

LSTC

FALL 2018

# Epistle

Magazine of the Lutheran School  
of Theology at Chicago



*Meet LSTC's  
new faculty*

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear friends in Christ:

All our ELCA seminaries pay close attention to recruitment, and rightly so. Collectively, the seven schools supply only about half the need for first-call pastors in our church, so the search is on to expand the pool of potential students. Our “yield rate” of those who come to seminary after expressing initial interest is 16%—quite high for graduate-level institutions. That’s good, but now do the math. If our church *presently* needs around 400 first-call pastors, then our recruitment pool must be around 2,500 people interested in seminary *every* year.

[Before going on, let me acknowledge that I refer here to only one portion of rostered ministry in our church—pastors. I am deeply thankful for the deacons who also study at LSTC, bearing their gifts on our staff and across the church. A future letter will focus on them.]

Reaching that target will take many years and many approaches. Remember, seminary recruitment is the caboose on the freight train of vocational discernment. We need to support the feeder systems that awaken a desire for church service—camping and outdoor ministries, faith development on campus, volunteer and mission opportunities, and other ways besides. This also includes congregations, our willingness there to notice those with gifts for ministry, and then risk the bold question, “Have you ever thought about ministry?”

But there’s something else we need to do, not about recruitment but stemming a tide of loss. Just look at the “retention rate” of clergy still serving at various periods after ordination. According to a 2016 report, the issue is first noticeable five years after ordination, when just over 90% of all pastors remain in service. That sounds great, but also means that one of every ten clergy is already gone. The news is more startling at ten years, when only around 75% to 85% of pastors are still serving—a downward trend for the past three decades.

Consider the impact. Across our church, the erosion of gifted leadership is stunning. We are losing folks just at the point when, in most other professions, they are moving into mature forms of service—so we lose their acquired wisdom, too. For seminaries, this trend impedes the stewardship of already strained resources. Each of our schools invests heavily in forming students. But if our church annually loses between one-fifth and one-quarter of the clergy who began a decade ago, then every five years an entire graduating class has vanished.

Sometimes vocational change is fine, but I am troubled to learn when newer clergy are already

discouraged. One of our faculty members asks graduates to share about their first calls, and what they say at first is upbeat—commitment to call, love of people, sharing the gospel. But then comes honesty about what corrodes—racist and sexist remarks, widespread anxiety and depression, administration that dampens mission, and a deep sense of loneliness. And these are not complainers. They were our best students, the leaders we want.

Of course ministry isn’t easy, but there is more we can do. Writing on pastoral resilience, pastoral therapist Cynthia Lindner says, “Without communities of mutual encouragement, it is hard for religious leaders to muster courageous selves out of which they can take risks on behalf of a worthy vision; without relationships of accountability, risk-taking can become a bad habit, born of anxiety and boredom. The sense of coherence, competence, and belonging engendered by authentic and honest relationships is requisite for responsible public leaders who hope to challenge, inspire, and move others.” So maybe we have a way to stem the tide of pastoral attrition—through the communities of support already at our disposal.

Could congregations find local, intentional ways to encourage newer pastors, ready simply to listen to and pray for them? Could our own alumni association deploy networks to embrace clergy in a safe space of colleagues who have walked the walk before them? Could our school in Hyde Park be a stronger place for re-gathering, not just for ministers to learn but also to speak and be heard? These are not wild ideas. They are within our grasp and quickly attainable. It takes only the will to do them, borne of an urgency to hold onto dear colleagues who were first drawn toward public ministry and even now want to be called into the world.



James Nieman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Nieman".

James Nieman  
President

LSTC

# Epistle

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

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## CONTENTS



Eunyung Lim



MDiv student Jeffery Roberts (left) paints posters at Chicago Youth Programming

## News

- 2 Clyde Walter appointed Interim Vice President for Advancement  
Kim Beckmann appointed Interim Director of Contextual Education
- 3 Lydia Hernandez-Marcial receives HTI/Lilly Doctoral Fellowship, Louisville Institute Honorary Fellowship; Nieman receives Distinguished Alumnus Award from Pacific Lutheran University

## Features

- 4 **LSTC begins year with service**
- 6 **Ismael Calderon's journey**  
by Julie B. Sevig
- 7 **Emotions, justice and the church - Marvin Wickware**  
by Jan Boden
- 8 **Translating the context - Eunyung Lim**  
by Jan Boden
- 9 **Kimberly Wagner on preaching and her pooch**  
by Julie B. Sevig

- 10 **Leading the growing Lutheran Church of Liberia**  
by Linda Johnson Seyenkulo
- 12 **Gift to give, gift to receive - Village**
- 14 **LSTC students, faculty in Egypt**
- 15 **Hein-Fry Book of Faith Challenge hosted by LSTC**
- 16 **Mark Van Scharrel reflects on years at LSTC**
- 18 **Relieving seminary debt**  
by Julie B. Sevig

## Departments

President's letter	inside cover
In the Public Sphere	19
Class Notes	22
In Memoriam	24
Transitions	26
Life @ LSTC	28
Events	inside back cover



Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



## Clyde Walter appointed LSTC's Interim Vice President of Advancement



**Clyde Andrew Walter**

Clyde Andrew Walter was appointed by President James Nieman to serve as Interim Vice President for Advancement for LSTC. He started September 4.

Walter joined LSTC's Advancement Office in January 2015 as campaign director and major gift officer. In this new role, which runs until February 2020, he will continue to manage the comprehensive

campaign and lead the annual, major and planned gift programs. He will be responsible for leading the advancement team and representing advancement work within and beyond the school.

"I am grateful for Clyde's willingness to serve, and confident in his leadership abilities," Nieman said in an announcement to staff and faculty. Nieman said that the 18-month appointment allows him and the school to develop the search for a vice president in a "careful, manageable, sustainable, and effective manner."

"During this interim period, I look forward to working diligently with the advancement team, LSTC faculty and staff, LSTC boards, and our network of alumni and donors to advance our work and ultimately the mission of LSTC," Walter said.

Earlier this year, Walter received the Jay Bleeke Young Professionals Award from the Association of Lutheran Development Executives (ALDE). The award is given to a member of ALDE who is under 40, shows exemplary participation in the organization at the local or national level, and is an inspiration to others regarding great commitment and involvement.

Walter has also worked for the Office of the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), for Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., and as the director of stewardship and advancement at Grace Lutheran Church and School in River Forest, Ill.

Walter holds a master's degree from the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration and a bachelor's degree from Augustana College in Rock Island. He is married to Pastor Kyle Severson, a 2015 graduate of LSTC.

## Kim Beckmann Appointed Interim Director of Contextual Education



**Kim Beckmann**

The Rev. Dr. Kim Beckmann (MDiv, 1984; DMin, 1999) was appointed Interim Director of Contextual Education for the 2018-2019 academic year. She began serving July 15.

As interim director Beckmann is overseeing the contextual components of seminary education offered to master of divinity (MDiv) and master of arts in ministry (MAM) students in collaboration with

congregations, agencies and synods. This includes clinical pastoral education (CPE), Ministry in Context (MiC) and internship. She will also teach Ministerial Leadership II, a course taken by all second year students in the MDiv program concurrently with their Ministry in Context immersion in local congregations.

"We are delighted that Kim Beckmann is serving in the important capacity of Interim Director of Contextual Education at LSTC. Contextual education is a key component of leadership formation for LSTC students, and Kim's gifts and experiences have uniquely prepared her to serve at this moment of transition," said Academic Dean Esther Menn.

With Associate Director of Field Education Marji Shannon, Beckmann is working with faculty and staff to provide contextual education aligned with LSTC's values and goals to address the changing nature of the "public church."

Beckmann is also consulting with the Contextual Education Advisory Committee as the seminary conducts a yearlong evaluation of its Contextual Education Program. The committee is chaired by LSTC Pastor to the Community and Director of Worship Erik Christensen and includes faculty members, an ELCA bishop and a local ELCA pastor.

For 21 years Beckmann was co-pastor, with her husband, Fredric Kinsey (MDiv, 1983) at an ELCA parish in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. From 2006 to 2009 she served as director of candidacy and director for women in ministry on behalf of the ELCA. Recently she has served as an interim pastor at nine different Lutheran parishes in transition throughout the Chicago area. She is the author of *Prepare a Road: Preaching Vocation, Community Voice, Marketplace Vision* (Cowley, 2002). She taught "Encountering the Living Word: Introduction to Preaching" at LSTC as an auxiliary faculty member in fall 2017 and spring 2018.

## Lydia Hernández-Marcial receives HTI/Lilly doctoral fellowship; Louisville Institute honorary fellowship



Lydia Hernández-Marcial

The Rev. Lydia Hernández-Marcial, a doctor of philosophy student at LSTC, has received the Hispanic Theological Initiative/Lilly fellowship for the 2018-19 academic year. She is also an Honorary Fellow with the Louisville Institute for the same period.

Dean for Academic Affairs Esther Menn, who is also Hernández-Marcial's advisor at LSTC, said, "I am delighted

that Lydia's innovative research is being recognized by both the Hispanic Theological Initiative and the Louisville Institute. These fellowships will allow her to continue her important work and expand her network among fellow scholars."

Benjamin Stewart, director of advanced studies at LSTC, said, "This is a considerable honor and a fantastic opportunity. These programs represent a network of world-class mentors and conversation partners that will further strengthen the research agenda that Ms. Hernández-Marcial is carrying out here at LSTC. It is wonderful to see others recognizing her potential as an emerging scholar."

Hernández-Marcial's doctorate will be in biblical studies. She is specializing in Hebrew Bible, particularly Wisdom Literature. Her dissertation will focus on the book of Ecclesiastes.

"I feel drawn to parts of the Hebrew Bible that are not studied in a church context," Hernández-Marcial said. "There are several voices in the Bible that question tradition. It is important to hear those voices, as well. I am interested in opening spaces for the study of the Bible from the perspective of voices that are silent in the dominant culture. I read the Bible as a Puerto Rican and a Latina."

As an HTI Fellow, Hernández-Marcial is assigned a professional editor to work with her on her dissertation. She participated in a summer workshop and two writers' workshops. She also received a stipend of up to \$750 to attend networking events.

She is required to develop a writing agreement with her editor and submit monthly progress reports. She is expected to work full-time on her dissertation.

As an Honorary Fellow of the Louisville Institute, Hernández-Marcial participated in the 2018 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in November 2018. In January she will attend the Institute's Winter Seminar, where she

will meet and interact with scholars at every stage of their careers.

Hernández-Marcial has already published two essays in a commentary on the lectionary and another is included in a forthcoming book honoring Mexican scholar Elsa Tamez. Hernández-Marcial has taught at *Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico* and was a visiting scholar at Austin Presbyterian Seminary in spring 2018.

Hernández-Marcial holds degrees from the University of Puerto Rico, *Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico*, Union Theological Seminary and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

## Nieman receives Distinguished Alumnus Award from Pacific Lutheran University

President James Nieman received a 2018 Distinguished Alumnus Award from his alma mater, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) in Tacoma, Wash., at a ceremony during Homecoming Weekend on November 3. A 1978 graduate of PLU, Nieman was honored for more than three decades of teaching and leadership in theological education and congregational life.

"When I was younger, PLU opened a universe I had never before experienced," Nieman said. "I learned how to think critically about complex issues, received leadership opportunities that gave me confidence, and met people who articulated their faith credibly. All these remain gifts from PLU for my current service in our church."

After graduating from PLU, Nieman earned an MDiv from Wartburg Theological Seminary and was ordained in the American Lutheran Church in 1985. He served as pastor of congregations in Iowa and Alaska. He earned the PhD from Emory University.

Prior to his selection as president of LSTC in 2012, he was professor of homiletics at Wartburg from 1992 to 2004. He served as academic dean at Hartford Seminary and taught practical theology there from 2005 to 2012. His current research focuses on the recovery of practical wisdom (phronesis) within the church and for theological education. He is widely published and has been a leader in academic and professional guilds nationally and internationally.

