



NMC Worship Ministry Playbook

The purpose of NMC's Worship Ministry is to be a community of people who are learning to glorify God through their lives and songs. Our mission is to authentically and passionately lead the NMC family to the feet of Jesus during our worship services through spirit-led music, singing, celebration, prayer, and reflection.

I. The Heartbeat of NMC's Worship Ministry:

We believe that worship, when defined broadly, encompasses much more than singing. Our lives are to be lived as an offering of worship to God.

Romans 12:1 instructs believers to "offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."

We believe that worship is a natural response to a fuller understanding of God's Word.

We believe that corporate and congregational worship can and should be expressed to our great God through singing, music, celebration, prayer, the reading of Scripture, the teaching of the Word and through a variety of biblical expressions. These expressions can include singing, silence, shouting, raising our hands, kneeling, clapping in response to or in rhythm with the music, and even dancing.

The Psalmist affirms some of these specifics in Psalm 95:1-3 when he writes, "Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods."

We believe that excellence matters, because God desires and deserves our best.

We believe that creativity matters, because we serve the creator of creativity.

We believe in developing godly leaders, singers and musicians.

We believe that we are at our best when we can lead all generations and ages of our distinct church family in worship.

Most importantly, **we believe** that we can accomplish our mission only through the guidance, power and work of the Holy Spirit.

II. Why do we sing while we worship?

The Christian faith has always been a singing faith.

a. Singing praise to God is commanded many times in Scripture.

Psalm 96:1-3 (NIV) Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

1 Chronicles 16:8 (NIV) Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

Want to be overwhelmed with data on singing in the Bible? <https://overviewbible.com/bible-songs/>

b. Singing was affirmed and practiced by the Israelites, God's chosen people.

Song of Moses: Deut. 32:44-47 (NIV) Then Moses came and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he, with Joshua the son of Nun. When Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, he said to them, "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed, it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."

Song of David / Temples Dedication: 1 Chron. 16: 7-9 (NIV) Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD. Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; Speak of all His wonders.

2 Chron. 5:13-14 (NIV) In unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD saying, He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

There are 150 songs *just* in the book of Psalms (the longest book in Scripture). There are over 185 songs in Scripture.

Other references to singing in Scripture:

Psa. 47:7 - For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a skillful psalm.

Psa. 66:2 - Sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious.

Psa. 9:11 - Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; declare among the peoples His deeds.

Psa. 149:1 - Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of the godly ones.

Psa. 98:1 O sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done wonderful things.

c. Singing was affirmed and practiced by the early church and in various ways for centuries by the church.

Col. 3:16 (NIV) Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Eph. 5:18b-20 (NIV) ...be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

Acts 16:25 (NIV) About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

d. Singing will be practiced throughout eternity.

Rev 5:9-14 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

e. In addition to these historical reasons, why do we continue to sing together today?

We sing songs of worship to the Lord together because they REMIND AND REAFFIRM...

- a. What we believe - ***our faith***.
- b. Who God is - ***His character***
- c. What He has done and is doing - ***His actions***
- d. What we are to do - ***our/His calling (personal and for the church)***
- e. Truth in turbulent times. Worship has a ***declarative and prophetic side*** – through song, we declare and reaffirm truth in turbulent times.
- f. His story/activity “among the nations.” It has an ***evangelistic side***.
- g. The reality that worship has a unique way of connecting us to the ***presence and power*** of God.

Worship through music and singing. Singing is like a telephone. When we want to connect or communicate with someone, we will often pick up a phone and send a text or dial their number. When it's someone you love, you can't wait for them to answer so that you can hear the sound of his/her voice. Or when they reply to your text, it brings a smile to your face. A phone is simply a tool we use to connect and communicate with someone. In fact, we rarely think about the mechanics of the phone and whether it's new or old. It's simply the device that we use to connect with someone. Worship, music, singing is similar—it's the “phone” we use to connect and have a conversation with the Lord. It connects our spirit with the Spirit of God. It's something we can use to hear the whisper of the One who loves us more deeply than we can fathom.

Worship was one way to – REMEMBER who God IS, what he has done, and who he was calling it church to be. Music and singing has a way of connecting and anchoring our minds and emotions to God's truth.

