

**Curriculum Vitae  
James R. Nieman**

**Contact**

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago  
1100 East 55<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chicago, IL 60615  
773.256.0728 (office)  
773.256.0782 (fax)  
jnieman@lstc.edu

**Education**

**Degrees**

Ph.D. 1997, Emory University  
Atlanta, Ga.

M.Div. 1984, Wartburg Theological Seminary  
Dubuque, Iowa

B.A. 1978, Pacific Lutheran University  
Tacoma, Wash.

**Dissertation**

*Local Theologies in American Protestantism: Proposals toward a Method for Research*

**Awards**

George W. Woodruff Fellow for Graduate Study  
Emory University

**Ecclesial**

**Ordination**

The American Lutheran Church, 1985

**Ministries**

Pastor, 1985-1989	Executive Director, 1985-1989
Iñupiaq Lutheran Church Anchorage, Alaska	Native Outreach Ministry Anchorage, Alaska

Licensed Minister, 1984-1985  
Zion Lutheran Church  
Clayton Center, Iowa

**Synod**

Metropolitan Chicago Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

## Academic

### Institutions

President, 2012-  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago  
Chicago, Ill.

Academic Dean, 2011-2012  
Professor of Practical Theology, 2005-2012  
Hartford Seminary, Hartford Institute for Religion Research  
Hartford, Conn.

Professor of Homiletics, 1992-2004  
Wartburg Theological Seminary  
Dubuque, Iowa

### Organizations

American Academy of Religion  
Academy of Homiletics  
Association of Practical Theology  
Academy of Religious Leadership  
International Academy of Practical Theology  
Societas Homiletica

### Leadership

Presider, ELCA Conference of Seminary Presidents, 2015-2017  
Founder and co-convenor, Practical Theology group, American Academy of Religion, 2006-2008  
Co-convenor, Hermeneutics and Biblical Study group, Academy of Homiletics, 2005-2010  
Secretary, International Academy of Practical Theology, 2005-2009  
Board of Directors, The Louisville Institute, 2004-2013  
Editorial board, *Journal of Religious Leadership*, 2002-2005  
English language managing editor, *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 2002-2012  
President, Association of Practical Theology, 2002-2004  
Executive Committee, Association of Practical Theology, 2001-2006

## Publications

### Books

*Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), co-authored with Dorothy C. Bass, Kathleen A. Cahalan, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, and Christian B. Scharen.

*Knowing the Context: Frames, Tools, and Signs for Preaching*, Fortress Elements of Preaching, ed. O. Wesley Allen, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008) [also translated and published in Chinese and Indonesian].

*Church, Identity, and Change: Theology and Denominational Structures in Unsettled Times* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), co-edited with David A. Roozen.

*Preaching to Every Pen: Cross-Cultural Strategies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), co-authored with Thomas G. Rogers.