Said Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament, "The LSTC faculty rejoices in this honoring of President Nieman by PLU—a university from which outstanding graduates have come to study here. He has guided our seminary's distinctive public voice, including reshaping the curriculum around the theme of 'public church,' and articulates Lutheran public theology in a way that attends to the neighbor, grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Nieman has deep roots at PLU. Three generations of his family have studied there and his paternal grandfather, Gustav, served on the school's board of regents.

# LSTC begins the year with service

by Julie B. Sevig



Urban Juncture Master Gardener Lewis Lee gives a tour of the rooftop garden to LSTC volunteers.

When leaders planned orientation activities for incoming (and returning) seminary students this year at LSTC, they decided a hands-on experience of service and learning would help everyone experience public church, which is at the center of the school's curriculum.

"We wanted to find a way to have the community have access to one immediate experience of Public Church," said Scott Chalmers, dean of students. "While students are immersed in Public Church during the time they spend in the classroom, we wanted new students in particular to begin their LSTC experience walking from Hyde Park to

nearby Washington Park, crossing boundaries and already starting to think about context."

And they did. More than 50 students, staff and faculty engaged in an afternoon of service during Welcome (Back) Week on a rainy day in late August. Chicago CARES was onsite to lead the learning and service in the nearby neighborhoods of Washington Park and Bronzeville.

Chicago CARES is an organization that envisions "a city where we're all active participants, fully invested in the city we call home and the success of all our neighbors." More than 200 volunteer projects are available through Chicago CARES every month to the public. It's an easy and organized way for individuals and groups, especially congregations, to serve in the city. LSTC is already looking for more opportunities to serve and frequent the places its community visited. LSTC worked with organizations focused on:

- **Restorative justice:** at Church of the Good Shepherd volunteers learned about Nehemiah Trinity Rising by participating in a peace circle and tracing and painting symbols that now serve as traveling peace murals.
- **Youth engagement:** at Chicago Youth Programming's Community Center volunteers painted signs with local students, cleaned offices and played games.
- **Beautification:** Urban Juncture builds economic opportunities through its Boxville market, Chicago's first street food market and container mall. One of the things volunteers did was work in its rooftop garden.



LSTC volunteers and Chicago CARES staff





**Can you guess who won the Uno game?**

It was the first time Chicago CARES worked with volunteers who were able to walk to their work sites. Part of that strategy, Chalmers said, was to lift the veil of “don’t cross Cottage Grove Avenue,” commonly (and stereotypically) referred to as a South Side dividing line beyond the seminary and University of Chicago. Chalmers said the leaders wanted to communicate security and common sense, but also make students aware there is more to the South Side than what they see every day.

Observed student Troy Medlin, “As I walked through Washington Park to Bronzeville to serve at a community garden for the afternoon I was struck by the beauty, power and resiliency of these neighborhoods on the south side. They have been denied resources and services for many years and yet still find ways to care for one another, serve one another and create innovative ways to love one another.

“We didn’t go to these neighborhoods to fix them or save them, but only to witness and to be equipped to challenge the dominant narratives about the south side and proclaim the good news that it is there...the spirit is making things new in all sorts of unexpected and unsettling ways.”

Jessica Houston, assistant vice president for advancement, led one of the teams and said the experience provided an opportunity for the LSTC community to “be community in community.”

“At the end of the day, hearing folks share their experience and the impact that was made warmed our hearts and encouraged us to keep our connections to the new opportunities just blocks away. Seeing our staff embrace the young people as we shared goodbyes was a powerful testimony,” she said.



**Volunteers prepared posters to be used with Nehemiah Trinity Rising’s peace circles.**

# Ismael Calderón's journey brought him to Jesus and LSTC

by Julie B. Sevig



**Ismael Calderón**

Ismael Calderón took an unusual path to seminary to be sure. In just three years, he has made a home in both the United States and the Lutheran church.

"You are so Lutheran and you don't even know it," one pastor told him as he articulated his faith.

Calderón was born and spent his early years in Caracas, Venezuela, where his Colombian family had moved during the 1980s oil and economic boom. The family moved back to Colombia in 1998, prior to the emergence of the social, economic and political crisis currently affecting Venezuela. When he was five, his mother immigrated to the United States to find work, sending money back to Colombia so her children, who were living with their grandmother, would be more financially stable and have a better chance at an education.

As a result, he went more than 15 years without seeing his mother. She had found employment in the northern Illinois area, which has now also become his home.

In Colombia, he attended a military (conservative Roman Catholic) school. His grandmother took him to church weekly, and had a strong influence on his faith, which in young adulthood he would describe as "spiritual, not religious." During those years, he found refuge in the letters, poetry and readings of German philosophers Emmanuel Kant and Friedrich Nietzsche as he tried to understand his own reality as a gay man, and the loneliness and depression that accompanied him. His interest in philosophy allowed him to challenge conservative teachings. He holds a bachelor's degree in International Relations from Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogota, Colombia.

In 2015, Calderón came to the U.S. to take care of his mother. He was focused on her health, but began working and networking as an AmeriCorps VISTA worker for United Way of Lake County. He was instrumental in developing a new program called "Better Together," which helps children and families living in poverty, many of them immigrants, to handle day-to-day challenges. Not unlike his own mother, these parents and caretakers, "despite any challenges they may have personally, always put their children and their education first," he said.

"It was so challenging, but a blessed experience," he said. "It opened doors for me." One of those doors was the position of immigration case manager, then outreach and citizenship education coordinator at Hispanic American Community and Education Services, a non-profit that supports and educates immigrants through the path to citizenship (i.e. waivers, visas, passports, legal services, Dreamers and DACA). The work was both a privilege and depressing.

In 2016 he left his job to return to Cartagena, Colombia, this time to care for his grandmother. While there he had time to wrestle with his faith and future. Through his immigration work in Waukegan, he had been introduced to the local congregation of Parroquia Luterana Sagrado Corazon and Pastor Nestor Espinoza Perez, who was able to answer Calderón's nagging question about the church's position on gay people.

"We are open and inclusive," he told me. "I said, 'I want to become Lutheran now.'"

And indeed he did. In short order, he became involved in the congregation, and now serves on its church council. He was tapped to work on an ELCA stewardship event in Dallas, and be a churchwide representative to an HIV/AIDS conference in Amsterdam. He applied to LSTC and was accepted. His contacts and connections enabled him to afford this next chapter in his life. His work site as a Public Church Fellow was developed with the ELCA's HIV/AIDS Initiative.

Despite the language barrier and rigorous learning, "I feel like I belong here," he said, looking around the Refectory. "I feel so privileged and so blessed...My religious faith is in the middle of everything. Right now my faith is Jesus. God was trying to push me to focus on Jesus...Now I'm not scared to be myself. Now I'm not scared to say I'm Lutheran. Now I'm not scared to say what I feel. And now I feel so grateful to say I love you to the people. To be there for people..."

"That's my journey. It led to Jesus. This is me. I am one of this group, just another servant. I want to be part of that Jesus work."



# Emotions, justice and the church

Marvin Wickware Jr. examines how emotions shape systems

by Jan Boden



Marvin Wickware Jr.

Three weeks into his first semester teaching at LSTC, Dr. Marvin E. Wickware Jr., assistant professor of church and society and ethics, had an epiphany. He had just finished teaching a session of his class, *The Theology of James Cone*.

"I'm an introvert who usually feels drained after that much time with a group of people. That day I realized that I was leaving class feeling more energized than when it had started," he said. "I sent my wife, Beth, a text to tell her I love my job. Ten years ago I couldn't imagine teaching theology and ethics. Now it feels natural."

Wickware first honed his teaching skills as a special education teacher in the New York City Department of Education. After three years he decided to take a break from teaching and enrolled in the master of divinity program at Union Theological Seminary. It was the next step in a long journey toward teaching theology and ethics.

## Struggling to make sense of strange teachings

Raised in Terre Haute, Ind., Wickware's parents recognized early on that he was a smart kid.

"Terre Haute wasn't a great place to be a gifted black child in the late 1980s or early 1990s," he said.

His parents decided to send him to a Roman Catholic school. They thought he would have a better chance of success there. But the Wickware family did not attend the Catholic or any other church. Both of his parents had had bad experiences with the church and found no reason to give it another try. And young Marvin knew that he was too smart to believe in the stories and strange teachings that didn't make sense.

Fast forward to college at Duke University where he met Beth, a conservative evangelical Christian. They dated and argued constantly about religion. After Beth broke up

with him, Wickware started to read the Bible to see if he could reconcile himself to what was in it. He also attended InterVarsity, the evangelical campus ministry. His family was convinced that he had gone astray, that he had lost himself.

He and Beth got back together, but Wickware still had a lot of questions about the Christian faith. "I was okay with the message, 'Jesus cares for you,' but there was a lot that the evangelicals I was around preached that just didn't work for me or for Beth."

When they moved to New York City after college, they joined Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan which had "amazing small groups." Wickware was still a member there when he started the MDiv program at Union.

"It was James Cone's class that put together faith and politics in a way that made sense to me," Wickware said.

It also was Cone who encouraged Wickware to enter a PhD program.

## Showing love to the enemy

Wickware's dissertation, research and teaching focus on the question of racial reconciliation and the political and social problems tied to race and gender in the United States. Two incidents he experienced, and his lack of clarity in responding to them, got him thinking about demonstrating that black and white U.S. Christians are enemies and exploring the possibility of love in light of that reality.

In 2013 Wickware and his family joined a predominantly white Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation whose members expressed a serious commitment to racial conciliation. In the spring of 2015, the church began a sermon series on race and the church. One of the guest preachers was a former pastoral intern with the congregation, a gentle, well-liked, soft-spoken black man. In his sermon, he condemned white supremacy and called the congregation, himself included, to repent from "a whiteness that is killing us."

One of the white elders of the church responded to the sermon by saying, "This isn't church. I come to church to get away from all of this hate."

Wickware was at a loss to respond.

"The preacher bared his pain before the congregation and before God," Wickware said. "And when he preached the word of God to the people of God, the people of God got angry. Not at the white supremacist violence that had wounded their brother's heart. They got angry at him."

The second incident that left Wickware unsure of how to respond happened at about the same time. He was a teaching assistant for a course on womanist theology and ethics offered at Duke Divinity School. Although the professor chose the readings carefully and allowed students to express their concerns in class, Wickware said that each week a group of white women in his section expressed the same frustrated sentiment that "it feels like the professors and authors hate white women. We care about racial reconciliation, and all we get in return is anger."

continued on page 13

## Translating the context

### Eunyoung Lim on Early Christianity and Biblical Greek

by Jan Boden

For Assistant Professor of New Testament Dr. Eunyoung Lim studying Early Christianity is a life-changing activity. She knows because it changed her life.

“One of my college scripture professors introduced me to historical biblical studies. It released me from biblical inerrancy and it was the moment I decided that this is what I wanted to do,” Lim said. “We need to know the context of the time and those who first followed Jesus or we will miss a lot of what the New Testament can tell us about our own time. It’s all there in the early church: racial minorities, the role of women, sexual differences, and much more.”

#### Changing policy by examining scripture

Lim is a pastor’s kid who grew up in a conservative Baptist denomination in South Korea. She learned that the Bible was the verbatim word of God. Her father told her that if she read the Bible enough times, she would receive a special blessing.

“I was a sick child and stayed home a lot. By the time I went to college, I’d read the Bible nine times,” she said.

She considered becoming a pastor, but at that time the denomination did not ordain women.

After learning about the historical-critical methods and feminist theology, she decided to use them to examine the biblical prohibition of women’s leadership. What she learned may have contributed to the denomination changing its policy.

At about the same time Lim started the master of divinity program at Harvard Divinity School, the denomination had formed a task force to study women’s ordination.

