**Lis Valle**

Assistant Professor of Homiletics and Worship

McCormick Theological Seminary

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## **Education**

Ph.D. in Homiletics and Liturgics, May 2019, Vanderbilt University

* Minors: Liturgics; Religion, Gender, and Sexuality
* Certificates: Women and Gender Studies;

Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender and Sexuality

M.A. in Religion, Vanderbilt University

Th.M. in Homiletics, Princeton Theological Seminary

M.Div., Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

J.D., University of Puerto Rico, *cum laude*

B.A. in Education (Theater), University of Puerto Rico, *magna cum laude*

## **Awards, Honors, and Grants**

Vital Worship Grants for Teacher-Scholars by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 2020

HTI/Lilly Dissertation Fellowship, 2018-2019

Forum for Theological Exploration Doctoral Fellow, 2017-2018

Bettye R. Ford Graduate Student Service Award, Graduate Department of Religion,
Vanderbilt University, May 2014.

Melanie Lane Preaching Award, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, May 2012.

## **Research Interests/Areas of Specialization**

* Worship: healing rituals; footwashing liturgies; queering liturgy.
* Homiletics and Liturgics: the intersection between worship and preaching with embodiment, gender, sexuality, performance theory, queer theory and theologies; postcolonial perspectives.

## **Research Experience**

***Dissertation***

* *As One Among Many: Affirming a Multitude of Embodied Preaching Practices*
Principal investigator – This study analyzes three modalities of delivery in preaching: pulpit preaching through public speech, street preaching through symbolic action, and preaching through theater and proposes that these are three paradigms among many others in the repertoire of embodied Christian preaching practices among which preachers may choose.

***Other projects***

* “Mary Magdalene’s Presence in Footwashing Rituals”
Principal investigator – Researched the biblical and historical origins of footwashing rituals. Compared and contrasted New Testament texts related to footwashing. Identified embodied actions common to all passages and unique to Luke’s version of the story of the woman who anointed Jesus’ feet. Compared and contrasted the embodied actions in the texts with the embodied actions in the footwashing rituals of Roman Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, and Pentecostal traditions. Analyzed the data using an anthropological approach, the ritual-myth (action-story) union theory. Reported the results to Dr. Robin M. Jensen as a final paper for the course *Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Eve in Art, Text, and Tradition*, Vanderbilt University, April 2015.
* “Worshiper’s Experience of a Dramatized Sermon”
Principal investigator – Secured IRB approval for research design, planning, and implementation. Secured informed consent from participants and from hosting organization. Collected and analyzed data through a phenomenological approach requiring direct observation and in-depth interviews. Reported results to Dr. Dale P. Andrews as a final paper for a Ph.D. seminar in *Qualitative Research*, Vanderbilt University,
May 2015.
* “What Latinas are Preaching: A Case Study in Search for Mujerista Theology”
Principal investigator – Researched the theology evident in sermons from Latina clergy. Collected sermons from female preachers in Protestant faith traditions. Analyzed data employing generative criticism – textual analysis of the sermons and core texts from *mujerista* theology. Reported the results to Dr. Ellen Armour (and Dr. Dale P. Andrews, secondary reader) as final paper for the course *Feminist and Womanist Theology*, Vanderbilt University, December 2013.
* “Sermons of a Woman: Juana de la Cruz” (1481-1534)
Principal Investigator – Analyzed the implicit homiletical theory of Juana de la Cruz by exploring her life, audience, Franciscan tradition, and her preaching practices. Collected and analyzed Juana’s sermons. Reported findings to Dr. James F. Kay, for the course *Homiletical Theory I*, Princeton Theological Seminary, December 2012.

