Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow: Innovating, Evaluating, and Improving Worship to Participate in God's Mission

Andrew K. Barnett

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PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW:
INNOVATING, EVALUATING, AND IMPROVING WORSHIP
TO PARTICIPATE IN GOD’S MISSION

by

ANDREW K. BARNETT

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Luther Seminary
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ABSTRACT

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow:
Innovating, Evaluating, and Improving Worship to Participate in God’s Mission

by

The Rev. Andrew K. Barnett

This case study asks how a Cathedral might innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission. Theoretical frameworks include: Missional Church (Zscheile, Keifert, Bosch), Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz, Linsky), Playful Acts in Scripture (Taylor), Doxology (Anderson), and utilizes Mixed-Methods Social Science Research. The central findings are that participation leads to transformation in worship, engagement helps communities innovate together, and innovation requires prolonged investment. Theoretical codes yielded a model of church as sailing vessel: seeking transformation, balancing identity with financial realities, dependent on trust, steered by a sense of shared purpose, and powered by the Holy Spirit’s wind.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No person is an island, and no thesis is written in isolation. I deeply appreciate the people and institutions that made this work possible. In particular, I give thanks to God for my Bishop, the judicatory and Cathedral colleagues who supported this work and whose identities remain confidential, and my colleagues and professors at Luther Seminary: Dan Anderson, Alvin Luedke, Dwight Zscheile, Mary Caucutt, Doug Dent, Doug Peterson, Albert Triolo, Laurie Johnson Neil Christians, Meghan Gage-Finn, and Ernest Kadiva. Luther doctoral students David Carlson and Sarah Nye wrote theses that were particularly inspiring to my work. My family was there for me at every stage: Diane, Mike, Sarah, Caleb, Luke, and Abi Barnett, and I stayed with Mom every time I came home for classes at Luther. Friends and mentors shaped this thinking, especially Paul Rexford Thatcher, Geoffrey Hoare, Randy Hollerith, Brian Prior, Wes Williams, Mariann Budde, Paul Cooney, Andrew McGowan, Pam Wesley-Gomez, David Orr, Steve Huber, Michael Boney, and Benjamin Straley. My musical and liturgical ideas have been formed through a decade of adventures with Theodicy Jazz Collective: Sarah Politz, Ann Phelps, Will Cleary, Jonathan Parker, Charlie Dye, Dan Loomis, and Mike Wade. Finally, I extend my love and gratitude to Hannah Hastings.
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“The length of the 9:00 service is about right.”

“I think the best way to welcome people to our church is to offer worship and music from the [denominationally approved prayer and music resource], led by choir and organ.”

“I stopped attending the 9:00 service because of the new music format.”

“Since we added the Cathedral band to the 9:00 service, I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in worship.”

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CCC    Cathedral Congregation Committee
NRSV   New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
IBM SPSS The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, currently produced by IBM.
NVivo  A software package designed to code and sort qualitative interview data.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Exploring the Research Question

Worship is complicated. Just ask anyone involved in planning it, anywhere. Indeed, Mainline Protestant churches are vexed by this adaptive challenge: how to craft worship that engages young people, embraces cultural diversity, and expands liturgical offerings in ways that remain authentic to historically received traditions. Few have navigated these waters with both agility and stability, and we need both. While churches have myriad options to consider on Sunday morning, these liturgical choices are rarely framed in the context of a community’s missional identity and theological commitment. Rather, liturgical revision is often viewed as an easy answer to a much deeper set of cultural questions that are transforming the ways Christian traditions are received (or rejected) by the world. In an era of precipitous decline, church leaders often think, “Get the right band and the kids will come,” or “preach well enough, and you will save the church.” But who does the saving?

I am convinced that efforts to revitalize the Church can only succeed when they are understood as partnership with God, tracing the activity of the Holy Spirit in our midst, rooted in the Triune God made known through the scriptures, and grounded in spiritual transformation. This is the true work of the church, yet I watch many churches
flounder as they try to answer questions that people simply are not asking. God’s people are not looking for more obligations of time and money, and they are not asking why Cathedrals have thrones. Rather, families gathered around the kitchen table are asking a much deeper set of questions about love and belonging, the direction of the country, their financial futures, the fate of the planet, and how to do justice in a culture that rewards little more than greed. As the church seeks relevance and growth in this context, I have come to believe that God’s preferred and promised future comes into focus when we are transformed. Movements are launched when you feel something. Inspiration launches a non-profit when you feel uniquely called. Faith is proclaimed when it matters to you.

These daunting contextual trends shape one of the primary public functions of church, which is worship. In today’s era of selfies, social media-induced loneliness, and unspeakable political discord, does communal Christian worship still matter? In a world where churches are defined more often by their style of worship than by God’s purpose for them, can worship still change us, that we might change the course of the world? Or better, can we align our worship practices so that God might change our hearts, sending us out by the power of the Holy Spirit to serve the world in remarkable ways? To call the question: if we show up for worship, (how) does that invite us into God’s wild and passionate work of loving the world?

People in the pews seek experiences that comfort, challenge, and inspire, sending them to be God’s people ever more fully, now and here. This transformation of head and heart will necessarily differ for each person, but communal worship offers one of the best opportunities for Church to shape the conversation. Here, I do not mean that we will change the watching world through great sermons and professional music— the world is
not watching— but I do mean that people will engage in spiritual practices that allow God to change hearts. Indeed, when we worship God in a community that knows and cares about our particular lot, we engage one of those practices. We are transformed when our prayers reflect the particulars of our neighborhood. We are thus empowered to name and celebrate the loving presence of Jesus in our lives, and to seek our place in that story.

This research stems from my curiosity in all of these issues, as well as my concrete job commitments. I have been asked to help a Cathedral expand its liturgical offerings, while simultaneously honoring the worship traditions of those who join us each Sunday. Having started this new liturgical format and experiencing it together for six months, I became eager to work with congregation and colleagues to build robust feedback pathways: to listen deeply, and to improve the service so that we all might participate more deeply in God’s mission of reconciling and restoring all creation.

Bearing these issues in mind, my research question became:

*How might a Cathedral innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission?*

What Is a Cathedral?

Several issues lay embedded in this question and each one bears further discussion. First, what do I mean by the word “Cathedral?” Technically, a Cathedral is the seat of the bishop, but in practice, this term applies broadly to the congregation and staff that serve together. Further, the word “congregation” refers to the regular worshipping community at the heart of the Cathedral’s common life. On a given Sunday, senior staff estimates that at least sixty percent of those worshipping with us are visiting
Pacific City\(^1\) and do not intend to return for several years. These visitors are clearly part of worship, but they would not identify as a part of the regular worshipping community. As a result, my survey and focus group research focused on those who regularly attend. The term “staff” broadly connotes the seventy-five full time employees of the Cathedral, though I focused my staff interviews with the clergy, worship, and music departments. A specific emphasis comes to light when we consider the history of the 9:00 service, and the broader Cathedral challenges that have affected it.

**Innovation**

Second, what is the innovative worship experience under discussion? Here, I refer to the shift in music and text during our 9:00 Sunday service, which began on January 29, 2017. The musical leadership for this service comes from a staff ensemble consisting of piano, bass, drums, saxophone, trombone, and a vocalist. The players are versatile, with strong experience in jazz, gospel, and R&B\(^2\), though we avoid those terms in our description of worship because we do not want to limit ourselves to a specific genre. I explore the history of this service more deeply below.

Innovation means adjusting ancient practices to create something new. It comes from the Latin word *innovare*, which means “renewed or altered,”\(^3\) and the word has

\(^1\) All identifying details have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of research participants.

\(^2\) R&B is an acronym for “Rhythm and Blues” music, which typically includes harmonic structure and melodic influence from the twelve bar blues, driving rhythms from jazz, and improvised vocal flourish. The style was made popular by African American artists such as Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, and Sam Cooke in the 1940s and 1950s. It was a precursor to rock and roll and funk in American music.

become associated with thriving companies in rapidly changing industries. For example, technology companies like Apple famously take previously existing devices and create something new from them. Consider the revolution that happened when iPods became iPhones. Steve Jobs did not abandon the iPod; he expanded what it could do, and Apple became the world’s most valuable company. In this light, Merriam Webster’s dictionary draws a helpful distinction between innovation and invention:

*Innovation*, for its part, can refer to something new or to a change made to an existing product, idea, or field. One might say that the first telephone was an *invention*, the first cellular telephone either an *invention* or an *innovation*, and the first smartphone an *innovation*.4

I hasten to note that we are not trying to invent new worship at the Cathedral. We do not seek to create a thing that has never been. Rather, we work with the prayers, hymns, songs, and Bible stories we have received and we try to create something new, broad, and alive. We intentionally draw on melodies and prayers that our congregation knows, and we work with rhythm and harmony, space and light, to craft a new worship experience. It is not our goal to invent new liturgy for the Mainline Protestant church. It is our goal to expand what we offer in a way that welcomes new cultures and sounds into the public witness.

There is an ecclesiological and theological rationale for this move. It has to do with expanding whose voice counts. Though our worship certainly draws beauty and meaning from received traditions and the denominationally approved resources we have in most pews, those resources almost exclusively reflect European and North American culture, text, and music. If Andrew Wall is correct that we live in the “Post-Christian

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4 Gove and Merriam-Webster.
“west” and that the church is growing and being shaped by “Post-Western Christianity,” it is inappropriate to offer monochromatic worship from Europe alone. This observation is especially true of Cathedrals, which seek to be places of broad welcome, yet overwhelmingly play European classical music to the exclusion of other styles. But thanks be to God that we need not throw the baby out with the bathwater; we can expand our worship traditions without abandoning them. If it is true that the critical act of the 20th century was expanding who had voice, vote, and power through civil rights, then it is high time for the church to expand the cultures we allow to influence us in God’s worship and music. This critical task can be done with excellence and care. The work is difficult, but it simply must be tried. Not to try would convey a tone deafness to a nation that is wrestling painfully with this question of whose voice counts. It would also be contrary to the work of Jesus, who seeks to love and serve those at society’s margins.

Method

Third, how did we evaluate this worship experience, and what variables were involved? As the methodology section explains further, this research was a concurrent, mixed-methods case study. I gathered information through background reading, attendance analysis, and oral history interviews with staff who were present as the 9:00 service became a principal Sunday offering. The collective memory of the congregation identifies this service as becoming a main Sunday Eucharist when it moved from a crypt chapel to the Nave in the early 2000s. Accordingly, I traced my data and interviews as

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close to this era as possible, given the reality that only three staff members were present during that era.

I used the information gleaned from this background research to continue to adapt the survey questionnaire, which I shared with the whole congregation via Survey Monkey⁶. Next, I scheduled focus groups with members of the congregation to ask follow-up questions raised by the survey results. Though I did not research this question with a baseline and end-line survey, the independent variable is the musical change we made to the service in January of 2017. The dependent variables are the congregation’s stated responses, attendance judged against a three-year historical average, and new requests to join the congregation. Intervening variables include a change in Cathedral leadership (we changed three of our four priests in the summer of 2017, then added two more in 2018), the presence of tourists during the spring, the small but numerous changes made to the spoken liturgy at the service, and the decision to move from the Nave to the Great Choir in January of 2018. In my context, the word “Nave” refers to the large space to the west of the rood screen. True to classic cruciform architecture, the Nave refers to the crossing, both transepts, and the full length of the church, moving west from the rood screen. The term “Great Choir” refers to the area East of the rood screen. Figure one illustrates the floor plan of the Cathedral.

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⁶ Survey Monkey is an online survey development, cloud-based software and service company, founded in 1999 by Ryan Finley. The website is www.surveymonkey.com
Demographics

Three demographic variables bear further discussion: race, national trends, and age. The Cathedral tilts female, elderly, and white, while the city tilts younger with a gender balance, and has growing non-white groups, including Latinx and African Americans. Though the Cathedral leadership has identified the need for an “over-

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7 The term Latinx encapsulates the full spectrum of gender identity within the Spanish-speaking community. Latino is masculine, Latina is feminine, and everyone is included in the term, “Latinx.”
corrective lens toward youth and youth leadership," it remains difficult to engage young people in meaningful ways in a city where young adults tend to move away after just a few years. The Cathedral actively recruits young adults. We have a 20s and 30s group that is thriving and growing, but this group does not identify nine o’clock as an ideal worship time. We have had strong response to the Cathedral band from young families, especially when the band plays for the neighboring schools. It remains difficult to attract these families back to church for Sunday morning. Beginning in September of 2017, we added nursery care for babies and toddlers, and we partnered with a very close neighboring church to offer age-appropriate Christian formation for students between the ages of four and eighteen. These child-care and Christian education opportunities are noted as intervening variables in the case study that follows.

Compared to the national trends facing our denomination, we are faring well. My analysis of the Cathedral’s Sunday attendance data shows that we have held relatively steady over the past three years, compared to a five-year baseline. We have also added 273 congregation members since January 1 of 2016, while twelve members have left the congregation. Across the country, our denomination is in a state of rapid decline. Between 2001 and 2015, our denomination decreased in active members by 24.7% and average Sunday attendance dropped by 34.5%.  

Race is a fraught issue for us, especially in the age of Trump, and racial history is signified through the building, symbols, prayers, and music present on Sunday morning.

8 Elected leader of the judicatory, Personal communication. August 15, 2016.

The Cathedral’s history with the city’s African American community is complex, and though significant headway has been made in recent years, the wounds of past memories remain for some of our constituents. Quite publicly, the Cathedral has engaged issues of race, racial justice, and slavery’s legacy through a multi-year process of dialogue, concerts, and programming. The presenting issue was the presence and then removal of a stained glass window and stone carving honoring two Confederate generals, but the issues are much larger than the window. Moving beyond the Cathedral walls, the music we play (or not) and the liturgical resources we make available to the congregation (or not) signify which cultures are honored (or not) in this sacred space. It is also signified in the saints we honor (or exclude), images we display (or not) in our carvings, stained glass windows, and other fine art. Further, the people who are asked to lead services from the altar platform represent a variety of backgrounds, and diversity considerations are especially noticed in the question of “Who’s on the platform today?” Beginning in the fall of 2016, I began to hear numerous congregation members make appreciative comments about the diversity of those leading worship. This timeline reflects the arrival of a new worship director, who articulated diverse worship as a central priority.

**Participating in God’s Mission**

Fourth, what does it mean to participate in God’s mission? Beginning with our theological identity, God has a mission of reconciliation and restoration for all creation, as shown in the biblical record, and as experienced by people of faith for generations. Our triune and perichoretic God sends Jesus Christ, who sends the Holy Spirit, who sends the Church, who sends people for the sake of loving the world. In the sending, we are also returned to relationship with God, where we find the persons of the Trinity in a
whirling, dance-like relationship known as *perichoresis*. For example, consider the way the Holy Spirit sends Jesus into the wilderness in Luke 4:1. He is sent out, yet he circles back home. Additionally, we find a reciprocal relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit sends Jesus into the wilderness at the beginning of his ministry in Luke’s Gospel, but Jesus will later send the Holy Spirit as a gift to his disciples at Pentecost. That same Spirit will send them out for the sake of the world. Luke’s illustration of the perichoretic Trinity helps us understand God as a sending presence, deeply committed to relationship, which by definition requires justice and compassion for all.

**My Definition of God’s Mission**

I define God’s mission as “bringing God’s love, justice, and compassion to fruition for all creation.” David Bosch defines it as follows: “Mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus…wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to belie. It is the good news of God’s love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world.”

God’s mission has a church, which exists to participate in God’s work, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Notably, the mission is God’s and not ours, and God is the subject of action verbs in this ecclesiology. God sends. God so loves the world. God acts. Thus we respond, because God has work for us to do.

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How to “Improve” Worship?

Fifth, given our identity and call to participate in God’s mission of reconciliation and restoration, what would it mean for this 9:00 service to improve? Surely our goal cannot be to make all people happy or satisfied. “Enjoyment” is not the goal of worship, as William Sloane Coffin prophetically reminded us: “God must afflict the comfortable before comforting the afflicted.” Through worship, the church seeks to partner with God to offer a “sign, instrument, and foretaste” of God’s beloved community. The goal of worship, in other words, is to tell the remarkable story of God’s work in the world, as best we understand it, and to empower worshippers to join in God’s mission each day, in our own time and place. Specifically, worship engages people in song, prayer, movement, and thought so that the Holy Spirit can empower us to be God’s hands and feet in the world. Worship is improved when people feel and report enhanced engagement in worship and with their communities beyond the Cathedral walls. We will know this is the case when people attend, sing, offer spoken prayers, participate in community events, and talk about their participation in God’s mission with specificity. We can also track requests to join the congregation as an indication of the transformation that is taking place in worship.

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**How This Research Impacts the Cathedral**

I designed this case study to help me innovate, evaluate, and improve my own work, in close partnership with colleagues and congregation, that together we might walk toward the future God intends for us. Further, I intended this project to create new pathways for healthy communication, with implications that will last long after this thesis is complete. I believe the congregation has developed new communication channels and patterns, which have helped us live together in Christian community as we navigate the challenges and opportunities coming our way. Additionally, I learned how our congregation and staff function as a system of systems. Here I refer to the clusters of people that operate in relative isolation from other groups yet share space and navigate occasionally conflicting priorities. For example, the docents provide museum-style tours while the worship department organizes daily prayer and the events department books large rentals that generate significant income. Meanwhile, volunteer ushers provide a sense of hospitality to newcomers in a ministry that also functions as a source of belonging and affection to the ushers. Because the ushers are meeting their core social needs at least as much as they are meeting the needs of the community, changes to their routine are often met with resistance.

Each of these groups creates a unique hierarchy and communication pathway and views the Cathedral’s priorities quite differently. Tending to these groups – and all the others – to create a sense that we are all pulling on the oars in the same direction is one of the Cathedral’s central challenges. Indeed, this challenge illustrates the need for a commonly shared identity and purpose, which has long eluded the Cathedral. While I did not solve that problem for all time, I did learn how to gather and respond to feedback in
meaningful ways. As a byproduct, my colleagues and I continue to implement what we learned in our plans for worship at 9:00. This process helped me contribute more meaningfully to the music and worship departments, as well as to the congregation’s worship experience.

**Brief Historical Background of the 9:00 Service**

It is necessary to understand the historical background of worship at 9:00 in our Cathedral. Chapter two provides a more detailed summary of this history, and I offer here a brief summary. In essence, this service has been through substantial upheaval over the past ten years. There were times when the 9:00 service was advanced as the congregation’s service, and regularly worshipping members were encouraged to attend it. Years later, there was serious discussion about whether to end the service completely. Now we find ourselves in a period of renewed investment in the service. After six months of planning and discussion in the fall of 2016, we launched a new worship format for the 9:00 service in January 2017. This new format includes music led by a staff ensemble consisting of piano, bass, drums, saxophone, trombone, and a vocalist. It also includes contemporary language in the spoken liturgy to create a more intimate and less formal worship experience. We have been innovating, evaluating, and improving this format since it began in January of 2017.

**Theoretical Lenses and Literature**

The story of this 9:00 service is filled with false starts, and with big ideas that lasted only a short while. That pattern has created a sense of congregational anxiety that any new-found success will not last, or that key staff will not be retained. Along the way,
many people who were involved in the service felt disrespected and hurt, and many of them left. This context created something of a minefield in which to imagine a new worship experience. At times, simple requests were met with strong reactions, and both staff and congregation were worried about the next big idea that would not last. All of these realities affected my work in this context. As I have grounded my thinking amidst these complexities, a robust theoretical framework helped me understand developments in our community, how people were responding, and what leadership techniques could help us navigate this terrain in faithfulness to the Gospel. I thus addressed my research question through the lenses of Adaptive Leadership, Missional Church Theory, and the sending nature of liturgy. In the paragraphs below, I briefly introduce each theoretical lens with regard to background literature, relevance to my research, and questions I will answer in chapter two.

First, Adaptive Leadership is a leadership and social change theory developed by Ronald Heifitz and Martin Linsky at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. They write, “Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.”13 This theory creates a distinction between “Technical challenges” which can be fixed with existing technology and ideas, and “adaptive challenges” which cannot be solved so easily. For example, burnt out light bulbs can be quickly replaced, and most people know how to do it. The authors suggest that if you could make a numbered list of action items, and the items on that list could be

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completed by a normal human, you are most likely dealing with a technical challenge.

“Adaptive challenges,” by contrast cannot be solved with existing knowledge and practice. Heifetz and Linsky write,

There is a whole host of problems that are not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. We call these adaptive challenges because they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways – changing attitudes, values, and behaviors – people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment. The sustainability of change depends on having the people with the problem internalize the change itself.14

Second, I considered the research question through the lens of Missional Church Theory. Consulting the authors and texts we have engaged throughout Luther Seminary’s Congregational Mission and Leadership program (Zscheile, Roxburgh, Anderson, Van Gelder, Keifert, and Bosch), I explored the missional identity and theological commitments that undergird our liturgy. I specifically wrestled with enlightenment impulses that affect our work together, and the various and competing ideas for what church should be. For example, some leaders in our community believe that a particular worship service should be diverse and multi-cultural, while other members of our community believe that each service should have its own flavor, distinct from the others, and not mixed. These are irreconcilable differences, because one worship experience cannot meet both of these expectations: but they are both deeply held by senior decision makers in our community.

14 Ibid. 13. Emphasis added.
Biblical / Theological Lenses

I considered my research question through lenses that are at once biblical and theological. This practice was inspired by Craig Van Gelder’s suggestion that strategic action in a missional church be “Communally discerned, biblically and theologically framed, theoretically informed.” One might paraphrase Van Gelder’s wisdom: smart projects are grounded in good theology, informed by the Bible while seeking to make sense of the world, and shaped by the community. As I wondered how to lead missional worship in my context, I considered the challenge through three biblical and theological lenses: the glorification of God, playful passages in scripture, and the sending nature of liturgy.

First, I considered the praise of God in scripture, and asked how our liturgy praises God. Drawing on the scholarship of Daniel Anderson and others, I explored the biblical practices of praising God. Anderson argues that mission means participating in the glory of God, as it is shown to us, promised, made flesh in Jesus, lifted up, and experienced in our daily lives. Missional worship has similar goals.

Second, I analyzed playful acts in scripture, seeking to develop a theology of play that informs our worship. I consulted Luther student Sarah Nye’s doctoral thesis, exploring a similar theme. I was taken with Nye’s observation that play invites us to a place of joy and laughter, and we can take ourselves less seriously. For example, when the Cathedral congregation move outside for a picnic, the energy changes instantly. Dogs

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roll in the grass, kids giggle and play, and older adults smile and laugh. I began this research thinking that we have untapped opportunities to engage a sense of play and improvisation in our worship, and that God could lead us in these new directions. I was surprised to learn from my research participants that play is not a priority for them in worship. But play abounds in Holy Scripture. Genesis chapter two offers a seminal example of God’s playful nature: fiddling with mud, God makes Adam and Eve.

Third, I explored the sending nature of liturgical theology; in which God sends the people out into the world. Patrick Keifert says it well, “The Apostolic Age was characterized by local churches understanding themselves to be mission outposts within the mission of God; communities called, gathered, and sent in God’s mission, the very movement of God toward the world.” 17 Indeed, one of the key things to know about Trinity is that God sends. I drew particularly on Bosch’s *Transforming Mission,* 18 LaCugna’s *God For Us,* 19 and Zscheile’s *People of the Way* 20 and *The Agile Church.* 21 My curiosity here focused on the ways liturgy enlivens our missional imagination. How, and in what ways, might worship send us out to love and serve God, for the sake of the

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18 Bosch, *Transforming Mission.*


world? As I move now to a description of Biblical and Theological lenses, it is always with an eye toward our participation in God’s mission.

**Methodology**

This project was a concurrent mixed-methods case study. In the paragraphs below, I provide a rationale for this research design, as well as a description of the proposed work. In brief, I conducted background research, administered a survey, held two focus groups whose participants were selected with a *convenience sample*, and used qualitative coding to analyze the results, as developed by Kathy Charmaz.²² I composed a case study that answers the question: *How might a Cathedral innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission?*

**Rationale for a Case Study**

I chose to conduct a case study because the 9:00 service had experienced so many intervening variables that I could not draw reasonable conclusions about any one of those changes. For example, in the two years under consideration for this research, we changed all but one of our clergy, fundamentally shifted the music for the service, started in one room and ended in another, and shifted the spoken elements of the liturgy several times. The goal of the case study was to tell the story of this service with specificity, to write a thick description of my context, and to learn from this experience in ways that other congregations might find helpful.

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Overview of Research Design

This case study involved interviews, a survey, and focus groups drawn from the population that makes up the 9:00 worshipping community. I asked participants to self-select their membership in this group, defined by worshipping with us at least six times per year. Notably, this population did not include interviews with visiting worshippers because I did not have access to their contact information. Ideally, the research would have captured their responses, but this limitation allowed me to focus my conversation with our regular worshippers. I field tested my questionnaire by sending it to ten members of the congregation and received detailed feedback from eight of them. I also used their responses to ensure that the data from Survey Monkey would be functional in IBM SPSS software. I also sent it to four colleagues for review. Congregation members accessed the questionnaire between February 25 and May 25 of 2018 and I received responses from eighty-three participants. Additionally, thirty-one people participated in focus groups, and fifteen of those participants did not take the survey. In total, I recorded feedback from ninety-eight people. Because our average Sunday attendance at 9:00 in the fall is 198, I calculated that these responses represent approximately fifty percent of the worshipping community. I then analyzed these data with descriptive statistics, which included total number of respondents, the frequency of each category, the percentage of respondents that fall into each category, and the mean, where appropriate.

Following the survey, I hosted two focus groups, with a protocol that I field tested with my conversation team and colleagues. I used terminology from the research participants, and I drew conclusions from what I observed rather than from the theories I
hoped to observe. I made my best effort not to insert myself into the interpretation, though I certainly name my role as a researcher and a participant.

Other Matters

In the paragraphs below, I define key terms, discuss my research in light of Luther Seminary’s Institutional Review Board standards and ethical considerations, and I summarize the significance of this study. First, I define the following key terms as I intend to use them in this research.

- **Missional Church:** A Christian community that is called, led, and sent by the Holy Spirit to participate in God’s mission of reconciliation and restoration. Through clarity of identity and purpose, the missional church resembles the early spread of the Jesus Movement in the first three centuries, often called the “Apostolic Age” of Christianity.

- **God’s Mission:** I define mission as “bringing God’s love, justice, and compassion to fruition for all creation.” David Bosch writes, “Mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus, wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to belie. It is the good news of God’s love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world.”

- **Worship:** The act of praising God and telling the biblical story to a people hungry for meaning, belonging, and Christian community.

- **Liturgy:** The work and play of the people. Public meaning-making, in my case, is explicitly Christian in content. Liturgy is a “sign, instrument, and foretaste” of the

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Kingdom of God, that sends us out into the world empowered and inspired to participate in God’s mission.  

- **Cathedral**: The congregation, visitors, staff, and donors that spend regular time in our building. Importantly, when I use the term I am referring primarily to the people – the Body of Christ. The building is a secondary concern.

