



Meet your D.Min. Faculty



UNION
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For the Church in the World

Meet Your Faculty on the Richmond and Charlotte Campuses

Our D.Min. program has many distinctive aspects, but one of the most unique is that all students have the opportunity to work individually with nationally and internationally recognized scholars in theological education. Your faculty also love and care about teaching. Learn more about their perspectives on ministry and teaching, research interests, and the types of D.Min. projects they advise below. **Faculty included are eligible and may be available to work with you on Mini or Final Integrative D.Min. Projects.** Union has many additional and wonderful faculty who may offer courses with D.Min. planks or be available for conversation.



The Rev. Dr. Samuel Adams serves as the Mary Jane and John F. McNair Chair of Biblical Studies and Director of the Master of Theology Program. Dr. Adams' interests include the Wisdom literature of the Bible and beyond, wealth and poverty in the ancient world, apocalypticism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Egyptology, biblical theology, and the Bible and film. His publications include *Social and Economic Life in Second Temple Judea* (Westminster John Knox, 2014) and *Wisdom in Transition: Act and Consequence in Second Temple Instructions* (Brill, 2008). Current book projects focus on a commentary on the Jewish sage Ben Sira (Anchor Yale Bible) and editing a comprehensive introduction to Wisdom literature.



The Rev. Dr. Rubén Arjona is the Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and, when not on sabbatical, serves as the Director of the Doctorate of Ministry Program. He was raised by a “hybrid” Christian family (Presbyterian on his father’s side and Roman Catholic on his mother’s). He cherishes that legacy and explores ways to integrate his early faith formation with his current intentional theologies.

Inspired by his work in various congregations in Mexico City and his mentorship of students in Mexican seminaries, Dr. Arjona pursued graduate studies in pastoral care and pastoral theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. In addition to serving as an instructor in seminaries in his native Mexico, Dr. Arjona served his denomination as executive secretary of its board of education and moderator of the Berea Presbytery in Mexico City.

Dr. Arjona has published several works in Spanish, including his undergraduate thesis on John Calvin’s missions to France, published by the *Centro Basilea de Investigación y Apoyo* under the auspices of the *Fondation pour l’Aide au Protestantisme Réformé* (FAP). More recently, Dr. Arjona has published several peer-reviewed articles in *Pastoral Psychology* and the *Journal of Pastoral Theology*. Dr. Arjona’s research interests include the pastoral care of men, the intersections of pastoral care and liberation theologies, the care of couples and families, the care of LGBTQ+ individuals, and Erik H. Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development.

Meet your D.Min. Faculty

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

- Research Methods Seminar
- Advanced Topics in Pastoral Care

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

- Journeying with My Students on Campus: Spiritual Care with Non-Religious Emerging Adults
- A Liberation Theology for the Post-modern Church in Response to Mental Health: An Examination of the Intersection of Theology and the Practice of Care

When asked what excites him about working with D.Min. students, Dr. Arjona says, “*What I appreciate most about working with D.Min. students is their creative and thoughtful approach to praxis—the rich, dynamic interplay between theory and practice.*”



Dr. Rachel S. Baard, Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics and Director of the Master of Arts in Public Theology Program, joined the faculty of Union Presbyterian Seminary in the fall of 2019, having previously taught at Villanova University. As a South African whose theology was shaped by the theologies of resistance to apartheid, she has a particular interest in public theology.

Her first book, *Sexism and Sin-Talk: Feminist Conversations on the Human Condition*, was published in 2019 by Westminster John Knox Press and received the 2020

Andrew Murray-Desmond Tutu Book Prize in South Africa. She is the editor of *The Political Theology of Paul Tillich*, published in 2024 by Lexington Press. She is also the author of multiple articles and has given scholarly presentations around the United States and in South Africa on a variety of topics, including the Confession of Belhar, Christology and culture, public theology, and truth and reconciliation. Her current book project focuses on Mariology through a Protestant lens.

