

LSTC

WINTER 2018

Epistle

Magazine of the Lutheran School
of Theology at Chicago



*Community forming
leaders to form
community*

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear friends in Christ:

Elsewhere in this issue, you will meet our new strategic plan. For some readers, I may have lost you right there. Mention this stuff and eyes glaze over. Some regard such effort a waste of time, a charade done out of duty, feckless at best and best soon forgotten. But I'm a planner, not a cynic. Strategic planning lets us anticipate who we want to become and how we can get there together. And it's not just the goal that matters but how we are changed along the way, even enriched. Planning is a score of music played by a talented ensemble, delightful not only when the final measure is reached but during every artful passage.

Our latest strategic plan promises both a worthy goal and a demanding journey, even daunting. During these days when even basic institutions are imperiled and support for the shared work of gracious hearts is eroding, our church has a chance to be an alternative force. We can bring a credible, constructive word that rebuilds a beloved community for all people. And this isn't just about restoring social goods or finding a way beyond our present incivility. At heart, we can embody a public witness to the good news of Christ Jesus through our very faith communities and the people we form to lead them.

Where that becomes daunting is that, for our school to form those kinds of leaders, we need to be such a community first. In my sixth year at LSTC, I can tell you that this does not happen simply by living in proximity to one another and wishing we behaved better. It will take greater clarity about our values and commitments. It will take honoring the diverse gifts of all in our midst, especially on the margins. It will take a formation that integrates the classroom with the daily life. And it will take the material goods to sustain our work over the long haul. That's what our strategic plan is all about, and why community is at its center.

Daunting as this project may be, though, it is not beyond us. It turns out that communities that make an enduring difference, transformative ones like we want to be, are not the natural outcome of high energy, loud voices, and great causes. Instead, they result from a thousand small acts of faithfulness that bind folks together over time. Sociologist Zeynep Tufekci recently compared the dynamic, fast-forming but rapidly disbanded protests against dictatorships across North Africa and the Middle East with the more slow-building, durable yet nimble movements for civil

rights in this country over a half century earlier. For all their respective merits, between the two she saw a difference worth pondering.

Civil rights groups from two generations ago were able to reach their goals because of the countless small acts of trust-building exerted over the years

across every level of the movement—mundane tasks done together, small disagreements worked through, little plans that aligned with other ideas until a larger goal was reached. These small acts of faithfulness, which Tufekci prosaically called “network internalities,” are what build lasting, meaningful communities. With far fewer acts of deep caring, more recent protests fueled by technology and social media came together quickly but just as quickly dissipated, often short of their mark. They could generate vibrant flash mobs but not the dense web of community practices that change lives.

At LSTC, we want to become a more durable and transformative community, so that our students can be well-formed as leaders who translate what they experience here into the faith communities they will serve and shape anew. For the sake of the gospel through all forms of the church, our students need to be formed in a community built up through small signs of faithfulness. And this is not beyond us. It will take our careful planning and commitment, to be sure, but it more deeply results from the pattern of a gift we have already received—the faithfulness of the one who first gathers us to God's heart as a beloved people, and then calls us into the world to share such community with others.



James Nieman

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

James Nieman
President

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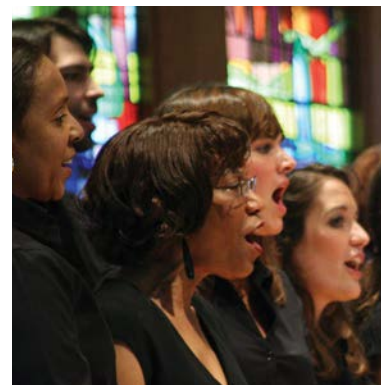
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Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago

Rickey W. Copley-Spivey appointed Director of Development at LSTC



Rickey W. Copley-Spivey

Rickey W. Copley-Spivey joined the LSTC Advancement Office as director of development on December 11. Copley-Spivey most recently served as director of business development at Lettuce Entertain You Restaurants.

Prior to his six years with Lettuce Entertain You, he worked as an admissions counselor for Millikin University, Decatur, Ill., and as arts and dance coordinator

for Decatur Family YMCA/Macon County YWCA. He was a youth servant companion for the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans and is a member of Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Chicago.

In his new position, Copley-Spivey is responsible for building the annual giving program, driving a cohesive communication strategy for all areas of giving, and cultivating a portfolio of leadership donors as LSTC prepares for its comprehensive fundraising campaign. In developing and implementing gift strategies, Copley-Spivey will work directly with the Advancement leadership team, volunteers and board members in identifying, cultivating and soliciting leadership giving prospects.

"We're tremendously excited to welcome Rickey, who brings significant marketing and business development experience as well as a passion for the church and its leaders," said Clyde Andrew Walter, LSTC campaign director and major gift officer. "I'm confident Rickey's work will support LSTC's goals to significantly increase fundraising and donor engagement in order to strengthen leadership development for the church."

Copley-Spivey said this position is an answer to the call he has felt for some time to use his skills to raise funds for a nonprofit organization. "I want to go to work every day and know that I have made a difference. I want my work to support the growth of the church. I want my work to support social justice. This position is the perfect intersection of my faith and work life."

Copley-Spivey has a bachelor of science degree in communication and behavior science from Millikin University and is working toward a master's degree from Roosevelt University. He currently serves as secretary on the board of directors for the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois.

Community mourns, remembers William E. Leshner, fourth president of LSTC

The Rev. William E. Leshner died January 23. He served as president of LSTC from 1978–1997, the seminary's longest-serving president. He was 85 years old. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, A. Jean Olson Leshner and their sons, David and Gregory, and three grandchildren. The family held a memorial service in California on March 11. A memorial service was held at LSTC on March 15.

"Bill Leshner was a larger-than-life figure in theological education way back when my teaching career began," said James Nieman, president. "His unparalleled tenure of leadership in two seminaries, including our own for 19 years, is hard for someone in my role to fathom today. It afforded Bill the opportunity to implement a vast range of innovative plans that still stamp our school's character—perhaps the most remarkable being his wide-open welcome of Seminex. I am grateful to God for Bill's gifts of vision and commitment, and will miss his wide smile, caring words, and joyful heart."

Philip Hefner, professor emeritus of systematic theology and senior fellow of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, said, "In the last months of his life, Bill Leshner spoke of moving into the Immensity. He lived a life of immensity, his death is an immense loss, and he blessed us immensely." Hefner and Leshner first became friends in the 1950s when they were both students at LSTC's predecessor school, Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in Maywood, Ill.

Legacy of innovation and cooperation

During his 19-year tenure at LSTC, Leshner shaped the seminary in ways that are still being lived out today, more than 20 years after his retirement. He helped develop and support coursework for effective urban ministry, the advancement of cross-cultural consciousness and global mission, and the ethical and social implications of the faith.

Leshner was instrumental in establishing the Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS) one of the largest and most effective consortia of seminaries in North America. He also helped establish the Chicago Center for Religion and Science, which is now the Zygon Center for Religion and Science. In cooperation with Catholic Theological Union and McCormick Theological Seminary, he made LSTC a partner in the Chicago Center for Global Ministries.

"Bill is and will be remembered for his unquenchable energy and sense of humor, his passion for influencing both LSTC and ATS Standards to reflect the global

character of the best theological education, and the way he challenged LSTC to stretch and respond to what he was always dreaming for us to do,” said Kathleen D. (Kadi) Billman, John H. Tietjen Professor of Pastoral Ministry: Pastoral Theology and director of master’s programs at LSTC. She was one of the first female faculty members at LSTC, appointed during Lesher’s presidency.

