

October 2020
New Series 12.2



Theta Alpha Kappa

The National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

Board of Directors

President

Eric F. Mason
Judson University

Vice President

David Nikkel
University of North
Carolina-Pembroke

Secretary

Andrea Stanton
University of Denver

Treasurer

Christopher McMahon
Saint Vincent College

Member At Large

Michael Berger
Emory University

Member At Large

Julye Bidmead
Chapman University

Member At Large

Dexter Callender Jr.
University of Miami

Member At Large

Elena Procario-Foley
Iona College

JTAK Editor

Bernadette McNary-
Zak, Rhodes College

Contact the Board at
[theta_alpha_kappa_](mailto:theta_alpha_kappa_inquiries@ThetaAlphaKappa.org)
[inquiries@ThetaAlpha](mailto:theta_alpha_kappa_inquiries@ThetaAlphaKappa.org)
[Kappa.org](mailto:theta_alpha_kappa_inquiries@ThetaAlphaKappa.org)

Annual TAK Business Meeting Online on Sunday, November 8

Chapter representatives and all inducted Theta Alpha Kappa members are invited to participate in the society's 2020 Annual Business Meeting on Sunday, November 8, at 5 p.m. Eastern/2 p.m. Pacific. The meeting will be conducted online via Zoom at the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/91549161893?pwd=UitXV0hGa1pzK0lwaHFGSHhwdFdCUT09>

Meeting ID: 915 4916 1893; Passcode: 844386

One tap mobile: +13126266799,,91549161893# US/Chicago,
+16465588656,,91549161893# US/New York

The annual business meeting is a wonderful opportunity for chapter representatives and others to have input on the activities of the national board and to receive updates on financial and other society matters. Elections for open board positions are also conducted at the business meeting. The nominees to be considered this year for new three-year terms (2021–2024) are **Julye Bidmead** for an at-large board slot, and **Michael Berger** for the office of treasurer. Both presently are at-large board members, Julye in a one-year interim position and Michael since 2017. We will also announce the recipient of the **2020 Kathleen Connolly-Weinert Leader-of-the-Year Award** at the business meeting.

The TAK business meeting normally occurs on the Sunday night of the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, but we will meet separately from AAR and SBL this year since their meetings have also shifted online due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Please note that we will not use the AAR/SBL digital platform for the TAK business meeting, and registration for the AAR/SBL meeting will not be necessary to participate in the TAK business meeting.

You may download the agenda and other information for the TAK business meeting at <https://tinyurl.com/2020TAKbusiness> starting Sunday, November 1. Please note that this file may be updated as needed up until the time the business meeting begins on November 8.

Alternate Induction Payment Option for 2020

With the abrupt shift to online classes in Spring 2020 and the proliferation of hybrid and online classes at most institutions in Fall 2020, many chapters have found it difficult to order and pay for student inductions using TAK's normal (and ongoing) procedures as described at <https://thetaalphakappa.org/new-member-induction-form/>. But thanks to the efforts of TAK's previous president Kelley Coblentz Bautch and our vendor partners at Kenneth E. Jernigan & Associates, a temporary alternate method for induction orders—which will allow for students to pay directly for their inductions by credit card—is available through December 2020. For the details (originally announced in an email to chapter representatives on April 8, 2020), see <https://tinyurl.com/TAK2020special-induction>.

ThetaAlphaKappa.org



New TAK Chapter at Freed-Hardeman University

We extend a hearty TAK welcome to our newest chapter at **Freed-Hardeman University** in Henderson, TN, and its chapter representative **Richard A. Brumback III**.

Julye Bidmead and Elena Procario-Foley Join TAK National Board



The national TAK board welcomed two new members in July 2020, Julye Bidmead and Elena Procario-Foley.

