

Call for Papers
Academy of Homiletics -- Annual Meeting 2025
Richmond, Virginia
December 4-6, 2025

The Academy of Homiletics (AOH) is issuing a call for papers for its 2025 meeting, which will be held Dec. 4-6. Our theme for the conference is “Preaching and Place.”

This year’s theme extends the theme from 2024: “Preaching Builds Bridges.” Our 2024 theme prioritized the work stemming from our 2019 theme “Preaching and Homiletical Whiteness,” as well as the 2022 Wabash-funded self-study of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Academy of Homiletics. As a guild, AoH members have made considerable efforts to be more inclusive, expansive, and just in their teaching, research, and practice of preaching. And while real-life bridges connect people and perspectives, we cannot do so without also accounting for place.

In the biblical witness, place serves a variety of functions: naming God’s presence and activity, defining God’s presence and judgment, marking socio-cultural and religious difference, accounting for the formation and maintenance of identity, charting the faithfulness and faithlessness of God’s people, mapping God’s present and future promises, and much more. Throughout history, place has been a way that identity, conflict, community, and interactions with the Holy have been mediated.

In recent years, we have become more accustomed to accounting for the ways that place affects our homiletical theory and practice, and the ways that homiletical theory and practice affects place. Contextuality, globalization, coloniality, migration, ecological crisis, war, the changing nature of sacred spaces and spaces from which preaching happens, digitality, place-based pedagogy, and more have all become integral to our collective work as it relates to place. And we have more work to do. This year’s theme invites us to reflect on “place” in our research, teaching, and practice of preaching, especially as we continue our collective commitment to seeking justice in our scholarship.

2025 WORKGROUPS OF THE ACADEMY OF HOMILETICS

(See below for full descriptions.)

Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies
History of Preaching
Identity and Imagination
Justice, Ethics, and Preaching
Pedagogy
Performance and Embodiment

Preaching and Culture
Preaching, Media, and Technology
Preaching, Environment, and Climate Crisis
Rhetoric
Theology of Preaching

We will continue to use the traditional format in which we have two sessions for workgroups. Each workgroup is allotted 2 ½ hours divided into four thirty-minute sessions with ten-minute breaks between papers. This allows for a maximum of four papers per group. Some workgroups, however, may have plans to fill some of those slots with book reviews, panel discussions, or sermons. Directions for specific

workgroups can be found below. More information about the schedule will be announced closer to the meeting.

PAPER SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR ALL WORKGROUPS

Eligibility:

- * Papers must be submitted by Academy members or by sponsored doctoral candidates (PhD, ThD, DMin) who have completed all coursework in a homiletics-related field.
- * Papers by doctoral students are to be submitted only by a sponsoring member of the Academy on behalf of the candidate.
- * Papers must meet standards for academic writing, including mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, syntax, etc.), proper citations, and content standards as set by the workgroup convener(s). Conveners and First Vice President may return the paper to the author to fix any identified issues or may choose not to accept a paper if it does not meet these standards.

Copyright and Open Sourcing:

While in the past, Academy papers have been archived and made available to members only, at the 2015 meeting, the AoH membership voted to begin making papers accepted by the Academy and presented at the meeting available to the public. If you do not wish for your paper to be included in this open-source format, simply note this at the time of your submission. Copyright for the paper is retained by the author.

Deadlines and Instructions:

- Abstracts and papers will be submitted to the 1st Vice President, Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, via an online form and she will distribute them to the conveners. *Do not send abstracts or papers to the workgroup conveners.*
- Graduate students may submit their own abstracts, but papers must be submitted by the student's advisor, a full member of the Academy of Homiletics.
- A 100-150 word abstract including keywords and identification of the workgroup for which the paper is intended to be submitted is **due by June 30**, using Survey Monkey. Submit abstracts here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R66HLSZ>
- **Papers are due by September 1** and must follow the formatting instructions below to be accepted. Submit papers here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FNC2698>
- Papers will be vetted by workgroup conveners who will contact submitters about any issues regarding content, writing mechanics, or format. Final papers will be submitted to the First Vice President (from workgroup conveners) by **Friday, September 30**.
- The First Vice President will collect and publish the book of papers to the Academy website by the Web Editor/Communications Coordinator no later than **November 4**.

