



APCE AE Online 2025 Workshops

Workshop Schedule

Thursday, January 30

2:45p.m. – 4:15p.m. Workshop A

4:45pm – 6:15pm Workshop C

Friday, January 31

10:30a.m. – 12:00p.m. Workshop D

4:00p.m. – 5:30p.m. Workshop E

Workshop Selection Tips

Choose carefully! You will be able to attend only the workshops for which you are registered.

To continue through the registration process, you must select a workshop in each block. If you choose not to register for a workshop in a block, select "No Workshop."

Please note that Workshop B workshops are 3.0 hours long and overlap with Workshops A and C. There are no workshops in Workshop B that are included in AE Online.

Thursday, January 30 – Workshop A

2:45p.m. – 4:15p.m.

100. Jesus' "I AM" Statements in the Gospel of John

Jann Treadwell

Over three workshop blocks, this in-depth Bible study will dig below the surface of the seven I AM declarations in the Gospel of John. The sayings, such as “I AM the Bread of Life,” “I AM the Light of the World,” are remarkable, yet appear in no other gospel. Why? Who is the audience? What is the context? How does the author use familiar concepts and settings to hammer home the importance of Jesus and God being one? Over and over the writer of John uses these particular images to reveal the reality of God come to earth through Jesus. Bring your Bible and join us as we explore together these rich statements and more.

*This workshop is a three workshop block workshop. It is continued as workshop 300 in Workshop C and workshop 400 in Workshop D. You will register for all three sessions.

Jann Treadwell, retired Certified Christian Educator, APCE 2010 Educator of the Year, author of "Unbound: The Transformative Power of Youth Mission Trips," past service on Grace Presbytery Parish Life and Examinations Committees, past moderator of Awards and Scholarships Ministry Team, past service on GA's Educator Certification Council.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

101. How to Create a Multi-sensory Space on a Budget

Michelle Junkin and Heather Selement

Discover cost-effective ways to create inclusive church experiences that remove barriers while enhancing children’s engagement by incorporating ear defenders, weighted toys, sensory lights, tactile manipulatives, and beyond. This session will offer advice, go over best practices, show ways to adapt materials while showcasing DIY instructions and recipes so you can make resources to offer children an environment with sensory friendly activities that go beyond fidget spinners and coloring pages.

Michelle Junkin, MACE, M.Div, D.Min, is the Pastor of Spiritual Formation at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Michelle holds a Certificate in Non-Profit Management. She is a professional artist, and the focuses of her thesis was “A Fuller Palate of Praise: Exploring God’s Gift of the Creative Arts to Renew Engagement in Worship, Congregational life, and Mission.”

Heather Selement is Director of Children's Ministry at Westminster Presbyterian Church and oversees programing for Special Needs ministry including seasonal Sensory Friendly Worship services. Prior to WPC, Heather served as the Director of Family Ministry at the City Rescue Mission homeless shelter.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

102. Unboxing the Church: Becoming Courageous Congregations

Laurie Lyter Bright

1 John 3:18. *Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.*

We're interested in co-creating a more peaceful world, but how do we do that with only an hour together on Sundays? The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship can help!

This workshop engages congregations of the peace-curious, those already steeped in justice work, and those seeking a roadmap to move from book club to actionable change. Together, we'll reimagine mission alongside any congregation of any size and demographics as we seek to take seriously the call to follow Christ in the path of resisting violence.

This workshop offers an introduction to three core resources from the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship to equip congregations for the journey from theory to action. Resources include gun violence prevention ministry, engaging conscientious objection to violence for all ages, and moving from mission trips to accompaniment journeys, all as expressions of our faith. This workshop is interactive and invites participants to explore the opportunities and challenges in their particular community as we consider our collective calling to be peacemakers.

Rev. Laurie Lyter Bright, Ph.D., is the executive director of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. She's an author, preacher, and adjunct professor. She lives in Milwaukee with her husband and chaos muppet children, Tillie and Sonora.

Category: Mission and Social Justice/Outreach

Intended Participants: Other

103. Advanced Care Planning: Not For the Faint of Heart

Denise Shannon

Incorporating a spiritual perspective, the presentation will focus on advanced care planning in the context of a church ministry by emphasizing the role that faith communities can play in having meaningful conversations about end of life choices and navigating the spiritual dimensions of healthcare decisions. This session provides guidance on integrating advanced care planning discussions into pastoral care, and promoting compassionate communication within congregations. We will explore the intersection of spirituality and medical decision-making and will aim to equip church leaders and members with tools to initiate thoughtful conversations, fostering a supportive environment where individuals can align their values with their healthcare preferences.

