

# The Future of Worship

*Fusion Plenary 1*  
*Led by Nelson Cowan*

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This plenary addresses the unique spot United Methodists occupy in contemporary worship as we dream of our future together. Instead of falling back on uncritical pragmatism or copying the playbook of the contemporary worship industrial complex, we need to look back at our historical, liturgical, and theological roots. By leaning into our tradition marked by creative tension, we can build a distinctly United Methodist approach to contemporary worship propelling us into a future that is theologically rich, sacramentally rooted, globally inspired, ecumenically aware, socially conscious, and holistically formative.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate how the United Methodist tradition's historical framework of creative tension provides a resilient foundation for modern worship renewal.
2. Explore the pitfalls of the contemporary worship industrial complex and the theological blind spots of importing ungrounded models.
3. Apply distinctly United Methodist hallmarks to contemporary worship contexts.

## OUTLINE

Part 1: A Tradition of Creative Tension – 10 min  
Part 2: The Tension We Find Ourselves in Now – 5 min  
Part 3: Developing a Distinctly United Methodist Approach – 10 min  
Part 4: Opportunities and On-Ramps – 10 min  
Part 5: Facilitated Table Discussion – 15 min

## MATERIALS NEEDED

200+ rubber bands