4Aq0]</p> <p>What about this “piece” and “peace.” Can you tell me what the first version of piece is? [I am going to have a piece of pizza]. What about peace? [there was a feeling of peace].</p> <p>The confusion around peace is not just a problem in English, it is also one of those words that gets a bit lost in translation. The word used in the Bible that is translated peace is “shalom” and although peace is a part of what it means, it means way more than our English word can capture. Shalom is about well-being, it is about wholeness, it is about flourishing in every part of our lives.</p> <p>1. <u>We Are Right with God So We Have Peace</u></p> <p>So, when we read in our passage today, “Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.” (v. 1) This is more than just the absence of fear, and more than just a feeling of calm. We have shalom. We have well-being. We are whole. We have the opportunity to flourish in our lives.</p>

And this is all because of what Jesus has done for us by making us right with God.



2. Because of Jesus We Are in a Place of Privilege

The passage goes on and in the first part of verse 2 it says, “Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of underserved privilege.” We are a privileged people because of Jesus. You may have heard the famous saying that says “With great power comes great responsibility.” I would like to suggest today, that with great privilege comes great responsibility. This privilege that is given to us by Jesus is not a privilege that we want to waste.




3. We Can Have Confidence in God



This privilege means that, “we can confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.” But it also means that as we look around at all of the terrible things going on around us in our world, we have a responsibility to stand and declare God’s shalom, God’s peace with our words and actions. But as we declare this peace, we are also released from despair. We know that no matter what happens God’s got this. Nothing takes God by surprise. It is because of this that we can hope in God. Verse 20 of chapter 4 says this, “Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise.” Abraham didn’t give up no matter how tough things seemed. He did some pretty stupid things, but despite that, he held onto the promise that God gave him. The verse continues and says, “In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises.”

Hope—we hope in a God who showed us his love through Jesus. We hope in a God that despite the things that go on in our life and world that we can experience his shalom. We hope in a God who promises to be with us.

<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>The repetition of this song over the four weeks will assist people in participating.</i></p>	<p>For the next four weeks we are going to do two things the same each week. We are going to be journeying together through Romans 5:1-11 and we are going to be singing one song as a theme song if you will. The song is “Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me.” I want to draw your attention today to the words of the first verse.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer There is no more for heaven now to give He is my joy my righteousness and freedom My steadfast love my deep and boundless peace <p><u>Chorus</u> To this I hold my hope is only Jesus For my life is wholly bound to his Oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine Yet not I but through Christ in me.</p> <p>As we sing you might like to spend some time in prayer. You could come forward to the mercy seats or holiness table if you would like someone to pray with you. You might like to spend some time thanking God for the peace and hope that he gives and for all that he has done through Jesus.</p>
<p><u>Benediction</u></p>  <p><i>There are two versions of the Lord’s Prayer to select from for the benediction. One includes Auslan.</i></p>	<p>The Lord’s Prayer</p> <p>The Lord’s Prayer Sung in Auslan: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-6x-Duf6Jo</p> <p>The Lord’s Prayer Hymn: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IGN6Fq_mIU</p>

Liturgy 10

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>	<p>Series 3, Meeting 2 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>  <p><i>This series uses the song Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me. Each week we will reflect on a different verse of the song. The repetition of using the song each week will help to reinforce what we are learning.</i></p>	<p><u>The Big Idea:</u> When we face problems, we can rejoice in God.</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>The call to worship today will be read by one person.</i></p>	<p><u>Lamentations 3:22-26</u> ²² The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. ²³ Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. ²⁴ I say to myself, “The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!” ²⁵ The Lord is good to those who depend on him, to those who search for him. ²⁶ So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the Lord. <p style="text-align: right;">[New Living Translation]</p></p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing,</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 2 All Creatures of Our God and King 25 God’s Love to Me Is Wonderful 39 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee 64 How Great Is Our God 279 To God Be the Glory 369 I Love You, Lord 398 This Is the Day 486 Be Glad in The Lord and Rejoice</p>

