

I visited the church called Gilead. Which is a new church started by my mom's seminary school classmates and friends. My parents had gone to this church and thought that I would like worship there. I was excited to go because I don't often go to other churches. I was interested to see how it compared to worship at my church.

I found only a few basic similarities. The basic structure of the service was the same as the one at my church. There were hymns, readings, a sermon and communion. When we entered the church there were greeters who gave us bulletins. Afterwards they had cookies and soda, just like coffee hour at our church. The church was very big and beautiful, it had an all-the-way-around balcony, an altar and pews. This was pretty similar to my church so I was interested to see how they were going to run the service.

Aside from that the service was very different. The readings were poems, the hymns were songs on a guitar. The sermon was based on a combination of a verse from the bible and a children's book called *The Runaway Bunny*. They even had a comedian as a speaker. They had an activity where you were supposed to put points in your life on a map. The theme of the service seemed to be high points and low points in your life and where you are on the map. I really enjoyed the unexpected twists. For communion they let you take your own piece of bread and after the service a lady who helped with communion asked me if I wanted more bread and I had a huge piece of it. All of these things were a big difference from the style of the worship that I go to at my church. During the entire service I was pleasantly surprised at the new changes in how the service was run and executed.

When I first got there I was interested in what was going to happen but not exactly excited, I mean it was a church service, they're not supposed to be fun. When we walked in, I saw cookies and soda that were for after the service. I thought to myself, "Well even if the service is boring there will be snacks to look forward to." When we walked in the greeters asked us (everyone in my family attended the service with me) to put nametags on that identified which pronoun to use while talking about ourselves. The look of the church was pretty generic but my mom said that in the past they have held service inside a bar! When the service started, the pastor read some slips of paper that people attending the service handed in that talked about some high or low parts in people's lives. I really liked how the church used the people in the service. After the comedian had finished his bit about a really high part in his life, I really was excited to see what would happen next. The whole service was very interactive.

My takeaway is that Gilead is a very cool church, and that it is fun to change up the type of service you go to once in awhile. This was a fun experience and I am glad I went to a service that wasn't boring. I would have had a much blander experience if I had gone to any other church. Gilead was unique and endearing and I am glad that I went. I would definitely consider returning.