

LSTC

FALL 2019

# Epistle

Magazine of the Lutheran School  
of Theology at Chicago

***Angela Khabebe  
one of 14  
Distinguished  
Alumni honored  
at Homecoming***



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear friends in Christ:

Each fall many congregations hold an annual stewardship drive. It's unfortunate. I don't mean seeking financial support but equating "stewardship" with charitable giving. Thirty years ago, theologian Douglas John Hall clarified the term's real intent. To be a "steward" (*oikonomos* in Greek) doesn't mean raising funds but putting in order (*nomos* = rule or law) one's household affairs (*oikos* = habitable domain). So as stewards of LSTC, we focus not only on sustainability but also how we organize our life together. Hall urged all of us stewards in our daily lives to share with others the varied gifts God offers in and for this world. That involves so much more than just pledge cards and offering envelopes.

Being stewards of our school requires more than spontaneous or sporadic behavior, a haphazard reactivity to recent trends. It calls for consistently, thoughtfully looking ahead. That is, we need a plan. We aren't fortune-tellers claiming to predict the future. Instead, we use practical wisdom to learn about emerging factors, review who we are and what we have, set course toward an agreed destination, and hold to that course while working together. Along the way, of course, the spirit guides us while holy mercy upholds us. Planning ahead never denies trust in God's purpose and strength. It just means we also use our God-given intellect to move toward a future that is already divinely established.

At LSTC, we look ahead through strategic planning. Astute readers may ask why I mention this again since I just wrote of our strategic plan in 2018. But we know that times change rapidly and our best laid plans grow stale. Two-thirds of our 2018-20 strategic plan has been completed, so now it's time to draft the 2021-23 version. We will develop this next plan using the "Common Discernment Project" (CDP—see Julie Sevig's article in this issue). It is *common* as shared by our whole community. It is *discernment* as a wise judgment that can bring clarity. And it is a *project* as a planned undertaking that yields a productive outcome. The many strands comprising the CDP will lead into our next strategic plan.

This time around, the stakes are higher. Recent strategic plans were truly helpful but also a bit safe. We named current strengths to develop further but never asked what should stop, what could change, or how the plan would integrate and orient the whole school. As we now think ahead about our school—and I mean a half-century ahead—there are three challenging questions to engage without further delay:

1. What will be the chief kinds of faithful gathering, participation, and witness during the next decades, both locally and globally?
2. What forms of leadership and discipleship will be needed to support and direct that kind of church in this dramatically different era?
3. What ways will theological education be oriented and organized in order to shape the leaders and disciples needed for this emerging church?



James Nieman

Unless we directly address these questions in our planning and decisively refocus ourselves to be a distinctive educational institution, we are simply tinkering with what we have always done, which will only leave us vulnerable and unsustainable.

Fortunately, we have over a year for the CDP to do just that. Carrying out our core mission is ultimate while reaching our planned outcomes is penultimate. But today we are a step earlier, the antepenultimate period for planning. We know that *planning takes much time* and cannot be rushed without debasing its credibility. That's why I am writing to you now.

Another reason is that our situation is complicated. LSTC has been good at designing a core plan owned by a few, while silos of separated activity undercut a more coordinated effort. We know that *planning has several strands* to which we all must attend to produce an integrated, comprehensive roadmap that includes every dimension of the school.

One last reason to share this is about you. Many inputs make for good planning: existing data, new research, key documents, and so on. But an irreplaceable factor is your involvement, since *planning needs many voices*. Your participation can help us steward what we do well, what we can change, and what could happen next. Please make it your plan to be heard.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Nieman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

James Nieman  
President

# LSTC Epistle

Fall 2019  
Volume 50 • No. 3

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.

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

## Editor

Julie B. Sevig

## Designer

Brooke Curran

## Contributors

Jan Boden  
James Nieman  
Julie Sevig

## LSTC Board of Directors

Gordon Braatz  
Susan Candea  
Paul Erickson  
Kristi Ferguson, Vice Chairperson  
Warren Geier  
Terry Goff  
Emmanuel Jackson  
Dale Landgren, Treasurer  
Scott Leisinger, Chairperson  
Jessica Liles  
Brian Lund  
Jane Mar  
Karen McClain  
Lilia Miletti  
Harry Mueller  
Rebecca Pallmeyer  
Maryjeanne Schaffmeyer  
Janette Schum

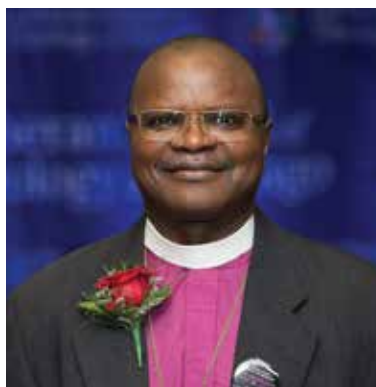
The LSTC *Epistle* is published three times a year by the Communications and Marketing Office. Printed on recycled paper with soy-based inks.

**Change of address?** Please email [advancement@lstc.edu](mailto:advancement@lstc.edu). Please give the address as it currently appears followed by your new address.

**Cover:** Angela Khabeb was one of 14 alumni who received a Distinguished Alumni Award during the 2019 Homecoming.

**Photo credits:** Jan Boden, Tricia Koning, Emily Cikanek/TKPhoto Art, Julie B. Sevig

## CONTENTS



Rev. Dr. D. Jensen Seyenkulo, bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, received the 2019 Witness to the World Award.



Sara Olson-Smith was one of the emcees for the Oct. 10 Distinguished Alumni Awards ceremony

## News

- 2 LSTC hires director of philanthropic engagement  
LSTC hires director of advancement operations
- 3 Tim Brown returns to alma mater as gift officer  
Refectory introduces changes
- 4 Eric Kyle appointed director of contextual education

## Features

- 5 **Common Discernment Project propels LSTC into future**  
by Julie B. Sevig
- 7 **They steward our space that forms community**  
by Jan Boden
- 10 **And also with y'all**  
by Julie B. Sevig
- 11 **Stepping sideways into Seminary**  
by Jan Boden

- 12 **CCME leads the way in Christian-Muslim relations**  
by Julie B. Sevig
- 14 **Retired pastor, LSTC alum, establishes scholarship for LGBTQ students**
- 15 **Homecoming 2019 and Distinguished Alumni Awards**

## Departments

President's letter	inside cover
In the Public Sphere	19
New Books from alumni	20
Class Notes	21
In Memoriam	24
Transitions & Accomplishments	25
Life @ LSTC	28
Events	inside back cover



Lutheran School of  
Theology at Chicago

## LSTC hires director of philanthropic engagement



**William "Bill" Myatt**

William "Bill" Myatt recently joined the Advancement staff as the seminary's new director of philanthropic engagement.

Myatt most recently was senior director of development, and director of development, at Catholic Extension in Chicago.

Prior to his work with Catholic Extension, he was director of development, adjunct instructor and

lecturer in theology at Loyola University. He has also held teaching positions at DePaul University, Judson University and Lewis University, all in Chicago.

"I've always been impressed with LSTC," said Myatt, who was familiar with the seminary during his time at Loyola University and from attending a conference hosted by LSTC's Zygon Center. "For many years, LSTC has struck me as a community I would like to be a part of. Students are vocal about social, theological and political issues, and I look forward to making an LSTC education accessible to anyone, regardless of their financial situation. I'm so impressed with students and others I've already met—the stories of people in ministry or connected to the school. It's an exciting time for the denomination as a whole, but also an exciting time for LSTC to make a real difference in society."

Clyde Walter, vice president for advancement, said he is delighted to add Myatt to the team. "Bill's triple-threat experience as a pastor, a theologian and a fundraiser will be incredibly valuable to his role and to LSTC. He's familiar with LSTC, having paid attention to LSTC's unique voice in the theological education world, and he's quite passionate about our mission and distinctive approach. Bill is energetic, ambitious and has an incredible record of fundraising success."

Myatt received his PhD in constructive theology at Loyola University in Chicago, a master of arts at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., and a master of divinity from Trinity Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill. His bachelor of arts is from Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

## LSTC hires director of advancement operations



**John Damer**

John Damer recently joined LSTC's staff as the seminary's new director of advancement operations.

Over the last 11 years, Damer has gained extensive experience managing operations in an institutional advancement environment at the University of Chicago, most recently as director, development operations at the University of Chicago Lab Schools. As an entrepreneur,

and before joining U of C, Damer conceived of and opened a restaurant specializing in Costa Rican cuisine.

As an active member of Immanuel Lutheran Church on Chicago's north side, he was eager to make the shift to LSTC. "I was drawn to LSTC's commitment to remain grounded in its mission while boldly envisioning what that can mean for the next generation of leaders," Damer said. "Now more than ever the world needs the kind of education and training that LSTC is creating."

"It's a pleasure to welcome John to the team," said Clyde Walter, vice president for advancement. "John brings tremendous experience in advancement operations roles from his work at the University of Chicago. I've already been impressed by John's analytical mind and I'm confident in his ability to lead advancement operations to new levels in support of our incredibly important fundraising work."

Damer received his master of business administration from the University of Illinois at Chicago, a master of arts degree in Latin American Studies from Indiana University, and a bachelor of arts in political science from Miami University in Ohio. He is a member of the Association of Advancement Services and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

## Tim Brown returns to alma mater LSTC as gift officer



**Timothy Brown**

Timothy Brown recently joined LSTC's Advancement staff as a major gifts officer. A talented preacher and communicator, he spent the last 10 years as a pastor, and has led his own and other congregations through successful fundraising campaigns.

Brown most recently served as senior pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Raleigh, N.C. Prior

to that, he was lead pastor at Luther Memorial Church in Chicago. He graduated with honors from LSTC with a master of divinity in 2009, and is excited to return in this new capacity.

"I have a heart for theological education and human development," Brown said. "Equipping and empowering whole leaders in this world is my life's goal. My personal mission as a pastor, theologian and fundraiser fit well with the stated mission of my alma mater, and under this new leadership I am interested and excited about the future of my seminary."

In addition to his two pastoral calls, Brown is a thoughtful and gifted writer with a large following. He is a regular contributor to *Living Lutheran*, the magazine of the ELCA, writes for other publications and has a blog followed by more than 1,000 on each of its platforms. Since 2015 he has also been an executive coach. He is an advisory board member for the ELCA's North Carolina coaching initiative, serves as a coach of church professionals and para-professionals in meeting their goals, and coaches start-ups on strategy and creative leadership.

In addition to his master's degree from LSTC, Brown graduated with honors from Valparaiso University with a both a bachelor of arts in theology and a master of education in elementary education. He was a teacher for two years (grades 7 and 8) after graduating from college.

## Refectory introduces changes



**New changes draw a crowd.**

At the beginning of the academic year, the LSTC Refectory took on new hours, new food—and a new look.

One of the biggest changes has been pre-paid meal plans for students (and a student plus family plan), paid for by a swipe of student IDs. The Refectory now serves hot bar meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Students may add a monthly co-op package that includes meat, potatoes or rice, vegetables, milk and juice for the weekend.

