

# A Contemporary Seeker Service

The worship team at Sulphur Springs United Church of Christ, Sulphur Springs, Indiana, is especially committed to designing worship that is welcoming to visitors and is highly experiential. The service is designed for seekers, those who are not familiar with church life. In describing the service, the pastor also identifies it as a blended style—experiential worship within a framework. Although the congregation does not have a bulletin, the following pattern is outlined on a “worship tech sheet” and used as a guide for worship leaders. The pattern below, however, is flexible and may change from week to week. Variety is important. Praise is also important. Through giving thanks to God for God’s good work, persons are invited into a living faith. Words to prayers and songs are often projected on a screen.

The service includes a praise band, video clips, and language that is easily accessible to persons not familiar with church life. The focus of worship is usually on a theme or “metaphor” for the day determined by a worship team.

## ***Gathering in God’s Praise***

*(The gathering portion of the service is intended to build community and to praise God. This dual purpose is experienced through praise music and the opportunity for the congregation to state how God has been active in their lives and the world.)*

### **Call to Worship**

*(Often the pastor or lay leader suggests the theme for the day and prays.)*

### **Praise Song, Meet and Greet, and Praise Song**

*(Framed by a prayer chorus, persons in the congregation introduce themselves to each other beginning with the introduction that “There are no strangers in the family of God!”)*

### **Opening Prayer (with music in the background)**

## ***Giving God Praise***

### **Sharing of praises and joys**

*(Persons state how God has been active in the world and in their lives.)*

### **Offering, Doxology, and Offering Prayer**

*(As an expression of thanksgiving and praise, the offering is collected.)*

### **Prayer Song, Pastoral Prayer, Prayer of Our Savior, and Prayer Song**

*(A chorus again frames prayer. Confident of God’s action, persons are also invited to share concerns. The pastor then lifts both celebrations and concerns to God while music is played in the background.)*

## ***Hearing God Speak***

### **Scripture Reading and Sermon**

*(Scripture and sermon may be blended into one event. The pastor may also include music, testimony, or a video clip as part of the sermon or as a response to the sermon.)*

## **Holy Communion**

*(Once a month, Sulphur Springs UCC celebrates Holy Communion. The sacrament follows the sermon and is seen as a transition into the next section, “Responding to God’s Word.” The words of the communion prayer are adapted in light of the theme for the day. Praise music is often sung during the sharing of the bread and cup.)*

## ***Responding to God’s Word***

### **Invitation, the “Take Away,” and Praise Song**

*(Depending on the theme for the day, this time may include a time of consecration or giving an object to members to remember the theme for the day. The pastor usually summarizes with at least one task, ministry, or hope for people to “take away” from worship and to live in the following week.)*

### **Blessing and Closing**

*(The pastor returns to the back of the sanctuary and pronounces a benediction. Or the worshipers are invited to offer a blessing to one another as they leave.)*

### **Celebrative Music**