

LSTC

SUMMER 2019

Epistle

Magazine of the Lutheran School
of Theology at Chicago

Celebrating 2019 Commencement



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear friends in Christ:

As one of the roughly 7,200 recipients of the Epistle, you have a vested interest in our school as a graduate, donor, or friend. Because you're a regular reader, you likely know I use this letter to discuss some aspect of our common work as a seminary, like educational mission, community life, or social context. My letter this time is similar, but I also want to add an appeal for your help. Spoiler alert: A pitch for direct assistance comes later.

With the many challenges facing seminaries today, the main responses so far have settled on just two strategies: price and ease. The accepted diagnosis is that what ails us amounts to being unreasonably expensive and inordinately elaborate. Measured by money or time, seminaries are just unaffordable. The remedy for this diagnosis, so the story goes, is obvious. It is the press to make preparation for ministry "faster, easier, cheaper," as I wrote here one year ago. It's too soon to tell, though, whether that prescription is the right one.

As to price, recall that the main cost before students is living expense incurred regardless of full scholarships or accelerated programs. Moreover, the major burden graduates carry is undergraduate student debt that no seminary can erase. Reduced tuition by whatever means solves neither of these. Our experience also shows that scholarships do not attract prospective students as much as some think. Price tag matters, but not ultimately.

As to ease, consider what kind of learning is needed for ministry. Shortcut or compressed curriculum in a smaller package implies that we just deliver information along a supply chain judged by its efficiency. But such an approach can distort our purpose, reducing the aim to just getting a diploma. Our work should be forming people for wise service, which takes time and space, change and growth. Formation like that is complex, even hard.

At LSTC, we focus on value. We attend to the lasting impact of formation that starts with us and unfolds across a lifetime of ministry. Throughout this issue you'll find that value shown in stories of our seminary community and those we affect across the country and around the world. When you notice what our students are doing, when you grasp how our graduates are serving, when you realize this school's reach into all kinds of settings, then you know LSTC's value. We even have a tagline for it: Go deeper, go further, go beyond.

Right now, put down this magazine and go to our website (www.lstc.edu). On the home page you'll see three scrolling scenes, each linked to part of that tagline. Click the arrow marked "Watch our video" and view a three minute feature on the value of this school in the words of our own



James Nieman

students. It's pretty inspiring. You'll learn of the rigorous academic study and rich personal encounters in which we go deeper. You'll sense engagement with the city, ecumenical and interfaith partners, and global learning that drive us to go further. And you'll discover formation for the long run as innovative pastors, deacons, teachers, administrators, bishops, and others who can go beyond. Such value is the heart of everything we do.

And now it's time to add your voice (yes, this is the pitch). We need more stories about our school's value from you as alumni and you who benefit from such ministry. Here's how you can help directly. First, paste the link <http://bit.ly/2wJ9Zk2> into your web browser, which will take you to a Google Drive site. Next, watch the fun "how to" video by our videographer, Jason Chesnut. Then, record a brief clip (no more than a minute) with the story you want to tell and upload it there. If you can record a cute baby or adorable kitten and post it to Facebook, you can do this! More seriously, we need your story of how theological education has lasting value to go deeper, go further, go beyond. You are the heart of that story.

James Nieman
President

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

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

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Cover: ThM graduate Sweetie Helen Chukka and daughter Illithya Sparsha Rueben remind us that Commencement is often a family affair.

Photo credits: Jan Boden, Tricia Koning



ThM grad Sunil Singh Nallathambi; Commencement coverage, page 12.



Benjamin Stewart and Gordon Braatz; They share a name, page 18.

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Eric J. Kyle appointed Director of Contextual Education

Dr. Eric J. Kyle was appointed as Director of Contextual Education at LSTC, effective July 1. As a regular member of the faculty, Kyle will administer and adapt a framework for contextual education that is integrated with LSTC’s public church curriculum.

“We are delighted to welcome Eric Kyle to the LSTC faculty,” said Esther Menn, dean of academic affairs. “His education and experience in spiritual formation and community engagement are especially well-suited to LSTC’s public church curriculum. He combines the practical, contemplative and prophetic approaches that will both support and challenge our learning community.”

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

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

Kyle holds a doctorate in practical theology in religious education and spiritual formation and a master of divinity from Claremont School of Theology. He also earned a bachelor of science and master of science in mechanical engineering from Texas A & M University. He is the author of four books.

LSTC awards Madres por la Paz the Community of the Cross Award

Madres por la Paz (Mothers for Peace), a group of mothers in Chicago’s Back of the Yards and Little Village neighborhoods who lost their children to gun violence, was awarded the Community of the Cross Award by LSTC on May 19 during commencement ceremonies.

LSTC recognized the mothers for their healing ministry with each other as they grieve the loss of a child to gun violence and for their public engagement with the youth



Madres por la Paz receive the Community of the Cross Award at commencement.

in these two neighborhoods with underfunded public services that suffer from gun violence. Through their work as “Mothers for Peace/Madres por la Paz” they offer “an exemplary witness to Christ Jesus and the Gospel by selfless service to others.”

The Community of the Cross award originated at Christ Seminary–Seminex, a predecessor school of LSTC. Recipients of the award are nominated and approved by the faculty. They look for “a community, institution, congregation or any collectively functioning Christian group whose actions manifest the invitation of our Lord to take up the cross and follow him, and whose service is directed to the world around it, both Christian and non-Christian, and whose satisfaction and honor clearly derive from the gospel.”

Madres por la Paz, many of whom come from immigrant families, accompany mothers in their process of grieving. They hope to provide an anchor for youth with the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation that runs a youth program and works to find restorative ways to heal and rebuild after violence and conflict in the Back of the Yards neighborhood.

LSTC awards Vítor Westhelle the Confessor of Christ Award

At its 159th commencement ceremony on May 19, LSTC presented its Confessor of Christ Award posthumously to the Rev. Dr. Vítor Westhelle, a valuable member of the LSTC faculty and international scholar and teacher who died May 13, 2018. His wife, Christiane, was present to receive the award and colleague and friend Jose David Rodriguez spoke on behalf of the family.

“In his writings and theological conversations Vítor used to clarify the important dimension of a ‘gift,’” Rodriguez said, quoting a line from Westhelle’s writing: “A gift can only be given if it is free and without any reciprocity; otherwise it is no longer a gift. Its sheer reception is called faith.”

Rodriguez, Augustana Heritage Chair of Global Mission

and World Christianity, said Westhelle was being granted the “gift” of being a Confessor of Christ “in his teaching, scholarly endeavors and his personal and professional ministry.

“Vítor cannot be present to receive this gift. However, his humble and continuous presence in his family and friends will receive this gift in faith with great appreciation to continue to witness to the gospel among our brothers and sisters in the world. Thanks be given to God.”

The Confessor of Christ Award originated at Christ Seminary-Seminex, a predecessor school of LSTC. It is given to “a Christian individual whose commitment to Christ Jesus and the Gospel manifests itself through extraordinary personal sacrifice for the sake of Jesus Christ and the Gospel or exemplary witness to Christ Jesus and the Gospel by selfless service to others.”

Westhelle (1952–2018), professor of systematic theology at LSTC since 1993, was renowned for his participation in global Luther research, specifically his insights about Luther and the Reformation from the global south, about the theology of the cross, and about Lutheran eschatology yielded numerous publications. Students from around the world interested in these areas of research, particularly those at an advanced level, came to LSTC to study with him. His scholarship is recognized in the U.S., throughout Latin America, in Europe and in South Africa. His commitment to creatively enriching the Lutheran legacy in Latin America, the United States, and in other parts of the world was an important contribution in the present and will remain so into the future.

Care Lawrence chosen for Auschwitz fellowship



Carolyn “Care” Lawrence

Carolyn “Care” Lawrence, an LSTC MDiv student, was among the 14 seminary and divinity school students, and early-career clergy, chosen for the 2019 Seminary Program of the Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE).

Lawrence, who is from Crystal Falls, Mich., participated in a two-week program in Germany and Poland this summer, which uses the conduct of clergy

and religious leaders in Nazi-occupied Europe as a way to reflect on contemporary professional ethics. Along with other fellows, she attended seminars and visited memorials and sites to explore pastors’ ethical responses to anti-Semitism in 1930s Germany and the Holocaust, as well as

explore today’s issues facing theologians and seminarians.

In a news release from FASPE, Lawrence said, “As a Lutheran Christian, the legacy of Martin Luther’s anti-Semitism and my denomination’s history in Nazi Germany is one that I have had to grapple with. I hope my time with FASPE will provide ethical frameworks for how to respond to this history and to address these issues—and other ethical questions—as a professional leader in my congregation and community.”

LSTC grad deported to Colombia



Paul Erickson, bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, speaks on behalf of Betty Rendón at a rally held in downtown Chicago outside of ICE headquarters.

Many in the LSTC community and throughout the church have rallied around Betty Rendón and her family. Rendón, who had been serving Emaus Lutheran Church in Racine, Wisc., and is a 2013 graduate of LSTC, was taken by ICE officers in the early morning hours of May 8 in a raid on the family’s home.

They had stopped her daughter, Paula Hincapie-Rendón, while she was driving her daughter to school. After ICE officers took her to the family’s Englewood home, they took Rendón, her husband Carlos, and a cousin into custody. Their daughter was released because of her Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status, but she didn’t have the chance to see her parents again; they were deported in the early morning hours of May 28.

Protests and prayer vigils were held in Chicago and in Wisconsin, including one in LSTC’s Augustana Chapel. A fund set up by LSTC for Hincapie-Rendón and her family raised more than \$10,000 in just 36 hours. The fund is still active and at press time had more than \$12,000 toward a new goal of \$17,500.

The family came to the United States in 2004 after Rendón received death threats from guerrilla fighters who were trying to recruit students at the school where she was principal. The school was attacked and several teachers were assaulted. Her application for asylum was denied due to lack of a police report.

The family owned a home and had no criminal records. Rendón drove more than two hours to preside at Spanish-language services at Emaus, and in the midst of the raid on her home texted church to say she would likely not be able to preach on Sunday. Rendón was to begin doctoral studies in preaching at LSTC this summer.



Paula Hincapie-Rendón is interviewed following a prayer vigil at LSTC.

Shortly after being returned to Colombia, she posted on her Facebook page her LSTC graduation photo from six years ago, declaring her love for LSTC and sadness to no longer pursue doctorate studies in preaching.

She wrote, “By the grace of God, LSTC has transformed the life of my family and my life in the love of God reflected in each person that is part of the

community: teams of students, faculty, staff, our families and my classmates whom I remember with love... I felt welcomed and cared, without discrimination. All of you have valued me as a person, have helped me nurture my gifts, and have given me the opportunity to explore and expand learning from my Latin context to share, grow and produce an impact in the midst of the complexity of life with other communities and from different contexts that live in the U.S.A. Thanks be to God for giving me the opportunity to meet, live and study in the community of LSTC.”