- **Christendom**: This phrase is best summarized by Patrick Keifert, who writes:

  By A.D. 800, a Pope crowned a new Holy Roman Emperor. The formation of Christendom, a fusion of Christianity and civil kingdom – **Christendom** – was complete…The Christian parish was a political and geographical area within which each person, except the rare Jew or Muslim, was considered a member…The parish [pastor’s] responsibility was to maintain the flock: to hatch, match, and dispatch the members. Evangelism and mission became relatively irrelevant. Evangelism was done by the parishioners having babies. Between 800 and 1648 the business of European Western culture and the business of the church were relatively indistinguishable…. As the ruler believed, so went the ruled.

  It is important to note that there are two dimensions of Christendom reflected in the Cathedral. The first is the Gothic architecture of the building. The Gothic era in architecture is generally considered to include the twelfth through sixteenth centuries in Europe. Though construction on our building began in the early twentieth century, the Gothic Cathedrals of Europe were its unmistakable influence. This gothic era can be considered a pre-enlightenment Christendom impulse, most clearly illustrated by the arched vaulting, stained glass, and stone-building techniques. The other dimension of Christendom reflected in the Cathedral’s founding documents and cultural assumptions is the notion of a great church for [broad public] purposes. This project is best traced to the

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Enlightenment era, which David Bosch defines as follows: “The undisputed primacy of reason, the separation between subject and object, the substitution of the cause-effect scheme for belief in purpose, the infatuation with progress, the unsolved tension between “fact” and “value,” the confidence that every problem and puzzle could be solved, and the idea of the emancipated, autonomous individual.”26

Second, my research met the standards of Luther’s Institutional Review Board. I submitted all of my consent forms as well as my research plan for approval and waited until the work was approved before I began it. I also addressed the ethical considerations enumerated below.

According to the United States Office for Human Research Protections, the National Research Act (Pub. L. 93-348) was signed into law in 1979, and it was a response to the Belmont Report. That report:

Attempts to summarize the basic ethical principles identified by the Commission in the course of its deliberations. It is the outgrowth of an intensive four-day period of discussions that were held in February 1976 at the Smithsonian Institution's Belmont Conference Center supplemented by the monthly deliberations of the Commission that were held over a period of nearly four years. It is a statement of basic ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical problems that surround the conduct of research with human subjects. By publishing the Report in the Federal Register, and providing reprints upon request, the Secretary intends that it may be made readily available to scientists, members of Institutional Review Boards, and Federal employees.27

The Belmont Report establishes three requirements for the ethical conduct of human subject research:

26 Ibid., 350.
Respect for persons (involving a recognition of the personal dignity and autonomy of individuals, and special protection of those persons with diminished autonomy); Benefice (entailing an obligation to protect persons from harm by maximizing anticipated benefits and minimizing possible risks of harm); and Justice (requiring that the benefits and burdens of research be distributed fairly).  

Because I provided informed and implied consent forms, maintained the confidentiality of research participants, and exercised prudence in which information becomes publicly available, I believe that the potential benefits of this research far outweigh the risks. I outline the benefits below when I discuss the significance of the research. The potential risks include uncomfortable conversations, and potential discomfort should a respondent experience dissonance between their stated values and observed actions.

Third, I must address the question of confidentiality, which I maintained by using pseudonyms to identify the city, denomination, institutions, and employees who were part of this research. All of the names of the people, cities, and churches listed in this document have been changed.

Last, I offer a word on the significance of the study. One of my colleagues often asks, “So, what? Why go to all this trouble?” I would submit that this research has four avenues of significance. First, I developed and enhanced communication pathways with my colleagues and the congregation I serve. These renewed channels continued to provide benefits long after the thesis was complete. I worked hard to develop trust with my research participants so that we can communicate directly as time goes on. Second, I enhanced my understanding of the structure, function, and craft of liturgy. I heard from

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28 Ibid.
my community what works and what does not, and I continued to study the origins of our worship songs and text, asking how God might still speak to us today through these public words. Third, I shared my findings with the broader liturgical community. There is robust interest in expanding our worship offerings in ways that respect our received traditions. Because I am engaged in this shared theory and praxis, I made helpful observations and discovered truths that are worth sharing. Fourth and most importantly, I pray that this research helps the Cathedral evaluate and improve a new worship experience so that we all participate more fully in God’s mission of reconciliation and restoration. I turn now to the theoretical lenses that informed my research at the Cathedral and a historical overview of the 9:00 service.
Chapter one introduces the overall project and summarizes the lenses I used to understand the Cathedral’s work in Pacific City. Now I offer historical background on the 9:00 service and explore the theoretical lenses that I used to ground my thinking. Those lenses are: adaptive leadership, missional church theory, and the sending nature of liturgy as it is explored in the field of liturgical theology. I begin by telling the story of this service.

**Historical Background of the 9:00 Service at Pacific Cathedral**

It is important to understand the historical background of worship at 9:00 in our Cathedral. Due to the major changes that have occurred in this service in the past ten years, congregation members’ perceptions of the service have fluctuated over time. There were times when the 9:00 service was publicly framed as the congregation’s service, and folks were actively asked to attend. Years later, there was serious discussion about whether to end the service completely. Now we find ourselves in a new period of growth.

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1 The names of all cities and participants have been changed to pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of research participants.
To understand this context more fully, I offer a brief history of the service over the past twenty years.

Beginning in the early 1990s the Cathedral held a 9:00 service in one of the crypt chapels. The format of the service was similar to the 11:15 service, which means that the music featured organ and choral anthems, though the choir was small and consisted of volunteers. The liturgy was virtually identical to the 11:15 service, which was a standard prayer-book liturgy in our Mainline Protestant tradition. When Dean Cople was approached about becoming Dean of the Cathedral, he said he would only come if he could help develop a congregation which would form the heart of the Cathedral’s worshipping community. The question of forming a congregation had never been addressed before. Though the Cathedral enjoyed a regular gathering of worshipers each Sunday, that gathering did not have the kind of institutional or pastoral support that most congregations do. They just came and went, and the Cathedral functioned as a dispensary of programs and worship. After some discussion, the Cathedral’s leadership agreed that supporting a regular congregation would be a good idea, and Dean Cople began his tenure.

When he looked at the Sunday offerings, he felt that the Cathedral should offer one service that would be more intimate and intended to meet the pastoral needs of the congregation. This intimate and participatory worship was his vision for the 9:00 service. As a result of this liturgical shift, the later service could be more grand in terms of music, procession, and length. This higher style of worship became his vision for the 11:15 service, intended more for out-of-town guests seeking a traditional Cathedral experience.
To his credit, Dean Cople was a legendary church builder, and he had seen this approach succeed before. In his previous position, he had overseen substantial growth in attendance, giving, and engagement with the community. In his view, the key to saving the Cathedral from financial ruin would lie in his ability to build a vibrant congregation. With a strong congregation, he believed the Cathedral would build a community of people who believed in the institution and would then support it financially. He also saw his gifts best suited for the work of a parish priest, preacher, and teacher. He understood the value of volunteer participation in worship and music, and he directed the music program to create a volunteer choir for this service. I will discuss this choir in more detail below.

As he applied his renowned pastoral sensibilities to the 9:00 service, attendance quickly outgrew the location in a basement chapel, which comfortably holds 100 people. Dean Cople moved the service to the Nave, which comfortably holds 1,700 people. The challenges of the large space were immediately apparent, but the service grew between the years 2007 and 2012, and the total congregation was reported to contain 1,000 members. It is important to note that this number also included the attendance at 11:15, which has consistently been the larger service. Though Dean Cople’s renowned preaching and teaching surely played a role in this growth, it is important to note that two large churches within a two-mile radius were deeply dissatisfied with their rectors, and a notable portion of this growth might more accurately be called a ‘reshuffling of the

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2 Patricia Sullivan. The Rev. Cople, Dean of Pacific Cathedral to resign. *The Pacific Times*. July 8, 2011. (Note: The names of the newspaper and of the Dean have been changed to reflect pseudonyms used throughout this research.)
sheep’ from one parish to another. As a wise counselor\(^3\) reported to a neighboring congregation, “Cathedrals have congregations. You know that right? All Dean Cople did was bring them upstairs and give them coffee. The fact that neither you nor St. Joseph’s liked your pastors at the time doesn’t mean the Cathedral was trying to steal your people.”\(^4\) Several of our parish leaders have stayed with us since Dean Cople started the congregation, and they point to a series of classes he led as the principal driver of the congregation’s growth.

One of the musical distinctions between the Cathedral’s 9:00 and 11:15 service was exhibited in the choral ensembles. The 9:00 choir had a few section leaders, and a committed group of volunteers of varying vocal abilities. Some were not strong singers. The service was also accompanied by the assistant organist and choir director. Though the two choirs would often sing similar music on a Sunday, the quality of the 9:00 choir was perceived as a “junior varsity” version of the 11:15 choir, due to the . They were also offering virtually the same music, but they were inviting anyone who wanted to come to rehearsal to participate. Though there are significant benefits to empowering lay-leaders to sing and lead worship, not least that the congregational singing is often strengthened, the two ensembles simply were not at the same level musically. This meant that Cathedral patrons who valued excellence in music made 11:15 their regular home. It also meant that the Cathedral was offering two very similar liturgies at 9:00 and 11:15.

\(^3\) Zsheile, People of the Way.

In 2011, after the stock market had crashed (2008) and a natural disaster had caused tens of millions of dollars in damage, Dean Cople resigned and was replaced by Dean Stern, who was not perceived to view the congregation as a strong priority. As the financial difficulties of the Cathedral began to compound, leaders found themselves facing deficit budgets for years. Combined with the building damage and the need to return to balanced budgets, elected leaders imposed a round of deep budget cuts to program and music. After a dramatic budget cut to the music program in 2015, the 9:00 choir was cut from the budget with very little warning to the congregation, and members of the choir quickly left the congregation, taking with them their family and friends, and their financial contributions.

It is worth exploring the culture and decisions around the 9:00 choir, because the cultural memory of the ensemble still affects worship and music decisions at 9:00. The choir was called “[Volunteer Choir]” and by multiple accounts, its quality was lacking. As one employee described the expectations for singers in this choir, “If you had a pulse, you were in.”\(^5\) It consisted of a few section leaders, and a committed group of volunteers, and it was led by the associate director of music and organist. In casual conversation with former members of the choir, I often hear this choir described as if it had sixty to seventy singers on a regular basis. Analysis of choir attendance and pictures, however, suggests that the actual number was closer to thirty. I am curious as to why the cultural memory of the choir seems to inflate its participation and significance. Though that question is beyond the scope of this research, it is clear that virtually all of the volunteer singers left

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\(^5\) Employee M. Personal communication. October 7, 2017.
the congregation after the choir was disbanded. Whatever the original number was, I am aware of three former choir volunteers that continue to worship at the Cathedral. When former members return for Diocesan events, they still find members of the staff with whom they share their frustration over the choir’s demise. I share email documentation of this decision in my results chapter, including the letter from Dean Stern, announcing that the choir would be disbanded. As is often the case following major budget cuts and heated disputes with key staff members, the Dean announced his retirement six weeks after disbanding the volunteer choir.

Dean Stern’s tenure was rocky and it was marked by a precipitous drop in funds. At the end of three years, he announced his retirement, so the interim Dean then faced a precarious financial situation, and a staff with low morale. I would join the Cathedral staff during this interim period. I would join a Director of Worship, Director of Programs, and Dean as new employees in August 2016.

In the fall of 2016, the clergy and music staff began a series of conversations to reimagine worship at the 9:00 Sunday service. In September of 2016, the service consisted of an organist and a cantor, and many of the people who continued to attend the service did so because they liked the time (starting at 9:00, ending at 10:00), and the music was seen as less of a priority. A key point here is that several members of the congregation who value music (and tend to sing well) stopped attending the service in 2015. One result of this move is that the congregation struggles to sing confidently. It became important to recruit congregational singers as part of the rebuilding effort for this service. Congregational singing is a stated priority of the congregation, as well as the worship and music staff.
It is also worth describing the constituents that make up the 9:00 congregation. This time of day is the preferred worship time for many of the Cathedral’s most generous donors. Notably, the average age of donors is seventy-five and many of our principal donors prefer this earlier worship time. The service welcomes a regular group of worshippers, who know and love that service and have mostly been attending since Dean Cople started it, approximately ten years ago. These regular attendees include many of the “reshuffled sheep” who joined the Cathedral after disarray roiled their nearby parishes in the early 2000s. On most weeks, we welcome intermittent worshipers and newcomers, who are often visiting the area. It is worth noting that the attendance can double in size between the prelude and the offertory, which has implications for when and how worship leaders can address the full congregation.

As we entered into evening conversations about the 9:00 worship experience, we heard a desire to expand the musical offerings at the service while respecting time-honored worship traditions such as weekly Eucharist, Bible readings, strong preaching, and communal prayer. This led us to create a new gospel-jazz ensemble called the Pacific Cathedral Band, and to roll out a new service format in January 2017. Since we began that service, we have collected robust feedback from the congregation. The results of this feedback are discussed in detail in chapter five.

During the season of Epiphany, 2018, we moved the service from the Cathedral nave to the high altar area, known as the Great Choir. The goals for this move included better audio quality for the music, a more intimate space for the congregation, flexibility

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in the worship space, and a more appropriate space for the attendance. In hindsight, it was just bad church-planting to put a 200-person service in a 1,700-person room. The Great Choir comfortably holds 200, and additional chairs can boost the capacity to nearly 400. The flexibility of this space, combined with its intimacy and improved audio quality received a strong positive response from the congregation and worship staff. We intended to continue experimenting and innovating with the service throughout the research period, but the move to the Great Choir in January of 2018 was significant. This move improved the sound quality and liturgical intimacy of the worship experience. I turn now to a discussion of the theoretical lenses through which I am considering this work.

**Theoretical Lenses**

As this story indicates, our 9:00 service has had a challenging past, and worship leaders can elicit strong emotional responses from members of the congregation by bringing up these old issues that have not yet been resolved. I am reminded of a truism I learned in my study of pastoral care, “If you would reasonably expect an emotional response to be a two on a ten-point scale, and you get a response that feels like a nine, chances are you have just triggered an unresolved issue from the past.” Specifically, the community is leery of sweeping changes that are announced abruptly rather than discerned communally, and they are afraid that budget cuts and staff changes will affect the Sunday worship experience with little warning. As I grounded my thinking amidst these complexities, a robust theoretical framework helped me understand what was happening in our community, how people were likely to respond, and what leadership techniques might help us navigate this terrain in faithfulness to the Gospel. In the pages
below, I consider my research question through the lenses of Adaptive Leadership and Missional Church Theory.

**Adaptive Leadership**

First, Adaptive Leadership is a theory of leadership and social change developed by Ronald Heifitz and Martin Linsky at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. They write that, “Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.”

Their seminal book, *Leadership on the Line*, suggests several strategies for leaders in tough situations:

- Get on the metaphorical balcony, so you can see the whole situation, above the ground-level noise;
- Regulate personal distress;
- Give the work back to the people, which is to say do not try to solve problems for the people you’re serving; and
- Correctly identify technical challenges versus adaptive ones, because you need adaptive leadership for adaptive challenges, and you can draw on existing expertise to solve technical challenges.

This text is especially relevant because the challenges and questions around Cathedral worship are almost certainly not technical ones. In Heifitz’s and Linsky’s vocabulary, this means that the knowledge, experience, ideas, attitudes, and ways of thinking may not yet exist to solve these challenges. One of the most common mistakes leaders make is to confuse adaptive and technical challenges. When a leader’s challenge

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7 Heifetz et al., 2009, p 14.
is adaptive, the common mistake is to try to solve it with technical fixes. Anyone who thinks the vexing problems can be solved by technical fixes is not wrestling with the full nature of the challenge at hand. These approaches almost always fail.

**Adaptive Challenges We Face**

As I consider the adaptive challenges facing the Cathedral, I see a challenging set of trends: people do not attend church with the frequency of previous generations, young people do not attend church like they used to, communities of color have a complicated history with our denomination and our institution, the giving practice known as a “pledge” is declining in significance among younger donors, we have immensely conflicting sources of identity, the generation that was so dedicated to finishing the Cathedral is literally dying off, and building maintenance requires enormous expense every year. This combined set of challenges is nothing short of adaptive. Technical fixes will fail.

Though many of the above trends have been well documented,\(^8\) I wish to focus here on two adaptive challenges that are unique to our context. The first arises from our competing sources of identity. As one member of senior staff recently put it, “We’re odd, aren’t we? I mean we are a church, a Cathedral, a museum, a music school, and a high-end rental venue for corporate events.” Indeed, each of these identities creates expectations, possibilities, and costs. The resulting mix also creates a lack of clarity about who we are, and whom we are called to be. Indeed, our Dean has identified this push and

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\(^8\) See, for example, Patrick Keifert, *We are Here Now*, and Bosch, *Transforming Mission*. 
pull as one of the Cathedral’s founding challenges. Rather than run from the mix of identities, he has asked us to name it and embrace it.

Consider these competing identities. The Cathedral has pastoral responsibilities for a congregation that worships here regularly. We also serve as a worship space and a convening space for regional gatherings of our local judicatory, which means we are guided by the pastoral oversight of our judicatory’s leader. Additionally, we are a venue that hosts worship services of regional and sometimes national importance. Further, we are incorporated with three independent schools, each of which boasts stronger financial standing than we do. The schools have a complicated relationship with religion, Christianity, and our particular denomination, and living into this identity has created a mix of challenge and opportunity. All four institutions have their own governance boards, and an over-arching foundation has fiduciary responsibility for the combined institutions. Governance is one of the great challenges for the Cathedral’s senior staff. Happily, improved relationships among the institutional leaders has led to stronger collaboration and trust over the past three years. Finally, there are senior leaders in our staff and governance structure who seek to pitch the Cathedral as a civic and cultural hub in addition to its role as a religious institution. When the national leader of our denomination last visited, he called on us to be “an icon for the loving, liberating, and life-giving way of Jesus.” In contrast, the Cathedral’s largest 2019 fundraiser aimed to attract non-religious donors to a national landmark that might play a role in the country’s civic life.

Part of the reason we tried to reach new donors is that our greatest generation of donors is quickly dying. Indeed, this is a second adaptive challenge worthy of discussion.
Like many congregations around the country, we struggle to engage younger donors at a level that matches the giving of seniors. The average age of our donors is seventy-five, and some of our most dedicated patrons have died in the past two years. Indeed, there was a group of people that was committed to completing the Cathedral’s construction, and their decades of service and commitment have been transformative. They are now well into their eighties, and there are few people coming up behind them who share their dedication to this place. Indeed, our senior staff refers to this generation as the founders, and we spend a good deal of time considering how to engage a new generation of leaders in a similar capacity. One of the challenges we face here is that our case for support is amorphous. Some would suggest that it is not compelling, while others suggest that it simply has not been clearly articulated. In my view, we need a clear identity and mission, rooted in spiritual practices and theological commitment. From this, all else will flow.

Adaptive Leadership discourages a leader from proposing simple answers. Rather, the theory suggests that the only way out of tough challenges is a pattern of communal innovation and learning, where members try small, low-risk ideas and learn as they go. Successes are replicated, failures are terminated, and communities learn along the way. Another way to frame this theory of leadership is that the work of leadership comes from the community, and in our context, I would suggest that the Holy Spirit becomes the principal public leader of this work. In the end, Heifetz and Linsky get it right, “Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.”

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Innovation: An Approach to Adaptive Challenges

I believe God is calling us to innovate as we navigate the Cathedral’s adaptive challenges, and I have been thinking about how to spark this innovation so that it can be received and engaged. Put simply, innovation must not be an idea that originates in the C-Suite. Linda Hill discusses leadership and innovation in her book, *Collective Genius*, writing:

Leading innovation is not – cannot be – about being a visionary. The last thing you want is a team that defers to you to set a course, to be a chief innovator and then simply implement your vision...If your goal is innovation, then your role must instead be to create an environment – a setting, a context, an organization – where people are willing and able to do the hard work of innovation themselves: to collaborate, learn through trial and error, and make integrated choices.”

I wonder to what degree our innovation can be informed by members of the congregation. How much of it needs to be led by staff, and to what degree can members of the congregation propose new ideas for worship and music? Though a bottom-up approach to organizing innovation is necessary in many congregations, this approach applies differently to us, because of our mixed and competing identities. Innovation in our context must be a cultural practice, but the Cathedral’s leadership cannot wait too long before acting. One way to split this difference is to allow the musicians in the ensemble to contribute their expertise to the music and worship. Rather than having all of the arrangements and ideas come from the musical director, we can learn from their decades of experience. We can invite their voices into the innovative conversation. To move from the abstract to the concrete, the rhythm section players can suggest grooves

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for a song, the brass players can suggest harmony lines, and the vocalist can suggest tempo and key. Considering all this complexity leads me to a short reflection on Servant Leadership, which informs my approach to managing staff and engaging the congregation.

Servant Leadership: Harnessing the Power of Relationships

Among its many tasks, Adaptive Leadership calls leaders to become aware of their leadership preferences and liabilities. The idea is that we will veer toward our preferred leadership style, but all approaches have liabilities. The key, then, is to know your strengths, to develop your weaker skills, and to engage colleagues who compensate for the skills you lack. For example, I have learned that I am gifted at building pastoral relationships and trust, but I tend to roll my eyes at the daily minutia of program administration. I must tend to these details at a microscopic level to avoid creating extra work for my colleagues. I need to ask my colleagues for assistance, where appropriate, so that our combined work reaches its potential. Mindful of this opportunity to grow, I am also aware that I have the ability to lead and manage change. As the results section will demonstrate, our congregation has embraced the Cathedral’s liturgical innovation at the 9:00 service. Multiple factors play into this trend, but I would like to focus here on the power of relationships, best harnessed through servant leadership.

Peter Northouse writes that servant leadership “Emphasizes that leaders should be attentive to the needs of followers, empower them, and help them develop their full
human capacities.”"\textsuperscript{11} It is also “The only leadership approach that frames the leadership process around the framework of caring for others.”\textsuperscript{12} I think it resonates deeply with the leadership that Jesus modeled, and it has been instructive to read some of the founding ideas from the seminal thinker on servant leadership, Robert Greenleaf. Greenleaf was inspired by a story he read, in which an actual servant sustained his group on a mystical quest across the desert. The servant’s ability to tend to each member of the group made him an indispensable leader and led Greenleaf to research leadership for the next several decades. He defines ten characteristics of servant leadership:

1. Listening (as communication. Not just talking, but listening);
2. Empathy (standing in the shoes);
3. Healing (to make whole);
4. Awareness (receptive to what happens around you);
5. Persuasion (convince others to change);
6. Conceptualization (be a visionary);
7. Foresight (predict the future);
8. Stewardship (take responsibility for your role);
9. Commitment to people’s growth (see them as more than just worker bees);
10. Building Community.\textsuperscript{13}

Even in a large and high-profile parish, this approach to leadership is welcome and noticed. It must be said that our Dean and the leader of our Judicatory both embody this style of leadership, and they call the rest of their teams to a similar approach. Servant leadership thrives because of relationship, and models the loving way of Jesus, even as


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 239.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 227-228.
tough decisions are made. As I consider the way Jesus leads, and how we might invite the Holy Spirit to serve as our principal public leader, I now weave these leadership theories into the missional church conversation.

**Missional Church Theory**

In the paragraphs below, I consider my research question through the lens of Missional Church Theory. I explore the missional identity and theological commitments that undergird our liturgy at the Cathedral. I begin with a series of assumptions that led Christianity to be understood as an established element of Western culture. These assumptions can be summarized with the term, “Christendom,” which I explain below.

**A Story of Christendom**

Patrick Keifert identifies the difference between what he calls the “Apostolic Age” where churches did mission as their primary task, and the era of Christendom, in which church became synonymous with western empire and government. He writes,

> By A.D. 800, a Pope crowned a new Holy Roman Emperor. The formation of Christendom, a fusion of Christianity and civil kingdom – Christendom – was complete...The Christian parish was a political and geographical area within which each person, except the rare Jew or Muslim, was considered a member...The parish [pastor’s] responsibility was to maintain the flock: to hatch, match, and dispatch the members. Evangelism and mission became relatively irrelevant. Evangelism was done by the parishioners having babies. Between 800 and 1648 the business of European Western culture and the business of the church were relatively indistinguishable.... As the ruler believed, so went the ruled.¹⁴

This Christendom era is the one in which our denomination (globally) acquired its significant properties and holdings, and one in which we no longer reside. “Christendom”

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¹⁴ Keifert, *We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era, a Missional Journey of Spiritual Discovery*, 30-31.
is a helpful way to understand the way the Christian church was the establishment religion. This was especially true during the Gothic era in England, when Cathedrals had thrones for the bishop, because the bishop was a ruling member of the aristocracy. The connection between Christianity and the colonial impulses of the European empires was impossible to ignore. Indeed, many of those designs were replicated in the Cathedrals that were built to imitate the gothic structures of Europe. One could assume that music would come from the unaccompanied human voice, and later would include the organ. Accordingly, European Cathedrals developed a cavernous and splashy acoustic that would be imitated in the Americas. One could assume that the liturgy would be said by one white man, from one important place, and that the congregation would look on from afar. To make this possible, large pulpits and elevated altars would become the focal points of the space, although there was significant disagreement about which was more important – word or sacrament. One could assume that the congregation’s role was to arrive, listen, and depart, with Eucharist taking on varying roles over time. These assumptions were then cemented into the stones of the building which would limit the Cathedrals’ musical and liturgical options, centuries later. These building choices illustrate an economic principle known as pathway dependence. To illustrate pathway dependence, physicist Amory Lovins considers a series of consequential and irreversible decisions made over extended time. For example, the standard width of U.S. railroads – fifty six and a half inches – dates back to the width of a British train track, informed by trams and wagons over the centuries, which matched the ruts cut into roads in Ancient Rome, all of which started with the dimensions of a Roman chariot, which needed to fit
the posterior ends of two Imperial Roman Army war horses.\textsuperscript{15} Long after the rationale and even some of the benefit of those decisions has faded, the consequences of empire remain: today’s train tracks were literally designed by a horse’s butt. In our Cathedral context, we have a stunning building that imposes limitations on sound, sightlines, and musical variety. When we are at full capacity, approximately half of our seats offer obstructed views and compromised audio quality. Rhythm-driven music can only function well in the front half of the building. We also have the enormous cost of maintaining that space, whose expense arises from the attempt to recreate a Gothic construction practice. Though the building evokes the stunning experience of a European Cathedral, it imposes limits on the work that can happen inside.

In addition to the liturgical ramifications of Christendom, one’s church was determined by geography, so the pastoral ministry of each church was to “hatch, match, and dispatch” (baptize, wed, and bury) the already existing members, and evangelism meant that members would simply procreate. That system worked because young families were still part of the culture of the church. Though this era would fade dramatically, the assumptions behind it would continue to drive thinking and behavior in the Mainline Protestant Church. Indeed, the very concept of a Cathedral is an embodiment of the ideals and assumptions of Christendom.

The “Era of Disestablishment”

Keifert moves on to describe an era of Disestablishment, writing, “This [modern project] eventually led to the separation of church and state, one of the primary achievements of modernity…For most local churches, however, the experience of disestablishment has meant challenge, change, stress, and struggle.”

