

LSTC

Epistle

Magazine of the Lutheran School
of Theology at Chicago

SPRING 2020



*Season of change
for Kadi Billman*

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear friends in Christ:

Late during the production of this issue of the *Epistle*, the coronavirus pandemic grew to dominate our attention. I therefore had to rewrite this letter completely after being delayed by other urgent issues around the school. No one gives you a playbook for times like these. Seminaries lack experience with adapting to a public health crisis. It's just not what they were mainly designed to do. Of course, we implement safety procedures and rethink our daily operations, but beyond those initial reactions, what then should we do?

One thing we're pretty good at doing is seeking wider wisdom about faithful living. That's just another way of saying what "formation" is. Because we don't have all the answers, we turn to trusted sources and diverse views to guide and shape our next steps. That's what we ask our students to do in their formation for ministry, and it's also good advice for our school in days like these. So where do we look for this wider wisdom right now? One place is to seek analogies, other times when we've responded to a crisis like the one we're facing.

Some are reviewing what Dafoe or Camus said about pestilence in their day, but Lutherans have a more direct connection. In late summer 1527, Martin Luther replied to a pastor's call for advice with the essay, "Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague." The question was urgent. Bubonic plague during the sixteenth century was ferociously virulent. With nothing like modern treatment, it killed half of those infected, wiping out a third of Europe's population. And while Luther was writing this essay, it reached the very doorstep of Wittenberg.

With all that, you might expect the often acerbic reformer's position about fleeing would have been a blunt "Never!" Not so. Far from unyielding or absolute, Luther's response was nimble and nuanced. Regardless one's station in life—civic official, church leader, or family member—he urged attention to what was truly needed. Be neither reckless nor feckless—don't carelessly endanger yourself, yet ensure your duty is fulfilled. And never judge those who decide differently than you. Luther's tone was blessedly balanced and gentle.

How does such level-headed, even-handed, sure-footed leadership develop, especially in times of crisis? Luther's approach arose because he drew upon a profoundly pastoral theology. Unlike the brusque "if this...then that" transactional calculus of the marketplace or battlefield, his was a subtle, situational reflection molded in the ways of the faith, the practices of the assembly, the wisdom of scripture and history. Such a leader is fully formed with a low

center of gravity that persists and rebounds during hardship, come what may.

So when Luther wrote in 1527, he didn't just share his latest advice or new ideas. Instead, his thinking was grounded in twin theological principles that support the entire essay. The first was *trust in God*.

Amidst whatever ravages may befall, we can rely on God's lasting promise to restore and sustain us, a promise that guards us from corrosive doubt and despair. The other was *love of neighbor*. Even with dangers on every side, we can reach out to serve all in need as if thereby serving Christ himself, because that is exactly what we're doing.

Based on trust in God and love of neighbor, Luther's pastoral theology could then stretch to embrace a wide range of practical matters. He focused on specific issues of the present moment (better sanitation and health facilities) while also leaning into the future (care for the bereaved and even civic planning). Reasoned faith was no idle pursuit for Luther. It freed him for the calamity around him. Grounded in holy trust and neighbor love, he could then engage the complex trials of his times with deep concern and genuine care.

Again, such leadership doesn't happen by accident. Luther was thoroughly formed by faithful practices and perspectives, so that eventually he could lead others with calm assurance and clear hope. This is what we're all about at LSTC—forming people for confident leadership in these unsettling times. It's what we're actually pretty good at doing. Indeed, it's what we've been doing all along, the course we've charted since our journey began. And soon enough, when the storm subsides and the crisis fades, it's also what we'll be doing next.



James Nieman

James Nieman
President

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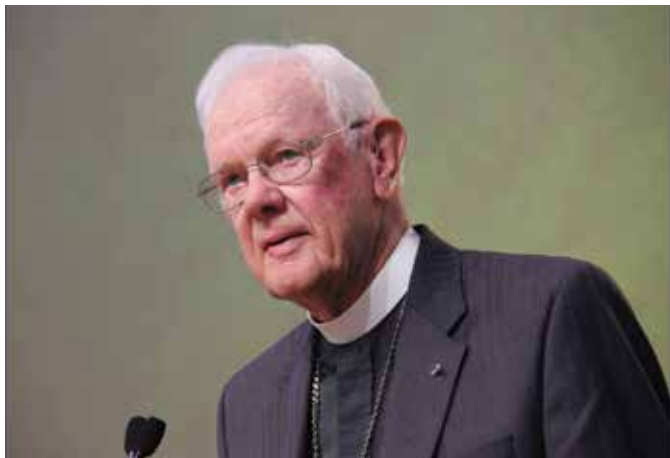
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Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago

Herbert Chilstrom remembered, honored by LSTC



Herbert Chilstrom

The Rev. Herbert Chilstrom, first presiding bishop of the ELCA, died Jan. 19 at his home in Green Valley, Ariz. He was 88. The LSTC community mourned his death and remembered his contributions to the seminary and church.

A memorial service was held at Desert Hills Lutheran Church, on Feb. 13. Another was held on Feb. 15 in Christ Chapel at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn., which President James Nieman attended.

Bishop Chilstrom served congregations in Pelican Rapids, Elizabeth, and St. Peter, Minn. Among his survivors is his wife Corinne, who is also an ELCA pastor.

LSTC is proud to claim Chilstrom as an alumnus. He graduated in 1958 from Augustana Seminary, a predecessor seminary. His support of LSTC was strong, culminating in the establishment of the Chilstrom Chair in New Testament.

Faculty member Barbara Rossing said the Chilstrom Chair reflects what the bishop himself called his “love affair with the Bible.” He wrote about the impact his grandmother’s daily Bible readings in Swedish during the Depression had on him, and about his study of Greek and Hebrew at Augustana Seminary and “the importance of studying the Bible in the historical context in which it was written,” Rossing said.

“Herb’s gift to LSTC and to all of us in theological education [was] his ability to bring together three things: a love for the Bible, a commitment to the church, and brilliant thinking on the church’s public theology—why the Bible matters in our world today,” Rossing said during her remarks last Spring as Chilstrom and several from LSTC gathered in St. Peter to boost support of the Chilstrom Chair.

His work on biblical hermeneutics (how to use and interpret the Bible) shaped the church and sets a course for the church, she said.

Just days after news of Chilstrom’s death reached LSTC, President James Nieman reflected, in a video, on how Bishop Chilstrom drew from the Augustana roots that shaped him, as well as contemporary passions and concerns he had: the inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the church and seminary, care for the earth, his views about public matters and ways in which he was engaged in public ministry. That video is still available on the seminary’s YouTube channel.

“He was a living model of what ministry could be like for all of our students and faculty,” Nieman said. “One of the important things that Herb gave to LSTC was in his leadership of the church. We’re not a school all by ourselves, off to the side. We’re a part of a larger church. He set that context, he set the tone, that it was important to be the church that was inclusive, that was diverse, that was intellectually responsible, that was committed to mission and that was a part of a future that was innovative. And I think that has always been inspiring to us at LSTC.”

Chilstrom’s memoir, *Journey of Grace*, chronicles his journey that began at seminary and the historical insights on the formative years of the ELCA. When Rossing spoke at the event in St. Peter, she listed five issues that LSTC continues to work on, all of which mesh with Chilstrom’s interests and causes: sexuality, creation care, mental health and suicide, peacemaking and war, spirituality.

“Friends, I want to make the case that LSTC is continuing the work of one of our most distinguished graduates to draw on the Bible for public theology, public church,” Rossing told the crowd. “I hope you will support teaching the Bible in the living tradition of Herb Chilstrom, to shape the next generation of pastoral leaders. I hope you will support this important chair.”

