

LSTC

SUMMER 2018

Epistle

Magazine of the Lutheran School
of Theology at Chicago



*A season
of Godspeed*

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear friends in Christ:

In the late spring, I had the chance to meet the curator of bonsai at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. He brings a lifetime of prominent expertise to his present role caring for hundreds of trees, this country's second largest collection, many of them several times older than he. As a result, his work unfolds on a time scale most would regard as, well, extended. Sure, he thinks about today's rain or next winter's dormancy, but more often he casually speaks of removing a few branches in three years so he can repot and trim roots a few years later and then maybe see how things shape up after a decade. There's nothing fast-paced about bonsai.

That could also be said of seminary, though pressures are mounting. With apologies to the IOC, "faster, easier, cheaper" is becoming the motto for seminaries, guiding our efforts without assuring the outcome. Will racing to finish a degree as soon as possible give the depth needed for durable ministry? Will removing encounters with serious change and challenge reinforce a ministry where real people become inconvenient interruptions? And while all schools try to be efficient, will reducing costs at all costs inadvertently lead to forms of learning whose value is debased? It's too soon to tell, and so I wonder about other long-term options.

At LSTC, we unexpectedly find ourselves today as the last predominantly residential seminary in our denomination. We love our commuters, to be sure, but the fact is that most of those who study here live here as well. That's not an accident but the result of a visionary plan. When our five (later six) predecessor schools relocated to the South Side, the whole idea was to become a community embedded in a community. At the heart of a vibrant city, in the shadow of a great university, as a faithful assembly living and learning together, during the past half-century we have been committed to live into the future envisioned for us.

It's not that we cannot imagine another way to be. Many seminary experiments are now underway, which is great. It's just that we have a distinctive, proven profile, a countercultural approach that may not be for everyone. We think encountering genuine difference requires face-to-face engagement, a diversity in and beyond our school. We think deep learning respects the varied kinds of learners who need different pathways to develop valuable competencies. We think where we live is neither

accident nor ornament but fundament to what we should learn. Most of all, we think that ministry formation means more than acquiring information, because being called into the world calls first for being with and for others.

This distinctive profile—engaging difference, varied pathways, contextual learning, and formational attention—is a time-expensive, space-intensive, risky venture for us. It surely isn't the only way to be a seminary, but it's ours and we think it's still worth upholding, especially in these noisy and fractured times. This past May at commencement, I greeted each graduate not with "Congratulations!" (because a diploma is not a door prize) but "Blessings!" (because that's what our newest alumni so dearly need). And even though blessing is from God, I do wonder if we've given what they need for untold ministries yet ahead. What should be our gift, a blessing to sustain them as we shake hands and they step forward into God's call?

Maybe our truest blessing to them is not just what we learn but how—taking time, in a place, together. In these noisy and fractured times, we can still seek what Evagrius of Pontus (4th century desert monastic) called *hesychia*—stillness. That's more than calm and serenity, but also steadiness, the low center of gravity to weather storms, and then quietness to turn from raging passion to fully hear your neighbor's need. Interestingly for us who want everything so quickly, Evagrius thought *hesychia*—which was only the entryway into the contemplative life—might take a lifetime to attain. But in God's time there is no frenzy. Growing into ministry can share that tempo, careful and attentive. There's nothing fast-paced about it.



James Nieman

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

James Nieman
President

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Cover: ThM grad Chrisida Anandan leads the procession to commencement. Classmates Adama Isa, Si Khaw, and Mangasa Saor Parlindungan are right behind her

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Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago

Three new faculty to join LSTC in fall 2018

On April 5, the Board of Directors elected three outstanding scholars and teachers to the LSTC faculty. They are Dr. Eunyung Lim, assistant professor of New Testament; Dr. Marvin E. Wickware Jr., assistant professor of church and society and ethics; and the Rev. Dr. Kimberly R. Wagner, assistant professor of homiletics. All are three-year, tenure-eligible positions.

“We are delighted to welcome Drs. Lim, Wickware, and Wagner to the LSTC faculty,” said Dean of Academic Affairs Esther Menn. “Each one of them is a stellar scholar and excellent teacher who will have a deep impact on LSTC. We look forward to the ways in which they will inspire and transform our community.”

Eunyung Lim completed the doctor of theology degree in New Testament and Early Christianity at Harvard University in May. Her doctoral dissertation, “Entering God’s Kingdom (Not) Like a Little Child,” is a historical and cultural investigation of early Christian portrayals of children and their relationship to God’s kingdom. Her effectiveness as a teacher has been recognized three times with the Harvard University Distinction in Teaching award. Lim said that her teaching emphasizes the contextualization of biblical texts, but that she uses her training in feminist and contextual hermeneutics to encourage students to “read against the grain” to imagine the “voices from the margins” in the texts.

Marvin E. Wickware Jr. will receive the doctor of philosophy in religion degree from Duke University this summer. He describes his research and writing as a way for him to work out the problems he has encountered while teaching and living in community with others. His experiences as a black man working in the predominantly white institutions of Duke Divinity School and a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation led to his dissertation topic of racial reconciliation in U.S. churches. In it he demonstrates that black and white U.S. Christians are enemies and explores the possibilities of love in light of that reality. His research draws on feminist theory and black studies and in his teaching he works to connect an understanding of theoretical and theological perspectives to the church’s engagement with pressing political and social issues.

Kimberly R. Wagner completed the doctor of philosophy degree in homiletics at Emory University this spring. Four years serving on the pastoral staff of a congregation in Virginia “fueled and informed” Wagner’s PhD work. Her research, teaching and scholarship in homiletics have focused on the role of the church and all of God’s people as proclaimers of the gospel in an ever-changing world. Her dissertation, “From the Depths: Preaching in the Wake of Mass Violent Trauma,” rethinks the task of preaching to communities in the immediate aftermath of an incident

of mass gun violence. She also believes that preaching requires a multidisciplinary perspective and did work in a variety of core areas during her PhD studies, allowing her a broad range of conversation partners in her scholarship and teaching.

Read more about LSTC’s new faculty in the News section of LSTC’s website (lstc.edu). Profiles of each of them will be published in an upcoming issue of the *Epistle*.

Andrea Finnegan elected LSTC Vice President for Finance

On May 22, the LSTC Board of Directors elected Andrea Finnegan to be the school’s Vice President for Finance. She began June 1.

Finnegan was hired in late January as Controller/ Director of Finance. She came to LSTC with deep expertise and experience in nonprofit finance.

“Andrea has already been serving in a leadership role far beyond the controller role for which she was originally hired,” said James Nieman, president. “After seeing her strong performance under complex conditions, I concluded that she would better serve our school at the vice president level, a role for which she is amply qualified. She brings a remarkable blend of intense focus, quick thinking, and minimal drama to what can be a stressful role. Her calm and cordial manner is widely appreciated not only among the staff and faculty but also with our boards.”

“At LSTC, I look forward using my experience to connect the school’s mission to numbers and people,” said Finnegan. “It’s important for me to work for an organization that is doing good in the world. I appreciate and share LSTC’s commitment to work for peace and justice.”

Before coming to LSTC, Finnegan served as vice president of finance and operations for Community Support Services, a nonprofit that provides services for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Her work there included finding ways to maintain operations through significant funding cuts due to the budget crisis in Illinois, managing complicated billing and cost allocations, collaborating on grant administration, and managing 11 facilities. Finnegan also has experience as financial director for a homeless shelter and she is a real estate broker.

Finnegan has a certificate in nonprofit leadership excellence from the University of Notre Dame, a bachelor of arts in accounting, and a certificate in K-12 art education.

LSTC Guild transforms to Village

For over 70 years the Guild provided support for students first at Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in Maywood, Ill., and for the last 55 years at LSTC. Now the Guild has changed its name and the way it carries out its mission through its transformation into Village.

Under the direction of Dr. May May Latt, international student services coordinator, and the International Students Association, Village will sponsor projects to enhance the life of seminary students. While Village will continue to have several projects only for international students, Latt emphasizes that the new organization will support all LSTC students.

“The motto of Village is ‘gift to give, gift to receive,’” said Latt. “Duty Free is a good example of that. It’s a place where all students can go to get donated household items and clothing for free. It’s meant to benefit everyone.”

Duty Free is an on-campus exchange filled with gently used or new items donated by Chicago area congregations and individuals. Students may take what they need. It is especially helpful to international students and their families who often come to LSTC with just a few suitcases containing their belongings. Once they arrive, they must outfit an apartment with linens, pots and pans, and other necessities as well as clothing appropriate for Chicago’s changing seasons.

As the Guild had done, Village will have special projects for LSTC international students and their families. It will seek donations for winter clothing and medical kits and funding for an annual family retreat at the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center in rural Illinois.

Mutuality is at the heart of Village: what each gives and what each receives. Village seeks to deepen the relationship between LSTC students and congregations. It also wants to strengthen ties with and support from LSTC alumni.

“If people would like to support Village, there are a couple of ways to do that,” Latt said. “One way is by donating kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom items—and shoes—to Duty Free. The second is by writing a check or making a donation online.”

Congregations or individuals who wish to make a donation of items may contact Duty Free Manager Adama Isa at adama.isa@lstc.edu or international@lstc.edu.

Those who wish to support Village with a financial donation may make checks payable to LSTC with “International Student Program Fund – the Village Fund” in the memo line and mail them to Office for Advancement, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615. Gifts may be made online at www.lstc.edu/giving/make-a-gift, using the Designation box to choose “Other” and writing “International Student Program Fund – the Village Fund” in the comment box.

Year of re-envisioning for A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice



Sara Trumm

A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice (CCME) at LSTC is entering a year of re-envisioning the Center’s priorities and direction. The Rev. Dr. Michael Shelley retired June 30 after leading CCME since 2006 and Dr. Ghulam-Haider Aasi, distinguished affiliate professor of Islamic studies, plans to step away from regular teaching in 2019.

Sara Trumm will serve as interim director during this transitional year. Trumm has served as CCME’s program coordinator since 2008.

A CCME Re-envisioning Team led by Dr. Carol Schersten LaHurd, distinguished affiliate professor of world religions at LSTC, began its work in May. The team will be inviting partners in the church and the Islamic community to offer advice on what is needed to enrich Christian-Muslim relations and enhance the seminary’s related course offerings. They plan to hold two or three consultations during the year to bring people together to advise on different aspects of interfaith relations such as social justice, academics, and different forms of faith leadership.

As team leader LaHurd explained, “Beyond the impact of retirements at LSTC, this is an important time for re-thinking interreligious relations. When CCME was founded in 2006, many of us were just beginning to learn about other religions and to develop strategies for friendship and dialogue. Now, 12 years later, Christians, Muslims and others are focused also on showing solidarity for each other in the public arena and working together for the common good.”

During the 2018–2019 program year, CCME will continue to sponsor the Kristallnacht Service of Repentance and Remembrance, the Giving Thanks interfaith meal, and other regular events.

Remembering Bill Lesher

by Philip Hefner



Bill Lesher gave a keynote address at the 2014 LSTC Leadership Conference.

