

2025 Conference Schedule

Updated December 11, 2024

Bookstore Hours – Closed during events held in the main meeting room

Tuesday, June 10 - 1:00-8:30pm (closed during dinner 5-6pm)

Wednesday, June 11 - 8:00am-8:30pm (closed 5-6pm)

Thursday, June 12 - 8:00am-8:30pm (closed 5-6pm)

Friday, June 13 - 8:00am-8:30pm (closed 4-6pm)

1 on 1 Meetings with Faculty (North Party Room)

Wednesday, June 12 - 9:00-10:15am, 1:00-4:55pm

Thursday, June 13 - 9:00-10:15am, 1:00-4:55pm

Friday, June 14 - 9:00-10:15am, 1:00-3:55pm

The meeting scheduling desk will be open during the conference for confirming, changing, or adding appointments if openings are available.

Tuesday, June 10, 2024

8:00am – Registration opens (Outside Coray Gym)

11:45-1:00pm – Lunch (Dining Hall)

3:00pm – On-Campus Housing Check-in Begins (Fischer Dormitory)

5:00-6:00pm – Dinner (Dining Hall)

6:30-7:30pm – Opening General Session, *Speaker: Eric Redmond* (Coray Gym)

8:00-10:00pm – Casual reception (The Stupe)

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

7:15-8:15am – Breakfast (Dining Hall)

8:20-8:45am – Morning Devotions - *Speaker: Tish Suk*, plus Announcements (Coray Gym)

9:00-10:15am – **Continuing Classes** (six classes)

10:30-11:20am – Morning Plenary Session, *Speaker: Tim Challies* (Coray Gym)

11:45-1:00pm – Lunch (Dining Hall)

1:30-2:30pm – **Workshops** (five plus one at Wade Center)

2:30-2:45pm – Break time

2:45-3:45pm – **Workshops** (five sessions)

5:00-6:00pm – Dinner (Dining Hall)

7:00-8:00pm – Evening General Session, *Speaker: Tim Shoemaker* (Coray Gym)

8:00-10:00pm – Casual reception (The Stupe)

Thursday, June 12, 2025

7:15-8:15am – Breakfast (Dining Hall)

8:20-8:45am – Morning Devotions- *Speaker: Tish Suk*, plus Announcements (Coray Gym)

9:00-10:15am – **Continuing Classes** (six classes)

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2:45-3:45pm – **Workshops** (five sessions)

5:00-6:00pm – Dinner (Dining Hall)

7:00-8:00pm – Evening General Session, *Speaker: Sandra Dalton-Smith* (Coray Gym)

8:00-10:00pm – Casual reception (The Stupe)

Friday, June 13, 2025

7:15-8:15am – Breakfast (Dining Hall)

8:20-8:45am – Morning Devotions- *Speaker: Tish Suk*, plus Announcements (Coray Gym)

9:00-10:15am – **Continuing Classes** (six classes)

10:30-11:20am – Morning Plenary Session, *Speaker: Tim Challies* (Coray Gym)

11:45-1:00pm – Lunch (Dining Hall)

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2:30-2:45pm – Break time

2:45-3:45pm – **Workshops** (five sessions)

4:00-5:00pm – Closing General Session – *Speaker: Becky Antkowiak* (Coray Gym)

5:00-6:00pm – Dinner (Dining Hall)

6:30-10:00pm – Dessert reception/book signings (The Stupe)

Saturday, June 14, 2025

7:15-8:15am – Breakfast (Dining Hall)

2025 Presentation Summaries

Morning Devotions with Tish Suk @ 8:30am

Wednesday - Three "R's" for a Lifetime of Writing: Renewal - 2 Cor; 4: 16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day." What does renewal really look like? Is it ok to get bored with our spiritual practices? How can we live a lifestyle of renewal?

Thursday - Three "R's" for a Lifetime of Writing: Repentance - Psalm 51: 10 "Create in me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me." How can repentance get easy? What does it feel like to get rid of our sins? How can a clean heart help our writing?