Denise Shannon, MDIV is the Pastor at Weldon Valley Presbyterian Church, Weldon, CO. Denise is passionate about introducing people to Jesus and journeying with them along the spiritual journey using new and creative ideas. She has worked in End of Life care for over 30 years.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

104. Reclaiming Confirmation: Stirring the Souls of Youth

Kirsten Trachsel

Research shows that adolescents seek relevant learning, place less value in organizational membership, and often stop trying if understanding is not immediate. How might the confirmation process be reshaped to be experiential, relevant, relational, and inspire young people to claim their baptismal identity? What approach might lead teens who have experienced the trauma and disillusionment of a pandemic toward faith and understanding in the mystery of the divine? This presentation will explore these questions and propose a process and potential new structures through which faith communities may reclaim confirmation as a launchpad for a life of discipleship instead of an outcome-based program in the church.

Kirsten Trachsel works with children, youth, and adults at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Denton, Texas in both faith formation and music. She earned a Master of Arts in Christian Education from Union Presbyterian Seminary in 2024.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer

Thursday, January 30 – Workshop C
4:45p.m. – 6:15p.m.

300. Jesus' "I AM" Statements in the Gospel of John

Jann Treadwell

Over three workshop blocks, this in-depth Bible study will dig below the surface of the seven I AM declarations in the Gospel of John. The sayings, such as “I AM the Bread of Life,” “I AM the Light of the World,” are remarkable, yet appear in no other gospel. Why? Who is the audience? What is the context? How does the author use familiar concepts and settings to hammer home the importance of Jesus and God being one? Over and over the writer of John uses these particular images to reveal the reality of God come to earth through Jesus. Bring your Bible and join us as we explore together these rich statements and more. *This workshop is a continuation of workshop 100.

Jann Treadwell, retired Certified Christian Educator, APCE 2010 Educator of the Year, author of "Unbound: The Transformative Power of Youth Mission Trips," past service on Grace Presbytery Parish Life and Examinations Committees, past moderator of Awards and Scholarships Ministry Team, past service on GA's Educator Certification Council.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

301. Presbyterian Women/Horizons Bible Study: Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ **Rhashell Hunter**

Sometimes we take on more than we can accomplish. But, reconnecting to our spirituality is a path that offers us the ability to spring back into shape and to find our resilience. The 2025–2026 PW/Horizons Bible study author, Rhashell Hunter, will lead participants in learning about Biblical women and exploring Jesus' witness to faithfulness. You don't have to be a PW to benefit—everyone will enjoy rediscovering our joy and our identity in Christ.

Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter is author of the 2025-2026 PW/Horizons Bible Study and has written the worship materials for "Celebrate the Gifts of Women" for multiple years. She served as Director of Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries for 14 years and currently teaches the Presbyterian polity course at Louisville Seminary.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

302. All are Beloved, All Belong: Creating LGBTQIA+ affirming Ministries

Sarah Leer

Working and living in Beloved community requires engaging theological discussion, creativity, collaboration, and vulnerability. Church workers are often asked to lead ministries which deftly navigate the intersections of culture, politics, and faith formation. Dr. Sarah Leer (she/her), an educator, former youth worker, and practical theologian, will invite participants to engage in practical conversations of LGBTQIA+ affirmation and belonging through the lens of abundance. In this interactive workshop, we will wrestle with what it means for all to know they are Beloved. We will discuss power-sharing with youth and young adults, LGBTQIA+ affirming terminology, and resources to affirm and celebrate LGBTQIA+ people in our midst. Sarah will create a space for participants to learn together while also equipping them with resources to deepen and express belonging in their ministries.

Dr. Sarah Leer (she/her/hers) is a native Arkansan who has served PC(USA) churches in Austin, Dallas, and NW Arkansas. Sarah is a graduate of Wake Forest University, Columbia Theological Seminary, and the Clinton School of Public Service. She is a practical theologian and educator who is living into her call to seek liberation, justice, and belonging in solidarity with those living on the margins. Sarah enjoys singing Broadway songs in her car, random road trips, traveling, hanging out with her family, SEC college football, and youth conferences that include energizers.

Category: Mission and Social Justice/Outreach

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

303. Wonder of Worship: Listening to a Diversity of Voices about Intergenerational Worship

Kathy Dawson

Wonder of Worship has completed its first year of the five year, Lilly Endowment funded grant regarding nurturing children through worship and prayer. We've done a lot of listening this first year and are ready to share what we've learned from child research projects, sub-grants awarded to churches for their own projects, new ideas from Quicksheets and podcasts, and our first Godly Play training sessions. We look

forward to engaging workshop participants in these conversations and activities and learning from each other in the process, so that we may get closer to forming beloved community that includes all ages and abilities in corporate worship.