*** Please check your Spam folder or contact your IT Administrator if you do not receive the form after submitting your email address.**

Formatting:

Submit papers only in Word format, using Times New Romans, 12-point font, with Times New Roman 10-point font for footnotes. Maximum paper length is ten pages, single-spaced, including footnotes. Papers referencing historical documents can include longer excerpts of those documents in an Appendix, if needed; an Appendix does not count as part of the ten-page limit. Follow the current Chicago Manual of Style (Turabian) for footnote citation. Do not insert page numbers.

The paper's heading should be centered, in bold font, and include the following information:

TITLE OF PAPER

Author's Name, Academic Rank, and Title (or Ph.D./Th.D./D.Min. Candidate and Program)

Author's email address

Sponsor: Name of Sponsor with Academic Rank and Title (for doctoral candidates only)

Sponsor's email address

Name of Institution, City, School Web Address

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100-150 word abstract with keywords

PAPER SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL WORKGROUPS

HERMENEUTICS AND BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies workgroup welcomes papers on the interpretation of biblical texts for preaching and the exploration of hermeneutical approaches as relevant for homiletical theory. Submissions are encouraged in the following areas: hermeneutically engaged approaches to preaching on Hebrew Scripture narratives, biblical poetry, prophetic texts, wisdom traditions, the Gospels, the New Testament epistles, or biblical apocalyptic traditions; analysis of theological or ethical dimensions of the text-to-sermon move; investigation of precedents, pressures, and possibilities in the reception history of a biblical text, motif, or figure; feminist, womanist, queer, or other emancipatory hermeneutics for the transformation of preaching praxis; hermeneutical challenges and benefits of expository preaching; affect theory and biblical interpretation for the pulpit; or another focus positioned at the nexus of text(s) and homiletical interpretation. Submissions addressing this year's conference theme are encouraged; other foci are welcome as well. This group supports the participation of emerging scholars, including students in doctoral programs. The convener is glad to discuss topics with potential participants over email or Zoom. Mentoring is available on the writing process and presentation format to those who request it.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

If a paper is accepted, the presenter will have up to 20 minutes for their distilled presentation, with 10 minutes allotted for discussion. All Academy of Homiletics members are welcome to attend our sessions.

Convener:

Carolyn J. Sharp

Professor of Homiletics
Yale Divinity School
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HISTORY OF PREACHING: Preaching and the Social Sciences

This workgroup welcomes papers that explore preaching and worship in critical conversation with social sciences, especially history, sociology, ethnography, and anthropology. Potential submissions may fit broadly into categories that examine 1) sermons, worship, and homiletical themes in historical contexts, 2) sociological studies about preaching and worship in contemporary communities or traditions, and/or 3) interdisciplinary work that draws upon critical methods from social sciences to develop deep descriptions about a homiletical theme, particular preacher(s), collection of sermons, or worshiping communities.

The co-conveners are enthusiastic supporters of research from newer voices at the Academy, including submissions from candidates in graduate programs. The theme of each Academy meeting will guide conversations about potential panel discussions and partnerships with other workgroups. At the same time, the co-conveners welcome submissions of thoughtful research that may fall outside the year's theme.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

- * Papers submitted to the group will be evaluated by a small “jury” of the co-conveners. If a paper concerns an area, figure, era, or style that is not familiar to the co-conveners, they will ask someone with relevant competence to evaluate it. The standards will be the standards for things like evidence, sources, and claims that are appropriate for the particular descriptive discipline involved. We will also look for clarity of thought, significant arguments, and, of course, a clear focus on preaching.

- * Submissions can be accepted in the form in which they are submitted, accepted on the condition of some revisions, or simply refused. All papers will receive comments designed to help the author take the paper to the next level.