## **Teaching Experience**

***Seminary Settings***

ACTS DMin in Preaching, Illinois

* ***Preaching as Performance*** – 11 students. Designed and facilitated the course. Facilitated discussion of readings. Evaluated and graded assignments. Summer 2019

McCormick Theological Seminary, Illinois, Since Fall 2018

* ***Doing Worship*** – 9 students. – Designed and facilitated the course. Facilitated discussion of readings. Evaluated and graded assignments. Spring 2020
* ***Pilgrimage in Faithfulness*** – Teaching Team Leader. 32 students. – Facilitate small group (7 students) discussion of readings. Evaluate and grade assignments. Design and deliver four lectures, one on vacation, and on baptism, and two on Eucharist. Fall 2019
* ***Introduction to Christian Worship*** – 7 students. Design and facilitate the course. Facilitate discussion of readings. Evaluate and grade assignments. Facilitate community conversations about weekly community worship life to both assess prior services and design upcoming ones. Fall 2019
* ***Introduction to Christian Preaching*** – 18 students, some of which speak only English, others only Spanish, some are physically present in the classroom, some are joining online. Design and facilitate the course. Facilitate discussion of readings. Evaluated and graded assignments, sermons, and preaching. Fall 2019
* ***Worship and Sacraments in the Christian Traditions*** – 4 to 8 students. Designed and facilitated the course. Facilitated discussion of readings. Evaluated and graded assignments. Spring 2019 and Spring 2020.
* ***Leadership Across Difference Co-Instructor*** – Teaching Team Member. 21 students. – Facilitated small group (4 students) discussion of readings. Evaluated and graded assignments. Designed and delivered four sessions on the problem of race and church responses to it. Spring 2019
* ***Pilgrimage in Faithfulness Co-Instructor*** – Teaching Team Member. 38 students. – Facilitated small group (7 students) discussion of readings. Evaluated and graded assignments. Designed and delivered two lectures, one on Eucharist and ecclesial social witness, the other on vocational discernment. Fall 2018

Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2019

* ***Teología & Historia II*** – Guest Instructor. About 12 students. –Designed and delivered a session on Protestant and Catholic women’s contributions to the reformations. January 2019

***University Settings***

Monmouth College, Illinois, July 2017

* ***Scriptures and Theology Professor***, Lux Summer Theological Institute for Youth. – Instructed 17 high school students during ten seminar daily sessions. Designed and implemented the curriculum for the course with the mentorship of Dr. Daniel J. Ott. Assigned and assessed homework. Mentored college students who served as counselors and teaching assistants. Helped with other aspects of the program.

Vanderbilt University, Divinity School; Nashville, TN

* ***Teaching Associate***, Course *Queer Theology*, Spring 2017; Instructor of Record: Dr. Ellen Armour; 25 students. – Facilitated small group (12-21 students) discussion of readings. Evaluated and graded assignments.
* ***Guest Instructor***, Course *Oratory and Rhetoric for Proclamation,* March 20, 2017; Instructor of Record: Dr. Dale P. Andrews; 16 students. – Facilitated one session, “God Comes Out: A Queer Homiletic.”
* ***Teaching Associate***, Course *Prophetic Preaching and Social Ethics*, Spring 2016; Instructor of Record: Dr. Dale P. Andrews; 12 students. – Facilitated one session, “God Comes Out: A Queer Homiletic.” Facilitated small group (6 students) discussion of readings, and feedback sessions for preaching exercises. Graded assignments and sermons.
* ***Teaching Associate***, Course *Fundamentals of Preaching*, Spring 2015; Instructor of Record: Dr. John S. McClure; 21 students. – Designed and facilitated small group (7 students) discussion of readings, and feedback sessions for preaching exercises. Graded assignments and sermons.
* ***Teaching Associate***, Course *Oratory and Rhetoric for Proclamation,* Fall 2014; Instructor of Record: Dr. Dale P. Andrews; 12 students. – Facilitated one session, “God Comes Out: A Queer Homiletic.” Facilitated small group (4 students) discussion of readings, and feedback sessions for preaching exercises. Graded assignments and sermons.
* ***Teaching Associate***, Course *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*, Summer 2014; Instructor of Record: Dr. Elizabeth Caldwell; 24 students. – Facilitated some class activities. Graded 12 students as they were teaching a class. Facilitated feedback sessions for students’ teaching.

