Eat, Drink and Be Spiritual

At Ministers' Week we will discover how early Christianity first began to take shape at the meal table and rediscover what it means to be a community gathered at table today.

Featured Speakers

Hal Taussig and Dennis E. Smith have been friends and research colleagues since they met in the early 1980s at the Jesus Seminar. In 1990, their first collaboration on the subject of ancient meals resulted in the book, ***Many Tables: The Eucharist in the New Testament and Liturgy Today***. Currently, they are co-chairing an ongoing research seminar on Meals in the Greco-Roman World.

Hal Taussig, PhD

Hal Taussig received his MDiv from Methodist Theological School of Ohio and his PhD from Union Institute. He is Visiting Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and pastor of Chestnut Hill United Methodist Church in Philadelphia. Hal recently published his breakthrough study, ***In the Beginning was the Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity***. He is co-editor of ***Constellation: Thinking Progressively About Christianity***, an online journal connected with the Center for Progressive Christianity, and has recently authored a major study of progressive Christianity. Hal describes himself as having chosen a lifelong bi-vocational calling both as a professor of biblical studies and as an active UMC pastor.

Dennis E. Smith, ThD

Dennis Smith received his MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary and his ThD from Harvard Divinity School. He is LaDonna Kramer Meinders Professor of New Testament at Phillips Theological Seminary and is an ordained Disciples minister. In 2003, Dennis published his major study of ancient meals, ***From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World***. Smith is also active in the storytelling world as an avid story listener and is editor of several volumes in ***The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible*** series. Dennis is married to his high school sweetheart, Barbara McBride-Smith and has a son, Adam who is a singer/songwriter living in Paris.

Alyce M. McKenzie, PhD

Alyce M. McKenzie received an MDiv from Duke Divinity School and a PhD in Homiletics from Princeton Theological Seminary. She is Professor of Homiletics at Perkins School of Theology and an ordained elder in the North Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Her research interests include preaching biblical wisdom from both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament and preaching the aphorisms and parables of the synoptic Jesus. Her most recent book is ***Novel Preaching: Tips from Today's Top Writers for Crafting Creative Sermons***, forthcoming in February 2010. She and her husband Murry live in Allen, Texas where they are active in the life of First United Methodist Church of Allen, singing in the choir and teaching Sunday School. Alyce is an avid fan of mystery novels, a student of yoga, and bakes fabulous oatmeal chocolate chip cookies.

Barbara McBride-Smith

Nationally-known storyteller Barbara McBride-Smith will perform at the Ministers' Week banquet. Barbara is regularly featured at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee, as well a host of other festivals including the National Festival of Homiletics and the International Storytelling Festival in Washington D.C. She is also a school librarian, an adjunct instructor in storytelling at PTS, and author of several books and audio CDs. Often asked how she got started telling stories, Barbara explains that she grew up in a storytelling family and, since her father and two sisters were deaf, she learned to talk for all of them.

For a more complete list of the published works of Smith, Taussig, McKenzie and McBride-Smith visit www.ptstulsa.edu.