Ralph Klein, Christ Seminary–Seminex Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, said, “Bill was a boundless source of new ideas to make theological education come alive. He often inspired potential new additions to the faculty with his vision. I remember a number of occasions when a committee thought they were stuck with no way forward. Bill would pop into those committees and by the end of the hour they had new energy and new assignments. Both Bill and his wife Jean were passionate about caring for international students and their families. With Phil Hefner, he was the driving force in founding of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science.” Klein served as academic dean during the last nine years of Lesher’s tenure.

Passion for parish, Parliament of the World’s Religions

Before being called to serve as president of LSTC, Lesher served as president of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary for five years. He anchored his ministry in his experience as a parish pastor at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church of Logan Square in Chicago and at Reen Memorial Church in St. Louis. He graduated from Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, one of LSTC’s predecessor schools, in 1958, and served as associate professor of parish renewal at LSTC in the early 1970s.

Lesher served on numerous commissions, boards, and task forces in the Lutheran Church in America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran World Federation, and in his local community.



William E. Lesher at the 2014 LSTC Leadership Conference

After his retirement in 1997, both Lesher and his wife became more deeply involved in the Parliament of the World’s Religions. Their global experiences and travel before and during their time at LSTC helped them imagine what they might do to encourage interfaith understanding and action. He emerged as a spokesperson for the Parliament and served as chair of its Board of Trustees from 2003–2010.

A fuller tribute to William Lesher will appear in the summer issue of the *LSTC Epistle* magazine.

Erik Christensen will tell you his story, and help you tell yours

by Julie B. Sevig



Erik Christensen plans worship with students of the Augustana Chapel Worship Team: (from left) Hesron Sihombing, Josh Evans, Evan Mayhew, Morgan Gates and Helen Chukka.

Erik Christensen learned throughout his life to brush off the suggestion of going to seminary. But with an irony that tickles him, it was a “come to Jesus” breakfast discussion with an atheist friend that made him enroll.

And nearly two decades later, LSTC is the fortunate recipient of that frank breakfast conversation.

In August, Christensen joined the staff as pastor to the community and director of worship. It’s a revised title and job description, and a new office—at the crossroads of second floor activity near the grand hallway. The pastor’s office connected to the chapel is now used by chapel staff.

Christensen came to us from St. Luke’s Lutheran Church of Logan Square in Chicago, where he was pastor for 11 years and helped found the Logan Square Ecumenical Alliance.

Although his path to seminary took detours, his baptismal ministry never waned. He grew up as a church musician’s kid. His father, Larry Christensen, recently retired after 40 years of service to St. John’s Lutheran Church in Des Moines, Iowa, and was also founding president of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians.

“I grew up in a family in which worship and liturgy were what we talked about,” he said. “In the car on the way home from church, we talked about the sermon and the hymns. I was thinking about the church and its worship from a young age.”

At age 14 while on one of their many talks while walking the dog, he told his dad he felt he had a call to ministry.

“Of course you do, you’re baptized,” Larry told him, cautioning against both being a musician and working in the church...“unless those things will truly make you happy.”

About the same time, his sister Tara, from Bangkok, Thailand, joined the family. Christensen said the struggles she endured have shaped his vocation. He spent significant time working with youth on the margins, so that inclusion

and welcome characterize his ministry.

After coming out as gay in college, Christensen assumed ministry wasn’t an option for him. He went to Boston to teach junior high students with emotional behavioral issues; in Minneapolis, he worked with runaway and homeless youth. Although he loved the clients, colleagues and work, he realized he wasn’t happy.

Called on collusion

It was on New Year’s Day 1999 when his good friend told him, “It’s time for you to go to seminary.”

“It knocked me back on my heels,” he recalls. “He told me I was acting as an agent of my own oppression and that I needed to take responsibility for doing that. My happiness was muted. I was, in a sense, colluding with the church.”

At the time, ordination was not an option for ELCA seminarians/rostered leaders who were, or intended to be, in same-sex relationships.

His friend encouraged him to stop saying no to the church, but instead make the church say no to him: “You can’t be happy as long as you don’t try.”

He attended Emory University in Atlanta, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia Seminary for his Lutheran year. Although his candidacy committee shared that they hadn’t seen a candidate more qualified for ministry, he was removed from candidacy January 2004.

He went on to work with runaway youth, was active at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Atlanta, and joined the Extraordinary Candidacy Project, mostly for support.

“I didn’t think there was a job for me in it,” he said. But joining what is now Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (elm.org) proved pivotal. St. Luke’s, a congregation of 12 elderly people on the brink of closing, wanted to meet him.

And in them, he found both potential and an opportunity. Among his classmates at Emory were Methodist women who encouraged him.

“It’s a church and it’s a chance in a beautiful city,” he remembers them telling him. “Get over your anger and hurt and take this chance to go somewhere.”

During the interview in Logan Square, he realized they needed a community organizer as much as they needed a pastor, and he vowed to build St. Luke’s up. And indeed he did. At LSTC’s 2017 graduation, the congregation that has grown to 120 members was awarded the Community of the Cross Award along with the rest of the Logan Square Ecumenical Alliance.

Its strength and growth are an example of what Christensen is fond of saying, “In God’s economy, nothing is wasted. Our wounds and our suffering—while not caused by God, are nevertheless used by God.”

Testimony & team

God used the tension and pain inside him to fashion a ministry of welcome and safety, and that continues to shape his ministry at LSTC.

“As we send graduates to their first calls, I see a need for more and more redevelopers and entrepreneurs who will build from the ground up in some cases,” he said.

Here, we are modeling for students how the world’s

needs and suffering inform what we do in worship: “Worship that is absent of the world’s suffering empties worship of its meaning,” he said.

That’s one reason LSTC’s new worship structure includes testimonies: Monday: Service of the Word; Tuesday: Service of Prayer; Wednesday: Service of Eucharist; Thursday: Service of Testimony.

“We need to be telling and receiving stories from each other,” he said. “When we tell our own story in our own voice—our stories of being wounded and welcomed—we offer one another transparency and true hospitality. That vulnerability evokes empathy. And that rolls over into other parts of our life together. We’re able to be softer with one another.”

That transparency and hospitality help shape a thoughtful and creative four-week worship planning process that includes students of varied degree programs and cultures, but also the entire community.

Christensen says that years of telling his own story has enabled him to see what God has been up to in his life—and what led him here.

“This is why I want our community to get better and better at telling our story, because I’m convinced that is how we will come to understand what God has been up to in our life together.”

LSTC launches first online Giving Day

On April 18, LSTC will host its first online Giving Day, complete with challenges, specially-produced and live video, and social media selfie whimsy.

That’s the hope of Jennifer Thomas, LSTC gift officer and alumni relations, who is heading up #LSTCgives18.

“This was inspired by college giving days, seen as a great opportunity to broaden our alumni strategy and reach out to alumni through social media,” Thomas said, explaining that Giving Day will raise money for the Annual Fund, which provides scholarships and helps pay for seminary operations.

“We want to encourage first-time givers,” she said. “If you have always loved LSTC and never given

to an appeal, it’s a way to participate and to show school pride.”

As April 18 draws near (and on the day), watch for ideas of how alumni and others can support LSTC. A gift of \$18, \$180, or more perhaps? Or a class challenge or gift that promises to be matched by a bishop or another LSTC faithful? Gifts may also be made in memory or honor of someone, perhaps your bishop or pastor who is a graduate of LSTC.

