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What Should We Wear?
Clergymen, Clothing, and Calling

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Abstract

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Worship is the distinctive factor of the children of God. The clergywoman's charge is to facilitate an authentic worship experience for the worshipper, and what she wears to lead worship can either facilitate or distract from this worship experience. Clergywomen, therefore, have a responsibility to form a theological rationale for their worship.

The project establishes a theology of authentic worship, discusses the history of vestments and clothing in worship, explores clothing and personal/pastoral identity (including impression formation, group identity, and behavioral impacts), addresses the complexity of women's clothing in particular, and examines the challenges and benefits of wearing non-religious clothing to lead worship.

The conclusions of the project are that the clothes worn to lead worship are themselves an act of worship, and clergywomen must consider what considerations are pertinent in decision-making. Five considerations are suggested and explored: Contextual, Personal, Purpose, Seasonal, and Vision. Drawing on surveys with over 1400 clergywomen and a local congregation, the research revealed a propensity for clergywomen to overvalue their own personal preferences and comfort, often to the detriment of the vision of their church.

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Introduction

What Should I Wear?

She stands in her closet on a Sunday morning, considering what she should wear to lead worship. She will not be wearing clerical vestments, academic robes, or a uniform of some kind; she will be in “street clothes.” As she rifles through the hangers in her closet, she thinks to herself, “Is this skirt too short? Will I be able to cross my legs?” Then she remembers that she will be sitting on the low chancel steps with the children, so maybe a skirt is not a good idea. Pants. She should wear pants. Leggings are not an option, as those are too tight. Pixie-style ponte pants might work, but she wonders whether they will be too stylish for her conservative congregation. And since they are form-fitting, she deems that the top she wears should be long enough to cover her backside. Finally, she considers whether she should wear flats or heels. Heels look better with this outfit but can be construed as too sexual. She goes with the flats.

As she steps out of her closet, she wonders whether the colors are too flashy, whether the style reflects who she is while not being too far out of step with what the congregation will be wearing, and whether her outfit will be considered too casual in comparison with her male colleague’s typical suit-without-a-tie. Does this outfit reflect the image that the church is trying to project while holding in balance her personal freedom to choose what she wears? Does it reflect her status and calling as a Minister of Word and Sacrament?

Her Sunday mornings were simpler when she wore a robe, yet choosing her own clothing reveals her personality to her congregation and allows her to be more authentic in her leadership of worship. And still, after all of this, the real work of worship leadership has yet to begin –

acting as a mediator between the people of God and the Holy One. She wonders whether what she is wearing will facilitate this role or whether it will be a distraction. And she wonders what factors she should consider when choosing clothing and who has the authority to determine those factors. *What should she wear?*

A Brief History of CCC

For the past fifteen years, I have been one of two pastors at Community Congregational Church in Short Hills, NJ, which was founded in 1953 at the height of the suburban economic boom in the suburbs of New York City. The church is located in a neighborhood of single-family homes on sprawling estates. The surrounding town is among the wealthiest in the nation,¹ and residents are typically highly successful in their careers. Residents also place an extraordinary emphasis on education, and the public school system is ranked number two in the state of New Jersey for 2021 (with the town of Princeton holding the top spot).² The combination of success through wealth and the emphasis on education has created a context of excellence for residents, which extends into the life and character of our congregation.

Community Congregational Church is affiliated with the United Church of Christ but is congregational by charter and practice. This means that there is a wide variety of backgrounds and traditions that make up the membership, and this characteristic is much celebrated by our members. Up until about ten years ago, the worship style and ministry of CCC could be

¹ Short Hills, NJ statistics show a 1.56 percent poverty level among the 13,000 residents, with mean property values stand at \$1.36 million in 2018 (“Short Hills, NJ,” Data USA, <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/short-hills-nj/>). The town was named by Time Magazine as the richest zip code in America in 2014 (“Here are the 10 Richest Towns in America,” Graphiq, Time.com 5/15/14, <http://time.com/100987/richest-towns/>) based on 69.4 percent of residents earning more than \$150,000, and it ranked fifth in “America’s 100 Richest” by Bloomberg Analysis in 2018 (“America’s 100 Richest Places,” Shelly Hagan and Wei Lu, Bloomberg.com, 3/5/18, <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2018-hundred-richest-places/>)

² <https://www.niche.com/k12/search/best-school-districts/s/new-jersey/>

described as entirely traditional. The music during worship was of a classical genre, the liturgy and style of worship remained unchanged for decades, and ministers exclusively wore robes, adding academic hoods during high church occasions like Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day. There is a history of long pastorates (the current Lead Pastor has been here for thirty-one years, having started as a student intern, and I have been here for fifteen). I am only the second woman to serve in an ordained capacity (and the first woman was here for less than three years).

In 2013, after a long discernment process, the Church Board (the governing board) signed on with a church revitalization coach. The result of that coaching was a vision for the next fifty years of ministry, which, if the church was to survive, could not continue to be considered traditional. After embracing initiatives in fulfillment of this vision, such as a new logo/branding and the updating of worship and all programs, the congregation voted to change our ministry to that of a "contemporary church" (2018/2019 Annual Plans). We began to live into this vision by embracing the characteristics of contemporary worship.³

Toward these goals, one of the decisions that we made with regard to worship was that worship leaders would no longer wear clerical or academic robes, as had been the common practice for the church's first sixty-five years. With the use contemporary language and style, a decrease in formality, and incorporation of electronics into the worship space, a traditional robe no longer matched the look, feel, or increasing informality of worship. This change sparked the conversation about what worship leaders should wear, as style, formality, and look were

³ According to Lim and Ruth, the categories that define a church as contemporary are: Fundamental Presumptions (using contemporary nonarchaic English; a dedication to relevance regarding contemporary concerns and issues in the lives of worshippers; a commitment to adapt worship to match contemporary people, sometimes to the level of strategic targeting); Musical (using musical styles from current types of popular music; extended times of uninterrupted congregational singing; a centrality of the musicians in the liturgical space and in the leadership of the service); Behavioral (greater levels of physical expressiveness; a predilection for informality); and Key Dependency (a reliance upon electronic technology). See Swee-Hong Lim and Lester Ruth, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017), 2–3.

important to live into the vision recommended by the revitalization coach and agreed upon by the congregation.

What Should We Wear?

The heart of this study rests on the conviction that the clothing worn to lead worship is itself an act of worship. Clergy and church leadership must consider what factors and considerations are pertinent to informing this decision. This study, therefore, examines what worship leaders should wear to lead worship, what factors they must consider, and the particular challenges for women when they do not wear vestments. Chapter One explores the theology of worship and establishes worship as the primary and defining act of the church. Chapter Two offers a history of vesting and establishes clothing as an act of worship. Chapter Three explores the psychology of clothing—why we choose our clothes, the meaning behind our choices, and the impact that the pastoral identity has on clothing choices. Chapter Four addresses the unique challenges that women face in their clothing choices and highlights the elevated complexity for female clergy. Chapter Five offers the advantages and drawbacks of not wearing traditional vestments (robes, albs, collars) to lead worship. Chapter Six presents five considerations that clergy and church leadership should use to inform the decision about what worship leaders wear. Drawing upon my research study of over 1400 clergywomen, this chapter also establishes the topics of authority and vision as the most contentious and controversial issues in deciding what is worn to lead worship.

A study about clothing in the theological realm has the potential to be viewed as shallow or unimportant. This topic, however, matters for reasons beyond a simple appreciation for fashion or the critique of one's clothing. A worship leader's attire, as an act of worship itself,

affects the worshipper's experience, and in the absence of vestments, this impact is heightened. Our charge as worship leaders is to facilitate the most authentic and faithful worship experience possible for the worshipper. Clergy, therefore, have a responsibility to form a theological rationale for what they will wear to lead worship, so that the leader's attire does not distract the worshipper from the ultimate purpose of worship: glorifying God.

Chapter 1: A Theology of Worship

The conversation about what women wear to lead worship must begin with a strong, sound theology of worship in the Christian tradition, as this is at the heart of the life of a believer and of a church. Therefore, defining true and authentic worship is the theological foundation that creates the “why” we worship so that our understanding of “how” we worship is strengthened. This definition begins with an appreciation of worship as the very basis for the identity of the Church.

The Primacy of Worship

Worship is the singular act of the Church that sets it apart from the rest of the world. The gathering of a community is first expressed in the Bible as the basis for the Church (“For where two or three are gathered, I am there,” Jesus says in Matthew 18:20), and it is this marker that distinguishes a church from another body or organization. Simon Chan puts it this way:

In this world the church may be many other things: a voice of conscience in the community, a champion of the poor and oppressed, a preserver of traditional values and so on. But these functions are not what make it the church, for they could as well be taken up by other religious and secular bodies. The church’s defining characteristic is its worshipful response to the call of God to be [God’s] people.⁴

There are many causes worthy of a church community’s attention, but the basis for the identity of the Christian church is that it gathers to worship, making worship the highest priority of the congregation’s and the individual believer’s life. Without worship to “continually remember, proclaim, and faithfully enact the story of God in the world and in our lives, we could not form,

⁴ Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 43.

much less give expression to, the sense of God.”⁵ It is because of this gathering together in worship that we identify ourselves as the children of God, set apart from the world.

