

Looking toward  
commencement

Public pastor  
for a public church

A bridge from  
Baptist to Lutheran



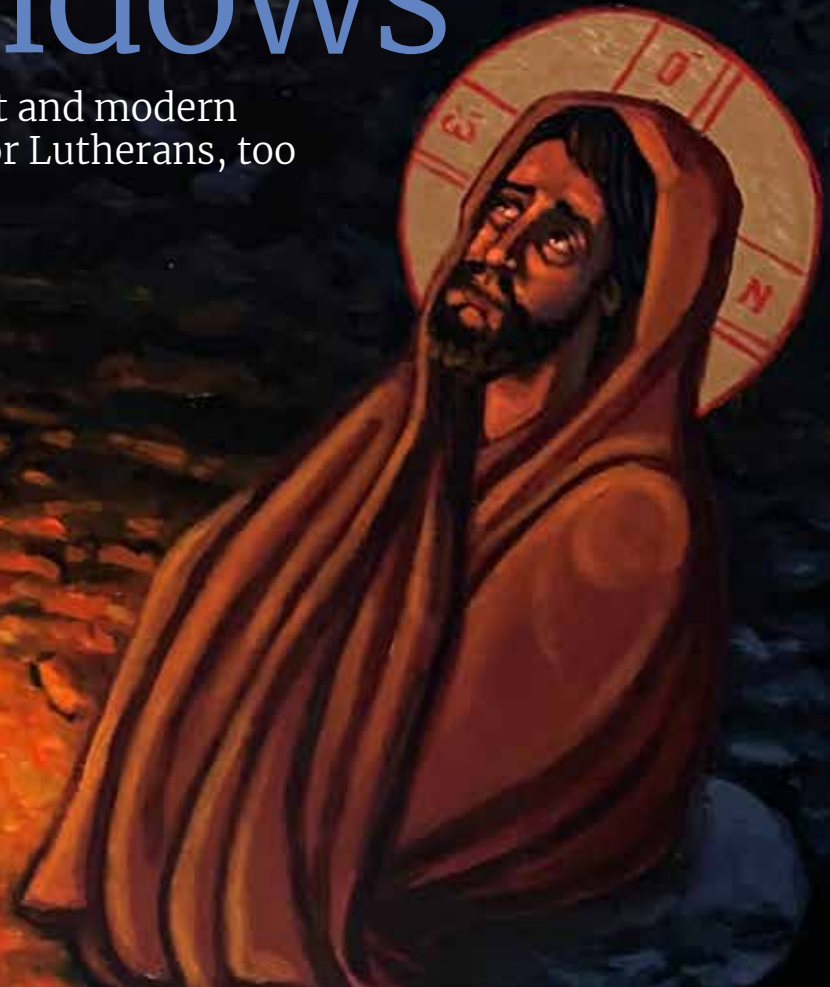
# epistle

WINTER/  
SPRING 2022

The magazine of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

## mirrors & windows

Why ancient and modern  
saints are for Lutherans, too



# Sustainability and its challenges

With the turn of the calendar year, we also moved from the first to second year of our strategic plan, *For such a time as this*. Almost all our Year 1 initiatives have become part of our regular operations, so we now look to Year 2 initiatives to guide us in further improving our programs, resources, and vision. Overall, our plan seeks *sustainability* at a key moment in the life of our school, church, and wider world. But sustainability sounds so dreary and prosaic, only about dollars and cents. There is that side to it, of course, but I want to tell of a different sense of sustainability, and then share the special challenges we face in attaining it.

When we think of sustainability, it's often only in the *material* sense. This is not to be minimized, since our school (like any organization) doesn't persist by nice thoughts and good wishes but by using treasure well. Material sustainability asks hard questions about that treasure. What are our revenue sources and will they improve? Where do we spend funds and are these justified? How much space do we need and can we afford it? Such questions about material sustainability appear throughout our plan in initiatives about marketing, enrollment, facilities, scholarships, fundraising, partnerships, program viability, and more besides.

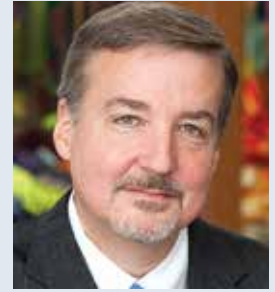
But sustainability also has a *missional* sense that both grounds and exceeds the material. It asks still harder questions about purpose and identity and whether these still matter. Why do we work as we do and toward what ends? Who do we seek to become and does that bring any good? What secures our future and have we still a reason for being? These are middle-of-the-night, soul-searching questions that shake us to the core. Yet every seminary is asking them and so must we. To adapt Mark 8:36, were we to gain all needed material goods but lose our purpose, our

direction, our very soul, is that still a life, or one worth living?

It's not so simple, though, to say what missional sustainability means any more. For the past few centuries in North America, seminaries held three familiar, overlapping, at times rival roles. One was *vocational development*, credentialing professional leaders for religious groups. Another was *knowledge proficiency*, transferring religious insights needed for official capacities. The third role was *moral activism*, speaking a public, ethical voice while preparing students for the same. Development, proficiency, and activism were usually balanced, though at times some might predominate (as with professionalism a century ago) or stand in tension (as is often the case with activism and proficiency).

These were the accepted roles for seminaries in a milieu of settled assumptions. Being a seminary meant living into these roles, with material goods deployed to sustain such missional ends. But what if settled assumptions about race, gender, and so on are disputed or rejected? What if religious groups know neither what forms they want nor what leaders they need? What if insight we once passed down is being questioned by those who were left out? What if our confident activism has had its privilege exposed? What is our sustainable mission when the purposes on which we once relied and for which we were founded are all being reconsidered, and surely often for the better?

For such a time as this, material sustainability must be rethought in light of missional sustainability. And I trust God's guidance into new purposes that free us from just repeating a past that will never return. In mercy and hope, God calls us onto a new path that is more amply suited to proclaiming the gospel and forming Christ's disciples. I hope you can join our efforts as we explore what our next steps will be. ✿



James Nieman

For such a time as this, material sustainability must be rethought in light of missional sustainability.

# epistle

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The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, a seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, forms visionary leaders to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ.

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Visit [www.lstc.edu](http://www.lstc.edu) for more information about LSTC's programs, conferences and special events.

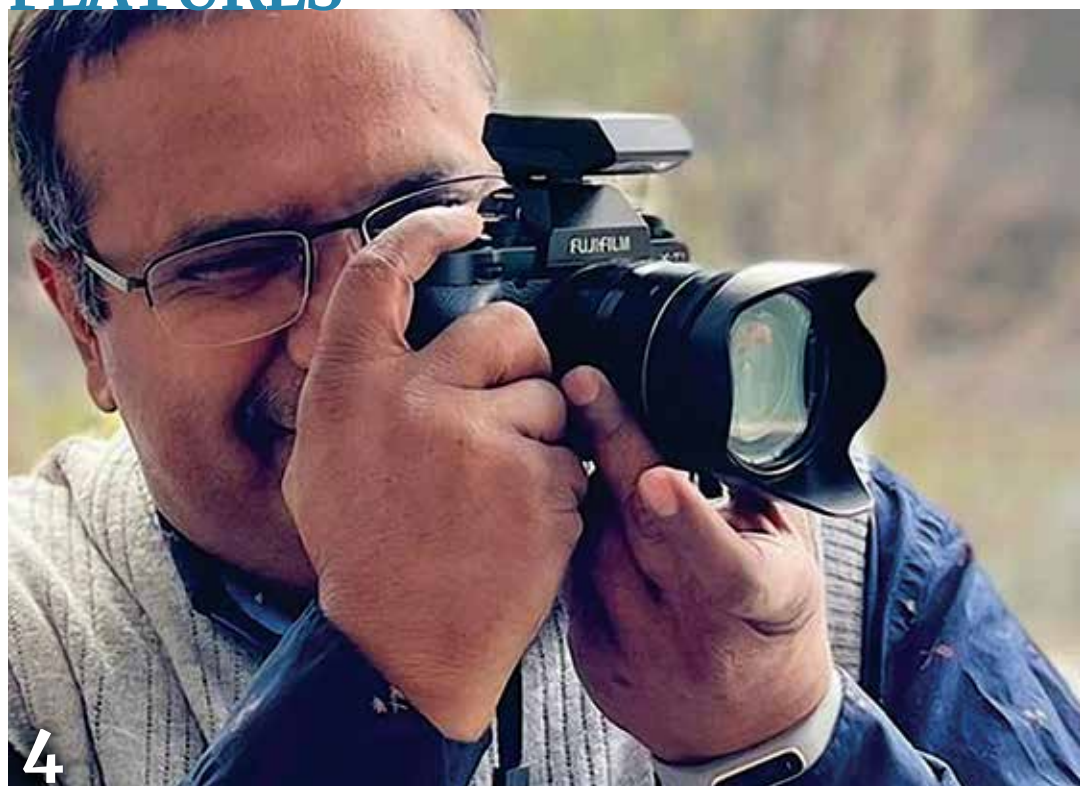
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LSTC's lobby was an art gallery during February.

# Black History Month focuses on the Black family

LSTC planners of Black History Month (BHM) activities chose the Black family as its focus this year, with three panel discussions, worship, art gallery and tour, and musical presentation.

The Woodshop Art Gallery on Chicago's South Side offered a virtual art exhibition and provided a special Black art collection for the LSTC lobby. Lawrence D'Antignac, African American artist and gallery owner, said "African American artists are the unsung recorders of Black history."

The online panels explored issues confronting the Black family: family wellness (mental health and blended families), the Black immigrant family, and the impact of mass incarceration on the Black family.

Keith "Doc" Hampton and the Keith Hampton Singers presented a recorded musical extravaganza honoring Black history and Christian faith. Among the speakers for worship were LSTC alumni Wyvetta Bullock and Yehiel Curry, associate to the bishop and bishop of the Chicago Metropolitan Synod.

At the final worship service,



Chicago Metropolitan Synod Bishop Yehiel Curry presiding, with his daughter, LSTC student Shemiah Curry, assisting.

Linda Thomas was installed as director of what has been renamed The Albert "Pete" Pero and Cheryl Stewart Pero Center for Intersectionality Studies.

BHM events were planned by faculty, staff and students of color, with support from the Pero center. Recordings of events may still be viewed on LSTC's YouTube channel or LSTC's Facebook page. ❁

Linda Thomas speaks after her installation.



# A '60 Minutes' scoop?

LSTC and CASIRAS host scientist with James Webb expertise

Those who tuned into the Dec. 11 webinar focusing on the James Webb Telescope were treated to an amazing presentation. The webinar, entitled “Will the James Webb Telescope see God?” was hosted by LSTC and the Center for Advanced Study in Religion and Science (CASIRAS). It is still available for viewing on LSTC’s YouTube channel.