PhD student Denise Rector chosen for panel, forum attendance



Denise Rector

This summer, Denise Rector, who began her PhD studies at LSTC this past academic year, was part of a three-person PhD panel at the Association of Teaching Theologians (ATT) convocation at Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill. The theme of the convocation is “Unearned Privilege as Cheap Grace.”

The theme borrows from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and recent work on white

privilege and contemporary liberation movements. Bonhoeffer opened *Discipleship* with the stark but subtle distinction between costly grace and cheap grace. Explained the ATT, “...our contemporary word for “cheap grace” is *privilege*—white privilege, male privilege, straight/cis-gender privilege, able-bodied privilege, North American privilege, Christian privilege.”

Rector has also been accepted to the 2019 Forum for Theological Educators (FTE), which will meet Nov. 20–22 in San Diego. This gathering is designed to provide doctoral students

of color with opportunities for networking, professional development, vocation exploration and mentoring.

This summer she has also been interning at the ELCA churchwide offices for the ELCA Journal of Lutheran Ethics (JLE). Rector, who is from Kansas City, Mo., received her master of divinity degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary (Dubuque, Iowa), but decided not to pursue ordination.

“Reverend Rector comes to LSTC’s Advanced Degree program with brilliance and maturity. She’s a renaissance woman!” said the Rev. Dr. Linda E. Thomas, professor of theology and anthropology and her advisor. “How else could she could she intern for JLE, present on a PhD panel for the Association for Teaching Theologians and be accepted into a prestigious mentoring program almost simultaneously? She’s awesome and I’m thrilled as her advisor. What a gift Reverend Rector is to the Church!”

Clyde Walter appointed LSTC’s vice president for advancement

At its Spring meeting, LSTC’s Board of Directors named Clyde Andrew Walter as Vice President for Advancement, effective July 1. Walter had been appointed by President James Nieman as interim Vice President last fall and has served in that capacity for the last ten months.

“We are blessed that Clyde will continue to bring his keen insight, drive, and passion into the leadership of all our Advancement efforts,” said James Nieman, President. “During the past five years, I have witnessed at close range his faithfulness and care for those who support this school, and I have directly benefitted from his ability to work his plans toward completion. Clyde loves what he does, and that enthusiasm makes a positive difference in every part of our fundraising.”

In a message to the staff regarding the appointment, Walter said he is “grateful for the privilege to lead this incredible and vital team” and that he “doesn’t take the privilege lightly.”

“I pray and I trust that we will continue to do good, powerful, life-changing work together... to enable meaningful change—for donors, for students, for LSTC, and for the church and the world,” he said.

Walter joined LSTC’s Advancement office in January 2015 as Campaign Director and Major Gift Officer.

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

Walter holds a master’s degree from the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration and a bachelor’s degree from Augustana College in Rock Island.

Local, national and global impact

2019 Distinguished Alumni

At Homecoming 2019, LSTC will honor the outstanding ministries of 14 of its graduates. In the last issue of the Epistle, you met the seven 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients. Now we'd like you to meet the 2019 recipients. These grads have had local, national and global impact in their wide range of ministries.

2019 honorees

Terrence (Terry) Baeder (Concordia Seminary/Christ Seminary-Seminex, 1971, MDiv) will receive the Called to Lead Award. In addition to parish ministry, Baeder was a leader in Lutheran social service agencies for nearly 25 years. He provided pastoral counseling, directed community services for a regional area, and was the chief operating officer for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois during his tenure. From 2008–2018, he served first as dean of students and pastor to the community and then as director of field education at LSTC. He is known as a compassionate and committed leader ready to serve where the church most needs him.

James E. Fowler (1995, DMin) will receive the Excellence in Parish Ministry Award not only for his years of service leading congregations since 1983 in Iowa and Texas, but especially for the ministry he is currently providing in South Dakota. His ministry of revitalizing a congregation and mentoring both neighboring young, first call pastors and a Hispanic female TEEM candidate were lifted up in the nomination made by Bishop David Zellmer.

Christopher Heavner (1983, MDiv) will receive the Specialized Ministry Award. For over 25 years Heavner has led Lutheran Campus Ministry at Clemson University, where he has made a “generational impact on campuses around the country, the church and the world,” the nominating letter states. He was a founding board member of the Lutheran Campus Ministry Network and is a tireless supporter of colleagues and an advocate for campus ministry. His daily devotional emails inspire the wide circle of people with whom he has built relationships. The nomination adds that his ministry has given the church “important new voices like Tuhina Rasche... and breathed new life into the churchwide institution... (through) YAGMs, pastors and faithful lay people engaged in the work of the gospel.”

Marilyn Olson (1994, MDiv) will receive the Faithful Servant Award, for her work of advocacy and support of people within diaconal ministry and of seminarians. After graduating from seminary, she served as director of admissions at LSTC, then as assistant director for educational partnerships at the ELCA. She returned to LSTC in 2013 as the assistant to the vice president for advancement. She is also involved in Housing Opportunities in Valparaiso, Ind., and Stephen Ministry in her congregation.

Kjersten Priddy (2013, MDiv) will receive the Emerging Voice Award, given to someone who has graduated within the last 10 years. Currently serving as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Battle Creek, Mich., Priddy has already served with “grace, skill and wisdom in this redevelopment congregation and previously as an interim in California,” the nomination states. At Trinity she is helping the congregation grow in its Lutheran identity and to become a hub of the neighborhood through an active outreach program. This includes a social justice team, a women’s co-op, and a place for neighborhood children to gather and learn. Her love of “the least of these,” vision for social justice, and commitment to the neighborhood embody what it means to be public church.

D. Jensen Seyenkulo (1992, ThM; 1999, PhD) will receive the Witness to the World Award. As bishop of the Lutheran Church of Liberia (LCL), Seyenkulo and ministries of the church played key roles in bringing to an end the Ebola epidemic that gripped the country from 2014 to 2015. The LCL continues to minister to families and orphans in the wake of the crisis in addition to healing ministries focused on HIV/AIDS, malaria and trauma/healing. Before being elected as bishop in 2012, Seyenkulo served congregations on Chicago’s west and south sides while earning his PhD. He served in several ELCA churchwide positions: assistant director of recruitment of multicultural leadership, director of rostered leadership and director of disability ministries. In addition to his work as bishop, Seyenkulo serves as first vice president of the Liberia Council of Churches and is a member of the Executive Council of the Interreligious Council of Liberia. He is a Lutheran World Federation Council member and president of LWF’s Central and Western Africa sub-region. He is a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

Gordon J. Straw (1997, ThM) posthumously will receive the Lifetime Service Award. Straw was associate professor and occupied the Cornelsen Chair for Spiritual Formation at LSTC when he died Jan. 5. In addition to teaching, he served as coordinator of candidacy at LSTC. During his career, he served in every expression of ministry and truly was a voice and advocate for the “priesthood of all believers.” He was an interim pastor, program director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries and program director for Lay School for Ministry and Missional Leadership for the ELCA. He wrote and lectured on Native American Christian theology and worked with other Native American ELCA leaders to develop both the Native American Emphasis and the Vine Deloria Jr. Symposium at LSTC.

See page 29 for more details about the October 2019 LSTC Homecoming.

LRWC does more than tend language skills— it provides a home

by Julie B. Sevig

It was a rainy, dark Chicago day. But in the Language Resource and Writing Center (LRWC) housed on LSTC's third floor east there was nothing but bright and cheerful energy. Students came and went, working independently or with another student, sipping coffee, sampling the granola on the table, and hugging hello and goodbye. Clearly, it was home.

Hesron Sihombing had a stack of books next to him and his laptop open. He was sitting at the oblong table just inside the door. The table is a symbol of what the center is all about: relationships and community.

At the time, Sihombing was finishing his work toward a master of arts (theological studies), which he has since received, but hadn't been back to his native Indonesia, where he is a pastor, since May 2017. But he says this room—these people caught up in the bustle of energy—are his family.

It's confirmed by at least two others nearby who call him "brother."

He speaks fondly of the two learning partners he's had at LSTC, Jeff and Amber, the Friday potluck gatherings around the table, and Monday global conversations. All have helped him to confidently be himself in a diverse cultural community, to learn about other countries and cultures, and make this home.

"The LRWC created space where I can find not only theological education, but relationships, friendship and love," he said.

In the LRWC, international students like Sihombing work on their writing, reading and conversational skills. They learn how to navigate the education system in the U.S., and so much more. As the center was created and grew, its potential had been impossible to imagine. But Rob Worley knew what it could be.

"People spend time together here," explained Worley, a member of the McCormick Theological Seminary faculty and director of the center shared by McCormick and LSTC. "My most important role is communicating that relationships matter, with colleagues and with people around the world. All the forces are against that these days."

Those forces, Worley said, include the electronic age we live in. In the LRWC, there are no "electronic fixes" on papers, for instance, without a conversation. "Relationships are the core. Students want and need to be here. This is a community of care and understanding," he said.

Its beginnings...

LRWC began as a family matter. When Worley's dad was dean at McCormick, non-traditional students had begun studying there; many of them didn't speak or write in English. He turned to his son for help, since the younger Worley had a master's degree in linguistics.

Rob Worley offered a solution, and ended up with a new career. This was back in 1990, when multicultural was growing in its use as a term. Worley interviewed students and faculty and submitted a report, recommending that McCormick begin a new effort in supporting students.

For the first two years, the center existed on the fourth floor of Hyde Park Union Church. It was less than ideal—there was no elevator and they shared the room with a choir. LSTC professor Ralph Klein heard about what Worley was doing, and became involved due to his interest in computers and Bible software. A grant resulted in new computers and moved things in a new direction. Eventually, the two schools signed an agreement for the shared center.

"There was the technology part, but what was really more important in the end, as it turned out, was the gift of relationships," Worley said.

And it always has been. There were global conversations even before he started in his current role.

Chicago 101

A Korean DMin student asked Worley to create an alternative program for Korean college students—a summer program of service. They did classroom work, but also took to the streets to learn about Chicago. This initial program became the Summer Language Institute.

"It created community for them so they didn't feel so alone, isolated or afraid," Worley said. "They could start the school year and relax. Students who had been through the program were small group leaders, so new students could see they were confident, thoughtful. 'They know what they're doing.'"

What he did with college students, he also does with seminarians. He helps familiarize them with the city, but



Christina Jindra and Hesron Hanshen Sihombing were on hand at the annual LSTC resource fair to tell others about the benefit of the LRWC.

what happens in the LRWC is still crucial to their success here. Part of that success is the pairing with learning partners. These partnerships are based on students' interests and strengths and include writing support, conversations and learning languages like Spanish and German. Worley knows that the more students produce in writing and speaking, the faster they develop and the greater their motivation. He recruits the partners and pairs them up, having read the writing of incoming students and seeing what kind of support they need. He looks for their potential, how well they write, their interest and openness to a different world view. "And whether the two of them would jibe personally," he said.

The relationship is development-based, not skill-based. Participants must feel safe, ask questions, be vulnerable, and interested in one another. Being a learning partner is a paid hourly job but it's not just a job. He interviews every one, communicating the importance of building relationships of mutual support and respect.