The day is separate from the annual national Giving Day that follows Thanksgiving so that it stands out and doesn’t get lost in the shuffle, Thomas said. The 18th was chosen because it’s after both Easter and tax day.



#lstcgives18

A Community to Form Leaders to Form Community:

A conversation about LSTC's new strategic plan



Christine Yucha, James Nieman and Maryjeanne Schaffmeyer

At its November meeting, the LSTC Board of Directors unanimously approved a new three-year strategic plan for the seminary, for 2018–2020. James Nieman, president; Maryjeanne Schaffmeyer, Board of Directors chair; and Christine Yucha, director of assessment and planning, answer a few questions to introduce the LSTC community to the plan.

What is the focus of the 2018–2020 strategic plan?

James Nieman: We live in a time where community and civil discord are breaking down. The church has the ability to gather people together, but it needs leaders adept at navigating the joys and challenges of community. Leaders don't drop out of the sky—they themselves are shaped in community. We want to model that at LSTC.

Maryjeanne Schaffmeyer: Yes, the church has always striven to be relevant and to message the gospel in a way that people can hear. Our society is almost demanding that we go in this direction.

Christine Yucha: Exactly. This plan moves us beyond the focus of being a solely learning community to becoming a community to form leaders to form community.

JN: With this plan, we recognize that one of the greatest assets we have for the wider church is the ability to form deeply meaningful communities that will change lives and the fabric of our society.

How does this plan connect with the notion of public church?

JN: This plan would not exist without the previous plan's focus of preparing leaders for a public church. They are directly related.

MS: The 2015–2017 Strategic Plan was trying to get at the 'how' of forming leaders for a public church. I see this plan as focusing more on the 'what'—focusing on the foundational skills and formative experiences that are critical to the sharing and spread of the gospel.

CY: Yes, and it acknowledges that those skills and experiences happen in the classroom but also in encounters with others, whether in the Refectory, the Finance Office, or the sidewalk.

JN: And this is a whole area that seminaries haven't historically been involved in. This plan signals our belief that you can't do effective work to announce the gospel in the many publics that the church lives in without the foundational nurture, support, and care that happens in a community.

Why does this plan matter?

MS: Simply put, we won't get to the future without a plan. Creating a plan drives us forward and makes sure that everything we do aligns with this shared vision.

JN: It's an opportunity to move from a historically reactive posture to a more proactive posture. To me, that's a culture change that will take time to embrace fully.

MS: This plan also lays bare our gaps, and documents our intentions to resolve those gaps so we can be who we want to be. It's about accountability.

CY: Yes, this plan feels honest. It acknowledges that forming community can be difficult and messy, and that we can and need to do better about addressing those things.

JN: This plan implicitly admits that we're not where we want to be, but we have a plan for getting there together.

What makes this strategic plan distinct?

MS: I appreciate the living quality of this plan, and its ability to springboard us into the next part of our future. It's very comprehensive.

JN: And yet, this plan is much more than just a document. Our approach to implementation exemplifies what the plan

is trying to achieve. It invites us into a more creative way of addressing divisions within the school and asks people to work together in new configurations.

CY: Yes, that's something that really excites me. Our collaborative, generative approach signals that the process of working the plan is just as important as the plan content. Strategy Leads and the Strategic Plan Oversight Team (SPOT) are multi-disciplinary teams responsible for plan implementation and oversight—and they're building community while they do it. It is a microcosm of what we hope to accomplish as a whole school

How will plan progress be shared?

CY: We don't want progress on this plan to be kept a secret. That includes not only our successes but the things that didn't go quite as we had planned.

JN: That is critically important—our commitment to share our own learnings from failure. Risking and failing can be one of the most productive and insightful things we can do, if we commit to learning from them.

MS: I see value in becoming a community of problem-solvers, inviting the entire LSTC community into the hard work of making this plan a reality. I know that something down the road will cause us to feel stuck, and I hope we can reach out to our constituencies and ask for help in getting unstuck.

What is your hope for this plan?

JN: As president, the strategic plan is a point of grounding and accountability for me and with the three boards of the school and our donors. I am hopeful that our students will be changed and equipped by how we do this plan—that we will model something they can take with them.

CY: My hope is that this plan will be a catalyst for a paradigm shift at our school. I am hopeful that in three years we can point to a list of successes that emerged from the plan, but also point to the immense value of mapping the future together as a community.

MS: The plan should help us align, enable, and improve our work. The right balance of those things results in strategic engagement with all our constituents, but the community who built the plan is ultimately responsible for its success. Officially, our structure tells us that this is the Board of Directors, but in our mindset the owners of the plan are everyone. I am hopeful for this plan's ability to change the entire LSTC community—and that's pretty powerful.

The 2018–2020 Strategic Plan

READ THE PLAN

The entire 2018–2020 plan is available on lstc.edu.

Look for regular updates here in the *Epistle*, or check out the strategic plan bulletin board next time you're on campus. We'll also share updates on social media and the website. Please direct all comments to christine.yucha@lstc.edu.

BY THE NUMBERS

3 year plan-life (2018–2020)

4 goal areas

7 months of plan development (May–Nov 2017)

12 strategies

28 key tactics

120 participants in small group feedback sessions

170 respondents to online survey

GOAL AREAS

I Distinctive Profile: Enhance and communicate the school's distinctive character

II Formative Community: Invest in talented, faithful people who participate in and are formed by a gospel-centered community

III Educational Impact: Provide instruction relevant for a church active in the world and for diverse student needs

IV Resource Sustainability: Develop an operational model and infrastructure to support learning and financial vitality

Thank you to everyone involved in the strategic planning process...

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Planning Consultant: Susanna Krentz of Krentz Consulting, Inc.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee: Melody Eastman, James Nieman, Richard Perry, Michael Russell, Lea Schweitz, Laura Wilhelm, Christine Yucha

Strategic Plan Work Group: Aaron Copley–Spivey, Cheryl Hoth, Laura Wilhelm, Christine Yucha

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy Leads: Klaus–Peter Adam (III.2), Terry Baeder (III.3), Bob Berridge (IV.3), Scott Chalmers (I.1), Erik Christensen (I.1), Aaron Copley–Spivey (II.4), Matt James (II.2), Esther Menn (II.1 and III.3), Jose David Rodriguez (II.3), Ben Stewart (III.1), Linda Thomas (II.1), Clyde Walter (IV.2), Christine Yucha (I.2), TBD (IV.1)

PLAN OVERSIGHT

Strategic Plan Oversight Team (SPOT): Jan Boden, Aaron Copley–Spivey, Kristi Ferguson, Jessica Houston, Jose David Rodriguez, Barbara Rossing, Martha Stocker

Gospel Choir sets “lofty goal” for 30th anniversary year

by Jan Boden



Members of the 2007-08 Gospel Choir

At LSTC Gospel Concerts, the sound of praise coming from the singers, keyboardists and other musicians just about lifts the roof off the Augustana Chapel. It is impossible to sit still and listen. Surrounded by that much sound and that much heart, you can't help clapping or moving to the music. On April 8 at 4 p.m., the LSTC Gospel Choir will hold its 30th annual concert, quite a milestone for a group that started as a pick-up choir.

Still going strong after 30 years

In 1988, LSTC Registrar Patricia Bartley invited members of the LSTC community to form a Gospel Choir to sing at the seminary's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day worship service. They were inspired to stay together and keep singing.

