**Summer Institute on Theology and Disability 2018**

**Edenton St. United Methodist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina**

**June 11-14**

**Workshops and Courses**

**Monday, June 11: Community Day**. Workshops as part of that day will be on a separate Community Day Schedule.

**Tuesday through Wednesday Afternoons**

There are two rounds of workshops each afternoon along with two courses in each time slot. We have tried to organize the workshops so that ones relating to a general topic are on separate days and times, so participants can make their own workshop track depending on a particular interest, e.g. inclusive worship, or sacred scriptures and disability.

You will note that this year we are adding information the kind of presentation, the audiences the leader hopes to address, their use of handouts and AV, and their faith tradition background. Registrants are welcome to go to any workshop, but we hope this will give you information to decide between a lot of great workshop topics. Other than the Ph.D. Symposium, you can attend any you wish.

**Two Courses Running Throughout the Three Afternoons**

**Ph.D. Symposium: Hans Reinders and Devan Stahl (**Plus other faculty at times)

The Ph.D. Symposium is an opportunity for graduate students to present short presentations from their own work, receive feedback from the faculty and other graduate students, and also hear from faculty about graduate work in this area. **Participation and presentation is by approval from Hans Reinders (**[**j.s.reinders@vu.nl**](mailto:j.s.reinders@vu.nl)**)** and **Devan Stahl. (** [**Devan.Stahl@hc.msu.edu**](mailto:Devan.Stahl@hc.msu.edu) **)** Please email both.

**Mental Health, Theology and Ministry: John Swinton and Warren Kinghorn**

This strand will include presentations by John Swinton and Warren Kinghorn, as well as three presentations by registrants whose workshop proposals were accepted. Registrants can come in and out of this strand depending on your choices for workshops. The presentations noted in this schedule are at tentative times, to be confirmed and updated later in the spring.

**Tuesday Afternoon, June 12, First Round, 1:45-3:00 p.m.**

* **Ph.D. Symposium**: Hans Reinders and Devan Stahl (Approval needed)
* **Mental Health, Theology and Ministry Strand**. **John Swinton and Warren Kinghorn**
  + **Distinguishing Illness from Sin: Trying to Love a Question.** Alison Downie, PhD

Theologies of agency, sin, grace, and salvation have been developed exclusively from the site of the “normate.” The many harmful ramifications of this unquestioned theological starting point include a profound and pervasive failure to distinguish sin from illness and, all too often, grace or salvation from “normalcy”. In the U.S., those disabled by severe mental illness continue to be harmed by stigmatizing shame and judgment, a great deal of which conflates illness and particular illness symptoms with poor character or sin. In response to the witness of serious mental illness, a relational theology of agency can helpfully de-couple illness and sin.

**Speaker Information**: Alison Downie earned her PhD in systematic theology at Duquesne University (Pittsburgh, Pa.) with a concentration in Christian feminist theology. Her academic interests include ecofeminist theologies, disability theologies, religious memoir, material religion, and interfaith dialogue. She has three adult sons, one of whom is disabled by serious mental illness.

**Additional Information**: Academic presentation, with discussion following. Presenting from Feminist Christian theology. Handouts available.

* **The Paradox of Difference**. Susan Lindbergh Haley and Elias Augustine Reed

What does it mean to live fully as the person God has created us to be? Jesus notices and accepts the uniqueness of each individual he meets in the totality of their social identity. In doing so, he offers healing and compassion. In this workshop, we’ll use the gospel healing narratives to consider how facets of social identity - ability, religion, gender, class, and ethnicity - impact how we notice another person. There is strength in diversity, in noticing and celebrating the uniqueness of each individual in the totality of their social identity. This is the paradox of difference and the gift of grace.

**Speaker Information**: **Deacon Susan Lindberg Haley** serves with and among people of faith through All Right Ministry, a ministry in the New England Synod (ELCA). She seeks to equip congregations to fully include all people in the live and work of God’s church. Susan is convener of the ELCA Disability Ministries Program Advisory Table. She has a M.A. in Ministerial Studies from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and a M.A. in clinical psychology from Xavier University. **Elias Augustine Reed** grew up as a Conservative Congregationalist and is now a member of two Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) congregations near Boston, MA. “I grew up loving bible stories. The Lutheran Confessions gave me a better way to understand my faith by bringing sense and order to scripture. I gain spiritual and emotional resilience as I learn which interpretations have led to problems and which have served others well.”

**Additional Information**: Presenting for a mixture of audiences, from Lutheran (ELCA), power-point, handouts

* **Islam and Disability.** (Note there are two presentations and three speakers)

**Islam and Leprosy: Promoting Acceptance through Historical Context, Foundational Values, and Storytelling**. Dr. Suheil Laher, Ph.D. and Dr. Rooshey Hasnain, Ed.

Fears and misconceptions about leprosy have flourished for centuries, and the condition

remains a socially stigmatizing issue and a public health problem in many societies. In the

context of Islam, there has been little systematic work done on accounts of leprosy-related

disability from early or recent Islamic history. In this session, we will present previously untold stories about leprosy, from sources strongly rooted in Islamic principles and societies. Our purpose is to amplify the voices of Muslims who live with leprosy and to present brief clips from a short film such as The House is Black to illustrate the presentation.

**Speaker Information:** **Rooshey Hasnain** is a clinical assistant professor with the Department of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She explores the cross-cultural lives, challenges, and strengths of people with disabilities and mental health conditions, especially those from refugee and immigrant backgrounds. She seeks to reduce cultural stigma associated with disability, and to promote a human rights perspective to issues faced disabled people and their families. **Suheil Laher** received his MA in Religious Studies from Boston University, and PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Harvard University, and conducts research in Islamic theology, law, Quran and hadith studies. He is Dean of Academics and Senior Instructor at Fawakih Institute for Classical Arabic and Quranic Studies, and Adjunct Faculty at Hartford Seminary. He has previously served as Muslim Chaplain at MIT. He was also a plenary speaker at last year’s Summer Institute.