Kathy Dawson, Ph.D., teaches at Columbia Theological Seminary. She is ordained and certified as an educator in the PCUSA. Kathy directs the Wonder of Worship project, is friends with Gracie, the fish, and enjoys spending time with her dog, Hope.

Category: Worship and ARts

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Other

304. Children's Ministry that Forms Faith: Abandoning the Entertainment Model

Jill Benson and Lesli van Milligen

We all want church to be fun and enjoyable for children. But what happens when our goal in children's ministry is to entertain instead of to form faith? What effect do entertainment models and curricula have on children's long-term faith formation? In this workshop, we'll explore how to form faith in your children's ministry through the following:

- Engaging the history of children's ministry with particular attention to what Scottie May refers to as the, "Carnival Model," and exploring her suggested alternatives to this model.
- Exploring how theology matters when choosing children's ministry curriculum and how various curricula views children and their capacity for deep conversations about faith.
- Examining a variety of curricula, evaluating whether it emphasizes forming faith in children or represents more of an entertainment-based approach.
- Experiencing activities that encourage faith formation as we try out elements, such as wondering questions, that are included in faith-forming curricula.

Participants will be introduced to a variety of resources, including Sunday school and children's worship materials, that create space for children not just to learn about God, but to encounter God. It is our hope that participants will leave fully equipped to create children's ministry spaces that form lifelong faith in their children.

Jill Benson works for Thrive, an agency of the Christian Reformed Church, serving as a Resource Developer with a focus on curriculum. She is passionate about bringing the big story of the Bible to kids of all ages. In her current role, she creates and curates resources with a particular focus on the DWELL curriculum, equipping DWELL volunteers, parents, and coordinators as they enter God's Big Story each week. Jill enjoys in-depth study of God's Word and holds degrees in Biblical Languages and Old Testament from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Lesli is Director of Congregational Ministries-Canada and oversees Thrive Regional Connectors. She is ordained in the CRC and has co-pastored in both Canada and the US with her husband, Tom. Along with supporting local congregations in strengthening their cradle to grave faith formation practices, Lesli is passionate about building into the next generation of leaders through leadership workshops for youth, young adults, and church councils.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer

Friday, January 31 – Workshop D

10:30a.m. – 12:00p.m.

400. Jesus' "I AM" Statements in the Gospel of John

Jann Treadwell

Over three workshop blocks, this in-depth Bible study will dig below the surface of the seven I AM declarations in the Gospel of John. The sayings, such as “I AM the Bread of Life,” “I AM the Light of the World,” are remarkable, yet appear in no other gospel. Why? Who is the audience? What is the context? How does the author use familiar concepts and settings to hammer home the importance of Jesus and God being one? Over and over the writer of John uses these particular images to reveal the reality of God come to earth through Jesus. Bring your Bible and join us as we explore together these rich statements and more. This workshop is a continuation of workshops 100 and 300.

Jann Treadwell, retired Certified Christian Educator, APCE 2010 Educator of the Year, author of "Unbound: The Transformative Power of Youth Mission Trips," past service on Grace Presbytery Parish Life and Examinations Committees, past moderator of Awards and Scholarships Ministry Team, past service on GA's Educator Certification Council.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

401. New Members...An Intergenerational Approach

JoAnne Sharp

When a new family comes into our faith community, we typically invite the adults (parents) to a New Members class. There they learn all about our faith community and being Presbyterian. Yet, when youth and children come into faith communities, we send them off to Sunday school, Youth group, or Mid-week programming without an opportunity to learn. The assumption is that they will get it in Confirmation! This workshop will give you some ideas on how to have an intergenerational gathering to welcome the whole family into the faith community!

JoAnne Sharp is a Certified Christian Educator serving Hodges Presbyterian, Jacksonville, FL. They have a passion for educational ministry, especially bringing all the ages together. They will gladly share pictures of their grandchildren or their kitty, Casper.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

402. Reading the Bible Queerly: Beyond the Basics!

Jimmy Hoke

This workshop will help participants dig deeper into trans and queer approaches to the Bible in ways that can help them transform their teaching, preaching, and personal interpretation/devotional practices. The workshop goes "beyond the basics" by skipping over the traditional "clobber passages" and questions of "what the Bible says about LGBTQ people." Instead, it will use unexpected passages to help participants understand how trans and queer approaches can inform how they read and teach any story or text from the Bible. These approaches are heavily informed by current, cutting-edge work being done in trans and queer Biblical Studies, including but not limited to the workshop leader's work on queer approaches to Paul's letters and the New Testament. The workshop will be highly interactive in order to show participants how they might incorporate these methods into their work with adults, youth, or children. Instead of telling them what a queer or trans approach to a text is, the leader will challenge participants to learn and embody these approaches using guided examples and collaborative learning techniques. Participants will leave feeling empowered to dig deeper into the Bible using these approaches and skills--and with resources that help them adapt and apply these reading techniques to their many different contexts for faith formation.