"It's God's choir," Bartley said. "There isn't anything that is going to stand in the way of God's plan." The choir is still going strong, singing several times a month during weekly worship at LSTC.

From the start, student members have played an enormous role in the choir. Master of divinity student Christine Thompson was its first director, and that seems like a good thing for a choir that was composed largely of LSTC students. Bartley explained the downside. "We weren't considered a legitimate choir because we didn't have a director with a master's degree."

They changed that in 1994, when they hired Charles Hayes to direct.

Keith "Doc" Hampton is the current director. This is his third time in the position, which he used to squeeze in around full-time teaching and part-time performance and church musician jobs. Now he directs the choir as cantor to the seminary community.

"I knew about the choir since its inception in 1988. I have a passion for multi-cultural music and communities and that's what I saw in the LSTC Gospel Choir," Hampton said. "What's unique about the choir is that many people don't have Gospel music experience and most of them read music. It's the opposite of the church choirs I direct. Here, I can give them the music and they're able to learn the notes. But the style of the performance is different, so it can be difficult to make the performance sound authentic. It's sometimes challenging, like learning a foreign language. I'm amazed that they love it."

Pastor Vickie Johnson is in her second year as Gospel Choir manager. As a trained singer with an operatic range, she performs with auditioned choirs and recently sang in concert with renowned soprano Kathleen Battle. "Some people at my level of training wouldn't bother with a choir like this, but I love the music. I want to be part of it. What I like about this choir is that they sing from the heart and it just touches the heart."

Bartley has put together a list of nearly 300 choir alumni she will invite to join a reunion choir for the anniversary concert.

"That's a lot of people—most were students, but it's also staff and faculty and members of the wider community. It's always been open to whoever wanted to sing to the Lord," Bartley said.



Keith Hampton and Charles Hayes at the 25th anniversary Gospel Choir Concert

Concerts benefit scholarships

Since the 1994-95 academic year, the Gospel Choir has had another purpose. That is when choir members Vicki Watkins and Christine Thompson established the Grover Wright Scholarship for students of color or whose first language is other than English. Their annual concert became a fundraiser for the scholarship. Thirty-four students have received scholarships that ranged from \$1,500 at the beginning to \$2,500 today.



Gospel Choir, 1980s.

In 2004–05 President James Kenneth Echols and Bartley established a second scholarship in memory of choir member Rev. Carole A. Burns. The annual concert benefits this scholarship, also. So far, 10 scholarships have been awarded to female African American students.



Rev. Carole A. Burns

This year, Bartley, Johnson and Hampton have set a visionary goal of raising enough money to dramatically increase the amount of each scholarship. “I pray that we will be able to give a full tuition scholarship to the Grover Wright recipient and at least a half-tuition scholarship to the Carole A. Burns recipient. We want to continue to give that amount every year,” Bartley said.

Johnson recognizes that it’s a lofty goal but she is confident that it is attainable. “We want people to be generous. We’re inviting people who benefited from the scholarship to go out and encourage people to give—to be fishers of people to be generous. We’ll be contacting surrounding congregations to encourage their support with presence and presents,” she said.

Students shaped by Gospel Choir

It is impossible to measure the impact of the choir on its members, the LSTC community and on the many people who have experienced the Gospel in choir performances in congregations, synod assemblies and on tour.

“Students have said to me that they are glad to be part of the choir because it is a bright spot in their week, or that a song they’ve learned is going on in their head and keeping them going. And then there are the comments I hear from alumni at the Leadership Conference about how being in the Gospel Choir has helped them in their ministry,” Bartley said.

She added, “I am most grateful that the Gospel Choir could give a different kind of worship experience to the LSTC community. Not everyone at LSTC is Lutheran or White. This was important to me from the beginning. Having my own tradition become part of the worship experience at LSTC meant everything to me. I was glad that it was accepted.”



Gospel Choir, 1990s.



Justin Tigerman (2015, MDiv) and the LSTC Gospel Choir at the 25th anniversary concert

Military chaplaincy as public church

by Jan Boden



Chaplain (Major) Kerstin Hedlund (middle) and colleagues on her current deployment

Chaplain (Major) Kerstin Hedlund has glimpsed Christ in places where the church might say, “This is not a place of God.”

While on deployment in 2009–2010, she attended mass led by another chaplain, a Catholic priest. “People from Uganda, the UK, the Americas, from all over the world, were gathered around the table. It brought to mind the vision from Revelation, when all peoples and languages are gathered together around the throne of the Lamb,” she said. It was a glimpse of the power of Christ and Christian community in a tangible way.

Experiencing that kind of diversity makes it difficult for Hedlund to go back to parish ministry. “The ELCA emphasizes diversity, but it is still several steps away from the diversity I experience as a military chaplain.”

Military and ministry

Being in the military and doing pastoral ministry were always part of Hedlund’s plan for her life, but she didn’t always imagine doing them at the same time. A chaplaincy candidacy program helped her put the two together.

“I came up through ROTC and thought I would be a military officer for a few years and then get out, go to seminary and become a pastor. I was in the Army for a short while when I heard about a chaplain candidate program that would give me a chance to try on chaplaincy.”

She did the Army chaplaincy training, and then, because of the candidacy requirements of the ELCA, found herself straddling the two worlds of the military and the church.

“It took me seven years from the time I completed my training until the time I started to pay back my obligation to the military: four years of seminary and three years in the parish. To be ordained in the ELCA, I had to be called to a parish and to serve in that call for three years,” Hedlund said. (Reserve Chaplains operate under a different rule. They may be called to active duty while serving their first parish call and their active duty time will count as time in the parish.)

The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq were at their

height during those years and the people Hedlund had trained with in the ROTC were all on active deployment. “I felt torn. Here I was, sitting comfortably in school and many of my cohort were in miserable or intense situations. I considered dropping out of the program,” Hedlund said.

She finally went on active duty in 2009 until 2013, serving four different assignments. She was deployed with a logistics unit, then with a military installation and prison. She served in medical ministry and ended her active duty deployed with a smaller installation. When she finished her tours, she thought she was done with chaplaincy.

Hedlund put in her ELCA mobility papers and ended up in Milwaukee. She felt that school would be a good transition for her and that’s when she applied to the doctoral program at LSTC. She is studying systematic theology and medical ethics. But she also became an Army Reserve chaplain.

“There’s a three-year cycle with Reserve chaplaincy, with one year more active than the other two,” Hedlund explained.

Her current assignment is to prepare a 440-bed hospital unit that is going to deployment this summer. She is working with the hospital chaplain and with the commander of the unit to be sure they have what they need to support those who will be deployed. She is also working with the family readiness coordinator to find the resources families will need when their loved ones are deployed.

“Chaplains try to network with each other to provide the support a unit will need. Some of that happens ahead of time and some of it happens when they arrive on site. Every chaplain is trained in how the military functions, in the life cycle of assignments, and the level our command is working with. This helps us understand the challenges facing the commanders and the people they’re working with.”



Hedlund is helping prepare this 440-bed hospital unit for deployment.

Military chaplains embody public church for a diversity of people, faiths, situations

Hedlund thrives not only on the diversity of the people but also on the variety of assignments she’s had. She noted that the population of the military is “majority minority.” People from many different backgrounds come together with a common goal. “You may disagree about the goal, but if you are looking for racial and ethnic diversity, it’s in the military. Chaplains exist to ensure the free expression of religion and that there is no one religion in the Department of Defense.”

Chaplains also are trained to understand the religious diversity in other countries as well as within the unit they serve. They are called on in diplomatic as well as traumatic situations, advising commanders on the potential religious implications of a mission. They may be called into talks with political leaders to de-escalate a situation.

