



Integrated Preaching for Transformation

Doctor of Ministry Cohort

Faculty Mentor: Rev. Dr. Steve Norman

Length: A 36-credit degree comprising six in-person seminars over three years, plus completion and defense of the Doctor of Ministry project.

Locations: Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MI
New York, New York (Fall 2027)
London, UK (Fall 2028)

Those who apply for this cohort will demonstrate interest in exploring some aspect of transformational preaching, for the preacher, the local church, or the broader ministry community. While a wide range of proposed studies may apply, we seek to build a cohort with women and men whose research interests intersect in meaningful ways such that deep and rich lifelong conversation partnerships and friendships are cultivated.

Overview:

In the last few years, a growing number of resources exposed the dangers of emotional unhealth among church leaders. Spiritual abuse and toxic leadership are core themes in podcasts (*The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill*), books (*Redeeming Power*, *Bully Pulpit*, *When Narcissism Comes to Church*, *The Lord Is My Courage*), and conferences (RESTORE). While many of these resources rightly highlight how unhealthy power dynamics affect leadership, there's room to explore how such dynamics bleed into preaching in the local church pulpit, and how to prevent it.

In many instances, gifted preachers are given a pass on character issues and power abuses because of their preaching skills. An integrated approach to preaching, however, argues that unhealthy leaders will preach unhealthy sermons, and that, in time, unresolved personal and spiritual issues in the preacher will emerge in the preacher's tone, posture, and relationships.

The goal of a Holistic Preaching (or Integrated Preaching) DMin model is to help students understand that all preaching is ultimately embodied in the preacher and, as such, the well-being and flourishing of the preacher is critical for compelling preaching. Content on emotionally healthy preaching, family history, creativity, soul care, self-awareness (enneagram), positive accountability and encouragement networks will all be relevant material for the coursework. Final projects may include a preaching "rule of life" or a preaching series that is born out of the cohort experience.

Ezekiel 24:24 'Ezekiel will be a sign to you; you will do just as he has done. When this happens, you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord.'

Objectives:

- To produce doctoral level research for the church in the area of transformational preaching.
- To build a cohort-community of eager and earnest learners committed to building relationships and encouraging one another.
- To encourage personal transformation for vibrant and sustained ministry

Schedule:

Event Dates Location

Launch Sept. 21-25, 2026 WTS

2nd Seminar March 1-5, 2027 WTS

3rd Seminar Sept. 20-24, 2027 New York City 4th Seminar March 6-10, 2028 WTS

5th Seminar Sept. 14-22, 2028 London, UK

Final Seminar March 5-9, 2029 WTS

Commencement Spring 2029 WTS

Core Readings: (additional titles forthcoming)

Students are required to read approximately 3300 pages in Year One, of which 1000 are chosen by the student. If one or more of the above books have been read previously, the professor/student will select an alternate.

On Christian Doctrine Augustine

The Preacher Jowett

Preaching Keller

When Narcissism Comes to Church DeGroat

Bully Pulpit Kruger

Too Great a Temptation Gregory

The Lord is My Courage Ramsey

Comfort in the Ashes Keener

Emotionally Healthy Leadership Scazzero

Emotionally Healthy Discipleship Scazzero

Leaf by Niggle Tolkien

The Gift of Limitations Hagerty

Gentle Power Lahti

Healing Leadership Trauma Rowe and Rowe

Amusing Ourselves to Death Postman

Dare to Lead Brown

The Preacher as Sermon Norman

Redeeming Power Langberg
Art and Faith Fujimura
Calling in Context Maros

Additional Readings:

The Creative Act Rubin
Dinner for Vampires Lenz
Educated Westover
Land of My Sojourn Cospers
The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory Alberta
Stolen Focus Hari
Rising Strong Brown
Atlas of the Heart Brown
Preaching in Place Mark R. Rigg
Preaching from Inside the Story Frymire
Shouting Above the Noisy Crowd: Biblical Wisdom and the Urgency of Preaching
Blessed and Beautiful: Multiethnic Churches and the Preaching that Sustains Them
Decolonizing Preaching Decolonizing Preaching The Pulpit
Ordinary Preacher, Extraordinary Gospel: A Daily Guide for Wise, Empowered Preachers
The Eloquence of Grace: Joseph Sittler and the Preaching Life

Year One – Orientation

Seminars

Students will participate in two one-week face-to-face cohort gatherings, held in fall (September) and in spring (March).