Friday - Three "R's" for a Lifetime of Writing: Restoration - Isaiah 40:31 Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." How does restoration show up? What are the before and after pictures of restoration in your life? How can you daily pursue restoration?

Morning Plenary Sessions @ 10:30am

Wednesday, Tim Challies, The First 10 Million Words - Tim reflects on the discipline of writing as he honed it through twenty years of daily blogging and a dozen books. Both biographical and practical, this session will have tips to benefit writers at any stage of their career.

Thursday, Tim Challies, Idols of the Writer's Heart - Tim looks inward and then to Scripture to consider the particular sins and temptations that may be most common among writers.

Friday, Tim Challies, Writing from the Peaks and Valleys - Tim considers the value of writing that flows from the most joyful and most sorrowful of life's experiences.

Keynote Messages

Tuesday @ 7:00pm, Eric Redmond, TBD - TBD

Wednesday @ 7:00pm, Tim Shoemaker, Out of the Shadows - At times we find that shadows creep into our life—making this writing life so much more difficult. Sometimes, shadows come due to no fault of our own, or because of our own failure, or because of our own self-doubt. But it's what comes out of these shadows that really matters.

Thursday @ 7:00pm, Sandra Dalton-Smith, TBD - TBD

Friday @ 4:00pm, Becky Antkowiak, TBD - TBD

Continuing Classes

Ann Kroeker, Publishing 101

- Session One: Step into the publisher’s role to uncover the secrets of what makes a project truly shine and the key ingredients for successful collaborations between publishers and authors. By following the path of a book from proposal submission to offer, you’ll transform the daunting publishing landscape into an accessible adventure as you prepare to share your unique voice with the world.
- Session Two: Shift gears to think like a professional author, diving into the essentials of building your author platform and crafting a compelling book concept. Armed with actionable strategies and insights into where to seek support, you’ll confidently advance your author career and take meaningful steps toward achieving your publishing goals.
- Session Three: With a deep understanding of both the publisher’s and author’s mindsets, confidently tackle your role as a professional author, from securing an agent to completing your manuscript and preparing for launch. This session will illuminate how to integrate marketing strategies from the start and connect the dots, showing you how each step contributes to your book’s success before, during, and after launch.

Zena Dell Lowe, Master Screenwriting for Hollywood

Want to write screenplays that Hollywood wants? Each of these sessions will teach advanced principles to help writers craft visual, powerful, and commercially viable stories for Hollywood.

- Session One: Finding Your Story & The Three-Act Structure - The choice of what story to tell is the most important decision you will make as a writer. Don't waste valuable time and energy on a story that won't get produced. We will discuss personal and factors you should consider in choosing what story to tell, and then we'll apply the “Hollywood Plot Map” to your story to help you flesh out your plot the Hollywood way.
- Session Two: Industry Standard Formatting for Screenwriters - This session will teach screenwriters how to properly format their scripts while still allowing for artistry. It won't guarantee a great story, but it will make you look like a professional.
- Session Three: Mastering Visual Images: The 7 Levels of Meaning in Story - In this session we will consider what we mean by calling screenplays a “visual” art form. We'll also discover how to construct more complex visual imagery in screenplays so as to portray deeper levels of meaning through your work.

Sandra Dalton-Smith, Crafting Impactful Nonfiction: From Concept to Connection

Nonfiction writing offers limitless opportunities for those who seek to inform, inspire, and transform their readers. In this three-part class, bestselling author and speaker Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith will guide you through the foundational principles of crafting impactful nonfiction. Whether you're called to write books, articles, or blogs, this class will help you clarify your message, understand your audience, and structure your work for maximum impact. Dr. Dalton-Smith will also explore strategies for growing your platform and building connections with your readers. You'll gain practical tools and insights that will empower you to share the story and message God has placed on your heart with confidence and clarity.