While in Iraq, Hedlund was asked to go to the Iranian border to be part of meetings with an Iraqi colonel who is a Muslim. “I didn’t know what he would think about this white, female Westerner, but I was invited to dine with them and to be part of the talks. When it was time to leave, the colonel asked me to be their imam. He said, ‘we have no religious leader here.’ I told him that I needed to return to my unit and he said, ‘Well then pray for us, because Allah always hears the prayers of the faithful.’ I haven’t had an experience like that in civilian life.”

“LSTC emphasizes public church, which can get interpreted many different ways. I feel that military chaplains embody public church. Wherever the unit goes, we go. We are an embedded, an incarnate presence. We eat and sleep with the unit. We’re right there. If someone is interested in exploring public church as presence, this is a good way to do it,” Hedlund said.



The ICU of a 440-bed hospital unit getting ready for deployment.

Care package suggestions

Congregations and many other organizations often want to send care packages to troops.

Navy Reserve Chaplain Daniel Sorensen (2007, MDiv) provided these guidelines for organizations to help them include what troops want and will be allowed to receive.

1. You must address your package to an actual individual in the unit. Chaplains frequently are willing to receive and distribute these boxes. Many deployed units post the contact information for the Commanding Officer (CO), Executive Officer (XO), Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL), and Chaplain on the unit’s official web page. Start by sending an email to the chaplain asking what troops would like or need. You can send these via the Co, XO, or SEL if necessary.

Some boxes arrive full of wonderful things. Delivering these items gives an opportunity for chaplains to have face time with their troops.

Other boxes have items that, while well-intentioned, get thrown out because they are spoiled, invite pests, are impractical or prohibited. Needs, wants, permissible and prohibited items vary by location and commander.

2. If your organization sends toiletries, please send them separately from food items. Long mail routes and fluctuations in temperatures can leave even the best wrapped granola bars tasting like soap.

3. Any notes or cards should **not** contain senders’ names, addresses, or emails. These items sometimes wind up in the wrong hands. Don’t put your personal information at risk.

SEND

(based on input from troops at Guantanamo)

- Starbucks VIAs, 5-hour energy bottles (small shot size)
- Individual Crystal Light/Kool Aid packets designed for water bottles
- Playing cards; small word search, Sudoku or crossword puzzle books
- Laffy Taffy, Starburst (both in small quantities)
- Peanuts, pistachios, almonds, cashews (individual packs)
- Beef jerky (small or individual packs)
- Oreos (individual packs) and “Little Debbie” snacks (cupcakes, oatmeal cookies, Hoho)
- Protein bars, power bars, breakfast bars
- Cheerios, all kinds (individual boxes)
- Healthy snack of any kind: individually packaged items made with real fruit or whole grain or similar ingredients
- A small note of thanks and “we are

thinking of you” or words to that effect with your **organization’s name and hometown only**

- Personal hygiene kits: one quart size Ziplock bag with travel size shave cream, wipes, powder, soap, shampoo, hand sanitizer, razors and an extra Ziplock bag

DON’T SEND

- Socks, t-shirts, etc., unless specifically requested by the unit or chaplain
- Jars or bottles of food such as jam, jelly, peanut butter, honey, etc.
- Magazines, books, board games, puzzles
- Hard candy, old candy, seasonal candy (Halloween, Easter, etc.)
- Chocolate
- Gum
- Caramels or anything with caramel
- Homemade items (they don’t survive the mail)
- Canned food (soup, ravioli, etc.)
- Notes with personal emails or addresses
- Notes that are seasonal (Christmas, Easter, Valentine’s Day, etc.) as boxes can be delayed up to 6 months
- Notes addressed to “soldier” as many of our personnel are Airmen, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard
- Any full-size personal hygiene items; *Please no large bottles of powder, shampoo, shave cream, Costco packs of razors, etc.*

Patrice Nordstrand: ‘Enjoy what you have, but share that with others’

by Julie B. Sevig



Patrice Nordstrand

Patrice Nordstrand is getting close to retirement, and it's the lesson she learned as a 6-year-old that has prepared her for this next stage of life, as well as joy and purpose through all the years that preceded it.

Early on, she was encouraged to give 10 percent or more of her allowance to the church. And if she needed extra money for something she wanted, she was expected to earn it. That's why, as a 9- or 10-year-old, she went door-to-door selling greeting cards.

"Work hard and enjoy what you have, but share that with others," she recalls learning from her parents. Her father was ordained in the Augustana Synod, whose seminary was a predecessor to LSTC. Patrice is an LSTC grad, and among the first 100 women ordained in the Lutheran Church of America, a predecessor to the ELCA.

She has been chaplain at Walnut Village in Anaheim, Calif., the past 18 years, and throughout her years in the church her own stewardship has been shaped by "other people's witness about giving."

After being ordained in 1978 she recalls telling synod staffer Norm Lueck at a stewardship workshop that she'd been tithing all along. "Very gently he told me, 'Well you know, you don't have to be limited by that.'"

At that point in life she was just grateful to be getting a

paycheck and paying her bills, but he was a shining example of something more.

"He said he and his wife had grown in their desire and discipline, and now gave 20 percent. Unbelievable! These are the little stories that stick in your mind," she said.

And now she's sharing them, and her own witness for saving and giving. Her cousin Cyrus Warmanen, also an LSTC grad, taught her the 10-10-80 scale: 10 percent "things that are of God," 10 percent savings for the future, and 80 percent is "enough for all you really need and much of what you want."

Nordstrand is aware of how finances among pastors have changed through the years, recognizing that what the church (both congregations and institutions) have put into her pension fund will afford her "a far more comfortable retirement than it did years ago."

"What I've decided to do is live on as closely to what my retirement generates every year so upon my death the remainder is returned to the church, and things the church does. It seems natural to me that since congregations and church organizations built this retirement for me, I trust that I can return it to the work of the church," she said.

Aligning money with values

One of Nordstrand's areas of benevolence is the seminary and its students.

"I received a fine education at LSTC and am proud to be one of its graduates. I don't know that I can be specific on something 20 to 30 years down the way, but in my giving I'm investing in the values, the organizations and the communities that I have shared values with."

For instance, she'll support smaller organizations that support veterans and military personnel because both her father, Art, and brother David, also an LSTC grad, served in the military.

"I'm realistic about what changes can happen in an organization or institution," she said. "The church has its ebb and flow about what to focus on, but is centered in Christ and I don't think we get so far off that mark that I would look back and say 'Boy I wish I had chosen some other institution.'"

She appreciates LSTC's emphasis of being a community that learns in place, rather than online, and that orders its life around daily worship.

"Public Church, more visible in society, is important to me. One reason I chose LSTC was that the seminary is in the city and I didn't see it as a place to retreat from but as a place to interact with. That's a strength."

Sharing the wealth

She is committed to sharing LSTC's stories of strength with others, but also the richness of the larger church—social services, camping, colleges and seminaries, hospitals and health centers, Global Mission and ELCA World Hunger.

She glanced through World Hunger's Good Gifts catalog, for instance, and decided to buy a global family farm for \$715: a cow, goats, chicks, pigs, farming tools, seeds and agricultural training and support.

"I said to myself, if I can't every year give enough for two families to start a farm there's something wrong..."

And if they have a dozen chickens, they should have a rooster. And there are other animals I need to add to make it more robust. It's the rent that I pay for living on this earth. I have to be able to help two people feed and care for their family."