In the last weeks of his life, Bill Lesher spoke of the “immensity.” In a eulogy, his son, David, writes that the immensity was Bill’s “new word.” He was accustomed to focusing periodically on “new” words or phrases. As I think back over our 63 years of friendship, I think immensity was always central to Bill’s worldview. That made him exciting, inspirational, enjoyable to be with—and also puzzling and a bit mysterious. It’s what reminded us that no matter how close we were to Bill Lesher, no one possessed him; he lived every day in a larger space, with his eye on the immensity.

In his last letter, Bill wrote, “I think of how all of us, in our closest cadre of friends and colleagues, have lived committed for the cause of change (in all its variety of forms) and have poured out ourselves—no (or only a little) holding back. We knew it from the beginning, but the evidence has piled up along with the years; there is little doubt that we are living in a transitional time, a Kairos, an Axial Age.”

Immensity of social change

While most of us were seeking conventional internships, Bill found the possibility to intern with the World Council of Churches in Geneva, in the department of “rapid social change,” which put him in the vortex of Christian response to movements that were changing society around the world. He witnessed immensity in that setting.

As a parish pastor in St. Louis (1958–64) and Logan Square, Chicago, (1964–71), Bill was deeply involved in neighborhood social change and also in forming a coalition of churches in northwest Chicago that was committed not only to social change, but also new forms of ministry. This work in Logan Square led Bill back to his alma mater, the Lutheran School of Theology, in 1971, where he accepted a call to become professor of parish renewal.

Immensity of theological education

In 1973, after three years at LSTC, Bill’s world added another dimension of immensity when he was elected president of Pacific Lutheran Seminary in Berkeley, California. He returned to Chicago in 1979 to become the fourth president of LSTC until his retirement in 1997.

As theological educator, Bill Lesher’s vision of the immensity took on larger dimensions, impossible to describe in detail here. He worked to bring new coalitions of seminaries into existence. These coalitions expanded the world of every LSTC student and faculty member, toward hitherto unimagined seminary cooperation.

At the same time, he served the national church’s Board of Global Mission, where his vision of world Christianity grew. The curriculum and program of LSTC stepped into the immensity with the formation of four centers: for world mission, religion and science, Christian–Muslim interaction, and cross-cultural outreach. These centers were implanted in the ongoing program of the seminary, intended to continue beyond the work of the faculty members who may have been instrumental in establishing them—outliving Lesher himself.



Jean and Bill Lesher at his retirement reception in 1997



Leshner with Dick Jensen at a 1994 Covenant Cluster meeting

Immensity of interreligious understanding

After 19 years, Bill retired—transitioned is a better term—to become chair of the board of the Parliament of World Religions from 2003 until 2010. Until the last year of his life, he traveled around the world tirelessly and shaped a personal spirituality that was open to religions other than the Lutheran Christian faith in which he was rooted. In a 2009 magazine interview, he stated his vision: “The very existence of the interreligious movement is a massive change in the religious landscape of the world. ...(It) is an essential force for good that is helping humanity meet the challenges of the modern world.”

Bill Leshner had roots—he was a graduate of a Lutheran college and of the Maywood predecessor of LSTC. He also had wings—the imagination and the courage to soar into the Immensity and take us with him.

Philip Hefner is professor emeritus of systematic theology at LSTC and senior fellow of the Zygon Center of Religion and Science.



Jean and Bill Leshner at his inauguration as LSTC's fourth president

LSTC gives thanks for the life and witness of Professor Vítor Westhelle



Vítor Westhelle at LSTC's 2014 Commencement ceremony

Vítor Westhelle, professor of systematic theology at LSTC, died May 13 after living with cancer since early 2017. He was a deeply respected and revered theologian, colleague and mentor here and globally. The LSTC community gathered on May 14 and 15 for prayer services to honor Westhelle. A celebration of life service was held on May 17 in the Augustana Chapel at LSTC. He is survived by his wife of over 40 years, Christiane; three sons, Carlos Henrique, André, and Felipe; three daughters-in-law and two granddaughters.

“For me, one of the many remarkable things about Vítor was that he not only reflected the riches of global Lutheranism beyond a narrowly Euroamerican frame, but in turn contributed to that gift in ways that were always insightful, surprising, and graciously unsettling,” said James Nieman, president. “Knowing him and his impact for my entire life in teaching and administration, I am very saddened by his untimely death, but also very hopeful

that his impact on an emerging generation of scholars is enduring and profound.”

“The depths of Vítor’s language and his wry humor opened our hearts and minds to God’s presence in unexpected and ordinary places. We have been changed through knowing him and through contemplating his theological writings,” said Esther Menn, dean of academic affairs. “It is no wonder that LSTC students flocked to his courses. He reciprocated their regard through his remarkable dedication to all of his students, in particular to his numerous doctoral students.”

In a letter to Menn the week prior to his death, Westhelle announced his retirement from the faculty. In the letter, which he asked to have shared with the faculty, Westhelle continued his teaching vocation with a reflection on how he was learning life’s last and most difficult lesson of how to receive life as a gift. He also communicated the happy news that the executive council of Faculdades EST, the seminary that he left to come to LSTC, voted to grant him the prestigious title, Doctor *Honoris Causa* in Theology in Latin America.

Global impact

Westhelle’s impact on the global church cannot be underestimated. He was a prolific writer and editor who published works in English, Portuguese and Spanish, including 14 books and hundreds of articles and book chapters. Students familiar with his writing came to LSTC from around the world to study with Westhelle. His recent books, *The Scandalous God: The Use and Abuse of the Cross* (Fortress Press, 2006); *Eschatology and Space: The Lost Dimension in Theology, Past and Present* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and



In the classroom

Transfiguring Luther: The Planetary Promise of Luther's Theology, (Cascade Books, 2016), are examples of his deep and wide-ranging scholarship.

Westhelle was born January 25, 1952, in Taquara, Brazil. He began his theological studies in 1972 at the former Faculdade de Teologia da IECLB, now Faculdades EST, in São Leopoldo, RS. In 1977, the year he completed his bachelor's degree, he participated in the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Westhelle received a scholarship to study at LSTC and earned a ThM in 1980 and completed his PhD in systematic theology in 1984 while teaching at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary (now Luther Seminary) in St. Paul, Minn.

In 1985 Westhelle returned to Brazil and served as pastor of a 13-point parish in Paróquia Evangélica de Matelândia and as coordinator of the Commission on Land in Paraná working with those struggling for land and

justice. From 1989 to 1992 he was professor of systematic theology and ethics at Escola Superior de Teologia in São Leopoldo. He returned to LSTC in 1993 as associate professor of systematic theology and was named a full professor in 1999. He has served as visiting professor at the University of Natal, South Africa; University of Aarhus, Denmark; Gurukul Theological College and Research Institute, India; Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – UNISINOS, Brazil; ISEDET, Argentina; and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary), USA. From 2010–2016 he split his year between Chicago, Denmark and Brazil, serving as honorary professor of theology at the University of Aarhus and occupying the Chair of Luther Research at Escola Superior de Teologia as well as professor of systematic theology.



Westhelle was dedicated to his students. He is pictured with PhD graduate Yahu Vinayaraj, the Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Church and other dignitaries.



Westhelle in his own words*

**“It is a simple insight:
when God is in the water
it is worthwhile learning
how to swim.”**

“Dependence-Liberation-Justice” in *Justice and Justice*, Unpublished Manuscript of the Proceedings of the Justification and Justice Conference in Mexico City, Mexico, December 1985.

“*Anfechtung* means being in trial, probation, and tribulation, spiritual or otherwise. This is the ‘touchstone’ because you cannot do theology without *experiencing* cross and suffering and persecution. Prayer and meditation ought to lead to *Anfechtung* only so we may know that the Devil and his minions are indeed being confronted.”

“Luther’s *Theologia Crucis*” in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb et. al. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 165.

“Spouses, children, and friends of sailors waiting by the shore, or harbor, looking at departing vessels were a common sight. They would not take their gaze off the ships that were sailing away with their loved ones until they were in the offing. Up to that point the ships were still available to sight even if long out of reach. To the eye they were still available only waiting for their crossing into the offing. The journey had hardly begun, but for the sailor at sea, alike for those on the harbor it was a break with the familiar. The feeling of not *au fait* with what was in store was mutual. But different were the experiences. For those in the immensity of the ocean, already in the offing, there no longer was any point in staring back; the crossing was done, the unpredictable was in front of them; however, for those on shore it is a departure of dear ones while the quotidian life remained

a chartered territory... To this day, in small fishing villages around the world, wives of fisherman folk who had their husbands out in the sea stand on the shore, looking out into the horizon hoping and praying that their dear ones would get home safe. They are looking out for the boats in the offing. The phrase is used to express their lament and simultaneous expectation of a safe and happy reunion.”

Eschatology and Space (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 133

“But death and the gift that cannot be returned are the two sides of the same coin of *vita passiva*, or pure receptivity. In the moment one even tries to acknowledge the gift one is already destroying it, because it then enters into an economy of reciprocity. Jacques Derrida phrased it sharply: “If the gift appears or signifies itself, if it exists or if it is presently *as gift*, as what it is, then it is not, it annuls itself. Let us go to the limit: The truth of the gift (. . .) suffices to annul the gift.” This annulment is what we call life. Death is the condition that makes the gift possible and vice versa. Life wraps the gift and has a rendezvous with death. When Soren Kierkegaard contends that “the work of love in remembering one who is dead is a work of the most unselfish love,” because it eliminates every possibility of repayment,” he is also implying its reverse. The gift the dead receive in remembrance is a pure gift, because it cannot be repaid. Thus these, gift and death, are the *eschata par excellence*.”

Eschatology and Space (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 103-104.

A lecture given by Vitor Westhelle at the ELCA Teaching Theologians Conference in August 2017, “Reformation, Conquest and Circumnavigation: The Global Destiny of Luther’s Theology,” will appear in a forthcoming volume of essays being edited by Peter Vethanayagamony, associate professor of modern church history. In it Westhelle provides a strong criticism of a capitalist agenda in light of the economy as Westhelle sees it embraced by the Reformation.

*With thanks to students Tom Gaulke, Manoj Gunthoti, Baiju Markose, Vinod Wesley, Benjamin Taylor

The true quality of a theologian of the cross

by José David Rodríguez, Augustana Heritage Professor of Global Mission and World Christianity

This article first appeared in the blog We.Talk.We Listen. Conversations about Diversity on May 21

On Sunday, May 13, our Brazilian colleague at LSTC, Vítor Westhelle, joined the Church Triumphant. As Rev. Dr. Carmelo Santos (2002, MDiv; 2004, ThM; 201, PhD), one of Vítor's former students and now a colleague wrote recently on his Facebook page, we thank Vítor for introducing us to... *the liberating mystery of the cross and to the practice of the resurrection.*

Few theologians have given witness to this enigmatic experience that we will all face sooner or later, with the rational clarity and persuasion Vítor had—as demonstrated through his many lectures, books and articles. Still fewer have witnessed with their life to what Martin Luther described as the true quality of a theologian of the cross. The secret lies in the liberating experience that the practice of the resurrection grants as an unmerited gift to those who willingly and faithfully engage the challenges and risks that come with living in the context of the cross.

