

**Penn West Academy for Ministry
Worship & Preaching Course 2023-24 (Year 1)**

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Introduction:

“Christian worship is more than a passive response to God’s revelation. It is in itself a Pentecostal proclamation. It both announces the good news of God’s love for all the world and invites all people to share God’s saving embrace. . . The words and acts commonly called “worship” cannot rightly be separated from Christians’ faithful response to God in words and acts of love and justice for all people. That is the transparent meaning of Jesus’ liberating command: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” - UCC Book of Worship

“If you want to talk about grace, if you want to talk about revelation, talk about your life with some depth, which doesn’t mean lurid revelations as much as simply looking at your own deep experiences and describing them as they are.” - Frederick Buechner

Worship & Preaching is both theory and practice, with a healthy dose of research, and art. Our social locations and contexts in this life provide each of us with a unique lens with which to experience our own spirituality and religiosities. Over the course of our time together, we will endeavor to explore each of those, and many more nuances, with as much fidelity as we can.

Despite the arc of time, our actual minutes together are relatively short, and so students will need to have both initiative and self-reliance to be successful. The good thing is that the instructor, and your fellow learners, are only an email or phone call away! Utilize your communities and connections to support you, guide you, and help you.

Most importantly, I hope that you will try new things, reach outside of your comfort zone, and maybe even take a few risks along the way. Worship & Preaching is where the spiritual rubber meets the road, and those of us in the pulpit get to be the navigation systems! So, not always perfect, but always willing to re-route, take a U-turn, and try again. I can’t wait to see all the detours and stops along the way on each of your journeys.

Course Description and Course Goals:

Each of our sessions together will be roughly divided into ½ discussions of theory, and ½ practice (this is, of course, subject to change). Out of class readings and assignments will provide opportunity for deeper explorations and reflections, as well as applications. These readings will become the foundation of many of the in-person discussions, as well as inform the written products. Ultimately, the goal is to be able to spend a good deal of our in-person time workshopping the different elements of worship, and practicing various settings. This can only be done if all students (and the instructor) are committed to timely and complete preparation of readings and assignments.

In all cases, students are highly encouraged to have regular dialogue with the instructor regarding questions and concerns, personal circumstances, and inquiries regarding suggestions and alternatives.

At the end of the 4-year cycle, students should be able to:

- Identify the basic components of the worship experience.
- Demonstrate a basic level of comfort with public speaking, and with the leading of worship and rituals.
- Craft a cohesive worship experience that is theologically, socially, and ethically sound.
- Concisely articulate their own personal theology of worship, and be aware of how that personal theology, and its application, interplays with leading corporate worship and/or providing pastoral care.
- Begin to discern how they are being called to share their gifts of ministry as they apply to the realms of worship and preaching.

(Some Applicable) UCC Marks of Ministry:

The list that follows is not an exhaustive list of the UCC Marks of Ministry~, nor an exhaustive list of the marks addressed during this course. It is, however, an idea of those marks that one might expect to be addressed during the 4-year cycle.

- **Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice**
 - Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit, living a life of discipleship.
 - Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices.
 - Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith.
- **Nurturing UCC Identity**
 - Communicating passion for the oneness of the Body of Christ (John 17:21)
 - Exhibiting a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives.
- **Building Transformational Leadership Skills**
 - Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprise of the Holy Spirit.
 - Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power.
- **Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions**
 - Maturing in effective proclamation and preaching.
 - Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.
 - Leading faith formation effectively across generations.
 - Holding the Holy with integrity especially as represented in the Sacraments.
- **Caring for All Creation**
 - Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation.
 - Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness.
 - Practicing self-care and life balance.
 - Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.

- Attending to one's own spiritual and pastoral care, including engagement in supervision as appropriate.
- **Participating in Theological Praxis**
 - Practicing theological reflection and engagement as part of one's sense of ministerial identity.
 - Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preachings, and ecclesial and community leadership.
 - Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry.
 - Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.
- **Working Together for Justice and Mercy**
 - Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression.
 - Practicing the radical hospitality of God.
 - Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church.
- **Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets**
 - Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church.
 - Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the lifespan.
 - Demonstrating excellent communication skills.

~ The United Church of Christ's *Marks of Faith and Effective Authorized Ministers* can be found in its entirety on the UCC website:

https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/local-church/mesa-ministerial-excellence-support-and-authorization/ministers/ministers_marks/

Required Texts*:

Reeb, Charley. 2017. *That'll Preach!: 5 Simple Steps to Your Best Sermon Ever*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Stookey, Lawrence Hull. 2001. *Let the Whole Church Say Amen!: A Guide for Those Who Pray in Public*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

United Church of Christ. 1986. *Book of Worship: United Church of Christ*. United Church of Christ, Office for Church Life & Leadership.