“My father was struggling with some of the doctrine of the denomination and wanted to know about what I was learning at Harvard,” Lim said. Although he was from a congregation in a small town, he was elected to serve on the committee considering ordination of women. Lim is proud that her father helped pass the measure in 2013.

#### Cross-cultural aspects of early Christianity

Lim is fascinated by the early followers of Christ. Her research focuses on those who received the message of the gospel and struggled against the odds of the colonialism and patriarchy of the Roman Empire to believe.

“I see a lot of cross-cultural aspects in early Christianity. Looking at and looking into this gives us a greater opportunity to examine what is going on in our time. I really want to focus on and investigate the context beyond the biblical text.”

Her dissertation, “Entering God’s Kingdom (Not) Like a Little Child,” has its roots in her reading of the Gospel of Thomas and a set of unusual sayings that cannot be understood without understanding the context. For example, Jesus says, “a man of old age will ask a seven-day-old baby the place of life, and he will live.” When Lim began to do the historical research about the way infants were thought of at



Eunyoung Lim

that time she discovered the social practices and ideas that help interpret the saying.

“Greek and Roman society had a practice of *dies lustricus*, a day of purification performed when a baby was eight or nine days old,” Lim said. “Until then, a baby was considered almost a non-human being. It was a way of registering the child for legal and social purposes. I found out that this liminal

status correlates with the ancient notion of the baby’s non-gendered body. In the wider literary context of Thomas, the gospel idealizes this idea, making the infant an exemplar of entering the kingdom. Isn’t it fascinating?”

The passion she brings to studying the New Testament makes it easy to understand why she was awarded the Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching four times while she was a teaching fellow.

This semester Lim is teaching Biblical Greek for Ministry. She told her students it’s Greek “with no tears.” Three weeks into the semester, she saw her students were “really suffering” as they attempted to memorize scores of paradigms necessary to learning the language. To help them remember the paradigms she turned to YouTube.

“I played a song with a strong beat and asked them to tap out the rhythm as they recited the paradigms. Then we made them into a rap song,” Lim said.

For her, learning Greek is an essential part of the public church curriculum.

“It’s a great way to reflect upon how the Bible gets quoted in today’s public discourse. Greek is also a way to build intercultural competency. Learning another language is getting into another culture. It’s about being open to the unpredictable. It takes patience, time and misunderstanding to figure it out.”

Biblical Greek also brings those who can read it into the world of the first believers who established the church and to consider the cultural implications of the words the writers chose.

Lim is just as enthusiastic about being at LSTC as she is about early Christianity.

“This is such a good institution for teaching and research and I am happy to be in a place where I can share my faith with the students.”

## Kimberly Wagner: on preaching and her pooch

by Julie B. Sevig

Kimberly Wagner holds an open table for students every Tuesday noon in the Refectory. They can join her with their lunches and discuss anything on their hearts and minds—or nothing at all. These unofficial office hours say something about her as a professor and as part of this community.

Sitting down to visit only six weeks into her time at LSTC, she is already clearly at home, and as eager to discuss her new position as assistant professor of homiletics and Axel Jacob and Gerda Maria (Swanson) Carlson Chair in Homiletics as she is to talk about her dog, Toby.

“I love the students. It is so fun to be in the classroom,” she said. “I have always said the pulpit and the classroom are where I feel like I come most alive and feel most energized. So to get to teach about preaching, that’s a combination of the two. The students here are just fantastic. They’re engaged and they have amazing questions.”

Wagner teaches *Encountering the Living Word: An Introduction to Preaching* plenary and labs, and *Ministerial Leadership I* with Kadi Billman. She and Billman have different yet complimentary styles and are committed to sharing the classroom, along with their teaching assistant. “We nurture and challenge each other and dream,” Wagner said.

### **But first: preaching**

Wagner’s first goal is to guide and grow preachers.

“I’m here as a guide. One of my goals is for them to grow as preachers. Another goal is for them to walk out of here being great listeners. I want them to be great listeners of preaching because that gives them tools to critique their own preaching as they go.”

Their first assignment is to bring to class (on video or in print) two or three aspirational sermons by someone whose preaching they admire. Then, they preach three minutes of one of those sermons.

“It lets them preach to one another with low vulnerability since it’s not their words,” she said. “They already know it’s a great sermon. It’s a good way for me to get a sense of what they see as great preaching.”

She wants them to articulate why it’s compelling or powerful, and consider how they might adapt it to their own voice: “Great preaching is as much caught as it is taught. I want to help them to listen well and listen effectively so they can develop some of those preaching gifts for themselves.”

She covers a certain amount of content in the plenaries so they all start on a good baseline. As the semester goes on, “the training wheels come off.”

Three sermons are preached in lab to their classmates (“We critique toward the up-building of the person and community”). A fourth sermon is a video of them preaching



Kimberly Wagner

at their Ministry in Context site, which they go over privately with Wagner.

“Intro to Preaching has a special charm to it, a special place in my heart because I get to watch students grow and develop so much,” she said. The challenge is that students enter with a variety of preaching experience to none at all. Sometimes the challenge with those just starting out is to

help them gain confidence in their own voice in the pulpit, while the challenge with those who have preached a lot is to break bad habits they may have inadvertently developed, she said.

Wagner fine-tuned her own preaching as a parish pastor for four years in southeastern Virginia. Ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), she came to LSTC from Emory University in Atlanta (PhD and MDiv). She holds a bachelor of science in education, and taught eighth grade science and 10th grade biology.

“I loved being a parish minister. It took a lot to draw me back to academia. My academic work is an extension of my call to the church. I consider it a privilege to think and learn and teach and write on behalf of those in the parish.”

### **Trauma as specialty**

Along the way, preaching about trauma has become her area of expertise, and the topic of her dissertation.

She was in high school when the Columbine High School shooting occurred, which shaped her nearly as much as the 9/11 attacks. The Virginia congregation she served had been impacted by the Virginia Tech shooting, and when Sandy Hook happened, the grief in her church was rekindled.

“What do preachers do? What is a preacher’s faithful response when a community’s sense of self, their identity, has been fractured or broken by an incident of violence?” she asked.

When she went looking for resources about preaching after mass shootings, she found nothing. Finally, a colleague told her, “Then why don’t you write something about it? You found the gap. Go. Do it.”

*continued on page 17*



# Leading the growing Lutheran Church of Liberia

by Linda Johnson Seyenkulo



**Bishop D. Jensen Seyenkulo at a Lutheran World Federation gathering**

Bishop Jensen Seyenkulo (1992, ThM; 1999, PhD) is known to say each morning in chapel at the Central Office of the Lutheran Church of Liberia, “Today is going to be a great day. And it’s going to be a great day, why? Because. Jesus. Is. In. It!”

Jesus came into D. Jensen Seyenkulo’s life when he was still a young child. He went to a meeting led by a missionary because he heard that pictures of people from his area were being projected on a wall. He hoped to see a picture of himself. Instead, he met Jesus and it was the start of a lifelong love and commitment to his Lord. That love and commitment has led Seyenkulo from the Belle Forest of Liberia to Minnesota, to Chicago, and back to his home country.

## **Seeking sustainability for the church**

Elected bishop of the Lutheran Church of Liberia (LCL) in April 2012, Seyenkulo is known as the Jungle Bishop because of his travels throughout the country as he works with leaders and congregations on a sustainability plan for the church.

“We’ve been a church for 158 years and we are not yet self-sustaining,” Seyenkulo said.

In recent years, changes in the global economy have led to a decrease in assistance from partner churches in the West. He encourages parishes and local leaders, who now have a higher degree of education and diverse backgrounds, to begin the hard process of self-support through entrepreneurial programs in agriculture and real estate development.

“We are emphasizing sustainability through agriculture. It fulfills an important vision of the church helping to feed the nation as well as helping parishes to grow financially.”

## **Pastor, scholar, leader in the ELCA**

Seyenkulo returned to Liberia with decades of experience as a pastor and leader in the ELCA.

He first came to the U.S. on a scholarship to the ThM program at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. There he met his wife, the Rev. Linda Johnson. A month after the newlyweds returned to Liberia, the country was torn apart by a civil war. They came back to the U.S., where Seyenkulo served congregations on Chicago’s west and south sides and earned a PhD in New Testament at LSTC in 1999.

From 2006 until he was elected bishop, Seyenkulo served in churchwide positions of the ELCA, first as assistant director of recruitment of multicultural leadership, then as director of rostered leadership, and finally as director of disability ministries.

His gifts for leadership, administration, vision and diplomacy serve him well in a growing church in a country that continues to develop and struggle in the aftermath of a civil war that lasted many years. It is a place where some Christian leaders are calling for legislating Christianity. Seyenkulo and the people of the LCL are committed to bringing their witness of the Lutheran faith, a grace-filled, gift-of-God, and a merciful gospel to the people of Liberia. They are committed to evangelizing through sharing the faith, rather than legislating it.

## **Preaching points spread the gospel, grow the church**

The LCL, established in 1860 by missionaries from a predecessor church of the ELCA, is made up of 112,000 members. Each of its 58 parishes have many congregations and each congregation has preaching points.

Preaching points develop when members of parishes may find themselves living far from the “mother” church. They begin to do Bible study in their neighborhood and those gatherings eventually become congregations supported and connected with the larger parish. As the preaching points grow into parishes they begin to establish their own preaching points. A parish in the LCL may have as many as 30 preaching points in addition to the mother church. Pastors, deacons and evangelists serving congregations are on the staff of the mother church. With this plan in place to share the good news of the gospel, it is no surprise that the Lutheran church is growing in Liberia.

## **Schools build foundation of educated citizens**

Teaching is another important ministry of the LCL that begins in its parishes.

“We have 30 plus junior and senior high schools around the nation. The LCL’s emphasis on education from the start laid a foundation for many of the educated people in this country. That emphasis on education has not been diminished over the years—we continue to build and dream. Our newest dream is to build a university to help men and women to continue their education after high school,” Seyenkulo said.

The LCL’s Louis T. Bowers Lay Leaders and Ministers Training Center provides theological education for pastors, deacons, evangelists and lay people.

## **Healing ministry critical during Ebola epidemic**

The third aspect of the LCL's mission, its healing ministry, combined with Seyenkulo's leadership, saved many lives and helped bring an end to the Ebola epidemic that gripped Liberia from 2014 to 2015.

The LCL has two hospitals in the interior of Liberia, strategically placed as referral hospitals for the rural areas of the country. They are Phebe Hospital near Gbarnga and Curran Hospital, located in Zorzor. The hospitals also have the top two nursing programs in Liberia.

Phebe Hospital was hit hard early in the epidemic when nine staff members became infected and died. Curran Hospital was the only hospital in Liberia that remained open for the duration of the Ebola epidemic.

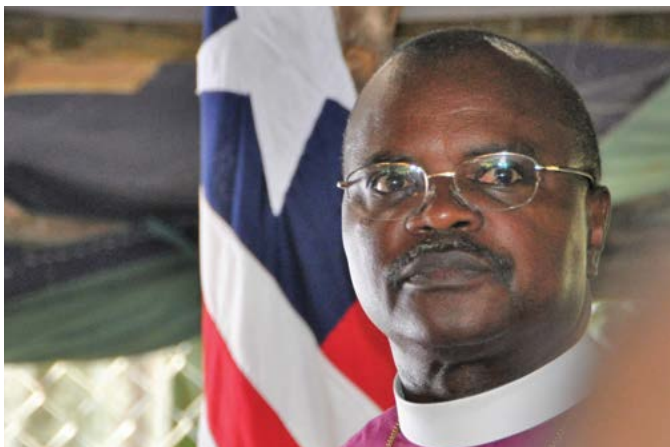
Seyenkulo's difficult roles during that time were to encourage hospital staff to stay on the job, and to work with rural communities to accept and follow the western medical procedures necessary to combat the epidemic, treat the sick, bury the dead and work for health for the communities.