<p><i>playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> Deep, Deep Love (Terry Butler) Still (Reuben Morgan) Thank You Lord (Dennis Jernigan) Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me (Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, & Rich Thompson) *must be included as it is the theme song for the month.</p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>It is helpful to cue some people beforehand to be aware of people in the congregation who may be on their own or visiting for the day. Make sure that everyone is invited to participate in a group.</i></p>	<p><u>Prayers for Each Other</u> Invite the congregation to break off into pairs or small groups. Spend some time praying for each other and particularly for the challenges that each member of the group might be facing.</p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcements Offering</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>This Scripture reading will be based on lectio divina. The congregation will be asked to reflect on some questions as the passage is read slowly. The passage will be built upon each week and a different reflection question will be asked.</i></p>	<p><u>Romans 5:[1-2] 3-5</u> [see accompanying file: Week 10 Scripture Lectio Divina]</p> <p>Put the words to the Scripture reading on the screen. Have one person read the verses through thoughtfully. Give some time for silent reflection afterwards. Make sure someone reads the reflection questions for people who may struggle to do so on their own. [The questions are on the PowerPoint file mentioned above.]</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p>	<p><u>Introduction</u> Problems. Nobody likes them. Nobody wants them. Even the definition of the word problem is awful. According to the dictionary online a problem is “a</p>



own.

This basic outline needs to be developed before use to make it your


matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome.” So, when we read passages like today’s it might leave us scratching our heads a little bit. Because Paul tells us in verse 3 that, “we can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials.” Hang on, rejoice too? That word “too” links us back to our passage last week. Where Paul says we can “confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.” Hope. We hope in what God has done and trust him for the future.

1. We Can Rejoice When Faced with Problems

In other words, “God’s got this.” We can trust God. So, if that is the case then the next logical step is to rejoice. But do we really want to rejoice in our problems? What does Paul mean? Before we jump into that I think we need to point out that Paul is not telling us to rejoice IN our problems. We don’t rejoice because we face an uncertain diagnosis. We don’t rejoice because we can’t pay our bills this month. We don’t rejoice because our best friend just died. These are all challenges that we might face. Paul is telling us that we rejoice because of what Christ has done. We can face our problems because of Christ.

2. Problems Build Character

Paul then tells us that problems actually do something for us. They help us to learn to endure. Just think about Thomas Edison for a minute. This guy was an incredible inventor. Yet not all of his inventions paid off. According to *The New Yorker* magazine, here are some of his best inventions: the light bulb; the phonograph; the dictation machine; the alkaline battery; a sap extractor; a talking doll; an electric pen; a fruit preserver; and a tornado-proof house. Now these are just some of the things he invented in his lifetime. But Edison also had some epic failures: ink for the blind; concrete furniture; and he also tried some innovations in the mining industry that lost him a lot of money. It is thought Edison tried several thousand different ways of perfecting the light bulb

	<p>before he came up with the one we know today. Several thousand. Now that is endurance! And Paul tells us that enduring in the face of our problems builds character. And character leads to hope of salvation.</p> <p>3. <u>Hope Never Disappoints</u></p> <p>Notice Paul doesn't say that facing our problems leads us to overcome our problems. Sometimes we may overcome and that is fantastic. We thank God for those times. But sometimes problems are that big they may never be overcome. I think of the 10.7 million African slaves who ended up in America. They endured some horrific situations. They were ripped from their land and family. They were not free to make decisions about their lives. They were used and abused. Treated as subhuman. I am sure the struggles they faced seemed insurmountable. But we can see from the African American spirituals that the African people trapped in slavery turned to and hoped in God. Knowing, as Paul says, "this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know that God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." This is why we rejoice.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>This response time has two opportunities to participate. 1. Watching/listening to the clip as it is played. 2. Coming forward and writing down or drawing a problem/dilemma that you are facing.</i></p>	<p>Watch a clip of The Plantation Singers singing "Swing Low Sweet Chariot." Is there something that you are facing today that is robbing you of the hope of salvation and the joy that comes from Christ? You might like to come forward and write what you are facing onto a piece of paper. Take the paper and place it into the water and watch what you have put on the paper disappear. As it disappears ask that God would restore that hope and joy in Christ in your life.</p> <p>You will need to have a bowl of water, slips of paper, and some water-soluble markers on the mercy seats or holiness table. As people immerse their paper in water the ink will dissolve in the water and disappear.</p> <p>YouTube Clip of The Plantation Singers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljup8cIRzIk</p>

Benediction



*Often, we ask
people to close
their eyes for
the benediction.*

*A great way to
allow for participation is to ask
people to look at you as you
pray this blessing over them.
Pronounce the benediction
slowly making intentional eye
contact around the room.*

Based on Lamentations 3: 22-25



The faithful love of God never ceases; it is
inexhaustible!