## Articles / Chapters

- “Centrifugal: Being a Public Church,” part of the “Deeper Understandings” series in *Living Lutheran* 1/3 (June 2016): 42-43.
- “What a congregation knows: The deep wisdom behind odd practices,” *The Christian Century* 133/9 (27 April 2016): 27-30.
- “Dancing: Moves and Rhythms That Engage Local Wisdom,” in *Christian Practical Wisdom: What It is, Why It Matters*, Dorothy C. Bass, Kathleen A. Cahalan, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, James R. Nieman, and Christian B. Scharen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), 88-118.
- “Congregational Studies,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 133-142.
- “On the Dynamic Relation between Ecclesiology and Congregational Studies,” *Theological Studies* 70/3 (September 2009): 577-599, co-authored with Roger Haight. Reprinted in *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Christian Scharen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 9-33.
- “Theology in the Sermon,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible Handbook of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 489-493.
- “Career Path, Life Stage,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible Handbook of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 257-258.
- “The Idea of Practice and Why It Matters in the Teaching of Preaching,” *Teaching Theology and Religion* 11/3 (July 2008): 123-133.
- “‘Liturgy and Life’: An Account of Teaching Ritual Practice,” in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 150-167.
- “Mapping the Field of Practical Theology,” in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 62-85, co-authored with Kathleen A. Cahalan.
- “Why the Idea of Practice Matters,” in *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy*, ed. Thomas G. Long and Nora Tubbs Tisdale (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 18-40.
- “What Good Are Denominations?” *Zion’s Herald* 179/6 (November/December 2005): 35-36, 43.
- “The Theological Work of Denominations,” in *Church, Identity, and Change: Theology and Denominational Structures in Unsettled Times*, ed. David A. Roozen and James R. Nieman (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 625-653.
- “Introduction,” in *Church, Identity, and Change: Theology and Denominational Structures in Unsettled Times*, ed. David A. Roozen and James R. Nieman (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 1-34, co-authored with David A. Roozen.
- “An Ecclesiological Perspective on the Role of Scripture for Preaching,” in *Papers of the Academy of Homiletics 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting* (Claremont: 4-6 December 2003), 62-66.
- “Preaching as Words of God in a Multi-Faith Society,” *The Clergy Journal* 80/2 (November/December 2003): 3-5.

“Attending Locally: Theologies in Congregations,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 6/2 (fall 2002): 198-225.

“Practice *Where* You Preach: Conditions for Good Preachers,” in *The Difficult but Indispensable Church*, ed. Norma Cook Everist (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 105-113.

“Images for Preaching” [seventeen exegetical synopses of lectionary texts], in *Sundays and Seasons: Worship Planning Guide, Cycle A, 1999*, gen. ed. Frank Stoldt (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998), 50-129.

“What Is Preaching?” in *What Is Changing in Eucharistic Practice? Open Questions in Worship*, ed. Gordon Lathrop, vol. 5 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1995), 6-13.

“Three Thuds, Four D’s, and a Rubik’s Cube of Children’s Sermons,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22/4 (August 1995): 259-263.

“Preaching that Drives People from the Church,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 20/2 (April 1993): 106-115. Reprinted in *A Reader on Preaching: Making Connections*, ed. David Day, Jeff Astley, and Leslie J. Francis (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2005), 247-254.

“A First Reading” [eleven exegetical synopses of lectionary texts], *Currents in Theology and Mission* 15/3 (June 1988): 302-317.

## Reviews

Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction*, in *Theology Today* 67/1 (April 2010): 99-101.

Richard R. Osmer. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*, and John Reader. *Reconstructing Practical Theology: The Impact of Globalization*, in *Homiletic* 34/2 (December 2009): 80-82.

Roger Haight, SJ, *Christian Community in History, vol. 3: Ecclesial Existence*, in *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 16/3 (July 2009): 372-375.

Walter Brueggemann, *The Word That Redescribes the World: The Bible and Discipleship*, in *Theology Today* 65/4 (January 2009): 541-543.

John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, in *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 14/2 (March 2007): 233-234.

David Lose, *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World*, in *Lutheran Quarterly* 20/3 (autumn 2006): 368-370.

Thomas G. Long, *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian*, in *Family Ministry* 19/2 (summer 2005): 85-87.

Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, in *Dialog* 38/2 (spring 1999): 153-156.

## Presentations

### Lectures / Sermons

“Church Leadership Challenges,” lecture for Senior Pastor Training Program sponsored by United Theological Seminary, Darien, Ill. (8 August 2018)

“Christian Vocation 1 – Creation,” “Christian Vocation 2 – Discipleship,” and “Christian Vocation 3 – Humility,” lectures for the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly, Rock Island, Ill. (19-

20 June 2015)

“Homiletical Theology Project Webinar,” presentation for the Boston University School of Theology, Boston, Mass. (25 February 2015)

