

THE INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE FORMATION

SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE | JUNE 15 -17, 2022



In Search For Biblical Justice

Critical engagement with the Bible discloses the mandate for Christians to seek first the Kingdom of God and the eternal beauty of His justice (Matthew 6:33). Unfortunately, controversial political divides and toxic social aversions in society have contaminated the clarity of this eternal mandate, especially in recent decades.

Unresolved, controversial social problems involving race, poverty, violence, gender roles, and other tangible injustices have confused many. Into this often-toxic nexus, the Institute for Justice Formation has taken up the challenge to help the Church reach its potential as the salt and light of society regarding the pursuit of biblical justice.

OUR LEADERS

Rev. Drs. Kenneth Pruitt, Jeffrey Willetts, Henry Allen, Larry Golemon, and Rev. Samuel Feemster, JD, M.Div, welcome you. Turn to pages 2-6 to read what they have to say.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Starting on page 8, read more about our speakers and panelists.

GCBJF

The Graduate Certificate in Biblical Justice Formation is a program designed for students interested in what the Bible says about justice. Read more on page 16

REV. DR. KENNETH PRUITT

President, The John Leland Center for Theological Studies

Welcome! As we gather for the second annual *Institute for Justice Formation Conference*, I welcome you in the name of Christ our Lord.

Jesus once announced the significance of giving even a cup of cold water *in His name* (Matthew 10:42). His words demonstrate principle and practice: *all things for all others in His name*. This spirit of otherness expresses the beauty and power of the Kingdom of God and reflects the standard of Jesus for His followers and His church.

Today, we gather to seek inspiration and encouragement in our pursuit of Biblical Justice, as with ever-increasing love for God and others, we seek His heart. I am grateful for your presence with us, and on behalf of Leland Seminary and the Institute of Justice Formation, I welcome you. Let us remain diligent in pursuing God's heart for justice, and may we enter the joy of our Lord.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ken Pruitt



REV. SAMUEL L. FEEMSTER, JD, M.DIV.

Director, The Institute for Justice Formation @The John Leland Center for Theological Studies

The Institute for Justice Formation (IJF) is excited to sponsor our Second Annual “*In Search of Biblical Justice Conference*” for your fortification and enjoyment. If this is your first conference with us, welcome! If you were part of our fantastic inaugural conference, welcome back!

There is no time like the present to critique seminary curriculums and local church behaviors in light of pervasive injustice in our society. There is no seminary better positioned than Leland to pivot and prioritize critical engagement with Biblical justice. And there are no people better prepared for these urgent tasks than Leland's community and constituency. So, welcome to Jesus' radical justice ministry! Your participation is your proclamation of purpose and commitment. Whether you contribute virtually or in person, this conference will be successful because we are united in Christ.

I am thankful to President Kenneth Pruitt for supporting IJF's vision and mission and Pastor Jeffrey Willetts and Parkwood Baptist for hosting our gathering.

In Service,

Samuel L. Feemster

Samuel L. Feemster
Director, IJF



REV. DR. JEFFREY G. WILLETTTS, PH.D.

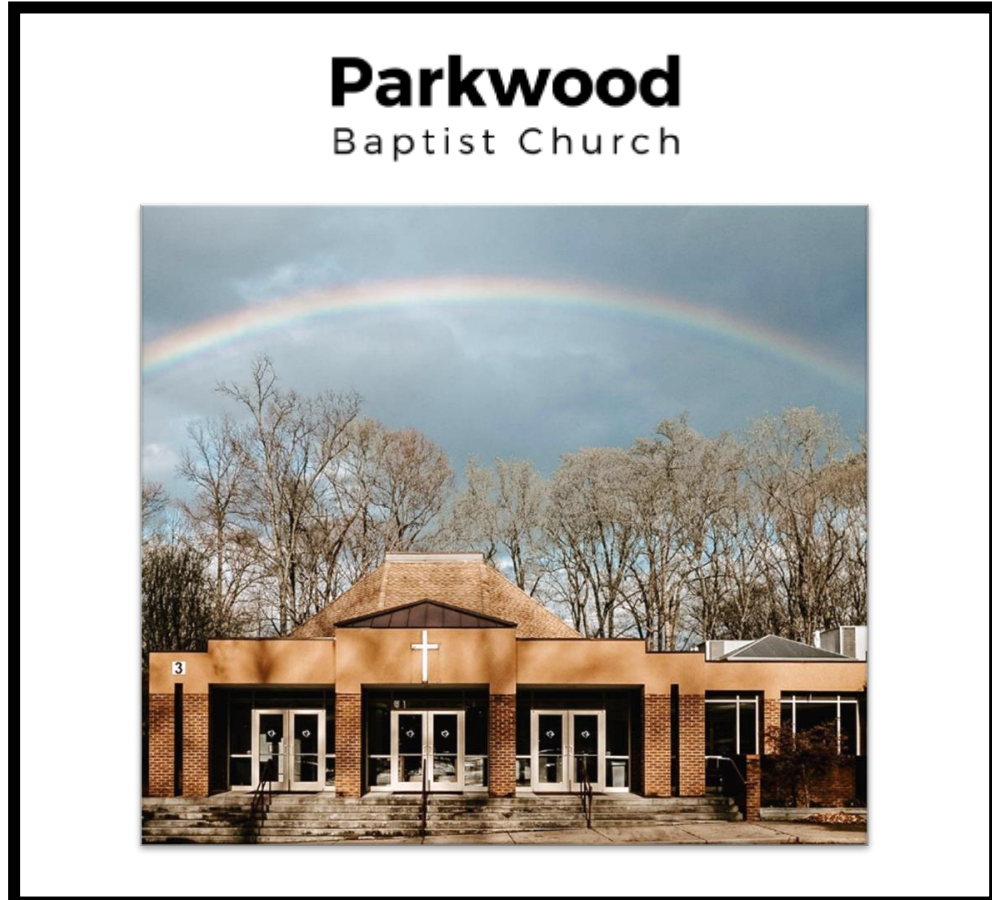
Senior Pastor; Conference Host, Parkwood Baptist Church
Co-Chair, Institute for Justice Formation Advisory Group