Another change is in Refectory hours, including expanded hours for supper. It is open at 7:30 for coffee and pastries, with hot food served beginning at 8. An all-you-can-eat hot bar is available Monday through Thursday for \$10, as well as a less expensive special breakfast item each day. Breakfast bar ends at 10:30 and a lunch hot bar runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A hot bar for supper is open from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Most noticeable is the room itself—cash registers were moved nearer the entry, and silverware, etc., nearer the food line. There is a new menu (also one with daily specials), and flow is better partly because of the new layout and because ordering (from taking the order to sending it to the cooks) is now high tech and appears on screens for the cooks.

Many favorite items, including all the global breakfasts and sandwiches, remain the same, but less popular items were dropped. Several vegetarian and vegan options were added.

A small fridge and microwave (especially for those who bring their own food), as well as water jugs and glasses, a toaster, bread and jelly are housed near the far end of the room.

Full tables are proof of the successful changes. And, University of Chicago students continue to find that the Refectory's tasty and affordable menu, and the welcoming community vibe, make this a popular choice for their dining.

# Eric J. Kyle appointed LSTC's director of contextual education

by Julie B. Sevig



**Eric J. Kyle**

One of the newest faces among faculty at LSTC is Eric J. Kyle, director of contextual education.

A few months into the position, which began July 1, he said, "I'm inspired by the students. Their dedication, and resilience to challenges when they realize ministry is not always as they thought it would be. I look forward to working with them to grow."

This is a new full-time position, and as a member of the faculty Kyle administers and adapts a framework for contextual education that is integrated with the seminary's public church curriculum.

Kyle said he felt the call to shape future ministerial leaders for congregations and society in 2004 while pursuing his own MDiv, which he received in 2006.

"I have been yearning to be at a seminary," he said.

In the United Methodist Church, he has served as a youth minister, a local pastor at an urban church, and worked at a Japanese-American church.

He most recently served as director of the Center for Research, Education and Teaching Excellence at Nebraska Methodist College in Omaha, and was associate professor. He was assistant professor of theology and director of service learning at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha. Kyle taught courses on spirituality, nonviolent peacebuilding, and world religions. He also has experience as an instruction designer and technologist. His areas of interest focus on religious education, community engagement and excellence in education.

"We are delighted to welcome Eric to the LSTC faculty," said Esther Menn, dean of academic affairs, when he arrived on campus. "His education and experience in spiritual formation and community engagement are

especially well-suited to LSTC's public church curriculum. He combines practical, contemplative and prophetic approaches that will both support and challenge our learning community."

Kyle holds a doctorate in practical theology in religious education and spiritual formation and a master of divinity from Claremont (Calif.) School of Theology. He has participated in the Ignatian Spiritual Formation Program and is a Promised Member of Ignatian Associates in Omaha. He is the author of four books, including *Education in the Spirit: Evidence-Based & Theological Foundations for Higher Impact Education Systems* (Wipf & Stock, 2019).

He describes his educational approach as "collaborative," adding that he puts relationships first in his work with both seminarians and contextual education site supervisors.

Part of what he likes is working with students throughout their time at LSTC, in the classroom, and as they spend time in Ministry in Context (MIC) sites, on Clinical Pastoral Education assignments, and internships.

His goal for formation is that clergy are shaped for the many contexts in which they will serve, and that they have tools, theories and strategies in their toolbox. "We are equipping clergy to be effective," he said.

Kyle approaches the relationships of congregations to students, and students to congregations, as "welcoming and nurturing, with a foundation of grace: No one is perfect and we enter into the struggle together to be in this together."

His first months were spent checking in with established congregational sites, and exploring new ones. Tapping into his technological skills honed at Texas A&M University (a bachelor of science and master of science in mechanical engineering), he hopes to also develop ministry modules that seminarians can access for support while away doing field education. He may also implement some short-term service learning experiences that will connect LSTC with more congregations than those who know about LSTC through MIC students and vicars.

By mid-October, he had already started building one contextual education resource that brought varying resources into one place, created questions for supervisors to ask at check-ins, and new and necessary policies and procedures.

Kyle said he is "humbled and grateful" to become part of the LSTC community. "It's inspiring to be joining a group of students, staff and faculty who are deeply committed to working toward change in our churches and in theological education. I hope that I will be able to contribute to this mission as much as I know that I will be benefiting from this work."

# Common Discernment Project propels LSTC into the future

by Julie B. Sevig

LSTC is in the early phases of an 18th-month effort to improve and refine its planning culture and distinctive mission. Both James Nieman, president, and Aaron Copley-Spivey, director of human resources, say that wide-ranging involvement in the process will be key to its success.

The process is known as the Common Discernment Project (CDP), and began with Nieman's desire to coordinate more fully the major strands of LSTC's administrative activity. Launched in spring 2019, the CDP is expected to conclude by the end of 2020, bringing together five interrelated areas: (a) board governance, (b) staff organization, (c) strategic planning, (d) budget setting, and (e) institutional mission.

An important aim for the CDP is to promote more comprehensive and integrated planning. To reach that aim, LSTC is seeking more effective ways to govern, organize, envision, budget, and focus toward the kind of school it wants to become in the years ahead.

"In the past, we have sometimes been reactive, struggling to work as a truly comprehensive planning culture. The CDP is about learning to do this better with a more integrated response," Nieman said. "We now have an opportunity to coordinate our direction-setting more fully across the institution."

What has been especially helpful, Copley-Spivey and Nieman agreed, are the conversations about improvement happening at every level of the institution. All employees have been asked for feedback to help shape what LSTC will look like going forward. The insights and ideas so far have been positive, they said.

"We hold so many things in common, so as we plan ahead, we don't want any part of the school to be left out," Nieman said. When there is uncertainty, it brings wariness, so we want everyone to be on board," Nieman said.

Some students have already been involved, along with many staff members. During large group conversations about the CDP, people have been eager to learn more and become involved. Nieman said he has appreciated everyone's awareness and how participants are thinking constructively, listening to one another and sharing ideas of how to work better.

## Roles and responsibilities

One early and significant change during the CDP was the size and composition of the seminary board of directors. New bylaws were shrewdly drafted and quickly approved. They were recently approved by the ELCA Church Council. These changes involve reducing the board size from 30 to 15 members, and means the seminary will have a stronger voice in naming the skills and gifts needed from board members.

These major changes were adopted more rapidly than expected and show the board's readiness for such significant change. As a result, the board will become a more nimble and efficient decision-making body. The nature of the governing board, however, is only one of the five main areas engaged by the CDP.

A second and equally challenging issue for the CDP has been to rethink the administrative structure of the school, its various departments and lines of accountability. Nieman praised the cabinet for taking seriously the need to design a structure that is more efficient, adding, "This is not code for eliminating staff." The point instead has been to recognize duplications, overlaps and bottlenecks so that LSTC can deploy its energies more efficiently and thereby expand its capacity to carry out a demanding educational mission.

## New org chart

The latest draft of the new organizational chart intends to fine-tune responsibilities and support such efficiency. For instance, previously some administrators had more than a dozen direct reports, Copley-Spivey said, making supervision unwieldy. Distributing supervision more deeply across the school will give all employees the chance for conversation and coaching not presently available, Nieman added. One likely outcome will be shifts in responsibilities and retitling of roles in order to better identify what a person does.

Changes are already noticeable in the Advancement area, quite different from even a year ago. Like other mainline seminaries, LSTC relies on current impact giving for more than 40 percent of its support. Advancement therefore needed to restructure in order to have a decisive presence in philanthropic engagement (direct fundraising) and advancement services (support, processing and analysis). Added to this, Advancement will bring communications and marketing under its umbrella. "Investing in staff in this area has been intentional," Nieman added.

A different example of restructuring involves the present Academic Affairs office and Student Services office. The eventual aim is to bring these into a closer working relationship. In fact, the line between the two has always been fluid. For example, admissions is presently lodged in Student Services but has immediate implications for academic programs, while Academic Affairs is concerned about student retention that is usually best addressed by non-faculty staff. Bringing the two offices together improves the chance for important issues to be addressed in a more holistic fashion, Nieman explained.

While it's easy to see how restructuring could make LSTC more efficient, Nieman said, "What will be harder is

.....

*We hold so many things in common, so as we plan ahead, we don't want any part of the school to be left out.*

.....

to await what eventually shakes out – the implications of all this for our financial position, what we need to budget for ourselves versus what should be outsourced. One advantage of the CDP will be to develop a clearer sense of what can make a financial difference and what won't move the needle."

**The big picture**

A major product of the CDP, Nieman says, will be the next strategic plan. "We need a new plan that is uncomplicated yet truly meaningful, listens to everyone, and reflects the best of our school," he said. "Our plan should reflect where we are actually good and effective, and avoid being a tedious or risk-free proposal."

What has come out of this process so far, said Copley-Spivey, is learning that "the big things are important."

"Refocusing our mission through the strategic plan will ensure we understand what we do well as an institution," he continued. "If we pay attention to that, it can guide our strategic planning process."

The executive cabinet (comprised of the deans, vice presidents and a few key directors) is driving the CDP and is still at work on a new strategic plan emphasis. The 2018-20 Strategic Plan, "A Community to Form Leaders to Form Community," focused on contextual learning for the sake of church leadership. The next plan will need to take a significant step further, discerning the

kind of school LSTC wants to become over the next 50 years and how that can be truly sustainable, Nieman said.

For this very reason, a core part of the CDP is to integrate budget setting into the next strategic plan. As Copley-Spivey noted, "Things don't happen in a vacuum. We need to look at intersections between planning and finances, and plot our next steps with mindfulness."

Finally, the CDP will ultimately help LSTC refocus and deepen its core institutional mission.

Nieman says that the school's mission has not been errant or ineffective, but instead too vague for the kinds of key decisions that lie ahead in theological education and for the church. "We do so many things well," he said, "but we need to learn that we can't do everything, and it doesn't serve our church well if our mission is compromised by exhausting ourselves."

For those beyond the school, the CDP will help the seminary better articulate a core value proposition that sets us apart. "The ultimate gain is a tighter mission. It's not about being better than other schools but being right for our students and our church,

remaining focused and successful at what LSTC does best," Nieman said.

Overall, the CDP calls for everyone with a stake in LSTC's future to enter in, he added, including everyone reading the Epistle: "The more eyes we have on this, the more voices we have speaking to this, the better."

.....  
**Refocusing our mission through the strategic plan will ensure we understand what we do well as an institution.**  
.....



**Help Stock Katie's Closet**

Katie's Closet is a campus initiative to eliminate food insecurity at LSTC. The coordinating team has set up an online store through Amazon to make it easy to purchase items for the closet. It's at [bit.ly/KatiesClosetLSTC](http://bit.ly/KatiesClosetLSTC) (Note: the site URL is upper and lowercase sensitive.)

On the site, check out as you normally would for Amazon and ship to "Kate's Closet Gift Registry Address." The order will be shipped directly to Katie's Closet.

These items are staples as well as special requests for Katie's Closet, which is vital to both U.S. and international students.

Direct questions to Katie's Closet Coordinators Christina Montgomery or River Needham at [lifetogether@lstc.edu](mailto:lifetogether@lstc.edu) or [katiesclosetLSTC@gmail.com](mailto:katiesclosetLSTC@gmail.com).