“Speaking with Greater Boldness: Public Witness on the Model of Philippians,” four lectures for the Southeastern Iowa Synod Fall Theological Conference, Davenport, Iowa (28-30 September 2014), co-presented with Susan Briebl

“Why Synod? Why Bishops?” “What about This Synod?” “Where Are We Going?” and “Which Kind of Bishop?” lectures for the Saint Paul Area Synod Bishop’s Theological Conference, Trego, Wisc. (27-29 October 2013)

“Ministerial Wisdom,” presidential inaugural lecture at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Ill. (27 October 2012)

“Current Church Changes,” “Seen and Unseen,” and “Becoming *Ecclesia Crucis*,” lectures for the Bishop’s Convocation of the ELCA Eastern Washington – Idaho Synod, Walla Walla, Wa. (24-26 October 2011); and for the First Call Theological Education Annual Conference for the Six ELCA Synods of Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula, Marathon, Wisc. (7-9 November 2011)

“Situations are Not Simple: Reflections on *Knowing the Context* (2008),” 2011 Wertsch Lecture, St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Mo. (18 October 2011)

“Church Changes and Theological Education,” keynote address to the joint boards of Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn. (5 May 2011)

“Current Denominational Funding Patterns and Issues,” two presentations for the Mission Capacity and Funding Consultation, ELCA Living into the Future Together Task Force, Chicago, Ill. (5-6 August 2010), co-presented with David A. Roozen

“About Bodies and Christian Funerals,” keynote address for the Institute of Liturgical Studies, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind. (13 April 2010), co-presented with Thomas Schattauer

“Response to Thomas G. Long, *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*,” panel presentation for the Consultation on Accompany Them with Singing sponsored by the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, Louisville, Ky. (8 January 2010)

“Response to ‘Perspectives of Churchgoing Volunteers on Their Voluntary Service,’ by Henk de Roest and Herman Noordegraaf” and “Stimulating Examples of Ph.D. Research,” lectures for the “Human Flourishing: Exploring Protestant Goods in Changing Contexts” conference, Protestantse Theologische Universiteit, Kampen, The Netherlands (8-10 June 2009)

“Practical Theology and Teaching the Practices in Homiletics,” lecture at the Graduate School of Theology of Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea (29 May 2009)

“Search for a New Ecclesial-Congregational Identity of Small Churches” and “Ministerial Paradigm Shift from the Clerical to the Congregational,” lectures at the Seventh International Symposium of Practical Theology sponsored by the Graduate School of Practical Theology, Icheon, South Korea (26-28 May 2009)

“Response to ‘Does This Text Have a Future?’ by Mary Hinkle Shore,” lecture for the Hein-Fry Lecture Series XIX at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Manchester, Conn. (22 March 2009)

“Know Where You Preach: How Sermons Connect with Contexts,” presentation for Educational Outreach event, Hartford, Conn. (8 October 2008)

“How can the church best foster a Christian way of life...?” panel presentation for the Christian Faith and Life / Religious Institutions Consultation at Louisville Institute, Louisville, Ky. (29-30 May 2008)

“A Voice in the Wilderness? Preaching and Its Publics” and “On the Green, on the Margin: Congregations in Public,” presentations for the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind. (31 March-2 April 2008)

“Theology in Congregations and How They Are Studied,” presentation for the “Ecclesiology and Ethnography: Exploring the Emerging Conversation between Theology and Congregational Studies” conference at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn. (27-29 September 2007)

“John 8:31-36 and Reformation Day,” presentation at the ELCA New England Synod Bishop’s Convocation, Worcester, Mass. (24 October 2006)

“A Sermon Preached on the Festival of St. Philip and St. James,” *Praxis* 18/2 (August 2006): 16.

