A Praise Service from Hawaii

This order of worship comes from Central Christian Church, United Church of Christ, in Hilo, Hawaii, established in 1892. The congregation is a downtown multiracial congregation that often includes persons who are homeless. Although the membership is 38, worship attendance averages between 50 and 80. In their worship, the pastor and people seek to be particularly attentive to the movement of the Spirit and the concerns of the congregation on that particular Sunday. The form seems to emphasize the power of praise, prayers for healing, and the Living Word.

Tolling of the Bells
(At the 9:00 a.m. hour, a youth often tolls the church’s bell for worship to begin. As the bell tolls, the pastor moves from the front porch of the church to the pulpit.)

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer
(The pastor greets the congregation, reads a Bible passage, briefly teaches about the passage, and offers an extemporaneous invocation.)

Praise Songs
(Those who are able stand and sing a praise song selected during the week before by a worship committee. Members of the committee lead the congregation in the songs.)

Announcements

Hymn

Tithes and Offerings
(The deacons collect the offering from the congregation.)

Doxology

Prayer Requests and Pastoral Prayer
(The pastor moves to the back of the church. As the pastor moves forward row by row, worshipers state their concerns. The pastor may pray for healing by laying on of hands and/or anointing with oil. The Prayer of Our Savior/Lord’s Prayer is sometimes offered at this time.)

Song of Thanksgiving
(The congregation sings a hymn thanking God for the ways God answers prayer.)

Morning Word from God
(The pastor blends readings from the Bible with inspired teaching on the passages.)

Holy Communion
(Once a month, the congregation celebrates Holy Communion. The pastor extemporaneously delivers the words of institution. Deacons first pass the bread throughout the congregation, then the juice. After each, the pastor and congregation pray responsively.)

Closing Hymn

Closing Prayer
(The pastor prays, lifting to God what has happened during worship. The prayer also invites persons into a commitment to Christ and for God to utilize their lives in the lives of others. The pastor dismisses the congregation: “Go in the peace of Christ!”)