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SMU Perkins School
of Theology

Perspective *magazine*



FORMED FOR A
world of many callings

**Across ministries,
communities and contexts**

*Perkins leaders share how their
callings take shape.*

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ON THE COVER:

Cathy Hall, Beth Bentley '25, Mara Morhouse '07, '19, Solomon Israel '26, Rosedanny Ortiz '21, Eremina Oweh '28, Abbey Adcox '26, The Rev. Michael Gienger '17, Jerry Walker '27 (Ordered from left to right, top to bottom)

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FORMED FOR A *world of many callings*

A LETTER FROM DEAN BRYAN P. STONE

In theological education, we often speak of formation – something more than information, credentialing or surviving exams. Formation suggests the shaping of lives and callings, practices that take root over time, and a community in which that shaping becomes possible.

At Perkins School of Theology, formation has always been at the heart of what we do. Yet in this moment – when the church, the academy and the world are all experiencing profound change – the meaning of formation is both more challenging and more expansive than ever. The callings of leaders formed here unfold across many contexts: congregations, classrooms and community organizations, hospitals and faith-based nonprofits, public service and places we cannot yet imagine.

This vocational breadth is not a departure from our mission; it is a faithful expression of it. Faithful leadership requires imagination about where and how God's Spirit is at work. For this reason, formation at Perkins is woven through the whole life of this community.

It happens in classrooms where Scripture, ethics and pastoral care are wrestled with seriously. It happens in worship where voices are raised together in prayer,

lament, protest and praise. It happens in mentoring relationships where faculty, staff and alumni walk alongside students as companions in discernment. It happens in internships where students explore their callings and test their gifts in real-world communities and ministries. And it happens in the everyday rhythms of daily community life – in conversations across differences, friendships formed across traditions, and the shared work of seeking wisdom for faithful service.

**Formation, in other words,
is relational before it is
programmatic.**

It is the steady work of shaping leaders whose imagination, character and convictions are formed by the good news. It is the patient work of cultivating theological depth alongside pastoral wisdom, intellectual rigor alongside spiritual maturity. And it continues long after any degree has been conferred.

The stories throughout this issue reflect that reality. You will encounter graduates whose ministries take shape in congregations, hospitals, nonprofit organizations and schools. Their callings look different from one another, yet they share a common thread: Each has

been formed within a community that believes theology matters for the world.

In a time when church and society face deep uncertainties, communities require leaders who listen carefully, think theologically, and act with courage and compassion across diverse settings. They require leaders whose callings are grounded not only in skill but also in wisdom, humility and hope.

At Perkins, we remain committed to that kind of formation – trusting that leaders formed in faith, scholarship and practice will carry it into the many places where God's work is already unfolding. The callings may be many, but the formation that sustains them is shared, and it is a gift we cultivate together.

BRYAN P. STONE '92
LEIGHTON K. FARRELL ENDOWED DEAN



Distinct callings, diverse pathways

Their paths are diverse. Their beliefs vary. And they minister in a range of settings: An established local mainline congregation; a hospital room; an innovative new church plant. Each of these students follows a distinct calling, but all share a formational experience: a Perkins education.



ABBEY ADCOX '26

Finding her voice

At a women's retreat for Wilshire Baptist Church, the room settled into quiet, attentive stillness. Abbey Adcox '26 stepped to the front, notes in hand, the text open before her. Then she did something she couldn't have imagined just a few years earlier: She delivered the homily.

Afterward, one of the women in the pews took her aside and said, "I didn't know you could do that."

"Neither did I," Adcox replied.

Adcox came to Perkins after more than a decade on staff at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, coordinating missions and women's programs. Initially, she considered a Master of Arts in ministry to deepen her knowledge. Ministry didn't seem like an option; preaching was out of the question. And with three college-aged children, the prospect of going back to school was daunting.

"I was kind of scared just to say it aloud," she says of her call to ministry. "I was in my late 40s at the time. It felt crazy."

Once enrolled, Adcox embraced the Perkins community and coursework. She built strong connections through the Baptist House of Studies. She even loved preaching class, the one class she swore she'd never take. With encouragement from her professors and through hands-on ministry experiences, including her internship at Wilshire, she found her voice.

She will complete her Master of Divinity in December at age 54.

"The whole experience opened me up to more possibilities," she says. "I found I love the pastoral side of ministry – just being present with people."

“The whole experience opened me up to more possibilities. I found I love the pastoral side of ministry – just being present with people.”

Called, challenged and stretched

A Master of Divinity isn't a requirement for the path that Solomon Israel '26 chose. He hopes to serve in ministry in a nondenominational congregation like his current church, The One International Ministries in DeSoto, Texas. But in his final year at The University of Texas, he felt a pull toward Perkins that he couldn't quite explain.

"Originally I wanted to work in finance and be a rapper on the side," he recalls. "But I really came to the Lord in my sophomore year, and that redefined my purpose. I didn't know anything about Perkins, but I just knew God had called me to this place."

Perkins immersed him in a new language and exposed him to unfamiliar traditions –

something Israel didn't expect. "I thought everybody was going to believe the same way I did," he says. "But everything was different." He got into some disagreements at times. But he believes that stretched him.

"I believe God has called me to evangelize, but to do that, you have to relate to different people," he says. "Perkins has taught me to connect with people that I would've had no ability to speak to before."

However, he hasn't had to abandon his passion for rapping. Now he raps with a message of faith. At the urging of Professor of Christian Worship Mark Stamm, Israel shared his music at a Wednesday community worship service.



SOLOMON ISRAEL '26

To his surprise, the entire community responded with joy and enthusiasm. Professors swayed to the rhythm. Classmates lifted their hands. Some began to dance.

"They circled around me and prayed," he says. "I wasn't expecting that."



DIANA FAJARDO '27

“My Perkins education is giving me more tools to work with in ministry, and it’s giving shape to my theological thinking. I’m able to do what I do with more intention.”

Carrying the tent

Hundreds of miles away in South Omaha, Nebraska, Diana Fajardo's ministry looks very different.

She pastors a bilingual, multicultural United Methodist church plant. The ministry uses Montessori tools, theater and storytelling to share the message. At one early service, Fajardo placed a small model of a tent on a table, with figures gathered around it. Attendees were invited to touch and move the pieces. Recalling the story from Exodus, Fajardo shared how the tent was a space where the Israelites felt the presence of God.

"Isn't God everywhere?" one parishioner asked.

"Yes, but they wanted to take God with them," a child replied.

That's how the new congregation became The Tent, which Fajardo founded.

It's also an example of how her studies in the Master of Divinity in Spanish program are empowering her.

"My Perkins education is giving me more tools to work with in ministry, and it's giving shape to my theological thinking," she says. "I'm able to do what I do with more intention."

Fajardo's own faith journey has been circuitous, winding across countries and denominations, beginning with her Roman Catholic roots in Colombia to the Lutheran Church and now The United Methodist Church. The hybrid program fits her life and ministry already in motion, while the Master of Divinity in Spanish community has provided a vital space for growth.

"Until now, all of my preparation has been in English and in the Anglo community," she says. "Finding that space of cultural similarity has been very important to me."