God's mercy and compassion is new every morning!
Great is Your faithfulness, O God!


So go into the week ahead with courage, and with joy.
Trust in God and wait patiently for Him to act.
For God is good to all who seek Him;
and God's loving presence goes with us.




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Liturgy 11

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>	<p>Series 3, Meeting 3 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>  <p><i>This series uses the song Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me. Each week we will reflect on a different verse of the song. The repetition of using the song each week will help to reinforce what we are learning.</i></p>	<p><u>The Big Idea:</u> Because of Jesus we are free!</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>Invite the congregation to join in with the refrain. This may be challenging for members of the congregation with low literacy. If this is the case encourage people to participate with the phrase “praise the Lord.” Key word signs can be used as an option for participating.</i></p>	<p><u>Responsive Call to Worship</u> Based on Psalm 107:1-15 [New Living Translation]</p> <p>[Leader] Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever. Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies. <i>[All] Let us praise the Lord for his great love and for all his wonderful deeds to us.</i></p> <p>[Leader] For he has gathered the exiles from many lands, from east and west, from north and south. Some wandered in the wilderness, lost and homeless. Hungry and thirsty, they nearly died. “Lord, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he rescued them from their distress. He led them straight to safety, to a city where they could live.</p>

	<p><i>[All] Let us praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for us.</i></p> <p>[Leader] For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. Some sat in darkness and deepest gloom, imprisoned in iron chains of misery. They rebelled against the words of God, scorning the counsel of the Most High. That is why he broke them with hard labor; they fell, and no one was there to help them. “Lord, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains.</p> <p><i>[All] Let us praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for us. Amen.</i></p> <p>The signs below are the key word signs in Auslan. Praise: https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/praise-1.html</p> <p>Lord: https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/Lord-1.html</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing.</i></p> <p><i>Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u></p> <p>25 God’s Love to Me Is Wonderful 45 Now Thank We All Our God 87 Jesus What a Beautiful Name 139 He Came to Give Us Life 181 Let the Weak Say I Am Strong 185 Amazing Love 261 Shine Jesus Shine 380 Lord of Creation to You Be All Praise</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u></p> <p>For All You’ve Done (Reuben Morgan) Free to Dance (Darlene Zschech) What a Beautiful Name (Ben Fielding, Brooke Ligertwood)</p>

	<p>Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me (Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, & Rich Thompson) *must be included as it is the theme song for the month.</p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>The refrain for the prayer of confession is fairly simple and repetitive, which will help people with low literacy to participate. Let people know what the response line is before the prayer starts.</i></p>	<p><u>Prayer of Confession</u></p> <p>Adapted from Rev. Renee C. Jackson’s prayer posted on the United Church of Christ’s <i>Worship Ways</i> website.</p> <p>[Leader] God of mercy, hear the prayers of your thirsting people. For every time we have attributed your miracles in our lives to our own hands alone, <i>[All] Forgive us, we pray.</i></p> <p>[Leader] For every time we promised to trust you but turned to our own way when your response did not come soon enough or in the way we expected, <i>[All] Forgive us, we pray.</i></p> <p>[Leader] For the many opportunities to extend forgiveness that we have refused, <i>[All] Forgive us, we pray.</i></p> <p>[Leader] For each way we put our own understandings above your wisdom, For each time we resist your command to be reconciled with those who believe differently from us, <i>[All] Forgive us, we pray.</i></p> <p>[Leader] For our silent sins, our quiet acts of violence, and our indifference to the suffering round us, <i>[All] Forgive us, we pray.</i> <i>Amen.</i></p>