# They steward our space that forms community

by Jan Boden



LSTC's main building shortly after completion in 1967

It's not the building, it's the people who make a community. But every community needs a place to gather, a place to form itself into a community. Since 1967, for LSTC that place has been the distinctive main building at 55th and University and the seminary's 105 apartments.

This is where thousands of students and hundreds of faculty and staff have gathered to learn, pray, eat, worship, disagree, and discuss. It is here that they are formed into a community that goes out to form other communities.

It also takes a dedicated community with a wide variety of skills to meet the needs of the building and the people who use it.

At LSTC that's the Operations staff, which includes Building Services (engineers, carpenters, custodians, building use coordinators, hospitality and security), Human Resources, Information Technology and Food Services. Even with that much in-house talent, it is often necessary to hire contractors for projects like roof replacement, tuckpointing, replacing the chillers.

Every day the team works together to identify and address problems and challenges in apartments and the main building.

## Coordinating complex systems

Vice President for Operations Bob Berridge is the chief steward of all things building. Working closely with his staff, he makes sure that LSTC faculty, students and staff have a safe, secure, and functioning place to do their work, gather for worship and live. It's his greatest satisfaction and his greatest frustration.

"Coordinating and working with people, listening and responding to their part of the project is very satisfying when all the layers and levels go well. But when any part of the process doesn't go well, it affects all of the other parts," Berridge said.

With the myriad complex systems that Operations staff oversee, there's plenty of coordinating that needs to happen.

A new point of sale system installed in the Refectory is just one example of what it takes.

"That required new wiring to be run, new computers installed, making sure that it was connected to the bank/credit card system, and training the staff in how the new system works," Berridge said.

That example was a relatively simple transition that took place on one day. It went smoothly because everything was coordinated ahead of time and everyone followed through with their part.

## Flexible, expansible universal space

Perkins & Will architect Wilmot Vickrey described his design of the LSTC building as "flexible, expansible, universal space to meet unforeseen needs."

Rather than tailor the design to the needs of 1967, he built in endless flexibility within the interior of the building. What draws the attention of the admiring



Bob Berridge recognized Michael Huckelberry and Scott Pachowicz for their years of service at a ceremony in May 2019.



**Kimberley Ferguson**

architecture experts is Vickrey's use of six Vierendeel trusses that support the three wings of the building. Each truss is 175 feet long, 36 feet deep and two feet thick and sits on two supporting concrete pedestals. This leaves the interior space flexible and expansible.

Over the years, LSTC has taken full advantage of that endless flexibility, creating different size classrooms, offices, meeting spaces, and, most impressively, the Augustana Chapel and third floor spaces above it.

"The vertical structure has given the building its strength," Berridge said. "It's the horizontal that brings complications. Ductwork and walls with power and light switches of plumbing don't change easily."

Getting around the complications takes an intimate knowledge of the building. Berridge joined the building staff full-time in 1984, and Michael Huckelberry, director of building services, started in 1979 to manage the heating and cooling systems. The two of them know every square inch of the 106,000 square foot main building.

## ***Housing and hospitality***

The building services and renovation staff are both specialists and generalists.

Huckelberry's specialty is the mechanicals and structure of the main building. The rest of the full-time repair and maintenance staff, Scott Pachowicz, Tim Knutson and Jami Galindo help out in the main building as needed. They spend most of their time repairing and renovating the 105 apartments that make up LSTC housing.

Pachowicz is a master carpenter who is a skilled cabinet-maker, woodworker, and rehabber. But some afternoons you'll find him fixing a boiler or installing tile in a bathroom. He celebrated 30 years at LSTC this year.

Knutson, is a union carpenter who was on LSTC's building crew when he was in college.

Galindo's specialty is as a drywall finisher but,

like others on the crew, he's used a lot of other skills renovating apartments.

Twice a day they stop by the front desk to collect work orders filled out by residents or by staff. More urgent repairs get relayed to them by Kimberley Ferguson or other front desk staff. Armed with a radio as well as a computer and phone to alert the building staff of acute problems, Ferguson and her staff are the go-to people for getting answers or a listening ear.

They are also the face and voice of LSTC for anyone walking through the door or calling the main phone number. A rotation of LSTC graduate students share front desk responsibilities with Ferguson, who also oversees the mailroom and guest housing reservations, maintenance and billing.

International masters and doctoral students play an important role in building services. Because of visa limitations, international students may work only on campus or in congregations. Many are employed in security, maintenance, information technology and other operations jobs. Students providing front desk hospitality and safety support this year are Chrisida Nithyakalyani Anandan, Smitha Das Gunthoti, Manoj Kumar Gunthoti, Sunil Singh Nallathambi, Dax Sunny Mathew, Rajeev M. Geddam and Rita William.

"Working with these amazing leaders from India and Africa has taught me a lot about what it means to have a global workforce," Ferguson said. "This is part of formation at LSTC and we want to lead by example in our interactions and communications—making sure everyone has a say, introducing people. This has helped me grow."

Denis Betare Ndoe, a PhD candidate from Cameroon, works on room set-up and daytime maintenance of the main building. He is scheduled for 20 hours a week during the school year and more hours during the summer. He said, "This job has helped me meet living expenses while I've been at LSTC."



**Tim Knutson, Scott Pachowicz and Jami Galindo in an LSTC apartment they were renovating**



From left, Lena Washington (dining services), Niko Junnawatt (mailroom), Denis Betare Ndoe (building services), Cliff Felix (building services), Aaron Copley-Spivey (human resources/Title IX), Tim Knutsen (renovation), Di “Karen” Kang (IT), Martha Stocker (IT), Bob Berridge (operations), Chrisida Anandan (front desk/security), Mike Huckelberry (building services), Akeem Haywood (refectory), Rocky Hunter (security), Frank Perez (refectory), Renee Fisher (refectory), James Foster (safety and security), Jami Galindo (renovation), Abimbola Brown (operations), Sunil Singh Nallathambi (IT/front desk), Manoj Gunthoti (front desk/security)

### ***Security and safety***

Another function of the front desk is to welcome and monitor visitors to the building. It’s the intersection of hospitality, security and safety. Ferguson explained, “My thinking has changed about this. We need to know who comes into the building and where they are going. If there is a fire or safety issue, we would need to know who to look for.”

James Foster, manager of safety and security, joined LSTC in August. See page 26 for more details on his extensive background in both security and theology. He is on campus starting in the afternoon, along with watchpersons Rocky Hunter, Hakeem Chandler, Curtis Keys, Monica Williams and Kaleb Ware from Allied Universal Security. They patrol the main building, housing, and the wider campus.

### ***Space and technology***

LSTC is a community with many meetings and Operations Assistant Abimbola Brown keeps up with requests for rooms. She confirms that the desired space is available and then directs Cliff Felix of United Maintenance Company and Betare Ndoe, on room set-up.

Information Technology staff provide technical support for meetings and events, internal-use recordings of lectures and the occasional live stream. Martha Stocker currently serves as interim director, adding to her duties as software support specialist, after long-time director Kenesa Debela departed in August. She and a team of part-time consultants and LSTC graduate students are responsible for hardware, software, wi-fi, printers, and classroom technology.

### ***Food and people***

Like many functions of Operations, the Refectory provides so much more than its name implies. In addition to delicious food for hungry students, faculty and staff, it is a place of hospitality and community. In recent years and especially under Lena Washington’s leadership, it has brought in a new set of loyal customers: University of Chicago students who come for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Recent changes to the Refectory, LSTC’s cafeteria, warrant their own article (see page 3).

Excellent staff make all the difference in the small but complex system of LSTC. Aaron Copley-Spivey, director of human resource and Title IX coordinator, guides every search process. He is also currently guiding LSTC’s Common Discernment Project. See page 5.

“I’ve heard it again and again from staff: they consider their work a calling, not just a job,” Copley-Spivey said. “We’re a staff dedicated to forming leaders for the church. We’re aware of the impact our work has on the mission of the school. There’s a strong community among the staff and that makes challenging work easier and the fun we have together that much better.”

It’s those skilled, adaptable, dedicated Operations staff whose work give LSTC the real and virtual spaces where community can be formed one meal, one repair, one solution at a time.

# And also with y'all

## Cecie Suknaic brings Texas roots to seminary

by Julie B. Sevig



**Cecie Suknaic**

Cecilia (“Cecie”) Suknaic’s t-shirt, “And Also With Y’all,” says something about both her home state of Texas and her liturgical roots.

And as much as she loved growing up in Austin she says “It was important for me to get out of Texas. After 22 years, it’s important to go somewhere else.”

Well into her first semester at LSTC, she’s already enjoying that “somewhere else.” Suknaic has never lived in a city with as many tall buildings, and though she misses the beauty and spaciousness of Texas, in early October she was looking forward to autumn in the Midwest and even the eventual snow. “Snow quietly settles a place,” she said.

If she sounds thoughtful and poetic, it’s because she is. She’s an English major, after all. In her new student bio provided to Admissions she listed her interests of reading and writing and wrote this: “I’m a proud former English major, feel free to ask me about 19th+ Century novels, poetry, and transcendentalist writers such as Thoreau and Emerson.”

Suknaic graduated from Texas A & M, where her senior year was one of transition. Her fiancé and other friends had graduated, and she was overwhelmed with loneliness. Early on at LSTC, she felt a similar angst.

“Entering a new community can be terrifying,” she admitted, thinking back to her first week of seminary and not knowing anyone. She entered Roby Chapel, where the “silence and stillness” confirmed to her that she was where she was supposed to be. She remembers going from the small chapel to worship, and hearing Erik Christensen, pastor to the community, preach about some of the very emotions she was experiencing.

“I was able to dig in and realize we’re in this together and we need to be who we are,” she said.

Daily chapel continues to anchor her, and Suknaic tries not to miss. Her routine is to drop her backpack, enter Augustana Chapel, exhale and be present. She appreciates

that she gets to hear the voices of clergy, professors and students, and found the recent care of creation emphasis powerful.

Her fiancé, a law student, and a few relatives are nearby, cheering her on. Still, the transition from a college of more than 60,000 to a class of fewer than 20 has been its own adjustment. It has also meant that “not knowing anyone” quickly vanished.

“I’m learning with a community that has roots, that supports and encourages one another, that’s not afraid to live out a faith of love and justice,” she said. “I love the design of the chapel with windows looking out on the world, reminding us that we’re not just a church in the world, but that we’re called to be *the* church in the world.”

As a Public Church Fellow, she’s had the chance to familiarize herself with Hyde Park, and live out her yearning for social justice. In college she was active in, and influenced by, Treehouse Campus Ministries, and experience working at an Episcopal day school was training ground for her PCF work at the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club.

“I’ve found it to have humbling and hard moments,” she said, telling about visiting a child who wasn’t wearing socks because the family couldn’t afford them, and then with a child whose parent had died. She recognizes the vastness of her Chicago experience, walking by Lamborghini and Ferraris and homeless people in sleeping bags in downtown Chicago. It stirs in her a desire to carry love and justice into the world.

This Public Church passion drew her to LSTC, though she had really thought she’d be an English teacher. Her mentors along the way, and experience as a Bible study leader, steered her toward seminary. Suknaic loves that Chicago offers international and ecumenical dialogue. She chose LSTC because she wanted a seminary that had a practicality to it, a “here and now sort of encouragement to go out.” And she’s finding the school’s smallness suits her.