He does not have patience for the churches still struggling with the change. I appreciate the way Keifert names the grief that accompanies his loss, and also his clear words for those who still wallow: “Get over it!”

“Paradigm Shift”

As we consider the challenges framed by disestablishment, perhaps we will discover possibilities from the revolution taking place in our midst. In his oeuvre entitled *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch writes, “My thesis is, furthermore, that this process of transformation has not yet come to an end (and will, in fact, never come to an end), and that we find ourselves, at the moment, in the midst of one of the most important shifts in the understanding and practice of the Christian mission.”

The notion of radical change ought not scare us, he argues, because the Church has experienced at least six fundamental changes in thought and action. He calls these revolutions “Paradigm Shifts.”

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16 Keifert, *We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era, a Missional Journey of Spiritual Discovery*, 32-34.

17 Ibid., 34.

Bosch delineates major paradigm shifts throughout Christian history “with a view to getting a deeper insight into what mission might mean for us today. After all, every attempt at interpreting the past is indirectly an attempt at understanding the present and the future. So, one important way for Christian theology to explore its relevance for the present is to probe its own past, to allow its self-definitions to be challenged by the self-definitions of the first Christians.”

Explaining the notion of a paradigm shift in the context of seismic changes in thought and behavior, Bosch points to the work of scientific historian, Thomas Kuhn. Bosch writes,

In a nutshell, Kuhn’s suggestion is that science does not really grow cumulatively (as if more and more knowledge and research bring us ever closer to final solutions of problems), but rather by way of ‘revolutions.’ A few individuals begin to perceive reality in ways “qualitatively different from their predecessors and contemporaries, who are practicing ‘normal science.’”

When transferring this natural science theory to theology, a few caveats are appropriate.

For the Christian this means that any paradigm shift can only be carried out on the basis of the gospel and because of the gospel, never however, against the gospel. Contrary to the natural sciences, theology relates not only to the present and the future, but also to the past, to tradition, to God’s primary witness to humans. Theology must always be relevant and contextual, but this may never be pursued at the expense of God’s revelation in and through the history of Israel and, supremely, the event of Jesus Christ. Christians take seriously the epistemological priority of their classical text, the scriptures.

Bosch concludes that the church is in the midst of a paradigm shift.

It is, in fact, the thesis of this book that the events we have been experiencing at least since World War II and the consequent crisis in Christian mission are not to be understood as merely incidental and reversible. Rather, what has unfolded in

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19 Ibid., 187.

20 Ibid., 188.

21 Ibid., 191.
theological and missionary circles during the last decades is the result of a fundamental paradigm shift, not only in mission or theology, but in the experience and thinking of the whole world. Many of us are only aware of the crisis we are facing now. It will, however, be argued that what is happening in our time is not the first paradigm shift the world (or the church) has experienced. There have been profound crises and major paradigm shifts before. Each of them constituted the end of one world and the birth of another, in which much of what people used to think and do had to be redefined. Those earlier shifts will also be traced in some detail, insofar as they had a significant bearing on missionary thought and practice. It will, furthermore, be proposed that such a paradigm shift does not – to paraphrase Koyama – confront us only with a danger but also with opportunities. In earlier ages the church has responded imaginatively to paradigm changes; we are challenged to do the same for our time and context.”

Another way to frame Bosch’s argument is that seismic change creates a rare disturbance. This disturbance makes deep innovation possible – not inevitable – but possible. One of the realities of our Cathedral context is that the church around the country is shrinking dramatically, even as we are holding steady in attendance. The church around us is in financial crisis, but we have managed to maintain balanced budgets for three years after several years of deficit spending. Indeed, the broader church in turmoil looks to large institutions, such as ours, for stability in the midst of a seismic change. The question then becomes how much should we invest in our stability, and how aggressively should we innovate?

A ‘New Missional Era’

How might a congregation navigate the waters of disestablishment? Keifert describes a “New Missional Era,” in which congregations undertake a spiritual journey to discern and incarnate God’s preferred and promised future. Keifert believes that formal

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22Ibid., 4.
vision statements and plans can only be drafted after deep spiritual discernment. The outdated business model that many churches use requires a small group of “experts” or “leaders” to write a plan, and then to get buy-in from the community through a carefully planned sales pitch. This process is not biblical, prayerful, spiritual, or helpful, and it typically fails. By contrast, Keifert advocates an approach of discovering, experimenting, visioning, learning, and mentoring. Toward the end of that process, written documents are helpful to keep members focused and accountable. But there is much work to be done before writing the plan, and it starts and ends with scripture and prayer. Keifert insists on biblical literacy as a foundation for faithful innovation.

How might we innovate our liturgy in ways that remain faithful to the Gospel, to our received traditions, and to God’s work in the world? I explore this question in the paragraphs below.

**Missional Liturgy**

Clarity around liturgy and mission requires definitions of both terms. Here I define liturgy as the work (and play!) of the people, which creates a “sign, and foretaste” of the Kingdom of God, inviting us all to participate more fully in God’s work in the world.²³ I define God’s mission as the reconciliation and restoration of all creation, and in my survey I defined it as: “bringing God’s love, justice, and compassion to fruition for all creation.” David Bosch writes beautifully on this subject: “Mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus[,] wagering on a future that

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verifiable experience seems to belie. It is the good news of God’s love, incarnated in the
witness of a community, for the sake of the world.”24 Specifically, one must critique
assumptions that surface-level changes, though necessary at times, would be sufficient to
address the deeper issues facing our culture and institutions.

I worked closely with Zscheile’s Agile Church, especially his work with
improvisation, low-risk innovation, and a permission to fail. This approach is especially
helpful as we consider liturgy as a process of discovery, and as we look for new ways to
expand our offerings to the neighborhood. For example, Zscheile describes an early
tennis lesson in which the instructor congratulated him for hitting the ball over the fence
after several attempts had sent the ball crashing into the net. The tennis coach called that
a “good mistake,” because it meant he was hitting the ball with much more potential. By
connection, Zscheile invites the church to make the same kind of “good mistakes:”
failures that might teach us and lead to innovation.25

The missional church can be defined as a Christian community that is called, led,
and sent by the Holy Spirit to participate in God’s mission of reconciliation and
restoration. Through clarity of identity and purpose, the missional church resembles the
early spread of the Jesus Movement in the first three centuries, often called the
“Apostolic Age” of Christianity.26 In Patrick Keifert’s words,

The Apostolic Age was characterized by local churches understanding themselves
to be mission outposts within the mission of God; communities called, gathered,


26 Ibid., x.
and sent in God’s mission, the very movement of God toward the world. “Even as the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21)...They did not imagine mission as something or somewhere other than their primal activity as a called, gathered, centered, and sent people of God. This is the core characteristic of a missional church: being, not just doing, mission.\textsuperscript{27}

In the current era facing God’s Church, we can understand the Holy Spirit as our primary leader for innovation. Zscheile describes the practices of Silicon Valley innovators, with keen insights for the Church. He also draws on Heifitz’s and Linsky’s work with \textit{technical problems}, which have known solutions, and \textit{adaptive challenges}, which require new patterns, learning, metaphors, and paradigms.\textsuperscript{28} Christian leaders must learn to “give the work back” to the people who have to do the learning, which means that we will not solve all of the problems ourselves. Zscheile describes the despair of mistaking adaptive challenges for technical problems.

We watch the church’s vitality, relevance, and institutional strength erode before our eyes, and we feel responsible. We think that if we only worked harder, preached better, brought more energy, met people’s needs more, or found the right program or technique, things would turn around.”\textsuperscript{29}

\textbf{Innovation Is Crucial}

Heifitz and Linsky offer the principal insights that \textit{nobody knows} how to solve adaptive challenges, and that is why experimentation is so crucial. We can learn from

\textsuperscript{27}Keifert, \textit{We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era, a Missional Journey of Spiritual Discovery}, 28.


\textsuperscript{29}Zscheile, \textit{The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age}, 33.
concepts like “Agile Project Management” which launch “minimum viable products” and provide pivot points for organizations to learn early and often. Zscheile writes,

“This new approach… is increasingly becoming the norm. It involves much greater attentiveness to what is going on outside the organization than the old approach. Workers are empowered to improvise and collaborate in new ways. The customer is actually a partner in discovering what the product should become, as end users are incorporated into the learning process. Various dimensions of the project are affected by new learnings that arise. Leaders are less responsible for controlling a predetermined process than fostering a lot of improvisation.”

It is also necessary to have good conversations about the assumptions that lie beneath our actions and pay attention to those “positive deviants” who succeed in their contexts despite trends that would predict failure. In all of this, we can understand the Holy Spirit as our guide in faithful innovation because she has played that role throughout the Judeo-Christian story. The Holy Spirit inspired Peter to preach good news to the “men of Judea” (Acts 2:14), and later called Peter to change his own stubborn mind by honoring all of God’s creation, including the “profane” parts (Acts 10:1-13). So too can we expect the Spirit to guide us with disruptive innovation that may yet breathe life into God’s church. Tired though we may be, we follow a God who speaks to a desert people and calls us to promised land. Following this discussion of theoretical lenses, I turn to a biblical and theological examination of the research question: How might a Cathedral innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission?

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CHAPTER 3
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

Chapter two provides historical background on the 9:00 service and explores the theoretical lenses of adaptive leadership, missional church theory, and the functions of liturgy. Chapter three considers the research question through the biblical and theological lenses of doxology, playful acts in scripture, and the theological nature of liturgy. I consider my research question through three lenses that are simultaneously biblical and theological. This approach draws upon Craig Van Gelder’s suggestion that missional projects ought be “Communally discerned, biblically and theologically framed, [and] theoretically informed.”¹ Strategic action is informed by the biblical narrative while also trying to make sense of the world as we see it. Pondering what missional worship might be in this place and time, I endeavor to ground my thinking through lenses that are concurrently biblical and theological.

Biblical and Theological Lens: Doxology – God’s Glory Revealed and Exalted

First, I consider doxological acts in the biblical narrative, and ask how our liturgy glorifies God. Drawing on the scholarship of Daniel Anderson, I explore the biblical telling of the glory of God. Anderson writes,

In Hebrew scripture it is the *kabod* (*doxa* in the Greek Septuagint) or *glory* of God that is revealed in creation and celebrated in song in Psalm 19:1. It was the glory of the Lord (*kabod Yahweh*) that filled the tabernacle as described in Exodus 40:34-35. It was the prophet Isaiah who spoke comfort to the people of Israel and prophesied that the *kabod Yahweh* would be revealed and that all people would see it together in Isaiah 40. It was the glory (*doxa*) of the Lord revealed incarnate that was proclaimed in John 1:14. It was to the glory of God the Father that Christ emptied himself, took on the form of a slave, became obedient to the point of death on a cross, and was exalted by God as sung in the Christ hymn of Philippians 2. It is the glory of God that lights the eschatological holy city Jerusalem foretold in Revelation 21. A doxological hermeneutic of the Bible suggests that God’s story is the story of God’s glory revealed, promised, incarnate, exalted, and fulfilled from creation to new creation…the *missio Dei* is realized in the eschatological, definitive revelation of *doxa*.2

Anderson suggests that we can understand mission as participating in the glory of God, as it is shown to us, promised, made flesh in Jesus, lifted up, and experienced in our daily lives. One might extend this work to conclude that missional worship strives toward these same ends. Or, better, doxology lies at the heart of Christian worship. Patrick Keifert would add to this observation that missional worship comes from “local churches understanding themselves to be mission outposts within the mission of God; communities called, gathered, and sent in God’s mission, the very movement of God toward the world.”3 In short, missional worship changes us. It is no longer akin to a shopping experience in which we purchase the style that pleases us; church differs from shoes in this way. Worship is rather a transformative experience that creates expectations from God, for us, on behalf of the world.

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3 Keifert, *We Are Here Now*, 28.
Text Study: Doxology in Psalm 98

As I consider the doxological tasks of innovative worship, the work is inspired by Psalm 98. We read, “O sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things.” We sing our praises to God in response to the good work God has done and is doing in our midst. We are able to give God praise because God first did marvelous things. It is not just a song that we sing, but a new song. Here the distinction between innovation and invention is helpful. To invent is to create a thing that has not been before, to innovate is to renew that which we have received. Importantly, we are not singing a song for its own sake. We are not performing or building our own egos. Rather, we are called to sing a new song to the Lord, because God has done marvelous things.

That we glorify God in response to the work God is doing in the world highlights the connection between worship and loving the world. We have been richly blessed with the wonders of creation and companionship, God has blessed us with a beautiful existence. As a reaction to these wonderful things, Psalm 98 calls us to sing a new song unto God, to glorify God, to engage in doxological worship. When we practice this task, we are once again called, gathered, centered, and sent by the power of the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the world. Engaging with the world reminds us both of the work God would have us do, but also of the marvelous things that call us back to doxology. This cycle repeats, as the connection between worship and living grows deeper.

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The psalmist continues, “God has remembered steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.”\(^5\) What must our worship and music do, but remind us of God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, and proclaim it to the ends of the earth, in languages and sounds that can be globally understood? The psalmist bellows, “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.”\(^6\) The news we have to proclaim is good indeed. As the old spiritual proclaims, “I got news, I got news, I got news, O Lord I got news. Ain’a that good news.”\(^7\) Ours is a wondrous faith, and we are called to make a joyful noise to the Lord, with all the earth, to break forth into song that is joyous, and to sing praises. This is the very definition of doxology in our worship: to give praise to God, and it is a marvelous thing indeed.

Next, the psalmist takes us on a tour through the temple orchestra, writing, “Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody. With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.”\(^8\). We have more than just a single instrument, style, or sound in the heavenly symphony. We have lyre, and with the lyre we have melody. Then we have trumpets, and the bold horn, all called to make a joyful noise. For what? For the Lord, who is King. The extension to

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\(^5\) Ibid., Psalm 98:3

\(^6\) Psalm 98:4.


\(^8\) Psalm 98:5-6.
liturgy here is clear: we are called to draw on all the sounds we have and know, to bring glory to God.

Lest we think our sounds are limited to the orchestra, Psalm 98 looks to all creation for doxological song: “Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord.”\(^9\) The roaring foam of the ocean, the rumbling of the hills, the clap of thunder and flood, all these mighty acts praise God with the glory that only creation can muster. It is indeed a good thing to sing to the Lord, who has done marvelous things in our sight.

The author of psalm 98 makes clear that God’s marvelous works become known through our rapport with creation. This connection with land, water, creatures, and mountains was a formative reality for early Jews and Christians, and it was intentionally removed from Christian influence by enlightenment impulses that sought to separate feeling and thought, beauty and piety, nature and heaven. The idea that heaven was far above us, removed, distant, and unearthly continued the separation between creation and spirituality.

This sense of dualism – which was so common during the enlightenment, and which continues to influence contemporary thought – was a new trend. But the psalmists saw things very differently. For them, creation was telling the glory of God. Mountains thundered, seas foamed, creatures called, grass fed the cattle, and wine came in due season. These abundant and over-flowing blessings were deeply rooted in creation. They

\(^9\) Psalm 98:7-8
were not resources to be rightly used. They were not partisan gimmicks, associated with the elite and the out-of-touch. No! These natural wonders were nothing short of doxological acts: they glorified God, and called God’s creatures to a sense of awe.

Consider Psalm 104, for example. Here we find a nature hike through God’s glorious mountains, and the chorus resounds, “O God how many are your works, in wisdom you made them all.”  

Night and day have a place in the cosmic story, “You have made the moon to mark the seasons; The sun knows its time for setting.” Further, YHWH is seen as the provider of the bread, the wine, and the oil, as we read, “We all look to you [YHWH] to give us food in due season. When you give to them they gather it up; When you open your hand, they are filled with good things.” Inspired by God’s abundance, creation’s beauty calls us to glorify the Lord, as the psalmist continues, “I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing for I rejoice in the Lord.” As we sing our praises, we are also inspired by notions of play found throughout scripture. Thus, play becomes the next biblical focus of this chapter.

Biblical and Theological Lens: God’s Playful Acts in Scripture

We glorify God in response to the blessings of this life, and as we offer our praises through new song, we are inspired to love the world in remarkable ways. Yet this project need not be a stiff, unpleasant task, like homework. It can be joyful, exuberant,

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10 Psalm 104:1
11 Psalm 104: 19.
12 Psalm 104: 28.
13 Psalm 104: 34.
even playful. I now consider playful acts in scripture, seeking to develop a theology of
play that informs our worship.

In his book *Body and Bible: Interpreting and Experiencing Biblical Narratives*,
Björn Krondorfer ponders whether play and scripture can work together. He writes,

“Play,” Victor Turner observed, “can be everywhere and nowhere, imitate
anything, yet be identified with nothing” (1986:168). Given this description, play
seems to provide an ideal model for postmodernity—the representation of culture
as scattered and polymorphic, as simulacra, and as incomplete and creative.
Indeed, we have lost a universe that hitherto provided coherent meaning
systems and given us a sense of being protected by a sacred canopy. This loss has
not only unleashed great anxieties but also released powerful creative energies.
For better or worse, the twentieth century has procured more playful modes of
living. As individuals and communities, we have played with new forms of
experiencing ourselves in relation to our traditions, cultures, and realities…. We
truly are, as twentieth-century literature has emphasized, homo ludens, the
playing human; or, as others have said, a bricoleur, the post-modern human who
playfully rearranges the world from fragments and debris of the past without truth
or origin… Considering this predicament, we ought to ask ourselves whether this
book, which wholeheartedly endorses the notion of play, does more harm than
good. Is it not actually play itself that contributes to our bricolage style of living
and the loss of meaning? Is it, therefore, legitimate to combine the Bible—which
is for so many a sacred, authoritative voice—with the elusive, equivocal nature of
play? Why would we turn to play to interpret biblical narratives? Is it not play that
circumvents the seriousness and sacred of life? Play is neither nonserious nor
antisacred. Play, as the contributions to this volume demonstrate, provides spaces
in which the modern human is in search of meaning or, to adapt a Jungian phrase,
“in search of a soul.”

To understand a biblical and theological lens that focuses on play, I read the
doctoral thesis composed by Luther Seminary student Sarah Nye. She writes:

The study of play has a long and varied history of its own. Johan Huizinga has
argued that play is older than culture itself. Play has alternatingly been seen as

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the privilege of adults… and the foolishness of children.\textsuperscript{16} Far from being limited to humans, play has been observed and described as an essential behavior of animals.\textsuperscript{17} Language even portrays the characteristics of play being extended to other aspects of nature as well. We can talk about how light \textit{plays}.\textsuperscript{18} Play has been described both as the means through which humans confirm the existence of objective truth and as the process through which humanity wrestles with the postmodern ambiguity in which humanity is always inventing and reinventing truth.\textsuperscript{19} Yet for all these deep theories, and even conflicting definitions, play remains something that even the smallest child understands through experience. Play is fun… Further expanding upon this experience, this lens will be engaged to explore the possibility that play is a means through which we are opened to the possibilities of creativity, innovation, and engagement with the Other.\textsuperscript{20}

I am taken with Nye’s observation that play calls us to a place of joy and even silliness – we are delivered of the presumption of our own import. In my context, one of the greatest barriers I observe to transformative worship is a sense of stiffness, of performed propriety. Yet my research participants indicated that this pretentiousness was not appealing to them. If anything, authenticity with mistakes would be preferable to a sense of performed perfection. I make this observation because I have seen the congregation let go of pretense, and joy has been the result. When we move outside and share a picnic, our community changes dramatically. I have mentioned this before, but the joy and freedom was so memorable that it is worth saying again: Dogs roll in the grass, kids run around playing, and we find ourselves in a very different emotional space.


\textsuperscript{19} Krondorfer, \textit{Body and Bible: Interpreting and Experiencing Biblical Narratives}, 14.

I think we have incredible opportunities to engage a sense of play and improvisation in our worship, and that God might be working in those spaces. I should note, however, that though the research participants are looking for authenticity, the results section will show that they are not looking for a sense of playfulness in worship.

Still it is worth asking, what might play look like in worship? It could be an open time of prayer, or a sermon preached off-book. It could be a funny moment during the announcements, or a connection between congregants during the peace. It could be improvised music that supports the congregation, or a wailing Gospel style solo at the offertory. Playful worship need not be disrespectful, rude, or trivial. Indeed, a sense of play could inform dramatic moments in the liturgy, such as biblical texts read with multiple voices to represent different characters. In essence, playful worship engages the congregation with joy, enthusiasm, humor, and drama.

From a biblical perspective, play abounds. It is hard to look much farther than the second chapter of Genesis, where God plays in the mud. Robin Stockitt notes, “The language of the story of creation is located in the playroom rather than the workshop.”

Truly, the whole creation story pops with a child’s sense of play. Stockitt continues,

The text of Genesis 2 is couched in playful language. A picture is constructed by the storyteller of God taking the dust of the ground, much as a potter or a child would take a lump of modeling clay, and breathing into the human form that had just been shaped. It is the language of the kindergarten yet it is profoundly serious in its intent. The first Adam is taken from the red earth itself and given the gift of life via the very breath of God. The conclusion that the Hebrew storyteller invites us to draw from this account is that God creates out of sheer good pleasure

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22 Ibid., Loc. 3084.
without an apparent utilitarian intention in view. The Hebrew word that is translated as “imagination” furthers this image of creative delight. Our first encounter with the imagination of God is in Gen 2: 7 where the writer uses the term *yatsar*. This account of creation depicts God forming or shaping Adam from the dust of the ground and breathing life into his nostrils. It is a tender, gentle, creative image of a God who carefully shapes into a form. The readers of this creation account are invited, through the skill of the storyteller, to imagine God taking the rough clay from the earth and molding it much as a potter would do into the shape of a human being. It is the image of an artist, a sculptor at work…. This shaping activity constitutes the heart of creation and is a product of God’s creative imagination. When God created or shaped (*yatsar*) Adam in his own image, and endued him with the same capacity to imagine (*yetser*) he was enduing humanity with the ability to imitate God’s own creativity. Adam was given the same shaping potentiality, to create something new out of the very fabric of the material world.\(^23\)

A sense of play continues throughout scripture. One calls to mind Moses’ interactions with YHWH before heading back to Egypt,\(^24\) young David playing the harp and lyre even as some plotted his murder,\(^25\) YHWH’s musings about the Leviathan in the psalms,\(^26\) and Jesus’ trickster tendencies – especially his tendency to answer the Pharisees’ questions with yet more questions.\(^27\) Sarah Nye highlights the incarnation itself as a supreme act of play, writing,

> The most playful act of all, though, is the absurdity of the incarnation—of God becoming man and entering the human story as a baby, born in a stable. What a surprise! How ever more surprising that this Messiah did not engage with military might, but rather told stories. Every parable of Jesus is the opportunity to find ourselves surprised by our own location in the biblical story.\(^28\)

\(^23\) Ibid., Loc. 3738.

\(^24\) Exodus 3.

\(^25\) 1 Samuel 16, 18, 19.

\(^26\) See, for example, Psalm 74, 104

\(^27\) See, for example, Mark 12.

\(^28\) Sarah Nye. The Spirit’s Playground.
Barbara Brown Taylor examines Jesus’ playful story-telling to show that every created thing is “fraught with divine possibility.”

God became incarnate and there was no going back. From that point on, the distinction between the sacred and the secular was blurred forever. Nothing was too humble to contain the holy: not a manger, not a stable, not the sweet-smelling body of a Hebrew boy child. The door between heaven and earth was blown off its hinges, and nothing was ever the same again. The child became a man and the man became a preacher whose sermons were full of commonplace things: seeds and nets, coins and fishes, lilies of the field, and birds of the air. Wherever he was, he had a knack for looking around him and weaving what he saw into his sermons, whether it was sparrows for sale in the marketplace, laborers lining up for their pay, or a woman glimpsed through a doorway kneading her family’s bread. “The kingdom of heaven is like this,” he said over and over again, comparing things they knew about with something they knew nothing about and all of the sudden what they knew had cracks in it, cracks they had never noticed before, through which they glimpsed bright and sometimes frightening new realities. Every created thing was fraught with divine possibility; wasn’t that what he was telling them? Every ho-hum detail of their days was a bread crumb leading them into the presence of God, if they would just pick up the trail and follow.

If each created thing is indeed fraught with divine possibility, we bear in mind Jesus’ advice to create scribes for the kingdom: to bring old treasures old and new. In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus says “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” One might hold this passage as a guide for playful and faithful innovation: drawing on the best of our received traditions, and expanding them without abandoning them. For example, one could take a fifteenth century hymn, blend it with jazz harmony

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30 Ibid., 211-212.

31 Mark 13:52
and South African rhythm, and present it in a way that invites robust congregational singing. This is the task of faithful innovation in an uncertain era.

Through these stories, the biblical narrative helps us imagine what God might prefer and promise for our worship and living. As Arthur W. Frank observes, “We need stories to live.” Through story, we understand what has come, but we also see new possibilities for the future. Thus stories become “living things” that “often shape, rather than simply reflect, human conduct.” When we tell stories together in public, and when we confess our beliefs based on those stories, Shannon Craigo-Snell suggests that we are rehearsing our commonly understood ethics. When we promise to welcome the stranger and care for the widow, we are priming ourselves for ethical behavior as we walk to the car after church. When we invoke Jesus’ parables of mercy and compassion, the stories shape our public discourse and priorities. These stories indeed shape us, and they send us out transformed.

**Theological Lens: The Sending Nature of Liturgy**

After exploring our telling and playful interaction with the biblical narrative, our focus turns to the sending nature of liturgy. Patrick Keifert observes that in the missional church of the first and second centuries, the early Christians “Did not imagine mission as something or somewhere other than their primal activity as a called, gathered, centered,

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33 Ibid., 22-23.

and sent people of God. This is the core characteristic of a missional church: being, not just doing, mission.\(^{35}\) God’s mission of reconciling and restoring all creation is the identity, purpose, and task of the missional church, and our worship aspires to help us in this work.

How does worship meet this goal? William Sloane Coffin writes that “God must afflict the comfortable before comforting the afflicted”\(^{36}\) and for him, this was one of the preacher’s central tasks. Likewise, worship urges Christians to challenge assumptions, build connections with the neighborhood, and engage in the practices of discipleship, which will necessarily send us out into the world.

After all, one of the central things to know about Trinity is that God sends. God sends forth the act of creation in a primal blur. God so loves the world that he sends his only Son, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, the activity of God in our midst. The Holy Spirit builds and sends God’s church, and God’s church sends us – you and me – into the troubled waters where the kingdom is not. It is precisely there, in these waters, that God calls us to build the kingdom of Shalom, which is a just peace for all of God’s children. This is nothing short of the Apostolic mission of God. And the world is hurting!

How should we imagine a worship experience that sends? I believe that it transforms us through music and liturgy, especially when we participate in it. God’s kingdom is not tribal: it is limited neither by Victorian culture nor by personal preference. In short, it is not dead. Rather, God’s kingdom is brimming with joy, life, and passion.

\(^{35}\) Keifert, *We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era*, 28.

and it encompasses the whole world without exception. Our worship can embody this global and multi-cultural expression of God’s love.