Parkwood Baptist is pleased to welcome to our church the Institute for Justice Formation for this vital conference. The need for dialogue within the local church around questions of God's justice in the world is critical to the faithful living out of Jesus' invitation to follow Him.

No institution is better placed than Leland seminary's Institute for Justice Formation to lead in this pressing need. I am grateful to the Institute's Director, Samuel Feemster and the Leland Center's President, Kenneth Pruitt for allowing us to participate in this prophetic conversation.



Jeffrey G Willetts, PhD
Senior Pastor



DR. HENRY L. ALLEN, PH.D.

Co-Chair, Institute for Justice Formation Advisory Group

Welcome Second Annual “In Search of Biblical Justice Conference. I hope everyone is excited about this opportunity to engage in the stewardship of biblical justice. Critical engagement with the Bible discloses the mandate for Christians to seek first the Kingdom of God and the eternal beauty of His justice (Matthew 6:33). Unfortunately, controversial political divides and toxic social aversions in society have contaminated the clarity of this eternal mandate, especially in recent decades. Unresolved, controversial social problems involving race, poverty, violence, gender roles, and other tangible injustices have confused many. Into this often-toxic nexus, the Institute for Justice Formation has taken up the challenge to help the Church reach its potential as the salt and light of society regarding the pursuit of biblical justice.



King Solomon understood the centrality of justice in society. A plethora of verses in the Book of Proverbs informs all theological students regarding how biblical justice is the pathway to genuine love and wisdom. Yet, countless churches and Christian communities ignore Proverbs 28:5 (New American Standard): Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand all things. From a Biblical perspective, true love is impossible without justice (Micah 6:8).

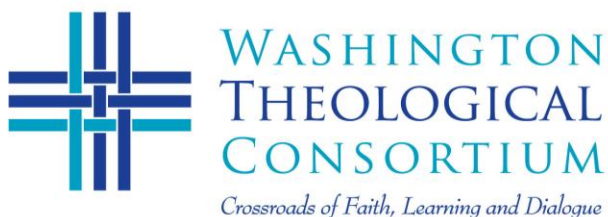
In three years, against the odds, the Lord has allowed IJF to tackle some of the most challenging theological and social issues. Motivated by Galatians 6:9-10, IJF seeks to pursue justice for all peoples with a tenacious concern for the Body of Christ. Students and faculty strategically implement faith, hope, and love in courses, practical projects, and other tangible innovations. Reflections about biblical justice unleash neglected dimensions of theological insight and engaged Christian service. So, let us continue the works God has begun in us and through us.

In Christ,

Dr. Henry L. Allen, PhD

REV. DR. LARRY GOLEMON, PH.D.

Director, Washington Theological Consortium



Dear Colleagues at the Institute for Justice Formation of the John Leland Center:

I am delighted that this second annual conference of the IJF is taking place, and in person no less! The Washington Theological Consortium is a committed sponsor of this event, and we are proud that a number of WTC school faculty members are involved in leadership. The John Leland Center for Theological Studies is an integral part of the Consortium community, and the Institute for Justice Formation is an exciting new development that brings Biblical Justice to the forefront of theological education and the future of ministry in our churches.

So, on behalf of the Consortium, I welcome you to this Conference, "In Search of Biblical Justice" and I am excited to be part of the conversation.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry A. Golemon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Larry Golemon
Executive Director



AGENDA

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

7 pm – 8:15 pm	Worship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening: Rev. Dr. Jeffrey G. Willetts, Ph.D. Institute for Justice Formation: Rev. Samuel L. Feemster Justice and Introduction of Speaker: Rev. Danielle Bridgeforth Keynote Speaker: Dr. Kenyatta Gilbert, Ph.D. Closing Remarks and Benediction: Rev. Dr. Jeffrey G. Willetts, Ph.D. 	

