
Rev. Emily Nelms Chastain

History of Christianity and Methodist Studies

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EDUCATION

Boston University School of Theology, Boston, MA - *Ph.D., Theology*

Ph.D. Candidate | May 2025

History of Christianity (American Religious History) and Methodist Studies

Advisor: Rev. Dr. Christopher H. Evans

Second Reader: Dr. Dana L. Robert

Qualifying Exams/ American Religious History

Teaching Areas: Historiography, Long 19th Century, 20th-21st Century, American Methodism

World Christianity

Historiography, Methodology, American Christianity and Mission History,
Global and Transnational Evangelicalism, Global/Worldwide Methodism

Women, Gender, and Religion

Women's Religious History, Feminist Methodology and Theology, Feminism and
Women in Religion, Women's Ordination, Women and Methodism

Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, CA - *M.Div., May 2019*

Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, CA - *M.A., Religion, May 2019*

University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL - *B.A., History, August 2007*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Perkins School of Theology | Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX - *Instructor*

AUGUST 2024 - PRESENT

- United Methodist History (Fall 2024)
- United Methodist Polity (Spring 2025)

Boston University School of Theology, Boston, MA - *Teaching Fellow*

AUGUST 2021 - PRESENT

Providing lectures, class support, and assistance to the instructor of record and members of classes at the School of Theology

- United Methodist History and Doctrine - Dr. Christopher Evans (Fall 2021)
- History of Social Christianity - Dr. Christopher Evans (Spring 2022)
- Spiritual Companionship Group (Fall 2021, Spring 2022)
- The Wesleyan Tradition in 21st-Century Context: Travel Seminar to Manchester, England - Dr. Christopher Evans (Summer 2022)
- Integration of Theology and Practice Cohort/Contextual Education (Fall 2022-Spring 2023)

- Writing Workshop for UMC Commissioning Papers (Summer 2023)
- Women in World Christianity - Dr. Dana Robert (Fall 2023)
- UMC General Conference Travel Seminar - Dr. Cristian De La Rosa (Spring 2024)
- United Methodist Polity and Ministry - Dr. Jay Williams (Spring 2024)
- American Christian History - Dr. Christopher Evans (Spring 2024)

Garrett-Evangelical Theological School - *Adjunct Professor, Course of Study*

SEPTEMBER 2023 - PRESENT

Teaching and supporting students seeking licensure in the UMC through Course of Study (curriculum outlined by General Board of Higher Education of the UMC)

- United Methodist Polity and Administration (October-November 2023)
- Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement (July 2024)

First United Methodist Church, Birmingham, AL - *Small Group Leader*

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2019

Five-week class covering Wesleyan history (British and American), theology, polity, and connection

- “What It Means to be United Methodist”

Wallace State College, Hanceville, AL - *Adjunct History Instructor*

AUGUST 2009 - MAY 2010

Lecturer and instructor for World History courses

PUBLICATIONS

Nelms Chastain, Emily. Invited book review for *Methodist History*, February 2025.

———. Book review for *Reading Religion*, December 2024.

———. “Break[ing] the System:’ How the Methodist Student Movement Motivated a Generation Into Challenging Their Denominational Polity of Segregation.” *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, Forthcoming (Fall 2024).

———. Book Review: *The Practice of Mission in Global Methodism: Emerging Trends from Everywhere to Everywhere*, *Reading Religion*, eds. David Scott and Darryl Stephens, January 2024.

———. [“Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, 8-part series on newly elected women bishops in the UMC, March 2023.

———. [“Parity Among Methodist Clergy.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, September 13, 2022.

———. [“Connexionalism Vital to Continued Ministry of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, June 9, 2022.

———. [“Sexual Ethics Remains Vital to the United Methodist Church.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, April 29, 2022.

———. [“Clergywomen Promote Hope and Healing.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, March 30, 2022.

———. [“Laywomen Promote Hope and Healing.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, March 18, 2022.

———. [“Deaconesses Promote Hope and Healing.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, March 4, 2022.

———. [“The Foremothers of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, February 28, 2022.

———. [“The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women: Advocating for Women for 50 Years.”](#) General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, January 31, 2022.

Kuan, Jeffrey Kah-Jin, Emily Nelms Chastain, and Erin Grasse. [“The Multifaceted Nature of Progressive Theology.”](#) *Emerging Methodism*, July 30, 2019.

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

Panel: The Perils and Promises of Institutions – Protestant Women, Mission, and Reform in the Gilded Age through the mid-20th Century, American Society of Church History - *Presenter*

JANUARY 2025, Chicago, IL

“Redefining Boundaries: Jeanne Audrey Powers, Inclusivity, and American Methodism”

Wesleyan-Methodist Studies Unit, “The Reception History of the Wesleys,” American Academy of Religion - *Presenter*

NOVEMBER 19, 2024, San Diego, CA

“Reviving the Radical: The Legacy of the Methodist Student Movement within Wesleyan Tradition”

Wesleyan-Methodist Studies Unit, American Academy of Religion - *Co-presenter*

NOVEMBER 18, 2023, San Antonio, TX

“All the World’s My Syllabus: Necessary Adjustments to Methodist Studies Curriculum in a Globalized Church”

History, Practice, and Theory Roundtable, Wesleyan Theological Society

MARCH 3-4, 2023, Asbury Theological Seminary

“Methodical Medical Missions: A Wesleyan Consideration of Global Health Practices in Recent History”

Historical Studies II Session, Wesleyan Theological Society

MARCH 3-4, 2023, Asbury Theological Seminary

“The Francis Burns Effect: How a Transnational Missionary Transformed the Liberian Methodist Mission”

2022 Writing Collective, Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender and Sexuality

OCTOBER 21-22, 2023, University of Rochester

“Advancing A New “Woman Question:’ M. Madeline Southard’s Diligent Advocacy for the Ecclesiastical Status of Women Preachers”

Podcast Guest, Un-Tied Methodism (General Commission on Archives and History)

MAY 2, 2022

“Methodist Women in History.”