It may not have technically been a scoop, but on Dec. 12, CBS’s “60 Minutes” devoted the show to the telescope.

Heidi Hammel, who was LSTC’s webinar guest, was also interviewed on “60 Minutes.” She is vice president for science at AURA, a consortium that operates large astronomical observatories, and explained what the James Webb Telescope would see.

“It was amazing to hear a scientist working on this historic satellite help us understand — in Lutheran theological terms — what this means for humanity,” said Ben Stewart, director of the Zygon Center.

By now, of course, the telescope



Scientist Heidi Hammel was guest speaker on the LSTC and CASIRAS webinar focusing on the James Webb Telescope.

was successfully launched and has been returning images to earth.

The James Webb Space Telescope is NASA’s next great observatory, following in the footsteps of the Hubble Space Telescope. Hammel has been working with NASA on this project for more than 20 years as an interdisciplinary scientist. She described what and how the Webb will “see” the cosmos, and explained how she would be using Webb to explore objects throughout our solar system.

CASIRAS ([casiras.org](http://casiras.org)) is a supporting organization for the Zygon Center for Religion and Science in partnership with LSTC. ✿

## From the editor

Welcome to the fifth issue of the *Epistle* magazine in its new design.

This cover is new and different for us, but I hope it makes you want to open the magazine and read Tim Brown’s story, “Mirrors and Windows,” about ancient and modern saints.

Tim, an 2009 alum and former colleague at LSTC, posts something about a saint of the day nearly every day on social media. I asked him to give us a bit of a history lesson about saints, and although we associate them with the Catholic church to tell us why they are also important to Lutherans.



Julie B. Sevig, editor  
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Tim also tells us why he concludes his posts by telling us why this saint’s life is important to him and should be to the church. We are also grateful for permission from three icon writers to illustrate his story: Gracie Morbitzer, Keith E.O. Homstad and Kelly Latimore. What a gift to be able to show the work of those who today focus on diverse, modern saints.

This issue is filled with several don’t-miss stories: Tim also reflects on being a student of our own professor saints, Ralph Klein and Edgar Krentz; our advancement colleague Bill Myatt visits an alum in southern California and shares his story; and we highlight three graduating students as we look toward commencement.

As always, we’re grateful for your support of LSTC, your readership and your feedback. ✿

### ANCIENT SITES & CURRENT STRUGGLES

## LSTC offers Middle East travel seminar

In what is known as “Maymester” in academia, Professors Klaus-Peter Adam and Barbara Rossing will once again lead a trip to the Middle East for students, alumni, LSTC leaders and friends. It is May 16-28 and at press time spaces were still open.

Information is available at [lstc.edu](http://lstc.edu) with links to the trip brochure and tour webpage.

This 13-day tour visits key biblical sites in Galilee, Jerusalem, Caesarea Maritima and Bethlehem, where participants will visit with

key people and groups struggling for peace and justice today. They will also learn about water resources from ecological and justice perspectives. Engaging in “the world of the Bible” involves both ancient sites and current struggles, and how they are intertwined, say the leaders.

The \$3,548 price from Chicago includes \$300 for student scholarships. There is also a \$2,300 price that doesn’t include airfare, but also includes \$300 for scholarships. ✿

# Looking toward commencement

*in person!*

After two years of recorded commencement ceremonies due to the global pandemic, LSTC will return to nearby St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church for a 2:30 ceremony on Sunday, May 15.

“A New Heaven and a New Earth” is the theme of this year’s commencement, based on Revelation 21:1a: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...”

A baccalaureate service will be

held in Augustana Chapel at 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 14. The commencement theme was chosen from biblical texts which will be used for the service. The preacher is to be determined in March by graduating students and other factors.

Paul C. Pribbenow, president of Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minn., will be the commencement speaker.

In choosing the theme, Erik

Christensen, pastor to the community and director of strategic initiatives, said this passage is cause for hope in the assurance of God’s power, bringing God’s promised future into our uncertain times.

“Our graduates are beginning the next chapter of their own vocations, whether that be in



## HERY ANDRIANOTAHINA NAIVOSON

### Madagascar pastor returns home as a systematic theologian

By Christopher Rajkumar


When The Malagasy Lutheran Church identified Hery Andrianotahina Naivoson as a trailblazer, he accepted the call to further his education in the United States, particularly LSTC.

Naivoson is a pastor in Madagascar, a big island in the Indian Ocean separated from Africa by the Mozambique Channel, nearly 250 miles off the south-eastern coast of Africa. His 16 years of pastoral ministry with the congregations enabled his church to enthusiastically establish possibilities for contextual

theological education abroad. Once the church identified him to do this, he left his family, commitments, and challenges back in Madagascar and traveled here to study.

Naivoson is a passionate pastoral caregiver. During his ministry, he realized and experienced that the people in the pews are overly impacted by eschatology (theology about the end times).

“We always live in fear of natural catastrophes as an island community,” he said. “This spirituality also impacts the islanders socially, economically and spiritually, thus causing us to lose our inner joy and peace in



congregational ministry or elsewhere, as leaders in times of tumult. Therefore, we send them with the assurance that God is present with them (and with us all), working in and through us to bring about 'a new heaven and a new earth.' A word of hope in uncertain times," he said.

Some 33 students will receive their diplomas. Three graduates are profiled on these pages, but these degrees are expected to be awarded: 16 MDiv, one in the TEEM program, one MA, two MAM, seven PhD, five DMin in preaching and one affiliate. ❁

families and communities.”

Naivoson's engagement with scripture helped him believe that the reign of God is “here” and “now.” He says that life before death is as important as life after death. In other words, we cannot strive towards life after death at the cost of our life here in this world now. He says life is to be celebrated with joy as a community, not lived in fear. He believes that his theology could help the islanders overcome their fear of the future. So, he developed an interest in developing and articulating a theology of eschatology that fits into our “here and now” that would help his island Christians celebrate and lead lives with joy and hope.

Naivoson chose LSTC for its commitment to ecclesial theology. But he also appreciates LSTC's inclusive, accommodating and accompanying nature.

When he landed in Chicago, his baggage was lost so he arrived with only the clothes he was wearing. An LSTC staff member took him shopping so he'd have clothes to wear. He calls this his wilderness experience, similar to the people of Israel moving toward the promised land with both panic and hope. This gesture of love bestowed upon a stranger was unimaginable for him.

He also appreciates the faculty and his classmates for their acceptance and accompaniment over these six years.

Naivoson says the diverse learning experience he's had at LSTC definitely expanded his theological horizon. Using the library was especially helpful: “I learned to use the gadgets and digital resources like the millennials. These digital resources would be a great help to the students of my country; we can access them from our places.”

He says Madagascar is the land that taught him life, and LSTC is the second home that taught him who he is, where he is, and where he is headed. At LSTC he gained both academic and ministerial confidence to address: “What do my people need? What is expected of me in my future ministry?”

He will return to Madagascar with his PhD in systematic theology to assume a teaching ministry of his church. When your beloved finally returns as a scholar, it becomes the proudest moment to the family. That experience will be memorable for his wife and daughter, whom he left behind in 2016 by accepting this missional call of his church and fulfilling this academic challenge. Their sacrifice contributed to his success, he says. ❁

*Rajkumar, from Madurai, India, will soon graduate with his MA degree. He is also student worker for Marketing and Communications.*



CHRISTOPHER RAJKUMAR

‘Belonging’ is how he feels,  
and what he studies

PHOTO BY MANOJ GUNHOTI



By Julie B. Sevig

By the time you're reading this, Christopher Rajkumar will have learned whether he's a new PhD student at LSTC. But for now, he is soon to be an MA graduate.

Exactly a year to the day Rajkumar and his wife Sugirtha arrived in Chicago for him to pursue his studies, we sat down in the Grand Hallway to reflect on his academic journey so far.

When he arrived at seminary, it was not his first visit to the United States or even to LSTC. He had been to the U.S. four times, all for conferences,

and had come through Chicago to visit his Indian friends at LSTC. At two of the four conferences he had been a speaker on a topic he's pursuing for a PhD in theology and ethics with a special focus on "just, inclusive and belonging in the church."

"Belonging is a culture not a sign or a symbol," he said. "Cultivating a culture of belonging should be inculcated among the pews to consider everyone as belonging to each other, and should be the mission of the church." His life philosophy is, "I belong to you, you belong to me, and we belong to each other."

When Rajkumar visited LSTC the first time, he met with Rob Worley, director of the Language, Resource and Writing Center, who asked him, "Why don't you take up your

study here?" faculty member Peter Vethanayagamony also encouraged him to consider doing his PhD work at LSTC when Rajkumar was working for the National Council of Churches in India.

Rajkumar served the NCC 10 years as the executive secretary for mission, ecumenism and diaconia, allowing him to contribute to the mission and ministries of several international ecumenical movements and organizations, including World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation and the United Nations.

But because of more than a decade gap from academics, he was advised to first get his MA, which he said was good advice; he called it a "refreshing experience" to be in the MA program.

This year allowed him to adjust to academia in a new country, and to living here. Because they had to quarantine in their campus home when

they arrived, it was weeks before he and his wife met anyone face-to-face. Still, he says the welcome was tremendous.

#### LSTC is family

"The community made us feel we belong to a family. We had calls from people we don't know saying they heard we had arrived and saying, 'How are you both doing?' and 'Do you need anything?' It made us to feel, wow, what a great community."

Cultivating a culture of belonging should be inculcated among the pews to consider everyone as belonging to each other, and should be the mission of the church."

Christopher Rajkumar

Since all classes were online last academic year, they continued to be isolated. Still, people reached out. It wasn't unusual for someone to ask him in the chat feature during classes on Zoom, "How are you doing?" or "Do you need anything?"

"It made us feel this is a family," he said.

Family is exactly what they needed. The hardest part of leaving India was leaving their two daughters, Rushenka (age 21) and Shyreeti (age 18 and in boarding school and still financially supported by her parents). To pay for seminary, make ends meet and even support family at home, many international students work at the seminary. Rajkumar works for the Marketing and Communications team taking photos, editing video and writing.

In addition, he manages the seminary's Duty Free shop (donated household and clothing items to help students, especially international students) and Katie's Closet.

"Duty Free and Katie's helped us set up our house and were a huge part of our life the first three months especially. They reduce the burden for new students. When you are hunger-free most of your problems are solved," he said. Churches, individuals and families, and other partners donate to them regularly and there is a "Katie's Closet at LSTC" Facebook group.

In addition to the closeness of classmates, Rajkumar says the inter-faith programs, Christian-Muslim conversations, the Antiracism Transformation Team, LRWC, public church emphasis, disability theology, and preaching courses have taught him different perspectives to his philosophy and theology of belonging.