For Vítor this witness of faith took place not only in his role of teacher and scholar, but also—and consistently—as husband, father, friend, and colleague. As demonstrated by the testimony of his colleagues, friends and family during Vítor's excruciating struggle against cancer, his willingness to come to terms with this terminal condition with hope and endurance was a clear sign of his trust in the liberating mystery of the cross in the context of the power of the resurrection.

Now, as Santos also claims, *...we trust that Vítor rests in peace continuing his theological labors not like one who sees as a dim reflection in a mirror, but as one that sees face to face and knows as he is known.*

My relationship with Vítor and his family has run the span of approximately 40 years. We began our advanced studies in theology at LSTC in 1978. He came with Christians from Brazil; I came with my family from Puerto Rico. Throughout the years we became fellow students, close friends, compadres (I am the godfather of his son Carlos), lecturers at common international events and since the early '90s, dear colleagues at LSTC.

While my professional experience has led me to incur more administrative labors than Vítor, both of us continued our education in other international institutions of higher learning that enriched our vocations as teaching theologians. For Vítor it was the University of Tübingen in Germany; for me it was the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. Both of us are also ministers of Word and Sacrament and have had significant experience in parish ministry as well as social and political endeavors. Given the precipitous departure of Vítor from our midst, there will be a vacuum that no one among us will be able to fill.

The memorial service for Vítor celebrated at LSTC on May 17 brought together a great number of people whose lives have been profoundly impacted by the creative, scholarly, teaching, and pastoral labors of this extraordinary Latin American theologian. While the full range of contributions of towering figures like Vítor may only be acknowledged with the passing of time, the celebration at LSTC broke down barriers of time and space by including viewers (via livestream) in different geographical locations joining in the memorial celebration. This event reminds us that the relevance of faith in our times, rather than effacing, continues to be a present force of empowerment in the face of today's challenges with hope and resilience.

May God's grace, which filters through the fissures of rising walls of doubt and seemingly insurmountable challenges, continue to strengthen our resolve in witnessing to the true quality of a theologian of the cross.

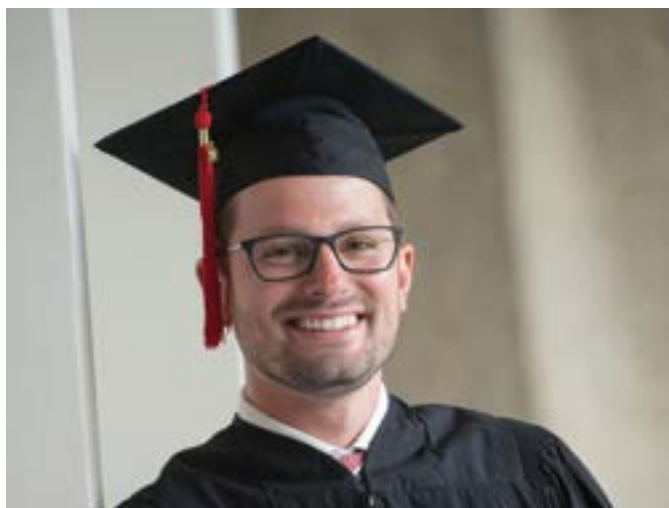


Westhelle shares a story at a lunchtime panel discussion at LSTC.

'Pastors have gifts for challenging times'

After four years of Public Church curriculum, MDiv graduate feels prepared

by Julie B. Sevig



Alex Clark

Alex Clark is headed to the Southeast Michigan Synod later this summer, a surprise considering what he and his wife Kelly Mack had imagined for his first call. But in his affable way he adds, "The assignment process, with plenty of prayer and discernment on all sides, is guided by the Holy Spirit."

And with that same philosophical, can-do spirit, he notes that it's only a short drive across his new synod. Clark, MDiv '18, is from the expansive prairie of the South Dakota Synod.

He doesn't talk about his experience at LSTC, or the future, without including Kelly. Married this past year, and on a delayed honeymoon in Tanzania and South Africa this summer, it's clear they'll be partners in ministry.

"Even if we didn't expect this choice [of synod assignment], we're excited," he said. "If you get to choose, it's not always as good as you think it might be either. Freedom can both disappoint us and lift us up."

He's grateful for how LSTC has prepared him for what's ahead, and says the culture of where they're going (the Detroit area) will be a good match for where he has been. He and Kelly love both city life and the outdoors. They've already noticed a millennial culture vibe in their new synod, a lively social context of anti-racism work, climate justice, community gardens and other opportunities for community organizing (Kelly's passion and expertise as well).

"We were either leaning westward toward mountains or to New England to the ocean and rolling forests. Above all, what we have learned is that we feel confident immersing ourselves in the local culture and environment, no matter where we land," he said. Where they'll land has since been determined: Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Ypsilanti, Mich.

Clark came to Hyde Park and LSTC for the first time when attending orientation for Young Adults in Global Mission: "I fell in love with Hyde Park, and it felt like a good fit."

While here, he helped launch LSTC's bike rental program, and worked maintenance. He saw the underbelly of some of the seminary building's structure problems, working outdoors on the grounds crew whenever possible and putting his handy person resources to good use—skills honed from four summers at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in Montana.

Public Church first-timers

Clark's MDiv class is the first to complete the new public church curriculum, and he credits professors Richard Perry and Ray Pickett with their influence: "Perry taught me ethics, Pickett community organizing based on the New Testament and Pauline letters. Combined, it was interesting, good, confusing and challenging."

The curriculum opened up new ways of looking at public witness and public ministry, but also how important prioritizing worship, liturgy and community life are to him. He's thankful for how contextual education, internship and clinical pastoral education rounded out his seminary experience.

Perhaps most influential was Professor Kadi Billman: "She taught me a deeper well for compassion and pastoral care, smoothed my rough edges, and taught me to hold other people's stories sacred. Her course in death and bereavement was foundational for me."

From Professor Kurt Hendel he learned about Lutherans and all reformers who were challenged by society to articulate their faith. Hendel's Confessions course "put my faith to the test."

Clark says he's entering this new stage of adult life aware of the importance of self-care, and with realistic expectations for ministry—that "lives are at stake" and with a sobering reality that we have less time in life than we realize.

He brings his awareness and attentiveness of personal and systemic health into the future, hoping that synods receiving new leaders offer a hospitable welcome and thoughtful work in matching pastors to congregation.

"Pastors have gifts for challenging times," he said, noting society's whirling corporate and individual greed. He expects to feel a sense of sacred responsibility when ordained, and looks forward to public church ministry in Southeast Michigan and wherever the future takes him: "I feel lifted up and chosen by the church to be a leader, but I won't take this confidence for granted."

Roller coaster ride of faith leads to public church ministry

by Jan Boden



Fanya Burford-Berry

You may recognize Fanya (pronounced fa-N-ya) Burford-Berry. For the last several years, she has graciously allowed LSTC to use her picture to promote the new public church curriculum. Her picture is on the homepage of LSTC's website, featured in ads, and it graces LSTC's admissions materials. Although she was one of the first Public Church Fellows, it's ironic that Burford-Berry didn't earn her master of divinity degree through the public church curriculum. She did, however, graduate with the first class that did. It hasn't been false advertising by LSTC. Burford-Berry's experience working both in and alongside the church is a perfect example of what LSTC means when we talk about public church.

But she nearly didn't go to seminary at all. When she did, it wasn't to become a pastor. Burford-Berry enrolled as a master of arts in ministry (MAM) student at LSTC in 2012.

"I wasn't sure about my call, about being a pastor," she said. "Being a pastor requires preaching and good preaching needs vulnerability and risk-taking. I am an advocate for the causes I care about. However, my relationship with God is like a roller coaster ride with hairpin turns and loop-de-loops. And that is hard to preach."

Teacher, leader, minister

Burford-Berry grew up in the Pentecostal tradition and was baptized in a Roman Catholic parish when she was 17. It was the priest of her parish in Joliet, Ill., who told her she should go to seminary.

"I asked him why, since I couldn't become a priest, and he said that it would just be good for my edification. I resisted that."

With a degree in education, Burford-Berry taught middle school for several years until her job was eliminated due to funding cuts.

The same priest who encouraged her to go to seminary invited her to apply for a position leading youth ministry for the Catholic parishes in Naperville, Ill. She organized events, trained volunteers and directed programming for 800 middle and high school students in that affluent community 30 miles west of Chicago. "It was exciting and exhausting work," she said.

After seven years she was ready for a change. Burford-Berry spent the next year traveling across the country with Camfel Productions to create "best life decision" videos for middle school children. "We visited schools from California to Maine and I saw how uneven they are because funding depends on the tax base. Some schools had sound booths where kids could lay down music tracks. Other schools could barely afford toilet paper in the bathrooms."

Aide, director, organizer

The next lap of Burford-Berry's roller coaster ride led her to work simultaneously as an aide in the mental health unit of a hospital and as executive director of a community center in Joliet. In both places she became keenly aware of food justice issues. She had a chance to work on this issue again as an LSTC Public Church Fellow with the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) on Chicago's Southside.

It was the next part of the ride that finally led her to LSTC. Burford-Berry used her passion for justice, her experience as an educator and her knowledge of the church when she took a position as an educational organizer with SOUL (Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation). A number of LSTC grads were involved with SOUL and the offices were just a few blocks from LSTC.

Burford-Berry also joined Holy Family Church, where Pastor Maxine Washington (1986, MDiv; 1992, DMin) was serving, and saw a "Black woman pastor who had sound theology." She had never forgotten the priest's words, "You should go to seminary," and decided to check out LSTC's programs.

God's other plans

Burford-Berry was almost done with the requirements for the MAM degree when she decided instead to seek ordination. Prior to starting her internship for the MAM, she met with Sarah Stumme (1998, MDiv), who is in charge of candidacy for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

"Pastor Stumme told me that I should take a preaching class, that my voice was needed in the church, and that I should consider getting an MDiv instead."

By that time, LSTC had adopted the Public Church curriculum which appealed to Burford-Berry for a number of reasons.

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Empowering women in a new church

Fatima Bass Thomas and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Gambia

by Jan Boden



Fatima Bass Thomas

As a child growing up in a peasant family in the Gambia, Fatima Bass Thomas dreamed of going to school, but wasn't sure that would be possible. She was told that girls didn't need to go to school because they would get married, take care of the household, have children, and be dependent on their husbands. At age 11, she got her chance to begin school. She has been a learner and a teacher ever since. On May 20, she earned a master of theology degree at LSTC. She will return to the Gambia this summer to continue her ministry in the growing Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Gambia (ELCG).

"It is God, it is really God who made all of this possible," Bass Thomas said, as she reflected on her own journey and that of the ELCG.

What it takes to establish a new church

Faith and education play a large role in the life of Bass Thomas and her husband, Samuel Thomas. While she taught first primary and then middle-school grades, Samuel was principal of a school a day's journey from their home.

