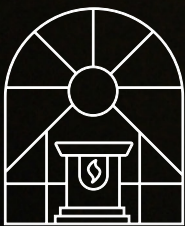


Presenting Sponsor



Festival of HOMILETICS

Preaching to Heal the Divide



May 12-15, 2025 | Atlanta
festivalofhomiletics.com

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Scan the QR code for instant access to our complete digital package – daily schedules, liturgies, speaker resources, and more!

Don't Miss a Thing! Your Guide to Making the Most of the Event

With multiple tracks running simultaneously Tuesday through Thursday, take a moment to map out your must-see sessions. Here's what you need to know:

Entering the Venue: The doors to be used by all Festival attendees (all of which are ADA accessible) can be found on the map on page 82, and are as follows:

- Blue Lot Entry
- Grace Hall Entry
- Rollins Entry
- Harp Center Entry

Getting a Seat: All sessions, including workshops, operate on a first-come, first-served basis. Arrive early to secure your spot – popular sessions fill up quickly! Please note that food and beverages are not permitted in the sanctuary.

Stay Comfortable & Courteous: Keep the space welcoming for everyone by tucking bags under your seat. Remember to silence your devices during sessions.

Get Social: While your phone's on silent, put it to good use! Download our event app (Whova), then search for Festival of Homiletics to connect with other attendees and join meetup groups with shared interests. Share your experience with our community, tag us on Instagram @festivalofhomiletics

Accessibility: Need an assisted hearing loop? Just stop by any venue's information desk – we're here to help ensure you have the best experience possible.

Welcome

We're so glad you're here.

Our theme for 2025 is Preaching to Heal the Divide. In a time when our communities, nation, and world face deepening divisions – political, social, economic, and spiritual – we believe faithful preaching has a unique power to build bridges, foster understanding, and restore broken relationships.

This theme emerged from listening deeply to preachers' experiences over the past year. They have shared stories of congregations torn by polarization, of families split by ideological differences, and of communities struggling to find common ground. Yet in these challenging times, they have also witnessed moments of profound reconciliation and healing through the proclaimed Word.

Preachers today carry the weight of not just proclaiming the Gospel, but of helping their communities navigate through deeply divisive times. They need resources, wisdom, and support to serve as agents of healing and reconciliation. The 2025 Festival of Homiletics aims to provide exactly that – practical tools, theological frameworks, and spiritual nourishment for the vital work of bridge-building through preaching.

Our hope is that participants will leave the Festival equipped with practical strategies for healing division through their preaching, renewed in their spiritual vigor, and reconnected to the transformative power of the Gospel to bring people together.

Thank you for joining us in this crucial work. Come ready to share your wisdom as we learn together how to preach healing into the divides of our time.

Karoline Lewis, Program Director
Festival of Homiletics



Wi-Fi

No public wi-fi is available

Social Media

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Welcome to Peachtree Road United Methodist Church

On behalf of the members and staff of Peachtree Road United Methodist Church, we are pleased to welcome you to Atlanta and the 2025 Festival of Homiletics. We are delighted to be the host church as you consider "Preaching to Heal the Divide."

If you are here in Atlanta for the first time, we want you to know that much of what makes our city an exciting place to visit is within a short distance of the church. We are located in the heart of Buckhead, a center for shopping and dining in Atlanta. We believe you will enjoy the variety of restaurants as well as the warm friendliness of our people. Our staff stands ready to recommend a favorite restaurant or shop to you.

In addition, we have a group of volunteers who would be delighted to give you a tour of our beautiful facilities. The 1,800-seat sanctuary, which was completed 23 years ago, is the center for the worship life of our congregation. I would describe our worship services as warm, traditional, and welcoming to all, as we gather in a place that instills a sense of reverence in us. We are blessed to have two organs in our sanctuary – the Great Organ was installed when the sanctuary was built, and the Gallery Organ in the balcony was added in 2008. You will have an opportunity to hear both of these renowned instruments that were designed, built, and installed by Mander Organs of England.

Peachtree Road UMC is an 8,600-member church with a vital ministry in the Buckhead community. Our mission is "Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," and we live this mission out through our ministries of worship, nurture, outreach, and witness. Our staff will be available to you to talk about any of those aspects of our ministry that may interest you. We are especially delighted to welcome you as we

celebrate our centennial. The church was founded in 1925, and, as a part of our year-long celebration, we have an art display of origami doves in our sanctuary. This unique display has been an inspiring addition to our worship, and we look forward to sharing it with you.

Again, welcome to Atlanta. We are delighted that you are here and look forward to helping you in any way possible. We pray that this week will be a source of inspiration for you in your ministry.

Bill Britt, Senior Minister
Peachtree Road United Methodist Church

3180 Peachtree Road NE
Atlanta, Georgia, 30305
(404) 266-2373 | prumc.org



ADA-accessible entrances include:
Blue Lot Entry, Grace Hall Entry, Rollins Entry,
Harp Center Entry

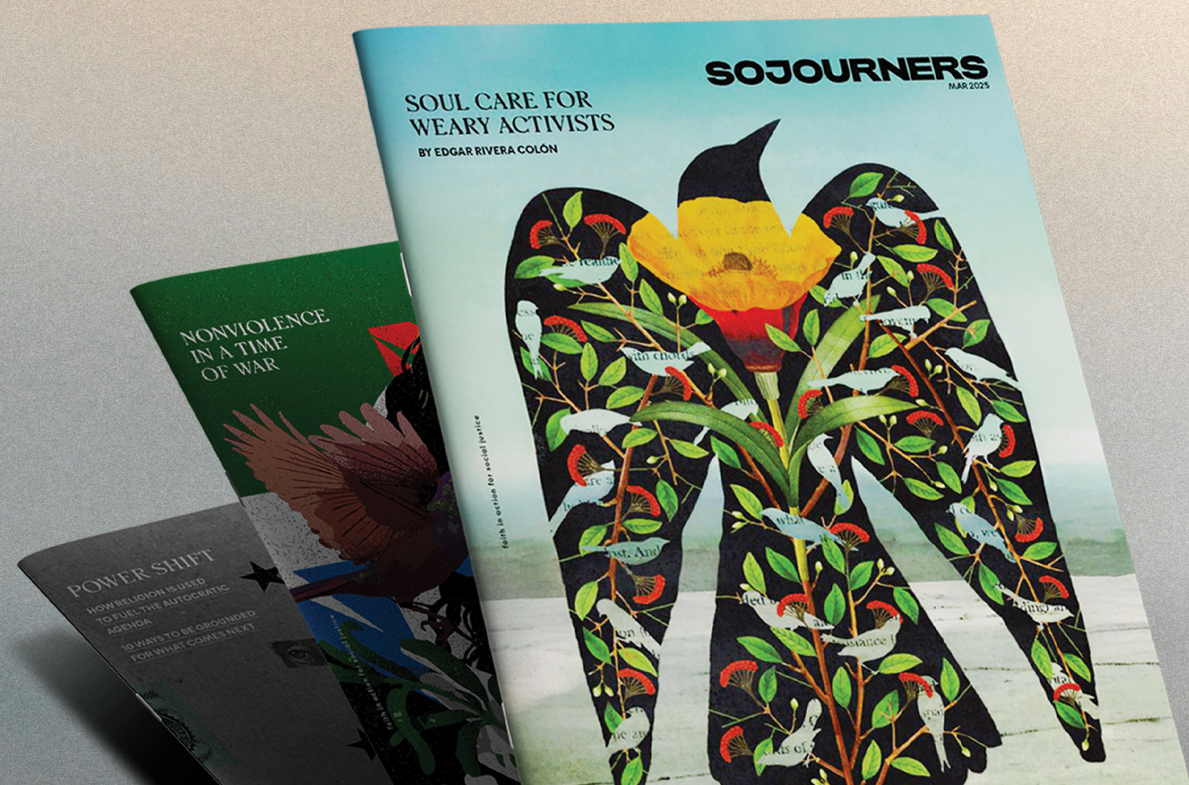
To locate these entrances, see the map on
page 82.

ACCESSIBILITY



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Agenda

Monday, May 12		
	Sanctuary	Harp Center
2 p.m.	Registration/Check-In Begins	Book Signing: David Howell (2–4 p.m.)
5:30 p.m.	First-Timer Orientation	
With gratitude to Princeton Theological Seminary & Crystal Hall for sponsoring tonight's kick-off!		
6 p.m.	Land Acknowledgment & Welcome	
6:30 p.m.	Sermon: Allan Boesak – “In Need of a Healing Moment,” Matthew 11:28; 14:13-14, 34-36; Luke 5:15-16 Recording	
7:30 p.m.	Lecture: Anna Carter Florence – “Staying Together, Running Aground” Looking to the shipwreck scene in Acts 27 as a source of wisdom for today.	

We're excited to announce that Elias Tours will be sponsoring a Mediterranean afternoon meal for the first 500 attendees on Monday from 3:30-4:30 p.m. The meal will be served outside the Harp Center (where initial registration takes place) if weather permits. Attendees can register and then grab a meal before the program begins (note: no food or drink is permitted in the sanctuary) - a perfect way to refuel and meet other participants.

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For more about our academic programs, visit luthersem.edu/admissions.



Luther Seminary

Tuesday, May 13	
	Sanctuary
9 a.m.	Sermon: Melva Sampson – “Don’t Shrink Back,” Hebrews 10:32-39 This sermon will challenge us not to shrink back from faithful proclamation even in the face of uncertainty and conflict, but instead to stand firm with courage and hope.
10 a.m.	Morning Break Many thanks to United Lutheran Seminary for sponsoring today’s morning break!
10:30 a.m.	Lecture: Brian Blount – “Help My Unbelief: A Personal Encounter with Paul’s Christ and Mark’s Jesus” An autobiographically inspired engagement with faith and unfaith in Paul’s presentation of Christ and Mark’s narrative of Jesus, as particularly focused on the father’s cry at Mark 9:24.
11:30 a.m.	Lunch Break
1 p.m.	