Loving the questions

As a pediatric neurologist, Patricia Evans '27, spent decades immersed in science, data and precise, measurable outcomes. Now, as a Perkins student, she studies in a field where certainty is less defined. She is pursuing a Master of Theological Studies while continuing to practice medicine part time at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

While medicine is grounded in quantitative evidence, Evans finds theology to be more qualitative and narrative-based. That difference fascinates her. "Theology is less like quantitative science and more like the conversation and beauty of jazz," she says. "I'm a jazz keyboardist; theology feels like jamming with other people."

Attending Perkins was a lifelong dream for Evans. She grew up in a United Methodist Church in Lubbock, Texas, and was profoundly influenced by her pastor,

the Rev. Tim Dotts '64 who led study groups on the works of Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer. As a high school student, she was thrilled to attend Laity Week at Perkins.

Ultimately, Evans' love of science steered her into medicine, but her interest in theology endured. Through her work with children with autism, she became fascinated with questions that only theology can address.

"I'm interested in how people achieve their own sense of authenticity, especially for those who are outside of the mainstream of culture," she says. "And I'm intrigued by the intersection of medicine, philosophy and faith."

She marvels that many of the terms still used in medicine – the cerebellum, the



PATRICIA EVANS '27

hippocampus, the thalamus, even the Hippocratic oath – can be traced back to ancient Greece.

Evans hopes her studies may eventually lead to teaching at the intersection of science and theology. For now, she is content to be learning.

"There is just so much to learn," she says.



CAROLYN BARKER '26

At Baylor Scott & White Health in Plano, Texas, Carolyn Barker '26 moves quietly through hospital corridors, pausing at doorways before stepping inside.

Her role began as a Perkins internship and became her professional position in July 2025. The work reflects what she describes as a lifelong calling.

"I have been a chaplain all my life," she says.

Though she previously worked as a journalist and as an educator, people

Presence as practice

have always sought her out – on buses, in churches and in moments of crisis. Informally, she has counseled friends facing terminal illness, supported families navigating grief, and listened to strangers who just needed to talk.

"It's like I have a sign on my head that says, 'You can trust me,'" she says with a smile.

At Perkins, that calling was confirmed and shaped.

"Perkins has given me this worldview of life experiences," she says. "Taking clinical pastoral education classes opened up the reality that, yes, I was called to do this."

Immersion trips to El Salvador and Waco, Texas, along with a January term at Houston Methodist in the Health Care Holy Care program, deepened her understanding.

"Chaplaincy is not just for the sick, it's also for people who are socially marginalized," she says. "I've learned how to advocate for those who can't speak for themselves."

She also had the opportunity to shadow experienced chaplains, watching how they entered rooms, how they listened, how they resisted the urge to fix problems or provide answers.

"You journey with the patient," she says. "You don't take over."

Though older than many of her peers, Barker has found strong community at Perkins. The Perkins Student Association elected her as its chaplain and younger students often turn to her for guidance.

"There is no 'you and I' at Perkins," she says. "It's always us."

Learning to listen

How spiritual direction formed Tee Bolin as a leader

Theresa “Tee” Bolin juggles many different roles. She’s a lay leader and a businessperson with a busy family life. Keeping her grounded through it all, she says, are the practices learned and nurtured in Perkins’ Certificate in Spiritual Direction (CSD) program. Bolin teaches and supervises students in the program while serving as director of Lay Servant Ministries for the Arkansas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Here, she reflects on how spiritual direction has helped her become a deeper listener and a better leader.

Q: What first drew you to spiritual direction?

A: It was almost a spontaneous decision. I signed up partly out of curiosity around an “unknowing” and completed the original two-year certificate in 2012. Years later, I was invited to return to complete the newly added practicum piece. During that first practicum weekend, I experienced what I can only describe as an interior freedom. At a spiritual and personal level, I was moving from what I would learn to call a false self – the world-identified self I had at the start – toward what Carl Jung, Thomas Merton and Richard Rohr would call the “true self.” I realized that I could continue in my business career and still find energy in this program.

I have a distinct memory of the moment when the light bulb went off that weekend. After 40 years of searching, I had discovered my vocation. That realization came through discernment, a key part of spiritual direction. It’s been such a gift.

Q: Expand on that. What is discernment, and what does it look like in real life?



A lot of us call ourselves good listeners or active listeners, but spiritual direction takes a deeper, more holistic approach.

A: I tell my students, “There’s a difference between discernment and decisioning.”

Because spiritual direction acknowledges our spiritual selves, everything we do in spiritual direction gives us an opportunity to make better decisions about our vocation.

If I had looked at my choice to pursue spiritual direction strictly at a practical, decision-tree level, it wouldn’t have made much sense. I had to miss work. I had to travel to Dallas. There was no monetary incentive. But through the lens of discernment, it was the only choice I could make. For me, spiritual direction has been life-giving.

Q: You also serve as director of Lay Servant Ministries in the Arkansas Conference. How has spiritual direction shaped the way you lead?

A: I’ve never been afraid to speak up or share my opinions. But now that comes from a different place. It doesn’t come

from an ego-driven place. Spiritual direction has invited me to lead by letting other people talk. I don’t feel a need for validation, or for my words to be heard. I’m not as anxious to get my point across. I’m better at holding all of it together until we can figure it out together.

Leadership comes from what I’m intuiting and what I’m noticing about the situation.

I’ve also developed a sense of curiosity that I didn’t have before. I’m more curious to hear others’ stories and to get their input.

Q: How has your work in spiritual direction shaped the way you listen?

A: A lot of us call ourselves good listeners or active listeners, but spiritual direction takes a deeper, more holistic approach. We’re listening with something beyond our ears. We’re listening with our bodies. We’re listening to the heart.

In a normal, daily conversation, we’re equally engaged in dialogue. In spiritual direction, it’s very much about the directee. If I’m talking half the time, I’ve said too much.

Spiritual directors always work in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. So we’re also listening for what’s not said, for what’s not being verbalized. We’re there to give the directee a nonjudgmental, noncritical space where they can explore, where they can say out loud things they may not be able to say anywhere else: doubts in their faith, doubts in their calling, fear, distance from God. It’s listening with the aim of inviting the directee to go deeper.

2026 Perkins Award recipients

The 2026 Perkins Award recipients represent outstanding lay and ordained leaders who have broken barriers, opened pathways for laypeople to grow in faith and knowledge, and forged partnerships that extend the church's reach into the community. Each describes experiences at Perkins that continue to shape how they lead, serve and respond to the needs around them.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

THE REV. ELIZABETH ANN "LIZ" LOPEZ '75, '76

RETIRED UNITED METHODIST ELDER

When Liz Lopez arrived at Perkins in 1971, she was one of just a few female students preparing for ordination. Not all were met with encouragement.

"Back then, the bishops didn't know what to do with us," she recalls. Yet Lopez persisted, forming lifelong bonds with a small cohort of women who were navigating uncharted territory.

Lopez went on to pastor congregations in New Mexico and Texas and to serve as a district superintendent in Minnesota. Her career in ministry included many firsts: the first Hispanic woman to earn a doctoral degree from Perkins, the first to serve on a conference cabinet in Minnesota, one of the three founders of the Hispanic Clergywomen's Association, now known as the National Association of United Methodist Latina Clergy Women (ACLAMEN). She's still in touch with many of her classmates, including that small group of women, many of whom became denominational leaders.