Thursday, June 16, 2022

8:30 am	Welcome In Search for Biblical Justice	Rev. Dr. Kenneth Pruitt, President/JLCTS Rev. Samuel L. Feemster
9 am	What the Bible says about Church, Race, & Justice—Part II	Rev. Dr. Drew Hill & Rev. Dr. Robert Wallace, Ph.D.
10:30 am	The Value of Institutions to Theological Schools	Rev. Dr. Larry Golemon, WTC; Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Pruitt, President/ JLCTS, IJF Inaugural Cohort
12 pm	Lunch	
1 pm	Theories of Christian Education and Justice	Dr. Barbara Fears, Ph.D., HUSD
2:15 pm	Christian Leadership and Justice	Dr. Andrey Shirin, Ph.D., JLCTS
3:30 pm	Worship as Justice	Rev. Dr. John Lee, Ph.D., JLCTS; Rev. Dr. Jeffrey G. Willetts, Ph.D.

Friday, June 17, 2022

8:30 am	Justice and Youth Ministry	Dr. Denise Janssen, Ph.D., VUU
9:30 am	Criminal Justice and Advocacy	Rev. Dr. Harold D. Trulear, Ph.D., HUSD
11 am	Justice Formation Fellowship	Rev. Sean Roberds, Rev. Dr. Drew Hill, Rev. Dr. Robert Wallace, Ph.D.
12 pm	Worship/Communion	Rev. Dr. Jeffrey G. Willetts, Ph.D.
1 pm	Closing Remarks & Departure	



WASHINGTON
THEOLOGICAL
CONSORTIUM
Crossroads of Faith, Learning and Dialogue



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HOWARD
UNIVERSITY
School of Divinity



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VIRGINIA UNION
UNIVERSITY



JOHN
LELAND
CENTER

for Theological Studies

SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

In order of appearance

REV. DR. JEFFREY G. WILLETS, PH.D.



Rev. Dr. Jeffrey G. Willetts is a Baptist minister and leader with more than 20 years pastoral experience, serving three congregations in the Northern Virginia region. Dr. Willetts earned his BA in Religion & Philosophy at Campbell University, his Master of Arts in Religion at Yale University Divinity School, and his PhD in Philosophy at Swansea University, Wales, UK. In addition, Dr. Willetts is an experienced theological educator and denominational representative. He currently serves on a number of committees, commissions, or advisories for church-related or academic organizations, including: the Baptist World Alliance, the Society for Philosophy of Religion (vice-president), the Institute for Justice Formation (vice-chair) and Rising Day ministries. He is currently the President of the Network for Theological Engagement, a non-profit organization focused on the accessibility of theological education for the local church. Dr. Willetts is former Professor for Philosophy of Religion (2016-2021) and Dean (2016-2018) of Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Willetts is also the former founding Dean (1998-2014), Vice-President (2007-2014), and Associate Professor of Divinity (1998-2014) and Professor of Divinity (2014-2016) at the John Leland Center for Theological Studies, in Arlington, VA. Dr. Willetts is a native of Wilmington, NC. He is married to the Reverend Elizabeth (Beth) Willetts, and they have three adult children. Dr. Willetts is an avid sportsman, enjoys golf and basketball, and loves to sing

REV. DR. SAMUEL L. FEEMSTER, JD, M.DIV.



Rev. Samuel L. Feemster is the founding Director of the Institute for Justice Formation and facilitator of core courses in its Graduate Certificate in Biblical Justice Formation program. In addition, he brings to his role a background in local church ministry, investigations and enforcement, and program development.

Rev. Feemster retired from the FBI after 28 years of service. At the FBI Academy, he conducted a research project focused on Officer Wellness and established Project BeStow (Beyond Survival Toward Officer Wellness).

Rev. Feemster is pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Arlington, VA. Under his leadership, Mount Vernon provided a respite and renewal center for the first responder community known as R.E.S.T. Stop East (Restoring Essential Servants Together) until gifting their property to the John Leland Center for Theological Studies.

As Director of the Institute for Justice Formation, Rev. Feemster leads efforts to investigate and promote the transformational character of biblical justice for leaders and communities through a holistic program of worship, education, and advocacy.

REV. DANIELLE BRIDGEFORTH, JD, M.DIV



Rev. Danielle L. Bridgeforth is a native of the District of Columbia and was raised in Hopewell, Virginia. She attended James Madison University and then went on to receive her Juris Doctorate Degree from Howard University School of Law, graduating with honors. She spent 10 years practicing law in the areas of medical malpractice and pharmaceutical litigation, before answering the call to serve in ministry. She made the career change to become an Associate Pastor and the Youth Pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church in Alexandria, VA. She earned a Masters of Divinity Degree with high honors from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University. In 2017, she accepted the call to serve as the Senior Pastor here at the Church at Clarendon, becoming the first woman pastor in the church's storied history.

Pastor Danielle founded Joy4Life Ministries, LLC in 2013 and is certified in marital and pre-marital counseling through the Prepare-Enrich Counseling Program. She is a member of the Fairfax County Community Chaplain Corps, an interfaith group which provides chaplain care and support to community members during and after an emergency or disaster. In 2018, she published a devotional entitled, *Vantage Point*. This 20-Week topical devotional helps readers expand their perspective, enlarge their faith, and experience God anew. Pastor Danielle is an active member of the NAACP and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

REV. DR. KENYATTA GILBERT, PH.D.



Rev. Dr. Kenyatta R. Gilbert is Professor of Homiletics at the Howard University School of Divinity. He earned his B.A. in Political Science from Baylor University and both his M.Div. and Ph.D. in Practical Theology (Homiletics) from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Dr. Gilbert specializes in the history, theory, and practice of African American preaching. His research focuses on the theology and rhetoric of prophetic preaching, African American religion, hermeneutical theory, and constructive practical theology.