<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>  <p><i>Hearing the stories of others can be a significant part of worship. If someone is hesitant to share, they could always be interviewed and given the questions in advance. This is a great way to provide opportunities to participate for people with intellectual disabilities in the congregation.</i></p>	<p>Announcements Offering Testimony or Interview on the topic: Because of Jesus I am free.</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>This Scripture reading will be based on lectio divina. The congregation will be asked to reflect on some questions as the passage is read slowly. The passage will be built upon each week and a different reflection question will be asked.</i></p>	<p><u>Romans 5:[1-5] 6-9</u> [see accompanying file: Week 11 Scripture Lectio Divina]</p> <p>Put the words to the Scripture reading on the screen. Have one person read the verses through thoughtfully. Give some time for silent reflection afterwards. Make sure someone reads the reflection questions for people who may struggle to do so on their own. [The questions are on the PowerPoint in the file mentioned above]</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p>  <p><i>This basic outline needs to be developed before use to make it your own.</i></p>	<p><u>Introduction</u> In January 1973 one man began dreaming and writing the screenplay for a movie. It would be the first of many. When you boil this movie series down it is really about good versus evil. Light versus dark. The first film that was being worked on was released into the cinemas in 1977 while the person who made it all happen was hiding in Hawaii just in case it was a giant flop. Can anyone tell me what the film was? [Star Wars—put movie poster up on the screen. See accompanying file: Week 11 Star Wars Slide.] You are right—it was Star</p>



The sermon provides opportunities for people to respond by calling out answers to questions.

Wars. The first of a long string of films, spin offs, and merchandise. We love to see Luke battle Darth Vader. There is something that resonates with us in a story where we witness the clash between good and evil. And our passage today deals with this. Only without the lightsabers.


1. Jesus Came at the Right Time


People often say that “timing is everything.” If you get the timing wrong with some things it could be disastrous. Just think about cooking for a minute. What are some things that you love to cook? [Hopefully you will get a response. You can pick up on something that someone has suggested and then ask the following questions.] Cooking is one of those activities when timing is everything. If you put a [whatever example was given] in the oven for 3 minutes, how is it going to come out? [raw] If you put the [example again] in the oven for 10 hours, how is it going to come out? [all shriveled and black— assuming it doesn’t catch on fire first!] You need to follow the recipe to determine the right amount of time that you need to cook [example] for.

Timing is everything. And verse 6 tells us, “When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.” There was nothing that we could do to fix our relationship with God. People had been trying. They had been living with strict rules. Sacrificing animals. All in the hope that they would be ok with God. But all it took was one mistake and they had to go through the rituals again. But our passage tells us that Christ came at the right time. Christ came at the right time to do the right thing.




2. Jesus Reveals God’s Love




Paul goes on to paint this picture of good versus evil. As I said there are no lightsabers involved but it is still a cosmic battle. It is a battle of life and death. God knew sin killed people. Have you heard of the seven deadly sins? Pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth

	<p>—which is a sin where we don't do what we should. They are called deadly sins because they lead to death. All of these things trap us and keep us away from God. But God sent Jesus to break the power of sin. We didn't deserve it. We didn't earn it. This is what Jesus had done for us! His weapon was not a lightsaber or a sword, it was love.</p> <p>3. <u>We Have Been Made Right with God</u></p> <p>And it is because of this love that we are made right with God. What does that mean? It means we are no longer condemned. God doesn't look at us and see the sin in our lives. God looks at us and sees what Christ has done for us. He sees that on the cross Jesus conquered evil. He sees on that on the cross Jesus died for us all. He sees that the battle between good and evil, the battle between life and death, has been won—and it is Jesus who won! We are free from the chains that sin brings! We are free to follow Jesus.</p> <p>Verse 3 of our theme song this month says:</p> <p>No fate I dread I know I am forgiven The future sure the price it has been paid For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon And he was raised to overthrow the grave</p> <p><u>Chorus</u></p> <p>To this I hold my sin has been defeated Jesus now and ever is my plea Oh the chains are released I can sing I am free Yet not I but through Christ in me.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>Uses spontaneous prayers of thanks for what Jesus has done. People can participate by</i></p>	<p>Sing Thank You Lord (Dennis Jernigan) available on CCLI SongSelect.</p> <p>After it has been sung the first time, pause and allow the congregation to join in the time of spontaneous prayers of thanks. Ask the congregation to join in or agree with the prayers by saying and/or signing, “Thank you, Jesus.”</p>