***Professional***

* ***Guest Instructor***, Course *Philosophy 260-001: Introduction to Biblical Studies*; Instructor of Record: Sherri Person; 22 students. – Facilitated one session, “Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible.” Volunteer State Community College, Gallatin, TN; March 16, 2107.

***Theatre of the Oppressed Workshops***

“Forum Theatre.” Actors Bridge Ensemble, Nashville, TN; March 18, 2017.

“Image Theatre.” Theopoetics Conference, Cincinnati, OH; March 11, 2017.

“Image Theatre.” Scarritt Bennett Center, Nashville, TN; January 21, 2017.

“Theatre of the Oppressed and Devising.” Guest Session Facilitator, *Readings in Ministry and Public Life* (DIV5009), Vanderbilt Divinity School, November 28, 2016.

“Introduction to Theater of the Oppressed.” Guest Session Facilitator, *Life Skills* course, TN Prison for Women (TPW), December 2014 and May 2015.

“Theater of the Oppressed as Cultural Expression.” Guest Speaker, course *Spanish Language and Culture*, American Baptist College, April 1, 2015.

“Introduction to Theater of the Oppressed.” West End United Methodist Church, Fall 2013.

***Other Workshops and Informal Education***

“Collective Preaching: Crafting, Delivering, and Performing the Word in Community.” Guest Session Facilitator, *Field Education* course, Vanderbilt Divinity School, December 10, 2015.

“On Same Sex Marriage and the Presbyterian Church (USA): A Dialogue Through Theatre of the Oppressed.” Presbyterian Church Sión, San Sebastián, PR, June 2015.

## **Liturgical Leadership**

***Worship Leader***, *Opening Devotions*; about 40 participants. – Designed and led opening devotions World Mission Institute 2019 *Dual Belonging*. The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, IL, March 2019.

***Worship Leader***, *Beyond the Rainbow Ritual*; about 40 participants. – Designed and led a healing ritual related to the showing of the play *For Colored Girls*. Recruited liturgists. Collaborated with Pastoral Care Assistant Professor, Stephanie Crumpton, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL, March 2019.

***Preacher***, *Orientation Week*; about 80 participants. – “The Missing Piece,” Designed and led collaborative and experiential sermon. McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL, August 2018.

***Worship Leader/Chaplain***, *Interdenominational Gathering of Latina Pastors*; 21 participants. – Designed and led daily worship services. Recruited liturgists. Collaborated with two helpers setting up the space for worship. Asociación de Clérigas Metodistas Nacional, Nashville, TN, August 2017.

***Pastoral Care Intern***, *Belle H. Bennett Fellowship*; 3 participants, activists in training. Designed and led weekly spiritual practices and one retreat. Scarrett-Bennett Center, Nashville, TN, August 2016 - May 2017.

***Chaplain***, *Raíces Latinas Leadership Institute*; aprox. 40 participants. – Facilitated devising sessions where participants (high school and college students) designed liturgies. Led worship services. Recruited, motivated, and supervised liturgists. Boston University School of Theology, August 2015 and August 2016.

***Worship Teaching Fellow***, Vanderbilt Divinity School – Led 4-7 M. Div. students in designing and leading rituals every three weeks for the Divinity School community. Recruited and motivated additional liturgists. Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 2015-2016 and 2013-2014.

## **Publications**

***Article (Peer-reviewed)***

Valle-Ruiz, Lis. “Toward Postcolonial Liturgical Preaching: Drawing on the Pre-Columbian Caribbean Religion of the Taínos.” *Homiletic* (Online), 40 no 1 2015, p 28-37.
<http://www.homiletic.net/index.php/homiletic/issue/view/200>

 Republished in two parts by the *Asian American Theological Forum* online journal, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Feb. 2016), <http://aatfweb.org/2016/02/05/toward-postcolonial-liturgical-preaching-drawing-on-the-pre-columbian-caribbean-religion-of-the-tainos/>; and Vol. 3, No. 2 (June 2016), <https://aatfweb.org/2016/06/11/part-ii-toward-postcolonial-liturgical-preaching-drawing-on-the-pre-columbian-caribbean-religion-of-the-tainos/>.