Though our worship certainly draws beauty and meaning from received European traditions, we can expand those traditions without abandoning them. One need not assume that any deviation from organ and choir will result in a bad band with no rehearsal. If it is true that the critical act of the 20th century was expanding who had voice, vote, and power through civil rights, then it is time for the church to expand the cultures we allow to influence us in God’s worship and music. This critical task can be done with excellence, and indeed that is one of the ways I have discerned God calls me to serve the Church. I have become a hound dog sniffing for new songs, prayers, and practices that might transform our worship. Drawing on jazz, blues, spirituals, Gospel music, and music from the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, I seek to incorporate new rhythm and harmony into our beloved melodies, and fresh prayer practices into our well-known liturgies. Indeed, this musical and liturgical expansion has been at the core of my work at Pacific Cathedral.

Having explored these biblical and theological lenses I turn now to the methodology that undergirded my research with the congregation. I conducted a concurrent mixed-methods case study, asking how a Cathedral might innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission.
CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY

Research Question

Throughout this project, I have asked the question, “How might a Cathedral innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission?” As explored in the biblical and theological lenses above, I asked this question in light of the glorification of God, playful acts in scripture and theology, and the sending nature of liturgy. I turn now to a discussion of method, informed by the Bible, theology, and a social science approach known as case study.

Case Study Methodology

This project was a concurrent mixed-methods case study. The work was concurrent because the qualitative and quantitative data gathering overlapped. The research employed mixed-methods because qualitative data were added to the quantitative data. Indeed, the primary intervening variable was a change in music, which happened in January of 2016, one year before this research began. As I discussed in the “Historical Background” section of chapter two, the 9:00 service has been through seismic changes in the past ten years. These included but were not limited to music, choral ensembles, clerical leadership, and most recently, space. A case study made sense here because it was essentially an effort to tell the story of this service, to write a thick description of the
Cathedral’s context, and to learn along the way. In the paragraphs below, I provide a rationale for this research design, as well as a description of the work.

In brief, I conducted background research, administered a survey, held focus groups with selected participants, and used qualitative analysis to analyze the results as I conducted a case study to answer this question: How might a Cathedral innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission? The research timeline is presented in figure 2 below.

**Figure 2. Research Timeline**
Theoretical Rationale for a Case Study

First, I provide a rationale for this design. Describing the value of mixed-methods research, Luther Seminary student David Carlson\textsuperscript{95} writes,

This approach has the advantage of combining both quantitative and qualitative instruments, i.e. mixed methods, to describe phenomena. As John Creswell explains, “This ‘mixing’ or blending of data, it can be argued, provides a stronger understanding of the problem or question than either by itself. This idea is at the core of a reasonably new method called ‘mixed methods research.’”\textsuperscript{96} As Peter Nardi observes, \textit{quantitative methods} assume that “social phenomena can be systematically measured and scientifically assessed,”\textsuperscript{97} but one must note that, “choosing to conduct a quantitative approach to understanding the social world can answer only some questions.”\textsuperscript{98}

Due to these observations, qualitative research adds a helpful supplement. According to Herbert and Irene Rubin, “Qualitative researchers focus on depth rather than breadth; they care less about finding averages and more about understanding specific situations, individuals, groups, or moments in time that are important or revealing.”\textsuperscript{99}

When I engaged research participants in focus groups, I used Rubin’s and Rubin’s technique known as \textit{responsive interviewing}, which “treats the interviewees more as partners than as subjects of research.”\textsuperscript{100}

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\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 16.

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 7.
those questions elicited follow-up information from the survey. But when the Holy Spirit
directs our conversation in a different direction, *responsive interviewing* gives us all
license to follow that lead, avoiding the sense that we are working through an inflexible
protocol.

The decision to use responsive interviewing would prove successful and
important. I learned that the focus group responses differed based on the blend of
participants in each group. Because I asked each participant to write their answers before
we discussed them as a group, I was not worried about losing their responses. I was able
to follow the energy of the conversation and this intuitive move helped participants share
their deep longings for worship and our common life together. In brief, we had the
opportunity to wonder aloud.

I must highlight that I originally intended to complete the survey and analyze the
data prior to the focus groups. Because we decided to move the service to the Great Choir
in the middle of my research, I began focus groups before I had finished analyzing the
survey data completely. My research became *concurrent* rather than *sequential* when I
made this decision, but I was able to consult the survey results prior to the focus groups.
Consequently, my questions to the focus groups were informed by my early review of the
survey data.

**Biblical Rationale for a Case Study**

We find a biblical rationale for case study research in the second and third
chapters of the book of Revelation. In this dream-like report, traditionally attributed to
John of Patmos, we read that the Son of Man has specific instructions for the churches in
and around the Aegean Sea. These messages blend affirmation, support, condemnation,
and particular reference to individuals in the community. Consider, for example, the letter to the church in Ephesus:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lamp stands: ‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false. I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet this is to your credit: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God (Revelation 2:1-7).

The author praises the Ephesians for their endurance and patience, and for their clarity around whose teaching to follow. Yet he upbraids them for abandoning the love they had at first, and calls them to repent. He also applauds their rejection of the Nicolaitans. With specificity, and with knowledge of their local context, he comments on their ministry. He continues this detailed case study with the churches in Smyra, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Jezebel gets a particularly strong scolding for her adventures in Thyatira, for example. Through this text, the Bible provides precedent for learning from the specific stories of particular communities, and then sharing those stories with the larger body of faithful people. This, indeed, is the goal of a case study: to contribute toward a learning community.

Christians have wondered how to innovate faithfully since the earliest church gathered. In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the
will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). This remarkable passage highlights two qualities of faithful innovation.

“Do Not Be Conformed to This World, but Be Transformed”

First, the passage encourages innovators not to be conformed to this world. In discussions around Christian music and worship, I often hear people advocate a strident view of what worship should be. Facebook posts frequently link to articles that suggest that there is a correct approach to worship. Frequently, these posts come from traditionalists who malign innovative worship, or from folks who are concerned that quality goes down with contemporary music. For many of these thinkers, church should not strive to sound like the music and theatrics on display on TV, radio, and web streaming services. Rather, liturgy should remain an experience that is set apart, perhaps even foreign to the sounds of contemporary culture. Of course, this approach requires worshippers to culturally commute from their daily lives to the sounds and experiences of Sunday morning. But a traditionalist would maintain that this commute is worth the journey. In jest, a member of this camp might translate Psalm 122:1 into contemporary language as follows: “I sure was happy when they said, ‘Let’s all go to God’s house, ‘cuz God’s good.’” Of course, Psalm 122:1 reads like this in the New Revised Standard Version: “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’” The point made here – through sarcasm – is that heightened language and music actually do separate the liturgical experience from daily life.

Occasionally, these online comments come from strident innovators who are convinced that “the church is dying, and maybe there are some things that need to die
before a resurrection is possible.” These thinkers believe that old, traditional, classical, or English choral sounds have long lost their appeal, and the authors seek change. They are rarely clear on what type of change they seek, but they are convinced that the old ways are not working. In response to these heated, and occasionally disrespectful arguments, I long for reflection on worship that names the expansive nature of God, and the theological benefits of multi-cultural worship. I long for public discourse on the subject that contributes to level thinking and prayerful discernment. And I long for examples of worship and music that explode the binary between traditional and contemporary, old and new, choral and soloistic. In short, I long for worship that encourages people to sing.

Discern What Is the Will of God

Second, this passage from Romans calls Christians to faithfully discern the will of God in their midst. As the Cathedral seeks to innovate in its own context, it is important that all of us put our personal preferences to the side while we prayerfully listen for what God might be doing in our midst. The Apostle Paul gives us an example of what it takes to be changed by God’s work in the world. In Philippians, he writes, “If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more” after which he proceeds to describe his near-perfect pedigree within Judaism. He was a Pharisee at that point, and after a life-changing journey on the road to Damascus, he completely changed his

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102 Philippians 3:4-6.
outlook. Those of us who work in worship and music tend to have strong opinions. Can we find the faith and the courage to be changed as profoundly as Paul was?

Third, I provide a summary of the research timeline. Once my proposal was approved, I began a small series of conversations with my colleagues in the worship and music department. I shared conversations with five colleagues, each lasting approximately 30 minutes, in which I asked a simple question: “From your experience, please tell the history of the 9:00 service at the Cathedral, noting its strengths and challenges.” These interviews were used to inform my “historical background” section of chapter two, and suggested that several of the changes to the 9:00 service have been met with frustration by the congregation, angst by the worship and music staff, and a general level of dissatisfaction from the Cathedral community as a whole. One notable theme that emerged from these interviews is that the most recent changes we have made to the service, over the past year, have been met with much more grace and understanding. This warm reception from the congregation validated our patience and intentionality as we imagined what this service could become, back in the fall of 2016. We communicated carefully and thoroughly, shared our ideas with the congregation and sought feedback before we implemented them, and gathered feedback after the service began. Perhaps the greatest takeaway from this whole project is that large systems benefit from clear and frequent communication, and this information is best shared in person.

During the fall of 2017, in preparation for the survey and focus groups, I communicated early and often with the constituents of our community. I presented my research plan to the senior staff, clergy group, and Cathedral Congregation Committee (CCC), and I held several discussions with our director of worship and with members of
the congregation. After each of those presentations, I received feedback that informed my research process. For example, I was asked to minimize the demands this research might have created for colleagues. Concretely, this meant compiling data that had not otherwise been compiled. As those interviews were taking place, I field-tested my questionnaire with colleagues and members of the congregation. I sent the questionnaire to ten members of the congregation, and received detailed feedback from nine of them. I used this feedback to improve the questionnaire, and sent it to the congregation on February 18, 2018. I noticed that 90% of the field-testing group responded to my single email request, and I interpreted this high participation as a mark of investment in the research.

I administered the questionnaire using the Cathedral’s account with Survey Monkey, between the dates of February 25 and May 25, 2018. This questionnaire was intended for congregation members who predominantly attend the 9:00 service, and one of the first questions determined the frequency with which congregants attend that service. Because our congregational list-serve does not separate people by which service they attend, I sent the survey to the whole list, and indicated that the survey is intended for members of the congregation who have attended the 9:00 service six or more times in the past year. I only analyzed results from respondents who have attended the 9:00 service six times or more since we began the new worship format in January of 2017. I distributed the questionnaire solely online, using Survey Monkey, and I sent it to all of the email addresses in the Cathedral’s database.

This survey provided a census of the population who regularly attend the 9:00 service. Please consult appendix D to review the material covered in the questionnaire. I reported descriptive statistics, which included total number of respondents, the frequency
of each category, the percentage of respondents that fall into each category, and the mean, where appropriate. I also analyzed the results by inferential statistics, including independent t-test analysis. I compared the means of the age groups (fifty-nine and below, vs. sixty and above) on the Likert scale questions. When I noticed a statistically significant difference between the age groups, I discussed those questions separately in the results section of chapter five. Once the survey was complete, I used IBM SPSS software for statistical analysis. Due to the large number of visiting groups that join us in the spring, I concluded that a regular congregational attendance figure could be estimated from the average Sunday attendance in the fall of 2017. This time period included musical leadership from the Cathedral Band, and took place in the nave of the Cathedral. I received eighty-three completed questionnaires, and recorded responses from thirty-one focus group participants, of which fifteen had not completed the questionnaire. These data indicate that ninety-eight people participated in my research, and all but two of them are regular attendees at the 9:00 service. Because the average Sunday attendance in the fall of 2017 was 198, and I had a total of ninety-eight research participants, I calculated that this participation level represented input from approximately fifty percent of the regular worshipping community.

Survey Monkey processed the survey results and made it possible to begin analysis with IBM SPSS. My initial questions pertained to demographics, and were useful as I created groups to consider in later comparisons. Most of the worship questions employed a Likert scale, with an option for respondents to indicate, “This question does

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not apply to me” and another option for respondents to offer “Any additional thoughts.” Two questions asked respondents to evaluate seven different elements of worship and communication, using a numerical scale where one indicated “least transformative” and seven indicated “most transformative.” I coded all of the free-response answers on the questionnaire using Charmaz’ approach to qualitative coding.104

I shared a proposed protocol for the focus groups with the same ten congregation members who evaluated my questionnaire. I incorporated their suggestions in the final protocol, which is included in appendix C. These focus groups were a *convenience sample* as I announced their existence at the beginning of each of the four services. I also created a question on the questionnaire to ask if respondents would be interested in a focus group conversation (see appendix D). I used these responses to ensure that I had a range of opinions of the new service format. Each focus group was approximately 90 minutes, and I asked members if they would be open to a follow-up conversation.

In both the focus groups and interviews, I recorded the interviews and used *in vivo* coding as described by Kathy Charmaz in her book, *Grounded Theory*. David Carlson summarizes this process helpfully.

This involve[s] an initial coding process of word-by-word, line-by-line, and incident-by-incident coding to produce *in vivo* codes. A subsequent process of focused coding involve[s] clustering the *in vivo* codes into similar concepts, paying attention to both the frequency and value of these initial codes. A second level of abstraction follow[s] with axial coding, clustering the focused codes into similar categories and beginning to relate them to the theoretical and theological lenses of this thesis. A final step [is] theoretical coding, specifying the interrelationships and possible directions of influence between the axial codes.105

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I discuss the specific coding process in detail in the results chapter below. I also used a transcription service on the website www.temi.com\textsuperscript{106} to transcribe the focus groups, and asked participants to sign an informed consent form (appendix B). The questionnaire included a statement of implied consent at the beginning of the form (appendix A).

This case study approach blended the precision of quantitative analysis with the intuitive benefit of conversation. I analyzed survey data with the same rigor I applied to coding the focus group conversations, and the result led to a more robust picture of our community’s experience of worship. Turning now to results, I will display and discuss the data I gathered from this research.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Chapter four summarized my rationale for conducting a case study, and then explained the components of my research. Chapter five turns now to the results of that research, with data presented in four broad categories: demographic observations, quantitative survey data, attendance data, and qualitative data from my survey, focus groups, and email correspondence. This investigation addressed my research question: How might a Cathedral innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission?

As discussed more fully in chapter four, this project was a *concurrent mixed-methods case study* in which qualitative and quantitative data combine to tell the story of what happened at the 9:00 service at Pacific Cathedral between the years 2016 and 2018. I began with background conversations with colleagues who were involved in the 9:00 service in the past, or who work with it now. I communicated robustly with the senior staff, worship and music team, and the congregation, so that all would know what to expect throughout this research process. I compiled attendance data from the Cathedral’s register of Sunday services, and analyzed those results with descriptive statistics (N, n, percentages, and means where appropriate) and the inferential statistical test known as an independent t-test. I conducted an online survey between the dates of February 25 and
May 25, 2019, which included two letters to the full congregation, inviting their participation. Eighty-three people completed the questionnaire online, which included an introductory letter to explain that completing the questionnaire implied their consent to participate in my research. I hosted focus groups on Sundays March 4 and March 11, 2018, using a convenience sample. I emailed the congregation prior to those Sundays and announced the focus groups before and after worship. Anyone who wanted to attend those conversations was welcome to do so. I did not require focus group participants to complete the questionnaire before we met, but I did collect informed consent forms from all participants prior to turning on the video camera. I filmed both of these sessions, created a transcription, and coded the qualitative data using Kathy Charmaz’ process for coding. I also coded free-response data from the survey and email correspondence. I turn now to a discussion of the quantitative results of this case study.

Quantitative Results

It was appropriate to gather quantitative data from my research participants because this approach allowed me to gather standardized data from a relatively large group of people. My census was not random, however, so it is important to note that my ability to make generalizations about the larger Cathedral context has limits. Peter Nardi describes this situation when he writes, “With nonprobability methods… you are limited to making conclusions about only those who have completed the survey,” and I would add that this observation extends to those people who participated in the focus groups.107 Considering Nardi’s important caveat, I believe that the high level of participation in this

research reflects its descriptive capacity, and indicates that the congregation remains invested in communicating about worship and music. I received eighty-three completed questionnaires, and recorded responses from thirty-one focus group participants, of which fifteen had not completed the questionnaire. These data indicate that ninety-eight people participated in my research, and all but two of them are regular attendees at the 9:00 service. Because our spring attendance data include large numbers of visitors, it is reasonable to estimate that congregational attendance at this service is reflected in fall attendance. The average attendance in the fall of 2017 was 198, so I estimate that these ninety-eight responses represent participation from approximately half of 9:00 attendees.

**Demographic Observations**

A summary of age, gender, and academic background provides context to understand these survey responses (see table 1). It is important to note that the demographic observations pertain only to survey participants, as I did not record these data for focus group participants. I begin with age, and note the following distribution of age groups.

**Table 1. Age Group Distribution**

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<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
N.B. 83 respondents answered this question, and percentages are rounded to the nearest 100th.

These data indicate that fifty-seven out of eighty-three survey participants (69%) are over the age of fifty-nine. A visual depiction of the data shows the distribution of participants by age group (see figure 3).

![Figure 3. Graph of Age Group Distribution](image)

Demographic Observation: Gender

Another trend worth noting is gender, portrayed in table 2 below.

Table 2. Self-Identified Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Identified Gender</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54.22</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44.58</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. 83 respondents answered this question, and percentages are rounded to the nearest 100th.
I would note that the survey did not enforce the gender binary, which presumes that the only two genders are male and female, identified by external genitals at birth. The Cathedral has become deeply involved in LGBTQ civil rights, and we have taken great steps to communicate our support for this community, especially given the recent threats to the civil rights and liberties of transgender people. For this reason, I chose to provide a hospitable option for respondents to identify as a gender other than male or female. Though I would not have anticipated any respondents electing that option, I noticed that one person did. That data point reminded me that some of the assumptions we make about gender conformity on a daily basis may not be true. On a different note, I recorded more survey responses from females than from males, which is consistent with the demographic trends I observe in the full congregation. We trend towards older females in our worship attendance, donors, and program participants.

Demographic Observation: Academic Accomplishment

Our congregation thinks of itself as high achieving, well-educated, and smart. When asked, “What is the highest degree that you finished, and for which you got credit?” I note the following responses (see table 3).

**Table 3. Highest Degree Earned**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Degree</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No School</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School or G.E.D.</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>21.69</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>36.14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>28.92</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Doctoral</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This information is portrayed in figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Graph of Highest Degree Earned

I note that sixty out of eighty-three respondents (72%) have advanced degrees. This is a smart, driven, and high-achieving congregation.

Demographic Observation: High Level of Participation from the Ushers

I noted a high level of engagement and critique from the ushers in my first focus group, which I discuss below in greater detail. At this juncture, it will suffice to say that the process of asking for feedback helped the worship and music team discover that we had alienated one of our core constituencies: the ushers. One quote highlights the degree to which they differed from the other research participants, and the degree to which their views were negative, “Let me speak for the ushers, and offer a different, perhaps less rosy view.”\footnote{Focus Group transcript from meeting on March 4, 2018.} This participant proceeded to share constructive criticism, which other members...
of the usher team echoed, taking up approximately 25% of the focus group time. I thanked them for their input, and initiated a series of pastoral and logistical conversations, which improved the worship experience for the ushers. I also wanted to track what, if any, effect the usher participation might have on the rest of my data. After that experience, it was important to note which constituencies participated in the survey portion of my research. Fortunately, question eight asks, “Which, if any, of the following activities are part of your engagement with the Cathedral?” I lay out the options and responses below, and note nine ushers and coffee hour hosts. Of those nine respondents, I do not know what percentage serve as coffee hour hosts and what percentage serve as ushers. While the ushers and coffee hour hosts constitute a non-zero percentage of the full group (eleven percent), I concluded that it was not so large as to make the data unreliable (see table 4).

Table 4. Survey Respondent Participation in Cathedral Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity at the Cathedral</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing beyond worship</td>
<td>16.87</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower guild</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eucharistic visitors</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter (a governing body)</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay Eucharistic Ministry</td>
<td>14.46</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour guide</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathedral congregation committee</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office volunteer</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality: ushers and coffee hour hosts</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other congregation ministries(^\text{109})</td>
<td>40.96</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100.0 83

\(^{109}\) Other congregation ministries include but are not limited to: silver and linen guilds, bell ringers, and vergers. We do not engage the services of volunteer musicians.
I move now to a discussion of Communication.

**Communication**

I was curious to learn which types of communication feel effective to our congregation. I asked survey respondents to rank their response to the question, “How can the worship and music staff hear from you most effectively, where one indicates ‘most effective’ and seven indicates ‘least effective.’” In this ranking, a lower score is preferable, and respondents were asked to rank these options with 1 representing effective communication, and 7 representing ineffective communication (see table 5).

**Table 5. Rank of Communication Preferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Method</th>
<th>Overall Ranking</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Mean Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Group Conversation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Call</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food and Fellowship</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.90</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Correspondence</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Conversation</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>6,7</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Groups</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,7</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.70</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>NA</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
<td><strong>NA</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N.B. this table illustrates a ranking, so a lower score is preferable.*

I noticed that two of the strategies we employed in the fall of 2016 – large group conversation in an annual meeting, and “Food and Fellowship” gatherings – were ranked as more effective ways to communicate with the worship and music staff. As I coded free-form responses from the survey, and as I coded focus group conversations, those evening conversations came up more than almost any other communication technique.
They were extremely successful in building trust between congregation and staff, and the congregation still remembers them.

**Survey Results**

I combined quantitative and qualitative data in the questionnaire, in keeping with the mixed methods nature of my research. I asked the same questions to all respondents, but I did not require a response to every question because I did not want people to get frustrated and stop participating in the research. I asked a series of demographic questions, which I describe above. Then I asked a series of Likert scale questions, whose responses I describe below. Each of those questions provided a dialogue box with the prompt, “Is there anything else you’d like to share?” I coded those responses, and I discuss them in my qualitative data section. Finally, I asked participants to respond to some open-ended questions such as, “Based on my experience at the 9:00 service, this is what it means to participate in God’s work in the world.” I discuss these open responses in the qualitative section of this chapter. I made a few marquee observations from the survey that deserve mention in this introduction.

- I observed that 77% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “the best way to grow our church is to offer a broad palate of music and worship.”
- Participants selected “sermon” and “congregational song” as the most transformative elements of worship.
- I observed that 79.5% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I trust music and worship staff to make decisions in the best interest of the Cathedral, and to solicit my feedback along the way.”
- When asked how the worship and music staff could “earn my trust more fully” sixty-six participants offered constructive ideas.
- Asked to evaluate their “overall experience” of the 9:00 service, 70 participants responded. Of these, four were coded “negative” and two were coded “neutral.” This coding regimen concludes that 91% of respondents had a positive overall experience of the 9:00 service during the study period.
Survey Results: Likert Scale Responses

My survey employed a Likert scale to measure responses to several questions. Respondents were asked to quantify their responses to questions using this scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

To evaluate these data, I performed the following analysis. First, I noted that the number of responses varies because some respondents chose not to record their opinions for some statements, and others selected the response, “N/A = This question does not apply to me.” I did not count these responses toward the mean. Second, I measured the mean response on the Likert scale. A mean higher than three indicates general agreement with the statement, whereas a mean lower than three indicates general disagreement with the statement. When I calculated the mean for each statement, I included every response except for “N/A = This question does not apply to me.” Third, I wanted to measure how strongly the respondents reacted to each question, so I compiled the percentage for “agree” and “strongly agree.” I performed the same calculation for “disagree” and “strongly disagree.” I report the results of these calculations below, and offer comment on those statements marked bold and italic. This table does not report the number of responses for “3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree” but those responses were counted toward the mean for each statement. A mean higher than 3 indicates general agreement with the statement while a mean lower than 3 indicates general disagreement with the statement.
Table 6. Summary of Likert Scale Responses (N = 83)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% agree or strongly agree</th>
<th>% disagree or strongly disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The most important part of worship is that the service feels calm.</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The most important part of worship is that the service feels authentic.</strong></td>
<td>76</td>
<td><strong>81.6</strong></td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td><strong>4.10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most important part of worship is that the service feels joyful.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The most important part of worship is that the service feels playful.</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
<td><strong>18.5</strong></td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td><strong>2.69</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length of the 9:00 service is about right.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length of the 9:00 service is not important to me.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer a broad palate of worship and music.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer worship and music from the [denominationally approved prayer and music resource], led by the choir and organ.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be comfortable inviting my friends to attend the 9:00 service.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I started attending the 9:00 service because of the new music format.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stopped attending the 9:00 service because of the new music format.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have long attended the 9:00 service and I would continue to attend even if the worship and music were to change.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I trust the clergy, music, and worship staff to make decisions in the best interest of the Cathedral congregation, and to solicit my feedback along the way.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After attending the 9:00 service, I feel called to participate more fully in God’s work in the world, defined here as “bringing God’s love, justice, and compassion to fruition for all of creation.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the 9:00 service took place in Bethlehem Chapel, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When the 9:00 service consisted of organ and the Cathedral Voices (choir), I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When the 9:00 service consisted of organ and a single cantor, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Since we added the Cathedral band to the 9:00 service, I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Since we moved the service to the Great Choir (the wood-paneled area near the high altar, where we have worshipped since January 4, 2017), I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N.B. This Table does not report the number of responses for “3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree” but those responses were counted toward the mean for each statement. A mean higher than 3 indicates general agreement with the statement while a mean lower than 3 indicates general disagreement with the statement. **Bold and italic** text indicates a that a statement receives further discussion below.*
In the space below, I offer comments on the **bold and italic** statements. I focus on these questions because they demonstrate findings that are particularly relevant to my research question.

“The most important part of worship is that the service feels authentic.”

Searching for adjectives to describe this service, respondents favored the word “authentic” to describe what is important about the service. This statement received 76 responses, with 81.6% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, 3.9% of participants disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and a mean response of 4.10. There were also 21 comments to this question, of which 7 responses (33%) indicated that they did not understand the term “authentic” worship. The dual lessons here for worship planners are that authenticity is difficult to define, but that our congregation considers it to be more important than joy, calm, or a sense of play.

“The most important part of worship is that the service feels playful.”

I was surprised to note that respondents do not seek a “playful” worship experience. This statement received 81 responses, with 18.5% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, 46.9% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and a mean response of 2.69. As I discuss further in my conclusions chapter, this is a community that is not looking for a playful experience of worship. Based on these survey data, it is reasonable to conclude that a sense of play is not a value for these survey respondents. That is an interesting observation, given that one of my biblical and theological lenses has been a sense of play. In future research, I would like to inquire what congregants
understood when they heard that question. Did they understand play as childish, loud, noisy, or disruptive? Or did they understand it as vibrant, creative, flexible, and relaxed?

A Note on Worship Adjectives

It was my intention to identify characteristics of liturgy that our congregation could use to describe worship that they experienced as transformative. I focused on joy, calm, authenticity, playfulness, and the length of the service. Though some of these characteristics were identified as being important (authentic had the highest mean), a few respondents chafed against the idea that there should only be one important quality of worship. In hindsight, I could not agree more. Great liturgy takes us on a journey and invites us to think, feel, and prayerfully engage each day’s biblical message. If a service only had one experience or quality, it would feel rather one-dimensional. A more transformative worship experience would engage multiple qualities. A service might uplift, challenge, inspire, and soothe. It might give voice to lament. It may find hope in the midst of despair. Regardless, the liturgy would wrestle with these complexities. One of the respondents wrote about it beautifully, “The fact that these questions have such a narrow focus seems to limit the scope of what worship can be. There is certainly a time for joyful worship, but contemplation and repentance and thankfulness and a myriad of other things can be part of that too. No one element could ever be considered ‘the most important.’” I am grateful for this thoughtful level of engagement.

