

Contemporary and Alternative Worship

Convener: Rev. Nelson Cowan (ncowan@bu.edu) is the Director of the Center for Worship and the Arts at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. He is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church.

Members in Attendance: Emily Snider Andrews, Taylor Burton-Edwards, Nelson Cowan, Jim Marriot, Adam Perez, Ed Phillips, Tim Ralston, Ron Rienstra, Melanie Ross, Diana Sanchez-Bushong, Matt Sigler, Casey Sigmon, Noel Snyder, Karen Westerfield Tucker, Nicholas Zork

Visitors: Shannan Baker, Sean Thomas

Description of Work: The Contemporary and Alternative Worship Seminar had an eclectic lineup of papers and presentations on topics such as: liturgical theologies and practices of contemporary praise and worship music, an evangelical megachurch embracing marriage as “sacrament,” the practice of eucharistic adoration accompanied by worship music, the origins of the charismatic renewal movement, and adolescent liturgical curiosity. This year’s visit to Seattle also inspired an off-site field trip to St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, often referred to as the birthplace of the Charismatic Renewal Movement. We heard a paper from Matt Sigler on the work of Fr. Dennis Bennett, then continued on for a lunch presentation at Seattle Pacific University on the relationship between worship and loneliness.

Papers and Presentations:

- Casey Sigmon: “Progressive Modern Worship Music? From Enigma to Establishment in Theological Education.”
- Shannan Baker: “Corner[stone]-ing the Market: How Worship Leaders Navigate Chart-topping Songs and their Brand Affiliations.”
- Adam Perez: “How Old is the Worship Music Industry?: Recursive Processes in Church Affiliation and Industry Apparatus.”
- Sean Thomas: “The Lived Experience of Eucharistic Adoration.”
- Emily Snider Andrews: “From Pragmatism to Doctrinal Commitment: An Evangelical Megachurch Embraces ‘Sacrament’.”
- Nelson Cowan: “Assessing the Liturgical Curiosity of Teenagers: Methods and Metrics.”
- Matt Sigler: “Fully Charismatic, Clearly Episcopalian: Worship Practices at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in the 1970s.”