



BRIDWELL LIBRARY, PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY // ISSUE 21 // FALL 2023

# The Bridwell Quarterly

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# The Bridwell Quarterly: Welcome

*Anthony J. Elia, Director of Bridwell Library and J.S. Bridwell Foundation Endowed Librarian*

Dear Friends,

Every season presents its own challenges and opportunities and this fall has been no exception. The academic year started off with a great number of projects and demands as we had been recovering from the whirlwind events of last April and the historic visit by the Codex Sassoon at Bridwell. We were also fully immersed in researching, planning, curating, and installing the long-anticipated *World Methodist Museum* Exhibition. The coordinated effort took months of preparation, strategy, and the collective support of the Bridwell staff. I am very much indebted to them all for bringing it to fruition. The exhibition's subsequent success is a witness to the fabulous work our staff does on a daily basis. As of this issue, the *World Methodist Museum* Exhibition has been visited by more than three hundred guests, coming from Europe, South America, and Asia, but also from nearby by local church groups, regional clergy, SMU community members, interdisciplinary faculty, and students from high schools, colleges, and graduate institutions. The Exhibition is free and open to the public and groups interested in a guided tour are encouraged to contact Michelle Ried ([mried@smu.edu](mailto:mried@smu.edu)) in advance of your visit.

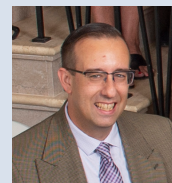
As the semester wore on and we were busy with various projects, the world seemed to fall into greater disrepair, with conflicts aflame around the globe, protests and political infighting, and daily difficulties that sometimes distracted us from the work we needed to do. Finding a place among our nearest communities, like here at SMU or with those in our neighborhoods, clubs, or faith traditions, has become all the more important. I am thankful to many colleagues for providing spaces for community gatherings, for chapel services, daily lunches, and group conversations. Our regular human-to-human contact affords us a chance to hear one another, to seek some sort of repair in our regular struggles, concerns, or needs, and to find hope in the moments that too often give us stress and uncertainty about the path forward.

In the days after Thanksgiving, when we are to come together, reflect, and give thanks, one of our dear colleagues and friends died unexpectedly. The beloved Charles “Chuck” Aaron, a long-time fixture in the Perkins community, passed away on Wednesday, November 29. Losing him brought a deep sadness to us all. He was a great friend, mentor, colleague, spiritual brother, and humble soul to many. He worked tirelessly and without judgment or complaint. He had a pronounced and powerful spirit oriented toward justice and equity, always wanting to make the lives of the oppressed better, elevating them up in the illumination of God’s grace. And so, too, when we experience the profound loss of a friend or feel the depths of uncertainty, it is within community that we most often are able to find the necessary support and guidance to take those next steps. *It takes a village* is the common and sometimes overused expression. But it’s so true and so important to remember this.

I hope as we continue to move ahead and program activities that we do so with intentional care and thoughtfulness. This means being considerate of those among us today and those who have gone before us, honoring their legacies while also recognizing the importance of those around us with joy, grace, and an abundance of compassion. We continue to be honored and blessed to be in the company of so many great souls and a great community, throughout all the times, easy and hard. Let us go forth into a season of wonder and repair with hope in all its forms.

Thank you for your continued support.

Anthony



# Announcements



## DOUGHBOYS RETURN!

The Light Crust Doughboys return to Perkins Chapel and Bridwell Library for a Christmas concert and reception on Thursday, December 14 at 7pm. The 2023 concert marks the third annual performance by the legendary band. Each year the Light Crust Doughboys have performed in front of a full house.



## BRIDWELL HOLIDAY HOURS

Beginning on December 13, Bridwell Library will close at 6pm until holiday closures begin on December 22. The library will remain closed through January 1, 2024 and will open on January 2, 2024. For all library hours, visit the [Bridwell Library Hours](#) page online.



## NEW YORKER WRITER AT SMU

Bridwell will be co-hosting *New Yorker* cartoonist and writer Amy Kurzweil on February 19 and 20th, 2024. Ms. Kurzweil's most recent book *Artificial: A Love Story* is about her family, especially her famous father, the Futurist and inventor Ray Kurzweil. For more details visit the SMU Libraries blog in January.

