

2021 Cedar Falls Christian Writers VIRTUAL Workshop Speakers and Topics



Keynote Speaker Shelly Beach is co-founder of our Cedar Falls Christian Writer's Workshop in Iowa and also helped co-found Breathe Writer's Conference in Grand Rapids, MI. She is a multiple award-winning author of more than thirteen books, co-author of several others, and coach and mentor behind dozens of additional titles. She has worked with New York Times best-selling authors, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, acclaimed physicians, pastors, entrepreneurs, musicians, educators, as well as new and aspiring authors.

Shelly served as managing editor for the *NIV Hope in the Mourning Bible* (Zondervan), was one of three writers for the *NIV Stewardship Bible* (Zondervan), and was a contributor to the *Mosaic Bible* (Tyndale) and the *David Jeremiah Study Bible* (Worthy).

Shelly is also the co-founder of PTSDPerspectives.org and founder of Caregiving Journey on Facebook. She consults and speaks across the nation on a variety of issues. She can be found at PTSDPerspectives.org, award-winning PTSDPerspectives on Facebook, Caregiving Journey on Facebook, and at ShellyBeachOnline.com

Shelly and her husband Dan moved to Iowa from Michigan in 2019 to be closer to family. She and Dan have two adult married children and six grandchildren. They are active in their church and enjoy time with their grandchildren and traveling.

Shelly's Sessions:

The Power of Influence: Changing the World One Person at a Time

This session calls us to look beyond writing to our greater power of influence. How can we use our skills, passion, and the love of Christ in atypical settings: hospitals, prisons, community ministries, with our family, our neighbors, in missions, or in education? Learn how to become an awesome influencer in the world by developing a new vision of yourself as a writer.

How to Become Unstoppable: Developing Confidence as a Writer

The sad truth is that almost all authors struggle with Imposter Syndrome: the unshakable conviction that we're getting away with something and that, at any moment, the Fraud Police will find us out. In this session you will learn how to harness the power of your identity, self-talk, realistic expectations, and routine to become an unstoppable steward of your gifts as a writer.



Mary Potter Kenyon graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a BA in Psychology and is a certified grief counselor and Therapeutic Art Coach. She works as Program Coordinator for the Shalom Spirituality Center in Dubuque, Iowa, where she lives with the youngest of her eight children.

Mary is widely published in newspapers, magazines, and anthologies, with essays featured in ten *Chicken Soup for the Soul* titles. She is the author of seven books, including the award-winning *Refined By Fire: A Journey of Grief and Grace* and her newest release *Called to Be Creative: A Guide to Reigniting Your Creativity*.

Mary founded the annual Hope & Healing Grief Retreat and the Faith Writers Conference in Dubuque. She is a member of AWSA Advanced Writers and Speakers Association and has been a popular presenter at our workshop annually since 2012, as well as many venues in the Midwest. She has shared the stage with her mentor and New York Times bestselling author Cecil Murphey. Mary's blog is <http://marypotterkenyon.com>

Mary's Sessions:

Thursday Night-only intro session: Jumpstart Your Creativity

You've set aside time for writing. You're sitting in front of your keyboard or pencil and notepad, ready to write, only to discover nothing is flowing. What can we do when writer's block stalls us? If it's true that the hardest part is getting started, what can you do to jumpstart that writing engine? Mary Potter Kenyon walks attendees through a series of creativity exercises that gets those writing gears oiled up and ready to roar to life. Activities include blackout poetry, falsehood/truth list-making, and other fun exercises.

Scanned pages for Blackout Poetry activity will be emailed to attendees beforehand. Attendees will need a word processing program like Microsoft Word with a Text Highlight Color tool, or a printer and a black Sharpie marker.

Agents, Editors and Publishers—Oh my!

Traditional publisher? Self-publishing? Hybrid? Agent? No agent? Hire an editor? Pay an illustrator? We have decisions far beyond our pages of written work to consider, and the logistics in making them can make a writer's head spin. Mary Potter Kenyon has heard and seen it all: fly-by-night publishers and authors spending thousands of dollars for badly done work. The good news is that no writer needs to make a costly mistake. Mary walks you step-by-step how to do your own homework before you make a decision, identifies red flags to watch out for and shares reputable websites that will do some of the work for you.

Zoom...Zoom...Zoom: The Future of Promotion

Marketing gurus say: "Establish yourself as an expert in your topic; get your books into libraries; let your speaking sell your books for you." We're not in Kansas anymore, Dorothy. With the pandemic came changes in how writers can promote their books or build a platform. As the advent of the pandemic events were cancelled, libraries and bookstores closed. Now, even those places opening up

have changed the way they do business. Authors need to be prepared to pivot to the new present and future ways to promote themselves. Mary Potter Kenyon comes to this topic as a presenter for community colleges and libraries throughout Iowa since 2011, experience as a former librarian and program coordinator for a spirituality center, and as an author with a book released during the pandemic.



Karen Strauss founded Hybrid Global Publishing in 2011 to help speakers, authors, and entrepreneurs write and publish their bestselling book. She has helped over 400 business owners become successful published authors and has helped 250 authors reach #1 bestselling status. She's the author of *Book Publishing for Entrepreneurs: Top Secrets from a New York Publisher*.

