



Project CIDI Bridges

A coffee shop-style gathering area that leads directly into the sanctuary?
I'm there!

The parking lot is almost full as we pull into a spot amidst numerous men, women and children hurrying to the 11am service. This is considered the more "modern" option to the more traditional liturgical service at 9am.

Upon entering we are directed to the sanctuary without hesitation, warm smiles passing us in the hallway. After almost 30 observances, each building and congregation continue to surprise and delight me. There is no alter in the space, but rather a simple table surrounded by rows of encircling chairs. A group of musicians are off to the side, tuning and preparing to energize the faithful.

The floor arrangement creates a no-barriers-type feel to the service. Both pastors and worshippers are equal.

I am delighted to see a café-style area is adjacent to the sanctuary. I don't hesitate to grab myself a cup of the strong brew and take my seat.

The opening song rings true to me. The lyrics, "You make beautiful things out of dust" reminds me of the verse from the

Holy Qur'an:

*And among His wonders is this: He creates you out of **DUST** – and then, lo! You become human beings ranging far and wide! - 30:20*

Towards the center table, a young boy plays the air drums to the music while his father happily moves to his child's beat.

Children play a vital part in the service. Not only are youth welcomed (along with their vocal outbursts and seat-wiggling), but also no one seems to mind or be distracted by their presence. These same children are then called to the center of the sanctuary to take the bread and offer as communion to the faithful.

The sermon focuses on the life of Martin Luther. *By Grace we are saved.* Grace is spoken of as a safety net, always ensuring protection. Grace also acts as a force of good, propelling the Christian into the world to share the Good News.

My visit ended with a look at the pipe organ and a promise to let me play it.