Tuesday, May 13		
	Grace Hall	Harp Center
9 a.m.	Sermon: Cynthia Hale – “It’s Not Complicated!” Ephesians 4:1-6 Given all the division in the world, Christians are in a wonderful position to help heal the divide by living out the unity we have in Christ. As Warren Wierbe said, we don’t have to manufacture the unity; we just have to maintain it. We are one.	
10 a.m.	Morning Break Many thanks to United Lutheran Seminary for sponsoring today’s morning break!	Book Signing: Olu Brown (10 a.m.–12 p.m.)
10:30 a.m.		
11:30 a.m.	Lunch Break	
1 p.m.	Platinum Sponsorship Message: Betsy Shirley, Sojourners – “The Press and the Pulpit: We’ve Both Got Trust Issues” Journalists and preachers are no strangers to working amid uncertainty while striving to tell the truth. But beyond our usual struggles – dwindling audiences and limited resources – both journalists and clergy are facing a new challenge: record lows in public trust. Join <i>Sojourners</i> editor in chief Betsy Shirley	

Tuesday, May 13	
	Sanctuary
1 p.m.	
1:30 p.m.	Lecture: Joy J. Moore – “Recovering Truth amid Doctrinal Divergence”
2:30 p.m.	Sermon: Olu Brown – “ A New Day, a Renewed Hope, and a Promised Future,” Romans 12:9-13 In a world that moves at lightning speed, the enduring power of love, hope, and hospitality remains the foundation of a brighter future. No matter how fast life changes, these timeless values anchor us, strengthen our communities, and propel us forward. Together, we are stronger, and our future is filled with promise.
3:30 p.m.	Afternoon Break
4 p.m.	Workshops: See schedule below
5 p.m.	Evening Free

Tuesday, May 13		
	Grace Hall	Harp Center
1 p.m.	(<i>continued</i>) in exploring what those of us engaged in different sectors of truth-telling work might learn from each other as we build trust with folks who, frankly, have pretty good reasons to be skeptical.	
1:30 p.m.	Lecture: Rachel Baard – “Public Theology and the Life of the Church” Public theology, driven by an ethical demand for a commonly shared language for public life, is an indispensable part of addressing various factors that contribute to societal disintegration. Within the life of the church and its worship practices, public theology seeks ways to move beyond the impasse of either withdrawal from the world in pietistic quietism, or an activism that replaces faith instead of being its fruit.	
2:30 p.m.	Sermon: Anna Carter Florence – “Testing Grounds,” Luke 4:1-13 Thinking about Jesus’ encounter with the Tempter in the Wilderness as a model for our own under-pressure conversations.	
3:30 p.m.	Afternoon Break	
4 p.m.	Workshops: See schedule below	
5 p.m.	Evening Free	

Tuesday's Workshops

Please check the Whova app for workshop locations.

Workshop: David Gushee – “Rocking Everyone’s World with the Teachings of Jesus”

One way to heal the divide in our churches and pierce through polarization is through a preaching and teaching program centering Jesus and demonstrating how he challenges all of us. Core Jesus teachings for such a project will be workshopped.

Workshop: “Live Sermon Brainwave”

Join Sermon Brainwave cohosts Rolf Jacobson, Karoline Lewis, and Matt Skinner for a discussion on the texts for Pentecost Sunday.

Workshop: Rachel Baard – “In Search of Truth and Reconciliation: Living in a Purple World”

This workshop leans into the history of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the field of reconciliation studies, and elements of the classical Christian theological tradition to highlight some of the complexities of and possibilities for truth, justice, and reconciliation. Specifically, the workshop seeks to look at ways in which space can be made for truth and truth-telling in the interest of restorative justice and reconciliation.

Tuesday's Workshops

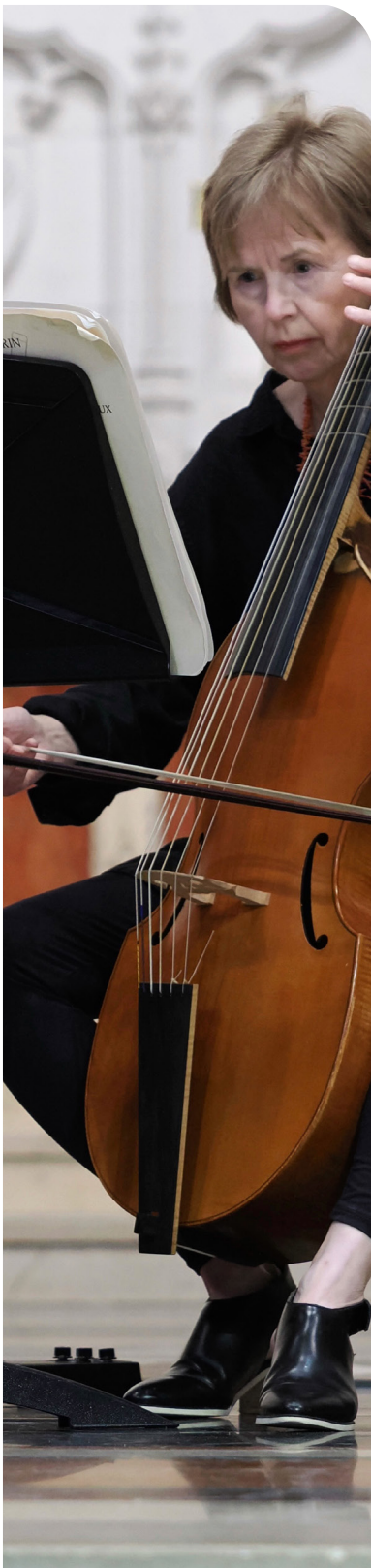
Please check the Whova app for workshop locations.

Workshop: Jake Myers – “Preaching Jokes to Power: How to Challenge Injustice and Build Bridges through Humor”

Comedy is a double-edged sword. It can pierce ideologies that perpetuate injustice as well as forge community amid the differences that divide us. This workshop teaches preachers about the structural potential of jokes and bits to craft sermons that are both prophetic and priestly. Preachers will get to implement these techniques in community to foster preaching that challenges unjust sociopolitical ideologies and draws congregants toward our shared humanity through laughter.

Workshop: Brent Strawn – “Learning Forgiveness with St. Joseph”

Healing divisions often involves granting forgiveness but that is often hard to do. This workshop will explore the Joseph cycle in Genesis 37-50 to see what resources may be found there for the crucial but oh-so-difficult task of forgiving.



Wednesday, May 14	
	Sanctuary
9 a.m.	Sermon: Eric Barreto – “We,” Luke 15:1-7 This sermon begins by noticing the question that prompts Jesus to narrate three particularly striking parables. The parables answer the question, “Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners?” By weaving in verses from the hymn “A Woman and a Coin,” we encounter the stories anew and find at the end a picture of belonging, the possibility of finding a more expansive “we” than we had previously assumed.
10 a.m.	Morning Break Many thanks to The Bridge for Early Career Preachers (of Union Presbyterian Seminary) for sponsoring today’s morning break!
10:30 a.m.	Lecture: Austen Hartke – “Beyond Division, Beyond Binaries: Gender Diversity in Your Congregation” When division in our congregation pushes us toward black-and-white thinking, might a commitment to gender diversity better equip us for imagining an abundance of possibilities? Let’s explore how communities that fully affirm and integrate transgender members use their communal knowledge to model new ways of being church together.
11:30 a.m.	Lunch Break
1 p.m.	Platinum Sponsorship Message: The Christian Century

Wednesday, May 14		
	Grace Hall	Harp Center
9 a.m.	Sermon: Jared Alcántara – “Repairer of the Breach,” Isaiah 58:9b-12 Preaching to heal the divide requires renewal and recalibration on the part of preachers and churches. In a divided age marked by racial hatred, polarization, and xenophobia, God calls leaders and churches to repair and restore, to cross borders for the sake of the gospel.	
10 a.m.	Morning Break Many thanks to The Bridge for Early Career Preachers (of Union Presbyterian Seminary) for sponsoring today’s morning break!	Book Signing: David Gushee (10 a.m.–12 p.m.)
10:30 a.m.	Lecture: Donyelle McCray – “The Apostle Pauli: Bridging the Divide” + Q&A Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray (1910-1985) was a poet, activist, attorney, professor and Episcopal priest who preached during the rocky aftermath of the Episcopal Church’s ordination of women. Determined to face resistance with energy and joy, Murray had to unearth new spiritual resources. This lecture explores the theological commitments and homiletical strategies that proved helpful for Murray and still hold promise for contemporary preachers.	
11:30 a.m.	Lunch Break	
1 p.m.	Platinum Sponsorship Message: Fred Chambers, Thrivent – “Making an Impact: Your Generosity Story”	

Wednesday, May 14	
	Sanctuary
1:30 p.m.	Lecture: David Gushee – “Proclaiming the Moral Teaching of Jesus” + Q&A Part of what has gone wrong in US Christianity is that the moral teaching of Jesus has been obscured, ignored, or buried in political ideology. Preachers need to center what Jesus taught and speak our own “native language” rather than borrowing from elsewhere.
2:30 p.m.	Sermon: Matt Skinner – “On Death and Other Deadly Divides,” Isaiah 58:6-12; Acts 9:36-42 There are always numerous breaches to repair and many motivations for doing so. But a Christian desire to promote healing, repair, reconciliation, justice, and belonging of all kinds derives primarily from an Easter conviction that all death is a loss and that death itself is a nemesis. Death, like other divides, calls first for protest.
3:30 p.m.	Afternoon Break
4 p.m.	Workshops: See schedule below
5 p.m.	Evening Free

Wednesday, May 14		
	Grace Hall	Harp Center
1:30 p.m.	Lecture: Brent Strawn – “613 Points (or So) and a Poem (or Two): Watching Moses Preach (in) Deuteronomy” As Fred Craddock pointed out years ago, the Bible is not only a book <i>for</i> preaching but a book <i>of</i> preaching. Contemporary preachers can learn a great deal by watching how Moses preaches the book of Deuteronomy and preaches within Deuteronomy. Indeed, the entire Torah, often called the Five Books of Moses, is a remarkable resource when thinking about “preaching to heal the divide.”	
2:30 p.m.	Sermon: Teresa Fry Brown – “Re-member to Sing,” Psalm 137 This sermon focuses on “re-memory” of the power of the melodic lament in tremulous times.	
3:30 p.m.	Afternoon Break	
4 p.m.	Workshops: See schedule below	
5 p.m.	Evening Free	

Wednesday's Workshops

Please check the Whova app for workshop locations.

Workshop: Jared Alcántara – “How to Turn the Ear into an Eye: Preaching as an Oral-Aural Event”

This workshop helps participants “preach for the ear” instead of “preach for the eye” through helping them to conceive of the sermon as an oral-aural event rather than a written artifact. It teaches the rules of orality in preaching, discusses practices to avoid when preparing sermons, and invites participants to learn from one another through the practice of preaching for the ear.

Workshop: Eric Barreto – “Preaching Luke Backwards”

Some stories are not meant to be read once and in order. Some stories are meant for us to revisit over and over again. The Gospel of Luke is such a story, providing an ideal opportunity to remember and learn the story of Jesus’s cross and resurrection anew, afresh, and perhaps from a different vantage point. So what would it look like to read this Gospel backwards? In a world turned upside down by pandemics and politics alike, how might we approach our preaching if we start at the foot of the cross, at the threshold of the empty tomb? And what if we end the story where it starts, in the arms of Mary? From the end to the beginning, Luke narrates a good news that transforms a ruptured world.