## BRIDWELL LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS:

Bridwell Library's Christmas Card, 2023: *Le Cantique des Cantiques*

*Le Cantique des Cantiques*, or the Song of Songs, translated into French by Ernest Renan, designed and produced by François-Louis Schmied, and bound by Georges Cretté. Bridwell's volume is number 75 of 110 copies made. The production of this book, which features intricate illustrations created using over one thousand blocks, took several years due to the complexity and detail of the prints. Bridwell Library chose to use this image for the annual holiday greeting card in 2023. Anthony Elia penned the holiday greeting this year with the theme of hope very much in mind.



Bridwell Special Collections is open by appointment only, learn more at:

<https://www.smu.edu/libraries/bridwell/specialcollections>

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Bridwell News Online: <https://blog.smu.edu/smulibraries/category/bridwell/>



# Bridwell Hosts World Methodist Events

## World Methodist Museum Opens to Great Success

The *World Methodist Museum* Exhibition opened to great success the week of October 1, 2023. A visit from David Worthington (photo right, center), the Director of John Wesley's New Room in Bristol, England started off the week on Sunday afternoon, when he lectured in Bridwell's Blue Room on Methodist History. In attendance were several dozen visitors who were given a preview of the exhibition that Sunday afternoon, just prior to the official October 2nd opening. The exhibition will be open long-term to the public and admission, as always, is free. On Wednesday, October 4th, the Perkins Executive Board met in the Bridwell Blue Room and had a chance to hear from Bridwell Director Anthony Elia about the collection, as well as brief comments from Jackie Bolden (bottom, left), former Executive Director of the *World Methodist Museum* in Lake Junaluska. The Board was also treated to a tour of the exhibition after their meeting.



## Lead Up to the Exhibition Installation

The research, curation, and installation of the *World Methodist Museum* Exhibition was a significant undertaking that took the better part of the last year. The preparations leading up to the installation involved extensive collection evaluations. While we had been wanting to install the exhibition last spring, the sudden and unexpected visit by the Codex Sassoon forced us to put off the installation for about six months. Resuming the work this summer, the careful and dedicated Bridwell Staff—especially





Jesse Hunt, Michelle Ried, Arvid Nelsen, Jane Elder, and Elisa McCune—worked through the summer and into the early fall to make sure that this project came to fruition. The installation of the images, texts, and infrastructure (including the complexity of lighting) were all completed in late September, just in time for the opening in early October. In the accompanying photos (p. 5 and right), you will see members of the FastSigns Team, who crafted some of the lettering, installing items on the wall of the exhibition.