**Additional Information:** Intended for mixture of backgrounds and roles. Powerpoint. Interactive workshop and discussion. Presenting from Muslim tradition.

**The Qur’an and Disability Studies: Physical Disability and Icon Polemics in Qur’an 21:51-70.** Halla Attallah

The Qur'ānic narrative of Abraham and the idols polemicizes idolatry by using contrasting and socially charged language, which includes textual representations of disability. My paper examines the Quran’s polemical discourse using a literary critical approach that is engaged with a disability hermeneutic. I argue that although the narrative evokes disability imagery to reinforce the ideological divide between God and the idols, it also presents an alternative reading that problematizes this system of classification. Abraham, for example, derides the community for worshipping idols that “cannot speak”, thereby associating muteness with immorality, and yet the narrative subverts this notion by portraying a God that also does not demonstrate the ability to speak.

**Speaker Information:** **Halla Attallah** is a doctoral student at Georgetown University studying narratives from the Qur’an and the Hebrew Bible with special attention to the Abrahamic figures and their roles in shaping religious identities. She is interested in literary approaches to the Qur’an as well as the relationship between religious texts and culture. Her research interests include postcolonial theories, disability and Islam and the treatment of gender and power in the Qur’an.

**Session Information:** I plan to give a presentation/lecture with hopes of receiving feedback in the discussion. For scholars or anyone interested in a close reading of religious texts using a disability hermeneutic.Although the paper is primarily engaged with a literary approach to the Qur’an (i.e. is mostly concerned with the structure of the text and the nuances of its language as opposed to its theological context), it is a paper that engages from the Muslim tradition.

* **Couples with Disabilities: Navigating Dating, Marriage, Faith and Disability.** Rev. Justin Hancock, Lisa Hancock, Kirsty Jones, Zach Holler

Justin and Lisa, married for 10 years, and Kirsty and Zach, engaged to be married, offer this workshop as an opportunity to discuss ways in which they have navigated dating, marriage, and faith in the context of disability and caregiving. Topics to be covered include all the quirky questions people ask when you’re dating with disabilities, finding a supportive faith community, and the journey of simultaneously becoming life partners and care-receiver/caregiver, as well as any questions workshop attendees might bring!

**Speaker Information: Kirsty Jones** is a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at Georgetown University, focusing on Biblical Studies, and the director of the Certificate in Disability Ministry at UTS. **Zach Holler** is an MDiv student at UTS and an ordination candidate in the UMC. **Justin and Lisa Hancock** are co-founders of The Julian Way, a ministry of community building among persons with disabilities, and **Lisa** is a PhD candidate at Southern Methodist University, focusing in Systematic Theology.

**Additional Information:** Interactive panel discussion, interactive discussion with workshop attendees, for clergy/religious professionals, lay practitioners, people with disabilities, families/friends. Primarily presenting from a Christian perspective

* **Teaching Inclusion: Working with Staff and Lay Leader Teams.** Topher Endress

A practical guide to coaching staff and lay leadership teams on issues of inclusion, access, and advocacy. This is a walk-through of a practical toolkit that participants can use for internal training within their faith communities. Participants will learn how to lead conversations and provide education for those in their churches who need further help understanding issues of faith and disability, and will receive a packet of practical training tools for their congregation.

**Speaker Information**: **Topher Endress** is a former minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), most recently serving a congregation in Austin, TX before moving to Scotland. He began his Ph.D. in Practical Theology in March, 2018, and is writing on constructive disabled ecclesiology (re-imagining what it means to gather and worship in light of a more diverse expression of human embodiment). Topher enjoys running, tennis, college basketball, and long hikes with his wife

**Additional Information**: The primary audience is faith leaders/clergy/religious professionals. This is designed to provide training material to those who would in turn teach their congregations; religious leaders are best suited to apply these materials to lay leader/staff/board training sessions. Faith background: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) - Mainline American Protestant church. I also have experience with the United Church of Christ, non-denominational Evangelical, and the Presbyterian Church of America. Handouts available (all available online via Word/pdf/Powerpoint, as well).

* **The Discovery of Scripture in Community** David Sittser

The presentation will begin with storytelling about what we are experiencing and learning at Reality Ministries about reading Scripture and entering into Worship together. We will focus on two things:

1. Our “Discovering Scripture” model of learning the Bible together, which incorporates various sensory experience, ways of learning stories, and group interaction.
2. Our Community Worship services, which are open to the community and led in large part by our friends who have intellectual/developmental disabilities.

**Speaker Information**: **David** is married to Kelli, a graduate student at UNC, and they have one wild and amazing son Charlie. He moved from WA to study at Duke Divinity School, and since receiving his MDiv he has been working with Reality Ministries in Durham. As the Director of Community Development, he gets to walk alongside some amazing people as they experience the transforming effects of that community

**Session Information:** The presentation will include an interactive demonstration. We will also leave time for discussion and wise input from attenders. Anyone welcome. Our stories and examples will focus on the Christian scriptures and tradition, but everyone is welcome to come and contribute. I’ll use presentation slides for part of the session. Handouts available.

**Tuesday Afternoon, Second Round (3:30-4:30)**

* **Ph.D. Symposium** (continued)
* **Mental Health, Theology and Ministry Strand**. (continued)
* **The Resurrection and Disabilities: What Will Our New Bodies Look Like?**

Rev.Stephen Bedard.

There has been a renewed interest in the doctrine of the resurrection as a result of the work of theologians, such as N.T. Wright. The biblical doctrine of a bodily resurrection over a disembodied state in heaven is becoming more prominent. What does this mean for people with disabilities? Does the doctrine of the resurrection mean that those with disabilities will lose everything that makes them unique? Is the resurrection all about humanity losing all traces of disability? This workshop will look at some of the latest work on the resurrection and will look at some of the biblical data concerning the resurrection of Jesus to answer these questions.