Workshop: Rolf Jacobson – “Preaching the Ten Commandments: The Community God Forms Through the Law”

A pastoral hero of mine once said, “A pastor should preach through the Ten Commandments at least once every three years.” This workshop will help equip pastors to do exactly that, with a focus on how God uses the Decalogue to form a community. As soon as God reclaimed his people from bondage in Egypt, the first thing he did was give them the Ten Commandments, to describe how free people live and to form a community to bear God’s name.

Wednesday's Workshops

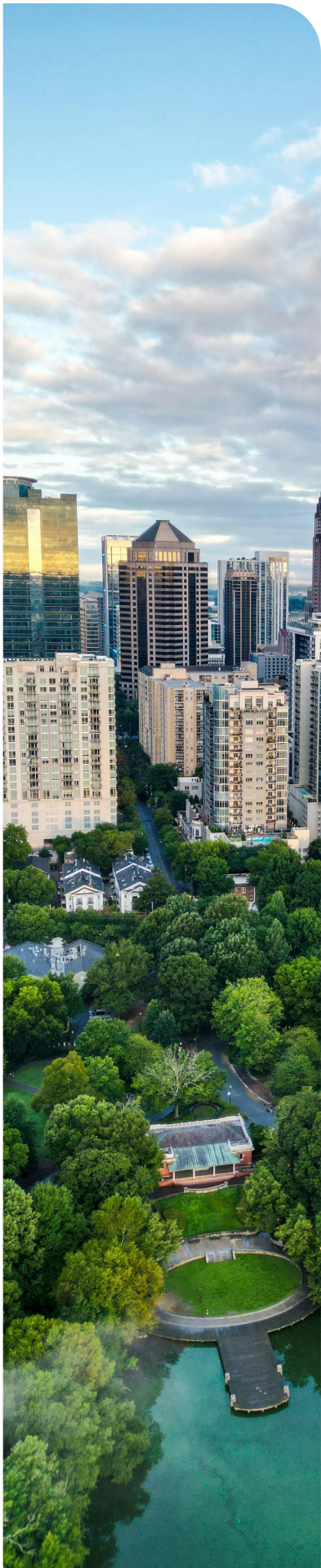
Please check the Whova app for workshop locations.

Workshop: Donyelle McCray – “The Introverted Preacher: Practical Strategies”

How can introverts approach the public demands of preaching while being true to themselves? Designed for self-identified introverts, this workshop explores strengths introverts typically bring to preaching as well as practical strategies to try before, during, and after sermons.

Workshop: William Yoo – “The Uses and Misuses of History: Preaching to Make a Real Difference for Racial Justice and Repair”

More and more Christians yearn for preaching that addresses racism because they believe racial prejudice is a terrible sin. But Christians everywhere also keep fighting with one another about critical race theory, DEI, politics, reparations, and more. In this workshop, William Yoo covers how history is used and misused when Christians talk about racism today, and he identifies practical steps and pitfalls for preachers who want to make a real difference for racial justice from their pulpits.



Thursday, May 15	
	Sanctuary
9 a.m.	Sermon: Otis Moss III – “Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace,” Isaiah 58:3-12 What happens when “prophets and poets” refuse to speak? What are the consequences for choosing to speak in the midst of an empire? The American church unfortunately has too often chosen empire comfort over prophetic consequences. We are called as witnesses of God’s grace to speak now in this moment or forever hold our peace.
10 a.m.	Morning Break Many thanks to Columbia Theological Seminary & Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for sponsoring today’s morning break!
10:30 a.m.	Lecture: Otis Moss III – “When Ministry Becomes an Idol” Ministry, while rewarding, has the ability to seduce well-meaning practitioners into the dangerous void of idolizing the craft, actions, and access afforded to those who minister. There are practices we must all engage to release ourselves from the human-created residue and folly found in the void of idolatry.
11:30 a.m.	Lunch Break

Thursday, May 15		
	Grace Hall	Harp Center
9 a.m.	Sermon: Valerie Bridgeman – “Making Room at the Table,” Proverbs 9:1-6 Holiday meals might have been difficult for some people after the 2024 elections in the US. Faces and feelings set and firm as fruitcake. But what happens when we accept the invitation to make room at the table for wisdom’s delicacies? When we determine to move over, listen, and savor relationships, both human and divine?	
10 a.m.	Morning Break Many thanks to Columbia Theological Seminary & Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for sponsoring today’s morning break!	Book Signing: Ted Smith (10 a.m.–12 p.m.)
10:30 a.m.	Lecture: Bishop Gregory Palmer – “Assuming Our True Vocation” Exploring the ways in which our preaching can be an ongoing exercise in accommodating what is. The aim of our preaching is to participate in the creation of what is not.	
11:30 a.m.	Lunch Break	

Thursday, May 15	
	Sanctuary
1:30 p.m.	Lecture: Ted Smith – “Preaching the Wounds” Christian hope for healing is not for the restoration of some imagined past, but for real resurrection of the wounded body. Learning from both Pietist and liberationist traditions, we will consider ways preachers might tarry with wounds in familial, civic, and ecclesial bodies in order to bear witness to a healing that is more than middle-way civility.
2:30 p.m.	Afternoon Break
3 p.m.	Sermon: Bishop Gregory Palmer – “Come Closer,” Genesis 45:1-15 Holy Communion Taking off our masks readies us to take care of the unfinished business that contributes to healing for self, neighbor, and the world.

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Speakers



Jared Alcántara

Professor of Preaching, Baylor's Truett Theological Seminary

Jared E. Alcántara is Professor of Preaching, holds the Paul W. Powell Endowed Chair in Preaching, and is the Director of the Kyle Lake Center for Effective Preaching at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas. His recent publications include *The Challenge of Joseph H. Jackson*, *How to Preach Proverbs*, *Let the Legends Preach*, and *The Practices of Christian Preaching*. Alcántara is a member of the Academy of Homiletics, the Evangelical Homiletics Society, and the Hispanic Theological Initiative. An ordained Baptist minister, he has also served as a youth pastor, associate pastor, and teaching pastor in Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, and New Jersey.

When and where to find Jared during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: "Repairer of the Breach," Isaiah 58:9b-12

Wednesday, 9 a.m., Grace Hall

Workshop: "How to Turn the Ear into an Eye: Preaching as an Oral-Aural Event"

Wednesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app

 jaredalcantara.com

Repairer of the Breach Isaiah 58:9b-12

Preaching to heal the divide requires renewal and recalibration on the part of preachers and churches. In a divided age marked by racial hatred, polarization, and xenophobia, God calls leaders and churches to repair and restore, to cross borders for the sake of the gospel.

Notes:

How to Turn the Ear into an Eye: Preaching as an Oral-Aural Event

This workshop helps participants "preach for the ear" instead of "preach for the eye" through helping them to conceive of the sermon as an oral-aural event rather than a written artifact. It teaches the rules of orality in preaching, discusses practices to avoid when preparing sermons, and invites participants to learn from one another through the practice of preaching for the ear.

Notes:



Rachel Baard

Professor of Theology and Ethics,
Union Presbyterian Seminary

Rachel S. Baard studied theology at the University of Stellenbosch in her native South Africa before completing a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. She taught humanities at Villanova University in Pennsylvania for several years before joining Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, as Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics, where she also serves as Director of the Master of Arts in Public Theology Program. She is the author of *Sexism and Sin-Talk: Feminist Conversations on the Human Condition* (WJK 2019), and editor of *The Political Theology of Paul Tillich* (Lexington 2024). Her current book project focuses on developing a constructive Protestant perspective on Mary.

When and where to find Rachel during the Festival of Homiletics:

Lecture: "Public Theology and the Life of the Church"

Tuesday, 1:30 p.m., Grace Hall

Workshop: "In Search of Truth and Reconciliation: Living in a Purple World"

Tuesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app



Rachel Baard

Public Theology and the Life of the Church

Public theology, driven by an ethical demand for a commonly shared language for public life, is an indispensable part of addressing various factors that contribute to societal disintegration. Within the life of the church and its worship practices, public theology seeks ways to move beyond the impasse of either withdrawal from the world in pietistic quietism, or an activism that replaces faith instead of being its fruit.

Notes:



Provocative Question: How can the church, in a time of religious and political fragmentation, be an instrument for the greater good through the practice of _____?

In Search of Truth and Reconciliation: Living in a Purple World

This workshop leans into the history of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the field of reconciliation studies, and elements of the classical Christian theological tradition to highlight some of the complexities of and possibilities for truth, justice, and reconciliation. Specifically, the workshop seeks to look at ways in which space can be made for truth and truth-telling in the interest of restorative justice and reconciliation.

Notes:



Provocative Question: How can the church offer space for _____ and _____ in the interest of restorative justice and reconciliation amidst the broken realities of our times?



Eric Barreto

Weyerhaeuser Associate Professor of New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary

Eric D. Barreto is Weyerhaeuser Associate Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary and an ordained Baptist minister. He is the author of *Ethnic Negotiations: The Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16* (Mohr Siebeck, 2010), the co-author of *Exploring the Bible* (Fortress Press, 2016), and editor of *Reading Theologically* (Fortress Press, 2014).

When and where to find Eric during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: "We," Luke 15:1-7
Wednesday, 9 a.m., Sanctuary

Workshop: "Preaching Luke Backwards"
Wednesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app



ericbarreto.com



Eric Barreto



@eric.barreto

We Luke 15:1-7

This sermon begins by noticing the question that prompts Jesus to narrate three particularly striking parables. The parables answer the question, Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners? By weaving in verses from the hymn "A Woman and a Coin," we encounter the stories anew and find at the end a picture of belonging, the possibility of finding a more expansive "we" than we had previously assumed.

Notes:



Provocative Question: What happens when God reminds us that ___includes___?

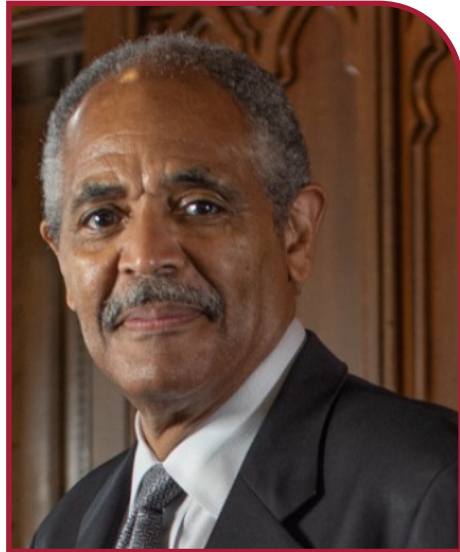
Preaching Luke Backwards

Some stories are not meant to be read once and in order. Some stories are meant for us to revisit over and over again. The Gospel of Luke is such a story, providing an ideal opportunity to remember and learn the story of Jesus's cross and resurrection anew, afresh, and perhaps from a different vantage point. So what would it look like to read this Gospel backwards? In a world turned upside down by pandemics and politics alike, how might we approach our preaching if we start at the foot of the cross, at the threshold of the empty tomb? And what if we end the story where it starts, in the arms of Mary? From the end to the beginning, Luke narrates a good news that transforms a ruptured world.

