**New Class Sessions**

**January 7-May 26, 2024**

**Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church**

The New Class sessions during the winter term will explore the variety of depictions of Jesus in the Christian tradition. We will have six units of class sessions, each with two to four lessons. We include reading suggestions in case you want to pursue a topic in greater depth.

**Unit I: How worship at Glenn reflects the Christological diversity in the early Church**

1. January 7.  In the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John present distinctive views of Jesus. Glenn members find traces of this diversity in sermons, hymns, and Bible study. Listen for the differences during worship services

Teacher: **Carl Holladay,** Charles Howard Candler Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading suggestion: Carl Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the Message and Meaning of Jesus Christ*  (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005)

1. January 14. The creeds recited at Glenn were written partly as attempts to place boundaries on the proliferating views of Jesus Christ in the early Church. Compare the creeds that are recited in worship at Glenn.

Teacher: **Luke Johnson,** Robert W. Woodruff Professor Emeritus of New Testament and Christian Origins, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: Luke Johnson, *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why it Matters* (Guttenberg, New Jersey: Image Press, 2004)

1. January 21. Sacramental observances at Glenn embody specific traditions describing how the Christ is present in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper and the water of baptism. Differences over these questions helped divide the Church in the sixteenth century. Observe carefully the words Glenn uses in sacramental worship.

Teacher: **L. Edward Phillips,** Associate Professor of Historical Theology and Christian Worship, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: L. Edward Phillips and Sara Webb Phillips, *In Spirit and Truth: United Methodist Worship for the Emerging Church* (Franklinville, NJ: OSL Press, 2004)

**Unit II: How John and Charles Wesley formulated in sermons and hymns an Anglican view of Jesus Christ that took a specific position on the earlier debates.**

1. January 28. Wesley’s view of Jesus Christ. Wesley held views of Jesus long prevalent in the Church of England.

Teacher: **Natalya Cherry, Assistant Professor of Methodist Studies and Theology,** Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University

Reading Suggestion: Henry Rack, *Personable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993)

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1. February 4. The Wesleys: Christ in Music. The ministry and music of the Wesley brothers conveyed a message of piety and social concern grounded in the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. Note the frequency of the Wesley brothers’ hymns in Glenn worship.

Teacher: **Don Saliers**, William R. Cannon Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Theology and Worship, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: Don Saliers, *Music and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007)

1. February 11. The Wesley Imprint on American Methodism. John and Charles Wesley expected Methodists to adhere to detailed patterns of governance, daily life and belief. Americans embraced those standards in the Christmas Conference (1784). With these provisions and expectations Glenn and the various other American Methodists continue to live.

Teacher: **Professor Russell E. Richey,** Dean Emeritus, William R. Cannon Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Church History, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: Russell E. Richey, Kenneth Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, *American Methodism: A Compact History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012)

**Unit III: Early modern fundamentalism tried to overcome the diversity, historicism, and social gospel teachings in “liberal theology” and in its more recent manifestation carried its views into political action and voting.**

1. February 18. The Emergence of Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism appeared in America in vigorous opposition to theological liberalism and to methods of biblical interpretation that emphasized the social teachings of Jesus. Do fundamentalist themes appear anywhere in the current Methodist debates?

Teacher: **Brooks Holifield**, Charles Howard Candler Professor Emeritus of American Church History, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980)

1. February 25. Fundamentalists gravitated toward “premillennial dispensationalism,” a theology of “dominion,” and an emphasis on supernaturalism that inclined one important strand of the movement toward a particular kind of political activism. Do you find examples of these themes in political reporting today?

Teacher: **Brooks Holifield** (see February 18)

Reading Suggestion: Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

**Unit IV. We can see traces of these views of Jesus in the upcoming meeting of the United Methodist General Conference.**

1. March 3. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. The Social Principles are based on the teachings of Jesus and their implications as interpreted by the Social Gospel movement. Where do you see observance of the Social Principles at Glenn?

Teacher, **Susan Henry-Crowe**, General Secretary Emerita, General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church

Suggested Reading: *Social Principles of the United Methodist Church 2017-2020*

Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2017)

1. March 10. The structures and procedures of The United Methodist General Conference. In the attempt to employ “democratic” decision making, the General Conference reflects both (1) the early revivalist Methodist Jesus, who was present in the heart of the individual and invoked in the tradition of “conferencing,” and (2) the Jesus of the Social Gospel, whose teachings were thought to entail democracy in all institutions. What do you know about the relationship between Glenn and the General Conference?

Teacher: **Mathew Pinson,**Assistant Vice President for Operations and Strategic Initiatives within the Office of the Vice President for Business and Administration, Emory University

Suggested Reading: Thomas E. Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006)

1. March 17. The issues before the General Conference. The conference will implicitly reflect differing views of the implications of Jesus’s ministry and teaching for questions of human sexuality, conflict and division, and interpretation of scripture.

Teacher: **Mathew Pinson**, see March 10

Reading Suggestion*:* Don Saliers and Henry H. Knight, *The Conversation Matters: Why United Methodists Should Talk With One Another* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998)

**Unit V. Americans have developed many differing views of Jesus. What is our view of this immense diversity?**

1. March 24. Jesus in American Popular Culture

Teacher: **Stephen Prothero,** C. Allyn and Elizabeth Russell Professor of Religion in America, School of Theology, Boston University

Reading Suggestion: Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003)

1. March 31. No class. Easter Brunch
2. April 7. A Reformed View of Jesus. John Calvin formulated the view of Jesus that prevailed in Presbyterian, Congregational, Christian Reformed, German Reformed, and many Baptist churches.

Teacher: **Ted Smith**, Associate Dean of Faculty, Charles Howard Candler Professor of Divinity, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988)

1. April 14. Jesus in the Black Church. Depictions of Jesus have had special resonance and diverse expression in the Black Church.

Teacher: **Shively T. J. Smith**, Assistant Professor New Testament, School of Theology, Boston University

Reading Suggestion: to be determined

1. April 21. Lutheran Christology

Teacher: **Jonathan Strom**, Professor of Church History, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: Martin E. Marty, *Martin Luther: A Life* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008)

1. April 28. Christ in Roman Catholic Thought and Piety

Teacher, **Susan Reynolds**, Assistant Professor of Catholic Studies, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: Susan Reynolds, *People Get Ready: Ritual, Solidarity, and Lived Ecclesiology in Catholic Roxbury* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2023)

**Unit VI. Implications: Spirituality and Social Responsibility of Followers of Jesus**

1. May 5. One example of local Christians helping the poor and homeless

Teacher: Brad Schweers, Executive Director, Intown Cares, Atlanta

Reading suggestions: to be determined

1. May 12. What is Glenn doing to follow Christ in ministry to the world?

Teacher: Joan Lord, representing Glenn’s Justice Team

Reading Suggestion: Diana Butler Bass, Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Changing the Faith (New York: HarperOne, 2009)

1. Unit IV, Conclusion: May 19. General Conference: What happened and what does it mean?

Teachers: Mathew Pinson (see March 10) and Susan Henry-Crowe, (see March 3)

1. Unit VI, Conclusion: May 26. Howard Thurman on Communion with Christ

Teacher: **Luther Smith**, Professor Emeritus of Church and Community, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Reading Suggestion: Luther E. Smith, *Howard Thurman: The Mystic as Prophet* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2007)