“Denominational Challenges, Theological Identity, and Mutual Gifts in the ELCA,” two presentations for the ELCA Church Council, Lisle, Ill. (28-30 July 2006)

“What We Have Seen and Heard: Preaching in the Stream,” three presentations at the ELCA New England Synod Spring Theological Convocation, Manchester, Conn. (20 April 2006)

“Resounding Faith: Formation, Catechesis, and Preaching,” presentation for the Central Iowa Continuing Education Form, Ankeny, Iowa (20 January 2004)

“Kent Knutson Memorial Lectures,” four presentations for the GIFTS program of the ELCA Western North Dakota Synod, Minot, N.Dak. (26-27 September 2003)

“The Future Shape of Congregational Studies,” panel presentation for the “Congregational Studies: Roots Reaching to the Future” event, Hartford, Conn. (12 September 2003)

“Summary Remarks on Theology in Denominations,” presentation for the final reporting session of the “Organizing Religious Work” project, Hartford, Conn. (10 July 2002)

“Preaching and Worship in a Time of Crisis,” presentation for the “Ministry in the Heartland in the Midst of Global Tragedy” event, Dubuque, Iowa (20 October 2001)

“Attending Locally: Theologies in Congregations,” presentation for the “Teaching Leadership, Administration, and Finance at Theological Schools” conference, Chicago, Ill. (29 April 2001)

“Sun of Justice, Come: The Winter Cycle, Its Time and Texts,” continuing education event for the Tri-State Forum, Dubuque, Iowa (2 November 2000)

“Theologies in Congregations” lecture for the biennial Congregational Studies Institute, Hartford, Conn. (2000-2004)

“Local Catholicity and the Marks of the Church,” presentation for the Lutheran World Federation teleconference on “Communion, Community, Society” (18 September 1999)

“Common Signs: Local Expressions of the Whole Church” continuing education event for the South West Area Ministry, Castle Rock, Wisc. (26 January 1999)

“The Challenge of Multicultural Preaching,” presentation to cluster meeting of the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago D.Min. program, Dubuque, Iowa (30 November 1998)

“Preaching as a Social Act,” lectures for Core III seminar for three years of the ACTS D.Min. in Preaching program, Chicago, Ill. (1998-2001)

“Wisdom and Preaching,” panel presentation for the annual meeting of the Association of Practical Theology, St. Louis, Mo. (18 April 1998)

“Local Theologies,” first call continuing education event for the ELCA Minneapolis and St. Paul Area Synods, St. Paul, Minn. (16 April 1997)

“Thinking Your Way through Your Cultural Context,” certification school for the Center for Youth Ministries, Dubuque, Iowa (5 June 1995)

“Literary Genres and Preaching on Luke,” continuing education event for the L’Chaim: Iowa Center for Theology and Life, Waverly, Iowa (8 November 1994)

“Preaching, Children’s Sermons, and the Word,” presentation for five certification schools for the Center for Youth Ministries, Dubuque, Iowa (1994-1997)

### **Essays**

“Four descriptive tasks” prepared for the “Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA” task force on synods, Chicago, Ill.

“As well known yet unknown” prepared for the “Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA” task force on synods, Chicago, Ill.

“What then should we do?” prepared for the “Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA” task force on synods, Chicago, Ill.

“Synods, but what kind?” prepared for the “Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA” task force on synods, Chicago, Ill.

“An Account of Teaching Practices,” prepared for the “Seminar on Practical Theology and Christian Ministry,” Indianapolis, Ind.

“Why Practices Matter in the Teaching of Preaching,” prepared for the “Consultation on Teaching Homiletics,” Crawfordsville, Ind.

“The Concept, Adequacy, and Use of Frames/Lenses,” prepared for the semiannual meeting of the Congregational Studies Project Team, Cape Cod, Mass.

“Research Strategies for Denominational Theologies,” prepared for the “Organizing Religious Work” project, Hartford, Conn.

“What Counts as Theology?” prepared for the “Organizing Religious Work” project, Hartford, Conn.

“The Use and Limits of Narrative for Congregational Studies,” prepared for the “Congregations in Changing Communities” project, Atlanta, Ga.