The crisis of the Ebola epidemic is over, but the personal and economic devastation from it continues. Recovery is slow. The LCL is ministering to families and orphans in the wake of the epidemic. The healing ministry of the LCL continues with programs focused on HIV/AIDS, malaria and trauma/healing that help the government meet the medical needs of the people.

## **Leading in the global church**

In addition to his work as bishop in this very public church, Seyenkulo serves as first vice president of the Liberia Council of Churches and a member of the Executive Council of the Interreligious Council of Liberia. He is a Lutheran World Federation Council member, representing the Central and Western Africa sub-region where he serves as president. He also serves as a member of Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

"Jesus is in the ministry of the LCL. Jesus is with me today and every day," he said. "I give thanks for that and for the opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in my home country."



**Bishop Seyenkulo; Liberia's flag is in the background**

## **Witnesses to God's world changing power in Liberia**

*In the 1960s and 1970s, Joe Wold (1959, MDiv) and Cliff Grosenbacher (1955, MDiv) served the Lutheran Church of Liberia as missionaries among the Loma tribal villages of Lofa County. Joe Wold shared some of his memories of that experience.*

"Together we baptized more than 2,000 Loma speaking adults," Wold recalled. "Each month we taught 20 or 30 evangelists and literacy teachers from the villages in a class modeled after 'Preaching from the Pericopes' from out seminary days."

When they visited villages, they would baptize three to five members of baptism classes taught by the village evangelist.

"One day in 1967, Cliff baptized 27 adults in a village he visited. That same week I had baptized 15 adults in a village in my parish," Wold said. "We sat shaking our heads about what was happening because we knew we were doing nothing different. We were witnessing the amazing acts of God, the power of the Holy Spirit."

It was the beginning of the People Movement of the Loma Tribe into the church. Wold and Grosenbacher proposed training some of the most faithful evangelists to be ordained deacons so they could baptize and serve communion in their village congregations. Bishop Roland Payne agreed to the experiment. By 1970, ordaining lay deacons became the practice for the whole Lutheran Church in Liberia.

"When the Civil War broke out, all the missionaries had to leave. Bishop Payne and several Liberian pastors were killed. But the Christians in 200 villages were still able to receive both word and sacrament from the ordained deacons," Wold said. "Be a witness for Jesus, and you will be surprised by the world changing power of God you will be allowed to witness."

# 'Gift to give, gift to receive' is how Village supports international students

by Jan Boden



**M. Seng Tsin Nan from Burma and Dax Sunny Mathew from India took public transit to visit downtown Chicago. They entered the PhD and ThM programs this fall.**

Earlier this year, the 73-year-old LSTC Guild made a bold move. They transformed into a new organization with a different approach and a new name. The new organization, known as Village, is led by Dr. May May Latt, LSTC international student services coordinator, and by members of the International Students Association (ISA). With the Student Services and Advancement offices they are developing new and creative ways to support LSTC's international students and their families.

The motto of Village is "Gift to give, gift to receive," which reflects the mutuality at the heart of this new organization.

"Village is meant to deepen the relationship between LSTC students and congregations," Latt said. "We can use support through donations to Duty Free of shoes, and kitchen, bedroom and bathroom items. Or individuals may make a donation by check or online. But we also want to give what we have."

Each year the international students have a Christmas party at the end of the fall semester and a cultural night during the spring semester. Congregation members and the LSTC community are invited to this time when students share stories, music and food from many places.

Guild board member Delbert Anderson (Augustana Seminary, 1958, MDiv) said, "Very few people know the scope of the international community at LSTC. These students become serious leaders in their churches. They bring tremendous gifts to us and to the church. It is a gift to be a part of their training, to support them in material ways while they are at LSTC."

Marilyn Klein, a longtime member of the Guild said, "We were interested in having the international students determine what they need and how they would like us to be involved."

## **Supporting students was Guild's mission**

The Guild was founded in 1945 by the wives of faculty members at Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in Maywood, Ill., one of LSTC's predecessor schools. Its mission was to help support students and the seminary for things that were not covered by the school's budget. They held luncheons and other events for women in Chicago area congregations to raise funds and to build good will for the seminary. Event and Guild membership fees funded projects small and large.

In recent years, the Guild focused on international students, providing material support they needed to help them settle into their life in Chicago. Guild funding provided winter clothing, household medical kits, and summer retreats at the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Camp (LOMC), Oregon, Ill., for the students and their families.

## **Changing culture, continued support**

The transformation to Village was a "fairly easy decision," according to Jean Nye, who served as president of the Guild since 2012.

"There were four congregations on the south side with a number of active Guild members, Salem Lutheran Church, Ashburn, Bethlehem and Augustana. The regulars would come to the meetings, but it was hard to reach beyond



those few congregations,” she said. “As the culture of women’s organizations changed, it became more difficult to recruit people to the board to serve in the old model. It was harder to attract people to the events we held.”

Village is able to count on the continuing support of guild board members who have attended international student events, prepared medical kits for new students, and reached out to their congregations for donations.

Duty Free, the on-campus exchange which is open to everyone at LSTC, is an example of the mutuality at the heart of Village. Gently used or new items are donated by Chicago area congregations or individuals and meet the needs of students who need to outfit an apartment, find clothing appropriate to a Chicago winters, or even games and toys for their children.

Anderson’s congregation funded the annual retreat for international students and their families to LOMC.

Most of LSTC’s international students are in the PhD program and continue their studies during the summer. The mini-vacation to LOMC allowed them some refreshing time away from studying and a chance to reconnect with their families and with one another in a completely different setting.

“This year we went to a farm with an LOMC volunteer,” Latt said. “A number of international students are from farm country in India or Burma. It was eye-opening for them to see how different farms in the U.S. are from farms in their countries.”



**PhD student Adama Isa, who is from Nigeria, is the Duty Free manager, where students get donated housewares, linens and clothing.**

Giving a gift to Village is easy. To donate items to Duty Free, contact Adama Isa, Duty Free Manager, at [adama.isa@lstc.edu](mailto:adama.isa@lstc.edu) or [international@lstc.edu](mailto:international@lstc.edu).

Monetary gifts may be made by check to LSTC with “International Student Program Fund – Village Fund” in the memo line and mailed to the Office for Advancement, LSTC, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615. Gifts also may be made online at [lstc.edu/giving/make-a-gift](http://lstc.edu/giving/make-a-gift). Use the Designation box to choose “Other” and write in “International Student Program Fund – Village Fund.”

## *Emotions, justice and the church*

*Continued from page 7*

Wickware wondered, “What is wrong with these white people? Why do they see hate when black people try to help them understand how they are involved in the problem they say their faith leads them to fight?”

In his dissertation, he rejected the idea that “these white Christians were acting in bad faith.” Instead, he accepted that they “truly felt attacked, were frustrated and burned out. They perceived themselves to be faithful friends who were being treated as if they were enemies. In reality, they were enemies who were being loved as such.”

### ***Paying attention to emotions***

In *Emotions, Justice, and the Church*, another class he is teaching this semester, Wickware uses the ideas he developed in his dissertation to help students pay attention to the strong emotions that they, and members of their future congregations, will experience.

More importantly, he helps them see how those emotions are shaped by political and social systems and the value of both “positive” and “negative” emotions in church and societal contexts.

“I invite students to come talk with me if anything is generating strong emotions in them. Usually those emotions don’t come out during class, but if they do, it’s a teaching opportunity.”

Asked if he ever gets emotional in class, he said, “As a police officer and a black man, my dad felt it important to teach me to keep my emotions firmly under control. However, my PhD advisor, Willie Jennings, stressed the importance of taking emotions seriously when I teach. So I try to remain open to the feelings in the classroom but don’t usually find my own rising in response. People tell me that I exude a calm presence. I find that ironic because I often feel anxious but I’ve learned to deal with others around me expressing strong emotions.”

## LSTC students, faculty in Egypt: ‘servant builders, guests, pilgrims’



Members of the Mt. Sinai study tour rest in the cleft of a rock.

Two faculty and three students visited Mt. Sinai in Egypt last April thanks to the Lyn C. and Stewart W. Herman Jr. Fund for Innovation in Theological Education grant. Stewart W. Herman III led the trip, and LSTC participants were students Makayla (Marinack) Dahleen, Adam Dowd and Yoseob Song, and faculty Esther Menn and Barbara Rossing.

The grant’s aim was an exploratory encounter with cultural and spiritual traditions embedded in the southern Sinai. Long-range, the intention was to explore the possibility of offering such an immersion experience as a J-term or summer term course for LSTC students, pastors and other adult learners.

Organizers also hoped pastors for the global church would benefit from having a vivid sense of the origins of their tradition and be able to communicate experiences of encountering Muslim culture in an imaginative and constructive way.

Participants went to Mt. Sinai not as tourists but as servant builders, guests and pilgrims. As servant builders, they constructed a dam near Mt. Sinai, a structure intended to provide a lasting benefit to local semi-nomadic Muslim residents. As guests, they experienced Bedouin hospitality. As pilgrims, they encountered and participated in the spiritual traditions associated with a monastery of St. Catherine’s at Mt. Sinai, including liturgies during Easter. The aim of the trip was to initiate a relationship which might be strengthened in future years, should the program take root.

The rock and concrete carried by participants assisted the Jebaliya and their Egyptian employees in constructing a catchment dam just about Oda’s dam in Wadi Shaq. Members of the contingent also donated many items they brought on the trip, including clothes, gloves, garden tools, seeds, construction tools, children’s art supplies, and a Goal Zero solar panel to help with phone charging at dam building sites.

Since their return, the students and faculty have made public presentations and written reports. Some of these were at LSTC for the community or a class, others in congregations. All three students wrote papers for courses.

*This trip was made possible because in 2013 Stewart W. Herman III made a \$500,000 gift to LSTC named in honor of his parents. Stewart W. Herman Jr. was the first president of LSTC.*



### My long-awaited meeting with a manuscript

by Yoseob Song

My dissertation topic is about the Sinai Arabic MS 151, the oldest known Arabic translation of the Pauline letters with the catholic letters and Acts that was written in the 9th century and has been preserved in the library of St. Catherine Monastery.

A couple of years ago I contacted Archimandrite Justin, Librarian of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, to locate the digital copy of the manuscript. He sent me high-quality images which were incommensurable with microfilmed copies in the Library Congress. Since then, it became my lifelong desire to meet the manuscript with which I had fallen in love. This expedition allowed me to finally meet both Father Justin and the Sinai Arabic MS 151.

Father Justin allowed me to look at it as much as I wanted. Also, British journalist Fleur McDonald, who tagged along with us at the monastery, interviewed me regarding my dissertation work and general information about studies of manuscripts in the St. Catherine monastery. Her article ([bbc.co.uk/news/business-44144527](http://bbc.co.uk/news/business-44144527)), “Hidden writing in ancient desert monastery manuscripts” was published June 13.

*(This is an edited excerpt of a longer reflection Yoseob Song wrote following the Exploratory Sinai Immersion trip.)*

## Hein-Fry Book of Faith Challenge hosted by LSTC



**Marissa Becklin presents her project during the Hein-Fry Book of Faith Challenge.**

Marissa Becklin, (2018, MDiv), was one of six ELCA seminary students to present projects at the Hein-Fry Book of Faith Challenge (HFBFC) hosted by LSTC October 18-19. Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament, led a panel of academic and church leaders as they gave educational and pastoral feedback to students following their presentations. Klaus-Peter Adam, professor of Old Testament, and Cheryl Hoth, assistant to the dean of academic affairs, were the on-site coordinators of the event.

Becklin's topic was "Give Unto the Lord: A Study About Food and Tithing in Deuteronomy 14."