Instead of simply “pleasantries of conversation,” Suknaic says she is surrounded by people who sincerely want to know what brought her here. She feels connections among her classmates and the church that is calling them: “I have gifts and I have weaknesses, but they have them too.

“I trust in God’s call to ministry in me, and through it I hope to be part of reshaping the church of the future, the church that creates authentic space for people to live together in love while also honestly grappling with injustice and God’s call for us to respond. I believe my gifts will be nourished and challenged here.”

# Stepping sideways into seminary

## MDiv student Jonas Ellison drawn to a sacramental life

by Jan Boden



Jonas Ellison

If you would have asked Jonas Ellison about his faith life just two years ago, he would have told you, “I’m spiritual but not religious.” He even had a popular daily blog under that heading.

A conversion experience changed that in an instant.

Now his blog is called “Grace Incarnate,” and he began a master of divinity degree at LSTC this fall with the goal of being ordained in the ELCA. Grace Incarnate is also the name of the first seminary course he took, with Kurt Hendel, who gave him permission to use the name.

### **Create the life you want**

It was Ellison’s spirituality that brought him to Chicago in 2017. “A friend of mine invited me here to help him as an assisting minister with a spiritual center he was opening,” Ellison said.

He had done a certificate program to be a minister at the center, but he soon found his spirituality shifting.

“I was getting more drawn to Christianity, mystical Christianity, and found the writings of Christian thinkers like Richard Rohr, Thomas Merton and Cynthia Bourgeault. It was a move from individualistic spirituality to the mystical—and away from the spiritual center in Chicago, too.”

Ellison was raised Roman Catholic. His mother, who was devout in her faith, died when he was 16 years old and “that’s when I pretty much left the church.”

He attended mass when he and his wife were dating, “but she started to question her faith and we just stepped away from the church,” Ellison said.

The messages Ellison heard at the spiritual center he attended appealed to him.

“I grew up pretty poor by American standards,” he said. “Poverty was a big deal in our house. I was trying to create security for myself and ‘spiritual not religious’ was part of that. The services I’d go to had messages that were more like TED Talks, motivational speeches. Sometimes they’d bring in a Bible quote and I came out of there

feeling like, ‘Great! I can create the life I want!’”

### **Being created**

After he left the spiritual center, Ellison and his wife decided to go to mass. St. Benedict Catholic Church, on Chicago’s north side, was a nearby parish.

“The message I got and that changed me was that it’s not up to me to create my life. I’m created. I’m being created. This is happening to me. I had a conversion experience there, in a liturgy. It just spoke to me, after all the years away from the Catholic church.”

With all that was going on in the Catholic church, Ellison and his wife decided that they couldn’t be Roman Catholic. That’s when they found Lutheranism.

“I found Nadia Bolz-Weber. I didn’t know who she was before that. I didn’t even know about Lutheranism. It has a liturgy like the Catholic church but more progressive views.”

Through an online search they found Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chicago, and joined.

### **Side step to seminary**

Then he did another online search for Chicago seminaries and found LSTC.

“It’s kind of crazy. I’m Lutheran for a week and I was already looking for a seminary. I thought I’d just come down to LSTC to check it out. I didn’t know that half of Holy Trinity would be here—(Director of Admissions) Matt James, (Communications Specialist-Advancement) Julie Sevig, (Adjunct faculty member) Craig Mueller.”

Ellison said he was on the path to ministry before he became a Christian. Entering seminary wasn’t a new path, just a “side step” for him.

He might have started immediately but was required to be Lutheran for a year before entering seminary.

While Ellison was clear in his discernment about coming to seminary, the biggest discernment was that he wouldn’t be able to work much and that his wife would have to shoulder the financial load for the family. He does have a scholarship that covers 75 percent of tuition.

Ellison is taking three courses this semester. “It’s been absolutely fantastic—all of my professors are passionate and helpful.”

His toughest course is History and Theology, an online course taught by his advisor, Peter Vethanayagamony.

“Writing is no problem, but remembering the names and details is difficult for me. And then there are so many moving parts to seminary—classes, contextual education, candidacy.”

Ellison has found his “biggest pivot” has been with the daily blog he has written for five years (find it at [JonasEllison.com](http://JonasEllison.com)). When he “came out” as Christian, he got feedback from his readers and some no longer follow his blog.

His seminary learning “only enriches the blog. It’s important to put a thought or idea out there every day.”

Ellison is certain that this is the path he needs to follow, the life that is being created in him.

# CCME leads the way in Christian-Muslim relations

by Julie B. Sevig



CCME envisioning session

When it comes to Christian-Muslim relations, LSTC is a leader. In the ELCA, it's not a stretch to say it is *the* leader. Since the 1980s, LSTC has offered courses in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations, initially under the leadership of Harold Vogelaar, Mark Thompson and Ghulam-Haider Aasi. Supported by an endowment, LSTC launched a professorship chair of Christian-Muslim and interfaith relations (held by Mark Swanson) and A Center for Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice (CCME) in 2006.

CCME, housed at LSTC, has been and continues to be, a much-needed resource for the church and beyond ever since its founding. Its mission is to build bridges of mutual understanding, respect and cooperation among people of all faiths. It was founded on the conviction that "Christians, Muslims, and neighbors of other faith traditions, in their co-humanity, created by and responsible before God, are called to know, respect and learn from one another, despite or even because of our differences."

With the retirement of Michael Shelley as director of CCME and the approaching retirement of Aasi in 2018, President James Nieman and leaders of CCME decided to launch a re-envisioning process to help assess its priorities and direction. Not only was the leadership shifting, but the social context and political climate also has changed, from one emphasizing interfaith dialogue to multi-faith and inter-religious engagement.

In determining the center's needs and future, the center took up this task over 11 months, to:

- audit its outreach strengths and LSTC's inter-religious instruction,
- survey the larger landscape for inter-religious relations, efforts and education,
- think about CCME's mission going forward,
- consider the purposes of inter-religious education and make recommendations.

Key findings are at the end of this article.

Carol Schersten Lahurd, distinguished affiliate professor of world religions and long-time colleague at CCME, led the process. And a team was formed that included church and other seminary and Islamic community partners to evaluate the changing climate for the center, and to further enhance the seminary's related courses.

In May 2018 the task began in earnest. Working with Lahurd were Swanson, associate director of CCME and Harold S. Vogelaar Professor of Christian-Muslim and Interfaith Relations, and Sara Trumm, new director of CCME (see related story). Lahurd said the three were well suited for the task; all have lived and worked in Islamic countries, and their gifts complement one another. Lahurd describes herself as "organized to a fault, and sees connections across disciplines." She cites Trumm's people skills and Swanson as "a visionary, deep and connected."

Committed to monthly meetings, the team reached out to Christian and Muslim constituents (alumni, community leaders, students, and interfaith partners) through a survey, two in-person consultations with area and national leaders, and an assessment of inter-religious curricular practices. What became clear was how much the process dovetailed with the Churchwide Assembly's adoption this summer of "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment," said Lahurd, who with Swanson had worked on the Task Force.

"Our denomination has strong partners with LSTC and CCME, which have worked so much to bring response to societal change and increased diversity," Lahurd said.

## Shift in culture

In recent years, the urgency and importance to interact and work together with people of various faiths has increased, which played a key role in this re-envisioning.

"Engagement is always the key word in our name for me," Trumm said. "It is where I center my vision for our programming. The need for bringing people of different faiths together has largely grown and expanded, not only for us as a seminary and in congregations, but for the larger population." While there had been a considerable desire for interfaith dialogue 10-20 years ago, she said that the move toward creative and social justice action has become much more important now, both within curricular and extra-curricular endeavors.

LSTC's Public Church emphasis has created a desire for talking about, and understanding, the theology behind interfaith issues. CCME has for years been training leaders in churches, and even worldwide, about these issues.

"We discovered through the survey that we need to improve our outreach to alumni," Trumm said. Resources are available for the communities in which they serve. We need to make sure they know we're here to support them." This might happen through adult-forum study guides or help in navigating community/ individual discussions when

community members are fearful about something they heard in the media.

Providing academic learning about Islam (from credible sources), helping navigate interactions with those who are different from ourselves, developing our bridge-building skills, and having the courage to speak up when injustices are present are all a part of forming inclusive communities. These things are equally important when addressing other systemic issues, such as racism, anti-Semitism, or homophobia, Trumm said.

“To be able to speak to everyday issues with knowledge and experience is something the seminary and the center have seen as important. We’re educating and cultivating leadership among our students, needed for the communities in the many contexts they’re in,” she said. Part of that, she added, is simply teaching and encouraging people to tell real stories about people they know. “Share your experience and no one can argue with that.”

The re-envisioning process also provided focus for the center. “We try to do everything—but we just can’t,” Trumm said. “We need to focus on students here, the Chicago area, alumni and their congregations and communities.” It’s also important to partner with national organizations like the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign and staff of the churchwide organization, or local partners such as the American Islamic College, other seminaries, and other Muslim leaders and community organizations, she said.

Those involved with CCME are confident about CCME’s future, and are now eager to add staff—preferably a Muslim woman to help run the center and/or teach.

While building on the focus areas brought to light in the re-envisioning process, the hope is to also be “open to things that come up, what Mark calls ‘maintaining a posture of responsiveness,’ ” Trumm said. “We have been affirmed in what we were doing. CCME has long been showing the way in how to do this important work.”

---

## Summary highlights

Since its founding, CCME has observed a cultural move from interfaith dialogue to an approach centered on multi-faith and inter-religious engagement, which led it to rethink programming emphasis and skills needed in leadership. They also considered whether the make-up of the leadership team reflects its commitments.

The re-envisioning process resulted in key learnings:

1. Expanding circles of engagement, which are locally focused and grounded.
2. Build and tend relationships (alumni, Muslim communities, etc.).
3. Maintain a posture of responsiveness.
4. Break down the curricular/extracurricular barrier (courses and experiences).
5. Address systemic issues.

## Sara Trumm named director of CCME



Sara Trumm was recently appointed director of A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice (CCME). She served as interim director since July 2018 and as the center’s program coordinator since 2008.

“Sara will do an outstanding job as director of CCME,” said

Esther Menn, dean of academic affairs when the announcement was made. “Building on extensive experience in cross-cultural and interfaith relations, including 11 years as coordinator of CCME, Sara is prepared to take the center into the future. She has a joyous presence and a commitment to hospitality, qualities that open doors and foster interfaith friendships and partnerships.”

“I am excited to take on this new role with CCME,” Trumm said. “The re-envisioning process helped us see the intersectionality of the systemic issues we’re trying to address. I look forward to building even stronger relationships with the many partners CCME has in the Christian and Muslim communities to expand the circles of multi-faith and inter-religious engagement.”

Before joining CCME, Trumm served at the Henry Martyn Institute in Hyderabad, India, and at the Global Mission Institute at Luther Seminary. She has traveled and studied in Egypt, East and West Africa, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

“I recognize the privilege I have had with all of these experiences and how so many people who have guided me have expanded my worldview. I want to use my privilege to ensure inclusion and to promote other voices,” Trumm said.