The Marks of Authentic Worship

If worship serves this important purpose as an identity-maker for the church, it is vital that worship is true, authentic, and pure in its goals. Chan, however, is critical of the recent approach to worship, where the primary aim is to be relevant to the worshipper and where the mark of good worship is whether it meets the worshipper’s needs. Because of this corrupted tendency, he notes that a “sound theology of worship...can guide the church’s practice and ensure that its worship is truly the worship of the triune God and not hijacked to serve other ends,”⁶ like church growth. Worship, therefore, is about God, not the worshipper or some other goal, and an understanding of true and authentic worship proclaims the purpose of worship as God-focused. At its core, worship is “about God, and to be more specific, it is ultimately about the risen Lord Jesus Christ through whom God comes to us.”⁷

Further, true and authentic worship is marked by certain characteristics, defined by Don Saliers in *Worship Come to Its Senses* as awe, delight, truthfulness, and hope.⁸ He argues that each of these characteristics not only marks true worship but also opens up a full experience of God during worship. When these markers are present, we are in the presence of true and

⁵ Don Saliers, *Worship Come to its Senses* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 88.

⁶ Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 41.

⁷ Mark Allen Powell, in “Foreword” from Rick Barger, *A New and Right Spirit: Creating An Authentic Church in a Consumer Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), vi.

⁸ Saliers, *Worship*, 14.

authentic worship, and we experience “a vision...of God’s creative and redemptive glory,”⁹ the foundation upon which this worship is based.

In the practice of worship, marks of true and authentic worship are *encountering* God (in Word and Sacrament) and the *transformation* of the worshipper (through Response and Charge).¹⁰ Through the proclamation of the Word and participation in the sacraments, worshippers encounter the presence of God. True and authentic worship is grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and it is proclaimed when “human words are united with the divine Word.”¹¹ Sacraments, as Augustine wrote, are “a visible sign of an invisible grace,”¹² acts which give the worshipper an embodied experience of God’s grace.

The transformation that comes from encountering God results in a response of the worshipper and their consequent living into the charge to be a child of God in the world. Through true and authentic worship, the believer is transformed through their response of a change in practice that becomes “the background for our perceptions, the baseline for our dispositions and the basis for our (often unthought) action in the world.”¹³ Finally, true worship is marked by the mission or charge to the worshipper, who then goes into the world to share the Gospel and grace of God, in response to having encountered God and to having been transformed themselves.

⁹ Saliers, *Worship*, 88.

¹⁰ This is inspired by Barbara Day Miller, who writes, “This rhythm of encounter and transformation, of revelation and response, is the pattern in which you will lead the people in worship,” in *The New Pastor’s Guide to Leading Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 20.

¹¹ Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 134.

¹² Augustine, in Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T. McNeill, Transl. and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles; in collaboration with the editor and a committee of advisers (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 1277.

¹³ James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, vol. 2, *Cultural Liturgies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 40.

The Responsibility of the Worship Leader

Those who lead worship are therefore charged with an extraordinary responsibility: to facilitate an experience in which this kind of true and authentic worship can take place and in which this rhythm of encounter and transformation is possible. Kimberly Bracken Long calls it “effective presiding—faithful leadership that most fully evokes the people’s worship.”¹⁴ It is, therefore, imperative that the execution of worship be done well. After all, worship invokes the name and presence of God, the Almighty! Certainly, that is worthy of our best work. Moreover, as Chan argues, “the *way* things are done is just as important as what is being done... There is power in the spoken word and in the gestures and movements, but if we do the liturgy poorly, whether in speech, gestures and movements, we undermine our belief in the power of the liturgy to form and transform us.”¹⁵ This means, therefore, that every moment of worship—every word, gesture, piece of furniture, and piece of music—must be chosen and executed with intentionality to serve the greater responsibility of true and authentic worship. That includes the clothing worn by the worship leaders.

¹⁴ Kimberly Bracken Long, *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship*. 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009) 3.

¹⁵ Chan, *Liturgical Worship*, 154. Emphasis added.

Chapter 2: Clothing in Worship

A History of Vesting

The wearing of vestments during worship,¹⁶ which dates back to Constantine when it was deemed legal to practice Christianity, developed with two main functions: (1) to distinguish the rank and role of the clergy, and (2) to reflect the nature of the occasion (the sacramental or general liturgical function). While the style of the vestments varied greatly throughout the centuries that followed (based on time period and location), until the Reformation no significant change occurred. Many Reformed traditions adopted academic-style vestments that reflected the dual role of pastor and preacher/teacher. However, at the time of the Reformation and in recent history, clergy increasingly embraced wearing civilian clothing to preside over the liturgy as a form of protest “against alleged distortions of both sacramental doctrine and hierarchical authoritarianism.”¹⁷

One tradition that is of particular note is a moment of ritualized transition or a vesting rite in the form of vesting prayers as the clergyperson donned his robe and other clerical accessories. (The use of “his” is intentional, as these traditions predate the inclusion of women in ministerial roles; these prayers were not used in Protestant churches after the Reformation and were removed from Catholic requirement at the Second Vatican Council in 1963.¹⁸) Vesting prayers

¹⁶ To read more about the history, styles, and symbolism of vestments see: Joanne Pierce, “Vestments and Objects,” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, eds. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen Beth Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 841–57 and Gilbert Cope, “Vestments,” in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, 1st ed, ed. by J. G. Davies, (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1986), 521–40.

¹⁷ Cope, *Vestments*, 537.

¹⁸ Pierce, *Vestments and Objects*, 843.

often reflected a moral, ethical, or purificatory message, thus highlighting the importance of what worship leaders wear.

Clothing as an Act of Worship

This long history of vesting is the foundation for intentionality around what we wear to lead worship when vestments are no longer worn. The history, tradition, and symbolism behind vesting indicates that clothing is part of the act of worship and liturgy. It is, in fact, an act of worship in itself! And, with the responsibility of doing all aspects of worship well, what is worn to lead worship becomes a vital part of ensuring true and authentic worship. As Pierce suggested, “In a Christian faith founded on the key theological concept of the incarnation, no physical expression of that incarnate and redeemed reality can be dismissed as insignificant.”¹⁹

Clothing, therefore, is an act of liturgy that reflects the Incarnation. It is, in a way, the embodiment of God for the people. To illustrate: it is well documented that worship leaders fulfill three biblical roles at any given point of worship: Pastor, Priest, and Prophet.²⁰ Each of these roles is defined by the intention of that particular moment – as pastor, a comforting word; as priest, a mediator between God and the people; as prophet, a word of calling to live into God’s vision. In each of these roles, the worship leader fulfills a particular need of the congregation, and all of them are present in every worship service.²¹ However, when a worship leader acts in the priestly role during worship, as a mediator who speaks for God to the people and for the

¹⁹ Pierce, *Vestments and Objects*, 854.

²⁰ Miller, *New Pastor’s Guide*, 11–12.

²¹ This formula is closely connected to the understanding of Christ’s trifold offices of prophet, priest and king, which is well-documented in works of Reformed theology. For example, in his *Institutes* (pp. 494-503), Calvin unpacks how each of these is present in Christ’s saving activity: prophet in his anointing, priestly in his reconciliation and intercession, and kingly in his dominion and reign.

people to God, it is necessary that their clothing is representative of that function (hence the emphasis in the history of vesting on status and role). This priestly role brings a sense of the incarnation in a worship leader's very presence as mediator. As Long argues, "The body is a powerful conduit for expression and experience; what we do with our bodies has the capacity to bear meaning beyond what our words can articulate."²² Our whole selves—mind, spirit, *and* body—are brought into the worship space, both as worshippers and as leaders. We must, therefore, be mindful of the way that we clothe our body to communicate the Gospel.

²² Long, *Worshiping Body*, 21.

Chapter 3: Clothing and Personal Identity

Each day, most of us choose what we will wear. For some, this is a very conscious choice; for others, it is instinctual or subconscious. Either way, a person's clothing choice is layered with meanings that are as old as humanity itself.²³ Whether one's clothing communicates the group to which one belongs, is used simply for its function, or is worn for its style and fashion, the complexity of what a person wears is significant and has far-reaching impacts on their life, identity, and perception of others.

Primary Motives of Clothing

In her book, *The Dress of Women*, sociological theorist Charlotte Perkins Gilman presents an early understanding of the sociology of clothing. The fact that this topic was researched more than a century ago suggests the influence of clothing on individuals and society. Gilman argues that there are, fundamentally, five motives behind clothing: protection, warmth, decoration, modesty, and symbolism.²⁴ It is on this last point of symbolism that much of our conversation about clothing in worship centers.

²³ For further reading about the primal nature of clothing in comparison with the outer skin of the animal world, see Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Dress of Women: A Critical Introduction to the Symbolism and Sociology of Clothing*. ed. Michael R. Hill and Mary Jo Deegan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 3–5, originally published in Gilman's monthly journal, *The Forerunner*, in 1915.

²⁴ Gilman, *Dress*, 6.

Clothing & Impression Formation

It is well-documented that clothing has a role in impression formation and is the most important factor in non-verbal communication, as judgments based on clothing are made in the first twelve seconds of interaction.²⁵ As Norman Cohen writes, “Clothing can provide important information about the sex, age, occupation, origin, personality, attitude, and values of the wearer. Clothing can be crucial in terms of image construction and interpretation; it can give us insight into a person’s sense of self as well as the picture of his or her ideal self.”²⁶ We form impressions of other people based on the information they provide to us, and clothing is the most significant form of non-verbal communication that we receive. In fact, it can be argued that clothing doesn’t just carry a message but *is* the message, and that it is therefore a powerful force that can change our culture, society, and even the church.²⁷ The process of perception is so subtle, fast, and biased that an individual’s background and predispositions influence their discernment of a situation before it is even fully understood.²⁸

When the issues of perception and non-verbal communication are applied to the religious realm, clothing is an even stronger consideration than in the secular world. Because of the highly symbolic nature of religious clothing, “the message communicated is that the wearer chooses to follow a certain set of ideological or religious principles and practices.”²⁹ It suggests

²⁵ For resources and studies to support these points, see Regan A. R. Gurung, Michaella Brickner, Mary Leet, and Elizabeth Punke, “Dressing ‘in Code’: Clothing Rules, Propriety, and Perceptions” *The Journal of Social Psychology* 158, no. 5 (September 3, 2018): 553–557.

