

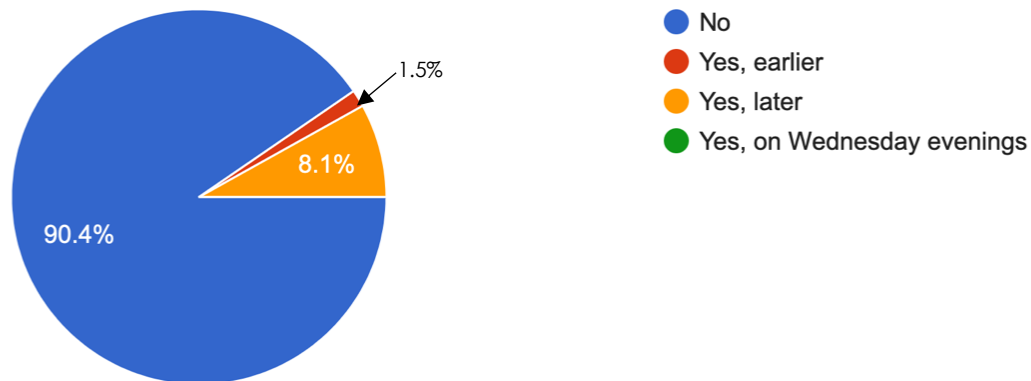


Christ the King Lutheran Church

Sunday Mornings in the Fall: A Worship Survey

Worship Survey Overview

1. Do you need a different service time in order to worship regularly?



Commentary: The vast majority of those who completed this survey let us know that the 9:30 service time works for them, at least for the time being.

When we first returned to in-person, indoor worship (after more than a year away) we knew that we'd likely need to bring back services and other in-person ministries gradually. Our instinct to stick with one service at 9:30 seems to be the right one—again, for now. While this Sunday morning schedule may work well for this season of re-emergence, it is by no means set in stone for all eternity!

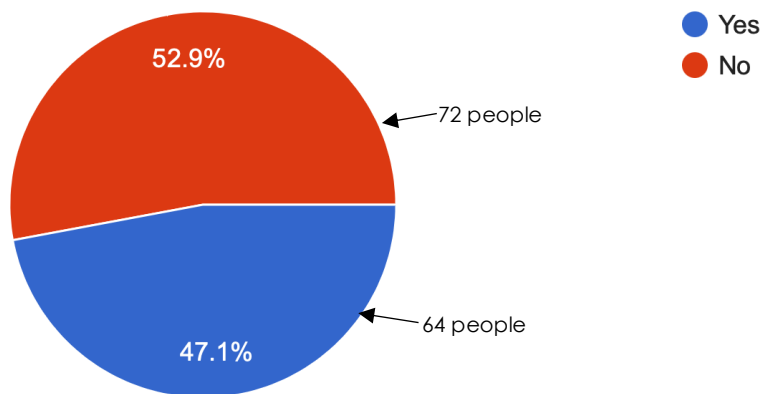
As we continue to live into this time of resurfacing from the pandemic (realizing that the pandemic itself is still far from over), we know that this present schedule will need flexibility for future adaptations. We will consider adding an additional service in the future, as the need arises. In the meantime, we can enjoy both the sense of community that comes from all worshipping together and also continue to offer the livestream for those for whom this better meets their worship needs.

2. Which aspect(s) of worship at Christ the King do you connect with most: select **all** that apply to you (please note, the responses listed below are those selected by the **majority** of respondents):

- 86% Preaching
- 81% Hearing music led by CtK Ensembles (Sanctuary Choir, Kings Ringers, etc).
- 78% Receiving Holy Communion
- 68% Hymns led from the organ
- 65% Seeing my friends in the pew
- 54% Seeing children and youth present during worship

Commentary: It is heartening to see that the things most selected as meaningful connections have to do with proclamation, music, sacraments, and involving many generations—each of which has been a longstanding strength of the Christ the King worshipping community.

3. Would you be willing to volunteer one Sunday a month to help with hospitality (usher, greeter, welcome center, serving communion, brewing coffee, running a camera, helping with nursery, Sunday school, youth group, etc.)?



