

Principles that Guide Us at St Gregory's

Developed during a course on our congregation's history, and approved at Members' Chapter in June 1999, here are some basic principles that guide our worship at St Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco.

- God invites us to be God's Friends.
- We take part in a spirit of Holy play.
- We are unashamedly Christian - yet ready to learn from the experience of all people of God.
- We try ancient traditions to discover the experience in them.
- We plan a liturgy that is sensuous, and participate with our sensory responses.
- We gather so we can meet one another's eyes. No one in the church is further than sixty feet away from another person, the distance at which normal corrected vision can read feeling on another person's face.
- We make physical connection, touching one another as we greet the Gospel book, dance to the Table, exchange the Peace, and dance our final Carol.
- We sing as much as possible. We do not read prose texts together. We sing without instrumental accompaniment, shaping a congregational voice by listening to each other.
- We only put congregational music in people's hands, music they will need to sing, so our eyes are up, not reading along. As we pray the Eucharistic prayer together, we listen or drone a support pitch (again, not reading along).
- We eliminate physical barriers between clergy and laity - no rails, no modesty panels; we bring clergy and laity physically close together both for preaching and the Table.
- Our preachers are direct and honest about scholars' questions, skepticism, or doubts about any text - and we preach and share the work of preaching (sermon-sharing) from genuine, living, unresolved personal experience.

- We move together physically - the whole congregation moves in processions and congregational dance.
- We plan our liturgy to make strangers feel welcome. It serves everyone's spiritual life to be part of a completely welcoming, inviting, and including community.
- We give spoken instructions as we go to reduce visitors' and our own congregation's anxiety about what happens next or how to take part.
- We include and welcome everyone to communion (unconfirmed children, unbaptized children and adults).
- We make our liturgical practice and all we do together on Sunday continuous with the day to day values we live by.

For more information about St. Gregory's - including opportunities to read their history, view and listen to the liturgy, and to order materials - check the congregation's website at www.saintgregorys.org or call the church office at (415) 255-8100.