"LSTC is known for its creative, contextual, inclusive, belonging and bold theological vision," he said. ✿

*Sevig is content and social media manager.*



**MELISSA HRDLICKA**

## An MDiv student ready for the future

By Julie B. Sevig

**M**elissa Hrdlicka toured four seminaries/divinity schools before settling on LSTC, a school she didn't visit until she arrived as a student four years ago.

"LSTC was the best choice for me," she says confidently. It's a wonderful place. The first time I was on campus was when I moved in." She says she was swayed by what she saw on LSTC's website—the public church curriculum and how the school "is engaged with what is happening in

the world—not keeping to itself."

Proving that a timely email response is no small thing, she also credits Matt James (then director of admissions), who quickly responded to all her questions.

Hrdlicka is currently finishing her fourth-year internship at Common Ground Recovery Community in Reading, Pa., a mission development start that began 11 years ago but is still considered young, she said. This spiritual community explores the "common ground" beneath the 12-

step program and Christian faith. Its "very cool" worship includes 12-step readings, scripture, confession and forgiveness, and open sharing. "It's a wonderful blend of both the 12-step and Christian communities," she says.

Common Ground also includes a ministry with those experiencing housing and food insecurity—clothing, winter wear, toiletries and food.

Asked about her highs and lows at LSTC as she nears graduation, she says "the community" as a



high without skipping a beat. She remembers the early years with fondness—especially the close proximity to others also living on campus: “I babysat for the Wickwares who lived above me, and loved walking down the street and seeing Dr. Wagner with her dog... I also have great memories of our flag football team and all the people who showed up for our games.”

The low is that half of her seminary years have been lived during the pandemic: “I missed seeing people, seeing them in the hallway and having [traditional hall] recess together, hanging out with people. We all struggled with technology and it was so hard to hold discussions in the Zoom room when you couldn’t see

people’s body language.”

Her list of influential classes and professors is lengthy. So, in short: “Professors at LSTC are phenomenal.”

But she did highlight how Brooke Petersen’s pastoral care and mental illness class “is super helpful to the ministry I do now... How to accommodate in worship space, in pastoral care. I saved all my readings from that class.”

Also her preaching class with Kimberly Wagner. “Especially preaching in trauma. I took that class as the pandemic was starting, adding [pandemic] trauma into our learning and how it was impacting our lives.”

Marvin Wickware Jr.’s class on racial reconciliation is also helpful

I’ve learned a lot about mission development starts, and I’m not sure I’m there yet, but I think that’s the way the church is going and this [internship] has prepared me for the future.

Melissa Hrdlicka

for her current ministry: “The community I live in now is deeply segregated. Half my time is spent in a wealthy, white suburb and the other half is in the poor [section of the] city that is very racially diverse, largely Hispanic and African-American. These communities are two miles apart and I’m right in the middle.”

She also appreciated Barbara Rossing’s classes, among others, adding, “I’m just a big nerd when it comes to the Bible classes.”

Hrdlicka said her internship lay committee told her she was “almost perfectly prepared” for her time there. “I fully agreed with them,” she said with her usual humor.

A Wisconsin native (and Packers fan), Melissa feels pulled back to the Midwest for her pastoral ministry ahead. “As I meet more and more clergy, I’m excited to be their colleague and work alongside them... I miss the snow and Great Lakes. I want to end up back there. I’ve learned a lot about mission development starts, and I’m not sure I’m there yet, but I think that’s the way the church is going and this [internship] has prepared me for the future.” ❁

*Sevig is content and social media manager.*

# Wise giants

Channeling the kindness and knowledge of professors **Ralph Klein** and **Edgar Krentz**

By Timothy Brown

In J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, Hobbits Merry and Pippin, confused and a bit lost at having been separated from their party, find themselves in Fangorn Forest. There, these diminutive Hobbits (a bit under 5 feet, by Tolkien's measure) are addressed by a 14-foot giant of a tree, Treebeard, an Ent. The scene turns out to be a tender one, despite the size differential between the creatures. The Ents are ancient, wise, speak a different language, and turn out to be quite kind despite their enormous stature.

The Ents save Merry and Pippin. And while they would probably brush off any suggested comparison to these wise giants, Professor Klein and Professor Krentz (never would I address either by their first names, despite their invitation post-graduation) were, at least for me, akin to these mythic beings. They

were ancient, wise, spoke another language, and were quite kind.

Channeling their kindness and knowledge has saved me more than once in my life.

I remember taking my seat in Old Testament that first year at LSTC and thinking, "I recognize this professor's

*continued on page 12*

## Ralph Klein: 'brilliant scholar, moral integrity, humble servant of Christ'

Ralph W. Klein, 85, Christ Seminary-Seminex professor emeritus of Old Testament, died Dec. 29. His funeral was Jan. 8 at Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chicago.

A beloved professor and renowned scholar, Klein helped shape the lives and ministries of countless pastors, scholars and church leaders.

"Ralph Klein was a pillar of the seminary... He was a brilliant scholar, a person of moral integrity, and a humble servant of Christ who touched so many lives..." said Esther Menn, dean of academic affairs and Ralph W. and Marilyn R. Klein professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible.

A member of the faculty since 1983, Klein served as a professor through 2009. Klaus-Peter Adam, professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, said that as an internationally-recognized scholar, Klein "personified excellence through his historical, source, and text-critical expertise. His rigor and creativity in the classroom were matched by his deep and ample humor, which came from a generous, warm personality."

Klein was dean at LSTC from 1988-99 (and again in 2005), during which Christ Seminary-Seminex faculty became key members of the LSTC faculty, influencing a new generation of students and attracting a new generation of faculty. Said Kadi Billman, John H. Tietjen professor emerita of pastoral ministry, "[Ralph] took pleasure



Ralph Klein (right) with James Kenneth Echols and Philip Haugen.

in encouraging and administratively supporting faculty scholarship, and in times of crisis he was a pastor to faculty members and to many students. He was the first to embrace educational technology and to encourage faculty members to become adept in new ventures in teaching and learning.”

Prior to coming to LSTC, Klein was professor and chair of the department of exegetical theology at Christ Seminary–Seminex, St. Louis, Mo. He was a leading and influential proponent of the historical–critical study of scripture, the ecumenical movement, and the ordination of women, all of which inspired

## Wisdom over grades. Gentle discipline. A respect for the work. I carry this with me.

**Timothy Brown**, 2009 graduate

significant debate and division within the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod during the 1960s and 1970s. He joined the majority of his colleagues and students in forming Concordia Seminary in Exile (Christ Seminary–Seminex) in February 1974.

Klein founded and chaired the Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah Group for the Society of Biblical Literature and served on the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools. In 2016, he was

awarded the title of Honorary President of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research. He was also curator of LSTC’s Gruber Rare Books Collection.

Klein authored more than 1,300

books, book reviews, and short notices. His notable books include *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament* and *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation*. He served as editor of *Currents in Theology and Mission* and as associate editor of the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.

He studied at a number of universities, including Harvard University, where he received the doctor of theology degree. ❁

*Find a more extensive obituary at [lstc.edu](http://lstc.edu).*

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name...” but couldn’t quite place it until I pulled out my *HarperCollins Study Bible (Revised Edition)* to find that Dr. Klein had, quite literally, written the book about the book in hand (1 and 2 Chronicles notes).

Once on a Hebrew exam I had misidentified a word. “Dr. Klein,” I said, “I think I got this one correct. It’s ‘horse,’ right?” “Ah,” he said, “it’s actually ‘mare.’ Note the feminine form.” I smiled and then laughed, “Dr. Klein, I don’t think I

even knew a female horse was called a mare, can’t you cut me a break?” “No,” he responded, “but it looks like you learned two new things today.”

Wisdom over grades. Gentle discipline. A respect for the work. I carry this with me.

Similarly, as I took a prospective student to sit in on Dr. Krentz’s New Testament course, arriving just a bit late, I informed (warned?) the student that Dr. Krentz had written the authoritative commentary on 1 Thessalonians. “What does that

mean?” the student asked. “It means,” I said with a smirk, “that he’s forgotten more Greek than we’ll ever know.” As we slipped into the class, Dr. Krentz was reading out loud from his Greek New Testament, briefcase with the “SemineX” bumper sticker sitting at his side.

He glanced up as we walked in, I nodded, and he continued reading straight from the Greek without missing a beat, translating on the fly. He would expect us to

## Edgar Krentz: ‘faithful servant of Christ, exemplary teacher, dedicated scholar’

Edgar M. Krentz, 93, Christ Seminary–SemineX Professor Emeritus of New Testament, died Oct. 31. A memorial service was Nov. 13 at Augustana Lutheran Church in Chicago.

Krentz, professor, archaeologist, scholar and poet, in more than 60 years of teaching helped shape the lives and ministries of thousands of students.

“...His faithfulness and many gifts have strengthened LSTC as an educational institution. His departure from this mortal life on Reformation Day is most appropriate given his commitment to the Lutheran church and its ongoing reformation,” said Esther Menn, dean of academic affairs and Ralph W. and Marilyn R. Klein Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible.

Kurt K. Hendel, interim director of advanced studies and Bernard, Fischer, Westberg distinguished ministry professor emeritus of Reformation history, called Krentz “a faithful servant of Christ, an exemplary teacher, and a dedicated scholar. The breadth and depth of his knowledge was impressive.

“His exegesis of the scriptural texts was enhanced by his archeological

insights and his extensive engagement with Greco–Roman philosophy and Mediterranean culture,” Hendel continued. “He deeply appreciated the liturgy as well as the diverse artistic heritage of the church. His ecumenical consciousness was accompanied by a commitment to the Lutheran confessional tradition.

“[He] loved to teach and invited his students to join him in the joyous but also challenging adventure of academic study. All who accepted that invitation were deeply enriched...”

Krentz was the author of the influential *The Historical–Critical Method* as well as numerous articles about biblical interpretation. He experienced the split in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod over religious issues in the early 1970s while teaching at Concordia

Seminary in St. Louis (1953–75).

In 1960 he received his PhD in classics from Washington University. In 1963 he spent a sabbatical year at the University of Tübingen, Germany, where he learned to combine committed Lutheranism with radical New Testament interpretation, a position he adopted for the rest of his career. Krentz became an archeologist in 1971, frequently excavating at Caesarea Maritima, Israel.

In 1975, Krentz joined the faculty of Christ Seminary–SemineX, and in 1983 he moved to LSTC with other SemineX faculty. He retired in 1998 but continued to teach part-time at LSTC (his students affectionately referred to his early-morning New Testament Greek tutorial as “Rambo Greek”). 🌿

Find a more extensive obituary at [lstc.edu](http://lstc.edu).