Commentary: This is great! 64 of you are willing to help out at least once a month in one of the various volunteer leadership and hospitality roles related to worship. That's more than enough to get started again this fall, knowing that others will certainly join you, encouraged by your example!

Of course, not all of the 64 who indicated this willingness included their name on the survey form; so we need to be more intentional about making our volunteer preferences known to folks who do the scheduling. If you haven't already, please begin signing up for specific dates to be involved in these different roles on Sunday mornings. The sign-up genius link can be found [**here**](#),

We anticipate the late- and post-pandemic season here at CTK to be one of new opportunities for participation and involvement in our shared ministries—in worship and beyond! Are there roles here that interest or intrigue you, but for which you may need further information or instruction? No worries—we're happy to provide you with what you need to succeed. Are there roles you have been play for quite some time but feel ready to set aside? Now is the time to let us know. Do you know of someone who you think would be particularly good at a ministry in which you've been involved? Invite them to sign up, too (and let us know as well)! No prior experience is necessary to be active in our ministry!

4. If you'd like us to follow up with you about volunteering or to answer any of your questions, please leave us your contact information.

Staff and other leaders have noted names and contact information and will be following up directly with the individual respondents.

5. Is there anything else you would like to share with the staff at Christ the King? What excites you about our plans for Sunday mornings in the fall? What other questions can we help answer?

Note: Below are the different responses provided by various survey-takers to this final, open-ended question. Some provided further responses to the specific questions the survey posed. Others provided input, feedback, or criticism concerning our worship life at Christ the King in a more general way. Still others made very specific offers to help out, or at times even more pointed suggestions for staffing changes or program updates!

While responders' names have not been included here, staff and other leaders will be sure to follow up, as appropriate, with any specific comments which came to us with a name and contact information attached.

We've done our best to group the comments by category, realizing both that others may have come up with different categories altogether, and that some comments pertain to more than one of these somewhat random categories.

Please note that as is often the case with open-ended survey questions such as this one, some of these comments might lack context when printed off separately, and so can be open to a variety of interpretations. We ask your understanding and forgiveness if we've inadvertently misconstrued the point your comment was trying to make.

- **Comments on the Proposed Sunday Schedule**

- We like the 9:30 worship time and are grateful for the online option.
- In one way, I'm excited to see the sanctuary full for a church service and combining the services to one will do that; but as a long-time member it's sad to see that our congregation has lost so many members that we can fit into one Sunday service.
- It is wonderful to be back in church and the 9:30 service works well for us.
- I will say having only one service at 9:30 means I can never bring my elderly parent to worship as that's too early for her; even 10 am worship might work a little better
- I like the idea of being together in one worship service.
- Not excited about one service - need a more contemporary style service - more upbeat music - guess if going to only one service - hope you will still offer online.
- Although 9:30 church services work for us, we did enjoy the earlier service...however, understand the time difference given that there will be just one service.
- I think the one service is a stable way to evaluate and re-establish our worship and fellowship routine
- Disappointed to see only one service, etc. as it implies reduced membership which then leads to concerns about future.
- One worship time will be good for the ctk community.
- My opinion is that we should accommodate young families' needs. We seniors have had our "day" to be the decision-makers and now we can serve in support of transformations needed to welcome in more young families. What they want is what I want.
- Continue livestreaming the service for those of us who are homebound.
- I like that the worship time is 9:30!
- I like the idea of one service

- Only one Service? Love it!
- I hope you will return to the 10:30 service like before and then move the 9:30 to 8:30 again like before
- I am ready for a return to a regular schedule.
- I love the idea of BAM in the chapel following the children's message!!! I think this will help us all get more out of the service!
- I like adult forum on with worship.
- looking forward to singing together, again!
- I'm not confident yet that [that we can return to church] due to Delta and 62% protection with the Pfizer vaccine I hear about.

Commentary: While it might seem obvious to some of us, it bears repeating often that our worship life in this season of emergence from the COVID-19 global health crisis will not fully resemble our ministry practices either before the pandemic nor during the various stages of COVID shutdown. In proposing the schedule included in this survey, we sought to combine items that have been working well (one in-person worship service, weekly online option, community and faith formation options after worship), while also listening to folks for whom this time has been particularly challenging (families with children under 12, folks in assisted living or other elder care settings).