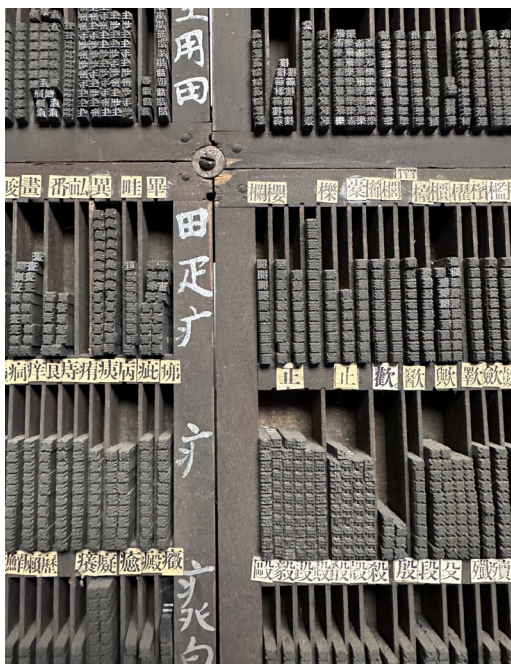


# A Visit to the Platen Press Museum

Early in the fall semester, Bridwell Library Director Anthony Elia visited Chicago and its suburbs to meet up with Paul Aken (photo, right), a legend in the printing and historical press collecting world, and members of his printing and typography circle, including the proprietors of Starshaped Press. Mr. Aken has been collecting presses and press-related equipment for decades, having worked in the machine trade prior to his work with historical presses and typography. The Platen Press Museum has been around for decades and Mr. Aken has been a mentor and teacher to many in the field, from the casual passerby to the professional typographer and printer. Elia met Mr. Aken more than fifteen years ago, while living in Chicago. The Platen Press Museum is located in the far northern exurbs of Chicago, just a few miles from the southern Wisconsin border. In the museum, Mr. Aken has collected dozens of printing presses of varying shapes, styles, and sizes, as well as many other machines and tools related to printing. As Bridwell Library seeks to enhance its historical printing programs in the coming years, reconnecting with Mr. Aken and his colleagues has been an important step toward this commitment to printing and to fostering a greater awareness of that history. It will also allow Bridwell to honor the kind of legacy that Mr. Aken has put in place and supported with other printing and typographic professionals over the years.







Mr. Aken owns hundreds of objects related to historical printing and typography, many of which can be seen in the above images. These include linotype equipment and associated machines that melted lead “pigs” into typeface.



# Second Annual Abraham Memorial Lecture

The 2nd Annual William J. Abraham Memorial Lecture was held on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at Perkins School of Theology in the Prothro Great Hall. The featured speaker was the internationally renowned theologian, philosopher, and theologian, Dr. Paul Gavriluk (right), who had been one of Prof. Abraham's graduate students at SMU and was a graduate of GPRS in 2001. Over a community lunch, a capacity crowd of nearly a hundred attendees listened to a stellar lecture by Dr. Gavriluk titled "The Doctrines That Do and Do Not Develop," which considered this topic in conversation with the works of John Henry Newman and William J. Abraham, and specifically how narratives of positive doctrinal change are compared with those of decline, and doctrines of the incarnation and deification given special attention. Members of Prof. Abraham's family and many friends spoke before the lecture and many of this colleagues and former students also attended the fine lecture.



## Sky Drawing

One day recently after a Community Lunch, attentive pedestrians witnessed an unusual sight over Perkins Chapel when a number of commercial airlines flying in the crowded skies over DFW made a fascinating and geometrically sophisticated set of lines with their exhaust and condensation trails. What was particularly striking about the moment when this photograph was taken was how precise the flight trails were in how they intersected each other and the terminus of the Perkins chapel spire! In some ways the image looks like a high school geometry problem, while in another way it looks like a sky-bound *Etch A Sketch*. If you look closely, there is a *third* airplane flying nearly the same path at the left as an earlier flight, with a less pronounced trail, but still moving toward the tip of the spire. The Perkins Chapel has been a place of beauty and inspiration, and many times what surrounds the chapel, whether nearby or thousands of feet in the air, creates a canvas that accentuates or highlights that very inspiration. While the word "spire" itself might seem to be related to "inspire," the words are not etymologically related—the spire on the chapel is from the Germanic words *spir* and *Spier*, meaning "point" or "top" like on a blade of grass. Nonetheless, the chapel continues to be a wonderful place to provide a centering focus for the community—with and without lines in the sky.



# Custard Institute Hosts Inaugural Symposium

The Custard Institute for Spanish Art and Culture (CISAC) at the Meadows Museum, recently established in 2021, hosted an inaugural symposium titled *Context Matters: Materiality of Objects in the Museum*, held on October 5 and 6, 2023. The symposium was organized by the Institute and spearheaded under the leadership of Gregory Warden (right), Mark A. Roglán Director of the Custard Institute for Spanish Art and Culture, and Emeritus Professor of Art History at SMU. More than half a dozen scholars and arts leaders participated in the two-day event, including Michael Corris (Emeritus Professor of Art, SMU), Amanda Dotseth (Linda P. and William A. Custard Director of the Meadows Museum and Centennial Chair in the Meadows School of the Arts, SMU), Adam Jasienski (Associate Professor of Art History, SMU, and member of the Custard Institute Advisory Board), Michelle Rich (Ellen and Harry S. Parker III Associate Curator of Indigenous American Art, Dallas Museum of Art), Anne Balsamo (Arts and Humanities Distinguished University Chair, University of Texas at Dallas), and Maurizio Forte (William and Sue Gross Distinguished Professor of Classical Studies and of Art, Art History, and Visual Studies, Duke University). Bridwell Director Anthony Elia presented a talk on Friday titled “Virtue Ethics or Vulture Ethics?—Reflections on Our Confessional Distance from Culpability in the Arts,” followed by a group discussion and questions among participants and attendees.