Lopez credits Perkins not only for academic rigor but for relational formation. Professors such as Harville Hendrix and Robert Elliott shaped her pastoral identity. "The hours they spent nurturing me with their kindness, insights, guidance and understanding are representative of the kind of faculty that Perkins invests in," she says.



EMERGING LEADER AWARD

THE REV. MICHAEL GIENGER '17

CO-PASTOR, CENTRAL UMC, GALVESTON, TEXAS; FOUNDER, GALVESTON HOUSING PLUS

Michael Gienger remembers vividly a moment in an Old Testament class at Perkins when Professor Roy Heller proposed "curiosity" as a key Christian virtue.

"Everyone thinks it's love, but Dr. Heller said that, if you love someone, you want to know something about them," Gienger says. "Curiosity is the force that propels us toward the other."

Gienger took that insight to heart, leading to a practice he calls "exegeting culture" – reading the world as carefully as Scripture. That led him to become a "chief connector," bringing together individuals experiencing homelessness, civic leaders, health providers and faith communities. His work at Central UMC in Galveston has helped transform a once-declining congregation into one of Galveston County's largest provider of services for unhoused people, with clinics and initiatives like Galveston Housing Plus.

It's demanding work. Recently, Gienger led a memorial service for 12 unhoused folks who have died just since January 1. Helping sustain him is the formation that began at Perkins, giving him the imagination and resilience to find God at work "in the midst of what's actually happening in the world, right now."

WOODROW B. SEALS LAITY AWARD



BETH BENTLEY '25

**LAY LEADER, ST. JAMES CME CHURCH,
MCKINNEY, TEXAS**

Although she does speak as a layperson occasionally, Beth Bentley's ministry doesn't come just from the pulpit. It also unfolds in schools, at city hall and in neighborhood relationships.

Bentley came to Perkins during a season of grief, drawn by what she describes as a divine nudge. Her studies became a process of refinement, where intellect met heart and spiritual disciplines like forgiveness and hope took deeper root.

That formation now shapes how she moves through the world: advocating for children and families and serving as a bridge between church and civic life. She often speaks at city council and community meetings in McKinney, whether leading a prayer or advocating for community needs. Her Perkins education, she believes, strengthened her voice and enhanced her lens to see pressing and future needs.

"My time at Perkins expanded my view beyond the CME space," she says. "The Perkins community connected me with the broader community of Christianity. And that has helped me as I am in ministry throughout the community."

Professionally, Bentley serves as a care coordinator for Allen Independent School District, helping ensure students have access to food, supplies and support. While the setting is secular, she sees continuity in the work.

"My job is a Matthew 25 experience every day," she says. "It's feeding the hungry and caring for families."



CATHY HALL

**OFFICE AND HOSPITALITY MANAGER,
METHODIST FOUNDATION FOR ARKANSAS**

She's a lifelong United Methodist, but Cathy Hall traces her current calling to a single week at Perkins' School of Youth Ministry about three decades ago. After the closing service, sitting outside of Perkins chapel, she felt overwhelmed with emotion and a profound sense of calling.

Her prayers for direction were answered. Since then, Hall has devoted herself to connecting others to the same kind of transformative experience she found at Perkins. Through her work with the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas, she helps laypeople access Perkins programs. She's worked to help provide funding for Arkansas United Methodists to attend events like the Certificate in Spiritual Direction program, Fall Convocation and the Perkins Summit for Faith and Learning at the Dallas campus. She also helped bring Perkins experiences to locations in Arkansas.

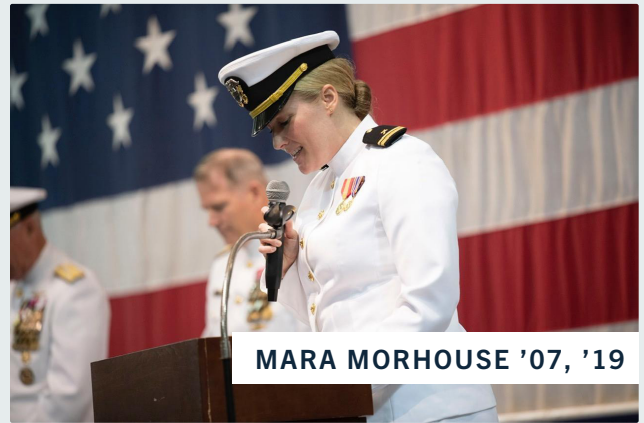
"I'm kind of like a conduit," she says. By linking people to resources, relationships and growth, she's nurturing a network that has strengthened churches and communities across Arkansas.

Behind it all is that transformative moment she experienced herself – and a deep conviction in the power of lay education.

"Lay learning helps you become a better human," she says. "And when you are a better human, you're a better member of the church and the community."

Called to serve in uniform

When Lt. Mara Morhouse '07, '19 goes “underway” aboard a U.S. Navy submarine, she enters a world where space is tight and faith, if it exists at all, takes many forms.



MARA MORHOUSE '07, '19

As a chaplain at the Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut, Morhouse provides spiritual support to some 5,000 sailors serving on 21 submarines from Connecticut to New Hampshire. Most don't share her beliefs; many claim no faith at all.

“Even if someone is diametrically opposed to what I believe, I still have to be their chaplain,” she says.

Chaplains never proselytize. Instead, they are charged with what the Navy calls “spiritual readiness” – preparing personnel for deployment. That may mean connecting someone with a clergy person of their faith tradition to perform a religious rite, such as a wedding or baptism. More often, Morhouse spends her time listening, offering confidential spiritual counsel on everything from addiction or strained relationships to the pressures of life at sea.

“Chaplains in the military are not mandatory reporters,” she says. “Federal law allows us to maintain 100%

confidentiality. Sailors can be open and honest with me, and I can truly help.”

Morhouse is ordained in the Trinity Full Gospel Fellowship and endorsed by the Chaplaincy of Full Gospel Churches. Her ministry serves sailors from diverse faiths – Christian, Muslim, Jewish and others. In May, she will lead a program for those identifying as Norse Pagans, exploring addiction issues through the tradition's apocalyptic concept of Ragnarök.

Perkins' rigorous theological education, she says, provided a firm foundation.

“The professors at Perkins really hold you to an academic standard,” she says. “They don't water anything down. It's no longer just your personal opinion about what Scripture means.”

In her classmates, she encountered beliefs and traditions that differed widely from her Pentecostal background. She also completed an internship at Oak Lawn United Methodist Church, a congregation outside her theological tradition.

“I wanted to swim in another fish tank,” she says. “The intern director took a huge risk in placing me there, but in the end, it worked out really well.”

Those experiences prepared her to minister with confidence and openness in one of the most religiously diverse environments imaginable.

“I am genuinely not threatened by anybody's faith tradition or even their misunderstanding of Christianity,” she says. “Instead, I can say, ‘Hey, let's talk about that.’”

In a setting where sailors bring a wide range of beliefs – and often deep personal challenges – Morhouse sees that openness not just as a strength, but as essential to her calling.



Growth and partnerships update

Formation at Perkins School of Theology is extending beyond our campus through new partnerships that open pathways for students and communities. Each collaboration from this academic year expands who is served and what becomes possible in theological education.