One further note about worship attendance and membership "decline." It is true that like many faith communities in the area and around the country, we have had members leave Christ the King for a number of reasons, even before the pandemic hit. We have also had others who have decided to step away from CTK during this time of separation and shutdown—a reality we have still not fully been able to come to terms with, given the difficulties of tracking individual worship engagement once everything moved to YouTube, Facebook, and Zoom. This is a serious concern, and one that we will continue to consider as we re-engage with one another post-pandemic.

At the same, our online worship attendance has actually remained robust, even after returning to in-person worship in the CTK sanctuary. Since June 6th, for example, our average in-person attendance is just over 100, while our virtual worship attendance averages 270 participants a week (based on an average of 135 "log-ins" per week). New members have joined us during the shutdown and have now connected in-person. Some long-time members have

reengaged in worship, thanks to the online option. Families who have told us that they will not be attending any in-person, indoor gatherings until their children can be vaccinated are nonetheless actively participating in worship, faith formation, fellowship, and service—sticking to outdoor or online options.

Overall, CTK has shown a high degree of flexibility, resilience, and perseverance in terms of worship attendance, participation, and leadership, given all that has happened in the past eighteen months.

- ***The Style of CTK Worship***

- The majority of music in every service should be traditional hymns. One non-traditional music item is enough for me. I love to hear the ctk choir.
- Need a more contemporary style service - more upbeat music - guess if going to only one service - hope you will still offer online.
- Having Doug Chapman as a soloist made the service special today.
- Having more “modern” Christian music throughout the services. Songs heard on the radio
- I would like to see fewer guitars, violins, and bands.
- More well-known hymns will get better participation from congregational members
- I would like to go back to having communion twice a month.
- Will communion resume with the same format as in the past?

Commentary: In case anyone was wondering, people have opinions and preferences about worship styles (and especially about musical choices!)

Our goal in worship planning in the past several years at CTK has been to be increasingly expansive in choosing the various elements we use in worship, rather than limiting or separating ourselves based on somewhat arbitrary categories, the definitions of which we don't always agree on (e.g., is a four-part organ-led hymn written in 2012 considered contemporary or traditional? What about a rock liturgy composed in 1974? Or a new-to-us chorus that Lutherans in Puerto Rico have been singing for 100+ years?)

It is also good to remind ourselves from time to time to take the “long view” in terms of worship style and musical selections. Not only do musical selections differ by liturgical season, one week's hymn selections might also include more songs familiar to each of us than the week before or after. Special music offered by members, along with guest musicians from time to time enrich our worship experience as much as the regular leadership of choirs and music staff. Some offerings will resonate more and others less; that is part of the beauty of being part of a community that is varied in age, background, and experience, as well as diverse in race, ethnicity, language, and other social factors.

And yes, our plan is to reintroduce weekly communion, served as we did pre-COVID-19, when it is once again safe to do so. We are blessed to have the Communion “Kits” to fall back on when we need to make a quick change for the health and well-being of one another.

- ***About Children's Ministry On Sundays (Worship, BAM, etc).***

- I appreciate the attention to the BAM kids during the service and I think that sounds like a wonderful plan!
- If Christ the King can keep doing occasional worship and/or BAM time outdoors, that would be wonderful. It's way easier for my kids to stay engaged and, for the time being, it's safer since they're unvaccinated.
- I'd also be excited about BAM time that's centered around relationships, bible storytelling, and the outdoors and that doesn't involve acquiring more stuff (plastic toys, candy, etc).
- We have a child under 12 who can't get vaccinated, yet. Until he's vaccinated, we are limiting his indoor exposure. As much as we want to get back to more normal, we are not rushing until kids are able to get vaccinated. Then I think we would volunteer more and work our way back inside after vaccinations. We are comfortable meeting outside and doing activities
- Is it possible to keep worship to 50 minutes and start children's, middle/high school, and adult programming at 10:30 or 10:45? That might get more families to worship each week and be much appreciated

- Unfortunately for my family that is too long and a lot of transition which will not work for my child with a disability. We will be unable to attend any of the Sundays for church activities
- Hoping it works to keep offering the livestream. We likely won't bring our unvaccinated kids to worship.
- Will there no longer be a typical Sunday school downstairs?