²⁶ Norman J. Cohen, *J. Masking and Unmasking Ourselves: Interpreting Biblical Texts on Clothing & Identity* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Pub, 2012), 3.

²⁷ Shane Hipps, *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church* (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, 2006), 17.

²⁸ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 32.

²⁹ Lynne Hume, *The Religious Life of Dress: Global Fashion and Faith. Dress, Body, Culture.* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1.

identification with certain viewpoints and, perhaps even more importantly, the status of the wearer.

Clothing & Group Identity

Especially true in the church, clothing also establishes a sense of belonging as a distinction between “us” and “them” that suggests whether a person is part of the group or an outsider. While we learn what is generally appropriate to wear from social media, literature, and television, we adjust to the “norms” in a particular context by observing what others wear and modeling our clothing to fit the group.³⁰ Because clothing has the power to tie a community together,³¹ our clothing can either indicate that we are part of the group or that we are (intentionally or unintentionally) on the outside. This means that the clothing of both the worship leader and the worshipper has deep impact on the sense of belonging to the community in worship.

Further, the level of impact a person’s clothing has on the image of the group or organization can be considerable, especially when the person is considered a leader or representative of that group. Regan Gurung and colleagues have established that “the appearance of employees is a significant factor contributing to the company’s image and evaluation,” which has led to the adoption of dress codes.³² When the organization represented is a church, the

³⁰ Gurung, *Dressing in ‘Code,’* 554.

³¹ Hanna Rijken, Martin J M Hoondert, and Marcel Barnard, “Dress at Choral Evensongs in the Dutch Context: Appropriation and Transformation of Religiosity in the Netherlands.” *Tenemos* 53, no. 2 (2017): 227.

³² Gurung, *Dressing in ‘Code,’* 544; This study researched the impact of dress codes on the perception of women, arguing that there is a higher rate of penalization for women when they break the dress code. It highlights both the tendency of dress codes to focus unfairly on women and the disparity between the impact of clothing on the perception of men and women.

symbolism of a person's dress reflects the pastor's role and status, the larger church, and even God. One priest reflected on this experience in this way:

In those 'sacramental moments' of home celebrations, I have often felt, the dress or the collar serve almost a 'sacramental' purpose: you bring that dress into people's homes and you bring the entire church and Christ with you, by the visible symbols you carry. That experience has made dressing in the clergy outfit a very significant ritual, a privilege...I realized how it was about grace and respect: Our appearance may indeed convey a message of respect or disrespect of the work we do, the church we represent, and the people we encounter.³³

Because of what and whom/Whom we represent as pastors (and as worship leaders), the symbolism of our dress carries with it the weight of the whole of the Christian faith, and our very presence impacts others' impressions of the Church and, ultimately, of God.

Behavioral Impacts of Clothing

The implication of clothing's potential to communicate (both in and out of the religious world) is that it not only influences our perceptions of a person but also affects how we interact with them. Hanna Rijken, et al., suggest that "as non-verbal communication, dress anticipates verbal communication,"³⁴ thus having an effect on interactions. Further, this study highlights our desire to act appropriately toward someone based on their role or status, which is communicated most strongly by their clothing. Therefore, judgments about a person's character that come from their clothing³⁵ not only shape our impressions, but also the way we interact with those persons.

It has also been suggested that those impressions impact our self-understanding, and that clothing may "prime certain self-knowledge."³⁶ In *Clothing Makes the Self*, researchers

³³ Kirsi Stjerna, "What Will They Wear?" *Seminary Ridge Review*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2001): 45–46.

³⁴ Rijken, *Dress*, 227.

³⁵ Gurung, *Dressing in 'Code,'* 556.

discovered that the level of formality of a person's dress influenced the manner in which they described themselves. Those dressed formally were more likely to describe themselves in a formal manner, while those dressed more casually tended to describe themselves with casual characteristics.³⁷ We can draw the conclusion, then, that our clothing is not just an expression of our self-understanding or even of the image we desire to project; it also contributes to the very development of our self-understanding. For the conversation about the clothing of the worship leader, this is particularly important.

Clothing & the Pastoral Identity

The way we clothe our bodies for worship is a process that, for many, resides in the subconscious. We pay varying attention to choosing what we wear, and what we choose is highly individualistic. And yet, in the context of worship, clothing becomes representative of ourselves as pastors and of God. In choosing what we will wear to lead worship, worship leaders need to make informed, intentional, and mindful choices that reflect the status, role, and function of our office as worship leader and representative of our church, while holding in balance our identity and the image we wish to project through our clothing. The heart of this examination of clergy clothing sits at the intersection of these two considerations.

This consciousness reflects the idea that a change in our understanding and beliefs results in a change in our practices. By recognizing that the clothing we choose as pastors and worship leaders matters, the factors we deem influential determine the choices we make. Carol Noren suggests that it is such an important practice that teachers of preachers should include this type of

³⁶ Bettina Hannover and Ulrich Kuhnen, "The Clothing Makes the Self' Via Knowledge Activation," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 32, no. 12 (December 2002): 2514.

³⁷ For the full intention, methods, and results of the study, see Hannover, *Clothing Makes the Self*, 2513–25.

activity in their classrooms, “pushing them on questions such as ‘What theological and ecclesiological assumptions are you disclosing in your appearance?’ and ‘How is this nonverbal communication likely to be interpreted?’”³⁸ She argues that this type of training is profoundly important, because it allows preachers to “name and deal with impediments to effective communication in the pulpit.”³⁹ If worship leaders do not intentionally try to understand the messages sent by their clothing, the entire Gospel message can be lost.

The Deeper Perception of Pastors

Worship leaders, therefore, need to be attentive to the needs, reactions, and perceptions of the congregation that sits before them, in service of the Gospel and of true and authentic worship. This requires what Craig Dykstra refers to as the “pastoral imagination – an imagination, a way of seeing into and interpreting the world...It is the capacity to perceive the ‘more’ in what is already before us. It is the capacity to see beneath the surface of things, to get beyond the obvious and the merely conventional, to note the many aspects of any particular situation, to attend to the deep meanings of things.”⁴⁰ He notes that this skill is not only one that is gained in the practice of pastoral ministry but is “essential to doing it well.”⁴¹ Different authors and theologians have labeled this ability to get to the deeper understanding of things in many

³⁸ Carol Noren, “Theology, Vestments and Women’s Nonverbal Communication,” *Homiletic* 15, no. 1 (Summer 1990): 7.

³⁹ Noren, *Theology*, 8.

⁴⁰ Craig Dykstra, “Pastoral and Ecclesial Imagination,” in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig R. Dykstra (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008), 47.

⁴¹ Dykstra, *Pastoral and Ecclesial*, 48.

different ways.⁴² While the interpretation varies by author, common among them is a theological responsibility to be attuned to the deeper motivations in the congregation.

This “deeper perception” is particularly necessary when tending to the meaning, symbolism, and even the sense of spirituality that comes from civilian clothes in worship. As Amy McCullough cleverly titled one of the chapters in *Her Preaching Body*, my clothes teach and preach!⁴³ “Clothing materializes values, ideas, relationships, and identities that are internalized and mediated both within and on the surface of the body...In fact, clothing infuses the human body with meaning and determines its behavior, often beyond personal preference.”⁴⁴ Pastors wisely employ this ability to attend to a deeper understanding in reference to the worship leader’s clothing choices simply because of the message and meaning that clothing itself offers. This is vital even if the congregation does not voice (or, perhaps more importantly) does not even realize clothing’s impact on their worship experience.

⁴² Two examples are Mary McClintock Fulkerson, who calls it “situational competence” (*Places of Redemption*, 46) and Boyung Lee, who refers to it as “spiritual geography” (*Transforming Congregations*, 45).

⁴³ Amy P. McCullough, *Her Preaching Body: Conversations about Identity, Agency, and Embodiment among Contemporary Female Preachers* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 62–77.

⁴⁴ Anna-Karina Hermkens, “Clothing as Embodied Experience of Belief,” In *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, ed. David Morgan (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 232–33.

Chapter 4: The Complexity of Women's Clothing

This project is not about clothing in general. Nor is it about what any given worship leader wears to lead worship. It is about how women decide what to wear to lead worship, and, more specifically, what I should wear to lead worship in my particular context. In order to manage the scope of this project, I have limited my empirical research to what women wear to lead worship. This is not to suggest that men do not also have to consider their clothing. I would argue, however, that women's clothing is far more complex than men's, and a whole host of issues arise for women, especially in the context of church, that men do not need to manage. As has been established, all clothing speaks, teaches, and preaches, regardless of the wearer's gender. But in both secular and church contexts, women have, historically, faced problems, objections, and issues that are specific to the very fact that they are women.

The Psychology of Women's Clothing

In *New Women's Dress for Success*, John Molloy writes that men have an unwritten advantage in what they wear and that "this is obviously a double standard and certainly not fair. However, it is the way the real world operates, and you have to deal with it."⁴⁵ Although his manner of expression might be pointed, the implication is clear: women must pay more attention to what they wear than men. Harsher judgments are drawn about women's character and competency based on their clothing, a perspective that has been well-established through psychological and sociological studies.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ John T. Molloy, *New Women's Dress for Success* (New York: Warner, 1996), xi.