He also was an evangelist for Lutheran congregations forming in the Gambia and had a dream of starting a Lutheran denomination. Eventually he was asked to choose between his work as an evangelist and his work as a principal. He chose to become a full-time evangelist in 2005 for the ELCG. Bass Thomas fully supported her husband's decision and stepped up to the task of being the breadwinner for the family. In addition to teaching and caring for their three children, she made and sold *olele*,

bean and fish pies, to supplement their income.

Perseverance is a necessary quality when starting a new church. The ELCG was growing but did not have an ordained minister to baptize and preside at communion. When they asked to have someone come to do this they were sent a Missouri-Synod pastor who changed many things in the church. The young church split apart and the ELCG needed to start again.

In 2007, both Samuel and Fatima received scholarships to attend seminary in Tanzania. When they returned to the Gambia in 2011, they needed to begin the church a third time.

Ordained in 2012, they were now able to baptize and give communion. With the help of evangelists, congregations grew across the Gambia and the church has now expanded to the country of Guinea Bissau.

Empowering women

"The Church Council decided that I will serve the churches in Guinea Bissau when I return from LSTC because I speak the local language," Bass Thomas said. Last year 250 people were baptized and just a few months into this year, 50 have already been baptized.

Bass Thomas is passionate about empowering women. In the Gambia, expectations are not very different from when she was a girl.

"Most women are reliant on their husbands and the culture believes women should be silent," she said. "I want to make connections with women in the Scriptures so they feel empowered and see that they have something to give to the church."

One way Bass Thomas did this was by asking the women to each give a small amount of money when they met. Twelve of the women were chosen to receive \$100 loans each from the collected money to establish a business.

"Some women sell fish, some start gardens and sell vegetables, some sell cashew nuts or tie-and-dye," Bass Thomas said. "After three months, they pay back the money with five percent interest. Another group of women get loans to do the same thing and a portion is contributed to the church."

Bass Thomas is excited to share what she learned at LSTC when she encounters those who use Bible passages to criticize her efforts to empower women.

She said, in her cultural setting, "You have to go slowly with them. When you want to leap high, they may block you. They are using the Scripture to block women. I want to bring back all the books and all I learned at LSTC that look at those Bible passages. I want to show that this is not right, this is not the whole message of those passages."

Finding intersections

PhD student combines nonviolence and Revelation, campus living and community study

by Julie B. Sevig



Jeffrey Meyers

Jeffrey Meyers is an unofficial ambassador for both the ACTS consortium and LSTC residential living. It was LSTC's relationship with the Association of Chicago Theological Schools that drew him here, and it was on-campus living that has enriched his stay since arriving five years ago.

"I took half my classes at other ACTS schools," he said. "The breadth of opportunities the consortium provides was the primary reason I came here."

In May, Meyers was awarded his PhD in Theology with distinction. His dissertation was "Visions of Resistance: Nonviolent Counter Discourse and the Book of Revelation." In 2015, he received his ThM from LSTC.

His goal is to teach theology full time, and his specialty is the intersection of peace and justice studies and religion.

It was after taking Barbara Rossing's class on Revelation and apocalyptic literature that he landed on his dissertation topic. He also drew on both theological and secular theories of non-violence. Vitor Westhelle was his advisor and Rossing a significant professor for him. Meyers served as her teaching assistant the past two years. In Westhelle's final instructions before he died just prior to commencement, he had asked Rossing to be the one to ceremoniously place Meyer's hood on him.

Other professors have also had important roles, of course. Meyers has been impressed with the willingness of faculty at other schools in the consortium to "go the extra mile" for students. Jennifer McBride, a professor at McCormick Theological Seminary, served on his dissertation committee, for instance.

"That's just the culture in Hyde Park," he said. "Faculty are willing to work with you. It surprised me how much they work together." He believes the schools could do even more if the administrations would also work more closely together.

Like other recent PhD graduates hoping to teach, Meyers is open to relocating to other cities/schools and to teaching in a variety of related areas.

In the meantime, and over this summer, you'll likely find him in the place he's spent considerable time since arriving at LSTC: working in the JKM Library. He started at the circulation desk, where he still works, and serves as the technical services assistant, a job focused on book processing and repair.

JKM, shared by LSTC and McCormick, has an unusually large collection for the size of the two seminaries. Meyers spends much of his time processing materials that haven't yet been cataloged—some dating back to when the original five seminaries merged to form LSTC 50 years ago.

Many of the books are old and falling apart, requiring special glue, special tape and a gentle touch. "Most of what I work on dates back to the 1800s, with some as old as the 1600s," he said. Although most master's students usually don't have an interest in checking out these older books, they're restored and cataloged for their historical value.

Meyers' life at LSTC has extended beyond the library and classes to the community. He has appreciated the distinctive feature of LSTC as a residential seminary, which allows PhD students in particular to learn what others are studying and develop a certain kind of camaraderie.

"LSTC does the residential seminary experience really well," he said. "Having campus-owned housing right next door, the Refectory as a community focal point, and chapel four days a week—in the era of online education, few seminaries have such a vibrant campus community."

Commencement 2018

On May 20, 59 students graduated from LSTC. The Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin, bishop of the Southwest California Synod, preached at the Holy Communion and Commencement held at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church.

In addition to the conferring of degrees, the LSTC faculty presented Ingrid Christiansen with the Confessor of Christ Award for her life's work on justice and service for marginalized people in society, with a special emphasis on women in sex work, poor families, and persons facing the death penalty. They also presented the Community of the Cross Award to Faith in Place for its work to empower people of all faiths in Illinois to be leaders in caring for the Earth by providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities. Read more about the award recipients in the News section of LSTC's website.

Prizes for scholarship and preaching were also awarded during the ceremony. Four students shared the Bible and Lutheran Faith Prize for their research papers: Noah Dwyer, Hesron Sihombing, Samson Samuel and Timothy Geislinger. Chrisida Anandan, Alexis Witt and Cami Brubaker received the Edgar Krentz Award for Biblical Interpretation. Ian Coen-Frei and Christina Jindra shared the Lutheran Confessions Prize. Preston Fields and Bridget Jones received the James Kenneth Echols Prize for Excellence in Preaching.

Evan Mayhew and Alexis Witt presented the senior class gift, a prayer labyrinth and books to aid in use of the labyrinth for spiritual formation.

Congratulations to the Class of 2018!



Professor Barbara Rossing presided and MDiv student Daniel Beirne assisted at Commencement Eucharist



Patrick and Kathryn (Katie) Freund are one of three married couples in the class of 2018.

Congratulations to LSTC's newest alumni/ae!

Master of Arts

Sarah Coen-Frei

Master of Arts in Ministry

Kari Olsen
Alissa Oleson
Catherine Swanson

Master of Arts (Theological Studies)

Rhonda Hill
Cheryl Hoth
Malina Keaton

Master of Divinity

Hans Becklin – will be assigned fall 2018
Marissa Becklin – will be assigned fall 2018
Erin Coleman Branchaud – Metropolitan Chicago
Fanya Burford-Berry – will be assigned fall 2018
Megan Casper – Eastern North Dakota
Rita William Chirala – Ecumenical MDiv
Alex Clark – Southeast Michigan
Joshua Evans – Metropolitan Chicago



Ingrid Christiansen, Confessor of Christ Award recipient

Preston Fields – Northern Illinois
Kathryn Freund – will be assigned fall 2018
Patrick Freund – will be assigned fall 2018
Elizabeth Frey – Lower Susquehanna
Amanda “Day” Hefner – Nebraska
Bridget Jones – Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evan Mayhew – Northern Illinois
David Petersen – will be assigned fall 2018
Sharayah Robinson – Rocky Mountain
Eric Schaefer – Metropolitan Chicago
Kyle Seibert – New England
Kyle Symanski – Eastern North Dakota
Beverly Voss – South Dakota
Dennis Waugh – will be assigned fall 2018
Joseph Wilkinson – Greater Milwaukee
Alexis Witt – Virginia

Master of Theology

Hassan Aly
Chrisida Anandan
Adama Isa
Di Kang
Si Khaw
Hery Andrianotahina Naivoson
Mangasa Saor Parlindungan
Fatima Bass Thomas

Doctor of Ministry – Ecumenical

Ashley Nengsuanthang
Phaipi



Alexis Witt and Evan Mayhew present the class gift.

Doctor of Ministry in Preaching

Carolyn Hellerich
Eeva Kettunen
Lars Viper

Doctor of Philosophy

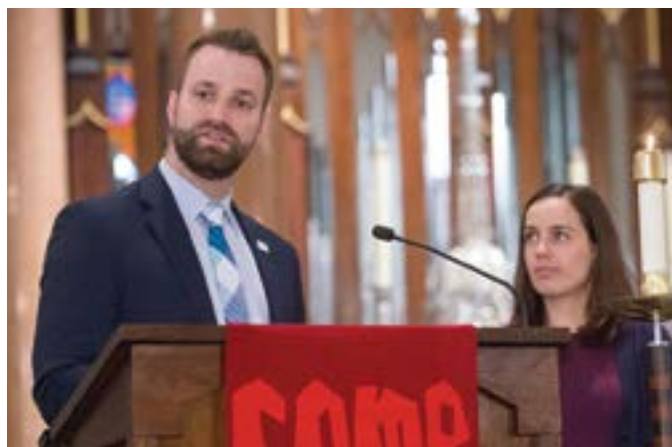
Gretchen Freese
Dale Ann Gray
Chingboi Guite
Seo Young Lee
Jeffrey Meyers
Saw Solomon Opehtoo



President Nieman congratulates MDiv graduate Marissa Becklin



MDiv grads Bridget Jones, Dennis Waugh, Day Hefner, Kyle Symanski, Eric Schaefer and Sharayah Robinson



Chris Saunders, Faith in Place, accepts the Community of the Cross Award.



Carolyn Hellerich receives the DMin in Preaching degree



Master of arts grads Sarah Coen-Frei, Cheryl Hoth, Kari Olsen, Malina Keaton and Rhonda Hill (with MDiv Kyle Symanski photo-bombing)



MDiv grads Josh Evans and Preston Fields with Bishop R. Guy Erwin



ThM grads Hery Andrianotahina Naivoson and Mangasa Saor Parlindungan



PhD grad Saw Solomon Opehtoo and ThM grad Si Khaw



PhD grad Chingboi Guite and DMin grad Ashley Phaipi celebrate with their daughters and friends.



ThM grad Hassan Aly congratulates MDiv grad Alex Clark.

Terry Baeder: ready to practice what he preaches

by Julie B. Sevig



Terry Baeder with fellow retirees Richard Perry Jr. and Michael Shelley

In retirement, Terry Baeder will do exactly what he's been telling his students: immerse himself in the context. Baeder, director of field education for the past five years, retired the end of June.

When students go to their Ministry in Context (MIC) or internship sites, or leave seminary as pastors and leaders, he tells them to take several months to study their surroundings, learning from their context and not making any huge decisions.

That's exactly how Baeder is approaching retirement. Since he doesn't really have any hobbies, his only plan is to take an advanced math class (he's always loved math), read books he doesn't have to read, and travel. He's looking forward to watching retirement unfold and paying attention to its context.

