Course Description
One of the most powerful ways a community of faith understands itself is through our spiritual practices and our articulation of the work and vision of God in our liturgy. The United Church of Canada finds its identity in the reformed tradition and in the contextually relevant ways it expresses praise and relationship to the divine. Evident in United Church worship and spiritual practice is both a respect for the tradition that has formed us and a commitment to open up that tradition with creative expression that is inclusive and accessible.

In this course we will supplement students’ understanding of foundations in liturgy across the traditions by deepening students’ familiarity with the worship traditions and practices of the United Church of Canada. The purpose of the course is to stimulate reflection on the nature and practice of United Church worship, including congregational leadership in worship, and to develop skills and knowledge regarding planning and practice of worship leadership.

Content:
The course will examine and explore a history of UCC worship including a review of primary and secondary sources, a theology of reformed worship and free church as well as build on our understanding of what it means to have “Ordered Liberty” as our defining identity in the praxis of leadership. It will address the specifics of sacraments, funeral rites, marriage covenants, preaching, history of hymnody, music selection, just language, aesthetics in worship and contextual interpretation.

Resources:
Main Textbook:

Other Resources:


MacLauchlan, Brenda Just Language: A guide to Inclusive Language in The United Church of Canada. Etobicoke, UCPH, 1997. (will be posted on Moodle)


Course Outline:
January 8 and 9th
- Introduction to history and understanding of UCC Worship Identity
- Review of the purpose of worship and liturgy including liturgical theology
- Review of Chapters in *Ordered Liberty*.

**Please prepare for the first class by:**
- Reading *Ordered Liberty* in its entirety
- Writing one-page summaries of five chapters of your choice
- Of the five chapters selected, identifying 1-2 chapters which you wish to discuss in small group discussion.

Ritualism vs. Non Ritualism, balancing tradition and context.
- Prayer, Ritual, Small Group Worship, Intergenerational Worship
- Preaching It! United Church style
- Preparing for Funerals and Memorials: From pastoral response to internment
- Sacraments: Baptism and Eucharist
- Covenants and Marriage: Rites and practices, marriage preparation, church policy and who’s in charge!
- Voices United: A History and Exploration of Music, Praise, Prayer and Practice
- Liturgical Resources for United Church worship and planning.

**Assignment:** (To be discussed further in class on January 9th)
Each student is required to prepare and preside at a worship service within the VST community. This will normally be during United Church Worship on Tuesday afternoons in Spring term (Jan-April). However, those preparing for community worship may utilize that opportunity. This liturgy should demonstrate a solid knowledge of United Church form. It should include attention to context, theme, “audience” and emphasis on reformed tradition. It should include creative expression (theme, gesture, drama, words, aesthetics, media etc.). After worship there will be a time of structured constructive feedback on the liturgy by peers and the instructor and/or the Director of Denominational Formation. Please submit a written record of the liturgy, including relevant annotation and bibliography of resources, no later than the last day of spring term.

United Church Student Retreat, January 10th:
- Language Matters: An exploration of language in worship and a history of just language in United Church.
- Writing for Worship: An exploration of preparing and finding words for worship, prayer, blessing and spiritual practice.