<p>saying “thank you, Jesus” after each person prays. If it is helpful this could also be signed using key words in Auslan.</p>	<p>The signs below are the key word signs in Auslan.</p> <p>Thank you: https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/thank%20you-1.html</p> <p>Jesus: https://www.auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/Jesus-1.html</p>
<p><u>Benediction</u></p>  <p><i>The benediction uses the same signs as the response time above. The congregation can join in the with simple refrain.</i></p>	<p><u>Responsive Benediction</u></p> <p>[Leader] Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” Because of Jesus, we do not need to walk in darkness. <i>[All] Thank you, Jesus!</i> [Leader] As you leave today, walk in the light he brings.</p> <p>[Leader] Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.” Because of Jesus, the ache in our bodies is filled. <i>[All] Thank you, Jesus!</i> [Leader] As you leave today, share the bread that he gives.</p> <p>[Leader] Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd.” Because of Jesus, we are safe, secure, and loved. <i>[All] Thank you, Jesus!</i> [Leader] As you leave today, care for people who are lost and lonely.</p> <p>[Leader] Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Because of Jesus, we have a hope for tomorrow. <i>[All] Thank you, Jesus!</i> [Leader] As you leave today, be willing to share the hope that Jesus gives.</p> <p>[Leader] Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Because of Jesus, we can walk in the truth. <i>[All] Thank you, Jesus!</i> [Leader] As you leave today, go following Jesus in truth and love. Amen.</p>

Liturgy 12

<p><u>Placement in Series</u></p>	<p>Series 3, Meeting 4 <u>Overarching Series Theme:</u> Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me</p>
<p><u>Introduction of Theme</u></p>  <p><i>This series uses the song Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me. Each week we will reflect on a different verse of the song. The repetition of using the song each week will help to reinforce what we are learning.</i></p>	<p><u>The Big Idea:</u> We have so many reasons to celebrate all that God has done through Jesus!</p>
<p><u>Call to Worship</u></p>  <p><i>The call to worship will be read by multiple people in the congregation. This is a great way to encourage a variety of people to participate.</i></p>	<p><u>Psalm 96:1-13</u> Have the Psalm printed out with each verse on separate slips of paper. Before the meeting begins hand out the different verses to people in the congregation and ask them to read out their verse for the call to worship. People can stay where they are in the hall and read loudly! The call to worship will then come from all around the hall. [see accompanying file: Week 12 Call to Worship]</p>
<p><u>Songs</u></p>  <p><i>There are many ways for people to participate in corporate singing. Repetition in the lyrics can be helpful. Clapping, dancing, playing along with instruments, or twirling ribbons are great ways that people can</i></p>	<p><u>The Salvation Army Songbook</u> 241 And Can It Be That I Should Gain 337 I Will Enter His Gates 357 Come on and Celebrate 363 Forever 366 Hosanna, Hosanna 376 King of Kings, Majesty 382 Majesty 389 Rejoice! Rejoice! Christ Is in You</p> <p><u>Songs Available on CCLI SongSelect</u> 10,000 Reasons (Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman)</p>

<p><i>join in with this part of worship.</i></p>	<p>Celebrate Jesus (Gary Oliver) Thank You Lord (Dennis Jernigan) Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me (Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, & Rich Thompson) *must be included as it is the theme song for the month.</p>
<p><u>Prayer</u></p>  <p><i>There are two opportunities to participate in this prayer time with either silence or spontaneous prayer.</i></p>	<p><u>Silence and Spontaneous Prayer</u> The whole meeting will be upbeat. This is an opportunity for people to pause in the midst of celebration and to spend some time silently reflecting on the things that we each have to celebrate. After a period of silence invite the congregation to pray prayers of thanks for what God has done. If that is too broad you could encourage prayers of thanks for what God has done in the last week or month.</p>
<p><u>Other Worship Elements</u></p>	<p>Announcements Offering</p>
<p><u>Scripture Reading</u></p>  <p><i>This Scripture reading will be based on lectio divina. The congregation will be asked to reflect on some questions as the passage is read slowly. The passage will be built upon each week and a different reflection question will be asked.</i></p>	<p><u>Romans 5:[1-9] 10-11</u> [see accompanying file: Week 12 Scripture Lectio Divina] Put the words to the Scripture reading on the screen. Have one person read the verses through thoughtfully. Give some time for silent reflection afterwards. Make sure someone reads the reflection questions for people who may struggle to do so on their own. [The questions are on the PowerPoint in the file mentioned above]</p>
<p><u>The Message Outline</u></p>  <p><i>This basic outline needs to be developed before use to make it your own.</i></p>	<p><u>Introduction</u> I am fascinated by people who have the ability to repair things. Often, they can take something like an old piece of furniture and with lots of love, patience, and hard work, they can have the piece of furniture looking brand new again. Or what about people who can restore</p>