“The length of the 9:00 service is about right.”

Participants indicated strong agreement that “the length of the 9:00 service is about right.” Every respondent answered this question, 90.4% either agreed or strongly
agreed, only 2.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean response was 4.20. This was the second highest mean of any of my Likert scale questions, indicating that the length of the service is a high priority for these survey respondents.

“The length of the 9:00 service is not important to me.”

It did not come as a surprise that survey respondents like the current length of the service, which runs between 65 and 75 minutes. Phrasing that same content in the negative, I asked congregants to gauge their agreement with this statement, “The length of the 9:00 service is not important to me.” I observed that 81 people answered this question, 21.0% agreed or strongly agreed, 48.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the average response was 2.70, indicating a slight disagreement with the statement.

“I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer a broad palate of worship and music.”

Next, I asked members to evaluate the statement, “I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer a broad palate of worship and music.” I observed that 81 people answered the question, 79.0% agreed or strongly agreed, 9.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean score was 3.89. These data indicate important support for the type of musical and liturgical innovation we are engaging with the 9:00 service. It is consistent with the conversations we have shared with the congregation, in which we discussed expanding the Cathedral’s offerings without ever abandoning the beauty of the traditions we have already received. I observed that the comments to this question push us to define what we mean by the term “broad palate.” For example, one respondent wrote, “I think a ‘broader palate’ as you say, could be a
great addition to this service. However, the changes that have been made to the 9:00 seem to offer one particular musical style. We changed from one style to another. Simply because this service is different from the 11:15 does not mean that it necessarily qualifies as a broader palate of music.” Another person wrote, “Yes! Everyone is different and a worship format that uplifts and inspires one person may not uplift and inspire the next. God speaks in many ways.” I am interested to observe that some respondents feel that we are playing the same style from week to week. Though the music comes from a variety of countries, languages, and cultures, it is perceived as coming from the same genre.

Members of the congregation associate the term “jazz” with this music, even though we almost never play jazz standards during the service. When we do play traditional jazz music, it is offered as a prelude and/or postlude. A more accurate description of the band would be “roots music” or “rhythmic music that relies on piano, bass, and drums to establish the musical pulse.” We rarely play swing rhythms because the congregation would struggle with swung eighth notes in the melody.

“I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer worship and music from the [denominationally approved prayer and music resource], led by the choir and organ.”

I sought to ask a similar question from a different angle. I thought members may be in favor of a broad palate of worship and music. How would they evaluate our more traditional worship resources? The next statement read, “I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer worship and music from the [denominationally approved prayer and music resource], led by the choir and organ.” I observed that 73 people answered the question, 23.3% agreed or strongly agreed, 43.8% disagreed or
strongly disagreed, and the mean score was 2.74, indicating slight disagreement with this statement. It makes sense that regular 9:00 attendees would share this view, because they could worship at 11:15 to participate in a traditional Cathedral experience. As a worship and music staff, it has been our goal to offer distinctive worship experiences throughout the day.

“I would be comfortable inviting my friends to attend the 9:00 service.”

One way to measure the way worship impacts evangelism was to ask whether congregants were comfortable inviting their friends to worship. I recorded responses from 81 participants, of whom 92.6% agreed or strongly agreed, 6.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean score was 4.43. This was the highest mean for agreement in my entire questionnaire. It seems reasonable to conclude that members of the 9:00 congregation would be comfortable inviting friends to join them at worship. This is a valid measurement of the worship experience. It will also be important to evaluate the congregation’s experience by coding their reactions to the question, “What has been your overall experience of the 9:00 service?” The power of mixed-methods research is that quantitative data identify the qualitative discussions that merit further exploration.

“I stopped attending the 9:00 service because of the new music format.”

I wanted to ask if participants stopped attending regularly as a result of the new music and I noted that 10.0% agreed or strongly agreed, 76.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean response to this question was 1.74, indicating a high level of disagreement. This is a question I would like to explore further in future research. I noticed that only 48 participants answered this question. It is possible that some members
stopped attending and also stopped responding to email correspondence, and if that is the case, I do not have a way to collect their input.

“I trust the clergy, music, and worship staff to make decisions in the best interest of the Cathedral congregation, and to solicit my feedback along the way.”

This is one of the most important findings of my research. I observed that 79.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this question, only 8.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean response was 4.01, indicating a high level of agreement. Prior to my arrival, and prior to the arrival of our [pastoral leader] and Director of Worship, members of the congregation hosted listening sessions to learn what the congregation was thinking and feeling. Unprompted, several participants voiced frustration with the drastic changes that had taken place at the 9:00 service. These participants were particularly frustrated that they were not consulted prior to the change. Indeed, congregational meetings about the service, especially right after the choir was summarily canceled, were testy and tense. By contrast, we held a congregational meeting in February 2017, shortly after the new music had begun. Because we spent six months listening and building trust, that meeting contained no frustration, and several people mentioned the positive change in our decision process. A colleague who had attended both the tense meetings in 2016 and the fruitful ones in 2017 described the difference as “night and day” and credited this change to our team’s skill in working with the congregation.110

To contrast this finding with the congregation’s experience three years ago, I reached out to the research team that surveyed the congregation in the spring of 2016. I have included their full written response to my question, because it summarizes what they found, and highlights the change we have observed over the past three years. They write,

In the spring of 2016 when the Cathedral Congregation and Community was experiencing a change of senior leadership, a committee chartered by the governing group of the Congregation formed to understand the experience members of the congregation were having at the Cathedral. Conversations were held after all 3 services on two different Sundays, soliciting feedback about what is important to members of the congregation and how they experience the Cathedral.

Comments were captured [with notes], although not in verbatim format, to determine themes from the congregants. The conversations following the 9:00 services included discussions about not feeling heard, especially when decisions were made about music and the format of the service. It became a theme that was strong enough based on the number and intensity of comments to be discussed with the Cathedral leadership.

This is the comment included in the final report, “For some of the congregants, these comments touch on deeper concerns about the relationship between the clergy and congregants, the ability to be heard, and the patterns of communications with the Congregation.’

This is one verbatim comment from one of the meetings, “The 9:00 service has been a petri dish as resources have shrunk. The congregation community has not been invited to give ideas to leadership and to speak and be heard about our concerns (particularly in reference to the 9:00 service).”

One of the principal lessons from this research, and from this work, is that engaging the congregation in direct and healthy conversation is absolutely critical to any new worship experience. This is especially true when the congregation does not feel a sense of trust due to past decision processes.
“After attending the 9:00 service, I feel called to participate more fully in God’s work in the world, defined here as ‘brining God’s love, justice, and compassion to fruition for all of creation.’”

With this question, 74.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, only 6.4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean score was 3.98. In the comments, I noticed that six respondents were not clear on what I meant by “God’s work in the world” even though I defined it in the prompt. I think this indicates a congregation that is still not used to talking about God’s agency or work in the world.

“When the 9:00 service consisted of organ and the Cathedral Voices (choir), I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.”

This question refers to the volunteer choir that led music for nearly a decade at the 9:00 service. The ensemble consisted of a mix of volunteers and professional section leaders, but the volunteers were of mixed ability. Though the music staff was convinced that the quality of this choir was not worthy of the standard of the Cathedral’s music program, and that it duplicated the 11:15 service with sub-optimal quality, the congregation warmly embraced it. I noticed that 72 respondents answered this question, 62.5% agreed or strongly agreed, only 9.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean response was 3.71, indicating a relatively high level of agreement.

“When the 9:00 service consisted of organ and a single cantor, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.”

After the [volunteer choir] was disbanded, the 9:00 service went on life support while the music and worship staff tried to figure out what else could happen at that
The service continued in the nave of the Cathedral and was led by the organ, with a single cantor leading hymns and offering an offertory from the lectern. By most accounts, this approach was not well received. Asked to evaluate their response to this statement, “When the 9:00 service consisted of organ and a single cantor, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship,” 74 participants replied, 32.4% agreed or strongly agreed, 43.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean response was 2.89, indicating disagreement with the prompt.

“The band began leading worship in January of 2017, and we remained in the nave of the Cathedral until January of 2018. Asked to respond to this prompt, 78 participants responded, 88.2% agreed or strongly agreed, only 10.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean response was 4.10, which is tied for the third highest mean of any of the Likert scale questions. One of the central conclusions of this research is that the congregation has warmly embraced the band’s musical and liturgical leadership.

“The band began leading worship in January of 2017, and we remained in the nave of the Cathedral until January of 2018. Asked to respond to this prompt, 78 participants responded, 88.2% agreed or strongly agreed, only 10.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean response was 4.10, which is tied for the third highest mean of any of the Likert scale questions. One of the central conclusions of this research is that the congregation has warmly embraced the band’s musical and liturgical leadership.

“The decision to move to the Great Choir was motivated by three factors. First, with attendance hovering in the 200s, it felt empty to hold worship in the 1,700-seat nave. The Great Choir can welcome approximately 400 worshippers, and it feels much more intimate to worship in that space. Indeed, the term “intimate” would arise as a key word
in the focus groups. Second, the music sounds better in a smaller space, with reduced echo. Third, we knew that we could attempt this move during the low-attendance months of January, but it would be hard to make that move again if we did it during tourist season, which begins at the end of February. I originally intended to collect questionnaire responses in January of 2018, but I pushed that to February to give us a few weeks to get comfortable in the Great Choir. I asked participants to reply to the prompt “Since we moved the service to the Great Choir (the wood-paneled area near the high altar, where we have worshipped since January 4, 2017), I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.” I observed that 77 participants responded, 63.6% agreed or strongly agreed, 13.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the mean response was 3.75. As I would discover in the focus groups, congregation members generally approved of this move, although there were some strongly-voiced exceptions. Participants talked about a sense of intimacy and community, and a much improved acoustic for the music. They encouraged the music and worship staff to continue to improve the logistics that affected issues such as communion flow, late seating, sight lines, and movement during the service. I discuss these conversations in detail below.

**How Does Age Affect Survey Response?**

I discussed the congregation’s age distribution in the “Demographic Observations” section, and I conclude that our congregation includes an aging population. One of the trends I have been asked to attend to in my ministry at the Cathedral is this issue of age. In fact, my youth was mentioned as one of the reasons I was hired. To compare survey responses between younger and older respondents, I created two demographic groups and compared means using an independent samples t-
test. I had 83 respondents, and 57 of those respondents were aged 60 and above (68.7%), while 26 respondents were under the age of 60 (31.3%). I labeled all responses from respondents aged 18-59 “Under 60” and I labeled all responses from respondents aged 60-89 “60 and Above”. In the discussion below, I refer to the younger and older group, but it is important to note that of the 26 respondents in the “Under 60” group, 18 of them are aged 40-59 (69.2%), 7 of them are aged 30-39 (27.0%), and 1 of the respondents is aged 20-29 (3.8%). The “Under 60” group would most accurately be labeled “40-60” but I did not have enough respondents in the 18-39 categories to justify an ANOVA analysis for three groups.

Another factor to consider is the prominence of “Baby Boomers” in this survey data. Meriam Webster’s dictionary defines a “Baby Boomer” as “a person born during a period of time in which there is a marked rise in a population’s birthrate: a person born during a baby boom; especially: a person born in the U.S. following the end of World War II (usually considered to be in the years from 1946-1964).” 111 Using Webster’s definition, people born between the years 1946 and 1964 are aged 54-72 in 2018. I did not distinguish between respondents in the 54-72 age bracket, but I did sort respondents by decades. This means that a rough estimate would allow me to count people in their 50s and 60s as “Baby Boomers.” I had 10 respondents in the 50-59 age group (12.0%) and another 21 respondents in the 60-69 age group (25.3%). That means that approximately

37% of my respondents were “Baby Boomers” according to the Meriam Webster definition. As I reviewed these data, I again wished I had received enough responses from the 18-39 age bracket to justify creating a young, Baby Boomer, and elder group, but it was not appropriate to draw conclusions from 8 survey responses in the 18-39 age group.

The age discussion above shows the rationale for the groups I created: “Under 60” and “60 and Above.” After placing survey responses into these two groups, I selected all survey questions that used a Likert scale and conducted an independent samples t-test, comparing means among the two groups. For most of the questions, there was not a statistically significant difference between the groups, perhaps due to the sample size. In table 7 below, I illustrate those questions that exhibited a statistically significant difference between age groups. Note that I included one question that did not exhibit a statistically significant difference, with discussion to follow. The text of this question is bold and italic.
Table 7. Independent t-test Results for Likert Scale Questions about Worship, Sorted by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/Statement</th>
<th>Mean:</th>
<th>N:</th>
<th>Mean:</th>
<th>N:</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under 60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Under 60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length of the 9:00 service is about right.</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>-2.258</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the best way to welcome people to our church is to offer worship and music</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.469</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from the [denominationally approved prayer and music resource] led by choir and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organ.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I stopped attending the 9:00 service because of the new music format</em></td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.981</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since we added the Cathedral band to the 9:00 service, I have had a strong</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>-2.276</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience of God’s presence in worship.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the 9:00 service consisted of band and organ, and it when it took place</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-2.965</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the nave of the Cathedral, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worship.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A p-value that is less than 0.05 indicates that a researcher should reject the null hypothesis and conclude that a statistically significant difference exists between the means of two groups. I explore each of these results in the space below.
“The length of the 9:00 service is about right.”

I noticed that the elder population (ages 60 and above) agrees with this question more strongly (mean = 4.35) than does the younger group (mean = 3.88). Comparing the means between age groups for this question, I calculated that $t_{(31)} = -2.258$ and $p = .031$. In further study, I would be curious to ask the older group about their thoughts on this matter.

“I think the best way to welcome people to our church is to offer worship and music from the [denominationally approved prayer and music resource], led by choir and organ.”

There was a statistically significant difference in the age groups as they responded to this question. The older group had a lower level of agreement (mean = 2.54) than did the younger group (3.17). Comparing the means between age groups for this question, I calculated that $t_{(71)} = 2.469$, $p = 0.016$. I was curious to read that the crowd under 60 seemed slightly more interested in traditional music and worship. The follow-up question read, “I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer a broad palate of worship and music” but I did not observe a statistically significant difference between the age groups for this question. The “Under 60” group had a mean of 3.68 (n = 25) and the “60 And Above” group had a mean of 3.99 (n = 56). It is important to note that both groups agreed with this statement about offering a broad palate of worship and music more than they agreed that we should solely offer liturgy from the prayer book and hymnal. The mean response to “broad palate” was 3.89 (agree) and the mean response to “prayer book and hymnal” worship was 2.74 (neither agree nor disagree).
“I stopped attending the 9:00 service because of the new music format.”

There is not a statistically significant difference between means as “60 and above” responses are compared with responses from the “under 60.” The mean response to the question from all respondents is 1.74, with 76.0% percent of respondents saying they either disagree or strongly disagree (see table 6, indicating that a mean of 1.74 indicates disagreement). Those who have been part of our community for the past several years have continued to worship with us as a part of this service. When I considered the means between the two age groups, the “Under 60” demographic had a slightly higher average (mean = 2.22, disagree) compared to those who stopped worshipping at 9:00 in the “60 and Above” group (mean = 1.53, disagree). These results are illustrated in table 7. I do not think that there were enough participants to make age-group conclusions about this music and its reception among the respondents. Additionally, the p-value of this independent samples t-test was 0.54, indicating that the difference between means is not statistically significant.

“Since we added the Cathedral band to the 9:00 service, I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in worship.”

For this question, the “Under 60” group reported a mean of 3.58 (agree) while the “60 and above” group reported a mean of 4.33 (agree). Comparing the means between age groups for this question, I calculated that $t_{(30)} = -2.276$, $p = 0.030$. We are popular with the old folks, but it is probably premature to conclude much about preferences for congregation members under the age of 40. I can observe that, among those who participated in this survey, the older participants were more enthusiastic about the band. It is important to note that most members of the 20s and 30s group did not participate in
this survey, and of the three members of that group who participated in the focus group, they offered strong positive feedback. In the end, I did not have enough participation from our 20s and 30s group to make conclusions about their worship preferences.

“When the 9:00 service consisted of band and organ, and it when it took place in the nave of the Cathedral, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in worship.”

Here, the “60 and Above” group liked the nave setup more than the “Under 60” group. The elders had a mean of 3.93 (agree) whereas the younger crowd had a mean of 3.21 (neither agree nor disagree). I calculated that the \( t(77) = -2.965, p = 0.004 \). I move now to a discussion of attendance data.

**Sunday Attendance**

Evaluating Sunday attendance at the Cathedral is a particular challenge because we have such a variance in tourism throughout the year. We note that touring groups begin to join us in much higher numbers in the beginning of March. It is, as one colleague told me “as if someone turned on the light switch, and suddenly we have hundreds of tourists every Sunday.”\(^{112}\) Below, I illustrate the process I used to evaluate Sunday attendance over time, and discuss the rationale for this method.

The attendance boost in the spring complicates our efforts to determine whether the service is growing because the largest influence on attendance is the presence or absence of large groups. Additionally, the Cathedral’s data on Sunday group attendance is unreliable for three reasons. First, I did not have access to the group data for the years

\(^{112}\) Colleague B. Personal communication, January 15, 2018.
2013-2016. Second, not all visitors register as groups. In fact, groups tend to register primarily when they are looking for bus parking at the Cathedral. The majority of our visitors do not inform us of their plans to visit prior to a Sunday service, which means we do not count their presence as a “visitor” in our data. Third, some large groups tell us they will worship with us, and then simply do not attend. Importantly, our group attendance does not always note whether the groups arrived. Because I did not have access to reliable Sunday group attendance, I decided not to use data from our visitor program’s department in calculating Sunday attendance. Instead, I decided that comparing spring semesters to each other, and comparing fall semesters to each other, respectively, would be the most accurate way to account for our touring groups in the spring. I move now to explain the methodology for these attendance data.

Sunday Attendance Data – 9:00 Service

First, I created a batch of baseline data, dividing semesters as follows. The *bold* and *italic* text indicates the semesters that included the new 9:00 service format. These semesters are Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Fall 2018 (see table 8).

Table 8. Outline of 9:00 Worship Semesters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Semester #</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Semester #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Pacific Cathedral Sunday attendance data.*

Next, I created a baseline dataset for the fall and spring. The datasets that refer to the old format of music and worship (led by the organ) are labeled “baseline fall” and
“baseline spring.” It is good to remember that the Cathedral band began leading worship at the 9:00 service in the January of 2017, which was the beginning of the time period labeled “Spring 2017.” Semester 8 corresponds with “Spring 2017,” semester 9 corresponds with “Fall 2017,” semester 10 corresponds with “Spring 2018” and semester 11 corresponds with “Fall 2018” as illustrated in table 8. Semesters 8-11 represent all of the Sundays at the 9:00 service since we changed musical format to include the Cathedral band.

Next, I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the following means: “Spring 2017 versus baseline spring,” “Fall 2017 versus baseline fall,” “Spring 2018 versus baseline spring,” and “Fall 2018 versus baseline fall,” as shown in table 9. Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.116 in the fall of 2017. Because 0.116 > 0.05, I concluded that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between old fall and new fall. I conducted a second independent samples t-test to compare the means between “Spring 2017” and “baseline spring.” I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.941. Because 0.941 > 0.05, I concluded that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between “Spring 2017” and “baseline spring” (see table 9). The key finding here is that there was not a statistically significant difference between means for “Spring 2017 versus baseline spring” nor was there a statistically significant difference between means for “Fall 2017 versus baseline fall” (see table 9).

What Can We Conclude About 9:00 Attendance?

It is important to discuss the statistically significant attendance drop between “Spring 2018” and “baseline spring.” In January of 2018, we moved from the nave of the
Cathedral, which has a seating capacity of 1,700, to the Great Choir, which has a seating capacity of approximately 300. We also began encouraging touring groups to attend the 11:15 service and to avoid the 9:00 service, because there would not be room for them in the Great Choir. Group attendance constitutes the majority of our numbers during the spring, and these two decisions happened during the time that 9:00 attendance decreased the most. Comparing “Spring 2018” (mean = 232.08) with “baseline spring” (mean = 279.09), I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.015. Because 0.015 < 0.05, I concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between “Spring 2018” and “baseline spring” (see table 9). Comparing “Fall 2018” (mean = 188.63) with “baseline fall” (mean = 229.27), I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.033. Because 0.033 < 0.05, I concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between “Fall 2018” and “baseline fall” (see table 9). For both Spring 2018 and Fall 2018, the new format had a lower attendance than the old format, but that is because we moved to the Great Choir for both of those semesters. The Great Choir functionally discourages large groups from attending the 9:00 service, and those groups drive our attendance more than any other factor.

Table 9. 9:00 Worship Attendance by Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Number of Sundays Reported</th>
<th>Mean attendance by semester</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Statistically Significant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013-2016</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>229.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>198.44</td>
<td>1.591</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2018</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>188.63</td>
<td>2.174</td>
<td>78</td>
<td><strong>0.033</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013-2016</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>279.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>277.40</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2018</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>232.08</td>
<td>2.478</td>
<td>91</td>
<td><strong>0.015</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When I noticed this decrease in attendance, I was intrigued. Did the service shrink after we changed the music? What other trends might be at play here? Some of the decrease is explained by the Cathedral’s abrupt decision to cut the volunteer choir in the summer of 2015. The choir included approximately 30 singers, and many of their family and friends attended services to support them. After the choir left, the 9:00 service was supported with a cantor and organist for Fall 2015, Spring 2016, and Fall 2016. The fall of 2016 was my first season at the Cathedral, but we did not change music format until Spring 2017. In other words, Spring 2016 and Fall 2016 both had the stripped-down music format of organ and cantor. I went back and looked at the 9:00 attendance during the beginning of Rev. Stern’s tenure. There were several Sundays with 450 people at 9:00, but as time wore on, those numbers began to shrink. I noticed that 2016, which had organ and cantor for the full year, had some of the lowest attendance of the baseline period. I thought it would be interesting to compare the year before my arrival to the first and second years of my work at the Cathedral. Curious to compare these 2016 means with the means of 2017 and 2018, I employed the same methodology as explained above and calculated the following results. Average Sunday attendance in “Fall 2016” was 166.64, and that average increased to 198.44 in the “Fall 2017” and decreased slightly to 188.63 in “Fall 2018.” As illustrated in table 10, those increases were not statistically significant, but they did indicate a congregation that was holding steady, with signs of growth. Average Sunday attendance in “Spring 2016” had a mean of 245.82, and that mean increased to 254.00 in “Spring 2017” and decreased slightly to 232.08 in “Spring 2018.” As illustrated in table 10, those changes were also not statistically significant. Further complicating these data, I learned in February 2019 that the events staff has
observed irregularities between reported data and observed numbers at the 9:00 service. There is a concern that the ushers may be under-reporting attendance. That is another intervening variable in this attendance study.

As I explore further in the conclusions chapter, I conclude that the fluctuations in 9:00 attendance have more to do with moving to the Great Choir and the presence/absence of large groups than they do with the congregation’s response to the service. Based on survey data, focus group data, email exchanges, and anecdotal evidence, it is my experience that the service is extremely well received and appreciated. It also fills the space in a predictable way each week. The numbers appear to be holding steady.

Table 10. Comparing 9:00 Attendance, 2016-2018, by Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Number of Sundays Reported</th>
<th>Mean attendance by semester</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Statistically Significant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>166.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>198.44</td>
<td>-1.660</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>188.63</td>
<td>-1.411</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.169</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>245.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>254.00</td>
<td>-0.372</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.712</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>232.08</td>
<td>0.586</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0.561</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sunday Attendance Data – 11:15 Service

After concluding that 9:00 service attendance roughly held steady during the study period, I was curious to find out whether any of our other Sunday morning services experienced growth. To answer this question, I applied the same methodology to our 11:15 attendance data, over the same period of time.

The datasets which include attendance from semesters 8-11 are labeled “Spring 2017,” “Fall 2017,” “Spring 2018,” and “Fall 2018” respectively (see table 11). These
semesters measure the attendance at the 11:15 during the same time period for which we measured the 9:00 service. In this context, the baseline data include Fall 2013 through Fall of 2016. The period of study included 2017 and 2018. Note that there was not a notable change in music or worship to the 11:15 service during this time.

Table 11. Outline of 11:15 Worship Semesters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Semester #</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Semester #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pacific Cathedral Sunday attendance data.

I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the means between “baseline spring” and “Spring 2017.” Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.919. Because 0.919 > .05, I concluded that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between old spring and new spring data at the 11:15 service (see table 12). Then I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the means between “baseline fall” and “Fall 2017” at the 11:15 service. Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.906. Because 0.906 > 0.05, I concluded that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between “baseline fall” and “Fall 2017”. I used the same methodology for the 2018 data. I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the means between “baseline spring” and “Spring 2018.” Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.161. Because 0.161 > .05, I concluded that there was not a statistically significant
difference in the mean attendance between “baseline spring” and “Spring 2018” at the 11:15 service (see table 12). Finally, I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the means between “baseline fall” and “Fall 2018.” Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.053. Because 0.053 > .05, I concluded that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between “baseline spring” and “Spring 2018” at the 11:15 service (see table 12).

Table 12. 11:15 Worship Attendance by Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semesters</th>
<th>Number of Sundays Reported</th>
<th>Mean attendance by semester</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Statistically Significant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013-2016</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>566.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2017</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>569.00</strong></td>
<td>-0.119</td>
<td>42</td>
<td><strong>0.906</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2018</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>623.00</strong></td>
<td>-1.971</td>
<td>74</td>
<td><strong>0.053</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013-2016</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>595.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2017</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>599.13</strong></td>
<td>-0.101</td>
<td>92</td>
<td><strong>0.919</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2018</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>650.83</strong></td>
<td>-1.412</td>
<td>93</td>
<td><strong>0.161</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pacific Cathedral Sunday attendance data.

Though the attendance data do not show statistically significant changes between “baseline fall” (mean = 566.77) and “Fall 2017,” (mean = 569.00) there is a net increase of approximately 2 people (increasing from 567 to 569 people). The increase between “baseline fall” (mean = 566.77) and “Fall 2018” (mean = 623.00) is approximately 56 people (increasing from 567 to 623), and is not statistically significant. Similarly, though the attendance data do not show a statistically significant change between “baseline spring” (mean = 595.56) and “Spring 2017” (mean = 599.13) there is a net increase of approximately 4 people. The difference between “baseline spring” (mean = 595.56) and
“Spring 2018” (650.83) shows an increase of 55 people, which is not statistically significant.

Sunday Attendance Data–8:00 Service

After concluding that the 9:00 and 11:15 services did not show statistically significant growth during the study period, I applied the same methodology to our 8:00 attendance data, over the same period of time. Importantly, I deleted data from Easter and Palm Sunday, when we do hold an 8:00 service, but it serves as a principal Sunday liturgy in the nave, with attendance ranging from 1800-2600 people. The normal 8:00 service occurs in a small side-chapel, with a typical attendance ranging between 40 and 80. Here again, I separated spring and fall attendance data, because we have more tour groups in the spring. It is important to compare spring data with spring data, and then to compare fall data with fall data, when we have fewer tour groups.