Back to the table...

When the current space in the east wing became available, Worley designed the space. He wanted computers, but also a table for gathering, and private rooms for study and conversations. There is even a ping pong table that wasn't being used at McCormick.

Every Wednesday and Friday, there is lunch at the big table. It's organic. If students want to share a meal or be together, they'll gather at the table to catch up on the news, and often hear about people who have gone back to their home countries. In sharing the news around that table, they know they're supported and that what happens to people matters.

A Wednesday afternoon spouse group in the LRWC was once a feeding program the first Tuesday of every month at First Presbyterian Church in Woodlawn. Although many of the participants are spouses of students, about half are students. Since PhD students spend five to six years here, they don't have their traditional families around. "The LRWC becomes family," he said.

But if you think all the benefits of the LRWC—in both communication and relationships—land on international students, you'd be mistaken. Most significant is the theological formation of young (mostly) white people, Worley says, MDiv students from rural, white America. Advanced Studies students who are international, whose lives are from poverty, scarcity and the margins, influence their partners, their student colleagues, he said. White people read about global lives, but don't always engage. Here they do, Worley says, adding: "Global conversation is



M. Seng Tsin Nan sits at the LRWC table to have lunch while she studies.

teaching about our role in the world, our responsibility."

Without any prompting, Chrisida Nithyakalyani Anandan, an LSTC PhD student, declares her love for the table. She admits she's somewhat of a fixture in the writing center, with at least one other student joking with her that she should pay rent there instead of for her apartment. When preparing for qualifying exams, it was not unusual for her to spend 18 hours a day there. Many of her books are stacked in a study room, and she brings food for several meals and stores it in the fridge. She is no stranger to the adjoining room with a sofa for tired students needing a nap.

"For those far from home this is a place where no one is excluded. I love the table, I sit down and conversations start," she said. "I don't feel lonely. It is a lively place. I come here when I don't want to stay at home. It doesn't just seem like home, it is home."

She has worked with several learning partners, and is now a learning partner to another student brushing up on Hebrew.

She calls the room a bridge where domestic MDiv and PhD students (many of them global) meet. "They see each other in the library or in class, but here they can sit down and talk and get to know each other." It's also a place to get to know McCormick students, she added.

Anandan, who was ordained just months ago in her native India, first learned of the LRWC during orientation. When she eventually packs up to return to India to teach Old Testament, she knows she'll pack all those LRWC memories with her.

MDiv graduate Sarah Derrick looks toward first call, commends classmates to the church

by Julie B. Sevig



Sarah Derrick

When she was considering a year of service with the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program, Sarah Derrick, MDiv 2019, remembers telling her mother she hoped to go anywhere but Malaysia. You guessed it, that's where she landed.

That isn't exactly what happened as she approached her first call—but close. As she contemplated where she hoped to land, Texas wasn't really on her radar. But you guessed it, the Northern Texas–Northern Louisiana Synod is where's she's headed, and "excited" is the word she's using.

"I've moved enough and lived enough places that I know there are good people who love the church wherever you land," said Derrick, who is from South Carolina and whose ordination is this summer in her home congregation of Zion Lutheran, Lexington.

Derrick has been called as pastor for care and outreach at Faith Lutheran in Flower Mound, Texas, a congregation with a lively youth program and not afraid to use technology.

Derrick says her LSTC class "Global Church, Here and Now" with Professor Mark Swanson was most influential. Swanson was also instrumental in her decision to come to seminary. She still remembers visiting LSTC after returning from her year with YAGM. She sat in the Admissions office,

and Swanson stopped by to visit about his and his wife's global ministry experiences.

"Yup, I'll come here," is what she remembers suddenly thinking, and it surprised her. Her service in Malaysia had been at a large church with all women pastors. "It was a powerhouse of a church, but the thought of seminary, to be honest, wasn't too exciting," she said.

"...I don't know what I thought it would be like, but I'm sure it's not what I thought. I wonder if I knew what I was getting into," she said, reflecting on the past four years, which included an internship in Ballard, Wash.

LSTC a good decision

Now, on the other side of four years, seminary turned out to be the right decision. She loved Swanson's class, which taught about various faiths and then turned into a lab or sorts when the students visited various churches in Chicago. Peter Vethanayagamony was her advisor, and she describes him as a "wildly fierce advocate" for her to pursue global ministry. Although she's headed for Texas now, she (and Vethanayagamony) both hold out hope for her to one day serve globally again.

She has also appreciated taking classes through The Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS) consortium, especially the "God, Suffering & Evil" and "Bonhoeffer" courses at neighboring McCormick Theological Seminary.

Derrick describes her time at LSTC as "fraught with turnover and death." And indeed it was. Two beloved professors died, and there have been several retirements and resignations among the faculty. The advantage of a small faculty, however, is that they have "been very invested in our wellbeing."

As she and her classmates reminisced during their final weeks on campus, they remembered going out for margaritas that first night together four years ago, not knowing one another and to a place they've never been to since. It was one of many memories that came flooding back, but she was also quick to look forward.

"I have such gifted classmates," she said. "Whether they serve as pastors, deacons, chaplains, professors... I have such respect for the gift they'll be for our church."

Eddie Rosa-Fuentes imagines a church of ‘melancholy hope’

by Julie B. Sevig



Eddie Rosa-Fuentes

When Eddie Rosa-Fuentes ponders his years at LSTC, he is quick to say that being a “liberal” seminary is not enough. “We need to be radical. Radical actually comes from the word ‘roots.’ We need to go to the root, and deep. We’re not radical here.”

There’s too much yet to be done in this world, the church, and even at LSTC, he says. Injustices keep him from fully enjoying his experiences, though if pressed he might admit he’s happy to have recently graduated with his master of theology degree.

“I don’t seek to be happy, happiness blinds you from the injustice and oppression in the world, but also around you,” he said. “Yes there are happy moments and you receive them and enjoy them for a while, but you cannot stay in that stage. If you stay in happiness, it is too easy to become complicit with systemic oppression.”

Rosa-Fuentes has been serving as program coordinator of the Pero Multicultural Center and the Zygon Center for Religion and Science. He cites the ways LSTC has tried to change: regular anti-racism training, the multicultural center, a diversity committee and the blog “We Talk. We Listen.”

“But we need to move beyond the things we list. How do we commit to change? How can we commit to give our

power away? The ideal goal would be that we don’t need the multicultural center anymore, but that people in power need to challenge our own desires for power. We need to know the history of oppressed communities... and do what it takes to become anti-racist.”

He believes that LSTC, even with its programs on anti-racism, takes a toll on people of color. “We are not anti-racist, and we need to do better. But it is a hard and painful job,” he said.

Melancholy hope

“Imagine a church that teaches melancholy hope. My main disappointment is why do we just teach resurrection when people are dying out there? Systemically oppressed people live in a mixture of trauma and resurrection. That is our life... our experience. Yes, there are great moments in our life, but that does not mean progress. Our present is always linked to our history, our past. That’s why ‘Say Her Name’ is important. Why ‘Black Lives Matter’ is important.”

He’s been deeply influenced by Joseph R. Winters’ book *Hope Draped in Black*, in which Winters responds to the enduring belief that America follows a constant trajectory of racial progress.

The recent health issues and deaths of faculty who are people of color have been palpable during the past year, he said. Vítor Westhelle, was an influential professor and he feels his loss. Reading Westhelle’s extensive writing helps him “feel his legacy.” Westhelle helped him move beyond the idea of progress and utopia, and recognize we have not recovered from colonization, he said. Professors Linda Thomas and Marvin Wickware have also been important.

“Wickware and I don’t believe exactly the same—he says that I’m probably more radical, but we relate in what we’re reading. But my biggest influences have been colleagues, other advanced studies students like Mayuko Yasuda and recent graduate Adam Braun.”

“Something I did find at this institution is a community of colleagues, students who I could be vulnerable with, cry with. Those are the ones that helped me survive.”

Perfect for a theology student whose dissertation asks the question: “What does it mean to be a human being?”

Rosa-Fuentes wants to eventually go to Latin America to teach theology, culture and race, and gender studies as he focuses on areas like Afro-pessimism, decolonial thought and queer theories.

New PhD grad Baiju Markose grateful for ‘freedom space’ he found at LSTC

by Jan Boden



Baiju Markose

Baiju Markose thinks carefully about the words he uses to express his ideas about religion and culture. He has just completed his doctoral studies at LSTC and the word he uses most often to describe his time here is “grateful.”

“We are grateful to many people,” he said. And first on the list are his advisor, Professor Linda E. Thomas and the late Vítor Westhelle, one of Markose’s instructors.

“They were an amazing combination. Dr. Thomas is prophetic and Dr. Westhelle was poetical.”

His gratitude ripples out to the community of scholars, the other graduate students from all over the world, who are now his academic colleagues as well as his friends. They were important because of “who we are, how we give space for others from different cultures, religions, races, how we practice hospitality, how we practice active listening; their bodies, their culture.”

Encouraged by alumni, supported by church

Markose joins a long list of LSTC alumni from the Mar Thoma Church in India. Markose said that it stretches back 30 years, but his bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenus, of the Dioscesan Episcopa of the North America–Europe Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church, noted a much longer history in his greetings during the commencement ceremony. Students from the Mar Thoma Church first studied at the Chicago Theological Seminary in Maywood, Ill., in 1948.

It was some of the more recent alumni who encouraged Markose to come to LSTC. He said that he knew LSTC had a good theological platform for him to verbalize his theological thinking, his existential thinking, and his philosophy as a Dalit Christian.

He also knew that he would have easy access to the University of Chicago, Chicago Theological Seminary, Catholic Theological Union and other ACTS seminaries. “It makes a difference to have all of those resources available,” he said.

Markose was also helping at a Mar Thoma congregation in the Chicago area while doing his studies. They, in turn, have supported him. “They consider me as their own son. It is a wonderful relationship.”

Freedom space

Markose describes the particular experience he had at LSTC as “freedom space.”

“I am really grateful to LSTC because it gave me freedom space to think on my own and to verbalize my thinking. Freedom space is very important. It made me at home here,” Markose said. “I studied at a lot of theological schools in India and never had that freedom space to express myself.”

He observed that each school has its own academic culture. “LSTC’s definitely gives space for the other, space to listen to the other. This is a wonderful, vibrant space. LSTC gifted me with vocabulary to voice my ideas. LSTC helped me to think out my own existential dilemma, problems and theological insights.”

Black Lives Matter

After serving several times as the teaching assistant for Dr. Thomas’s Black Lives Matter course, Markose felt well-prepared to teach it during the spring semester this year.

“It gave me the opportunity to teach students from all over the world. They brought different perspectives and learning styles,” he said.

His dissertation, “Aftering the Subaltern Numen: Theologizing Liminality, Hybridity, and Alterity in Dalit Religious Phenomena,” has a strong connection to what is taught in the Black Lives Matter course.