Today's message is fairly simple but will

reinforce what has been looked at over the previous three weeks. People will be given an opportunity to go over Romans 5:1-11 and spend some time thinking about everything that Jesus has done. If there are people who will not be able to read the passage, you could ask the congregation to break up into pairs or threes and then read the passage together and share in their small group. This will provide an opportunity for everyone to participate.

cars? Taking something that is old and rusty and bringing it back to new life.



One of my children had an accident when they were two years old. They fell off a balancing beam and broke their arm just above their elbow. I remember the doctor at the Children's Hospital telling us that as the bone repaired itself it would actually become stronger than the bone in the other arm that did not break. This is how a young body restores itself. The bone became stronger. Our Bible passage today is also talking about restoration. But rather than it being about a piece of furniture, or a car, or a bone, it is telling us about a restored relationship.

1. Our Friendship with God Is Restored

And Paul starts by telling us that because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross that our friendship with God, our relationship with God, has now been restored. Out of something horrible and violent, the death of Jesus, came something beautiful. And this all happened while we were enemies of God or while we were against God. If you like, we were like a piece of old furniture that needed to be brought back to life. And that is what Jesus has done. Restored us, restored our relationship with God, and given us new life!

2. We Can Rejoice in What Jesus Has Done

And friends, this is a reason to celebrate. Paul says in verse 11, "So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God." And God is not a friend who is going to like you one minute and then get mad at you for something trivial the next. Because of Jesus this is it. This is God with us. God with us forever. I wonder if you would like to take a couple of minutes and have a look over the first 11 verses of Romans 5. Have a look at some of the things it tells us about what Jesus has done for us. We are going to have a look for

	<p>the next few minutes and then there will be a chance for you to share some of those things.</p>
<p><u>Response</u></p>  <p><i>Since we are celebrating today, we want the church to look festive.</i></p> <p><i>Have balloons on sticks around the church. These will be used during the response time. You will also need to have some thick markers available.</i></p>	<p>This response time will continue to reinforce what Jesus has done for us and our reasons to celebrate! Use the song 10,000 Reasons (Matt Redman & Jonas Myrin). This can either be sung by the congregation or played.</p> <p>What is your reason to celebrate today? Have colorful balloons and balloon holders set up around the hall. Invite people to come and take a balloon and write a reason to celebrate today on the balloon. Encourage people to take their balloon back to their seat.</p>
<p><u>Benediction</u></p>  <p><i>The congregation will be asked to read this together. Everyone can participate by holding their balloons in the air with their reasons to celebrate.</i></p>	<p><u>Based on Psalm 16</u></p> <p>[All together with balloons raised!] As you go from here, remember: God is always with you. No matter what you face, no matter what trials or hardships come your way, God is right beside you, guiding and directing your path. So do not live in fear, but in joy, celebrating God’s presence and singing God’s praise. Amen.</p> <p>© Christine Longhurst</p>

Worship Resources

Websites

Engage Worship

<https://engageworship.org/ideas>

This website contains a wealth of resources that can be used in worship. To access all the materials, you will need an account. You can sign up for free.

Laughingbird Liturgical Resources

<https://laughingbird.net>

This website contains liturgical resources from the South Yarra Baptist Church. The site has an Aussie flavor to its content and follows the liturgical calendar.

Ministry Matters

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/>

This website contains resources for liturgies and sermons. A subscription is needed to access all the materials on the site. There is a free subscription option with minimal access and paid monthly subscriptions which provide access to all the resources.