The datasets which include attendance from semesters 8-11 are labeled “Spring 2017,” “Fall 2017,” “Spring 2018,” and “Fall 2018” respectively (see table 13). These semesters measure the attendance at the 8:00 service during the same time period for which we measured the 9:00 service. In this context, the baseline data include Fall 2013 through Fall of 2016. The period of study included 2017 and 2018. Note that there was not a notable change in music or worship to the 8:00 service during this time.

Table 13. Outline of 8:00 Worship Semesters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Semester #</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Semester #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the means between “baseline spring” and “Spring 2017.” Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.001. Because 0.001 < .05, I concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between “baseline spring” (mean = 46.15) and “Spring 2017” (mean = 68.23) data at the 8:00 service (see table 14). The increase of 22 people was very small on the scale the Cathedral typically operates, but because the 8:00 service has such low attendance, the increase appears as a statistically significant change. Then I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the means between “baseline fall” and “Fall 2017” at the 8:00 service. Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.494. Because 0.494 > 0.05, I concluded that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between “baseline fall” and “Fall 2017” (see table 14). I used the same methodology for the 2018 data. I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the means between “baseline spring” and “Spring 2018.” Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was < 0.001. Because < 0.0001 < .05, I concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean attendance between “baseline spring” (mean = 46.15) and “Spring 2018” (mean = 75.39) at the 8:00 service (see table 14). The 8:00 service showed statistically significant growth in the spring of 2018. Finally, I conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the means between “baseline fall” (mean = 48.39) and “Fall 2018” (mean 71.27). Using the independent samples t-test, I calculated that the p-value for this comparison was 0.003 Because 0.003 < .05, I concluded that there was a statistically
significant difference in the mean attendance between “baseline fall” and “Fall 2018,” showing small growth at the 8:00 service (see table 14).

Table 14. 8:00 Worship Attendance by Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Number of Sundays Reported</th>
<th>Mean attendance by semester</th>
<th>t-Test Score</th>
<th>d f</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Statistically Significant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013-2016</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>48.39</td>
<td>-0.687</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0.494</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2017</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>-3.040</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2018</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71.73</td>
<td>-3.481</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013-2016</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>46.15</td>
<td>-5.346</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2017</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>68.23</td>
<td>-3.481</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2018</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>75.39</td>
<td>-5.346</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pacific Cathedral official attendance data.

The finding in these attendance data is that the 8:00 service grew by a statistically significant margin during this period of study. It is still, by far, our smallest service, so the change in mean is relatively small. But it does show a statistically significant growth in that service. It is possible that some members of the 9:00 service began attending the 8:00 service to achieve an earlier worship service, but to avoid the new format of the 9:00 service. I do not have a way to test this possibility, and I do not know of any regular worshippers who made this change. Finally, table 15 shows the semesters that exhibited statistically significant changes in attendance data.
Table 15. Where did Attendance Show a Statistically Significant Change?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>服务时间</th>
<th>春季 2017</th>
<th>秋季 2017</th>
<th>春季 2018</th>
<th>秋季 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>是</td>
<td>否</td>
<td>是</td>
<td>是</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>否</td>
<td>否</td>
<td>是</td>
<td>是</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
<td>否</td>
<td>否</td>
<td>否</td>
<td>否</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing this semester’s data to baseline data (2013-2016), was there a statistically significant change?

Requests to Join the Congregation, 2007-2018

The Cathedral also tracks new requests to join the congregation. When a newcomer is interested in joining the congregation, they complete a short form and are encouraged to make a financial contribution. The data below indicate the number of requests to join the congregation that we have received since 2007.

Table 16. Number of Request to Join Congregation, Shown by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>号数</th>
<th>增加或减少</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>减少</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>减少</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>减少</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>增加</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>减少</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>增加</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>减少</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>减少</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>增加</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>增加</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>增加</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pacific Cathedral Congregation statistics

Here one notices that the congregation has added 273 members since January 1, 2016, and in email correspondence with our membership coordinator, I learned that
twelve people left the congregation between 2016 and 2018. One also notices the very slow year of 2015, in which we added fifty members, and the booming years of 2007 and 2008, in which we added 374 and 218 people, respectively. Finally, one notices the general decrease since 2007, which bottomed out in 2015, and has been steadily increasing since 2016.

**Historical Context: When Did the Service Grow?**

According to my survey responses, and according to the member data reported in table 16, Pacific Cathedral added the most 9:00 attendees during a period when the Cathedral sought to establish a congregation under the leadership of Dean Cople. These survey responses indicate that the largest period of growth in the Cathedral congregation took place in the past six to ten years, which is exactly when Dean Cople worked to build the 9:00 service as a worship experience for the congregation. The “requests to join the congregation” shown in table 16 show that the congregation’s growth was especially strong in 2007, 2008, and 2009. Dean Cople envisioned that the 11:15 service would be a tourist attraction, but he wanted to create a parish dynamic at 9:00. He envisioned a volunteer choir, and invited leadership and participation from regular attendees of the Cathedral. This was a formative era for many of the regular 9:00 worshippers. When I asked survey participants when it was that they began worshipping at the Cathedral, almost thirty-five percent answered that they began worshipping here “in the past six to ten years.” This is almost double any of the other time periods, as shown in table 17, and table 16 illustrates this congregational growth between the years 2008 and 2012.
Table 17. Responses to, “When did you begin attending worship at the Cathedral?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship in the past year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship in the past 2-5 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I began attending worship in the past 6-10 years</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>34.67</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship in the past 11-15 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship more than 15 years ago</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Questionnaire administered during the spring of 2018.*  
*Note: 75 respondents answered this question.*

**Summary of Quantitative Results**

Quantitative data illustrated four key lessons for the music and worship team. First, the congregation deeply appreciated our decision to engage members in conversation before we made any changes to the service. One of the major findings from the survey is that 79.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they trust the music and worship staff to make decisions in the best interest of the Cathedral and to solicit feedback along the way. Second, the congregation offers enthusiastic support for the new form of music at 9:00, led by the Cathedral band. With 78 responses, 88.2% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Since we added the Cathedral band to the 9:00 service, I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in worship.” Third, worship attendance has held relatively steady across all of our Sunday morning services between 2013 and 2017. Though the 8:00 service showed a small increase, and the 9:00 service showed a small decrease after our move to the Great Choir, the general attendance numbers have been consistent since 2016. Our congregation has also added 273 members since 2016, consistently increasing the number of new members since 2016, and posting surplus budgets for three consecutive years. In our particular
denomination, this trend stands against a national trend of rapid decline. Between 2001 and 2015, our denomination decreased in active members by 24.7% and average Sunday attendance dropped by 34.5%.\(^{113}\) Fourth, though we built trust and good will by engaging the congregation before changing music at the 9:00 service, we did not engage a similar process before moving the service to the Great Choir. Most of the criticism we received pertained to this move, and it came from some of the volunteers who were most affected. The strongest concerns came from the ushers, and I discuss this interaction below.

**Effect of Intervening Variable: Moving to the “Great Choir” of the Cathedral**

Without question, the greatest intervening variable in my research is that we made a change to the service shortly before I began collecting data. As mentioned above, we moved from the nave to the Great Choir in January of 2018. It took us about nine months to finish making adjustments to the movements, altar placement, and band placement in this new space. By September of 2018, most of those movements would be finalized. But in February and March of 2018, we had small changes almost every week, and some of the feedback I received indicated frustration with “constant tweaking.” Comments on the move to the Great Choir were especially apparent during the focus groups, and in the questionnaire’s free-response text boxes. The space also limited the number of people who could comfortably attend the service. To evaluate these conversations about worship, I move now to a discussion of qualitative data.

Qualitative Data

As the survey was in process, and before I had finished analyzing the quantitative data, I hosted two focus groups after the 9:00 service to gather feedback from congregation members. Combined with free-response survey feedback and email correspondence, my focus group transcripts became the third source of qualitative data for this study. Because the responses from each of the three sources exhibited such similar trends, I decided to combine all of that data into one document, and to apply the same codes to all of the qualitative data as a single group. I used a software called “NVivo” to enter this material, and to develop a series of initial, focused, axial, and theoretical codes to explain the patterns I noticed in the data. The term “NVivo” is a reference to the in vivo codes that Kathy Charmaz describes in her book Constructing Grounded Theory. In this qualitative data section, I discuss the insights gained from focus groups, free-response survey feedback, and email correspondence. I also provide an outline of the coding I developed to make sense of this feedback. To begin, it is helpful to understand the context of the focus groups.

Focus Group Context

I hosted two focus group conversations during this study. The first focus group took place on March 4, 2018, and included seventeen adult participants. The second focus group took place on March 11, 2018, and included fourteen adult participants. One participant agreed to attend both sessions at my request, because she was involved with a

114 NVivo qualitative data analysis Software; QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 10, 2014.

115 Kathy Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory.
congregational survey prior to my arrival at the Cathedral, and because she has experience in social science research. I asked her to join so she could advise my analysis and coding of these conversations. Prior to beginning our conversation, I asked participants to complete an “Informed Consent” form, which is included in appendix B, and I also asked them to complete a one-page handout that included these questions:

1. How long have you been part of this community, and how did you come to be a part of it?
2. Describe a time in your experience of the 9:00 service where you felt God’s presence was known to you during our worship, and where you felt called to respond.
3. If you could change any three things about the 9:00 service to enhance your experience of God’s presence in worship, what would they be?
4. To enhance your experience of God’s presence in worship, if you could choose to keep consistent three elements of the 9:00 service, what would they be?
5. As you think about the communication and decision process that led to changes in the 9:00 service over the past year, did the worship and music staff earn your trust to make decisions in the best interest of the Cathedral? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. What do you think God’s preferred and promised future for the Cathedral looks like?
7. Is there anything you’d like to add, or that we haven’t covered?

These written questions became the protocol for our conversation, but also provided a chance for introverts to think about their responses prior to the conversation. I captured all of these written comments and included them in my coding document. To analyze the text of our focus group conversation, I uploaded focus group videos to an
online transcription service on the website temi.com\textsuperscript{116}, then I proofed those transcriptions and created a series of initial and focused codes. Because I invited non-stipendiary participation in this study, there was no incentive for congregation members to participate in this research. I only had two Sundays where I was excused from other worship services to collect focus group data, so I wanted to ensure that I had robust participation in the focus groups. I invited anyone who wanted to share their feedback to participate in the focus groups, even if potential participants had not completed the survey yet. We announced that the focus groups would take place after worship on March 4 and March 11, 2018. The text of that announcement was, “Following the worship service today, Andy Barnett will host a focus group to hear your feedback on the 9:00 worship experience. All are welcome to attend, even if you have not completed the survey. We will meet in the library at 10:30 am.” This recruitment approach is known as a \textit{convenience sample}.

\textbf{Focus Groups, Survey Responses, Email Correspondence: Analysis}

To analyze the qualitative data in my focus group transcripts and written responses, open-ended questions in my questionnaire, and email correspondence, I used Kathy Charmaz’ approach to coding, described in her book, \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory}. I began with line-by-line and incident-with-incident coding to generate \textit{in vivo} codes. Charmaz writes, “Initial coding continues the interaction that you shared with your participants while collecting data but brings you into an interactive analytic space.”\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{116} www.temi.com, accessed multiple times in June of 2018.

\textsuperscript{117} Kathy Charmaz. \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory}. 109.
Later she clarifies that “Initial codes are provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data.”\textsuperscript{118} Next I used \textit{focused coding} to group these \textit{in vivo} codes into similar concepts, noting the value and the frequency of the initial codes. Charmaz summarizes the transition between initial and focused coding well, “Constructing grounded theory coding involves you in at least two main phases; 1) an initial phase involving naming each word, line, or segment of data followed by 2) a focused, selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data. I aim to keep coding simple, direct, and spontaneous, but some researchers prefer more elaborate coding schemes.”\textsuperscript{119} This led her to a critique and discussion of axial and theoretical codes. Ultimately, I decided to use a hierarchy of coding that begins with focused codes, then clustered these focused groups into axial codes, and ultimately seeks a series of relationships between the axial codes, known as theoretical codes.

As I created axial codes, I grouped the focused codes into similar categories, and considered them through the theological and theoretical lenses I described earlier. Charmaz does not love the structure of axial codes. She writes, “For most of my analyses, focused coding simply meant using certain initial codes that had more theoretical reach, direction, and centrality and treating them as the core of my nascent analysis.”\textsuperscript{120} She likes the playfulness and freedom of this approach. Nevertheless, she acknowledges the common practice of axial codes, and describes it clearly, “Axial coding relates categories

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 117.
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 113-114.
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 141.
\end{itemize}
to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data you have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis.” Finally, I built a few theoretical codes to explore the relationships and influences among the axial codes. Charmaz highlights the playful nature of this type of coding, “Theoretical playfulness allows us to try out ideas and to see where they may lead. Initial coding gives us direction and a preliminary set of ideas that we can explore and examine analytically by writing about them. Grounded theory coding is flexible; if we wish, we can return to the data and make a fresh coding. We can go forward to writing about our codes and weighing their significance.”

A Note on Data Presentation

Charmaz advises researchers to begin with the words of the transcript, and to build our theory upwards from that text. I followed her advice in my coding. However, I concluded that the themes of the data will be better understood by presenting them in reverse order. Accordingly, I begin with theoretical codes, then explore axial codes, followed by focused codes, and I end with the initial observations. I chose this macro to micro approach because I think it shows the key lessons more clearly, and because it allows the data to come into focus at the beginning of the discussion. I begin, therefore, with the theoretical codes.

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121 Ibid., 147.

122 Ibid., 137.
**Theoretical Codes**

I considered the focused and axial codes, looking for relationships among them. The metaphor of a sailing vessel captures the relationships among axial codes, and serves as a model for my theoretical codes. Imagine the Cathedral as a large medieval sailing vessel. Rising as the central mast is the notion that people are transformed by their experience here. Music roots the mast as a pivotal driver of transformation. But it is much more powerful when experienced in the context of worship, which sits at the top of the mast. We are, after all, a worshipping community. The connection between music and worship, measured on this vertical spectrum of transformation, is the congregation’s participation – when you participate in music and worship, you can be transformed. I illustrate this concept in figure 5.

![Worship as Transformation Diagram]

**Figure 5. Participation Allows Music to Become Part of Transformative Worship**
Imagine now a horizontal axis with the building on the right, and our sense of identity on the left. The building, and the many issues created by worshipping in that Christendom space, has a strong tendency to become our identity. It is what we are known for, it is our biggest expense, and it was the tireless goal of generations of builders and donors to raise those stones. It creates a set of possibilities because it draws thousands of visitors every year. Yet the Dean Lincoln has encouraged us not to be defined by the building, but by our participation in God’s work. The building also creates major limitations for the type of music and worship that can succeed in the space. Participants talk frequently about this balancing act between the limitations and assets of the building on one hand, and our sense of identity on the other. Indeed, there is a balancing act between who/what we are called to be, and what the building requires. Indeed “The Building” is a common phrase in the office, epitomizing all that the building enables and requires (see figure 6).

![Figure 6. Balance Between God’s Mission and the Costs/Possibilities of the Building](image)
Affixed to this horizontal axis is a system of sails, without which we cannot travel. These sails represent the critical sense of trust among congregation and staff. When we function together as a cohesive unit, those sails pull us all forward. But when our trust breaks, the sails tear, and we decrease our ability to harness the wind, which comes from the Holy Spirit.

As we seek to navigate the ship through uncertain waters that are defined by complex challenges, we need a sense of adaptive leadership which draws on all of the tools of adaptive leadership theory (see chapter 2). Indeed, this approach to leadership is similar to steering a large sailing vessel. We need the rudder to steer the ship, but we also need to mobilize an entire crew to turn, trim, and let out the sails. No one person can steer a sailing vessel, and at the same time, a crew needs a clear leader that empowers the full group to function as a team. These theoretical codes exhibit relationships among the axial codes, which I illustrate in figure 7. Table 18 summarizes the sailing metaphor in relation to these theoretical codes, and figure 7 illustrates the metaphor.
Table 18. List of Theoretical Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Codes that Emerged from the Qualitative Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transformation is made possible in music and worship through participation. Sailing metaphor: participation moves you higher up the mast, indicating that the more you participate, the more you are transformed. In sailing, a taller mast can catch more wind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The building is closely linked to our identity, and it limits what we can do. We aim to exist for the sake of God’s mission – who we are called to be and do – but the building and its expenses dominate our budget and time. There is the risk of imbalance here. Sailing metaphor: We can only balance the sails when we have a balance between God’s mission and what the building requires and enables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We rely on trust and communication for all of our work to succeed. Sailing metaphor: trust and communication make up the sail, making it possible to catch the Holy Spirit’s wind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Holy Spirit is the wind that drives this ship. We can only sail when we discern where she is going, catch her wind, and follow her lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Adaptive leadership empowers the community to tackle tough challenges and thrive. In the sailing metaphor, adaptive leadership is the task of steering the ship, driven by the rudder, and engaging the full. crew.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7. Theoretical Codes as a Sailing Metaphor. Image Credit: Hannah Hastings.
Axial Codes

I looked for similar groupings among the focused codes and I created level-one and level-two axial codes. I created a list of level-one codes to amalgamate my qualitative data entries into five discrete categories, displayed in table 19 below.

Table 19. Level-One Axial Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level-One Axial Codes That Emerged from the Qualitative Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Living into this space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Trust and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Who we are and want to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Worship as Transformation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NVivo visually depicts the number of data entries in each code, shown in figure 4 below. This graphic feature is called a “sunburst” and surface area corresponds to the number of entries for each code group. For example, “Trust and Communication” appears as a larger slice of the pie chart than “Who we are and want to be” because there were more coded responses in the “Trust and Communication” group.
Figure 8. Level-One Axial Codes, Indicating Number of Entries for Each Code.

Living into this space

Worship as Transformation

Who we are and want to be

Trust and Communication

Music

Living into this space
Table 20. Level-One and Level-Two Axial Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level-Two Axial Codes That Emerged from the Qualitative Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Living into this space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-A Great Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-B Role of clergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-A Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-B Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-C Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-D Volunteer choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Trust and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-A Congregation’s suggestions for innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-B Decision Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-C Feedback from people under 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-D Historical context (and opinions!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-E Trust music and worship staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-F Ushers’ experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Who we are and want to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-A Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-B Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-C Playful- what does that word mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Worship as transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-A God’s mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-B Overall experience at the Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-C Purpose of worship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Issues Raised in Axial Codes

As I reflected on the conversations and correspondence, I heard research participants asking focused questions about each of these issues. I summarized those questions as follows:

1. How do worship and music transform us?
2. How do we build trust while we lead change?
3. How does this building relate to God’s work for us in the world?
4. How do traditions shape innovation?
First, my research participants wondered how worship and music transforms us. Participants often referred to “beauty,” “intimacy,” “transcendence,” and “participation” when they named the transformative elements of music and worship. They also spent a good deal of time describing the style of singing and the quality of the vocalists, which seemed a point of connection between worship leaders and congregation. Worshippers often discussed the role of participation in the music. Their level of engagement and participation increased dramatically when they felt invited to sing. Participants wondered about the power of silence, and frequently discussed the power of belonging to this community, in some cases, for many decades. As the coding below will illustrate, ‘worship as transformation’ became a robust theme in participants’ questionnaires, focus groups, and written correspondence.

Second, participants wondered how to build trust while participating in change. This question was shared by the worship and music departments, although my colleagues phrased the question differently. The staff wondered, “How do we build trust while leading change?” Perhaps the greatest lesson of this research is that people deeply appreciate being asked. This trend emerged time and again from the research participants. When they were asked, and when they felt that they were honestly heard, trust was built. As one participant wrote, “Asking for feedback helps! Effectively communicate any changes and the rationale to the congregation – and continue to survey the reaction/response to any changes. Just continue to ask questions and fine tune, when necessary.” By contrast, when congregation members were not consulted in the past, or when “listening sessions” were shallow performances where previous leaders had no interest in changing course, trust eroded quickly. Discussing frustration after the
volunteer choir was abruptly dismissed in 2015, a congregation member wrote, “The 9:00 service has been a petri dish as resources have shrunk. The congregation community has not been invited to give ideas to leadership and to speak and be heard about our concerns (particularly in reference to the 9:00 service).”

Third, conversations among research participants raised various forms of the question, “How does this building relate to God’s work for us?” In one of Dean Lincoln’s most discussed sermons, he explained his rationale for raising money for a new mission-oriented priest, even as the Cathedral was pushing hard to meet existing financial targets. He suggested that the Cathedral could only be the institution it sought to be if it made outreach and missional partnerships central to its identity. He said that the great temptation of this Cathedral is that the building would become our idol. The building is at once an incredible asset and liability. It is what we are known for, and it creates strong assumptions and limitations about what we can do in worship. Conversations around space emerged frequently from the research participants, particularly after moving the 9:00 service to the Great Choir. As I discuss further in chapter six, the Christendom assumptions that lay the groundwork for the Cathedral’s founding continue to affect what we can do with music in the space. It is a big, resonant cave, and rhythmic music struggles in the space. One of the primal questions for this Cathedral, since its founding, is, “Can we be more than the building?”

Fourth, the data reveal continued conversation about the relationship between tradition and innovation. Some participants refer to a monolithic tradition, implying that there is only one way to be a Cathedral, or to worship as a [member of a certain denomination]. One participant wrote, “I do not see why we cannot be a perfectly good
Cathedral, and do what Cathedrals have done for centuries [play European choral music].” Others express gratitude for actions that expand the musical and liturgical options beyond just one denomination. One participant said,

I particularly do love the blend of Christian traditions that are being honored within the 9:00 service. Particularly with the music. Um, the hymns are wonderful and they're beautiful, but you also have some old spirituals that, for visitors who have that in their tradition, it is like coming home. It is very nice for them, so I think that blend of both what is so wonderful about the hymns, but also within other Christian traditions makes it a nice welcoming and warm place for people who aren't used to maybe the [name of denomination] tradition.

As indicated in the quantitative data, the overwhelming consensus among research participants was that offering a “broad palate” of worship and music remains in the strategic interest of the Cathedral. There is a continued sense that the Cathedral needs to reach out to young people, and to communities that have not been a part of our common life, especially Spanish speakers and African Americans. Participants wonder aloud how to innovate in the context of beloved traditions like hymns, choir, and grand arching spaces.

I will note that I did not change these codes to match what I wanted the congregation to say. This is important to note because I was conducting this research while also working hard to shift the musical culture of the Cathedral to a place where new music was welcome and expected. I was a participant in this project, even as I investigated it. I simply allowed the trends in the data to speak for themselves
Focused Codes

I took Kathy Charmaz’ advice to heart: “I aim to keep coding simple, direct, and spontaneous.” It was my goal to let my data surprise me, and to code it exactly as I perceived it. I did not attempt to group the data into pre-conceived categories, nor did I attempt to ‘prove’ anything about my research question. Indeed, one of the benefits of running a case study is that there was nothing to prove, no cause and effect to seek, and no correlations to graph. I aimed simply to describe what I observed in the data, to analyze what I heard from the research participants. One of the benefits of the transcription service provided by temi.com is that the researcher can listen to the audio recording while editing the interview transcript. This allowed me to pick up on non-verbal communication techniques such as pitch, pace, pause, volume, and interactions among speakers. This practice became a form of deep listening because I basically listened to every exchange at least twice, and occasionally three times. Throughout this listening, the following focused codes became clear. I present them below, grouped with the theoretical and axial codes into which I eventually placed them.

123 Ibid., 113.
List of Focused Codes

1. Living into this space

1-A Great Choir
1-A i  Communion flow
1-A ii  Intimate
1-A iii Negative
1-A iv  Positive
1-A v  Preaching location

1-B Role of clergy
1-B i  Be genuine!
1-B ii  Clergy hospitality
1-C iii Pastoral confidentiality
1-D iv  Sermons
1-D iv.a  Political content
1-D iv.b  Negative
1-D iv.c  Positive

2. Music

2-A Duration
2-A i  The length of the service is about right
2-A ii  The length of the service is not important to me

2-B Negative
2-B i  I miss the organ
2-B ii  Hard to sing with these folks
2-B iii  I do not like jazz
2-B iv  Needs more joyful uplift
2-B v  Feels like a night club
2-B vi  Needs even more diversity

2-C Positive
2-C i  I like the new format
2-C ii  This music lifts my spirits
2-C iii Clergy engagement (you can tell they like it)
2-C iv  Improvisation (you’re good at it, do it more)
2-C v  Variety
2-C vi  Piano versus Keyboard (use the piano!)
2-C vii Sing together builds community
2-C viii Special services (Gospel Christmas and MLK)
2-C ix  Talented musicians (“the best band in Mariposa”)
2-D Volunteer choir
   2-D i What if we had the volunteer choir again?
   2-D ii Why did they cut the choir? The story doesn’t add up.
   2-D iii I miss the volunteer choir?

