

# Worship at New Life Community Church

## I. Worship Statement:

Worship, praise, adoration of our triune God is essential to His holiness. God created man with the unique capacity for awe of God's glory. Worship is man's response to God's greatness. (See Isaiah 6:1-5, Revelation 4:11)

## II. Worship by Believers:

The driving desire of all believers is to lift God up in worship. That is why the Psalmist said *"How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."* (Psalm 84:1-2, NIV)

Worship of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, focuses the heart and mind of the believer on God, who is the worthy One. The Christian's privilege is to live all to the glory of God. *"Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name."* (Psalm 103:1, NIV)

From a new heart in Jesus Christ, the believer's life becomes a new song of worship to the Lord. As he is given energy and guidance by the Holy Spirit and the word of God, the Christian is free to give himself to the praise and worship of God. *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24, NIV)

## III. Corporate Worship

### A. Gathered for His Worship

#### 1. Vertical:

Coming together on Sunday to worship God is crucial; it is a defining activity for the Body of Christ. The focus of worship is on who He is and what He does.

The people of God, for millennia, have gathered together to make their sacrifice of praise and to express their joy and gratitude in Him. *"O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together!"* (Psalm 34:3, ESV)

When believers gather together on the Lord's Day they are God-centered and Christ-exalting and Spirit empowered. They express their pleasure, joy and allegiance to Him. *"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked."* (Psalm 84:10, NIV)

#### 2. Horizontal:

God is present and He is felt by His church in gathered worship. A benefit results to His people as the Holy Spirit manifests and moves them toward each other in love, joy and service. The Psalms of ascent speak to this: *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD!'"* (Psalm 122, ESV) *"Praise Him...in the courts of the house of our God...sing to His name, for it is pleasant."* (Psalm 135, ESV)

### B. Scriptural Elements of Corporate Worship

Over the centuries, the believing Church of Christ has shared common expressions of worship that are based in scriptural example:

#### 1. The People of God Listen to Him:

**Call to Worship:** The call to worship is a clear, concise summons, in God's own words, scripture, to draw and unify worshippers to their God (Psalms 145 – 150). God has summoned His people to assemble in His presence to worship Him on the Lord's Day.

**Benediction:** A benediction is the pronouncement of God's blessing upon his people at the conclusion of the worship service. Words of benediction are taken directly from Scripture (Numbers 6:24-26).

**Scripture Reading:** Through the weekly reading of scripture during the service, God speaks directly to the congregation in his own words. The hearing of God's Word is a means of grace (1 Timothy 4:13).

**Teaching and Preaching:** The teaching and preaching of the Word, the power of God unto salvation, is indispensable in the public worship of God. In the sermon, God addresses the congregation by the mouth of his servant, and through his Spirit opens the ears of his people (2 Timothy 4:2).

## **2. The People of God Speak to Him:**

**Singing and Music:** Congregational singing is a duty and privilege to be practiced and cultivated by all God's people, singing psalms, hymns & spiritual songs, not merely with the lips, but with understanding and with grace in their hearts, making melody to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19-20, Colossians 3:16-17).

**Public Prayer:** Comprehensive prayer, which may be offered as more than one prayer throughout the worship service, should include adoration of God's perfections, thanksgiving for all his mercies, confession of sin, supplication for forgiveness through the blood of the atonement and for renewal by the Holy Spirit, lamentation in times of distress or crisis, and intercession for the needs of God's people and others (1 Timothy 2:1-2, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

## **3. The People of God Celebrate His Presence:**

**Public Sharing:** The people of God gather and share life together. This is joining together, walking together in times of sorrow as well as in times of joy. There are times in the life of a church where God calls us to corporate thanksgiving. There are also times in the life of a church when God may call us to corporate repentance and humility (Hebrews 10:24-25, Hebrews 3:12-13, 1 Corinthians 14:26).

**Tithes and Offerings:** The bringing of tithes and offerings in the public assembly of God's people on the Lord's Day is worship to almighty God that is characterized by gladness and openhanded giving back to God. The people of God are to set aside to him the firstfruits of their labors; in so doing, they should present themselves with thanksgiving as a living sacrifice to God (2 Corinthians 8 & 9, Malachi 3:8-12).

**The Lord's Supper – Communion:** The Lord's Supper, also called Communion, is the sign and seal of eating and drinking in communion with the crucified and risen Lord. During his earthly ministry Jesus shared meals with his followers as a sign of community and acceptance and as an occasion for his own ministry (1 Corinthians 11:23-34).

**Baptism of believers:** Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ Jesus. Jesus, in his own baptism, was attested Son by the Father and was anointed with the Holy Spirit to undertake the way of the servant manifested in his sufferings, death, and resurrection. Jesus the risen Lord assured his followers of his continuing presence and power and commissioned them to go throughout the world teaching and baptizing others in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 8:12-13).

## **IV. Practices of Corporate Worship**

As we give respect to the timeless scriptural Elements of Corporate Worship, we are then free to develop and evaluate our own practices and traditions of worship according to matters of taste, judgment, and culture. We are reminded that the particular way we have chosen to do corporate worship at NLCC is not the only right expression of worship.

The Elders have overall responsibility for the weekly worship services and will delegate parts of the worship service to mature believers who will work together to create a cohesive focus and movement for our worship services.

### **A. Worship Planning:**

Weekly development of the worship service will regularly bring the congregation into the movement of God's great story of redemption for His Church. By a planned use of the Elements of Corporate Worship, the congregation joins together to tell His story: **Praise** - extolling God's holy attributes and justice, agreeing with scripture as to who He is; **Confession** – acknowledging the problem of sin, the need for confession, Christ's redemption from our sin; **Restoration** – Joy in our Savior, His cross, forgiveness, Holy Spirit power for all of life, thanks; and **Commitment** – to be like Him, holiness, new beginnings, desire to serve Him alone, tell the world, longing for the second coming.

Worship planning is aided by the scripture readings calendar that we use. The worship planners are encouraged to build their worship movement, beginning with the call to worship, by the themes laid out in the OT, NT and Gospel readings that will take place in each worship service.

### **B. Worship Leading:**

Our primary goal for all who plan and who lead in our Sunday services is to unite worshippers in seeing God. It is a public time of worship, emphasizing a uniting and blending, rather than any singular or individual expression. We want the Holy Spirit to enliven us and bring us close to God our Savior.