



# Schedule of Events

## Friday, November 6

- 6:00 pm Registration Opens
- 6:30 pm Keynote Presentation - Scott Holland
- 7:30 pm Break
- 8:00 pm Open Mic for Presenters and Attendees

## Saturday, November 7

- 8:00 am Registration and Breakfast
- 8:40 am Optional Worship
- 9:00 am Welcome
- 9:15 am Panel I: (Theo) Poetic Faith
- 10:15 am Panel I Roundtable & Questions
- 10:45 am Break
- 11:00 am Workshop Session I
- 12:30 pm Lunch
- 1:45 pm Panel II: Poetics of Ministry
- 2:45 pm Panel II Roundtable & Questions
- 3:15 pm Break
- 3:30 pm Workshop Session II
- 5:10 pm Closing & Mullen Fellowship Announcement

ONLINE REGISTRATION: [esr.earlham.edu/WC2015](http://esr.earlham.edu/WC2015)



**Anna Woofenden**  
*Divine Improvisation:  
Liturgy in the Garden*

Ministers like to approach liturgy like movie directors – we want to write the script, cast all the parts, make sure everyone knows her lines, and watch the show unfold as planned. Being pastor of The Garden Church has taught me to let go of all that. We create new words of liturgy – “This is God’s table ... all you need to be to eat here is hungry” – but you never know what you’re going to encounter when you worship outside, by the street. Instead of controlling the show, you become the improv director. Worship suddenly includes the homeless man hovering around the edges, the child who approaches the communion table with mouth open like a baby bird. The liturgy provides a vessel for all that happens within it – but it takes the attention of a writer to see how God is shaping the storyline. In this workshop, we will focus on writing prompts that tune into this practice of paying attention, to the container that liturgy can offer, and to the movements of the Divine Improviser.

Rev. Anna Woofenden is the founding pastor of The Garden Church in San Pedro, California. Gathered around an urban garden rather than inside a church building, The Garden Church’s motto is “feed and be fed.” Anna received her Masters of Divinity from the Earlham School of Religion, a Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies from the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and is an ordained minister in the Swedenborgian Church of North America. Anna has a passion for spirituality, justice, beauty, compassion, and community and is driven by a calling to re-imagine church.



**Kirstin Vander Giessen-Reitsma**  
*Writing from Your Watershed*

We all write from a situated perspective. That perspective is shaped not just by a timeline of personal events, but by the places where we live – the water that we drink. This workshop will explore how the geographical image of a watershed can help unfold our imaginations as gifting and receiving artists within our local ecosystems. Sparked by samples of photography, poetry, and prose from the editorial staff of the brand new *Topology Magazine*, participants will have time to write and share from the unique places where they find themselves.

Along with her husband Rob, Kirstin Vander Giessen-Reitsma is co-founder of the non-profit \*culture is not optional ([www.cultureisnotoptional.com](http://www.cultureisnotoptional.com)), formed in 2001 to foster storytelling and learning toward living at peace with our neighbors and our places. \*cino’s work, which is based in the rural city of Three Rivers, Michigan, includes publishing, community development, creative local events, and an intentional community. In 2009, \*cino purchased a historic school property in Three Rivers to renovate as The Huss Project: a center for building friendship and imagination through art, food and play. One of their current projects is building on 12 years of publishing the online *catapult* magazine to launch a new venture called *Topology Magazine*, featuring artful dispatches from the places where we find ourselves.

### The Ministry of Writing Colloquium:

“The Ministry of Writing” colloquium was endowed by individuals in honor of Tom Mullen at the time of his retirement as Dean of Earlham School of Religion in 1990. Tom retired from ESR in 1997. He passed away in June 2009.

His “Writing for the Religious Market” class, first offered over 20 years ago, was the beginning of ESR’s unique emphasis in the ministry of writing. This colloquium is one way the school demonstrates its commitment to the written word as an important form of ministry. The colloquium will be held in the ESR Center at the northeast corner of the Earlham Campus. A finalized schedule and room assignments will be available at registration.