He continued reading straight from the Greek without missing a beat, translating on the fly. He would expect us to eventually do the same.

Timothy Brown, 2009 graduate

eventually do the same.

Drs. Klein and Krentz were premier intellectuals, but they were also robust theological activists. Having lived through the trauma of Seminex, they brought with them an advocacy for women in the pulpit, for queer students in the collar, for those on the margins to be moved into the middle.

Their lived experience helped them to help others. We students who, though we may have been intimidated by their presence and felt like we paled in comparison to

their long, distinguished shadows, were invited to think critically, laugh heartily at their jokes, and mine the depths of the faith before us using their headlamps as guides.

Often students will describe learning from honored teachers using that ancient Socratic image of “sitting at their feet.” I’ve used this image in describing my time with Dr. Klein, Dr. Krentz and many others from those seminary years. But I think they’d probably offer a different interpretation. I think

they’d say we sat alongside them at the foot of the faith, at the feet of the crucified and risen one, learning and growing together, by God.

And that humility is what I will remember and cherish most about these wise, kind giants who, as unsure students who were often a bit lost wandered into their classroom, found a safe place to live and learn about the ancient but very alive faith they embodied. ✝

*Brown is a 2009 graduate of LSTC and is the ELCA’s director of congregational stewardship.*



Edgar Krentz on his last official teaching day.

Brian Ecklund has been serving the people of southern L.A. for 45 years. Ecklund is pictured standing in front of a neighborhood mural. He also appears in the mural (just above the real-life Ecklund).



# A public pastor for

Story and photo by Bill Myatt

**M**ore than 50 years ago, in 1968 to be precise, Brian Ecklund (M.Div. 1970) was a spritely 20-something seminarian. Axel Kildegaard, professor of theology and director of contextual education at LSTC, approached him for a conversation that would change his life.

Kildegaard had been ready to send Ecklund to a three-point parish in Iowa for an internship when he learned of a pilot project in Los Angeles sponsored by the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), a predecessor to the ELCA. The LCA was looking for five young clergy who could be placed in an urban setting, work halftime, and collaborate in ministry while being trained by the Urban Training Institute. If future pastors hoped to reach those in the city, they needed to participate in the structural dynamics of the city and thus usher in a new theological relationship between church and city.

Ecklund's life and ministry would ultimately be shaped by this conviction.

## A lunch conversation...

Not too many months ago, on a sunny Southern California afternoon, Ecklund graciously told his story. It is the story of a public pastor for a public church, even before it was part of LSTC's lexicon.

Ecklund has been serving the people of southern L.A. for 45 years. Looking at him and listening to him string story after story of ministerial miracles, you wouldn't think he's old enough to have been in ministry that long. Ecklund has all the energy and enthusiasm of a recent graduate. He transitions easily, and quickly, from conversations in Spanish with neighbors to recollections of political battles in his community. And he's just as comfortable serving communion as he is playing the banjo or spinning wood—all while wearing sandals, cargo shorts and a ballcap.

After seminary, he and his wife Ruth moved to San Diego. He worked for six years at a hospital, but his sense of call to urban church ministry remained, and he accepted a call to St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Los Angeles where he had served as an intern. It was there that

Ecklund and his family would place roots and serve among the urban poor for the next four decades.

## A church in the heart of the city

In the early 1900s, this area in the heart of the city was inhabited by affluent families, both Black and white. It was the location of the prestigious University of Southern California. But wealthy families eventually moved, as did economic stability. Racially restrictive housing covenants forced Black and brown communities into overcrowded neighborhoods. Multiple forms of discrimination proliferated. Racist business practices and outright violence kept communities of color from finding economic opportunities. And the neighborhood eventually became a seedbed of poverty, gang violence and drug use, especially in the wake of the crack/cocaine epidemic. By the 1980s the neighborhood was known by the pejorative and racially loaded term "South Central LA."

Those who are old enough will never forget the spring of 1991 when Rodney King, a Black man, was brutally beaten "between 53 and 56 times" by four white police officers.

In a moment of injustice that has





# a public church

become all too familiar, the officers were later exonerated. The verdict set off one of the most horrific episodes of civil unrest in American history. Riots fueled by decades of systemic racism and an unmitigable pattern of police brutality broke out across Eklund's parish.

"We were all surrounded by fires, sirens and chaos for three days," he said. "The shopping center across from St. Mark's was burned to the ground, but the church was unharmed."

In the wake of this collective outburst of anger, a vision that had been planted 20 years earlier took root. Eklund and four other ELCA pastors formed New City Parish, an urban coalition of multiple churches located in and around southern Los Angeles. Together, they focused on transforming their community and developed holistic ministries and social outreach programs. They advocated for the poor, organized community members, developed relationships with local leadership, taught people how to think critically and to find their own voice, and cultivated a sense of healing and comfort.

## LSTC prepared him well

Central to this vision was the theological training Eklund

received at LSTC. As he put it, "A church has to root and re-root and re-root itself in the neighborhood. A parish is a neighborhood. It is not just 'the church,'" This localized, parish-based approach led him into a ministry marked by beautiful moments of collaboration, miraculous local victories over giants like USC and the Staples Center (where the Lakers, Clippers, Sparks and Kings all play), and more stories than could fit into a single lunchtime conversation.

A noteworthy partnership Eklund forged was with Diane Donoghue, a member of the Sisters of Social Service. Like others, Eklund and Donoghue saw that families were being displaced in southern L.A. Discriminatory housing practices, slumlord building owners and opportunistic business people were forcing families out, often for the sake of building low-wage garment factories or "sweat shops."

Eklund worked with Donoghue as she founded the Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, which provided quality housing for low-income families. In 2001, in a moment of beautifully just symmetry, Esperanza converted one

of the abandoned sweatshops into Mercado La Paloma, a modern facility where more than a dozen nonprofits and locally owned businesses conduct their affairs.

The Mercado is the backdrop of our conversation. Construction workers mosey in for their lunch. Moms and students and businesspeople visit in the food court. Eklund knows many of them, making introductions to a handful of business owners and the executive director of Esperanza. (Eklund is president of its board of directors.) Then he visits with Gloria, a local seamstress who has been running her business out of the Mercado for 29 years.

With these stories and surroundings, it's impossible not to think of public church, LSTC's theological (masters) curriculum which is sometimes difficult to define. Now, thanks to inspirational conversation over tacos in southern L.A., we have a vibrant picture that helps define public church at its best. 🌱

*Myatt is director of philanthropic engagement.*

Icon of Martin Luther King Jr.,  
whose saint day is April 4.

ICON BY KELLYLATIMORE



# mirrors & windows

Saints are for  
Lutherans, too

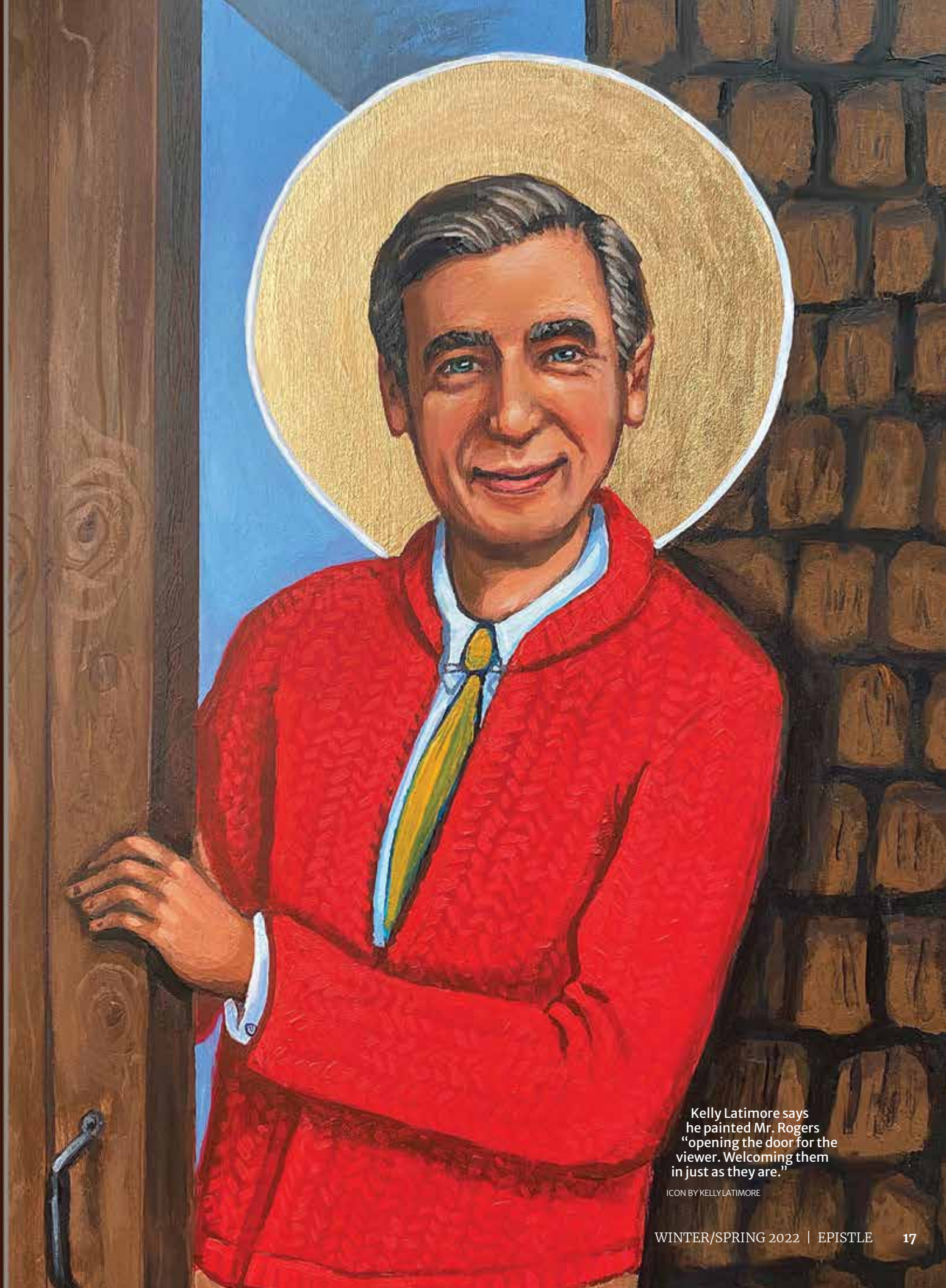
*By Timothy Brown*

“She’s now sainted,” Kurt Hendel said with love and a tear in his eye, indicating that the woman in the picture had died.