Dr. Gilbert is an ordained Baptist minister and founder of The Preaching Project: Restoring Communities through Spoken Word (www.thepreachingproject.org), a website ministry promoting the nurture of the preaching life of ministers serving African American churches and communities.

REV. DR. KENNETH PRUITT



Rev. Dr. Ken Pruitt presently serves as President of the John Leland School of Theological Studies. He has served in full time pastoral leadership for 26 years, and has experienced fruitful ministries in Texas, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

Ken earned his Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) at Baylor University's Truett Seminary in Waco, Texas, specializing in Preaching and Theology. His M.Div. with Biblical Languages was earned at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth Texas. Ken also studied for one year in the School of Religious Education at Southwestern Seminary with a concentration in M. Dr. Pruitt's continued priority for pastoral ministry centers on the communication of God's Word, congregational care, and discipleship.

His daily vision for the church involves the "equipping of the Saints" for the "work of ministry" (Ephesians 4). This vision has also involved ministry to pastors through a training center in India, where Ken regularly travels to teach marriage and Family Counseling. Ken earned his B. A. at Charleston Southern University.

REV. DR. DREW HILL



Rev Dr. Drew Hill was called as the sixth pastor of Memorial Baptist Church on April 15, 2012. Drew holds a Doctor of Ministry and a Master of Divinity from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and also studied Old Testament archaeology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Drew has taught at two Baptist seminaries in Ukraine and has been involved in mission work in Canada, South Africa, Belarus, and India. Additionally, he has led various Bible study field trips to Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, and Israel. Before coming to Memorial, Drew served as Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Sedalia, Missouri for fourteen years.

REV. DR. ROBERT WALLACE, PH.D.



Currently serving as the Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church of McLean in McLean, VA, Rev. Dr. Robert Wallace has spent over 20 years as a Professor of Biblical Studies striving to bridge the gap between the academy and the church. While finishing his Ph.D. at Baylor University, he was ordained at First Baptist Church of Waco, Texas, and he worked as a full-time pastor for several years. Throughout his academic career, Robert maintained an active, ecumenical ministry of supply and interim preaching.

He has a deep love of the Psalms, and much of his academic research has focused on that area. He currently is finishing a book with Baker Academic Publishing provisionally titled, "Reading the Old Testament Through the Psalms." The book brings together several of Robert's passions by using the Psalms as the entry point to make the rest of the Old Testament accessible to a Christian audience.

REV. DR. LARRY GOLEMON, PH.D.



Rev. Dr. Larry Golemon has served the wider church in a variety of capacities: youth minister, local pastor, college and seminary professor, missionary, and researcher. He received a B.A. in History from Stanford University, a Master of Divinity and a Master of Sacred Theology from the Yale Divinity School, a ThM from Columbia Theological Seminary, and a PhD in contemporary theology from Emory University's Graduate Division of Religion. He is an ordained Presbyterian minister (PCUSA).

As a researcher, Dr. Golemon was an associate for the national study of theological education by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and co-authored their findings in *Educating Clergy* (2006). He taught at Dominican University of California and the GTU, and directed their research project entitled "Sacred Visions and the Social Good," which explored religion in public life among Buddhists, Sufis, Native Americans, and faith-based Catholic and Protestant parishes. While at the Alban Institute in Virginia, he directed the Narrative Leadership project, which explored story-based transformation of congregational life. He continues to write in theological education, with a new book entitled "Clergy Education in America: Religious Leadership and American Public Life, 1785-1935" (Oxford Press, 2021).

DR. BARBARA FEARS, PH.D.



Dr. Barbara Annette Fears is Assistant Professor of Religious Education at Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C. She teaches courses in the history, philosophy and practice of ministry. Dr. Fears identifies as a womanist practical theologian, a critical race theorist (CRT) and a critical pedagogue. Her research focuses on matters of power, privilege and accountability in faith formation, praxis of faith and curriculum development. Recent works include a book review on Critical Race Theory in Education, an entry for Dr. Mary Boys in the Database of Christian Educators of the 20th Century, and article, Race, Disability and COVID-19: A DisCrit Analysis of Theological Education.

Dr. Fears previously worked in bio-behavioral studies with Midwest Research Institute, in documentation and training with AT&T and Lucent Technologies and in environmental, social and governance (ESG) advocacy with Wespath Investment Management formerly The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church. She has a Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies in Theology and Ethics, Doctor of Philosophy in Christian Education and Congregational Studies and a Preaching Award from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Dr. Fears has worked with the prison ministry of her Chicago church and currently serves as a chaplain for a local hospice agency.

DR. ANDREY SHIRIN, PH.D.



Dr. Andrey Shirin is Associate Professor and Director of Transformational Leadership at Leland. Dr. Shirin taught at American and Russian institutions of higher learning for 10 years before coming to Leland full time in 2012. He earned his Ph.D. at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Dr. Shirin has authored multiple articles on various issues in philosophy, theology and leadership theory. His core conviction is that theology provides the foundation for dealing with multiple problems in both the church and larger society. His scholarly and curricular interests are broadly interdisciplinary and

include, among other subjects, theology, philosophy, and their relations to larger culture, particularly to leadership studies.

