

The Rev. Melody D. Knowles, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer
Professor of Old Testament
Virginia Theological Seminary and The General Theology Seminary
703-461-1725; mknowles@vts.edu

Education

- 2001 Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary. Dissertation: The Centrality of the Jerusalem Temple and Religious Practice of Yehud in the Persian Period (Advisor: Choon-Leong Seow)
- 1994 M.Div., Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey
- 1991 B.A., *summa cum laude*, Trinity Western University, Langley, BC, Canada
- In addition, I have taken various courses in online teaching, including Fundamentals of Online Teaching for Theological Educators, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018

Ordination

- 2004 Deacon, The Episcopal Church (Chicago, Bp. Scantlebury)
- 2004 Priest, The Episcopal Church (Chicago, Bp. Persell)

Positions

- 2022-present Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Professor of Old Testament, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria VA, and The General Theological Seminary, New York City
- 2013-2022 Vice President for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Old Testament, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria VA
- 2025-present Editorial Board member, *Biblical Interpretation* (Brill)
- 2022-present Associate Editor, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
- 2004-2013 Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago
- 1999-2004 Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago
- In addition, I have served as Parish Supply priest in the Episcopal Diocese of New York in 2009-2013, Acting Dean and President of VTS for 2016 (calendar year), Parish Associate (non-stipendiary) at St. Paul's, Alexandria for 2017-2020, Acting Director of the Center for Anglican Communion Studies at VTS for spring and summer 2017, Acting Director of the Bishop Payne Library for fall 2019, Chaplain at Trinity College, Oxford in spring 2021, Acting Director of Multicultural Ministries at VTS for fall 2021 and spring 2026, Acting Director of Contextual Ministry at VTS for spring and summer 2022, and Visiting Scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary in spring 2025

Publications: Books

- In process *Psalms III (Pss 107-150)*. Illuminations Commentary Series (under contract with Eerdmans).
- In process *Politics and Pieties in Psalm 132: The Reception and Appropriation of the Text from the Second Temple to Antebellum America* (under contract with Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, T&T Clark Bloomsbury, due 1 July 2027).
- In process *How to Read a Psalm* (tentative title).
- In process co-editing with Dorothea Erbele-Küster and Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, *The Book of Psalms*. Themes and Issues in Biblical Studies (under contract with Equinox Press).
- 2026 *Bible and Film: An International and Intercultural Exploration*. London: Wiley, 2026.
- 2006 *Contesting Texts: Jews and Christians in Conversation about the Bible* (editor and co-author of the Introduction), with John Pawlikowski, Esther Menn and Timothy Sandoval; Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Spring 2026

2006 *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora in the Persian Period.* Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies; Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Publications: Articles and Chapters

