Public Services

David E. Schmersal, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chair

STEERING COMMITTEE

- David Schmersal, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chair
- Kaeley McMahan, Wake Forest University
- Gerrit van Dyk, Brigham Young University

MEMBERS PRESENT

- David Schmersal, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chair
- Donna Church, Concordia Seminary (St. Louis, MO)
- Jane Elder, Southern Methodist University
- Daniel Flores, Western Theological Seminary
- Sharon Gardoski, Clarks Summit University
- Steve Jamieson, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Denise McFarlin, Atla
- Kaeley McMahan, Wake Forest University
- Elizabeth Young Miller, Morvian College & Theological Seminary
- Juliana Morley, Biola University
- Jude Morrissey, Yale University
- Charlotte Nahon, Atla
- Steve Perisho, Seattle Pacific University
- Mary-Carol Riehs, Garrett Theological Seminary
- Alexis Weiss, Loyola Marymount University
- Brian Wright, Colorado Christian University

AGENDA

1) Update on Websites for Religion LibGuide
2) Touching base/catching up
3) Group discussion: How has the quarantine/COVID-19 affected your public services (circulation, reference)? Do you foresee any lasting changes?

1) Update on Websites for Religion LibGuide

After Atla assumed ownership of the *Websites on Religion* list created by Charles Bullinger and formerly maintained by the Wabash Center, Atla hired Jim Darlack to convert this content into a Libguide, available on Atla's website. Christine Fruin of Atla has asked members of the Public Services Interest Group and the World Religions Interest Group to collaborate with other members of Atla and of the wider realm of religious and theological studies to develop and maintain this LibGuide going forward.

Members of the PSIG and the WRIG met via Zoom on January 23 to discuss plans for the LibGuide. We have created a spreadsheet to help keep track of volunteers and areas of responsibility, and have identified two broad roles:

Coordinators:

- recruit and collaborate with content managers;
- vet websites proposed by content managers to ensure they conform with guidelines;
- are responsible for broader areas of the guide, have admin/editorial access to the LibGuide, and actually make the changes.

Content managers:

- discover and propose new, relevant websites for under-developed content areas;
- test existing links on a regular basis to ensure there are no broken links.

We have also identified the following criteria for evaluating websites:

- Websites that are sponsored by/affiliated with an academic institution or maintained by a faculty member at an institution (e.g., Assisting You to Learn).
- Official, organizational websites of various religious groups or denominations or historical societies.
- Websites that provide (legal) online access to relevant primary sources and to tools that help patrons to make use of such sources, such as lexicons (e.g., Perseus Project, CCEL, hymnary.org).

- Websites that provide access to a variety of texts that reflect various perspectives (vs. websites that seek to promote a single point of view).
- Websites that are regularly maintained and updated.
- Websites that we have used personally and found helpful (e.g., STEP Bible).

Developing this guide to curated, free, open access online resources in religion and theology will be useful not only for librarians but also for alumni and others who do not have access to subscription databases. It is our hope that the development of this guide will serve as a catalyst for the creation of additional stand-alone guides that will facilitate exploring individual faith traditions, their history, and their sacred texts in greater depth.
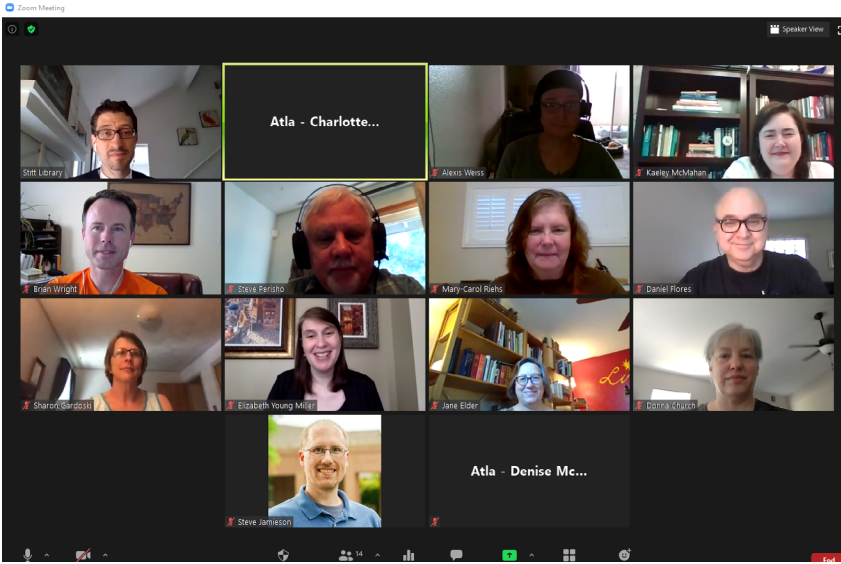
2) Touching base/catching up

Members of the PSIG, and others who joined us for the meeting, took turns introducing ourselves and noting our respective institutions.

3) Group discussion: How has the quarantine/COVID-19 affected your public services (circulation, reference)? Do you foresee any lasting changes?

Members of the group shared how the quarantine prompted by COVID-19 has affected our work and some members of the group shared examples of guides they have created:

- moravian.libguides.com/onlineresources [Online Resources LibGuide developed by librarians at Moravian]
- libguides.lmu.edu/covid19
- guides.westernsem.edu/covid-19
- guides.garrett.edu/spring-2020-special-resources
- www.covenantseminary.edu/update-on-library-services
- www.projectcora.org/library-collection/radar-challenge

Many members of the group indicated that their schools will be offering classes online, in part or entirely, and that fall orientation will be online.

2019–20 GROUP: [pictured, left to right] David Schmersal, Alexis Weiss, Kaeley McMahan, Brian Wright, Steve Perisho, Mary-Carol Riehs, Daniel Flores, Sharon Gardoski, Elizabeth Young Miller, Jane Elder, Donna Church, Steve Jamieson