“Womanist theology has a strong connection with Dalits. They are the ‘Blacks in India’ who had undergone slavery because of the caste system. They share many similarities with African Americans. I can easily connect what I learned here to the India context.”

Markose was familiar with Womanist and Liberation Theology before coming to LSTC. In his studies here, he has employed insights from Black, African American, and Caribbean writers, bringing in religious traditions and Dalit religious traditions to explore their philosophical value.

Completion and connection

Less than two weeks after he graduated, Markose, his wife Stefi, who just completed a master’s degree at McCormick Theological Seminary, and their two children, moved to North India. He began his first semester, teaching four courses, in late June. They are excited for this new phase of their lives.

“It’s a feeling that our journey here in the U.S. is completed and it’s time to embark on another journey in another space with other responsibilities,” he said. “North India is a new place for us. This is my first opportunity to teach in this seminary where I will be teaching courses on religion and culture, so I am excited to explore North India and its many religions and cultures.”

Even though his time here feels complete, Markose mentioned that the January 2020 LSTC travel seminar to India will visit his new seminary. He looks forward to welcoming the travelers and to keeping the connection strong.

Joanne Hickey's dream has her dressing up for chaplaincy

by Julie B. Sevig



Joanne Hickey

When Joanne Hickey's IT job was ending and she pondered hitting the road as a consultant, she realized she needed to upgrade her wardrobe.

"I knew I had to buy some suits, but I kept putting it off," she said. "I asked myself: 'What would be an outfit I would like to wear and what would I do in it? Visiting people in the hospital. That's what I want to do.'"

That realization played a role in her visit to LSTC and decision to get her master of arts in ministry (MAM) degree to become a deacon, and eventually she hopes a chaplain.

Although she intended to visit other seminaries, she felt at home at LSTC immediately. Scholarships made it affordable, and the public church curriculum made it attractive.

"Public church is perfect for deacons—it's about involvement and service in God's world. Even the

architecture of LSTC is what I wanted—the opposite of ivory towers," she said, gesturing toward the LSTC building.

Here, she also found the academic rigor she wanted, and community among others pursuing higher degrees. She said she has valued "living together on campus and a face-to-face learning community."

"I could have easily signed up for distance education, but I've chosen physical community," she continued. "I wanted the experience of being present. I learn through talking things through rather than just reading. I remember better."

There has also been time (and a place) for her other interests: writing, poetry and photography. She often has a camera strung over her shoulder. One of her favorite photos is of Professor Linda Thomas baptizing a child in the Augustana Chapel.

Hickey is from Kansas and still has a home there. She grew up Methodist and helped with youth groups, but eventually joined Good Shepherd Lutheran in Lawrence, Kan. While interim confirmation teacher there, she decided that if she was going to teach she wanted to learn more about the Lutheran faith, and was delighted to discover "an emphasis on grace."

After three years at LSTC, including experience hours and a ministry project for candidacy (a prayer workshop), she is now eligible for assignment. She hopes to find a call that uses a combination of her gifts and passions: prayer, writing, retreats and pastoral care.

"And theology, because I love it... I've been happy just to be here," she said.

Baccalaureate and Commencement 2019

On May 18, graduates, their families, well-wishers, and the LSTC community gathered in the Augustana Chapel for a baccalaureate service. Kathleen D. “Kadi” Billman delivered the sermon on John 13:31–35 and faculty colleague Benjamin Stewart presided. LSTC Choirs and Friends, led by Keith “Doc” Hampton, provided special music, including the sending song, “God of the Water” composed by Erik Thone (2019, MDiv).

The following afternoon, the rain held off long enough to allow graduates, faculty and board members to process from LSTC to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church for the commencement ceremony. The Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr., president of Chicago Theological Seminary, delivered the commencement address. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenus, Diocesan Episcopa of the North America–Europe Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church, brought ecumenical greetings. He attended to hood PhD graduate Baiju Markose.

Carolyn “Care” Lawrence and Christina Jindra, both second-year MDiv students, shared the 2019 Bible and Lutheran Faith Prize. The Krentz Award for Biblical Interpretation went to Adama Isa, PhD student; Ashley Rosa, second-year MDiv student; Helen Chukka, 2019 ThM grad; and M. Seng Tsin Nan, ThM/PhD student. Amber Kalina, second-year MDiv student, received the Lutheran Confessions Prize. She and Erik Thone received the James Kenneth Echols Prize for Excellence in Preaching.

The Confessor of Christ Award was presented to Vítor Westhelle and accepted by Christiane Westhelle and José David Rodriguez. See page 2 for more details.

The Community of the Cross Award was presented to the Madres por la Paz, a group of mothers who lost their children to gun violence and now support one another and others who grieve victims of gun violence in their Chicago neighborhoods. See page 2 for more information.

LSTC celebrates the Class of 2019.



Kathleen (Kadi) Billman was chosen by the students to be preacher at Baccalaureate.



Lined up and ready to process into St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church.

Congratulations to LSTC's newest alumni/ae!

Master of Arts

Joseph Calderone
Noah Dwyer
River Needham
Samson Samuel

Master of Arts in Ministry

Elliott Drake
Jessica Edelman
Joanne Hickey

Master of Arts (Theological Studies)

Jennifer De Leon
Dafne Del Risco-Nolla
MeKota Fogg
Hesron Sihombing

Master of Divinity

(with synod assignments known at press time)

Alexander Aivars - North/West Lower Michigan

Ila Elise Anderson - fall assignment

Andrew Baumgartner - Central States

Amy Asendorf Berger - Central/Southern Illinois

Mathew Berger - Central/Southern Illinois

Sarah Derrick - Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana

Molly Eversoll - Northern Great Lakes

Christephor Gilbert - fall assignment

Samantha Nichols - Nebraska

Chelsey Olson - Northern Illinois

Levi Powers - Rocky Mountain

Remy Remmers - Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana

Denise Rode - fall assignment

Nash Shaffer, III - Ecumenical MDiv

Erik Thone - South Dakota

Master of Theology

Cami Brubaker

Sweetly Helen Chukka

Manoj Gunthoi

Smitha Das Gunthoi

Brach Jennings

Sunil Nallathambi

Lal Piang

Eddie Rosa Fuentes

Vinod Wesley

Doctor of Ministry in Preaching

James Johnson

Anna Norrby

Doctor of Philosophy

Iskandar Bcheiry

Nayoung Ha

Godson Jacob

Curtis Johnson

Rebecca Luft

Baiju Markose

Matthew Mellott

Damasus Okoro

Olak Sunuwar



Christina Jindra and Carolyn "Care" Lawrence walk forward to receive the shared 2019 Bible and Lutheran Faith Prize.



Hesron Hanshen Sihombing shows us the face of accomplishment.



Professor Mark Swanson places the PhD hood on Iskandar Bcheiry.



Elliott Drake leaves the procession line-up for a quick congratulatory hug.



MDiv grads Denise Rode and Chelsey Olson.



Vinod John Wesley, ThM graduate, is surrounded by family after commencement.



Happy MDiv grads Alex Aivars, Remy Remmers, Andrew Baumgartner, Samantha Nichols and Sarah Derrick.



LSTC Choirs and Friends provided music.



Baiju Markose, Godson Jacob and Matthew Mellott received the PhD degree with honors.



Amy and Mathew Berger.



President Nieman, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenus and the Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr.



PhD grad Olak Sunuwar (center) with his daughters, Yabena and Yaleen.

A life in libraries

Retiring JKM Library Director Christine Wenderoth reflects on theology and technology

by Jan Boden



Christine Wenderoth

Only one thing changed for Christine (Chris) Wenderoth when she walked out of her office at the JKM Library for the last time on June 30. She remains a teacher, she remains an academic, and she remains curious and informed on a wide range of topics related to theological education. But for the first time since she was an undergraduate student she isn't working in a library.

A student job at Oberlin College led her straight to library school after she graduated. "I knew that I wanted to be in academia, and at that time, women were not having an easy time being hired as professors," Wenderoth said. "But even while I was doing that degree, I found myself pining after religious studies."

Wenderoth majored in religion as an undergrad to find out "why people of good will and intelligence believed that stuff." She grew up in a family that was decidedly agnostic and her studies were "rational intellectualizing about religion and theology" rather than a faith-based approach.

Her journey to faith was gradual. "I've come in through the back door," Wenderoth said.

She was well into her 20s when she came into the church.

"It was the people who took care of me after my sister died that made the difference. They knew me and recommended a congregation that was the right one for me."

Its pastor was Albert Curry Winn, the former president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a great preacher with social justice commitments. "The congregation was wonderful, too," she added.

Nudged into ministry

Wenderoth's first job out of library school was at Columbia Theological Seminary. Still pining after more religious studies, she completed the PhD program at Emory Divinity School while working full-time at Columbia.

She got "nudged into ministry" by Columbia students who asked her to preach and preside at communion. Because she already had a PhD in theology, she was required to take seven "remedial courses," to meet the requirements for an MDiv.

"I didn't actually take a preaching course," she confessed. "I just read a lot of books about preaching."

One bonus was having Walter Brueggemann as the professor of her Introduction to Old Testament course.

She started her teaching career at Columbia, offering a course in the doctor of ministry program on research and writing. Since then she's taught a wide range of courses including faith development, gender studies, Christian education, food and the body, and, most recently, science fiction and theology. "I've always been a dilettante," she said with characteristic humor.

Wenderoth is not retiring from teaching. She's already scheduled to lead a J-Term course at LSTC. She also looks forward to having time to write about science fiction and the Bible, and the neuroscience of reading.

Observer of changes

Libraries, even theological libraries, have moved with the times over the decades of Wenderoth's career. She and the staff of the JKM Library brought the entire collection online. Perhaps even more impressive was the "weeding" of 90,000 triplicate, quadruplicate, or entirely irrelevant volumes from the collection.

"I enjoy seeing a project through to completion, even a project that I might not want to do," she said.

Wenderoth is circumspect about what technology makes possible but also the ways it changed how she led a theological library.

"We can get resources for patrons instantly on CARLI (Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries of Illinois) and I-Share and can help them find almost anything they're looking for. On the other hand, technology has vastly changed my day-to-day work. The number of email communications means I spend a lot of time tending those instead of interacting face-to-face with people. With fewer paper files, it's a challenge knowing the best way to pass along the digital communications to the next person who will need them."

Technology has also changed what goes on in the classroom and students' study habits.

"Students are less able to perform what I call 'crap

detection' on what they're reading. How do they vet their sources? And with the speed of the online world, we find that students wait until the last moment to do their research and that also makes them less discriminating."

One big surprise for Wenderoth is how many younger students like print. "One of them told me that they like the smell of books!"

Wenderoth is also a keen observer of the changes in church, especially mainline Protestant churches, and the impact it's had on theological education. The biggest changes she sees are in finances and student demographics.

"As the church has changed, credentialing for becoming a minister has an impact on what we do," she said.

She says that LSTC is "more protected from this because of the candidacy process," with its specific requirements for ordination. Other denominational or interdenominational seminaries only grant degrees but are not vetting students for ordination. Wenderoth added that the ELCA process is so labor intensive that it takes a lot out of the school.

