

## **Rev. Leah Gunning Francis, Ph.D.**

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty  
Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN  
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### **EDUCATION**

**Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary**, Evanston, IL

Doctor of Philosophy in Christian Education and Congregational Studies, May 2009

Dissertation: *Beyond Band-Aids and Bootstraps: Toward a Womanist Vision of Christian Education as Social Transformation*

**Candler School of Theology, Emory University**, Atlanta, GA

Master of Divinity, 2001

Concentration in Christian Education and Pastoral Care

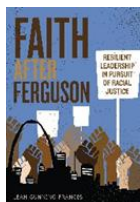
Recipient of the G. Ray Jordan Award in recognition of ministerial promise as demonstrated through excellence in integrating academic study with constructive leadership and service.

**Hampton University**, Hampton, VA

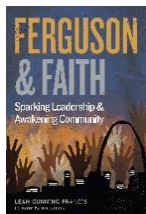
Bachelor of Science in Marketing, 1993

Marketing intern (Summer 1990-93), Sun Company, through the INROADS internship and professional development program.

### **PUBLICATIONS**



*Faith After Ferguson: Resilient Leadership in Pursuit of Racial Justice*  
(Chalice Press, 2021).



*Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community*  
(Chalice Press, 2015).

"Street Protest and Self-Esteem" in Susanna Snyder and Ellen Ott Marshall (eds.), *Parenting for a Better World* (Chalice Press, 2022).

"Beyond Band-Aids and Bootstraps: Transformative Mentoring as Redemptive Community" in Denise Janssen (ed.), *Educating for Redemptive Community* (Wipf & Stock, October 2015).

Bible Commentary on John 8:12 and 8:21 in Cynthia A. Jarvis and E. Elizabeth Johnson (eds.), *Feasting on the Gospels* Vol.1 (Westminster John Knox Press, March 2015).

## **EMPLOYMENT**

**Christian Theological Seminary**, Indianapolis, IN, 2016-  
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty and  
Associate Professor of Christian Education and Practical Theology

Select Accomplishments: Successfully navigated two presidential transitions during 2016-2019 while completing and living into the sale of CTS campus to Butler University; led three successful faculty searches, the ATS/HLC accreditation review process, comprehensive distance education application with NC-SARA and reconfiguration of M.Div. degree program; launched the world's first PhD program in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric; co-led the strategic planning and visioning process; implemented implicit bias training for faculty and entering students; transitioned all classes and academic affairs operations to online formats without disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic; developed and led the two semester Re/Formation 500/50 Travel Seminar to Germany, Rome and southern US states in honor of the 500 years of Reformation and in remembrance of the 50<sup>th</sup> year since Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's assassination in 2017-18.

*St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City*



*Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial, Ruleville, MS*



**Eden Theological Seminary**, St. Louis, MO

Associate Dean for Contextual Education, 2014- 2016

Assistant Professor of Christian Education, 2008-2014

Courses: Theology and the Practices of Ministry (required), A Call to Oneness: A Practical Theology of Reconciliation, Teens and Tweens: Ministry with Youth in Church and Community, Sister Outsider?: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Issues for Women in Ministry, Fanning the Flame: Children, Youth and the Faith that Fuels Their Lives, Educating for Justice and Peace and Congregational Leadership

**Methodist Theological School in Ohio**, Delaware, OH

Instructor of Practical Theology and Youth Ministry (2005-06), Adjunct Professor 2007

Courses: Intergenerational Ministries, Theology and Practices of Ministry, Christian Education in the Urban Church and Adolescent World

**Candler School of Theology**, Emory University, Atlanta, GA  
Youth Theological Initiative, Summer Instructor (2002)  
Course: The Whole People of God: Caring for Mind, Body and Spirit as Practical Theology

### **ECCLESIAL EXPERIENCE**

**Brice United Methodist Church**, Brice, OH

Pastor of Adult Discipleship, 2004-2008

Assisted the Senior Pastor in providing pastoral leadership for our congregation to include, but not limited to, preaching, education, outreach, pastoral care and hospitality.

