

Philosophy of Corporate Worship at Threshold Church

for Practitioners of Art and Technology

MISSION STATEMENT

Bearing witness to the beauty of Christ for the glory of God and the good of the world.

PURPOSE AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

The purpose of this document is to define the Christ-centered ethos that guide those who actively shape corporate worship on a weekly basis at Threshold Church. This includes staff, elders, deacons, speakers & presenters, worship leaders, artists, tech teams in audio, video, and lights, as well as those who artistically design and decorate the space, building, grounds, and atmosphere.

ESSENTIAL BOUNDARIES OF THE CONVERSATION

We believe that corporate worship is first and foremost Christ centered and Biblically informed. In addition, we believe that all expressions of the arts through technology are under the authority of God's Word and the Holy Spirit's guidance.

At Threshold Church we magnify worship that is CREATIVE, BEAUTIFUL, and EXPERIENTIAL. We embrace the use of art and technology to amplify these facets of corporate worship.

Further, we believe that the fullness of life embodied in corporate worship is inherently welcoming and attractive to our local community. While corporate worship is not intended primarily to be an act of missions, it becomes an enticing display of the fullness of the Kingdom of God. As a result, people who have not experienced that joy will be drawn to it.

Finally, we believe that corporate worship is a central pillar of the church community, and that church members should consistently take part in corporate worship in person.

CORPORATE WORSHIP IS **CREATIVE**

In the beginning, the triune God was in perfect community, and still it brought him joy to create. It is His nature and therefore ours to create. As His children, we are crafted in His image as creative people. We are empowered to collaborate with the Holy Spirit through a multitude of diverse artistic gifts to create as an expression of worship.

These are Threshold Church's key values of creativity in corporate worship:

- Creativity is **DIVERSE**. We want to allow creative expression in a multitude of ways as unique as the diverse individuals represented in our congregation. This includes their gifts, artistic mediums, languages, cultures, and tastes.
- Creativity is **PROPHETIC**. Our unseen God is primarily accessed through the act of imagination and the process of making "Thy Kingdom Come". Bringing heavenly realities to earth is activated as we creatively engage heavenly realities (sounds, images, stories, truths). We not only talk "about" heaven or sing about it in our services, our creativity actually echoes it and carries with it the power and purpose of God!
- Creativity is **JOYFUL**. Just as "God inhabits the praises of His People" (Ps 22:3), so should the creative contributor delight to employ their God-given gift to corporate worship. We want to cultivate an environment that invokes joy in those who serve, observe, and participate in creative worship.
- Creativity is **SPONTANEOUS** and **FLUID**. It does not always adhere to prearranged plans, forcing creative communities to remain humble, sensitive, pliable, and open to the work of the Holy Spirit in real time. Creativity, by nature, means pursuing new and original expressions, and will therefore evolve and change in expression with the passing of time and with the addition or loss of individual contributors.

Bible support references: Ps. 139:14, Ex. 35:31-35, Jer. 10:12, Ps. 22:3

CORPORATE WORSHIP IS **BEAUTIFUL**

God's glory is the purest source of beauty. In our broken creation, beauty is both the haunted echo of Eden lost and the prophetic glimpse of God's future Kingdom come. While we inhabit the broken in-between time of history, beauty is like the cracks that let the light of heaven shine into our present darkness. In all its forms, beauty is the hallmark and signpost of God's presence incarnate.

These are Threshold Church's key values of beauty in corporate worship:

- Beauty is **ORDERLY** and has balance and a sense of right proportion.
- Beauty is **EXCELLENT** and shows skill and dedication.
- Beauty is **AUTHENTIC** and comes from a genuine place of the heart.
- Beauty is **PURE** and rises above distortion, hate, or the tainting of sin.
- Beauty is **INCARNATIONAL** and takes the unique expression of its vessel (person).

- Beauty is **ROOTED** in Christ and reflects His truth and goodness.
- Beauty is **HEAVENLY** and creates a thin space to reveal heavenly realities.

Bible support references: Phil. 4:8, Ecc. 3:11, Col. 3:23

CORPORATE WORSHIP IS **EXPERIENTIAL**

We are created with many senses to be able to experience the world around us. At Threshold Church, corporate worship embraces these senses to enfold participants in the feeling of a family gathering. This is evident from the moment people drive the intentionally circuitous paths from the road through the trees, to the way they are warmly greeted entering the prophetic and symbolic barn style architecture, to the majesty of Creation joining the congregation through the large sanctuary windows while music envelops them. These intentional design decisions are meant to provide mental space to disconnect from a chaotic and lonely 21st century lifestyle and engage with the church family in a communal experience of worship.

These are Threshold Church's key values of experiential worship:

- Experiential Worship is **COMMUNAL**, and distinct from individual worship, allowing many members to simultaneously contribute. Community is best experienced in person (rather than online), with a value put on regular attendance.
- Experiential Worship is **UNIFIED** with the many different members harmoniously working together to glorify Christ.
- Experiential Worship engages **ALL FIVE SENSES** of sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch- and quality elements should be chosen accordingly to protect each experience.
- Experiential Worship is **ACCESSIBLE** and is shaped to be welcoming and relevant to those participating. Consistency in worship format is warm, positive and welcoming.
- Experiential Worship is also **VARIED** and should take diverse forms, liturgies, seasons, and expressions. A healthy disruptive/surprise and unpredictability helps break through our expectations and allows us to experience worship in a new way.
- Experiential Worship is **MULTI-GENERATIONAL**, **MULTI-RACIAL**, and **MULTI-GENDER** with participants from all walks of life feeling they are represented in the service.
- Experiential Worship is **PARTICIPATORY** and requires active engagement from the congregation.
- Experiential Worship is **EDUCATIONAL** and thoughtfully trains participants to grow in their capacity of worship.

Bible support references: 2 Cor. 2:15, Gen. 27:27, Mat. 19:14

CONCLUSION

Corporate worship is the intentional act of bringing our whole humanity into communion with our church body before the triune God. The multi-faceted act of corporate worship reflects the broader story of creation, fall, redemption and restoration/new creation, orchestrated by God Himself. This story is seen born out in Scripture, and we experience it in our personal lives and collective corporate experience.

As practitioners of art and technology, we play a crucial role in helping to shape the look, feel and experience of corporate worship on a weekly basis. We are blessed with the opportunity to play a small role in the work that God is doing at Threshold, and embrace the expression of art through technology to help make worship CREATIVE, BEAUTIFUL, and EXPERIENTIAL.

Approved by the Session on February 20, 2023