- * Multi-media submissions are welcome, especially when the media contribute to the work of rich description. For instance, archival recordings that could be played in a workgroup session might significantly enhance the quality of a paper.

Co-Conveners:

Hyemin Na

Assistant Professor of Worship, Media and Culture Wesley Theological Seminary

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Kimberly R. Wagner

Assistant Professor of Homiletics Princeton Theological Seminary

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IDENTITY AND IMAGINATION

The Identity and Imagination group considers the philosophical underpinnings and theological horizons of identity and imagination for homiletics. “Identity” indicates how self-examination and embodiment in all of their array empower and/or delimit proclamation. “Imagination” articulates how freedom of thought and ideological critique emboldens homiletical inquiries that may not easily fit within other Academy workgroups. For example, papers that situate proclamation as more than an exclusively Christian and ecclesial practice or papers that engage allied fields to interrogate and trouble preaching’s conditions of possibility fit within the auspices of the group. In general, papers, panel proposals, and sermon colloquia that explore embodied, adventurous, deconstructive, postcolonial, and multidisciplinary approaches to homiletics are all warmly welcomed.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

Members are encouraged to submit academic papers or sermons related to the description of the Workgroup or the conference theme. In order to ensure ample time for discussion, sermons should not exceed 15 minutes. We also welcome graduate student contributions that are appropriately scholarly and have garnered appropriate home institution and advisor support.

Convener:

Jake Myers

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

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JUSTICE, ETHICS, AND PREACHING

This workgroup welcomes papers that advocate for preaching about societal issues and concerns related to justice and ethics. Topics may include (but are not limited to) issues such as immigration policy, racism, white supremacy, sexism, classism, sex trafficking, domestic violence, etc. This year, papers related to preaching and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are encouraged.

Topics related to the conference theme are welcome and must be related to the focus of the workgroup. All papers should provide suggestions about how to preach effectively on these topics. Other topics may be considered.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

No more than four papers will be accepted for any given annual meeting to allow for meaningful discussions. At least one slot each year will be reserved for a graduate student paper. Though papers are generally accepted on a first come, first serve basis, papers may be denied for poor academic quality.

Convener:

Debra J. Mumford

Vice President of Academic Affairs, Frank H. Caldwell Professor of Homiletics Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary dmumford@lpts.edu

PEDAGOGY

The Pedagogy Work group explores and demonstrates theory and method on matters pertaining directly to the teaching of preaching. The co-conveners will attempt to provide balance between papers discussing theories of teaching and papers that demonstrate specific teaching practices for homiletics to consider. We prefer, but are not limited to, papers that explore pedagogical philosophies and/or practices that have been tested in homiletics classrooms or field experiences.

Participation:

Participants are invited to stay with the workgroup for its full session and to consider making a long-term commitment. However, this is not required as guests are always welcome.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

- * The Co-Conveners will read all papers submitted to this workgroup.
- * The group wants to facilitate a safe space for the exploration of new ideas, so its goal is not to exclude papers. The co-conveners may, however, refuse papers lacking in correct style or academic quality.
- * The 2025 meeting intends for two of its four sessions to be devoted to a panel on “The Place of Place in Preaching Pedagogy: In-Person, Online, Hybrid, and Beyond.”
- * For our remaining sessions, we invite papers that focus on this year’s theme or on another topic related to pedagogy. Papers addressing the theme of the 2025 meeting will be given preference.
- * 30 minutes will be allotted per paper. Presenters are encouraged to limit summaries of their paper to 10 minutes to allow ample time for discussion of the work by the group.

Co-Conveners:

Rich Voelz

Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship, Union Presbyterian Seminary

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E. Trey Clark

Assistant Professor of Preaching and Spiritual Formation, Fuller Theological Seminary

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PERFORMANCE AND EMBODIMENT

The Performance and Embodiment Workgroup explores preaching as an embodied and performative event. Members are welcome to propose papers, performances, or pedagogical practices. Potential topics might include (but are not limited to): 1) theologies and practices of preaching, performance, and embodiment, 2) ways in which the body can be integrated into the whole of preaching preparation (e.g., embodied biblical interpretation and sermon writing), 3) preaching and embodiment in relationship to intersectionalities and diverse contexts, and 4) the homiletics’ embodied presence in the teaching space.