3. Trust and communication
   3-A Congregation’s suggestions for innovation
      3-A i We need better publicity
      3-A ii Congregation could participate in great thanksgiving
      3-A iii Empower more congregational singing
      3-A iv Improve flow of people in the liturgy
      3-A v Invite volunteer preachers
      3-A vi Keep experimenting
      3-A vii More musical diversity
      3-A viii More Spirituals
      3-A ix No more experimenting, please! (I’m tired of change)
      3-A x Stick with traditional hymns
      3-A xi Stream the 9:00 service online (like we do at 11:15)
      3-A xii Highlight building in worship (stained glass, carvings, etc)
      3-A xiii Bring back the volunteer choir

3-B Decision Process
   3-B i Anxiety
   3-B ii Budget
   3-B iii How to improve
   3-B iv Negative
      3-B iv.a Volunteer choir “fired”
      3-B iv.b No warning, no “heads up”
   3-B v Positive
      3-B v.a Community appreciates the ushers
      3-B v.b “Thank you” for the fall 2018 conversations
      3-B v.c How best to communicate with congregation
      3-B v.d “We feel like this is our service”
   3-B vi Please keep the band
   3-B vii What does it mean to be in the congregation
   3-B viii I like being asked

3-C Feedback from people under 40
   3-C i “We’re not here to worship the building.”
   3-C ii “What my friends care about is…”

3-D Historical context (and opinions!)
   3-D i Bethlehem Chapel
   3-D ii Cathedral Band (added in January 2017)
   3-D iii Cathedral Voices (volunteer choir)
   3-D iv Organ and Cantor (“unsatisfying”)
3-E Trust music and worship staff
  3-E i  Keep Andy
  3-E ii Keep the Band (“do not cut them like you did to the choir”)
  3-E iii Two-way communication is key
  3-E iv Use different music
  3-E v  You have my trust

3-F Ushers’ experience
  3-F i  Feel excluded from the worship experience
  3-F ii  “This is good for the congregation but bad for me”
  3-F iii  “I do not like this”

4. Who we are and want to be

4-A Children
  4-A i  “I wish we had more kids around”
  4-A ii “They annoy me”
  4-A iii Suggestions to bring in kids

4-B Community
  4-B i  “I love the sense of community here”
  4-A ii “The congregation feels like my spiritual home”

4-C Playful - what does that word mean?
  4-C i  “do not take things seriously”
  4-C ii  “Playful- That’s a good goal for us”
  4-C iii “Playful- maybe, but not too much”
  4-C iv “Playful- means disorganized”
  4-C v  Sense of understanding
  4-C vi “Playful- that’s for kids”

5. Worship as transformation

5-A God’s mission
  5-A i  “I felt God’s presence in worship”
  5-A ii  Love the world
  5-A iii Music’s role in sending us out to do God’s mission
     5-A i.a “Make a joyful noise”
     5-A i.b Lament
     5-A i.c Encouragement
  5-A iv  Work toward justice
  5-A v  Worship sends us out to do God’s work in the world
5-B Overall experience at the Cathedral
5-B i Brings in new people “by the droves”
5-B ii Energy
5-B iii Inspiring
5-B iv Intimate
5-B v Jazz night club
5-B vi Joyful
5-B vii Keeps me going during the week
5-B viii Meh.
5-B ix Negative
5-B ix Positive
   5-B ix.a “It’s good, and you can improve even more.”
   5-B ix.b “I like the service as it is.”
   5-B ix.c “There is integrity to the worship experience.”
   5-B ix.d The music keeps me coming back
5-B xi Talented musicians
5-B xii Worshipful experience

5-C Purpose of worship
5-C i Worship God, not the building
5-C ii Build community
5-C iii Send us out into the world, inspired

**Initial Coding**

After ensuring accurate transcription, my next task was to enter the text into NVivo and run a few diagnostic tests. I asked the software to evaluate the frequency of words as they appeared in the data, and generated the following word cloud in which larger text indicates a higher frequency of use (see figure 9).
Figure 9. Word Cloud Indicating Frequency of Word Appearance

We can depict the text in figure 9 as follows in table 21, although I limited this table to include the twenty-five most frequently used words in the data. The word cloud includes the eighty-five most frequently used words in the data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choir</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathedral</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I note that the terms “service,” “music,” “like,” “choir,” “people,” and “worship” all appear before the word “God” and that neither Jesus nor the Holy Spirit made an appearance in our top twenty-five words. Also, the words “great” and “choir” came up frequently. It is reasonable to assume that the forty-nine appearances of “great” almost always came in the context of our move to the “Great Choir” but the sixty-two “choir” appearances likely mean that we had \((62-49 = 13)\) thirteen references to the volunteer choir. The research participants spoke frequently about the band and music at 9:00. They also described a sense of community with their friends at the service.
There were a few other words that caught my attention, and though they did not appear in the top twenty-five, list I believe they merit discussion. Those words include the following, shown in table 22.

Table 22. Less Frequently Mentioned Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyful</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymns</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This participant summarized what many others shared, “I find the current mix of elements to be the most worshipful I have felt in the Cathedral. It is good to have a variety of services. 9:00 AM fills a hole if we are trying to be a church for all people, including those who weren't raised in ‘high church.””

**Documented Email Correspondence**

I received a few emails that helped me understand the historical context of the 9:00 service. As I mentioned previously, the decision to eliminate the volunteer choir in 2015 was a major shock to the Cathedral’s system, and generated monumental mistrust. I
received an email from one of the former choir members which summarized their\textsuperscript{124} view of the situation. They write:

\begin{quote}
The central date is possibly/probably the July 1, 2015 announcement that "discontinued" the [Volunteer Choir] and fired [a former organist]. I paste the letter below. It included the shift to cantor and organ starting in September, 2015. There was no prior discussion or warning on this announcement. The [Volunteer Choir members] were not thanked. To this day, this is a source of much hurt which is why most (all but 3) volunteer choir members and spouses left and did not return. I can think of congregants who said they left because of the worship changes. The tone of the letter produced a good amount of angst. With the summer schedule in between, I do not know what kind of correspondence you will see [in attendance]. It may have been gradual. Folks were not happy with the reduction to one cantor. The July 6 meeting mentioned in the letter did not help although [The vicar’s] handling of it was positive. I think some worshipers moved to the 11:15 service.

It is important to note that Dean Stern announced his retirement six weeks after disbanding the volunteer choir. The decision to cut the choir and make steep budget cuts to a beloved music program was perceived as yet another indication that he did not value the congregation. From his perspective, he made a difficult yet necessary decision to help the Cathedral control its spending. Dean Stern’s letter reads as follows:

Dear Cathedral Family;

Within any institutions as large and complex as Pacific Cathedral, there are what Ecclesiastes calls a season for every activity -- a time to grow, a time to lay fallow, a time to imagine, a time to reflect. Here at the midpoint of 2015 and at the start of a new fiscal year, we find ourselves with a bit of all of that.

As we start Fiscal Year 2016, the Cathedral is making a fresh start toward responsible stewardship of the physical and financial gifts that God has entrusted to us. The senior staff has assembled, and the Cathedral’s governing bodies have approved, a budgetary roadmap for the next 12 months that is ambitious, responsible and realistic.

\textsuperscript{124} According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it is correct to use the pronoun ‘they’ (them, their, theirs) in reference to a singular person. This gender-neutral construction avoids the need to clarify gender, and dates back to at least the sixteenth century, when Shakespeare used it in his \textit{Comedy of Errors}, writing “As if I were \textit{their} well-acquainted friend.”
Meeting our goals will be the shared responsibility of the entire Cathedral staff, on both the revenue and expense sides of the ledger. Simply put, we need to live within our means.

Over the past several years, we have seen success in growing our development and visitor capacity and also in good financial oversight of our expenses. Even with that hard work, we believe that our three-year run of deficit spending is no longer sustainable, nor is it even an option. Now is the time to realign our budgeting with our resources, and make investments in key growth strategies for the years ahead.

Using reasonable revenue and expense projections, this budget plan is actually a plan for growth and vitality; the FY 2016 budget is larger than the previous year. We have been challenged with a mandate from the PECF to operate under a balanced budget. It’s a challenge that we believe, with God’s help, we can and will meet.

The next 12 months will give us the opportunity anew to match our expenditures with our missional priorities. We do not have the luxury of aspirational budgeting; this $X operating budget is a realistic assessment of our resources. We will invest in areas of growth while bringing costs in key departments in line with real-world revenue.

Of course, challenges necessarily come with a cost, and for us in the Cathedral it means having to make some choices that, in an ideal world, we would rather avoid. The reality is that we must make choices about our worship and music programs to support the Sunday services that attract the most worshippers.

Starting this fall, the music for the Sunday 9 a.m. service will be provided by organ and cantor only. This means that we will be bringing to a close the ministry that [the Volunteer Choir] has provided during the past nine years. Unfortunately, we will also be saying goodbye to [a former organist], who has served this Cathedral with distinction. His musical talents echo from the very heart and soul of this sacred space. We are sad to bid him farewell at the end of July, and we wish every success for [him] and his career in God’s service. While this was not an easy decision, it nonetheless presents an exciting opportunity for the Cathedral congregation to commit itself anew to financial support of this service, particularly as we look to the fall stewardship campaign.

In this season of change, I am reminded of the promises and opportunities embedded in our baptismal covenant:

We will, with God’s help, continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers. We will, with God’s help, persevere in resisting evil and whenever we fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord. We
will, with God’s help, proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ. We will, with God’s help, see and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves.

And we will, with God’s help, strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being.

We will have an opportunity to discuss these changes as the Cathedral family on Sunday, [Date], from 10:15 to 11 a.m. in [one of our Chapels]. I look forward to seeing you there.”

Dean Stern

As I read this letter, I note the Dean’s clarity of purpose and rationale, and his focus on financial stewardship. The letter itself reads clearly and well, and it presents the financial realities that faced the Cathedral in the summer of 2015. He had an unpleasant set of decisions he had to make, and an even more unpleasant message to communicate. I do not envy him, and I know he would have chosen a different course had it been available at the time.

It is difficult to square this letter with all of the other conversations, focus groups, and survey feedback I have collected about the 2012-2015 time period. Whether hearing from congregants, staff, or musicians, I heard a strong sense that these changes were unwelcome, that the congregation’s input was not sought, and that they would have provided funds to continue the choir, had they been offered that chance. One of the leadership lessons I have drawn from this insight is that major changes, announced without community input, are likely to lead to frustration. Put simply, most people do not like surprises. And once a program begins in a church, it is particularly difficult to end it.
Summary of Qualitative Data

In brief, my qualitative data analysis yielded the following observations. I noticed three relationships among the large groups of data and I assembled these theoretical codes into an image of a sailing ship. First, I noticed that transformation is made possible in music and worship through participation. Second, I observed that the building creates strong limitations on what we can and cannot do in worship, and it will quickly become our identity if we let it. We try not to let it be our identity, but it is enormous, expensive, and the first thing people notice when they enter our worship space. There is a real tension here. Third, I concluded that we rely on trust and communication for all of our work to succeed. Next, I grouped my qualitative data entries into the following level-one axial codes: living into this space, music, trust and communication, who we are and want to be, and worship as transformation. I reflect extensively on these comments in the space above. Finally, I highlighted the decision process that led to the abrupt cancellation of the volunteer choir in the summer of 2015, and the damaged sense of trust that arose from that decision process.

Reflections on My Research Question

Throughout this work, I have been asking, “How might a Cathedral innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission?” The question breaks into four parts. First, what have we learned about innovation? Certainly it means to make new, and to draw on what has already been. The music and liturgy of the 9:00 service embodies this work, and the congregation’s strong support indicates that something of this innovation has taken root in our community. It was particularly gratifying to hear participants talk of the way the music inspired them, lifted their spirits,
stayed with them, and kept them going throughout the week. These effects may have come from our decision to prioritize spirituals, gospel music, and rhythms and harmonies that arise from cultures yearning for liberation.

Second, what have we learned about evaluation? The clearest lesson here is that more communication is good, and talking and listening in person is more effective than communicating electronically. Time and again, participants mentioned our evening sessions where we played, prayed, and sang together before sharing a meal. The essential move here was to share our ideas with the congregation and gather their feedback before rolling out the new service format. The iterative nature of this research has helped me in my work with the congregation. I created the survey, led the focus groups, analyzed the data, coded the transcriptions, and wrote this paper as I was continuing to serve in my role at the Cathedral. As questions arose, as suggestions became clear, and as I wrestled with tough issues around engaging the congregation with new material, I was constantly challenged to improve my work and thinking. The more I engaged the material, the more I discovered inspiration and material ideas to improve my work.

Third, what does it mean to improve worship? This may be the most difficult aspect of my research question, because it is, by definition, subjective. “Improved” worship in one participant’s view, may be the exact same experience that causes another participant to run screaming from the sanctuary, never to return again! It turns out that the people of God want different things, and if we think of worship as a consumer experience, folks can shop around until they find the liturgical store that sells their brand. But of course, worship is not a commodity to be bought and sold. It is rather a “sign,
instrument, and foretaste”¹²⁵ of the coming reign of God. The role of worship is to “gather, call, center, and send”¹²⁶ God’s people, that we might be inspired to be God’s hands and feet of healing in a world that hurts.

How would we know if worship was improved? I concluded that worship is improved when it engages the congregation fully, when attendance holds steady or grows, when the content of the service lifts people’s spirits, challenges them, inspires them, stays with them, and keeps them coming back. I wish this service had grown more than it did during the research period, because that would have been an obvious indicator of vitality. Indeed, one way to measure whether the worship experience has improved in the future may be to consider attendance data. Perhaps the most important aspect of improvement is one that I did not consider at the outset of this research. That improvement has to do with the trust and communication between staff and congregation. We have achieved a monumental shift in the way we make decisions together and communicate about them. This has fundamentally shifted the dynamic of trust, and has been a significant part of the Cathedral’s renewed sense of vitality. The congregation has welcomed 273 new members over the past three years, and we have achieved three consecutive years of balanced budgets. All of these trends indicate health and vitality, and they are a measure of improvement in the life of the Cathedral. Worship plays a


¹²⁶ Patrick R. Keifert. *We Are Here Now*, 96
central role in these positive trends, though it is difficult to say just how much of a role the 9:00 service played, relative to the other worship services.

My conclusion is that worship at 9:00 improved because people trust each other more now than ever, they find the music and liturgy deeply inspiring, they keep coming back, week after week, and they consistently name worship as an inspiration for their engagement with God’s work in the neighborhood. Our liturgies change us, challenge us, and call us to the better angels of our nature. We have more to do, and we will always strive to build a culture of continuous improvement. But we have come a good, long way, and this achievement deserves celebration.

Finally, how does our liturgy shape our imagination around God’s mission? It calls us to define God’s mission, which participants were comfortable doing. I created the definition “bringing God’s love, justice, and compassion to fruition for all of creation” and this resonated with my research participants. The relationship between liturgy and God’s mission was consistently defined in terms of inspiration and challenge to go out and be doers of the word. Our congregation is heavily involved in the needs of the community, and worship plays a central role in bringing us together and sending us out. I move now to the concluding chapter, discussing the insights of this research.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS

Chapter five explained the results of this research, and this concluding chapter now provides a summary of quantitative and qualitative data, reflects on my research question in light of these data, and interrogates these findings from the perspective of my biblical, theoretical, and theological lenses. The key findings are summarized in table 23.

Table 23. Key Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Findings from this Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To lead change, build trust.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To build trust, engage people in real dialogue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When we make big moves without consulting the community, trust is eroded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship and music transform us when we feel invited to participate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The congregation enthusiastically supports this direction of worship and music.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship attendance held steady across all worship services during the study period, adjusted for three intervening variables.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can we be more than our building? This is a fair question, and a dynamic that continues to challenge the Cathedral.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation is possible, even in a community deeply rooted in tradition. But it is exhausting, and you are not likely to be the one who sees the fruits of your labor.</td>
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Summary of Quantitative Results

Quantitative data illustrated four key lessons for the music and worship team. First, the congregation deeply appreciated our decision to engage members in conversation before we made any changes to the service. One of the major findings from the survey is that 79.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they trust the music and worship staff to make decisions in the best interest of the Cathedral and to solicit feedback along the way. Second, the congregation offers strong support for the new form of music at 9:00, led by the Cathedral band. With 78 responses, 88.2% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Since we added the Cathedral band to the 9:00 service, I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in worship.” Third, worship attendance has held steady across all of our Sunday morning services between 2013 and 2017. Services have not shown statistically significant growth, but, controlling for several intervening variables, I conclude that attendance has basically held steady. In the face of steady decline across many branches of the Mainline Protestant churches, this trend seems reasonably healthy. One would hope for robust growth, but holding steady is better than shrinking. Fourth, though we built trust and good will by engaging the congregation before changing music at the 9:00 service, we did not engage a similar process before moving the service to the Great Choir. Most of the criticism we received pertained to this move, and it came from some of the volunteers who were most affected: the ushers. In sum, the quantitative data portray an engaged congregation that is happy to be asked for opinions, broadly supports this direction of music and worship, views worship as God’s sending activity, and welcomes the opportunity to offer feedback in the future.
In response to the research question, we succeeded in our efforts to innovate, evaluate, and improve worship at a Cathedral. We met these goals because we tried bold new approaches to worship, we sought regular feedback, and we responded to what we heard. As a result, the congregation’s participation in worship increased, they reported a strong sense of God’s presence in worship, and indicated that worship empowered them to participate in God’s mission. As LaCugna concludes: “It is the nature of (the triune) God to seek out the deepest possible communion and friendship with every creature.”127 God-in-community’s nature and God-in-community’s purpose are one: reaching out in love.

Summary of Qualitative Results

My qualitative data are summarized most effectively by exploring the sailing metaphor that emerged from my theoretical codes. Consider the Cathedral as a large sailboat. Rising as the central mast is the notion that people are transformed by their experience here. Halfway up the mast, where the sails affix, music sits as a pivotal driver of transformation. But it is much more powerful when experienced in the context of worship, which sits at the top of the mast. We are, after all, a worshipping community. The connection between music and worship, measured on this vertical spectrum of transformation, is the congregation’s participation – when you participate in music and worship, you can be transformed. Imagine now a horizontal axis with the building on the right, and our sense of identity on the left. The building, and the many issues created by

worshipping in that Christendom space, has a strong tendency to become our identity. It is what we are known for, it is our biggest expense, and it was the tireless goal of generations of builders and donors to raise those stones. Dean Lincoln put it bluntly when he said our greatest temptation is to let the building become our idol. He has encouraged us not to be defined by the building, but by our participation in God’s work, and when people talk about why the Cathedral matters to them, they talk about their experience with worship, with music, with the community, and with God. Occasionally people will mention the grandeur of the building, but those comments tend to appear toward the bottom of the list. The building also creates major limitations for the type of music and worship that can succeed in the space. Participants talk frequently about this balancing act – between the limitations, costs, and assets of the building on one hand, and our sense of identity on the other. Indeed, there is a balancing act between who we are and want to be, and what the building requires. Affixed to all of this is a system of sails, without which we cannot travel. These represent the critical sense of trust among congregation and staff. When we function together as a cohesive unit, those sails pull us all forward. When our trust breaks, the sails tear, and we decrease our ability to harness the wind, which comes from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has long been associated with breath, wind, and motion. The Day of Pentecost provides a great example, as the author of Acts writes, “Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.”

\[128\] The Spirit can be the dynamic leader of God’s church, if we
are willing to let her lead. Luther Seminary student Mary Caucutt summarizes the Holy Spirit’s leadership powerfully as she engages with Zscheile’s scholarship. She writes:

Zscheile reminds readers that the Spirit’s agency both creates congregational community and leads congregational community.129 The Holy Spirit calls persons and communities to repentance and conversion.130 The Holy Spirit creates space for new persons in the community, and for persons to function in new ways in the community. 131 The Holy Spirit supports new liberating action (innovation).132 The Holy Spirit calls for openness to neighbor.133 The Holy Spirit gives taste of and invitation to God’s promised future.134 Who wouldn’t want to follow the Holy Spirit as the primary leader in Christian mission?135

Any decent sailor will tell you that you cannot sail without tracing the direction of the wind. In fact, the whole crew works together to find the wind, to turn the ship into the wind (at varying angles), and to let out sail in varying quantities to harness the wind.

Combining the sailing metaphor with church, I realized that the church must be at once stable and agile. If we consider the benefits of stability, we think about institutional momentum and memory. We think of endowments and financial stability. We think of sound buildings that will weather storms and endure for centuries after their founding generations die.

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130 Zscheile, 56.

131 Zscheile, 77.

132 Zscheile, 89.

133 Zscheile, 68–69.

134 Zscheile, 75–76.

In the sailing metaphor, stability looks like large and sturdy ships that will hold upright in a storm. But catching the Holy Spirit’s wind requires agility! How else would a ship turn when the wind shifts? Is it possible to sail a vessel that is both stable and agile? Or is an institutional church better represented by a fleet of vessels? Perhaps some boats cut in and out of gusts, able to make quick turns to take advantage of shifting winds. Other ships hold steady on a slow course, slow to turn, but sturdy in a storm. If the institutional church is best represented by a fleet, I wonder if there is something to be said for some large vessels holding sturdy, and other small ships being able to make quick changes. If that is the case, our institution surely represents the sturdy ships that are firm in their trajectory and difficult to overturn. They are, by consequence, difficult to turn in general. They have incredible momentum as institutions, which is to say they tend to keep doing what they have always done. Bearing in mind that momentum in physics is defined as mass times velocity, large objects can have enormous momentum, even if they chug along slowly. That momentum is good when the ship is heading in a healthy direction, because the ship is likely to keep on going. It is a dangerous trend when adaptation is needed, or danger lurks ahead, or when the winds have shifted.

I recently spoke with the retiring pastor of one of the wealthiest churches in our denomination. He had led that church for over a decade, and he concluded that the best innovation, the most faithful risk-taking, and the great lessons for the future of the church would take place in smaller churches that had no option but to innovate. Another way to say this is that faithful innovation will happen at the margins of the mainline church. Empty pews and dwindling budgets can force institutions to consider new ideas that they never would have considered in their heyday.
One wonders, then, whether the large churches will also take innovative risks. Will they continue to offer the same programs they have offered for decades, depending on endowments and severely aging donor bases? Can faithful innovation take root in these institutions, and if so, how might it be led? What is the right balance between guarding tradition and exploring new expressions? How much are we willing to invest in preserving institutions, and to what extent do we need institutions to die before missional Christian leadership becomes possible? To what degree must a church experience crisis before it is willing to take the missional turn? One of our national leaders has observed that we can only be the church of Jesus when the love of power is overwhelmed by the power of love. Another leader has compared empty pews to empty tombs, suggesting that institutional death is a part of the resurrection story.

Perhaps these two visions of church can be illustrated in the two images below. Figure 10 shows a medieval era sailing vessel, designed to cross the ocean without sinking. Figure 11 shows a twenty-first century ship, designed for speed and agility. Does the church need both kinds of approaches? Should every faith community adopt the same ratio of agility to stability, or should we think of ourselves as a fleet that needs a variety of ships? Some are fast and agile, if a bit unwieldy in a storm. Others are slow and huge, hard to turn, and even harder to turn over.
Figure 10. A Sturdy, late-Gothic Sailing Vessel (Replica)

Figure 11. A Fast and Innovative Sailboat (Twenty-first Century technology)
Results Considered Through Theoretical, Biblical, and Theological Lenses

It is time now to consider these results in light of the theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses I explored in chapters two and three. I begin with the theoretical lens of adaptive leadership.

Theoretical Lens: Adaptive Leadership

As Heifetz and Linsky write, “Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.”136 This leadership theory creates a distinction between “technical challenges” and “adaptive challenges.” A technical challenge can be fixed with existing technology and ideas whereas an adaptive challenge will not be solved with simple plans and numbered lists. As I have wrestled with the daily grind of worship and music at the Cathedral for almost three years, I am convinced that Cathedral worship in the 21st century is an adaptive challenge. This is an exhausting realization, but it pushes me to three conclusions. First, if multi-cultural doxological worship is an adaptive challenge, that means that the ideas, theories, and practices do not yet exist to solve it. We do not know how to offer multi-cultural worship in a way that authentically embraces many worship cultures. This is the case because a sense of discomfort will arise as soon as I experience worship in a culture or style that is different from the one I know. You will experience the same phenomenon. Second, there is no monolithic ideal of what worship should be. Our denomination is full of opinionated worship leaders who are happy to explain how things should be. Third, the only way out of this adaptive challenge is rapid, frequent, and faithful innovation. One’s goal ought not

be to make everyone happy, because that is impossible. The goal, instead, ought be to
give praise to God as authentically, as beautifully, and as deeply as we possibly can, in
our places. When the congregation participates, the Holy Spirit will do her work, and
people will be transformed.

Theoretical Lens: Innovation

It never was our goal to invent new liturgy for the Mainline Protestant church. It
is our goal to expand what we offer in a way that welcomes new cultures and sounds into
public witness. Innovation means adjusting ancient practices to create something new. It
comes from the Latin word *innovare*, which means “renewed or altered,”¹³⁷ and the word
has a connotation of vibrancy, energy, and possibility. In practice, innovation is hard and
dangerous work. Innovators and their ideas are often rejected, challenged, and
misunderstood, long before the innovation sees the light of day. This is exhausting, but
when an idea is eventually shared with the broader public, there is a sense of deep
reward. One of the key findings from this research, and from this experience at the
Cathedral, is that the congregation strongly embraced the innovative music and worship
we created together. We cannot rest on our laurels. We just have to keep trying things and
we have to learn as we go. One of my great senses of pride and satisfaction is that I have
tried a lot of music and worship ideas over the past ten years, and some of them have
worked. The challenge to a now-tired innovator is to continue experimenting with new

¹³⁷ Gove and Merriam-Webster, *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged.*
styles, new musical approaches, new compositions, and to invite the community into this work. Linda Hill shares the most important sentence I have read yet about innovation.

Leading innovation is not – cannot be – about being a visionary. The last thing you want is a team that defers to you to set a course, to be a chief innovator and then simply implement your vision...If your goal is innovation, then your role must instead be to create an environment – a setting, a context, an organization – where people are willing and able to do the hard work of innovation themselves: to collaborate, learn through trial and error, and make integrated choices.”

One of my great joys is the opportunity to work with a talented team of musicians, and to invite them into the work of innovation, partnering with the congregation and staff.

Theoretical Lens: Missional Church Theory

This Cathedral is an embodiment of American Christendom, as described in chapter one. To the extent that it can survive on event rentals, funerals, and financial support from a small group of aging donors, it will not perceive the need to take the “missional turn” that Keifert describes. This institution perceives itself, in some ways, as the guardian of Christendom, and some elements of Christian tradition. Even as top leaders have come and gone, decision makers near the top have remained in their chairs, all but ensuring that the Cathedral operates as a bastion of American Christendom. In fact, this may be the Cathedral’s role: to maintain a particular flavor of worship and music, and to broadcast it to the world in high definition. But the Cathedral risks communicating to an ever-shrinking demographic if it continues in this trajectory. Its relevance outside that particular denomination will continue to shrink. Its sense of self-importance will be self-generated, but when that crucial and aging bundle of top donors

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fades, the Cathedral’s core challenges will remain. These are the same issues that have
dogged the Cathedral for well over a century.

To illustrate just how powerfully the assumptions of Christendom pump through
the veins of this place, and just how prolonged the Cathedral’s financial struggles have
been, consider the words of Dean Gregory, who wrote this report to the Cathedral’s
governing body in 1974. The nave had just been completed, though the two western
towers were yet undone. In his words, note the sense of accomplishment paired with the
sense that the Cathedral had no business plan, no constituency, and no clear sense of
mission or identity. These are brave words for a Dean to share with his governing board,
and they could only have been shared after a tenure of twenty-four years and a
remarkably successful building campaign. They are the kind of words, and the strength of
sentiment that would be difficult to repeat without that same level of seniority and
accomplishment. This quotation is the longest I share in the entire thesis, but it is worth
presenting here, almost in its entirety. The challenges of the mid 1970s sound incredibly
familiar to the challenges of 2019. The former Dean writes,

Open House, less than two weeks ago, was like a joyous summary of the
Cathedral’s whole life from its beginning nearly three-quarters of a century ago
until the present moment. No one of the crowd, estimated at some ten thousand
people, failed to feel the excitement, nor to rejoice with us as the last temporary
wall of partition “came tumbling down,” and the whole graceful length of the
completed nave was seen. It did not happen in a day of course; indeed the last of
the big steel girders was safely down only this very week. And yet the festival,
blessed by gorgeous weather, somehow served to run a bottom line across the
balance sheet of all our life hitherto.

There was the western rose and Mr. [name of architect]’s stunning vaulting
lifting its branches in praise of God. Stained glass, long hidden behind the
plywood barricades suddenly jumped to vibrant life, framed in the forest of
columns standing stately there. The brave dream of our fathers [sic], so long and
carefully tended by your Building Committee, now sprung within sight of
fulfillment. And all clothed with such a richness of life like some great tapestry
for the happy visitors to enjoy. They came… to revel in the music and mime. All
the many crafts drawn by this gothic magnet were there: Artisans showed how the stone is carved, the glass leaded together, needlepoint designed and made. There were ladies sharing their delight in vestments and fine fabrics, flowers and silver vessels. There were bell-ringers in the tower, a choir for the first time in the west balcony and a grande finale in the afternoon when the Choral Society made the balloons in the children’s hands dance to the roar of Bach. The great impression was of people. People who gave love and life to so many human skills, people receiving them with such gratitude that they should find upon this hill an oasis of faith that inspires such numbers to weave in harmony the lovely skein.