Fall: The first gathering is devoted to engaging one another's stories through personal experiences of preaching (both in the pulpit and the pew), hearing initial project interests, and engaging rhythms of silence, solitude, and self-care.

Spring: The second gathering is devoted to exploring the fruit of Year One while refining and finalizing the primary question/topic the student wants to engage in his/her project.

Readings

During year one, students will be introduced to essential texts and crucial conversations in the area of deepening soul care, power dynamics, and preaching. Year One will require no fewer than 3000 pages of reading, with 2000 assigned and at least 1000 chosen by the student with approval from the mentor.

Ongoing Engagement

Students will engage in bi-weekly triad conversations via face-to-face online forum and a monthly full-cohort debrief for interaction with the mentor. Individual meetings with the

mentor are scheduled as needed.

Assignments

1. Students will write a Personal Experience in Preaching paper prior to the first intensive to be shared with the group.
2. Students will write a 3-page book review of each book they read, due in March. The review will briefly summarize salient points of the book, noting key insights and important takeaways for the student's project.
3. Students will develop a 5–10-page draft of their research question or topic, highlighting the following:
 - a. The rationale for exploring their proposed question or topic.
 - a. A description of the ecclesial or organizational context for their research. a. A brief summary of relevant literature or research connected to this general question or topic.
 - a. A proposed pathway for research for Year Two, complete with additional yet unexplored relevant literature, interviews to be done, sites to be visited, etc.

Year Two – Research

Seminars

Fall: Through one-on-one meetings with the primary and/or secondary mentor, triad discussions, and cohort conversation, students will refine and finalize their question and Year Two pathway. In a presentation to the group, students will take 15 minutes each to present their finalized project and share what they will need from one another to accomplish their work. Spiritual disciplines to cultivate presence and focus will be explored.

New York Seminar: The fall seminar in Year 2 will take place in New York City. The learning objectives for this trip include:

- a) Touring historic churches to learn about preaching in context.
- b) Pursuing unique spiritual formation experiences in an urban setting.
(St. Catherine's of Siena, Sacred Heart Convent)
- c) Learning from preachers and practitioners about best practices for transformational preaching.
(Possible connections: Redeemer Presbyterian. Union Seminary. Manhattan University. Trinity Church)

Spring: Students will present the findings of their previous months of research and

study, and will be invited into an exploration of the structure and expectations of their thesis project. A final proposal will be drafted after this intensive and forwarded to the DMin committee for approval.

Ongoing Engagement

Students will engage in bi-weekly triad conversations via face-to-face online forum and a monthly full-cohort debrief for interaction with the professor.

Assignments

1. Students will finalize their project proposal due one month after the Spring seminar of Year Two for approval by the DMin committee.
2. Students will write a 10–15–page literature review (due in March of Year Two).
3. Students will write a 10–15 summary of the fruits of their research (due at March seminar) to be presented to their cohort. The form and content of this will be agreed upon by mentor and student.

Year Three – Writing

Seminars

Fall: This intensive is devoted to a unique trip which cultivates community, celebrates accomplishments thus far, and motivates for the year of writing ahead. Details and costs will be presented at a future intensive.

Spring Graduation: Students will defend their theses during the final seminar, prior to late April/early May graduation.

Ongoing Engagement

Students will engage in bi-weekly triad conversations via face-to-face online forum and a monthly full-cohort debrief for interaction with the professor.

Assignments

1. Student will complete thesis project by February 1, 2029
2. Dates for thesis reception, reader review, etc. TBD.

Tuition, Costs, and Fees:

Tuition rates remain fixed for the duration of the three-year program, with an additional cost if students need further time to complete their final projects.

This cohort will be subject to the 2026/2027 tuition rate, which will be set in February 2026. For current DMin tuition and fees please see the [WTS website](#).

Students are responsible for all travel, food, and lodging costs associated with attending the six required seminars.

More information on the Doctor of Ministry at WTS is available at our [website](#).

Questions? Please contact the following:

Cohort information

Rev. Dr. Steve Norman – stevenorman911@yahoo.com

Application & Admission

Drew Brown, Director of Admissions drew.brown@westernsem.edu

DMin Program

Yolanda Vega, Program Administrator - yolanda.vega@westernsem.edu