**Sherman United Methodist Church**, Evanston, IL

Associate Pastor, 2002-2004

Provided pastoral leadership for the congregation through preaching, teaching, worship design, counseling and leadership training.

**St. Timothy United Methodist Church**, Stone Mountain, GA

Director of Christian Education, 2000-2001

Provided pastoral leadership for the church's educational ministry through the development and implementation of holistic programs that sought to meet the spiritual, intellectual and physical needs of this multicultural congregation and community.

**Ousley United Methodist Church**, Lithonia, GA

Student Minister, 1999-2000

Assisted the pastor with the congregational transition through worship leadership, counseling, preaching and teaching.

### **CORPORATE EXPERIENCE**

**General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church**, Atlanta, GA

Training Coordinator and Facilitator, 1999

Staff Coordinator, spiritual director and facilitator for preparing US 2's,

Mission Interns, Summer Interns and World Missionaries for leadership and service in domestic and international mission fields. Developed and implemented leadership training sessions, organized spiritual retreats, and counseled missionaries.

**Aetna US Healthcare**, Blue Bell, PA

Senior Account Executive, 1997-1998

Maintained existing and recruited new corporate health insurance accounts for the retiree health benefits division. Collaborated with active employee account executives to develop marketing strategies for our clients. Delivered formal presentations to corporate executives and retired employees. Corporate clients ranged from 20-4,000 retirees.

Marketing Representative, 1994-1996

Corporate liaison to government and community initiatives for the promotion of the statewide Children's Health Insurance Program. Developed and executed promotional strategies. delivered formal presentations to community and organizational leaders.

### **SELECTED ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS AND PANEL PARTICIPATION**

*Religion and Politics of the Vote* – Panel presenter (virtual), IUPUI, February 17, 2022

*Inclusion and Psychological Safety in the Workplace: A Global Perspective* – Panel presenter, September 9, 2021

*Religion and Race* – Panel presenter (virtual), Carnegie Mellon University, July, 14, 2021

*Faith After Ferguson and the Pursuit of Racial Justice*- multi-day Keynote address, University of Indianapolis, July 7-9, 2021

*Go and Grow!* - Baccalaureate speaker and recipient of Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree at Franklin College, Franklin, IN, May 21, 2021

*African American Legacy Lecture* – Panel (virtual), Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester, NY, April 8, 2021.

*Where Do We Go From Here?* – Keynote address (virtual), California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ) 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Interfaith Intercultural Breakfast, February 11, 2021

*Scholar, Teacher and Administrator: The Case of the Religious Educator as Dean*- Panel, The American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, November 24, 2019.

*Faith Following Ferguson: Five Years Later*- Keynote address for the Stoutemire Lecture, Western Seminary, Holland, MI, September 30, 2019.

*Accidental Activism* – Plenary speaker for the Metropolitan Community Churches General Assembly, Orlando, FL, July 4, 2019

*She Leads: New Practices for Changing Times* – Plenary speaker for the ATS Women in Leadership Consultation, Newport Beach, CA, April 9, 2019

*Teaching and Leading in Turbulent Times* – Keynote for Faculty Retreat, Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, GA, August 27, 2018

*Race, Policing and the Meta-Narrative about Young Black Men*- Keynote address for the Indiana State Bar Conclave, Indianapolis, IN, July 27, 2018

*Ferguson and Faith* – Keynote address for the Metro-Urban Institute at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA, May 11, 2018

*Faith Based Activism and the Civil Rights Movement* – Snidow Lecturer, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, VA, October 1, 2017

*Hearing on Racism and Xenophobia* – Panel Participant, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, September 25, 2017

*Ferguson and Faith* –Keynote speaker for the Hancock Symposium, Westminster College, Fulton, MO, September 21, 2017

*What about the Children?* – Plenary speaker for Children Defense Fund's S.D. Proctor Institute, Clinton, TN, July 17-21, 2017

*Ferguson at the Intersection of Faith and Justice*- Keynote speaker for the Search for Meaning Book Festival, Seattle University, Seattle, Washington, February 24, 2017