While traveling, she heard a Swaziland bishop say the average income was \$50 a year in his country: "Less than a dollar a week. How incredibly wealthy am I? We're all wealthy so let's start living like we're wealthy and give more away."

Pillars Society members provide perpetual support to ensure LSTC's mission into the future

by Keith Nelson

For the past 30 years, the ELCA has provided financial support to LSTC and its other seminaries. This comes from the churchwide organization and from the synods in each seminary's geographic region. But in the last two decades, as the ELCA and synods coped with financial challenges, their financial support to seminaries came at a reduced level. This meant that seminaries have had to become more self-sufficient in funding their mission.

That's where The Pillars Society of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago comes in. This is a new name for what some of you have already been part of—the Pillars of the Seminary.

Because of the support from individuals who are passionate about the school's mission, LSTC has been able to become more self-sufficient. They not only give annually, many have also made gifts through their estate—gifts that will have a lasting impact on the future of LSTC and of the church. Their estate gifts give LSTC a stronger financial foundation—and that's why we've named this group the Pillars Society. Their support is as essential as the 12 concrete pillars that support LSTC's building.

"If someone has been an annual giver, it only makes sense that they would want to continue to have an impact on LSTC through an estate gift," said Michael Dixon, LSTC planned and major gift officer. "It's been said that your checkbook is a moral document. So is your estate plan."

He added, "There are so many different ways to plan a gift from an estate that it's possible for anyone to do this. It's not just for people who have a great deal of financial wealth or those who are nearing retirement. Anyone who cares deeply about the way leaders are formed at LSTC can make this kind of gift."

To find out how you can make a gift from your estate and join The Pillars Society, contact Michael Dixon at michael.dixon@lstc.edu. If you have already arranged for a gift to LSTC from your estate, please tell us by checking the box on the envelope included in this *Epistle*. We want to invite you to the first celebration of The Pillars Society happening later this year.

Klaus-Peter Adam, associate professor of Old Testament, in November presented “The Attitude of ‘Hate’ as a Legal Category in Deuteronomy, Psalms and Proverbs” at the Society of Biblical Literature Biblical annual conference in Boston, Mass. He presented “‘Love Thy Neighbor’ – Overcoming Hatred in the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26)” at the Hatred and Love: Jewish Conceptions of Personal Hatred and Public Love in Antiquity and Modernity conference at the University of Chicago Divinity School in February.

Carol Rausch Albright, visiting professor of religion and science, and *John Albright*, visiting professor of religion and science, host a weekly study group in religion and science as well as a monthly salon called “Chicago Group” for people from metropolitan Chicago who are actively working in religion and science. Members represent various physical, medical and social sciences as well as religious studies.

With *Mladen Turk* (2000, ThM; 2009, PhD) they are the editors of *Interactive World, Interactive God: The Basic Reality of Creative Interaction* (2017, Cascade Books).

Thomas Blanton, auxiliary in New Testament studies, gave the lecture “Following the Example of Abraham: Genesis 15 and 17, Jubilees 15, and Romans 4” at the Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity colloquium at the University of Notre Dame in October. In November

he co-presented “The Extramercantile Economy: Problematizing the New Institutional Economics Paradigm in Recent Studies of Ancient Greece and Rome” at the Society for Biblical Literature annual conference in Boston, Mass.

Carol Schersten LaHurd, distinguished affiliate professor and educational outreach consultant for A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, published “Shalom Comes First: Replacing Claims of Absolute Truth with Absolute Trust in God,” *Gather Magazine* 30/10 (December 2017), 11–12

Ralph Klein, Christ Seminary–Seminec Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, reviewed *Psalms Books 2–3: Wisdom Commentary* by Denise Dombkowski Hopkins in the January 2018 issue of the online journal *Currents in Theology and Mission*. His review of *The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah: 2 Chronicles 10–36* by Yigal Levin was published in *Review of Biblical Literature* (2017).

James Nieman, president, preached at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Ill., in October. He was also the guest speaker for their adult education time. In November he served as a panelist for the American Academy of Religion annual conference Special Session Honoring the Scholarship of Nancy Ammerman held in Boston, Mass.

Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament, published “Reimagining Eschatology: Toward Healing and Hope for a World at the Eschatos” in *Planetary Solidarity: Global Women’s Voices on Christian Doctrine and Climate Justice*, Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Hilda Kusters, eds. (Fortress, 2017). She contributed the Foreword to Micah D. Kiel’s *Apocalyptic Ecology: The Book of Revelation, the Earth, and the Future* (Liturgical Press, 2017). Her review of *Making Peace with the Earth: Action and Advocacy for Climate Justice*, Grace Ji-Sun Kim, editor (World Council of Churches, 2016) appeared in *Reading Religion*, September 26, 2017. It is available online at readingreligion.org/books/making-peace-earth.

In November at the Society for Biblical Literature annual conference held in Boston, she presented “Reimagining Eschatology towards Healing and Hope for a World at the Eschatos.” At the conference she was a respondent at the Institute for Biblical Research Group—Ecological Ethics and Biblical Studies. She also presided at the Ecological Hermeneutics Section, “Ending and Beginning: Ecology and Apocalypse.”

Lea Schweitz, associate professor of systematic theology/religion and science and director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, was a panelist for the Animals and Religion Unit and Teaching Religion

Unit session “Teaching Animals and Religion” at the American Academy of Religion annual conference in November in Boston, Mass.

Gordon Straw, associate professor and Cornelsen Chair for Spiritual Formation and candidacy coordinator, gave a presentation on American Indian and Alaska Native ministries in the ELCA for an adult forum at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Dana Point, Calif., in September. That month he gave a lecture via Zoom as part of the Native American Genocide course at Wartburg Theological Seminary and preached and presided at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church in Chicago.

In October, he presented a keynote on theological education for the ministry of all the baptized at the Region 3 Lutheran Outdoor Ministries gathering in North Dakota. He also presented a keynote for the LSTC Guild gathering in Chicago and was a respondent to Dr. Andrea Walker’s presentation on global accompaniment at the LSTC Leadership Conference.

He was an instructor for The Diakonia Program of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, teaching a five-week course on Christian Doctrine. He has taught the course every year since 2002.

Mark Swanson, Harold A. Vogelaar Professor of Christian-Muslim Studies and Interfaith Relations,

was the respondent for the American Academy of Religion's Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit and Middle Eastern Christianity Unit session "Peacemaking and Hospitality in Middle Eastern Christianity: Accommodating Difference in the Eastern Christian Traditions" at the annual conference in Boston in November.

Peter Vethanayagamony, associate professor of church history, preached and presided at Lebanon Lutheran Church in Chicago on five Sundays in October and November.

Vitor Westhelle, professor of systematic theology, gave the lecture "Reformation, Conquest, and Circumnavigation: The Global Destiny of Luther's Theology" at the August meeting of the Association of Teaching Theologians held at LSTC. In October he delivered the keynote address at the ceremony for the formation of REET (Ecumenical Network for

Theological Education) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His topic was "The Challenges for Theological Education in the Beginning of the 21st Century in Latin America and in the Global Context." He also gave the opening lecture "The Present Relevance of the Message of Reformation: Perspectives and Challenges after 500 Years" for the new center of theological education.

In November, he presided at the Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions session "Reformation: Repentance and Resistance" at the American Academy of Religion annual conference in Boston, Mass.