## TEMA Luncheon Hosted at Bridwell

On Saturday, September 23, 2023, the thirty-third state meeting of the Texas Medieval Association (TEMA) was held at SMU. The day-long event featured a variety of presentations and discussions organized by SMU professor Dr. Bonnie Wheeler. The TEMA luncheon was hosted by Bridwell Library in the Blue Room at noon with more than seventy scholars and writers in attendance. Dante's Pizza Restaurant in Dallas catered the event.





# MAST+ Visits St. John's Abbey

Members of the 2023–2024 MAST+ Cohort from Perkins School of Theology participated in a four day retreat to St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN from September 7–10, 2023. The MAST+ Program is the most recent iteration of the MAST Program started around 2017–18, an initiative founded by former Perkins Dean Craig Hill. The program acronym began as “Minister-Author-Scholar-Teacher,” and was geared to support writing arts and scholarship among ministry students, especially related to their congregational community life and goals. The new iteration as



MAST+ incorporates the established values of the program and has changed “author” to “artist” (after student reviews desired this) and added the “+” to allow for greater flexibility in the creative components of students’ lives. The new MAST+ program has also shifted gears from a for-credit capstone course to a non-course framework, which is now described as “an intentional community cohort of student seekers looking to develop and foster creativity in the arts.” The work of the cohort is supportive and evolves according to the needs of the group. In addition, the role of the St. John’s Bible and the community of the Abbey in Collegeville has become central to the formative experience of the cohort, as a way of fostering a holistic approach to theological learning, the arts, and creative applications to how students engage with each other, their faculty, and their faith communities. The workshop included SMU faculty members and students, with lectures, tours, and sessions on writing and team-building. The cohort also had the opportunity to attend chapel services, a classical music concert, and participate in a tour of an environmentally sustainable fine arts pottery studio and traditional Japanese tea ceremony.





Images from the MAST+ Retreat at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN included guided and free walks through the nearby woods and along the lakes. Cohort members also visited the campus pottery studio run by world-renowned potter Richard Bresnahan (center, left). On the first evening, Father Michael Patella, OSB (bottom, left) greeted and welcome the group to the Guest House and St. John's experience.





Students and faculty participated in a range of activities. Pictured above right, the interior of the University Church on the St. John's campus, designed by Marcell Breuer, where members of the cohort were able to attend daily chapel services and concerts during the retreat; students also participated in a Heritage Edition learning session, team-building exercises, a half-day writing seminar, and a group-written and performed play (bottom photos).



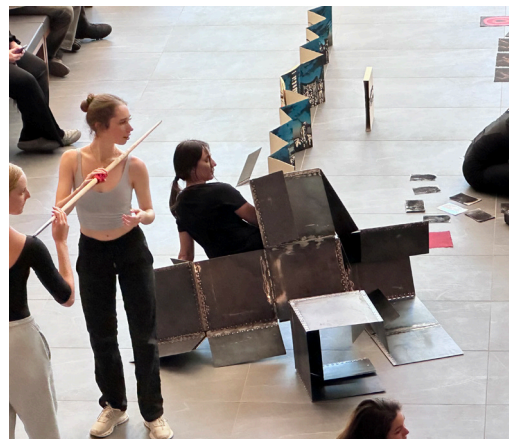
# María Verónica San Martín Performs at SMU