*Faithful Discipleship, Ferguson and the Faith that Fuels Us* – Keynote speaker for the Turner Lecture Series, Northwest Regional Christian Church (DOC), Yakima, Washington, October 2-5, 2016

*Race and Ethnicity: Theological Education after Ferguson*- Panel Participant, ATS Biennial Meeting, St. Louis, MO, June 29, 2016

*Ferguson, Faith and the Vocational Quest* – Guest Lecturer, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV, September 30, 2015

*Ferguson at the Intersection of Faith and Justice* – Public Theology Lecture Series, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL, September 23, 2015

*Leadership Lessons from Ferguson and Faith* – Guest Lecturer, Lafayette University, Easton, PA, September 9, 2015

*Remember to ACT* – Commencement Speaker and recipient of Honorary Doctorate Degree, Fontbonne University, St. Louis, MO, May 16, 2015.

*Ferguson and Faith: Academic reflections* – Guest Lecturer, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, February 18, 2015

*Not Looking Away: Ferguson and the Faith Community* – Presenter, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA, January 17, 2015

*Narrative and the Quest for Justice in Ferguson and beyond* – Paper Presentation, American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA, November 24, 2015

*Young Black Men and the Hope for Survival in the Age of Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin and Jarvis Jones* – Guest Lecturer, Doane College, Lincoln, NE, October 20, 2014

*The Power of Story: (En)Countering Narrative and Risk in the Age of Trayvon Martin* - Spring Convocation Brugemann and Kulenkamp Lecturer, Eden Seminary, April 23, 2014

*These A\*\*holes, They Always Get Away: Young Black Men and the Hope for Survival in the Age of Trayvon Martin* – Association of Practical Theology at Vanderbilt University, Nashville TN, March 29, 2014

*Foundations for Ethical Leadership* – Guest Lecturer for the John B. Ervin Scholars Program at Washington University, St. Louis, MO, January 14, 2012

*Roots, Shoots and Fruits: Issues in Faith Formation* – Guest lecturer for the Southern Illinois Conference's annual Christian Education Training, Columbia, IL, March 12, 2011.

*Christian Education and the Contemporary Black Church* – Three-day guest lecturer for the Missouri Annual Conference Meeting of the AME Church, St. Louis, MO, October 27-29, 2010.

*A Call to Oneness: Reflections on a Practical-Theological Approach to 'Bridging' the Academy and Faith Communities* – Paper presentation, Association of Practical Theology Biennial Meeting, Boston, MA, April 10, 2010.

*If it Wasn't for the Women: St. Louis Women and the Civil Rights Movement* – Keynote Address, St. Louis Art Museum's MLK Commemorative Service, January 15, 2010

*Beloved Disciples Building Beloved Community: Christian Education as Formation and Transformation* – Guest lecturer, Beloved Community Conference, St. Louis, MO, November 6, 2009.

*Ease on Down the Road: Transformation at the Intersection* – Guest Lecturer for the Association of Clinical Pastoral Educators' annual meeting, St. Louis, MO, July 9, 2009.

*Telling the Story: Narrative and Faith Formation* – Guest Lecturer, Wisconsin Conference (UCC) Christian Education training event, Fort Atkinson, WI, March 21, 2009

## **SELECTED CHURCH AND COMMUNITY EVENTS/WORKSHOPS**

Friendship West Baptist Church, Dallas, TX – Interview with Dr. Freddy Haynes, *Faith After Ferguson*, March 2, 2022

*Faith After Ferguson* virtual book panel discussions, January 31 and February 24, 2022

Spirit and Place Festival Interview with Robert P. Jones, Indianapolis, November 14, 2021

Robin Run Retirement Village, Indianapolis, *Faith After Ferguson*, November 2, 2021

Faith and Action Interview with Bryan Stevenson, Equal Justice Initiative, October 5, 2021

First United Methodist Church, Bloomington, Black History speaker, February 2, 2021

Lafayette, IN, Pastors' Alliance MLK virtual event, panel participant, January 17, 2021

MLK virtual event, panel participant, Nashville, TN, January 14, 2021

Interview of Beto O'Rourke and Michael Waters for book launch, virtual, January 12, 2021

