

May 1, 2020

Vital Worship Grants awarded for 2020 by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship

The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW) announced today that it will fund 41 Vital Worship Grants projects to Worshiping Communities for 2020-2021 as part of its Vital Worship Grants Program.

These projects have a variety of emphases—celebrating the Lord’s Supper in a prison congregation, creating worship practices for both home and corporate use, selecting music for worship, focusing on the arts and accessible worship, and more—but have as a common purpose a desire to both deepen people’s understanding of worship and strengthen practices of public worship and faith formation.

Kathy Smith, leader of the Vital Worship Grants Team, said, “We are grateful to award these new grants, even in this time of the pandemic crisis, trusting these projects will serve to encourage vital worship in new ways and support another group of churches, schools and organizations, even in these difficult times. We were grateful for a large number of excellent proposals and are eager to facilitate their learning and ours, regarding worship across North America.”

This year’s recipients include 30 congregations, one secondary school, two colleges and universities, one seminary, and seven other groups, including a church-run preschool, two denominationally-affiliated ministries, a Christian environmental science institute, a retirement community, a neighborhood ministry, and a campus ministry. They also represent 19 different Christian denominations, 19 states and two Canadian provinces.

Each grant (ranging from \$5,000 to \$18,000) will fund a year-long project beginning in June that promotes vital worship and faith formation. John Witvliet, director of the CICW, said “We are eager to learn from these programs. Although these grant proposals were written well before COVID-19 disrupted patterns of congregational life, these grants show remarkable promise for not only serving these communities as they make adaptive changes, but also to a much wider audience of learners. We look forward to sharing this learning over the next several months and years.”

This June, project directors of these grants will interact with and learn from not only CICW staff, but also with directors of the 2019 grants and recipients of grants to Teacher-Scholars via a digital grants event. Learning from the 2019 grants will be shared on the CICW website after the event.

Since it began in the year 2000, the Vital Worship Grants Program has now awarded 944 grants to churches, schools, organizations, and teacher-scholars across North America for projects that generate thoughtfulness and energy for public worship and faith formation at the local, grass-roots level. An advisory board of pastors and teachers from a variety of backgrounds assists in the grant selections, and the program is generously supported by Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. Founded in 1937, the Endowment’s major areas of programming are religion, education, and community development.

For more information on the grants program, including a complete list of this year’s grants recipients, please see worship.calvin.edu/grants.

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