

# Worship Planning 101 – Terms to Know

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## I. Core Worship Structure (United Methodist)

### Four-Fold Pattern of Worship

The historic structure used in United Methodist worship services. It reflects biblical, historical, and theological integrity.

#### 1. Entrance

- Gathering
- Greeting
- Opening hymn
- Prayer and praise

#### 2. Proclamation and Response

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture reading
- Sermon
- Confession and pardon
- Passing the peace
- Offering
- Prayers of the people

#### 3. Thanksgiving and Communion

- Holy Communion (if celebrated)
- Prayer of thanksgiving
- The Lord's Prayer

#### 4. Sending Forth

- Closing hymn
- Benediction/blessing
- Dismissal

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## II. Key Worship Resources

## **The United Methodist Hymnal**

Primary worship resource for hymns, liturgies, psalter (p. 385+), baptismal covenant, weddings, funerals, and service outlines.

## **The United Methodist Book of Worship**

Provides expanded liturgical guidance and worship structure.

## **Discipleship Ministries (UMCDiscipleship.org)**

Website with weekly lectionary resources, prayers, hymn suggestions, liturgy, children's messages, graphics, and planning notes.

## **Abingdon Worship Annual**

Lectionary-based worship planning resource with liturgies and communion settings.

## **Working Preacher**

Online resource offering commentary and preaching insights.

## **Planning Center**

Online tool for collaborative worship planning and volunteer coordination.

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# **III. The Lectionary**

## **Lectionary**

A structured list of scripture readings assigned for each Sunday.

## **Revised Common Lectionary**

- Finalized in 1992
- Three-year cycle: Year A, Year B, Year C
- Connects churches worldwide through shared readings
- Aligns with the liturgical (church) year

## **Liturgical Year**

The Christian calendar (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, etc.) that shapes scripture readings and worship themes.

## **Year A, B, C Cycle**

Three rotating years of scripture readings in the Revised Common Lectionary.

### **Best Practice in Lectionary Use**

Use at least:

- One Old Testament text
  - One New Testament text
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## **IV. Worship Planning Concepts**

### **Theme of the Week**

The overarching idea connecting the lectionary texts for a given Sunday.

### **Liturgy**

“The work of the people.” Worship is participatory, not pastor-centered.

### **Participatory Worship**

Encouraging congregational involvement (e.g., responsive psalm reading).

### **Prayer for Illumination**

Prayer asking the Holy Spirit to open hearts and minds before scripture reading.

### **Confession and Pardon**

Corporate acknowledgment of sin and declaration of God’s forgiveness.

### **Benediction**

A spoken blessing at the end of worship.

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## **V. Theological & Pastoral Considerations**

### **Connectional Church**

United Methodist identity emphasizing shared ministry across congregations.

### **Proof-Texting**

Using scripture out of context to support a preconceived point (to be avoided).

### **Contextual Interpretation**

Understanding scripture in its:

- Historical context
- Theological context
- Congregational context

### **Worship Planning Committee**

A collaborative team that helps design worship experiences.

### **Spiritual Preparation of the Pastor**

Personal prayer, spiritual disciplines, and readiness before leading worship.

### **Good News Question**

“What good news does this congregation need to hear this week?”

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## **VI. Historical References**

### **John Wesley**

Advocated use of structured scripture readings (earlier one-year lectionary).

### **Book of Common Prayer**

Source of the one-year lectionary Wesley referenced.

### **Second Vatican Council**

Led to publication of a three-year lectionary in 1969, influencing Protestant churches.

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# Big Ideas to Remember

- Worship follows a **four-fold structure**.
- The **lectionary connects** the global church.
- Worship planning is **collaborative**, not solo.
- Avoid **proof-texting**.
- Use available **UMC resources**.
- The pastor must be **spiritually prepared**.
- Worship is a **holy responsibility and privilege**.