White, James F. 2010. *Introduction to Christian Worship Third Edition: Revised and Expanded*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

A Bible

A Hymnal

**A note about these required texts - I have tried to keep the list as succinct (and affordable) as possible. Many of these texts have several different versions, and several different formats*

(including electronic). Buy/rent/borrow whatever makes the most sense for you and whatever you will actually use. As a class we will locate ourselves in the texts by referencing points other than page numbers. Most likely these texts will be supplemented from time to time with additional articles and resources. Additional materials will be made available as they are required / needed.

Suggested Websites & Apps

With the variety of electronic sources available today, it is practically impossible to create an exhaustive list of all the resources available, useful, etc. Below are resources which are from reliable, credible sources, and ones which I have found helpful for both the theory of worship and the practice of preaching, as well as research and paper preparations.

- “BibGuru.” n.d. Bibguru.com. <http://app.bibguru.com>.
- “Biblegateway.com: A Searchable Online Bible in over 150 Versions and 50 Languages.” n.d. Biblegateway.com. <https://www.biblegateway.com/>.
- Cressman, Lisa, Grace Pritchard Burson, and Joy J. Moore. 2020. “Home.” Working Preacher from Luther Seminary. <https://www.workingpreacher.org/>.
- “Google Scholar.” n.d. Google.com. <https://scholar.google.com/>.
- Leadership, and Ministry. 2020. “Worship.” United Church of Christ. <https://www.ucc.org/what-we-believe/worship/>.
- *Revised Common Lectionary*. 1992. London, England: Canterbury Press Norwich.
- “Study the Story of the Bible with Free Tools.” n.d. BibleProject.

Attendance, Participation, and Classroom Climate

Successful completion of this course is dependent on regular class attendance and participation, and the timely and thoughtful completion of all tasks and students. Students are encouraged to immediately contact the instructor with any questions, comments, problems, or expectations of delays completing assignments.

Inclusive language is expected of all participants in class, instructors, visitors, etc. This expectation extends to any written assignments, save for historical references. No discrimination of any kind will be tolerated.

Accommodations will gladly be made upon request. Please contact the instructor directly. Requests can also be made to the Dean.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. For additional information, please see the Penn West Academy catalog, or contact Rev. Joseph Hedden, Dean.

Ground Rules for Online Discussion & Zoom/Canvas Netiquette

The guidelines below are intended to help us have smooth conversations in Zoom and promote a positive learning environment for us all. Just a few tips to keep in mind:

- Mute your microphone when you aren’t speaking.
- Be mindful of background noise and distractions around you, as much as possible. (Cameos by kids, pets, and other loved ones are welcome!)

- Adjust your camera and lighting so we can see your face well. Also, please add a professional profile picture to your Zoom account so we can still see your face when you turn off your camera.
- Avoid multitasking and focus your attention on your instructor and your peers. You might want to minimize/close all other windows, so you aren't distracted by email or other applications.
- If you need to take an important phone call, please turn your camera and microphone off.
- If you wouldn't say something to someone in person, chances are you probably should not say it in a virtual setting either.
- Remember that it is more difficult to read facial expressions and discern other cues in this virtual space. Give everyone the same grace that you would like to be given to you.

Format of Assignments

As a general rule of thumb, written assignments should be completed in Times New Roman font (or its equivalents), size 12 point. Margins should be either 0.5 inches, or 1 inch, and consistent on all four sides.

All quotes and references should be cited appropriately. The exact citation format is student choice; however, in all cases citations should be **consistent** and **complete**.

Assignments may be turned in hard copy, or electronic format. Assignments turned in electronically should either be in a Microsoft Word document, Google document, or PDF format.

Students are encouraged to save all submitted assignments, as well as assignments returned with instructor's comments. (In other words, please don't count on me to have an assignment from three years ago!)

Due to the nature of this course, students are encouraged to think about the format of written assignments, and to complete them in the manner that makes the most sense given their predicted application. For example: sermon manuscripts are meant to be preached aloud. As such, it is understood that there may be certain grammatical conventions which lend themselves to the spoken word, but not necessarily to the conventional grammatical structure found in other applications.

