

## Leah Gunning Francis, Ph.D.



Dr. Leah Gunning Francis is the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dr. Gunning Francis is also the author of the book *Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community* (Chalice Press, 2015). She interviewed more than two dozen clergy and young activists who were actively involved in the movement for racial justice in Ferguson and beyond. Dr. Gunning Francis researched and wrote *Ferguson and Faith* while serving as the Associate Dean for Contextual Education and Assistant Professor of Christian Education at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

Dr. Gunning Francis' second book, *Faith After Ferguson: Building Resilience and Cultivating Wisdom* is scheduled to be released later this year. Dr. Gunning Francis followed up with clergy and young activists from St. Louis to find out what has happened since then and includes reflections on some of the current movements for racial justice nationwide.

In 2012, Dr. Gunning Francis was awarded the prestigious Engaged Scholars Fellowship to study issues of risk among middle-class African American young men. She argues that the meta-narrative about young black men puts all of them "at risk," regardless of socioeconomic class, and utilizes the narrated experiences of black mothers to construct a new narrative about young black men that honors their humanity and is concerned for their well-being. Dr. Gunning Francis was featured in the 2017 PBS documentary *The Talk: Race in America*.

Dr. Gunning Francis' additional research interests focus on transformative education as reflected in her doctoral dissertation, *Beyond "Band-Aids" and Bootstraps: Toward a Womanist Vision of Christian Education as Social Transformation*. Her writing reflects her commitment to the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of women, men and children; and highlights her particular interest in underserved and minority communities.

Dr. Gunning Francis has provided pastoral leadership for congregations in Georgia, Illinois and Ohio. She has received numerous awards to include the Candler School of Theology's G. Ray Jordan award for excellence in integrating academic study with constructive leadership and service, and the Fund for Theological Education's Doctoral Fellow Award. In 2015, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Fontbonne University.

Dr. Gunning Francis earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from Hampton University; a Master of Divinity degree from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University; and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois.

A native of Willingboro, New Jersey, Dr. Gunning Francis is married to Rev. Rodney Francis. They live in Indianapolis with their two teenage sons.