

Congregational Worship Music at Marco Presbyterian Church

Marco Presbyterian Church is a body of believers who bring hope to people with the truth of Jesus. Our greatest privilege as the church is to worship God through the congregational gathering where we remember the Gospel together and respond to His grace.

1. The Leader: The one who leads the music team and congregation is a leader who is under authority. He or she is not a “lone ranger” doing “their own thing” until it’s time for the preacher to do “his thing.” First and foremost, the music leader is under the authority of God, to lead the music according to the prescriptions of God (the Regulative Principle), and ultimately to the glory of God. Being “under authority” manifests itself by leading under the authority of the Local Session of Elders and the Teaching Elder who is presiding over the service for that day. The Teaching Elder presiding over the service is ultimately responsible for the worship of God’s people on any given Sunday. Therefore, the music leader should be Reformed in his or her theology and should work closely with the Pastors. There should be weekly prayer and close planning between the Pastor and the Music Leader going into each Sunday service. They should work in tandem to lead God’s people in worship. Additionally, the music leader should exhibit a close walk with Christ, a teachable spirit, a desire to see the glory of God and the edification of God’s people, and a humble approach to leading that does not bring undue attention to the leader or team members. The music leader should continually be pointing people to the glory of Christ with the humility of John the Baptist who said, “may he [Christ] increase and I decrease.”

2. The Atmosphere: There should be a joyful atmosphere as God’s people prepare and engage in New Covenant worship. Because of the amazing grace of God and finished work of Christ, worship should be, “a festal gathering” (Hebrews 12:22). There should be a sense of coming home to a party filled with “music and dancing” (Luke 15:25). Because we are coming before the King of Kings, there should also be a reverence and awe. The worship leader should seek to lead the congregation to experience this unique tension between child-like confidence and awe-inspired reverence with God-glorifying excellence.

3. The Story: The ministry of music should follow the trajectory of the gospel narrative. Each Sunday, the songs that are selected should have a flow and order to them that reflect an “Isaiah 6” movement. They should begin with exalting the majesty and grandeur of God. Seeing the holiness of God naturally leads to seeing the sinfulness of man. This leads us into a time of prayerful confession and assurance of pardon. Coming out of this should be songs that celebrate the mercy and grace of Jesus. Musically, this needs to be the most Christocentric time of the service that prepares us to hear God’s word from a place of deep rest in the finished work of Jesus. The communion and closing songs should be more thematic with the particular message that God has for the people that day and capture the commitment of the people. The closing song should be a song of commitment or sending as we say to God like Isaiah did, “Here I am Lord, send me!”

4. The Singing: Following the instruction found in Ephesians 5:19 to, “address one another in Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs,” we want two things to take place during our time of singing: 1. The congregation singing loudly (not mouthing or whispering the songs), and 2. The congregation hearing each other singing the songs. To accomplish this, many things are involved: volume of music, familiarity with songs, arrangements that encourage singing, and planning the type and number of selections well.

In short, the worship leader should craft the service and exhort the people in a way that leads to robust congregational singing.

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