Trumm received a BA in psychology and religion from Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minn., and a master of arts in cross-cultural studies from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. She is a community ambassador through Interfaith Youth Core and is a qualified administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory.

## Retired pastor, LSTC alum, establishes scholarship for LGBTQ students



**William Purdy**

When William Purdy was a student at LSTC during the 1970s, he was out to some colleagues and faculty, but the seminary “pretty much just barely tolerated gays because the church did not officially have gays in the ministry,” he said.

But times have changed, and so have the seminary and the church. Recently, Purdy was delighted to hear about the LGBTQ population at LSTC,

and told Clyde Walter, vice president for Advancement, that because LSTC welcomes gay people and the God-given gifts they bring to ministry, he wants to establish a scholarship for LGBTQ students. “It seems a positive way to help move beyond the hurt of the past by encouraging diverse voices to preach the gospel,” he said.

Beginning in the 2020–21 academic year and lasting 15 years, the Purdy Scholarship Fund will provide a \$2,500 scholarship annually to an LGBTQ student.

The scholarship, Purdy says, bridges that hurt he endured.

Back when he was a student, he believes the community “supposed” he was gay. “Some faculty arched their brows, others opened their hearts; a few classmates avoided me, more embraced me. It was a heavy, if open secret, and could have been isolating, save for a few ameliorating points,” he said.

For one thing, he figured he wasn’t the only one, nor had he been throughout history. Nevertheless, church history includes dense chapters about gay people persecuted, or tolerated if discreet, but rarely welcomed.

The rigor of the seminary did not afford time to brood, he said. In fact, since he also took classes at the Jesuit School of Theology, the Jesuits regularly invited him to cocktail and dinner parties they hosted.

Once ordained (in the Florida–Bahamas Synod) and in parish ministry (New York City), he said things got harder, never more than at the height of the AIDS crisis which claimed his partner’s life. The sanctimonious told him it was judgment from God. Others (Christians) evolved in their beliefs and expressed care, though the church did not. In addition to parish ministry and study and work abroad, Purdy also worked in chaplaincy and health care administration. He is now retired, and married to his husband, Giovanni, who is a physician,

As much as society has progressed in LGBTQ acceptance, he still worries—especially about queer kids who get kicked out of homes or are bullied to the point of despair. He is galvanized by the ELCA’s welcome, and the LGBTQ presence in ministry, as well as the church body and

congregations willing to risk membership loss to live out that welcome.

“In some ways it seemed to me like the scholarship should be anonymous, except that anonymity might reinforce the trope that gay clergy need to remain hidden,” he said. “I am not hiding. I am a proud, gay Christian pastor.”

To make a gift to the Purdy Scholarship benefiting LGBTQ students, go to [lstc.org](http://lstc.org) and under “make a gift” choose the designation “Rev. Will Purdy LGBTQ Scholarship Fund” from the dropdown menu, or send a check and add the scholarship name in the memo section.



**Alumni Board member Elaine Siemsen talked about why she and her spouse support LSTC**

### Giving Circles introduced at Homecoming

At Homecoming, LSTC’s Advancement Office recognized two groups of donors. Members of the President’s Circle give \$1,000 or more each year. The Pillar Society is for those who have included LSTC in their estate plans. To learn more about the President’s Circle or Pillar Society, please contact Advancement at

[advancement@lstc.edu](mailto:advancement@lstc.edu)



## First homecoming a success

HOMECOMING 2019

LSTC's first Homecoming on Oct. 9-10 proved to be such a success we've already selected next year's dates: Oct. 14-15. Mark your calendar and make plans to join your classmates and other alumni.

More than 80 people participated in a number of activities on and off campus, including a spirited banquet the final evening in which LSTC honored 14 Distinguished Alumni. Watch LSTC's website and Facebook page for videos of each of them.

Kimberly Wagner, Axel Jacob and Gerda Maria (Swanson) Carlson Chair in Homiletics, presented the keynote: "Out of the Depths: Preaching and Ministry in the Midst of Trauma."

There was also an alumni reception honoring those in the President's Circle and Pillar Society, with staff sharing remarks and Elaine Siemsen sharing her inspirational story of why she supports LSTC and asking others to do the same. The reception was followed by a dinner for those in the classes of 2009 and 1969.



Janet and Lloyd Kittlaus, Frank Senn, Diane and Philip Hougen, and John Stumme gathered for the Class of 1969 Reunion.



50-year grads John Stumme, Philip Hougen and Frank Senn



Alumni Chris Heavner, Laura Heavner and Nash Shaffer find a quiet spot to visit.



Alumni Board members Michael Coffey, Jason Wahlstrom and Tracey Brashears Schultz



Alumni Rhonda Pruitt, Angela Khabeb, and Michelle Townsend de Lopez celebrate with faculty members Linda Thomas and Kadi Billman.



Clyde Walter, vice president for advancement, and Michael Fick, president of the Alumni Board



Alumni award recipients D. Jensen Seyenkulo and Paul Hanson with Linda Johnson Seyenkulo



Tim Brown, Julie Boleyn, Michell Townsend de Lopez, Angela Khabeb, Manda Truchinski and Josh Ebener celebrated their 10-year reunion.

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS



Kjersten Priddy received the 2019 Emerging Voice Award.



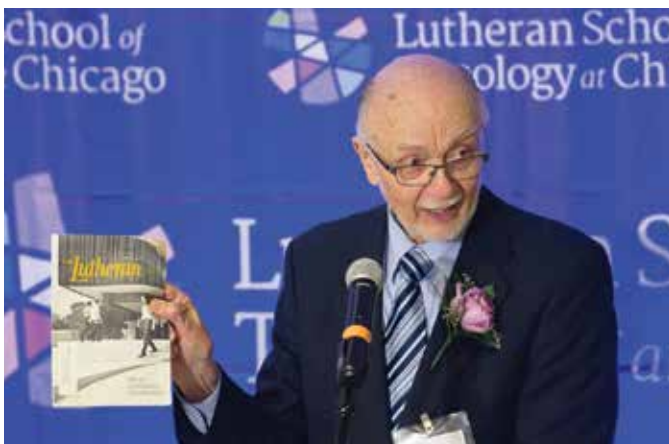
2019 Excellence in Parish Ministry Award recipient James Fowler with his spouse, Heidi



Terry Baeder received the 2019 Called to Lead Award.



Mike Blair, 2018 Specialized Ministry Awardee, cues the audience to sing, "I was ordained at a Holiday Inn."



Paul Hanson received the 2018 Faithful Servant Award.



Alumni John and Carolyn Fredriksen. Carolyn received the 2018 Excellence in Parish Ministry Award.

**DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS**



Professor Barbara Rossing accepted the posthumous award given to her cousin Daniel Rossing.



Gordon Straw's daughter, Amanda, and his spouse, Evelyn Soto, accepted the 2019 Lifetime Service Award posthumously presented to him.



Terry Kyllö received the 2018 Called to Lead Award.



Karen Soli received the 2018 Witness to the World Award.



Chris Heavner, 2019 Specialized Ministry Award recipient



2019 Faithful Servant Award recipient Marilyn Olson (center) with alum Mary Appelt Graves and guest Laura Brill

## Faculty

*Klaus-Peter Adam*, associate professor of Old Testament, presented “An eye for an eye: private enmity and God as avenger” at the Catholic Biblical Association annual meeting, held at Walsh University. He also preached and presided at German Worship in Naperville, Ill. He contributed “Food in Ancient Texts...” in *The T&T Clark Handbook to Food in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel*, Carol M. Meyer, Janling Fu, Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, editors (Bloomsbury, 2019). He reviewed *The House of David. Between Political Formation and Literary Revision* by Mahri Leonard-Flecken, (Fortress, 2016) for *Review of Biblical Literature* and contributed a revision of commenting notes of on Kings-2 Chronicles to “Lutherbibel erklart,” *Lutheran study Bible*, (German Bible Society, 2019).

*Javier Alanis*, director of the Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, published “Borderland Ethics Sin Fronteras: Borderland Ethics Without Borders, Neighbor-Love in Liminal Spaces” in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol. 46 No. 3.

*Kadi Billman*, John H. Tietjen Professor of Pastoral Ministry: Pastoral Theology

and director of the master of divinity program, with Craig Nesson, published “Introduction to This Issue Reciprocating Mission” in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol. 46 No. 3.

*Andrew Guffey*, auxiliary faculty, presented “On the Existence of ‘the Encratites,’” at the 18th International Conference on Patristic Studies in Oxford, U.K. in August. He also published “A Local Habitation and a Name: On the Imagery of John’s Apocalypse” in *Biblical Research* and *The Book of Revelation and the Visual Culture of Asia Minor: A Concurrence of Images* (Lexington Books/Fortress Academic).

*Ralph Klein*, Christ Seminary-Seminex Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, reviewed *The Genesis of Good and Evil: The Fall (Out) and Original Sin in the Bible* by Mark S. Smith in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol. 46 No. 4 and *The Old Testament: Canon, History, and Literature* by Richard D. Nelson in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol. 46 No. 3.

*Edgar Krentz*, Christ Seminary-Seminex Professor Emeritus of New Testament, taught “Living as resident aliens in the Roman world of Asia Minor” at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Munster, Ind.,



**Edgar Krentz recently presented James Nieman with a rare book from his library.**

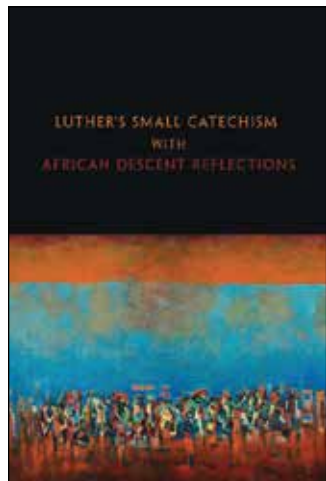
at Augustana Lutheran Church in Chicago and at Montgomery Place in Chicago. He preached at Montgomery Place and gave an illustrated lecture on Homer’s Odyssey.

*Barbara Rossing*, professor of New Testament, led the workshop, “Tree of Life, Abundant Life: Preaching Biblical Stewardship for World-Healing and Hope,” at the Stewardship Kaleidoscope in San Diego, a national event of the Presbyterian Church USA and ELCA to foster generosity. She participated in a World Council of Churches Bossey Ecumenical Institute Conference, “Green Reformation and Theological Education,” last spring and gave a panel presentation on LSTC’s Environmental

Ministry and the Zygon Center’s Future of Creation course. She lectured on Bible and Climate Change at the Gustavus Academy for Faith, Science and Ethics, a one-week program for high school students, in St. Peter, Minn.

*Benjamin Stewart*, Gordon A. Braatz Associate Professor of Worship and director of Advanced Studies, presented the paper, “Little Apocalypse: how green funeral practitioners reconfigure the iconography of climate catastrophe,” at the biennial conference of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture at University College Cork, in Cork, Ireland.

