



Asher Warketin

Springridge Mennonite church

2025 Student Bursary Application Reflection

I took a class this past year called *Art of Worship*. In this course, we deconstructed various aspects of Christian worship—such as singing, preaching, imagery, community, and prayer—to examine how these practices either aid or hinder our ability to connect spiritually. Uncovering the intentions behind these practices—and recognizing where our traditions sometimes fall short of those intentions—was a troubling process for many in the class, yet it proved deeply thought-provoking and meaningful. Setting aside our own preconceptions and being willing to engage with uncomfortable and unfamiliar ideas is not easy, but it's something that has come up consistently during my time at CMU. It's a challenge that continues to help me grow, both in faith and beyond.

Many of my other courses have challenged me in similar ways, often leaving me walking out of class deep in thought and unsure of how what I'd just heard would—or should—affect my worldview. *Senior Seminar in Evolution* was a particularly intriguing course where students took turns preparing and presenting lectures on a wide range of topics related—either directly or indirectly—to evolution. The diversity of topics, along with the unique ways students chose to engage with and present them, made for an engaging and enjoyable semester. At the same time, some of the ideas we explored had implications that differed from what I've been trained to believe. With some topics, I was able to fully agree with the material presented. Others left me unsettled, wanting to better understand the unfamiliar perspectives—and why I struggled with them. And this caused me to grow.

I look forward to continuing to have my beliefs and assumptions challenged as I enter this next year at CMU.