

Rev. Zhenya Gurina-Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Ordained Elder
United Methodist Church
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Education

Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, TX

Ph.D., New Testament and Early Christian Literature (2012-2019)

Dissertation: "Begging For Their Daily Bread: Beggars-Centric Interpretations of Matthew 6"

This project presents beggars-centric hermeneutic, explores Matthew 6 through these particular interpretative lenses, and argues that this text could be both engaging and alienating beggars in the first-century Jesus movement. This study reconstructs the voices of beggars in antiquity that are often absent from the academic discourse.

Dissertation Committee: Dr. Warren Carter (Director); Dr. Francisco Lozada; Dr. Shelly Matthews

Minor Area: Hebrew Bible

Th. M., Biblical Studies (2010-2011)

Thesis: The Revelation of the Audience and the Confusion of the Disciples in Mark 4:35-41

This application of narrative and imperial criticisms examines how the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples in the boat during the storm extends beyond the narrative, engaging with the historical context of the Markan audience, likely located in Rome around the time of the Jewish rebellion. In doing so, it creates points of connection and separation between the disciples and the Gospel's original audience.

Thesis Committee: Dr. Warren Carter (director); Dr. Francisco Lozada

M.Div. (2006-2009)

Voronezh State University, Voronezh, Russia

B.A., M.A., summa cum laude (2000-2005)

Major: English Language
Minor: Spanish Language
Concentration: Cross-Cultural Communication

Certificates

Online Teaching Certificate, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX (2019)

A six-week online course that prepares instructors to teach in online or hybrid formats. The course covers topics such as creating learning objectives, comparing online and face-to-face courses, and evaluating online courses

Graduate Student Pedagogy Certificate, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX (2018)

A ten-week, hybrid professional development course that prepares Ph.D. candidates for teaching higher education courses.

Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX (2013)

A graduate certificate requiring twelve credit hours that recognizes a student's intensive investigation of issues related to women, gender, and sexuality in the context of their regular disciplinary graduate work.

Teaching and Research Experience

United Theological Seminary, La Casa de Estudios Hispana – M.Div. Program

Instructor, Introduction to New Testament, Fall 2024 (asynchronous, online, Spanish)

La Universidad del Centro Educativo Latinoamericano, Santa Fe, Argentina – Professional Development Program

Instructor, The Voices of Suffering, Resistance, and Hope in the Gospels, Fall 2024 (hybrid, online, Spanish)

St. Paul School of Theology – Course of Study

Instructor, Acts, Epistles and Revelation, Fall 2024 (hybrid, online, English)

Instructor, Acts, Epistles and Revelation, Summer 2024 (hybrid, online, English)

Instructor, Gospels, Fall 2023 (hybrid, online, English)

Instructor, Torah and Israel's History, Summer 2023 (hybrid, online, English)

Duke Divinity School, Hispanic-Latino/a Pastoral Initiative

Instructor, Introduction to the New Testament, Fall 2020 (synchronous, online, Spanish)

Perkins School of Theology – Course of Study

Instructor, The Gospels, Spring 2025 (hybrid, online, English)

Instructor, Torah and Israel's History, Summer 2024 (hybrid, online, English)

Instructor, Torah and Israel's History, Summer 2024 (hybrid, online, Spanish)

Instructor, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation, Summer 2023 (hybrid, online, Spanish)

Instructor, The Gospels, Fall 2020 (hybrid, online, Spanish)

Instructor, Introduction to the Old Testament, Summer 2019 (in-person, Spanish)

Instructor, Torah and Israel's History, Summer 2019 (in-person, Spanish)

Faculty Board member, 2020-2021

Seminario Juan Wesley, Ahuachapan, El Salvador – Course of Study

Instructor, Prophets, Psalms, and Wisdom Literature, December 2024 (in-person, Spanish)
Instructor, Introduction to Contemporary Theology, December 2024 (in-person, Spanish)
Instructor, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation, December 2023 (in-person, Spanish)
Instructor, Gospels, December 2019 (in-person, Spanish)
Instructor, Introduction to the Old Testament, December 2017 (in-person, Spanish)
Instructor, Torah and Israel's history, December 2017 (in-person, Spanish)
Instructor, Prophets, December 2015 (in-person, Spanish)
Instructor, Torah and Israel's history, December 2014 (in-person, Spanish)

Brite Divinity School

Research Assistant for Dr. Warren Carter, Fall 2013-Spring 2014

Moscow United Methodist Theological Seminary – B.A. and M.Div.

Instructor, Introduction to the New Testament, Summer 2013 (in-person, Russian)

Ministry Experience

First United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, TX, Associate Pastor of Discipleship (2018 - current)

- Congregational leadership
- Worship leadership and preaching
- Pastoral care
- Development and implementation of innovative ministry models
- Development and implementation of various leadership trainings for laity
- Development of Bible Study curriculums
- Development and leadership of spiritual retreats

Nueva Vida United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, TX, Pastor (2008 – 2012)

- Congregational leadership
- Worship leadership and preaching
- Pastoral care
- Director and instructor of the community ESL program

Christ United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, TX (2006 – 2008)

- Director of children's ministry
- Community outreach coordinator

New Commandment United Methodist Church, Voronezh, Russia (2002 – 2006)

- Director of Youth Ministry
- Director and instructor of ESL program for youth
- Translator for the executive team
- Translator for mission teams and English-speaking leaders

Pulpit Supply (Selected)

