

Worship Planning

From Pastor Stephen Daley, St. Paul, South Haven, MI - April 16, 2015

I'm a big believer in using cloud technology for worship planning, because worship planning often involves a variety of people. Currently, I'm using Google Sheets to do worship planning because I can share it with the people who create our worship slides, our organists, pianists, singers, and choir directors.

Pluses:

- Access from multiple devices wherever there is internet connection
- Simple layout that less tech savvy people can understand
- Easy to hide rows making it easy to display only upcoming services instead of having to scroll through the whole sheet when you are at Pentecost 24
- Easy to have multiple editors of the worship plan and to track their changes in case something gets messed up
- Easy to review 12 years of worship plans in the same workbook
- Easy to copy and paste worship information from it and onto our congregation's Final Web Live Streaming Page so that worshipers at home can follow along in their hymnals
- If someone can't figure out how to use Google Sheets to even view the sheet, but does email, you can attach the current copy of the worship plan as a PDF and email it to them

Minuses:

- There is more manual entry of plans than would be needed if you were using a full relational database, although copy and paste from previous years helps.
- Harder to produce ready-made reports that can be used during worship like reading sheets, prayer sheets, announcements...
- Certain worship data doesn't fit well into a spreadsheet (text of lessons, long prayers, lesson introductions...)

Other tools that I find important:

- CWS Google Calendar: I use this shared calendar to double check readings, and I copy and paste the Prayer of the Day and Verse of the Day into the next tool
- Google Docs: Each week I create a document with the "Readings and Prayers". This document has information pulled from the Google Sheet Worship Plan (Sunday of Church Year, Hymns, Psalm of the Day); Lessons copied from Bible Gateway (We use ESV translation here); CWS Shared Google Calendar (Prayer of the Day; Verse of the Day); Digital Copies of Prayers of the Church (Responsive and Pastor Only versions); Planning Christian Worship Revised Edition PDFs (I use this primarily for hymn suggestions and ideas for the lesson intros that I write for use in worship). I increase the font size to 14 point to make it easy on the eyes and print. These sheets are then used on the ambo and altar.