“A New Way to Do Theology Locally,” prepared for the Center for Theology and Land, Dubuque, Iowa

### **Projects**

#### **Grants**

Recipient and director of the “New Circles of Learning for Engaged Scholars Studying Congregations” grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. (2012-2015)

Recipient and director of the “Planning New Resources and Audiences for Engaged Scholars Studying Congregations” grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. (2011)

Recipient and director of the “Enlarging the Conversation of Engaged Scholars Studying Congregations” grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. (2008-2011)

Recipient and director of the “Discerning Theologies: New Methods for Studying Congregations” grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. (2006-2008)

Recipient and director of the “Learning Communities: Pedagogies for Congregational Change” grant from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning (2002-2003)

Recipient and director of the “Common Signs: Local Expressions of the Whole Church” grant from the Louisville Institute (1998-1999)

### **Collaboration**

Consultant and facilitator for the “Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA” Conference of Bishops task force on synods, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Chicago, Ill. (2011-2012)

Member of the “*Phronesis* and Practical Theology” study group sponsored by the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, Valparaiso, Ind., (2007-)

Presider for the “Political Aspects of Practical Theology” session sponsored by the Practical Theology group, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Washington, D.C. (20 November 2006)

Member of the “Congregational Studies Project Team” meeting semiannually in Miami, Fla. and Centerville, Mass. (2006-)

Participant in the “Seminar on Practical Theology and Christian Ministry” co-convened by Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra through The Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, Indianapolis, Ind. (2004-2006)

Presider for the “Horizons in Practical Theology: Religious Practices as a Context for Interreligious Engagement” session sponsored by the Association of Practical Theology, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, Tex. (20 November 2004)

Consultant to the “Faith as a Way of Life” grant program, Yale Center for Faith and Culture, New Haven, Conn. (24 September 2004)

Participant in the “Consultation on Teaching Homiletics” convened by Thomas Long and Nora Tubbs Tisdale, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning, Crawfordsville, Ind. (2002-2004)

Consultant to the Health Task Force of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church, facilitated by Criterion Consulting, Evanston, Ill. (22 March 2002)

Organizer and convener for the “International Conference of Lutheran Scholars of Homiletics” held at the Wittenberg Center of the ELCA, Wittenberg, Germany (15-17 September 2000)

Theological consultant to the “National Congregational Studies Seminar” project directed by Carl S. Dudley, Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Hartford, Conn. (April 2000)

Participant in the “Teaching the Practices of Ministry” consultation co-convened by Herbert Anderson and Lucinda Huffaker, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning, Crawfordsville, Ind. (1999-2001)

Coordinator of theological case writers for the “Organizing Religious Work” project directed by Nancy T. Ammerman, Adair T. Lummis, and David A. Roozen, Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Hartford, Conn. (1998-2002)

## Service

### Committees

Faculty Representative, Board of Trustees, 2007-2011  
Hartford Seminary

Chair, Academic Policies Committee, 2006-2012  
Hartford Seminary

Steering committee, "Cultivating Pastoral Leadership Grounded in Mission and Directed toward Mission" grant, directed by Craig L. Nesson, Wartburg Theological Seminary, 1999-2001

Chair, Educational Technologies Committee, 1995-1998  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

Chair, Globalization Committee, 1992-1998  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

### Programs

Director, Doctor of Ministry degree program, 2005-2011  
Hartford Seminary

Chair, Ministry Division of the faculty, 2001-2004  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

Coordinator, Master of Sacred Theology degree program, 2000-2004  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

### Community

Synodical Candidacy Committee, 2006-2011  
New England Synod, ELCA

Review Board for the Protection of Minors, 2002-2005  
Archdiocese of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa

Chair, Dubuque Area Parents and Friends of Talented and Gifted, 1997-1998  
Dubuque Community School District Review Committee, Talented and Gifted Program, 1997  
Dubuque, Iowa