228 College Avenue  
Richmond, Indiana 47374  
800.432.1577  
[esr.earlham.edu](http://esr.earlham.edu)



Photo: Julie Dishman

# ESR Ministry of Writing

An Annual Colloquium

November  
6-7, 2015

Richmond,  
Indiana



**E A R L H A M**  
SCHOOL of RELIGION



*Words  
Made Flesh:  
Creative Writing,  
Creative Ministry*

To encounter God is to brush against living mystery. To minister is to touch the face of the unknown. To write about faith is to trace the horizon.

**Is this theology? Or is it theopoetics?**

Join us as we gather with writers that place the adventure of poesis – of making – at the center of their faith, work, and ministry. We'll hear about a church that meets in an urban garden in California. About a Christian community whose art arises from small-town Michigan. About a prison literary journal and about a devotional guide for poets – a devotional guide for everyone, in other words. "More religious writers and spiritual intellectuals are discovering that the Creator God of Genesis is not a moralist but a poet and a potter," writes Scott Holland, this year's keynote speaker and a leading advocate of theopoetics. Where might this Creator God be at work? Come and see, as we ask the question together.

# Keynote



**Scott Holland**  
*The Holiness of the Heart's Affections and the Truth of the Imagination: The Romance of Theopoetics*

Nearly a quarter of Americans claim no religious affiliation. Yet religious extremism, violence, and polarization remain fixtures of modern life. How do we speak and write about God in this world, when constant upheavals of the religious landscape demand not just new theologies, but whole new ways of speaking? This keynote will invite listeners into a different way of speaking of God and of naming ourselves, one that focuses on theo-poetics instead of theo-logics – that is, on a view of faith that is less creed and doctrine than literary spiritual adventure.

Scott Holland is the Slabaugh Professor of Theology & Culture and Director of Peace Studies and Cross Cultural Studies at Bethany Theological Seminary. He

is a senior contributing editor at *CrossCurrents* journal in New York. He speaks and writes in the areas of theopoetics, narrative theology, public theology, cultural studies, and peacemaking.

# Panels

## (Theo) Poetic Faith

What power do words have – to form us, to change us, to reveal us to ourselves? This panel examines the personal and spiritual meanings of writing, whether that means journaling at home or writing in prison. In these very different places, how does writing make real – make flesh – new perspectives, deep emotions, and dynamic faith?

**Brent Bill: *A Word After a Word After a Word is Power***

**Ashley Lucas: *The Weight of Words: Meditations on the Meaning of Writing in Prisons***

**Dave Harrity: *Journaling as Incarnation***

## Poetics of Ministry

The holy surrounds us. But sometimes seeing God, or seeing beauty, requires a different way of seeing, reading, and perceiving. This panel focuses on the difficult, joyous kinds of openness required in creative ministries – in editing prisoners' writing, having church in an urban garden, and making art central to alternative, Christian communities that root their lives in distinctive places.

**Phil Christman: *Beyond "Bad Person, Good Writer": What Editing Prisoners Has Taught Me About Reading***

**Kirsten Vander Giessen-Reitsma: *"Where" is Not Optional***

**Anna Woofenden: *She Pitched Her Tent Among Us***

# Workshops



**Phil Christman**  
*Severe Mercy: How to Respond To Others' Work (and Maybe Your Own) More Kindly, Critically, and Creatively*

When we read other writers' work – whether as lover, friend, editor, workshop participant, or, as for many writers, part- or full-time writing teacher – we often struggle over how to be honestly critical without causing more pain than necessary. As the editor of the *Michigan Review of Prisoner Creative Writing*, Phil Christman oversees a staff of volunteers who offer substantive feedback to every would-be contributor – several hundred critiques, written to an inherently vulnerable group, every year. Participants in this workshop will practice the useful art of careful, discerning, but kind critique, and consider its application to their own working and writing lives.