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

Theological Hermeneutics

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

- Seeking Christ, Seeking Justice: Exploring the Connection between Reinhold Niebuhr and the Social Witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- The Theology of Wild Things: Lessons for Creation Care



Dr. Sung Hee Chang has since 2012 served the faculty of Union Presbyterian Seminary as Associate Professor of Supervised Ministry and Director of Supervised Ministry & Vocational Planning, Charlotte campus. Previously, she had served as an educator in several churches in Virginia and North Carolina.

Her areas of special interest include curriculum theory with particular attention to contextual education, and postcolonial studies, intercultural theological education, ecumenical formation, interreligious education, and Asian theological education.

She currently serves as a member of the editorial board of the journal *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry*.

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

A Theology of Hope for Today: Reimagining the Church of the Future for the PCUSA



The Rev. Dr. Rebecca Davis serves as the Sarah Belk Gambrell Professor of Christian Education and Director of the Center for Excellence in Christian Education. Dr. Davis brings 25 years of congregational experience to her academic teaching. She has been both ordained and nonordained ministry staff in small, medium and large congregations across the South.

One of her deepest passions is child advocacy, which called her to serve as Coordinator of the Religious Action Division for the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C., and contract staff for the National Council of Churches' Committee on Justice for Children and Their Families. Dr. Davis has been engaged at all levels of the church, including serving as the organizing chair of the Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network and on the Year of the Child Planning Team for the General Assembly. She currently serves on the editorial board for Presbyterian Women's *Horizons Magazine*, the advisory board for the PC(USA)'s Educate a Child Initiative, and the National Committee on the Self-Development of People and was named the 2018 Educator of the Year by the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators.

Her research centers on the ethical implications of infant baptism, forming faith for public engagement, and transformative emancipatory pedagogy.

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:
Gender, Leadership, and the Church



The Rev. Dr. Frances Taylor Gench is an ordained minister of the PC(USA) and was on the faculty of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg from 1986 to 1999. She served as a member of the PC(USA) General Assembly's Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church (2001–2006) and for many years as a parish associate at The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. Her research and teaching interests include the Gospels, women in the biblical world and feminist biblical criticism, global and intercultural perspectives on the Bible, and issues of biblical authority and interpretation. She is the author of six books, including *Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts: Reflections on Paul, Women, and the Authority of Scripture* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2015). She also serves as the Book Review Editor for *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*.

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:
Gender, Leadership, and the Church



The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty serves as the J. Roy Davis Chair of Theology and History and Acting Director of the D.Min. Program while Dr. Arjona is on sabbatical. She joined Union's faculty in 2023 after teaching in university contexts for more than 20 years. She is frequently invited to preach or speak on matters of faith and public life and identifies as a scholar working intentionally to bridge church and academy. Her research interests are broad and include economic ethics, Reformed and feminist theologies, women and the social gospel, and the ethics of caregiving, among other things. Her most recent publication is *Authentic Christian Freedom: Deconstructing the American Gospel of Liberty* (Orbis, 2025). She is working on two new book projects—one that focuses on *Courageous Moral Leadership from Common People* and another that is a co-edited project with Shea Watts on a *Progressive Reformed Spirituality for Justice-Seekers*.

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

Spirituality and Social Transformation

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

- Reimagining Food Security: Partnering God, Government, Corporations, and Communities
- A Theology of Hope for Today: Reimagining the Church of the Future for the PCUSA
- A Liberation Theology for the Post-modern Church in Response to Mental Health: An Examination of the Intersection of Theology and the Practice of Care
- A Many Splendored Wonder: Cultivating Communities of Faith Characterized by Qualities of Justice, Care, and Interdependence in the Context of Imperial Death Culture and in an Urban Setting

One of the things that Dr. Hinson-Hasty finds energizing about working with D.Min. students is *“their passion for enlivening the theological and moral imaginations of people in the pew. I have worked with students on projects ranging from food justice to solutions to mainline decline to liturgical direct action. The connective thread of their concern is increasing the vibrant ministry of Christian communities of faith.”*



The Rev. Dr. Lakisha R. Lockhart serves as the Associate Professor of Christian Education. Her research interests are in the areas of religious education; practical, liberation, and Womanist theologies; ethics and society; multiple intelligences; embodied faith and pedagogies; theological aesthetics; theopoetics; and creativity, imagination, and play. Her teaching takes seriously the benefits and necessity of play, movement, aesthetics, creative arts, and embodiment. For Dr. Lockhart, the body is a locus for doing theology and theological reflection. Ordained to ministry in the nondenominational tradition, she recognizes the importance of teaching

Christian education for the strengthening of the church.