Kimberley Woodhouse, Fiction - Continue to take your writing to the next level with this intensive on key elements needed for the ever-changing fiction market.

Session One - Deep POV: Hone your skills for polishing your manuscript

Session Two - Writing Fast and Well: Master the task of multiple books a year

Session Three - The Heart of the Author: Refuel and refresh your creative well

Becky Robinson, Achieving Book Marketing Success: The Top Three Focus Areas for Growing Your Influence - Marketing should be a top priority for all authors who wish to grow influence. In this course, join Becky Robinson, author of the award-winning book, “Reach: Create the Biggest Possible Audience for Your Message, Book, or Cause,” and founder and CEO of Weaving Influence, a full-service marketing agency that specializes in marketing services and public relations for authors, to learn how to achieve book marketing success. Becky will dive into the different phases of a book launch and the right activities for each, and outline how to leverage a strategic, four-commitment framework to cultivate followers. She will also walk through how to propel your book visibility and enhance your brand presence through established traditional channels. Participants will walk away from these three courses knowing where to focus their marketing efforts and how to achieve success.

Athena Dean Holtz & Carol Tetzlaff, Indy Publishing Bootcamp: Strategies to successfully navigate the publishing industry and market your book

- Session One: Design Your Message from Manuscript to Book - Learn how to create a book that stands out in the competitive publishing market. We'll explore various publishing models and provide you with a comprehensive guide to transform your message into a well-crafted book. Gain insights on presentation, formatting, and design that will rival books in the traditional market.
- Session Two: Discover and Engage Your Ideal Reader - Identify your target audience and connect with them using powerful techniques to cultivate relationships and provide value even while your book is still in progress.
- Session Three: Develop Your Marketing Strategy - Discover the strategies to effectively market your book directly to consumers. Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that aligns with the message God has given you. Learn how to leverage your book as a tool for furthering your ministry and funding the calling that has been placed upon you.

Workshops

(listed in alphabetical order by speaker's first name)

Andy LePeau, Side Stepping Writing Ruts and Blocks - We have a deadline but are just staring at a blank screen. How do we get unstuck? This hands-on workshop will take writers through a variety of practical exercises that will show how you can write on demand and end up with prose that is fresher and more interesting.

Andy LePeau, The Secret of Powerful Prose - All of us struggle at times because our writing is just a bit flat. How do we find that energy, that zing, that subtle quality that pulls readers in and keeps them reading? Of the main elements of writing (plot, character, setting, theme, tone), the one that gives writing the most power is tone. How to identify tone, create tone, and avoid the pitfalls of tone are all discussed with striking fiction and nonfiction excerpts from a variety of writers.

Blythe Daniel, Connecting What You Write and What Readers Want - This workshop will help writers of non-fiction and fiction look at how their premise, story-telling and delivery of their writing needs to connect to what readers want. We'll look at the elements that need the most attention in this process and what you may think works but isn't what readers are looking for (three biggies: tone, technique and topic). We look at sentence structure, voice, and engagement to dive deeper into your writing style for best results!

Blythe Daniel, Which Comes First? Platform or Book Idea? - Many writers wonder if their book idea and manuscript matter as much as their platform. Which comes first (platform or book idea) and is there a standard way to look at the scenario? If not, what are the exceptions? How does a writer know where to go if they want to be a traditionally published author? What else can help a writer's potential with publishers? This workshop will look at these areas and help writers pinpoint where they are and where they can grow as a writer, marketer, and storyteller. For nonfiction and fiction.

Cynthia Ruchti, Next Steps: What Do You Mean Waiting is an Action Verb? - You've reached a level of accomplishment in your writing: a proposal or a finished manuscript. Now what? An agent is looking at your work? An editor is considering? Is waiting sitting still? Not in publishing, no matter what route you take. Discover practical next steps wherever you are in your writing journey. (Fiction and nonfiction; beginner to intermediate)

Cynthia Ruchti, Every Book Needs a Hook - Many writers have created a paragraph pitch, but few know intuitively how to create a hook. We can't catch fish (agents/editors/or readers) if our hook is dull. Let's sharpen our hooks and find just the right bait to snag and hold attention.