To make a gift to the Herbert Chilstrom Chair for New Testament, go to lstc.edu, click on Giving from the top menu and choose Make a Gift from the dropdown menu. Then, chose Chilstrom Chair of New Testament from the Designation drop down menu. You may also call 773.256.0699 or mail checks designated to the Chilstrom Chair to LSTC at 1100 E. 55th St., Chicago, IL 60615.

Third Annual Giving Day surpasses fundraising goal

This year LSTC tried a new approach to its annual Giving Day by holding it from noon March 10 until noon March 11. Thanks to the amazing generosity of 285 donors, we surpassed the ambitious \$100,000 goal by over \$10,000 (at this writing, with gifts still coming in).

Thank you to everyone who gave, especially the donors who gave matches and challenges. You inspired others to give! Thank you, also, to the 40 students, faculty and alumni who served as ambassadors and advocates. They made powerful personal plea videos that expressed exactly why a gift to LSTC makes a difference to students and to the church.

Here are a few highlights of the day on campus.



Nearly all our Advancement staff gathered for a photo in our new Giving Day t-shirts just as our 24 hours of giving began.



Students were key in the success of this year's Giving Day, including Cecie Suknaic and Melissa Hrdlicka.



Tim Brown, gift officer, accepts a gift from Martha Stocker, interim director of Information Technology, at our "broadcast" location of the Refectory.



Amber Kalina, an MDiv student, provided music during recess sponsored by Advancement (and with help from Thrivent Financial).



Advancement says "hats off" to donors!



Ryan Fordice, donor relations manager, and Tim Brown found a bin of costumes and hats helped keep things lively in the Refectory.

Season of change for Kadi Billman

Beloved professor of pastoral care retires June 30

By Jan Boden



Kathleen D. "Kadi" Billman

If the Wizard of Oz was right when he said, "A heart is not judged by how much you love, but by how much you are loved by others," then Kathleen D. "Kadi" Billman has one of the best hearts. It is difficult to imagine a member of the LSTC community more beloved than Kadi.

On June 30, students, alumni, faculty and staff will feel an ache in their hearts as Billman, the John H. Tietjen Professor of Pastoral Ministry: Pastoral Theology and director of MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy, is retiring after 28 years teaching and leading LSTC.

"People ask me what I am going to do next, and much of what the future will hold is still a mystery. I trusted the prompting inside that urged me in this direction and it's sometimes the case that anxiety about the future gets the better of me. Who will I be when I am not at LSTC? I don't yet know. One of the first field ed students I ever supervised as a new pastor said something to me that has come back to me this year in a powerful way. She said, 'Kadi, I told my pastor I needed more faith, and my pastor said I should put myself in a situation where I need more.' That memory gives me a way to think about this transition that is both challenging and life-giving."

Formed by two religious strains

Billman grew up in a small village in Ohio where her maternal grandmother was a founding member of the Lutheran church and her paternal grandfather was a pillar of the Methodist church.

"I heard 'A Mighty Fortress' in one ear and 'Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing,' in the other," Billman said. "My grandmother's favorite hymn was 'Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross.' That sums up her deep faith and deep piety. My grandfather on the other side was the opposite extreme. His favorite Bible verse was 'This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.' They embodied two different pieties, two different ways of engaging the world and I was shaped by both of them. You can't explain who I am without the two strains."

It was the conviction that the church is called to be engaged with its surrounding community that led Billman to ordination in the United Methodist Church. She thought of herself as more Lutheran than Methodist when she became Director of Neighborhood Ministry for a United Methodist urban congregation while she was in seminary. She got involved with a group of ministerial leaders passionately committed to ministry in the city of Trenton. But the Lutherans in Trenton at that time were holding back from getting involved in ecumenism and especially in the community organizing effort that caught Billman's imagination. She was drawn to United Methodism by John Wesley's adage that "the world is my parish," and United Methodist pastors who supported urban ministry invited her to consider ordination.

In that season of her life, Billman couldn't have imagined the Lutherans she would meet at LSTC who are very much involved in the world and the ecumenical movement. "Growing up with one vision of the way things are cannot help you imagine what will be or what could be," she said.

As she completes her last semester at LSTC, Billman is recalling the many seasons she has experienced here.

Season of encouraged mentorship

In 1992, when Billman began her service at LSTC, she was one of two women on the faculty whose calls were to full-time classroom teaching. Ralph Klein, who was dean at the time, and President William Leshner told Billman that she was the first in a coming sea change in the faculty. There was a sense of impending change and surprise, Billman added.

"I came as a fairly young professor, in my life and my career. The senior faculty members, including Pete Pero, Phil Hefner, Ralph Klein, Bob Conrad, Ed Krentz, Mark Bangert, and Morry Niedenthal mentored and formed me for leadership positions like division chair. The senior colleague closest to my generation, David Rhoads, was my role model/mentor for teaching and Dean Klein gave me



Billman in the classroom.

a chance to be part of the academic cabinet, a group that stayed the same over several years, and so the learning and mentoring process continued over time.”

Throughout her career, Billman had leadership opportunities “way too young.” She was one of just seven women ordained in the (then) Southern New Jersey Conference of the United Methodist Church.

She got “amazing opportunities” that she may not have been offered had there not been such a need for women to enter areas where they were not represented. She refers to that period as a season of “encouraged mentorship.”

In 1999, several faculty colleagues asked her to consider allowing them to nominate her to become academic dean at LSTC. “I was flabbergasted,” she said.

Season of partnerships

When Billman became dean and vice president of academic affairs in 1999, she was the first woman and the first non-Lutheran to hold that position at the school.

Like a true community organizer, she held one-on-ones with the faculty to find out what mattered to them and what they could accomplish together.

“There was tremendous unity among the faculty,” Billman said. “We conducted four faculty searches that first year and worked together to find the best candidates and to diversify the faculty. One of the great strengths of the faculty then and now is that we have chosen well in searches.”

The first four faculty appointed during Billman’s tenure as dean were Linda E. Thomas in the field of theology and anthropology; Craig A. Satterlee in the field of homiletics; Jose Irizarry in the field of religious education, and Antje Jackelén, in the field of systematic theology/religion and science.

Billman and the faculty completed seven more faculty searches over the next nine years. They also changed the academic calendar from quarters to semesters which required a complete reworking of the curriculum.

“It’s a real tribute to Audrey West’s skill (then assistant professor of New Testament) that she was able to lead the faculty to take 36 quarter-length courses, 27 of which were required, and reduce them to a 27-course curriculum and to increase electives,” she said.

By the time Billman became dean, negotiations had already begun with longtime Hyde Park partner McCormick Theological Seminary to form a closer collaboration on a shared campus. McCormick’s building is the north side of the quad.

“When we dug up the courtyard and had to come to work at 2 p.m. because the chapel auditorium was being demolished to make way for the Augustana Chapel—and then, when we welcomed the McCormick Seminary community to campus with Korean drummers—could we have imagined the economic crash of 2008 destabilizing that relationship and theological education, itself?”

Reflecting on leading during a period of tremendous change, Billman said, “Relationships matter. Stability matters in the sense that people need to know where to go when things change.”

It’s in relationships that Billman sees the most potential for theological education, citing what might happen if the ELCA or the Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS) seminaries banded together.

“There’s nothing we couldn’t offer if the ACTS consortium did that.”

Grieving is part of transitions

Billman’s ever-cheerful, outgoing personality doesn’t seem congruent with one of her most popular courses: Pastoral Care for the Dying and Bereaved. But for Billman, the rituals and care around transitions are deeply ingrained in who she is.