Commentary: These helpful comments reveal the underlying tension about making decisions about children's ministry (including, but not limited to BAM/ Sunday School). Many of our families with kids under 12 are rightly hesitant to bring their unvaccinated children to in-person worship or indoor faith formation. For many of them, the online and outdoor options are the best, and we intend to continue both in one shape or form well into the fall. In the meantime, we will also introduce BAM embedded in worship, for those who are comfortable being in-person and indoors already this fall.

- **Offering Thanks**

- Thanks for all you do in an ever-changing world!
- We are so pleased with the leadership of CTK. All we have been through during the pandemic, the staff has gone beyond in making sure we feel connected. I love the online book clubs, services and other meetings. We feel everyone participated and felt included without some talking all the time. Not knowing what Delta is bringing we can still be connected by live streaming. The staff has been creative in designing the services. Your proposal schedule for fall is a good plan and has something for everyone. God bless each of you on staff and know we feel blessed to have each and everyone of you!!
- Thank you for all everyone has done throughout the pandemic to bring services to us and to make it possible to be back in the sanctuary!!
- Thank you for guiding us through this trying time, good job! I am so happy to be able to worship in church and look forward to being (normal) again. I also am looking forward to a CTK that is alive and growing. Children and young people are the future of CTK.

- Thank you for this survey...I think it is most helpful. We appreciate all that you do to help us serve God and worship.
- Thanks to all of you for your flexibility and creativity in providing worship experiences for us.
- good ideas to try - all the best!
- This survey is a good idea to get congregational feedback. The results should be widely shared and discussed with the council and changes made if necessary.

Commentary: On behalf of the CTK staff, thanks so much for your words of appreciation and support. This has not been an easy year for any of us, and a little encouragement goes along way. Thanks for your spirit of cooperation and mutuality as we approach another turn in the already twisty road ahead!

- ***Specific Offers to Volunteer (we will follow up as appropriate!)***

- I am willing to help but am gone January through April.
- My schedule is erratic so I can't volunteer for monthly duty.
- I would be happy to read the scriptures and/or help serve communion. Also, hoping to eventually sing in the Sanctuary Choir again.
- I have been "volunteering" for over 1 1/2 years, by regularly phoning or sending cards to many CTK members
- Would prefer to assist with Sunday school over other in-person worship options that may overlap but otherwise open to other worship options.
- I cannot volunteer for medical reasons and because I am on oxygen 24 hrs. a day

Commentary: Most of these comments fall under the rubric of offering further details to the more general question of volunteering. We understand that folks participate to varying degrees, based on their availability, comfort level, giftedness and many other factors. As noted above, we'll be sure to follow up with any of these specific offers that were connected with a name!

- **Comments Related to the Choir and the Director of Music position**

- Looking forward to Choir starting up again
- Heather Nelson should come back as choir director.
- Please encourage Heather Nelson to come back as our choir director. We (the Sanctuary choir members) want her to return as our director.
- I think we need a new Director of Music.
- I'm also concerned that our once very strong music program has been let go in favor of much less as well as the funding for such programs is seemingly disappearing. So Sad. 😞
- I would be happy to see Heather return to the music program.
- What is going to happen with the Choir? Is Heather going to come back?

Commentary: As most of you have certainly heard by now, Heather Nelson has decided *not* to return to the CTK Staff, where she had served as Choral Director from 2015-2018 and Director of Music from 2018-2020. We are sad by this news, but also wish her well in her new ventures, including an eventual move to Ireland, where we understand that her husband, Chris, will be starting a new business. We are grateful to Heather for all of the many ways she shared her many gifts with us, especially in the area of choir direction and worship leadership. CTK remains committed to a robust music ministry, which we will be gradually re-introducing as health and safety protocols permit.

