

**Call for Papers**  
**Academy of Homiletics 2026**  
**Dayton, Ohio**

The Academy of Homiletics (AoH) issues a call for papers for its 2026 meeting, which will be held Dec. 3-5. Our theme for the conference is **"Theopoetic Preaching."**

Theopoetic preaching speaks to the need for imaginative approaches to preaching in addressing the crises and hopes of the present day. At the intersection of divine justice and imagination, it offers more than propositional speech or arguments about what to believe or how to behave but invites both critical reflection and creativity in designing sermons and communicative strategies that engage God's life-giving purposes amid the death-dealing impulses and divisiveness that threaten the world we share.

Honoring the Academy's call to build bridges (the 2024 AoH theme) and the importance of place in naming God's presence and activity amid socio-cultural and religious differences (the 2025 theme), our 2026 theme invites theological, biblical, historical, cultural, and pedagogical reflections on the meaning and practice of imagination for preaching that addresses urgent matters of life and faith (e.g., race relations, economic injustice, ecological crises, human sexuality, gender identity, violence between nations, groups, and individuals). How do the life of Jesus Christ and the Spirit guide us anew as teachers and researchers who seek to break out of the dogmatic deadlocks and ideologically driven narratives that keep us from seeing and hearing God's loving and transforming purposes today?

Questions that connect theopoetic preaching to our Workgroups and current scholarship in homiletics include (but are not limited to):

- How does Scripture reveal and invite theopoetic ingenuity through its myriad genres and forms, prophetic witness, and the poetic justice it communicates?
- More than a metaphor or an idealized image, how is the reign of God spoken of in Scripture and proclaimed through the words, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ something other than populist notions of power, White Christian Nationalism, political theocracies, or other assertions of "power over others?"
- In what ways might moral imagination, spirituality, and poesis (the act of creating) help preachers to envision communal participation in the fullness of life promised by God?
- Which names, images, and metaphors for God faithfully, freely, and truly represent the being and values of the God we speak of when preaching?



\*Image of watercolor cross and torn newspaper by Paul Grout, former pastor and moderator of the Church of the Brethren, artist and prophet. (2026)\*

- What performative expressions are needed to decry broken relationships and call for our re-creative participation in God's life-giving intentions for this blessed and broken world?
- How do media and culture enhance and/or work against the need to creatively imagine God's just and loving presence amid particular contexts and communities?

## **WORKGROUP SESSIONS**

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**

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:

Papers accepted for Workgroup presentations will be published in the Workgroup booklet and made available to AoH members. After the Meeting, the Booklet is also available to members via the AoH website archive. Papers are not made available to the public. Copyright for the paper is retained by the author.

#### Deadlines and Instructions:

- Abstracts and papers will be submitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Courtney V. Buggs, 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 1, 2026**, using Survey Monkey. **Submit abstracts [here](#).**
- Papers are due by **August 3, 2026**, and must follow the formatting instructions below to be accepted. **Submit papers [here](#).**
- 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 **September 30, 2026**.
- 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 6, 2026**.

*\* 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**

**Copyright © 2026 Author's Name**

**100-150 word abstract with keywords**

**WORKGROUPS AND DESCRIPTIONS**

**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

[carolyn.sharp@yale.edu](mailto:carolyn.sharp@yale.edu)

### **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 worshipping 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

[hna@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:hna@wesleyseminary.edu)

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

[Myersj@ctsnet.edu](mailto:Myersj@ctsnet.edu)

## **JUSTICE, ETHICS, AND PREACHING**

The Justice, Ethics, and Preaching section encourages submission of papers conversant with this year's AOH theme: Theopoetic preaching. *Theopoetic preaching speaks to the need for imaginative approaches to preaching in addressing the crises and hopes of the present day.* Papers that provide guidance on how to preach justice-focused sermons in the current geo-political climate are encouraged.