**Speaker Information:** **Stephen Bedard is** the pastor of Queen Street Baptist Church and a sessional lecturer at Tyndale University College in Canada. He has written for popular magazines and scholarly journals. He has spoken on the intersection of faith and disability. He has two children on the autism spectrum and recently discovered that he was on the autism spectrum as well.

**Additional Information:** Academic, scholarly lecture, primarily for scholars and clergy, presented from a Christian perspective.

* **Disability and Influence.** Erin Huber

As an individual whose life has been marked by persons with disabilities, I will use both personal experience and academic learning and research to edify how disability influences, encourages and teaches those who are able-bodied. We will engage how the Holy Spirit works in and through people with disabilities to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, and in turn, how this influences others. I will utilize my own accounts of how disability has profoundly impacted and influenced who I am as a person and a Christ follower.

**Speaker Information:** **Erin Huber** is in the Masters of Theological Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College. Currently she works in volunteer engagement at The Darling Home for Kids, a non-profit for children who have medical complexities, previous to this in the field of Autism and Behavioural Sciences. Having had a myriad of personal experiences engaging with persons with disabilities, Erin exhibits a strong desire to see greater understanding and acceptance of disability, particularly in faith communities.

**Session Information:** Both academic contact and personal experience will be included. There will be interactive components and time for discussion and personal account as well. This workshop would be suitable for a mixture of individuals, particularly those who work and interact closely with people with disabilities. There will be a handout and PowerPoint slides that accompany the workshop. My own faith background is non-denominational.(Christian)

* **Invitation to Vulnerability and Faith through the Lens of Brain Injury**. Rev. Tamara Puffer and Michael Galovic

We would like to lead a discussion on vulnerability and how people with disability and those with brain injury can lead the way in this discussion. We will explore the importance of expressing vulnerability, the fears that block our desire to be vulnerable, and how leaders can be vulnerable without diminishing their authority.

**Speaker Information**: **Tamara** is a Presbyterian minister who sustained a traumatic brain injury in 1996. She is currently working on a book about her experience. Her blog “Spiritual reflections on brain injury” can be found at [nogginnotions@wordpress.com](mailto:nogginnotions@wordpress.com). **Michael** is a member of the Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting. He currently works as a Business Analyst in the healthcare field, and is a Licensed Professional Counselor. Michael and Tamara facilitate the Brainstormer’s Collective in Asheville, NC—a group for brain injury survivors and their allies.

**Session Information:** Presentation and discussion for a mixture of lay practitioners, people with disabilities, friends/families. Tamara is Presbyterian and Michael is Religious Society of Friends. We lean toward Christian perspectives and are open towards other traditions. We may use a text that we can have available. We may also use slides or video.

* **Creating Leadership Opportunities for People with Disabilities**. Angela West

People with disabilities have unique talents. The church should recognize that they must cultivate opportunities for all to serve in the faith community. Accommodating these individuals may include making the stage accessible to those who use wheelchairs or give individuals extra time to give their testimony. The congregation can be influenced when they see that anyone and everyone is capable of leading others within the church environment. When acceptance and encouragement are modeled within the church, people will bring it with them as they serve in the greater community and in turn, will create a more inclusive society.

**Speaker Information**: **Angela** works at VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities in Center for Family Involvement as the Multicultural Specialist. Angela earned a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has served on boards, including the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities and the Virginia’s Employment First Advisory Group. Angela also served as Ms. Wheelchair Virginia 2015, where she travelled around the state speaking about recognizing the abilities of people with disabilities.

**Additional Information:** Presentation and interactive workshop. This topic is appropriate for all. Based on a Protestant background

* **Loving Leviticus.** Rabbi Ruti Regan

Gathered together in North Carolina, it is impossible to forget that Leviticus has been used in harsh and hateful ways. There is nothing inevitable about this. As we face times of exhausting moral crisis, the Book of Leviticus can also be a source of love and resilience. This workshop will be text-based, and is intended for both spiritual leaders and lay people from all faith backgrounds.

Primary audience(s), e.g. scholars, clergy/religious professionals, lay practitioners, people with

disabilities, families/friends, mixture.

**Speaker Information**: Rabbi Ruti Regan is a disabled rabbi serving the Jewish disability organizations Matan and Anachnu. Her research focuses on disability-informed spiritual leadership, and including disabled perspectives in Torah study. Rabbi Regan was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2017 with an MA in liturgy and ritual arts. Prior to rabbinical school, she studied at the Drisha Institute for Jewish Studies, the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem, and Washington University in St Louis.

**Additional Information**: Interactive lecture/text study. Handouts will contain English translation alongside Hebrew text, and I will make multiple formats available. Presenting from Rabbinic Judaism tradition, suitable for an interfaith audience.

**Wednesday Afternoon, First Round (1:30-3:00)**

* **Ph.D. Symposium Hans Reinders and Devan Stahl**
* **Mental Health, Theology and Ministry Strand. John Swinton and Warren Kinghorn**
  + **Christ on the Psych Ward.** David Finnegan Hosey.

In 2011, shortly after finishing my first year of seminary, I (with help from friends) admitted myself into psychiatric hospitalization. My book *Christ on the Psych Ward* emerges from this experience. The book weaves together personal narrative, theological reflection, and ministry praxis for communities of faith discerning how to be in faithful ministry alongside people with mental health struggles. In this presentation, I “go first” with my own story of mental illness and health in order to create space for other participants to share their stories of mental health struggles in their personal lives, family lives, and/or communities of faith.