- In process "Introduction: Turning Points in the History of Psalms Scholarship in the Last Fifty Years." Pages xx-xx in *The Book of Psalms*. Edited by Dorothea Erbele-Küster, Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, and Melody Knowles. Sheffield: Equinox Press.
- In process "Translating the Psalms into Greek and Latin." Pages xx-xx in *The Book of Psalms*. Edited by Dorothea Erbele-Küster, Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, and Melody Knowles. Sheffield: Equinox Press.
- In process "Effacing Power: Ancient Damage to Three Reliefs of Ashurnasirpal" (tentative title).
- Forthcoming "Praying with Illustrated Psalms: Illuminated Psalters and Books of Hours." Pages xx-xx in *The Book of Psalms*. Edited by Dorothea Erbele-Küster, Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, and Melody Knowles. Sheffield: Equinox Press.
- Forthcoming "Surviving National Annihilation: Singing Psalm 136." Pages xx-xx in *Singing to Survive and Thrive*. Edited by Rebecca W. Poe Hayes. Waco: Baylor University Press.
- Forthcoming "The Psalmist Laments: A School of Prayer." Pages xx-xx in *Judging the Clergy: Exploring Miscarriages of Justice in Ministry – Causes, Cases and Consequences in Ecclesial Contexts*. Routledge Ecclesiology Series. Edited by Martyn and Emma Percy. Milton Park: Routledge.
- Forthcoming "Thanksgiving in the Psalms." Pages xx-xx in *The Cambridge Companion to the Psalms*. Edited by Brent Strawn and Joel LeMon. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 2025 "Spurring Colonialism and Promoting Freedom: The Function of Psalm 132 in the Early Americas." Pages 29-46 in *Song, Prayer, Scripture: Aspects of the Use of the Book of Psalms from the Hebrew Bible to the 21st Century*. Edited by David Davage and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer. London: T&T Clark.
- 2025 "Trust and Type in Two Jesus Films: Playing with Expectations in *Son of Man* and *Das neue Evangelium*," *Biblical Interpretation* 33.4-5 (2025): 256-276.
- 2024 "Psalm 132: Lifegiving Conversations." Pages 221-225 in *Psalms: My Psalm My Context*. Edited by Archie C. C. Lee, Gale Yee, and Athalya Brenner-Idan. London: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark.
- 2024 "The Chronicler's Use of Psalm 132." Pages 223-251 in *The Formation of Biblical Texts: Chronicling the Legacy of Gary Knoppers*. Edited by Deirdre N. Fulton, Kenneth A. Ristau, Jonathan S. Greer, and Margaret E. Cohen. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- 2021 "The Assyrian Reliefs at Virginia Theological Seminary: A Record of Decisions" Co-Written with Amanda P. Bourne. *Anglican and Episcopal History* 90.3 (2021): 251-272.
- 2021 "The Visual Programs of the Fifteen Psalms in Medieval Books of Hours," *Die Bibel in der Kunst/Bible in the Arts* 5 (2021): 1-28; https://cms.ibep-prod.com/app/uploads/sites/18/2023/08/BiKu_2021_05_Knowles_PssAscentsBookofHours.pdf
- 2021 "Israel and Judah in Iron Age II." Pages 133-211 in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*. 4th edition. Edited by Hershal Shanks. Boston and Washington: Prentice Hall and Biblical Archaeological Society.
- 2020 "Yahwistic Religion and Worship in the Persian Period." Pages 254-265 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Brent A. Strawn and Brad E. Kelle. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2019 "To Sanction and to Subvert: The Reuses of Psalm 132 in the Hebrew Bible." Pages 189-202 in *Prayers and the Construction of Israelite Identity*. Edited by Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher and Maria Häusl. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Spring 2026

- 2018 “Ezra-Nehemiah.” Pages 264-268 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Writings of the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Donn F. Morgan. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2018 “The Writings: Confirming and Contradicting Gender Stereotypes.” Co-written with Judy Fentress-Williams. Pages 137-169 in *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*. Gale A. Yee, editor. Fortress Press.
- 2014 “Ethics in Ezra and Nehemiah.” Pages 264-268 in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics*. Edited by Robert Brawley, Kathy Ehrensperger, Jan van der Watt, Isaac Kalimi, Ralph Klein, and Stephen Fowl. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2014 “Feminist Criticism and the Psalms.” Pages 424-36 in *Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Edited by William P. Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2012 “‘Now English denizend, though Hebrue borne’: Did Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, Read Hebrew?” *Studies in Philology* 109.3 (Spring 2012): 279-289.
- 2009-11 “Abronah,” “Achshaph,” “Akrabbim,” “Allamelech,” “Allon-Bacuth,” “Almon,” “Almon-Diblathaim,” “Aphekah,” “Ashteroth-Karnaim,” “Beth-Pazzez,” and “Barad.” *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*. Edited by Hans-Josef Klauk, Bernard McGinn, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Choon-Leong Seow, & Hermann Spieckermann. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- 2009 “1 Chronicles,” and “2 Chronicles.” Pages 145-154 in *A Theological Bible Commentary*. Edited by Gail R. O’Day and David L. Petersen. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- 2009 “Psalm 31,” “Psalm 32,” “Psalm 33,” “Psalm 37.” Pages 128-34, 144-46 in *Psalms for Preaching and Worship: A Lectionary Commentary*. Edited by Brent Strawn & Roger Van Harn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- 2007 “Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Persian Period.” Pages 1-31 in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period*. Edited by Jon L. Berquist. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- 2006 “A Woman at Prayer: A Critical Note on Psalms 131:2b.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125.2 (2006): 385–389.
- 2006 “New Studies in Chronicles: An Introduction to a Discussion of Two Recently-Published Commentaries.” Pages 1-3 in “New Studies in Chronicles: A Discussion of Two Recently-Published Commentaries.” *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5:20.
- 2005 “Teaching the *Temptation*: Seminarians Viewing *The Last Temptation of Christ*.” Co-authored with Allison Whitney. Pages 193-202 in *Scandalizing Jesus? Reappreciating Kazantzakis’ The Last Temptation of Christ*. Edited by Darren J. N. Middleton. New York: Continuum.
- 2005 “The Flexible Rhetoric of Retelling: The Choice of David in the Texts of the Psalms.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005): 236-249.
- 2004 “The Returns in Ezra as Pilgrimage.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2004): 57-74.

