

Different Variations on the ways Congregations carry out Joys and Sorrows

1. A prayer is offered, but it is not 'intercessory'
2. We also use an ema stand (Shinto tradition). People may write a prayer, hope, etc on a card and hang it on the stand.
3. <Minister> invites us to speak, there is no use of a microphone. We sit or stand in our places and speak our joys and our concerns. After everyone has spoken, <Minister> then asks us to spend a few moments in silence and he asks us to meditate on what has been said aloud and also on the private joys and concerns we have in our hearts. He often asks us to meditate also on the needs of the world. (His words might be called "a call to intercessory prayer," but I certainly have never heard those words used in our <Name of Church>.) At the end of several minutes of silence, <Minister> rings a prayer bell to indicate the end of the Joys and Concerns time.
4. We also have an Ema stand from the Shinto tradition where people write their thoughts, concerns or hopes on a card and hang it on the stand. The cards are collected and at an end of year ceremony, they are burned.
5. We use Open Microphone, silent candles and an EMA stand.
6. We also have an Ema Stand. This is a Japanese tradition where you write your joys and concerns on a card and hang it on the Ema stand where others can read them at thier leisure.
7. Shinto EMA card stand where members can come to front and write and hang a card on an attractive stand for others to read later
8. Floor is open to people to express joys & concerns; this is followed by a brief period of reflective/meditative silence which is ended by the ringing of a bell
9. We introduce J&C limiting it to personal milestones. We write about J&C etiquette at least once a year in the newsletter. We offer a meditation afterwards. We also offer a moment of silence after the silent candle lighting.
10. People are invited to share their joys and sorrows, but usually not with a microphone. Silent and "embracing meditations" are used occasionally.
11. Like the Open microphone example except everyone stays seat and raises their hands
12. We do not use a microphone for sharing joys and concerns
13. We separate the lighting of candles from sharing of joys and sorrows. Since the separation many fewer people speak during joys and sorrows and dramatically more people come up to light candles.
14. The Worship Leader reads the entries in the book of concerns and joys that is available inside the worship hall. Not intercessory prayer -- that would be completely unacceptable -- but after reading the concerns and joys from the book, the Worship Leader reads a spoken meditation, followed by at least 2 minutes of silence and a musical meditation by the pianist. The silent lighting of candles comes during the musical meditation.
15. "Open Mic" without the microphone; people speak from where they are seated. Spoken Joys and Sorrows are followed by a period of silent prayer and meditation, then a (seated) meditation hymn.
16. WOULD take too long to write.
17. Following the sharing there is a brief prayer and that is following by a Litany of Repsonse. Minister lights candles while individuals do their sharing.
18. we have a book people write their J's and C's in before worship, and during hymns. The ushers bring the book forward and the minister reads them during the and C time.
19. NOT joys and sorrows, but Embracing Meditation, with congregants calling out names during a prayerful time.
20. rather than silent candles, we have a small fountain for people to place a river stone or shell to represent the joy or sorrow
21. we offer open microphone but I have just started this year tying the theme of the service into the introduction for Joys, Sorrows and Milestones. We also have had a fountain in which people can drop

seashells and river stones in for silent sharing. We have a moment of silent reflection after the spoken joys and sorrows, acknowledging that each of us has passages in our lives which we may not share out loud but are held in the community's heart. I tried a Prayer circle on another day where people could bring prayers but I ended up being the only one there. I changed the placement of joys and sorrows and there was an outcry from about 5 people but the Worship committee eventually supported it and now, most people like it at the end rather than in the middle. It has become the established time and ties in the end of the sermon and the going forth pieces, then we have closing hymn and Shalom as we hold hands and form a circle (most of the time).