She has authored or co-authored numerous publications and book chapters, including *United Against Racism: Churches for Change: Facilitator's Guide*, “Enfleshing Catechesis Through Embodied Space” in the book *Together Along the Way: Conversations Inspired by the Directory for Catechesis*, “Let's Dance: Zumba and the Imago Dei of Beautiful Black Bodies” in *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology & Culture*, and “My Wildest Dream: A Letter to My Black Son” in *Religious Education*. Her awards and honors include Millennial Womanist to Watch from The Millennial Womanist Project, Images of Success from Claflin University, and a First Wornom Innovative Grant from the Religious Education Association Project.

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

A Many Splendored Wonder: Cultivating Communities of Faith Characterized by Qualities of Justice, Care, and Interdependence in the Context of Imperial Death Culture and in an Urban Setting



Dr. Christine Luckritz Marquis is Associate Professor of Church History and Acting Director of the Master of Theology Program, having been at Union Presbyterian Seminary since fall 2013. Previously, she taught at Duke University, Lehigh University, and Moravian Theological Seminary. She is the recipient of several awards, including the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship from 2010–2012.

Her teaching and research explore early Christian communities and their practices, especially those founded in Egypt, Syria, and the Arabian Peninsula. Her first book is *Death of the Desert: Monastic Memory and the Loss of Egypt's Golden Age* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022).

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The book explores how memory and spatial practices were transformed by acts of violence among Egyptian ascetics. She has also co-edited and translated *The History of the Great Deed of Bishop Paul of Quentos and Priest John of Edessa: Texts from Christian Late Antiquity, Volume 29* (Gorgias Press, 2010). She contributed to *Melania: Early Christianity Through the Life of One Family* (University of California Press, 2016). Her translation work is found in the first two volumes of *More New Testament Apocrypha* and on the Coptic Scriptorium webpage.

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

- Enslavement, Race/Ethnicity, Caste (elective)
- Ancient and Medieval Food (elective)

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

Using Collaborative Preaching to Address Racism in the White Church



The Rev. Dr. Safwat Marzouk serves as Associate Professor of Bible and is an Egyptian Presbyterian whose research interests include thinking theologically about monsters in the Bible, ancient Near East, and popular culture; constructing the other in the Old Testament; Middle Eastern Christian hermeneutics; and immigration and the Bible. He is the author of numerous articles, book chapters, and three books: *Egypt as a Monster in the Book of Ezekiel*; *Exodus, Joshua, Ezekiel in the Arabic Contemporary Commentary*; and *Intercultural Church: A Biblical Vision for an Age of Migration*. He is currently working on a commentary for the New Interpretation

Series of Westminster John Knox Press: *Exodus: A Commentary*.

Dr. Marzouk was ordained as a pastor in 2002 by the Delta Presbytery of the Synod of the Nile (the governing body of the Presbyterian Church in Egypt), and in May 2021, he joined the Wabash Valley Presbytery of PC(USA). As a Christian Egyptian and migrant to the U.S., he interprets the Bible in ways that are interreligiously and interculturally sensitive, seeking God's shalom and justice for the vulnerable and the marginalized.

Courses taught in the D.Min. Program:

Intercultural Church and Migration



Dr. Robin McCall is Seminary Librarian and Assistant Professor of Bibliography and Research. Dr. McCall holds an M.Div. from Baptist Theological Seminary, an MLIS from UNC-Greensboro, and a Ph.D. in the Hebrew Bible from Princeton Theological Seminary. Her teaching focuses on helping students develop and implement information fluency—that is, practical research skills online and in the library, and professor of biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew Bible. Her research interests include the Hebrew Bible's priestly literature, the grotesque in biblical literature, biblical perceptions of divine and human bodies, and feminist and queer biblical interpretation. She has

published articles in *Review & Expositor* and contributed to *A Companion to Greek and Roman Science, Medicine, and Technology* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016) and *The Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Baker Academic Press, 2011).