**Speaker Information**: David Finnegan-Hosey is a Chaplain-in-Residence at Georgetown University. He is author of *Christ on the Psych Ward*, a series of reflections on his journey with bipolar disorder, psychiatric hospitalization, and Christian spirituality. David is passionate about the intersections between faith, story, mental health, and social justice. A graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary, David lives in Washington, DC with his wife Leigh and their adorable dog Penny Lane. You can learn more at christonthepsychward.com.

**Additional Information: For** Mixed audience: people with mental health struggles, their family/friends, and practitioners (lay&clergy) seeking to be in faithful ministry with those of us who struggle with mental illness will all find value in this presentation. Christian (Ecumenical Protestant – member of United Church of Christ). Reading book excerpt followed by interactive discussion and story-sharing. Handout: Excerpt of book available along with outline of presentation

* **A Black Liberation Theology of Disability: Taking Another Look at Slavery.** Rev. Leonard Curry and Kendrick Kemp, LMSW, MDiv.

Black theology takes seriously the lived experience of black people. Black theology also takes seriously the history of black people. Therefore a black theology of disability, whether that be a practical liberation theology or a theo-ethical and philosophical black theology, must take seriously the relationship between disability and enslavement. In this session, we propose to highlight and map a few of the critical inter-relationships between disability and the enslavement of black people, and its meaning for a black theology of disability.

**Speaker Information**: **Kendrick Arthur Kemp** was raised in Upstate NY, Lyons. He earned a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary and an MSW from Binghamton University. Kendrick was the founding member and co-chair of the Disability Justice Caucus and prior was an active member of ADAPT: a national grassroots organization promoting disability rights. Kendrick was also the key leader in getting an accessible door at Union's entrance. While at Union, Kendrick was mentored by Dr. James Hal Cone and Dr. Cornel West, Out of such depths of theological wisdom, Kendrick constructed Black Liberation Theology of Disabilities. As well, he inspired and sat on a panel at American Academy of Religion (AAR) titled "Black Liberation Theologies of Disabilities." For Additional Information, please go to [kendrickarthurkemp.com](http://kendrickarthurkemp.com/). **Leonard Curry** is an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. He is a native of Cleveland, Ohio, and holds both the Master of Sacred Theology (STM) and the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degrees from Yale Divinity School. Leonard is currently a PhD candidate in Ethics and Society at Vanderbilt University where his research focuses on Christianity, race, and sexuality. Leonard loves music and art, and finds God in sparks of creativity.

**Additional Information:** Intended for people with disabilities, friends, scholars. Presentation and discussion. Powerpoint. We will speak from the “Black Theological Tradition” which does not represent any particular form of Black Christianity.

* **Engaging People with IDD as Scholars and Leaders**. ­­­­­­­­­­­­Sarah Jean Barton, Bethany McKinney Fox, and additional presenter from Duke Course using People with IDD as Teachers.

The three presenters will share their perspectives and experiences as teachers and learners in settings that seek to expand opportunities for theological/seminary scholarship as well as ecclesial leadership (both lay and ordained) among persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. TBD and Sarah will specifically engage experiences in a Duke Divinity course where seminary students joined with community learners with IDD in a collaborative pastoral care course that included collaborative exegetical and preaching projects. Additionally, Bethany will share experiences and reflections of starting a church that has sought from its outset to be formed and led collaboratively by people with and without IDD.

**Speaker Information. Sarah Jean Barton** is a Doctor of Theology Candidate at Duke Divinity School and a Senior Occupational Therapist at Duke University Health System. Sarah studies practices and theologies of baptism across ecumenical Christian traditions and how baptism among persons with profound disabilities shapes the Church’s anthropological imagination. Sarah also instructs graduate courses on theology and disability at Duke Divinity School. **Bethany McKinney Fox** runs the Access Services Office for students with disabilities and is Adjunct Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary. She earned her PhD from Fuller, and her MDiv from Columbia Theological Seminary. She is in the beginning stages of starting a new church community collaboratively led alongside people with intellectual disabilities. Her forthcoming book: *Healing in the Way of Jesus*, with IVP Academic, explores how the Gospel healing narratives can constructively guide church communities to be true places of healing for people with disabilities.

**Additional Information:** The workshop aims to address a wide audience from diverse backgrounds. Clergy, seminary faculty and staff, as well as persons with disabilities may be particularly interested. Presenters represent various Christian traditions and the setting of Christian theological education. Each presenter will provide a ~15 minute presentation, followed by interactive discussion period with workshop attendees.

* **Changing Cultural Stigma And Treatment Of People With Disabilities Through Education Of Religious And Spiritual Community Leaders.** Cynthia R. Bauer

Around the world, disabilities are believed to be a result of curses, witchcraft or God. Because of these beliefs, people with disabilities are often abused and even murdered. Our work with Christian leaders and traditional healers in Kenya and Tanzania provides evidence that change in belief systems and awareness about disability issues with these key leaders results in community support and inclusion of people with disabilities. Our presentation will include descriptions of our methodology for working with these leaders, evidences of our success, and discussion on how our model can be applied to the interests of those attending this presentation.

**Speaker Information:** **Cynthia R Bauer**, Executive Director/Founder, Kupenda for the Children

Through her example, speaking, writing, and networking, Cynthia advocates for children with disabilities in Kenya, Tanzania, and the U.S. with increasing global interest. Born without her left hand, Cynthia was moved to action when she learned of the stigmas connected to disability in Kenya. Cynthia encourages others with disabilities to meet their God-given potential through the organization she founded which includes playing her guitar to demonstrate what is possible when opportunities are available to everyone.

**Session Information:** This will be a presentation, with supporting data, combined with an interactive workshop and discussion. Powerpoint. Our presentation is applicable to anyone working with or impacted by disability. We will present from both a Christian perspective as well as those who practice ancestor worship (traditional healers).