One student from each ELCA seminary is chosen to participate in, and present at, the event. Students showcase projects they've developed over the past year with a team from their (in most cases internship) congregation and a faculty advisor. Their goal is to find faithful, innovative and effective new ways to teach and learn Scripture. Over the years, the event has transformed from a lecture series (where the main speaker was the draw) to an opportunity for seminarians to teach others.

### **Table dreaming to 'Open Table'**

It was around the dining room table of Diane Jacobson, Luther Seminary Old Testament professor emeritus and leader of the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative, that the HFBFC initiative emerged five years ago.

It is fitting that from that dining room table emerged this year's focus: "Open Table." HFBFC asks students to use their innovation and leadership to draw together those who have long studied scripture, and those who are new (maybe even unfamiliar) to it.

Sara Vanderpan, a Minnesota pastor who most recently served as special projects director for the Book of

Faith Initiative, says the HFBFC is meant to be a learning experience that helps seminarians understand themselves as teachers and their work as welcome contributions to the life of the church and the community around them.

"We want the focus on the students. They are our teachers," Vanderpan said, adding that the event is also ideally about the coming together of churchwide leaders, bishops, pastors, seminary leaders or teachers.

"Congregational members and students end up being the key piece that ties these leaders together...They have different topics and structures, and our interest is in seeing the beauty, power and grace around the table as we bring together those who have long been in scripture and those who are new," she said.

Students were asked to present short, "TED Talk" style versions of what their fuller projects entailed. This year it included a production of a video (or audio visual production) of the experience, highlighting important teaching/learning moments and ideas. From them, the Challenge wanted to learn:

- What sorts of teaching/learning experiences of Scripture seemed to work well in your context to gather and sustain an open table of significant learning?
- In what ways did participation in such an open table affect the understanding, faith and Christian witness of those who were already relatively "biblically fluent"?
- In what ways did participation in such an open table affect those who came with little or no familiarity with Scriptures?

Other presenters were:

*Kristina Hill, MDiv, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., "Faith Friends: Exploring Intergenerational Encounters with the Bible."*

*Ashton Roberts, MDiv, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University, "The Wounded Reader: Experience as Exegesis."*

*Tania Schramm, MDiv, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, "Engaging Storytelling: Using Character, Narrative Sequence, and Scene to Experience and Share the Book of Acts."*

*Erika Tobin, MDiv, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif., "Building Relationships with the Word, Other Generations, and Other Churches."*

*Melissa Woeppel, MDiv, United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg and Philadelphia, Pa., "Scripture, Women, and Justice: A Survey."*



# Mark Van Scharrel reflects on his years at LSTC: A bigger picture

by Julie B. Sevig



**Mark Van Scharrel**

It's easy to imagine how a donor visit with Mark Van Scharrel might proceed: storytelling and careful listening, opportunities to communicate genuine love for LSTC and its mission, and likely some good food and drink.

Van Scharrel recently reflected on his 19 years at LSTC, first as assistant vice president for Advancement, and then (since 2004) as vice president. Last spring, he stepped away from that position, and now works part-time for Advancement tending to relationships with specific donors. "The biggest difference is that I don't have to go to in-house meetings," he joked. As a 1978 graduate of Christ Seminary-Seminex he is counted among LSTC's alumni. Once ordained, he served congregations in Teaneck, N.J. (while raising funds for the Lutheran Laymen's Movement for Stewardship in New York City); Blue Island, Ill.; and Downers Grove, Ill. A 10-year stint in real estate served him well in development work at LSTC.

When Van Scharrel joined the staff in 1999, seminaries were experiencing the challenge of reduced funding from churchwide and synods, leaving schools more dependent on individual donors and foundations for support. At the time, LSTC had the second lowest endowment (per student) of the (then) eight seminaries. "We were very annual fund dependent," he said, pointing out the need to grow the endowment and build an Advancement team.

He led LSTC through the \$56 million Equipping the Saints for Ministry Campaign, the largest campaign to date at LSTC. Following that campaign and in the midst of the recession, he spearheaded a major annual giving challenge. It was a tough time, when "people wanted to keep giving at previous levels, but couldn't," he recalled.

## Big picture

For Van Scharrel, his role at LSTC has always been about a bigger picture.

"It's not just about people having money; it's about deepening the relationship with them," he said. His goal has been to take people from a general awareness of the seminary's ministry to what he calls "investment engagement"—understanding what we're able to do together, and joining in that mission.

Despite historic and current financially-challenging times, Van Scharrel is upbeat about LSTC's opportunities—for the seminary and for those who support it. For instance, he points to technology that has changed the method of delivery for everything, including education. While others "are putting their eggs in distributive education or online learning baskets," LSTC maintains its strength as "a truly residential seminary."

What we don't know, he said, is how this will all shake out. What he does know, is that leadership is critical: "The whole church needs to invest to capacity so that we can experiment and try new things, adjust to these changes and react wisely and critically. So that we can ask: What's working today that didn't work yesterday? What fits in our wheelhouse?"

Van Scharrel is able to answer his own questions because he knows LSTC so well: rigorous education, and a richness of contextual experience, especially the Public Church Fellows program which allows LSTC graduates to respond to the church with "holistic leadership." Students leave here with credibility and awareness, prepared to minister inside and outside congregations, he said, adding "Our leaders are authentic, powerful and engaging." That sort of ministry is worthy of donors, *and* requires donor support across the board.

Van Scharrel said the alignment of faculty, staff and students around a shared vision of public church is one of the seminary's strengths. "We are not afraid to be engaged this way. We are not just a clergy assembly line. We know



**Van Scharrel, with James Nieman, Jessica Houston, Clyde Walter and Jennifer Thomas at the May Distinguished Service Dinner**

our people and vision, and in a responsible way we engage change...To me that's exciting." This means sacrifice, study, learning broadly. And when students leave here they are able to recognize how they learned and how they grew.

Another strength, he said, is LSTC's global community: "We get to sit down with, eat with, be in class with people from other countries. There is no substitute for that. People out in the field, that's what sticks with them. Even if they are in homogeneous communities, they have been changed by their experience here. They are not the same. Their leadership is richer, no matter where they live. It's invaluable."

### **Testimonies**

Last Spring, colleagues and friends had an opportunity to honor Van Scharrel's contributions with their own testimonies. Jessica Houston, assistant vice president for Development Programs, who has worked with him 11 years, said "ministry" is the first word that comes to mind.

"Mark has a way of inviting others to name LSTC as their favorite seminary, as one would a sports team, artist/musician...Mark has sought to have LSTC be more than just a point of conversation, but for others to love and be as passionate about this seminary as he is."

Bob Buschkemper (1968, MDiv), part-time planned and major gifts officer, said Van Scharrel "stands alongside the best" of church leaders he's worked with: "His leadership is not from afar but from the trenches...He is a master at relationship building done through active and intense listening. Add to that a tremendous ability to retain myriad details from a time span as distant as 15 years ago or as recently as last week's visit."

Another gift planner, Keith Nelson (1970, MDiv), called him "Mr. Wonderful," who has "become a greater presence

as his hair line parts ever further. Mark maintains a great smile with a sense of humor...Mark brings joy to donors and friends. He's so good, they welcome the opportunities Mark presents to them and the gifts they give...Clearly there is always a song in his heart as he goes about his work as well as when he joyously makes music on the piano, organ or cello."

Indeed, Van Scharrel said his joy has been getting to meet people "with vision and capacity and a desire to help." He's been able to discover and be curious about the stories of others, to stick with them and listen, to treat them well along the way, to hear about their lives.

"And I've learned from them what they really care about and are willing to support a community that forms leaders who form community. It's a privilege to do this work," Van Scharrel said.



**Van Scharrel and his wife, Julie Ryan (1986, MDiv)**

## ***Kimberly Wagner: on preaching and her pooch***

*Continued from page 9*

The result is a book she hopes will be out within a year, and another in the early stages that addresses "What is the role of the preacher, and how does a preacher respond when a community's entire sense of self is shaped by [continual] violence?" It is not lost on her that the South Side of Chicago is such a place to ask that question.

"[A preacher's] job is to stand in the breach and honor the brokenness...Standing in the broken place and honoring the jaggedness of it...without trying to heal the narrative too quickly and allow the congregation to get their bearings in the broken space...What does it mean to preach a narratively

fractured sermon?...I want preachers to be able to preach in that jagged space."

As Wagner fulfills her role in developing preachers and leaders at LSTC, she will only become more at home here, in part thanks to her schnoodle, Toby, who she describes as "eight pounds of joy, love, happiness and a pinch of crazy." Toby gets her out exploring the city.

He greets everyone with enthusiasm and if there are 30 people in the room, he gives them all equal lap time, especially the children. His unconditional and passionate love of people is both a blessing and a curse, she said, but his enthusiasm for life and people is certainly something we can learn from Toby.

# Relieving seminary debt: ‘We can’t do it alone, but we can help’

by Julie B. Sevig



John and Pat Bentz

John Bentz is retired, but his awareness about the importance of seminaries goes back to his childhood. He grew up in Central Illinois, and his family attended a Lutheran church where he first heard the word “seminary” and knew that the closest in proximity were the predecessors to LSTC.

“I have remembered from my growing up days and through the years the importance of training pastors,” he said. “My wife Pat and I know one of the things we need to do is provide training for our future pastors and support LSTC to train them. In particular, we’d like to have them graduate with as light a debt load as possible, ideally no debt load. We can’t do it alone, but we can help.”

One of the reasons Bentz is so intent on helping students is because he entered the work world with no debt, supported by his own parents for his engineering degree at Iowa State, and then a full-ride fellowship at Purdue for graduate school.

“Pastors are undercompensated for the amount of time they actually work, which is really around the clock,” he said. “It is incumbent on those of us who can give to help them have as little—or no—debt load as possible, which frees them to focus on ministry.”

John and Pat have chosen LSTC’s Annual Fund to be the best recipient of both the interest and principle of a traditional IRA. “It takes faculty and facilities to provide the education we want our future pastors to have, and funding is needed to provide the foundation for a great theological education.

After John’s career with ExxonMobile, and Pat’s as

a nurse, they discovered they were in the “fortunate circumstance” of not needing some of the income from their various investments. Wanting to increase their giving to LSTC while they are living, John and Pat chose to make annual direct transfers of \$80,000 per year to LSTC from his IRA. John offered a quick tutorial on a tax law which permits individuals who are 70 1/2 and older to donate up to \$100,000 annually from a traditional IRA to qualified charities without having the distribution reported as ordinary income for tax purposes. He encourages others to do the same. “God wants us to donate in ways that are smart,” he said.

They are also aware that almost all the funds to support more leaders will have to come from individuals. They appreciate the global emphasis at LSTC, as well as the training LSTC provides to those serving locally—two of whom were among their pastors during their 14 years at Grace Lutheran Church in Hendersonville, N.C.

“They were great examples of the kind of people LSTC is helping and reinforced our happiness in giving to LSTC,” he said.



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but know that a gift of any  
amount supports a student on  
their journey into ministry.*

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You may also make your gift automatically through Thrivent’s Simply Giving® program. For more information, contact Jessica Houston, 773.256.0697 or [jhouston@lstc.edu](mailto:jhouston@lstc.edu).



## Faculty

*Tom Blanton*, auxiliary in New Testament studies, was keynote speaker at the “Phallus in all its ‘glory’” international colloquium in October at The House Kairos in Fribourg, Switzerland. He presented his paper, “Abraham as Ritual Model in Genesis, Jubilees and Pauline.”

*Ralph Klein*, Christ Seminary–Seminex Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, reviewed *The Exodus from Egypt: How it Happened and Why it Matters* by Richard Elliott Friedman Mueller in the July issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*.

*Carol Schersten LaHurd*, distinguished affiliate professor of world religions and educational outreach consultant for A Center of Christian–Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, with Sara Trumm co-authored, “The Church Engaging Our Multi-Religious World: Ever-Serving, Ever-Reforming, Ever-Reconciling,” for the May/June issue of *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*.