REV. DR. JOHN LEE, PH.D.



Rev. Dr. John Lee serves as the Lead Pastor at The Rock PC. He is married to his amazing wife Suezan, and father of 2 daughters. He is also the Academic Dean at the John Leland Center for Theological Studies in Arlington VA and a member of the Company of Teachers for the Reformed Institute.

John earned a B.A. from Wheaton College, a M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, a S.T.M. from Yale, and a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion and Theology from Claremont Graduate University in California.

On top of his love for academia, he is an undisciplined runner and a distracted reader of things few would care about.

REV. DR. DENISE JANSSEN, PH.D.



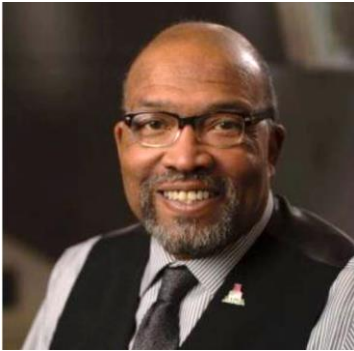
Rev. Dr. Denise Janssen is a Christian educator, author, and scholar. Her research focuses on faith transitions in life, particularly the transition from adolescence into young adulthood, using ethnographic research as a primary tool of inquiry. She also designs, writes, and consults on curriculum development and best practices in faith formation in communities of faith. Her 25+ years in youth ministry and pastoral ministry equip her well as a scholar-practitioner with a passion for student learning.

Her books include: *Fostering Faith: Teaching and Learning in the Christian Church* (Valley Forge: Judson, 2014), *Reclaimed: Faith in an Emerging Generation* (Valley Forge: Judson, 2015), and *Educating for Redemptive Community: Essays in Honor of Jack Seymour and Margaret Ann Crain* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), *Pressing Forward: Faith, Culture, and African American Youth* (Crutchfield with Janssen, Judson Press, 2022).

An ordained minister in the American Baptist Churches, USA (ABC-USA), Janssen maintains a commitment to the local church and denominational life. She currently serves as a staff pastor at Laurel Park United Methodist Church.

Janssen also serves as executive director of the independent ecumenical non-profit, The Resource Center, a 15,000-volume collection of books, video, curriculum, art, and artifacts for local congregations which is housed in Kingsley Hall.

REV. DR. HAROLD D. TRULEAR, PH.D.



Rev. Dr. Harold Dean Trulear has served as Associate Professor of Applied Theology at Howard University School of Divinity since 2003. He currently teaches Prophetic Ministry, Ethics and Politics, Ministry and Criminal Justice, and Church and Community Studies. Prior to joining the Howard Divinity faculty, he served as Visiting Distinguished Professor of Religion and Public Policy at the Templeton Honors College at Eastern University. He also held faculty positions at Yale University, Colgate Rochester Divinity School, The Center for Urban Theological Studies (Geneva College), and Jersey City State College. Through his research and activism he has been named a Fellow at the Center for Public Justice in

Annapolis, Maryland, and served as a consultant to the Faith and Families portfolio of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. He also serves as a member of the Executive Session on Community Corrections at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

REV. SEAN ROBERDS, M.DIV.



Rev. Sean Roberds accepted the call to First Baptist Church of Herndon in the summer of 2010 and moved his family – wife Cara, his college sweetheart, and sons Cole and Eli – to Herndon from Chadbourn, NC, a rural community in eastern North Carolina where he was a senior pastor for six years. In addition to his pastoral experience and easy-going friendliness, Sean brings to FBC Herndon a strong grounding in youth and children's ministry and a deep and sincere commitment to church involvement in the community. He has a passion for preaching, teaching, spiritual guidance and pastoral care. His goals for his third year of ministry at FBC include turning the church's recently adopted vision statement – be the presence of Christ by sharing the love of God one person at a time - - into reality for each and every believer at First Baptist.

VOLUNTEERS

VONDA BELL, Conference Administrator



Vonda K. Bell, a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, currently serves as the Administrator for the Institute for Justice Formation. Vonda has spent the last decade working and volunteering on numerous boards and commissions.

As a civil servant and member of the Senior Executive Service, Vonda serves as the Chief Human Capital Officer for the Farm Credit Administration (FCA). Prior to joining FCA, Vonda served as the HR Director for the U.S. Census Bureau, where she was responsible for successfully leading an end-to-end optimization of the Human Resources program.

Vonda is a University of Alabama-Huntsville (UAH) alumnus. She holds degrees from Troy University (M.S. Human Resources) and UAH (B.S. Human Resources). Additionally, Vonda is a Society for Human Resource Management Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP), as well as a certified Project Management Professional (PMP).

RACHEL WEATHERS, Research Analyst



Rachel Weathers serves as a Wealth Management Client Associate in San Diego, CA. Prior to her 7 years in the banking industry, Rachel worked for multiple non-profit organizations conducting research and hosting workshops on topics such as nonviolence, ethnicity, privilege, and power. Her research includes diversity training, community engagement, and holistic wellness of law enforcement officers, as well as emotional intelligence, dialogue, and conflict analysis skills. Rachel has also facilitated dialogue programs focused on race, privilege, and ethnicity for college students.