History III Session, History Graduate Student Association Conference

APRIL 29, 2022, University of California, Irvine

“Advancing A New ‘Woman Question:’ M. Madeline Southard’s American Association of Women Preachers and Their Push for Women’s Right to the Pulpit”

Theology and History Session, Boise Center’s Graduate Conference

FEBRUARY 27, 2021, Boston College’s Boise Center (Virtual)

“Three Simple Rules: How Birmingham Methodists Conveyed a Wesleyan Theological Framework and Reframed Their Practices to Save Lives From Both Cholera and Influenza”

Women, Gender, and Religion Session, Southeast Commission on the Study of Religion (AAR Southeast Region)

FEBRUARY 29, 2020, University of Georgia

“Shattering the Stained-Glass Ceiling: How Women in the Southeast Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church Reached and Influenced the Region’s Highest Office”

HONORS & AWARDS

Alpha Alpha Alpha Honor Society, Boston University

Inducted 2021

Tri-Alpha is an honor society for first-generation students and is open for induction as graduate students with a greater than 3.2 GPA.

Jeanne Audrey Powers Award, Claremont School of Theology

May 2019

An award named in honor of the founding donor of the Center for Sexuality, Gender, and Religion at the Claremont School of Theology, who was one of the first women ordained in the UMC (1958) and a lifelong advocate for ecumenism and inclusiveness in the life of the Church.

Editorial Board, *Vulcan Historical Review*, University of Alabama at Birmingham

2007-2008

Phi Alpha Theta (Chi Omicron), University of Alabama at Birmingham

Inducted 2007

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Wesleyan-Methodist Community of Learning, Boston University School of Theology - *Coordinator*

SEPTEMBER 2022 - MAY 2024

WMCOL supports students from the United Methodist Church, and other Wesleyan, Methodist, and Holiness traditions, who seek ordination within their tradition through professional development and vocational discernment

Association of PhD Students, Boston University School of Theology - *President*

MAY 2022 - MAY 2023

The Association of PhD Students within the School of Theology at Boston University provides support, education, and advocacy for doctoral students at the BU School of Theology and works closely with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the STH Advanced Studies Committee

College of Arts & Sciences Alumni Board, University of Alabama at Birmingham - *Member*

AUGUST 2019 - MAY 2023

Chair of the Student Relations Committee; promotion of continued work and life in the alumni community following graduation; connection for 20,000+ alumni graduating out of the 19 departments of the College of Arts & Sciences at UAB

Editorial Board, *Vulcan Historical Review* - *Designer and Editor*

OCTOBER 2007 - APRIL 2008

Design conception for the 2008 edition of the *Vulcan Historical Review* (UAB Student Journal for History); preparation of publication for press and organization of content; typesetting and editing

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Board of Directors, General Commission on the Status and Role of Women - *Director*

SEPTEMBER 2016 - PRESENT

The Commission works within the bounds of the United Methodist Church to promote the inclusion of women and minorities into full participation in the life of the Church; Human Relations Committee member and service to the Committee on Policies, Procedures, and Practices (General Council on Finance and Administration of the UMC); local service to the North Alabama Conference COSROW (salary study team, 2014-2018)

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry, North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church - *Chair and Member*

AUGUST 2015 - JUNE 2024

Chair of the board from August 2020-21; vice chair from September 2018-August 2020; the BHECM supports and serves six active Wesley Foundations and sustains campus ministry funding for active Wesley Foundations and the creation of new ministries for college students

Board of Directors, UAB Wesley Foundation - *President and Member*

AUGUST 2014 - AUGUST 2019

Organization of the board of directors sustaining the finances and direction of the Wesley Foundation for UAB; oversight of the staff and facilities (including rental property and tenants); chaired the board from 2016-2019 (previously a chair of the personnel committee)

Oral History Project, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute - *Archives Volunteer*

MAY - OCTOBER 2005

Archives records storage and organization; transcription of the Civil Rights Oral History Project, conducted by Dr. Horace Huntley; graphic design for the Friends of the Archives program; research assistance for patrons of the archives department

LANGUAGES

English (C2)

Spanish (A2) – Language exam, Summer 2021

SKILLS

Academic Research and Writing, BlackBoard, Canvas, Sakai, Moodle, Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint), Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), PC and Macintosh, iWork (Pages, Numbers, Keynote), Oracle, CMS (WordPress, Squarespace).

RELATED EXPERIENCE

King's Chapel History Program, Boston, MA - *Historic Site Educator*

MAY 2022 - SEPTEMBER 2023

- Education for tourists, church members, and the public by providing information about the religious, social, and Revolutionary history of King's Chapel and its importance in the City of Boston

North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church, Birmingham, AL - *Associate Director of Church Resourcing*

JUNE 2011 - AUGUST 2020

- Creation and management of systems and events to foster and track youth, young adults, and adults through the process of leadership development within various levels of the church; facilitation of leadership networks for age-level programming; marketing and communication for various ministries and events

First United Methodist Church, Birmingham, AL - *Deacon in Residence*

JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020

- Serving in ministries of Word, service, compassion, and justice with the congregation; pastoral care, small group leadership, and liturgical assistance in worship; pulpit supply for colleagues across the Annual Conference

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Member, The North Alabama Conference of The United Methodist Church (Deacon in Full Connection)

Member, American Society of Church History

Member, Historical Society of the United Methodist Church

Member, Wesleyan Theological Society

Member, American Academy of Religion

Member, Coordinating Council of Women Historians