## 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](mailto: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 homileticians to consider. We prefer but are not limited to 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. Neither is 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 supply 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 2026 workgroup intends for two of its four sessions to be devoted to an interactive workshop with the author(s) of *Arts and Preaching*.
- \* For our remaining sessions, we invite papers that focus on our theme.
- \* Papers addressing the theme of the 2026 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

[Richard.Voelz@upsem.edu](mailto:Richard.Voelz@upsem.edu)

Trey Clark

Assistant Professor of Preaching, Fuller Seminary

[edgartreyclark@fuller.edu](mailto:edgartreyclark@fuller.edu)

## **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 homiletician's embodied presence in the teaching space.

Paper, Performance, and Pedagogical Practice Guidelines and Procedures:

### Papers

\*Submissions addressing the theme of the 2026 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

[sgilmore@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:sgilmore@wartburgseminary.edu)

## **PREACHING AND CULTURE**

The Preaching and Culture Workgroup is concerned with cultural approaches to homiletics. Our globalized, multicultural, religiously plural, and multi-ethno-aesthetical 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, multi-artistic, interfaith, 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, nationalism, etc.—are also welcome. Moreover, we encourage you to submit your work on Asian and Asian American preaching, Black and African American preaching, Native American preaching, Hispanic/Latinx preaching, or other racially and ethnically distinctive preaching. The workgroup seeks to strengthen the scope and depth 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 their papers sponsored by a member of the Academy (e.g., their doctoral supervisor).

\* 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 group discussion.

\* Multi-media presentations are encouraged.

\* We encourage all participants to read contributions in advance for full and lively participation.

\* Visitors are welcome.

Co-conveners:

Sunggu A. Yang

Associate Professor of Theology & Christian Ministries, George Fox University School of Theology [syang@georgefox.edu](mailto:syang@georgefox.edu)

Wing Yi Wong

Assistant Professor of Practical Theology, Atlantic School of Theology

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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

[kwiseman@uls.edu](mailto:kwiseman@uls.edu)

### **PREACHING, ENVIRONMENT, AND CLIMATE CRISIS**

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, an increasing number of preachers require homiletical support for crafting sermons that provide biblical and theological framing for the climate crisis and other environmental issues. The conveners aim to foster a sustained and focused conversation about intersections between homiletics and environmental issues, especially the climate crisis. We provide a forum for equipping homiletics professors to instruct their students on preaching about topics such as anthropocentrism, colonialism, gender and patriarchy, food and faith, environmental racism, and ecological justice.

This workgroup builds on previous AOH themes on preaching and creation (2018), unmasking whiteness (2019), trauma (2020), decentering (2022), building bridges (2024) and preaching and place (2025). The group's approach is interdisciplinary and intersectional. We invite papers, sermons, and proposals for panel discussions that address the climate crisis and other environmental issues while speaking to the core of our homiletical discipline. For example, scholars may consider preaching and the environment from biblical, theological, cultural, pedagogical, performative, rhetorical, or liturgical perspectives.

In keeping with the 2026 theme, "Theopoetic Preaching," the conveners encourage papers that are imaginative in addressing the climate crisis and proclaiming strategic hope at the juncture of critical reflection, creativity, and divine justice and restoration for people and the planet. We especially encourage reflection on the question from Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, 2026 President of the Academy, "In what ways might moral imagination, spirituality, and poesis (the act of creating) help preachers to envision communal participation in the fullness of life promised by God?"

Co-Conveners:

HyeRan Kim-Cragg

Principal and Timothy Eaton Memorial Church Professor of Preaching, Emmanuel College

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Leah 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 relationship of preaching, theology, and rhetoric, in both the classical and contemporary traditions of rhetoric. We explore the rhetorical tradition both as practice concerned with the real world, and in conversation with aesthetic and literary practices and attentiveness to an imaginary world. Rhetoric provides homiletics with resources to examine aspects of the craft of preaching, focused on how diverse listeners may be influenced to become receptive to sermonic appeals, whether explicitly or implicitly embedded in the sermonic presentation. It also focuses on developing increasing awareness of what counts as meaningful sermonic reasoning resources, meaningful sermonic language use (including figures of thought and speech), meaningful sermonic designs, and meaningful forms of sermon delivery. Additionally, we welcome the use of rhetorical criticism as a methodology for analyzing sermons and public speeches that engage religion and theology.

This year contributors are encouraged to explore how theopoetics functions in the sermon, and theopoetic expression that may not traditionally be considered sacred rhetoric. Additional papers will be considered that address broader themes within homiletics, religious communications, and preaching.

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:

Courtney Buggs

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

## **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:

We recognize that while 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 2026, the Theology of Preaching Workgroup will accept up to 4 papers for presentation. Doctoral students who have completed all of their coursework are warmly invited to submit a paper **via their advisor**, who should be a full member of the academy. Preference will be given to submissions related to the conference theme. If more than four papers are submitted, the convener will select those to be presented. No papers in need of significant editing for content, length, or language will be considered.

Convener:

Susan McGurgan

Director, Preach All Ways Initiative

Associate Professor of Theology

Marian University

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