Philip Christman is an instructor at the University of Michigan and the editor of the *Michigan Review of Prisoner Creative Writing*. He holds an MA in English Literature from Marquette University and an MFA in fiction writing from the University of South Carolina. Before coming to Michigan, he taught English composition at North Carolina Central University and served as Writing Coordinator at MURAP, a summer program that prepares outstanding minority undergrads for graduate school in the humanities. Christman's own work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Paste*, *Annalemma*, *Feminist Formations*, *Books & Culture*, *Identity Theory*, *The Periphery*, and other places.



**Ashley Lucas**  
*Capturing the Living Voice: How to Write an Interview-Based Performance*

This workshop gives participants practical tools for how to interview others and use the language of everyday people to create a performance text. Participants will engage in basic interviewing activities and learn strategies

for adapting the words of others into well-crafted stories suitable for live performance.

Ashley Lucas is Associate Professor of Theatre & Drama and the Residential College at the University of Michigan, where she also directs the Prison Creative Arts Project. She is the co-editor of the book *Razor Wire Women: Prisoners, Activists, Scholars, and Artists* (SUNY Press 2011) and co-authors a blog by the same title. Lucas is the author and performer of a one-woman play, *Doin' Time: Through the Visiting Glass*, about the families of prisoners, and has toured with the show throughout the U.S., in Ireland, and in Canada. She is currently writing a book about theater in prisons in the U.S., the U.K., Canada, South Africa, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil.



**Brent Bill**  
*Finding God, The Reader, and the Writer in the Verbs*

Words matter. In prayer and writing. In this workshop we'll explore what the language we use in our writing reveals – about our beliefs in God, about our self-understanding, and about our imagined readers. Is our language safe? Edgy? Authentic? Dangerous? How does it reflect our sense of call to writing as ministry? Bring some of your writing samples with you – especially ones you wouldn't mind sharing with the other workshop participants.

J. Brent Bill is a Quaker minister, retreat leader, photographer, and writer. His books include *Holy Silence*, *Finding God in the Verbs* (with Jennie Isbell) and the soon to be released *Life Lessons from a Bad Quaker: A Humble Stumble Toward Simplicity and Grace*. An ESR graduate, Brent lives with his wife Nancy on Ploughshares Farms southwest of Indianapolis.



**Dave Harrity**  
*Moving Into Mystery*

For the spiritually minded, the community organizer, the peacemaker, and the contemplative, poetry is a potent tool for awakening. This workshop focuses on methods of composition (creating, fostering creativity) and revision (techniques for bringing out the best in a piece of writing) which nurture meaningful practice and work. Inspired by a few well-known authors, we'll write in ways that open up our creativity, then begin to think about what to do with the results.

Dave Harrity's work has appeared in *Memorious*, *Revolver*, *Killing the Buddha*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *Confrontation*, *Softblow*, and elsewhere. His books include *Making Manifest: On Faith, Creativity, and the Kingdom at Hand*, a 28-devotional guide of meditations and writing exercises in poetry, as well as two forthcoming books of poems, *These Intricacies* (Cascade Books 2015) and *Our Father in the Year of the Wolf* (WordFarm 2016). He teaches English at Campbellsville University and lives in Louisville with his wife and children.

Name _____	WORKSHOP ONE preference (1st & 2nd choice)	Christman _____	Lucas _____	Bill _____	Harrity _____	Woofenden _____	Giessen-Reitsma _____
Address _____							
City _____							
State _____							
Zip _____							
Phone (_____) _____							
E-mail _____							
Please make checks payable to: Earham School of Religion.							
<input type="radio"/> Colloquium prior to Oct. 16, 2015: \$85 <input type="radio"/> Undergrad and graduate students: \$35 <input type="radio"/> Colloquium after Oct. 16, 2015: \$100 <input type="radio"/> Dietary Restrictions: _____							
Registration fee covers all colloquium events, including Friday night keynote address, panels, workshops, breakfast, lunch, and refreshments.							

# Registration

Send to: ESR Writing Colloquium 2015, Mandy Ford, Earham School of Religion, 228 College Avenue, Richmond, IN 47374. 1.800.432.1377, Email: fordma@earham.edu Online registration: esr.earham.edu/WC2015