When Baeder first came to LSTC in 2008 he served as dean of students and pastor to the community. He took on other roles, including director of the MA and MDiv

programs and coordinator of the Templeton Grant to develop religion and science modules across the curriculum. He retired in 2013, but was asked to stay on directing field education on a part time basis.

"I've loved all the positions I've held. I love taking on new challenges, but they have to be new," he said. "I've been the same throughout my ministry, five or so years and then I pass it off to someone else and move on. It works for me. I really love new and challenging things."

Matchmaker

Matching students to solid field education sites was new and challenging to be sure. Two driving forces that have created challenges in recent years have been the public church curriculum and the importance of sending students to Reconciling in Christ congregations.

MIC sites are mostly in the Chicago area so they are urban and provide a variety of ministries. But they're also suburban or even further out if being matched with commuter students. Students are encouraged to visit a variety of sites during their first year, and introduce themselves to the pastors. In MIC they're placed, if possible, at a congregation with characteristics different from what is most familiar to them.

"Throughout ministry they'll continually find themselves in new contexts. It is good for them to experience a new and different type of ministry than what they grew up with," Baeder said. "They'll never learn about different unless they do something different. The beauty of being in Chicago is the multiplicity of ministry sites."

Internship and MIC sites vary from year to year based on the interests and needs of each. Also, the public church curriculum has caused a change in the way the seminary does field education, he said.

"We're always looking for different sites that will provide meaningful ministry. For public church, we want congregations that are invested in communities and neighborhoods, for instance."

Students go all over the country and even internationally through Global Mission (Horizon sites) on internships. One challenge, and important partnership, is working with Advancement to raise funds to help supplement internships at congregations which may not be able to afford interns, he said.

Watching progress

On this, and other matters, Baeder is eager to watch LSTC's progress.

"Throughout my ministry I have worked with the most wonderful, incredible people, but this place tops the list," he said. "To have the opportunity to be engaged with world-class faculty has been absolutely astounding. It's



Hanging around: Baeder, known for his great sense of humor, volunteered to be taped to the Refectory wall as a fundraiser for the flag football team's trip to the 2013 Luther Bowl.

been an honor to be part of it, and to work with the staff, which doesn't get the credit they deserve. They work as a team and trust each other and use their particular gifts in profound ways.

"I will miss the people the most," he continued. "I've had the unbelievable privilege to work closely with students, watching them immerse themselves day to day in the reality of ministry. I tell them what a privilege it is to be in ministry as a pastor, with access to people no one else has at the most vulnerable times in their lives. They are invited into their sacred space. Students have allowed me to do the same in their lives."

In addition to the people, Baeder will miss the challenge of change.

"It will be fun to watch from a distance. I have loved the direction we're going with the new curriculum, the care we've put into choosing new faculty. There are people who provide stability and new folks, and staff. We'll keep moving in the right direction. It's a hopeful sign. The church is in good hands, when I look at who we are and who we're becoming."

Perry, Shelley retire

On June 30, the Rev. Dr. Richard Perry Jr. and the Rev. Dr. Michael Shelley retired from their varied service at LSTC. Perry, (1977, MDiv; 1992, ThM; 1996, PhD) joined the faculty after completing his PhD in 1996. Shelley (1980, ThM) returned to LSTC in 2003 as a visiting scholar.

Perry brought to the classroom his experience as a pastor in Gary, Ind., as director of inclusive ministries for the North Carolina Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, and as director for Black ministries for the ELCA. His teaching has centered on urban and cross-cultural ministries, making connections with social ethics and appropriate responses by the Christian community to issues affecting all of us. He has published numerous articles, essays, book chapters and theological resources, most recently on African American Christian bioethics.

His service to the wider church includes co-chairing the 1999 International Planning Committee for the Conference of International Black Lutherans, presenting at the first consultation between African and Africa-American Lutheran theologians in Harare, Zimbabwe; and chairing the working group on racism in society and the church at the Lutheran World Federation's Seventh Assembly in Budapest, Hungary. He served on the ELCA's Task Force on Genetics and as a board member of Lutherans Restoring Creation. He has also served on the board of directors of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois.

Perry first announced his "phased" retirement in 2016 and has been invited to continue working on special projects and teaching assignments at LSTC.

Shelley's service at LSTC began after 24 years of serving as a pastor, professor, and seminary administrator in Cairo, Egypt. At LSTC he was called on to serve in many roles.

From 2004-2007, Shelley directed the Doctor of Ministry Program. He became director of A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice (CCME) in 2007. For the next two years he also served as associate director of Advanced Studies. In 2009 he was elected dean and vice president for academic affairs and associate professor of Christian-Muslim Studies. He completed his tenure as dean in 2013. He continued to teach and direct CCME until his retirement.

Shelley and his wife, Joanne, are moving back to their home in Ohio this summer.

The LSTC community and wider church give thanks for the wisdom, collegiality and friendship of our retiring colleagues, Terry Baeder, Richard Perry Jr., and Michael Shelley.

Sarah Stegemoeller: Distinguished for service—past and future

by Julie B. Sevig



Sarah Stegemoeller

When Sarah Stegemoeller talks about LSTC, and the church, she reaches back and pushes forward. Her connection to the seminary goes back decades, but these days she looks forward—for her grandchildren. She wants the future church to be one which speaks to Harris, 2, and his baby sister, Maeve, one that walks with them long after Sarah and her husband, Mark, are gone.

That's one reason she's intent on supporting a seminary which produces leaders for the church.

"I find a curriculum built around public church so exhilarating," she says. "As a lawyer, as a person always involved in social justice issues, this is important to me. LSTC is developing church leaders equipped to publicly witness to the gospel and engage fully in the heartaches and triumphs of communities where they are called to serve.

"We are counting on LSTC to continue to train leaders for this more public church, leaders who can witness boldly to Jesus' love and forgiveness in ways that will speak to all the baby Harris and Maevies in the world."

At LSTC's leadership banquet in May, Stegemoeller was presented with the Distinguished Service Award. She joked, "I think I may have received this honor too early—I haven't delivered yet."

Stegemoeller will have her chance to deliver. She and her husband are co-chairing the seminary's Go Forth Campaign that will enter its public phase next spring.

They are well-equipped for the task, of course. Both are pastors' kids; their fathers were classmates at Concordia Seminary (Missouri-Synod) in St. Louis. While attending law school in St. Louis she was a member of Bethel Lutheran, a congregation also attended by a number of Concordia and Seminex professors. When she and Mark moved to Chicago so he could attend law school, she was tapped to serve on the Seminex board which ultimately negotiated its merger with LSTC in 1986.

In 1994, she left her practice of law to become the first executive vice president of LSTC, which she did for four years until their family moved to London for Mark's work. They returned in 2002 and settled in California, which is where she was when asked her to serve on LSTC's board of directors. She did so from 2008 to 2016, serving as chair three of those years.

An honest look

For someone with no historic connection to LSTC, she marvels that she's been involved with the seminary more than half of her life. When receiving the Distinguished Service Award she introduced her husband and then called LSTC her "second true love."

"I've seen the school as both an insider and outsider," she says, adding that during the years she was less involved, she was still a financial supporter.

Her involvement, of course, has given her an honest look at LSTC, and a clear vision of its needs, including the challenges of its property.

She embraces President James Nieman's description of the school as "a community to form leaders to form community," but is keenly aware that LSTC's valuable but aging housing assets, and residential seminary emphasis, come with financial implications.

"This is a place where students are equipped with skills for local leadership, for spiritual nurture, and for robust witness to the love of Jesus in all the places where the church may be found. Our church, our world, desperately needs those leaders—as many as LSTC can equip," she said.

As Stegemoeller's remarks drew to a close during the leadership banquet, she made her usual bold witness for LSTC and plea for financial support. And then she did what is congruent with how she has been since childhood, when her grandmother sent her a birthday dollar and her parents insisted she save one dime and give another to Sunday school.

"I have met so many generous donors over the years who have been real game changers for this school. Growing up as two preachers' kids, Mark and I could never in our wildest dreams imagine we would ever have the resources to do something like that for a cause we cared about. We want to try to emulate these partners in an equally impactful way by giving \$1 million to LSTC through a current and planned gift as part of the Go Forth Campaign and as a challenge to others to make support of this school a priority. Ours is not the largest gift ever given to LSTC, but it is by far the largest we have ever given, and it stands as our tangible endorsement of the critical mission of this school to equip visionary leaders to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope you will join us."



Sarah Stegemoeller with family and friends

Gospel Choir Concert & Giving Day raise money, lift spirits



The combined LSTC Gospel and Reunion Choirs led by Dr. Keith Hampton

Within 10 days in April, LSTC was alive with spirit and fundraising.

On April 8, the annual Gospel Choir Concert raised nearly \$13,000. The choir uses its benefit concert to support the Grover Wright and the Carole A. Burns Scholarships. The goal of the concert in this 30th year had been to raise enough to provide full-time tuition to a Grover Wright recipient and half-time to a Carole A. Burns recipient.

The weekend event allowed 13 alumni choir members to reconnect with the choir. They learned the songs in a day and sang at the concert, along with other special guests. The concert played to a full house and was live streamed on Facebook. Alum Jason Chesnut and Ankos Films produced both a teaser video and full concert video.

Chesnut also produced video for Giving Day.

More than \$52,000 was raised during LSTC's first-ever online Giving Day (#lstcgives18) on April 18. Donations rolled in from alumni, family and friends, staff and students, faculty and board members—250 donors who gave to support students via the Annual Fund.

And LSTC had fun doing it. The day was filled with Facebook updates, live-streamed events, and interviews with staff, faculty and students. Throughout the day and across the country (and beyond) people changed their social media profile photos to reflect the whimsy of the day, and encouraged one another to give.

There were class challenges, state challenges and challenges from bishops. There was even a Jimmy's Challenge matching donations of those who have frequented Woodlawn Tap.



2018 Grover Wright Scholarship recipient Nash Shaffer and his mother



Giving Day mastermind Jennifer Thomas



Rickey Copley-Spivey shares a Giving Day update from Cheryl Hoth and Clyde Walter on Facebook

Faculty

Klaus-Peter Adam, associate professor of Old Testament, presented “Love Thy Neighbor—Overcoming Hatred in the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26)” at the “Hatred and Love: Jewish Conceptions of personal hatred and public love in antiquity and modernity” conference at the University of Chicago Divinity School in February.



Klaus-Peter Adam

Javier Alanís, executive director and associate professor of Theology, Culture, and Mission: Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, published “Listening to Immigrant Voices Cruz-ando la Frontera (Cross-walking the Border)” in the April 2018 issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*.

Kurt K. Hendel, Bernard, Fischer, Westberg Distinguished Ministry Professor Emeritus of Reformation History, led a four-session adult forum series, “What does faith have to do with it?” at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hinsdale, Ill., in February. He also preached for the ordination of Kyle Seibert

at Zion Lutheran Church in Muscatine, Iowa, in March and made a presentation on “The Spiritual Quest” for the men’s breakfast group at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Naperville, Ill., in May. From February 2017 through January 2018 he made 22 presentations, most of them related to the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

Hendel published “The Smalcald Articles,” in *The Annotated Luther*. Vol. 2. *Word and Faith*, edited by Kirsi I. Stjerna (2015, Fortress Press); articles on “Bugenhagen, Johannes” and “Ordained Ministry” in *Encyclopedia of Martin Luther and the Reformation*, edited by Mark A. Lamport (2017, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers).