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

New Books from Alumni

When a Father Loses a Son

Herbert W. Chilstrom takes readers with him on the long journey of grief and healing in *When a Father Loses a Son*. He introduces us to Andrew, his youngest son, a brilliant, complex young man who took his own life in 1984 at the age of 18.

More than 30 years after Andrew's death, Chilstrom decided to share the story to offer others, who have lost a child, especially fathers, the empathy and compassion he received. He draws on the journals he kept and the letters he wrote to Andrew in an effort to understand and to remember the son he dearly loved.

At the time of Andrew's death in 1984, Chilstrom was in the public eye as bishop of the Minnesota Synod of the Lutheran

Church in America. Rather than resign his call or hide his grief, he and his family trusted that their faith, and the community of faith, would support them.

This powerful book witnesses to the compassion and healing we find in Christian community, the recognition of the human condition found in great works of literature, and the unknowable mysteries of those closest to us whom we will continue to love even beyond the grave.

This is Chilstrom's eighth book since retiring from the Office of Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. Like his other books, income from book sales will benefit ELCA colleges and seminaries.

When a Father Loses a Son is available for \$21.95 (shipping and tax included) from Chilstrom Books, 635 S Park Centre Ave. #2121, Green Valley, AZ 85614-6280. Also online at "Herb Chilstrom Books The Book Mart."

CLASS NOTES

1965

Max Sullivan (Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, MDiv) was featured in the article “From rags to riches,” in the December 31, Advantage News. Sullivan recounts his experiences as a military chaplain from 1968–84, serving in Vietnam, at the Pentagon and at Arlington National Cemetery.

1968

Abner Cunningham (MDiv) was featured in the online article “‘We have lost our prophet’” published January 12 by Journal & Topics Online Media Group, Des Plaines, Ill. Cunningham talks about his experience attending the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington. He serves as a social worker for the Center of Concern in Des Plaines.

1969

Frank C. Senn (MDiv) received the Christus Rex Award from the Valparaiso Institute for Liturgical Studies in April 2017 for his contribution to worship renewal and liturgical scholarship. He is the author of *Embodied Liturgy* (Fortress 2016) and *Eucharistic Body* (Fortress 2017).

1980

Ron Gluskamp (Christ Seminary–SemineX, MDiv) is pictured in the January issue of *Living Lutheran*. As director of The Campaign for the ELCA, he urges everyone to contribute to an ELCA ministry of their choice during the last year of the campaign.

1982

Jerry Koch (MDiv) published “The College Student’s Religious Tattoo: Respect, Reverence, Remembrance,” in the journal *Sociological Focus*. It is the 35th peer-reviewed research article to be published by his “Body Art Team” at Texas Tech University. Koch is professor of sociology and associate chair. See www.drjkoch.org for links to the article and more.

1984

Kathryn “Kit” Kleinhans (Christ Seminary–SemineX, MDiv) has been appointed dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, now unified with Capital University. She began her new role in January.

1988

Carl Trost (MDiv) was pictured on the cover and on page 19 of the November *Living Lutheran*. He was also quoted in the cover story on military chaplaincy. He serves as a Navy chaplain and was the lead chaplain for the 2017 Dept. of Defense Warrior Games held in Chicago.

1992

Amy Reumann (MDiv) was elected to the board of directors of Bread for the World.

Pedro Suarez (MDiv) was elected bishop of the Florida–Bahamas Synod of the ELCA on October 13. The installation service was held on January 20 at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in New Tampa, Fla.

1993

Mary Weinkauff (MDiv) is included in the *Marquis Who’s Who for Professional Excellence in Religious Studies*. She is honored for her writing, which include *Hard-boiled Heretic* and *Sermons in Science Fiction* as well as for her involvement in many organizations as a pastor and educator.

1994

Patrick Keen (M Div; 1999, DMin) was the featured preacher January 7 on “Day 1,” a nationally broadcast ecumenical radio program accessible online at Day1.org. His theme was “Taking Baptism Seriously,” based on Mark 1:9–11. Keen is pastor of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wis.

James Lapp (MDiv) is quoted in the January *Living Lutheran* story, “A welcome home,” about the St. Stephen’s Senior Housing facility in Santa Cruz, Calif. Lapp is pastor of St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church in Santa Cruz, which donated the land and was instrumental in planning the housing facility. Santa Cruz County ranks as one of the top 10 most unaffordable places to live in the country. The housing facility provides housing for low-income independent-living people who are 62 or older.

2002

Paul Bischoff (ThM; 2005, PhD) presented the adult forum “The Reformation Wasn’t Protestant” at Faith Lutheran Church

in Glen Ellyn, Ill., at First Presbyterian Church, Deerfield, Ill., in October and at Trinity Covenant Church in Evergreen Park, Ill., in November. During Advent he taught “Mary Gave God a Body” at First Presbyterian in Wheaton, Ill., and at the Windsor Park Center for Lifelong Learning in Winfield, Ill.

2003

Janelle Rozek Hooper (MDiv) published the Faith and Family article “Pills and patience” in the November issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2006

Meghan Johnston Aelabouni (MDiv) published “Form a faithful foundation: Holding one another to our baptismal promises” in the January issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Linda Norman (MDiv) was pictured in the January issue of *Living Lutheran*. She was presented with the ELCA’s Servus Dei award in thanksgiving for her six years of service as ELCA treasurer.

2007

Joel Cruz (ThM; 2009, PhD) presented “Spaniards in the Americas: Las Casas among the Reformers” at the American Academy of Religion annual conference in Boston in November.

Amy Lindeman Allen (MDiv) published pastoral reflections for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, Palm Sunday, and Passion Sunday

in the Preaching Helps section of the January issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission* (online).

2009

Yehiel Curry (TEEM; 2013, MDiv) received the 2018 Tom Hunstad Award given by the ELCA Youth Ministry Network for excellence in youth and family ministry.

Angela Khabeb (MDiv) published “A life of thanks-giving” in the November *Living Lutheran*. She is pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wis.

2011

Adam Braun (ThM; 2017, PhD) presented “We Are Not Talking About Belief: Reading (the Bible in) Baldwin’s Jimmy’s Blues for #BLM” at the Society for Biblical Literature annual conference in November in Boston.

2012

Masresha Chufa (ThM; 2017, PhD) is serving as acting dean as well as teaching at Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He is also teaching at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, serves on a commission of his church and is a leader in his local congregation.

Carl-Eric Gentes (ThM; 2017, PhD) presented “Justified By Faith Not Reason: The ‘Sin Against Rigorous Thinking’ and the Possibilities of Thought in Human/Animal Entanglements” at the Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit at the American Academy of Religion annual conference in Boston in November.

2013

Ki-Min Bang (ThM) presented “The First Source Critic in LXX 1 Samuel 17” at the Society of Biblical Literature at the annual conference in Boston in November.

2014

Ben Adams (MDiv) was a speaker for the Peace and Justice Series at Open Table United Church of Christ in Ottawa, Ill., in October. The topic was homelessness and how it affects youth and adults in urban and suburban areas.

Yoseob Song (ThM) presented “The Strategy and Rhetoric of the Women in the Genealogy in the Gospel of Matthew” at the Society of Biblical Literature conference section, Women in the Biblical World. He also presented “The New Jerusalem and the Covenant

Formula: The Strategy of Using the Old Testament in Revelation 21:3” at the Korean Biblical Colloquium of the same conference in November.

2015

Jeffrey Meyer (ThM) presented “Hypomoné as Enduring Resistance: Finding Nonviolence in the Book of Revelation” at the November annual conference of the Society for Biblical Literature. He published a review of *Making Peace with the Earth: Action and Advocacy for Climate Justice*, edited by Grace Ji-Sun Kim in the January issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*.