Rachel received her Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Shaw University and her Master's degree in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from American University.

REV. MEGAN THOMAS, M.A.R., Virtual Productions Manager



Rev. Megan Thomas is the associate pastor of McLean Baptist Church. She graduated from Abilene Christian University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology focusing on how evolutionary ethics inform Christian stewardship. Rev. Thomas strives to welcome people from diverse perspectives and histories into the life of the church.

Before seminary, Meg served as co-pastor of Gateway Community Church in Bali, Indonesia, where she explored the intersection of faith and art. She was ordained to the work of the Gospel Ministry on November 2, 2014 at the First Baptist Church of Austin. In 2015 she graduated from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest with a Master of Arts in Religion.

PREVIOUS IJF EVENTS

Winter Webinar Series – Critical Engagement with Biblical Justice, March 12 – April 2, 2022

IJF faculty and local pastors discuss what the Bible says about justice, race, and truth and explore what the church must do now and how to move from conversations to constructive actions that disrupt injustice.

Critical Race Theory Seminar Series, October 30 – November 13, 2021

Critical Race Theory: Friend, Foe, or Opportunity? This three-session CRT seminar explored the foundations, the debates, and the implications of Critical Race Theory (CRT). What is the origin of CRT? Is CRT a danger to Christian beliefs, or does it help people of faith fight racism? Are CRT's positive, practical implications for the church and its witness to the world?

Inaugural Virtual Conference, June 17-18, 2021

For our inaugural conference, the Institute for Justice Formation brought together pastors, educators, practitioners, and conscientious believers to pursue biblical justice and tangible love for our times.

Short Course on Biblical Justice Christian Formation, November 7 – 21, 2020

This short course explores the Presbyterian scholar Michael Barram's *Missional Economics: Biblical Justice and Christian Formation*. The author conducted one session. Steven Reeves, Esq., and Rev. Dr. Timothy Tee Boddie, two notable Church leaders, ran other sessions. In addition, IJF Cohort students conducted two breakout sessions.

Presbyterian and Race, September 19, 2020

Presbyterians and Race: A Reflective Experience in Power and Social Justice. This reflective walk in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, visited sites marking critical moments in the story of Presbyterians, White supremacy, and Black resistance from colonial days to the present.

The WTC Spring Faculty Event – Witnessing Whiteness, March 11, 2020

Author Kristopher Norris shared vital insights from his recent book, focusing on constructive steps to address the collaboration of “mainline” (White) theology in racism in the country. These include the three R’s: Remembrance, Repentance, and Reparations. Norris's work builds on deep engagement with the theologies of Stanley Hauerwas and James Cone, among others.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN BIBLICAL JUSTICE FORMATION

The Graduate Certificate in Biblical Justice Formation is a non-degree, master's-level program of study designed for students interested in what the Bible has to say about justice and what relevance that has for people, particularly Christians, today. The program is ideal for people across all vocations who wish to point ways forward for everyone seeking to think and act in harmony with God – a community of equals pursuing biblical justice in the world today. Part-time students can complete the program in two years. Full-time students can complete the program in one year. Like the other programs at the John Leland Center, students who are working full-time may pursue this certificate without significantly compromising their family life and employment.

Graduation requirements include completing 18 semester credit hours in the prescribed curriculum, community event participation, and full payment of all tuition and fees. In addition, the program requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

Recommended Curriculum

MF 4301 Spiritual Formation (3)

B 1305 Interpreting the Old Testament, B 1505 Interpreting the New Testament, or Tools Based Bible Study (3)

EH 3205 In Search of Biblical Justice (3)

MF 4333 Justice, Church, and Society (3)

MF 4335 Critical Engagement with Biblical Justice (3)

MF 4339 Justice Formation Externship (3)

Extended Descriptions – Core Course

EH 3205 – In Search of Biblical Justice (B/A)

This course design guides the student's search for biblical justice by appealing to explicit and implicit Scriptures about what God says He loves and what others have said about God's loves. Based upon these disclosures, students will reflect upon embedded attitudes and behaviors and consider what God might say about justice prevalent in their environs. Finally, this course will equip students to practically express justice and righteousness through the routine of daily living.

MF 4333 – Justice, Church, and Society (B/A)

Prerequisite for GCJF Cohorts – EH 3205

This course will challenge students to bring the transformational potential of the biblical texts to bear on critical current justice issues regarding the distribution of social benefits and penalties, the

exercise of legitimate power; fairness and balance; and honoring the rights or entitlements of people made in the image of God. In addition, students will critique ongoing Christian behaviors congruent or incongruent with biblical justice by reflecting upon and contrasting what we love and what God loves.

MF 4335-Critical Engagement with Biblical Justice (B/A)

Prerequisite for GCJF Cohorts – EH 3205, MF 4335

This course guides the student's search for biblical justice through critical engagement with a contemporary justice theorist. Students will compare and contrast the ideology of a contemporary justice theorist with the course's information. The successful student will demonstrate the capacity to synthesize salient principles from selected theorists while articulating a personal justice formation paradigm.