Worship & Preaching Capstone Portfolio

Students completing their final year will be expected to turn in, as their last assignment, a "Worship & Preaching Portfolio" that is based on one cohesive set of scriptures. This assignment will be developed over the course of the 4-year class cycle by completing regular assignments. A student who completes their assignments each year, should only need to make final edits and polishing touches to this completed portfolio.

This assignment is intended to serve as both a reflective exercise for the student, but also (and perhaps more importantly) a work product which can be utilized in their future ministry application(s). Students are encouraged to ask frequent questions and engage with the instructor

regarding this task. Students are also encouraged to be creative with this task, and to have fun with it!

Further detailed instructions will be given in class; however, in broad strokes, the portfolio should include, at a minimum, the following products of work:

- Brief scriptural exegesis
- Script for a complete order of worship (including all musical selections, prayers, intercessions, benediction, etc.)
- Sermon manuscript
- Preaching recording
- Children’s sermon
- Bulletin (include lay reader script)
- Questions / reflections for congregants
- Description of the “scene” of worship
- Other thematic items as selected by the student

Cycle Overview

The Penn West Academy is a 4-year program with revolving matriculation, as well as additional options for participation including auditing. Below is a brief overview of the basic anticipated trajectory of this specific course. Refinements will occur over the period of the 4-year cycle, and take into consideration the unique talents and situations of each of the students. This trajectory is, of course, subject to change (as are all things in life, really).

Year 1 (2023-24)

The Church Year
Conceptualizing the Context
Mechanics of Liturgy
Music
Prayers and Praise
Sermons

Year 2 (2024-25)

Corporate Grief & Lament
Houses, Hospitals & Hospice
Lent
Order for Times of Passage: Farewell
Services of Memorial and Thanksgiving
Services of Reconciliation & Healing

Year 3 (2025-26)

Acceptance of New Members
Services of Adoption
Services of Baptism
Services for Birth
Services of Confirmation
Services of Marriage

Year 4 (2026-27)

Affirmations of Faith
Advent
Paperwork & Promises
Services for Authorization of Ministries
Services of Recognition
Services of Word & Sacrament

Assignments: Year 1 (2023-24)

Assignment Key

- Reading(s) to Complete
 - These should be completed before the start of the class.

- It is recommended that these readings also be done before assignments, as they will help inform the written work.
- On occasion, additional articles and/or information will be communicated in between classes. Unless otherwise noted, those items are not required.
- Assignment(s) Due
 - All assignments are due no later than the beginning of class time, unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor.
 - If turning in an assignment electronically, it should be emailed as an attachment to mclean.melissa.a@gmail.com. A confirmation email will be sent within 24 hours. If you do not receive an email, you can assume that the assignment was not received, and will need to contact me again.
 - Creativity is encouraged with all assignments. I want these to be **meaningful** and **useful** for you, and not simply a checkbox on the syllabus. Students who wish to alter the stated format of an assignment are encouraged to consult with the instructor to establish the equivalent in the student's chosen medium.
- Class Topic(s)
 - This heading gives you a brief scaffolding of the actual content and context of each class. Lecture topics will build on readings, as well as previous assignments.
 - Students are always welcome to bring their own questions and topics to class for discussion and feedback as time permits.
 - "Topics" are not simply lectures, but may also include workshop time, and practical applications.

September

- Reading(s) to Complete
 - none
- Assignment(s) Due
 - none
- Class Topic(s)
 - course & syllabus overview
 - personal preaching personalities
 - introduction to prayer
 - introduction to the church year
 - bulletins, music, and more

October

- Reading(s) to Complete
 - *Book of Worship*; Preface, ix-x; Use of This Book, xi-xii; and Introduction, pgs. 1-27
 - Review the following websites:
 - UCC Sermon Seeds - <https://www.ucc.org/what-we-believe/worship/sermon-seeds/>

- UCC Worship Ways - <https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/local-church/worship-resources/worship-ways-2/>
 - The Revised Common Lectionary - <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>
- Assignment(s) Due
 - Write a 2-4 page personal reflection paper describing your own personal “Theology of Worship & Preaching.” Include your social location(s) and personal context, as well as your current and future ministerial contexts and aspirations.
 - Provide a 1-2 pg. description of either your current ministry context, or your hoped for context. Include what the space looks like (and where it is), who the participants are, why everyone has gathered, and whatever else you imagine in your mind’s eye.
 - Identify 3 sets of scripture (3 separate Sundays) to be utilized throughout the course. Select scriptures to be used during “Ordinary Time.” Each scripture set should include: Old Testament reading, Gospel reading, and Psalm. Provide the readings in written format from the translation that you intend to use and identify the translation.
- Class Topic(s)
 - “Jar Your Faith”
 - Exegesis, research, and commentaries
 - Performing vs. preaching