## New Books from Alumni



### **Luther's Small Catechism with African Descent Reflections**

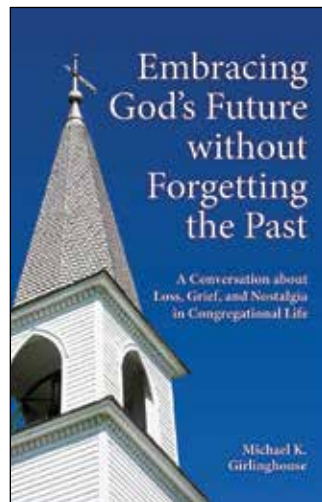
As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation approached, Lutherans of African descent gathered at the ELCA churchwide office to explore and reflect on Luther's Small Catechism.

They affirmed the gift of the Small Catechism in the life of the church and also wished to broaden the explanations of Christian faith to address the historical, cultural and linguistic experiences of Lutherans of African descent on the African continent and in the diaspora. Joseph M. Bocko, ELCA program director for African national ministries, and the late James Kenneth Echols, former president of LSTC, formed a planning team to identify and reach out to contributors for African descent reflections on the catechism.

LSTC alumni who

contributed reflections are Andrea Ng'weshemi, Cheryl Stewart Pero, Richard J. Perry Jr., James Thomas, and Louis R. Tillman IV. Echols noted in the introduction that the book is meant for the whole church to "serve as an invitation to other readers of the Small Catechism to take up similar reflection and contextualization..."

*Luther's Small Catechism with African Descent Reflections* was published in April by Augsburg Fortress and is available for \$7.99 plus shipping (ISBN 9781506458595).



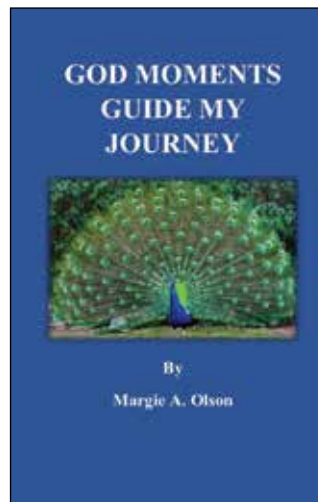
### **Embracing God's Future without Forgetting the Past**

Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod Bishop Michael R. Girlinghouse believes that congregations experiencing decline must mourn their losses before they will be able to think creatively about their future. His book, *Embracing God's Future without Forgetting the Past: A Conversation about Loss, Grief, and Nostalgia in Congregational Life*, gives congregations and their

leaders a way to do just that.

Girlinghouse begins with a discussion of loss, grief and the value of nostalgia. Then he helps leaders tell their congregation's story, how it fits into the current social context, and ways to accept the reality of their losses and express their grief. The book then invites congregations to think more creatively about their future. Then the congregation will be ready to embrace God's future for them. Each chapter of the book includes a Bible study and questions for reflection.

*Embracing God's Future without Forgetting the Past* is available in paperback and e-book from Fortress Press for \$16.99 or \$15.99 respectively (ISBN: 9781506458885 and 9781506458892).

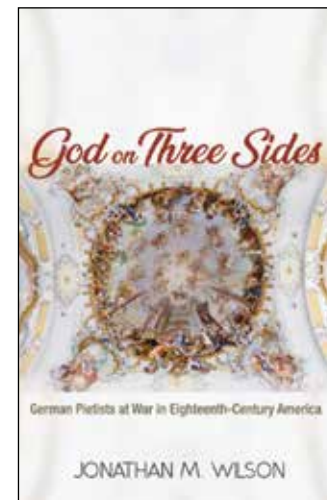


### **God Moments Guide My Journey**

Margie A. Olson says her life began when she began daily Bible study in 1983. Three years later she was a short-term missionary in Liberia. At 61, the Holy Spirit led her to seminary and ordained ministry that only God could

have led her to.

*In God Moments Guide My Journey*, Olson shares her story in this self-published book available on Amazon for \$10 plus shipping (ISBN: 9781506458892).



### **God on Three Sides**

Many assume that people who share the same type of religious experience also share the same political views. *In God on Three Sides: German Pietists at War in Eighteenth-Century America*, Jonathan Wilson challenges that assumption by looking at how German pietists took three different sides during the American Revolution.

German speakers were the largest non-English speaking European settlers in colonial America, 10 percent of colonists on the Atlantic seaboard. Among them were patriots but also royalists. Some tried to remain neutral. All three had a strong connection between their faith and their political views.

*God on Three Sides* is available from Wipf and Stock Publishers and from other book retailers for \$38 (ISBN: 9781532663185).

1958

Herbert Chilstrom (Augustana, MDiv) published the opinion piece “Who gets to taste of this land of opportunity?” in the July 31 *Green Valley News*.

1974

David Abrahamson (Christ Seminary-Seminex, MDiv) retired on June 30 after serving as pastor of Saint Luke Church in Chicago since 1974. The congregation marked the occasion with a festival service and reception.

1975

Richard Jaech (Christ Seminary-Seminex, MDiv) was elected to a second term as bishop of the Southwestern Washington Synod in June.

1981

Stewart Herman (ThM) and his wife were featured in a story published July 2 by Hamilton College about their “better than net zero” house, which generates more energy than it uses. Read the story at [hamilton.edu/news/story/stewart-herman-green-technology](http://hamilton.edu/news/story/stewart-herman-green-technology).

1985

Mike Blair (MDiv) has accepted a call to serve as chaplain at Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community in Waverly, Iowa. He has served as campus pastor at Luther College for 28 years.

1988

Craig Mueller (MDiv; 2013, DMin) was received as an oblate at Saint John’s Abbey,

Collegetown, Minn. He also participated in a consultation on congregational song for a supplement to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* to be published in late 2020. He published essays on preaching the Christmas Cycle, the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany and Maundy Thursday in *Sundays and Season, Year A, 2020*.

1992

Deborah Dingus (MDiv) was featured in the article “Deborah Dingus’ roles with United Way, Newark church are ‘a great combination,’” in the Oct. 9 *Newark Advocate*. It recounts the highlights of her 25 years of ordained ministry. Dingus is pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Newark, and director of United Way of Licking County.

1995

Stacie Fidler (MDiv) celebrated 20 years as pastor of St. John’s Lutheran Church, Rock Island, Ill. A special celebration was held Oct. 26 and she was featured in an article in *Quad-Cities Online*. During her tenure at St. John’s Fidler has coordinated a partnership between the congregation and Augustana College to create a community of students practicing intentional living in which they explore faith questions through conversation and outreach projects.

2000

Jennifer Ginn (MDiv), pastor of Cross & Crown Lutheran Church, Matthews, N.C., is

quoted in the August *Living Lutheran* article “God is present every day.” She used her three-month sabbatical earlier this year to focus on biblical storytelling.

2005

George Tsakiridis (ThM; 2009, PhD) received the J.P. Hendrickson Liberal Arts Faculty Scholar Award and delivered the Herbert Cheever Jr. Liberal Arts Lecture on Sept. 24 at South Dakota State University, where he is a lecturer of philosophy and religion. His lecture title was “The Liberal Arts and Technology: Our Need for Ethics.”

2007

Joel Cruz (ThM; 2009, PhD) published “Strangers in a Strange Land,” on Protestantism in Latin America, in *Christian History Magazine* #130, featuring Latin American Christianity.

Amy Lindeman Allen (MDiv) published “What the Bible Has to Do with It: God’s Justice and Social Justice in Matthew’s Gospel Account” in the October 2019 issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*.

2008

Thomas Gaulke (MDiv; 2017, ThM) appeared in a Sept. 21 *Hyde Park Herald* photo on the picket line with University of Chicago Medical Center nurses. It accompanied the article “Strike becomes lockout as U of C Medical Center tells nurses to disperse.”

2009

Tim Brown (MDiv) joined LSTC’s Advancement team as a major gifts officer. He is a deployed staff member working from Raleigh, N.C. See more on page 2.

2010

Zachary Parris (MDiv) received the 2019 Joseph A. Sittler Award for Excellence in Writing and Communication presented by Lutheran Campus Ministry, with co-host Matt Keadle (2011, MDiv) for their podcast *Vinyl Preacher*.

2011

Matthew Keadle (MDiv) received the 2019 Joseph A. Sittler Award for Excellence in Writing and Communication presented by Lutheran Campus Ministry, with co-host Zach Parris (2010, MDiv) for their podcast *Vinyl Preacher*.

Rebecca Lund Sheridan (MDiv) began a new call as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Syosset, N.Y., on Sept. 1

Richard Sheridan (MDiv) entered the PhD program in Clinical Psychology at Adelphi University in August.

2012

Carolyn Albert-Donovan (MDiv) was one of 20 Texas pastors to travel to Washington, D.C., in September for congressional meetings about their recent experiences on the U.S.-Mexico border. Texas Impact organized the visit and accompanied the faith leaders.

Anja Stuckenberger (MDiv) was appointed director of the Protestant City Academy in Bochum, Germany. She is the first woman to hold that position. The Protestant City Academy is for people with academic backgrounds interested in topics relevant for society, the environment and the church. It is Germany's oldest city academy.

## 2013

Jonathan Wilson (ThM; 2015, PhD) has been serving as pastor of an Evangelical Covenant congregation in rural Minnesota since January 2019. He has been teaching regularly as an adjunct faculty member at various institutions, particularly their online and hybrid online-intensive courses. He is involved in the Evangelical Covenant as a parliamentary officer. He has also published articles in the annual journal of the Lutheran Historical Conference and in *The Covenant Quarterly*. In October his book *God on Three Sides: German Pietists at War in Eighteenth-Century America* was published by Wipf and Stock Publishers. See page 20 for more.

## 2014

Shanell Allen-Debela (MA(TS)) began ministry training with the Salvation Army in Chicago in August.

Kenesa Debela (MA(TS)) answered a longtime call to ministry and began training with the Salvation Army in August. He stepped down as LSTC's Director of Information Technology that

month and moved with his family to the training center on the north side of Chicago.

## 2015

Kwame Pitts (MDiv) accepted a call at pastor of Crossroads Lutheran Church, Buffalo, N.Y. She was featured in a Sept. 10 article in the *Amherst Bee*.

Christine Doidge Yucha (MAM) accepted a call as Deacon of Ministry at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Villa Park, Ill. Since 2015 she served LSTC first as a recruiter and then as director of assessment and planning.

## 2017

Shane Brinegar (ThM) published a review of *The Sacraments: A Practical Guide* by Jeffrey A. Truscott in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol. 46, No. 3

## 2018

Fanya Burford-Berry (MDiv) was ordained Aug. 18 at Edgebrook Lutheran Church, Chicago. She is serving as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Chicago.

David Petersen (MDiv) was ordained Oct. 26 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Ill. He is serving as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Belvidere, Ill.

## 2019

Alex Aivars (MDiv) was ordained Sept. 6 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Kalamazoo, Mich. He is serving as pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Lansing, Mich.

Andrew Baumgartner (MDiv) was ordained at the Augustana Chapel at LSTC on July 27. He is serving as pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Clayton, Mo.

Amy Asendorf Berger (MDiv) was ordained July 26 at Salem Lutheran Church, Catonsville, Md. She is serving as pastor of St. Petri's Lutheran Church, Flanagan, Ill.