Notes:



Provocative Question: What if Luke meant for us to read the Gospel from the ___ to the _____?



Brian Blount

President Emeritus, Union Presbyterian Seminary

Brian K. Blount is President Emeritus of Union Presbyterian Seminary, following service as the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Princeton Theological Seminary. An M.Div. graduate of Princeton Seminary, he obtained his B.A. from the College of William and Mary. After seminary, he was pastor of the Carver Memorial Presbyterian Church in Newport News, Virginia. He later received his Ph.D. in New Testament Studies from Emory University. He has served as the president of the Society of Biblical Literature and the president of the Association of Theological Schools. His primary research has been in the Gospel of Mark, the book of Revelation and cultural studies and hermeneutics.

When and where to find Brian during the Festival of Homiletics:

Lecture: "Help My Unbelief: A Personal Encounter with Paul's Christ and Mark's Jesus"

Tuesday, 10:30 a.m., Sanctuary



briankblount.com

Help My Unbelief: A Personal Encounter with Paul's Christ and Mark's Jesus

An autobiographically inspired engagement with faith and unfaith in Paul's presentation of Christ and Mark's narrative of Jesus, as particularly focused on the father's cry at Mark 9:24.

Notes:



Provocative Question: Why do we confuse ____ with what we _____?



Allan Boesak

Reverend & Professor (Emeritus)

South African Black Liberation theologian Allan Boesak is an alumnus of the University of the Western Cape, and of Kampen Theological University (The Netherlands). He is a preacher and the author of 29 books. His most recent publication is a 4-volume work, *The Fire, the River and the Scorched Earth Between* (public lectures, essays, and sermons). Rev. Boesak is an inductee of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Board of Preachers at Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia.

Recording from Allan during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: "In Need of a Healing Moment," Matthew 11:28; 14:13-14, 34-36;

Luke 5:15-16

Monday, 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

In Need of a Healing Moment

Matthew 11:28; 14:13-14, 34-36; Luke 5:15-16

Public theology, driven by an ethical demand for a commonly shared language for public life, is an indispensable part of addressing various factors that contribute to societal disintegration. Within the life of the church and its worship practices, public theology seeks ways to move beyond the impasse of either withdrawal from the world in pietistic quietism, or an activism that replaces faith instead of being its fruit.

Notes:



Valerie Bridgeman

Dean & Vice President of Academic Affairs,
Methodist Theological School in Ohio

Valerie Bridgeman is Associate Professor of Homiletics & Hebrew Bible, as well as Dean & Vice President of Academic Affairs at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. She also is the founding president and CEO of WomanPreach, a training organization to help preachers find and hone their prophetic voice. She is a member of several guilds, a regular contributor to WorkingPreacher.org, and the author of several articles and essays on preaching and Bible. She received her Ph.D. from Baylor University in Religion, her M.Div. from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and her B.A. in Communication and Religion from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

When and where to find Valerie during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: "Making Room at the Table," Proverbs 9:1-6

Thursday, 9 a.m., Grace Hall



mtso.edu –
Faculty Directory



Valerie Bridgeman



@vbridge90

Making Room at the Table

Proverbs 9:1-6

Holiday meals might have been difficult for some people after the 2024 elections in the US. Faces and feelings set and firm as fruitcake. But what happens when we accept the invitation to make room at the table for wisdom's delicacies? When we determine to move over, listen, and savor relationships, both human and divine?

Notes:



Provocative Question: How do we foster
_____ in a divided community?



Olu Brown

Owner, Culverhouse LLC

Olujimi (Olu) Brown, a native of Lufkin, Texas, is the father of Daya Elom and Langston Wesley Brown. He graduated from Jarvis Christian College and earned a Master of Divinity from Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta. As Lead Pastor of Impact Church in East Point, Georgia, he grew the congregation from 25 people to over 5,000, earning recognition as one of the 25 Fastest Growing Large United Methodist Churches. In 2021, he announced his retirement from pastoral ministry and introduced Normalizing Next®, a framework helping organizations navigate change. On August 26, 2024, he launched his candidacy for Governor of Georgia in the 2026 election, marking a historic moment for the state. A Professional Certified Coach (PCC) with the International Coaching Federation, Olu continues to provide leadership coaching, speaking engagements, and resources.

When and where to find Olu during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: "A New Day, a Renewed Hope, and a Promised Future," Romans 12:9-13
Tuesday, 2:30 p.m., Sanctuary



olubrown.com



Olu Brown



@pastorolubrown

A New Day, a Renewed Hope, and a Promised Future

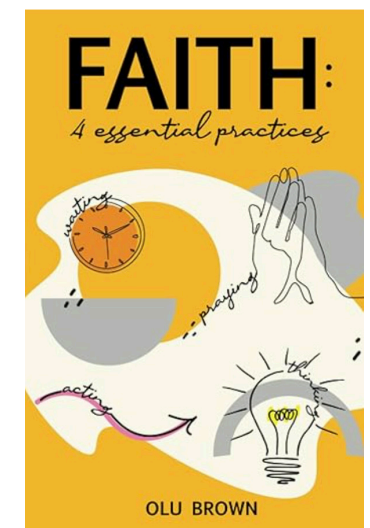
Romans 12: 9-13

In a world that moves at lightning speed, the enduring power of love, hope, and hospitality remains the foundation of a brighter future. No matter how fast life changes, these timeless values anchor us, strengthen our communities, and propel us forward. Together we are stronger, and our future is filled with promise.

Notes:



Book Signing
Tuesday, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.
Harp Center





Teresa Fry Brown

Bandy Professor of Preaching, Associate
Dean for Academic Affairs, Candler School of
Theology, Emory University

Rev. Teresa L. Fry Brown, PhD., is Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta. Dr. Fry Brown obtained a Doctor of Philosophy in Religious and Theological Studies from Iliff School of Theology and the University of Denver, with an emphasis in Religion and Social Transformation (1996). The author of five monographs, she has 60 published reviews, chapters, and commentaries. She holds membership in the American Academy of Religion, Society for the Study of Black Religion, and Academy of Homiletics. An ordained Itinerant Elder in the AME Church, she serves as scholar in residence at New Bethel AME Church, Lithonia.

When and where to find Teresa during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: "Re-member to Sing," Psalm 137

Wednesday, 2:30 p.m., Grace Hall



Teresa Fry Brown



@revdrtfrybrown

Re-member to Sing

Psalm 137

The sermon focuses on "re-memory" of the power of the melodic lament in tremulous times.

Notes:



Provocative Question: How does one _____
their _____ in seasons of shock, awe, trauma,
and disappointment?



Anna Carter Florence

Peter Marshall Professor of Preaching,
Columbia Theological Seminary

Anna Carter Florence is the Peter Marshall Professor of Preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) with degrees from Yale University (BA) and Princeton Theological Seminary (MDiv and PhD). Her books include *Preaching as Testimony* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), *Rehearsing Scripture* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2018), based on her 2012 Beecher Lectures at Yale, and *A Is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2023). Anna is a frequent preacher and teacher in the U.S. and abroad. She and her husband, the Rev. David Carter Florence, have two grown sons, Caleb and Jonah. They also have two dogs, two cats, and way too much knitting yarn.

When and where to find Anna during the Festival of Homiletics:

Lecture: "Staying Together, Running Aground"

Monday, 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary

Sermon: "Testing Grounds," Luke 4:1-13

Tuesday, 2:30 p.m., Grace Hall

Staying Together, Running Aground

I'm going to be thinking about the shipwreck scene in Acts 27 as a source of wisdom for us today.

Notes:

Testing Grounds

Luke 4:1-13

I'm going to be thinking about Jesus' encounter with the Tempter in the Wilderness as a model for our own under-pressure conversations.

Notes:



David Gushee

Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics

Rev. Dr. David P. Gushee is Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics at Mercer University, Chair of Christian Social Ethics at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and Senior Research Fellow, International Baptist Theological Study Centre. He is also the elected past-president of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Christian Ethics. Dr. Gushee is the author or editor of 29 books, including the bestsellers *Kingdom Ethics* and *Changing Our Mind*. His other most notable works are *Defending Democracy from Its Christian Enemies*, *After Evangelicalism*, and most recently, *The Moral Teachings of Jesus*. He lectures and consults globally, and is widely regarded as one of the world's leading Christian moral thinkers. Gushee and his wife, Jeanie, live in Atlanta, Georgia.

When and where to find David during the Festival of Homiletics:

Workshop: "Rocking Everyone's World with the Teachings of Jesus"

Tuesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app

Lecture: "Proclaiming the Moral Teaching of Jesus" + Q&A

Wednesday, 1:30 p.m., Sanctuary

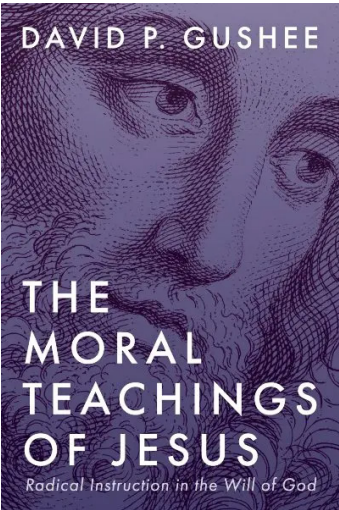
 davidpgushee.com

 David P. Gushee

 @dpgushee



Book Signing
Wednesday, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.
Harp Center



Rocking Everyone's World with the Teachings of Jesus

One way to heal the divide in our churches and pierce through polarization is through a preaching and teaching program centering Jesus and demonstrating how he challenges all of us. Core Jesus teachings for such a project will be workshopped.

Notes:

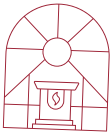


Provocative Question: Might a focus on the teachings of Jesus help heal our divide by convicting all of us of _____?

Proclaiming the Moral Teaching of Jesus

Part of what has gone wrong in US Christianity is that the moral teaching of Jesus has been obscured, ignored, or buried in political ideology. Preachers need to center what Jesus taught and speak our own "native language" rather borrowing from elsewhere.

Notes:



Provocative Question: How can the church offer space for _____ and _____ in the interest of restorative justice and reconciliation amidst the broken realities of our times?