Historically, women’s clothing has taken on more of a concealing role than has men’s clothing. McCullough notes that male clothing has typically been more fitting of body shape (like armor, pants, and the business suit), while female clothing sought to hide the female body (through long skirts and “modest” shirts). She suggests that it is only in the past century that clothing designs have reflected the contours of the female body, as women’s roles in society have coincidentally expanded.⁴⁷ And, at the same time, women’s response to the increased attention to their bodies when serving in professional or leadership positions has often been to neutralize their clothing, affording women the same professional courtesy and acknowledgment as men.⁴⁸

One of the most significant impacts of women’s clothing is on the impression of competency and authority in their roles. Studies have suggested that women who wear provocative clothing are considered less competent than women whose clothing is deemed more conservative.⁴⁹ In fact, “women who appear ‘sexy’ are judged as less competent, less intelligent, and”—especially important for a conversation about women’s clothing as worship leaders—“less moral than those who dress ‘appropriately.’”⁵⁰ This speaks not only to women’s

⁴⁶ See Gurung et al. *Dressing in Code*, 553-57, and Gurung et al. *Power and Provocativeness*, 252-55, for introductory conversations on the results of recent research.

⁴⁷ McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, 75.

⁴⁸ Sarah-Jane Page, “The Scrutinized Priest: Women in the Church of England Negotiating Professional and Sacred Clothing Regimes: The Scrutinized Priest,” *Gender, Work & Organization* 21, no. 4 (July 2014): 300.

⁴⁹ For a full discussion on the impact of clothing on the perception of women, see Gurung, *Code*, and Gurung, *Power*.

⁵⁰ Regan A. R. Gurung, Elizabeth Punke, Michaella Brickner, and Vincenzo Badalamenti, “Power and Provocativeness: The Effects of Subtle Changes in Clothing on Perceptions of Working Women.” *The Journal of Social Psychology* 158, no. 2 (March 4, 2018): 252. For further reading on this topic, see Graff et al, *Too Sexualized*, 11-12; Gurung et al., *Code*, 553-57; and Zurbruggen & Roberts, *The Sexualization of Girls*.

competency, but also their authority in a given context, with the attire of professional women in high-status positions having particular impact.⁵¹

When the discussion of sexuality, authority, and competency of women based on their clothing enters into the realm of the church, the issues are heightened exponentially. While most of history has seen only men in positions of leadership in the church, in recent decades, women have also taken on this role (in some traditions).⁵² While wearing robes can be viewed as “leveling the playing field,” in traditions where robes are not worn or where they are not preferred, the history and societal perception of women’s clothing now affects how a woman is perceived as she leads worship, depending on how she dresses.

The Authority of Women in the Church

In the context of the church, the most significant issue for women is their very inclusion in church leadership in the first place. Arguments over whether women could or should hold position in the church range from whether it “complied with tradition, whether a woman could represent Christ, and whether the Bible prohibited women’s [ministerial leadership] on the grounds of headship (i.e., whether it is biblically permissible for women to be in positions of authority over men).”⁵³ For centuries, the Christian church held onto a gender-based hierarchy that claimed a biblical basis for women’s exclusion,⁵⁴ and, in many traditions, this theology is

⁵¹ Gurung, *Power*, 252.

⁵² For discussions on the history of women’s inclusion in church leadership roles and as preachers, see McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, and Mountford, *The Gendered Pulpit*.

⁵³ Page, *Scrutinized Priest*, 296.

⁵⁴ Two examples are 1 Corinthians 11:3 (“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ.”) and 1 Timothy 2:11–12 (“Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent.”).

still well-engrained in practice, even today. Based on these biblical texts, “women have been excluded from certain sacred spaces”⁵⁵ and deemed inferior voices in the church.

Thankfully, most mainline denominations (with one notable exception being the Roman Catholic Church) have formally adopted an inclusive stance on women in ministry. However, the unwritten tradition experienced by many women is that their authority and competency is still questioned, with their clothing and accessories (like nail polish and high heels) “being seen at odds not only with the professional self, but also the sacred self.”⁵⁶ The problem is that the very sense of what is held to be sacred can be defiled simply by the presence of women’s clothing.⁵⁷

Men, of course, do not need to manage this problem. While women may be rejected in the church, in the pulpit, and during the sacraments simply because they are a woman, “male Christian ministers have never had to worry about acceptance or rejection of their leadership...solely on the basis of their maleness, and therefore do not think in terms of [clothing] that will minimize, ignore, or accentuate their gender.”⁵⁸ But whether women wear clothing previously reserved for men (the academic robe, the business suit, pants, etc.) or clothing that is traditionally women’s, their gender is still on display.⁵⁹ McCullough reflects, “It is easy to understand why women gravitated to suits and other forms of professional dress. Donning these clothes sent a message about a preacher’s readiness for her task, her capacity to

⁵⁵ Roxanne Mountford, *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces*. Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 28.

⁵⁶ Page, *Scrutinized Priest*, 300.

⁵⁷ In the Survey presented in Appendix A, authority emerged as a significant issue for clergywomen in choosing their attire. There was a concern that without some marked difference in their clothing, people would not know they were the pastor.

⁵⁸ Noren, *Theology*, 6.

⁵⁹ See Page, McCullough, and Noren for further discussion.

competently deliver a sermon...Clothes served as a tool to affirm their credentialed identity, enabling them to embody the preaching role.”⁶⁰ The female worship leader claims her ministerial identity and authority by wearing clothing that reflects this role, which often results in the reappropriation of the accepted attire, which is traditionally male. In fact, women often rely on the classic clerical garb to lend them authority in claiming their theological, preaching, teaching, and priestly voice, both in the pulpit and as a leader of worship. Because this authority is not assumed in the same manner as it is for men, clerical garb is a signifier that helps to increase the perception of authority and competency among female clergy.

In addition, there is an inherent sense of male privilege that is assumed and taken for granted in the church. Perhaps because of the exclusion of women for so long, the church’s assumption is that the voice and body of the preacher is male, and sacred spaces are, therefore, set up for the male body. Whether this is reflected in the size/height of the pulpit and lecterns, the settings of the sound system (that often favor the male voice), or the physical layout of the chancel, the architecture and space is generally accommodating of men. I personally experienced this when invited into the worship space of a partner congregation as a guest pastor. I was very conscious of the fact that, given their tradition, I was likely the very first woman allowed a ministerial place on their chancel. And I was grateful that I had chosen to wear a robe that day to signal my status as a pastor, for the chancel was located up four steps from the floor, placing my legs at eye-level of the congregation, and the seats all directly faced the congregation. Had I been wearing a knee-length or shorter skirt, I would have faced an “exposure” problem. It was clear, however, that this was never before a consideration, highlighting the architecture’s design for men.

⁶⁰ McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, 73.

Chapter 5: Civilian⁶¹ Clothing in Worship

Having established the importance of clothing in the context of worship, and the issues that surround women's clothing in particular, we come now to the heart of the problem: that the clothing of the worship leader can (1) blend in and disappear, allowing the worship leader's words to be the primary mode of communication; it can (2) facilitate worship by creating a sense of identification with the worship leader; or, at worst, it can (3) be a distraction from the message of the Gospel and the experience of authentic worship. Vestments most often serve the first option – they tend to make the clothing of the leader a non-issue. The power of civilian clothing in the worship context, however, is that it typically either enhances or detracts from worship; it rarely disappears. And in a context where vestments are less appropriate to the culture and vision of the congregation, the potential for distraction must be managed.

If we agree, as Peter Block asserts, that the task of a leader is to craft an experience for others that creates engagement among and between people,⁶² then worship leaders in civilian clothing must ensure that this engagement is not distracted, but instead facilitated by what they wear. Further, in the context of worship, this engagement takes place between the people and God, making the theological stakes even higher. Therefore, all aspects of the designed experience must be managed, including and, perhaps especially, the leader's clothing, in order to

⁶¹ I have chosen to use “civilian clothing” to describe that which is worn by clergy when they are not in clerical dress. No matter the clothing worn, the office and status of a clergyperson is an identity—a clergyperson is a clergyperson regardless of their dress. The term “civilian” allows for the fact that the clergyperson is not altering or changing this identity when choosing street-clothes but is instead matching the clothing to those who do not carry the office: civilians.

⁶² Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Second Edition Revised and Updated (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 2018), 90.

facilitate true and authentic worship. As McCullough put it, “The preacher’s clothing could participate in the proclamation or, if wrongly chosen, hinder it.”⁶³

The Challenges

The most critical challenge to manage of civilian clothing in worship is the most basic: ensuring that the clothes do not distract due to being outside of the culture of the congregation. Wearing jeans and a t-shirt in a formal context, a minister’s personal preference to preach barefoot, bold colors and patterns, and provocative styles all have this potential to distract. Alternatively, a worship leader who is dressed too well (too stylish or fancy) could also distract; while not deemed inappropriate in any way, if the congregation is focusing on the clothing rather than the Gospel message and worship, distraction is a potential that needs to be managed.

Clothing can also indicate membership in a group. Therefore, the worship leader’s clothing has the potential to draw unhelpful lines of status between herself and the congregation and to unintentionally demarcate someone as on the outside. When we approach worship as a space that is welcoming to all and accepting of all (an assumption made in my context, although I acknowledge not in every context), the clothes of the worship leader can potentially be read as implying denigration of someone whose clothing is not equivalent, drawing distinctions between those worthy of inclusion and those deemed unworthy. Clerical garb ensures that the worship leader does not contribute to this demarcation of status as defined by the secular world.

Finally, because of the complexity of women’s clothing in society, others are more likely to consider female clergy/worship leaders as over-sexualized, lacking in competency, authority, and morality, and as distracting attention away from the Gospel message and the worshipper’s

⁶³ McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, 64.

experience of God. Page sums it up well: “Women’s negotiation is...fraught, for if they assimilate, and don the traditional black, they are seen as subverting their femininity, but if they endorse more feminine patterns and colours, this is seen as discrediting the professional space that is bound up with masculinity.”⁶⁴ Women’s clothing, therefore, is at greater risk than men’s of being perceived as distracting from the worship experience and the Gospel message that the preacher is communicating to her congregation.

