

Publisher's Foreword

As we outlined in the last issue, this is a year of transition for *Journal for Preachers*. How does anyone follow the high standards established by Erskine Clarke and the extraordinary group of colleagues he gathered over four decades? For all who worked with Erskine to offer these pages—serving as an advisory board member or associate editor, helping with the mail subscription letter, launching and curating the website, fielding questions and troubleshooting problems—we offer our heartfelt gratitude.

Last Spring, at the initiative of Erskine Clarke and Tom Long, and with Tom's assistance securing a generous grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, *JP* held a consultation in Atlanta. A dozen pastors—half *JP* subscribers and half not subscribers—met for a day of reflection about the past, present, and future of *Journal for Preachers*. We heard affirmation for the mission and heritage of *JP*. The changes in society, the church, and publishing were all apparent as we considered the vast difference in producing something like the journal in 2022 compared to its beginnings in the 1970's. With sermons now readily available on church websites, should they still be published in *JP*? If so, should we offer commentary or analysis alongside the sermons? Given the cost and the longer lead time, should we continue to publish a printed edition or do something that would be digital only? (As you can imagine, each of these, and many other questions, had passionate advocates on all sides.)

We will try to faithfully work through these questions in the coming months. One outcome of the consultation was unmistakable: *JP* needs to find a way to renew itself with younger generations of preachers. To this, Ted Wardlaw and I bring a singular commitment. We have recruited eight wonderful, diverse associate editors who are working with us on identifying the themes and writers for each issue. We hope to broaden and deepen the variety of voices you will hear in *JP*. We will listen with keen attention to what these associate editors raise from the front lines of ministry—just as we continue to listen carefully to the needs of those who been with *Journal for Preachers* for decades. How can we address the need to equip preachers for this pivotal time in the church and world? Trying to faithfully answer that question will be essential in determining what is addressed in these pages.

We offer our deep thanks to all who helped bring *Journal for Preachers* from its founding to this moment and added to its rich and relevant history along the way. And we are grateful for these new associate editors—Jerry Cannon, Matt Gavenata, Bridgett Green, Amy Miracle, Adam Mixon, Jessica Patchett, Katie Nakamura Rengers, and Betsy Swetenburg—for their commitment to helping us write the next chapter of *Journal for Preachers*.

Mark Ramsey