

eREACH

14.1

January 2024



Reflecting on REA's public statements
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Highlights from the 2023 Fall Gathering

On Wednesday, November 1st from 7 to 10 pm ET, participants from various corners of the globe came together for the 2023 informal online [Fall Gathering](#). The meeting commenced with a warm welcome and an opening prayer by our president Anne Walker. The gathering proceeded with updates from the REA, followed by a Governance & Circle Process Plenary led by Anne Walker and Christine Hong. Valuable insights were shared by a diverse group of REA scholars and practitioners during this session. The fall gathering concluded with various working groups convening in breakout rooms.

The plenary invited members to do a circle process together and engage around three prescient concerns:

- Living into our JEDI commitments
- How are these changes requiring us to govern, organize, and gather in different ways?
- How is the way we govern changing the way we practice RE and produce RE scholarship?

A video recording of the session is available [at the REA YouTube site](#).

REA Board is having a discussion regarding REA statements

The REA Board concluded our Fall Board retreat, shortly after the November 2023

Fall Gathering. Your board wanted to inform you that at our recent fall board meeting, a discussion unfolded concerning the nature of statements and our role as a statement-making organization, prompted by the events involving Palestine and Israel.

Despite engaging in thorough deliberations, the board has not reached a definitive conclusion on this matter. The ongoing dialogue is set to continue during our upcoming board meeting. We want to inform our members that we are actively addressing this issue, yet no resolution has been reached at this point.

Our 2024 annual meeting will continue to be fully online — Apply for regional gatherings by January 31st!

In the era of post Covid-19 pandemic, the advantages of fully embracing online interactions are becoming apparent. With the annual meeting continuing online, our international participation has more than doubled, fostering learning across significant geographical distances.

However, recognizing the value of in-person gatherings for learning and creativity, the REA Board encourages members to organize regional or local meetings. The Board is committed to providing financial support for such gatherings, which can coincide with the annual meeting, align with online sessions, or occur independently before or after the main event. To facilitate this, the Board has allocated funds and invites individuals interested in organizing regional meetings to submit a brief application outlining their plans and the necessary support they require.

Given the start of the semester for many at this time the steering committee thought that extending the deadline to the end of January on the 31st might offer more grace and possibly get more regional gathering proposals.

You can find [full details and a form for applying for a regional meeting grant](#) on our website, the deadline is January 31, 2024.

Submit a proposal for our upcoming annual meeting in July 2024

The [Call for Proposals submission process is now live on our website](#). The world is on fire: we know it in our bones and feel it in our hearts. Science, sociology and other disciplines describe dire scenarios as oceans rise, cities warm, and species decline. We know humanity's most vulnerable populations will suffer most severely. These challenging times demand our attention as religious educators, in and out of institutions, to mitigate harm when possible, create new rituals of grief and lament when needed, and stir human creativity on behalf of all beings.

We envision a host of interdisciplinary conversations that can help religious educators integrate climate justice, climate grief, and climate hope for our planetary community into their practice of education and formation in all contexts, offering wisdom and leadership around the following questions:

- Where is religious education for climate justice happening in the larger ecosystem of change-making institutions, arts-based organizations, decolonizing movements, and activist communities? How might we further support it?
- What pedagogies for social change are religious communities practicing as they collaborate at the intersections of climate justice movements?
- What rituals of grief, mourning, confession, and lament are people using as we witness the demise of species, communities, and lifeways?
- What rituals of celebration and earth-honoring are people creating or re-envisioning to rally fuller participation with the Beloved Community reflected in all of Creation?
- What spiritual practices foster a deepening of our connection to nature, understanding humans both as agents of change and as part and parcel of nature?
- How might our religious language transform to communicate the reality of Creation as a sentient subject rather than an object separate from its human inhabitants?
- As global political decision makers move toward fuller recognition of the climate crisis, how are faith communities leaning into these larger systemic moves to effectively promote ecological health and well-being?

Please review our [Call for Proposals](#) for more details about this theme and the proposals we will welcome. The CFP electronic submission process is now live, with a deadline for proposals of January 31, 2024.

Submitting a proposal for REA 2024? See if yours qualifies for a Wornom Innovation Award!

If you are a student, RE practitioner, or “emerging scholar” (i.e., someone who is relatively new to the field of RE), *and* you plan to submit a proposal on climate change that is innovative as well as practical, then you are strongly encouraged to [apply for a 2024 Wornom Award](#). The process has never been easier!

For years, the REA has utilized the Wornom Fund to provide small grants for innovative projects in religious education. For 2024, we are modifying the traditional grant structure, offering three awards to select applicants. Instead of submitting a separate proposal, all you have to do is indicate that you would like your RIG or Collaborative Proposal for REA2024 to be considered for the award, by [checking the appropriate box on the REA2024 Proposal Submission page](#).

A Wornom Award this year entitles you to (a) a **\$500 award**, (b) a **year-long membership** to REA, and (c) **coaching sessions** to help develop your project into a publishable paper, a curriculum, a research project, or whatever the next logical step might be.

In return, you will be asked to submit your proposal about two weeks earlier than you would have to otherwise, so that the Committee has enough time to read and select proposals before the conference. Also, if you are selected, you will participate in an additional open collaborative workshop/discussion with the other finalists towards the end of the conference, where you can reflect on your own projects, as well as exchange ideas and inspiration with your fellow finalists.

(Note: Your RIG or Collaborative proposal could involve reflection and analysis of an existing innovative project or workshop, or delineate a formal research project, or propose distinct practical steps for a future initiative, workshop, etc. There are many acceptable options here, as long as the proposal has a practical intent to address the issue of climate change. See the [Wornom Award landing page](#) for a fuller explanation of the criteria and process.)