Cynthia Hale

Senior Pastor, Ray of Hope Christian Church

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale is the founding and Senior Pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Georgia. Dr. Hale has been in ministry for 46 years. She established ELAH Pastoral Ministries, Inc., a mentorship program that assists in the development of pastors and para-church leaders, in 2004 and convened her first Women in Ministry Conference in 2005. In 2010, she authored her first book, *I'm a Piece of Work: Sisters Shaped by God*. Dr. Hale presently serves as the Chairperson of the IC3 Conference Board, a member of the Board of Trustees at Hollins University, a member of the UNCF NFEI Advisory Council, a member of the Welcome.US Council and an emeritus member of the Board of Visitors of the Divinity School at Duke University. She is most recently the past President for the Hampton University Ministers' Conference. Dr. Hale is a native of Roanoke, Virginia. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hollins College. She holds a Master of Divinity degree from Duke University and a Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary. Dr. Hale is a contributing writer for many books and publications and the recipient of numerous honors and recognitions including in 2023 when she was honored with the Duke University Distinguished Alumni Award.

When and where to find Cynthia during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: "It's Not Complicated!" Ephesians 4:1-6

Tuesday, 9 a.m., Grace Hall



cynthiahale.org



Cynthia L. Hale



@sororcyn1908



@sororcyn

It's Not Complicated!

Ephesians 4:1-6 NIV

Given all the division in the world, Christians are in a wonderful position to help heal the divide by living out the unity we have in Christ. Warren Wierbe said we don't have to manufacture the unity; we just have to maintain it. We are one.

Notes:



Provocative Question: Given our _____ in Christ, what are the ways that we can help heal the divide between Christians caused by theological, racial, and political differences?



Austen Hartke

Author and Educator

Austen Hartke is the author of *Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians*, a book on theology and personal narratives published by Westminster John Knox Press, now in its second edition. His writing also appears across the internet and in several anthologies including *Violence Against LGBTQ+ Persons: Research, Practice, and Advocacy* (Springer, 2020) and *Rally: Communal Prayers for Lovers of Jesus and Justice* (Fresh Air Books, 2020). He is the founder and former Executive Director of Transmission Ministry Collective, an online community dedicated to the spiritual care, faith formation, and leadership potential of transgender and gender-expansive Christians. As a transgender person of faith, Austen's greatest passion is helping other trans and gender-expansive people see themselves in scripture.

When and where to find Austen during the Festival of Homiletics:

Lecture: "Beyond Division, Beyond Binaries: Gender Diversity in Your Congregation"

Wednesday, 10:30 a.m., Sanctuary



austenhartke.com

Beyond Division, Beyond Binaries: Gender Diversity in Your Congregation

When division in our congregation pushes us toward black-and-white thinking, might a commitment to gender diversity better equip us for imagining an abundance of possibilities? Let's explore how communities that fully affirm and integrate transgender members use their communal knowledge to model new ways of being church together.

Notes:



Provocative Question: There are many biblical and theological _____ we can use to describe things that exist outside of a _____. Which of these resonate with you, and which do you think might resonate with your congregation?



Rolf Jacobson

Dean of Faculty; Professor of Old Testament;
A.N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and
Ministry, Luther Seminary

Rolf Jacobson is Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Old Testament and the Alvin N. Rogness Chair of Scripture, Theology, and Ministry at Luther Seminary. With Craig Koester, he developed and supports the Narrative Lectionary and can be heard on the "Narrative Lectionary" podcast.

When and where to find Rolf during the Festival of Homiletics:

Workshop: "Live Sermon Brainwave"

Tuesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app

Workshop: "Preaching the Ten Commandments: The Community God Forms Through the Law"

Wednesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app

Workshop: "Live Sermon Brainwave"

Join Sermon Brainwave cohosts Rolf Jacobson, Karoline Lewis, and Matt Skinner for a discussion on the texts for Pentecost Sunday.

Notes:

Preaching the Ten Commandments: The Community God Forms Through the Law

A pastoral hero of mine once said, "A pastor should preach through the Ten Commandments at least once every three years." This workshop will help equip pastors to do exactly that, with a focus on how God uses the Decalogue to form a community. As soon as God reclaimed his people from bondage in Egypt, the first thing he did was give them the Ten Commandments, to describe how free people live and to form a community to bear God's name.

Notes:



Donyelle McCray

Associate Professor of Homiletics, Yale Divinity School

Donyelle McCray serves as Associate Professor of Homiletics at Yale Divinity School. A teacher, writer, and Episcopal layperson, her scholarship focuses on ways African American women and lay people use the sermon to play, remember, invent, and disrupt. She is the author of *The Censored Pulpit: Julian of Norwich as Preacher* (2019) and *Is it a Sermon?: Art, Activism, and Genre Fluidity in African American Preaching* (2024). She is currently writing a book on the preaching and spirituality of the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray. Before becoming a homiletics professor, she served as an attorney and hospice chaplain.

When and where to find Donyelle during the Festival of Homiletics:

Lecture: "The Apostle Pauli: Bridging the Divide" + Q&A

Wednesday, 10:30 a.m., Grace Hall

Workshop: "The Introverted Preacher: Practical Strategies"

Wednesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app

The Apostle Pauli: Bridging the Divide

Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray (1910-1985) was a poet, activist, attorney, professor, and Episcopal priest who preached during the rocky aftermath of the Episcopal Church's ordination of women. Determined to face resistance with energy and joy, Murray had to unearth new spiritual resources. This lecture explores the theological commitments and homiletical strategies that proved helpful for Murray and still hold promise for contemporary preachers.

Notes:



Provocative Question: What _____ help us sustain and deepen agreement during divisive times?

The Introverted Preacher: Practical Strategies

How can introverts approach the public demands of preaching while being true to themselves? Designed for self-identified introverts, this workshop explores strengths introverts typically bring to preaching as well as practical strategies to try before, during, and after sermons.

Notes:



Provocative Question: Why are _____ so often called to _____?



Joy J. Moore

President, Northern Seminary

Dr. Joy J. Moore is the 13th President of Northern Seminary and Professor of Homiletics. An "Ecclesial Storyteller," she weaves biblically grounded narratives addressing contemporary issues across diverse ministry contexts. A Chicago native and ordained United Methodist elder, her career spans positions at Luther Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Duke Divinity School. Dr. Moore holds a PhD in Practical Theology, is a past cohost of Working Preacher podcasts, and has championed cross-racial ministry initiatives, including efforts during the Flint Water Crisis.

With a passion for building bridges between theology and practice, Dr. Moore brings her expertise in fostering cross-cultural connections to Northern Seminary's mission of forming resilient, mature, and joyful church leaders. She officially began her presidency on December 1, 2024.

When and where to find Joy during the Festival of Homiletics:

Lecture: "Recovering Truth amid Doctrinal Divergence"

Tuesday, 1:30 p.m., Sanctuary



Joy J. Moore



@storiedworlds



@joyjmoore

Recovering Truth amid Doctrinal Divergence

Notes:



Otis Moss III

Senior Pastor, Trinity United Church of Christ

The Reverend Dr. Otis Moss III is a renowned spiritual and civil rights leader, known for his ministry rooted in community empowerment and social justice through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Recognized as one of the “12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world” by Baylor University, he has been named one of Chicago’s 30 most influential people and is an NAACP Image Award recipient. As Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, he has spent two decades preaching a Black theology that confronts mass incarceration, environmental justice, and economic apartheid. A Professor of Homiletics at Mercer University, award-winning filmmaker, and founder of The Unashamed Media Group, he blends African American culture, history, jazz, and hip-hop into a message of liberation, love, and justice. Dr. Moss is married to Monica Brown Moss, and they have two children, MK and Eli.

When and where to find Otis during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: “Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace,” Isaiah 58:3-12

Thursday, 9 a.m., Sanctuary

Lecture: “When Ministry Becomes an Idol”

Thursday, 10:30 a.m., Sanctuary



revom3.com



Otis Moss III



@otismosiii

Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace

Isaiah 58:3-12

What happens when “prophets and poets” refuse to speak? What are the consequences for choosing to speak in the midst of an empire? The American church unfortunately has too often chosen empire comfort over prophetic consequences. We are called as witnesses of God’s grace to speak now in this moment or forever hold our peace.

Notes:

When Ministry Becomes an Idol

Psalms 51:1-2, 10

Ministry, while rewarding, has the ability to seduce well-meaning practitioners into the dangerous void of idolizing the craft, actions, and access afforded to those who minister. There are practices we must all engage to release ourselves from the human-created residue and folly found in the void of idolatry.

Notes:



Jake Myers

Wade P. Huie, Jr. Associate Professor of Homiletics, Columbia Theological Seminary

Jake Myers serves as the Wade P. Huie, Jr. Associate Professor of Homiletics at Columbia Theological Seminary. He's an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA). Jake's authored or co-authored publications include: *Preaching Philosophy: French Thought for Gospel Proclamation* (2025); *Theology, Ethics, and Stand-up Comedy* (2025); *Stand-up Preaching: Homiletical Insights from Contemporary Comedians* (2022); *In Tongues of Mortals and Angels: A Deconstructive Theology of God Talk* (2019); *Curating Church: Strategies for Innovative Worship* (2018); *Preaching Must Die! Troubling Homiletical Theology* (2017); *Making Love with Scripture: Why the Bible Doesn't Mean How You Think It Means* (2015). He provides online homiletical resources and sermon coaching at www.preachingdr.com.

When and where to find Jake during the Festival of Homiletics:

Workshop: "Preaching Jokes to Power: How to Challenge Injustice and Build Bridges through Humor"

Tuesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app



preachingdr.com



Jake Myers



@preachingdoctor

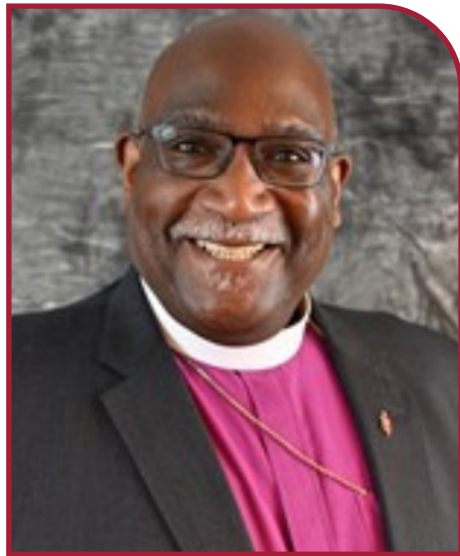
Preaching Jokes to Power: How to Challenge Injustice and Build Bridges through Humor

Comedy is a double-edged sword. It can pierce ideologies that perpetuate injustice as well as forge community amid the differences that divide us. This workshop teaches preachers about the structural potential of jokes and bits to craft sermons that are both prophetic and priestly. Preachers will get to implement these techniques in community to foster preaching that challenges unjust sociopolitical ideologies and draws congregants toward our shared humanity through laughter.