He was presenting a digital memory book of former classmates, spouses of classmates, and friends all united by an experience with the Seminex tradition. Homecoming that year had brought many pastors and friends who had lived through that experience back to campus, and Dr. Hendel was leading a short seminar on the subject, personalizing the slides.

I was struck by that phrase, “now sainted.” Though I understood that, theologically speaking, Lutherans held anyone who died in the faith as a “saint” (we have little patience for the pomp and purported miracles of the canonization process), I’d never seen it practically applied. But perhaps most notable for me was the fact that Dr. Hendel was, in that moment, not referring to some grand, well-known theologian or scholar, but to the spouse of one of his classmates who had made an impression on him.

The saint on the screen was, in most ways, ordinary, and



Kelly Latimore says he painted Mr. Rogers “opening the door for the viewer. Welcoming them in just as they are.”

ICON BY KELLY LATIMORE

yet worth remembering and worth reverence. It was the most Lutheran of moments, and it made an impression on me.

### What we're missing

In the properly pietistic Lutheran parish of my youth, saints were not something noted or really talked about. Perhaps it was a reaction to a practice that was seen as “overly Roman Catholic,” or perhaps it was just because the saints of the faith weren't considered relevant. Except for the occasional reference to St. Peter or St. Paul in a church's name, saints weren't in the faith picture for me. I suspect the same could be said for many Lutherans over the past few centuries. We're not the better for it.

An affinity for the saints of the faith would have been second nature for me in childhood, as it has proven to be as an adult. I started reading comic books at an early age. Superheroes were more than just fanciful and fascinating for me. I wanted to be virtuous like Captain America. I wanted to save the day like Wonder Woman. I wanted to be that hero. Superheroes were more than just characters for me; they were symbols of possibility and reminders of righteousness in action, however flawed they were.

And they were flawed.

In seminary I was reintroduced to the saints of the church through an exploration into the Greek Orthodox tradition. This highly visual arm of the faith utilizes icons in a way that tantalized my imagination and reignited those superhero feelings inside of me. Don't mistake that phraseology for some sort of infantilized faith, though; I do not see the saints of the faith as unflawed superheroes.

They are all flawed.

I do see them, however, as storied examples of faith in action. I do see them as examples of virtues and vices, to be learned from, sometimes emulated, and worth a second look by a Lutheran church that claims to love an embodied

faith but has often only whispered about this sacred tradition.

The saints of the church have been largely kept in a small-print calendar in our hymnals, and with the exception of liturgical renewal in the last two decades, have been ignored.

We've lost the stories of our own flawed, ordinary, superheroes.

### The process and pitfalls

The process for official canonization in the Roman branch of our faith was first adopted in the 12th Century. It is quite long and involved.

After a revered person dies there is normally a five-year moratorium, allowing a little space between the death and the process to make sure popular opinion doesn't have undue influence on the papal decree of sainthood (a notable exception to this is Mother Teresa's fast-tracked



[I see the saints of the faith] as examples of virtues and vices, to be learned from, sometimes emulated, and worth a second look by a Lutheran church that claims to love an embodied faith but has often only whispered about this sacred tradition.

*Timothy Brown, 2009 graduate*

sainthood, with this five-year period waived by John Paul II just two years after her death). After this, a person can become a “Servant of God,” an official indication that the church is considering them for sainthood.

From there a scholarly deep dive into the life of the person is conducted, ensuring that their record lives up to the title. This can take a while (it took the popular Joan of Arc 450 years to be canonized).

The next step in the process is, for most saints, some sort of verified miracle after being invoked in prayer. This step can be waived

in the case of a martyr for the faith, whose death is apparently seen as proof enough of worthiness.

Finally, the person in question is canonized after a second (or third, sometimes) miracle is attributed to them. A day is assigned, a Mass is declared, and they're added to the calendar of those honored and venerated.

This process is obviously a tripping point for Lutherans, especially regarding “verified miracles,” of which Lutherans are generally theologically allergic. Instead, we'd



From [themodernsaints.com](http://themodernsaints.com) by Gracie: Kateri Tekakwitha (opposite page), and at left, Felicity (mother) who gave birth three days before she and Perpetua were executed, and St. Clare and St. Francis, who together established “The Poor Ladies” and “The Poor Clares.”

ICONS BY GRACIE MORBITZER

rather consider anyone who died in the faith as worthy of remembrance and honor. Brother Thomas Merton (Dec. 10), Sojourner Truth (July 20) and even Fred Rodgers (Feb. 27) all can find a place on our saintly calendar alongside Saint Peter, Saint Augustine and Saint Julian of Norwich.

### Utilizing the saints today

For years following my exploration of Greek Orthodoxy I had started to slowly amass icons of the faith, both ancient and modern, using them in my prayer and meditation practices. In my study I found that Luther

himself highly venerated the saints of the faith (St. Mary in particular) though he didn’t believe they were any better or worse than anyone else.

This fact has kept me a Lutheran for many years and has encouraged me to utilize icons in my spiritual practices.

Icons are both a mirror and a window for the faithful.

They are a mirror because as you stare at the icon, it stares back at you, inviting you to see their life and example as a lens for living the faith. Simultaneously they are a window offering a glimpse

into a different time, context, and way of being in the world. For all the attempts at transcendent experience that the liturgy offers, prayer and meditation with icons has always, for me, heightened the experience in real and visceral ways. It both grounds and transports you, especially when you understand the story of the saint before you.

In 2010 I picked up *New Book of Festivals and Commemorations: A Proposed Calendar of Saints* (Minneapolis/Fortress Press, 2008) by Philip Pfatteicher, now sainted himself this last year (on the Feast

of Saint Alban, June 22). In it I found exactly what it promised: a revised calendar for the saints of the church, both canonized and non-canonized. It was a marriage of orthodoxy and contemporary ecclesial honesty.

I had found a new wellspring for my faith.

I started posting the saint days and icons on social media, borrowing from Pfatteicher as well as Celtic Christian calendars (as someone of Celtic heritage, this strain also speaks to my spirituality). I have found satisfaction in both informing a wider audience about the saints of the faith and in having an opportunity to explore the saints more. With each story of the faithful I gain insight, and these posts are shared far and wide throughout social media and the blogosphere. Weekly I hear stories from people who have found strength and inspiration from these posts that, for many, have long been buried in the corners of the faith.

### **Embodying both then and now**

Outside of the Apostles, Saint Francis of Assisi is probably the most popular saint in the church. He's remembered for being a saint who liked animals (an animal blessing on or near Oct. 4 is sometimes about as close as a Lutheran might get to a saint in most parishes!). But did you know he's also the reason you have a manger scene in your home? It was he who invited the faithful to reenact the Christmas story in their churches and their homes with figures and art.

You probably have heard a bit about Saint Patrick because of the popular parades and secular celebrations for the people of Ireland on his feast day (March 17), but did you know that he was actually raised as a slave in Ireland? He returned as a bishop to help the people he came to know and love find a better way of being. His story is not about greenish hues or of beer, but about redemption and rebirth.

Likewise, saints like St. Clare



Pastor Keith Homstad describes his Nursing Madonna icon as “Mary in a plain very dark garment, edged in gold, nursing a chubby happy infant Jesus.” ICON BY KEITH E.O. HOMSTAD

(Aug. 11), the first canonized First Nations Saint Kateri Tekakwitha (April 17) and Saint Fabian (elected pope without even being ordained as a priest, remembered on Jan. 20) hold gems of stories worth mining for the faithful.

The saints spark faith in the faithful when their stories are shared. So, set up those icons in your sanctuary and hang them on your walls. Post liner notes on the saints of the day in your bulletins. Post on your social media the stories of those who have gone before us. Educate, inspire, console, and enlighten the church using examples ancient and new!

The saints are both mirrors and windows of the faith. Take a look. After all, we'll all be one, by God's grace.

In every social media post about the saints, I always end with some sort of “aha” I pull from their story. Sometimes these are very personal inspirations I find in their example, and sometimes they are larger lessons I think the church at large needs to remember. The saints embody both the then of their time, and the now of our times.

The lives of the saints are reminders for me, and should be for the whole church, that a religion that claims to honor the incarnation but doesn't lift up lived examples of it will overlook a prime opportunity to educate and inspire those who follow it.

Let those with ears to hear, hear. ✨

*Brown is a 2009 graduate of LSTC and is ELCA director of congregational stewardship.*

# Strategic plan update: Accomplishments & focus on new priorities

Woah, we're halfway there  
Woah, livin' on a prayer  
—Bon Jovi

By Elizabeth Chentland

We're nearly halfway through LSTC's strategic plan for 2021–2023 that the board of directors approved in November 2020. And although prayer has been part of it, it's also taken a lot of time, work and commitment. We need it all “for such a time as this” (the strategic plan name).

Soon after the plan was approved, seminary leaders analyzed its 24 priority initiatives. Nine were chosen for focus in 2021 and seven were chosen for 2022. Various faculty and staff have served as priority initiative leaders.

## To recap: Strategic Plan 2021

We're celebrating accomplishments across the nine priority initiatives of 2021, including these:

- Erik Christensen and Esther Menn, co-leaders of priority initiative “Program Viability,” reported the completion of an audit of the advanced studies program and worship, as well as studies of contextual education and housing. The advanced study audit helped faculty formalize capacity for upcoming admission cycles for the next few years. These audits continue as part of the ongoing work, and there are new ones underway this year.
- Esther Menn and Brooke Petersen, co-leaders of priority initiative “Curriculum Review,” said faculty successfully revised and passed new curriculum rubrics for the MDiv, MA and MAM programs.

- Vima Couvertier-Cruz was “owner” and Erik Christensen was “sponsor” of the “Antiracism Transformation Team” and “Authentic Diversity” initiatives. They completed an antiracism institutional charter and team-commissioning event.
- Nate Ramsey and John Damer, co-leaders of priority initiative “Scholarship Support,” performed an in-depth assessment to determine appropriate balance between supporting students and helping the institution reach financial sustainability, all while remaining competitive within the seminary landscape.

Said Damer, “We have already begun changes to how we recruit and talk with prospective students, [communicating] our commitment to them and the steps for which they are responsible. With input from school leadership and board members with expertise, we built an improved budget model to more accurately project future scholarship needs for the various degree programs as LSTC.”

Aaron Copley-Spivey, leader for priority initiative “Administrative Alignment,” said how impressed and humbled he feels after reflecting on strategic plan successes in 2021.