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

Research Methods Seminar

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

Questioning for Connection: Using Creation to Increase the Capacity to Care

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The Rev. Dr. Joshua Morris joined Union's faculty in 2023. He is interested in practical and pastoral theology and publishes on moral injury, trauma, and chaplaincy. His most recent book is on pediatric chaplaincy and will be published by Orbis Books in 2026.

Dr. Morris advises D.Min. projects exploring the intersections within practical theology. These intersections include how hospice chaplains create support networks for colleagues working almost exclusively with death and dying, how to enliven congregational preaching with emerging conversation partners, how to train a healthcare network spiritual care team to prepare volunteers for spiritual care visits, and the correlations between mental health and spiritual health.

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

Advanced Topics in Practical Theology

When asked what excites him about working with D.Min. students, Dr. Morris says, *"I am amazed by the students that I get to work alongside. The vision, questions, and passion that students bring to doctoral work excites me, and I am encouraged by ever-expanding nature of God's calling on us!"*



The Rev. Dr. Melanie Jones Quarles is Assistant Professor of Ethics, Theology, and Culture and the Inaugural Director of The Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership (KGCCWL). Formerly, Dr. Jones Quarles served as the 2018–19 Crump Visiting Professor and Black Religious Scholar-in-Residence at Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, and Lecturer at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas; American Baptist College in Nashville, Tennessee; and the Chicago Theological Seminary and Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, Illinois.

Dr. Quarles' research probes the scripting of the body in theology and philosophy, particularly as it relates to Black women's body politics, womanist theological ethics, sacred texts, millennials and faith, Black aesthetics, and popular culture. Her first academic monograph, *Up Against a Crooked Gospel: Black Women's Bodies and the Politics of Redemption* (Orbis Books, 2024), mines the prophetic imaginations of influential womanist thinkers, crafting a liberating vision that resists Black women serving as surrogate "saviors" in society and religion. For her distinguished research, Dr. Quarles has received notable fellowships and scholarships, including from the Forum for Theological Exploration, the Louisville Institute, the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, Villanova University Center for Church Management, the Henry Luce Foundation, Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Technology, Innovation & Digital Engagement Lab.

Dr. Quarles, a thinking woman of faith, embodies radical love and revolutionary justice in the academy, church, and global community. She is the Co-Founder of The Millennial Womanism Project (TMWP) and Co-Host of the transgenerational womanist public theology podcast "The Womanist Salon."

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

Liberation Theology & Ethics

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

Self-worth: A Foundational, Restorative, and Healing Tool for Incarcerated Women in Prison

Re-entry Programs

Dr. Quarles is *"excited to collaborate with D.Min. students who are passionate about developing gospel-inspired, transformative pathways for faith communities. D.Min. students represent frontline practitioners who confront the pressing concerns of our time, blending head and heart while shaping a future rooted in faith and action."*



The Rev. Dr. Rodney Sadler is Associate Professor of Bible and Director of the Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation. He is a widely published author and editor. Among his research interests are the intersection of race and Scripture, the impact of our images of Jesus on the perpetuation of racial thought in America, the development of African American biblical interpretation in slave narratives, the enactment of justice in society based on biblical imperatives, and the intersection of religion and politics.

In addition to his academic work, Dr. Sadler brings a wealth of experience in community organizing to our D.Min. program. Dr. Sadler has hosted a weekly national radio program for the People Demanding Action Network called “Politics of Faith,” co-hosts the “Just Talk/Talk Just” series and hosts the “Dangerous Dialogues” series. He currently serves as the Co-Chair of the Reimagining America Project and as a Tri-Chair of the North Carolina Poor Peoples’ Campaign.