Publications: Book Reviews

- 2025 “A Major Reception History of the Psalms Complete: A Review of Gillingham’s *Psalms Through the Centuries*” (vols. 1-3; Wiley-Blackwell, 2008-2022) *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 32.1-2 (2025): 14-20; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/rirot.14373>
- 2022 Review of *T&T Clark Companion to The Bible and Film* (ed. Richard Walsh; London: T&T Clark, 2018) in *Review of Biblical Literature* 12.
- 2018 Review of Richard J. Bautch and Gary N. Knoppers, ed. *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2015), *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 18 (2018): 21-29.
- 2000 Review of Tal Ilan, *Integrating Women into Second Temple History*. *Review of Biblical Literature*. Online: http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/401_217.pdf (May 2000).

1999 Review of Johanna van Wijk-Bos, *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*. *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 20 n.s. (1999): 93-95.

In addition, I have been a peer-reviewer of books for Westminster/John Knox Press, the Society of Biblical Literature Press, Oxford University Press, and Cambridge University Press, and a peer-reviewer of articles for the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Oxford Bibliographies in Biblical Studies*, and *Theology Today*.

Publications: Biblical Translations and Notes

- 2023 “Introduction,” and “Study Notes” for the book of Ezra. Pages 672-688 in *The SBL Study Bible*. 3rd edition. Edited by Steven L. McKenzie, Kristin De Troyer, and F. Scott Spencer. New York: HarperCollins.
- 2023 “Introduction,” and “Study Notes” for the book of Nehemiah. Pages 689-709 in *The SBL Study Bible*. 3rd edition. Edited by Steven L. McKenzie, Kristin De Troyer, and F. Scott Spencer. New York: HarperCollins.
- 2016 “Introduction and Notes on Psalms 1-150.” Pages 657-790 in *The CEB Women’s Bible*. Edited by Judy Fentress-Williams et al. Nashville: Christian Resources Development Corp.
- 2015-17 Translations of Pss 77 and 78 for *Timeless-Ancient Psalms for the Church Today*. Vols. 1-3. Edited by R. Mark Shipp. Austin: Austin Christian Acapella Music.
- 2013 “1 Chronicles” and “2 Chronicles.” Pages 615-721 in the *Common English Bible Study Bible*. Edited by David L. Petersen. Nashville: Christian Resources Development Corp.
- 2011 English translation of Ezra and Nehemiah for the *Common English Bible*. Edited by David L. Petersen. Nashville: Christian Resources Development Corp.

Academic Presentations and Conferences

- Nov 2025 “Seeing *The Compassionate One* (1978) in *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).” Paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature, Bible and Film section, Boston
- Aug 2025 “Writing a Psalms Commentary.” Invited paper for the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Berlin
- Nov 2024 “Trust and Type in Jesus Films: Playing with Expectations in *Son of Man* and *Das neue Evangelium*.” Paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature, Bible and Film section, San Diego
- Nov 2023 Reviewer of Susan Gillingham’s book, *Psalms Through the Centuries: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 73-151*. Invited panel presentation for Book of Psalms program unit, Society of Biblical Literature, San Antonio
- Nov 2022 “Spurring Colonialism and Slavery: Protestant and Catholics United in their Interpretation of Ps 132.” Invited presentation for Oxford Interfaith Forum, Oxford
- Oct 2022 “The Psalms and Psalm 132 in the Early Days of the ‘New World’.” Invited paper for the conference Song, Prayer, Scripture, Örebro School of Theology, Sweden
- Aug 2019 “The Reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II: Architecture, Iconography, and Text.” Symposium co-organized by M. Knowles, J. Caleb Howard & Amanda Bourne, Virginia Theological Seminary
- July 2019 “Politics and the Reception of Ps 132 by Mary Sidney Herbert.” Invited paper for the Society of Old Testament Studies, Oxford
- Nov 2016 Review of *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles* (Richard J. Bauckham and Gary N. Knoppers, ed.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2015). Invited panelist for the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah program unit, Society of Biblical Literature, San Antonio
- May 2016 “Writing on the Psalms.” Conference organized by M. Knowles at Virginia Theological Seminary