Edgar Krentz, professor emeritus of New Testament, preached at Montgomery Place, Chicago, in January and March. He also taught a six-week course there on Greco-Roman religion in Luke-Acts and gave a presentation on church architecture in March.

Carol Schersten LaHurd, distinguished affiliate professor and educational outreach consultant for a Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, published “Fifty years of American polarization and the changing roles of faith communities,” in *Dialog* <https://doi.org/10.1111/dial.12373>. Her article “Shalom Comes First: Replacing Claims of Absolute Truth with Absolute Trust in God,” appeared in the December 2017 issue of *Gather Magazine*.

Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament, was a panelist for the film “Shifting Sands,” at the One Earth Film Fest at the University of Chicago in February. The film chronicles the Indiana Dunes, and early environmental community organizing to protect this landscape. In March, Rossing was also part of a panel of respondents for the film screening of “Almost Sunrise,” sponsored in part by the ELCA Federal Chaplaincies. Also that month, she delivered the plenary keynote address “Ecology and the Book of Revelation” at the Central States regional meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Columbia, Mo. In April, she delivered a lecture, “On Earth as in Heaven: Biblical Ecology

for an Eco-Reformation” at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill. In May, she presented “CreationCare: Faith to Action” at the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center, an event for the Northern Illinois Synod.

Benjamin Stewart, Gordon A. Braatz Associate Professor of Worship and director of advanced studies, was co-presenter with Marty Haugen for the keynote address, “(Re)forming the Singing Body: How Luther’s Approach to Music Can Renew Catholic and Protestant Worship,” that began the Gregorian Institute of America (GIA) 2017 Fall Institute, held at LSTC. The conference commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. In January,



On April 27, Ed Krentz taught the final class in his 65-year career. It was a Greek text study with PhD student Yoseob Song. Faculty members surprised Krentz with an impromptu party. He shared a few stories and then dismissed them so he could get back to teaching. Ed recalled that when he started teaching “student bodies were all male, the church was optimistically growing after WWII.” Over the years, curricular emphases and academic calendars changed and theological interests, too. “How they will serve parish ministry is yet to be seen,” he said. “I have had a wonderful life in seminary teaching, fortunate and blessed by God.”



“Hidden writing in ancient desert monastery manuscripts,” an article by Fleur McDonald for the BBC (bbc.co.uk/news/business-44144527) features LSTC faculty and students who last Spring hiked up Mt. Sinai. McDonald, the journalist, went with them. From left, MDiv students Makayla Marinack and Adam Dowd, Father Justin, Nancy Arnison of the Theological Book Network, PhD student Yoseob Song, Professors Barbara Rossing and Esther Menn.

Stewart presented “Liturgy and the Anti-Institutional (R) age” at the 2018 Lutheran caucus of the North American Academy of Liturgy in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, where he also served as convener of the Ecology and Liturgy Seminar. Later that month, Augustana College (Rock Island) hosted a teaching session at Holden Village in Washington, “A Conversation with Author Benjamin Stewart.” In January Stewart also completed his training through Earth Traditions and became a certified death midwife, a non-medical end-of-life care provider often called to serve at home funerals and

natural burials.

In April Stewart attended and was a worship leader for the 2018 Association of Theological Schools Roundtable Seminar for Midcareer Faculty, in Orlando, Fla. He also was on the advisory council for the 70th Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University, where he introduced plenary speaker Bishop Craig Satterlee (LSTC Adjunct Professor of Homiletics) and introduced and presented Rev. Liv Larson Andrews (2006, MDiv) with the 2018 Emerging Leader Award.

Gordon Straw, associate professor and Cornelsen

Chair for Spiritual Formation and candidacy coordinator, delivered a keynote address, “The (Dis)Comforting God: Suffering and a Theology of the Cross,” to the Lutheran Student Movement Gathering at LSTC on New Year’s Day. In February Straw attended the meeting of ELCA Seminary Coordinators of Candidacy to discuss areas of common concern related to the candidacy process. In February he spoke about the Cornelsen Chair for Spiritual Formation at the banquet of the LSTC Foundation Board of Directors, and was an adult forum speaker on the topic of “Questions

You Were Afraid to Ask” at Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest, Ill. In March he served as retreat leader for the Midwest Lutheran Volunteer Corps Spring Retreat at Sugar Creek Bible Camp, in Perryville, Wis., where he led participants in the practice of “Spirituality for the Sake of Community.” In April, he was a presenter at the Western Social Science Association annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, for the discussion “Is Vine Deloria Jr’s Critique of Christianity Still Valid?” He was a workshop leader and the liturgist for Evening Prayer at the 2018 Institute of Liturgical Studies at

Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Ind.; and a workshop leader for the churchwide office's Division for Mission unit.

Mark Swanson, Harold A. Vogelaar Professor of Christian-Muslim Studies and Interfaith Relations, in January taught "Christian-Muslim Hybridity in a Medieval Copto-Arabic Sermon" [in Arabic], in Dr. Wageeh Mikhail's Diploma Program in Christian Arabic Studies in Cairo, Egypt. He also gave a

public lecture, "The Way to Perfection: Stories from Buṭrus al-Sadamantī" [in Arabic], sponsored by the Center for Middle Eastern Christian Studies and given at the Evangelical Theological Seminary, Cairo. While in Cairo, he preached at the Evangelical Churches of Giza, Ayn Shams (Cairo), and Rod al-Farag (Cairo). Swanson published: "Scripture Interpreting the Church's Story: Biblical Allusions" in the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*. In *Exegetical Crossroads: Understanding*

Scripture in Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Pre-Modern Orient, edited by Georges Tamer (2018, De Gruyter).

Peter Vethanayagamy, associate professor of church history, in February led an adult forum, "A Glimpse of the Changing Landscape of World Christianity," and "The Recent Trends and Shifts in Indian Christianity" at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Wheaton, Ill. Vethanayagamy preached at New Life Lutheran Church in Bolingbrook, Ill., in April.

Vítor Westhelle, professor of Systematic Theology, published "The Distinction of Régimes and Institutional Spheres in Latin American Context," in *Angewandtes Luthertum? Die Zwei-Reiche-Lehre als theologische Konstruktion in politischen Kontexten des 20. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Jürgen Kampmann and Hans Otte (2017, Gütersloher Verlagshaus).



Gordon J. Straw with friend Jonathan Strandjord after receiving the honorary doctorate

Straw receives honorary doctorate

Gordon J. Straw received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity during commencement exercises at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, on Sunday, May 20.

"Gordon has been an engaged advocate for theological education throughout the ELCA, including among ethnic specific communities," said the Rev. Dr. Craig L. Nesson, Wartburg's Academic Dean and Professor of Contextual Theology and Ethics and The William D. Streng Professor for the Education and Renewal of the Church. "His support for lay schools for ministry and the education of the universal priesthood of all believers has been exemplary. We thank God for his ongoing partnership in theological education as professor at LSTC and celebrate the awarding of this doctoral degree at Wartburg Theological Seminary."

Straw earned a master of theology degree from LSTC in 1997 and has completed all coursework for a PhD in systematic theology. He holds a master of divinity degree from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

1984

Kathryn “Kit” Kleinhans (Christ Seminary–Seminex, MDiv) published “Easter: The best news in the world” in the April issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Wayne N. Miller (MDiv) on October 31, 2017, signed a renewed covenant with Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago’s Catholic archdiocese, on behalf of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. The original covenant was signed in 1989 by Cardinal Joseph Bernadine and Bishop Sherman G. Hicks. In his remarks published as “People of promise” in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod supplement in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*, Miller affirms the shared commitment of the archdiocese and the synod to “stand side by side to work for peace, to stand against violence in all its forms, and to witness boldly to the sanctity of life.”

1997

Caryn Riswold (ThM; 2000, PhD) will join the Wartburg College faculty as a professor of religion serving as the McCoy Family Distinguished Chair in Lutheran Heritage and Mission. Her appointment begins with the 2018–19 academic year.

2000

Mladen Turk (ThM; 2009, PhD) published *Interactive World, Interactive God: The Basic Reality of Creative Interaction* (Cascade Books, 2017), which he edited with Carol Rausch Albright and John Albright. See page 28.

2003

William Flippin Jr. (MDiv; 2005, ThM) published “We’re going for the gold” in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*. In June he was elected to the Advisory Board of Day1 Radio Ministry.

Janelle Rozek Hooper (MDiv) published “Can dogs go to heaven?” in the March issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2006

Meghan Johnston Aelabouni (MDiv) published “Understanding the Enneagram: Many gifts, one body” in the March issue and “Is America facing a ‘post-Christian’ future? Lutheran witness in the country’s most and least ‘post-Christian’ cities” in the April issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Liv Larson Andrews (MDiv) received the 2018 Emerging Leader Award at the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University in April. Ben Stewart, Gordon A. Braatz Associate Professor of Worship, introduced her at the award ceremony.

2008

Jordan Miller Stubbendick (MDiv) published “Bearing witness” in the March issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2009

Yehiel Curry (TEEM; 2013, MDiv) and his congregation, Shekinah Chapel in Riverdale, Ill., were featured in the May *Living Lutheran* article, “Rewriting the narrative: Small congregation makes a big impact

with global giving.”

Nanette Dehnke (MDiv) started a new call as pastor at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Baroda, Mich., on May 13.

Angela Khabeb (MDiv) published “Grace” in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2011

Sheri Kling (MA(TS)) has been appointed executive director of the Beecken Center and associate dean of the Sewanee School of Theology at the University of the South. The Beecken Center serves as a center for continuing Christian education and formation for the Episcopal Church. For more information see beeckencenter.sewanee.edu.

2012

Charles Featherstone (MDiv) published *Kesslyn Runs*, his second book and first work of fiction. It is available online from Amazon and Barnes and Noble. See more on page 28.

Jeffrey Fitzkappes (ThM; 2016, MDiv) was featured in an April 5 article in the West Central Tribune about interfaith dialogue in Montevideo, Minn., sparked by the visit to the community of an anti-Muslim speaker. Fitzkappes was part of a panel that included people of faith from the Muslim, Jewish, Baha’i, and Christian traditions.

Mary Tororeiy (ThM; 2015, PhD) published the book *Reclaiming Motherhood: An African Woman’s Reading*

of *Birthing Imagery in Job* (Borderless Press, 2018). See more on page 27.

2014

Benjamin Adams (MDiv) was featured in a June 11 *Chicago Tribune* video story about the city’s eviction of homeless people encamped on Lower Wacker Drive.

Yoseob Song (ThM) was pictured and quoted in a BBC News global education article, “Hidden writing in ancient desert monastery manuscripts,” that appeared online June 13. Song traveled to the Sinai in April with a group that included several other LSTC students and Professors Esther Menn and Barbara Rossing. Song was able to examine, in person, an ancient manuscript that he had only had access to on microfilm and digital images.