* **Disability Readings of the Parable of the Great Banquet:** Dr. Louise Gosbel

With the development of disability readings of the Bible, the parable of the banquet has been assessed and interpreted from a number of different disability perspectives, however, very often, disability readings of the parable have argued that the parable is inherently negative toward people with disability (e.g., Metzger’s “God in the Parable of the Snubbed Host” and Schiefer Ferrari’s “(Un)gestörte Lektüre von Lk 14, 12-14”). In contrast, the recent commentary, *The Bible and Disability* edited by Melcher, Parsons, and Yong, overlooks the parable of the banquet altogether. What, if anything, can a disability reading of the parable of the banquet reveal to us about attitudes towards disability in the early Jesus movement?

**Speaker Information:** **Louise Gosbell** has a PhD in Ancient History (New Testament) from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. Her PhD thesis, which is due for publication with Mohr Siebeck in April 2018, addresses disability in the gospels of the New Testament. Louise has presented at numerous academic conferences in Australia and internationally and has published a number of academic publications on this topic. Louise is also the Sydney Coordinator for CBM’s Luke 14 inclusive churches program.

**Additional Information:** Intended for **s**cholars, clergy/professionals, but hopefully a mixture of all!, Presenting from the Christian tradition**,** Academic/scholarly lecture – with PowerPoint. Handouts with outline available, happy to make full text available to anyone it might be helpful for on the day or ahead of time, PowerPoint slides of text and images related to the passage.

* **Inclusive Music Making in Worship.** Jason Wells-Jensen ; Dr. Sheri Wells-Jensen, Ph.D

Individuals in our worshiping communities (including musicians) possess different needs and strengths, and have had different kinds of previous encounters both with religious institutions and with music. We believe an authentic, contemporary (i.e. “here-and-now”) approach to worship music must acknowledge and celebrate these differences. We will share examples of how we are working toward fulfilling our congregation’s promise of “authentic welcome”, not only with inclusive texts but also with a flexible approach to musical arrangements, rehearsal, and performance. We welcome discussion and brainstorming from participants based on their own experiences.

**Speaker Information: Jason** is the Director of Music at Peace Lutheran Church (and a part-time English and linguistics instructor) in Bowling Green, Ohio; **Sheri** is a blind musician (and a tenured linguistics professor). We have worked together (and with other musicians) leading a diverse repertoire of “contemporary” worship music for approximately 20 years. Jason has also served as a cantor, choir member, and choir director in more “traditional” worship contexts.

**Additional Information:** Presentation and discussion, for People with and without disabilities who are interested in vibrant, inclusive worship music (as both leaders and participants). We are part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and our congregation’s specific vision/mission is concerned with diversity, inclusivity, and authentic welcome. “Handouts” (electronic and/or paper copies) will include, at least, a summary of the major topics in our presentation as well as URLs for some audio examples and possibly some written musical notation.

**Wednesday, Second Round (3:30-4:30)**

* **Ph.D. Symposium (continued)**
* **Mental Health, Theology and Ministry Strand. (continued)**
* **Aesthetic Praxis as Inclusive Practical Theology Methodology.** Thomas N. Murphy

This presentation examines how to foster access and agency for people with intellectual disabilities within theological reflection and discourse. It works towards that end in three parts: (1) a portion applying a notion of *aesthetic praxis* developed by Roberto Goizueta regarding the fiesta of Our Lady of Guadalupe to inclusive dramatic enactments within the communities of L’Arche; (2) describing aesthetic praxis as an inclusive source of theological reflection via overlay of *Universal Design for Learning* as an analytical tool; and (3) discussion of aesthetic praxis as a form of *Participatory Action Research* with methodological implications for inclusive practical theology.

**Speaker Information:** **Thomas N. Murphy** is a PhD student at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. His scholarly interests lie at the intersection of disabilities studies, theology, and religious education. His research is driven by gratitude to his friends from L’Arche, with whom he had the privilege to live and work alongside for many years in the L’Arche Boston North community.

**Additional Information:** Scholarly presentation with PowerPoint slides/supporting material and ample time for conversation/discussion. Geared toward a mixture of roles and backgrounds. The presentation is informed by the author’s Roman Catholic faith perspective and draws on several Catholic traditions, but is open and applicable to all faiths. Handouts, PowerPoint slides, summary available

* **Curriculum Isn’t a Dirty Word.** Ryan Wolfe

Have you ever been frustrated by lack of teaching materials out there for classes and groups for adults with developmental disabilities? Or maybe you have found materials, but you just aren’t happy with them. This workshop will unveil a new curriculum designed specifically for adults with developmental disabilities. This curriculum is 100% digital and customizable. Not only will you be able to see it, but this workshop is designed to help you experience it. These Bible lessons are highly interactive and centered around real-life issues that adults with developmental disabilities face.

**Speaker Information:** It is **Ryan's** passion to equip and empower churches, organizations, and individuals to reach their disability communities for Jesus. Ryan comes to Ability Ministry with 15+ years of ministry experience. He previously worked at First Christian Church in Canton, Ohio as their full-time Disability Pastor. He also worked as a Church Consultant for Key Ministry. Ryan is an ordained Pastor. Micah 6:8 and Proverbs 31:8 best describe Ryan's commitment to life and ministry.

**Additional Information:** My presentation will include a hybrid of things including scholarly lecture, interactive elements, and discussion. It will be both visual and auditory as I will use PPT for all my points. My primary audience would be to religious professionals and lay leaders. My background is from the Restoration Movement (Christian Churches, Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ) which is traditionally pretty conservative.

* **Disability at Church: Where Advocacy and Inclusion Intersect.** Laura Robb

A disability impacts the way a person can be involved at church, but a disability doesn’t mean one can’t build friendships, serve in some capacity, and thrive with limits. The Church should be the place where we see inclusion done well. What does that look like for the person with the disability? How can the Church create this kind of welcoming community for all people? Thriving happens at the intersection of self-advocacy and inclusion that aims to pursue the person, not the limits, visible or invisible.

