WORSHIP IN ST. JOHN’S MEMORIAL CHAPEL
Formation and Worship Committee
Fall 2013

WELCOME

We warmly welcome you into the communal and public prayer of the Church in this time and place.

This booklet provides an introductory overview of the worship life of Episcopal Divinity School on campus at St. John’s Chapel. It is an attempt to describe the way things function now; it will be edited for clarity and fulness on an ongoing basis. For further reading, please visit the Worship page on Canvas.

VISION

Chapel life flows from the vision for EDS articulated in the document, Strategic Vision, Goal and Objectives 2011-2015. This document was created with input from the whole community, including faculty, student, staff, administration, trustees, and friends. Highlights relevant to chapel life are outlined below:

✦ EDS is a spiritual, academic, and professional community (p.5); an educational and formational community (p.8); a vigorous, relevant, and sustainable institution (p.8); a place where people concerned with progressive theological education want to come to study, work, pray, and be (p.5); sustained by contemplation, worship, and prayer (p.1)
✦ EDS supports spiritual and ministerial formation (p.1); forms leaders of hope, courage, and vision to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (p.1); produces graduates who are fluently “multi-lingual” in the scholarship and practice of ministry—both lay and ordained (p.5)
✦ Worship and faith formation at EDS are central aspects of EDS common life. They sustain community (p.1); extend hospitality (p.6); are creative (p.7); reflect our progressive values, our Episcopal identity, and our diverse community (p.6); foster supportive respectful, encouraging, and collaborative learning, worship, and work (p.9); teach flexibility, leadership, cooperation, and creativity (p.5); make use of new neuroscience findings on mind, body, and spirit (p.7); incite continuous long-term thinking (p.3); both adapt to and provoke changes in the nature of the Church, ecumenism, interfaith work, and education (p.10); deepen and broaden the community’s cross-cultural and interfaith experience (p.11); build relationships across faith and denominational traditions (p.13).
COMMITMENT

EDS embraces common, public worship as a fundamental vocation, locus of ongoing formation and transformation, and spring of joy. The gathered community is the prime mover in our corporate worship. All are expected to exercise their primary responsibility as a member of the community, and to participate regularly and actively in worship in the chapel: Morning Prayer, Eucharist/Holy Communion/The Lord’s Supper, and other special services. There are ample opportunities for all to enter into this powerful experience in specialized ways—for example, reading, singing in choir, ushering/hospitality, eucharistic minister, art/environment, ironing/polishing/cleaning, baking bread. These roles, and the roles of presider, preacher, and musician, exist to serve the assembly as they carry out the liturgy—"the work of the people."

GOVERNANCE

Work Flow. Chapel life is shepherded in this way:

✦ The president and dean is the ordinary of the chapel. As such, she is responsible for setting large scale vision, policies, priorities, and strategies. She does this in ongoing consultation with the board of trustees, the faculty (through the formation and worship committee), and the chapel team.

✦ The formation and worship committee (FWC) is a faculty committee. It represents the faculty in providing advice and feedback to the ordinary, and to the chapel team, in the planning and implementation of worship.

✦ The chapel team (CT) implements the vision for the chapel as it plays out over weeks, seasons, semesters, and years. The CT prepares a written report for the FWC at least once a year.

✦ The chapel staff (CS) assists the chapel team in the “nuts and bolts” of helping worship happen day by day.

Formation and Worship Committee (FWC). This faculty committee was created in May of 2013 to oversee formation and worship at EDS. Tending to the life of the chapel is one of their several broad responsibilities. Their goal is to discern and follow the movement of the Spirit in the community as they ensure that the life of the chapel lies at the heart of EDS life; and that what goes on in chapel both reflects and feeds what goes on in the rest of EDS life, including academics, field work, ministerial formation, and training for baptismal witness in the world. To this end, they advise and support the ordinary and the chapel team (see below); and respond to various issues as they arise. They meet as needed, but at least four times a year. They report to the full faculty. Current members of the committee are:

✦ President/dean/ordinary of the chapel: Katherine Ragsdale
✦ Two faculty members: Christopher Duraisingh and Kwok Pui Lan
✦ Dean of students and community life: Miriam Gelfer
✦ Director of music: Ellen Oak