22. Silent Candles during Offering
23. Open Mic and candle lighting
24. Open microphone is offered the first Sunday of the month; on some occasions the minister does intercessory prayer instead of candle lighting but has lay leaders accept written joys/concerns
25. see previous answer - in the service order; minister also notes those "held in our hearts" message at the end of the meditation and silence, then lights one candle for those...
26. The ministers words of introduction are more descriptive with emphasis on this time as a practice in becoming a Beloved Community. And sometimes closing words that indicate some things said may or may not be in line with our principles.
27. Congregation members may light a candle silently during Joys and Sorrows (called Candles of Community). I also follow with a pastoral prayer -- which is not about specific people, but "categories" of joys/sorrows/being feelingly human.
28. Live J&Cs 2x a month, pastoral prayer other Sundays, and every Sunday, silent candles during offertory. By the way, our J&Cs range from 2 - 16 people offering a J&C, and from 1 - 15 minutes service time.
29. we do both--silent candles during offertory and spoken j&s with clear guidelines and we talk to those who violate more than once; staff sends follow up cards
30. Open Microphone plus lighting of candles. We call it "Candles of Community."
31. Open mike is once a month. Rest of the time it's intercessory sharing and/or silent candles
32. One Sunday a month we have the open mike as well as the other two above. The other Sundays are just the other two.
33. First Sunday is open mike. People can also write their statments to be read by the minister and lay minister. On the other Sundays congregants write joys and concerns on a slip of paper and light a candle silently. The minister and a lay minister read the joys and concerns. Individuals can also light candles silently without handing in a slip of paper.
34. Open mic first Sundays. Silent candles invited every week. Intercessory sharing most others Sundays. Intercessory prayer often included in weekly pastoral prayer. A liturgical pastoral prayer written to include present concerns, with responsive music is used with no candles 4 or 5 times a year. People are recently requesting that we do this more often and the worship committee suggested monthly.
35. Each person comes forward an after introducing him/herself places a stone on the cairn. It is a very meaningful ceremony.
36. Intercessory Sharing with silent candles lit when they come up to hand the Minister their note, with gentle music being played while they write and come up. We only have this in the service twice a month, and only with Minister presiding. Minister mentally edits written notes to keep everything brief & appropriate.
37. Open mic only once a month; written sharing and silent candles always an option, unless we're doing something completely different, such as an extended pastoral prayer (often with sung response) which often happens when some other participatory ritual is part of the service.
38. The minister is contacted about a joy or sorrow that he/she wants shared the following Sunday from the pulpit
39. Joys has been included in "Announcements & Celebrations" before the Offeratory and while the children are still in the service. Sorrows has been renamed "People in Our Hearts and Thoughts" and takes place after the Offertory and after the children leave for class. Applause is common during

Celebrations but does not occur during "People in Our Hearts and Thoughts" providing a more respectful atmosphere.

40. We are small - we stand up.
41. We use the term Joys and Concerns, mixing solemnity, and worldly concerns
42. Introduction, then people stand at their seats and share in their own words.
43. Spoken from seat after invitation.
44. People are invited to stand at their seats and share joys, concerns, & milestones. No microphone & no candles
45. This year we have attempted to lay down some ground rules about making it a personal time rather than a political platform time. It has much improved this segment. The lay leader does ask for concerns first so sadnesses etc. are grouped together and that prevents the jarring of joys and concerns mixed together. After the joys then are shared, there is a very nice statement about holding these thoughts just shared in our hearts and of course those many unspoken thoughts, also. There are some services where we have our quiet moment of silent meditation following this segment. I very much like the way we do Joys and Concerns. People do come up to those that have spoken after the service and provide hugs or statements. I was on the search committee last year and when we did our survey, that ritual received very high regard.
46. We announce J&C, giving an opportunity, first, for folks to light silent candles while music plays; spoken J&C follow, with a designated person lighting the candle while the person speaks using a microphone; at the end there are concluding remarks transitioning back to the service.
47. Similar to "open microphone," however people stand from where they are.
48. Joys and concerns are shared by people from their seats, usually standing in place.
49. open mike, held by the minister, who lights candles and begins with a reminder to everyone of the purpose of J&S and a strong admonition against abuse of this element, such as making anncts.
50. Since we are a small congregation (47 members), we've been able to allow folks to continue to come forward. We also always light a candle for joys and sorrows that remain unexpressed.