“I was the kid who needed a ritual to say goodbye to my locker at the end of high school. I’ve been aware, from a very young age, that things are always changing and the grieving process is part of those transitions.”

Her MDiv thesis was on the conflict between the ideal and the actual in ministry. She did in-depth interviews



Billman with an advisee in the 1990s.



Dean Billman in her office circa 2000.

with pastors approaching retirement. One of her findings was that you can't trust your own perspectives on how things will be.

"How do you see yourself as something bigger than you are? You can be part of something for a little while, you can reflect on what you did while you were part of it, but finally you can say, 'I don't have that much control of how things will turn out.' How do you take responsibility for what you can do and not cop out by saying, 'It's all in God's hands' as an excuse for not trying as hard as you can and caring deeply, while knowing, in a deeper sense, that it's not in my hands?"

Billman calls it a "mercy" that she is teaching the Pastoral Care for the Dying and Bereaved course in her final semester at LSTC.

"It keeps me mindful in the large sense that all things end. Can we rest in faith, knowing that we are part of God's story, part of the Body of Christ? Whatever meaning the individual has is part of God's story. We're all connected, part of creation, part of what God is doing in the world. That deep sense of connection is a profound grace."

Next season

This semester, Billman is focused on teaching and laying the groundwork for whoever follows her as director of candidacy and director of the MDiv and MA programs. She regrets that her retirement means another transition for the director of candidacy role. Due to retirements and deaths, there have been three directors in four years.

"It's hard to leave the relationships and processes that I've worked on and cared so much about. But at some point we all must entrust the ministries we've tried to do to other hands, knowing that those who come after us inherit both our contributions and errors. What I'm trying to do now is to leave faithful documentation of what I have learned and leave the continuation of this marvelous work to whoever follows," she said.

Billman is remaining open to what happens after retirement, looking forward to some imagined delights: playing with her grandson James and spending time with son Adam, daughter-in-law Kaylee, and beloved friends. She wants to find new ways to be involved in the world, actively advocating for the endangered planet and for those who suffer the most from social injustice.

In late January she went on a retreat with three friends she's known since her time in Trenton. Their prayer for her, which she has embraced as her own, is that she will have some adventures, and let those adventures help her to imagine what the future might hold.

Editor's note: Discernment is real. As the Epistle was going to press, Kadi Billman discerned the need to remain at LSTC into the fall to assist students navigating degree programs and candidacy during the COVID-19 pandemic, to finish several projects that were put on hold because of it, and to contribute to a smooth transition for a new director.



Billman and the LSTC faculty after her installation service as dean and vice president of academic affairs.

A history of inclusion

LSTC graduate says 'small congregation attitude' enables church to be nimble

By Julie B. Sevig



Stephanie Jaeger

Stephanie Jaeger and her congregation were doing “public church” before it was a twinkle in LSTC’s eye.

St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church in North Hollywood is one of the first ELCA congregations to have LGBTQ+ members as its majority. It embraced activism ministry in the middle of the AIDS crisis.

“This church has a history of inclusion,” said Jaeger (MDiv ’07). A church member with AIDS was

Deaf, which launched a Deaf ministry some 18 years ago. The pastor at the time got a grant for Deaf ministry, so St. Matthew’s second bragging point is that it is the only ELCA Deaf ministry west of the Ozarks. Its Deaf ministry has been used as a model for others, partly because of its blended nature: The Deaf community worships two or three times a month on its own, and all in the faith community worship together the other Sundays (with an interpreter present). Jaeger leads but there is shared leadership. “My ASL (American Sign Language) is rather poor, but I work on it,” she said.

Twelve of St. Matthew’s 107 members are Deaf. One member of the church council is Deaf, and two church council members have taken considerable interest in bridging the gap between the two groups, Jaeger said. Although the ELCA still considers it a disability ministry, the congregation considers it multicultural ministry.

Jaeger, a second career pastor, arrived back in California five years ago, having also done her internship in the state. After graduating from LSTC, she served as pastor of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Santa Monica. She then returned to the south side of Chicago to serve as a pastor of Augustana Lutheran Church in Hyde Park before returning to the Southwest California Synod.

“There’s something about church out here—they’ve been used to being in the minority so long that we’re actually ahead of the curve from the Midwest. We wrestled with egos as a white institution, so we know we’re not dominant. We lost prestige and influence long ago. As our bishop likes to say, ‘there are more Uber drivers than Lutherans out here,’” Jaeger said.

Their “small congregation” attitude makes them more nimble and able to take risks to try something new, she says. “A good portion of why I came back.”

NoHo Home Alliance

One of those risks was addressing the biggest neighborhood challenge: homelessness and lack of affordable housing. “Inclusion of various economic levels is another level of our congregation’s expression,” she said. “Inclusion developed out of that crisis.” Not long after she arrived, she tapped into her community organizer skills and formed NoHo Home Alliance to address the homelessness and housing crisis, with some immigration work as well.

It took a year of preparation, of asking what needed to be addressed, but the answer was clear: The alliance had to meet the needs of the homeless who lacked services. They developed a pop-up drop-in access center model that connects guests with needed services including housing, mental health and substance use treatment. The center is almost entirely run by volunteers, the result of mobilizing the community.

Twice a week guests arrive to accept housing placements and resources for immediate needs such as food, clean clothes and showers. Medical care professionals and representatives from service organizations are also on site. Jaeger helped lead the neighborhood to approve a 40-unit building of permanent supportive housing for persons experiencing homelessness, the result of gaining community trust.

“We not only meet the needs of homeless people but changed hearts and minds of residents around homelessness and released anxiety by building relationships. Volunteers feel tremendously useful. I see them all the time, even at worship.” The church has been adding four to eight new members each year, one-third of them through the nonprofit.

“What we’ve done is public church,” she says. “The [wider] church often expresses anxiety around small churches, but if St. Matt’s weren’t small, I would not have the liberty and time to do public work that I can do *and* lead the congregation. This traditional Word and Sacrament



Being part of the neighborhood council has been key.



St. Matthew's welcomes all.

small church layered public work on top of it.”

“The blessing to me is sustainability,” she added. The congregation didn’t have enough resources to hire a pastor full time with benefits, so she is financially supported 70 percent by the church and 30 percent by the nonprofit, plus an administrator who splits time 75/25. “I believe it’s a viable model that can be replicated,” Jaeger said.

LSTC influence

“I have a commitment to public church. It’s been in the DNA of LSTC a long time—before it was a curriculum, which I predated but it was certainly at LSTC when I was there,” she says, listing the influence of the seminary’s emphasis on urban ministry under Richard Perry, and learning that preaching is a public act. Vitor Westhelle’s theology of the cross and Ray Pickett’s gospel of Matthew also influenced her.

She values preaching that’s relevant to current lived experience of Christians and those who come into their space. Biblical studies, she said, were also about public church. It’s where she learned the Greek word for righteousness and justice, “often translated just righteous, but it’s both.” Same with the Greek word for salvation, which also means healing. Knowing that inspired her to live out the gospel, and view God’s commitment to righteousness and justice, and Jesus as both salvation and healing. “Public church has to embody all of it,” she added.

One of the ways she makes that visible and translates the gospel is as faith leader on the NoHo Neighborhood Council, serving as vice president.

“It has put me in relationship with elected officials, neighbors, developers. Serving has been a great way to make church and gospel visible in a way that uses a language people can understand in the public square. My urban ministry course stressed that. How do we find language to proclaim in the public square so that un- and under-churched people can accept it and respect it and be inspired?”