1 For example, discussion is currently in progress in the FWC, and with the full faculty, to clarify EDS customs concerning who is invited to preside, preach, assist at the altar, distribute bread and wine, etc., at what kinds of services. Another example would be whether and when an act of confession is included in an EDS celebration of Anglican/Episcopal Eucharist.
**Chapel Team (CT).** Members are appointed to the team by the president and dean. Current team members are:
- Dean of students and community life: Miriam Gelfer
- Director of music: Ellen Oak

**Chapel Staff (CS).** These are paid student positions; students are appointed to serve by the dean of students and community life.
- Liturgical coordinator: Amanda March. Schedules people for particular ministries in services: for instance, presiders at Morning Prayer, lectors, eucharistic ministers, greeters, sub-deacons. Fields and directs information and questions from the community to the appropriate chapel person.
- Head sacristan: Chip Mills. Maintains and prepares all the things used for worship, and oversees volunteers who do the same.
- Librarian: Aimee Altizer. Files programs and music; organizes books; helps creates new psalm settings; take care of musical instruments.
- Editor/graphic designer: Bill Cruse. Lays out and prints handouts as needed for chapel services. Uploads worship resources.

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

**Morning Prayer.** Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 8:30-9:00 a.m. This service is based on ancient patterns of daily prayer, and is informed by the current global ecumenical liturgical renewal. The service includes opening greeting and invocation; singing of psalms, canticles, hymns, and songs; proclamation of Scripture; intercessions; and closing prayers and blessing. The roles of presider and lector are passed around the community. Coaching and resources are provided.

**Free Prayer.** Tuesday 8:30-9:00 a.m. These “one-off” services are planned and led by members of the community. They explore the myriad ways we can come together before God. Possibilities include: Celtic meditation; walking meditation; blessing for those graduating; centering prayer; Sufi dancing; benediction of blessed sacrament, and hymn sing.

**Anglican/Episcopal Eucharist.** Monday 12:15-1:15 p.m. Presiding is usually done by faculty members. Preaching is usually done by students and guests. This year we are trying on “paperless worship.” We want to explore what happens when we come to worship with empty hands. The service includes simple singing and improvisation. On the third Monday of the month, the rite of healing/anointing will be included in the Eucharist.

**Community Worship.** Thursday 12:15-1:15 p.m. Presiders for this service are usually guests. Preachers are usually faculty members. This year we are making a concerted effort to diversify our Thursday worship with collaborative ecumenical and interfaith services. We want to foster abiding relationships of friendship, respect, and shared service with people of many traditions. The goal is not to “airlift” services from various traditions into chapel; but rather to
fire our imagination, deepen our prayer, and strengthen our love for the world through creative and grateful collaboration in the midst of difference.

PLANNING AND REFLECTION

People
- People are invited by the CT to preside and preach at a given service, and to join in the planning and preparation for that service. They often provide energy and focus for the planning process. Faculty, both lay and ordained, are invited to take a leadership role in Monday/Thursday 12:15p.m. worship at least once a semester.
- In keeping with the vision and mission of EDS, the presider and preacher are strongly encouraged to collaborate with others in preparing worship. The “others” might include the students in a particular course, a cohort, outside guests, those assigned particular ministries in the service, etc.
- If a service is to be held in a particular established tradition (Episcopal, Anglican, UCC, MCC, Sufi, etc.), the presider at that celebration is the one person responsible for ensuring that the celebration proceeds according to the norms of the tradition in question.
- The CT is in close contact with those preparing the service, providing background and resources, facilitating communication, and supporting them however they can.
- A worship aid is prepared for the Thursday 12:15p.m. service. The final draft is shown to the presider and preacher for their approval before it is printed.

Wednesday Lunchtime Meeting
- The CT and CS meet every Wednesday 12:15-1:30p.m. in the private dining room in Washburn Hall. These are open meetings and anyone may attend.
- The content of the meetings varies from week to week. Often a Thursday service is planned at this time; on occasion a faculty member will present an informal talk on a worship-related topic (for example, “cultural translation of liturgical rites,” or “worship as mission”), and a round table discussion will follow. Sometimes the group will reflect on recent worship experiences and patterns; or look forward to coming seasons and events; or make suggestions for something to “try on.”

LANGUAGE

Our approach to the complex issues concerning liturgical language is expansive, experimental, flexible, and respectful of the diversity in our own community, and in the global church we serve. It is our custom to proclaim Scripture from the New Revised Standard translation. A fully inclusive translation of the Bible is available in the Grey room. Training in adapting language is provided for all readers.