On November 2, Bridwell Library and Meadows School of the Arts collaborated with Chilean New York-based multidisciplinary artist María Verónica San Martín to present a dance performance in the Gene and Jerry Jones Grand Atrium (below), followed by a lecture and reception at Bridwell Library. Arvid Nelsen, Curator of Rare Books & Manuscripts and Librarian for Special Collections and Christopher Ham, Director of Dance Production worked with María to organize *Moving Memorials / Dignidad / The Javeline Project*, which incorporated a trilogy of dance performances with mobile artist books, kinetic steel sculptures and handcrafted javelins about memory, human rights violations and resistance



in contemporary Chile and Latin America. The artworks were simultaneously activated by the artist and 20 first-year dancers transforming the intimate act of reading into a choreography that positioned reading as an act of protest and remembrance. The performance was followed with a talk by San Martín on her *Moving Memorials* series of artist books (2012—ongoing) that engages with the complicated political history of Chile and mutates from installations and performance to artist books. This series of artist books has a civic, historic, and political responsibility to reconstruct the stories of the past in order to create social change and acknowledge the form of the book as a repository of both memory and knowledge.





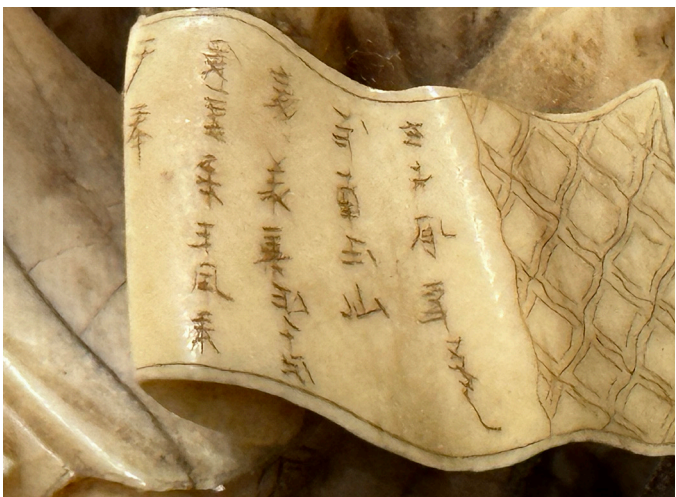


# Historical Ivories Exhibition at Bridwell

This fall Bridwell Library featured a short-term exhibition of historical ivories, given to Bridwell in 2021. The exhibit, displayed in two tall vitrine cases, includes some remarkable artistry in ivory, traditionally called scrimshaw. Many of the works included in this exhibition are from an Asian cultural milieu, where the practice was popular for centuries, though some of the items in this collection are of European origin, including those depicting ornate ecclesiastic imagery. The ivory trade is highly controversial and the underlying ethics of its origins, production, and longevity has presented many modern collectors and institutions with serious dilemmas in stewardship and conservation. Sale and commerce of ivory is either highly regulated or illegal, depending on its age and the location of the material. Additionally, the cultural attachments and social responsibilities of the material objects places an onus on those who are curating said objects to think critically and wisely about the long history of the trade, its historical implications, and its current and future meaning. While some institutions are gun-shy about dealing with the implications of such objects, for our part, the engagement with such objects is vitally important to educate the public and to interact with younger generations about the complexity of objects or artifacts with moral baggage and cultural nuance and complexity. The ivories are at once astonishingly detailed and beautiful, but also shocking to the viewer considering that some of the objects came about through the death of a magnificent animal. These tensions allow for our public to reflect and think about the extents that cultures have gone to articulate notions of *beauty* and *nature*. The collection of more than 150 ivory carvings, dating between the mid-19th and early 20th centuries, was given to Bridwell Library by Rev. Kenneth and Marya Rodgers.









# In Memoriam: Rev. Dr. Charles (Chuck) Aaron



**On November 29, 2023, the Oak Lawn United Methodist Church in Dallas, TX shared the following:**

It is with very sad and heavy hearts we announce today that our beloved Rev. Dr. Charles (Chuck) Aaron passed away earlier today at home. Chuck was an active member of Oak Lawn United Methodist Church – teaching, preaching, greeting, driving for our outreach programs, and volunteering for shelter. He exemplified what it means to be a member of our chosen family – and was passionate about all our inclusive and welcoming ministries. He was an extended member of our ministry team, providing pastoral care, conducting funerals, and doing whatever was needed to ensure the love of our church reached our community. He has a special place in the hearts of our pastors because their well-being and health was always on his mind.

