

Lilly Endowment to award \$75 million to help pastors preach better

by [Tracy Simmons](#)

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Valerie Bridgeman. (Courtesy image)

Valerie Bridgeman knows good preaching. Her dad was a pastor, and for 45 years now, she too has been behind the pulpit.

Currently, she serves as dean and vice president for academic affairs at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. She also teaches homiletics and Hebrew Bible at MTSO—and she still preaches.

“It’s always funny to me when people say, ‘Oh the homiletics teacher can preach,’” she said with a laugh. “Isn’t that what you want?”

More than a decade ago she founded WomanPreach!, which according to its website “brings preachers into full prophetic voice around issues of equity and justice in the pulpit and in the public arena.” The organization began as a training ground for women but is now open to all genders.

Now, in partnership with MTSO, WomanPreach! has \$1 million in funding from the Lilly Endowment as part of its [Compelling Preaching Initiative](#).

The new endeavor, announced November 30, will make \$75 million available to help Christian pastors, “strengthen their abilities to proclaim the Gospel in more engaging and effective ways.”

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