St. Matthew’s, she says, has shown how a small church can have a powerful impact in its neighborhood. They saw a need and asked how they could address it, and the result has been restoration and healing in the community.

“It took a willingness to create new things. ...We were strategic in our relationship with the wider community, especially those who didn’t want to be in a relationship with the church because of bias or negative experiences.”

Now when she goes out in public, she realizes the community knows St. Matthew’s and understands its advocacy and relevance. “We found a secular structure and funding possibilities, and it has served its purpose in making church relevant to the wider community. Our community thinks of church in a new way, in an entrepreneurial way. It’s not their grandmother’s church.

“People know St. Matt’s as a place that doesn’t just talk about Jesus but does the work we’re called to do. Without the work of the nonprofit, neighbors wouldn’t have bothered to get to know St. Matthew’s. It’s not a distinctively West Coast issue, but we’ve created a method, a pathway, a structure that makes church visible to those who do not see or want to see the church. We as church leaders have to have the capacity and willingness to take risks the gospel requires of us.”



Theresa Hassman (left) and Jill Nelson serving NoHo’s first meal, a hot healthy breakfast of oatmeal, egg casserole, fruit and baked goods.



Volunteer Karen Burkland invited her “Girlfriends Doing Good” group of fellow educators to come to NoHo Home Alliance for a Saturday morning of community service making bag lunches, prepping lasagnes and sorting donations.

Celebrating Blackness in White Spaces

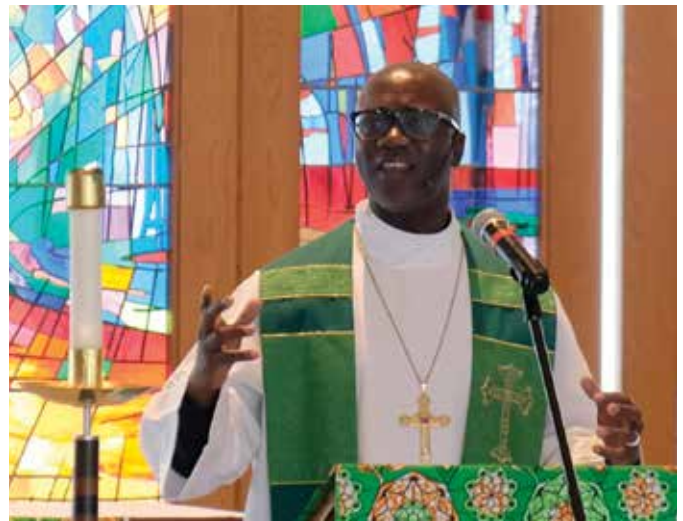
Black History Month at LSTC

Students, staff and faculty presented a monthlong series of Black History events during February with the theme “Celebrating Blackness in White Spaces.”

The theme is rooted in the Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture campaign launched in 1993 by the ELCA. The campaign’s purpose is to express the ELCA’s calling to celebrate culture and ethnicity, confront racism, and engage in public leadership.

According to keynote speaker Pastor Lenny Duncan, author of *Dear Church: A Love Letter From a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.*, “It is time for the church to rise up, dust itself off, and take on forces of this world that act against God: whiteness, misogyny, nationalism, homophobia, and economic injustice.”

It was in response to issues confronting today’s church that students and staff of color selected the theme for this year’s celebration.



Bishop Yehiel Curry, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, kicked off the month with worship and conversations.



Pastor Lenny Duncan brought the message at the closing celebration.



Roxanne Stevenson and the Chicago State University Community Jazz Band played a wide range of jazz for the History of Black Music workshop.



The Shekinah Chapel Dancers performed during the closing celebration.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Cantor to the Seminary Community Keith "Doc" Hampton taught the history of gospel music.



Lenny Duncan and M. Wyvetta Bullock, with Nicolette Panaranda, reflected on being a Black leader in the ELCA.



Veronica Mwakasungura, Bishop Yehiel Curry and Stephen Styles dedicate the Wall of Black History.



Student Stephen Styles, who led the planning for Black History Month, pours libations during the closing celebration.



Beverly Wallace, Lee Butler, Judith Roberts, Linda E. Thomas, JoAnne Terrell, Marvin Wickware Jr. after the panel discussion "Celebrating Black Presence in White Dominated Spaces."

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Gail James, Jodette Adams, Christopher Joyner and Teniya Mackey, gospel music "demonstrators"



Student Rafael Sligh sang during the closing celebration; Keith Hampton accompanied.



Artist Allan Emmerson Hicks talks about his sculpture (foreground) made from found objects.



Nash Shaffer was MC for the closing celebration.



Angela Khabeb (2009, MDiv), center, preacher for Ash Wednesday worship, with Patricia Bartley, registrar, and Jessica Houston, advancement programs and events manager.

LSTC hires new director of strategic marketing & communications



Elizabeth Chentland

Elizabeth Chentland joined the LSTC Advancement staff early in the year as director of strategic marketing & communications.

Chentland came to LSTC from the Alzheimer's Association, where she served most recently as regional director of communications and had previously served as associate program & communications director. She also is an adjunct instructor at the University of Nebraska-

Omaha, where she develops and presents course content for undergraduate and graduate students in an online, adult learning environment. Earlier in her career, she worked in leadership roles with organizations focused on public health and aging.

She has a master's degree in public health from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Iowa State University. She brings to LSTC a set of skills that include strategic planning, public/media relations, story development and execution, team management and public speaking.

"I'm drawn to LSTC's long-standing excellence in preparing visionary leaders that create peace and justice initiatives across the communities they serve," Chentland said. "I also appreciate and hold up LSTC's high academic standards, which ensure that our faith leaders are prepared to fully teach, engage and challenge the congregations and communities they serve.

"In uncertain times, our LSTC family is entrusted to bring neighbors together, to restore hope, and to help next generations elevate the good news of Jesus Christ. It is a privilege to work alongside the LSTC community in these pursuits."

In welcoming the changes Chentland's arrival signaled, President James Nieman added, "This is exactly the right moment for decisive steps toward telling our story more boldly and broadly. Elizabeth brings a rare combination of marketing savvy, leadership skills, and personal energy to make that happen rapidly and well. I am grateful for what she is bringing to our seminary."

WE REMEMBER



Shirley Doolittle 1931-2020

Longtime friend and donor to LSTC, Shirley Doolittle, died unexpectedly February 29. She and her husband, Kenneth, were awarded LSTC's Distinguished Service Award in 2016.

It was Shirley's strong Lutheran faith that inspired her husband to get more involved in church. When the Augustana Chapel was built, the Doolittles were involved in the planning committee. They also provided a lead gift to name the sacristy in honor of their son, Jonathan

(1994, MDiv), and his wife, Holly (1996, MA).

Shirley was a longtime member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Upper Arlington, Ohio. She earned a degree in nursing from the University of Rochester and served as a public health nurse in Columbus and Grandview Heights (Ohio) city schools. She also volunteered for the American Red Cross.

She is survived by her husband, their four children, 12 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held March 7 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

Faculty

Klaus-Peter Adam, associate professor of Old Testament, published “The Earth and the Earthling: Thoughts on Genesis 2–3” *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol 47 No 1 (January, 2020) 35–37. He and Barbara Rossing attended the wrap-up celebration for Henry Luce III Faculty Fellowships at American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature, which ended after 25 years.

Kadi Billman, John H. Tietjen Professor of Pastoral Ministry: Pastoral Theology and director of the master of divinity program, wrote “In Thanksgiving for Gordon J. Straw: The Weaving Continues” *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol 47 No 1 (January, 2020) 1–3.