*Eunyoung Lim*, assistant professor of New Testament, contributed “Traces of Personified Wisdom in Early Christian Literature,” to Alice Ogden Bellis’ *Proverbs*, part of the Wisdom Commentary Series (2018, Liturgical Press).

*Esther Menn*, Ralph W. and Marilyn R. Klein Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and dean of academic affairs, this fall led a three-part adult forum entitled

“21st Century Psalms” at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Wilmette, Ill.

*Barbara Rossing*, professor of New Testament, gave three lectures on “Let the Whole Creation Cry: Hope and Healing for a Planet in Peril” at the East Central Synod of Wisconsin Theological Conference in Door County, Wis., in October. At the invitation of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, she presented at and participated in a consultation on “Empire” in Manila, Philippines, also in October. In August, Rossing participated in the 2018 Science for Seminaries Faculty Enrichment Retreat in Maryland, exploring innovative ways to integrate forefront science into core seminary curricula.

*Benjamin Stewart*, Gordon A. Braatz Associate Professor of Worship and director of advanced studies, was the conference speaker for the Northern Illinois Synod Professional Leader’s Conference in September, “Renewing the Wisdom Tradition in a ‘Post-Truth’ World.” Stewart gave three plenary addresses, “Wild Wisdom: Deepening Our Appreciation for the Wonders of the Created World,” “Questioning Wisdom: Contesting Rigid Ideologies,” and “Remembering the Dust: Wrestling with What It Means to Be Mortal on a Living Earth.” In May he presented “Everything that has Breath: Liturgy and the Prayers of Other Creatures” at a retreat for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago. In June he presented the

paper, “Wisdom’s Buried Treasure: Ecological Cosmology in Funeral Rites,” at Yale University’s liturgy conference, “Full of Your Glory: Liturgy, Cosmos, Creation.” Over the summer, he co-presented a series of lectures with Elizabeth Stewart at Holden Village retreat center: “How Change Theory Can Help You Re-form the Health of Your Body, Your Spirit, and the World Around You.”

*Gordon Straw*, associate professor and Cornelsen Chair for Spiritual Formation and candidacy coordinator, was a presenter for the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Theology for Ministry Conference in September. The theme was “Racism and Ministry with Native Americans.” He preached and gave two presentations. He also led adult forums at Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest, Ill., on the topic “Christian Faith and Native American Experience.” In October, he represented LSTC and the American Indian and Alaska Native Community at the ELCA Theological Roundtable at the Lutheran Center in Chicago.

*Mark Swanson*, Harold A. Vogelaar Professor of Christian–Muslim Studies and Interfaith Relations, in July gave a keynote address, “Printing the Medieval Copto–Arabic Heritage: From the ‘Golden Age’ to the Printed Page,” at the Symposium on the Copts in Modernity at St. Athanasius College – University of Divinity in Melbourne, Australia. That month he

also gave a lecture, “Buṭrus al–Sadamanti’s *The Story of Babnūdah*: The eventful career of a hidden servant,” at the 19th St. Shenouda – UCLA Conference at the University of California at Los Angeles. In June he preached at ‘Ayn Shams Evangelical Church, ‘Ayn Shams in Cairo, Egypt. He also worked on a manuscript cataloguing project sponsored by Yale University at the Syrian Monastery in Wadi al–Natrun, Egypt. In May he gave the paper, “On the Beauty of Texts: Examples from the Christian Arabic Heritage,” at the Symposium on Christian Arabic Heritage and Muslim–Christian Dialogue (Actus Academicus in Honour of Rev. Fr. Samir Khalil Samir, SJ), at the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies, Rome. Earlier this year he led an adult forum, “Taking God Seriously: The Faith and Practices of Muslims,” at Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Chicago.



**Mark Swanson**

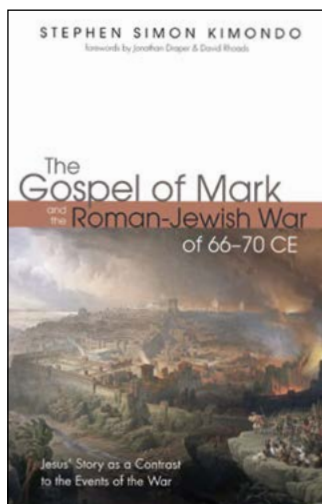
Swanson also contributed “The Tell–Tale Rhyme: On the Original Language of Buṭrus al–Sadamanti’s *Instructive Lives*,” to *Between the Cross and the Crescent: Studies in Honor of Samir Khalil Samir, S.J. on the Occasion of his*

*Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Željko Paša, OCA 304 (2018, Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies). He published “Portraying the Religious Other in the Age of Pope Matthew I (the 87th Patriarch, 1378–1408),” and “The Story of Fakhr al-Dawlah ibn al-Mu’taman: Priest’s Son, Muslim Grandee, Monk of St. Antony,” in *Coptica* 16 (2017).

Peter Vethanayagomony, associate professor of modern church history and director of the doctor of ministry program, published “Henry Melchior Muhlenberg” in the October issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Kimberly Wagner, assistant professor of homiletics and Axel Jacob and Gerda Maria (Swanson) Carlson Chair in Homiletics, reviewed *Approaching the End: Eschatological Reflections on Church, Politics, and Life* by Stanley Hauerwas in the May 22 issue of *Practical Matters*. Her review of *Imagining a Way: Exploring Reformed Practical Theology and Ethics*, ed. Clive Pearson appeared in *Homiletic: The Journal of the Academy of Homiletics*, (2018). She published a review of *Anxious to Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism* by Carolyn B. Helsel in the July 4 issue of *The Christian Century*.

## New Books from Alumni



### ***The Gospel of Mark and the Roman-Jewish War of 66–70 CE: Jesus’ Story as a Contrast to the Events of the War***

This book by Stephen Kimondo (2006, ThM; 2011, PhD) interprets Mark’s gospel in light of the Roman-Jewish War of 66–70 CE.

Locating the authorship of Mark’s gospel in rural Galilee or southern Syria after the fall of Jerusalem and the temple, and after Vespasian’s enthronement as the new emperor, Kimondo argues that Mark’s first hearers—people who lived through and had knowledge of the important events of the war—may have evaluated Mark’s story of Jesus as a contrast to Roman imperial values.

He makes an intriguing case that Jesus’ proclamation as the Messiah in the villages of Caesarea Philippi set up a deliberate contrast between Jesus’ teaching and Vespasian’s proclamation of himself as the world’s divine ruler. He suggests that Mark’s hearers may have interpreted Jesus’ liberative campaign in Galilee as a deliberate contrast to Vespasian’s destructive military campaigns in the area. Jesus’ teachings about wealth, power, and status while on the way to Jerusalem may have been heard as contrasts to Roman imperial values; hence, the entire story of Jesus may have been interpreted an anti-imperial narrative.

*The Gospel of Mark and the Roman-Jewish War of 66 – 70 CE* (ISBN: 81532653025) is a Pickwick Publication available from Wipf and Stock Publishers.

### ***The Human Church***

In his latest book, Paul O. Bischoff (2002, ThM; 2005, PhD) says that the church doesn’t need to be more spiritual. It needs to become more human. Since God decided becoming human was right, so must the church. Jesus’ language was consistently understood by nonreligious people. Elitist in-house church language may never reach the growing number of Americans without a religious background who have given up on God.



Employing basic ethnographic methods, the reader looks at the church again for the first time without a religious lens. Based upon the premise that all good theology emerges from good anthropology, the book first considers the rituals celebrated around the symbols of a manger, cross, bread, wine, and tomb. Such symbols then become the basis for theological interpretation.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is the reader’s conversation partner to help make the theological journey from human community to church, manger to incarnation, cross to redemption, and tomb to resurrection.

Bischoff says that the church will flourish in the twenty-first century to the degree that it proclaims the Gospel using nonreligious language with a human accent.

*The Human Church* (ISBN: 9781532642333) is available from Wipf and Stock Publishers.

**Waiting for Good News: Living with Chronic and Serious Illness**

Sally L. Wilke (2012, MDiv) organizes *Waiting for Good News* around seven questions that those who face serious illness often ask. From “What Is the Diagnosis?” to “Where Do I Find More Help?” she accompanies readers on their own journey.

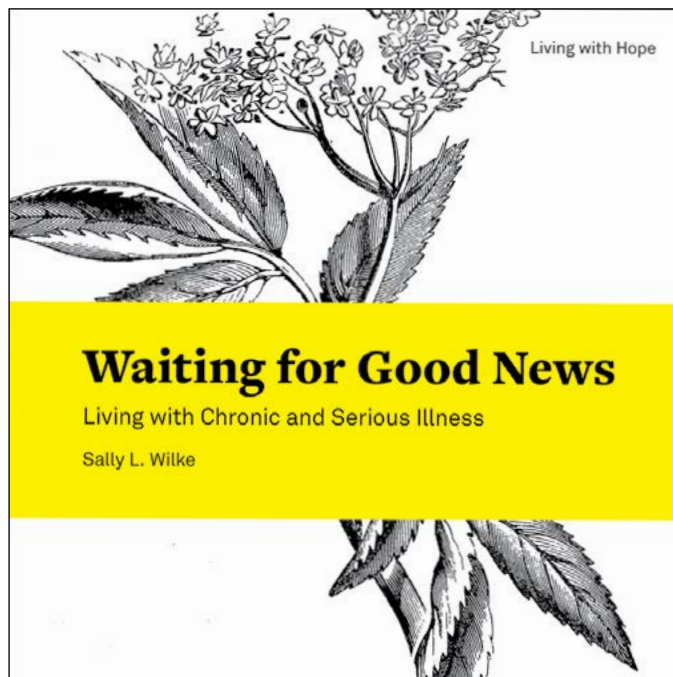
Using stories, her own, those of others who have struggled with severe illness, and accounts from the Bible, she helps readers find strength, support and

a way forward in a difficult situation.

She offers tools, tips, ideas and resources for reflection and for obtaining additional support.

Chapters conclude with questions that may be used for personal reflection and discussion with family members, patients and support groups.

*Waiting for Good News* (ISBN: 9791506434230) is available from Fortress Press.



**ATLA Religion Database Update from JKM Library**

The JKM Library provides alumni of LSTC and its predecessor schools access to the ATLA Religion Database (ATLA RDB®) and its complementary full text database, ATLA Serials® (ATLAS®). ATLA RDB® is the premier index to journal articles, book reviews and collections of essays in all fields of religion. For security reasons we have upgraded our username and password and migrated to a secure URL.

As of April 1, 2018, the old username and password that library staff sent you when you requested access to ATLA RDB® and ATLAS® no longer work. Send us an email at ask@jkmlibrary.org to request the new username, password and URL.

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## CLASS NOTES

1978

John Hitzeroth (Christ Seminary–Seminex, MDiv) retired on September 16. He served three parishes over the last 40 years: Our Savior Lutheran Church, Salem, Mo.; Peace Lutheran Church, Sparta, Mich.; and Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Marysville, Mich.

1985

Nathan Sager (MDiv) concluded 22 years of service as pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Virginia, Minn., in August. He was praised for the quality of his sermons in an August 25 article in the *Mesabi Daily News*.

1986

Emlyn Ott (MDiv) joined the Bexley Seabury Seminary faculty in August as associate professor of pastoral theology and leadership. She is also the director of Bexley Seabury's doctor of ministry programs. She will be teaching both DMin and MDiv courses in pastoral theology, organizational systems, and other topics pertaining to congregational leadership and development.

1992

Amy Reumann (MDiv), director of ELCA Advocacy, is quoted in a news item about the Poor People's Campaign in the July issue of *Living Lutheran*.

1998

Javier Alanis (ThM; 2002, PhD) published "Bartolomé

de las Casas" in the July issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2002

Paul O. Bischoff (ThM; 2005, PhD), published his latest book, *The Human Church*. See more on page 20.