Notes:



Provocative Question: What would it do for your preaching if you could wield your words and shape your audience's reception of your sermons with the same power and panache as _____?



Gregory Palmer

Bishop, United Methodist Church

Bishop Gregory V. Palmer was elected to the episcopacy in 2000 and has served in various leadership roles within The United Methodist Church, including as Resident Bishop of the Iowa, Illinois, and West Ohio Areas before retiring on September 1, 2024. That same day, he began a four-year term as the Council of Bishops Executive Secretary, having previously served as the Council's President from 2008 to 2010. Born in Philadelphia, he earned degrees from George Washington University and Duke University and received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Baldwin-Wallace College. Ordained in the Eastern Pennsylvania and East Ohio Conferences, he pastored churches in Ohio and North Carolina, including founding the James S. Thomas United Methodist Church in Canton. He also served as a district superintendent and Senior Pastor of the United Methodist Church of Berea. Bishop Palmer has been actively involved in church leadership, global ministry efforts, and community service, holding positions on various boards and committees.

When and where to find Gregory during the Festival of Homiletics:

Lecture: "Assuming Our True Vocation"

Thursday, 10:30 a.m., Grace Hall

Sermon: "Come Closer," Genesis 45:1-15

Thursday, 3 p.m., Sanctuary

Assuming Our True Vocation

Exploring the ways in which our preaching can be an ongoing exercise in accommodating what is. The aim of our preaching is to participate in the creation of what is not.

Notes:



Provocative Question: Why have we allowed _____ and _____ busy work to distract us from our true work?

Come Closer

Genesis 45:1-15

Taking off our masks readies us to take care of the unfinished business that contributes to healing for self, neighbor, and the world.

Notes:



Provocative Question: What do we need to _____ in order to be healed?



Melva Sampson

Assistant Teaching Professor of Preaching and Practical Theology

Melva L. Sampson is a professor, preacher, and pastor. She is Assistant Teaching Professor in the Practice of Preaching and Practical Theology at Wake Forest University School of Divinity. Her ministerial credentials span across the Baptist and Presbyterian USA denominations. She is a leading practitioner in digital Black religion and is the creator of The Pink Robe Chronicles™, an online spiritual gathering that circumvents interlaced oppressive religious structures, doctrines, and theologies by utilizing womanist and Afrocentric/Afrofuturist values of resistance, recovery, and reflection to curate a liberated and transformative faith-centered community of practice.

When and where to find Melva during the Festival of Homiletics:

Sermon: "Don't Shrink Back," Hebrews 10:32-39

Tuesday, 9 a.m., Sanctuary



drmelvasampson.com



[@pinkrobechronicles](https://www.instagram.com/pinkrobechronicles)

Don't Shrink Back

Hebrews 10:32-39

Drawing on Hebrews 10:32-39, this sermon will challenge us not to shrink back from faithful proclamation even in the face of uncertainty and conflict, but instead to stand firm with courage and hope.

Notes:



Matthew Skinner

Asher O. and Carrie Nasby Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary;
Scholar for Adult Education, Westminster Presbyterian Church

Matt Skinner, one of the co-hosts of the popular Sermon Brainwave podcast, has served on the Luther Seminary faculty since 2002. His newest book is a commentary on the Acts of the Apostles in the Interpretation Bible Commentary series. He's also written books for general audiences and small groups on both Acts and the Gospel of Matthew. A new book on Advent (titled *The Voices of Advent: The Bible's Insights for a Season of Hope*) is scheduled to be published in November 2025. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Skinner also serves in a congregation in downtown Minneapolis. He teaches frequently at workshops and conferences for church leaders.

When and where to find Matt during the Festival of Homiletics:

Workshop: "Live Sermon Brainwave"

Tuesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app

Sermon: "On Death and Other Deadly Divides," Isaiah 58:6-12; Acts 9:36-42

Wednesday, 2:30 p.m., Sanctuary



Matthew L. Skinner



@matthewlskinner

Workshop: "Live Sermon Brainwave"

Notes:

On Death and Other Deadly Divides

Isaiah 58:6-12; Acts 9:36-42

There are always numerous breaches to repair and many motivations for doing so. But a Christian desire to promote healing, repair, reconciliation, justice, and belonging of all kinds derives primarily from an Easter conviction that all death is a loss and that death itself is a nemesis. Death, like other divides, calls first for protest.

Notes:



Provocative Question: What is it about _____, as an ultimate denouncement of _____, that motivates you to work for healing the suffering, ill health, and injustices that afflict people?



Ted Smith

Charles Howard Candler Professor of Divinity;
Associate Dean of Faculty at Candler School of
Theology, Emory University

Ted A. Smith is Charles Howard Candler Professor of Divinity and Associate Dean of Faculty at Emory University's Candler School of Theology. He also serves as director of the Theological Education between the Times project. Smith is the author of three books: *The End of Theological Education* (2023), *Weird John Brown* (2015), and *The New Measures* (2007). Together these books try to think theologically about core American Protestant institutions, practices, ideals, and rhetoric in the time of their unraveling. Ordained to ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Smith served as pastor to two small-membership churches prior to his doctoral studies.

When and where to find Ted during the Festival of Homiletics:

Lecture: "Preaching the Wounds"

Thursday, 1:30 p.m., Sanctuary



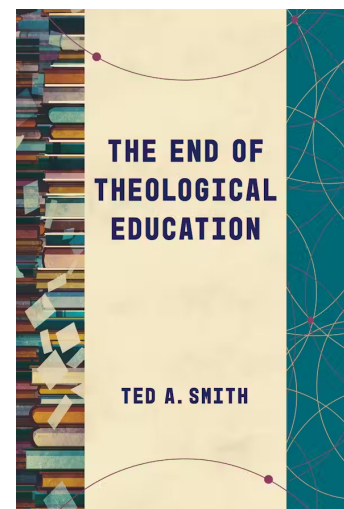
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Ted Smith



Book Signing
Thursday, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.
Harp Center



Preaching the Wounds

Christian hope for healing is not for the restoration of some imagined past, but for real resurrection of the wounded body. Learning from both Pietist and liberationist traditions, we will consider ways preachers might tarry with wounds in familial, civic, and ecclesial bodies in order to bear witness to a healing that is more than middle-way civility.

Notes:



Provocative Question: How can preachers help heal the divides without slipping into mere _____ or middle-of-the-road _____?



Brent Strawn

D. Moody Smith Distinguished Professor of Old Testament and Professor of Law, Duke University

Brent A. Strawn is D. Moody Smith Distinguished Professor of Old Testament and Professor of Law at Duke University. He has edited over 30 volumes to date, including the award-winning *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law* (2015). He has authored over 250 articles, essays, and contributions to reference works, as well as six books, most recently *The Incomparable God: Readings in Biblical Theology* (2023). Strawn is an ordained minister in The United Methodist Church and has served as a translator and editor for the Common English Bible (2011) and the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (2022).

When and where to find Brent during the Festival of Homiletics:

Workshop: "Learning Forgiveness with St. Joseph"

Tuesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app

Lecture: "613 Points (or So) and a Poem (or Two): Watching Moses Preach (in) Deuteronomy"

Wednesday, 1:30 p.m., Grace Hall



[amazon.com – Brent Strawn, Author Page](https://www.amazon.com/Brent-Strawn)
and [divinity.duke.edu – Our Faculty](https://divinity.duke.edu)



Brent A. Strawn



@brentastrawn

Learning Forgiveness with St. Joseph

Healing divisions often involves granting forgiveness but that is often hard to do. This workshop will explore the Joseph cycle in Genesis 37-50 to see what resources may be found there for the crucial but oh-so-difficult task of forgiving.

Notes:

613 Points (or So) and a Poem (or Two): Watching Moses Preach (in) Deuteronomy

As Fred Craddock pointed out years ago, the Bible is not only a book for preaching but a book of preaching. Contemporary preachers can learn a great deal by watching how Moses preaches the book of Deuteronomy and preaches within Deuteronomy. Indeed, the entire Torah, often called the Five Books of Moses, is a remarkable resource when thinking about "preaching to heal the divide."

Notes:



William Yoo

Associate Professor of American Religious and Cultural History, Columbia Theological Seminary

William Yoo is Associate Professor of American Religious and Cultural History at Columbia Theological Seminary. He has published books on African American Christianity, Asian American Christianity, Presbyterian history, and the histories of Indigenous rights activism and abolitionism in the United States. As a teacher, preacher, and scholar, Yoo focuses on the history of racism in American Christianity. Yoo is a professor and public theologian who interprets the most challenging and urgent issues of racial justice with clarity, depth, honesty, and precision. He is presently studying sermons from various preachers across Black, white, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Asian American perspectives for a book project on Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement.

When and where to find William during the Festival of Homiletics:

Workshop: "The Uses and Misuses of History: Preaching to Make a Real Difference for Racial Justice and Repair"

Wednesday, 4 p.m., find workshop location on the Whova app



wjkbbooks.com – Author: William Yoo



@williamyoo

The Uses and Misuses of History: Preaching to Make a Real Difference for Racial Justice and Repair

More and more Christians yearn for preaching that addresses racism because they believe racial prejudice is a terrible sin. But Christians everywhere also keep fighting with one another about critical race theory, DEI, politics, reparations, and more. In this workshop, William Yoo covers how history is used and misused when Christians talk about racism today, and he identifies practical steps and pitfalls for preachers who want to make a real difference for racial justice from their pulpits.

Notes:



Provocative Question: Although many Christians repudiate _____, preaching about _____ remains fraught with tension in some congregations. How did American Christianity get this way and what can preachers do to address this challenge?



Fred Chambers

Financial Advisor, Thrivent

Fred is a financial advisor with Thrivent who is passionate about clergy and church finances. He has served for over 25 years as a pastor, missionary, and ministry consultant and is committed to helping ministry leaders to thrive in their service and to finish well in their calling.

When and where to find Fred during the Festival of Homiletics:

Platinum Sponsorship Message: "Making an Impact: Your Generosity Story"
Wednesday, 1 p.m., Grace Hall



Betsy Shirley

Editor in Chief, *Sojourners*

Betsy Shirley is the editor in chief of *Sojourners*, where she leads the publication's award-winning coverage of faith, politics, and culture. Her own work has earned recognition from the Religion News Association, the Associated Church Press, and the American Academy of Religion. Betsy is a graduate of Butler University, the Sojourners Fellowship Program, and Yale Divinity School. She lives in Washington, D.C.

