

REV. DR. APRIL JOHNSON BRISTOW

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EDUCATION

DMin	Houston Graduate School of Theology Pastoral Care Specialization	December 2019
MDiv	Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University	May 1998
BS	Rutgers College, Rutgers University Marketing Major Religious Studies Minor	May 1989

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Ordained Elder, United Methodist Church
Legacy North Texas Conference, Plano, TX, 2003

SEMINARY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, TX Clinical Assistant Professor in the Intern Program Associate Director, Intern Program	June 2024 - Present
• Create Modules for Orientations for Interns, Laity, and Mentors • Guide discernment and advise students for internship placement • Design and lead Internship Seminars • Build collaboration with community partners • Advise Doctor of Ministry students	
Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, TX Instructor Course: Pastor's Crisis Ministry	Spring 2025
• Converted syllabus from in-person to online modality • Built Canvas to support student engagement • Guided students through Directed Study and Summative Projects • Outperformed institution and department in all student evaluation categories	

DENOMINATIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Horizon Texas Conference UMC Local Pastor's Licensing School Pastoral Care Instructor	2026 – Present
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Perkins School of Theology Regional Course of Study School June 2019 - Present
Congregational Care Instructor

- Enhanced Congregational Care curriculum
- Taught Residential School, Online and Hybrid modalities
- Built Online Engagement Using Canvas

North Texas Conference United Methodist Church, Dallas, TX Summers 2018, 2020
Instructor, Extension of Perkins School of Theology Course of Study

HeartPaths Spirituality Center, OK 2024, 2025
Guest Lecturer, Spiritual Direction and People of Color Module

Stephen Ministry, Plano and Dallas, TX 2018 - 2022
Leader, Continuing Education Instructor

United Methodist Women/United Women in Faith 2005 - 2015
Study Leader/Regional Study Leader, School of Christian Mission (Mission u)

- *Created for Happiness*, 2015 (Regional Study Leader)
- *Living as Covenant Community*, 2014
- *The Call: Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly*, 2013
- *For the Love of God: The Epistles of John*, 2010
- *Food and Faith*, 2009
- *Children of the Bible*, 2005

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Project, Houston Graduate School of Theology, Houston, TX 2019
Advisors: Becky Towne, Douglas Kennard, Jerry Terrill
Research-Based Study Report: "Becoming One Again:
Using a Wesleyan Framework to Equip for Divorce Recovery Ministry."

PUBLICATIONS

Works in Progress

Lead contributor to "Chapter 8: Women Pillars and Trailblazers" in *God Never Fails: The History of the Black Methodist Church in the Horizon Texas Conference*, edited by Ronald Henderson. Forthcoming, 2027. (Chapter development; coordinating research, organization, and writing.)

"Continuing the Pursuit of Clergy Effectiveness through the Leadership Circle Profile: A Look at 21 Students During Internship and their Collective Group Effectiveness" Forthcoming, 2026.

Journal Publications

"Remember...to Rest," *Leaves of Wisdom: A Book of Daily Meditations and Encouragement*. Dannette Anthony Reed, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Chicago, IL, 2024.

“The Work of Peacemaking,” in *Our Favorite Sunday School Lessons: Eight Adult Sunday School Lessons by Clergy of the North Texas Conference*. Market Square Publishing, 2023.

“Peacemaking,” Lenten Devotionals, First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2016.

“With Compassion, Forgiveness, and Dignity: Jesus Heals the Unforgiveable,” Lenten Devotionals, First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2016.

Curriculum for Local Churches

“Pre-Cruise Spiritual Preparation A 6 Week Guide for Sacred *Shifts*: Embracing Life's Transitions in the Wild Beauty of Alaska.” 7 Day Alaskan Cruise on Norwegian Cruise Line with Educational Opportunities Tours. Sponsored by Highland Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas, August 2026.

Editor, “*Help For Hurting Hearts: Grief Recovery Class*,” First United Methodist Church, Richardson, TX, 2022.

Bristow, April Johnson and Young, Adam., “*S. E. L. F. I. E.: A Model for Cultural Intelligence*,” North Texas Conference United Methodist Church, 2015.