Spring 2026

- July 2015 “Ps 132 as a prayer to authorize the significance of Jerusalem, the Chronicler’s account of the past, and the power of prayer in the Persian period.” Invited paper for the European Association of Biblical Studies, Cordoba, Spain
- May 2015 “What Psalm 132:8-10 Sanctions.” Invited paper presented at the Christian Scholars Conference held at Abilene Christian University in a session entitled “Generative Session in Old Testament: Papers Honoring J. J. M. Roberts,” in support of the inaugural J. J. M. Roberts Lecture in Old Testament Studies
- May 2013 “Art, Theology, and the Politics of Pembroke’s Psalm 132: Paraphrasing Gender in the Elizabethan Age.” Invited paper for the inaugural session of the Baylor-Bonn symposium: “The Psalter as Witness: Exploring the Rich Texture of Theological Claims with the Aid of Diachronic and Synchronic Analysis”
- Nov 2010 “God’s Covenant with Jerusalem in the Psalms.” Invited paper for the inaugural session of the Covenant in the Persian Period program unit, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta
- Feb 2009 “Women and the Psalms.” Invited paper for the Chicago Society of Biblical Research
- Nov 2008 “Engendered Psalms: Feminist Criticism and the Psalter.” Invited lecture for the Religion and Philosophy Public Lectures Series at Marist College
- Nov 2006 Respondent in a panel discussion of books by myself (*Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora in the Persian Period*) and Jacob L. Wright (*Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah Memoirs and its Earliest Readers*); Society of Biblical Literature, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah section
- Nov 2002 “The Rhetoric of Retelling: The Psalter’s Portrait of the Choice of David.” Invited paper for the Society of Biblical Literature, Psalms Section
- Nov 2001 “Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Persian Period.” Invited paper for the Society of Biblical Literature, Jerusalem in Bible & Archaeology Consultation
- Nov 2000 “The Return as Pilgrimage in Ezra.” Paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah section
- Nov 1997 “The Demise of Sacrifice at Elephantine.” Paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah section

Courses Taught

Introduction to Biblical Studies	Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
Film and the Bible (face-to-face & online)	Hebrew Language and Exegesis
Hebrew Readings	The Psalms (Masters- and Doctoral-level)
Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah	Christian Daily Prayer
Ancient Pilgrimage	Women in the Religious Life of Ancient Israel
Augustine and the Psalms	Sacred Texts in Education (Doctoral-level)

Ph.D. Dissertation Committees

- 2019 Caleb Grundlach, “The Way to Zion in Isaiah 40-55: Beyond New Exodus or Metaphor” (Ph.D. candidate at Toronto School of Theology [Wycliffe College], external examiner)
- 2014-2018 Chingboi Guite, “The *Golab* Community and the Other in the Book of Ezra” (Ph.D. candidate at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, external reader)
- 2013-2015 Mary Tororeiy, “A Literary and Thematic Function of Job 3 in the Dialogic Development of the Book of Job: Exploring Birthing Imagery” (Ph.D. candidate in Biblical Studies at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, external reader)
- 2004-2013 David P. Gambrell, “The Song of the Cross: Ps 22 and the Good Friday Liturgy” (Ph.D. candidate in Liturgical Studies, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston Illinois, external reader)

Spring 2026

In addition, I have served as a second reader for D.Min. theses at McCormick Theological Seminary, a MA advisor for a thesis at Virginia Theological Seminary and an external examiner for tenure and promotion committees for Durham University and Baylor University.