Workshops

(listed in alphabetical order by speaker's first name)

David Bennett, Inspired Writing that Inspires (Devotional Writing) – Both magazines and devotionals provide life-changing opportunities to inspire others and to be inspired in the process. Whether 300 words or 2,000 words, God can use you to lead others to His Word. This workshop will give you some tools to write inspirationally.

Elizabeth Jackson, 5 Signs You're Ready to Be Published: Tips for Fiction Authors - In this session, learn about what you should be doing now—as well as things to avoid—if you want to traditionally publish your novel. Discover key factors acquiring editors evaluate in considering whether to offer a book deal, the red flags that can make them press pause on a proposal, and the qualities editors look for in the projects they take on.

Emma Fulenwider, Nailing Your Author Bio - What if the purpose of an author bio isn't to talk about yourself, but to connect with your audience? Using a 5-step template and live feedback, attendees will clarify their brand and craft a professional bio that engages the community they hope to serve.

Emma Fulenwider, Writing Your Testimony (This Time Without Church Speak) - It's a writer's conference, let's write! Using Isaiah 6 as a guide, attendees will pen the most important story of their life - the hour they first believed. Whether for posterity or publication, join us as we take on the ultimate writing prompt.

Erik Peterson, TBD - TBD

Grace Kelley, How to Write for Focus on the Family's Clubhouse and Clubhouse Jr. - Writing for magazines is a great first step to become a published author for children. In this workshop, you'll discover the keys to contributing to Focus on the Family's children's magazines.

Janyre Tromp, The Art and Science of a Fiction Proposal - A proposal is key to winning a publisher. But how does an author capitalize on the opportunity? In this workshop, you'll learn the secrets to developing a fiction proposal from Janyre Tromp, who has intimate knowledge of 3 of the 4 sides of the publishing world—author, marketing manager, and editorial representative.

Janyre Tromp, Turning Your Speaking Ministry Into a Book - Learn the steps necessary to turning your speaking ministry into a book deal. Veteran editor Janyre Tromp tackles the surprisingly difficult process and breaks down the elements so you can easily uncover the best idea, distill it, and create the structure for your first book.

Workshops

(listed in alphabetical order by speaker's first name)

Jevon Bolden, Your Story Matters: Four Ways to Tell Your Story So Readers are Engaged and Publishers Say Yes – The bane of many writers' existence is drafting an outline. A good outline keeps your writing focused and your mission in view. It is the secret to writing well and quickly. In this class, Jevon will show you four ways to organize your nonfiction book that boost your credibility with readers and deliver thrilling yeses from agents and publishers.

Jevon Bolden, TBD

Josiah DeGraaf, How to Create a Memorable Fantasy or Sci-Fi World

Your fantastical setting can be so much more than a geographically-rearranged Europe or a single climate expanded to fill an entire world. The secret to memorable worldbuilding, however, is to worldbuild deeply, not broadly. In this session, Josiah DeGraaf will unpack what the most successful authors of our day do to craft worlds that captivate readers, and how you can replicate that in your own stories. You don't need to take decades like Tolkien to develop a realistic fantasy world!

Katara Patton, What I Wish Every Writer Knew – From her more than 20 years of experience in Christian publishing (in acquisitions and editorial), Katara shares what editors would love to tell writers...but may not for various reasons. This workshop will help improve your relationship with editors and give you some pointers to think about on your publishing journey.

Lee Weeks, Interviewing Sources for an Article - Session includes prepping for the interview through backstory research online and knowing how to execute timely follow-up questions in real-time when the interview takes on a life of its own. Often, sources share information that can alter the angle or predetermined focus of an article or theme. Timing and tone of questions is crucial to building rapport and trust with a source when addressing highly personal and emotional issues.