01 EXPANDING ACCESS

McMurry University

ABILENE, TEXAS

Students at McMurry University are gaining a clearer, more affordable pathway into theological education. Through a new accelerated degree program, undergraduate students can begin taking SMU courses during their senior year – courses that count directly toward a Master of Divinity at Perkins School of Theology.

This partnership serves students who feel called to ministry but may face financial or time barriers in pursuing graduate study. By removing those barriers, Perkins is helping more students act on that call earlier and with greater confidence.

The program also extends Perkins' reach into West Texas and reflects a broader vision: Theological education that meets students where they are and walks with them into what's next.

02 CONTINUING FORMATION

Memphis Theological Seminary

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

When Memphis Theological Seminary announced its closure, its students faced an uncertain future. Through a teach-out agreement, Perkins is providing a path forward – welcoming these students to complete their degrees while honoring the formation they have already begun.

This effort serves students in transition, ensuring their theological education continues without interruption. It also carries forward the ecumenical spirit of Memphis, shaped by the leadership of Memphis Theological Seminary and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

As these students join the Perkins community, they bring new perspectives, experiences and traditions that deepen learning for all. In this way, Perkins is expanding the very fabric of its formation, shaped by voices from beyond Dallas.

03 GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Methodist Theological University

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

A new three-year memorandum of understanding with Methodist Theological University in Seoul opens the door to global collaboration in theological education. This partnership connects students, scholars and institutions across continents in shared work.

It serves faculty and students at both institutions by creating opportunities for joint research, conferences and potential academic exchanges. These initiatives invite participants to engage theology in a broader cultural and global context.

By building relationships in South Korea, Perkins extends its mission internationally, forming leaders equipped for ministry in an interconnected world.





Gathered for formation

Formation at Perkins doesn't happen in just one place. It unfolds wherever students gather – on campus, but also in communities and in ministries. Through intensives and Global Theological Education experiences, students step into new environments and encounter new perspectives. Here, Perkins students reflect on their intensive experiences and how they became part of their formation.

Tendresse Kapalong A Sul '26

📍 Student in Coffeyville, Kansas → Dallas, Texas, intensive

I came to the intensive already feeling connected to my classmates, but meeting in person really deepened those relationships. We had been learning together online, texting and encouraging one another, but sitting at the same table, praying together before class, and sharing meals and conversations about ministry was so meaningful. We are helping each other to grow in our journey as ministers.

One moment that stayed with me: In a class on evangelism, we talked about engaging popular culture as part of ministry. That challenged how I had always understood the church's relationship to the world. Formation, I'm learning, is not just about knowledge – it's about being open to new ways of reaching people.

What matters most to me is the people. That human connection is challenging me and shaping me for my calling.



Andi Claudio Villar Arroyo '27

📍 Student in Bellevue, Washington → McAllen, Texas, intensive

This intensive focused on a bilingual course, Issues in Evangelism: Christian Mission and the Borderlands, combining lectures, ministry visits, and conversations with leaders serving immigrant communities along the border.

Originally from Peru, I have long understood faith and community through the lens of my own immigrant experience. The McAllen intensive deepened that perspective by bringing me closer to the lived reality of the border.

Witnessing the resilience of migrant communities was especially meaningful. Despite significant challenges, families continue building community, caring for one another and holding on to hope. Their stories underscored that Christian mission is not only about service, but about recognizing the dignity, strength and faith already present and walking alongside others with respect and solidarity.

This experience is reshaping how I approach ministry, calling me to accompany immigrant communities and recognize their faith as a source of strength for the whole church.



Rich Dudley '26

📍 Student in Dallas, Texas → El Salvador, intensive

In El Salvador, we visited sites connected to Archbishop Óscar Romero and other martyrs. It was so moving and so tangible. One museum displayed the clothes the priests were wearing when they were killed. The work of the Óscar Romero Center continues, somewhat under the radar because it's still in opposition to the government. As I wrote in my journal, "A single bullet pierced the fleshy heart of Óscar Romero, but it never quelled the spirit and the faith of the people."

This connected with a class I'm taking this semester, on evil, suffering and death. We're studying nonviolent resistance and how systems create and sustain injustice. The El Salvador intensive reminded me that we are all created in the image of God. The response to violence is never more violence, and the church must have a voice in identifying and calling that out.



Ellyn Favors '27

📍 Student in Lancaster, Texas → Dallas, Texas, and Waco, Texas, intensives

My journey to Perkins began long before I stepped on campus. For two years, I felt the pull to apply but held back — until I finally said yes. Within days, I was accepted and soon received the support that made it possible to begin. When I arrived for my first in-person experience, the on-campus intensive last fall, I was nervous returning to school in my 50s and unsure what to expect. What I found was community. Faculty, staff and fellow students welcomed us in a way that made me feel I belonged from the very start.

That sense of belonging carried into Waco, where formation took on new depth. Walking the streets as part of a homelessness simulation and serving alongside others reshaped how I understand ministry — not just as helping, but as creating lasting change. Together, those experiences challenged me and confirmed that I am exactly where I'm called to be.



Felicia Patton '27

📍 Student in Chicago, Illinois → Dallas, Texas, intensive

The intensive gathered us from very different lives into an intense, shared space of learning and collaboration. I live in the Chicago area, have a baby at home, a full-time job as a church music director and a recording career. I'm grateful for the hybrid model, which allows me to follow my interest in music and the sacraments. In the classroom, we challenge one another, exchange ideas, and learn to articulate our work with clarity and confidence.

During this January intensive, the D.P.M. students assembled a choir for the memorial service for Garth Baker-Fletcher (spouse of Perkins faculty emeritus Karen Baker-Fletcher). Being called into service on short notice is a common experience for those of us in church music! Ministry is not something we prepare for only in theory; it unfolds in community, in the moment.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A year in review



This academic year has been filled with new beginnings – from students to leadership – as well as engagement with our ever-growing annual events.

Here is a list of all streamed events from Perkins. Missed any? Scan the QR code to watch each video.

WORSHIP

AUGUST 28, 2025

Feast of Beginnings

FACULTY

OCTOBER 2, 2025

Dean Stone Installation

SYMPOSIUM

OCTOBER 3, 2025

Liberating Theology and Ethics for the Common Good

CONVOCATION

OCTOBER 7–9, 2025

2025 Perkins Fall Convocation

LECTURE ONE

The United Methodist Studies Lecture in Wesleyan History and Contemporary Engagement featuring Ashley Boggan

LECTURE TWO

The Peyton Lecture in Preaching featuring Lisa L. Thompson

LECTURE THREE

The Tate-Wilson Lecture in Faith and Public Life featuring Almeda M. Wright

LECTURE FOUR

The Fondren Lecture in Christian Mission and Community Engagement featuring Monika Ardelt

LECTURE FIVE

The Barton Lecture in Hispanic Theology and Ministry featuring M. Daniel Carroll R. (Rodas)

WORSHIP

DECEMBER 2, 2025

66th Annual Advent Service

FACULTY

MARCH 5, 2026

Rebekah Miles Installation as the Albert C. Outler Chair of Wesley Studies

LECTURE

APRIL 14, 2026

Abraham Lecture Series: “Faith, Commitment, and Belief” featuring Lara Buchak

Formation through cultural encounter

At the Arvo Pärt Centre in Estonia, sacred music, archival stewardship and theological imagination converge to shape leaders and artists at Perkins School of Theology and SMU.