Valle-Ruiz, Lis. “Performing Cultural Memory Through Preaching.” Submitted. To be published during the 2020 calendar/liturgical year in the journal *Liturgy* Volume 35.

***Book chapter***

Valle, Lis. “Toward a Border-Crossing Homiletic: Building Blocks for Trauma-Informed Preaching Practices.” Submitted.

***Book reviews***

Valle, Lis. “Exodus Preaching: Crafting Sermons About Justice and Hope.” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*. 2019, Vol. 73(4) 403-422.

Valle, Lis. “Postcolonial Practice of Ministry: Leadership, Liturgy, and Interfaith Engagement,” *Journal of Pastoral Theology*, Published online December 11, 2017. DOI: 10.1080/10649867.2017.1402563.

***Related Essay***

Valle, Lis. “Preaching for Healing from Sexual Violence: Restoring Safety, Agency, and Connections through Re-Storying.” Unpublished Classroom Paper, January 2015. Assigned by Dr. John S. McClure in his doctoral course *Liturgy and Preaching* (Rel. 6929), Vanderbilt University, Fall 2015. Quoted in upcoming book tentatively entitled *Speaking Together and With God: Liturgy and Communicative Ethics.* Submitted by Dr. John S. McClure.

***Related Articles and Publications***

Valle-Ruiz, Lis. “Silence That Calls us to Love Too Much.” *Horizons: The Magazine for Presbyterian Women*. January/February 2020, 4-6.

Valle, Lis and Nancy Hawthorne. “Collaborative Energy: An Opening to a World of Possibility.” *Wellsprings Journal*, 2016 Edition: *Birthing a Worldwide Church*. http://www.wellspringsjournal.org/2016/03/collaborative-energy-an-opening-to-a-world-of-possibility/

Valle, Lis et. al. on behalf of *Vanderbilt Center for Teaching.* “A Guide to Feminist Pedagogy.” March, 2015. https://my.vanderbilt.edu/femped/

Valle, Lis. “The effective – and fun – use of drama,” *Advocate*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Fall 2012, 12-13
http://advocate.apcenet.org/issue/let-us-play

## **Presentations**

***Presentation of Scholarly Research***

“Liturgy, Ritual and Prophetic Communication as Approaches to Healing.” *Convening at the Intersection of Faith, Trauma and Resilience Conference*, Chicago, IL; January 2020.

“Liberating Imagination Through Co-Inspiration.” *CoInspire Conference: Eviscerating Racism, Liberating Imagination*, Montreat, NC; October 2019.

“Performance of Collaborative Preaching.”

* McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL; September 22, 2018.
* Preaching Lab: *Preaching in More Than One Voice*. Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church, Bloomfield Hills, MI; October 6, 2018.

“Queering Preaching Through Burlesque.” Societas Homiletica Conference, Durham, NC; August 2018.

“Redeeming Pleasure in Worship and Preaching.” Theopoetics Conference, Cincinnati, OH; March 2017.

“Restoring Through Re-Storying: Toward a Healing Homiletic for Border Crossers.” Homiletics and Biblical Studies Workgroup: Preaching in/and the Borderlands, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, November 2016.

“Performative Preaching: The Genealogy of Mary Magdalene’s Ritual”

* Performance Studies Workgroup, Academy of Homiletics Annual Meeting, December 2015.
* Women and Gender Studies Colloquium, Vanderbilt University, November 2015.

“Toward Postcolonial Liturgical Preaching: Drawing on the Pre-Columbian Caribbean Religion of the Taínos.”

* Worship and Preaching Workgroup, Academy of Homiletics Annual Meeting, November 2014.
* *Consultation on Postcolonial Theory and Preaching* at Boston University, October 2014.
* *Commemoration of La Raza Month*, Latin@/American@ Seminarians, Vanderbilt University, October 2014.

***Related Performances***

“An Exorcism of White Supremacy.” Burlesquesque Sermon. *Carnival de Resistance*, Philadelphia, PA; July 27-28, 2018.

 *Words and Flesh Entangled*. Play. All Faith Chapel, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN; May 4, 2018.

