



What is a Taize Service

This coming Sunday, our worship service will be a virtual Taize service. It has been several years since we had a Taize service here at FMC, and it's possible that many of you that have forgotten, or don't know what a Taize service is. I want to provide you with some information about the service so you can be prepared for Sunday.

Taize is a small community in Central France. The community is an "ecumenical monastic order" made up of both Catholic and Protestant monks, with a strong devotion to peace and justice. The order was founded by Roger Louis Schutz-Marsauche, better known as "Brother Roger". Brother Roger was the son of a Protestant pastor and the youngest of nine children. From an early age, he was aware of the divisions between Protestants and Catholics and wanted to look beyond these differences and work together with people of all faiths. He was influenced by his grandmother's stories of helping refugees after WWI, and this gave him a desire to help the poor and oppressed.

The characteristic of Taize worship is the use of repetitive prayer set to simple musical lines to support meditative worship. Repetitive prayer is not new or uncommon, but Taize is the adaptation of repetitive form to simple musical lines and biblical texts that can be sung by the whole congregation. The texts are typically sung in Latin or French. Singers can drop in and out, change parts, sing whatever the spirit leads them to sing. The duration is not predetermined, timed or calculated ahead of time. The idea is for worshipers to immerse themselves in the simple lines and beautiful harmonies and be carried by the sung prayers. Silence is another characteristic of Taize. During the time of silence, each worshiper can focus on prayer or meditation, not on their weekly "to do" list.

As we are not meeting in person, some of the Taize elements will be more planned out. The songs will be the length of the recordings found, the silence will be shorter, and the prayers more corporate, but the hope is that each person in the congregation will be able to reflect and meditate during the worship time. This might also be a Sunday where you worship outside on your patio, observing God's creatures and growing things. Maybe it would be a day of sitting in a darkened room with several candles, away from distractions and disruptions. However you choose to experience the Taize service, my hope is that each person will find some comfort and peace to carry them through the next week during these times of uncertainty and insolation.

-Jana Miller