Next moves: new home, more travel

June 30 marked another move for Wenderoth, from a first floor apartment in LSTC housing to a 14th floor condo with a view of Lake Michigan.

"Living in LSTC housing turned out to be so much fun. I was in a building where students were in three of the apartments and faculty in the other three. Sitting on the back porch having coffee, you might have six people join you. We take care of one another's animals and one another. This living arrangement really speaks to the wisdom of committing to a residential community for the seminary."

She won't have long to settle into her new place before she and her spouse, Thomas Haverly, join Dean Esther

Menn and McCormick Seminary Professor Robert Cathey on a Partners for Peace trip to Israel.

"After that, we're planning trips to Europe and other parts of the world," she said.

JKM | Library

JKM background

The JKM Library is administered as the JKM Library Trust. Its board of directors is comprised of the presidents, academic deans, two faculty and representatives of the boards of LSTC and McCormick Theological Seminary, and the JKM Library director. The JKM in the name was, from 1975 to 2004, an initialism for Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick: Jesuit from the Jesuit School of Theology, which closed in 1981; Krauss from the Krauss Library, the original name of the merged collection when LSTC moved to Hyde Park in 1967; and McCormick, for that seminary, which joined the Jesuits and LSTC in the Hyde Park neighborhood in 1975. In 2004, in an agreement worked out with the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus, the name Jesuit was dropped, and the library became officially known as the JKM Library.

RETIRING



Mitch McCullough, Bob Berridge and Elmer Henderson

On June 13, the LSTC community gathered to thank Elmer Henderson, watchperson coordinator, and Mitch McCullough, watchperson, for their combined 42 years of service to LSTC. Mitch joined the staff in 1996 while

he was still serving in the Chicago Police Department. He patrolled the LSTC campus and area in the afternoon and evening, often on a bicycle. He and his family lived in LSTC housing and knew students, faculty and staff as neighbors and friends.

In 2000, Mitch's childhood friend, Elmer Henderson, joined the LSTC staff after he retired from the Chicago Police Department. He monitored traffic in and out of LSTC from the front desk each evening.

Ask Elmer, "How are you?" and his standard response was "Terrible." He said, "People will always ask 'How are you' and not listen to the answer. I started to say 'Terrible,' and they'd still walk away but they'd usually take a few steps and turn around."

We are grateful for their watchfulness, for keeping the LSTC community safe for more than two decades. We wish them good health and God's continued blessings.

Gordon Braatz: ‘delicious understatement’ of service

by Julie B. Sevig



Gordon A. Braatz

Unassuming is one word to describe Gordon A. Braatz, even on the day he received the Distinguished Service Award from LSTC. He says his support of LSTC has simply been about doing what is required of “good and faithful servants.”

“This recognition is neither something I seek nor relish,” said the soft-spoken pastor and psychologist while seated in the Refectory between sessions of the LSTC Board of Directors meeting in May.

His generous gift to LSTC to establish an endowed chair for worship was made in 2008. But the seed was planted some years earlier when he responded to a mailing asking for help paying for the new Augustana Chapel. For his modest gift, he was surprised to receive “a most gracious and personal note of thanks.” Not long after came the installation of the Paul and Ruth Manz organ, and because they were “dear friends,” he made another modest gift. “And then, to no one’s surprise, development people began to contact me,” he joked.

He credits a conversation which included a pivotal and perfect question from then-president James Kenneth Echols with what he did next. Echols asked him, “What might we do together?”

Having learned more about LSTC’s mission and vision, Braatz decided the seminary was the place for a windfall asset that had come his way.

“You see, a small investment I had made not all that long before had come to be worth nearly 400 times what I had put into it,” he explained. “And since I hadn’t expected it, hadn’t earned it, and didn’t depend on it, I was determined to give it all way.

“How I came to that decision has many antecedents, but surely prime among them was what my parents would have said. My parents were products of the Great

Depression, and among the things they carried from those days were a deep concern for others and a style of very careful generosity. In other words, money was always precious and one never gave it away without knowing it was truly needed and would be well used. Clearly those same values were instilled in me.”

Indeed they were. When accepting his award at the seminary’s annual Leadership Dinner, he recalled how a memory from fourth grade influenced his future behavior. His class was to go together to a movie, and it was going to cost each student 15 cents.

“On the day of the showing my dad gave me the 15 cents, and then he gave me another 15 cents in case there was a kid who didn’t have even that and would have to stay behind.

“I didn’t think much about that then, and it is only in more recent years that I have recognized how much those little things had an impact on me. And I’ve come to appreciate how much my parents sacrificed so that I could have experiences and go places they would never see, and to realize also that into the land of kindness and caring they had ventured farther than I can ever hope to go,” he said.

Seven ways to simultaneously serve

Greg Kaufmann, also a board member, and Benjamin M. Stewart, associate professor, paid tribute to Braatz prior to the award presentation.

“How many ways can one person serve God by serving their neighbors?” Kaufmann asked the crowd, holding the Braatz vita above his head and saying he was only going to share seven different ways he served the neighbor—“all at the same time!”

Kaufmann began with Braatz’s pastoral ministry at three different congregations, and proceeded to list his work as a psychologist (including extensive work with veterans), and teaching in both the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota, accreditation site visitor to post-doctoral training programs for the American Psychological Association, mentor and board examiner for the American Board of Professional Psychology, and consultant with Church Innovations. Then, he proceeded to mention that Braatz also made time to serve on the LSTC Board of Directors, the Academic Affairs Committee, and the Campaign Steering Committee.

Braatz is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, as well as Northwestern Lutheran Seminary (prior to what then became Luther Northwestern) in St. Paul, Minn. His connection to Chicago goes back to childhood, when he spent time each summer with his aunt and uncle who lived on the north side.

‘Accessible, deep, never trite’

Stewart delighted the crowd with examples of being introduced as “Gordon Braatz” when he is introduced with

the title he holds at LSTC: The Gordon Braatz Associate Professor of Worship. Stewart quoted a scholarly review Braatz wrote, in which Braatz called the writer's prose a "delicious understatement."

"Those of us who know Gordon's writing and speaking know that he himself is something of a master of 'delicious understatement...'" Stewart said, adding a story from Pastor Bradley Schmeling at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minn., where Braatz is a member: "He is both accessible and deep (Gordon is never trite!)"

Turning to Braatz, Stewart commended his "philanthropy and generous companionship with others," especially in establishing the worship chair at LSTC.

"...You've carved out a space for new generations to stand at the table so that they too may 'taste and see' something so good, so delicious. And for that we too raise our glasses and give thanks to God," Stewart said.

Braatz concluded his remarks by recounting how his involvement at LSTC has only increased since that first gift 20 years ago.

"I have come to appreciate ever more [LSTC's] mission, its scholarship, its faithfulness, and its innovative spirit..." he said, sharing his recent epiphany after driving past ongoing construction until a sign finally appeared on the buildings: "Boy Scouts of America. Base Camp."

"Well, isn't that what a seminary is?" he asked. "A base camp. A place for education and planning, preparation and practice for a mission outside of itself? That's why terms like 'public church' and 'called into the world' are so apt. For this is a place where those who are called are made ready to go forth on a mission: to proclaim the Gospel, to care for all people, to heal the earth. Sometimes it needs to be a place of respite where those who have gone out can return to retool and make changes before setting out again. And always it needs to be flexible and alert for even if the mission may be the same, the means of fulfilling it won't be the same for long."

Cross that symbolized a father's blessing returned to LSTC



Bob Hansen, left, tells Bob Berridge about the cross his father made him that he returned to LSTC.

When Bob Hansen decided to go to seminary back in 1969 he was bucking the trend in his family. Hansen came from three generations of engineers, after all, and his father was opposed to his decision.

But when the seminarian returned to the LSTC campus from his internship near Littleton, Colo., his dad visited him at LSTC for the first time. And he brought something with to show his approval.

His father, Richard, used to take long walks along Lake Michigan, in Muskegon, Mich., to pick up driftwood after a storm. When he visited his son, he gave him at

crucifix he had carved from driftwood.

"This treasure was to symbolize a fatherly blessing," Hansen said. Then-president Stewart Herman happened to be nearby when Hansen's dad visited, so he not only met Richard Hansen, but took him on a tour of LSTC. Bob Hansen said his dad never forgot that personal attention from the president.

The cross, which is about 4' x 3' and heavy, hung in the LSTC chapel until 1975, and stayed with Pastor Hansen throughout his ministry—in parishes, hospital pastoral care and in campus ministry—hanging in "places of prominence, or in my pastoral office," he said.

One morning when coming early to his office he walked in on a cleaning lady, praying at the foot of the cross. She was embarrassed, he said, as if she'd done something wrong. But he backed out of the office and told her she is a blessing and can stay as long as she wanted.

Recently, Hansen, who lives in DeKalb, Ill., retired and the cross was returned to LSTC as a gift.

"I'm humbled and honored that LSTC would accept it back," he said, taking another fond look at the crucifix before leaving it in the capable hands of LSTC staff to find the right resting spot.

"You see the pain and the dignity on Jesus' face. And it is dark skinned, which symbolizes all the colors of our humanity," he said.

John Damm, pastor, professor, president, dies at age 92



Surrounding John Damm on a December visit to commemorate the naming of an endowed chair are, from left, Clyde Walter, Amadus J. Derr and President James Nieman.

The Rev. Dr. John Silber Damm, pastor, professor and seminary president, died May 4 in his assisted living apartment at Wartburg Place in Mount Vernon, N.Y. He would have been 93 years old on June 21.

The Damm Chair, established with a \$1 million gift to LSTC from Larry and Christie Tietjen will endow a future faculty position dedicated to education and leadership in the church. The Tietjen family will also match \$500,000 in gifts from families, colleagues, students and parishioners of Damm who wish to join in honoring him.

Amadus J. Derr, senior pastor at St. Peter's Church in New York, N.Y., sent a letter of tribute to the church community recounting Damm's influence: "His influence on 20th Century seminary education and his incredible care for his students, their spouses and their families has made him one of the most influential Lutheran leaders of the 20th Century. His wisdom, love and humor and his incredible sense of hospitality has affected us all."

The Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated June 22, and his ashes were laid to rest at St. Peter's Church Columbarium. Per his instructions, his body was clothed in liturgical vestments, including the white and green chasuble given to him by his mother on June 16, 1951, the day of his ordination, Derr reported.

"Father John," as he was called, served two parishes, Grace Lutheran Church, Teaneck, N.J., and St. Peter's Church in New York. Between his parish ministries he served first as a professor and ultimately as academic dean at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Mo., and at Concordia Seminary in Exile–Christ Seminary/Seminex as academic dean and interim president. Through his ministry, Father John served as mentor and friend to countless pastors and their families as well as an equally large number of parishioners and friends.

