

*August 28, 2020*

## **Worship: God Is the Audience**

Over 150 years ago, Søren Kierkegaard observed that we suffer from role confusion in worship. We understand the congregation as an audience, the minister (and I would add musicians) as the performer(s) and God as the prompter. Staying with this stage metaphor, Kierkegaard said we need to flip this on its head: The congregation are the actors, the minister (and musicians) the prompter(s) and God is the audience.

This concept becomes even more challenging during a global pandemic when we cannot meet in person, and we, as the congregation, are reduced to “watching” worship. The whole point of worship is to nurture the worshipper toward integrity, wisdom and joy. And this joy is more than entertainment. We often ask ourselves, “What did I get out of that service?” when the real questions might be: “What did I let go of because of the service?” “What anger, pride, jealousy was I able to put down?” “What lie do I no longer believe?” “How was my heart lightened and my soul encouraged?”

If we enter worship (even on Facebook or YouTube) facing anywhere but toward God, the experience may be enjoyable, informative and comforting, but not transformative. Worship that does not make us uncomfortable or fails to stretch our mind and spirit is less than the worship God intends. I invite you to face God as the audience and see if it makes a difference in your worship experience.

Blessings!

*Paula*