

WEDNESDAY

February 28

Noon	Lunch	Dunn Dining Hall
1:15 p.m.	Opening Session: "The Gift of Lament" <i>Valerie Bridgeman moderates a conversation with Lisa Allen-McLaurin, Eugene Gibson Jr. and Ryan Schellenberg</i>	Alford Centrum
2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:30 p.m.	Workshop Session 1 <i>Choose one of these four concurrent workshops.</i>	
	"The Sermon of Lament: Preaching in and Through Personal Trauma" will be a discussion of how to prepare and perform sermons despite life's vicissitudes and personal trauma. <i>Led by Eugene Gibson Jr.</i>	Gault Hall Teaching Chapel
	"Honoring and Employing Lament as a Practice in Worship" will focus on recognizing and making space for personal and communal lament as well as planning the intentional practice of lament in worship. <i>Led by Lisa Allen-McLaurin</i>	Gault Hall 150
	"Preachers' Self-Care is Soul Care" addresses how you take care of yourself as you lead through hard times. This workshop introduces practices and rituals of breath, rest, and prayer that will help the preacher keep balance. <i>Led by Valerie Bridgeman</i>	Gault Hall 140
	"Israel's Psalms of Lament" will explore the formal and theological shape of the biblical psalms before we try our hands at writing our own. Startlingly frank in their complaints against God, Israel's psalms of lament reflect the struggles and anguish of life, but also embody vibrant theological convictions rooted in God's covenant. <i>Led by Ryan Schellenberg</i>	Gault Hall 133
3:30 p.m.	Break	
3:45 p.m.	Workshop Session 2 <i>Choose another of the four workshops above.</i>	
4:50 p.m.	Closing Gathering	Alford Centrum
5 p.m.	Dismissal	

THURSDAY

February 29

8:30 a.m.	Coffee and pastries	Gallery
9 a.m.	Plenary Session: "Professional Mourners, Grieving Mothers, and the Divine Politics of Lament" <i>Ryan Schellenberg</i>	Alford Centrum
10:30 a.m.	Break	
11 a.m.	Closing Worship	Alford Centrum
Noon	Dismissal	



Lisa Allen-McLaurin is professor of worship, music and spirituality at MTSO. She is the author of four books on worship and preaching, including *The OneWord Worship Model: A New Paradigm for Church Worship Planning*. Allen-McLaurin holds a Ph.D. from the University of Southern Mississippi, Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology, Master of Music Education from the University of Southern Mississippi, and bachelor's degrees in piano performance and music education from Millsaps College.



Valerie Bridgeman serves as dean and vice president for academic affairs at MTSO, where she also serves as associate professor of homiletics and Hebrew Bible. She is the founder and CEO of WomanPreach! Inc., which partners with MTSO in providing practical training and nurturing community spaces that empower preachers across the country. Bridgeman holds a Ph.D. from Baylor University, a Master of Divinity degree from Austin Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts from Trinity University.



Eugene Gibson Jr. is assistant professor of homiletics at MTSO. He serves as senior pastor of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in Columbus. In addition to his congregational leadership, he has taught homiletics as an adjunct professor for more than a decade. A Ph.D. candidate at Christian Theological Seminary, Gibson holds a Master of Arts in Religion/Urban Ministries from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a Bachelor of Theology from Christian Bible College.



Ryan Schellenberg is associate professor of New Testament at MTSO. He is the author of *Abject Joy: Paul, Prison, and the Art of Making Do* and *Rethinking Paul's Rhetorical Education: Comparative Rhetoric and 2 Corinthians 10-13*. Both books were recognized with the Beare Award from the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies. Schellenberg holds a Ph.D. from the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, a Master of Arts in New Testament from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary and a BA from Canadian Mennonite University.

Prayer of Approach/Call to Worship with "Spirit of the Living God"

*Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on us,
Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on us,
Melt us, mold us, fill us, use us,
Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on us.*

Living God, we come to you now, in wonder, to worship You.
We have heard of your works – as Creator, Upholder, In-dweller,
Lover of all – and we have known you
in our own times, in our own lives, in the lives of our neighbors.

**Before the mystery of your presence all around and within,
it is right for us to be silent, and to offer thanks and praise.**

Sung response

But, living God,
we also come to you in anger and despair.
We look out, and see children dying of hunger,
see nations torn apart by war,
see greed and corruption blighting the lives of millions.

**And we look within, and see our complicity in much of this,
see our compromised lives, see our broken hearts,
our broken promises; and before the mystery of evil rampant
and injustice unpunished, we ask,
"Where were you, God, when all this went so wrong?"**

Hear us as we lift our voices to you and cry
"O God, why have you abandoned us?"

