

COMMUNITY DAY

From Longing to Belonging: Practices and Pathways for Inclusion

Monday, May 20 at Hope College and Western Theological Seminary

SUMMER INSTITUTE
on **THEOLOGY**
& **DISABILITY**
2019

MAY 20-23 / HOLLAND, MI



COST IS \$50 FOR
COMMUNITY DAY OR
\$500 FOR ENTIRE INSTITUTE.
REGISTER NOW AT:
bit.ly/2019SITDReg

Contact Ben Conner at
benjamin@westernsem.edu
with any questions

SCHEDULE

7:30 Registration begins

8:00 Resource Room opens

8:30 *Morning Meditation* (Maas Hall on Hope's Campus) w/Carlos Thompson & Shelly Christensen

9:00 *From Longing to Belonging: Practices and Pathways for Inclusion* (Maas Hall)

Welcome: Bill Gaventa, Ben Conner and Pres. Tim Brown, WTS

Plenary Session: Shelly Christensen and Barb Newman

10:20 Break and Browse

10:45 *Panel with Local Ministries* led by Krista Mason, Executive Director, Benjamin's Hope (Maas Hall):

How do these organizations help people with disabilities move from longing to belonging? How have these organizations/institutions been transformed by the presence and gifts of people with disabilities?

12:00 Lunch with Round Table Discussions (Phelps Dining Hall—across the hall from Maas)

1:45-3:00 *From Longing to Belonging Breakout Sessions* at WTS (see page 2)

3:30 *Closing Worship* in Mulder Chapel at WTS led by Prof. Sue Rozeboom, Nouwen Fellows, and Friendship House

SESSIONS

9:00 Plenary Session (Shelly Christensen and Barb Newman)

"Everyone is welcome." "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." "Join our family." Our congregations issue these warm statements of welcome and offer places of belonging. How can our congregational good intentions in these words on our doors and on our websites turn into actions that support all people to belong? Join us for a discussion that introduces the key elements in a community of belonging and discover some very practical strategies and tools to turn those welcome statements into a reality in your congregation. You'll learn from faith communities we have visited and worked with as we highlight the perspectives and practices that allow each of us to move from longing to belonging within the heart of a congregation.

1:45-3:00 From Longing to Belonging Breakout Sessions

Shelly Christensen, From Longing to Belonging: Continuing the Conversation

Continuing the conversation from the morning plenary and engaging the practical suggestions from Shelly's new book on how to include people with disabilities and mental health conditions in your faith community.

Sarah Barton, Ben Conner, and Carlos Thompson, From Longing to Belonging: Theological Education

This session explores ways that theological institutions can move beyond ableist biases.

Erik Carter, Incomplete without You: The Church and People with Disabilities

What does it really mean to belong? This presentation will spur deeper reflection about the ways in which churches might welcome and weave people with developmental disabilities and their families more fully into the life of the community. In moving from barriers to belonging, we discover the power of life lived together and how those at the margins are indispensable to the flourishing of everyone.

Jill Harshaw, From Longing to Belonging: Intellectual Disability

When we think about people with intellectual disabilities and their faith communities, is inclusion still a useful concept? This workshop explores what it might mean to belong in ways that surpass our images of inclusion.

Barb Newman, From Longing to Belonging: Enjoying the Shared Language of Worship with Persons Experiencing Dementia

How does the language of worship provide common place to plant our feet with persons experiencing dementia? This session will explore some practical ideas for worshipping together with people with dementia.

John Swinton, From Longing to Belonging: Mental Health Challenges

The session will explore the spiritual dimensions of mental health challenges with a view to examining what kinds of community we need to be to enable the body of Christ to live life in all of its fullness even in the midst of enduring mental health challenges.

Alex Kimmel, "The Self Determinator", From Longing to Belonging: Neuro-diversity

This interactive session features applications of the Serenity Prayer and an introduction to COG. The Culture of Gentleness (COG) has four supporting pillars: Safe, Loved, Loving and Engaged. At its' core is the philosophy that everything is based off establishing a relationship. This philosophy has potential for positive outcomes in all connections. This is especially true when approached with the understanding of neurodiversity, or the acceptance and celebration of those that operate other than what most of the world considers to be normal. Alex Kimmel will lead attendees, through PowerPoint, video clips and small group discussion opportunities, to an understanding of individualized supports including sensory and communication needs as well as the importance of acceptance and faith. Be ready for laughter and an opportunity to update your thoughts on neurodiversity!

10:45 Panel with Local Ministries

Renew Therapeutic Riding Center- Melissa Conner (Executive Director) and a rider. A Christian organization that empowers people with disabilities through horse-back riding and serves many local organizations.

The Church of Benjamin's Hope- Eric Peterson (Pastor) and a resident/congregant. A Christian church with a particular way of addressing inclusion and a vision for "Connecting people of all abilities with Jesus and with each other"

Congregation Ahavas Israel- Rabbi David J.B. Krishef. A synagogue that has thought through matters of inclusion.

Calvin Institute of Christian Worship-John D. Witvliet (Director, Professor of Worship). How is engagement with the lived experience of disability transforming and enriching the CICW?