

# eREACH

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July 2024



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## Exciting plans for the REA Annual Meeting 2024 in July!

We are now just a day away from REA2024, our annual meeting July 8-12. We will be exploring the theme “**Dear Earth: Innovating Religious Education Through the Lens of Climate Justice.**” 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. Our program chair, Dori Baker and Wanda Stahl, has worked hard with the REA Board to put together a compelling program that will take place entirely online using the Zoom platform.

The online conference is included with your membership fees, which means that you have to be a current member to receive the various zoom links. The zoom links are only emailed to you in the half hour before the session. The link will also be on the schedule for every session when the session is active and you are logged in. On that note, we ask that you sign up for sessions [using our online schedule](#) so that we can facilitate good moderation and so that you can access the various resources — complete papers, workshop outlines, and other additional tools — that you will need to engage fully in the meeting.

There is still time to register and nominate people for a year's [trial membership](#). Nominate someone who has never been to REA before for a free trial membership. Doing so means they will have access to the annual meeting and one year of digital access to REA journal.

Plenary sessions are organized in collaborative and experiential ways that draw on wisdom from scholars and practitioners across the globe. You can find a robust set of biographies and other information at the conference website. Here is a sneak peak of the many sessions that will occur in this learning space:

### **Monday, July 8 plenary: Refugia Futures and Corridors of Belonging**

The biological concept of refugia is used as a metaphor by [Debra Rienstra](#) to highlight the importance of local focus combined with global connection. Rienstra will moderate this panel conversation for [Daniel Foor](#), and [Melanie Harris](#), engaging worldviews informed by Ecowomanist, Animist, and Christian perspectives.

### **Tuesday, July 9 plenary: The Harmony Way: Decolonizing Our Worldviews for Climate Futures**

Indigenous scholars and practitioners Randy and Edith Woodley use multiple platforms to help people deconstruct colonial worldviews from Native American perspectives. These platforms include academic books, children's books, pedagogical innovation of theological education, regenerative Indigenous design, and hosting learning journeys at their farm near Portland, OR. This dialogical session will include Randy and Edith's story of founding [Eloheh Indigenous Center for Earth Justice and Eloheh Farm & Seeds](#) and what they are learning as they invite people to transform to a more indigenous worldview.

### **Tuesday, July 9 plenary: Fire Salons: Grief Processing and Mobilization in Sacred Community**

In a world on fire, grief cannot be held alone. Processing in a beloved community moves us towards healing and collective action. In the fall of 2021 at Harvard Divinity School, HDS Author in Residence Terry Tempest Williams and former Religion and Public Life Climate Justice researcher, Anna Del Castillo, shared a vision of building a circle community to process grief, climate catastrophe, and the devastation of an ongoing pandemic. Around an outdoor fire-pit, sacred conversations and healing transpired. Join Fire Salon facilitators, [Maya Pace and Anna Del Castillo](#) to learn about circle processing and leave inspired to spark your own Fire Salon.

**Wednesday, July 10 plenary: Beautiful Journeys Back to Earth, Land, and Justice: Profits and Prophets in Food and Faith**

The Black Church Food Security Network is a national network of Black churches organizing to help Black churches use their assets to establish gardens on their land, host miniature farmer's markets, and buy wholesale from Black farmers. This conversation between its founder [Heber Brown](#) and religious educator [Timothy L. Van Meter](#) will illuminate challenges and opportunities in addressing food insecurity.

**Thursday, July 11 plenary: Spiritual Leadership for a Climate Changed World**

The mission of [The BTS Center](#), the successor organization to Bangor Theological Seminary, now based in Portland, ME, USA, is to catalyze spiritual imagination with enduring wisdom for transformative faith leadership in a climate-changed world. In this session, members of the The BTS Center staff will share stories and learnings based on their formational programming and applied research with spiritual leaders and faith communities

**Thursday, July 11 Circle Process: Conversation on Religious Education in Violent Times**

For this one hour session, we welcome anyone with a story to share how you are living into your vocation as a religious educator in times of crisis, violence, and grief. REA board members and staff will co-facilitate circle processes in small groups and hold space for storytelling. We invite you to bring personal stories as scholars and practitioners navigating teaching and learning in turbulent times.

**Friday, July 12 plenary: Art, Theater and Ritual in Fostering Climate Justice**

This session will include a viewing of the original play "When Wajcha Meets Pachamama" by [Cláudio Carvalhaes](#), filmed at Union Theological Seminary in January 2024. Following the play, Cláudio will lead a conversation about the role of ritual, art, and theater in fostering climate justice around the world.

In addition to these plenary sessions, many members are excited to share their work through breakout and poster sessions. You can read the research interest group papers for the sessions you choose by clicking on the session in the schedule, and then on the link within the description. You must be logged in to access the papers.

Despite the ongoing challenge of different time zones, there will be multiple ways to engage with other members during the meeting, including working groups and student gatherings.



## Live translation offered in Spanish, Korean, and Indonesian

REA continues to offer language translations for plenaries. Language translation was first offered for the 2023 REA annual meeting, asking the following question: What if we could bring the multiplicity of lingual diversity together to our gatherings beyond performative practice? This year, we continue this initiative. In addition to Spanish and Korean, we have added Indonesian.

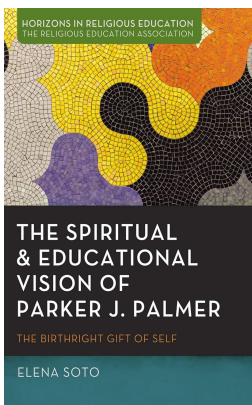
## Join an in-person gathering along with our online meeting

The REA Board has made available funds for members to plan regional gatherings that support in-person engagement in addition to our annual meeting. Student gathering have already been held on April 26th hosted by Dr. Mark Chung Hearn. In this gathering Ph.D. students and recent graduates in Religious Education gathered for networking.