Kurt K. Hendel, Bernard, Fischer, Westberg Distinguished Ministry Professor Emeritus of Reformation History, presented a lecture at Kenilworth Union Church. He also preached and celebrated at Ashburn Lutheran Church in Chicago and led two adult forums, “Johannes Bugenhagen: Dr. Pomeranus” and “Katharina von Bora: The Morning Star of Wittenberg” at Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest, Ill.

Ralph Klein, Christ Seminary–Seminex Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, reviewed “The Old Testament: Canon, History, and Literature” by Richard D. Nelson in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol 47 No 1 (January, 2020) 73.

He also taught a six-week adult forum on the Psalms at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Chicago.

Eric Kyle, associate professor, director of contextual education, attended a workshop on Building an Inclusive Church, facilitated by Reconciling Works, at Grace Lutheran Church in LaGrange, Ill. He also presented “Responding to the Rohr: An Incarnational Spirituality for Everyday Life” at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Naperville, Ill. Kyle also published *Educating in the Spirit: evidence-based and theological foundations for high impact educational systems* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock), 2019.

Esther Menn, Ralph W. and Marilyn R. Klein Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and dean of academic affairs, delivered a lecture, “From Eve to Zelophehad’s Daughters: Biblical Stories of Courage and Agency,” at The Center for Religious and Spiritual Life at Smith College in Northampton, Mass. She gave the response to a paper by Dr. Munther Isaac, “Palestinian Christians and the Promised Land,” at North Park Theological Seminary’s symposium, The Holy Land: Biblical: Perspectives and Contemporary Conflicts. She co-hosted, with Bob Cathey of McCormick Theological Seminary, Interfaith Partners for Peace Mission to Israel and Palestine. Menn participated in a Poland Odyssey for Protestant Leaders through the United Jewish Federation. She presented “Dwelling in Secret: Astonishing Temple Origins in Midrash Tehillim

on Psalm 91 and Parallels in Number Rabbah and Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer” at Generations: Bar Ilan Talmud Workshop and Conference, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.

José David Rodríguez, Augustana Heritage Chair of Global Mission and World Christianity, with Esther Menn, represented LSTC at an Inter-American Lutheran Encounter, “Theological Education at the Margins,” held in Bogota, Colombia. He wrote “Images and Their Power in the Developing of a Theology of Migration: The Reality of Latin American Migrants in the U.S.” *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol 47 No 1 (January, 2020) 29–34.

Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament, wrote “Waters Cry Out: Water Protectors, Watershed Justice, and the Voice of Waters in Revelation 16:4–6, 21:6 and 22:17,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol 47 No 1 (January, 2020) 38–42. Rossing lectured and recruited Lutheran-affiliate students from Yale Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary, and Princeton Theological Seminary at the “Lutherans of Other Folds Together” (formerly Lutherans in Diaspora) conference at Yale. She lectured in Houston at Christ Episcopal Cathedral on “Heaven canNOT Wait—God’s Kingdom Here and Now” and hosted “An Evening with Dr. Barbara Rossing” for Lutherans of the Gulf Coast Synod.

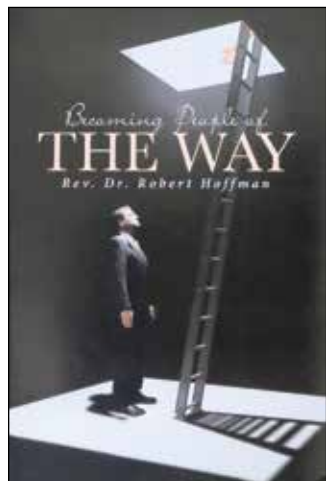
Benjamin Stewart, Gordon A. Braatz Associate Professor of Worship and director

of advanced studies, and Erik Christensen, pastor to the community and director of chapel, presented their paper “God is Really Among You”—the Risk and Promise of Testimony in Lutheran Worship” at the Lutheran caucus of the 2020 meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy in Atlanta, Ga. Stewart was also interviewed by National Public Radio for a story about Blue Christmas worship services.

Mark Swanson, Harold A. Vogelaar Professor of Christian-Muslim Studies and Interfaith Relations, participated in a series of events called “Cultivating Hope in Anxious Times,” sponsored by Champaign-Urbana Campus/Community Interfaith Exploration. He also spoke at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church and Campus Center in Champaign on “From Missionary ‘Focus’ to Neighborly ‘Commitment’: Chicago Lutheran Stories in Christian-Muslim Relations,” and participated in the “Beyond Tolerance” interfaith dinner and panel discussion at the Central Illinois Mosque and Islamic Center. He published “Beyond Imitation? Paul of Sadamant” (fl. 1260 CE) in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol 47 No 1 (January, 2020) 47–51.

Linda Thomas, professor of theology and anthropology with Esther Menn, attended Community Organizing as Spiritual Practice, a training offered by Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, in Berkeley, Calif.

New Books from Alumni



Becoming People of the Way

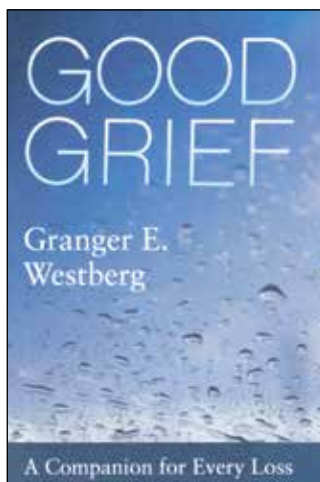
Stewardship is not primarily about giving money to the church. It's about our relationship with our creator. That is what Robert Hoffman claims in his book *Becoming People of the Way*. It's a lesson he learned and shared in his 40 years as a stewardship consultant working with congregations and the ELCA.

Hoffman's book identifies the counter-productive behaviors that pass for stewardship in most churches. He offers suggestions on how to move in more healthy and helpful ways.

Published by Christian Faith Publishing, *Becoming People of the Way* is available from your bookseller for \$15.95 (ISBN 78-1-64515-283-5).

Daily Bible Reading Guide

Kenneth L. Petersen has prepared his 35th annual *Daily Bible Reading Guide* for the Canadian Bible Society. This one-sheet pamphlet is available to download at www.biblesociety.ca or www.biblescanada.com. The daily readings uses 50 books of the Bible, five in their entirety.

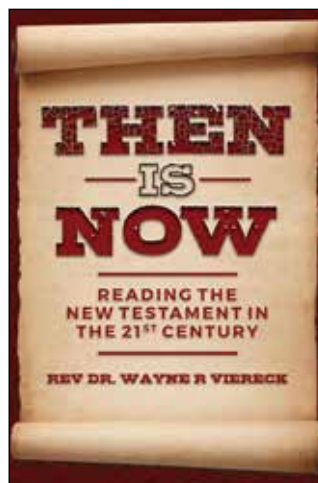


Good Grief: A Companion for Every Loss

This classic, comforting book by Granger E. Westberg was recently re-issued by Fortress Press with reflection questions and Bible passages provided by LSTC alumna Sally L. Wilke.

The book walks with the reader through stages of grief, giving words to thoughts and feelings that may be difficult for the grieving to speak out loud. It offers the assurance that God is with those who grieve.

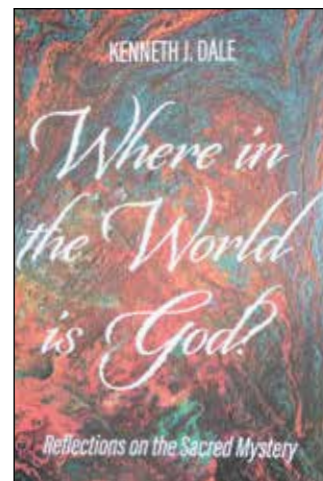
This new edition of *Good Grief* is available from Fortress Press and booksellers for \$7.99 (ISBN 978-1-5064-5447-4).



