

16th Century Reformation, with objections notable on several fronts. But instrumental music became more popular from that point on.

Over the centuries, the church building became a community meeting place and life revolved about its functions. Today, it is not unusual to see large buildings containing at least one auditorium, or sanctuary, with other multi-use

meeting rooms, recreational facilities ranging from game rooms to basketball gymnasiums and outdoor athletic fields, set-asides for social outreach, and large amounts of office space. All these represent not so much a center of community life as attempts to attract participants (not so much religious adherents or seekers after spiritual knowledge).

(NEXT: A look at how the

Lord’s church has evolved in regard to changes in worship and the buildings each congregation may use.)

Morris Fraser

# NAVARRE MESSENGER

February 4, 2018



We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre. Call for directions and more information (850) 939-8109

### Navarre church of Christ

8490 James M Harvell Rd  
Navarre, FL 32566

Place  
Stamp  
Here

### Assembly Schedule

#### Sunday

Bible Class for all ages\_9:00 AM

Morning Worship Service\_10:00 AM

Evening Worship Service\_6:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages\_7:00 PM

This entire publication and previous issues are available online at

[navarrechurchofchrist.net](http://navarrechurchofchrist.net)

along with some more useful information

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME!**

### Part I

Christians enter an auditorium designed for the purpose, take a seat on a padded pew, chat among themselves and with visitors, settle down as the established time to worship oc-

curs and announcements are presented. Then they sing, pray, take the Lord’s Supper, make a contribution, hear a sermon, sing an invitation song and are dismissed with a prayer.

With relatively minor varia-

tions, this is how Christians worship each Sunday. Since we present the argument that we should follow the Bible as it was revealed as late as the First Century A.D., it is natural that we think that the way we worship today is the way it has

always been.

Not so.

The Bible gives little information as to how the first Christians conducted worship. Acts 2:42, 46 and Acts 5:42 show that they met daily in the temple, an understandable meeting place for those Christians who all were Jews, and that they also met “from house to house.” They also taught the word and prayed.

The only other clear reference to prescribed activities in worship is found in Acts 20, when disciples in Troas took the Lord’s Supper and heard the word preached. The only reference to a specific location for worship is in this same passage, an upper room (Acts 20:8).

The earliest authoritative secular reference to worship comes from Justin Mar-

tyr, a second century teacher who wrote several important works regarding Christ and the church. One of those is his First Apology, written about 155 A.D. In that was a brief discussion of a service of Christians of the time.

Justin describes a baptism and the bringing of the new disciple to an assembly of Christians where they pray. After describing the particulars of receiving the new brother, he continues:

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended,

bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.

“And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.

“But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in

the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn; and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.” (From christianitytoday.com)

Thus we learn much of the “how” and “what” Christians did in those early days. The “where” is less certain, but some evidence exists from a variety of sources. After the word spread throughout Asia and into Europe, Christians met where they could do so easily and safely. That generally meant a private house, usually a large building owned by a disciple (note Romans 16:3-5, Colossians 4:15 and Philemon 2).

Several histories refer to the

first known building reserved specifically for worship. It was at Dura Europos on the Euphrates River in eastern Roman Syria, first used around 240 A.D. Two rooms were combined to form a place for worship, with another room made into a baptistery. Worshipers stood during the services, which may have lasted as long as three hours. The house was used only for a few years until a Persian attack destroyed the town in 256.

Dura was an intermediate stage between meeting in members' houses or other places, and constructing buildings specifically for church meetings. References exist concerning separate church buildings from the end of the second century through the third century. It is uncertain whether these were remodeled, like the house at Dura, or new construction. Archaeological evidence exists of halls be-

ing built for meetings into the early fourth century.

After that, Emperor Constantine commissioned specific buildings, called basilicas, that showed his support of the new religion. Buildings became increasingly ornate both inside and out, and services likewise became more attractive to the senses. Choirs were common in pre-Christian era musical events, but little is known of choirs in churches until the fourth century.

Historians quibble extensively over the use of musical instruments in worship, arguing they were used as early as 200 A.D. to well past 1000 A.D. Many encyclopedias cite Pope Vitalian’s use of the organ in 666 A.D. as the first use of instruments, but objections to that date range from “it didn’t happen” to “he used it only in his private worship.” Increased use of instruments happened during the