2026 Call For Papers
The Evangelical Homiletics Society

Preaching Amid Society's Mental Health Crisis:
Seeking A Healthy Homiletic

Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

Each year the Evangelical Homiletics Society hosts its Annual International Scholars Conference. A key feature of the conference is the papers that members prepare and present to their peers. This is the heartbeat of our scholarly society, as members gather to encourage, query, and critique each other's scholarship. Professors of preaching and other scholars lay out their ideas that have an impact on the classroom and their potential publications.

The following is a call for papers for the upcoming conference that will take place October 15-17, 2026, at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, in La Mirada, California. The theme for our gathering is "Preaching Amid Society's Mental Health Crisis: Seeking A Healthy Homiletic."

With this them we are inviting preachers and scholars to explore the intersection of theology, psychology, and homiletics. Our hope is that people would advocate for a robust academic response to the worsening mental health crisis in the United States. Our invitation is to examine preaching in light of the mental health of the preacher and how it addresses specific mental health challenges within our congregations.

Topics addressing spiritual vitality, mentally healthy preaching, personal mental health, and pastoral care will be considered. We also encourage subjects such as the role that medication, counseling, and therapy should play in early 21st-century Christian practice. This includes, but is not limited to, anxiety disorders, phobias, mood disorders, depression, bipolar, eating disorders, PTSD, social isolation, loneliness, various forms of abuse/trauma (inclusive of that perpetuated by pastors and congregants), neurological conditions, caregiver stress, and suicide.

Our goal is to create a conference marked by an atmosphere of transparency where attendees leave healthier and are better equipped to prepare students for the rigors of preaching in pastoral ministry.

Although paper proposals may focus on other areas of homiletical research, preference will be given to those proposals that address the conference theme.

All proposals are evaluated by a blind jury of EHS members.

Note: Authors of papers selected for presentation will be required to provide a five-minute introductory/overview video that will be posted on the website with the completed paper

prior to the conference. More details on the content and submission of the video will be provided to those whose proposals are accepted.

To propose a paper, please complete the form linked below and submit it to Vice-President Casey Barton at papers@ehomiletics.org by April 30, 2026. You will be notified around May 30, 2026 if your paper has been selected for presentation. If the proposal is approved, you must submit your final paper by August 15, 2026 and video by August 31, 2026.

All EHS members are encouraged to consider submitting a paper proposal and plan to join us in person at Talbot School of Theology, in California.

Submission Process

Please download the 2026 Paper Proposal Form on the conference website (ehomiletics.org/conference), fill out the requested information, and submit your proposal to: papers@ehomiletics.org

Recommended Reading

Sensitive Preaching to the Sexually Hurting - Sam Serlo
The Emotionally Healthy Leader - Peter Scazzero
Unspeakable: Preaching and Trauma-Informed Theology - Sarah Davis
Preaching Hope in Darkness: Help for Pastors Addressing Suicide from the Pulpit - Scott Gibson and Karen Mason
Preaching to People in Pain - Matt Kim
The Wounded Minister - Guy Greenfield
Evangelical Anxiety: A Memoir - Charles Marsh
A Quiet Mind to Suffer With - John Andrew Bryant
A Christian's Guide to Mental Illness - David Murray and Tom Karel
Mental Health and Your Church - Steve Midgley and Helen Thorne
Pastors and Their Critics - Joel Beeke and Nick Thompson
Spurgeon's Sorrows - Zack Eswine
Relational Spirituality - Todd Hall

Recommended Research Questions

- What is the role of homiletics in cultivating congregational mental and emotional health? What are the limits?

- What are the prevalent biblical and theological frameworks regarding mental health in the context of preaching? How do we effectively proclaim health, wholeness, and

flourishing in a fallen world?

- What does it look like when a mentally healthy herald addresses the unique challenges of their congregation in their preaching?

- What current scholars or models integrate psychology, theology, and homiletics? Are there new models that can be proposed?

- How can one best address the congregation's mental health broadly (as a system) while also allowing for and addressing individual experiences from the pulpit? What are the implications for our preaching ministry?

- How does a preacher's mental health impact his/her preparation and delivery of the sermon? What tools or resources are available to measure a communicator's mental health?

- What are appropriate/biblically faithful ways of helping a congregation and homiletician work through mental health struggles?

- In what ways is the preacher a counselor? What are the boundaries?

- What are the most common examples of trauma and abuse in congregations (e.g., spiritual, emotional, sexual, financial, etc.) and how can preachers address them in their sermons?