MF 4339 – Justice Formation Externship (B/A)

Prerequisite for GCJF Cohorts – EH 3205, MF 4333, MF 4335

After completing the prerequisites, students will meet one of the following initiatives:

- a) develop an inclusive community worship initiative praising God for the privilege and responsibility to be agents of His justice and righteousness,
- b) conduct an education and advocacy presentation to encourage communities and governments to do justice, or
- c) initiate or continue an advocacy initiative intended to redress or dismantle a structural or systemic injustice that is incongruent with God's love.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE FORMATION (IFJ)

BACKGROUND

Recent social events and cultural antipathies have exposed the urgent need to promote authentic justice afresh for generations within church and society. Police shootings of unarmed citizens, moral impotency, racism, ridiculous scandals, and political subterfuge have escalated cultural confusions about theological imperatives and biblical justice. Even seminaries need to engage issues related to sanctity of life, school shootings, sex trafficking, and the church's silence in the face of these extensive concerns. In short, our nation and its leaders seem to suffer from a 'ball of confusion' regarding truth, integrity, and authentic justice. Our society seems to be hurtling toward an abyss of sophistry. The Rand Corporation has denoted this penchant for confusion as 'truth decay'. A generation ago, the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. warned us to avoid the catastrophic decline associated with moralistic ignorance and conscientious stupidity. Something must be done to accentuate the virtues of character and righteousness everywhere, especially for future generations being choked by inept or insufficient notions of biblical truth and justice. We can move beyond the passive acceptance of perceptions that are the best of the worst, but not the best operations of justice.

PURPOSE

The Institute for Justice Formation @ The John Leland Center for Theological Studies (IJF) exists: (1) to investigate and promote the transformational character of biblical justice for leaders and communities, and (2) to advocate—across all vocations—for leaders and lay persons in public marketplaces and private domains to do what is right and just intrinsically, to be a 'profile in courage'. Employing the multi-pronged investigative approach of worship, education, advocacy, and evaluation (plus systemic feedback) pursuant to its vision and mission, IJF will accomplish relevant and evolving goals and objectives through the synthesis or convergence of these approaches.

OUR VISION

The Vision of The Institute for Justice Formation is to embody authentic truth as well as serve as a catalyst for Biblical Justice in our world. We will engage society wherever churches, communities, and authorities actively cooperate in serving people so that they may live in harmony with God and each other through the transformational character of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We pursue "Embodying the spirit of Justice to inspire human flourishing".

OUR MISSION

The Mission of The Institute for Justice Formation is to establish enduring, robust relationships between religious and cultural institutions (along with civic organizations or agencies) through a holistic program of worship, education, and advocacy in order to unify, inform, and encourage the application of Biblical Justice by leaders and their organizations.

OUR VALUES

The Values of IJF are:

- *Truth and meaning*, as revealed in God's Word and His creative nature, which is the foundation of Justice. Truth is the essence of the search for meaning.
- *Integrity and sacrifice*, as demonstrated by God's faithfulness, which is the personification of Justice. Integrity compels sacrifice.
- *Love*, as demonstrated by God's Grace through the compassion and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is the motivation for Justice.
- *Community*, as demonstrated by God's command for inclusiveness—to love our neighbors as ourselves, which is the jurisdiction of justice.
- *Empowerment*, as demonstrated by Jesus's merciful interaction with the blind, lame, diseased, and possessed. This is the volition of Justice.
- *Action*, to which we are called as children of God in order to bring healing to the wounded and seek peace in strife. This is the vehicle for Justice.
- *Joy and shalom*, the hallmark of human flourishing, which is the result of Justice. Joy is the sign of peace.

OPERATIONAL IMPERATIVES

The Mission statement describes how IJF will achieve success. The Vision statement describes what that success will look like. Worshipful, educative, and advocative activities conducted and sponsored by The Institute for Justice Fellowship will be governed by the Values of IJF. To that end, students, professors, pastors, and public servants will engage in Christ-like behaviors to dismantle human concepts and conduct that separate man from God. Biblical Justice is experienced individually and in community when children of God make our brothers' and sisters' problems, of whatever origin, our own.

THE INAUGURAL IJF COHORT

Graduation Date: June 4, 2022



Pictured left to right: Dr. Eric Foresberg, Deborah Louise Tillman, Vonda Bell, Rev. Samuel L. Feemster, Kelly Anderson, Rev. Dr. Clinton A. Feemster

Who We've Become

For their final project the inaugural cohort wrote reflection papers about their journey through the Graduate Certificate in Biblical Justice Program and its impact on their beliefs, behaviors, and ministry. Here are some of their thoughts:

Kelly Anderson

Through the course of this inaugural IJF cohort, I cannot say enough about the positive impacts this has had in both my ministry and in my life personally. When I entered into the cohort in the Fall 2020

semester, I honestly was not quite sure what I was getting into...Then I remember when professor Feemster asked me to join the cohort as the Spring 2021 semester began and even though I did not know what to expect, I was excited for the opportunity. Little did I know that the invitation from professor Feemster would lead me on such an incredible journey over the past couple of semesters. There are three categories that have shaped me deeply over the course of this cohort experience: The relationships, the readings, and the practical experience.