“Change is so difficult and can create a lot of fear and anxiety, yet our community worked through those fears and anxieties to ask tough questions and develop sustainable solutions that better equip us to handle future challenges,” Copley-Spivey said. “We prayed together, showed concern for the most vulnerable among us to ensure equitable and just practices, and celebrated the gifts of new and longstanding community members.” ❁

*Chentland is former director of the Marketing and Communications team.*

## Looking ahead: Strategic Plan 2022

This year, community members will focus on seven new priority initiatives under these themes:

### Theme: Courageous Service

**Seeking equity: race, gender, sexuality:** Equip students to frame these issues as theological concerns and gain experience addressing them faithfully in practical contexts.

**Climate health:** Offer formational experiences of the church as a change agent for rethinking the relationships of economies to ecology to care for creation.

### Theme: Stewarding Gifts

**Software integration:** Fully integrate the institution's software systems and programs to ensure seamless efficiencies in reporting and decision-making processes.

**Coordinated evaluation:** Implement an institutional data management plan for streamlining information collection and use to successfully support seminary initiatives.

**TEEM Program:** Develop, enroll and support clusters of students through the TEEM program, and support enrollment and retention of these candidates through mentoring initiatives with our alumni.

**Alumni Involvement:** Design and implement multiyear strategy to enlist the alumni board to increase unrestricted donations from alumni; recruit alumni as volunteers for communicating our story to potential donors; connect alumni with students in mentorship roles.

### Theme: Dynamic Formation

**Authentic Diversity:** Examine, prioritize and implement the “Recommendations for theological education and leadership” from the ELCA Task Force for Strategic Authentic Diversity final report.

# TEEM program provides bridge from Baptist to Lutheran

By Julie B. Sevig

**I**t was a good Friday when Sean Ramsey was tapped to preach to a Lutheran audience. Actually, it was Good Friday. Yehiel Curry, now bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, had asked Ramsey to preach on one of the Seven Last Words when Curry was serving Shekinah Chapel in Riverdale, Ill.

Ramsey, who grew up in the Beverly neighborhood attending the New Faith Missionary Baptist Church, says he was shocked by the warm reception his preaching received at Shekinah. A couple of members from Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chicago Heights came up to him after and asked if he would consider preaching once a month at their small church without a pastor.

“They were hungry for the word,” Ramsey recalled.

After checking with his own Baptist church, he said yes. And after dutifully showing up at Bethany once a month for more than a year, Curry asked if he would be open to discuss being Bethany’s pastor (synodically authorized minister) while being part of the ELCA’s TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Leaders) program. The accelerated program enables students already in a congregation to pursue their theological education.

“I told him it would take a lot for me to do that,” Ramsey said.

“We [he and Bethany] were in agreement on the Word. But I told them I’m not so sure about the Lutheran practices as I didn’t fully understand everything,” Ramsey said. He knew he could preach to them—he’d been doing it a year—but he also

knew it wasn’t enough. They needed vision and leadership.

“They needed someone to shepherd their souls,” he said. He told them to go home and pray about it. They came back with their answer: they wanted to interview him and move forward. And so they did, calling him to serve as their part-time pastor.

## Bi-vocational ministry

Ramsey’s full-time job is at Grainger Industrial Supply. He has a solid history in secular work. In fact, it was after losing his lucrative job at Motorola in 2009 that he first received his call to preach. Worried about the future without employment, he spent three days locked away in the bedroom, crying and praying for God to open another door. He wasn’t sure that door had been opened until his wife called him on that plea he’d made to God and encouraged him to be open to more involvement at church. He preached his first sermon in November of that year (at age 40) and has served ever since.

But preaching to the Baptists was considerably different than preaching to the Lutherans. At Bethany, he said he wasn’t finding a lot of room for the spirit to move. And he wasn’t used to what he calls a “scripted” service: lectionary readings and creeds.

“I made every mistake a young pastor makes,” he says, shaking his head and smiling, grateful that a wise woman of the congregation patiently counseled him about the changes both the congregation and pastor needed to navigate.

## Then came COVID

He hadn’t been this small, faithful congregation’s pastor long before

COVID-19 hit. Bethany was starting to grow when he had the difficult task of shutting in-person worship down and preaching on Zoom. Still, the congregation stayed with him—and even more joined.

“The table was physically smaller, but actually got bigger,” he said. “People were tuning in... [a church that] once sat alone on a block was now many [worshippers] online. Donations you’d assume would decline grew.”

COVID allowed him to show members he had their best interests at heart. In turn, the congregation showed him they could also help. They said, “Hey pastor, we’re OK with you using your computer [for worship], but we think we can do better.” They stepped up their technology game for online worship and started online giving.

“Bethany and I are in a bit of a marriage,” Ramsey said, adding a sense of excitement about what “God has in store for me,” and crediting Curry as the influencer who made this happen.

During the pandemic, Ramsey has been able to show the congregation his leadership and pastoral care abilities. It has also allowed the church in a middle class, primarily African American, neighborhood a chance to serve beyond their walls in new ways—providing Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys and hams and partnering with others to serve as a site for both COVID tests and vaccinations.

He says he’s trying to navigate how to make it “not Lutheran, not Baptist, not ‘whatever’...but the best of both worlds. I want to make God relevant to them. I want to look past titles and meet them on their own terms.”





Sean Ramsey baptizes young Chase Solowski, held by his godmother, Becky Solowski Burke.

Ramsey drives from Frankfort, Ill., to work at church—“bringing back to life a church that was nearly deceased... I’m trying to be a vessel. Trying to get the patient off the table and the heart beating again.”

He’s juggling a lot: his ministry, family, a full-time secular job, and classes at LSTC. He has been part of the TEEM program that involves a cohort of five students, all of whom will eventually graduate.

Seminary has helped him understand why Lutherans do what they do in worship, such as saying a creed every week. “Now I understand,” he said. With good humor he says he’s still not on board with the multiple

scripture readings, and realizes his sermons need to be shorter than a Baptist might preach. “For one thing, no one wants to be online for an hour and a half,” he admits.

He’s quick to credit worship class with Ben Stewart and the Genesis to Revelation Bible class with Barbara Rossing. Before Rossing’s class, what he knew about scripture came from what he had learned in Sunday school. When Rossing told him, “Sean, this is not enough,” he readily agreed, saying what he has is a foundation he hopes to build on. The TEEM program has students on an accelerated learning pace—evening classes, workshops, J-term classes

and abbreviated clinical pastoral education. And the candidacy process. (All of this happening without even setting foot on campus during the pandemic.) He’s grateful for his classmates and for Scott Chalmers, dean of student services, coordinator of the TEEM program.

“It’s a hard walk but it’s been a good walk,” he said. “The benefit will far outweigh the sacrifice. I have a ton of fondness and admiration for the professors who gave up their time so we could go through this program and for the cohort because they, too, were making a similar sacrifice. We were in it together.” ✨

*Sevig is content and social media manager.*

## 1959

**Kenneth Peterson** (Augustana Lutheran Seminary, MDiv; 1971, MST; 1985, DMin), for the 37th consecutive year prepared the 2022 Daily Bible reading Guide published by Canadian Bible Society.

## 1971

**William S. Carter** (MDiv) published *But Mary Kept All These Things... An Advent Devotional Rooted in the Christmas Gospels*. It is a work of interwoven stories: the Gospel stories of Christmas mixed with contemporary images and personal remembrances.

## 1973

**W. Stevens Shipman** (MDiv) was recently elected dean of the Atlantic Mission Region of the North American Lutheran Church. This position is responsible for coordinating NALC service to congregations and pastors from a point roughly north and east of Roanoke, Va., to the Canadian border and the Atlantic Ocean. He has been told that he flunked retirement.

## 1975

**Stephen Larson** (MDiv) retired for the third time in August 2020 after serving a nine-month interim pastor assignment at Trillium Lutheran Church, Waterloo, Ontario. He says, "Third time will hopefully be the charm and stick."

## 1982

**Dennis Kelly** (MDiv) retired from congregational ministry in 2020.

## 1984

**Wayne Miller** (MDiv) is serving as interim assistant pastor at St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Naperville, Ill.

## 1986

**Marta Poling Schmitt** (MDiv) was the "Inaugural Legacy Honoree" at the 25th Anniversary Gala for Lutheran Social Services of Nevada (LSSN) held Sept. 9. She has been involved with the agency for 18 of its 25 years as a board member and officer, benefactor, volunteer and advocate. She currently serves on the board of directors for the United Way of Southern Nevada and is an active member of Living Hope Lutheran Church in Las Vegas, Nev.

## 1988

**David Housholder** (MDiv) is on the translation team for *The Passion Translation* of the Bible, and has finished Daniel, Hosea, Lamentations and Amos, with more to come. He also assists the senior leadership team of Concordia University Irvine [Calif.] with starting new programs (ministry training, engineering), and continues as pastor of The Well at Surf City. The Well also planted a daughter church in Alberta, Canada, and is involved through missions pastor Linda Vannoy-Castillo with work in Bethlehem under the leadership of Mitri Raheb.

## 1989

**Christine Helmer** (MA) was appointed the Peter B. Ritzma Chair of Humanities at Northwestern University. She is the only theologian in the U.S. to hold an endowed chair in the humanities at an R1 university. She recently edited and published *Truth-Telling and Other Ecclesial Practices of Resistance* (Fortress Academic 2021), essays by Lutheran theologians, including Gordon Straw; and *The Medieval Luther* (Mohr Siebeck 2020), essays on Luther's medieval philosophical inheritances by leading international Luther scholars. Helmer is the founder of the Lutheran Scholars Network, and the instructor of a free online class on Luther: [coursera.org/learn/luther-and-the-west](https://www.coursera.org/learn/luther-and-the-west).

**Richard Wolff** (MA) published "The Use of Cinematic Arts in Lutheran Confessional Education" in the Eastertide 2021 themed issue of *LOGIA: A Journal of Lutheran Theology, on Lutherans and the Arts*. The article develops a method for parish leaders and other church educators to use film to teach the Book of Concord's articles of faith.

## 1990

**Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon** (ThM; 1995, PhD) edited *Bible Blindspots: Dispersion and Othering* with Jione Havea. It was recently published by Wipf & Stock in its Intersectionality and Theology series.

**Melinda Plumley** (MDiv) earned a doctorate in bioethics from Loyola University at Chicago. The title of her capstone project is "Beneficence and Unilateral Do Not Resuscitate Orders." She serves as chaplain manager for Orlando Health and lives in Ocoee, Fla.

## 1991

**Thomas A. Krieger** (MDiv) was installed as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Springfield, Ill., Sept. 16.

## 1995

**Arthur Bergren** (MDiv; 2007, DMin) is now the lead pastor at Bethany Lutheran Church, Rice Lake, Wis.



## 1996

**M. Wyvetta Bullock** (MDiv; 2003, DMin) in October joined the Metropolitan Chicago Synod staff as a part-time associate to the bishop. She will work with congregations of the Southwest Conference to provide pastoral care and mobility support. Prior to joining synod staff, she most recently served as executive for administration in the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA.