It's important to remember that the scaling back of our music ministry since March of 2020 was almost entirely related to the COVID-19 global pandemic, when all leading public health experts agreed that corporate singing was one of the riskiest activities in terms of transmission of the coronavirus. The decision to suspend congregational song, to take a break from choirs, to postpone the Music and Arts Series, and even for Heather to take a leave from her position as Director of Music were all related to the public health risks, and NOT a reflection of any sort of financial limitations or constraints.

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of CTK members, the ample assistance of the CTK Foundation (who provided seed money for the Music and Arts Series, among other very generous music-related grants), and the commitment of many engaged and enthusiastic volunteers, worship and music ministry, including the funding provided for it, remains very strong. It is true that there will

be a necessary period of rebuilding after such a long period of dormancy, and we will not be able to simply reinstate everything at once.

- ***Some More Specific Constructive (?) Criticisms***

- The outdoor service on Facebook leaves a lot to be desired online. I left early [last time] due to freeze up, but did come back later and watched at least the sermon before it cut out totally again. Every outdoor service has had a problem.
- Nate has had trouble carrying the tune on some songs.
- Not every sermon needs to tangentially or directly deal with current political issues, diversity or equality in current society. It's just a little too much. Otherwise, the sermons have been very good.
- I feel that Heather and Chris Nelson have not been shown enough appreciation and respect for their jobs as well as their many hours of volunteer time.
- I'm afraid ctk will carry on as usual. The majority of those surveyed will probably not agree on anything they don't like. But this shouldn't be required for action or an excuse not to make changes. I don't think carrying on as usual is acceptable to a number of people I talk to.

Commentary: Criticism, when offered constructively, reciprocally, and in the spirit of wanting us all to do better, can be very helpful to any organization, congregation, or community. Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying that only those who have the heart to help also have the right to criticize. We choose to believe that those who shared each of these observations share that “helpful heart” as committed members of this faith community!

Amidst the steep learning curve of figuring out how to livestream worship, our outdoor services have no doubt been the most challenging. Cables get stretched around corners and snaked across parking lots, WiFi signals are diminished the farther we are from the router, wind interferes with the amplified sound, and sunlight and shade take turns messing with video levels. The only solution, it seems to us, is to keep trying, to keep learning from our mistakes, and to better anticipate where the issues might be each time we move outdoors.

Similarly, after a year or more of being able to record another take each time we made a mistake, most of us worship leaders (as well as folks “in the pews”) have become quite aware of the imperfections of “live” worship leadership. At the same time, the skill set required to accompany congregational song can be challenging enough without the added necessity of singing on behalf of the congregation (and in a mask, to boot!). So, while we continue to expect and require a high level of musical expertise among our leadership, we also believe that we have been well served in our worship music throughout the contours of change in how we lead worship, and appreciate the nimbleness shown by our worship team at each new turn.

We rely on the preachers in this community to listen both the voice of God (that is, what word God is calling them to speak at any given moment) and to the collective voice of the assembled community. Sometimes the message that results is a call to comfort the afflicted; other times it is to afflict the comfortable. This has been a difficult year, filled with many examples of in our common life (yes, including our political life) which have raised for preachers the issue of the diversity of God's creation, the activity of the Spirit in our daily lives, and the justice, kindness, and humility required by those who follow Jesus Christ.

We would agree that all of us can show more appreciation for one another and should say thanks more frequently. That is true for staff who lead and serve this congregation, as well as for volunteers who freely offer their gifts of service and leadership as well. In the initial days of the pandemic shutdown, Chris Nelson was publicly thanked during each of the worship services he helped record and produce. As a member of staff, Heather Nelson was also thanked for the ways she adapted her work so quickly and expertly.

Since this past year and a half has been anything but usual, we're not sure how exactly CtK might “carry on as usual.” Neither can we completely return to how things have been before the arrival of COVID-19. We thank you all for your helpful reflections on this survey, which has equipped us to make some changes now, imagine some others in the future, and hold off on other new directions for the moment. We know that we will likely never agree on anything 100%, but trusting the Holy Spirit, let us trust one another as well, moving forward into God's future together.