“*Becoming One Again: Intentional Steps Toward Healing for Divorced/Divorcing Persons*,” First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2013.

Bristow, April Johnson and Holbert, Diana., “*Sisters in the Spirit: A Cross-Racial Experience for White Women and Women of Color*,” Richardson, TX, 2007.

“Blessed Beginnings: Preparing Christian Couples for Marriage,” Dallas, TX, 2000.

PRESENTATIONS, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Spiritual Director and Lecturer, “Sacred *Shifts*: Embracing Life's Transitions in the Wild Beauty of Alaska.” 7 Day Alaskan Cruise on Norwegian Cruise Line with Educational Opportunities Tours, Sponsored by Highland Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas. August 2026.

Subject Matter Expert, “Suicide Prevention for Faith Leaders” Video Curriculum produced by General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and E. Stanley Jones Foundation, January 2026.

Podcast Guest Speaker/Subject Matter Expert, “Navigating Grief and Loss During the Holiday Season” POD Strangely Warmed Podcast, North Texas Conference UMC, 2024, “Clergy Mental Health,” 2025.

Workshop, “Picking Up the Pieces Divorce Recovery Series” a ministry of Highland Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, TX. 2025 – *Navigating the Holidays*, 2024 – *Christian, Divorced, and Angry! God, Please Help!* Co-facilitated with Michelle Spurgeon, LCSW-S.

Workshop, Surviving Christmas and Divorce. North Texas Conference UMC Offer Hope Now Resources, 2024.

Workshop, “Praying Again, For the First Time,” Perkins Summit, Houston, TX, 2024.

Workshop, “Operate!” Freedom: A Liberative Way Forward for Black Clergy Women UMC, New Orleans, LA, 2024.

Workshop, “Be Whole” Be You for Black Clergy Women UMC, Washington DC, 2023.

Keynote Address, “Unfortunate History, Intentional Future: The Church, Spirituality and Domestic Violence,” For Spirituality and Domestic Violence - A Partnership of Highland Park United Methodist Church and Genesis Women’s Shelter, An Event for Clergy, Chaplains, Theology Students, Domestic Violence Counselors/Therapists, October 2023 – Event Cancelled.

Presentation, “Sabbath: The Biblical, Theological and Practical Implications for Spiritual Practice,” Soul Tending – First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2023.

Presentation, “S.E.L.F.I.E.: A Model for Cultural Competency to Equip Christian Lay and Clergy,” For Students, Faculty, Staff of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 2023.

Presentation, “Professional Quality of Life: Support, Development, Satisfaction and Rejuvenation, A Plan for FUMCR Clergy” First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2022.

Presentation, “Strength for Your Soul to Lead: Biblical, Theological and Practical Foundations for the Spiritual Discipline of Leadership,” Leadership First – First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2022.

Presentation, “Strengths in Differences: Cultural Competency for Church Leaders,” Leadership First – First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2022, 2021, 2020.

Workshop, “How to Have Difficult Conversations on Race,” First United Methodist Church, Richardson, TX, 2021.

Presentation, “The Church’s Role in Mental Health,” Strategic Vision Committee – First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX 2021.

Training, “Journey Companion Training,” Journey Toward Racial Justice Task Force, North Texas Conference United Methodist Church, 2021. Created module and equipped leaders to be Journey Companions for the Racial Justice Task Force.

Presentation, “Holiday Survival Kit: Finding Peace In the Midst of Grief: Tools for Pastors,” Presented to Clergy of North Texas Conference United Methodist Church, TX, 2021.

Presentation, “Cultural Competency Using The S.E.L.F.I.E. Model,” Presented to Bishop Michael McKee, Extended Cabinet and Conference Staff, North Texas Conference United Methodist Church, TX, 2021.

Workshop “Having Difficult Conversations,” Co-Facilitated with Adam Young, North Texas Conference United Methodist Women – Dallas, TX, 2021

Presentation, “Strength for Today, A Focus on Mental Health During the Pandemic,” Three Session Webinar – First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2020.