Marta Poling Schmitt speaks at the LSS gala at which she was honored.



## 2003

Julie Ehlers-King (MDiv) was featured in the Dec. 7 *Barrow News-Journal* article, "Pastor finds her new calling at Nativity Lutheran Church." Nativity is in Bethlehem, Ga.

## 2006

**Anthony Bateza** (MDiv) published "andemic wisdom from Luther" in the October issue of *Living Lutheran*.

## 2008

**Tom Gaulke** (MDiv; 2017, ThM; 2020, PhD) published "Ruben Alves builds altars of word and song" in the Oct. 13 issue of *The Christian Century*. He was a panelist for the AAR Ecclesial Practices Unit virtual session Nov. 20, Prayers in Defiance of Empire: Engaging Claudio Carvalhaes' *Liturgies from Below: Praying with People at the Ends of the World*.

**Jordan Miller-Stubbendick** (MDiv) published the reflection "Remembering, celebrating, turning" in the November issue of *Living Lutheran*.

## 2009

**Tim Brown** (MDiv) published "A Homegrown faith: For Luther, faith formation began at home," in the October issue of *Living Lutheran*.

**Angela Khabeb** (MDiv) published "Harvest ground" in the October issue, "Grateful ground" in the November issue and "Groundbreaking arrival" in the December issue of *Living Lutheran*. She also appeared on GMA3 Nov. 19.

## 2012

**Iskandar Bcheiry** (ThM; 2019, PhD) presented "The Life and Homilies of Jacob of Serugh in a Manuscript in the Oriental Institute Museum" online Nov. 4 for the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago.

**Vance Blackfox** (MA(TS)) published "Telling the truth about the lands we inhabit" in the November issue of *Living Lutheran*. He was also the guest on the Nov. 9 edition of the LSTC podcast *An Incomplete Field Guide to Ministry*.

## 2016

**Francisco Herrera** (ThM) presented “Will you hurt me, too?: the Missional Church and Black Feminist Epistemology” at the 64th annual meeting of the Midwest Mission Studies Fellowship held via Zoom Nov. 6.



## 2017

**Anna Ernst** (MDiv) in October joined the Metropolitan Chicago Synod staff as part-time Youth Ministry Leaders Network Coordinator. She works closely with youth ministry leaders from across the synod. She also serves as associate pastor at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Elmhurst.

## 2018

**Chrisida Anandan** (ThM) published “That Slave Is Your Sibling: A Reading of Deuteronomy 15:12–18” in *Bible Blindspots: Dispersion and Othering* edited by Jione Havea and Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon (2021, Wipf & Stock).



**Josh Evans** (MDiv) in October joined the Metropolitan Chicago Synod staff as part-time director of communications. He works with synod staff to coordinate and publish official announcements and synod publications, as well as maintaining an active social media presence. He also serves as pastor of St. Philip Lutheran Church in Glenview.

**Vinod Wesley** (ThM) presented “Subalterns as ‘Eco-Missionaries’ and ‘Eco-Prophets’ in the Context of Climate Change” Oct. 22 at the Iliff School of Theology Center for Eco-Justice Conference.



Elle and Adam Dowd kneel during the laying on of hands at their ordinations, including the hand of goddaughter Leonora Coen-Frei.

## 2019

**Sweetie Helen Chukka** (ThM) published sermon notes to Sermonlab.org for the 19th Sunday after Trinity. She is a facilitator of Sermonlab.org, an online collective of theological and biblical scholars.

**Hesron Sihombing** (MA(TS)) served as a moderator for the Iliff School of Theology Center for Eco-Justice Conference Oct. 21–22. He also published the article “Capitalism and the Ecological Crisis: The Spirituality of Voluntary Sacrifice” in *International Journal of Public Theology*.

## 2020

**Ruby Burwell Myers** (MDiv) is serving as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Phoenix, Ariz., in the Grand Canyon Synod. She was ordained Nov. 13 at Zion Lutheran Church, Tinley Park, Ill.

**Adam Dowd** (MDiv) was ordained Dec. 4 at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Darien, Ill., where he serves as pastor.

**Danielle (Elle) Dowd** (MDiv) was ordained Dec. 4 at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Darien, Ill. She serves as campus pastor for South Loop Campus Ministry, Chicago.

**Maija Mikkelsen** (MDiv) in June became a pediatric chaplain at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Ore.

**Bristol Reading** (MDiv) was ordained at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn., Dec. 4. She began her call as pastor of St. Luke Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn., in January. She and her husband,

Michael, are also celebrating the birth of their daughter, Magnolia Grace Reading, born Oct. 18.

## 2021

**František Janák** (MDiv) began his call as pastor of St. Stephen’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Plainfield, N.J., on Jan. 17. His ordination date has been set for April 23.

**Christina Johnson** (MDiv) was ordained Dec. 3 at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Ill. She is serving as pastor of King of Glory Lutheran Church, North Myrtle Beach, S.C.

**Amber Kalina** (MDiv) was ordained Dec. 11 at Calvary Lutheran Church, Perham, Minn. She is serving as pastor of Our Savior’s/Melo in Warren, Minn.

**Denise Rector** (ThM) is one of the authors of a 16-day Churches Beyond Borders devotional focusing on the United Nations’ “16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence.” It

includes devotions written by clergy and laity from the ELCA, the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

**Togu Sihite** (MA) presented “Vicarious Suffering as Political and Cultic Roles of the Servant in Isaiah 52:13–53:12” at the virtual Society of Biblical Literature session, Ideological Criticism Nov. 23.

**Anne Wickland** (MDiv) was featured in the Oct. 30 *Waunakee Tribune* article, “At Peace Lutheran Church, new pastor seeks to create safe space for all teens.” She serves as children, youth and family pastor at Peace, Waunakee, Wis.

## Future Alumni

**Mark LaChance** (ThM/PhD) presented “A Reformed Protestant Approach to Culture and Cultural Differences” at the 64th annual meeting of the Midwest Mission Studies Fellowship held via Zoom Nov. 6.





**Carlos Carrillo** joined the finance staff in November as senior staff accountant. He works to oversee student account data and reconcile general ledger accounts,

along with other accounting responsibilities. Previously, he served as an accounts payable specialist and staff accountant at El Valor, a non-profit community-based organization supporting children and adults with disabilities. Before El Valor, he held positions in accounting management and audit engagement for a variety of organizations. He holds a bachelor of science degree in accountancy from the University of Illinois.

**Eric Kyle**, director of contextual education, online education & faculty development coordinator and associate professor, resigned in December to accept

a position as director of a faculty development center at a university in Oklahoma. In a farewell letter to the community, he said he had discerned that the new position more closely aligns with his call to return to full-time faculty development which he considers his primary vocation, and is closer to family. "I have and continue to be deeply blessed by the loving community, commitment to justice, and intentionality with which you all engage with theological education..."

**Marji Shannon** was appointed acting director of contextual education for the spring semester.

## Godspeed

**Elizabeth Chentland**, director of Strategic Marketing and Communications for two years, resigned in January, but is continuing some duties on a contract basis. In announcing her resignation to the community, Aaron Copley-Spivey wrote, "Elizabeth has had an incredibly positive impact on our seminary. Her expertise in planning through synthesizing big picture goals and executing practical details have helped set LSTC up for our current and future successes. We give thanks for Elizabeth's two plus years of leading the MarComm team." ❁

## in memoriam

**Carl William Beyerhelm**  
1927–2022 | *Augustana Theological Seminary class of 1955*  
Carl Beyerhelm, 95, died Jan. 19 in Iowa City, Iowa. He served in the U.S. Army, which included a tour of duty in Japan, prior to college and seminary. His first call was to the Lutheran Mission Tanganyika (now Tanzania), then to three town and country parishes in Iowa. Beyerhelm retired in 1989 and served part-time as a VA Hospital chaplain. He was preceded in death by his wife Beatrice, and is survived by five children, four grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

**Robert N. Binge**  
1922 — 2022 | *Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1959*  
Robert Binge, 99, died Jan. 26 in St. Paul, Minn. A funeral was held at First Lutheran Church in St. Paul. For more than 60 years Binge served Wisconsin congregations (Clear Lake, Waukesha and near Ellsworth). He was preceded in death by his wife Esther and is survived by three children, seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

**Earl Martin Fritz**  
1927–2021 | *Chicago Lutheran Theology Seminary class of 1955*  
Earl Martin Fritz, 94, died Nov. 7 in Columbus, Ohio. He was drafted in the U.S. Army in 1945 and served in the Pacific. Fritz served parishes in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. He retired from Peace Lutheran Church, Gahanna, Ohio, in 2005. He is survived by his wife Pauline, two children, four granddaughters and a great granddaughter.

**Fredrick E. Goos**  
1944–2021 | *Class of 1970*  
Fred Goos, 77, died Dec. 7 in Millville, N.J. He also earned a PhD from Temple University. Goos served as pastor of Fortescue Chapel in Fortescue, N.J., taught undergraduate courses at Temple, and was the bereavement coordinator and chaplain for South Jersey Healthcare. He survived by two children and a brother.

**Laura Hall-Schordje**  
1961–2022 | *Class of 2012*  
Laura Hall-Schordje, 61, died Feb. 2 in Chicago. A memorial service was Feb. 19 at Christ Lutheran Church in Chicago. Hall-Schordje was choral and music director at congregations in Chicago for 25 years before enrolling at LSTC. She served Living Christ Lutheran Church in Hanover Park, Ill., until the congregation closed in 2019. Later that year she was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer, yet committed to making her final years a "Wild Gospel Ride" by spreading the love of Christ everywhere she went and with whomever she met. She is survived by her husband Robert and child Noel.

**Donald Herdman**  
1937 – 2021 | *Chicago Lutheran Theology Seminary Class of 1963, DMin 1981*  
Don Herdman, 84, died Dec. 9 in Battle Creek, Mich. Herdman served congregations in Illinois, Iowa and Michigan, including 20 years at Trinity Lutheran in Battle Creek. He was preceded in death by his wife Vivian and is survived by his son David.