Paper, Performance, and Pedagogical Practice Guidelines and Procedures:

*Papers

- Submissions addressing the theme of the 2025 meeting will be given preference so far as they are related to performance and embodiment.
- Papers should follow the stated guidelines and deadlines for the Academy.

*Performances (e.g., a Scripture reading or portion of a sermon that manifests a particular aspect of preaching performance)

- To propose a performance, please submit a title along with a one-paragraph description and explanation of the performance.

*Pedagogical Practices of embodiment, speech, performance, and delivery that have proven beneficial in the classroom.

- To propose a pedagogical practice, please submit a title along with a one-paragraph description and explanation of the purpose of the practice. Using or adapting exercises from other texts or workshops is encouraged with proper crediting of sources.
- Brief presentations and demonstrations may employ volunteers from the workgroup as participants.

Convener:

Samantha Gilmore

Assistant Professor of Homiletics, Wartburg Theological Seminary

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PREACHING AND CULTURE

The Preaching and Culture Workgroup is concerned with cultural approaches to homiletics. Our globalized, multicultural world drives us to take the relationship between preaching and culture seriously by critically analyzing current practices of Christian preaching grounded in traditional Western rhetoric and hermeneutics. It also challenges us to reconstruct homiletical theories more relevant to our changing cultural context for preaching. Papers providing insights into postmodern, postcolonial, intercultural, or intergenerational preaching are welcome. Those dealing with preaching on social and ethical issues emerging from local and global cultural contexts, such as race, gender, sexuality, immigration, climate change, economic and power disparity, abortion, disability, religious pluralism, etc., are also welcome. Moreover, we encourage you to submit your work on Asian and Asian American preaching, African American preaching, Native American preaching, Hispanic preaching, or other racially and ethnically distinctive preaching. The workgroup will help you strengthen the scope of your research through constructive conversation.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

- * Both conveners review all submissions. While we hope to accept each proposal in its submitted form, the workgroup conveners may ask for additional revisions, recommend another group for the proposal, or decline the submission.

- * We encourage graduate students to submit papers, but only with the sponsorship of a full member of the Academy of Homiletics, as specified in the “Deadlines and Instructions” listed above.
- * In addition to essay submissions, we welcome the submission of guild-appropriate sermon manuscripts with analyses and proposals for panel discussions and book reviews. Please consult the workgroup conveners via email before proposal submission.
- * A maximum of four sessions, including paper presentations and panel discussions, will be offered, thirty minutes per each. Presenters are encouraged to limit summaries of their papers to ten minutes to allow sufficient time for the discussion of the work by the group.
- * Multi-media presentations are encouraged.
- * We encourage all participants to read contributions in advance for full and lively participation.
- * Visitors are welcome.

Co-conveners:

Eunjoo Mary Kim

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Sunggu A. Yang

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PREACHING, MEDIA, AND TECHNOLOGY

The Preaching and Media Workgroup will engage the potential intersections between Preaching and Social Media and Technology, especially considering this year's theme and the experiences of preachers today. Technology is playing a larger and more integrative part of 21st century culture. How can preaching, media, and technology aid in creating a preaching renaissance? This work group will look at the ways preaching using media and technology intersect, how and why media and technology can be used in worship, why it might not be useful in some situations and contexts, and the theological and practical implications for their possible utilization in our preaching, especially regarding the theme of a preaching renaissance.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

Since this workgroup is a relatively new addition to the Academy of Homiletics, the members are encouraged to submit any academic papers related to the description of the Workgroup. In addition, sermons and book reviews are welcome. If you want to preach a sermon and discuss it, your preaching should be no longer than 10 minutes. Please feel free to contact the convener if you have any questions.