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

Reimagining Food Security: Partnering God, Government, Corporations, and Communities



Dr. Christian Sanchez was called to Union Presbyterian Seminary in 2024. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Bible and Theology from Southwestern Assemblies of God University (2017), a Master of Philosophy in Analytic and Exegetical Theology from the University of St. Andrews (2021), and a Doctor of Philosophy in the New Testament from Baylor University (2024).

His research primarily focuses on the Gospel of Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, the Book of Revelation, early Christian apocalyptic theology, empire studies, and postcolonial interpretation. Dr. Sanchez has published in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, the *Journal of Theological Interpretation*, and the *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, and is a contributor to *Early Christians and Their Art* (SBL Press, 2023). Because his doctoral research in Lukan literature speaks to Latinx concerns and experiences, Dr. Sanchez also won the Hispanic Theological Initiative/Lilly Dissertation Fellowship award in 2023.

Dr. Sanchez believes that “*UPSem’s Doctor of Ministry students innovate new ways of drawing the church into the Spirit’s work in this world.*”



Dr. Alphonso Saville IV is a scholar of American religion whose research focuses on the legacies of slavery in American religion, African American Christianity, and the religions and literature of the African diaspora. His book, *The Gospel of John Marrant: Conjuring Christianity in the Black Atlantic*, is the first full-length study of North America’s first Black ordained minister, the Rev. John Marrant. It was published in August 2024 in the Religious Cultures of African and African Diaspora People series at Duke University Press.

Dr. Saville’s well-established ties to local communities demonstrate his commitment to the work of repair in the classroom and beyond. In his hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, he spearheaded youth development programs and initiatives as the Director of Community Engagement at Memphis Athletic Ministries and Lead Organizer at Shelby County Interfaith. Additionally, he has served as a Site Coordinator for the District of Columbia Board of Elections and conducted numerous education and training workshops for church and ministry leaders in the Washington, D.C., area.

Meet your D.Min. Faculty



The Rev. Dr. Megan Fullerton Strollo is Assistant Professor of Biblical Languages. She received both her Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy in biblical studies degrees from Union Presbyterian Seminary. Her primary research interests include the Megilloth (Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther), post-exilic literature, Wisdom literature, biblical languages, biblical theology, women in the Bible, intertextuality in the Bible, and feminist biblical interpretation. Her first monograph, *Theologies of Human Agency: Counterbalancing Divine (In) Activity in the Megilloth* (Lexington Books, 2023) explores human agency as a theological response in the

Megilloth. She has also published articles and reviews in peer-reviewed journals and is a contributor to *Megilloth Studies: The Shape of Contemporary Scholarship* (Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2016). As an ordained Baptist minister, Dr. Strollo has served in pastoral roles at various churches and enjoys opportunities to bring her research interests to the church and other public forums.

What excites Dr. Strollo about working with D.Min. students is *“the chance to build bridges between biblical scholarship and the life and ministry of the church.”* She is eager to *“work with students who are looking for ways to ‘translate’ academic biblical study for practical use in ministry and for all of God’s people.”*

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

Bible translation for diverse audiences (new readers, children, incarcerated individuals)



The Rev. Dr. James Taneti is the Director of the Syngman Rhee Global Mission Center and Assistant Professor of World Christianity. An ordained minister in the PC(USA), Dr. Taneti has previously ministered in church, classroom, clinical, and correctional settings. After completing his theological education at the United Theological College, India, Dr. Taneti pursued and received a master’s degree from Union Presbyterian Seminary. His area of expertise is on Christianity outside the Western hemisphere. Dr. Taneti has authored three books about Christianity in South Asia and numerous essays and book reviews.

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

- Ecclesiology in World Perspective
- Church in a Multi-faith World



Dr. Dorothee Tripodi serves as the Director of Supervised Ministry and Vocational Planning and Assistant Professor of Supervised Ministry. Dr. Tripodi is a United Methodist Elder in full connection and is a member of the Virginia Conference. After earning her Bachelor of Arts at San Diego State University, Dr. Tripodi received her Master of Divinity and Master of Theology from Union Presbyterian Seminary and Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Theological Seminary. The seminary’s board of trustees appointed her to a full-time faculty position in July 2022, after she had worked on the staff as an adjunct professor at Union.