When and where to find Betsy during the Festival of Homiletics:

**Platinum Sponsorship Message: "The Press and the Pulpit:
We've Both Got Trust Issues"**
Tuesday, 1 p.m., Grace Hall



sojo.net



@betsyshirley.bsky.social



@betsy.shirley

Event Facilitators



Dawn Alitz, Host & Managing Director

Director of Coaching,
Faith+Lead – Luther Seminary

Rev. Dr. Dawn Alitz joined the staff at Luther Seminary in 2016, where she designs and coordinates programming and coaching experiences to equip Christian leaders. Dawn received her Master of Arts in lay leadership from Luther Seminary in 2003, and received her Ph.D. in 2009. Dawn has taught in adjunct positions at the seminary, as well as with Augsburg College and Lexington Theological Seminary. Prior to her work at Luther, she served in a number of ministry settings including mission start and established congregations.



Dawn M. Hand, Emcee

Director of Equity and Justice
Western North Carolina
Conference UMC

Dawn M. Hand is an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church.

She welcomes diversity of ideology, political views, and theological perspectives. Hand believes humanity has more in common that unites us than differences that separate us. An engaged communicator and prominent advocate for justice, she has led and collaborated in a variety of local, regional, and national initiatives including immigration reform, alleviating children's poverty, sacred resistance, and chronic homelessness/affordable housing. A self-proclaimed foodie, she enjoys eating, traveling, sports, and the great outdoors. She loves spending time with her family. Hand believes God has a sense of humor for calling her into ordained ministry.



Dawn Hand



@dhand30



Karoline Lewis, Host & Program Director

Marbury E. Anderson Chair
in Biblical Preaching, Luther
Seminary

Rev. Karoline M. Lewis, Ph.D., is the Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, where she has taught since 2007. Lewis is the author of *Preaching the Word: Contemporary Approaches to the Bible for the Pulpit*; *Belonging: Five Keys to Unlocking Your Potential as a Disciple*; *A Lay Preacher's Guide: How to Craft a Faithful Sermon*; *Embody: Five Steps to Leading With Integrity*; *SHE: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry*; and *John: Fortress Biblical*

Preaching Commentaries, as well as numerous articles, book chapters, and web resources. Ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Lewis is a contributing writer for *Working Preacher*, and co-host of the site's weekly podcast, *Sermon Brainwave*, since its inception.



Matthew Weber, Liturgist

Pastor, Grace Lutheran
Church

Matthew is a child of
G-d, dad, step-father,

husband, pastor, aging athlete, and mediocre musician who doesn't spend enough time riding a bike or practicing mandolin. He lives in suburban Colorado with his amazing wife and three step-sons; his two adult children live within an hour's drive. Matthew has the honor of serving as the pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Boulder, and is uncomfortable writing about himself in the third person.



Matthew Weber



@hikerrev



Khalia Williams, Liturgist

Associate Dean of Worship
and Spiritual Formation,
Emory University – Candler
School of Theology

Rev. Dr. Khalia J. Williams is an ordained minister and visionary worship designer dedicated to shaping transformative liturgical experiences. As Associate Dean of Worship and Spiritual Formation at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, she has developed and led vibrant worship programs. She has co-authored *A Worship*

Workbook and co-edited *Theological Foundations of Worship*, showcasing her expertise in designing inclusive liturgies. Khalia also serves as an associate minister at the historic Providence Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, and is sought after for her worship leadership, passion for the arts, and unwavering commitment to inclusive communities.



Khalia J. Williams



@LadyKJW



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SERMON HANGING
OVER YOUR HEAD
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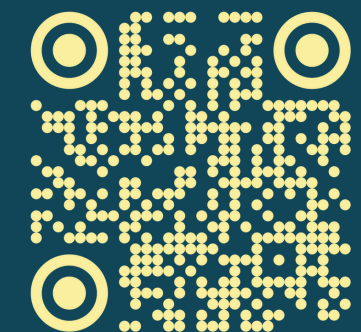
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Exhibitors & Sponsors

We welcome the following sponsors and exhibitors to the 2025 Festival of Homiletics! Be sure to check out the products of those joining the in-person resource fair at PRUMC's Harp Center.

Exhibitor Hours:

- Monday, May 12: 2 pm-6:30 pm
- Tuesday, May 13: 8:30 am-5 pm
- Wednesday, May 14: 8:30 am-5 pm
- Thursday, May 15: 8:30 am-4 pm



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- Educational Opportunities eo.travelwithus.com
- Elias Tours. eliastours.com
- Good Faith Media goodfaithmedia.org
- Humble Hearts Clergy Apparel humbleheartsclergyapparel.com
- Invested Faith. investedfaith.org
- Jeff Wunrow Designs. jeffwunrow.com
- LEAD Connects. leadconnects.org
- Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO) mtso.edu
- Our Stigma giveupthestigma.com
- Pitts Theological Library. pitts.emory.edu
- Progressive Pilgrimage. progressivepilgrimage.com
- Restore Clergy restoreclergy.com
- Sacred Stitches sacredstitches.com
- St. Paul School of Theology www.spst.edu
- Steeplebush Stoles etsy.com/shop/steeplebushstoles
- Stitchin' Time Designs stitchintime.us/shop
- Sunlight Tours. sunlighttours.org
- Threads by Nomad (The Off Ramp) threadsbynomad.com
- United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. unitedseminary.edu
- USAF Chaplain Corps airforce.com/careers/specialty-careers/chaplain
- Westminster John Knox Press. wjkbooks.com
- Woman of the Cloth etsy.com/shop/WomanoftheClothShop



Offering

The Welcome Home Village

In celebration of our centennial and as a gift to our community, Peachtree Road United Methodist Church is expanding our commitment to transformative outreach. One of the greatest challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals is securing stable, affordable housing. In response, PRUMC partnered with Atlanta Habitat for Humanity and City of Refuge to open Atlanta’s first Welcome Home House in 2023 – a place of stability, healing, and hope for women reentering society.

Now, as part of our Centennial Celebration, we are deepening our impact by developing a Welcome Home Village – a community of four homes providing sanctuary and support for up to 20 women at a time. This will be the largest initiative of its kind in Atlanta, creating a path toward renewed independence and a brighter future. Through this project, we honor our church’s century-long legacy of generosity and service, ensuring that our milestone is marked not only by celebration but by lasting change.



Information

Transportation

Peachtree Road United Methodist Church is located in Atlanta’s Buckhead neighborhood. There is limited parking on location. Many hotels and restaurants lie within walking distance. Attendees without cars will find Uber, Lyft, and other rideshare and taxi services readily available in Atlanta, and can find information about local buses, trains, and street cars at the **Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority website: itsmarta.com**.

There are several transportation options to reach the venue or your hotel from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL):

- Shuttle services are available from ATL, with a maximum fare of \$30 per person. Pick-up for these shuttles is at the Shared-Ride Shuttle Aisle, located in the Ground Transportation Center on the west end of the Domestic Terminal.
- Traditional taxi services, as well as Uber and Lyft, offer transportation from ATL to Buckhead. Estimated fares for rideshare services range from approximately \$23 to \$30 for standard options like UberX or Lyft, with higher fares for larger or premium vehicles.
- The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) provides train service from ATL to Buckhead. The Red Line departs from the airport’s MARTA station and stops at the Buckhead Station, which is approximately a 15-minute walk from the church.
- The Buc – Atlanta’s first on-demand, microtransit service: Request a shared ride when you need it at the tap of a button.

CCLI: 5642871 for May 12–15, 2025
OneLicense: E-804885 for May 12–15, 2025

Restaurants

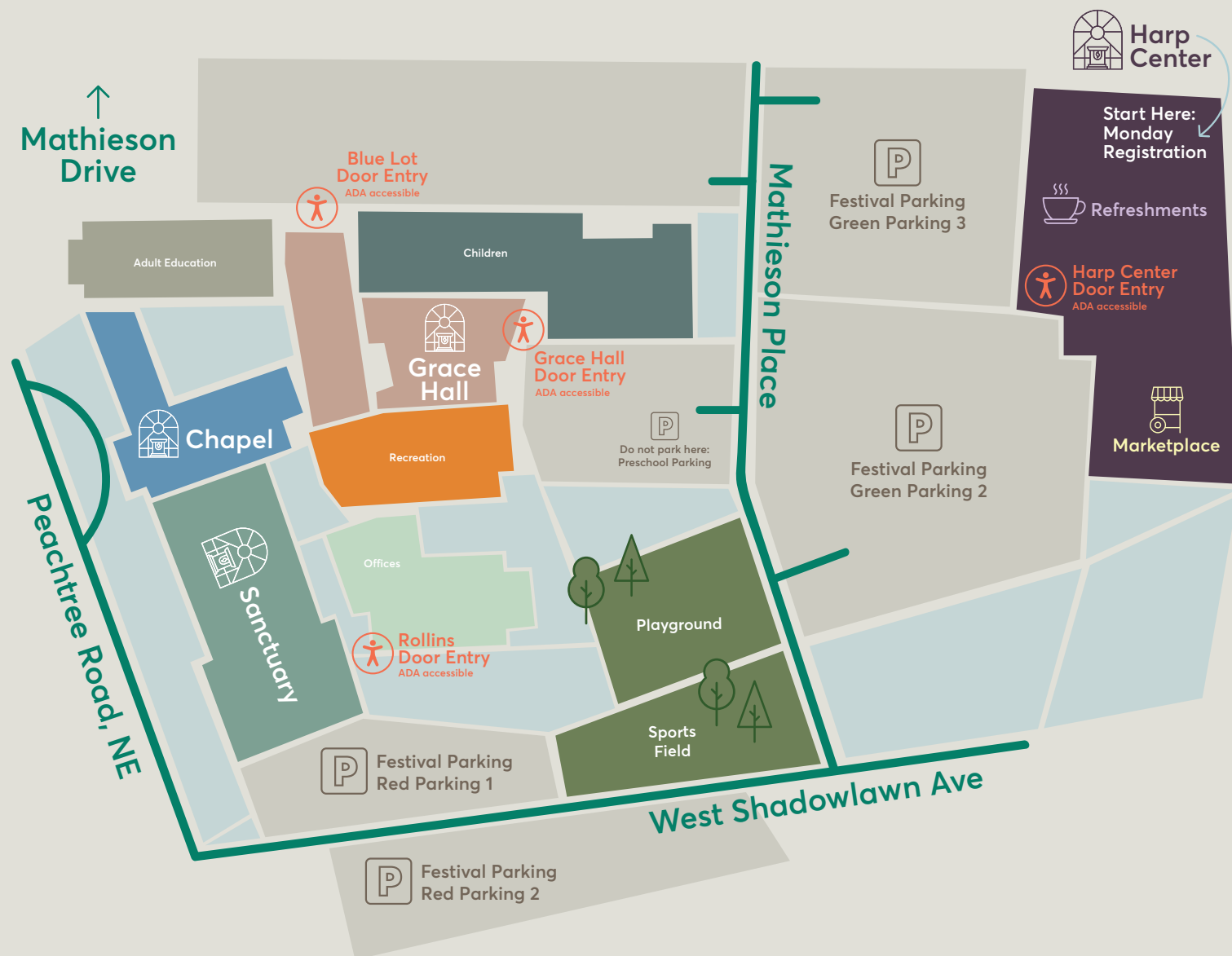
The restaurants included below are all in the neighborhood of PRUMC, either walking distance or only a short, 5-minute (or less!) drive away.