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Moderator, health panel discussion, October, 17, 2020

Faith and Action interview of journalist Soledad O'Brien (virtual), September 30, 2020

Festival of Faiths, interviewee (virtual) Indianapolis, September 13, 2020

Procession for Racial Justice protest in response to G. Floyd, Indianapolis, May 31, 2020

Steward Speaker Series interview of Ambassador Susan Rice, Indianapolis, March 2, 2020

Black History Month interview of Dr. Marvin McMickle at CTS - February 24, 2020

Invocation - Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett's State of the City Address - May 29, 2019

Fairview Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, IN – *Ferguson and Faith*, April, 2018

Shalom Baptist Church, Retreat Center in Carlinville, IL – Retreat Leader, October 20, 2017

Robin Run Retirement Village, Indianapolis, IN – *Ferguson and Faith*, May 21, 2017

Christ the Savior Lutheran, Fishers, IN – Gun violence panel participant, January 15, 2017

UMC of Greater New Jersey Commission on Religion and Race – Keynote address at Drew Theological Seminary, December 2, 2016

Eastern Star Church, Indianapolis, IN – Ministers Training keynote, November 19, 2016

Faith 265 Conference, Webster Groves Presbyterian – *Ferguson and Faith* Workshop, St. Louis, MO, October 10, 2015

Bethany Fellows– *Ferguson and Faith* Workshops, St. Louis, MO, September 10 and 29, 2015

St. Lucas UCC, St. Louis, MO – *Ferguson and Faith* Workshop, September 27, 2015

UM Clergy Training (COMPASS) – *Ferguson and Faith*, Columbia, MO August 3, 2015

General Assembly (DOC) – *Ferguson and Faith* Workshop, Columbus, OH, July 19, 2015

Wild Goose Conference – Ferguson Panelist, Hot Springs, NC, July 11, 2015

General Synod (UCC) – *Ferguson and Faith* Workshop, Cleveland, OH, June 27, 2015

Missouri Annual Conference (UCC) – *Ferguson and Faith*, Columbia, MO, June 5, 2015

National Benevolent Association (DOC) – Keynote Address, St. Louis, MO, June 4, 2015

Bethel Lutheran Church, Clayton, MO – Adult Sunday School on Ferguson, April 26, 2015

Black Methodists for Church Renewal (UMC), Prayer breakfast speaker, St. Louis, MO, March 21, 2015

The Christian Church (DOC), Regional Assembly – Keynote address, October 12, 2014

Christ Church Episcopal, St. Louis, MO – Lecture on the Toy Gun Buy Back Initiative, May 18, 2014

Christ Lutheran Church, Webster Groves, MO - Guest Sunday School lecturer on Children and Christian Education, October 21, 2012

Antioch Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – Christian Education Workshop, July 9, 2011  
First Congregational UCC, Webster Groves, MO- Adult Sunday School Class on Faith and Politics, April 10, 2011  
First Presbyterian Church, Kirkwood, MO- Adult Sunday School Class on Youth and Spirituality, March 13, 2011  
St. Paul UCC, Evansville, IN – Christian Education Workshop, October, 30, 2010  
Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, Webster Groves, MO – Adult Sunday School Class on Youth Spirituality (3 weeks), September 2010  
Central Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – Panelist and Guest Speaker for Women’s Retreat, July 9-10, 2010  
Shalom Church City of Peace, Florissant, MO – Christian Education Workshop for Leadership Training Day, March 20, 2010