Vonda Bell

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? - Micah 6:8

Author Gregory Mobley, describes Micah as someone who “condemned religious practice unaccompanied by ethical performance.” What a thought-provoking description! Micah is calling out those religious folks who know the Bible from cover-to-cover; go to church every Sunday; serve on every committee; participate in every communion—and yet sit silent in the face of injustice. As I reflect on my journey through the graduate certificate program in biblical justice, I can say with absolute certainty that I never want to fit Micah's description of someone who practices religion while simultaneously acting unethically.

Clinton Feemster

I have attempted to serve as a pastor for many years, and I am unsure if I have employed ministry as carefully as the scripture intended. Following this course, I hope to incorporate the information into our church so that we become a Justice Ministry focus church rather than a program focus church... I leave this course with a greater appreciation for justice and righteousness, along with a more profound commitment to living according to the standards of God's justice, and stand for people who are disenfranchised, marginalized, and disinherited. The church must take an active role in sounding the alarm for God's justice in an unjust society. The Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church is slowly moving towards a justice ministry. Our last church conference, we embraced the ministry of "Justice Involved." The idea is to place the same value on others as God has placed on us.

Eric Forsbergh

It is hard to underestimate the change wrought in me and my thinking since August 27, 2020, when I began my first class with the Institute for Justice Formation under Professor Feemster. In the past forty years of my life, I have undergone three profound periods of change in my life, and seminary at Leland has been one of them. My new understanding of faith, of biblical justice, and of poor and Black communities has informed my actions from this point onward. For example, I never expected to teach a class or give a sermon on racial justice to my all-White church, and now that will most likely happen, since all the signs are encouraging in the planning stages, even from the conservative members of my Leesburg Presbyterian Church.

Deborah Tillman

"If we merge mercy with might and might with right, then love becomes our legacy and change our children's birthright."

The words above are from Amanda Gorman, reciting 'The Hill We Climb' at the inauguration and encapsulates my entire journey through the Graduate Certificate in Biblical Justice Program.

Before our first class ever convened, we were given a survey that asked: "Explain what biblical justice means to you?" Then, during our first class a quote from Cornel West was mentioned as a response. "Justice is what love looks like in public" Sounds good but for me what it looked like in public in the face of racial wounds was hatred and I was angry. Anger doesn't drive me anymore passion does but that is because the process of transforming my heart was what I prayed for throughout this entire journey...Throughout this journey, I have learned how to love more like Jesus loves. The courses in Biblical Justice have all been instrumental in my understanding of what love truly is. Hart says that love is revolutionary.

JUSTICE FORMATION FELLOWSHIP (JFF)

The Justice Formation Fellowship is a group of churches united to be a conduit for the transformative work of Biblical Justice in our world. The Bible testifies that our God loves and delights in Justice. But, more profoundly, our Bible testifies that our God requires us to do Justice.

We believe the image of God in humanity manifests as the love and pursuit of the Justice God love. We also believe Jesus commissioned the church, his body, to do Biblical Justice. Therefore, the Holy Spirit empowers individuals and communities to proclaim the message and practice the ministry of reconciling humanity to God and all peoples with each other.

Congruent with our commission, we see the Institute of Justice Formation as an essential movement in the academic institutions of the church that can, through an informed understanding of God's self-revelation, lead us to become a justice pursuing people. Therefore, we stand by the Institute of Justice Formation, pledging our support, prayers, and commitment to the work of Justice formation. We stand with each other as we seek to build a fellowship of Justice seeking congregations through worship, education, and advocacy.

Justice Formation Fellowship Participants include:

1. First Baptist of Herndon, Herndon
2. McLean Baptist Church, Mclean
3. Memorial Baptist Church, Arlington
4. Mount Vernon Baptist, Arlington
5. Parkwood Baptist Church, Annandale



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS



The **John Leland Center for Theological Studies** is a seminary of Baptist tradition that welcomes students and teachers of all church denominations. Leland’s purpose is to serve in the Kingdom of God through accessible, accredited theological education that equips its students to become transformational leaders in the global ministry of Jesus Christ.

The mission of the **Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Baptist Church** is to serve Baptist churches and Christians as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission they seek to minister in the name of Jesus Christ and according to the Biblical principles upon which Baptist Churches are built.

The **Washington Theological Consortium** is a community of theological schools and partners from diverse traditions that pursue ecumenical dialogue, interfaith understanding, and educational collaboration to better equip clergy and laity for the ministry of the Church in a diverse society.

Howard University School of Divinity affirms its identity as a unique and irreplaceable graduate theological school that engrafts the spirit of excellence in learning and service. At the core of its time-honored identity are specific values that inspire and encompass the school's aspirations and endeavors. HUSD core values describe its character heart, and soul; these are its non-negotiable attributes.

A national leader in theological education, the **Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University (STVU)** is a center of excellence in graduate theological education with a broad and impressive national and international reach. The Proctor School has prepared thousands of ministers and religious leaders who have distinguished themselves through exemplary service to the church and the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

01

Visit <https://www.ijf-leland.org/calendar/> for future events.

02

A survey regarding this conference will be sent soon!

03

Go to ijf-leland.org for more information.

04

See you again for the 2023 annual conference!

The Institute for

Justice Formation