Outside of Oak Lawn UMC, Chuck was an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church and most recently served as the Director of the Intern Program at Perkins School of Theology at SMU. His wife, Sandra Aaron, remains at home and is in close connection with Rev. Rachel as they navigate plans for Chuck's celebration of life and next steps.

We remain in prayer for Sandra and the rest of Chuck's family and the faculty and students (current and past) at Perkins as this news reaches them all.

## ***Oratio: ad beatam memoriam***

A Prayer in Memory of Chuck Aaron

By Anthony J. Elia

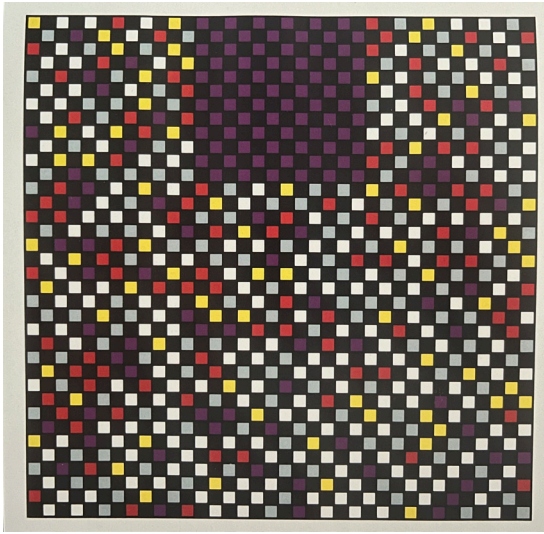
A good man sat at the table that day,  
drew breath, broke bread, and smiled.  
Our table was measured in its  
bounty, not of food and drink,  
but in the treble blessing of a bountiful soul,  
of the limitless heart that made room  
for the vulnerable, the defeated, the oppressed,  
and one another of the creatures on this coil;  
for a moment, the spirit rises and gives blessing,  
blessing upon each and every one of us,  
a passing glance lacking any sense of bitterness,  
or impatience or temperament that sullies  
our own dispositions; we have been blessed  
by the wondrous joy of his presence, his quiet  
calming witness, his statements to the faith  
with and without words, his steady resoluteness  
that moved mountains greater than we know,  
and a faith mightier than the nations;  
we pass an empty table now, today, a table blessed  
with food we all may eat, but may now deny,  
because our appetites are dulled by the bounty  
that has gone, our kindly, joyous spirit,  
a tempered vision of contented warmth among us;  
oh, sweet kindred fellow in Christ, we stay  
among your gift to us, our forged memories  
that recline in holy solitude today,  
the resplendent spark of your eternal spirit—  
we honor thee with humble gratitude,  
having made us better by each encounter;  
we remember thee with grace and  
proclamations of our assembled family here;  
and we love thee, our brother at the cross  
who sees before us the Word everlasting.  
Our table will forever be set for you.

Amen.



# Bridwell's Christmas Cards

For decades Bridwell Library has been creating its own Christmas cards. Usually, the cards have drawn on more *traditional* scenes, often based on historical texts of poetry or literature. During the last four years we have taken a slightly more adventurous and creative approach, sometimes even avant-garde in style. With the help of former and current staff, including Jon Speck, Rebecca Howdeshell, Arvid Nelsen, Michelle Ried, and Elisa McCune, the cards have explored a variety of themes and topics related to our collections and work. In 2020, the card was from a Salvador Dalí work (below right); Jon Speck chose an abstract work by Ian Tyson (bottom, center) in 2021; in 2022, Rebecca Howdeshell found this lovely piece by Kahn & Selesnick (bottom, left); and this year, Elisa McCune identified a wonderful hundred-year-old image from a work translated by Ernest Renan (top, right). The holiday message each year included a sampling of poetic messages appropriate for the holidays.



## A Very Bridwell Christmas

Bridwell Library enjoyed some holiday fun with a spirited reading of Charles Dickens' classic ghost story, *A Christmas Carol*. Warm mulled cider and cookies, a fireplace (video), and decorated Christmas trees set the stage for a cozy livingroom reading. Anthony Elia, Ally Stokes, and Erin Herndon read to an audience that included Perkins and Bridwell community members. Bridwell displayed a first edition color copy of *A Christmas Carol* and one of the first ever printed Christmas Cards from a run of 1,000 printed in England, 1843.