In 1973, Damm was one of the faculty members of Concordia Seminary labeled "not to be tolerated in the Church of God" and became the principal organizer and founder of Concordia Seminary in Exile, formed on February 19, 1974. Damm was both a liturgical scholar and liturgical pioneer, playing a major role in the development of baptismally-centered Eucharistic Lutheran worship. He was the first to introduce the Great Vigil of Easter to a Lutheran parish.

In late November of 2018, the Tietjens, Derr and local friends visited Damm at his home in Wartburg Place for a small ceremony to name the endowed chair. "In these his last days, nothing pleased him more than that honor," Derr wrote.

Larry Tietjen concurred. "We will never forget the joy and appreciation in his face... For Christie and me this was a very moving and emotional service as we watched Uncle John's joy spread throughout the room."

To the Tietjen family, Damm was like family. It was during a family gathering after the death of their patriarch, Dr. John Tietjen, that the idea for an LSTC chair surfaced. Damm "was passionate about fostering education and leadership in the church... While our father may have been front and center in the headlines [during the formation of Seminex], John Damm was behind the scenes making things happen," Larry Tietjen said.

Weather prevented President James Nieman from attending the ceremony in Damm's home, but he and Clyde Walter, vice president for advancement, visited him later in December to share the Eucharist and present him with items to commemorate the naming of the endowed chair. Focusing on education in the area of leadership, faculty persons called to this chair will enrich the formation of students in all six of LSTC's degree programs. An additional \$150,000 has been raised, leaving a need for \$350,000 to make the chair a reality.

Faculty

Klaus-Peter Adam, associate professor of Old Testament, was named associate editor of *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.

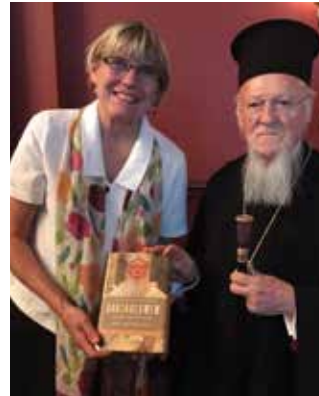
Kathleen (Kadi) Billman, John H. Tietjen Professor of Pastoral Ministry: Pastoral Theology and director of the MDiv and MA programs, in February gave a presentation on bereavement for the adult education forum at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Munster, Ind.

Mercedes Garcia Bachmann, auxiliary in Old Testament, had her membership on the Board of Trustees of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research renewed. She taught at the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin lay school and was an ecumenical guest speaker at a conference on the future of theological studies held by the Pontifical Xaverian School at Bogotá, Colombia, in June.

Kristel Clayville, acting director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, presented “Marketing Altruism: Charity and Neighbor Love in Organ Donor Appeals” at the University of Chicago Divinity School May 15.

Kurt Hendel, Bernard, Fischer, Westberg Distinguished Ministry Professor Emeritus of Reformation History, gave a presentation on “Katharina von Bora” to the Chicago Columbia Club. He also presented “Roman Catholic-Lutheran Relations: Then and Now” to the deacon candidates of the Joliet Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, and presented “Faith Active in Love: A Vision of the Christian Life” to retired executives of Lutheran Social Service Agencies.

Matthew Mellott, auxiliary in Greek, published “An Agonistic Explosion: An Investigation of Athletics in the Seven Cities of Revelation in Honor of



Barbara Rossing and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

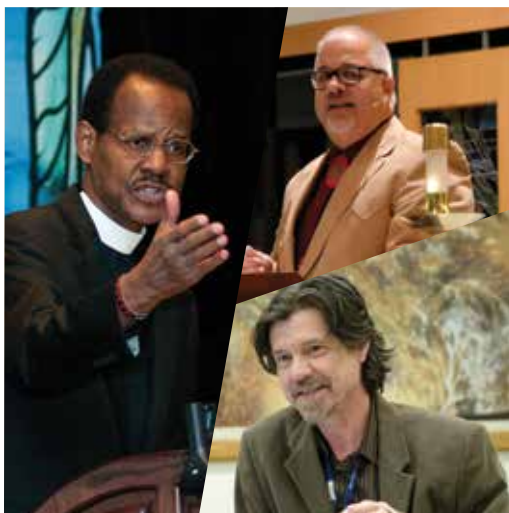
Dr. Walter F. Taylor Jr.” in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol 46 No 2 (2019).

Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament, presented “Creation, the City and the Built Environment” at the United Methodist National Office in Atlanta, Ga.; *Journeys Through Revelation: A day of study on Easter C lectionary texts to the Milwaukee Area Synod*; and delivered “Hope and Peace in the Book of Revelation” for the peace lecture series at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church

in Palm Gardens, Fla., and Resurrection Hope in Revelation at Christ Church Cathedral in Houston, Texas. Rossing, along with Gayle E. Woloschak, professor of Religion and Science Studies, participated in the third Halki Summit in Istanbul. Rossing spoke about eco-theological curriculum. The summit brought together some 50 delegates from more than 40 institutions around the world.

Benjamin Stewart, Gordon A. Braatz Associate Professor of Worship and director of Advanced Studies, was interviewed on National Public Radio (NPR) for a piece about Ash Wednesday.

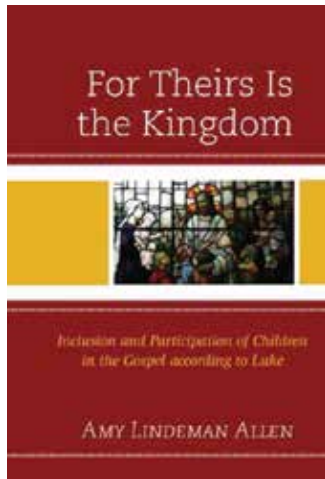
Kimberly Wagner, assistant professor of homiletics and Axel Jacob and Gerda Maria (Swanson) Carlson Chair in Homiletics, published “Day of Pentecost” for “Preaching Helps” in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol 46 No 2 (2019).



Echols, Straw, Westhelle to be honored

James Kenneth Echols, Gordon Straw and Vitor Westhelle will be honored at a session during the 2019 American Academy of Religion (AAR) in San Diego, Calif., in November. These three Lutheran scholars who recently died, all from LSTC, contributed to work on racial justice, according to The Lutheran Scholars of Religion (LSR) newsletter. In their honor, and to continue their work, LSR will hold a session during AAR to address past and contemporary Lutheran traditions as they engage contributions by Native Americans, African Americans, and Central/South Americans (including the Caribbean), or perspectives generated by indigenous, postcolonial or critical race studies.

New Books from Alumni



For Theirs Is the Kingdom: Inclusion and Participation of Children in the Gospel according to Luke

Jesus's interactions with children are typically considered the exception rather than the rule in his ministry. In "For Theirs Is the Kingdom," Amy Lindeman Allen (2007, MDiv) foregrounds children throughout the gospel of Luke to suggest that some of Jesus's closest disciples may have been children or adolescents. Her depiction of children in Luke's gospel challenges readers to see and hear them as bearers of God's word and grace.

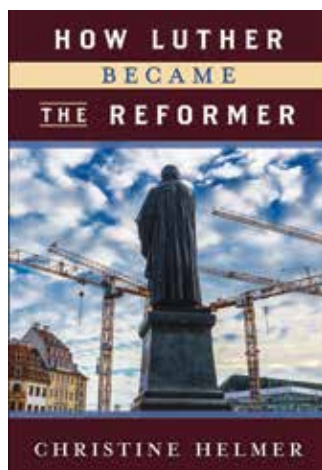
For Theirs Is the Kingdom was published in April by Fortress Academic Press, ISBN 9781978703216.

Having Everything: A Father's Gift

Daniel J. Carlson (1965, MDiv) traces the life of his

father, J. Chandler Carlson, a humble, quiet man with a sixth grade education who "made an indelible impression on the lives of thousands of individuals." In this gentle tribute to his father, Carlson affirms that every life has value and that everyone can make a difference in the lives of others. He explores faith, justice and living with quiet integrity.

Having Everything: A Father's Gift, Living Simply and Gratefully in an Age of Acquisition was published by Westbow Press, ISBN 9781490867489.



How Luther Became the Reformer

Christine Helmer (1989, MA) states that "No story has been more foundational to triumphalist accounts of Western modernity than that of Martin Luther, the heroic individual standing before the tribunes of medieval authoritarianism to proclaim his religious and intellectual freedom." In her book, *How Luther Became the Reformer*, Helmer examines the origins of this myth and

why German intellectuals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were so committed to this version of Luther's story. Through this lens she examines modernity's "deformations," including anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism. Helmer's new interpretation of Luther and modernity provide resources for understanding and contesting contemporary assaults on democracy.

How Luther Became the Reformer was published in March by Westminster John Knox Press and is available from the publisher and Amazon, ISBN 9780664262877.

Anh My: A daily journal by a young relief worker late in the Viet Nam War

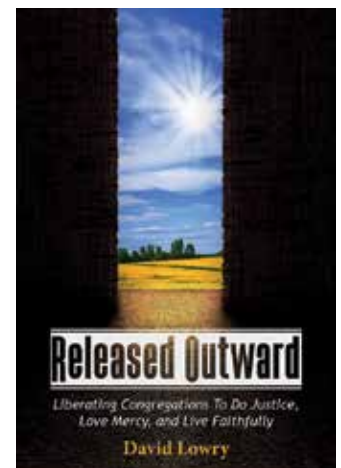
During the Viet Nam War, Stewart Herman III (1981, MTS) joined a relief agency in Quang Ngai Province. This daily diary chronicles what happens when youthful idealism encounters the grinding reality of civil war. It narrates how the "war for hearts and minds" played out for an ordinary American trying his unheroic best to ameliorate the wretched conditions under which refugees sought education and a semblance of normalcy for themselves and their children. The work was beset with failing vehicles, typhoons, hostile neighbors and rising danger of warfare—but also kindly and generous Vietnamese, courageous colleagues,

bewitching landscapes and occasional successes.

Anh My is available on Amazon, ISBN 9781727092837.

Love — It's the Greatest!

St. Paul's familiar love poem in 1 Corinthians 13 is the basis of John H. Krahn's (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1969, MDiv) newest book from CSS Publishing. *Love — It's the Greatest!* is full of true stories about love. Questions are included at the end of each chapter, making it well-suited for group Bible study. This is Krahn's 11th book. ISBN 9780788029301.



Released Outward: Liberating Congregations to Do Justice, Love Mercy, and Live Faithfully

David Lowry (1986, PhD) draws on his 28 years as pastor of St. Thomas Lutheran Church on Chicago's south side to address ways congregations turned in on themselves can be set free to engage the world with God's

justice, mercy and faithfulness. The journey outward is a spiritual one. Churches addicted to their cultural and ecclesial traditions must come out of denial, realize that the mission God has given them is unmanageable and surrender life and mission to God.

Released Outward is about congregations being liberated from false attachments and from theologies that do not support radical change to become liberated people giving witness to God's liberation in its many forms. It shows that the way forward is through seeing ourselves in the mirror of Jesus's witness, having Christ formed in us, and being empowered and guided by the Spirit.