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

2026	Suzanne F. Thomas Award for Faculty Research
2025-26	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$3,635 to research Jewish and Muslim medieval interpretation of the Psalms
2024-25	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$10,000 to research <i>Bible and Film</i>
2023-24	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$8,000 to research <i>How to Read a Psalm</i>
2022-23	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$10,066 to research <i>Bible and Film</i>
2021-22	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$8,250 to research <i>How to Read a Psalm</i>
2020-21	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$6,000 for study of Assyrian Reliefs
2019-20	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$6,250 for course development
2019	Grant from the Wabash Center for review of the Doctoral Programs at VTS
2018-19	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$2,000 for symposium on Assyrian Reliefs
2017-18	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$8,500 for research on Mary Sidney
2017	Grant from the Wabash Center for review of the M.Div. Program at VTS
2016-17	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$8,000 for a workshop on the Psalms
2015-16	Conant Fellowship, The Episcopal Church: \$4,500 for travel to give papers in Spain and Texas
2002-03	Participant, The Wabash Center Workshop for Teaching and Learning for Theological Faculty
1997	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i> travel grant for archaeological research
1995-1999	Merit Tuition Scholarship, Princeton Theological Seminary
1994-95	Green Doctoral Fellowship (Old Testament), Princeton Theological Seminary
1994	Goethe Institute Fellowship, Mannheim, Germany
1993	The B. Stanton Prize in Old Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary

Public-Facing Work

2025	“The Impact of Bible Translation.” Invited panelist for the National Council of Churches, Arlington, VA
2020	“Zion,” Bible Odyssey, http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/places/main-articles/zion
2014	“1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah.” <i>Covenant Bible Study</i> (DVD). Nashville: Abingdon Press.
2013	“Gendered Psalms: A History of Use.” Invited paper for a gathering of McCormick alums, Rochester
2007	“Involving Visions: The Presentation of God in Biblical Films.” Invited lecture for the Chicago Center for Global Mission, Association of Chicago Theological Schools
2004	“Teaching Film and the Bible.” Co-authored with Allison Whitney. <i>SBL Forum</i> , n.p. (March 2004). Online: http://www.sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleId=241
2003	“Eternal Egypt: At the Field and in the Bible.” Field Museum, Chicago

In addition, I have also written many popular articles for VTS publications such as *News from the Hill*, Dean’s Commentary, and the *Seminary Journal*, as well as display texts for installations of ancient artefacts from the archaeological collection at McCormick Theological Seminary and for the Assyrian reliefs at Virginia Theological Seminary. I have also presented on a variety of topics at local churches and contributed to popular podcasts discussing biblical texts.

Archaeological Experience

Summer 1997 Square Supervisor at Beth Shemesh (S. Bunimovitz & Z. Lederman, directors)

Spring 2026

Summer 1995 Volunteer at Miqne-Ekron (S. Gitin & T. Dothan, directors)

Professional Affiliations

Canadian Society of Biblical Studies/ Société canadienne des études bibliques
Society of Biblical Literature Catholic Biblical Association
American Schools of Oriental Research Association of Anglican Biblical Scholars
Society for Old Testament Studies

Committee and Board Service

2022-2024 Local School Advisory Team, Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Washington, D.C.
2021-present Finance Committee, Society of Biblical Literature (chair, 2025-present)
2011-2020 Steering Committee, Book of Psalms Section, Society of Biblical Literature (co-chair, 2012-16)
2017-2019 Co-chair, Association of Academic Deans of the Washington Theological Consortium
2001-2011 Steering Committee, Biblical Lands and Peoples in Archaeology and Text Section, Society of Biblical Literature
2002-2015 Steering Committee, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah Section, Society of Biblical Literature (chair, 2002-06)
2004-2008 Board of Trustees, American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR)
2004 Steering committee, Conference on “Contesting Texts: Jews and Christians in Conversation About the Bible” (with John Pawlikowski, Esther Menn, and Timothy Sandoval; co-sponsored by McCormick, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago Theological Seminary, and the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago)

Spring 2026