Then Is Now: Reading the New Testament in the 21st Century

Wayne R. Viereck challenges views about the early church and its biblical interpretations in *Then Is Now: Reading the New Testament in the 21st Century*. He shows that ancient leaders had a better grasp on the nuances of scripture than many in the modern era. He argues that by looking back we can find a clearer path forward, bringing "then" into "now."

Then Is Now is available online for \$9.95 (ISBN 978-1-5432-7471-4).



Where in the World Is God? Reflections on the Sacred Mystery

Kenneth J. Dale compiled this collection of poem-like reflections to explore the nature of the "great Mystery of the universe which we call God" and to share it with others searching for a better approach to God than the one most Christian people have learned.

After spending much of his life in a culture fed by the religious streams of pantheism (Japanese Shintoism) and atheism (Buddhism), Dale reflects on the place of the Christian "Heavenly Father" in such a context.

Where in the World Is God? was published by Resource Publications and is available from booksellers or the publisher (ISBN 978-1-7252-5220-2).

1975

Dennis Laherty (MDiv) retired in 2019. He was recently elected to serve on the La Habra Heights (Calif.) City Council.

1976

James McDaniels (Christ Seminary–Seminex, MDiv) received the Christus in Mundo award given every three years by both the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and the ELCA. The award was presented Nov. 4 at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis.

1978

David Hedlin (MDiv) received the 2019 Citizen of the Year Award from the New Lenox (Ill.) Chamber of Commerce. He was honored for offering many programs to the community as pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, New Lenox, and for his work supporting students at Lincoln–Way Community High School.

1984

Kathryn A. Kleinhans (Christ Seminary–Seminex, MDiv) published “What will it take to get our vision to 20/20?” in the January issue of *Living Lutheran*.

1985

Mike Blair (MDiv) retired as campus pastor at Luther College in December. He served the campus for 28 years. He and his wife moved to Waverly, Iowa, to work in a retirement community.

1988

Craig Mueller (MDiv; 2013, DMin) published “Opportunity and caution” in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*.

1989

William “Bill” Wiecher (MDiv) was featured in a Jan. 12 interview for the Pinecrest Tribune (Fla.) He serves as both an U.S. Air Force Reserve Chaplain and as pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Pinecrest.

1991

Pongsak Limthongviratn (ThM; 2000 PhD) contributed to the book, *Luther’s Small Catechism: An Exposition of the Christian Faith in Asian Contexts and Cultures* (2019, Christian World Imprints).

1999

Darcy Tillman (MDiv) was quoted in the article “ACTS celebrates 50th anniversary with co-founder the Lutheran Church of the Covenant” that appeared in the Jan. 20 edition of *Prince William Living*. Tillman is lead pastor of Lutheran Church of the Covenant in Dale City, Va., and president of the board of Action in the Community Through Service (ACTS).

2001

Kathryn Nolte (MDiv) is serving as interim associate to the bishop for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, relating to the synod’s Central and Southwest Conferences.

2003

William Flippin Jr. (MDiv; 2005, ThM) published “Lutheran roots and seeds of protest: The life and legacy of Daniel Alexander Payne” in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2004

Jennifer Moland–Kovash (MDiv) published “Questions about seeing” in *The Christian Century Newsletter*.

2005

Gabi Aelabouni (MDiv) and Meghan (Johnson) Aelabouni (2006, MDiv) began a new call last summer as country coordinators of the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) in Jerusalem/West Bank.

George Tsakiridis (ThM; 2009, PhD) was featured on the SDPB Radio Jan. 30 program “In the Moment.” He talked about religion and science for the program’s “Future of Faith” segment.

2006

Arata Miyamoto (ThM; 2009, PhD) contributed to the book, *Luther’s Small Catechism: An Exposition of the Christian Faith in Asian Contexts and Cultures* (2019, Christian World Imprints).

2007

Stephanie Jaeger (MDiv) and her congregation’s impact on their community are the subject of “Being Jesus,” in the January issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2008

Thomas Gaulke (MDiv; 2017, ThM) is serving in two new calls: as pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Cicero, Ill., and leading the Office of Communications for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. He and his spouse, Daisy, welcomed daughter Hannah Sofia in January.

Sarah Trone Garriott (MDiv) is running for a seat in the Iowa state senate. She was featured in a Jan. 22 story in *Religion News*.

2009

Tim Brown (MDiv) published “Forgotten or ignored?” in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*, and “Honor Advent through the saints,” in the December issue.

Joshua Ebener (MDiv) is now the Latinx ministry coordinator for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

David Fleener (MDiv) was installed as pastor of Shalom Lutheran Church in Alexandria, Minn., Nov. 3. He started his new call in September.

Angela Khabeb (MDiv) published “Invited into the wilderness” in the December issue, and “It takes a village to raise a pastor” in the March issue of *Living Lutheran*. On Ash Wednesday she was the guest preacher during worship at LSTC.

2010

Jason Chesnut (MDiv) was featured in the article, “A 21st-century church: How

are Lutherans expanding faith communities?” in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Zach Parris (MDiv) with Matt Keadle published “Keep Awake: The Vinyl Preacher Advent playlist” in the December issue of *Living Lutheran*. They co-host the weekly podcast The Vinyl Preacher, discussing lectionary texts and create playlists to listen to on the way to or from worship.

2011

Tanveer Azmat (ThM; 2016, PhD) published “Asbab al-Nuzul and Irfan A. Khan,” in *Islamic Perspective 22* (2019).

Kim Gonia (MDiv) is featured in the article, “Courageous, resilient, faithful: Synod program equips ministry leaders,” in the January issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Matthew Keadle (MDiv) with Zach Parris published “Keep Awake: The Vinyl Preacher Advent playlist” in the December issue of *Living Lutheran*. They co-host the weekly podcast The Vinyl Preacher, discussing lectionary texts and create playlists to listen to on the way to or from worship.

Timothy Weisman (Lutheran Year) began a new call in March as pastor of Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in New York City.

2012

Iskandar Bcheiry (ThM; 2019, PhD) published his dissertation, *An Early Christian Reaction to Islam: Iṣū'yahb III and the Muslim Arabs*, Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 57 (2019, Gorgias Press).

Richard Frontjes (ThM; 2014, PhD) published *Between Worlds: Sor Juana on Culture, Gender and the Desire for Knowledge* (2018, Political Animal Press).

Tyler Rasmussen (MDiv) recently began a new call as pastor of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa, Wis.

2013

Chris Honing (MDiv) and his wife, Liz, welcomed Elijah James on Jan. 21. He weighed 7 lbs., 12 oz. and everyone is doing well. Chris is pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Riverside, Ill.

2015

Kyle Severson (MDiv) is serving as associate to the bishop of Metropolitan Chicago Synod. He is responsible for candidacy and relating to the North and Near West Conferences.

Jasmine Tesdahl (MAM) began a new call as associate pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Hickory, N.C. She was installed Jan. 26.

2016

Analyse Triolo (MAM) was ordained Jan. 17 at First Lutheran Church, Greensboro, N.C. She is serving as pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Bellerose, N.Y.

2019

Molly Eversoll (MDiv) was installed as associate pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church, Marquette, Mich., Oct. 27.