Lucy Wynard (MDiv) started a new call at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Beloit, Wis., on May 1.

2015

Chingboi Guite (ThM; 2018, PhD) presented in the Old Testament section at the Central States Regional Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Columbia, Mo., in March. She also received a student paper award at the meeting.

Lydia Hernández–Marcial (ThM) has received a Hispanic Theological Initiative/Lilly Dissertation Fellowship. She is also an Honorary Fellow with the Louisville Institute for the 2018–19 academic year.

2016

Baiju Markose (ThM) published the book *Rhizomatic Reflections: Discourses on Religion and Theology* (Wipf & Stock 2018, ISBN: 9781532630842), with a foreword by Dr. Linda E. Thomas. See more on page 27.

2017

Paul Eldred (MDiv) was ordained April 21 at University Church in Seattle, Wash. He is serving as pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Bellevue, Wash.

2018

Alex Clark (MDiv) was ordained July 29 at First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, S.D. He is serving as pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Ypsilanti, Mich.

Preston Fields (MDiv) was ordained June X at the Norther Illinois Synod Assembly. He is serving as pastor at Salem Lutheran Church in Sycamore, Ill.

Kyle Siebert (MDiv) was ordained March 20 at Zion Lutheran Church in Muscatine, Iowa. He is serving as pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church and Campus Ministry in Hanover, N.H.

Future alumni/ae

Master of divinity students Makayla Marinack, Ashley Rosa, Amber Kalina, Jason Schultz, Kelsey Kresse, Christina Jindra, Kelsey Fauser, Stephani Shumaker, Alex Witt and Sarah Derrick; master of arts student Hesron Sihombing; master of theology student Mangasa Parlindungan and PhD student Yoseob Song participated in a workshop/training Faith Over Fear: Empowering Faith Leaders to Combat Islamophobia in Seattle in January. It was organized by Neighbors in Faith, Council on American-Islamic Relations in WA,

Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign, and the Muslim Association of Puget Sound (who hosted the conference). See photo on page 31.

David Rebey (MDiv) was pictured in a May 7 article in the *Kenosha News* about the blessing of Harley motorcycles that took place at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Wis., May 6.

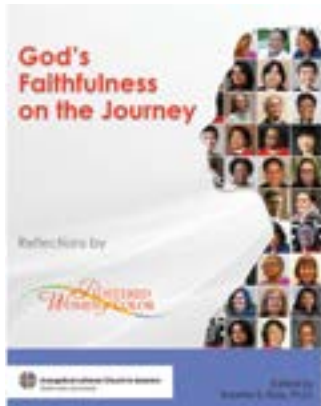
Debbie Hartfield (MDiv) was mentioned and pictured in a May 7 article in the *Kenosha News* about the blessing of Harley motorcycles that took place at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Wis., May 6.

Classes of 1958 and 1968 reunite



Commencement weekend, members of the Classes of 1958 and 1968 reunited at LSTC to share stories of their ministry. 1968 grads and their spouses: Left to right, back row: Roy Olson, Bob Buschkemper, Paul Bengston, Mark Holmer, James Beaty, Leland Eilert, Roger Rapp, Gary Miller, John Meyer, Tony Danielson; Front row, left to right: Sandra Olson, Mary Ann Bengston, Linnea Holmer, Rae Ellen Beaty, Judith Eilert, Mary Rapp, Katharine Miller, Frances Meyer, Sally Danielson

New Books from Alumni



God's Faithfulness on the Journey

A dozen LSTC alumni helped put together a new resource from the ELCA. *God's Faithfulness on the Journey: Rostered Women of Color* was developed to give women of color in the ELCA a forum to tell their own stories. The Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock (1996, MDiv; 2003, DMin) and the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Stewart Pero (1981, ThM; 2003, ThM; 2010, PhD) wrote the introduction, with Dr. Rosetta E. Ross. Bullock and Pero also served on the Project Steering Committee with other LSTC alumni: Priscilla Paris-Austin (2011, MDiv), Idalia Negrón Caamaño (2003, MDiv), Angela Shannon (1996, MDiv), Maxine Washington (1986, MDiv; 1992, DMin), and Chienyu Jade Yi (2010, MDiv). Thirty-eight

women share their stories, including Lydia Kalb (1979, MDiv), the first Latina Lutheran woman to be ordained in the U.S. in 1979; Linda Norman (2006, MDiv), Rhonda Pruitt (2011, MDiv), Niveen Sarras (2010, ThM), Kimberly A. Vaughn (2008, MDiv); and others who served on the Steering Committee.

The resource is available free for download at elca.org/rwoc. Select stories are also available online at livinglutheran.org/2018/03/called-and-chosen/



Reclaiming Motherhood: An African Woman's Reading of Birthing Imagery in Job

In her book, *Reclaiming Motherhood: An African Woman's Reading of Birthing Imagery In Job* (Borderless Press, 2018) Mary Tororeiy (2012, ThM; PhD, 2015) argues that most Joban

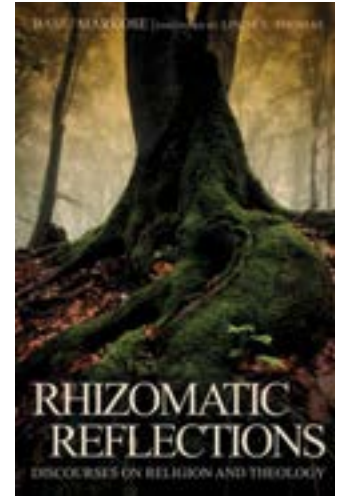
scholarship places Job at the center of conversation with a focus on the theme of theodicy and patriarchy. She calls for an alternative reading that focuses on birthing imagery and places Job's wife and the feminine side of God at the center of conversations.

A focus on birthing imagery brings out the double-sided meaning of the message of Job's book, which is that the cycle of life brings both joy and sadness. Rather than question these realities, we ought to explore ways to navigate them. This book is useful to scholars of the Hebrew Bible, Peace Studies, Women Studies, Political Scientists, theologians dealing with the problem of theodicy, and church practitioners who want to understand the problem of evil and suffering in the world today.

ISBN-13: 978-0996201773
Available online from Amazon

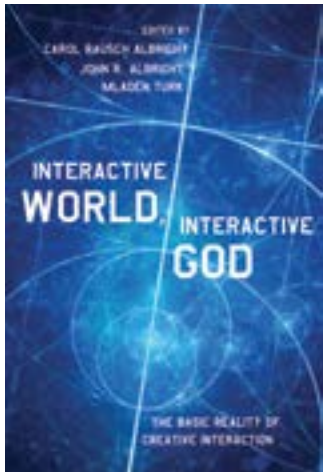
Rhizomatic Reflections: Discourses on Religion and Theology

Baiju Markose, (2016, ThM) has written fecund philosophical reflections on the conceptual metaphor "rhizome" that invite us to reformulate the theological engagements today with a renewed spirit. As a rhizome connects any point to any other point, the themes of Markose's book



are interconnected, and intertwined rhizomatically. Notably, the subaltern theological engagements make use of this new move in gleaning the fruits of heterogeneity, multiple origins, horizontality, interconnections, and intersectionality. This conscious rhizomatic move is exemplified as a constructive post-colonial move and a useful tool for meaningful subaltern resistance. This move takes us beyond the entrapment of western binary opposites to the challenging cultural and political spaces of hybridity and liminality.

Rhizomatic Reflections: Discourses on Religion and Theology (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2018) ISBN: 9781532630842, is available online from the publisher and other online retailers.



Interactive World, Interactive God: The Basic Reality of Creative Interaction

Since the dawn of science, ideas about the relation between science and religion have always depended on what else is going on in a society. During the 20th century, daily life changed dramatically. Technology revolutionized transportation, agriculture, communications, and housework. People came to rely on scientific

predictability in their technology. Many wondered whether God's supposed actions were consistent with scientific knowledge.

The 21st century is bringing new scientific research capabilities. They are revealing that scientific results are not totally predictable after all. Certain types of interaction lead to outcomes that are unpredictable, in principle. These in turn may lead to a whole new range of potential interactions. They do not rule out the reality of a dynamic God who can act in the world without breaking the known principles of science. God may in fact work with "the way things really are." Human experience of God may accurately reflect this reality.

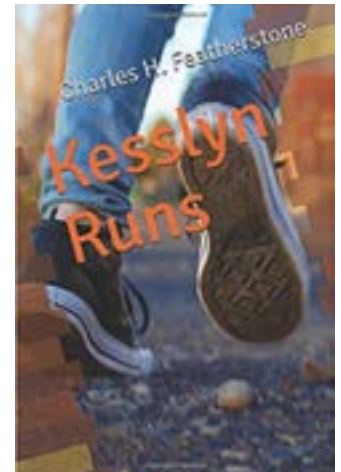
Interactive World, Interactive God: The Basic Reality of Creative Interaction, edited by Mladen Turk (2000, ThM; PhD, 2009), Carol Rausch Albright and John

R. Albright, (Cascade Books, 2017), illustrates such new understandings in religion and science by describing recent developments in a wide range of sciences, and providing theological commentary. The book is written for intelligent readers who may not be specialized in science but who are looking for ways to understand divine action in today's world. ISBN: 9781498293884. Available from the publisher and online retailers.

Kesslyn Runs

Charles Featherstone (2012, MDiv) has published *Kesslyn Runs*, his second book and first work of fiction.

When 15-year-old Kesslyn decides to flee her abusive foster home, she seeks help from the only people she can trust—a group of self-proclaimed monks led by Jerome, a former pastor who has made it his life's work to help



foster kids. But it proves difficult for Kesslyn to evade her former captors, who follow her as she runs from Spokane across the scrubland of Eastern Washington, putting Jerome and his monks—Javier, Tyler and Bethany—at great risk as they begin to uncover the horrific truth about the system that abused her.

Kesslyn Runs (ISBN: 978-1980901525) is available online from Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Roller coaster ride of faith *Continued from page 11*

"In the new curriculum, Hebrew and Greek aren't required, so I thought I could get out of taking those. But when I met with the director of the MDiv program, I found out that I was too far along in the old curriculum and that I'd have to take them after all. I thought I was outsmarting God, but God had other plans," she said with a laugh.

Vision of public church

There are more roller coaster loops ahead for Burford-Berry as she awaits assignment and a call. She envisions a ministry setting that will include the

opportunity to be part of a social enterprise ministry like Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles. She is eager to combine the gospel with meeting the needs of the community.

"I'm a mission-oriented person," she said. "I want people to have their best lives through Christ. For me, public church is what church should be in the midst of God's blessings and people's needs. For me, public church is encapsulated in this petition of the Lord's Prayer: 'thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'"

Bruce K. Benander
1932-2018
Augustana Lutheran Seminary
Class of 1957

After his ordination in 1957, Pastor Benander served congregations in Indiana, Illinois, Connecticut and Massachusetts. At age 65 he decided he wasn't ready to retire and spent the last 17 years of his ministry serving three churches in upper New York State. Benander officially retired in 2014.