Lee Weeks, Ghostwriting Basics - For some successful wordsmiths, writing to publish is achieved somewhat anonymously. Learn how to leverage your writing skills behind the scenes by helping key influencers shape their messaging.

Lin Johnson, Be Your Own Best Editor - Writers who make sales and get assignments not only have good content but also clean copy. Learn how to think like an editor to clean up your manuscripts before sending them.

Lori Roeleveld, Productivity with Peace - Never mind how others fit writing into their lives without losing sleep, how will you? Learn to live and write from a heart at peace with a method that helped this author release six traditionally published books while working full-time, ministering, and caring for a family. Come with a problem. Leave with a plan.

Workshops

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Lori Roeleveld, Writing Over 40 - Stop asking if you're too old to be a writer. Instead, learn what you need to know to start (or start again) writing at your age. If you're over forty and wondering if you've missed your chance, this workshop will answer your questions and prepare you to act wisely and well as you pursue publication.

Luke McKinnon, Theological Accuracy in Writing - As authors and publishers of Christian content, we have a sacred duty to ensure that what we are writing and publishing lines up with Scripture. We will discuss the importance of theological accuracy in writing, why it matters, and tips on how to ensure your work stays true to the Bible. Good writing with bad theology can be dangerous, good writing with good theology can change lives!

Sharon Elliott, What Great Agents Look For (Why You Need One, How to Find One, and How to Snag One) - A great literary agent is able to get your foot in the door with the perfect publisher for your work. And that's exactly what you want. But how can you make that happen? What are agents looking for and how can you evaluate and present your manuscript to be sure your prospective agent is intrigued enough to partner with you? Discover all of this and more about plunging into the publishing business by attending this workshop, taught by literary agent and industry insider Dr. Sharon Norris Elliott.

Steve Laube, Do I Need an Agent? - The role the literary agent in the industry is evaluated and explained

Susan McPherson, How to Be the Kind of Author Publishers Love to Work With Publishers look for an author they can partner with in all aspects of the process. From developing the content to marketing the book, collaboration is key. But what does that really look like? Senior Author Acquisitions Editor, Susan McPherson, walks you through each step of the publishing process. From getting a book deal to the day your book releases, she will equip you with tips and tools that will make you a valuable contributor throughout the entire process.

4 Key Takeaways:

1. How to create an action plan for your book project that will make it stand out in a crowd and entice publishers to take a chance on you.
2. Learn how to go beyond the creative process of writing and embrace the business side of publishing with confidence and enthusiasm.
3. Walk through each step of the publishing process and get tips for partnering with your publisher that will set your book up for success.
4. Gain a deeper understanding of your role and responsibility in the publishing process so you can thrive in your career as a professional writer.

Workshops

(listed in alphabetical order by speaker's first name)

Talia Messina, Identifying Comparable Titles for Your Proposal - Many writers seem to be confused about comparative titles. How does an author find them and what are they used for? This workshop will show how to find them, what's the goal, and how it impacts a proposal's reputation and effectiveness.

Tim Shoemaker, Fixing Fatal Fiction Flubs - "DEEP Point-of-View" and "Show don't tell" are two critically important areas of fiction. Get it right and you've got killer fiction. Mess it up and your fiction is already dead. We'll show you how to make your story come alive.

Tim Shoemaker, Writing from a Christian Worldview...Without Getting Preachy

How do we be a light to the world—without blinding our readers? And how do we avoid writing "hokey" Christian fiction? What about making our story more edgy to make it more real? We'll talk about writing in a way that changes lives, without compromising our standards.

Twila Belk, A Working Writer - Few authors make a living from writing books alone. The rest of us who want to be working writers need to diversify. In this class, we'll discuss potential streams of income, the importance of connections, business practices, and self-care for working writers. We'll also include plenty of tips and ideas.

Twila Belk, Say It with Humor - A touch of humor can help get your message across in a fun and memorable way. Learn about the benefits of using humor, where to find it, and how to incorporate it in your writing and speaking.