Naturally I was moved, to see coming true what has so patiently been essayed across these many years: “I never thought I would live to see it!” — was the astonished expression of many. And yet your Dean, wearing his silly hat and happy grin on that radiant day, was reflecting on some of the realities of Cathedral life that lie behind the festive scene. Nothing there displayed had come about by accident nor by the simple magic so many of our tourists appear to believe in when at first sight they take it all for granted. If we are indeed at something of a turning point, as I believe we are, then I thought it might be useful if I were to share with you now some of these inner reflections.

I think that I would have to begin by asking you to consider whether or not many of the assumptions underlying the administration of our Cathedral are now really obsolete. I must confess that in the course of my years here the achievements seem to have been won increasingly in spite of, rather than because of the framework of the [governance structure]. More and more they have been the personal accomplishments of a very remarkable group of individuals, some staff and some volunteer, who pour out their devotion and skill in God’s service in this place. But they are inadequately supported with the money and the tools to do the major job that is ever more urgently called for no less by the Cathedral’s maturity than by a society in disarray around it.

I have often wondered just how the men whose daring faith founded the Cathedral, imagined that it would be financed. They did not tell us who would build it, nor how it might be staffed and maintained. Moreover they indicated to the parishes of the city that we would have no constituency of our own, no local roots to encumber the national witness; but no members either to help insure the great church’s life. We have been starving ever since. On the building side how readily we have relied on chance: the good fortune of the generous interest of a [name of donor] or a [name of donor], but never succeeded in mounting a genuinely national campaign in the church or out. As for annual budgets, the mounting deficits of the past few years but clearly silhouette the inadequacy of our appeal among the unrelated and unknown multitudes. Have we ever faced the problem on a scale commensurate with the undertaking?

Granted there have been heroic efforts. One of them is surely the tremendous record of our Christmas card department which under the knowledgeable guidance of [name of staff members] has kept us solvent a lot longer than we would otherwise have been. Now to our sore regret [name of staff member] is about to retire, after forty-five years of service.
But the Cathedral will never be financed properly with Christmas cards, or the sale of [souvenirs] in the Gift Shop, or the offerings of strangers at our services. Those help. So does the income from invested funds. But not all of them together can really do the job, as we all to plainly see by the deficit in our current year’s operation, which amounts to 33% of the whole, or some [dollar amount] at last account. So, it comes about also that the Cathedral must liquidate, as you remember at our meeting a month ago, a goodly chunk of hard-won, self-created endowment to pay off part of the accumulated indebtedness. But so it comes about also that we must look for a better system by which to underwrite the work of our Cathedral not to mention the building of her west towers…

There is a third concern for us to think about, one not unrelated to the first two. This is the Cathedral’s mission: the purpose for its building, the ministry for which it must prepare…

Then again, the whole climate has radically changed since [year] when the cornerstone was laid. Two world wars shattered that complacent notion of progress which all our fathers apparently shared. Depression challenged it in the material sense; and more latterly the sad chapter of Watergate undermined it in a moral sense. Today it’s pretty hard to take man for granted, let alone God.

The church at large is less steady, less sure: she knows not how such eloquent loveliness as our Cathedral might serve her. She hardly knows what to make of the State itself; is it the ultimate enemy of grace, or a good and necessary servant of the same?

Year by year in each of the twenty-four that I’ve been Dean, I have tried to define one aspect or another of our mission in these annual reports. I am perpetually intrigued by the unique opportunity given us in this amazing place to explore those uncharted buffer lands that lie between the depths of faith and the practice of life. In the transition between the two creation is born; for surely faith is sterile if there be no politic to give it substance. And it’s also true that action divorced from moral root can only end in human disaster. In America the Church and the State are legally separate but God help both if they are ever finally divorced.

The other day a member of a seminar from [the local seminary] asked me, “Who commissioned you to speak for the [denomination] from this place? And who empowered the Cathedral to try to summarize the meaning of our corporate life in this Bicentennial year?”

The answer of course is no one. No one unless it be the Holy Spirit. But of that the church is not at all sure these days. And neither can we ourselves claim to be his [sic] unsullied emissaries. But we can be explorers and I believe that half the world waits dumbly but with wistful hope to see where we will go.

Here then is an outline, all too brief, of the major problems that I think we confront as trustees of the Cathedral. The first is one of monetary asphyxiation. The second (which perhaps is cause of the first) is the lack of an adequate constituency for the Cathedral enterprise, as distinct from the schools. And the third, again related, has to do with our mission, which I believe to be very clear in the mind of Christ, but not at all in the minds of our fellow churchmen, much less the citizens of the country generally.
What to do about these problems? I would prolong this report unduly by offering here some of the conclusions to which I personally have come regarding the Cathedral’s future and what might be some quite basic policy decisions. But at bottom these are the [governing board’s] responsibility not mine, although I would gladly share with you the whole of my thought. This I have already done with the bishop; but now I would propose that there might be a special commission appointed by him primarily from among your ranks to consider the long-range future of the Cathedral’s life and the adjustments that should be made to meet it.

It is clear to all of us that the happy festival of Open House presages that day – still somewhat distant – when construction will no longer be our primary responsibility, but rather program. One that will be truly national in scale, as this great building is, and for which we must now plan to reserve land and resources of major importance. The day is not too far off when the chapter’s Program Committee will at last supercede the crucial role hitherto played by the Building Committee.

And what a training-ground for that future will be the year that is now at hand. The elaboration of the celebration of the nation’s two hundredth birthday in this Cathedral is already well advanced under a program task force headed by the imaginative [name of staff member]. I think it will prove in the end – through all those modes that are native to a Cathedral, music and the word, dance and drama and teaching and worship, to be a vivid and moving witness of the sacred force that is still redeemer of history, deep hid though he be in the hearts of his many children.139

I can think of no better summary of the challenges of Mainline Protestant Christianity in the latter half of the twentieth century. Dean Gregory here wrestles with a society that grows increasingly uninterested in organized religion. He asks questions of identity, mission, and purpose, and he names that all three of those core issues remain unresolved. He suggests that Jesus has a mission for the Cathedral, but he is not sure what that mission is. He names the broader church’s discomfort with the Holy Spirit, our unease at naming her agency, and our lack of clarity around her identity and purpose. This is one of the most honest and thoughtful reckonings I have encountered in my time.

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139 [Rev. Gregory] [Name of Cathedral Publication], Winter 1975. Annual report to the [governing body]. N.B. The name of the Dean and the name of the publication have been redacted for the purpose of confidentiality.
here. Dean Gregory named the challenges without seeking an easy answer. In so doing, he summarized the adaptive challenges the Cathedral faces from the perspective of the missional church.

Theological Lens: Doxology – God’s Glory Exalted and Revealed

Daniel Anderson makes the case that we can understand mission as participating in the glory of God, as it is shown to us, promised, made flesh in Jesus, lifted up, and experienced in our daily lives. Considering the doxology on display in Psalm 98, we read, “O sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things” (Psalm 98:1).140 We sing our praises to God in response to the good work God has done and is doing in our midst. Though there have been occasions when new musical and liturgical ideas have not succeeded, there have been other moments when this work has mirrored the psalmist’s great joy. I think of the congregation’s response to some of our Advent and Christmas offerings, or the sense of connection we experienced in our evening conversations back in the fall of 2016. We are able to give God praise because God first did marvelous things. We respond to this blessing, and it is not just a song that we sing, but a new song. This innovative spirit can be understood as part of the doxological task, because God is always making things new. Indeed, doxology lies at the heart of Christian worship.

Theological Lens: The Sending Nature of Liturgy

Patrick Keifert would add to Anderson’s doxological work that missional worship “calls, gathers, centers, and sends”\(^{141}\) the faithful, which is to say that worship changes us as it sends us out into the world. One of the central things to know about Trinity is that God sends. God sends forth the act of creation in a primal blur. God so loves the world that he sends his only Son, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, the activity of God in our midst. The Holy Spirit builds and sends God’s church, and God’s church sends us – you and me – into the troubled waters where the kingdom is not. It is precisely there, in these waters, that God calls us to build the kingdom of Shalom, which is a just peace for all of God’s children. This is nothing short of the apostolic mission of God. And the world is hurting!

Our congregation has responded to the transformation they experience in worship, to make a real difference in the neighborhood. One of the most exciting examples of that is our Thanksgiving basket ministry, which partners with local churches and institutions to prepare Thanksgiving groceries to thousands of local families. In the past three years alone, this ministry has more than doubled its reach.

Biblical and Theological Lens: God’s Playful Acts in Scripture

I remain inspired by Sarah Nye’s observation that play calls us to a place of joy and even silliness.\(^{142}\) In so doing we are delivered of the presumption of our own import. I have often felt that one of the great barriers to joyful and authentic worship (from my perspective) is a sense of play among worship leaders and participants. I perceive a sense

\(^{141}\) Keifert, *We Are Here Now.*

of stiffness that actually gets in the way of the work we are trying to do. When a bestselling author offered a homily, she began by thanking the Bishop for whispering in her ear. The author said, “Right before I came up here, the Bishop told me ‘you know, we’re a lot less stiff than we’re coming across this morning.’” And you could hear the congregation breathe a sigh of relief. Yet my research participants were not looking for a sense of play in worship, at least not as they understood the term in my survey question. I was surprised to note that respondents do not seek a “playful” worship experience. The statement “The most important part of worship is that the service feels playful” received 81 responses, with 18.5% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing, 46.9% of participants disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and a mean response of 2.69. A mean lower than three indicates a general sense of disagreement with the prompt. Based on these survey data, it is reasonable to conclude that a sense of play is not a value for these survey respondents. A second anecdote, which may complicate the conclusion, is that the congregation loves to gather for picnics and parties outside of the Cathedral. When we gather for events like a picnic in the outdoor amphitheater people relax, laugh, and greatly enjoy each other’s company. Kids roll around in the grass, dogs play, and the smell of BBQ fills the air. These types of events are wildly popular with our congregation, and invite a sense of play from the community. Perhaps the conclusion is that worship is not the place for this sense of playfulness, but community members do welcome playful time in a less formal setting.

**Limits and Generalizability**

Peter Nardi sums up the limits of this research, writing “With nonprobability methods... you are limited to making conclusions about only those who have completed
the survey,” and I would add that this research also captures input from those who participated in the focus groups.\textsuperscript{143} I was careful in my language to describe research participants and their specific responses. I did not attempt to draw conclusions about cause and effect, and I was careful to identify the limits of the case study’s findings. At the same time, there are generalizable lessons that will transfer to other contexts. Those lessons are musical in some ways: we have learned specific musical techniques that are worth sharing broadly. We have developed a catalogue of arrangements and compositions, and an online portfolio of recordings that will serve as a musical resource for many years. Those lessons also relate to decision process and communication. We learned the pivotal role of trust and two-way conversations prior to liturgical innovation. We learned the value of relationships in managing change. We learned that healthy communication requires leaders to invite critique. There is a proverbial saying that one will be happier with the camel living inside the tent, peeing out, rather than outside the tent and peeing in. Put differently, leaders should give thanks for critique that is shared in a constructive setting. Finally, and on a personal note, I learned that innovation is hard work, and will involve great personal cost, but it can be invigorating and worth the effort.

\textbf{Areas for Further Research}

This research raises questions about communication, decision process, leadership, and liturgical/musical innovation. Regarding communication, I would be curious to learn how online feedback, social media feedback, and chat-room feedback could be useful. Do these digital platforms facilitate human connection, and do they make it possible for

community to form? Reflecting on decision process, there is more work to do on the question of buy-in. Is there such a thing as waiting too long, or gathering too much input? Do some leadership challenges require fast and bold moves, with less buy-in? What is the balance between seeking input and making decisions? I would like to learn more about servant leadership in the context of an enormous institution that seeks strong and decisive leaders. Are there models of servant leaders thriving in that type of environment? Do they get crushed? The liturgical and musical innovation we started here has been going on for many years prior to my arrival, and the experimentation will continue for many more years, God-willing and the people consenting. I am always in search of new ideas and possibilities. In the end, each of these questions could be explored further, in more depth, and in new directions.

Summary

Nearly two years ago, I began this research with a simple question, “How might a Cathedral innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God’s mission?” The question arose from two prior years of study and reflection on what God might be up to in the missional context of the Mainline Protestant church in the United States. It also arose from my practical responsibilities at the Cathedral, as I hoped to reflect on my work in real time. The journey has been long, but the key findings will stay with me long after the details of the research fade. I illustrate these findings in Table 23.

Ultimately, I came to see God’s work for me in this research as naming the missional possibilities for Pacific Cathedral. There are challenges here, to be sure. In many ways, the Cathedral will continue to function as an establishment church in the model of Christendom, and that may be its role for at least a little while longer. But there
are also incredible possibilities at hand. The Cathedral sees itself as an icon for the Jesus movement. Blinking in this unsettling new light, the Cathedral is waking up to the power of talking specifically about the world-changing love of Jesus Christ, the abundant life God promises, and the power of the Holy Spirit to send us out into the world. There is power in this message, and the world longs to hear it.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*
EPILOGUE

In many ways, this research project provided bookends to my time at the Cathedral. I began the work just prior to arriving, and I am completing it as I discern God’s next call for me. The research challenged me to reflect always on the work as I was doing it, even in the midst of a demanding schedule. I kept thinking about the Cathedral’s challenges and opportunities through the lenses of the Missional Church, Adaptive Leadership, and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. I routinely asked myself what God might be up to in this unique and challenging context. I kept a running list of authors I was excited to read once this project reached its conclusion. And I grew to appreciate the church-changing thought of many of the authors in this bibliography. At the end of the day, this experience made me a better priest, musician, and liturgist, and for that I am truly grateful.
APPENDIX A: IMPLIED CONSENT LETTER FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

February 18, 2018

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study of worship at Pacific Cathedral. I hope to learn how the staff and congregation might partner to evaluate and improve a new worship experience at the Cathedral. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you self-selected as a worshipper at the Cathedral’s 9:00 service.

If you decide to participate, please complete the enclosed survey. Your return of this survey is implied consent. The survey is designed to measure the congregational response to the new 9:00 worship experience. It will take about 20 minutes to complete. No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to help the congregation and staff evaluate the service. Any discomfort or inconvenience to you derives only from the amount of time taken to complete the survey.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relationships with Pacific Cathedral, nor with Luther Seminary. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. If you have any questions, please ask. If you have additional questions later, please contact The Rev. Andrew K. Barnett at abarnett@___________.org.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Andrew K. Barnett
Associate for Music and Worship
Pacific Cathedral
Informed Consent Form
Evaluating and Improving a New Worship Experience at Pacific Cathedral

You are invited to be in a research study of worship at Pacific Cathedral. You were selected as a possible participant because you self-identified as a worshipper at the Cathedral’s 9:00 Congregation. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by the Rev. Andrew K. Barnett as part of doctoral research in Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther Seminary. Research advisors are Daniel Anderson and Alvin Luedke.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to help the staff and congregation at the Cathedral evaluate and improve the new worship experience at 9:00.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to complete the survey and/or participate in focus groups.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
The study does not have foreseen potential risks.

In the event that this research activity results in an injury, treatment will be available, including first aid, emergency treatment, counseling, and follow-up care as needed. However, payment for any such treatment must be provided by you or your third party payer, if any, (such as health insurance, Medicare, etc.).

The direct benefits of participation include communication with the music and worship staff. Participants do not receive compensation for their participation in the research. Indirect benefits to you and to the general public include enhanced communication between congregation and staff.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept confidential. If I publish any type of report, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. All data will be kept in a password-protected file on my computer, and in a locked file in my office; only my advisors, Daniel Anderson and Alvin Luedke, and I will have access to the data and, if applicable, any tape or video recording. If the research is terminated for any reason, all data and recordings will be destroyed. While I will make every effort to ensure confidentiality, anonymity cannot be guaranteed due to the small number of people to be studied. Audio recordings of focus groups will be used for educational purposes, kept for 3 years, accessed by me, my advisors, and will be deleted by May 30, 2022. Raw data will be destroyed by May 30, 2022. Because Federal guidelines specify a minimum of 3 years for retention of data.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**
Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Luther Seminary and/ or with Pacific Cathedral. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**
The researchers conducting this study are Andrew Barnett and advisors Daniel Anderson and Alvin Luedke. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Andy.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**
I have read the above information or have had it read to me. I have received answers to questions asked. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature ___________________________ Date ________

Signature of investigator ___________________________ Date ________

I consent to be audiotaped

Signature ___________________________ Date ________

I consent to allow use of my direct quotations, with my identity remaining confidential, in the published thesis document.

Signature ___________________________ Date ________
APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

How long have you been part of this community, and how did you come to be a part of it?

Describe a time in your experience of the 9:00 service where you felt God’s presence was known to you during our worship, and where you felt called to respond.

If you could change any three things about the 9:00 service to enhance your experience of God’s presence in worship, what would they be?

To enhance your experience of God’s presence in worship, if you could choose to keep consistent three elements of the 9:00 service, what would they be?

As you think about the communication and decision process that led to changes in the 9:00 service over the past year, did the worship and music staff earn your trust to make decisions in the best interest of the Cathedral? If so, how? If not, why not?

What do you think God’s preferred and promised future for the Cathedral looks like?

Is there anything you’d like to add, or that we haven’t covered?
APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

Q1) When did you begin attending worship at the Cathedral?

Answered: 75    Skipped: 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship in the past year</td>
<td>5.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship in the past 2-5 years</td>
<td>18.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship sometime in the past 6-10 years</td>
<td>34.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship 11-15 years ago</td>
<td>18.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began attending worship more than 15 years ago</td>
<td>18.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2) How old are you? Please note: respondents must be 18 years of age.

Answered: 83  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>8.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>9.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>12.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>25.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>31.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>12.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-99</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3 Are you:

Answered: 83  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4) What is the highest degree that you finished and for which you got credit? (Please choose one).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No School</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School or equivalent (for example G.E.D)</td>
<td>6.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>21.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>36.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>28.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Doctoral</td>
<td>7.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5) Roughly how often do you attend the 9:00 service at the Cathedral?

Answered: 83   Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually every week</td>
<td>49.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a month</td>
<td>16.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a month</td>
<td>12.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 6 times per year</td>
<td>12.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or less</td>
<td>4.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>4.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6) Which of the following statements best describes your church experience prior to worshipping with the Cathedral congregation?

Answered: 83  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was a member of another Mainline Protestant congregation before joining the Cathedral congregation</td>
<td>43.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was a member of a church in another Christian denomination</td>
<td>24.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was not a member of any church prior to joining this one</td>
<td>14.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have always worshipped with the Cathedral congregation</td>
<td>4.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>13.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q7) How did you first encounter the Cathedral?

Answered: 82  Skipped: 1

**ANSWER CHOICES** | **RESPONSES**
---|---
A tour | 1.22% | 1
A friend invited me | 9.76% | 8
I was a volunteer | 6.10% | 5
I found the website | 2.44% | 2
I was looking for a church | 28.05% | 23
Other (please specify) | 52.44% | 43
**TOTAL** | **82** |
Q8) Which, if any, of the following activities are part of your engagement with the Cathedral?

Answered: 83  Skipped: 0

**ANSWER CHOICES** | **RESPONSES**
--- | ---
Nothing beyond worship | 16.87% 14
Flower guild | 1.20% 1
Eucharistic Visitors | 6.02% 5
Chapter (a governing body) | 3.61% 3
Lay Eucharistic Ministry | 14.46% 12
Tour guide | 2.41% 2
Cathedral Congregation Committee | 3.61% 3
Office volunteer | 0.00% 0
Hospitality: Ushers and Coffee Hour Hosts | 10.84% 9
Other Congregation Ministries (please specify) | 40.96% 34
Q9) How can the Cathedral's worship and music staff hear from you and respond to your thoughts most effectively? Please rank the following options below, where 1 indicates "most effective" and 7 indicates "least effective."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>23.44%</td>
<td>20.31%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group conversation with invited</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>21.21%</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
<td>15.15%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>6.06%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants and a facilitator</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal conversation</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>18.84%</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>14.49%</td>
<td>20.29%</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone call</td>
<td>7.25%</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>14.49%</td>
<td>14.49%</td>
<td>11.59%</td>
<td>18.84%</td>
<td>24.64%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large group annual meeting</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>4.41%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>19.12%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Food and Fellowship&quot;...we share music,</td>
<td>16.90%</td>
<td>14.08%</td>
<td>12.68%</td>
<td>9.86%</td>
<td>12.68%</td>
<td>12.68%</td>
<td>21.13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food, and conversation together in the</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathedral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10) The most important part of worship is that the service feels calm.

Answered: 81   Skipped: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Disagree</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>35.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Agree</td>
<td>23.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Strongly Agree</td>
<td>9.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This question does not apply to me</td>
<td>4.94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 81
Q11) The most important part of worship is that the service feels authentic.

Answered: 78  Skipped: 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Agree</td>
<td>43.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Strongly Agree</td>
<td>35.90%</td>
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<td>2.56%</td>
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1: Strongly disagree
2: Disagree
3: Neither agree nor disagree
4: Agree
5: Strongly Agree

This question does not apply to me
Q12) The most important part of worship is that the service feels joyful.

Answered: 82   Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2: Disagree</td>
<td>4.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>26.83%</td>
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<td>32.93%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</table>
Q13) The most important part of worship is that the service feels playful.

Answered: 83  Skipped: 0

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<thead>
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<td>2: Disagree</td>
<td>38.55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>33.73%</td>
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<td>4.82%</td>
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Q14 The length of the 9:00 service is about right.

Answered: 83   Skipped: 0

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<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>7.23%</td>
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<td>4: Agree</td>
<td>56.63%</td>
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</table>
Q15) The length of the 9:00 service is not important to me.

Answered: 82  Skipped: 1

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<tr>
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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Disagree</td>
<td>43.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>30.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Agree</td>
<td>19.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This question does not apply to me</td>
<td>1.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.22% of the respondents answered that the length of the 9:00 service is not important to them. The majority of respondents, 43.90%, disagreed with the statement, while 30.49% were neither agree nor disagree. A smaller percentage, 3.66%, strongly disagreed.
Q16) I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer a broad palate of worship and music.

Answer: 82  Skipped: 1

**ANSWER CHOICES** | **RESPONSES**
--- | ---
1: Strongly disagree | 6.10% | 5
2: Disagree | 3.66% | 3
3: Neither agree nor disagree | 10.98% | 9
4: Agree | 52.44% | 43
5: Strongly Agree | 25.61% | 21
This question does not apply to me | 1.22% | 1
TOTAL | | 82
Q17) I think the best way to welcome new people to our church is to offer worship and music from the [denominationally approved prayer and music resource], led by choir and organ.

Answered: 75  Skipped: 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10.67%</td>
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<td>2: Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4: Agree</td>
<td>17.33%</td>
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<td>5: Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5.33%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q18) I would be comfortable inviting my friends to attend the 9:00 service.

Answered: 82    Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Disagree</td>
<td>3.66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>1.22%</td>
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<td>4: Agree</td>
<td>32.93%</td>
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<td>5: Strongly Agree</td>
<td>58.54%</td>
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<td>1.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q19) Some elements of worship affect us more than others. With 1 indicating "most transformative" and 9 indicating "least transformative," please rank your experience of the following elements of worship.

Answered: 75    Skipped: 8
Q20) I started attending the 9:00 service because of the new music format.
Q21) I stopped attending the 9:00 service because of the new music format.

Answered: 81  Skipped: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>35.80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2: Disagree</td>
<td>9.88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>4: Agree</td>
<td>2.47%</td>
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<td>3.70%</td>
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<td>40.74%</td>
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</table>
Q22) I have long attended the 9:00 service, and I would continue to attend even if the music and worship were to change.
Q23) If this service had more children and young families, that would enhance my experience of God in our worship.

Answered: 81  Skipped: 2

### ANSWER CHOICES

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<td>11.11%</td>
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<td>41.98%</td>
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<tr>
<td>This question does not apply to me</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>81</strong></td>
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</table>
Q24) I trust the clergy, music, and worship staff to make decisions in the best interest of the Cathedral congregation, and to solicit my feedback along the way.

Answered: 83    Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<td>2: Disagree</td>
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Q25) After attending the 9:00 service, I feel called to participate more fully in God’s work in the world, defined here as "bringing God's love, justice, and compassion to fruition for all of creation."

Answered: 81    Skipped: 2

<table>
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<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>4: Agree</td>
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<td>3.70%</td>
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</table>
Q26) When the 9:00 service took place in Bethlehem Chapel, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.

Answered: 81   Skipped: 2

<table>
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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1.23%</td>
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<td>2: Disagree</td>
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<td>39.51%</td>
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</table>
Q27) When the 9:00 service consisted of organ and the Cathedral Voices (choir), I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.

Answered: 83  Skipped: 0

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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<td>3.61%</td>
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<td>2: Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>3: Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>24.10%</td>
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<td>13.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Q28) When the 9:00 service consisted of organ and a single cantor, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.

Answered: 83  Skipped: 0

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<td>10.84%</td>
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</table>
Q29) Since we added the Cathedral band to the 9:00 service, I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.

Answered: 80  Skipped: 3

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<td>2.50%</td>
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<tr>
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</table>
Q30) When the 9:00 service consisted of band and organ, and when it took place in the nave of the Cathedral, I had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.

Answered: 83  Skipped: 0
Q31) Since we moved the service to the Great Choir (the wood-paneled area near the high altar, where we have worshipped since January 4, 2018), I have had a strong experience of God’s presence in our worship.

Answered: 82     Skipped: 1
Q32) To help the worship and music staff earn my trust more fully, I suggest the following: (Open Response)

Q33) It would enhance my experience of God in worship if we tried the following idea(s) at the 9:00 service:
   (Open Response)

Q34) Based on my experience at the 9:00 service, this is what it means to participate in God’s work in the world: (Open Response)

Q35) I would like our music and worship staff experiment with the following ideas: (Open Response)

Q36) Here's how I would describe my overall experience of the 9:00 service during the past year. (Open Response)

Q37) Would you like to join a 50-minute focus group to help the worship and music staff innovate, evaluate, and improve the 9:00 service at the Cathedral? If so, please provide your email so we can follow up with you. If you would prefer not to leave your email here, but you would like to participate in the focus groups, please send an email to (email address). (Open Response)
APPENDIX E: A NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY

It is appropriate to offer a comment on confidentiality in this research. I did not work with a human transcriber. I used a web-based service called temi.com, and I am the only person with access to those transcription files online. I am the only one with access to my coded data, and they are stored in password-encrypted files on my computer. My survey data cannot be traced to any individuals, and it was administered using the Cathedral’s account on surveymonkey.com. Only two other staff members have access to this account, and they have committed to respect the confidentiality of the survey results. All names in this text are pseudonyms, including the name of the church, judicatory, senior leadership, and city. Where applicable, I refer to staff members and research participants by letters, which do not necessarily coordinate to their names (e.g. staff member A). I protect the confidentiality of my research participants because this practice is federally mandated, expected by Luther Seminary’s Institutional Review Board, and serves an important gesture of respect. We discussed issues of the heart, and I promised confidentiality throughout the process.