- 5Church:** 3379 Peachtree Rd NE
- Alma Cocina:** 3280 Peachtree Rd NE
- Antica Posta Tuscan Restaurant:** 519 E Paces Ferry Rd NE
- Aria Restaurant:** 490 E Paces Ferry Rd NE
- Astor Court (St. Regis Hotel):** 88 W Paces Ferry Rd NW
- Atlanta Fish Market:** 265 Pharr Rd NE
- Atlas Restaurant (St. Regis Hotel):** 88 W Paces Ferry Rd NW
- Bangkok Station:** 550 Pharr Rd NE
- Bistro Niko:** 3344 Peachtree Rd NE
- Brassica (Waldorf Astoria):** 3376 Peachtree Rd NE
- Cafe Agora:** 318 E Paces Ferry Rd NE
- Carmel:** 3900 Thrash St
- Cassis Restaurant (Grand Hyatt Atlanta):** 3300 Peachtree Rd NE
- Chido and Padre’s:** 128 E Andrews Dr NW
- Chops Lobster Bar:** 70 W Paces Ferry Rd NW
- Ecco:** 3586 Peachtree Rd NE
- Gypsy Kitchen:** 3035 Peachtree Rd NE
- Knife Modern Mediterranean:** 3167 Peachtree Rd NE
- Kyma:** 3085 Piedmont Rd NE
- Louisiana Bistreaux:** 3312 Piedmont Rd NE
- Nan Thai:** 1350 Spring St NW
- New York Prime Steakhouse:** 3424 Peachtree Rd NE
- Pricci:** 500 Pharr Rd NE
- Rreal Tacos:** 100 6th St NE
- South City Kitchen:** 3350 Peachtree Rd NE
- St. Cecilia:** 3455 Peachtree Rd NE

- Storico Fresco Ristorante:** 3167 Peachtree Rd NE
- The Big Ketch Saltwater Grill:** 3279 Roswell Rd NE
- The Capital Grille:** 255 E Paces Ferry Rd NE
- The Southern Gentleman:** 3035 Peachtree Rd NE
- The White House Restaurant:** 3172 Peachtree Rd NE
- Trap Wingz ATL:** 2179 Cheshire Bridge Rd NE
- Tulum Kitchen and Bar:** 1201 Peachtree St NE
- Velvet Taco:** 77 W Paces Ferry Rd NW
- Yebo Beach Haus:** 111 W Paces Ferry Rd NW
- Yeppa & Co.:** 306 Buckhead Ave NE



Area Map & Accessibility



Please only use marked entry doors for Festival ADA Accessible



For workshop locations, please check our event app (Whova) or visit the information desk located near the Sanctuary.

VERIFICATION OF CONTACT HOURS

Participant Name _____

Preaching to Heal the Divide

May 12-15, 2025 | Atlanta, Georgia

Festival of HOMILETICS

Total contact hours: 24

Daily contact hours:

Monday, May 12	_____ 4 contact hours
Tuesday, May 13	_____ 6 contact hours
Wednesday, May 14	_____ 7 contact hours
Thursday, May 15	_____ 7 contact hours

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About the Festival of Homiletics

The Festival of Homiletics began in 1992 with a gathering of 400 pastors from around the country for the purpose of learning and conversing about preaching in a contemporary context. David Howell, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), created the Festival as an extension of his preaching journal, Lectionary Homiletics, and the Festival's ownership, leadership, and planning efforts have resided with Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, since 2012.

A week-long conference designed to inspire discourse and theological reflection upon the practices of preaching and worship, particularly as churches navigate the 21st century and ever-changing society, the Festival aims to inspire preachers in their roles, renew their faith, and refresh their spirits.

Each year we invite approximately 25 outstanding preachers and professors of homiletics from diverse backgrounds, traditions, and ministry settings to engage the complexities of today's culture through the lens of God's grace, God's church, and God's word. Speakers over the years have included William Barber II, Nadia Bolz-Weber, Walter Brueggemann, Barbara Brown Taylor, Diana Butler Bass, Anna Carter Florence, Michael Curry, Yvette Flunder, Otis Moss III, Luke Powery, Will Willimon, and Andrew Young.

The goals of the Festival of Homiletics are to:

- Bring together a variety of outstanding preachers and professors of homiletics
- Inspire discourse about preaching, worship, and culture
- Engage issues related to church in the 21st century

- Engage theologically in the practices of preaching and worship
- Invite individual preachers to consider various styles and methodologies of preaching
- Inspire preachers in their roles of proclaiming the gospel

Digital Access

As a registered participant, you already have digital access to:

- Livestream of all worship services and lectures during the week of the Festival.
- Recordings of all sermons and lectures.

HOW DO I ACCESS THE RECORDINGS?

All paid registrants for this year's Festival have digital access. To access the recordings of the sessions you'll need to log in to the Festival portal on Whova at https://whova.com/portal/webapp/festi_202405/sign_in using the same email address you registered with. If you created a password when registering, enter it here; if you did not create a password or do not remember your password, click the Forgot your password link to receive an access link via email. From there, all 2025 recordings will be at your fingertips through August 15, 2025.

If you'd like to recommend the recordings to a friend/colleague, they'll need to register at <https://festivalofhomiletics.com> and purchase a ticket for Online Access.



Audience Profile & Demographics (2024)

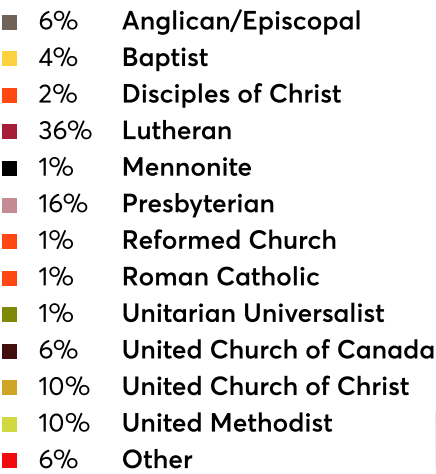
The Festival of Homiletics is an annual event that brings together about 800 in-person attendees (and even more online!) each year. It rotates between cities such as Atlanta, Denver, Minneapolis, San Antonio, and Pittsburgh.

Our 2024 Festival in Pittsburgh had over 3,700 attendees between our online and in-person audiences!

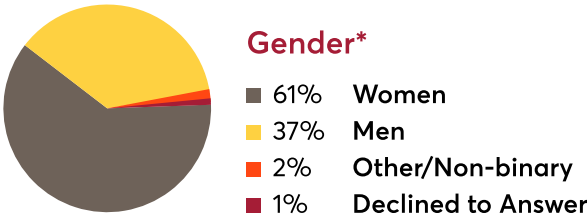
78% of 2024's Festival registrants were rostered church leaders in a single call; 94% of participants said the Festival was worth their time and expense; and 96% said they would definitely recommend the Festival to others. 62% were repeat attendees in 2024.*

*All percentages based on 361 survey responses

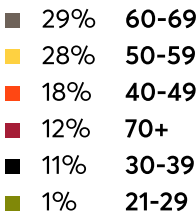
Denomination*



Gender*



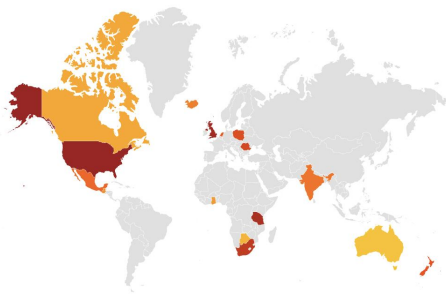
Age*



Why they attended*

- To hear great preaching
- To hear from diverse voices and perspectives
- To improve preaching skills
- For a time of refreshment and renewal
- Continuing education
- Interested in speakers
- To connect with other preachers

Virtual attendee locations



Type of Attendance

50% Free Stream 22% In-Person 22% Paid Online Access



A special thanks to the Festival Team for helping make this event happen!

Anthony Bailey, Emcee

Christina C. Gordon, Festival Marketing Coordinator

David B Howell, Founder and Consultant

Dawn Alitz, Managing Director

Dawn Hand, Emcee

Haley Harms-Frawley, Graphic Designer

Hallie Knox, Copywriter

Heidi Mann, Liturgy Copyeditor

Jacob Fredrikson, Livestream Coordinator, Website Specialist

Jill Turnbull, Site Assistant

Jody Nyenhuis, Site Assistant

Karoline Lewis, Program Director

Keith Spencer, Photographer

Kirsten Romero, Digital Registrar and Customer Service Specialist

Lara Moll, Administration Specialist

Rachel Postler, Project Manager

Sandy Olson, Volunteer Coordinator

Sitraka Rakotoarivelo, Media Specialist, Run of Show Coordinator

Takouhi Demirdjian, Site Assistant

Tara Eastman, Online Host

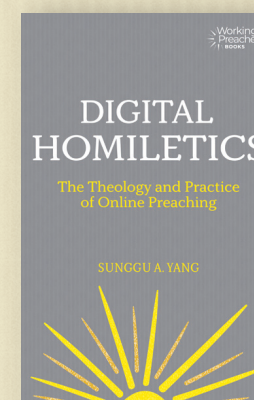
Tessa Pinkstaff, Survey Specialist

To all of the Festival of Homiletics Volunteers – thank you!

THE Bridge

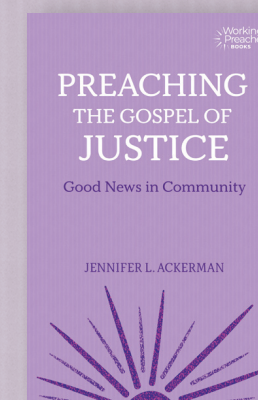
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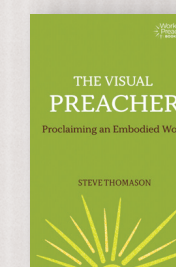
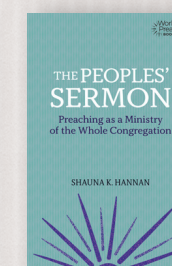
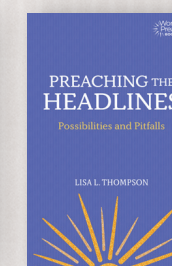
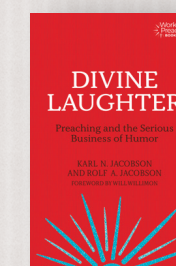
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