**Speaker Information:** I was born with Arthrogryposis, a physical disability. I have limitations that have always affected my daily life, but I refuse to see these limits as obstacles. I constantly find ways to embrace the story I am living, chasing dreams and overcoming the challenges as they come. As I share my own journey, I hope to encourage others to learn what it means to live...BEYOND YOUR LIMITS.

**Additional Information**: This discussion topic is for people with disabilities, those who want to build friendships with people with disabilities, and anyone working in a church setting who wishes to better understand inclusion and how to bridge the invisible gap. My background is Reformed Presbyterian, but this dialogue applies to all faith perspectives. I will begin with personal experience and offer a time for others to share, ask questions, and facilitate a group discussion on the topic. I can bring handouts with an outline / summary of notes and questions to start the conversation.

* **Starting a Worship Service with the Special Needs/Disability Community**. Ramsey Patterson J.D. MDiv.

This workshop would be tailored for anyone interested in learning more about how to start a worship service with and/or by the disability community. The information would be based on my experience as the pastor of The Feast, a weekly worship service with the special needs community at Highland Park UMC. I would cover the steps we took to begin this service, how we have evolved, what we have learned, and our current growing edges. I would be open to any Q&A or collaboration with any other presenter with a similar or complementary topic.

**Speaker Information**: **Rev. Ramsey Patton** currently serves as an Associate Minister and Director of Caring Ministries at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas. As Director of Caring Ministries, Ramsey oversees Special Needs Ministry. Further, Ramsey leads The Feast, a weekly worship service with the special needs community at HPUMC. Prior to entering seminary, Ramsey practiced law in Dallas. She is married to David, a high school teacher, and they have one son, Noah.

**Additional Information:** Presentation with Q&A/Discussion.For clergy/religious professionals, Presenting from Christian (UMC) – though I think some of steps and lessons could be applied to non-Christian worshiping communities.

* **Figuring David into the Mephibosheth Story: Scapegoats and subverted tropes in 2 Samuel** Kirsty Jones

People with disabilities have been, and continue to be, scapegoated by society and religious communities. This paper addresses the issue in the context of Girard’s scapegoat theory and the Mephibosheth pericope, exposing David’s negative statements against the ‘blind and the lame’ in 2 Sam 5 and his welcome of Mephibosheth. I will highlight how familial inclusion and friendship undercuts the powerful scapegoat mechanism, and undermines its power. This presentation will end with open discussion based on what characteristics of Girard’s theory are present in our own contexts, and how scripture and friendship can subvert it.

**Speaker Information:** **Kirsty Jones** is a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at Georgetown University, focusing on Biblical Studies, and she also directs the Certificate in Disability Ministry at United Theological Seminary (Dayton, OH). Her previous work (University of Cambridge) has investigated disability and the senses in the Hebrew Bible (particularly in the Major Prophets, Pentateuch and Psalms). She has a background in care, and is passionate about integrating her academic work with the practice of religious communities.

**Additional Information:** Scholars, but a mixture. Will be aiming it at lay audience but with enough depth and referencing for scholars and students to follow up. Hope that the resulting discourse will be able to address issues of ‘inclusion’ and friendship in religious communities beyond the academic sphere. Personally Christian, but not overtly so in lecture. Lecture with discussion. Handouts and full text available; full paper available; summary and key words available; power-point.

**Thursday Afternoon, First Round (1:30-3:00)**

* **Ph.D. Symposium. Hans Reinders and Devan Stahl**
* **Mental Health, Theology and Ministry Strand. John Swinton and Warren Kinghorn**
* **Trying to Make it Through: The Experience of African American Caregivers of Children with Traumatic Brain Injury Kay Rone Wilson, PhD** This presentation reviews the results of a study that examined the experience of 15 African American caregivers of children with traumatic brain injuries. The theme *Trying to Make it Through* expresses the caregivers desire to make it through the experience of caring for youth with disabilities while attempting to live up to perceived cultural standards of being resilient and not losing faith. More specifically, the impact of culture on coping and having or losing one’s faith will also be addressed. The results of this study aim to help organizations including the church develop culturally and spiritually responsive support for caregivers.

**Speaker Information: Keita Rone Wilson** is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the University of Louisiana Lafayette where she teaches courses on Inclusion. Her research interest includes the impact of culture on the disability experience. While working on her PhD in Special Education, Keita minored in Medical Anthropology where she was first introduced to the impact of culture on one’s perception of disability. As a professor in a teacher preparation program she aims to share her curiosity of culture and disability with her students urging them to look beyond abilities when developing a framework for inclusion.

**Additional Information:** The primary audience is geared towards a mixture of individuals. The presentation draws upon the history of the Christian faith for African Americans. To that end, the presentation addresses the possible conflict of faith and doubt when one experiences a traumatic event The presentation is a scholarly lecture that will also be interactive allowing the participants to examine their own experiences of the impact of culture and spirituality in their lives. Handouts will be made available and will be also be available in standard and large print and copies on thumb drives and/or CDs will be made available for use with various devices.

* **Home: Imagining an Alternative Way of Living Together**. Greg Little

Rather than navigating the current systems offering *housing* for persons with disabilities, let’s imagine an alternative way through creating *home* together*.* At the Corner House, we are attempting to do just that. We are a community of 8 persons, ages 9-months to 66 years-old. Some of us live with developmental disabilities. Some of us do not. All of us are gift-givers in our common life. Come hear our vision of home, which includes daily practices of welcome and prayer, and which blossoms from a commitment to ordinary, tiny gestures of mutual care and love. [**http://northstreetneighborhood.weebly.com/corner-house.html**](http://northstreetneighborhood.weebly.com/corner-house.html)

**Speaker Information: Greg Little** has a home at the Corner House. He has learned from various schools – several Christian communities seeking justice and peace (including a Catholic Worker home, Durham’s Friendship House, and Haiti’s Wings of Hope), Duke University (degree in disability studies), and Duke Divinity School. He is committed to a life ordered by daily communal prayer and littleness. He works at Reality Ministries, a place fostering friendship among people with and without developmental disabilities.