March

- Reading(s) to Complete
 - Read *That’ll Preach! 5 Simple Steps to Your Best Sermon Ever*
 - Review the following websites:
 - The Bible Project - <https://bibleproject.com/>
 - Bible Gateway - <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- Assignment(s) Due
 - Outline of 7-day personal timeline for service (and sermon) preparation. 1-2 pages.
 - Sermon manuscript based on one of the three sets of scriptures selected previously. Assume a 10-minute time limit for the spoken sermon.
- Class Topic(s)
 - Practical side of preaching - pulpit, presence, pews & people
 - Sermon & preaching practice

May

- Reading(s) to Complete
 - Read *Introduction to Christian Worship*:
 - Chapter 1: What Do We Mean by “Christian Worship”?

- Chapter 2: The Language of Time
 - Chapter 3: The Language of Space
 - Chapter 4: The Sounds of Church Music
- Assignment(s) Due
 - Craft a complete Order of Worship including all prayers, music, hymns, etc. Provide in bulletin format (what those in the pews would see), as well as script format (what the pastor and the lay leader will use / see). For this exercise, it is not necessary to write all of your own components; however, please provide them as if you were prepping a bulletin for service. Remember to cite your sources.
 - Bring a hymnal to class.
- Class Topic(s)
 - Receiving feedback (both solicited and unsolicited) and why it matters
 - Hymnal hints - because music matters
 - Year wrap-up & looking forward
- Reading(s) & Assignments to Complete for Returning Students, Year 2 (2024-25)
 - Read in *Introduction to Christian Worship*: Chapter 5 - Daily Public Prayer
 - Read *Let the Whole Church Say Amen! A Guide for Those Who Pray in Public*. Complete the exercises in the book.
 - Bring one original prayer that you have written to class. Type and format of prayer is the student's choice. Be prepared to share at class.

Titles for Deeper Discovery

A Note: The list below is not meant to be an exhaustive, definitive list on the topics of worship and/or preaching. Indeed, there are a plethora of valuable resources available - what is listed below is a small sampling. What I have tried to include are the texts and materials that I find myself reaching for time and time again in my educational pursuits, while engaged in ministry, and also when in need of broader intellectual wanderings. I would like this to be a “living” list, so if you have a recommendation, please let me know, and we’ll continue to grow it together.

- Attridge, Harold W. 2006. *HarperCollins Study Bible Student Edition*. New York, NY: HarperOne.
- Bradshaw, Paul, ed. 2003. *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Brownstein, Ted. 2014. *The Interfaith Prayer Book: New Expanded Edition*. Lake Worth Interfaith Network.
- Doehring, Carrie. 2015. *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Hickman, Hoyt L., and Don E. Saliers. 1959. *The New Handbook of the Christian Year*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Kelley, M. 2010. *Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry*. Fortress Press.
- Kim, Matthew D. 2017. *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People Who Hear Our Sermons*. Ada, OK: Baker Academic.

- Lartey, Emmanuel Yartekwei. 2003. *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*. 2nd ed. London, England: Jessica Kingsley.
- Long, Kimberly Bracken. 2009. *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Long, Thomas G. 2009. *Accompany Them with Singing--the Christian Funeral*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- McFarlane, Doreen M. 2007. *Weddings with Today's Families in Mind: A Handbook for Pastors*. Pilgrim Press.
- Pilgrim Press. 1997. *The New Century Hymnal*. Pilgrim Press.
- Reeb, Charley. 2017. *That'll Preach!: 5 Simple Steps to Your Best Sermon Ever*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Roberts, Stephen B., ed. 2011. *Professional Spiritual & Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and Chaplain's Handbook*. Skylight Paths Publishing.
- Stookey, Lawrence Hull. 2001. *Let the Whole Church Say Amen!: A Guide for Those Who Pray in Public*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Tirabassi, Maren C., and Maria I. Tirabassi. 2007. *Before the Amen: Creative Resources for Worship*. Pilgrim Press.
- United Church of Christ. 1986. *Book of Worship: United Church of Christ*. United Church of Christ, Office for Church Life & Leadership.
- Van Dernoot Lipsky, Laura, and Connie Burk. 2007. *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*. Las Olas Press.
- Wallace, Robin Knowles. 2011. *The Christian Year: A Guide for Worship and Teaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- White, James F. 2010. *Introduction to Christian Worship Third Edition: Revised and Expanded*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.