



# SMU | PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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## **Brian McLaren, Sandra Van Opstal to Lead Fall Convocation on Worship, Justice**

**DALLAS (SMU)** — “JustWorship,” the 2018 Fall Convocation at Perkins School of Theology set for Nov. 12-13, will explore worship through the lenses of social justice and reconciliation with internationally acclaimed author, theologian and pastor [Brian McLaren](#) and Chicago-based preacher, liturgist and activist [Sandra Maria Van Opstal](#).

The annual continuing education event, designed for clergy, laity, students and others with an interest in religious issues in contemporary life, includes lectures, workshops and symposiums as well as worship services and social gatherings. [View complete schedule here.](#)

McLaren, the author of more than a dozen books, embraces what he calls “a new kind of Christianity” – just, generous, inclusive of people of all faiths who seek a common good. His newest work is *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World’s Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian*.

Van Opstal, pastor of the Grace and Peace Community on Chicago’s west side, has been a featured speaker and leader throughout the U.S. and worldwide on topics including worship and formation, justice, racial identity and reconciliation and global mission. Her focus is “re-imagining the intersection of worship and justice” and she is the author of *God’s Graffiti Devotional, Still Evangelical, The Mission of Worship and The Next Worship*.

A highlight of the Fall Convocation is the evening plenary—free and open to the public—with McLaren and Van Opstal on the theme “How Can Worship Save or Destroy the Planet?” The plenary will be held in Wesley Hall at Highland Park United Methodist Church, located at 3300 Mockingbird Lane, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. A book signing will follow in the Wesley Hall Lobby from 9 to 9:30 p.m.

Limited seating for this free, public session is first-come, first-served. [Register here for the free event.](#)

In addition, McLaren and Van Opstal will each lead plenary sessions for registered participants. McLaren's topics are "Strengthening Liturgical Alignment" and "Worship as Movement-Building." Van Opstal's is "Embodying and Mobilizing for Justice in Worship."

Van Opstal will preach at the opening worship service on Nov. 12, McLaren at the closing worship service on Nov. 13.

The Fall Convocation also includes workshops exploring the "JustWorship" theme. Each workshop can accommodate a maximum of 40 registered participants who will choose two to attend—one in the morning and the second in the afternoon—from the following:

- **"Seven Conversations About the Arts That Will Revitalize Your Faith Community"**  
Leader: Robin Harris, president of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists and director of the Center for Excellence in World Arts at Dallas International University.
- **"Your Liturgy Checkup (In the Spirit of Justice, Joy and Peace)"** Leader: Brian McLaren
- **"When Polite is Simply the First Step"** Leaders: Oak Worship Strategies
- **"An Invitation to Observe (a Creative) Lent: How to Inspire Your Community to Do Something Besides Give Up Facebook and Dr. Pepper"** Leader: Rebecca Garrett Pace (M.S.M. '13), director of worship at White Rock United Methodist Church in East Dallas
- **"Welcoming and Empowering Individuals with Disabilities in Worship"**  
Leader: The Rev. Ramsey Patton (M. Div. '14), associate minister for care and engagement, Highland Park United Methodist Church
- **"Baptism and the Church's Vocation to Intercessory Prayer"**  
Leader: Dr. Mark W. Stamm, Professor of Christian Worship at Perkins School of Theology
- **"Spiritual Formation and Social Media"**  
Leader: Shawn Torres, youth pastor at Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas
- **"Worship that Embodies Hospitality, Solidarity and Mutuality"**  
Leader: Sandra Van Opstal

The cost of the two-day convocation is \$185 for those who register by Oct. 28; \$225 from Oct. 29 to Nov. 9; and \$265 at the door Nov. 12. **Deadline for online or mailed registration is Nov. 9.** There is a \$50 discount for two people who register together from the same church. Continuing-education credit (1.0 CEU) also is available for an additional \$15. [Click here for more information or to register online.](#)

During the Fall Convocation, the 2018 Perkins School of Theology Distinguished Alumni Award banquet will be held Nov. 12 at 5 p.m. in the Great Hall of Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Hall, located at 5901 Bishop Boulevard on the SMU campus. Cost for the banquet is \$50 and separate registration is required. [Register here.](#)

Perkins School of Theology organizes an annual fall event, generally during the second week of November. This continuing education program includes endowed lectureships, a variety of worship services, workshops, and meals. Laity, clergy, and anyone with an interest in religious issues in contemporary life attend from all over the nation.

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*[Perkins School of Theology](#), founded in 1911, is one of five official University-related schools of theology of [The United Methodist Church](#). Degree programs include the Master of Divinity, Master of Sacred Music, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Arts in Ministry, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry, and Doctor of Pastoral Music as well as the Ph.D., in cooperation with [The Graduate Program in Religious Studies](#) at SMU's [Dedman College](#) of Humanities and Sciences.*