Although this workshop is pitched as "beyond the basics"--in order to be a resource to LGBTQ leaders and allies who have already done the equivalent of "Inclusion 101"-type workshops--the workshop welcomes folks with all levels of experience--with the note that we will not be going over basic concepts of gender, sexuality, or usage of pronouns.

Dr. Jimmy Hoke teaches, writes, researches, and brings to life the queer folks in and around the Bible--for audiences as young as age 4 as well as seminary and adult learners. They are the Director of Children and Family Ministry at the House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, MN, Affiliated Faculty in New Testament at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, the author of Feminism, Queerness, Affect, and Romans: Under God?, and the creator of "Queering the Lectionary."

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship, Mission and Social Justice/Outreach

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

403. Pop Culture Faith: Teaching the Gospel through TV and Film

Cassie Waits

Pop culture influences the clothes we wear, the music we listen to, the attitudes we hold, and even the language we use. In fact, the average American spends two hours per day consuming digital media! Yet church educators are often unsure how to leverage television and film in their adult faith formation groups. Through this workshop, we will examine three real-life groups who have successfully used shows like "Ted Lasso," "The Good Place," and "Good Omens" as a catalyst for faith formation. Participants will then consider their own context: what shows would speak to their congregation, what setup would be most appropriate, and what buy-in would be needed. Finally, participants will learn how to design and execute an 8-session adult small group study that explores faith through the lens of popular television or film.

Rev. Cassie Waits is the Associate Pastor of Discipleship at First Presbyterian Church in Marietta, GA and treasurer for APCE's SOAP region. When not at the church, she can be found paddleboarding at the lake, catching up on Doctor Who, or hanging out with her family.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer

404. Lament WITH Children and Youth: Practices, Rhythms, Rituals that Empower Faith Communities to Address Loss and Injustice

Valerie Grissom

My story: In 2021, I lost both of my parents suddenly to Covid within 10 days. As a worship leader, I was immediately struck with how little room our faith communities provided for grief, let alone a framework or language for offering Christian lament. Interestingly, my children became my worship leaders, teaching me the rhythms and practices of daily lament, as we grieved together.

Proposed Workshop Content: Like adults, children and youth experience loss, trauma, transition. They encounter deep disappointments and grief, sometimes even the loss of a family member, or friend, or a special pet. Like us, younger generations often learn to inhabit the liminal spaces of waiting, disappointment, illness, moving, divorce, and so much more. We live in a world full of bullying, violence, racial injustice, poverty, and discrimination. But do we, as God's children, no matter our age, know that we can approach God honestly with our pain and confusion? Do we realize that God invites us to practice daily rhythms and rituals that allow us to lament with one another, no matter what age, in community?

In this workshop, we will discuss the following:

- a brief theology of lament as a spiritual practice for worship and daily life that enables us to approach God and community with honesty, vulnerability, and authenticity
- an exploration of how we might make room for lament in our faith communities and at home
- new language to aid us in practicing lament with children and youth together utilizing the Psalms of lament and biblical examples (Job, David, Hannah, Jesus)
- practical resources drawing from culturally diverse faith communities and experts (over 22 interviews I conducted in 2023) in this field to facilitate and create practices of lament through rhythms and rituals.

Valerie M. Grissom, MDiv, DWS, has been a Worship Pastor for over 20 years and is certified for ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament (PC-USA), near Seattle, Washington. She serves as Chair of the InterGenerate Team and recently edited the book All Ages Becoming: Intergenerational Practice in the Formation of God's People.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization, Other

Friday, January 31 – Workshop E

4:00p.m. – 5:30p.m.

501. The Sunday School Struggle: What's Flourishing, What's Fading, and What's in the Future?

Lisa Witherspoon

For many congregations, the “traditional” Sunday school of our childhoods is a thing of the past. Today, churches are doing Sunday School in a myriad of different ways and the choices can be overwhelming! In this workshop, we'll look at current Sunday school trends for children and youth, rundown a list of popular models and curriculum options, and discuss some things to consider when choosing what will work best in your context. (*This workshop is not a sponsorship for any particular curriculum or publisher.)