**Harvey Milo Johnson**  
1925–2021 | *Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1955*  
Harvey Johnson, 95, died Oct. 26 in Bluffton, S.C. He studied at seminary while working at

## We remember...

**Nola Ilene Gustafson (nee Marberger)**, 83, Western Springs, Ill., died; Nov. 25. She and her husband Art were the first recipients of the LSTC Distinguished Service Award (2000). They were married 57 years and had three children and four grandchildren. Her funeral was Dec. 4 at Redeemer Lutheran Church of Hinsdale, Ill. Gustafson



earned a bachelor of music from Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, and was awarded the master of music with distinction in piano at Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. In addition to teaching, she performed extensively in the Chicago area as a soloist and collaborative artist. She was an active performing member of the Chicago Musician Club of Women, the Illinois State Music Teacher Association, Western Springs Music Club and Salt Creek Music Club.

hospitals and factories to support his family. Johnson served three Illinois congregations for 36 years. He was preceded in death by his wife June and is survived by four children, three grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

**Jack F. Klecka**  
1945–2021 | *Class of 1974*  
Jack Klecka, 76, of Highland Park, Ill., died Nov. 26 from multiple myeloma. Klecka worked for the Food and Nutrition Service of USDA in the WIC program, and ended his career in Information Technology. He is survived by his wife Terry, three stepchildren and five grandchildren.

**David W. Peters**  
1935–2022 | *Chicago Lutheran Theology Seminary Class of 1962*  
David Peters, 86, died Jan. 18 in Wheat Ridge, Colo. He helped establish St. John Lutheran Church in El Paso, Texas, and later served congregations in Colorado and as

director of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, Hillside, Colo. Peters is survived by his wife Judy, two children and three grandchildren.

**Paul C. Peterson**  
1930–2021 | *Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1957*  
Paul C. Peterson, 81, died Oct. 13 in Dorchester, Mass. He served congregations in Irwin, Pa., and Dorchester (until his retirement). Peterson was predeceased by his wife Diane, and is survived by his wife Audrey, three children, two stepchildren and seven grandchildren.

**Roy P. Washill**  
1946–2021 | *Class of 1978*  
Roy Washill, 75, died Dec. 9 in Erie, Pa. He served congregations in Erie and Indiana, Pa. He also played the French horn in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, played the organ and was a choir master. He is survived by his wife Lois, a daughter and a grandson.



Fernando Rayas, Lisa Wagner-Carollo (Stillpoint Theatre Collective) and Klaus-Peter Adam at their January workshop at Ravenswood Presbyterian Church in Chicago.

**Klaus-Peter Adam**, professor of Old Testament, worked with the storyteller Marti Steussy, professor emeritus of Old Testament at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Ind., in the class on the David Narratives: “Telling stories about Tamar in Gen. 38 and 2 Sam. 13.” He also co-lead the workshop: “Reading and performing the David Narratives with youth and young adults on Chicago’s South and West Sides” with and for the Stillpoint Theatre Collective in Chicago. The goal of this project is to save lives by building generational resilience through a theatrical process and production shared in community. The project is youth-led in hopes of promoting healing and reconciliation in light of challenging family dynamics as they mirror biblical narratives. Adam also taught a four-part workshop series “What the Bible teaches about gangland violence and the Defund-the-Police movement” for and with ELCA congregations in Chicago (via Zoom).

**Elizabeth Chentland**, former director of strategic marketing and communications, received the status of Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in late 2021. Applicants must pass a rigorous exam, give a panel presentation, and complete an extensive questionnaire to receive this credential. Chentland was also one of four finalists for the Excellence in Health Public

Relations award, also through the PRSA. She was nominated by colleagues at the Alzheimer’s Association and a family she helped.

**Erik Christensen**, pastor to the community and director of strategic initiatives, attended the North American Academy of Liturgy’s liturgical language seminar and Lutheran caucus (online).

**Phil Hefner**, professor emeritus of systematic theology; senior fellow, Zygon Center for Religion and Science, presented a paper on the theological significance of AI robots, at OPA, the LSTC-McCormick retired professors’ group.

**Mark T. Lowry**, philanthropic engagement associate, facilitated a workshop, “Live with Intention,” at the Faith & Fundraising Conference in Milwaukee. Lowry designed the session around the question: Is the life I am living the same life that wants to live in me?

**Esther Menn**, dean of academic affairs and the Ralph W. and Marilyn R. Klein Professor of Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible, is chairing a task force of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) that has been meeting to prepare a study document focused on equipping member churches to engage in dialogue with Jewish communities. In the context of the 2023 Krakow Assembly and beyond, the publication will explore the theological and historical background to the dialogue, with the long-term aim of strengthening relations between Christians and Jews.

**Barbara Rossing**, professor of New Testament and environmental ministry coordinator, has a new 13-session Bible study, “Partners in God’s New Creation,” (Augsburg Fortress) for use this summer. Co-authored with Ann Hafften, former ELCA news director, it explores new creation themes in Isaiah, the Gospel of John and Revelation. It is available through the Augsburg Adult Bible Study subscription series. Said Rossing, “This series seeks to foster scriptural imagination, providing an entry point to God’s dream for our world.”

**Julie Sevig**, content and social media manager, wrote the March 11-21 daily devotions in the January-March *Christ in Our Home* book published by Augsburg Fortress.

**Michael Shelley**, director emeritus, A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, wrote entries on “Temple Gairdner,” “Cairo Study Centre,” and “Nile Mission Press” (with John Chesworth) in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographic History Volume 18. The Ottoman Empire (1800-1914)*.

**Benjamin Stewart**, Gordon A. Braatz associate professor of worship, director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, presented “The Ecosacramentality of the Funeral,” (a forthcoming chapter in the *T&T Clark Handbook of Sacraments and Sacramentality*) to the Ecology and Liturgy Seminar of the North American Academy of Liturgy. Stewart also led a consultation with the Holden Village community and the members of LSTC’s J Term course, “Practices of Abundant Life for the Anthropocene,” on the role of ecology, faith, and equity in the life of Holden Village into the Anthropocene.

**Linda Thomas**, professor of theology and anthropology, served as guest editor of the January *Currents in Theology and Mission*. The journal’s theme was “Faith and #BlackLivesMatter: Future Directions.” She wrote “Future Directions,” the introduction to the issue, and “The Image of God Considering Holy Solidarity: Teaching Theological Intersectionality.”



Ben Stewart serves as presiding minister and Katie Mueller as assisting minister for the eucharist, which includes a baptism, at Holden Village. Other LSTC students assisted and preached (at this service and throughout their stay).



## CCME invites creative expressions, activism for April

**B**ecause so many religious holidays occur during April this year, LSTC's Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice (CCME) and partners are requesting creative expressions of: Ramadan (Islam), Ridvan (Baha'i), Passover (Judaism), Vaisakhi (Sikh), Ram Navami and Vaisakha Sankranti (Hindu) and Holy Week and Easter (Christianity).

Consider these ways to participate and honor religious holidays during April:

- Make a sculpture or painting; write a song, story, poem or reflection. Share to [ccme@lstc.edu](mailto:ccme@lstc.edu) before April 1 to be included in an online showcase throughout the month.
- Write an op-ed piece. The Shoulder to Shoulder campaign will be available to help craft op-ed pieces about what it means to live well together amid religious and cultural diversity and differences.
- Join the Hyde Park trolley tour which will take participants to several sacred spaces while the group learns about holy days.

Contact Sara Trumm ([strumm@lstc.edu](mailto:strumm@lstc.edu)), director of CCME, for more information about creative expressions and the trolley tour. Go to [lstc.edu/academics/ccme/activities](http://lstc.edu/academics/ccme/activities) for details. ✿

## Giving Day is April 5-6

**A**pril 5-6 is LSTC's fifth Giving Day, this year focusing on student scholarships and authentic diversity.

Under the theme "For such a time as this," LSTC hopes to engage 325 donors— alumni and board members, staff and faculty, students and friends of LSTC—in raising \$200,000.

Ways to get involved:

- **Make a gift**—no amount is too small or too large.
- **Be a lead donor** with a leadership level gift of at least \$2,500, which inspires generosity from others.
- Share your LSTC story (even take



on the role of official ambassador) by making a video or posting on social media especially during our 24 hours of giving.

Contact Jessica Houston ([advancement@lstc.edu](mailto:advancement@lstc.edu)) to be a Giving Day ambassador. Find plans for the day here: [lstc.edu/giving/giving-day](http://lstc.edu/giving/giving-day). ✿

## Echols Preaching Prize March 29

**T**his year's James Kenneth Echols Prize for Excellence in Preaching takes the form of a celebration with finalists preaching to the LSTC community at 11:15 a.m. on Tuesday, March 29.

Students were invited to submit a sermon on the theme of "Covenant." This broad theme invites students to think creatively with a biblical text about covenant—from the covenants we make with one another to a biblical story.

Though participants were

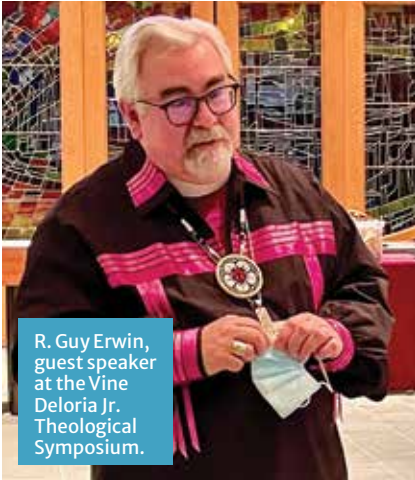
offered a theme instead of an assigned text, they are expected to preach sermons grounded in rich exegetical work with a particular biblical text, and to think imaginatively and theologically about the theme.

This annual preaching event was established and funded by LeRoy T. Carlson to promote the quality and excellence of preaching at LSTC and honor former president Echols. Each of the finalists will receive prize money. ✿

## Ecumenical Advocacy Days April 25-27

**E**cumenical Advocacy Days ([advocacydays.org](http://advocacydays.org)) will be held online again this year, allowing students, staff and faculty to participate from home. This is an annual gathering on Capitol Hill of Christian advocates and activists.

This year's theme, "Fierce urgency: Advancing Civil & Human Rights," calls us into solidarity to restore, protect and expand voting rights in the United States and to realize human rights around the world. ✿



R. Guy Erwin, guest speaker at the Vine Deloria Jr. Theological Symposium.



Keith "Doc" Hampton, cantor to the community, rehearses with the choir prior to a Black History Month worship service.



Communion during a Black History Month worship service.



International students and others from the community celebrate Christmas at Augustana Lutheran Church.



Kylee Bestenlehner in Lutheran Confessions class, with The Book of Concord standing by ready for use.

Observing COVID protocol during worship in Augustana chapel.





# Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

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Lawrence D'Antignac, owner of the Woodshop Art Gallery on Chicago's South Side, commissioned Black artist Melvin King to do a collection of art depicting events from the American Civil Rights Movement. From top left, clockwise: "I am a Man," "The March from Selma to Montgomery," "Civil Rights Protest at Woolworths" and "March on Washington." Many pieces from D'Antignac's gallery were on display in the LSTC lobby during Black History Month. D'Antignac says, "African American artists are the unsung recorders of Black history."



**WINTER/SPRING 2022**