Julye Bidmead is an associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies and director of the Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs at Chapman University in Irvine, CA. A PhD graduate of Vanderbilt University and recipient of several teaching awards, Julye is the author of multiple books and articles on the Hebrew Bible, ancient Near Eastern archaeology, and women's roles in ancient societies, and she served as education director and field archeologist in the Jezreel expedition in Israel. Julye joined the board as an interim appointment to fill a vacant board slot in July 2020 and is nominated for a regular three-year board term that would begin in July 2021.



Elena Procario-Foley is the Br. John G. Driscoll Endowed Chair of Jewish and Catholic Studies and also coordinator of the core curriculum at Iona College in New Rochelle, NY. Elena, who received her PhD from the University of Chicago, publishes and teaches in the fields of religious studies, the Holocaust, and systematic theology, and she is editor of *Horizons: The Journal of the College Theology Society*. Elena was appointed by the Vatican to a ten-person study group on Catholic-Jewish relations in 2016, and in 2018 she became the first woman invited by the Diocese of Chicago to deliver the Joseph Cardinal Bernadin Jerusalem Lecture. Elena began her three-year term on the TAK board in July 2020.

Undergraduate Achievement Awards for 2020–2021 and 2019–2020

Local TAK chapters whose code number ends in the digits 5–9 may select one student to honor with the Undergraduate Achievement Award for the 2020–2021 academic year. This award is available to each local chapter every other academic year to promote excellence among undergraduate students, and each recipient will receive a check for \$100 from the national society. Chapter representatives may confirm their chapter numbers in the chapter directory on the TAK website, and they may designate the student recipient for the prize by emailing (from their institutional email account) TAK treasurer Christopher McMahon at (Christopher.McMahon@stvincent.edu).

Awards were available in academic year 2019–2020 for chapters whose codes ended in 0–4. Chapter representatives who were unable to order an award in the spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic may also contact Christopher by December 15, 2020, to designate an honoree for that year.

2021 Clark Awards Competition Now Open

TAK invites entries for the 2021 Albert Clark Award, given annually for the best papers in religious studies or theology. The winner in each category (undergraduate or graduate) will receive a \$500 award, and the runner-up in each category will receive a \$250 award. The winners and runners-up will have their essays published in the *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*. Other excellent essays submitted for the competition will also be published.

The competition is open to current students at the undergraduate or graduate level who satisfy one of these conditions: a) currently enrolled in or having graduated from a school with a TAK chapter, provided that the paper was written while attending that school and submitted for the competition within 12 months after graduation; or b) currently in a school that does not have a TAK chapter, provided that the student was inducted in a chapter of TAK at a school previously attended. Papers may be submitted through TAK faculty representatives or independently. The application deadline is January 22, 2021. For additional information, see <https://thetaphakappa.org/clark-awards/>.

SBL Webinar Encouraging Minoritized Students to Pursue a PhD in Biblical Studies

The Society of Biblical Literature will hold a luncheon webinar to inform minoritized students about opportunities associated with pursuing a PhD in biblical studies. Presenters at a recent #BlackScholarsMatter symposium encouraged SBL to increase its efforts to recruit more minoritized scholars to pursue a PhD in Bible. As an initial response, the SBL and its Committee on Underrepresented Racial Ethnic Minorities in the Profession (CUREMP) partnered with the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) to organize a webinar called "To Be or Not to Be: Why Pursue a PhD in Bible?" precisely with that goal in mind. The webinar is scheduled for October 31, 2020, at 1:00–2:30 p.m. EST and is free for students of color interested in pursuing a PhD. Registration will be limited to 100. Participants will receive complimentary registration to the 2020 SBL Annual Meeting, may order their own meal and be reimbursed by SBL for up to \$25, and will also receive a free copy of a book related to the webinar topic. Panelists will address questions such as: Why pursue a PhD in Bible? How does one position oneself for it? What are some support structures minoritized scholars can avail to succeed in their program? Given the changing landscape of theological education, what are various career paths available to them? Registration is now open and available at <https://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/ToBeorNottoBe.aspx>.