A REFLECTION BY ANTHONY ELIA AND MARCELL SILVA STEUERNAGEL

Glancing across the windswept Lahepere Bay from the beachfront hamlet of Laulasmaa was both invigorating and bone-chillingly cold. The small town, tucked between the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea, rests within a pine and birch forest about 45 minutes west of Tallinn. It is quiet, marked by light and stillness – a setting that prepares visitors for the Arvo Pärt Centre.

Our engagement with the centre began several years ago through conversations with colleagues at a conference in Volos, Greece. In May 2024, we first traveled to Estonia to explore shared interests among Perkins School of Theology, Bridwell Library and the Meadows School of the Arts at SMU. We returned October 17–18, 2025, to attend Ideascapes, an international conference marking Pärt's 90th birthday. Nearly 100 scholars and musicians gathered for lectures and performances reflecting on his legacy. We were joined by Margaret Winchell, assistant professor of choral activities in the Meadows School of the Arts at SMU, and Fernando Berwig Silva, a Ph.D. candidate in religion and culture at SMU and a graduate of Perkins' Master of Sacred Music Program.

Laulasmaa is not simply a seaside retreat. The Arvo Pärt Centre is an internationally respected archive, research facility and cultural space dedicated to preserving and interpreting the work of one of the most influential composers of sacred music in the world. Pärt's music has shaped contemporary choral and liturgical expression across traditions, and the centre reflects the seriousness with which that legacy is stewarded.

Approaching the building along a wooded path, visitors gradually leave behind the noise of ordinary life. The architecture – natural materials, filtered light and open space – invites attentiveness. Silence is not incidental here. It is formative. The setting echoes the character of Pärt's music – disciplined, restrained, attentive to space as much as sound.

Silence is not incidental here. It is formative.

Learning more about Estonia's history, particularly during the Soviet period in which much of Pärt's compositional life unfolded, sharpened our awareness of creativity forged within constraint. Seeing manuscripts and archival materials in situ underscored that theology is expressed not only in words but through sound, discipline and integrity.

Conversations with centre leadership – including Michael Pärt, chairman of the council; Anu Kivilo, managing director; and Kristina Körver, researcher and archivist – deepened our appreciation for the intellectual and spiritual labor required to preserve and interpret a living artistic legacy. As stewards of theological collections and academic communities, we recognized in their work a shared vocation of care.

Our work with the Arvo Pärt Centre has influenced how we think about what we offer students in their journeys of ministry, leadership and Christian discipleship. It has reoriented our understanding of a globally attentive theological community – one grounded in cross-cultural listening and dialogue with ideas not commonly discussed through study confined to the United States alone.



For those in the Perkins and SMU community, such encounters expand theological imagination and sharpen leadership.

Engagement beyond our own context challenges assumptions and invites constructive reconsideration of long-held perspectives.

No singular moment defines the significance of these visits. Rather, the cumulative witness of Pärt's life and the centre's work offers a model – creativity sustained within limits, faithfulness expressed through discipline, and community built through shared artistic inquiry.

Looking ahead, we hope to continue creating opportunities for faculty and graduate students to engage the centre's resources and community. The partnership among Bridwell Library, the Perkins Sacred Music Program, jointly sponsored with Meadows, stands at a natural intersection of music, theology, scholarship and stewardship.

Across borders, theology is not only written or spoken; it is sung. In learning to listen, leaders are formed in ways that extend far beyond any single classroom or conference hall.



**In learning to listen to history, to silence, and to one another
...leaders are formed.**

Generosity that forms leaders

Scholarships and community support help Perkins students prepare for lives of ministry and service.

At Perkins School of Theology, gifts from alumni and friends make it possible for students to pursue theological education with clarity and purpose. Scholarships, programs and community life reflect a shared commitment to forming the next generation of ministry leaders.

“We have great facilities, a strong curriculum, and caring faculty and staff members,” says John Martin, who has led development efforts at Perkins for more than a decade. “But without scholarship support, our efforts will not bear fruit.”

One example of this commitment is the Perkins Scholars program, created to strengthen funding for outstanding Master of Divinity students. The program provides additional support throughout the three years of the degree, enabling students to focus on their studies and leadership in ministry.

Martin recalls that when the program was first proposed, its future was uncertain.

“I had no idea if the program would be successful,” he says. “But our supporters understood that Perkins exists to educate students for leadership in ministry, and they responded with extraordinary generosity.”

Since its launch, the program has supported students whose callings lead them to congregations, nonprofit ministries, chaplaincy settings and communities across the country.

Scholarships also shape students’ daily experience. Instead of navigating multiple financial pressures, students are able to focus more fully on coursework, worship, internships and community life – experiences that deepen their sense of calling.

Admissions leaders see the impact as well. Scholarships often determine whether a student can accept the invitation to pursue theological education at Perkins.

“Without scholarship support, a Perkins education would remain out of reach for many students,” says Christina Rhodes, assistant dean of Enrollment Management. “For countless individuals, receiving a scholarship is not only a deciding factor, but the key to turning their dream into reality. Because of our donors, we can make a Perkins education more accessible and work closely with students to help them graduate with little to no debt.”

Today, Perkins graduates serve congregations, hospitals, nonprofits and communities around the world. Their ministries reflect the same spirit of generosity that made their formation possible.

Through the continued support of alumni and friends, Perkins remains committed to forming leaders who will guide communities of faith with wisdom, compassion and hope.



BY THE NUMBERS

Generosity in action

\$80M raised
for Perkins over the past
decade

\$3.2M supporting
the Perkins Scholars program

10 Perkins Scholars
supported annually

\$21,000 in scholarship
support per Perkins Scholar

2025–2026

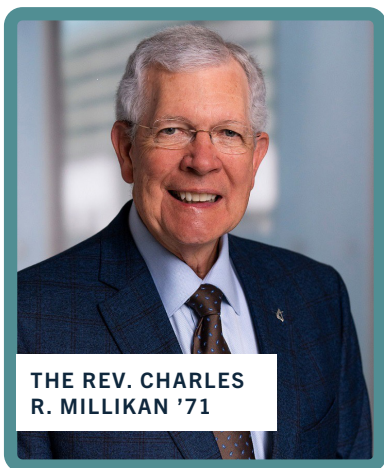
A Year of Giving

Completion of the
Kirby Commons remodel

Establishment of the
**Reverend Charles R.
Millikan, D.Min., Endowed
Chair** in Spiritual Care

Creation of the **John Martin
Endowed Scholarship**





THE REV. CHARLES
R. MILLIKAN '71

MILLIKAN ENDOWED CHAIR

Where ministry meets healing

Building on a legacy of spiritual care, the Millikan Chair will prepare students for emerging ministries of healing and service.

After decades of serving in a local church, The Rev. Charles R. Millikan '71 stepped into unfamiliar territory in 2005, accepting an appointment to lead the chaplaincy program at Houston Methodist Hospital.

People asked him if he was leaving the church.