**Additional Information:** Storytelling and practical theological reflection as presentation; space for engagement/questions/wonderings together. Definitely a presentation for all people. Christian community life ordered around daily prayer and welcoming others as Jesus welcomes us; vision of home is for all (including diverse faith perspectives and religious traditions).

* **Disconnects between Theology and Pastoral Practice through the Lens of Social Role Valorization** Anne Masters

Individuals with I/DD are still plagued by outdated narratives of dependency and sentimentality within faith communities, which shape pastoral practices disconnected from creedal statements of affirmation that inhibit meaningful participation. SRV theory provides a framework for understanding the social dynamics underlying and perpetuating these false narratives as well as providing considerations for addressing them – opening the door to changing perceptions and expectations about authentic participation of individuals with I/DD in the everyday life of faith communities. Though grounded in Catholic theology and pastoral practice, discussion will seek to identify points of engagement with the faith traditions of the participants.

**Speaker Information**: **Anne Masters**, M.A., FAAIDD is the Director of Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities for the Archdiocese of Newark; a member of the Council on I/DD for the National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities (NCPD); a contributing author, consultant with Our Sunday Visitor and University of Dayton Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF); author of [*Pastoral Ministry WITH Persons WITH Disabilities Parish Resource Guide*](http://www.rcan.org/sites/default/files/files/PMPD%20Flyer-order.pdf)​and a PhD student in Theology at Vrei University.

**Additional Information:** Presentation for mixed audience. Though grounded in Catholic theology and pastoral practice, discussion will seek to identify points of engagement with the faith traditions of the participants. The presentation has an academic starting point, but will also provide practical pastoral context and examples to stimulate a discussion with two areas of focus: (1) Recognition of the false narratives in our faith communities that continue to marginalize individuals with I/DD, and (2) Brainstorming of practical strategies to bring back to our faith communities to develop new narratives of possibility and growth

* **Including Students who Have Disabilities in Private, Faith Based Schools**. Dr. Jennifer Camota Luebke

Dr. Luebke published her dissertation entitled “Including Exceptional Children in a Christian Learning Community: New Narratives in Special Education” (2013). This study examined the practices of 11Christian schools throughout the U.S. that provide access to and/or inclusion. This study was the catalyst that enabled her son, who has intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) to attend a Christian high school. He is now attending the first Christian university in the country to accept students with IDD. She has worked with several faith-based schools to include students with disabilities, in alignment with the restorative justice of faith.

**Speaker Information: Dr. Jennifer Camota Luebke** is a mom of a college student who has an intellectual and developmental disability. She has over 25 years of executive leadership, coaching, teaching, and sales experience in companies, universities, and nonprofit organizations. In 2016, she co-founded a not-for-profit organization called Ability Revolution, Inc., which advances authentic inclusion for people of all abilities in workplaces, educational institutions, and communities. She was the recipient of the Jefferson Award for Public Service in 2017.

**Additional Information:** Academic, scholarly lecture, geared toward scholars, faith-based school administrators and teachers, clergy / religious professionals, people with disabilities, parents, families, friends. Summary and power-point will be available. From Christian perspective.

* **Vulnerability and Protection: Rights, Risks and Relationships.** Lynn M Swedberg, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA

Many denominations have policies to protect children and youth from abuse in their ministry settings. Some policies include “vulnerable adults” under the same guidelines, using definitions as broad as “a person 18 years of age or older with physical, mental or developmental disabilities.” This panel discussion will unpack the implications of such definitions and policies for adults with disabilities who have the cognitive capacity to recognize and resist abuse. We will address vulnerability, safety, and impact on relationships from theological and practical perspectives. The outcome will be talking points participants can use to engage their denominations in reflective policy development.

**Speaker Information:** **Lynn Swedberg**, Panel Convener and Moderator. Lynn is consultant for the DisAbility Ministries Committee of the United Methodist Church and an occupational therapist with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Her passion is facilitating accessibility and inclusion in faith communities. Lynn edits the Committee newsletter *The Voice*. She is from Spokane, Washington, and serves on her church’s Inclusivity Committee and the Spokane County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee. She is a Lay Servant, a Deaconess Candidate and is finishing Disability Ministries certification. The panel will include **Rev. Lisa McKee, Lida Merrill**, and **Rev. Chris Wylie** (remotely)

**Additional Information**: The format will be panel presentation, with audience Q & A as well as a brief small group time to discuss implications for one’s own lives and ministries. Intended for Clergy and laypersons with and without disabilities who provide ministries and programs with people with disabilities on the local, regional, or denominational level, leaders in congregations where there are people with disabilities or people who may develop a disability in their lifetime. The moderator and the panelists are all from the United Methodist tradition, and will use denominational “Safe Sanctuaries” policies as the point of departure for the discussion, which will be broad enough to encompass all faith traditions. The handout will be a brief synopsis of Safe Sanctuaries policies so that participants know the kind of document that is being discussed. The talking points document will come out of the discussion and be posted afterwards.

* **The Continuing Significance of Jean Vanier’s Theology.** Benjamin Wall and colleagues

This workshop will focus on the continuing significance of Jean Vanier’s theology of disability. Our 2017 SITD Emerging Vanier Scholar, Benjamin Wall, will discuss emerging developments regarding the use of Vanier in theological, ethical, and social sciences discourse. The workshop will feature tow emerging scholars working in the context of Jean Vanier studies. We will hear from **All Alaghbri,** an emerging Muslim scholar who has been looking at how the medium of language, for Vanier, is a medium of cultural protest, particular in relation to Vanier’s symbolic use of the child throughout his works. Also, we will hear from **Abby Bugger**, an emerging scholar who has been developing an agrarian way of reading Vanier and L’Arche as a model and metaphor for preserving the sacredness of Earth.