2003

Idalia Negrón Caamano (MDiv) was elected bishop of the ELCA Caribbean Synod on June 16. She was installed on October 6 at a ceremony in Cupey, Puerto Rico.

William Flippin Jr. (MDiv; 2005, ThM) preached on Day 1 on July 22. His sermon, "Counterfeit Clergy," based on Jeremiah 23:1–6 is available at [day1.org](#).

Janelle Rozek Hooper (MDiv) published "Take Faith Outside" in the July issue and "Creativity and identity at Halloween" in the October issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2006

Meghan Johnston Aelabouni (MDiv) published the July *Living Lutheran* cover article, "For such a time as this: Learning, speaking and doing gender justice in the church."

Stephen Kimondo (ThM; 2011, PhD), published *The Gospel of Mark and the Roman–Jewish War of 66–70 CE*. See page 20 for details.

Daniel Roschke (MDiv) hosted a "United against Hatred" event at his new congregation, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Fairfax, Va., On July 25, one

month after the church was severely damaged by vandals. The vandals scratched racist words and symbols in the interior of the sanctuary, shattered candle holders, and sliced open every pew pad with a knife. It was the seventh and most destructive attack on the church. At the interfaith event, worshipers were invited to bring blankets or quilts from their communities to drape over the damaged pews. They joined in song and prayer, shared poems and images, and concluded with a unified blessing and lighting of candles. An article about the incident and how the congregation is responding, "Opening doors and overcoming hate," appeared in the October issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2007

Erik Allen (MDiv) began a new call this summer as pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Brownsburg, Ind.

Amy Lindeman Allen (MDiv) has been appointed assistant professor of New Testament at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Ind., an ecumenical seminary affiliated with the Disciples of Christ. She published "Towards a More Perfect Union: Scriptural Reading of the Purpose of Marriage in a Changing Western Context," in *Luke–Acts: Texts@Contexts*, edited by James Grimshaw (T & T Clark, 2018).

2008

Wendy DeBoer (MA) won the race for the Nebraska

Legislature's District 10 in the November mid-term election. High quality public education was her top priority.

Gretchen Enoch (MDiv) began a new call June 2 as senior pastor of First Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls, Minn. She was featured in an article that appeared in the June 27 *Fergus Falls Journal*.

2009

Tim Brown (MDiv) published "Rules of attraction" in the August issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Angela T. Khabeb (MDiv) published "Bread. Again." in the August issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Carrie Smith (MDiv) was a keynote speaker at the New England Synod Assembly in June. She and Deacon Adrainne Gray connected participants to the realities of Christianity in the Middle East.

2011

Tanveer Azmat (ThM; 2016, PhD), published "An Introduction to the Qur'anic Hermeneutics of Irfan A. Khan," in the journal *Islamic Studies* 56.1–2 (2017). He also published "The Historical Study of Scripture: Historians and Believers, Issues and Implications," in the journal *Islam and Civilisational Renewal* (IAIS Malaysia) 9.1 (2018).

Matthew Keadle (MDiv) is quoted in the August *Living Lutheran* article "A positive partnership."

2012

Teri Ditslear (MDiv) was a candidate for the Noblesville, Ind., school board.

Matthew Stuhlmuller (MDiv) published a review of *Any Body There? Worship and Being Human in a Digital Age* by Craig Mueller (1988, MDiv; 2013, DMin) in the July issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*.

2013

Katie M. Deaver (MATS; 2015, ThM; 2017, PhD) published “Mamma Mia and the Mother-Daughter Connection” in the September 4 issue of the online journal *Feminism and Religion*.

Emmanuel Joshua Penumaka (ThM) presented the paper “Kazoh Kitamori’s Theology: Mystical or Masochistic” at the Convocation of Teaching Theologians at Augsburg University, Minneapolis, Minn., July 30–August 1.

2014

Alex Darling-Raabe (MDiv) began a new call as pastor of Oceanside Lutheran Church, Oceanside, N.Y., in October. He was installed on November 4.

2015

Ann Gonyea-Alexander (MDiv.) was featured in an article in *Superior Woman!*, the premiere online-magazine/blog sharing inspirational and motivational stories about women from across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and the Lake Superior region of the United States. She is pastor of Eden Evangelical Lutheran Church

in Munising, Mich. The article is available online at superiorwoman.net.

Lydia Hernandez-Marcial (ThM) received the HTI/Lilly Doctoral Fellowship and is an honorary dissertation fellow of the Louisville Institute. She also was pictured in a Louisville Institute ad that appeared in the August 15 issue of *Christian Century*.

Elsa Marty (ThM) received the 2018 Selva J. Raj Endowed International Dissertation Research Fellowship. She is a PhD candidate in theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School with a focus on theological anthropology and religion in India. Her dissertation, “Negotiating Difference: Adivasi Christians and Contextual Theology,” draws on ethnographic fieldwork among Adivasi Christians in North India to offer a critique of contextual theology. She is the co-editor of *A Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion*.

2016

Alma Gast Buko (MDiv) was ordained on September 7 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Cresco, Iowa. She is serving Luther Memorial Church in Syracuse, Neb.

2018

Megan Casper (MDiv) was ordained at Calvary Lutheran Church in Bemidji, Minn., on August 3. She is pastor of Lutheran Church of the Cross in West Fargo, N.D.

Preston Fields (MDiv) was featured in an NPR story on August 23. It focused

on his congregation in Sycamore, Ill., calling him as their pastor and on the ordination of LBGTQ pastors in the ELCA. Listen at northernpublicradio.org/post/salem-lutheran-church-welcomes-first-openly-gay-pastor-northern-illinois-synod

Elizabeth Frey (MDiv) was ordained June 1. She is serving as director of engagement at Trinity Camp Hill Lutheran Church in Camp Hill, Pa.

Amanda “Day” Hefner (MDiv) was ordained at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Coleridge, Neb., on August 30. She is pastor of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Schuyler, Neb.

Bridget Jones (MDiv) was ordained on August 4 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wis. She is serving as pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church in Superior, Wis.

Evan Mayhew (MDiv) was ordained at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wis., on August 19. He is serving as associate pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Joliet, Ill., focusing on youth and young adults.

Kari Olsen (MAM) was consecrated to the ministry

of word and service on October 6 at Christ Lutheran Church on Capitol Hill in St. Paul, Minn. She has been called as kitchen coordinator at Christ Lutheran and will be serving as a mission explorer for Shobi’s Table, a ministry based out of a food truck in St. Paul.

Kyle Symanski (MDiv) was ordained on September 29 at Ashburn Lutheran Church, Chicago. He is serving as associate pastor of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Valley City, N.D.

Future alumni

Brach Jennings (PhD Student), published “Courage to Be: Paul Tillich’s Existentialist Theology of the Cross in Relation to Martin Luther” in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* (September 2018).

Errata

In the summer 2018 issue of the Epistle the headline for the group picture on page 26 was not accurate. Those pictured were members of only the class of 1968 and their spouses. We regret the error and thank Dan Breunsbach, a member of the class of 1958, for bringing it to our attention.



60-year grads, including Dan Breunsbach and Ross Larson, pictured here, were honored during the 2018 commencement ceremony.

**A. Karl Boehmke**  
**1919-2018**  
**Concordia Seminary,**  
**St. Louis**  
**Class of 1944**

“Missionary at Large” was the title of Rev. A. Karl Boehmke’s first call as an ordained pastor. It was an apt title for his ministry that included founding parishes in Bethesda, Md., suburban Detroit, and Fairport, N.Y.; 28 years of military chaplaincy during the Korean and Vietnam Wars; and service at a school and congregation in Hong Kong. He and his wife, LaVerne, retired to St. Louis, Mo., and joined the newly founded ELCA and he spent the next 20 years as an interim pastor to a number of congregations. He died on August 19 in Pullman, Wash. He is survived by his wife, three children and their spouses, three grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. Memorial services were held in Pullman on September 8 and in University City, Mo., on October 13.

**Richard Borgstrom**  
**1928-2018**  
**Augustana Theological Seminary**  
**Class of 1958**

Rev. Richard Borgstrom measured each day of his life by how he could minister to other people. His first career was as a pharmacist in the family business in St. Paul, Minn. He entered seminary after serving in the Air

National Guard during the Korean War. He served parishes in California and Minnesota and on the ELCA’s Board of Social Ministry, which oversaw the church’s mission to provide senior housing. He died on June 16 after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, three stepchildren, three granddaughters, four step-grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. A funeral service was held June 24 at Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church in St. Paul.

**H. Eugene “Gene” Cedarholm**  
**1930-2018**  
**Augustana Theological Seminary**  
**Class of 1960**

Pastor Gene Cedarholm served parishes in Spencer and Newton, Iowa, until retirement, and additional congregations as interim pastor in Marshalltown, Newton, Tama and Malcom. In addition to remaining active in his church following retirement, he was a volunteer driver, worked at a historical society, a release center, and was involved in community theater. He also served on the board of Grandview College in Des Moines. A skilled craftsman, he built grandfather clocks, and a harp. Cedarholm, who served in the U.S. Navy (Korean conflict), died July 12. His memorial service was Aug. 31 at First Lutheran Church in Newton. He is survived by three daughters and nine grandchildren.

**Lowell “Bud” Erickson**  
**1929-2018**  
**Augustana Theological Seminary**  
**Class of 1955**

While on internship in Seattle, Pastor Lowell “Bud” Erickson and his wife, Clare, fell in love with the mountains and natural wonders of the west and decided to pursue options there. He served parishes in Ogden, Utah; Glendale, Calif.; and Seattle, Tacoma and Camas, Wash. In his younger years he excelled in music and athletics, playing on championship teams and even in a bowl game. He died Aug. 2 in Vancouver, Wash., and is survived by his wife, Clare, one son and one daughter, and four grandchildren.

**Norman E. Lund**  
**1925-2018**  
**Suomi Seminary**  
**Class of 1951**

Pastor Norman Lund attended college and seminary after serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He served as a missionary in Japan for 39 years, where he and his wife, Wenona, raised their four sons. The couple returned to Lund’s home state of Michigan, where he enjoyed engaging with his sons and grandchildren in outdoor sports. He died on June 26. He is survived by his wife, their sons and grandchildren. A memorial service was held on July 8 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Hancock, Mich.

**Charles J. Lundquist**  
**1928-2018**  
**Augustana Theological Seminary**  
**Class of 1954**

Rev. Charles Lundquist, known as “Pastor Chuck,” served Bethel Lutheran Church in Boardman, Pa., from 1954 to 1987. During his time there a new sanctuary was built, he implemented a Stephens Ministry Program, co-hosted a local TV religious talk show, celebrated the 100th anniversary of the congregation, and served as the president of the Mahoning Valley Council of Churches. He also served on a number of community boards and ecumenical councils. He was a member of the Boardman Kiwanis Club for more than 50 years and served as chaplain of the local police and fire departments as well as for the Youngstown State University football team. He was a member of the Wittenberg University Board of Directors for 32 years and received an honorary doctorate from the university in 1998. He died on August 16. He was preceded in death by his wife, Ilene. He is survived by two daughters, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. A funeral service was held September 1 at Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Youngstown.



**Dean W. Maas**  
**1937-2018**  
**Lutheran School of**  
**Theology**  
**Class of 1966**

The loss of his mother at young age deeply affected Dean W. Mass, and he started hanging with the wrong crowd until he was able to turn his life around. At Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, he was a walk-on athlete in both football and track, earning him Athlete of the Year in 1959 and a spot in the Athletic Hall of Fame. He met his wife, Audrey Kay, on a blind date and they were together 59 years. He attended Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, Ill., and graduated from LSTC. He served parishes in Council Bluffs, Iowa; Camdenton and Gladstone, Mo.; San Antonio, Texas; and Tulsa, Okla. He traveled for the Lutheran Church in America as a preacher evangelist. A book, *Live All Your Life* by Reuel Howe became pivotal for him, and he quoted its message, “live and grow,”

often. Maas died Aug. 4 in Tulsa, Okla., and a memorial service was August 17 at Fellowship Lutheran Church in Tulsa.