III. What are the stated values of NMC's Worship Ministry?

We have seven primary Worship Ministry values that we regularly evaluate.

1. **Excellence:** God deserves our very best. Consequently, we strive to seek excellence in everything we do.
2. **Spirit-Anointed:** Worship must be Spirit-anointed and Spirit-sensitive. Our worship times must take people into an encounter with God and prepare their hearts and minds to receive and respond to God's Word.
3. **Multiple Leaders:** Developing and using multiple leaders enhances freshness and facilitates multiplication.
4. **Depth of Team:** Multiplication is a significant value. Identifying and developing more instrumentalists and vocalists is essential for long-term sustainability of effective worship. We continually find ways to incorporate new members and in doing so, developing greater depth of the team.
5. **Cross-generational:** We desire to involve all generations and ages in our services and in our worship teams. We value being multi-generational.
6. **Culturally Appropriate:** Cultural relevance enables us to effectively lead God's people in worship. Because of the diversity of our congregation, this looks different in our various venues.
7. **Freshness and Creativity:** We believe this enables us to push the mission forward and more effectively tell the greatest story.

The 5 C's - Building Blocks of a Healthy Team: We desire to be a worship team that exemplifies these Godly characteristics.

- ✓ **Character:** A growing relationship with Jesus Christ is expected. We must be the same person on and off the platform. We can't lead people where we haven't been.
- ✓ **Chemistry:** This refers to how well someone fits with the team musically and relationally. Whenever we add someone to our team, it changes the dynamics of the team. Team unity is a high value.
- ✓ **Competency:** It is important to develop and refine your musical gifts. God deserves and desires our best. When we offer our best, we can minimize distractions in worship.
- ✓ **Commitment:** Members of our team are expected to show consistency in their commitment to the Lord, to the church family as well as in attendance to rehearsals and preparation for our worship services.
- ✓ **Culture:** Every church has unique cultural aspects to it, and NMC is no exception.

These **FIVE C's** serve as the foundational blocks that help us grow and maintain a healthy team.

IV. **How do we plan our worship services?**

We believe our services are most effective when planned with both the weekly sermon "theme" and the never-ending themes of the gospel in mind.

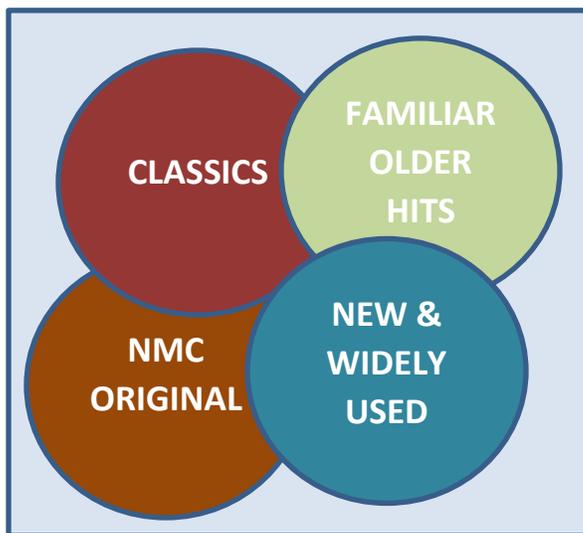
Our services are modeled from what worshipers from ancient Israel and presumably the first century church experienced as they *moved from the outer courts to the inner courts to worship*. Along the worship journey, we believe our goal is to remind people once again of who He is and what He has done while creating within our services the opportunity to respond to those truths.

V. **How does the NMC's worship staff plan songs that minister to the various generations in the church?**

NMC is a multi-generational church. Several years ago, our leadership collaborated to develop a strategy that we use to help us most effectively lead the various generations that are represented at NMC. As we plan our worship services, we believe we are most effective when we work to include songs that fall inside of each of the CIRCLES listed below.