Mathew Berger (MDiv) was ordained at LSTC on August 2. Central/Southern Illinois Bishop S. John Roth (Christ Seminary-Seminex 1980, MDiv; 1987, MTh) presided and Erin Colman Branchaud (2018, MDiv) preached. Mathew is serving as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Pontiac, Ill. The Sept. 6 *Pontiac Daily Leader* published his "Pastoral Perspective", introducing himself to his new neighbors.

Molly Eversoll (MDiv) was ordained Aug. 3 at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, Roscoe, Ill. She is serving as associate pastor of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church in Marquette, Mich.

Christophor Gilbert (MDiv) was ordained Oct. 19 at St. Mark Episcopal Church, Louisville, Ky. He is serving as pastor of St. Ansgar Lutheran Church, Portland, Me.

Brach Jennings (ThM) is in the doctor of theology degree program in systematic theology at Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen, where Professor Jürgen Moltmann serves as the main supervisor of his dissertation. Dr. Linda Thomas will remain part of Jennings' work as an

examiner on his dissertation committee.

Samantha Nichols (MDiv) was ordained Aug. 16 at Saint John's Lutheran Church, Leigh, Neb. She is serving as pastor of Saint John's and of Zion Lutheran Grand Prairie, Platte Center, Neb.

Chelsey Olson Weech (MDiv) was ordained Oct. 27 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Ottawa, Ill. She is serving as pastor of First Lutheran Church, Prophetstown, Ill.

Erik Thone (MDiv) was ordained June 20 at Alleluia Lutheran Church, St. Michael, Minn. He is serving as associate pastor of South Canyon Lutheran Church, Rapid City, S.D.

## Future alumni

Ismael Calderón (MDiv middler), published "Immigrant and Lutheran: 'Nobody is a Prophet in His/ Her Own Land'" in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol. 46 No. 3.

Bristol Reading (MDiv, final year intern) received the ELCA Peace not Walls Seminary Engagement Award. She also reflected on her time as a Public Church Fellow serving at the nonprofit environmental organization, Faith in Place in a June 29 online post. Read it on their website at: [faithinplace.org/news/seminarian-reflection-small-moments-lasting-change](http://faithinplace.org/news/seminarian-reflection-small-moments-lasting-change).



## Resources for alumni

The JKM Library offers upgraded e-resources to LSTC and predecessor school alumni with access to the Atla Religion Database and the AtlaSerials PLUS database. The Religion Database contains 2.8 million records, covering journals and essay literature in the field of religion and theology. The PLUS database is a full-text collection of more than 490 journals with content in more than 20 languages.

Additionally, in instances where the full-text of the article or chapter is not available, users can complete a document delivery form and library

staff will scan the article or chapter and email it to you. All requests are subject to the “fair use” provisions of copyright law. The library reserves the right to decline a document delivery request if fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

For the URL and login credentials, contact JKM staff at [ask@jkmlibrary.org](mailto:ask@jkmlibrary.org) and include your institutional affiliation and date of graduation. Login credential cannot be given out over the phone.

### Questions?

Contact Interim Director, JKM Library Barry C. Hopkins at [bhopkins@jkmlibrary.org](mailto:bhopkins@jkmlibrary.org).

JKM | Library

## It was a ‘no brainer’ to return to LSTC for a class



Lynn Bird

On Mondays, members of Zion Lutheran Church in Tinley Park, Ill., can reach their pastor at LSTC.

Pastor Lynn Bird, '13 MDiv, is one of eight people who are taking advantage of the seminary's offer to take a course for \$300, far below the normal tuition rate.

Bird is taking Professor Kimberly Wagner's homiletics class, saying this is a perfect opportunity while at a vocational crossroad.

Bird has been Zion's associate pastor (and years prior, its church musician), and was in the fall called to serve as solo/lead pastor. In October, she was installed by former LSTC classmate and now bishop, Yehiel Curry.

Registering for a class at LSTC was a “no brainer,” she said. She's the oldest in the class, older even than the professor, but she's not bothered by that. She wants to explore preaching styles, and find one that fits her new role. Weeks into the class, she said she found it stimulating, inspirational and professionally rewarding.

“It's an opportunity to be connected to people other than in the parish. I can think out loud in the classroom, and try things out that might bomb,” she joked.

Coming back to LSTC feels both familiar and fresh, she said. The seminary's emphasis on Public Church is new to her, and partly what drew her back to take a class.

In fact, she hopes to return to take a Public Church course, perhaps bringing a member of her congregation with her so together they can explore new ways to be Public Church in their community.

Meanwhile, she's been working from LSTC on Mondays, starting the day with the preaching plenary, then finding a quiet place to work on her exegesis for the approaching Sunday's sermon. In the afternoon, there is a preaching lab.

She was already reaping the benefits. She spent her own money for the course, saving her continuing education allotment for the annual Festival of Homiletics, where participants hear a steady stream of top-notch, famous preachers.

“I get to hear amazing sermons, but there is no opportunity to practice as I get to do here,” she said. Those interested in taking a seminary course during the spring semester should contact Scott Chalmers at [schalmers@lstc.edu](mailto:schalmers@lstc.edu) or call 773.256.0685. See page 27 for more details.

**James R. Anderson**  
1938-2019  
*Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1964*

James Anderson served four parishes in Minnesota and California during his ordained ministry. He was an active member in all of the communities he served. He was chaplain of the Minnesota State Legislature, served on the Minnesota Synod's executive board, was a regent at California Lutheran University, and was named an honorary alumnus of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

He remained active in retirement as an archivist, writer and part-time chaplain at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

He died on May 21. A memorial service was held at Mount Olivet on May 30. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Diane, two children and six grandchildren.

**Lowell Arden Anderson**  
1936-2019  
*Class of 1967*

Lowell Anderson was a man of many talents. He was a writer, photographer and musician whose CD, "A Toast to Country," made No. 10 on the Top-50 Airplay Charts in Europe.

He was a Navy veteran who held master's degrees from Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary and Texas A&M.

For 20 years he served as a parish pastor and as an editor for the Lutheran Church in America's

Division for Parish Services. Most recently, he taught American History in the public school system.

He studied religions of the world and felt a special kinship with Jewish traditions.

He died in Ocala, Fla., on June 14. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Lois Anne, three children, seven grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren.

**William Elwood Buschbom**  
1949-2019  
*Christ Seminary-Seminex Class of 1974*

Bill Buschbom served congregations in New York, Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas during his parish ministry. He served as Chaplain for Bethany Home, Lindsborg, Kan., in the years before his retirement.

He served the wider communities he lived in by working on service-oriented boards and organizations. He enjoyed stamp collecting, hunting, fishing, golfing, being outdoors, vegetable gardening, and spending time with his grandchildren.

He died on June 28 in McPherson, Kan. A funeral service was held July 3 at Bethany Lutheran Church, Lindsborg. He is survived by his wife, Alice, two children, six grandchildren and two step-grandchildren.

**Edward N. Corneilson**  
1936-2019  
*Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1962*

Ordained in 1962, Edward Corneilson served seven parishes in Pennsylvania and Illinois during his 43 years of active ministry. He was instrumental in the formation of the Penns Valley Medical Center in the early 1970s.

He was a musician, organist and singer who also served as minister of music at several congregations, where he started bell choirs and children's choirs. He performed as oboist in the State College Symphony Orchestra and also performed in plays and musicals.

He died on June 18 at Estelle's House hospice in Ocala, Fla. He is survived by his wife, Linnea Anne, four sons and six grandchildren.

**Frederick Gustafson**  
1941-2019  
*Class of 1967*

After being ordained, Fred Gustafson was a mission developer for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Harvey, Mich.

He then attended the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland, and received a diploma in analytical psychology in 1975. When he returned to the U.S. in 1977, he became a founding member of the C.G. Jung Institute in Chicago.

He served as a psychotherapist for Lutheran Social Services of Southeastern Wisconsin from 1977 to 1994, when

he established a private practice.

Gustafson published four books and contributed to several others. In 2018 he received the Distinguished Service Award at the C.G. Jung Institute of Chicago's biannual conference.

He died on July 17. A memorial service was held July 28 at Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Watertown, Wis. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Karen, and two children.

**Troy Hedrick**  
1936 - 2019  
*Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary Class of 1963*

Troy Hedrick served several congregations throughout Illinois. He then served as corporate vice president of Trinity Health Care Systems in the quad cities. He retired in 1999.

He died on September 28 at his home in Rockford. A memorial service was held October 12 at Christ Lutheran Church, Belvidere, Ill. He is survived by his wife, Janis, two children and three grandsons.

**Frederick Junior Juilfs**  
1925-2019  
*Central Lutheran Theological Seminary Class of 1954*

Frederick Juilfs was ordained in the United Lutheran Church in 1954. He served as a mission developer for Prince of Peace Lutheran in Kansas City, Kan., and

Christ the King Lutheran Church, Tigard, Ore.

After 15 years in parish ministry, he began a second career in health care administration for the elderly, working with The Good Samaritan Society of Sioux Falls, S.D. He served as an administrator in Syracuse, Neb.; Eugene, Ore.; and Sun City, Ariz. He then served as executive director for the Santa Clara Retirement Foundation, Santa Clara, Calif., until his retirement in 1998.

He died on July 8. A service was held August 24 at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Syracuse. He is survived by his wife, Lois, their three children, seven grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren.

### **Lee H. Wesley** 1933-2019 *Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1958*

Lee Wesley was ordained into the ministry of the Augustana Lutheran Church in 1958. He was one of a core group of Black pastors who were among the first to be ordained and serve in the Lutheran Church in America.

After serving as pastor of a congregation in California for six years, he became secretary for the LACK Youth Education for the Board of Parish Education. He served as director for the Justice and Social Change Program of the Lutheran Church in America's Board of Social Ministry and then became secretary for special

ministries of the Division for Parish Services.

He served as division director of Ken-Crest Centers in Philadelphia and then as president and CEO of Lutheran Social Services of Metropolitan New York. He served in that role for 22 years, until his retirement in 1998.

While serving LSS of Metropolitan New York he earned a master of social work degree from the Hunter College School of Social Work. In 1982 Upsala College awarded him an honorary doctor of divinity degree.

Wesley also served as volunteer president and CEO of several corporations created by Lutheran Social Services to provide new services. He volunteered on the Interfaith Worldwide AIDS Organization. He was one of the founding members of the African American Lutheran Association (AALA).

In retirement he continued to serve as interim pastor at several New York congregations.

He died on July 14. A funeral service was held July 27 at Saint James CME Church, East Dublin, Ga. He was preceded in death by his wife, Nancy Elaine. He is survived by three children and four grandchildren.

### **Godspeed**

*Robert Buschkemper* (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1968, MDiv), Planned and Major Gifts Officer (part-time) retired In April. He joined the LSTC Advancement staff in July 2012 after serving as a Senior Gift Planner with the ELCA Foundation for the Iowa territory and with Lutheran Planned Giving Services of Nebraska. He served as pastor of several congregations and also worked in the investment industry. We are grateful for the many connections and gifts Bob brought to LSTC.



**Kenesa Debela**

*Kenesa Debela* (2014, MA(TS)), director of information technology services for nearly 10 years, is answering a call to ministry with the Salvation Army. Debela started working at LSTC when his father was a PhD student here. He worked with the building crew, in the LSTC bookstore and on the LSTC/McCormick shared IT staff. He returned to LSTC in 2010 as Director of IT, where he employed and mentored many student workers, calmed many fears about new technologies and was

the model of patience in a demanding and ever-changing job. We pray God's richest blessings on his new ministry.

