Ritual:

**Getting to Know You:**
Have you had experiences with a liturgical church? What was good about it? What was different?

**Watch:**

“What is liturgy?”  By Aaron Niequiest  (3:44)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkKaDgAtkgM>

Aaron Niequist said that “…liturgy is not style, but form and intention. It is not old versus new, quiet versus loud, or sad versus happy. Liturgy literally means ‘the work of the people.’ It is the set of activities we do when we gather.”

What is the liturgy at Hope Church on a typical Sunday?

How does our current liturgy form our community?

**Read:**

# **Dueteronomy 6:4-9** New International Version (NIV)

*4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”*

 This passage is also known as The Shema. It was repeated at least two times a day by devout Jews. It was written on scrolls and rolled in mezuzahs (In mainstream Rabbinic Judaism, a **mezuzah** is affixed to the doorpost of Jewish homes to fulfill the mitzvah (Biblical commandment) to "write the words of God on the gates and doorposts of your house" (Deuteronomy 6). Mezuzahs pictured below.)

  

3. Do you have any symbols, artwork, shirts, jewelry… in your home, car, or workplace that point you to Jesus? If so, how have they been a help?

Another ritual of Old Testament believers’ was reading or reciting the Chrysostam. This means that every morning they would read Psalm 62 and every evening they would read Psalm 140.

1. By saying these Bible passages at least two times a day, what would you learn about God?
2. How are symbols and repetition helpful? Are they always helpful?
3. What are some other Bible passages that are often recited or used commonly? What do you often hear at a wedding, a baptism, a funeral, …?
4. God often used symbols to emphasize what He wanted to teach. In the Reformed Church, we have the symbols of water in baptism and the bread and the cup in communion. How is a physical item (something we can see, taste, or touch…) helpful to our faith?
5. What are some benefits to written prayers? What are some pitfalls?

“Lent is the period of 40 days which comes befor*e* [*Easter*](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/easter.shtml) in the Christian calendar. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Lent is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities.

Whereas Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus after his death on the cross, Lent recalls the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion by Rome. This is believed to have taken place in Roman occupied Jerusalem.

The Christian churches that observe Lent in the 21st century (and not all do significantly) use it as a time for prayer and penance. Only a small number of people today fast for the whole of Lent, although some maintain the practice on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It is more common these days for believers to surrender a particular vice such as favourite foods or smoking. Whatever the sacrifice it is a reflection of Jesus' deprivation in the wilderness and a test of self-discipline.” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/lent_1.shtml>

1. We are in the season of Lent. Have you ever given something up for God? How did it go?

**Application:** This week, if possible, try to do one of these activities.

1. Read one Psalm each morning and one Psalm each night.
2. Use the Book of Common Prayer or The Valley of Vision as a tool to guide your prayers.
3. Celebrate significant days in the church calendar like Lent, Pentecost, Advent… celebrate with food, seasonal devotionals, special worship services…
4. Learn about Old Testament feasts and celebrate them in your home.
5. Read the Apostle’s Creed or say the Lord’s Prayer at a set time every day for a week. Does your understanding of these grow with more exposure?