The Benefits

Rick Barger argues that “the societal tension in which the church lives is that, on the one hand, our culture is conditioned to respond to gimmickry, simple answers to complex issues, and offers of instant gratification; yet, on the other hand, we have a deep longing for authenticity.”⁶⁵ The church exists in the midst of a society that is crying out for engagement, truth, and authenticity in the midst of the mundane and deceptively unmeaningful. If authenticity is such a priority, then worship leaders who wear their own clothing, rather than that of the traditional church, are showing their more authentic selves. As we have established, clothing “is a part of our everyday presentation of self, a statement we make consciously or unconsciously as we go about living our lives.”⁶⁶ This means that our true selves are on display through our clothing as we lead worship. The congregation has a better understanding for who we are, who we seek to be, and how we engage with the world by seeing us in “normal” clothes, and this experience

⁶⁴ Page, *The Scrutinized Priest*, 303.

⁶⁵ Barger, *New and Right Spirit*, 3.

⁶⁶ Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell, eds. *Not Just Any Dress: Narratives of Memory, Body, and Identity*. Counterpoints, p. 220 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 261.

invites them to glimpse our authentic selves, thus facilitating a more authentic worship experience.

Further, if we feel more ourselves in our own clothing, then we ourselves are more likely to worship authentically. Authentic worship by the leader leads to authentic worship leadership. As Long argues, “If your speech is perfect, your intonations always expressive, your gestures evocative, your movements full of grace, and yet there is no connection with the people who have gathered for worship” (and, I would add, with God) “indeed, if you are not, yourself, worshipping—then you have merely perfected some sort of liturgical performance art.”⁶⁷ Authenticity during worship is about bringing our whole selves to the task, both as the worshipper and the leader, and our clothing contributes to our sense of authenticity in this manner.

Clothing also has the power to create familiarity with the worship leader, both in and out of the worship space through the continuity of self.⁶⁸ If we present ourselves in the same manner both as worship leaders and as everyday people, it can create a sense of consistency through “material expression [of] a preacher’s capacity to ‘be a real person’ while preaching”⁶⁹ and leading worship. This consistency brings authenticity and sincerity to the words, manners, and personality of the worship leader, allowing the congregation to develop a greater sense of trust in their leader. This facilitates the proclamation of the Gospel, as well as true and authentic worship through clothing.

⁶⁷ Long, *The Worshiping Body*, 116.

⁶⁸ McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, 93.

⁶⁹ McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, 94.

As previously discussed, clothing has the power to exclude based on status, social class, and style, and vestments are useful in neutralizing this concern. The flip side to that argument is that civilian clothing has just as much power to do the opposite – to create a sense of belonging, acceptance, and inclusion. McCullough says that, “Some Christian traditions, as well as some specific congregations, emphasize the necessity of preachers wearing everyday clothes to visually represent the continuous line stretching between pulpit and pew.”⁷⁰ Not only do civilian clothes remove the hierarchy of religious status that can create distance between leader and congregation, but they also have the potential to create a group among worshippers, in which the worship leader exists as an equal. And while pastors may individually or corporately embrace something that signifies their status (like a robe or clergy collar; see Appendix A for data on this), it may also work against them in their call and charge to provide a space for authentic worship where the Gospel is proclaimed and people are transformed.

⁷⁰ McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, 70.

Chapter 6: Innovation

In the end, the question about wearing civilian clothing during worship is not a judgment call on whether or not it is right; there are many instances when choosing this option is appropriate and beneficial. The question instead focuses on what kind of clothing is worn and who has the authority to choose it. Is it a decision left entirely to the worship leader and her freedom to clothe her body? Or are there other persons and factors that should be a part of the conversation? Who and what decides what is appropriate and facilitating in the context of worship? This becomes particularly poignant when a woman's clothing is the one in question, given the range, emphasis, perception, tendency for sexualization, and status that informs women's clothing.

When I began this project, my intention was to limit the conversation to my church. We were experiencing a disconnect over who has the authority to decide what is worn to lead worship, and I developed an Innovation to address this problem that resulted in the crafting of five considerations that I need to weigh when choosing clothing. However, when I used these considerations as part of a survey about what clergywomen in general wear to lead worship, it became clear that this disconnect is overwhelmingly present among clergywomen in general.

Five Considerations in Choosing Clothing to Lead Worship

Based on my research, I developed five considerations that clergywomen and their churches need to consider when choosing what clergywomen will wear to lead worship. They are, in alphabetical (not hierarchical) order: Contextual, Personal, Purpose, Seasonal, and Vision.

My assertion is that all five of these considerations must be taken into account when one chooses what to wear to lead worship. Let's explore what each of these considerations means.

1. Contextual

The “Contextual” consideration asks the question: “What are the pertinent characteristics of the church, its location, and its members?” It is in this consideration that a worship leader must intentionally gain an understanding of the culture of the place in which she leads worship. Culture “denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which [people] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life”⁷¹ and the required discernment can be termed “cultural intelligence.”⁷² Bourdieu called this sense of context “*habitus*,” and his theory suggests that *habitus* “produces individual and collective practices,”⁷³ and our task as preachers and worship leaders must be, in part, to understand the *habitus* of a particular context in order to create a sense of hospitality, belonging, and unity in our worship leadership. It may be difficult, but we, as pastors, “must accept the culture of the people as expressed by the people,”⁷⁴ rather than force our own culture onto a context that was here before us and will remain long after we move to another call.

⁷¹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

⁷² Kim suggests that the point of developing better cultural intelligence within our context is to have a direct impact on our preaching and leading of worship. For more on how to develop Cultural Intelligence, see Matthew D. Kim, *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People Who Hear Our Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017).

⁷³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), 82.

⁷⁴ Gerald A. Arbuckle, “Dress and Worship: Liturgies for the Culturally Dispossessed.” *Worship* 59, no. 5 (September 1985), 431.

This consideration suggests worship leaders need to pay attention to things like what the congregation wears (formal or casual?), the community in which it is located (wealthy or poor?), and how much emphasis is placed on status (whether through clothing, social cues, or profession). Each context is unique, but we are tasked with building a community of believers in each one. And the worship leader must acknowledge and respect the unique created culture by the clothing she chooses to wear. Page notes that there is a sense of altruism in this— “where clothing choice is made for the benefit of worshippers”⁷⁵— even to the subjugation of the preferences of the worship leader. The Apostle Paul takes it one step further and suggests it is for the very sake of the Gospel that he adapted to a particular culture.⁷⁶

2. Personal

The second consideration (Personal) asks questions like, “What do I prefer to wear?” and “What is appropriate for my body type?” This category is the acknowledgment of one’s personal preference, and it considers my style, the image I wish to project, what makes me feel that I look good, and what makes me feel good when I wear it. It is in the framework of this consideration that the question of personal freedom emerges and that the previous discussions of authenticity, continuity outside of Sunday mornings, and the prerogative for self-expression become strikingly relevant. One analysis showed that clergywomen balanced the desire to demonstrate their

⁷⁵ Page, *The Scrutinized Priest*, 302.

⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 9:19–23: “For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.”

ecclesiastical status with “an accompanying desire to look like themselves, to appear as the women God created them to be.”⁷⁷

3. Purpose

As the above analysis suggests, the role and ecclesiastical status/function of the worship leader is a third consideration in choosing what she will wear to lead worship. As noted previously, this is a particularly important topic for women in the church, having been denied a voice in the pulpit for centuries. Molloy makes this point by saying that the “job dictates the dress.”⁷⁸ In the case of clergywomen, the dress takes on a theological role as well as a professional one,⁷⁹ and it is important to consider what is considered professional dress in a particular context.

4. Seasonal

The fourth consideration is, in many ways, the most practical. When considering Seasonal factors, we need to be conscious of the weather, but also the season of the church year and any liturgical celebrations (like sacraments or Christmas Eve). Multiple open-ended survey responses mentioned, for example, that Seasonal is a key consideration when choosing civilian clothing instead of a robe in the summer, as the robe would be too hot.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, 79; interestingly, she discovered that self-expression often came through the use of accessories like jewelry, shoes, makeup, and hair, while maintaining a more conservative wardrobe.

⁷⁸ Molloy, *New Women's Dress*, 4.

⁷⁹ McCullough, *Her Preaching Body*, 65, 70.

⁸⁰ See Appendix A, Question 6, where boxes checked about seasonal considerations totaled 997.

5. Vision

The fifth consideration in determining what clergywomen should wear to lead worship emerges as the least intuitive, but is, perhaps, the most vital: Vision. This consideration goes beyond context in the sense that context is factual and physically demonstrable. Vision, by contrast, seeks understanding about the image that the church wants to project and the mission that the church is aiming to fulfill. Barger calls it “passion” for the church and its mission, and names it as the first quality of a leader that leads to the transformation of the church.⁸¹ The style of worship (traditional or contemporary?), the image that the church is seeking to live into (relaxed or formal?), and the strategic goals set by the leaders (growth? service? evangelism?) are all factors in this consideration. Our leaders call it the “elevator pitch”: Why does our congregation exist? What makes it unique? And what is the identity we are hoping to become? This consideration may, therefore, be the most vital to the corporate sense of the individual congregation as it seeks to discern God’s vision for its future.

*Survey of Clergywomen*⁸²

The next step in my Innovation was a survey to assess the opinions and experiences of clergywomen who lead worship at least once a month, presenting them with the five considerations. Appendix A includes the methodology, sample details, questions, and results. From the results of the survey, a number of conclusions can be drawn about the experience of clergywomen as they choose what they will wear to lead worship.

⁸¹ Barger, *New and Right Spirit*, 137.

⁸² A full description of the survey I conducted of clergywomen, including scope, methods, questions, and results, is included in Appendix A.

