

Be Still and Know that I am God

We gather in silence to await the Lord's spirit. The lighting is dim to minimize visual 'noise' as well.

The goal of the service is to quiet our hearts, minds, and spirits so that we may experience the 'still small voice of God.'

In this style of worship, the songs consist of short texts sung over and over as a means of prayer and meditation. With each song, the choir will sing the text through once and then the congregation will join in for the second and subsequent times through. This bulletin contains only the words as the tunes are easily picked up by hearing. If you wish to simply listen to the singing, that is of course fine as well. Most songs will be sung six times.

Readings are done slowly and quietly as is appropriate to the meditative character of the service.

During the singing of 'Come and fill our hearts' members of the congregation may come forward to kneel at the altar rail to offer their own prayers and light a candle if they wish. During the designated time, just go up to the altar rail, kneel, light a candle, and stay in prayer for as long as you like. You can choose either to go to the center and light one of the votives in the stand in front of the ikon or kneel at one of the four stations with taller candles to stand in the sand. At the votive stand candles will be lit with the sticks as usual. At the other stations candles will be lit from the one already there.

Throughout the service the entire congregation (including the worship leader) faces forward. At front, before the altar there is a Christos Pantokrator ikon, a representation of Christ in Glory, looking in blessing on the world he died and rose for, and loves always.

At the end of the service, you may remain in silence for more time of prayer or leave in silence.

A Brief Account of Taizé

In 1940 an ecumenical monastery was founded in the village of Taizé in the Burgundy region of France. Brother Roger began a community 'on account of Christ and the Gospel' which became a refuge for all sorts of people suffering in wartime, especially Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. At first Brother Roger was alone in his house welcoming refugees of all sorts, but after the war other brothers joined him.

He chose to found a community in which "kindness of heart would be a matter of practical experience, and where love would be at the heart of all things." Ever since, the community of brothers has maintained a discipline of prayer drawing on their various Christian traditions. The Taizé community includes members of many protestant denominations and now Catholics as well. They consciously strive for unity among all Christians. Today the brotherhood includes more than 100 brothers from more than 25 countries.

The distinctive style of worship 'in the beauty of simplicity' has inspired generations of Christians to discover a deeper relationship with God. Their songs and chants are sung in the various languages of their many traditions, so that a given service may include Latin and English and Spanish and German, for example, but because of the simple and repetitive style of the singing people find themselves comfortable even singing in languages they do not know. Young people come in pilgrimage from all over the world to join in the prayer.

The effort to bring about unity among all Christians and solidarity among all human beings is bearing fruit all around the globe. It is possible to find Taizé-style services in churches of various traditions all over.

To find out more about Taizé, visit their website at www.taize.fr/en.