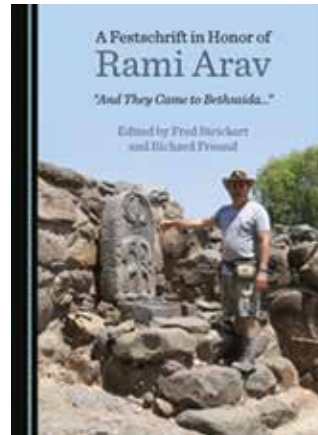
Released Outward was published by Wipf and

Stock in February 2018. It is available from the publisher and at Amazon, ISBN 9781532640728.

“And they came to Bethsaida... (Mark 8:22)” — A Festschrift in Honor of Rami Arav

Fred Strickert (Seminex, 1974, MDiv), professor emeritus of religion at Wartburg College, and Rabbi Richard Freund (University of Hartford) have edited a Festschrift in honor of Israeli archaeologist Rami Arav upon the completion of 32 years of archaeological excavation at Bethsaida, on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Despite Bethsaida's prominent role in the gospels, the Golden Age of Biblical Archaeology all



but ignored this important site until 1987 when a young Israeli archaeologist, Rami Arav, undertook a probe revealing early Roman pottery, coins and remains of domestic buildings. This led to a 32-year-long research project at Bethsaida adding to our knowledge of the Historical Jesus and his disciples, as also a window into the world of

common first-century men and women going about their daily lives under the realm of the family of Emperor Augustus and the Herodians. The big surprise was that layers below the surface (and a thousand years earlier), there also appeared a major iron-age capital city of the Geshurites with a magnificent palace, impregnable city walls, a massive four-chamber gate system, and religious symbols of another era, that were also connections to King David.

In this volume 23, international scholars share their research to demonstrate the success of Arav's venture spanning over three decades. “*And they came to Bethsaida...*” was published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, ISBN 9781527527898.

WE REMEMBER

Jean Leshner

Jean Olson Leshner, writer, editor, advocate, and spouse of the late LSTC President William Leshner, died April 4 at the Pomona Valley Hospital. A memorial service was held June 8 at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, Calif.

Leshner was working as the English news editor for the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, Switzerland, when she met seminary student Bill Leshner. They married in 1957 and traveled widely throughout the world.

From the time she was a child, Leshner knew that she would become a writer. She served as editor for several publications and as editor-in-chief of AARP Books and executive editor of books on aging for gerontologists. She had three book compilations during her early retirement, *Prayers for the Common Good*, *O Holy Night* and *Pathways to Peace*.

While her husband was still at LSTC the Leshners became involved in the Parliament of the World's Religions, which honored their work with the organization in 2017.

She is survived by two sons.

Sandra Meslow

Longtime friend of LSTC, Sandra Meslow, died May 10 in Mystic, Conn. She and her late husband, George (1967, MDiv), understood the financial challenges that seminaries and seminary students face. They placed a high value on the type of preparation students receive at LSTC.

Meslow worked as a financial analyst in the public and the private sector. She assisted George in his ministries in congregations and as a vice president for Lutheran Home in Pennsylvania and as president of Martin Luther Home Society in Lincoln, Neb.

She is survived by a son, a daughter and four grandchildren.

CLASS NOTES

1961

Arne Walker (Augustana Theological Seminary, MDiv) recently published two books which entirely benefit two ministries. To date, *Even I Will Learn to Dance* has raised over \$10,000 in scholarship funds for AFFIRM, a youth spiritual enrichment week of the ELCA Southeastern Synod. The book includes 450 stories of retreat ministry, combining church youth and court-related youth released into Walker's custody.

A Trail Less Hiked has raised over \$6,000 to support Young Adult Global Missionary Isaac Taylor. It was written in gratitude to all of the encouragers in Walker's life and challenges readers to take the "trail less hiked."

1973

W. Stevens Shipman, (MDiv) is now serving in the North American Lutheran Church as interim pastor at St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Camp Hill, Pa. He served as director of Lutheran CORE from 2012 to 2015 and then on the supply circuit across Pennsylvania and adjacent states. He and his wife, Linda, are members of St. Paul Lutheran Church (LCMC) in York, Pa.

1976

James R. Thomas (Christ Seminary-Seminex, MDiv) was awarded the 2019 Herman W. and Elizabeth P. Cauble Faculty Distinguished Service Award by Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne

University in recognition of the significant influence of his life and for teaching students being formed to be pastors, deacons and lay professionals, and for his distinguished service to LTSS and to the wider church.

1977

Greg Kaufmann (Christ Seminary-Seminex, MDiv) is featured in the article "A rural synod fights addiction" in the March issue of *Living Lutheran*.

1984

Paul Egensteiner (MDiv) was elected bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod. He will be installed on Nov. 16 at The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine.

1985

Ken Bowman (MDiv) was featured in a Feb. 15 article in the *East Grand Forks Exponent*. He talked about his call to ministry and his background. He has been doing interim ministry at congregations in a number of synods. Currently he is serving as interim pastor of Bethel and Faith Lutheran Churches in Badger, N.D.

1991

Cheryl Peterson (MDiv) contributed "Why theology matters" to the March issue of *Living Lutheran*. She is associate dean for academics and professor of systematic theology at Trinity Theological Seminary at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio.

1992

Amy Reumann (MDiv) was quoted in a March 19 Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA) news release announcing its partnership with the ELCA, by action taken by the Central States Synod Council endorsing KIFA as a state public policy office of the ELCA. Jennifer Thomas (1998, MDiv), is on KIFA's board. Reumann was also quoted in the April 2019 *Living Lutheran* article "For the sake of the earth."

1999

Michael Russell (MDiv) is in a picture on page 17 of the June *Living Lutheran* accompanying the "Worship 101" article.

2006

Gabi Aelabouni (MDiv) is pictured on page 3 of the June issue of *Living Lutheran* for the "Worship 101" article.

Meghan Johnston Aelabouni (MDiv) contributed "Grace and God's welcome" to the February issue and "Finding grace in prison—and beyond" to the March issue of *Living Lutheran*. Her article, "Worship 101," is in the June issue.

Sarah Stadler (MDiv) was featured in a Feb. 21 article in the *State Press*. She has been leading Grace Lutheran Church in Phoenix since 2010. The article talks about Grace Lutheran's impact in Phoenix, especially through a music venue, Trunk Space, that creates a welcoming space within the church building for those who don't go to church.

2008

Paul Bailie (MDiv) is now the half-time national coordinator of Lutheran Peace Fellowship. He also continues to serve a congregation in Ohio. His Lenten greetings are at lutheranpeace.org.

Wendy DeBoer (MA), serving in the Nebraska state senate, was featured in an Omaha TV news clip on April 25 when she addressed the Unicameral in opposition to the state's death penalty. She cited her faith as a reason for her opposition.

2009

Tim Brown (MDiv) published "Just enough real estate" in the March issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Yehiel Curry (TEEM, 2013, MDiv) was elected bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod on June 8. He also published "The winning play" in the April issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Benjamin Dueholm (Lutheran Year) published "Seeing what we believe" in the April issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Kirsten Fryer (MDiv) is in a photo accompanying the February *Living Lutheran*, "I know I am welcome" about ELCA-led international congregations. Fryer leads St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Cairo, Egypt.

Angela Khabeib (MDiv) published "We're on the move" in the February issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Michelle Townsend de Lopez (MDiv) is quoted in the May *Living Lutheran* article, “Dignity & Grace in the face of mental illness,” talking about the Bread of Healing Clinic at Cross Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, where she serves as pastor.

2010

Jhon Freddy Correa (MDiv, 2015, ThM) is pictured in the June *Living Lutheran* for the article “Worship 101.”

Aaron Decker (MDiv) completed his ThM degree at Princeton Theological Seminary in May 2018 and is now serving as Visiting Professor of Old Testament at Malaysia Theological Seminary. His website is RevAaronD.com.

2012

Iskandar Bcheiry (ThM, 2019 PhD) was a panelist for a May 2 event at the University of Chicago Divinity School sponsored by the school’s Theology Club and The Orthodox Christian Fellowship.

Christina Garrett Klein (MDiv) is quoted in the article “Worship 101,” in the June issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2014

Tracey Breashears Schultz (DMin) is now assistant to the bishop in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. She had been serving Zion Lutheran Church in Houston Heights, Texas.

2015

Sarah Rossing (MDiv) was quoted in a March 5

Washington Post article, “Churches Urge Giving Up Plastic for Lent.” She serves as pastor of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church in Youngstown, Pa.

Katherine Tuttle (MDiv) was ordained June 5 at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Spokane, Wash. She is serving as pastor of Wilbur Lutheran Church in Wilbur, Wash.

Marissa Harrison Tweed (MDiv) was featured in a May 30 NPR story about rural ministry, “With Attendance Down, Rural Churches Pool Resources.”

2016

Baiju Markose (ThM, 2019 PhD) was a panelist for a May 2 event at the University of Chicago Divinity School sponsored by the school’s Theology Club and The Orthodox Christian Fellowship.

2018

Hans Becklin (MDiv) and Marissa Becklin (MDiv) were featured in a May 18 article in *LancasterOnline*, “One family, two churches: For a Midwestern pastoral couple, Lancaster County offers a chance to encourage Christian communities.” Hans is serving Salem Lutheran Church, Lititz, Pa., and Marissa, ordained June 7 during the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly, is serving Faith United Lutheran Church in Denver, Pa.

Sharayah Robinson (MDiv) was ordained May 25 at Lutheran Church of the Incarnation in Poway, Calif.



President James Nieman with Yehiel Curry on the day Curry was elected bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

She is serving a four-point parish in North Dakota, including St. Paul and Waldheim in Kathryn, St. Petri in Nome, and Messiah Lutheran Church in Fingal.

2019

Levi Powers (MDiv) was featured in the April 20 “#WHYoming” section of *Sweetwaternow.com*, which highlights people in the community. Powers is serving as pastor of Mount of Olives Lutheran Church in Rock Springs, Wy.

Future alumni/ae

Reed Fowler (MDiv, middler) was pictured in a *Religion News Service* March 26 online article, “In Chicago, on mosque charts its own path,” about Masjid al-Rabia, a women-centered mosque. Fowler is a Public Church Fellow at Masjid al-Rabia.

Errata

In the Winter issue of the Epistle on page 3, 2018 Distinguished Alumna Carolyn Fredriksen’s name was misspelled.

On page 6, the first sentence of the article should read: “This April, doctoral student Brach Jennings travels to Tübingen, Germany, to study with world-renowned theologian Jürgen Moltmann on the topic of construction a Trinitarian theology of the cross in dialogue with Martin Luther and James Cone.”

Also, in a recent appeal letter sent to alumni and donors, Vítor Westhelle should have been identified as Baiju Markose’s instructor, not a co-advisor.

We regret the errors.

Richard N. Johnson
1937-2019
Class of 1965

One of Richard Johnson's greatest joys was being a parish minister. Following his ordination in 1965 he served congregations in Connecticut for 34 years.