Future alumni

Denise Rector (PhD candidate) published “(Social) location, location, location” in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Fire destroys home of LSTC alumnus in Madagascar

On Nov. 22, a devastating fire destroyed 127 homes in Ankaramalaza, Madagascar, including the home of Modeste Rakoto Endor (1987, ThM; 1991, PhD). He had recently retired as president of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (MLC), one of the largest and fastest growing churches in the global Lutheran communion. Fortunately, Endor and his daughters were not injured in the blaze.

The MLC has formed an official account for those who would like to contribute to rebuilding the destroyed homes. For more information about ways to contribute, contact James B. Vigen at chezvigen@yahoo.com or 708.851.6353.

Karen Bolton
1946-2019
Class of 2005

Before attending seminary, Karen Bolton was a school teacher who taught several grades and special education. As a pastor, she served congregations in Wisconsin and Nebraska.

She was a 4-H leader who loved sewing, cooking and keeping up with her grandchildren's activities.

She died Nov. 29 in Osceola, Iowa. She is survived by her sister, her ex-husband Darrell, four sons and six grandchildren. She was preceded in death by a granddaughter, Ally, and her brother. A memorial service was held Dec. 4 at Zion Lutheran Church, Benedict, Iowa.

Robert Chalstrom
1930-2019
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1956

Ordained in 1956, Robert "Bob" Chalstrom began his ministry in Verdale, Wash. He went on to pastor congregations in Richfield, Minn., and Arvada, Colo., before serving at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Cheyenne for the last 18 years of his full-time ministry.

In his retirement, he served as interim pastor to eight congregations extending from Albuquerque, N.M., to Casper. He was very integrated in the life of Cheyenne and its people, and drew great pleasure

from his volunteer activities, including serving as chaplain for the Laramie County Sheriff's Department and as a visiting pastor at the Cheyenne Detention Center. He also served on numerous committees and community boards and was a long-standing member of the Cheyenne Lion's Club.

He died Aug. 18 in Cheyenne after a brief illness. He was preceded in death by his wife, LaDonna. He is survived by three children, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. A service was held Aug. 26 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Ronald T. Englund
1929-2019
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1954

A son of a Lutheran minister and bishop, Ronald Englund was ordained in 1954. He served congregations in the U.S. and around the world, including in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and London, England. He also worked as a writer and editor for the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), based in London. While in London he also served as a judge for one of the major film festivals in Europe.

He died Nov. 12. His beloved wife, Ruth, died Nov. 6. A service celebrating both Ronald's and Ruth's lives was held Nov. 16 at Christ Lutheran Church, Falmouth, Mass. They were preceded in death by two sons and a baby girl. They are survived by a son

and a daughter and six grandchildren.

Paul John Halvorson
1937-2019
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1964

Paul John Halvorson was ordained in 1964 and served congregations in Arizona and California. In 1989 he accepted the position of outreach director and assistant to the bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod. He worked for the synod until he retired in 2001.

He was an avid hiker, traveler and gardener. He remained community-minded in retirement and participated in interfaith action groups.

He died Dec. 9. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Nancy, and three children. A celebration of life was held Jan. 18 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Phoenix.

Arnold E. Lack
1931-2019
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1956

Arnold Lack served parishes in Minnesota before serving as vice president of Suomi College (now Finlandia) in Hancock, Mich., from 1971 to 1978. He then served as vice president at Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Neb., from 1978-1988. From 1988 until his retirement in 1996, he served as vice president of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. He continued to serve the church as a board member and part-time

staff person for the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission and on committees of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Arlington Heights, Ill.

He died July 9. A funeral was held July 13 at Our Saviour's.

Thomas F. Livernois
1942-2019
Classes of 1970 and 1974

As a Roman Catholic seminarian in 1965, Thomas Livernois was sent to the American College and University in Louvain, Belgium. He was in Europe during the end of the Second Vatican Council and there he developed a passion for ecumenism, foreign languages and cultures that shaped his entire future career in the service of the Church. He formed strong friendships with Lutherans and other Protestant leaders, including a visit with Swiss theologian Karl Barth.

He returned to the U.S. with a master's degree and came to LSTC, where he earned a master's and PhD. Under the mentorship of Philip Hefner, he became interested in research and teaching. He joined the faculty of Susquehanna University in 1968 and was ordained in the Lutheran Church in America in 1974. While at Susquehanna he served several parishes.

In 1979 he and his family moved to Switzerland, where he served the Swiss Reform Church, first as a chaplain at the University of Neuch, tel, and later as a pastor in that same

city. After the formation of the ELCA, Livernois was called to the position of assistant director in the Office for Ecumenical Affairs in Chicago. He returned to Switzerland in 1991 to serve a three-point parish in the Jura Mountains. He and his wife moved to Texas but traveled to Europe frequently.

He died Nov. 18 at the T. Boone Pickens Hospice and Palliative Care Center in Dallas after a seven-year struggle with cancer. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Gertrude, two daughters and six grandchildren.

Larry W. Neeb
1939-2019
Concordia Lutheran Seminary (Christ Seminary-Seminex) Class of 1974

Larry W. Neeb was active throughout his life in many different aspects of the church. He was an active member of congregations, pastor, seminary administrator and teacher, newspaper editor, founder and president of a religious publishing company, and president of a family foundation focused on Christian ministry and education.

He founded Creative Communications for the Parish, Inc., in 1984. The publishing company annually provided devotional and worship resources for 40,000 Lutheran, Catholic and Protestant congregations.

Its daily devotional booklet, *Living Faith*, had a quarterly circulation of 700,000, making it the largest devotional publication in the U.S. for Roman Catholics.

Neeb served on the board of regents of Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Wash., and on the board of Lutheran Family and Children's Services.

He died Oct. 20. A memorial service was held Nov. 2 at the Lutheran Church of the Atonement in Florissant, Mo. He is survived by a brother, a niece, two nephews, and great nieces and nephews.

Richard Allan Olson
1939-2019
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1965

Richard Allan Olson was director for adult education for the Lutheran Church in America in Philadelphia and taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. His interest in a commitment to social justice issues led him to serve on the board of the Daily Planet and advocated in court to have a meal ministry for the homeless at First English Lutheran Church in Richmond, N.Y., where he served from 1989 to 1999.

He died Aug. 26. He is survived by his wife, Janyce, two sons and 10 grandchildren. A service was held Aug. 31 at First English Lutheran Church, Richmond.

Gwendolyn B. Saylor
1948-2019
Christ Seminary-Seminex Class of 1974

The Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn B. Saylor, William A. & John E. Wagner Professor of Biblical Theology and Distinguished Professor of Bible at Wartburg Theological Seminary, died unexpectedly Nov. 11 in Dubuque, Iowa.

After graduating from Valparaiso University in 1971, Saylor served as a parish deaconess in Alliance, Neb. She graduated from Christ Seminary-Seminex in 1974 and went on to earn a PhD in 1982. She was certified for ordination in the American Lutheran Church in 1981 and served as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Watertown, Wis., from 1982 until she joined the Wartburg faculty in 1991.

Saylor served as the director for lifelong learning and on the internship committee for several years. She published numerous articles, book chapters and one book. She also served on the candidacy committee for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin for more than 20 years. She planned to retire after the 2019-2020 academic year.

She was an avid bicyclist, walker and Green Bay Packers fan. She volunteered at the Dream Center, the Presentation Lantern and was an active member of St. Peter Lutheran Church, all in Dubuque.

She was a kind and loving friend, sister, sister-in-law, aunt and great-aunt. She is survived by a brother, two nephews, and six great nephews and nieces. She was preceded in death by her parents.

A memorial service was held at Wartburg Theological Seminary Nov. 16.