The first impactful piece of data about my survey is that for the short 42.5 hours that the survey was active, over 1400 clergywomen responded. From this, I draw a simple conclusion: that clergywomen find the topic relevant. The survey was conducted entirely through Facebook, and, beyond the number of respondents, the amount of engagement and conversation that resulted on those Facebook posts was dramatic. The women wanted to share their experiences with me and with each other. A number asked to see the results and hear more about the research. I even had someone reach out to me privately to explain the personal background that informed her answers. I was struck by the resonance of the topic with these women.

The data itself also speaks volumes about the opinions and experiences of clergywomen. From open-ended questions, I received responses that showed the degree to which clergywomen wrestle with this topic. The number of times “pockets” were referenced was notable, as well as the burden of the expense of clothes (especially in comparison with men, who, it was noted do not generally need as wide a variety). Some women reflected on the degree of comment and criticism to which their clothing choices opens them. One wrote, “Our clothes, as women especially, are examined and criticized, and the expectations of what we wear are part of our professional and public role.”⁸³ Others reflected on the differences between men and women, with one response saying, “Clergywomen attire is much more under scrutiny than attire for clergymen,”⁸⁴ and another saying, “There’s a greater expectation on women’s attire, no matter the culture or vision of the church.”⁸⁵ Others felt that clothing helped them claim their authority,

⁸³ Response #1,407 (1/13/21 at 11:04 a.m.)

⁸⁴ Response #951 (1/12/21 at 1:32 p.m.)

⁸⁵ Response #503 (1/11/21 at 9:42 p.m.)

with one writing, “I choose to wear a collar for liturgical authority...if I am to be taken seriously, I need the collar,”⁸⁶ and another reflecting, “We are judged on what we wear.”⁸⁷

One of the questions was whether the clergywoman should receive a professional expense allowance to purchase clothing for leading in-person worship. The data was split almost evenly at 49 percent saying “Yes” and 51 percent responding “No.” While this is statistically fascinating, the comments when asked “Why or why not?” were particularly illuminating. Overwhelmingly, the responses fell into one of the following two categories: (1) an expense allowance would mean that the congregation would have a say in what the clergywomen wear (one respondent said, “For civilian clothes, I would be reluctant to use professional funds because it might create the expectation that the congregation or church leadership should get to have a say in what I wear. *That is currently up to my discernment alone, and I would like it to stay that way*”⁸⁸ [emphasis added]); and (2) clothes are expensive and if the church expects a “uniform,” then they should cover the cost. One person said, “If [it’s] important for [a] worship leader to look a specific way as determined in consultation with church leadership then one should receive financial help to make it happen.”⁸⁹ The power struggle was clear: the desire to choose one’s own clothing was more important than the church’s expectations or vision.

Accordingly, vision emerged in the survey as the least important of the five considerations, with only 479 checked boxes in factors considered when leading worship⁹⁰ and, when asked to rank these five considerations in order of importance, it came out as the least

⁸⁶ Response #883 (1/12/21 at 11:07 a.m.)

⁸⁷ Response #527 (1/11/21 at 9:54 p.m.)

⁸⁸ Response #359 (1/11/21 at 8:41 p.m.)

⁸⁹ Response #682 (1/11/21 at 11:53 p.m.)

⁹⁰ See Appendix A, Question 6.

important.⁹¹ Interestingly, however, when cost became a factor, a number of responses cited the objection that if the church “required” a certain style of dress based on the vision of the church, that an expense account to cover the cost of clothing should be provided. One responder said, “The pastor becomes part [of] conveying the vision and the brand of the church and as such may need to dress a particular way to convey that brand—in a style or a manner that the pastor might not normally select, even for business attire and hence should be compensated for the “uniform” provided.”⁹² And yet there is a disconnect between what clergywomen deem the authority for what they wear to lead worship (with the emphasis on themselves, their preferences, comfort, and ecclesiastical role) and the consideration that has the most impact on the worshipping experience, call, and mission of a particular church. There is a fundamental problem with this: professional and personal considerations of the worship leader are given significantly more weight than the context or vision of the church.

The Problem of Authority

When asked who has the authority to determine what you wear to lead in-person worship, the overwhelming response was “me, the worship leader” at 90 percent. An external authority (leadership/board/session) was indicated about 6 percent of the time, and a combination of self and external entities about 3 percent of the time. When this perceived authority, the desire to hold onto control, and the personal preferences are combined, it is clear that there is a disconnect between what the clergywomen wear and enacting the vision of the church. The resulting question is how much the church’s expectations, vision, and mission should factor into what

⁹¹ See Appendix A, Question 8; not only did “Vision” fall last in the weighted score, it was also most frequently ranked last among the options.

⁹² Response #457 (1/11/21 at 9:20 p.m.)

clergywomen wear to lead worship and how much personal freedom the clergywoman has in her choices.

The Fundamental Importance of Vision

Vision for a church community goes beyond calling itself a friendly, Christ-centered church. All churches want to be that! Vision is the intentional process of determining who a church is and why the church exists. It is the “guiding force, a controlling assumption, a directing conviction behind everything that happens,”⁹³ and until a church understands and defines its vision, there is “no foundation, no motivation, and no direction for ministry.”⁹⁴ Citing the exchange between Alice and the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland* about wandering aimlessly because Alice doesn’t know where she wants to go, Piazza writes, “Too many of our churches wander through their lives not knowing which way to turn...The only way out of this wandering wonderland is to acknowledge where we are and decide where we want to go.”⁹⁵

Vision is vital to the identity of a church. It not only provides the marching orders for a church’s identity and ministry, but it is the vehicle through which transformation happens. Barger writes, “Vision is the ability to see things not as they are but as they can be...The task of congregations today who desire...to be the transformational movement birthed by God’s Spirit is

⁹³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message & Mission*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 2011), 77.

⁹⁴ Warren, *Purpose Driven*, 81.

⁹⁵ Michael Piazza and Cameron Trimble, *Liberating Hope: Daring to Renew the Mainline Church*, (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2011), 28–29.

first to see alternative ways of being.”⁹⁶ It is through an intentionally crafted vision that transformation happens, both for individuals and for the world.⁹⁷

A critical problem arises, however, when there is a disconnect between the vision of the church and enacting that vision, and this is particularly noticeable when we consider what clergywomen should wear to lead worship. I have presented authentic worship as a cycle of Encounter (through Word & Sacrament) and Transformation (through Response & Charge).⁹⁸ The survey of clergywomen revealed a deep emphasis on the first cycle of worship as played out in their individual role (their ecclesiastical status, their personal preferences, their comfort). This approach, however, entirely ignores the second cycle of Transformation, where the church seeks to transform both the lives of its congregation and the world. When leaders (whether lay or clergy) choose their own preferences over the vision adopted by the larger church, a church loses the very basis of its identity.

When this is applied to the clothing that clergywomen wear, it reveals that the preference of the clergy is on their role in creating an encounter by wearing clothes that best suit them.⁹⁹ It removes, however, the concern about how their clothing can facilitate the transformation that is at the heart of the worshipper’s experience. It would, for example, be counter-vision to wear a business suit in a worship space that is designed with contemporary worship in mind, but if the authority to choose lies with the worship leader’s preference (and the leader chooses to wear the

⁹⁶ Barger, *New and Right Spirit*, 113–14.

⁹⁷ Piazza expands on this concept of crafting a vision and suggests that the following four questions must be answered: “Who are we (individually and as a collective group)? What needs in our community are we seeking to meet? What values do we honor and allow to shape us? How would this community be positively changed through our presence?” (Piazza, *Liberating Hope*, 33).

⁹⁸ See page 8.

⁹⁹ See Appendix A, Q9. This was evidenced by over 90 percent of respondents, indicating they have the authority to choose their clothing.

suit in the contemporary space), then the vision of the church is lost, thus impacting the potential for transformation. Churches and their pastors must reclaim their vision in service of the transformation that may be facilitated, and pastors and lay leadership have a responsibility to lay down (or, at the very least, balance) their personal preferences in service of the greater good and vision of the church—including what clothes they wear to lead worship.

Applying My Innovation to CCC

Aligning a church's vision with the practices of what clergywomen wear to lead worship is the heart of my Innovation, and I put this into practice at Community Congregational Church. While my congregation recognizes that adopting a vision is strategically important, a disconnect between belief and practice has emerged as we have wrestled with our transformation from a traditional-style church to a contemporary-style ministry.¹⁰⁰ Since the congregation voted to transform our church's identity in 2018, the church leadership has been slowly implementing changes to reflect this new vision. In the area of worship (and, in particular, clothing), the Church Board agreed to stop using robes in most worship experiences. This led to the first phase in the process: wearing relatively formal attire (business suits and dresses).

Recently, however, we have moved to the next phase of clothing: relaxing the style of the clothing to match the contemporary style of ministry and worship. Over the past year, my colleague and I have led monthly discussions with the Church Board about what we should wear to lead worship, and we discovered that the personal predilections toward formality (robes, business suits, and dresses) were outweighing the Church Board's responsibility to enact the

¹⁰⁰ The earlier discussion, "A Brief History of CCC" outlined the process that led to the adoption of a contemporary-style ministry.

vision of the church and congregation. They expressly denied the appropriateness of certain styles of clothing (including jeans), although they fit with the vision of a contemporary-style ministry. Not surprisingly, given the associations with women's clothing, there were even differences in what they felt was appropriate for my male colleague and for me, as a female worship leader.

It is in this context that my Innovation was tested, and, with it, the potential for real and impactful change for my congregation to live into its embraced vision! The plan and details of this part of the Innovation are outlined in Appendix B but are not yet complete; time will tell whether this attempt has been successful!

