Welcome!

The Vital Worship Grants Program at the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship seeks to foster vital worship in congregations, parishes, and other worshiping communities in North America. This grants program is especially focused on projects that connect public worship to intergenerational faith formation and Christian discipleship, a theme that can unfold in many facets of worship from Bible reading to preaching to Baptism and Lord’s Supper, intercessory prayer, congregational song, visual arts, and more. We encourage grant proposals developed through a collaborative process from emerging and established churches; seminaries, colleges, and schools; hospitals, nursing homes and other organizations.

Through the Vital Worship Grants Program, hundreds of worshiping communities throughout North America have engaged in a yearlong process of focusing on worship. Projects funded have included (but are not limited to)—

- an in-depth study of the theology of worship in relation to current and emerging practices
- reflection and study of baptism or the Lord’s Supper and ways in which the sacraments connect with the life of the community
- exploration of the Psalms and the way they shape words and music in worship
- collaboration of pastors and lay leaders in planning worship that carefully integrates the sermon with other components of the service or aspects of congregational life
- a yearlong process that encourages the unique gifts of people of all ages to be used in planning and leading worship

You are invited to join this exciting process by submitting a proposal for a Vital Worship Grant.

Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Vital Worship Grants Program Staff
Kathy Smith is Associate Director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and Program Manager for the Grants Program
Betsy Steele Halstead is Program Coordinator for Grants and Communications and a Resource Specialist for Visual Arts
Cindy De Boer is Administrative Assistant
John D. Witvliet is Director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
Eligibility

Any team of people with leadership roles directly related to the worship life of a church or organization is encouraged to apply. This includes pastors, educators, church staff persons, church musicians, artists, architects, actors, dancers and scholars. The team should include the senior pastor of a congregation or the key administrator of an organization. We have learned that including such a leader increases the likelihood that the project will succeed in meeting its goals.

Grants will be awarded to churches and other nonprofit organizations, not to specific individuals. Please note what is not eligible for funding: compensation to your staff or volunteers for planning, teaching or administration that exceeds 20% of the total grant; equipment costs that exceed 10% of the total grant; production and replication of CDs, DVDs, books and videos for sale; production of web-based resources; building renovations and other construction costs; food costs that are not connected to a learning or reflection process related to worship; or attending or hosting a conference, concert, summer camp or other one-time event that is not part of a yearlong learning process.

Selection Criteria

Projects must

- have the potential to generate renewed interest, thoughtfulness, and energy for public worship at the local, grass-roots level
- be linked with the worship life of a particular community or congregation(s)
- include a component of theological reflection on the meaning and purpose of public worship
- be both realistic and visionary

Selection Preferences

In addition to the above non-negotiable criteria, the selection process will also reflect several preferences. Though these are not requirements, we will give preference to projects that

- are collaborative, involving the coming together of people for study, planning, and creating
- bring new learning into a community through a series of speakers and a study of books and other resources
- come from communities with limited financial resources
- have the potential to model vital worship for other worshiping communities
- have a plan for the sharing of the results of their program
- nourish intergenerational community, rather than segmenting groups of worshipers
- enhance the connection between worship and practices of faith formation and Christian discipleship

Amount and Duration of Grants

Grants will range from $5,000 to $15,000. In unique situations, where there is substantial collaboration and a grant project impacts several congregations, applicants may apply for grants up to $18,000. In May of each year, about 35 grants will be awarded. Unfortunately, we will not be able to fund all proposals. But proposals may be revised and submitted for consideration in a subsequent year.
Application Process

**step 1**

**Explore together.**

worship.calvin.edu/grants/explore-apply/step-1.html

Because the process of developing a grant proposal should be collaborative, the first step involves gathering a group from your church or organization together to explore and learn about worship. Our website offers links and resources to guide your exploring process, including:

- *What is Vital Worship?* is a key document to explore as you think about applying for a grant.
- We also encourage you to explore our *Ten Core Convictions about Christian Worship.*

