

## **Worship Services Policy and Procedures**

Policy: The assembly shall have a policy that addresses its worship services. The Worship Services Policy shall include all of the particulars pursuant thereof including the procedure for general assembly worship services and supplementary worship services.

An Awakening Together (AT) worship service shall be henceforth referred to as a gathering, since it is a formal gathering of the assembly for associational worship.

Procedure I: All gatherings shall follow a consistent program format as outlined in Procedure IV. Awakening Together shall have a minimum of one regularly scheduled general assembly gathering per week with the possibility for additional gatherings to meet the needs of the members. All gatherings shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- A. Whenever possible, an AT Ordained Minister will lead the gathering. If one is not available, a regularly scheduled gathering may be led by an AT licensed minister or a guest minister from another church.
- B. All gatherings shall be well marked on the Sanctuary schedule.

Procedure II: A general assembly gathering is a gathering administered by the President-Minister on behalf of the assembly. General assembly gatherings adhere to the following guidelines.

- C. The primary weekly gathering will be scheduled for Sunday beginning no earlier than 10AM ET and ending no later than 12:30PM ET.
- D. Whenever there are enough ordained and licensed ministers available to make a second weekly general assembly gathering possible, a second weekly general assembly gathering will be held on Saturday beginning no earlier than 5PM ET and ending no later than 10PM ET to meet the needs of additional time zones.
- E. A general assembly gathering shall be inclusive of multiple forms of universal wisdom. A general assembly gathering may give special attention to a holiday that is associated with any religion or spiritual path.
- F. The primary general assembly gathering shall be recorded and the audio shall be archived on the AT website.
- G. The President-Minister is responsible to schedule ministers to lead general assembly gatherings and to ensure general gatherings are regularly offered according to the schedule.

Procedure III: Two or more AT ordained ministers may self-organize to propose a regularly scheduled supplementary gathering for a time interval other than those reserved for general assembly gatherings. The purpose of supplementary gatherings is to meet the spiritual and schedule needs of congregants.

- A. Supplementary gatherings shall adhere to the AT consistent program format outlined in Procedure IV.
- B. Supplementary gatherings may be inclusive of multiple forms of universal wisdom or they may focus on one form of universal wisdom.
- C. Proposals for regularly scheduled supplementary gatherings shall be subject to the approval of the President-Minister.
- D. The President-Minister shall oversee and review the overall supplementary gathering schedule to ensure that it is balanced and does not reflect inordinate emphasis on one particular spiritual path.
- E. The ministers proposing a supplementary gathering are fully responsible for the supplementary gathering including ensuring an ordained or licensed minister leads each gathering and ensuring the gathering is regularly offered according to the schedule.
- F. The President-Minister may permanently cancel a supplementary gathering if it does not meet the requirements of this policy or if it is out of accordance with Awakening Together purpose and core values.

Procedure IV: The assembly shall have a consistent program format for all Gatherings, which ministers are expected to follow to the best of their ability.

- A. The presiding minister shall greet and welcome the Awakening Together congregants and guests to the Gathering.
- B. The presiding minister will extend an invitation for all congregants and guests to greet one another. They may do so by posting their greetings to one another on the Sanctuary comment board. While the congregants and guests extend greetings to each other, there will be music playing through the audio system. The greeting interval shall last approximately three minutes.
- C. The presiding minister shall then give a brief synopsis of the purpose of Awakening Together.
- D. After the synopsis, the presiding minister shall then proceed with the Awakening Together announcements.
- E. Following announcements, the program shall include a welcoming song or chant.
- F. At the conclusion of the song or chant, the presiding minister shall lead the congregation in an opening prayer, a guided meditation or an interval of reverential silence.
- G. The presiding minister will then introduce a lay-person who is a member of Awakening Together to do an instructive and/or inspirational reading concordant with Awakening Together core values and principles. It will be the responsibility of the presiding minister to enlist an Awakening Together member volunteer to do the reading.
- H. Following the reading, the presiding minister shall share a teaching that is concordant with Awakening Together core values and principles.
- I. After the minister has completed his/her teaching, the minister or the on-duty AT administrator will invite the congregants and guests to meditate/contemplate on the given teaching while peaceful music plays over the audio system. The AT administrator will also bring attention to the bottom right-hand side of the screen where congregants and guests will be given the opportunity to make a donation to

- Awakening Together. This portion of the program will last for not less than four and no more than seven minutes.
- J. After the meditation/contemplation interval has ended, the presiding minister shall invite congregants to share or ask questions based solely on the day's teaching. This interactive period will last not longer than twenty minutes.
  - K. The presiding minister will extend thanks and gratitude to the congregation and guests and invite them to join in the closing song or chant.
  - L. The total length of the gathering shall be one hour and fifteen minutes.