Presentation, “The Blessings and Challenges of Serving in a Cross Racial Appointment: My Story,” From the Frontlines Virtual Conference, 2020.

Presentation, “Peacemaking,” Stand for Peace: Compassion Event for Racial Reconciliation – Richardson Interfaith Alliance, Richardson, TX, 2020.

Presentation, “Thriving in Your Board of Ministry Interview: Tips for Success,” African American Clergy Fellowship, Mentoring Candidates for Ministry TX, 2020.

Presentation, “Creating a Wesleyan Framework for Divorce Recovery Ministry,” Scholars of Color – Society of Pastoral Theology Pre-Conference Gathering, 2019.

Workshop, “Cross Cultural Responses to Crisis,” Training for the North Texas Conference Crisis Team, Plano, TX, 2019.

Presentation, “The Church’s Role in Divorce Recovery Ministry,” North Texas Conference Churches, Dallas, TX 2018.

Presentation, “The Sandwich Generation: Caring for You, Your Family, and Your Aging Loved Ones: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Foundations for Self-Care ,” First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX , 2018.

Workshop “Surviving the Chaos of the Holidays,” First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX, 2015

Presentation, “The Characteristics of a Good Funeral,” Webinar for End-of-Life Coaching – Coaching4Clergy, 2013.

Trainer, Equipping Laity for Pastoral Care, Hamilton Park United Methodist Church Dallas, TX, 2011.

Training, “Soul Care and Dying: In-Service Training for Hospice Workers,” The Hospice Center, Dallas, 2009

Workshop “Creating Relationships Across Racial Boundaries,” Co-Facilitated with Chris Guldi, North Texas Conference United Methodist Women – Paris, TX, 2009

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATIONS

Certificate in Spiritual Transformation, The Transforming Center, Wheaton, IL, 2025.

Quality Matters (QM) Teaching Online: An Introduction to Online Delivery, 2024.

SMU Online Teaching Canvas Training, 2024

Diversity and Inclusion Certificate, eCornell, 2023

D, E, I at Work, Counteracting Unconscious Bias, Improving Engagement, Fostering an Inclusive Environment.

Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts Facilitator, SYMBIS.COM, 2023

Trained in using the SYMBIS Assessment for couples preparing for marriage.

Prepare-Enrich Trainer, 2023 and **Facilitator** since 2004, Life Innovations

Certified to use and train the Prepare-Enrich Assessment for couples preparing for marriage.

Certified Compassion Fatigue Professional, PESI, 2023

Leadership Circle Profile Certified Practitioner

Collective Leadership Assessment Certified Practitioner

BRITE Assessment Certified Practitioner

Pulse Assessment Certified Practitioner

Leadership Circle Profile, Salt Lake City, UT, 2022

Certified Resiliency Coach, Coaching4Today’s Leaders, 2020

Ascend Academy for Spiritual Care: Engaging Dialogue, Iliff School of Theology, 2016

Certified End of Life Coach, Coaching4Clergy, 2013

Certified Spiritual Director, Perkins School of Theology, 2011

Stephen Ministry Leader, Stephen Ministry, 2010

Trained to provide leadership to Stephen Ministry

Interim Ministry Training, Interim Ministry Network, 1998
Leading faith communities through times of transition.

Dispute Mediation Certificate, Dispute Mediation Service, Dallas, TX 1997
Leading faith communities through times of transition.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Doctoral Excellence Award Houston Graduate School of Theology For Outstanding Work on a Research-Based Study Project	2019
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Inclusiveness Award North Texas Conference United Methodist Church Co-Creator of “Sisters in The Spirit” Women’s Dialogue on Race	2007
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Elsa Cook Award Perkins School of Theology For Contributions to the Perkins Community	1998
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Albert Outler Award Perkins School of Theology Outstanding Essay in Theology	1996
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Crusade Scholar General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, United Methodist Church For Promising Students of Color	1994
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PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Society of Pastoral Theology Postcolonialism, Globalization, and Pastoral Care Study Group Religious Practices and Pastoral Research Study Group Scholars of Color Pre-Conference Planning Team	2013 - Present
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World Methodist Council/Conference Education/Theological Education Subcommittee Secretary (2024 – Present) Theological Education Subcommittee Member Gothenburg, Sweden, 2024 Seoul, South Korea, 2018 London, England, 2013 Durban, South Africa, 2011	2011 – Present
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American Academy of Religion	2026
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Association for Theological Field Educators	2025 – Present
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United Methodist Theological Field Educators	2025 – Present
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UNITED METHODIST MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS

Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, TX	June 2024 - Present
Clinical Assistant Professor in the Intern Program	
Associate Director – Intern Program	
First United Methodist Church Richardson, TX	2002 - 2024
Senior Associate Pastor	2022 - 2024
Director of Caring Ministries	2010 - 2022
Associate Pastor of Caring Ministries	2007 - 2010
Associate Pastor of Adult Ministries	2002 - 2007
St. Luke “Community” United Methodist Church, Dallas, TX	1999 - 2002
Associate Pastor	

MINISTRY AND WORK EXPERIENCE

First Congregational Church, Plano, TX	1997 - 1999
Interim Pastor	1998-1999
Intern Pastor	1997-1998
Methodist Hospital Dallas, TX	1997
Chaplain – Clinical Pastoral Education Extended Unit	
Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX	1994 - 1998
Graduate Hall Director	1994 - 1998
Assistant Chaplain	1995 - 1996
Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield, New York, NY	1989 - 1994
Rating Analyst	

DENOMINATIONAL SERVICE

Horizon Texas (Legacy North Texas) Conference United Methodist Church, Dallas, TX	
Metro East District Committee on Nominations, 2026 - Present	
District Committee on Superintendency, 2023 – 2025	
Crisis Response Team, 2022 - Present	
Journey Toward Racial Justice Coordinating Team, 2020 – 2024	
Committee on Religion and Race, 2013-2020	
Alternate Delegate to Jurisdictional Conference, 2008, 2004	
Annual Conference Planning Team, 2005 – 2007	
Board of Ordained Ministry Horizon Texas (Legacy North Texas)	2024 – Present
Residency Committee, 2024 – Present	
Executive Team/Extension Ministry Chair, 2020 – 2023	
Residency Committee Covenant Group Facilitator for Second Year Residents, 2019 – 2023	
Covenant Group Leader and Coach for Pastor Serving in Cross Racial Appointments, 2020	
Candidacy Mentor, Residency Committee, Conference Registrar, 2003 - 2016	

Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

Accreditation Steering Committee, 2009

Internship Program Faculty Member, Mentor Pastor, For Seven Student Interns

National Coalition of Young Adult African American Pastors, Vice President, 2003-2005

Homiletics Professor Search Committee, 1999

General Commission on Religion and Race

Covenant Group Leader for persons serving in Cross Racial/Cross Cultural Appointments, 2012

General Commission on Communication

Igniting Ministry Regional Trainer, 2000

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Golden Cross Division, Methodist Health Systems, Dallas, TX

Board Member, 2010-Present

Chair, 2020-2023

Methodist Health Systems, Board of Trustees, 2020-2023

Kairos Prison Ministry

Kairos Outside Volunteer – Spiritual Director Team, present

Medium/Maximum Security Volunteer 2014, 2015

The Center for Integrative Counseling and Psychology

Board of Directors, Dallas, TX, 2024 – present

Richardson Area Interfaith, Richardson, TX

Steering Committee Member, 2023 – 2025

The Retreat House in Richardson

Advisory Board Member, Richardson, TX, 2024 – 2025

Richardson Police Department Advisory Board

Advisory Board Member, Richardson, TX, 2020 – 2024

Plano Senior High School

Boys Basketball Team Booster Club President, Plano, TX, 2019-2020

Destination Imagination

Team Manager, Texas NExT Region, 2011-2013

CONTACT Crisis Help Line

Board of Directors, Dallas, TX, 2000-2003

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated

Member, North Queens New York and Plano, TX, 1991 – Present

LANGUAGES

English: Native Language

Spanish: Novice Communicator

INTERESTS AND HOBBIES

Traveling, Scrapbooking and Yoga

REFERENCES

Available on Request