Two more regional gatherings are coming up!

1. New England Regional Gathering on July 9th, 2024 hosted by Wanda Stahl ([click to send an email for questions](#))
2. Greece Regional Gathering on November 7th-11th, 2024 hosted by Tony Vrame ([click to send an email for questions](#))

## HORIZONS New Book!



The *HORIZONS* for Religious Education book series is pleased to introduce the latest book by REA member, **Dr. Elena Soto**, titled ***The Spiritual and Educational Vision of Parker J. Palmer: The Birthright Gift of Self*** (February 2024). As stated in the editorial foreword, “Dr. Soto takes us onto a journey in which we learn that the cultivation of one’s spiritual self is the key to authenticity and wholeness. Furthermore, the cultivation of one’s spiritual self has the potential to renew the art of teaching, the way we develop curriculum and even how one envisions the entire educational experience.” The book itself emerged from Dr. Soto’s transformative encounters with the person and the writings of Parker Palmer. We invite you to read, engage, and teach the book as a practice of religious educational encounter.

Elena Soto is chair of the Religious Studies Department at Fordham Preparatory School in New York.

The *HORIZONS* in Religious Education series publishes manuscripts defining key directions in the field of religious education. The REA’s commitments to interfaith, intercultural, and international conversations about the field guide manuscript selection.

Please visit the REA’s website for other *HORIZONS* titles: <https://religiouseducation.net/horizons/>.

## Apply for Executive Secretary and JEDI Officer

### Executive Secretary

You are invited to apply for the position of executive secretary of the REA. Dr. Lakisha Lockhart is taking another step after four years of dedicated service to the association. The primary tasks of the executive secretary are administering all aspects of the association and overseeing daily operations. The executive secretary works closely with the REA networking coordinator, the program chair of the annual meeting, the officers, and the board of directors to see that the mission of the REA thrives. A [full position description](#) as well as list of current job responsibilities is available online.

A successful executive secretary will have an advanced degree in and knowledge of the field of religious education. The person will have a high degree of self-direction and administrative competence as well as collaboration and communication skills. The REA is committed to inclusion and embodies commitments to interfaith, international, and intercultural religious education.

Questions can be directed to the search committee chair, Dr. Denise Janssen ([revdlj\[at\]att\[dot\]net](mailto:revdlj[at]att[dot]net)). Please **apply by** sending a letter, CV, and list of three references (please use a .doc format) to Dr. Denise Janssen ([revdlj\[at\]att\[dot\]net](mailto:revdlj[at]att[dot]net)). Candidates will be accepted as long as the position remains open.

### Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Officer

You are invited to apply for the Justice, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Officer (JDEI Officer) of the REA. Dr. Christine Jean Hong is taking another step after two years of dedicated service to the association. This individual would be someone with interest, commitment, and expertise in creating diverse, inclusive, and equitable spaces and events. This individual would be someone with interest and expertise in connections among diverse groups of individuals – through social media, pop-up workshops, and other events — a colleague in religious education who will enable REA members and friends to not only see and understand the necessity of diversity, inclusion and equity work, but to experience it in action through various events, conversations, and organizational actions.

The JDEI Officer will collaborate with the REA leadership to assess the need for, and recommend and/or lead training initiatives on racial justice, cultural diversity, gender differences, disability, sexual harassment, and other topics designed to increase awareness and support of equity and inclusion values. The JDEI Officer, working closely and collaboratively with the president, REA leadership and the staff, would also ensure that REA's leadership make-up, programs, and operations embody its declared diverse, equitable and inclusive commitments. The DEI officer will help with building more inclusive and equitable relationships across our current membership and with other groups and organizations, providing leadership in hosting regional gatherings and listening sessions, and naming areas where diversity, equity and inclusion are needed.

Time commitment would be approximately 20 hours each month, plus REA Board & Steering Committee meetings and the Annual Meeting. This position reports to the Board of Directors. [Compensation and many more details are available online.](#)

Questions can be directed to the search committee chair, Dr. Patricia Bonilla ([bonillaxpatricia \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:bonillaxpatricia@gmail.com)). Please **apply by** sending a letter, CV, and list of three references (please use a .doc format) to Dr. Patricia Bonilla ([bonillaxpatricia \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:bonillaxpatricia [at] gmail [dot] com)). Candidates will be accepted as long as the position remains open.

## Member news

We are excited to hear from our members and share your accomplishments and updates with the entire association. If you have any recent news, achievements, publications, awards, retirements, or other noteworthy events, we would love to include them in the next issue of our newsletter.

Please send your contributions to [nc@religiouseducation.net](mailto:nc@religiouseducation.net). Whether it is a new research project, a successful collaboration, or a personal milestone, your news helps us stay connected and celebrate our vibrant community.

Thank you for your participation, and we look forward to showcasing your stories!

## Please remember to choose sessions for the meeting!

All the details you need for registering for our annual meeting in July can be found on the meeting website: <https://religiouseducation.net/rea2024/>. Note that there are no additional fees (beyond membership) for coming to this meeting, but we do urge you to register your choices for sessions on the website. You will need to log in to keep track of what you've chosen.

## Please consider supporting our organization financially

We continue to work on creating and maintaining effective resources and staffing for our work together as an association. Our staff all donate significant amounts of their time and effort far beyond what we can pay them to do, and we are also continually seeking ways to support people new to the scholarly parts of our association, as well as to the practices of religious education more generally. We are grateful for any support you can offer us. [Please donate to our work together!](#)



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

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