Millikan's reply: "No. I'm taking the church with me."

That made all the difference. As Houston Methodist grew to include eight hospitals and more than 35,000 staff in 2025, the chaplaincy program grew, too, in size as well as scope. Millikan started with a secretary and just a handful of chaplains whose primary responsibilities were visiting patients; today, a team of more than 120 chaplains provide spiritual support to the entire hospital system.

Clinical pastoral education programs multiplied. Chaplains were embedded in palliative care, research, psychiatry and even departments serving hospital staff who never see patients.

Driving that growth was Millikan's eye for spotting new mission fields and his talent for forging partnerships. That vision now finds new expression at Perkins School of Theology through The Reverend Charles R. Millikan, D.Min., Endowed Chair in Spiritual Care. Funded by a collaborative commitment from the Permanent Endowment Fund of Moody Methodist Church in Galveston, Houston Methodist Hospital and the Houston Methodist

Hospital Foundation, the chair marks and honors Millikan's leadership in growing the spiritual support program within the Houston Methodist Hospital community.

"In our time, ministerial vocations are expanding and diversifying at a rapid pace," says Bryan P. Stone, Leighton K. Farrell Endowed Dean of Perkins School of Theology. "While Perkins remains committed to preparing clergy for congregational ministry, an increasing number of our students express interest in ministries such as chaplaincy, faith-based nonprofits, peacemaking, interfaith work and teaching."

The new chair, he says, "will take us to the next level in the preparation of all sorts of chaplains – but especially in the area of healthcare chaplaincy."

Stone added that healthcare systems are increasingly recognizing the interconnectedness of body, mind and spirit, further boosting demand for theologically trained spiritual caregivers.

Ultimately, Millikan became vice president of spiritual care and values integration at Houston Methodist, serving until

his retirement in July 2025. Having witnessed how pastoral care has informed the hospital's culture – helping to build staff retention and morale and fostering a shared conviction of the sacred worth of all people – Millikan believes spiritual care programs could benefit a range of organizations and institutions.

In Millikan's career, Stone sees a model for Perkins' future. "Charles is a trailblazer in understanding that Christian ministry extends far beyond the walls of a traditional congregation," he says. At the same time, the trauma-informed, interfaith and holistic caregiving skills honed in hospital settings are "desperately needed in the average parish."

The Millikan Chair builds on Perkins' Houston-Galveston extension site at Houston Methodist, which Millikan helped launch, and positions the school to deepen collaborations across Texas.

Spiritual leaders "should be able to speak to a variety of audiences and invite them to be part of a larger ministry," Millikan says. "And collaborations and partnerships are critical."



Words that shape callings

Homiletics, formation and the work of faithful speech



The Rev. Mara Richards Bim '24 preached her first sermon in a homiletics class taught by Alyce McKenzie at Perkins. Standing before classmates, she began learning what it means to speak faithfully in public. Today, Bim “speaks” to thousands of people across the country each week – but not from a pulpit.

As a Clemons Fellow at Baptist News Global, Bim writes news analysis and opinion pieces about politics and immigration from a Christian perspective.

Those pieces aren’t sermons, yet the habits formed in McKenzie’s homiletics class shape Bim’s work every day.

“Preaching is not limited to the pulpit, and it’s not limited to one type of ministry,” says McKenzie,

Le Van Professor of Preaching and Worship and founder of the Perkins Center for Preaching Excellence. “Homiletics teaches students attentiveness – to what God is doing in the world and to what God is saying through Scripture and through our context.”

Bim is one of many graduates who represent the living legacy of McKenzie, who retired after 26 years. The homiletics program has shaped the vocational formation of generations of Master of Divinity students. While many graduates preach weekly, others serve as nonprofit leaders, chaplains, advocates and educators. Whether their vocations involve preaching or not, the habits of mind formed in homiletics prepare them to speak faithfully in public life.

“Homiletics really draws together all the other courses that Perkins students take,” says Wes Allen, Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics and co-director of the PCPE. “It teaches students to think theologically, ethically and scripturally. It asks what you’re willing to stand up for and put your name by – to give your voice to. That’s a formative part of the M.Div. degree.”

Kaylee Vida '21 applied those lessons in the pulpit and beyond. Her first call was to a small United Methodist church in Florida, where she preached weekly. She now serves as Perkins’ associate director of lifelong learning. Though she no longer preaches every Sunday, she continues to draw on the disciplines she learned in homiletics.

Homiletics class taught me a way to engage Scripture that transformed my own spiritual life.

KAYLEE VIDA '21

There is a technical side to preaching – organizing thoughts so listeners can receive them and using storytelling techniques to make those ideas come alive. Preaching also forms the preacher as well as the congregation. When preparing sermons, students test their moral imagination. They discover whether the words they speak are words they can live. They clarify their own theology.

“There’s nothing more clarifying for one’s theology than to look out on a sea of upturned faces of real people and think about, ‘What is the real impact of what I’m saying?’” McKenzie says.

Preaching also demands courage. In homiletics class, many students profess their beliefs publicly for the first time and feel vulnerable doing so.

“Having to get up in front of people and say, ‘This, I believe,’ is a formative action,” Allen says. Students must decide what they are willing to claim publicly and stand by it.

For many students, the discipline of homiletics becomes a way of learning how to speak faithfully into complex worlds.

“Our calling is to proclaim love over hate and peace

over violence,” McKenzie says. “That’s a tough sell when all appearances seem to be to the contrary.”

Bim often tries to make that case in her writing for Baptist News Global, as well as her other role as justice and advocacy fellow at Royal Lane Baptist Church in Dallas. When she weaves Scripture and Christian ethics into analysis of immigration policy or political rhetoric, she draws on exegetical skills and storytelling practices honed in homiletics.

Bim also recalls McKenzie’s teaching on the “empathic imagination” – the discipline of entering another person’s experience before speaking. Speaking through a digital space, rather than a sanctuary, Bim considers how readers will receive her words, while offering a faithful Christian witness.

Whether preaching from the pulpit, or speaking to a secular group, or reaching readers through the written word, Bim says, “You have an audience, you have a message and you have a story to tell.”



THE REV. ALYCE MCKENZIE

Perkins achievements

Faculty and staff recognized for scholarship, service and leadership across Perkins and beyond

JAIME CLARK-SOLES

Professor of New Testament; Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor

GRANT

Louisville Institute Grant for Researchers

LAURA FIGURA

Program Specialist

AWARD

2026 Outstanding Staff Award, SMU

DALLAS J. GINGLES

Associate Professor of Practice in Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics

AWARD

Perkins Scholarly Outreach Award, SMU

GRANTS

Research Fellowship, Center of Theological Inquiry

Sam Taylor Fellowship, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

“Angels and Demons: The Morality of AI” — Houston Methodist Hospital; St. Paul’s UMC

“The Double Irony of Constitutional Order” — University of Cambridge
Invited panelist — ASSR/SWCRS Conference

JAMES K. LEE

Professor of the History of Early Christianity

AWARD

Perkins Scholarly Outreach Award, SMU

JACK LEVISON

W. J. A. Power Chair of Old Testament Interpretation and Biblical Hebrew; Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor

AWARD

Sam Taylor Fellowship Award, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester

GRANTS

Lilly Endowment Thriving Congregations Initiative Grant

Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship, LMU Munich

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Developing a Christian Mind: Seeking Wisdom — University of Oxford

Doctoral defense — Åbo Akademi University, Finland

ALYCE MCKENZIE

Le Van Professor of Preaching and Worship; Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor; Co-director, Perkins Center for Preaching Excellence

AWARD

Lifetime Achievement Award, Academy of Homiletics

EMILY NELMS CHASTAIN

Assistant Professor of Christian History and Methodist Studies

RECOGNITION

Elected to Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion

GRANT

Sam Taylor Fellowship

PRISCILLA POPE-LEVISON

Research Professor of Practical Theology

AWARD

Smith/Wynkoop Book Award, Wesleyan Theological Society

RECOGNITION

Book of the Month, American Society of Church History

GRANT

Lilly Endowment Thriving Congregations Initiative Grant

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Institute of Historical Research, London
University of Oxford

HAROLD J. RECINOS

Professor of Church and Society

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Bridging Visions: Prophetic Voices, Pastoral Hearts

Stained Glass Vespers, Dallas, Texas

MARCELL SILVA STEUERNAGEL

Associate Professor of Church Music; Director, Master of Sacred Music Program; Director, Doctor of Pastoral Music Program

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

“Worship and Technology” — Jakes Divinity School Fall Symposium

JEANNE STEVENSON-MOESSNER

Susanna Wesley Centennial Chair of Practical Theology; Professor of Pastoral Care and Pastoral Theology

AWARD

Sandy Tinkham Award for Outstanding Service

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Featured speaker, Clergy Covenant Day, Horizon Texas Conference

A lasting connection

Arriving at a new congregation, the Rev. Soniyah Blue-Key '13 always begins her first sermon with an apology.

"I apologize for all the clergy who had to choose between preaching the truth from the pulpit or putting their kids through college," she says. "I don't have kids."

"I'm prepared to lose my job for speaking the truth."

— THE REV. SONIYAH BLUE-KEY

That clarity – and courage – was shaped, in part, through her mentorship with Susanne Scholz, professor of Old Testament at Perkins.

Their connection began in a required course more than 15 years ago.

"In her class, you needed to bring your best," Blue-Key says. "You needed to be OK with being challenged and able to articulate your convictions in a way that was theologically sound." Blue-Key believes many of the world's problems are rooted in poor theological scholarship – the kind that once allowed the church to sanction slavery.

For Scholz, that kind of challenge is central to her work.



THE REV. SONIYAH BLUE-KEY '13



SUSANNE SCHOLZ

"Students come to seminary with unexamined faith assumptions," she says. "My task is to help them become conscious of those assumptions – where they come from and why they matter."

Over time, that process helped Blue-Key develop not only theological clarity, but confidence.

"When the stakes are high, I still hear her voice," Blue-Key says. "Don't shrink back. Speak your truth!" She had a confidence in me that I didn't yet have in myself."

That encouragement stayed with her as she completed her doctoral work, tackling questions of racism in progressive spaces, and now shapes her leadership as senior pastor of The Oasis United Church of Christ in Jefferson City, Missouri.

For Scholz, watching that growth has been part of the work – and the reward.

"I've always admired her clarity and her sense of justice," she says. "Over the years, she's gained the confidence and the language to bring those convictions into her preaching."

The connection did not end at graduation; Blue-Key continues to reach out to Scholz for guidance.

"She is still my go-to," Blue-Key says. "When I feel like I'm losing my way, she's the first person I call."

For both, mentorship is less about a single moment than an ongoing exchange – one that continues to shape how voice, conviction and calling take form over time.

Faculty milestones and updates

FREDERICK AQUINO '00

Edward and Emma Lehman Chair of Christian Doctrine

Aquino will be the fifth faculty member in the history of SMU to hold the chair. The chair has previously been held since 2011 by Professor Bruce Marshall, who is retiring this year.

REBEKAH MILES

Albert C. Outler Chair of Wesley Studies

Miles is the first woman to hold this chair and the fourth chairholder, following Dick Heitzenrater, the late Billy Abraham and Ted Campbell. A Wesleyan scholar, Miles has worked on issues spanning ethics, history, systematic theology and practical theology.

APRIL BRISTOW '98

Clinical Assistant Professor in the Intern Program

Bristow serves as clinical assistant professor and associate director of the intern program. A Perkins alum, she brings more than 25 years of ministry experience and a deep connection to students.

KATE HANCH

Director of the Baptist House of Studies

Hanch, a pastor, theologian and scholar, brings more than a decade of experience in congregational ministry and theological education. She teaches Baptist and free church theology at Perkins.

ASHLEY BOGGAN

Affiliate Assistant Research Professor of Methodist Studies

Boggan earned her Ph.D. in American religious history from Drew Theological School, with concentrations in Wesleyan/Methodist studies and women's and gender studies. She also serves as general secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church.

EMILY NELMS CHASTAIN

Assistant Professor of Christian History and Methodist Studies

Chastain joined Perkins in 2024 while completing her Ph.D. at Boston University in 2025. She is ordained as a deacon in The United Methodist Church and holds degrees from Claremont School of Theology and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

JEANNE STEVENSON-MOESSNER

Susanna Wesley Centennial Chair in Practical Theology

Stevenson-Moessner becomes the third scholar to hold the chair, following Evelyn Parker and Rebekah Miles. Her work explores trauma, grief, caregiving and resilience in ministry contexts. She has contributed extensively to the field through both teaching and scholarship, shaping generations of students and practitioners.

PAM WHITE '14, '21

Assistant Dean for Contextual Education; Clinical Assistant Professor in the Intern Program

White joined Perkins in 2025 as director of the intern program and now will be serving in two additional roles: assistant dean for contextual education and clinical assistant professor in the intern program.

New faces. Shared mission.

Introducing new staff joining Perkins this year

NEW STAFF



Kate Hanch
Director of the Baptist House of Studies



Josh Kuker
Financial Business Manager



Avery Pryer
Executive Assistant to the Dean



Josh Ulupano
*Digital Marketing Specialist
Office of Marketing and Communications*



Kaylee S. Vida '21
*Associate Director of Lifelong Learning
Office of External Programs*



Fahiyim Webber
*Communications Coordinator
Office of Marketing and Communications*

Honoring years of service

With the conclusion of the spring 2026 semester, we say goodbye to these treasured members of our community. Their passion, commitment and service have shaped our campus in meaningful ways. We send them off with gratitude and warm wishes for all that lies ahead.

108
COMBINED
YEARS *of*
excellent
service



Alyce McKenzie

*Le Van Professor of Preaching and Worship;
Director of PCPE at SIMU*



Christopher Anderson '91

Associate Professor of Sacred Music



John Martin

Director of Development



Pam Goolsby

Associate Director for Events and Facilities



Bruce Marshall

Lehman Professor of Christian Doctrine

Remembering friends of Perkins

We remember all members of the Perkins community who have passed since January 1, 2025, and pray for them as they rest eternally with the Lord.