MUSIC
The human voice has held pride of place in Christian worship from the beginning. Instruments are wonderful, but singing is essential. In all our sung worship, we lean into the Big Voice, the Deep Voice of the gathered community. This voice unites us and becomes for us, because of God’s love and promise, the voice of Christ praying in us through the power of the Spirit. The voices of presider, reader, cantor, and choir are individual refracted manifestations of the primal, mystical voice of the gathered body of Christ.

✦ **Psalms.** From the beginning, psalms have held pride of place in the Christian community’s sung prayer. At EDS, we include the singing of a psalm in almost every service we do. At Morning Prayer we chant the psalms antiphonally using a variety of musical tones; ancient and modern, unison and polyphonic. This year we have decided to begin a journey straight through the entire psalter, rather than singing the psalms appointed in the BCP daily office lectionary. We want to experience the full range of prayer given to us in the psalter as a whole. At Eucharist we usually sing the psalm responsorially. The congregation sings the refrain and a cantor or choir sings the verses.

✦ **Ritual Music.** In the current ecumenical liturgical renewal particular attention is being given to sung prayer which is integrally wed to particular ritual acts. For example, pieces specifically designed to function as communion processions; intercessions which are sung as a dialogue between cantor and congregation; sung settings of the invitations, responses, and acclamations of baptism and sprinkling rite; eucharistic prayers in which the congregation creates a vocal underlay.

✦ **Canticles, songs, hymns, and chants.** In keeping with the vision and mission of EDS, the director of music strives to offer a rich and varied feast of sung prayer. We sing repertoire from many times, places, and styles. We explore canonical and traditional repertoire which have stood the test of time, as well as brand new pieces born of contemporary experience. Our practice is to include at least one language other than English each time we gather for worship. We do this as an act of spiritual solidarity with the global church, and for our own practical training for multicultural ministry. This year we have created a music booklet for Monday Eucharist; the goal is that we will learn a “core repertoire” for each season very well. On Thursdays we will be somewhat more adventurous.

✦ **Chapel choir.** The choir rehearses Wednesdays 4-6p.m. in the chapel. It sings at the Thursday 12:15p.m. service, and at special events throughout the year. It is offered as a one credit academic course every term. The singers come from all parts of the EDS community, and from beyond its bounds. No special experience is necessary. We thrive on openness, good cheer, and hard work.

✦ **Drumming circle.** Led by Miriam Gelfer, this group practices once a week, and occasionally plays at worship and other events. Once a semester they have a workshop with a master drummer. No prior drumming experience is needed to join in.

✦ **Other instruments.** Ellen Oak welcomes those who play an instrument to bring their gifts to the community’s worship. Please speak with her directly.
ENVIRONMENT

The chapel is arranged in three areas to support the three kinds of worship we do regularly: rows of chairs facing one another for the antiphonal singing of morning and evening prayer; circular seating around the altar for community eucharist; and hospitable space with chairs and floor cushions in the apse and the side chapel for meditation/devotions.

The major symbols of our worship—baptismal font (with paschal candle as appropriate), ambo, and altar—form the east/west axis, the “spinal cord,” of our worship environment. Presider’s chair and ambo remain in their place, but are rotated as needed to serve both the antiphonal and circular seating areas. Oil for healing and anointing, held in a modern blown glass vessel, rests in the niche on one side of the apse; the blessed sacrament resides under a medieval triptych on the other side. Also in the apse are a stand for votive candles and a book in which to record individual prayers.

Art of various traditions and ages finds a home in the chapel. An icon of Mary hangs behind the presider’s chair, with a book of poetry laid open beneath it. Banners, paintings, drawings, and sculpture enrich our worship space, feasting our eyes, and expanding the horizons of our embodied faith.

As we welcome more and more people into the chapel, we want to provide them with ways to engage with our beautiful space. We want to create a “tour” booklet with background information and theological reflection on all the art in the chapel. This would make an excellent directed reading topic. Stephen Burns would be delighted to be the faculty advisor for this project.

LISTENING

Day by day questions, comments, dreams and desires regarding worship in chapel are always welcome. Please speak with Miriam Gelfer and/or Ellen Oak. Miriam and Ellen will keep the conversation going with the Formation and Worship Committee as appropriate.

Once or twice a year the CT publishes an anonymous online survey and invites the whole community to respond. We look forward to your reflections, comments, and suggestions.
May we together sing for God the song of our whole lives

To give God joy, who is joy to us.

(Psalm 104)