Her position fulfills two critical functions at the seminary: directing Supervised Ministry and Vocational Planning, and serving as a faculty member in Supervised Ministry, with responsibilities in teaching and advising, and contributing to the general work of the Practical Theology and Christian Education department and faculty.



The Rev. Dr. Richard W. Voelz is an Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship. An ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), he formerly served as senior minister of the Johns Creek Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), an open and affirming congregation in metro Atlanta, Georgia. He has over a decade of ministry experience in various contexts. Dr. Voelz is a graduate of Vanderbilt University's Graduate Department of Religion with a doctorate in homiletics and liturgics. His interests are in contemporary homiletic theory, particularly how preaching relates to the areas of critical pedagogy, adolescent youth, reproductive loss and adoption, and public proclamation.

He has authored four books: *From Pulpit to Public Square: Faithful Speech Beyond Church Walls* (Westminster John Knox, 2025), *Preaching to Teach: Inspire People to Think and Act* (Abingdon Press, 2019), *Tending the Tree of Life: Preaching and Worship Through Reproductive Loss and Adoption* (Energion Publications, 2018), and *Youthful Preaching: Strengthening the Relationship Between Youth, Adults, and Preaching* (Cascade Books, 2016). In addition, he has contributed to *Unmasking White Preaching: Racial Hegemony, Resistance, and Possibilities in Homiletics* (Lexington, 2022), *Preaching the Manifold Grace of God, Volume 1: Theologies of Preaching in Historical Theological Families* (Cascade, 2022), *Preaching as Resistance: Voices of Hope, Justice, and Solidarity* (Chalice Press, 2018), *The Living Pulpit: Sermons that Illustrate Preaching in the Stone-Campbell Movement 1968–2018* (Chalice Press, 2018), and *Young Preachers Compilation* (Shook Foil Books, 2012).

Dr. Voelz also directs The Bridge for Early Career Preachers, a grant project from the Lilly Endowment's Compelling Preaching Initiative. The Bridge provides resources, continuing education, and a supportive community for those who are moving from aspiring to active preaching ministries.

Courses Taught in the D.Min. Program:

- Preaching for Transformation
- Contemporary Homiletic Theory

Worked with Students as Advisor or Second Reader on Projects Such As:

- Balancing on the Tracks: An Exploration of Narrative Preaching in the Struggle for Socio-economic Equality on Philadelphia's Main Line
- Finding Enough in a Culture of More: Reading and Preaching Luke/Acts with the Minimalism and Financial Independence Movements
- Using Collaborative Preaching to Address Racism in the White Church
- Authentic Community: Cultivating Intergenerational Community through Small Group Ministry and Preaching



The Rev. Dr. Karen Marie Yust serves as the Josiah P. and Anne Wilson Rowe Professor of Christian Education and directs the Children's Spirituality Research and Innovation Hub. Her work focuses on nurturing spirituality and encouraging theological reflection intergenerationally and across the life span. Her current research explores the effects of digital culture on spirituality, particularly among children, youth, and young adults. Dr. Yust draws from findings in media studies, developmental psychology, and educational theory to describe how online participation shapes personal identity and communal relationships and then reflects

theologically on how the church might respond constructively to the realities of contemporary life. She wonders about new findings in young children's moral development that suggest infants and toddlers have moral sensibilities that adults can cultivate through encouraging curiosity and expanding social ideals of kinship to better encompass our human diversity.

Dr. Yust is also exploring the changing dynamics of congregational life and asking how these changes offer opportunities to develop new approaches to faith formation and new foci for educational ministries. She is interested in taking Christian education outside traditional programs to other venues, such as online sites and nonreligious gathering spaces. An experienced pastor and Christian educator, she is ordained with dual standing in the United Church of Christ and Disciples traditions.

For more information about our program, please reach out to Dr. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, Acting Director of the D.Min. Program for the 2025-2026 academic year, at Elizabeth.Hinson-Hasty@upsem.edu.



For the Church in the World

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