**In silence, then, before the mystery
both of your presence and of your absence,
we wait upon you now.**

Sung response

Opening Song

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”

My Shepherd, you supply my need,
most holy is your name;
in pastures fresh you make me feed,
beside the living stream.
You bring my wand’ring spirit back.
when I forsake your ways;
You lead me, for your mercy’s sake,
in paths of truth and grace.

When through the shades of death I walk,
your presence is my stay;
one word of your supporting breath
drives all my fears away.
Your hand in sight of all my foes,
does still my table spread;
my cup with blessings overflows,
your oil anoints my head.

Your sure provisions gracious God
attend me all my days;
oh, may your house be my abode,
and all my work be praise.
Here would I find a settled rest,
while others go and come;
no more a stranger, nor a guest,
but like a child at home.

Lament Litanies

Voice of One

Jaha Zainabu

Voices of Many (based on Psalm 22:1-15 and Job 23:1-9, 16-17)

Read antiphonally
by the congregation

Selected Voices: Where are you God, where are you?
Nothing compares with the pain of your absence.

Selected Voices: God, I cry out for you all day, and there is no answer – nothing;
but at night there is no silence or rest from my inner turmoil.

All: Yet you are holy, the praises of your people in every generation are your throne;
those who trusted in you, and whom you delivered; those who cried out to you and
were not disappointed.

Left: But in my present circumstance I am not worth calling human,
rather, I’m the scorn of all humanity, despised by everyone.
It makes no difference who sees me,
without exception they curl their lip and shake their head:

Continues

Right: "He trusted in the LORD, let the LORD look out for him,
let the LORD rescue him if he delights in the LORD."
It's as though they know you're nowhere near.

Left: Yes, you brought me out of the womb,
and made me safe on my mother's breasts.
I was cast on you at birth;
all my life you have been my God.

Right: If I go east, the Holy One is not there;
and west – I cannot make God out;

Left: to the north the Sovereign One hides, and I cannot see God;
I turn to the south, but I cannot look at God.

All:

Don't be so far away right now, oh God;
there is trouble almost upon me, and no one to help.
I am surrounded by fearful intimidating strength,
circling about me, around and around.

I haven't the strength to withstand their taunts or your absence;
my body is feeble,
and the very core of my being has melted like wax.

I've become paralyzed and speechless –
and you have set me in the dust of death.

Silence is kept.

Scripture Reading

Ezekiel 37:1-10

Sermon

"Preaching Despite the Bones"

Eugene Gibson Jr.

Musical Response

Lisa Allen-McLaurin

Prayers of Intercession with "Breathe on Me, Breath of God"

Gracious God,
God of all compassion and consolation,
your breath alone brings life to dry bones and weary souls.

**Pour out your Spirit upon us,
that we may face despair and death with the hope of resurrection
and faith through Jesus the Anointed One.
Help us to dance with the spirit,
the breath of life, which calls us out of the valley of dry bones
and into the Kingdom of God,
both a present reality and the grounding of our future hope.
Breathe on us, breath of God.**

Continues

Holy One,
You who sent Jesus, who revealed the way of life,
inscribe your law on our hearts that in this life,
we may be the body of Christ.

**Help our hands to hold the sick and suffering.
Help our feet to walk with the poor.
Help our ears to listen to those who live in despair.
May our eyes be affixed upon the suffering of the cross
and the hope of the empty tomb
so that we may live as resurrection people.
Breathe on us, breath of God.**

Sovereign One,
Creator of all in the power of the Spirit,
You know our faults and yet you promise to forgive.
Keep us in your presence and give us your wisdom.

**Open our hearts to gladness,
call dry bones to dance,
and restore to us the joy of your salvation.**

***Breathe on us, breath of God,
fill us with life anew,
that we may love as You have loved,
and do what You would do.***

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever, Amen.

Closing Song

"We Are One in the Spirit"

We are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

Chorus:

And they'll know we are Christians
By our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other,
we will walk hand in hand,
We will walk with each other,
we will walk hand in hand,
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land:

Chorus

We will work with each other,
we will work side by side,
We will work with each other,
we will work side by side,
And we'll guard human dignity and save human lives:

Chorus

Benediction and Sending Forth

"Spirit of the Living God" written by Daniel Iverson.

Prayer of Approach written by Rev. John Harvey and posted on the Church of Scotland's Starters for Sunday website: churchofscotland.org.uk.

"My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" written by Isaac Watts.

Lament Litanies

Voice of One written by Jaha Zainabu.

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"Breathe on Me, Breath of God" written by Edwin Hatch.

Prayers of Intercession posted on I'm Just Saying: thepostmodernpastor.com.

"We Are One in the Spirit" written by Peter Scholtes.

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