 “Unidad, Complementariedad, y Armonía” (Unity, Complementarity, and Harmony). Liturgical Dance Sermon. Aguada Presbyterian Church, Aguada, PR; June 11, 2017.

“Recovering Evangelical Coming Out,” Performance. All Faith Chapel, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN; February 17, 2017.

“Río Espíritu Santo,” Performance, *I Sing the Beloved Community* Song and Spoken Word Event, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN; April 22, 2016.

“In Memory of Her: An Erotic Missing Ritual,” Performance, *Carpenter Program 20th Anniversary Conference*, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN; April 1, 2016.

“What Inspires You?,” Panelist, *Arts, Advocacy, and Activism Conference*, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN; April 23, 2016.

“Disruptive Hospitality: An Embodied Proclamation for Maundy Thursday;” Performed at:
West End United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN; April 2015.
Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN; April 2015.

*The Advent Collective.* Artistic representations of biblical stories from Advent to Epiphany, original pieces by artists from different genres including music, poetry, dance, visual arts, and drama. Translated and adapted by a Puerto Rican minister for her congregation. Performed at:
West End United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN, December 2014.
Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN; December 2014.

Presbyterian Church (USA) in Rincón, PR; December 2014.

*Blessed*. Enactment of selected monologues in *Blessed: Monologues for Mary* by Jerusha Neal (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013). Presented at:
West End United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN; April 2014.
Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN; March 2014.

“Crucified Women,” Monologue, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 2009.

## **McCormick Theological Seminary Service**

Faculty Member, Student Success Committee, AY 2019-20.

Faculty Member, Search Committee, AY 2018-19.

ACTS Preaching DMin Advisor and Faculty of Core II, Spring and Summer 2019.

Faculty reader for the ACTS DMin in Preaching oral presentations of dissertations, March 2019.

## **Vanderbilt University Service**

Co-Chair, *Poiesis* Student Organization; Fall 2014 – Spring 2017.

Treasurer, *Latin@/American@ Seminarians* (Latinx Sems) Student Organization, Fall 2015 – Spring 2017.

Participant-Observant and Member of the Curating Committee, Carpenter Program in Religion,
Gender and Sexuality 20th Anniversary Conference, Vanderbilt Divinity School, April 2016.

Member of the MLK Vigil Committee, Vanderbilt Divinity School, January 2016.

GDR Student Representative, Search Committee, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Fall 2015.

## **Selected Community Service**

Mentor, Puerto Rican Pastors in Parish Ministry and working on their D.Min.; AY 2018-2019.

Referee, For Students of Color applying to higher education programs or ministry jobs.

Volunteer, Puerto Rico se Levanta, San Sebastián, PR; Fall 2017.

Volunteer, Thistle Farms, Nashville, TN; Fall 2013.

Actress, Agape Theater, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY; 2010-2012.

Lawyer, Pro-Bono, Inc., San Juan, PR; 2000-2002.

Artistic Director and Actress, Decisions Rolling Theater, San Juan, PR; 2002-2008.

Founder President of the Board of Directors, Ministerio Enseñándoles, Inc., San Juan, PR; 1998-2008.

## **Membership and Affiliations**

Visitor, Societas Homileticas, Summer 2018

Member, North American Academy of Liturgy; visitor since Fall 2017, member since January 2020

Student Member, American Academy of Religion; 2017-2018

Member, Association for Theopoetics Research and Exploration (ATRE), now ARC (ArtReligionCulture.org): A Creative Collaborative for Theopoetics; since 2016

Associate Member, Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies (SARTS); 2016-2018

Fellow, Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE); 2016-2018

Associate Member, Society of Biblical Literature (SBL); 2015-2017

Member, Academy of Homiletics (AoH); since 2013

Ordained Minister, Presbyterian Church (USA); since 2013

Fellow, Hispanic Theological Initiative/Consortium (HTI/C); since 2013

## **Skills and Interests**

Fluent in Spanish and English

Performance Artist (specialized in experimental theatre and theatre of the absurd)

Visual Arts (mosaics, painting, collage, mixed media, photo-montage)