He died at his home March 25. A celebration of life was held April 7 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in South Hadley, Mass. He is remembered for his exuberance for each day, laughter and mischievousness, booming voice and vibrant spirit, and is survived by his wife, Marty, five children, 12 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Charles V. Bergstrom
1922-2018
Augustana Lutheran Seminary
Class of 1948

The Rev. Dr. Charles V. Bergstrom died March 2 at age 95 after a lengthy illness. He served congregations in Connecticut and Massachusetts. He was also executive director (1977-88) for the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Bergstrom was preceded in death by his wife, Lois, in 2017, and a daughter; and is survived by two children, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. His funeral was March 9 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Worcester, Mass.

Merle Bolte
1935-2018
Class of 1969

Pastor Merle Bolte spent his entire ministry in Texas. He retired from Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Denton, in 2002, and retired again from Oak Cliff Lutheran in Dallas in 2013.

He is survived by his wife, Susan, three sons, three grandchildren, and his three golfing partners. Bolte's memorial service was May 12 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Denton.

William M. Cross
1926-2018
Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary
Class of 1954

During and after World War II, Pastor Cross served in the U.S. Merchant Marines. He received his MDiv from LSTC, and a PhD in sociology from South Dakota State (Brookings) University in 1971. He served congregations in Michigan and South Dakota, and did supply preaching in those states and in Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois.

He taught sociology at Valparaiso (Ind.) University, and several Indiana and Illinois colleges, and history at SDSU. He was active in sociological societies and presented papers and chaired several of their organizations.

A memorial ceremony was held March 9 at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Ill. His wife, Ruth, preceded him in death, and he is survived by two sons.

Ronald Ferrell
1944-2018
Class of 1971

Over the course of his ministry, Pastor Ronald Ferrell mentored nine interns. He served his first parish in Texas, and then four in Iowa. He was assistant to the bishop for the Northern Illinois Synod and later served Immanuel of Dixon, Ill.

He enjoyed woodworking, and was an avid Chicago Cubs fan. He died May 25 at age 73. A memorial service was held June 1 at Redeemer Lutheran in Bettendorf, Iowa, where he was a member. He is survived by his wife, Patricia, two daughters and a granddaughter.

Roy C. Hoch
1927-2018
Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary
Class of 1953

Pastor Roy Hoch died on January 18 and a memorial service was held for him on February 18 at Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in San Jose, Calif. He was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Mary Jane. He is survived by three children and four grandchildren. In the minister's prayer book he used since seminary are blessings on "social workers, chaplains and doctors" and he and his wife were gratified to see one of their children in each profession.

After earning his MDiv, Hoch did additional graduate work at LSTC and Santa Clara University for his degree in pastoral counseling. He served parishes in Ohio and Pennsylvania, where he helped establish a Lutheran campus ministry center. He continued in campus ministry at San Jose (Calif.) State. His final call before retirement was to Reformation Lutheran Church in Milpitas, Calif.

Wayne W. Niemi
1929-2018
Suomi Theological Seminary
Class of 1953

Pastor Wayne Niemi was ordained by the Suomi Synod (Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church) and served primarily bilingual Finnish Lutheran parishes—in South Dakota, Minnesota and Ohio. In 1953 he was an exchange preacher in Finland, and in 1980 he preached in seven churches in Finland. He was an avid traveler and fisherman.

He died March 8 and a memorial service was held at Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church in Tucson, Ariz. He is survived by his wife, Erika, four children, two grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Arnold V. Thoren
1931-2018
Augustana Lutheran Seminary
Class of 1956

The Rev. Dr. Arnold "Arnie" Thoren died Jan. 24; his funeral was at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa. Thoren received his doctorate in ministry from LSTC in 1978. He served congregations in Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa and Illinois, and retired in 1996 from First Lutheran in Galesburg, Ill.

He was an avid reader, enjoyed model railroading, woodworking, classical music and playing the guitar. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, four children, nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Board of Directors

We give thanks for the faithful service of four members of the Board of Directors who are completing their terms.

Michael Aguirre, Southwestern Texas Synod representative, served a total of 10/11 years on the board, completing the term of a previous board rep and three three-year terms of his own. He has served on the Administration and Finance Committee and on LSTC's Real Estate Task Force. He will continue to serve on the latter, which is not a committee of the board.

Bishop Michael Burke, Region 5 Bishops' representative, completed four years of service on the board in October 2017. He served on the Academic Affairs and the Executive Committee.

Melody Eastman represented the Metropolitan Chicago



Melody Eastman

Synod for the last nine years. She chaired the board for two years, chaired the Community Life Committee, and also served on the Community Life, Executive Committees as well as the JKM Library Advisory Committee.

Bishop Ray Tiemann, Region 4 Bishops' representative, is retiring as bishop and also ending his five years of service on LSTC's board, where he served on the Community Life and Executive Committees.

Godspeed

In May we bid farewell to Assistant Director of Admissions *Katie M. Deaver* (2013, MA(TS); 2015, ThM; 2017, PhD), who has moved to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

We also wish godspeed to *Chef Jennifer (Jen) Powell* who stepped down in May. She brought the LSTC Refectory to a whole new level of excellence during her two years with us.

In February, *Pam Johnson Davis*, Advanced Studies Assistant, left LSTC. We wish her God's richest blessings and are grateful for her work here.

Welcome

Marvis Hardy is making a switch from being an interim coordinator of the Advanced Studies Office, where she has been serving part-time since February, to LSTC's Finance Office, where she will serve as part-time staff accountant. She is a learning partner in the Language Resource and Writing Center, which is shared by McCormick Theological Seminary and LSTC. Hardy is a recent graduate of McCormick and has had a career in the banking industry in Chicago. She has served as vice president and credit administrator at Seaway National Bank and as assistant vice president for compliance at ABN AMRO-LaSalle National Bank. She will assist in accounts payable, accounts receivable and other financial processes.

Gloria Vicente joined LSTC on June 11 as the new Advanced Studies program coordinator. She comes with a love for theological and intellectual discovery and for the people who make this their vocation. She is a paralegal who worked with the organization Justice for Our Neighbors, representing matters before the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service. She also worked for nine years as a mission coworker for Guatemala with the Division for Overseas

Ministries, a partnership between Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ.

Vicente is of K'iche' and Kaqchikel Maya descent. Her family migrated to the U.S in the 1980s. This has given her a direct understanding of



Gloria Vicente

the multi-faceted challenges that immigrants face as they try to rebuild their lives and understand the complex fabric of life in the U.S.

She will provide assistance to the director of Advanced Studies in the oversight and administration of the ThM and PhD program and administrative support for the DMin program. She will coordinate the ELCA International Leaders Program on LSTC's campus and be the primary official and office for visas, in coordination with the Dean of Student Services.

We welcome all the gifts she brings to LSTC.

Accomplishments

Erik Christensen, pastor to the community and director of worship, was the “primary resource person” for the gathering of ELCA Chaplains in March in Charleston, S. C. He led the group in reflecting on ministry in an age of redevelopment and incorporating the practice of testimony into worship, which we have done at LSTC since Fall 2017. Click the orange Soundcloud icon at the bottom of any LSTC webpage to listen to testimonies and sermons from the last year.

Aaron Copley-Spivey began his term as president of the Chicago Area Student & Campus Housing Association (CASCHA) in June.

Clyde Andrew Walter, campaign director and major gift officer, received the Jay Bleeke Young Professionals Award presented by the Association of Lutheran Development Executives (ALDE) on March 2. The Jay Bleeke Young Professionals 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 greater commitment and involvement. The award winner must also demonstrate exemplary leadership and service to an organization in the fields of fundraising and/or public relations. The awardee receives a \$500 grant for continued professional development.



Clyde Andrew Walter



Sara Trumm (*front row in striped sweater*), interim director of A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, participated in Faith Over Fear: Empowering Faith Leaders to Combat Islamophobia.

Thirteen LSTC students (see Future Alumni, page 26) and Gift Officer Jennifer Thomas also attended the training in Seattle. It was organized by Neighbors in Faith, Council on American-Islamic Relations in Washington, Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign and the Muslim Association of Puget Sound (which hosted the training).

LIFE AT LSTC



Bridget Jones (2018, MDiv) delivers her Echols Preaching Prize sermon. Listen by clicking on the orange cloud icon on any lstc.edu page.



Kirsten Wee is a Public Church Fellow who volunteers at the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club.



Liz Frey and Sara Coen-Frei walked through the font as they prepared to leave LSTC.



In May LSTC celebrated faculty and staff employment and ordination anniversaries.



Public Church Fellow Stephani Shumaker worked with Refectory staff on alleviating food insecurity within the LSTC community.



An LSTC travel seminar group at Petra

Join Professors Rossing and Adam for 2019 Middle East travel seminar

You are invited to join LSTC students and faculty in the 2019 LSTC Middle East Travel Seminar, *World of the Bible: Ancient Sites and Current Struggles in the Holy Land*, hosted by Professors Barbara Rossing and Klaus-Peter Adam. The seminar is scheduled for January 4-17, 2019.

Some Christian tours of the Holy Land focus only on the sites associated with the events and people of the Bible, especially those linked to Jesus. This two-week study tour does that and much more.

The travel seminary includes visits to key sites in the Galilee (Nazareth, Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi, Magdala, and Megiddo), Jerusalem (Temple Mount, Mount of Olives, Church of the Holy Sepulcher), Qumran, Masada, Hebron and Bethlehem. Participants will dialogue with key persons and groups struggling for peace and justice today, worship with Lutherans in Bethlehem, stay on a kibbutz, and spend two nights in Jordan to visit Petra and other outstanding sites.

An optional extension to St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai is also being organized. In the best sense, this trip will be a pilgrimage for participants because engaging "the world of the Bible" does indeed involve both ancient sites and current struggles and how they are intertwined, say the tour leaders.

Seminar logistics are being handled by Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies, jcs.org; tour ID #55833.

The cost of the travel seminar is \$3,958 from Chicago, including airfare, double occupancy (includes a \$200 contribution to LSTC for student scholarships). Other departure cities are also possible. Land only (no airfare): \$2,660. Single room supplement \$958. (Prices reflect a 4 percent cash discount.) Email brassing@lstc.edu or kpadam@lstc.edu for more information.

FALL EVENTS AT LSTC

The Scherer Lecture

October 2, 4 p.m.

Hein-Fry Book of Faith Challenge

October 18-19, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

ELCA seminarians present their internship projects on new ways for biblical engagement in congregations. A master teacher/professor responds to each presentation. Contact Sara Vanderpan, svanderpan@gmail.com for details.

2018 Leadership Conference Canceled

At its spring meeting, the LSTC Alumni Board recommended that LSTC cancel the 2018 Leadership Conference scheduled for October 16-17 and LSTC's administration confirmed that recommendation.

Lengthy discussion prior to the recommendation centered on low attendance at recent conferences, potential scheduling conflicts for conference participants, and institutional ownership of the event.

Alumni Awards normally presented during the Leadership Conference will be given at another date during the 2018-19 academic year.



Lutheran School of Theology *at* Chicago

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