Lisa Witherspoon is the Director of Children & Youth Ministry at First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, NC. She has a background in child development and 20+ years of experience in education and Christian formation. She is a curriculum nerd and is passionate about welcoming children of all ages and abilities into faith formation.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

502. Nurturing the Mental Health of Youth

Liz Corsig and Michelle Thomas-Bush

The adolescent mental health crisis has been at the forefront of national conversation, yet it continues to plague our local communities and congregations. The church has a unique opportunity to address the adolescent mental health crisis by allowing and equipping youth to rest in their identity as beloved children of God. Yet, how can the church resist the temptation to perpetuate the toxic cycle of achievement that runs rampant in our culture? How do we as pastors and educators cultivate hope in our young people as they navigate the world? How can we equip young people with Christian practices that will ground them during life's chaotic moments? Join us as we build our mental health toolbox, exploring techniques and practices that we can bring home and share with anyone in the church who is passionate about the lifelong faith formation and flourishing of young people.

Michelle is the Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families at Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. She loves her job! It is a great joy for her to walk alongside young people on their faith journey. She is a mom of two teenagers, and is immersed in youth culture! She loves games, cooking, bike riding and her lab, Lola.

Category: Faith Formation/Discipleship

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

503. A.I, Faith, & You: Understanding and Using A.I. as a Tool in Ministry

Andy Morgan

This workshop is designed to explore this and other important questions by demystifying A.I., exploring both its practical uses and the ethical considerations it brings to our faith communities. You'll learn about generative A.I. programs like ChatGPT, understand their capabilities, and discuss how these technologies can be harnessed to enhance your ministry. In the first part of the class, we'll break down how generative A.I. works, what it can do, and its potential applications in your daily ministry tasks. The second half will focus on our collective response as faith leaders—how can we ethically and effectively integrate A.I. into our work while staying true to our values as faith leaders?

This workshop will be a blend of lecture, lively conversation, and hands-on praxis, allowing you to experiment with generative A.I. tools and reflect on their role in your ministry. Whether you're tech-savvy or just curious, this session will provide valuable insights and practical skills to help you navigate the digital landscape with confidence and faith. Come ready to explore, discuss, and discover how generative A.I. may become a meaningful part of your ministry toolkit.

Rev. Dr. Andy P. Morgan is the Director of Family Formation at First Presbyterian Church, Knoxville. Andy has served as a UKirk pastor, Senior Pastor, and now is living into God's call for his life through the field of Christian Education.

Category: Leadership

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

504. What's Stirring in the Soul of APCE?

Anne Wilson and Von Clemans

Interact with members of APCE's Strategic Planning Task Force and Implementation Team who have created new strategies and a new structure with the goal of ensuring that APCE remains vibrant, relevant and useful into the future. Discover how this new plan will provide support for you in your role as a leader in faith formation. Be inspired to become involved in one of the new Mission Teams. May your soul be stirred by what lies ahead!

Anne is a seasoned educator who has served 3 different churches in Houston, TX. She is a past president of APCE, Life Achievement Award recipient, and current co-chair of APCE's strategic planning task force

Category: Leadership

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization

505. Family Worship: A Recipe for Sunday Morning

David Carter-Florence and Brittany Williams

Is your Sunday School hour for children and families thriving or dying? How involved and enthusiastic are your children and families about your regular worship services? During COVID, we took the opportunity for change to begin a new program that would reach more children and families who wanted to be together on Sunday mornings. Family Worship is first and foremost child and parent friendly. That means the worship content is developmentally appropriate for all ages, specifically

focusing on younger children. This is a service where all are welcome and children feel free to move about and parents do not feel judged. Children and parents engage in the liturgy through singing, prayers, retelling scripture, storytelling, sacraments, sensory activities, and a fellowship time with a snack. The worship moves through fun-loving and relaxed tones to thoughtful and deep moments. Come and experience a Family Worship service and learn how to incorporate into your own faith formation and worship contexts.

David Carter Florence, Associate Pastor of Congregational Faith Formation at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, Black Mountain, NC. David has worn many hats in ministry and education with a focus on spiritual formation in schools, camps and churches, especially in academic, wilderness and farming settings.

Brittany Williams is the Director of Congregational Life and Children's Ministry at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, Black Mountain, NC. She is a native of Black Mountain and has a background in recreation and community building. She enjoys using her gifts to share the love of God with all ages.

Category: worship and Arts

Intended Participants: Educator, Pastor, Volunteer, Staff of church or organization