**Oakwood Worship Policy**

9/25/2017

**Purpose**

The Worship Ministry at Oakwood works with the Lead Pastor to faithfully prepare and lead God-honoring, Biblically-grounded, Gospel-centered worship celebrations that edify and inspire the congregation as we read, pray, sing and study the Word of Christ.

*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing songs, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”* Colossians 3:16

**Principles**

* ***God-honoring*** – our services are directed to God and seek, above all, to magnify the riches of His glory so that we may find our joy in Him alone.
* ***Biblically-grounded*** – we direct our attention to the Lord by choosing Biblically rich and theologically accurate songs and highlighting Scripture throughout the service.
* ***Gospel-centered*** – the person of Jesus Christ is our focus and His work through His life, death, resurrection, session and return provides the basis and motivation for our worship.
* ***Celebration*** – because of Jesus’ finished work and His soon return the primary tone of our gatherings should be one of joy, confidence and hope though certain seasons or events may lead us to plan services for more somber reflection, confession of sin or lamentation.
* ***Edification*** – we come together to encourage and build one another up in our faith and commitment to the Lord, so our services seek to engage people with God’s Word and inspire them to greater love, trust and obedience to the Lord.
* ***Preparation*** – in order to accomplish the values above we will collaboratively plan, practice and evaluate our services to continually improve.
* ***Outreach*** – our services are primarily for believers, but we always want to be welcoming and sensitive to un-churched or less-churched guests while also encouraging and equipping our people for our mission to reach out to Tampa and the nations with the Gospel.

“A faithful worship leader magnifies the greatness of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit by skillfully combining God’s Word with music, thereby motivating the gathered church to proclaim the gospel, to cherish God’s presence and to live for God’s glory.” Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, p. 55

**Practices**

* ***Planning & Preparation*** – we seek to choose songs and design services 2-3 weeks in advance in order to give musicians and other participants time to practice and prepare. This will facilitate the inclusion of more creative elements such as special songs, videos, testimonies, etc. All elements – including announcements, transitions, testimonies and prayers – should be prayerfully prepared and practiced in advance. Spirit-led spontaneous additions or changes may take place from time to time but that does not preclude the usual pattern of faithful preparation.
* ***Scripture & Song*** – the emphasis of our worship celebrations should be God’s Word and God’s people singing, so we seek to limit casual comments and informational announcements. We want to warmly welcome all who come, direct their minds and hearts to worship the Lord in song and to respond to His Word preached. To this end we want more Bible and more singing with less talking and more focused announcements.
* ***Rooted & Relevant –*** We intentionally work to keep our music current by prioritizing contemporary songs (using a repertoire of 40 songs written in the last 5-7 years and adding 6-10 new songs each year). We also appreciate the rich theology found in many hymns and seek to retain the best of these (top 15-20) in our “music memory,” sometimes with new musical arrangements.
* ***Consistent & Creative –*** while we generally follow a pattern [e.g. song / call to worship / 2 songs / pastoral prayer / announcements / offering / song / Scripture reading / sermon / song / benediction] we may adjust these elements or add special ones like the Lord’s prayer, creeds, solos, ensembles, testimonies, videos, etc. to keep our services fresh and engaging. Our pattern is to celebrate the Lord’s Supper monthly and sometimes also on special occasions.
* ***Evaluation & Improvement*** – the worship leader, host and Lead Pastor will debrief within 48 hours of the service to process what went well and what could be improved moving forward.
* ***Excellence & Involvement*** – everyone involved in the worship services should be a believer with the attitude of a servant, working hard to give their best while supporting the other musicians and participants. Worship planners and the Worship Leader should be members and others on the worship team should be encouraged to join as well. We will pursue “undistracting excellence,” avoiding attention-seeking and redirecting those whose skills are not yet ready for up front ministry, while encouraging and developing up-and-comers.
* ***Multiple Services*** – when possible, it is best to offer two or more worship service options. This supports volunteers whose ministry (to children, etc.) would cause them to regularly miss the worship service. This also facilitates outreach and growth by giving people in our community different times to choose from. “Our varied skills should function like the frame around a classic painting… The right frame complements the picture in all the right ways, directing our eyes to the brilliance of the artist, not to the frame… ‘undistracting excellence.’ It’s a proficiency that doesn’t draw attention to itself but rather points away from itself.”

Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, p. 38

**God-honoring**

Gospel-centered

Biblically-grounded

Edifying

Celebration