Charles Steinke
1939-2019
Class of 1968

Charles Steinke started seminary at Central Lutheran Theological Seminary in Fremont, Neb., and came to Chicago when Central merged with LSTC in 1967. He was ordained in 1968 and served five parishes in Illinois between 1968 and 1998 when he was called to serve on the staff of the Northern Illinois Synod. He retired from the synod staff in 2004 but continued to travel across the U.S. as a facilitator/consultant for the Stewardship Key Leader program of the ELCA, helping churches raise money for capital growth campaigns. He later served as an interim pastor of several churches and supply preached at many others.

He died Nov. 19. He is survived by his wife, Betty Louise, three children and five grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a young son. Funeral services were held Nov. 25 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Sterling, Ill.

Board members

These LSTC board members completed their service in the fall of 2019: Rosalise Olson, Western Iowa Synod, and Lilia Miletti, Southwestern Texas Synod. Bishop Susan Candea, Central States Synod, Region 4 bishops' representative, began her service with the board in the fall of 2019.

Godspeed

Clyde Andrew Walter, vice president for Advancement, resigned in January. He now works as gift officer with the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northern Indiana. Walter joined the Advancement office in 2015 as campaign director and major gift officer, and became interim vice president in 2018, and vice president in July 2019.

In October, Planned Gift Specialist *Michael Dixon* completed his work with LSTC.

Welcome

Elizabeth Chentland joined the Advancement staff on Jan. 16 as director of strategic marketing and communications. (See page 12.)

Accomplishments

Erik Christensen, pastor to the community and director of worship, led a daylong retreat for students from five Lutheran campus ministries from Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin at LSTC. The retreat, "Testimony and Transformation," equipped students to uncover and share their stories of faith for the sake of personal and societal transformation. He co-lead a daylong faith-rooted community organizing training along with alumni Erin Coleman Branchaud (MDiv, 2018), Allison Bengfort (MDiv 2017), and Tom Gaulke (MDiv, 2007; ThM, 2017; PhD student) and trainers connected to People's Action/The People's Lobby at St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Logan Square. Participants included members of local congregations and LSTC students Ole Schenk and Reed Fowler, as well as Alice Dowd, daughter of Adam and Elle Dowd (MDiv students). Christensen also spoke at Redemption Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa, Wis., about the process of relocating a congregation from traditional to non-traditional worship spaces. The community, currently being

pastored by LSTC student David Rebey, is selling its building and exploring next steps for ministry.

Cheryl Hoth, assistant to the dean and vice president for academic affairs, attended a 1½-day workshop on Building an Inclusive Church, facilitated by Reconciling Works, at Grace Lutheran Church in LaGrange, Ill.

Marji Shannon, associate director of field education, as a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Lakeview, attended the Metropolitan Chicago Synod's anti-racism event, "Skipping stones: an anti-racism encounter." Along with four other churches, Holy Trinity signed a two-year covenant with the synod's anti-racism ministry team to intentionally work on breaking down the inherent racism in our churches.

Julie B. Sevig, communications specialist, wrote 13 weeks of questions for Luther Seminary's Working Preacher resource for feast days in years ABC of the Revised Common Lectionary. The questions appear on the website and are tweeted.



Jennifer Thomas

Jennifer Thomas, gift officer, was recognized by ALDE (Association of Lutheran Development Executives) in February as Outstanding Chapter Leader of the Year. The Heartland chapter (Kansas and Nebraska) was also named Chapter of the Year.

LIFE AT LSTC



In February, LSTC hosted a daylong event focused on the ministries of Word and Service (deacons and those in specialized ministries). It included a panel discussion on the ministry of chaplains, worship, lunch and a panel discussion with deacons who shared powerful stories of their ministries. When the panel was over, it was the perfect time for a photo of deacons and those studying to be deacons.



Denis Ndoe Betare completed his PhD in January and returned to Cameroon to begin teaching.



Monica Brown Moss was keynote speaker for an ecumenical eco-theology conference at LSTC.



Barbara Rossing at the December eco-theology conference.



Vance Blackfox preached and led sessions for LSTC's Vine Deloria Jr. Symposium in November, honoring Gordon J. Straw.

A changing calendar

As this Epistle lands in your mailbox, so much will have changed since the weeks it was being written and published. Because of COVID-19, events that normally land on this page have been postponed, canceled, or are being held in a different and unexpected ways.

In mid-March President James Nieman announced a proactive response that included classes being taught virtually, a closed Refectory, JKM Library and entire LSTC building. Staff were working from home. Every effort was made to communicate love and concern for members of the community, especially students and those living on campus. Worship was held using Zoom. A Viral Outbreak Response Team was determining services, programs and facility use with April 13 as a date to re-access.

Important events on the calendar include baccalaureate and commencement, and even earlier on the calendar: The annual Gospel Choir. Nieman assured students they will be able to complete coursework and that changes due to COVID-19 will not negatively affect students seeking to graduate at the end of the semester.



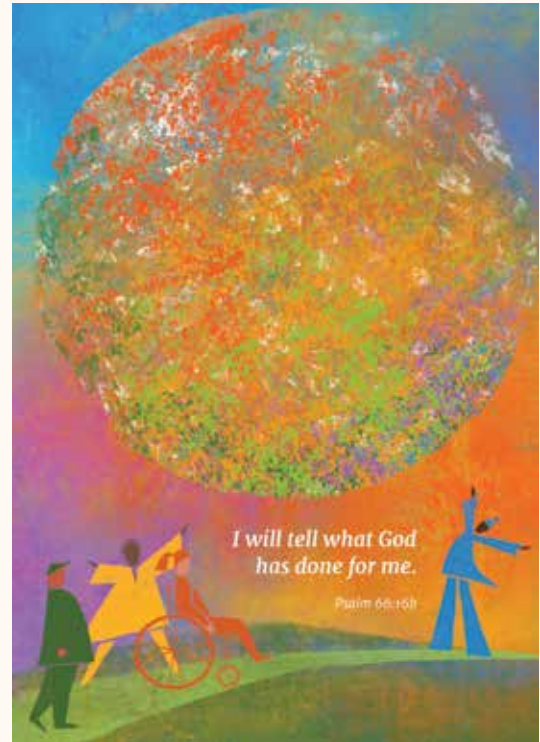
Gospel Choir Concert

The LSTC Gospel Choir and guests were ready to raise the roof, sing praise and give glory to God at the annual benefit concert scheduled for April 19. We can't do that because of COVID-19, but you can still support the Grover Wright Scholarship Fund and the Rev. Carole A. Burns Memorial Scholarship Fund. Since 1994, more than 45 of these scholarships have been presented to students of color at LSTC.

Make a gift online using the Give button at lstc.edu and use the Designation menu to choose the fund of your choice. You may also send a check made out to LSTC with the scholarship fund noted in the memo line. Mail it to LSTC Office for Advancement, 1100 East 55th St., Chicago, IL 60615

Although it has been postponed, the concert planning team is considering alternatives including having a virtual concert or combining it with Fall Homecoming. Watch for more news about the LSTC Gospel Choir Benefit Concert.

LOOKING AHEAD



Commencement artwork by Ann Gerondelis.

Baccalaureate and Commencement

Planned for May 16, 4 p.m., and May 17, 2:30 p.m., baccalaureate and commencement will not take place in person on those days. Alternate plans for these events were still being explored at press time.

Homecoming 2020

October 14-15

Our inaugural "Homecoming 2019: Hear My Voice" received positive reviews from those who came. Homecoming 2020 will be held in mid-October, with a theme and schedule that will be announced this summer.



Lutheran School of Theology *at* Chicago

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SPRING 2020

Soloist Karen Dade and the Chicago State University Community Jazz Band performed during Black History Month at LSTC.