- ✓ **SONGS THAT ARE NEW AND WIDELY USED** (defined as a song that is both “new and widely used” by the global church. We use CCLI’s “Top 100” to measure this (it’s like a radio station’s top 40 – but for the global church). This list is pretty fluid and changes some from year to year. (Fall 2020 Top 7 include: (1) Build My Life, (2) Who You Say I Am, (3) What A Beautiful Name, (4) Way Maker, (5) Great Are You Lord, (6) Raise A Hallelujah, (7) Living Hope.
- ✓ **SONGS THAT ARE FAMILIAR OLDER HITS**. This is **not** a hymn, but a worship song that is *at least* 8-10 years old and that has previously connected to the congregation (I.e. Shout to the Lord; Jesus Lover of My Soul; I Love You Lord; Open the Eyes of my Heart; Blessed be Your Name; You Are My King (Amazing Love), etc.)
- ✓ **SONGS THAT ARE CLASSICS**. We have specifically defined these as hymns or “gospel songs.” Here are a few hymns and gospel songs that are examples of this: O, How I Love Jesus; Holy, Holy, Holy; It Is Well with My Soul; Nothing but the Blood; There Is Power in the Blood; How Great Thou Art; Great is thy Faithfulness; Blessed Assurance; My Hope is Built on Nothing less.
- ✓ **SONGS BIRTHED FROM NMC—NMC ORIGINALS**. We believe that something powerful happens when a song is written out of the uniqueness of what God is currently doing in our local church. When it’s sung, it can give voice to a current stirring or movement of God’s Spirit in our church family and worship ministry team. Some recent congregational songs include: More Like You, Once Again, Here in Your Arms, Free Indeed, and King of Everything.

DEPICTION OF THE FOUR CIRCLES:



CATAGORIES OF SONGS (Adapted from HBC Worship Ministry)

Following the Old Testament example of moving people from the outer courts to the inner courts, we have adapted a system of categorizing our worship songs.

a. GATHERING SONGS

Gathering songs serve to effectively call the congregation to worship. The lyrics reflect the joy of coming together in community and announce the purpose of our gathering—to worship the Lord.

Gathering songs often mirror the songs of ascent sung by Old Testament worshipers on their way to Jerusalem. They should invoke participation and praise as the people of God enter the House of God once again. These songs often reinforce the psalmist's request to "Enter his gates with thanksgiving," in our hearts and musically lean toward being upbeat, energetic and enthusiastic.

b. TESTIMONY SONGS

These songs give testimony to the things God has done and continues to do in our lives, in the world, and throughout history and generally occur during the middle of the worship set. These songs tend to be "horizontal," meaning they are songs we sing to each other about God.

These testimony songs are an opportunity in the service to tell of the work God has done in our lives. They are also an appropriate time in the service to declare our need and desperation for God. Simply said, this time in the worship set is typically more focused on our relationship to God, His work in our lives, and our need for Him to continue to do so.

c. VERTICAL SONGS

Songs of "Pure Ascription," or vertical songs, contain very few, if any, personal pronouns— "I," "me," or "my." Instead, these songs invite worshipers to take their eyes completely off themselves and focus solely on God—who He is and what He's done. Ascriptive worship recalibrates us and resizes us, putting us in proper relationship to our Sovereign God and reminding us that we are not the center of this activity. God is. And He is to be worshiped accordingly.

In worship, we magnify God, and minimize ourselves, mirroring John 3:30, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Songs of Pure Ascription are "vertical" in direction— songs we sing to the Lord.

d. RESPONSE SONGS

The closing song comes after the sermon and is most often a response to the message. In many ways, this song is an extension of the message. It can be a song of commitment, trust, or affirmation, as well as, a fitting worship song. Sometimes the closing song is sung over the congregation, but most of the time it's congregational, which requires that the closing song be a familiar song so the congregation can respond and sing.

e. SPECIAL SONGS

Special songs, when used fittingly and purposefully, can enhance the worship experience. These songs may be diverse in style and used to reinforce a theme in the service or simply encourage the heart of the listener. We occasionally use this to introduce new worship songs to the congregation.

Congregational worship opens the door for interaction between divinity and humanity, between the created and their Creator, between the supernatural and the natural. A heart may be "strangely warmed" through this interaction.

"Thou hast made us for thyself, O God, and our souls are restless until they find their rest in thee."

- St. Augustine

We believe that engaging in authentic worship is one of the key indicators of a *Fully Committed Disciple*. To that end, may our lives and our songs be an offering of worship to our King Jesus.