**Charles W. Malloch**  
**1928-2018**  
**Chicago Lutheran**  
**Theological Seminary**  
**Class of 1963**

Rev. Charles “Chuck” Malloch served as a Chaplain’s Assistant while serving in the U.S. Army/ U.S. Air Force at Lowry AFB in Denver, Colo., during World War II. He received pipe organ lessons while there and became organist in the Base Chapel and also played piano in jazz combos. He specialized in music education while at seminary and furthered his music education after he graduated. He served as assistant pastor and youth choir director in his first call in Denver, then went on to serve as pastor of a mission church in Albuquerque, N.M. He served congregations in Arizona and California. He continued to lead and

perform for musical events throughout his ministry. He died in LaQuinta, Calif., on July 4. He was preceded in death by his wife, Lyn. He is survived by their five children and seven grandchildren.

**Melvin F. Rosenbaum**  
**1935-2018**  
**Central Lutheran**  
**Theological Seminary**  
**Class of 1963**

Melvin F. Rosenbaum graduated from Central Lutheran Theological Seminary in Fremont, Neb., but instead of seeking ordination he returned to teaching, which he had done before he was drafted into the U.S. Army. He taught primarily government and world history at three high schools. After his retirement in 1992, he was a hospice volunteer. He was a member of King’s Bach Choir in Houston and sang with the city’s Sacred Harp choir. His book, *Scissortails at Dawn, Bull-bats at Dusk*, chronicled the life of the German

farming communities in Texas. A memorial service was held at his long-time parish, Christ the King Lutheran, Houston, on Oct. 13. He is survived by a sister, nieces and nephews.

**Alexander J. Wacker**  
**1929-2018**  
**Central Lutheran**  
**Theological Seminary**  
**Class of 1955**

Pastor Alexander Wacker was born at his family’s home in 1929, and died August 16. A memorial service was held September 22 at American Lutheran Church in Ashland, Neb. He graduated from Central Lutheran Theological Seminary in Fremont, Neb., and served parishes in Nebraska (Fontanelle, Alliance, Hooper and Lincoln) until his retirement in 1994. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Lois, three daughters, 10 grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

## New directors join board

The LSTC Board of Directors welcomed three new members at its November meeting.

*Terry Goff* is the new representative of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod. He is a retired director of emission regulations and conformance for Caterpillar Inc. and lives in Hanna City, Ill.

*Roger Gustafson*, bishop of Central States Synod, is the Region 4 Bishops' Representative.

*Lilia M. Milett*, director of finance for Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, represents the Southwestern Texas Synod. She resides in San Antonio, Texas.

## Godspeed

We bid farewell to a number of colleagues this summer:

*Taposhi Bentley*, controller; *Vanessa Buenconsejo*, development programs coordinator; *Rickey Copley-Spivey*, director of development; *Sanja Jovanovic*, development program assistant; and *David Scott*, donor relations manager.

We are grateful for the many gifts they brought to LSTC and wish them every blessing in their new endeavors.

## Welcome

We welcome these new colleagues:



**Kristel Clayville**

*Kristel Clayville*, is serving as acting director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science this academic year. She is a graduate of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago where she specialized in religion and medical and environmental ethics.



**Samantha DeBias**

*Samantha DeBias*, accounting coordinator, who is serving as the first smiling face we see in the Finance Office. We are blessed to have her skill at organizing systems, her quick wit and her generosity with chocolate candy bars.



**Bianca Leoni**

*Bianca Leoni*, student services assistant and housing, is providing oversight of the campus housing program and assisting the student services team with administrative tasks. She is an avid reader who averages 20 books a year with titles like *Radical Candor* and *The Homo Sapiens Agenda*.



**Anissa Whitmore**

*Anissa Whitmore*, controller, had been working as senior accountant at LSTC through Quattro FPO Solutions. She brings 20-plus years of accounting experience to her new role and a friendly yet no-nonsense approach to all things finance.

## Accomplishments

*Erik Christensen*, pastor to the community and director of worship, has been selected as the 2019 recipient of the Brugh Emerging Leader Award by

the advisory council of the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University. This annual award recognizes leaders who have made significant contributions to the church in the areas of liturgy, congregational song, preaching, music, and/or writing for the whole church. The award will be presented on Wednesday, May 1 at the conclusion of the 2019 Institute of Liturgical Studies (April 29–May 1, 2019), which will gather around the theme, “*Table of Thanksgiving: How Eucharist Forms Us*.” For more information, see [www.valpo.edu/ils](http://www.valpo.edu/ils)

*Julie Sevig*, communications specialist – Advancement published “Sandals of faith” in the September issue of *Gather: The Magazine of the Women of the ELCA*. She also wrote “An Introduction to Dan Erlander,” the opening piece in the leader sourcebook for a new resource (2018) from Augsburg Fortress that reintroduces LSTC alum Erlander’s classic *A Place For You* to the church.

*Martha Stocker*, software support administrator, was a panelist at the Blackbaud Conference held in Orlando, Fla., in October. She talked about LSTC’s experience implementing new Blackbaud’s Cloud Solution for Higher Education.

*Sara Trumm*, interim director of A Center of Christian-Muslim Relations for Peace and Justice, with Carol Schersten LaHurd, published “The Church Engaging Our Multi-Religious World: Ever-Serving, Ever-Reforming, Ever-Reconciling,” in the May/June *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*.



The winning team and fans pose in the Refectory



There was great rejoicing as students showed off the Luther Bowl Book of Concord Trophy on the Monday after Big Orange's victory.

## Big Orange wins Luther Bowl

In late October, LSTC's flag football team, Big Orange, traveled to Gettysburg, Pa., to play in the 52rd annual Luther Bowl.

It is the first time LSTC has won the traveling trophy featuring the Book of Concord since 2007, (according to a yearly record at the front of the book). Big Orange played four games on Saturday, Oct. 27, to triumph, beating Trinity: School for Ministry 14-13 in the championship.

Erik Thone, MDiv, one of the team's captains, wrote this reflection on the team's participation in the Luther Bowl:

*Covered in mud. Soaked to the bone from the rain. Shaking uncontrollably in the cold. It never occurred to me to ask, "What are we doing here?" Why does a seminary have a flag football team? What does this have to do with Jesus, church or becoming a pastor? It's easy to dismiss it all as a silly game, but huddled in matching orange, mud-stained jerseys, wet and united in our shivering and goal, we transcended the game.*

*A team can function strangely like the church: a community with a mission, invested in one another, together in brutal cold and ecstatic victory. This was the team we wanted: encouraging, celebrating, and drawing the best out of each other. Win or lose, we wanted to do it like the church. I think we did and I'm proud of my teammates for that, but I confess I do also like winning. So when, after four wet, muddy games and a goal-line stand as the clock expired, we walked away with the Book of Concord trophy, I was pretty excited about that as well. LSTC Big Orange, 2018 Luther Bowl Champions!*

During the regular season, which ended Nov. 15, the team played Thursday nights at the University of Chicago.



## Watanabe calendar purchases support Danker Fellowship

Watanabe calendars feature the artwork of Sadao Watanabe (1913-96), a renowned Japanese Christian print artist. The print for this year's calendar, "The Good Shepherd," was created in 1982.

Calendars are \$30 with proceeds going to the William J. and Elizabeth M. Danker Fellowship for International Students at LSTC.

The 16.6 x 23 inch calendars, on momigami (wrinkled paper) or washi (Japanese paper), use the traditional Japanese folk art of stencil dying, or katzome, on which Watanabe created colorful representations of biblical scenes that he hoped would speak to his people. He clothed all the biblical characters in the Japanese dress of kimonos, making him less concerned with representing visual reality and more concerned with finding ways to communicate his Christian beliefs to other Japanese. His desire was to create art that could be enjoyed by common people and displayed in ordinary settings.

The Danker Fellowship honors the couple's legacy of helping international students prepare for ministry. The Dankers served as missionaries in Japan and were founding supporters of the Center for World Christian Interaction dedicated to helping international students become pastors and church leaders in their home countries.

Recent Danker Fellowship recipients came from Thailand, South Korea, India and Nigeria.

Calendars are available online at [lstc.edu>alumni-friends/watanabe](http://lstc.edu>alumni-friends/watanabe) or contact the Advancement Office at [advancement@lstc.edu](mailto:advancement@lstc.edu) or 773.256.0757.



# LIFE AT LSTC



MDiv Middler Robin Lovett with her dog at LSTC's Blessing of the Animals.



During Orientation Week, first year students Dax Mathew, Daniel Collins, Sarah Krolak, Melissa Hrlicka, and M. Seng Tsin Nan accompanied Mark Swanson on a trip to the Art Institute of Chicago.



At LSTC's Resource Fair, Christine Janak and Amy Berger encouraged students to join the liturgical dance team.



Students M. Seng Tsin Nan, Karl Anliker, and Wu Mee, did some serious weeding during the LSTC service day.



Maeve Schurz enjoys Tuesday afternoon recess.



Shannon Wright is featured in the “Public Worship for a Public Church” video.

## *New resource for congregations*

LSTC’s Public Church Network recently released two videos on YouTube. Find them at “Public Church Network–YouTube.” They feature two ways congregations can learn from and respond to needs in their communities.

“Lessons from Peace Camp” features an alternative to Vacation Bible School developed by Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church on Chicago’s South Side. The weeklong camp for children who have completed first through fifth grades teaches peaceful ways to deal with conflict. The camp serves dozens of neighborhood children who have no affiliation with the congregation.

“Public Worship for a Public Church” was developed by Klaus–Peter Adam, associate professor of Old Testament, and shows how witness or testimony can be used in worship to address issues in the congregation’s community. Adam drew on his research, “Love Your Neighbor! Private Hatred and Public Violence” and how Old Testament models apply to the street gang violence in Chicago.

The videos were produced through a generous grant from the Association of Theological Schools. Consultant Luther Snow and LSTC staff member Ryan Fordice guided the projects. Jason Chesnut (2010, MDiv) of ANKOS Films edited video recorded by Community TV Network.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SAVE THE DATE: 3/28

### *LSTC’s second annual Giving Day, “Make a Difference” set for March 28*

Get ready to make a difference by participating in LSTC’s second annual Giving Day on March 28. We’re asking how LSTC has made a difference in your life and ministry and what difference you can make for current students. Your gifts to the Annual Fund during LSTCGives19 will make a difference for every student.

It will be a fun day of live social media updates on challenges for your class, state, or other groups that unlock matching gifts. We need your help to reach even more alumni and friends for LSTCGives19.

To be a Social Media Ambassador, contact Jennifer Thomas at [jthomas@lstc.edu](mailto:jthomas@lstc.edu).

And save the date: 3/28 for LSTCGives19.

OCTOBER 2019

### *Reunion, continuing education, and 2018 and 2019 Alumni Awards*

LSTC’s Alumni Board is planning an alumni gathering for October 9 and 10, 2019. It will begin with Wednesday Eucharist in the Augustana Chapel. There will be continuing education sessions with LSTC faculty who will share their recent research on public church topics. Alumni from the class of 2009 will be invited to serve as responders to the faculty presentations.

An Alumni Banquet and presentation of the 2018 and 2019 Distinguished Alumni Awards will be held October 10. This is a reunion for all classes, but special honor will be given to those observing their 10th and 25th year anniversary.

Come celebrate with your classmates at LSTC on October 9 and 10, 2019. Registration and program details will be available in early 2019.





# Lutheran School of Theology *at* Chicago

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Eunyoung Lim, Marvin Wickware  
and Kimberly Wagner - they're  
gifted teachers AND they're fun

FALL 2018