*May May Latt* (2004, ThM; 2012, PhD), International Student Services Coordinator since late 2016, has concluded her service to LSTC in that position. She continues to work for the American Theological Library Association. While serving as coordinator, Latt provided support to international students and their families. She ensured that they had warm clothes for Chicago winters and took them on a brief summer vacation to Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Camp. Latt also helped the LSTC Guild transform itself into Village, a mutually beneficial organization for supporters and students.

*Keith Nelson* (1970, MDiv) Planned and Major Gifts Officer (part-time) retired In July 2018. He joined the LSTC Advancement staff in July 2012. He brought to LSTC his experience as associate director for gift planning with the ELCA Foundation and with Lutheran Planned Giving Services of Nebraska. Nelson was pastor of several congregations in the Midwest including Illinois and Nebraska. We are grateful for the many connections and gifts Keith brought to LSTC and for founding the Pillar Society.

*Christine Yucha* (2015, MAM), concluded her service at LSTC July 31 to accept a call with St. Paul Lutheran

Church, Villa Park, Ill. Yucha used her many gifts, first as a recruiter and then as director of assessment and planning, to guide students as they discerned a call to ministry and to guide LSTC in its strategic planning accreditation processes. She did all this with extraordinary grace and creativity. We are grateful that she carried at LSTC an extra four years, and wish her joy in her new ministry.

### New positions

*Vima Couvertier-Cruz* is serving as interim/action coordinator, International Student Affairs Office. She has been serving as a recruiter since fall 2018.

*Erin Haddad-Null*, gift processing coordinator, joined the Advancement staff full-time in July. She has been a part-time employee in the department since 2018. Before joining LSTC, she was an adjunct instructor teaching English at several colleges in the Chicago area. She holds a BA, MA and PhD in English.

*Martha Stocker* is serving as interim director of information technology.

She has been serving as Software Support Specialist on the IT staff. She is leading a team of part-time LSTC student IT workers and part-time technicians from Current Technologies to meet IT needs.

*Sara Trumm* has been appointed director of A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice. She served as program coordinator from 2008 - 2018 and then as CCME's interim director. See more on page 13.

### Welcome

We welcome these new colleagues:

*Tim Brown* (2009, MDiv) joined LSTC on July 29 as a major gifts officer with the Office for Advancement. See page 2 for more.

*Sarah Burdick* joined the Advancement staff on June 17 as philanthropic engagement coordinator. She most recently worked for Duke University, Durham, N.C., first as program coordinator in the Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society in Duke's Sanford

School of Public Policy, and then as director of administration and special project in facilities management.

*John Cattitorie*, catering assistant, joined the Refectory staff in July. He has worked in the catering and food industry for a number of years.

*John Damer* joined LSTC on June 26 as the new director of advancement operations. See page 2 for more.

*Renee Fisher* joined the Refectory staff as line cook in July. She comes with more than 10 years of experience as a line cook with several restaurants.

*James Foster*, safety and security manager, joined LSTC on August 1. He serves both LSTC and McCormick communities. He has more than 20 years in the field, most recently as manager for security and visitor services at the Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art on the Northwestern University Campus. In addition to his long career in safety and security, Foster is a pastor in the African Methodist

Episcopal Church and holds a PhD in theological and historical studies from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.

*Richard Vivian* joined LSTC's Finance Office as controller on September 16. He has over 20 years of experience in finance and most recently was controller for Catharsis Productions, a company with a mission to "change the world by producing innovative, accessible and research-supported programming that challenges oppressive attitudes and shifts behavior."

### Accomplishments

*Erik Christensen*, pastor to the community and director of worship, published "Preaching Helps: Tenth Sunday After Pentecost - August 18, 2019" in *Currents in Theology and Mission*, Vol. 46, No. 3.

## Take a Course at LSTC for \$300



*This year, LSTC is making a special offer to alumni and the wider community to go deeper in faith and knowledge by taking a course at LSTC. To make that easier, we're offering enrollment in regular courses at the special rate of \$300 each. Although these are not-for-credit, should a student choose to apply to seminary at a later date, the courses taken at the special rate may be applied to a degree program.*

Registration is open for J-Term and spring semester courses. There is something to fit your interest and schedule.

### **J-Term, Jan. 6-24**

- Monday–Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon, Women Preaching/ Preaching Women, Kimberly Wagner
- Monday–Friday, 1–4 p.m., Biblical Greek II, Eunyung Lim

### **Spring semester, Feb. 3 – May 8**

- Mondays, 8–11 a.m., Grace Incarnate: Lutheran Confessional Heritage, Kurt K. Hendel
- Monday, 1–4 p.m., The Sacramental Landscape: An Introduction to Worship, Benjamin Stewart
- Mondays, 1–4 p.m., Job: Reading Job and praying with Job as spiritual practice, Klaus–Peter Adam and Jennie English–Dumont
- Mondays, 6:30–9:30 p.m., Future of Creation, Gale Woloschak and guest speakers
- Tuesdays, 8–11 a.m., Preaching and Trauma: From the Depths, Kimberly Wagner
- Tuesdays, 1–4 p.m., Public Church I: Methods for Engaging a Public Church, Linda E. Thomas and Marvin Wickware Jr.
- Wednesdays, 8–11 a.m., Caring for the Dying and Bereaved, Kadi Billman
- Wednesdays, 8–11 a.m., Christianity in Asia, Peter Vethanayagamony
- Wednesdays, 1–4 p.m., Jesus within Judaism, Eunyung Lim
- Wednesdays, 6:30–9:30 p.m., Christian Mission and World Religions, Mark Swanson and Dirk Ficca
- Thursdays, 1–4 p.m., Narratives of Resistance, José David Rodríguez
- Thursdays, 1–4 p.m., Pastoral Care and Mental Illness, Brooke Peterson
- Fridays, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (meets six times), Theological Reflections on Intersectionality, Linda E. Thomas
- Fridays, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (meets six times), Ministry of Administration, Craig Mueller

- Online, Jesus within Judaism, Andrew Guffey
- Online, History and Theology II, Peter Vethanayagamony
- Online, Israel's Prophets, Mercedes Garcia–Bachmann

**Visit [lstc.edu/students/courses/](http://lstc.edu/students/courses/) 2020–spring to view all courses.**

To register or learn more, contact Dean of Student Services Scott Chalmers at [schalmers@lstc.edu](mailto:schalmers@lstc.edu) or 773.256.0685.

## Spanish Language and Latinx Ministry Intensives

### **Spanish Language and Hispanic Ministry Intensive I**

This 5½ day intensive offered by the Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest (LSPS) is an immersive introduction to Hispanic culture and Spanish language for worship. It will be held at the Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, Texas, from 5 p.m., May 24, to noon May 29, 2020.

Registration with housing is \$1,300 and without lodging, \$800. **Register or learn more at [lsp.edu/programs/intensives](http://lsp.edu/programs/intensives).**

### **Building Leadership Capacity for Latinx Ministry**

This June 7–11 Level II intensive offered by LSPS is designed to enhance leadership competence in the development and support of Latinx ministries in the ELCA and other ecumenical partners. Teams from congregations are encouraged to attend. You do not need to have completed the Spanish Language intensive.

The course will be held at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas. Cost is \$650 per person or \$500 per person for three or more from the same congregation. Fee includes three lunches.

**Register or learn more at [lsp.edu/programs/bldg.-cong-capacity-hispanic-min](http://lsp.edu/programs/bldg.-cong-capacity-hispanic-min).**

LIFE AT LSTC



Dr. Gulam Haider Aasi thanks those gathered at his retirement celebration.



Vima Couvertier-Cruz and Barbara Rossing attended a Faith in Place event at Chicago's Field Museum.



Ole Schenk blesses a beloved pet at the commemoration of St. Francis of Assisi.



Big Orange, LSTC's flag football team, getting ready for Lutherbowl



LSTC hosted Music that Makes Community Oct. 10-12.



Linda Thomas appreciated the witty remarks of guest speaker Dr. Larycia Hawkins.

## 'Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers: Migration and Mission,' theme for 50th anniversary World Mission Institute



Peter Phan

The 2020 World Mission Institute to be held March 20 at LSTC will welcome Peter C. Phan to explore the topic "Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers: Migration and Mission."

Phan holds the Ellacuria Chair in Catholic Social Thought at Georgetown University. He is a native of Vietnam who

emigrated as a refugee to the U.S. in 1975. He has earned three doctorates, the doctor of sacred theology from the *Universitas Pontificia Salesiana*, Rome, and the doctor of philosophy and the doctor of divinity from the University of London. His wide-ranging scholarship includes the history of mission in Asia; liberation, inculturation and interreligious dialogue, eschatology, and the theology of icon in Orthodox theology.

Next year marks the 50th year of the World Mission Institute, a collaboration of Catholic Theological Union, McCormick Theological Seminary and LSTC.

Please watch [lstc.edu](http://lstc.edu) for more details.



## Dates set for 2020 baccalaureate and commencement

Celebrate with the Class of 2020 on May 16 and 17. A baccalaureate service will be held at 4 p.m., Sat., May 16, in the Augustana Chapel at LSTC. The commencement ceremony will take place 2:30 p.m., Sun., May 17, at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, 5472 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago. It will be LSTC's 160th commencement, dating from its oldest predecessor school, Augustana Lutheran Seminary.

## SAVE THE DATES

### Giving Day 2020

Make a Difference for LSTC during 24 hours of giving, noon to noon, March 10-11. We are seeking alumni social media ambassadors for Giving Day. Contact Jessica Houston at [jhouston@lstc.edu](mailto:jhouston@lstc.edu).



### 32nd Annual LSTC Gospel Choir Benefit Concert

April 19, 4 p.m. in the Augustana Chapel at LSTC. Bring your friends, bring your family and get ready for some outstanding Gospel singing brought to you by LSTC's Gospel Choir and guest choirs from the Chicago area. Free but be generous with a freewill offering or a donation ahead of time to support the Grover Wright Scholarship and The Rev. Carole A. Burns Scholarship. Make a donation online at [lstc.edu/giving](http://lstc.edu/giving).

### Homecoming 2020

October 14-15. Mark your calendar now and plan to be in Chicago. Class of 1970—gather up your stories and come for your 50-year reunion. Class of 2010—come celebrate your 10-year reunion.

2020 Distinguished Alumni Awards will be presented during Homecoming. **Now is the time to nominate an outstanding alum.** Simply write a letter or fill out the form on the website [lstc.edu/news-events/awards](http://lstc.edu/news-events/awards) and send it to Jennifer Thomas at [Jennifer.thomas@lstc.edu](mailto:Jennifer.thomas@lstc.edu). The deadline for nominations is January 15.



# Lutheran School of Theology *at* Chicago

1100 East 55th Street | Chicago, IL 60615  
[www.lstc.edu](http://www.lstc.edu)

*Address Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
CHICAGO, IL  
PERMIT NO. 9556



FALL 2019

Alumni and the LSTC community learned  
new songs during Homecoming worship.