

Call for Paper Proposals

International Sermon Studies Association (ISSA) Conference 2026

Theme: “Preaching at the Milestones”

Renaissance Hotel, Walnut Creek, California, 17-19 September

Submission Deadline: 31 July 2026

The theme for the 2026 International Sermon Studies Association Conference held in North America is “preaching at the milestones.” Milestones in 2026 include

- The 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks
- The 80th anniversary of Martin Niemöller’s 1946 lecture tour, featuring the famous lines “First, they came for the socialists...”
- The 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution
- The 845th anniversary of the birth of St. Francis of Assisi

We welcome proposals for papers or complete panels that explore how adherents to Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – lay figures as well as ministers, rabbis, imams, and monks – observe or commemorate these and other significant dates in civic and religious history.

On the “civic” side, topics might include

- The beginning or end of wars
- Manmade or natural disasters
- The election or assassination of prominent political figures
- National or international commemorations

Possible topics on the “religion” side include

- The “origin” date of churches/religious organizations
- The beginning of new leadership (e.g., the election of a pope), or the death of leaders
- The beginning or end of reformations or revivals
- Special anniversaries (Saints days; holy days; commemorations such as Yom Kippur or Ramadan; or landmarks such as the 1844 martyrdom of Joseph Smith or Great Disappointment of 1844 for Seventh-day Adventists)
- National or international commemorations involving religious figures

Topics may be grounded in any faith tradition, time period, or geographical location. We welcome contributions from working preachers, interested “lay people,” and academics.

Special consideration will be given to papers, panels, roundtables, or workshops/interactive training sessions which focus on the practical skill of preaching. In other words, papers or sessions which attempt to answer the question how a person, lay or professional preacher, would preach sermons about milestones.

We also welcome proposals for papers or complete panels on topics not directly related to the conference theme which represent new research, cutting-edge analysis, challenge orthodoxies, or provide guidance for best practices in preaching and sermon creation.

Last, we particularly welcome proposals from young and junior scholars. One objective of ISSA is to promote the study of preaching and sermon in the future. Therefore, proposals from scholars or practitioners/preachers presenting for the first time will also be given special consideration.

Proposals for single papers should include

- A paper title
- An abstract of 250-350 words
- A biographical overview including contact information

Proposals for complete panels should include the above information for each paper, along with a panel title and contact information for the moderator.

Proposals for workshops/training sessions should include

- Workshop/training session title
- An explanation of the objective of the workshop/training session (250-300 words)
- Titles of “papers,” if relevant
- A biographical overview of the participant or participants

Presenters may be invited to submit revised and expanded versions of their papers for possible inclusion in an edited collection to be published as part of De Gruyter Brill’s *Studies in Preaching and the Sermon* series.

Submit proposals to the ISSA program committee at arete@arete-excellence.com.