

## The Practice of Christian Worship

Each week Christians gather for worship in mud huts and Gothic cathedrals, in prisons and nursing homes, in storefront buildings and village squares, in sprawling megachurches and old country chapels. In these diverse contexts the style of worship varies greatly. Some congregations hear formal sermons read from carefully honed manuscripts, others hear extemporaneous outpourings of emotional fervor. Some sing music accompanied by rock bands,

some by pipe organs, some by drum ensembles, some by rusty old pianos, and some by no accompaniment at all. Some dress in their formal Sunday best, others in casual beach clothes.

Yet for all the diversity of cultural expressions and worship styles, there remain several constant norms for Christian worship that transcend cultures and keep us faithful to the gospel of Christ.

*(Worship Sourcebook, page 15 – 17.)*

## Worship Renewal Grant

Princeton Christian Reformed Church has received a Worship Renewal grant awarded by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Grand Rapids, Michigan with funds provided by Lilly Endowment Inc.

The grant will provide funds for the Princeton community to learn the worship vocabulary that has been part of our reformed faith historically. Exploring the meaning of the liturgical year and Vertical Habits will encourage intentional participation in daily worship. Studying the Psalms will be an integral part of these explorations. We want to glorify God in a way that is inclusive, inter-

generational, hospitable and alive with a fresh, new awareness of why we worship the way we do. *(Taken from the proposal submitted for grant funding)*

The Year of Worship Renewal will begin with a congregational retreat on **Saturday, September 10** at Camp Manitou-Lin. You won't want to miss this day led by Bob and Laura Keeley. In addition to learning, worship and great food we'll have time to talk and enjoy being together as God's family at Princeton. All expenses for the day are paid by the grant.

## Living Worship



August 2011

## Worship Words

When children are young, they learn words that build relationships. Some come easily: "Help!" "Why?" Parents and grandparents persistently teach them to say to others, "Thank you" "I'm sorry." We celebrate as these words become habits. When a child without prompting tells her brother, "I'm sorry," we know that these words are beginning to shape her life and her relationship. Just as our words form our habits in relationship with other people, the words of worship can form the habits of our relationship with God and the way we live out our faith.

You are invited to participate in a small group book study this fall. Please see the table in the Narthex for book, leader and time options. All books will be purchased through grant funds.

Each month worship will focus on one of the *Worship Words* to help us grow in *Living Worship*. You will receive a monthly newsletter describing the theme for the month that includes Scripture readings to help you practice the the *Worship Words* we are learning.

From January through April we'll have a series of speakers on *Living Worship* that will give insights on visual arts, words, music and Scripture in worship. Watch for a schedule in December.

### Monthly Themes

**September** – Petition  
"Help" (or Lord, Help Me)

**October** – Illumination  
"I'm Listening"

**November** – Gratitude  
"Thank you"

**December** – Praise  
"I Love You"

**January** – Blessing  
"Bless You"

**February** – Lament  
"Why?"

**March** – Confession  
"I'm Sorry"

**April** – Service  
"What Can I Do?"

## Daily Scripture Readings ~ Living Worship

# August 2011

	1 <i>Psalm 95</i>	2 <i>Matt. 6:33</i>	3 <i>Revelation 4</i>	4 <i>Prov. 3:1-6</i>	5 <i>2 Chron. 7:1-11</i>	6 <i>Psalm 89:14-18</i>
7 <i>Joshua 24:14-18</i>	8 <i>Matthew 18:20</i>	9 <i>Psalm 27:4</i>	10 <i>Romans 12:1,2</i>	11 <i>Psalm 66:1-4</i>	12 <i>John 4:21-24</i>	13 <i>Psalm 86:8-11</i>
14 <i>Phil. 2:5-11</i>	15 <i>Deut 12:1-7</i>	16 <i>Eph 5:18b-20</i>	17 <i>Psalm 24</i>	18 <i>Col. 3:1-4,12-17</i>	19 <i>Psalm 22:27,28</i>	20 <i>Genesis 28:16-22</i>
21 <i>Joshua 1:7-9</i>	22 <i>Heb. 12:28-13:16</i>	23 <i>Psalm 111</i>	24 <i>Psalm 100</i>	25 <i>Matthew 2:1-11</i>	26 <i>1 Chron.16:23-33 and Psalm 96</i>	27 <i>Isaiah 2:1-5</i>
28 <i>Psalm 138:2</i>	29 <i>Nehemiah 8:1-12</i>	30 <i>Romans 6:3-5</i>	31 <i>Rev. 15:1-4</i>			

1. Christian worship should be **biblical**.
2. Christian worship should be **dialogic**. In worship God speaks and God listens. And by the prompting of the Holy Spirit we listen and then respond with praise, confession, petition, testimony and dedication.
3. Christian Worship should be **covenantal**. In worship, God's gracious and new covenant with us in Christ is renewed, affirmed and sealed.
4. Christian worship should be **Trinitarian**. In worship we address the triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – one God in three persons.
5. Christian worship should be **communal**. The gospel of Christ draws us into communal life with other people.
6. Christian worship should be **hospitable, caring and welcoming**.
7. Christian worship should be **“in but not of” the world**.
8. Christian worship should be a **generous and excellent outpouring of ourselves before God**.

(Worship Sourcebook, page 15 – 17.)

## Worship At Its Best

Christians will often say things like “Worship helps me get through the week. I couldn’t make it Monday to Saturday without worshipping on Sunday” or “Worship is where I get my spiritual batteries charged.” There is truth in this, of course. Worship at its best can be truly uplifting and inspiring, and worship can fortify us for the mundane tasks of life. But it is finally too shallow to think of worship mainly as a kind of holy pep rally aimed at giving us the spiritual energy to get out there in the workaday world and shoulder life’s burdens.

Worship does more than inspire us; it transforms us. It changes the way we live, changes the way we view life’s challenges, changes

what truly matters to us, changes the way we see ourselves and others. If worship is only a way to get pumped up so that we can “keep on keeping on” then worship can too easily be reduced to a means to perpetuate the way we are already living. But worship is about more than spiritual motivation. It is about vision and hearing, and worship gives us new eyes and ears, a new set of lenses to look at the world, a new vocabulary allowing us to listen afresh and speak what we could not have said before. To see and hear differently is to live differently, to have the ways we think and feel, make decisions and act as Christians transformed.

Thomas Long, *Testimony*, pp 40, 41