**step 2**

**Imagine & discern.**

worship.calvin.edu/grants/explore-apply/step-2.html

As your group meets, we hope to further stimulate your imagination by encouraging group discussion of what vital worship means in your context. Our website offers exercises and resources, including help to:

- discern your organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- consider your organization’s capacity for effective leadership for collaborative projects
- review the current and previously awarded grants to stimulate your thinking or refine your germinating ideas

**step 3**

**Plan & write.**

worship.calvin.edu/grants/explore-apply/step-3.html

Now it’s time to get down to the work of planning and writing your grant proposal! Step 3 on our website includes more information and details on the:

- Grant Proposal Guidelines
- Grant Cycle Timeline (see the back page of this brochure)
- form to write a Grant Proposal (a Word doc only available for download on our website)
- form to develop a Grant Budget (an Excel doc only available for download on our website)

**step 4**

**Send.** Proposals due January 10, 2016

worship.calvin.edu/grants/explore-apply/step-4.html

Your final step is to review the application checklist available online and submit your proposal materials. We look forward to receiving your proposal!
**Grant Program Consultation**

You are invited to submit your ideas for a grant project for feedback about the suitability or direction of your proposal. Please complete this process:

- follow the steps outlined for exploring and applying for a grant ([worship.calvin.edu/grants](http://worship.calvin.edu/grants))
- study the guidelines and the questions on the Grant Proposal Form
- brainstorm your idea with others, asking: Does this project idea meet the criteria of grants the Vital Worship Grants Program is able to fund?
- email your responses and questions you may have to worshipgrants@calvin.edu

We will be happy to provide a brief initial consultation to help you determine if your idea fits the criteria. Because of the large number of churches and organizations that apply for grants, we cannot guarantee funding. However, we hope that these steps will guide you in developing your proposal so that it falls within the guidelines of projects we may be able to fund. We look forward to receiving your proposal ideas!

**Grant Cycle Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates for 2016 Grants</th>
<th>Dates for 2017 Grants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposals Due</td>
<td>January 10, 2016</td>
<td>January 10, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submitted by January 10 - firm deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved Grants Announced</td>
<td>No later than May 1, 2016</td>
<td>No later than May 1, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Page Summary Due for 1st Colloquium</td>
<td>May 18, 2016</td>
<td>May 18, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant recipients will be required to provide brief answers to questions about their projects in preparation for three days of learning with other grant recipients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st half of Grant Funds Distributed</td>
<td>June 1, 2016</td>
<td>June 1, 2017</td>
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<td>Project directors of funded grant projects are required to come with one additional team member to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for a three-day learning event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Year Report with Budget Due</td>
<td>December 1, 2016</td>
<td>December 1, 2017</td>
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<td>Grant recipients will be required to provide a mid-year summary of their work and a budget report halfway through the implementation of their program. A complete report, including a financial report, will be submitted at the conclusion of the grant year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd half of Grant Funds Distributed</td>
<td>After Mid-Year Report is received</td>
<td>After Mid-Year Report is received</td>
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<td>One Page Summary Due for 2nd Colloquium</td>
<td>6 weeks before 2nd Colloquium</td>
<td>6 weeks before 2nd Colloquium</td>
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<td>Grant recipients will be required to provide brief answers to questions about their projects in preparation for three days of learning with other grant recipients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster Due for 2nd Colloquium</td>
<td>4 weeks before 2nd Colloquium</td>
<td>4 weeks before 2nd Colloquium</td>
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<td>Grant recipients will be required to design a poster which summarizes their grant year through photos and brief descriptions (templates are provided!)</td>
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<td>Attend 2nd Vital Worship Grants Colloquium</td>
<td>June 20-22, 2017</td>
<td>June TBA, 2018</td>
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<td>Project directors of funded grant projects are required to come with one additional team member to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for a three-day learning event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Report with Budget Due</td>
<td>July 15, 2017</td>
<td>July 15, 2018</td>
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<td>Grant recipients are required to submit a final budget and a final report that summarizes the activities of the project, what was learned and how the project deepened habits of worship in their context, and how that learning could benefit other congregations or organizations.</td>
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