

Worship Time Restructure - Updated June 20, 2024, after congregational input

After prayerful assessment of the evolving needs of our worshiping community, the Worship Committee, with the approval of the Church Council, is excited to announce a shift in our Sunday worship programming. On August 25, 2024, our Sunday worship schedule will transition to have a **9:00am Traditional Service, a 10:00am hour dedicated to Education & Small Groups, and 11:00am for The Current.**

Rationale

Moving The Current and having *one* earlier traditional service would allow us to take advantage of the following opportunities:

- Many church growth studies show that younger families are more likely to attend a later service. Additionally, this demographic is more often drawn to a modern/contemporary style of worship. This is validated with anecdotal evidence in our congregation. Research shows that churches are aging as young people disengage, but strategic churches can “grow young.”¹ We believe this strategic switch may allow us to attract more young people to worship.
- Combining our traditional services will allow musicians, such as members of the handbells, chancel choir, and orchestra, to narrow their time commitment to approximately 8:30-10:00am, instead of approximately 7:45-11:45am as they are now.
- Making this time change would eliminate one setup change of the chancel area between services. This schedule allows an hour between the traditional service and The Current and eliminates the need to switch back to the traditional setup after The Current finishes. It also allows The Current more time if it runs long.
- **New:** Creating a dedicated hour for Education & Small Groups will mean that no one has to choose between corporate worship and the community and support they find in their group.

Considerations and Logistics

We are excited about the new opportunities this creates for Sunday programming, and we pray that God will continue to open doors to reveal new hopes and dreams for St. Mark’s and all of our neighbors we strive to welcome. Thank you to the Sunday classes, musicians, and worship attendees from all services who offered constructive input on the revised worship schedule. We will be in conversations over the next few months to develop implementation plans for all our Sunday morning ministries.

As St. Mark’s approaches this next season of development, we are encouraged by the new energy of our ever-dynamic church. St. Mark’s congregation is courageously committed to the needs of our community while remaining steadfast to our foundational vision to welcome, grow, and serve.

¹ *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*. Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group. 2016.