He died on April 5 after an extended illness. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Christine, their sons and daughter-in-law. A memorial service was held April 25 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Harwich, Mass.

John L. Kindschuh
1926-2019
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1952

After being ordained, John Kindschuh served congregations in Arizona and Iowa. He then served in administrative posts at Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill., for 40 years and was active in the Quad Cities community, serving on multiple boards.

He died on Feb. 15. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Lolly, their three children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. A funeral service was held Feb. 27 at First Lutheran Church, Moline, Ill.

Dale Knudsen
1921-2018
Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary Class of 1952

Pastor Dale Knudsen was a veteran of World War II who suffered serious injuries in action in Europe. He earned a bachelor's in chemical engineering before attending seminary. During his 35 years of parish ministry he served congregations in Los Alamos, N.M., El Paso, Texas, and Albuquerque, N.M.

He died Dec. 28. A memorial service was held at All Saints Lutheran Church in Albuquerque Jan. 19. He is survived by Fern, his wife of 68 years, two daughters, a daughter-in-law, three grandchildren and five great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a son.

Raymond A. Mai
1928-2019
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1960

In his mid-20s, Ray Mai attended the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis and Seattle while discerning a call to ordained ministry. With a clear sense of call, he left the family farm to attend Bethany College and Augustana Seminary. He served congregations in North Dakota, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and

Nebraska before moving to Lee's Summit, Mo., to seek better medical care for his wife, Ruth, who was diagnosed with cancer. She died in 1977.

Mai became the operator administrator of White Cross Nursing Home in Smolan, Kan., in 1978. He also began parish ministry again, doing pulpit supply and then serving several congregations as associate or interim pastor.

He extended his nursing home administrative work to two additional homes in Salina and Abilene, Kan. With his son-in-law he built several businesses in Lindsborg. He remained active in those businesses and the community until 2016.

He died March 28 at Bethany Home in Lindsborg. A funeral service was held April 2 at Bethany Lutheran Church. He is survived by four children, three step-children and their spouses and children. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Ruth, and his second wife of 37 years, Ardyce Johnson-Davies.

Benard Nelson
1923-2019
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1957

Benard Nelson died April 11 in Carmel, Ind., at age 96. During his ministry he

served seven congregations in Nebraska and Iowa.

He met his wife, Evelyn, while on a seminary choir tour. They spent their lives in ministry together, as pastor and organist.

A funeral was held April 26 at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Fremont, Neb. He is survived by his wife, their three children, eight grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Edward H. Schroeder
1930-2019
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Class of 1955

The Rev. Dr. Edward Schroeder was a beloved professor and co-founder of the Crossings Community, Webster Groves, Mo. He taught theology at Valparaiso University, Concordia Seminary, Christ Seminary-Seminex, and seminaries in Australia, Ethiopia and Lithuania.

Schroeder died March 1 in St. Louis. A funeral service was held March 13 at Bethel Lutheran Church in University City, Mo. On June 1, the Crossings Community held a celebration of Schroeder's life and ministry at Christ Lutheran Church, Webster Groves, Mo.

He is survived by his wife, Marie, their three children, five grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

Board of Directors

We give thanks for, and bid farewell to a large and impressive group of directors who are completing their service on the board.

Clarence Atwood, churchwide representative, served for nine years on the board and was the chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, which meets monthly. We are deeply grateful for his guidance, advice and dedication. He continues to serve on the Foundation Board of Trustees.

Roger Gustafson, Region 4 bishops' representative, served on the Academic Affairs Committee and brought thoughtful insights to discussions about how to better prepare leaders for the church.

Greg Kaufmann, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin representative, has chaired the Academic Affairs Committee for most of his nine years of service. He provided invaluable guidance based on his experience with lay schools of theology and as a member of synod staff.

John Kiltinen, Northern Great Lakes Synod representative, shared his perspectives as an academic and churchman during his nine years of service. He served on the Academic Affairs Committee.

Melinda Pupillo, La Crosse Area Synod representative, helped the board tell LSTC's story in their home synods through her work on the Seminary Relations Committee where she

shared her experiences as an alumna.

Twila Schock, Northern Illinois representative, served for six years and during that time was board vice chairperson and then chairperson. She chaired the Community Life Committee and advised on LSTC's rebranding in 2016.

Phyllis Weiderhoeft, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin representative, served for five years. She last served on the Board Development Committee and was the secretary to the board. She shared her experience leading nonprofit organizations as a deacon of the ELCA.

We congratulate board member *Rebecca Pallmeyer* (churchwide representative) on becoming the first woman to head the federal court in Chicago. She has been a district judge since October in the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse since October 1998 and served as a federal magistrate in the same courthouse for seven years before that.

Board member *Kristi Ferguson* (Southeastern Iowa representative) received the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn. She is professor emeritus of General Internal Medicine and served as director, Office of Consultation and Research in Medical Education at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine from 1995-2018. She has greatly influenced the development, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum. Ferguson has served on committees for several

national organizations, including the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Godspeed

Lea Schweitz, associate professor of systematic theology/religion and science, and director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, resigned effective June 30. She had completed a year-long leave of absence for discernment and care of her family. Esther Menn, dean and vice president for academic affairs, thanked her for her bi-vocational work at LSTC over 10 years, calling her an "innovative teacher, a creative force in the curriculum revision for a Public Church, and an insightful Lutheran urban nature writer."

We bid farewell to Controller and Director of Finance *Anissa Whitmore*, who has worked in the Finance Office since 2017. We wish her all the best and thank her for her service to LSTC.

Welcome

Judith Jean-Michel is the executive assistant for advancement, supporting the vice president for advancement and helping the Advancement Office organize and manage its work. She has extensive experience in executive administration from her work in corporations and nonprofits, including the Chicago Child Care Society across the street from LSTC. Jean-Michel lives in Chicago and is a runner who has completed many

marathons in the city.

Bill Myatt joined the Advancement team June 10 as director of philanthropic engagement. Myatt most recently was senior director of development, and director of development, at Catholic Extension in Chicago. Prior to that, he was at Loyola University as director of development, adjunct instructor and lecturer in theology. He has also held teaching positions at DePaul University, Lewis University (both in Chicago), and served as associate pastor of Brookside Church in Omaha, Neb.

Accomplishments

Erik Christensen, pastor to the community and director of worship, was quoted in the June *Living Lutheran* article "Worship 101." He also led a workshop May 8 on expanding language in worship that brought together students from Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northwestern University and confirmation/youth groups from six ELCA congregations.

Julie B. Sevig, communications specialist, contributed a biography of Daniel Erlander to the new resource "Come to the Water: Leader Sourcebook" (Augsburg Fortress). She also wrote 12 weeks of questions for Luther Seminary's Working Preacher resource during the season of Pentecost. The questions related to Sunday texts appear on the website and are tweeted.

LIFE AT LSTC

Vinod Wesley is joined by his daughter, Tanya, as he receives his ThM diploma from President Nieman.



The LSTC community gathered to dedicate and walk the seminary's new labyrinth, a gift from the Class of '18.



The LSTC Gospel Choir sings during the 31st Annual Benefit Concert in April.



Senior MDiv students passed through, and played in, the font. Tradition!

LSTC to Host Homecoming 2019: *Hear My Voice*

All alumni are invited to a two-day Homecoming event Oct. 9-10. Participants will have a chance to learn from LSTC faculty, reminisce and reconnect with former classmates, and honor distinguished alumni.

A 50-year grad celebration (Class of 1969) and dinner will be Wednesday evening. Activities will also be arranged for the following classes: 2009 (10 years), 1994 (25 years), 1979 (40 years). Class anniversaries for these years will also be recognized: 1974, 1984, 1999, 2004 and 2014.

The annual Distinguished Alumni Awards celebration and dinner is Thursday evening, at which both 2018 and 2019 recipients will be honored (see page 5).

Kimberly Wagner, assistant professor of homiletics, Axel Jacob and Gerda Maria (Swanson) Carlson Chair in Homiletics, will present a plenary lecture "Out of the Depths." Wagner's specialty is preaching about trauma. Homecoming's theme "Hear My Voice" is the second verse of Psalm 130; Wagner's dissertation is entitled "From the Depths," the beginning of Psalm 130. Thursday's liturgy will focus on gun violence.

Registration is \$50 for alumni and special guests and \$10 for students. Dinner tickets are \$25 for the 50-year class celebration (no cost to graduates and spouse/guest) and \$25 for awards banquet (no cost to awardees and spouse/guest). Accommodations have been made at nearby hotels. More details will be listed on the website (lstc.edu/lstc-life/events/homecoming) as they become available.

Music that Makes Community

LSTC is also hosting Music that Makes Community (MMC) Oct. 10-12. During this intensive music workshop, Conie Borchardt, Paul Vasile and Scott Weidler will lead worship, plenaries, small groups and reflection. Participants will learn practical skills and diverse repertoire, and explore how paperless music can strengthen and enrich worship and community life.

The event begins at 2 p.m. on Thursday and ends at 4 p.m. on Saturday. The schedule offers optional evening activities to support the participation of local commuters, including a Community SING on Thursday evening and Dances of Universal Peace on Friday evening.

More information about schedule, costs (\$350; \$650 for two from the same congregation/community) and housing are available at musicthatmakescommunity.org (Click on Calendar, then Workshops). The event is generously supported by LSTC and discounted rates are available for current students, faculty and alumni. Scholarships are also available for individuals and faith communities with limited resources, and seniors.

Note that this is the weekend of the Chicago Marathon and lodging options fill quickly. A block of rooms at the La Quinta Inn and Suites (\$169 with discount code) will be released Aug. 26 if not booked.

HOMECOMING SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Oct. 9

9 a.m. – noon	Registration/Check-in
11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Worship, Augustana Chapel
12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	Lunch, class gatherings
2 – 3:30 p.m.	Plenary/lecture
4 – 6 p.m.	Alumni reception
6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.	50-year grad celebration and dinner

Thursday, Oct. 10

8 – 11 a.m.	Morning engagement opportunities
11:15 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.	Liturgy in response to gun violence led by Klaus-Peter Adam, associate professor of Old Testament.
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m. – 5 p.m.	Afternoon engagement opportunities
6 – 9 p.m.	Distinguished Alumni Awards celebration and dinner

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September 24, 4 p.m.

2019 Scherer Lecture presented by Rev. Dr. Steed Davidson, McCormick dean of the faculty and vice president of Academic Affairs; professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.

October 9-10

LSTC Homecoming

October 10-12

Music that Makes Community

November 14-16

Vine Deloria Jr. Symposium

December 5-6

Environmental Conference, Barbara Rossing keynoter

January 2020

J-term trip to India

March 12

World Mission Institute 50th Anniversary Conference, "Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers: Migration and Mission," with keynote speaker Dr. Peter C. Phan, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. He is a native of Vietnam, emigrated as a refugee to the U.S in 1975.



Lutheran School of Theology *at* Chicago

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