



SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS

LUTHERAN CHURCH, SCHOOL, AND CHILD CARE

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Q&A about the New 9:30 Sunday Service

On September 9, Shepherd of the Hills will begin offering a Sunday morning contemporary service at 9:30 in the Worship Center. The service will begin as a monthly service with the intent of eventually providing it weekly. This Q&A document has been created to educate the congregation and school families about the new service.

Whom are we trying to reach with the new service?

We are seeking to reach people who didn't grow up in a Lutheran church, young families, school families, the unchurched, and those of all ages and backgrounds who enjoy contemporary worship.

Why start a new service if existing services aren't full?

Think of the new service as a church plant on our campus. We're seeking to reach new people who are not already connected to a church. It's similar to starting a new congregation. All of the churches in San Antonio are not filled to capacity, but new churches are started throughout the city to reach the people no one else has reached yet. New ministries reach new people.

Why add a contemporary service when we already have one on Saturdays?

For many people, Sunday morning is church time. Many are not available Saturday or choose not to break up their day and come to church in the evening. Sunday morning is the "prime time" slot for a church service.

How will the new service affect attendance at existing services?

Anytime a church adds a new service, attendance at other services typically is affected to some degree. To create energy initially, we'll need a starter group of some members to attend at 9:30. But the goal of the new service is to reach people not already attending one of our services. Bottom line, we anticipate a net gain of more total people in worship, meaning a greater number of souls reached with the Gospel each weekend.

Does a new contemporary service mean we're giving less attention to traditional services?

No. The pastoral and music staff are committed to providing excellence in all we do. We are working diligently to build up our traditional music programs as well - choir, hand bells, band, and other singers and instrumentalists.

What will be the location?

The Worship Center. The space is unused during the 9:30 hour. It's attractive and designed for worship. Everything is there - Communion supplies, cry room, nursery, audio-visual equipment, etc. Once the new gym/multipurpose building opens, we'll evaluate keeping the service in the Worship Center or moving it to the new gym. The gym would offer a more relaxed feel, which could be useful in appealing to the unchurched.

Why a 9:30 service instead of a service concurrent with the 10:45 service in a different location?

First, 9:30 is a great time for young families. 8:00 is too early for many on a weekend. 10:45 gets into lunch and nap time for little ones. Second, a service at 9:30 means one pastor can be present for the entirety of all services. A service concurrent with 10:45 would either require two preachers each weekend or the pastor would need to leave in the middle of one service after preaching and arrive in the middle of the other service to preach. Available space also is an issue at this time.

How will you fit a service between the end of 8:00 and beginning of 10:45?

We will have to be efficient. 8:00 and 9:30 services will need to conclude at around 60 minutes. After the 8:00 service dismisses, we'll set up portable instruments for the 9:30 service. By portable instruments, we mean a conga drum instead of a full drum set, for example. Setup and teardown will need to happen in a short amount of time.

Is contemporary worship faithful to Lutheran doctrine and practice?

At Shepherd of the Hills, that is non-negotiable. All the essential components of Lutheran worship will be present: balance of Law and Gospel, read and preached Word of God, Sacraments of Baptism and Communion, confession of sins and absolution, confession of faith, Trinitarian invocation, closing benediction. These components will be packaged in a contemporary fashion through music and art. Keyboard, guitar, and drums will be used to lead music. New Christian music will be used, all selected based on consistency with our doctrine. We will seek to expand the use of visual media to illustrate the Gospel.

What kind of liturgy will be used?

Liturgy will be more similar to Saturday worship and Sunday non-Communion worship than to Sunday Communion Divine Services. Liturgy will be biblical. Some liturgical elements may be woven into songs or presented in other creative fashions.

Why offer the service only once a month?

The plan is to provide the service once a month at first and then expand to weekly. Once a month initially allows us to build up a volunteer core. We want the service to be sustainable over the long run.

Will an additional service put extra strain on the pastors?

It shouldn't. The same sermon will be preached at all services by the same pastor. An additional service will require no additional sermon preparation.

Will the pastor wear a robe?

This is under discussion. The advantage of wearing a robe is the symbolism; the pastor is set apart for a special purpose of shepherding God's people. The advantage of not wearing a robe is creating a more relaxed environment; some feel that the pastor comes across as more relatable when dressed like the people.

Will Communion be offered?

Once we go to weekly 9:30 services, the plan is to provide Communion on second and fourth Sundays. 8:00 and 10:45 offers Communion first, third, and fifth Sundays. This is to give an option with Communion every Sunday.

Will the 9:30 service be like CrossWalk?

CrossWalk was a once-a-month contemporary service that met in the gym from 2009 to 2014. The similarity with CrossWalk will be contemporary worship music and creative teaching elements during the service. CrossWalk was heavily geared toward young families - lots of drama, decorations, and playfulness. The 9:30 service is designed to appeal to a broader spectrum of worshippers. It will resemble the current Saturday service more than CrossWalk.

How will the 9:30 service affect Sunday school?

Sunday school for children, youth, and adults still will be offered at 9:30. As we have children's learning time during the sermon Saturdays and 10:45 Sundays, we'll also provide a special children's learning time during the 9:30 service. For adults, one pastor will preach, and the other will teach Bible class at 9:30 in the gym. Other Bible classes will be offered at 9:30 as we're currently doing. We may offer classes before or after the 9:30 service if there's interest.

How can I help?

Glad you asked! We are recruiting musicians (especially guitarists), audio-visual workers (sound board and slides), greeters, and ushers. We're looking to establish a core group of 30 people who will commit to attending every month as the service is beginning.

To ask questions or get involved, please contact:

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