Conclusion

True and authentic worship can be facilitated or hindered by something as simple as clothing. And yet the clothing that we choose to put on our bodies and the process by which we make that decision is anything but simple. Clergywomen, therefore, have a responsibility to ensure that they are equally accounting for their own preferences, whether motivated by their status, personal style, or comfort, along with the vision cast by the congregation they serve. Both the church leadership and the clergywomen should understand that their own personal preferences must, at times, be set aside in service of the vision of the church, for the sake of the Gospel, and in facilitation of the true and authentic worship of God.

Appendix A: Survey “What Clergywomen Wear to Lead Worship”

Purpose

In order to gain insight into the opinions and experiences of clergywomen about what they wear to lead worship, I conducted a survey to address specific issues around clothing that clergywomen wear for worship.

Method & Sample

The survey was conducted entirely through the medium of Facebook. I posted a link in eight Facebook groups of which I am a member (YCW Alumnae, YCWI & Alumni in the PCUSA, PC(USA) Leaders, United Church of Christ (UCC) Clergy (+MiDs),¹⁰¹ Candler DMin (Class of 2021), RevGalBlogPals, UCC Clergywomen, and Young PC(USA) Leaders) as well as on my own wall. While the groups of which I am a part currently total 16,411 members, I was informed that the survey was shared in (at least) five other Facebook groups for clergy, to which I do not have access. All participant responses were given anonymously.

The survey was active from January 11, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. until January 13, 2021 at 12 p.m. (42.5 hours). A total of 1,410 people responded to the survey, of which 1,379 were eligible based on the criteria in Q1 (see below). From the eligible group, 1,365 continued the survey. Once deemed eligible, the 506 participants who answered “Always” to the frequency of wearing a robe in worship were able to complete a shortened version of the survey with basic worship and demographical information. The remaining 859 participants were eligible to complete the entire questionnaire.

¹⁰¹ “MiDs” is an acronym for “Ministers in Discernment.”

Content & Results

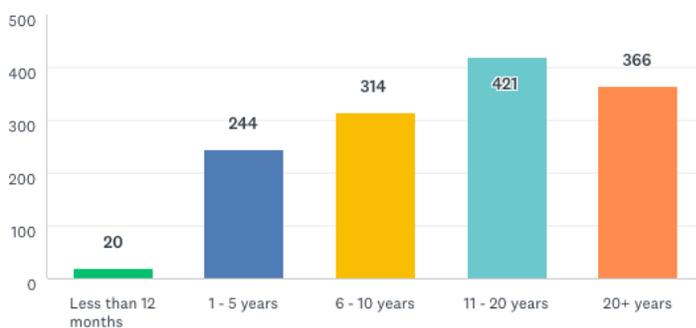
Part 1: Qualifications

Q1. Are you a woman (or identify as a woman) who serves in an ordained position as a pastor/minister/priest and who participates in leading worship at least once a month ("worship leader")? ($n=1,410$)

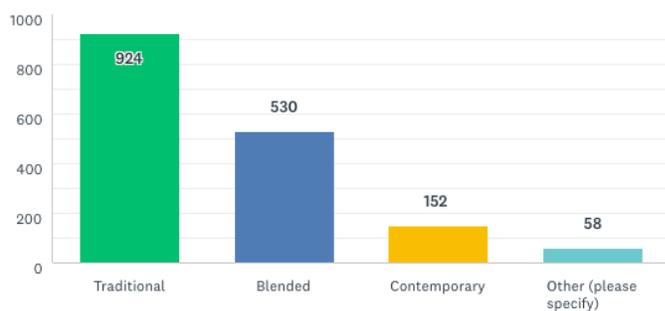
Yes: 1,379 No: 31

Part 2: Worship Information

Q2. How long have you been a Worship Leader? ($n=1,365$)

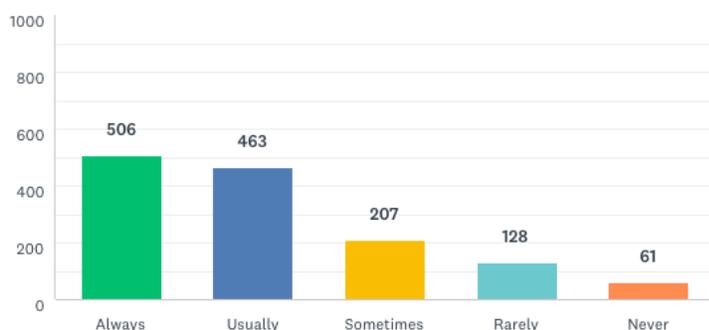


Q3. How would you describe the style of in-person worship in your current context? (If you have multiple worship services with different styles, please select all that apply.) ($n=1,365$)



Q4. During in-person worship, how often do you wear a robe/vestments to lead worship?

($n=1,365$)



Q5. For in-person worship, when you do NOT wear a robe/vestments, how would you characterize the clothing you wear to lead worship? Formal = 1; Casual = 10

($n=838$)

Median: 4

Mean: 4.33

Q6. Choose your top five considerations when deciding what you will wear to lead worship.

(Check five boxes.) ($n=838$)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal Comfort (e.g. style of shoes, warmth, loose-fitting)	58.47%	490
Professional Status	56.92%	477
Functionality (e.g. presence of pockets, bell sleeves with candles)	54.89%	460
Personal Style & Fashion Preference	52.27%	438
Weather/Climate	52.03%	436
Body Type	39.26%	329
Style of Worship	38.19%	320
Liturgical Season	34.01%	285
Celebration of Sacrament(s)	32.94%	276
Congregation's Clothing	24.11%	202
Projecting Personal Character	20.05%	168
Level of Sexiness of Clothing	11.46%	96
Projecting the Church's Image	10.86%	91
Aligning with the Church's Vision	8.11%	68
Other (please specify)	Responses 7.40%	62
Total Respondents: 838		

Q7. Which clothing would you prefer NOT to wear when you lead in-person worship? Check all that apply. ($n=838$)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Jeggings	86.04%	721
▼ Shorts	81.03%	679
▼ Jumpsuit	79.36%	665
▼ Sweatshirt	74.70%	626
▼ Leggings	68.02%	570
▼ T-Shirt	65.63%	550
▼ Short Sleeve Polo shirt	58.71%	492
▼ Sundress	57.52%	482
▼ Jeans	52.63%	441
▼ Skinny-style pants	51.31%	430
▼ Turtleneck	37.23%	312
▼ Business Suit (pants or skirt)	31.86%	267
▼ Clergy collar	29.95%	251
▼ Blazer	20.17%	169
▼ Shirt (collared/button-down)	18.26%	153
▼ Dress	15.99%	134
▼ Cardigan	11.58%	97
▼ Skirt	11.10%	93
▼ Sweater	8.35%	70
▼ Robe	7.52%	63
▼ Blouse	7.40%	62
▼ Dress pants	3.94%	33
▼ I would wear all of these.	2.27%	19
Total Respondents: 838		

Q8. Please rank the impact of the following factors on how you choose clothing to lead in-person worship. ($n=758$)

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
▼ Purpose (i.e. What is considered appropriate to my professional role and function?)	34.43% 261	26.91% 204	19.13% 145	13.32% 101	6.20% 47	758	3.70
▼ Personal (i.e. What do I prefer to wear? What is appropriate for my body type?)	31.27% 237	21.50% 163	22.96% 174	12.27% 93	12.01% 91	758	3.48
▼ Contextual (i.e. What are the pertinent characteristics of the church/context, its location, and its members?)	22.30% 169	22.96% 174	22.56% 171	22.16% 168	10.03% 76	758	3.25
▼ Seasonal (i.e. What is the weather? What is the season of the church year?)	6.33% 48	21.37% 162	25.07% 190	31.13% 236	16.09% 122	758	2.71
▼ Vision (i.e. What image does the church/context want to project? What is the mission that the church is seeking to fulfill?)	5.67% 43	7.26% 55	10.29% 78	21.11% 160	55.67% 422	758	1.86

Q9. Currently, who has the authority to determine what you wear to lead in-person worship?

(*n*=758)

Me, The Worship Leader: 679 (90 percent)

External: The Church Leadership/Board/Session: 52 (7 percent)

Both: 28 (3 percent)

Q10. What are the top three benefits of wearing civilian clothes (instead of vestments) to lead in-person worship? (Check up to three boxes.) (*n*=758)

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
▼ Approachability		61.08%	463
▼ Relatable		57.12%	433
▼ Not formal/institutional		42.48%	322
▼ Removes hierarchy		33.77%	256
▼ Reveals personality		25.99%	197
▼ Freedom of Self-Expression		18.60%	141
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	14.64%	111
▼ None of the above		5.15%	39
Total Respondents: 758			

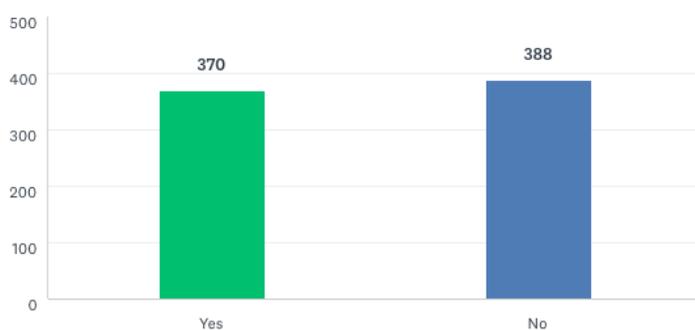
Q11. What are the top three drawbacks to wearing civilian clothing (instead of vestments) to lead in-person worship? (Check up to three boxes.) (*n*=758)

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
▼ Potential to distract		55.15%	418
▼ Burden of decision-making		51.19%	388
▼ Removes liturgical authority		49.34%	374
▼ Enduring criticism		46.97%	356
▼ Cost		14.91%	113
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	12.27%	93
▼ None of the above		7.26%	55
Total Respondents: 758			

Q12. What do you prefer to wear when leading in-person worship? ($n=758$)