Karen has held management and marketing positions at major publishing houses, including The Free Press, Crown, Random House, and Avon and has worked with celebrities such as President Jimmy Carter, Jimmy Stewart, Martha Stewart, George F. Will and Og Mandino. She has an online course called *Publishing 101: Your complete guide from idea to published author*.

Karen's Session:

7 Ways to Monetize Your Book

Most people ask how many copies of their book they can sell – a better question is, “How can I use my book to make more money?” Selling books is not the most efficient way to make money or reach your financial goals. Some people do it, but for most authors it takes a lot of time to build your credibility to sell enough books to quit your day job. The good news is that creating a book can help you make money in other ways. If you are an entrepreneur, speaker, or businessperson, writing a book can be a great way to garner attention. And Attention can equal making more money. You are attracting larger and more lucrative opportunities. In short – writing a book will make you more visible, give you more credibility and help you attract your ideal customer. Karen Strauss, who is a 35-year veteran in the publishing business, will talk about the 7 best ways you can leverage your book into a profit-making machine.



After authoring seven World War II women's fiction novels from her northern Iowa home, **Gail Kittleson** co-wrote two non-fiction books about holidays and food during the war. With Billy Rae Stewart, the son of the author of the lyrics to the Tennessee Waltz, Redd Stewart, she then co-authored *Country Music's Hidden Gem*.

In March 2021, her Civil War era novel, *Secondhand Sunsets*, released. Gail's next novel takes the reader back to World War II through the perspective of a British immigrant to the United States. Regardless of setting or genre, one theme shines clear. No matter how dire the circumstances, through the devastation of grief or shame's piercing

taunts, Gail's make-do fictional or real-life heroines discover new strength and move forward in faith.

Researching Fictional Characters

Discovering important facts and trivia about our heroines and heroes can be a daunting task, and the single most significant factor in our search is ATTITUDE. We must be relentless, as if seeking hidden treasure. By reading widely about the setting and period events, we may discover far more than we could ever have imagined.



Jean Vaux, Life Design Coach, helps busy servant leaders, influencers and communicators steward their personal leadership, by aligning with their divine design to uncover their voice and transform stress into strength, so they lead others from a place fueled by peace, purpose and powerful health. She has been co-leader of the Cedar Falls Christian Writers Workshop since 2006 and started the Cedar Falls writers' group.

Jean was formerly a graphic designer, art director and communication specialist, specializing in publication design. She was managing editor of the award-winning *Waterloo/Cedar Falls Magazine* in the 1990's and then managing editor of *Cedar Valley Christian News*, which grew to the *Iowa Christian Chronicle*. She helped start the *Cedar Valley Athlete* and was its Wellness Editor as she shifted her platform to health coaching, pursuing her love of teaching others natural wellness, God's way. She has been published in magazines, her own and others, and in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Jean leads workshops and retreats and is a natural foodie. You can find and like her Facebook page at [JeanVauxCoaching](#)

Getting Out of Your Own (and the Lord's) Way

Do you find yourself in the Romans 7 loop: doing what you don't want to do and not doing what you want to do? Can you relate to any of these self-saboteurs when you write:

- You stop yourself before you even get started writing because of fear of being judged?
- You get distracted by shiny object syndrome with so many ideas but never finishing one piece?
- You have trouble trying to get your editing perfect enough to push "Send?"

Find out how the latest neuroscience can help you collaborate with Christ in renewing your mind. Through mental fitness, learn how to tame your saboteur mind that derails and lies to you and tap into your sage mind where truth and creativity flow.



Sue Schuerman is co-leader of Cedar Falls Christian Writers Workshop and leads the local monthly Cedar Falls Writers group. She is co-founder of **EarthWhispers Abbey**, retreats and programs that integrate contemplative practice and creative expression.

Sue has a long history in leadership of various women's groups and has written devotionals for her church newsletter and participated in a community collaboration for a church devotional. Sue's essays have appeared in a variety of anthologies and magazines. She feeds and shares her passion for nature, legacy writing, and a spirit-illuminated life through retreats, workshops and classes. Visit her website for a schedule of offerings at glasspenwriter.com

Sue's Session:

How to Create A Church Devotional

Devotionals help us meet deep needs in our lives. They also make meaningful gifts. Imagine your own church members sharing God's love and wisdom through a collection of their faith stories written as devotions. Learn what it takes to create a book of devotions written by members of your congregation. We'll explore the process of developing a devotional from assembling your team to getting it published and everything in between.



Mackenzie Ryan Walters founded Faith Storytellers to lift up and share the story God is writing in the world. Available at faithstorytellers.com, you'll find true, first-person stories that answer the question: What do I know to be true about God that I didn't before?

Mackenzie is also the CEO of StoryStruck Marketing, a marketing agency that guides clients on how to strategically discover their story and tell it well. A former national award-winning journalist, her stories appeared in newspapers, trade magazines, on television and radio as well as during live events. Learn more at storystruckmarketing.com

Mackenzie's session:

Are you a Story Builder or Story Carver?

Crafting a compelling story is hard. After coaching storytellers during a church class, and after editing more than 50 stories at faithstorytellers.com, national award-winning journalist and marketing agency founder Mackenzie Walters shares how to better identify whether you are a "story builder" or "story carver" in your approach to writing, as well as practical tips on how to make your story shine given your natural building or carving tendencies. The workshop also includes a storytelling exercise to apply your new skills.