**Speaker Information**: **Benjamin Wall** teaches at Greensboro College in North Carolina, and **All Alaghbri** and **Abby Bugger** are two students at the college.

**Additional Information**: Session will include semi-academic lecture (more in summary form) and dialogue with audience. For Scholars, clergy/religious professionals, lay practitioners, people with disabilities, families/friends, mixture. Christian and Muslim theological perspectives will be offered. Yes, powerpoint and handouts will be available.

**Thursday Afternoon, Second Round (3:30-4:30)**

* **Ph.D. Syposium (continued)**
* **Mental Health, Theology and Ministry Strand. (continued)**
* **Toward a Model for Inclusive Education in Christian Higher Education Institutions: A Trial Prototype Program­­­­­­­­­­­­.** Mrs Karenne Hills & Dr Stephen Beaumont .

In 2014, the faculty of a small Christian higher education institution in Australia decided that equal opportunity should be provided for all people to participate in the transformational learning underpinned by their core values celebrating the “rich diversity and inherent worth of every person as a carrier of the Imago Dei”. Subsequently, a trial prototype program implementing innovative strengths-based approaches was initiated. Success exceeding all expectations has been measured academically, and by the sense of inclusion, heightened self-esteem and sense of purpose and achievement expressed by the student. Achieving much more than facilitating one student to achieve an academic goal, this project speaks to the very heart of the Gospel of Christ.

**Speaker Information:** **Mrs Karenne Hills** is the Undergraduate Counselling Course Coordinator in the School of Social Sciences at Christian Heritage College. She is a Ph.D. candidate at Griffith University, studying the spiritual experiences of people with non-verbal autism. She has a special interest in the theological and spiritual considerations for people with disability, an interest born largely out of her personal journey with her two sons, each of whom live with significant disabilities. Her research interests include: The spiritual experiences of people with non-verbal autism, sexuality and spirituality, sexuality for people with disability, alternative learning opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities, social justice, sustainability and creation care. **Dr Stephen Beaumont** is Dean of School of Social Sciences at Christian Heritage College. He holds a PhD in Practical Theology from the University of Queensland. Apart from his academic role, he voluntarily leads a number of social enterprises, and has developed long term early intervention programs for at-risk youth utilizing outdoor adventure.

**Additional Information:** For Scholars, parents, people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. PowerPoint presentation, academic literature, discussion, recommendations.

* **Using Training Videos to Enable Church Leaders and Teachers: Collaborative Skills and Teaching Strategies.**

Devoted ecclesiastical leaders and church teachers are often willing to provide necessary support to individuals with disabilities and their families but lack the confidence and training. Specific instruction on how to organize and execute such aid can help church leaders and teachers to create desired edifying experiences. This presentation informs the audience on training videos produced to enlighten and train ecclesiastical instructors concerning helpful teaching strategies and collaborative skills. By the end of the workshop attendees will leave with resources to help enable teachers and leaders working alongside members of their congregations with disabilities and their families.

**Speaker Information: Mary Woodruff** is an undergraduate student, graduating June 2018, at Brigham Young University with her degree in Special Education with an emphasis in severe disability. As an undergraduate student, she presented with Katie Steed, Associate Clinical Professor at the McKay School of Education at BYU, last year at the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability. Mary has also participated in research concerning siblings of siblings with disabilities and supporting lay Sunday school teachers in teaching strategies

**Additional Information:** This session will include lecture, presentation, and discussion**.** Handouts, presentations slides, and hyperlinks to videos will be shared. For: Families and individuals of people with disabilities, clergy/religious professionals, Lay practitioners, religious teachers of people with disabilities. This will be presented from the perspective of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)

* **Let All the Senses Believe? Why? How?** Roeli Reiling Drs.

In my workshop I would like to tell about the world of snoezelen, the theory of Dorothea Timmers-Huygen in relation with expressing and feeding the soul. I would also like to share examples of how we practice this in a Christian community in the Hartenberg, where 400 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live together

**Speaker Information:** I have worked as a chaplain with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities since 2002. Before that I was a chaplain in a psychiatric hospital for 12 years. Three years ago we (my colleague and I) started a website for clergy, professionals and families to make it more common to find what is going on in theology when you are going to be an inclusive faith community. The mean goal is also to share practical and beautiful stories, books and tips. We also started a facebookpage. [www.onbeperktgeloven.nl](http://www.onbeperktgeloven.nl)

**Additional** Presentation, interactive, discussion, for scholars, clergy, religious professionals, lay practitioners. Summary of text will be available. Presenting as a chaplain working in a residential facility.

* **Creating Culture Change: The Role of Leadership in Creating Hospitable or Hostile Faith Communities**. Catherine Webb, M.S. CCC-SLP

The leadership of faith communities, whether vocational or lay, plays an important role in creating the culture around disability in any religious community. How a leader perceives disability contributes to a hospitable or hostile culture that can significantly impact the lives of disabled people and their families. This session will explore some of the research surrounding the role of leadership in the faith lives of people with disabilities, with the majority of the workshop spent considering case studies and discussing how leaders might work toward creating cultures of hospitality in their faith communities.

**Speaker Information:** Catherine Webb is a Ph.D. candidate in Disability Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago and holds a M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology. Ms. Webb’s current line of research explores the training religious leaders receive about including people with disabilities in their faith communities. She has been actively involved in ministry for, with, and by disabled people in a variety of settings including: churches, summer camps, international outreaches, and local respite programs.

**Session Information**: A brief overview of academic literature, followed by case studies and discussion. Focuses on leaders, both lay and professional. The presenter comes from a Protestant Christian perspective, but the workshop should be applicable across faith traditions. Power Point slides will be accessible, several access copies will be made and brought to the workshop. Any media will be captioned.