We hope that this approach will encourage more people to apply, and to submit proposals for REA2024, particularly in a year where the conference theme is so urgent and in need of provoking and diverse ideas and approaches. So if you think you might be eligible, please keep Wornom in mind as you develop and submit your proposals! If you have any questions you are encouraged to reach out to Josh Lunde-Whitler, Chair of the Harper-Wornom Committee, at jlundewhitler@gmail.com.

Propose a theme for our 2025 annual meeting

Our meetings are in some ways like gears in a machine — one begins spinning which touches off the next. Although we have not yet held our 2024 annual meeting, we are already seeking proposals for an overall program theme for our 2025 meeting. Planning starts well ahead, because of our desire to have an entire issue of our journal focused on the theme, as well as giving people lots of time to consider what they might like to share by way of their research and practice. The Board has discerned that the 2025 annual meeting will continue to be fully online.

[Proposals are submitted online](#), reviewed by the Steering Committee, and then all viable proposals will be put to a vote by the membership. Our executive secretary, JEDI officer, and networking coordinator are pleased to answer questions and support your proposal. The final deadline for proposals of a program theme for the 2024 annual meeting is January 31, 2024.

Meet REA Members

Within our vibrant community, comprised of dedicated members actively contributing to the global field of religious education, we are delighted to introduce some of our esteemed members. Their diverse backgrounds and expertise form a rich tapestry within our association, reflecting the breadth and depth of experiences that enrich our shared commitment to advancing religious education worldwide.

Given that the 2024 annual conference is now being held online, this eReach publication strives to forge a more profound connection with our members. Beyond featuring their publications, we aim to provide a more intimate introduction to each member. Allow us to present some remarkable members, providing glimpses into their significant professional work and highlighting the invaluable perspectives they bring to our shared mission.

Rev. Dr. Hyun-Sook Kim



The Rev. Dr. Kim graduated from Yonsei University with a Bachelor's degree in Education and Yonsei Union Theological Seminary with a Master's degree. She further pursued studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in the United States, earning both an M.A. and a Ph.D. Currently serving as a professor in Christian Education at Yonsei Union Theological Seminary.

Her authored works include "The Future of Protestant Religious Education in an Age of Globalization" (co-authored, Waxmann, 2018) and "Christian Education for Postconventionality." She also published numerous articles such as "Moving Beyond the Clerical Paradigm: Practical Theology in the Korean Context (2022)," "Beyond Doubt and Uncertainty: Religious Education for a Post-Covid-19 World (2021)," "Seeking Critical Hope in a Global Age: Religious Education in a Global Perspective (2015)," and "Multicultural Religious Education in a Trinitarian Perspective (2012)."

She served as President at the Korean Society of Christian Religious Education for 2023. She shared her experience with REA.

"With a history of 62 years, the Korean Society of Christian Religious Education has played an important role in the academic development of Christian education in Korea and as a forum for scholars' academic discourse.

I was very happy to have the opportunity to serve as president of this society. I am very pleased to be able to provide a forum for academic discourse to discuss the public function of Christian education. While acknowledging the members' diverse theological positions and generational differences, I have tried to provide an opportunity to come together and discuss the past, present, and future of Christian education."

- Hyun-Sook Kim

Rev. Dr. Rebecca L. Davis



The Rev. Dr. Rebecca L. Davis is a Minister of the Word and Sacrament and a Certified Christian Educator in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

She graduated from Marshall University with a Bachelor's degree and Union Theological Seminary with a Master's degree. She further pursued studies at Presbyterian School of Christian Education and Theological Seminary in the United States, earning an M.A. C. E. She earned her Ph.D. at Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education.

Union Presbyterian Seminary formally inaugurated Rev. Dr. Rebecca L. Davis as the Sarah Belk Gambrell Professor of Christian Education at Sharon Presbyterian Church on December 2nd, 2023. In her inauguration, Dr. Davis presented “Embracing the Imaginable Possibilities: Educational Leadership for Bold Faithfulness in the Church and World.”

“One of her deepest passions is child advocacy, which called her to serve as Coordinator of the Religious Action Division for the Children’s Defense Fund in Washington, DC and contract staff for the National Council of Churches’ Committee on Justice for Children and their families. Dr. Davis focuses on new approaches for compelling and transforming teaching, forming faith for public engagement and emancipatory pedagogy.”

- Union Presbyterian Theological Seminary News Room

Eunjin Jeon, Ph.D. Student

REA Student Representative



Eunjin Jeon is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology, researching on the intersectionality of Korean popular culture, body theology, and educational practice.

She shared her experience with REA and what she advocates as a student representative.

“Since 2019, I have been an active member of the Religious Education Association. My involvement began during my Master of Theology studies at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, where I attended an in-person conference in Canada. The REA has significantly influenced my academic path, providing profound insights into my scholarly discourse within the association and fostering global networking opportunities. The AANARE group, in particular, offers crucial solidarity and a sense of belonging for me.

Within the REA, I serve as a student representative, advocating for mutual support among students throughout their academic journeys. I strongly believe in both formal and informal mentoring sessions, which not only offer practical wisdom from scholars in diverse disciplines but also help students with their vocational discernment within their academic paths. I envision this community as a platform for ongoing personal and academic growth both globally and regionally, welcoming all those interested in religious education.”

- Eunjin Jeon



eREACH is a newsletter of the Religious Education Association, an Association of Professors, Practitioners, and Researchers in Religious Education.

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