



## Pastor Enno's Weekly Message

**Dear Friends,**

When I was serving in Ipswich, SD, the board wanted me to try to attract the younger folks and do some contemporary worship stuff. I asked them what they meant by this, and they shrugged their shoulders. I asked them if they thought contemporary worship was singing praise songs for 20 minutes, have a 20-minute sermon, prayers, and more songs. They thought that was about right. I told them that style of worship came into being in the 80's and was over 30 years old, older than the young people they wanted to attract. We tried it a few times, but it wasn't a good fit for us.

In the constitution of the United Church of Christ, it is written:  
13 [The UCC] claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed 14 in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the 15 responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in 16 honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance with the 17 teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two 18 sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

As Millennials are now in their 30's and Gen Z's are becoming adults, it is hard for me or anyone to 'know' how they are claiming their faith. But, we are not a bunch of ol' codgers who are stuck in ruts. We can faithfully follow the Spirit in updating our faith and worship and prepare ourselves to hand it off to the next generations. What we shouldn't do is pander to them by saying, "God is Rizz! God is Fire!" and then expect them to show up, nor should we say we are here and it is our comfort and needs that should come first since we are the ones showing up.

For the most part, worship services are still designed around the 1950's model (or before) when many churches broadcast their services, so they had to be done within an hour. Nothing wrong with the way we worship. However, God leads us forward and not back. Protestant theology from the 15th century claims that the sermon, the preaching of the Word, is central for worship. Is this still the case? It would make for good discussions.

Our mission statement claims we welcome everyone, we are a Just Peace and an Open and Affirming Church, grounded in the love of God, Christ's mission, and that we have two sacraments. In our current time of global climate change, LGBTQA+ people getting legal rights, but still being harassed and killed, and a deep division in our country right now, what are the ways we proclaim the love of God, heal ourselves and those least around us, and work to become repairers of the breach? May we continue on our faith journey and listen to the Earth, the marginalized voices, and the Spirit who leads us into a better future.

**Peace**