### **SELECTED GUEST PREACHING**

Covenant Community Church, Indianapolis, IN – February 6, 2022  
Fairfield Friends Meeting (virtual), Camby, IN – November 21, 2021  
Shiloh Baptist Church, Trenton, NJ – October 24, 2021  
Downey Avenue Christian Church (DOC), Indianapolis, IN – April 25, 2021  
Fairfield Friends Meeting (virtual), Camby, IN – April 11, 2021  
North United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, IN – November 8, 2020  
Eastern Star Church, Indianapolis, IN – October 28, 2020  
Christ the King Episcopal Church (virtual), Willingboro, NJ – August 23, 2020  
Common Ground Church, Indianapolis, IN (1<sup>st</sup> virtual in COVID-19) –March 22, 2020  
Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN – February 2, 2020  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, IN – January 26, 2020  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis, IN – November 17, 2019  
New Zion Community Church, Indianapolis, IN – May 19, 2019  
Eastern Star Church, Indianapolis, IN – March 31, 2019  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, IN – March 17, 2019  
Light of the World Christian Church (DOC), Indianapolis, IN – September 9, 2018  
New Era Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN- August 5, 2018  
Witherspoon Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, IN – February 25, 2018  
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN – November 19, 2017  
First Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN – November 12, 2017  
All Souls Unitarian Church, Indianapolis, IN – October 22, 2017  
Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN – August 20, 2017  
Progressive Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN – January 15, 2017  
First Baptist Church North, Indianapolis, IN – November 20, 2016  
Eden Theological Seminary- September 23, 2015  
Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO – July 26, 2015  
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – February 8, 2015  
Union Ave. Christian Church (DOC) – January 18, 2015



Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO – September 14, 2014  
First Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO – January 19, 2014  
Christ UCC, Belleville, IL- Community Thanksgiving Service, November 18, 2012  
Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, MO – Chapel – October 13, 2011  
New Northside Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – July 17, 2011  
Antioch Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – July 10, 2011  
Washington Tabernacle Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – May 8, 2011  
Pilgrim UCC, St. Louis, MO – Joint MLK Service – January 16, 2011  
Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – November 21, 2010  
Washington Tabernacle Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – August 15, 2010  
Sherman United Methodist Church, Evanston, IL – May 23, 2010  
New Sunny Mount Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO – April 18, 2010  
Cote Brilliance Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO – March 21, 2010  
Unity United Methodist Church, Webster Groves, MO – December 27, 2009  
Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, MO – Chapel – September 28, 2009  
Centennial Christian Church (DOC), St. Louis, MO – August 2, 2009  
First United Methodist Church, Webster Groves, MO – Good Friday – April 10, 2009  
St. John’s UCC, St. Louis, MO – February 8, 2009  
Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, Willingboro, NJ - September 14, 2008

### **DISTINGUISHED HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity, Franklin College, 2021  
Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, Fontbonne University, 2015  
Summer Fellowship for Pre-Tenure Workshop for Faculty, Wabash Center, 2013  
Engaged Scholars Fellow, Congregational Studies Fellowship at Hartford Seminary, 2012  
Pre-Tenure Workshop for Theological School Faculty, Wabash Center, 2012-2013  
The Fund for Theological Education, Doctoral Scholar, 2001-2004  
Women of Color Scholar, United Methodist Church, 2001-2004  
American Bible Society Christian Education Award, 2001  
Georgia House of Representatives, Guest Chaplain, 2001  
Middle East Travel Seminar, Participant, 2000  
United Methodist Seminary Award, 2000  
United Methodist Crusade Scholar Award, 1999  
United Methodist Foundation Scholar Award, 1998

### **ACADEMIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Association for Theological Schools Evaluation Visitor, March 2022  
Association for Theological Schools Evaluation Visitor, October 2021  
Board Member, Peace Learning Center, Indianapolis, 2021-  
Classroom volunteer, Circle City School, Indianapolis, 2021-  
Founding Mentor, Young Women of Integrity, Howe High School, Indianapolis, 2018-2020  
Volunteer, Dayspring Family Shelter, Indianapolis, 2017-  
Board of Directors, Chair of Academic Disciplines for Religious Education Association, 2012  
Editorial Board, Journal of Childhood and Religion, 2010

Workshop Assessor, Fund for Theological Education, 2010  
Doctor of Ministry Committee, Eden Seminary, 2013  
Masters Committee, Eden Seminary, 2012  
Chair, Continuing Education Committee, Eden Seminary, 2009  
Co-Chair, Diversity Task Force, 2009  
Admissions Committee, Eden Seminary, 2008

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS**

Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education  
The American Academy of Religion  
The Association of Practical Theology  
National Baptist Convention, Ordained clergy