# Bridwell Staff Spotlights

Happy December birthdays to **Anthony Elia**, **Jane Elder**, **Ellen Frost**, **Elisa McCune**, **Deborah Hopes**, and **Joshua Pohl**! **Ally Stokes** returned to Bridwell Library as the Public Services Assistant. Welcome back, Ally!

In Sept of 2023, Bridwell Conservator **Jesse Hunt** attended the annual Guild of Bookworkers Standards of Excellence Seminar in San Francisco. He shares the following, “The city has a long, storied history in printing and the book arts and is the home of the San Francisco Center for the Book, the American Bookbinders Museum, and the Arion Press. When I visited the Center for the Book, proprietor Chad Johnson attempted to explain why and how printing and binding became so prominent in San Francisco. Namely the heavy, cast-iron equipment would get moved west, stop at the coast, and then stay there because no one wanted to move it ever again, like drops of water running downhill and pooling to form a lake. Not an auspicious origin story, but having moved several presses and board shears myself over the years, I can’t fault the logic in it. Ultimately, the cumbersome nature of printing created a literal center of gravity that turned San Francisco into a hub for the artform.”

**Etleva Shemai** and **Will Kanute** at St. Paul’s UCC premiered the short work for piano and soprano *Adtheu* (“Homeland”) on October 22, 2023; the piece was written in 2022 for the musicians by Anthony Elia (at Bridwell).

## Happy 40th Anniversary, Jane!

Bridwell Staff gathered for Jane Elder’s fortieth work anniversary at Bridwell Library and Southern Methodist University. Jane is the Head of the Theological Writing Center and Reference Librarian at Bridwell. In addition to her work at Bridwell in recent years, Jane has worked in the Clements Center for Southwest Studies and completed several graduate degrees during her tenure. Congratulations, Jane, on your anniversary here at SMU!

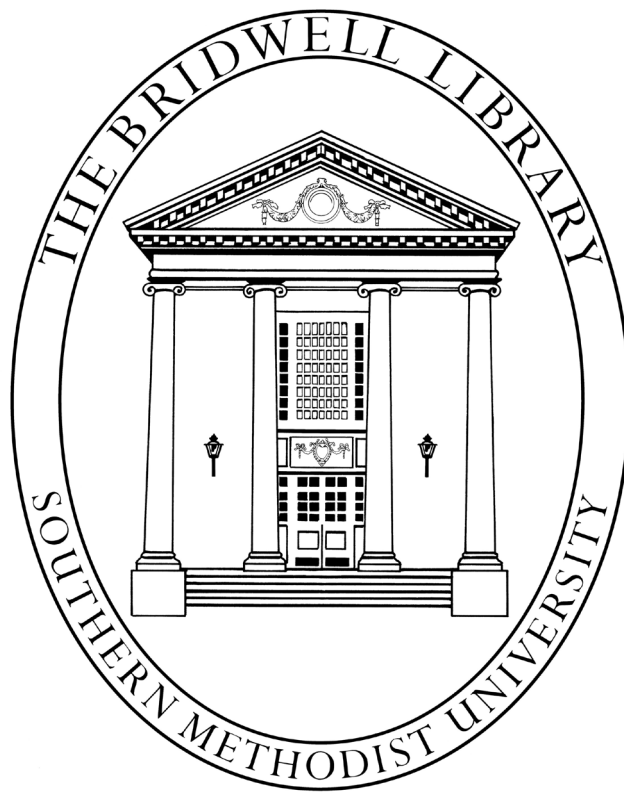


## Building Updates

Major storms during SMU’s Homecoming weekend in October overwhelmed the gutter systems at Bridwell and caused damage to the ceiling over the front entryway. Thankfully, the artwork was spared from any water damage. The front door was closed for a week while the ceiling was evaluated, scraped, and repaired. New gutter guards were installed to prevent damage from occurring again in the future.

















# *Le Cantique des Cantiques*

*Translated by Ernest Renan, Paris: F.-L. Schmied, 1925*