Convener:

Karyn L. Wiseman

Herman G. Stuempfle Professor of Homiletics

United Lutheran Theological Seminary – Philadelphia + Gettysburg

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PREACHING, ENVIRONMENT, AND CLIMATE CRISIS

This workgroup intends to foster a sustained and focused conversation about intersections between homiletics and environmental issues, especially the climate crisis. It is a forum for raising awareness about and equipping homiletics professors for instructing their students on preaching about topics such as anthropocentrism, colonialism, food and faith, environmental racism, and ecological justice. Given this year's theme, "Preaching and Place," there is an urgent need for homileticians to address preaching and the environment given scientific reports showing that the next decade is a critical window of opportunity for limiting the worst effects of global warming and preparing communities for impacts of the climate crisis. Congregations are showing a growing interest in having their clergy address climate change and other environmental issues from the pulpit. As well, there is a growing number of preachers who are in need of homiletical support for crafting sermons that provide biblical and theological framing for the climate crisis and other environmental issues.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

- * Scholars may consider preaching and the environment from biblical, pedagogical, performative, rhetorical, or liturgical perspectives.
- * The conveners invite papers, sermons, and proposals for panel discussions that will address the climate crisis and other environmental issues and speak to the core of our homiletical discipline.
- * A goal for this workgroup is to curate submissions for an edited anthology on preaching, environment, and the climate crisis.

Co-Conveners:

HyeRan Kim-Cragg

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Leah D. Schade

Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship, Lexington Theological Seminary

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RHETORIC

The Rhetoric Workgroup provides a forum for exploring questions related to the human dimension of preaching's craft traditionally identified with both the classical and contemporary traditions of rhetoric. From antiquity rhetoric has been taught as the art of reasoning in matters of contingent discourse trading in probable judgments rather than certain knowledge, in communicating contextually applied truths rather than communicating universal truths. Rhetoric then provides homiletics with resources to examine aspects of the craft of preaching, focused on how potentially diverse listeners may be influenced to become receptive to sermonic appeals, whether explicitly or implicitly embedded in this reasoning. It also focuses on developing increasing awareness of what counts as contextually meaningful sermonic reasoning resources. This includes context and meaningful sermonic language use (including figures of thought and speech), contextually meaningful sermonic designs, and contextually meaningful forms of sermon delivery. In general, contributors are encouraged to either address the theme for the Academy meeting

that year or contribute to disciplinary knowledge out of their own scholarly project(s). Occasional forums on selected subjects may be held.

Convener:

Courtney Buggs

Assistant Professor of Homiletics, Director of the PhD in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric Program, Christian Theological Seminary

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THEOLOGY OF PREACHING

As teachers of preaching, we are tasked with helping our students develop a theology of preaching that will deepen and develop through a lifetime of breaking open God's Word. We explore our theological vision as we consider questions such as:

- Who is the God whom I preach? What is the action of God in preaching?
- How do we understand and articulate the act of preaching and the role of the preacher within the community and in the mission of the church?
- How is our theology of preaching formed and articulated, consciously or unconsciously by our social location, ethnicity and culture?

Our responses to these and other similar questions constitute our theology of preaching.

Paper Submission Guidelines and Procedures:

Some Academy members have a long-standing relationship with a particular working group, others prefer to hear a variety of papers. We welcome all who wish to attend, whether that attendance is for the entire session or one particular paper. We strongly encourage participants to read and reflect on the papers they will hear, so that they may participate fully and fruitfully in the discussions.

For 2025, the Theology of Preaching Workgroup will accept up to 4 papers for presentation. Doctoral students who have completed all coursework may submit a paper via their advisor, who must be a full member of the Academy. Preference will be given to submissions related to the conference theme of *Preaching and Place*.

If more than four papers are submitted, the convener will select those to be presented. No papers in need of editing for content, length, or language will be considered.

Convener:

Susan McGurgan

Director, Preach All Ways Initiative

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