Brite Divinity School Chapel, Fort Worth, TX

Perkins Divinity School Chapel, Dallas, TX
First United Methodist Church, Rockwall, TX
First United Methodist Church, Crowley, TX
Arlington Heights United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, TX
New Riverside United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, TX
Iglesia Nueva Jerusalén, Ahuachapan, El Salvador

Church Affiliation

Ordained Elder in Full Connection, United Methodist Church, Horizon Texas Annual Conference

Member of the Board of Ordained Ministry (2022-2024)

- Mentoring candidates for ordained ministry
- Interviewing candidates for ordination (annual conference level)

Member of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (starting 2022)

- Interviewing candidates for ordained ministry (district level)
- Interviewing local pastors actively serving in the UMC churches

Grants and Awards

John Wesley Fellowship (2012)

Granville and Erline Walker Preaching Award (2007 and 2008)

Significant Publications

Books

Begging for Their Daily Bread: Beggar-Centric Interpretations of Matthew 6. Lanham: Fortress/Lexington, 2022

Commentary Entries

“Who Cares About the Damn(ed) Tree? Ecological Feminist Reading of Mark 11:12-14, 20-24” in Warren Carter, *Mark*, Wisdom Commentary Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2019)

“‘Master, let me regain my sight’ - Beggar-Centric Interpretation of Mark 10:46-52” in Warren Carter, *Mark*, Wisdom Commentary Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2019)

Journal Articles

“Bulls and Cows in the Animal Apocalypse: Gender Reading of 1 Enoch 83-90,” Enoch Graduate Seminar, Montreal, QC May 2014. Published in L. DiTommaso and G. Oegema (eds.), *New Vistas on Early Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016)

Book Chapters

“Pastoral Ministry (as an Associate Pastor)” in *What Can You Do with Your Bible Training?*, ed. by Brandon Benziger and Adam Day (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2023).

Other

Regular contributor to Daily Bread Devotional and Notes for the Day Devotional

Conference Papers

- Book Review – “Begging for Their Daily Bread: Beggar-Centric Interpretations of Matthew 6” by Zhenya Gurina-Rodriguez. Adam Winn (presiding), Helen Rhee (panelist), David Downs (Panelist), Steven Friesen (panelist). Society of Biblical Literature Conference Annual Meeting, Jesus Traditions, Gospels, and Negotiating Roman Imperial World Section, November 2023.
- “The Silence of the Lands in 1 Maccabees,” Southwest Commission on Religious Studies, Dallas, TX, February 2020.
- “All The Reasons To Worry: Reading Matthew 6:25-34 with the Poor of the First World,” Society of Biblical Literature Conference Annual Meeting, Poverty in the Biblical World Section, November 2019.
- “What is Caesar’s and What is God’s? Negotiating over Imperial Properties in the Gospel of Matthew,” Society of Biblical Literature Conference Annual Meeting, Jesus Traditions, Gospels, and Negotiating Roman Imperial World Section, November 2019.
- “Be Careful What You Ask For: Healing of Blind Bartimaeus From a Perspective of Beggars in the Roman Empire,” Southwest Commission on Religious Studies, Dallas, TX, March 2019.
- Response to Anders Runeson, “Who Killed Jesus and Why? The Jewish Nature of Matthew’s Imperial Polemics,” Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Jesus Traditions, Gospels, and Negotiating Roman Imperial World Section, November 2018.
- “Who Cares About the Damn(ed) Tree? – Ecological Reading of Mark 11:12-14,” North Texas Colloquium on Biblical Studies, Fort Worth, TX, October 2018.
- “Sarai – Victim, Prophetess, Deliverer, and Survivor (Genesis 12:10-20),” Society of Biblical Literature Conference Annual Meeting, Feminist Hermeneutics of the Bible Section, November 2017.
- “Bartimaeus, Lazarus, and Odysseus Walk into a Church – Beggar-Centric Interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:5-15,” Society of Biblical Literature Conference Annual Meeting, Jesus Traditions, Gospels, and Negotiating Roman Imperial World Section, November 2016.
- ““Babushka” Theology: Giving Out of Nothing”, World Methodist Council, Houston, September 2016.

Professional Development (selected)

- The Ministry Collaborative Cohort (2024-2025)
A two-year facilitated cohort of 9 clergy that is based in the same geographic location and is intentionally diverse theologically, racially, and gender-wise. The focus of the cohort is prophetic preaching that speaks to justice, inclusion and forward leadership in local churches.

- Mentorship with Rev. Phyllis Barren, LPC, Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care and Senior Ministries, FUMC FW
Regular collaborative projects and debriefs of various pastoral care examples in our ministry, especially in the contexts of grief, long-term illness, long-term caretaking, and caring for dementia relatives.
- The AI Dilemma: Balancing Innovation with Academic Integrity (November 3, 2024)
1-hour webinar facilitated by Brian Harfe (Senior Associate Provost of Academic Affairs, University of Florida), Cliff Archey (Lead PMM, Grammarly for Education), and Jenny Maxwell (Head of Grammarly for Education).
- Crafting Sacred Moments: A Webinar Series for Worship Planners (February-October, 2024)
5-session webinar designed to empower worship planners with a deep understanding of the theological underpinnings, practical considerations, and creative elements that contribute to meaningful worship experiences.
- “Addressing Representations of Jews and Judaism in Contemporary Christian Context” (November 29, 2023)
Training facilitated by Christopher J. Seeman, M.A., Ph.D., a representative of the Task Force: Addressing Representations of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Exegesis, Homiletics, and Catechesis, Catholic Biblical Association of America.