Re:Worship

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com>

This resource is compiled by Christine Longhurst. It contains prayers, calls to worship, and benediction resources. It is searchable by Scripture passage or liturgical season.

Revised Common Lectionary

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu>

This site by the Vanderbilt Divinity Library provides a wealth of resources to accompany the lectionary readings for each Sunday.

Books

Worship for Everyone

This book is in two halves—the first half looks at the theology behind worship and the second half provides practical tools for use in worship.

Drake, Nick, and Becky Drake. *Worship for Everyone*. London: SPCK, 2021.

Whole Life Worship: Empowering disciples for the frontline

This book is in two halves. The first half looks at what worship is and how worship is a whole-of-life activity, not just one hour on a Sunday. The second part of the book provides some excellent resources you can use in worship.

Hargreaves, Sam, and Sara Hargreaves, *Whole Life Worship: Empowering disciples for the frontline*. London: InterVarsity, 2017.

Disability Resources

Disability: Living into the Diversity of Christ's Body

This book is an easy read and an excellent starting place for wrestling with disability and the church.

Brock, Brian, *Disability: Living into the Diversity of Christ's Body*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021.

Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice

This is an edited volume containing the work of seventeen people. Each chapter explores a different part of disability theology and worship.

Eiesland, Nancy L., and Don E. Saliers, eds. *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998.

The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability

The book explores disability and theology and explores the significance of our bodies.

Eiesland, Nancy L., *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

My Body Is Not a Prayer Request: Disability Justice in the Church

In this book, Amy shares her experience of being a person with a disability and highlights the many challenges that people with disabilities face in the world, and in the church.

Kenny, Amy. *My Body Is Not a Prayer Request: Disability Justice in the Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2022.

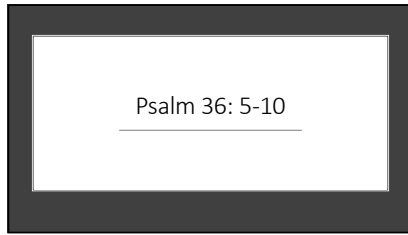
Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality

This book wrestles with a theology of disability. It also explores the transformative power of genuine hospitality.

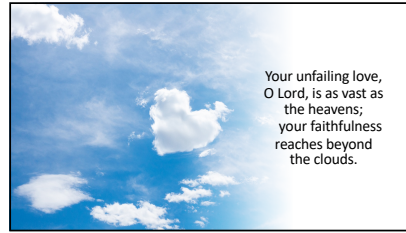
Reynolds, Thomas E. *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008.

APPENDIX I

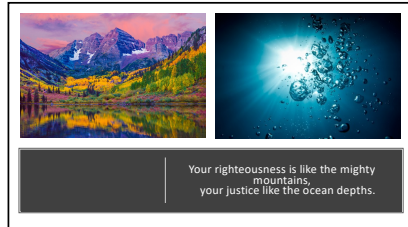
Psalm Prayers PowerPoint Slides



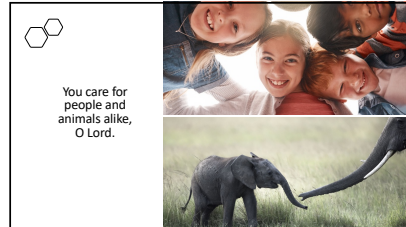
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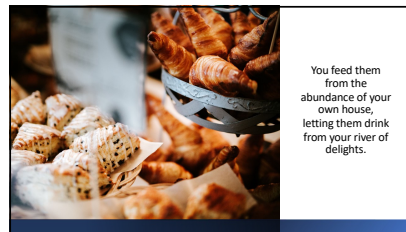
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BRIEF VITA

Catherine Spiller was born in Box Hill, Victoria, and grew up in the suburb of Ringwood. She attended The Salvation Army Officer Training College in 2000 and was ordained and commissioned in November 2002. Catherine has been an officer in The Salvation Army in Australia for more than twenty years and has served in a variety of appointments in corps and theological education. She earned a Bachelor of Theology from Tabor College Victoria in 2013 and then went on to complete a Master of Transformation Development in 2017. Catherine is currently the Coursework Coordinator at Eva Burrows College. Catherine and her husband, Rhys, currently reside in Ringwood with their two teenage children.