Robe	409
Civilian Clothes	231
Civilian Clothes with a Stole and/or Collar	44
No Preference	42
Adapt to Context	32

Q13. Should you receive a professional expense allowance to purchase clothing for leading in-person worship? ($n=758$)

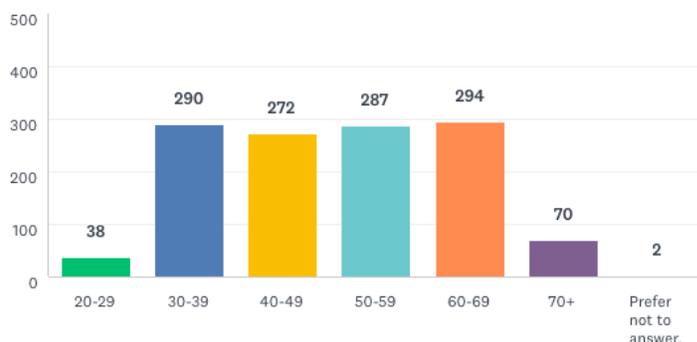


Q14. Why or why not? ($n=758$)

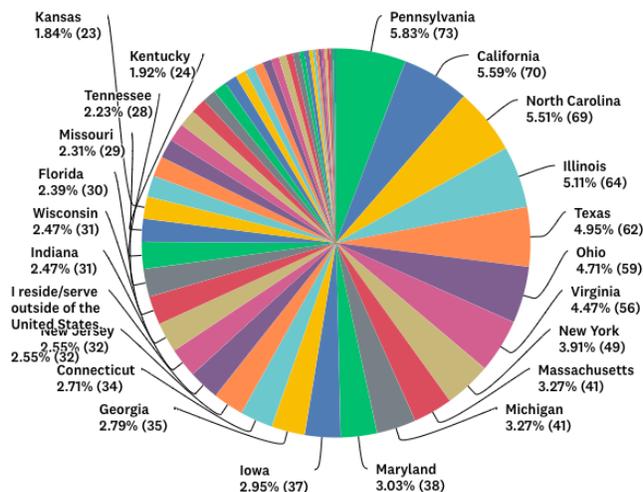
(For detailed responses, contact JHrynyk@emory.edu.)

Part 3: Demographical Information

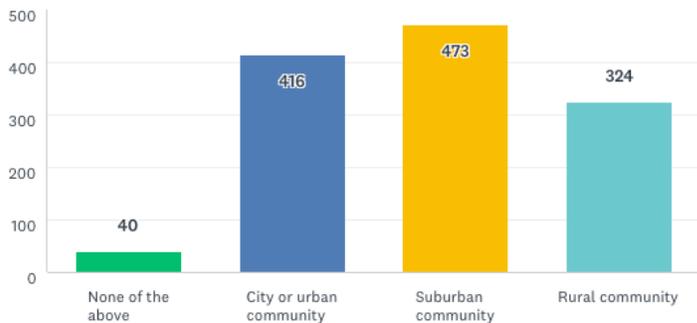
Q15. Your Age ($n=1,253$)



Q16. What state do you reside/serve in? ($n=1,253$)



Q17. What type of community is the church/context where you lead worship located? ($n=1,253$)



Q18. What denomination is the church/context where you lead worship? ($n=1,253$)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Presbyterian	26.02%	326
▼ United Methodist	24.42%	306
▼ United Church of Christ	20.03%	251
▼ Episcopalian	17.32%	217
▼ Other (please specify) Responses	8.86%	111
▼ Lutheran	3.27%	41
▼ Congregational	1.28%	16
▼ Baptist	0.48%	6
▼ Evangelical	0.40%	5
▼ Non-denominational	0.24%	3
▼ Reformed	0.24%	3
▼ Catholic	0.00%	0
▼ Pentecostal	0.00%	0
▼ Quaker/Friends	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 1,253		

Appendix B: Church Board Presentations

Purpose

The strategic objective of my Innovation is to apply and consider the factors relevant to what clergywomen wear to lead worship. In my research, I discovered there is a disconnect between the considerations most valued by clergywomen (with an emphasis on the role, personal style, and comfort of the leader) and the expressed vision for worship. The clash between style and vision was also evident on my Church Board, so through the tactical implementation of a series of intentional discussions centered on questions about five key considerations of clothing in worship, I sought to remedy this disconnect.

Method & Sample

Data was collected from the Church Board, the highest governing body of the church. The membership consists of nine lay leaders (five males, four females; voting members), two clergy (one male, one female; non-voting members), and two staff (male Director of Music and female Financial Director; non-voting members). Presentations were conducted in three phases over a span of three months (all via Zoom because of the pandemic). Board members were presented with photographs of me in various outfits in both of our worship spaces and asked to rate them based on various questions (see below for content and results). Additionally, I led open-ended discussions prompted by the questions found below. The three phases were:

1. Phase 1 (Dec. 2020): Baseline Analysis & Discussion – conduct a survey to establish a baseline and lead an open-ended discussion about the factors that should be considered in choosing clothing for worship.

2. Phase 2: (Jan. 2021): Presentation of the Five Considerations – based on their feedback in Phase 1 and my other research, present and discuss the five considerations.
3. Phase 3: (Feb. 2021; NOTE – not yet implemented): Results Survey & Discussion – Prior to the meeting, ask Board members to rank the five considerations in terms of importance. During the meeting, review the considerations and theological rationale for our church’s vision, then ask members to retake the initial survey.

There are two important things to note about my methodology. First, I chose to use myself as the model for the outfits, rather than some unknown person. I carefully weighed the benefits and drawbacks to this approach. The main drawback is the risk that responses would seek to take my feelings into account. The benefit, however, is that it makes the situation plausible. I am the clergywoman they see each week leading worship, and using myself as the model allowed them the closest experience to a Sunday morning in their responses. The Innovation cannot take place outside of their real-world experience, and for my congregation, I am the female clergy that they see each week. I decided it was worth the risk of placated responses and my own possible hurt feelings to achieve the most applicable data. (I was clear in stating prior to beginning that they were not to take my feelings into account and that they would not hurt my feelings—which they didn’t.)

Second, I was photographed¹⁰² in over fifty outfits, but only ten of those were presented to the Church Board. These ten specific outfits were chosen by the church staff and represent a continuum of clothing that would actually be acceptable in our space, divided into four

¹⁰² All photographs in this appendix are the property of Johann Bosman.

categories: robe, too formal, target, and too casual. The target outfits are what the staff would consider appropriate for the vision of the church as a contemporary-style ministry.

Content & Results

Phase 1: Baseline Analysis & Discussion

Questions 1–10: Board members were asked to respond with a number from 1 to 5 (where 1=Distracting and 5=Facilitating) for each of ten outfits (presented in no particular order), prompted by the following question: “What effect does this attire have on the likelihood for you to experience faithful and authentic worship?”

Outfit Number	Average	Outfit
Slide 1	2.6	
Slide 2	3.6	

Slide 3	2.6	
Slide 4	4.1	
Slide 5	3.5	
Slide 6	3.5	

Slide 7	4.3	
Slide 8	3.6	
Slide 9	4.2	
Slide 10	2.5	

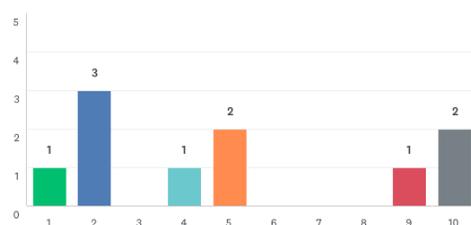
Questions 11–13: Board members were asked to give a number from 1 to 10 on the continuum, answering the following questions.



11. Where does our church fall on the following spectrum?



12. If you had to pick one of these outfits for Jennifer to wear this Sunday, which would you choose?¹⁰³



13. Thinking about our broader church context, which of these outfits is the most appropriate?



¹⁰³ The #9 answer was retracted in the discussion that followed, based on the discovery that these were leggings, not pants. Outfit #10 was intended to convey something that was on the “too casual/distracting” side of the spectrum. However, it was chosen twice in this question and three times in Question 13. This leads me to believe that the size of the picture was too small to see the (intentionally *very* short) length of the skirt.

Open-ended Discussion: What are the criteria Jennifer should consider when choosing clothing to lead worship?

Phase 2: Presentation of the Five Considerations

Five Considerations (presented in alphabetical order)

1. Contextual: What are the pertinent characteristics of the church, its location, and its members?
2. Personal: What do I prefer to wear? What is appropriate for my body type?
3. Purpose: What is considered appropriate to my professional role and function?
4. Seasonal: What is the weather? What is the season of the church year?
5. Vision: What image does the church want to project? What is the mission that the church is seeking to fulfill?

Characteristics of a Contemporary Church & Worship¹⁰⁴ (presented as representative of our church's vision)

Fundamentals

Style of Language: using contemporary non-archaic English

Relevance: A dedication to relevance regarding contemporary concerns and issues in the lives of worshippers

Strategic Targeting: A commitment to adapt worship to match contemporary people, sometimes to the level of strategic targeting

Music

- *Style of Music:* Using musical styles from current types of popular music;
- *Singing:* Extended times of uninterrupted congregational singing

¹⁰⁴ Adapted from Lee and Ruth, *Lovin' on Jesus*, 2–3.

- *Leaders*: A centrality of the musicians in the liturgical space and in the leadership of the service

Behavior

Expression: Greater levels of physical expressiveness

Informality: A predilection for informality, especially in dress

Technology

Technology: A reliance upon electronic technology

Discussion: Which of these five considerations is the most important?

Phase 3: Results Survey & Discussion¹⁰⁵

Q.1 (sent to Church Board prior to meeting): Please rank the impact of the following factors on how you choose clothing to lead in-person worship.

¹⁰⁵ To be completed in February 2021.

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