The Rev. Ronald Dickson Ball '60

The Rev. Bill Eugene Beck '60, '87

The Rev. John Elwood Birkelbach '65

The Rev. Karen Bright '16

The Rt. Rev. Joe Goodwin Burnett '74, '85

The Rev. Clyde Wilson Chesnutt '57

The Rev. Don Michael Daves '63

The Rev. Michael Douglas Dent '79, '92

Sammie Ruth Ellis '76

The Rev. Phillip Douglas Erwin '57

The Rev. J. Travis Franklin '83

Gary Wayne Frederick '63

Roger E. Glover '76

The Rev. Elson Payne Hargrove, Jr. '61

The Rev. Thomas Sterling Holcomb '52

The Rev. Richard Leland Hume '76

The Rev. J. Timothy Jarrell '89

William Preston Langham '56

The Rev. Charles Ebb Munden, III '57

W. Gerald Neff '83, '93

The Rev. Michael Loy Nichols '73

Jon Howard Pierpont '76

The Rev. Harold Price '63

The Rev. Lawrence O. Robbins '79

The Rev. Gregory Alan Robertson '57

The Rev. Norman Davis Roe '64

The Rev. Robert Roy Ross, Jr. '60

The Rev. Kenneth Douglas Royar '63

The Rev. Roy Hugh Ryan '67

Wesley M. Stevens '55

The Rev. John Earl Taylor '60

Rayford Leon Wallace '78

The Rev. Mary Jill Wiley '90

The Rev. Roger Reaves Wood '69

For a comprehensive list of all Perkins alumni who have died during the past 12 months, please visit smu.edu/perkins/memoriams. Note: All information regarding deceased Perkins alumni is provided by SMU's official database.

PREPARING LEADERS FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Through degree programs, supervised ministry and lifelong learning, Perkins equips leaders to serve faithfully and lead with purpose.

A COMMUNITY CALLED TO LEAD

274

students preparing for ministry, leadership and service

56%



20+

denominations represented



51%

FEMALE



49%

MALE

42

average student age

A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Forming leaders shaped by a wide range of cultures, experiences and perspectives.

51% WHITE

24% BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN

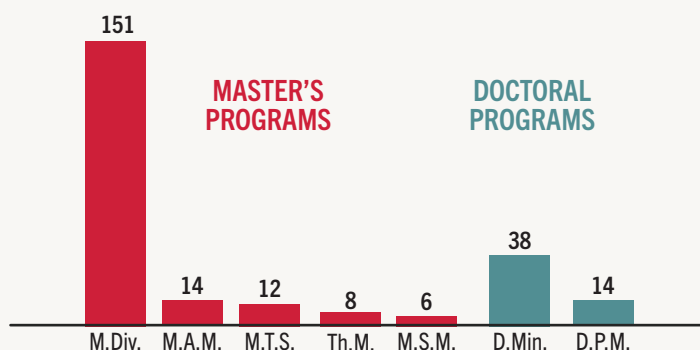
12% LATINO/A

6% INTERNATIONAL

4% TWO OR MORE RACES

3% ASIAN

ENROLLMENT BY DEGREE



*Nondegree/Audit: 6

†Ph.D. in religious studies: 25

WHERE WE LEARN

Located in Dallas, Texas, with courses taught in Houston and Galveston along with a fully hybrid-online degree program.

166

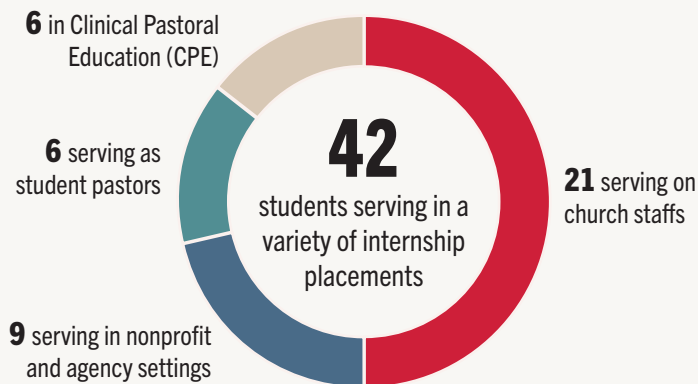
DALLAS-BASED
ENROLLMENT

108

HYBRID-ONLINE
ENROLLMENT

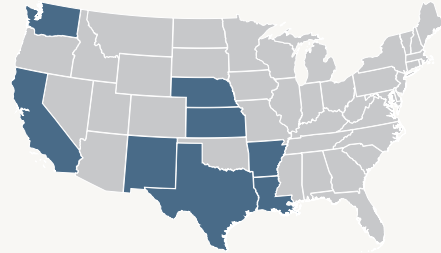
INTERNSHIPS: FORMATION IN ACTION

Hands-on experience shaping leaders in real ministry contexts.



WHERE WE SERVE

Students are serving in internships across Texas and in several other states, including Arkansas, California, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico and Washington.



LIFELONG LEARNING

AY 2025–2026

30+
STATES REACHED

Providing lifelong learning to:

- Clergy seeking continuing education
- Laypersons building skills, networking and community
- Members of the Perkins community

A COMMUNITY CALLED TO REAL GROWTH AND CHANGE

91% of participants said their experience contributed to their spiritual growth and development

85% said their experience strengthened and invigorated their ministry leadership

Based on participant evaluations across lifelong learning programs

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Prepare for these exciting Perkins continuing education opportunities.

2026

**JUNE
15**

Introduction to Spiritual Direction webinar

**JUNE
30**

Registration deadline: Certificate in Spiritual Direction 2026 Dallas Cohort

**SEPT
09**

“Preaching and Spirituality Webinar,” a CPX virtual workshop with Luke Powery

**SEPT
25–26**

Perkins Summit for Faith and Learning in Spring, Texas

**OCT
05**

“Preaching as Performance/Embodiment,” a CPX virtual workshop with Nancy Lammers Gross

**NOV
09**

Perkins 2026 Fall Convocation: “Engaging the Character of Conflict in Congregations,” with the SMU Dispute Resolution Program

**DEC
03**

Introduction to Spiritual Direction webinar

2027

**JAN
11–13**

Perkins School of Youth and Children’s Ministry

**JAN
19**

“Experiential Preaching,” a CPX virtual workshop with Wes Allen

**MARCH
19–20**

Perkins Summit for Faith and Learning in Collierville, Tennessee

DEGREE PROGRAMS WE OFFER

Your next step *starts here*

Whether preparing for congregational leadership, academic research, music ministry or nonprofit service, students at Perkins School of Theology at SMU find programs designed to meet vocation with purpose.



Our degree programs include:

MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 01 | Master of Divinity | (M.Div.) |
| 02 | Maestría en Divinidad | (M.Div. en Español) |
| 03 | Master of Arts in Ministry | (M.A.M.) |
| 04 | Master of Sacred Music | (M.S.M.) |
| 05 | Master of Theological Studies | (M.T.S.) |
| 06 | Master of Theology | (Th.M.) |

DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|----------|
| 01 | Doctor of Ministry | (D.Min.) |
| 02 | Doctor of Pastoral Music | (D.P.M.) |



Perkins School of Theology also offers hybrid-online degree programs that allow students to complete up to 80% of their coursework online.



CONTINUE THE CALLING



Your generosity equips
and supports the next
generation of leaders
formed at Perkins.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL

@PERKINSSMU