Jasmine Tesdahl (MAM) is pictured in the November *Living Lutheran* and quoted in an article on military chaplaincy. She is an Air Force Reserve chaplain and pastor of Faith (Cuba City) and First English (Platteville) Lutheran churches in Wisconsin.

2016

Elizabeth Lowry (MDiv) contributed “Confessing racism” to the January *Living Lutheran*. She serves as pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Reynoldsburg, Ohio.

Baiju Markose (ThM) presented “Subaltern Ritual Hermeneutics: Pottan Theyyam – A Case Study” at the Ritual Studies Unit of the American Academy of Religion annual conference in November in Boston.

2017

Matthew Jones (MATS) presented “Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Eschatological Wrestling: Epistemological Ambivalence in Fiction from Tegel Prison” at the American Academy of Religion annual conference held in Boston in November.

Nathaniel Klein (MDiv) was ordained on December 9 at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Palos Heights, Ill. He is now pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Midlothian, Ill.

Samuel Nelson (MDiv) was ordained February 25 at Coastside Lutheran Church in Half Moon Bay, Calif. He is serving as associate pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Encinitas, Calif.

Rebecca Truland (MDiv) was ordained on November 11 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Burlington, N.J. She was installed as their pastor the same day.

Willard C. Blomquist
1924-2017
Augustana Lutheran
Seminary Class of 1950

Pastor Willard Blomquist was ordained at the Washington National Cathedral in 1950. He served congregations in Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois. His final 30 years in a full-time call were as pastor of Trinity United Lutheran Church in Waukegan, Ill. During retirement, he served congregations during vacancies and as a visitation pastor. At Rolling Hills Manor in Zion, Ill., where he resided the last four years of his life, he continued to perform baptisms, counsel, comfort and pray with those in need.

He died on December 5. A funeral service was held at Trinity United Lutheran Church on December 16. He is survived by his two daughters, four grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Virginia, and three infant children.

James L. Carlson
1932-2018
Augustana Lutheran
Seminary Class of 1958
LSTC Class of 1983

Pastor Carlson was ordained in 1958 and served three congregations in Florida, Iowa and Texas. He was pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Victoria, Texas, for 30 years. After retiring in 1994, he became an active member of Triumphant Love

Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas.

He died on January 11. A memorial service was held at Triumphant Love Lutheran Church on January 20. He was preceded in death by his wife, Greta Adair Nelson Carlson. He is survived by their four children, six grandchildren, and a great granddaughter.

Mark B. Herbener
1932-2017
Concordia Seminary,
St. Louis (Christ
Seminary-Seminex)
Class of 1956

From the time he was five years old, Mark Herbener knew he was going to be a pastor. He entered the Concordia educational system at 13. He graduated from Concordia College in Milwaukee, Wis., and went on to earn degrees at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

He was ordained in 1956 and served congregations in Texas from 1956-87, when he was elected bishop of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod. He retired in 2000 and was named bishop emeritus.

During his long service as pastor of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Dallas, Herbener worked with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Black Citizens for Law and Justice, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. His congregation established the first food pantry in the city of Dallas. The church also sold

part of its property to meet the need for new housing in South Dallas. Herbener was also a leader in Dallas ecumenical and interfaith initiatives. As bishop, he helped develop the NT-NL Synod's strong relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone.

He loved a good pun, a bad joke, and a silly song. He sang with a number of choirs, tied his own bow-ties and fishing flies, and loved to spend time with family, fish, and commune with God at his cabin on a lake in east Texas.

He died on October 28, with Donna, his wife of 59 years, at his side. In addition to Donna, he is survived by their two children and a granddaughter. A funeral was held on November 4 at Central Lutheran Church in Dallas.

William E. Leshner
1932-2018
Chicago Lutheran
Theological Seminary
Class of 1958

See page 2.

David Pearson
1935-2017
Class of 1964

Pastor David Pearson began a career in mechanical engineering before feeling called to ordained ministry. While he was studying at Augustana Lutheran Seminary, LSTC was formed. He was ordained in 1964 and served congregations

in Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota. After retiring from full-time ministry, he continued to serve as interim pastor in Minnesota congregations.

He was a passionate advocate for peace and justice. He marched with Martin Luther King Jr. from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. Under his leadership, First Lutheran in Brainerd, Minn., sponsored a 13-member Vietnamese refugee family.

He died on November 24. Services were held on December 3 at Peace Church in Duluth, Minn. He is survived by his wife, Judy, three sons and two daughters, and 10 grandchildren.

Earl L. Peters
1934-2017
Class of 1984 (DMin)

Pastor Earl L. Peters served Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Burbank, Ill., from 1971 until his retirement in 2007. It was the third congregation he served during his 47 years of full-time ministry.

In addition to work in the parish, Peters served on the Stickney Township Advisory Board for Mental Health, the Ethics Committee of Advocate Christ Hospital and Medical Center, the Governing Council of Christ Hospital, and the Burbank Chamber of Commerce.

He died October 18. A funeral service was held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church on October 22. He was preceded in death by his

wife, Sharon. He is survived by their four children, 12 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Rudolph P.F. Ressmeyer
1924-2017
Concordia Seminary,
St. Louis (Christ
Seminary-Seminex)
Class of 1947

Bishop Rudolph Ressmeyer followed his father and grandfather into ministry. He was the grandson of Franz Pieper, professor and president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS).

Ressmeyer served congregations in Spokane, Wash., Baltimore, Md., and Long Island, N.Y. He was one of the founders of Long Island Lutheran High School and later served as its executive director. For nine years, he served as president of the Atlantic District of the LCMS. He also served as chairman of the board of Concordia College in Bronxville, N.Y.; on the Board of Public Relations of the LCMS; and as president of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau.

In 1976, he was elected bishop of the East Coast Synod of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) and served until the AELC became part of the ECLA.

He died October 6 in Oviedo, Fla. He was preceded in death by his wife, Virginia, and his daughter, Faith. He is survived by two daughters and two sons, eight grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. A memorial service was held November 19 at The Hahn Center of Long Island Lutheran Middle and High School in Brookville, N.Y. A Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist was held on November 25 at Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Bronx.

Eugene Schipper
1941-2017
Class of 1968

Pastor Eugene Schipper financed his college education by farming 120 acres in his native Iowa and by working as an auto mechanic. He worked in the Industrial Engineering Dept. at Deere and Company for a year before entering seminary at LSTC's Rock Island, Ill., campus. He was part of the first class to graduate from LSTC at 55th and University.

After his ordination in 1968, Schipper served congregations in Minnesota and Iowa until his retirement in 2006. He continued to supply preach and to volunteer as a spiritual care chaplain at Jones Regional Medical Center. An important part

of his ministry was working annually with Crop Walks through Church World Service and the Southeast Iowa Synod.

He died on December 2 from injuries suffered in an automobile accident. A funeral service was held on December 8 at Wayne Zion Lutheran Church in Monticello, Iowa. A Service of Prayer and Thanksgiving was held December 8 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Cherokee, Iowa. He is survived by his wife, Mary Lou, two sons and two daughters, and four grandchildren.

Robert Sutherland
1930-2017
Augustana Lutheran
Seminary Class of 1959
LSTC Class of 1972

Pastor Robert Sutherland interrupted his college education to serve in the U.S. Army in Munich, Germany, during the Korean War. He earned a bachelor's in music education and a bachelor's of divinity. He was ordained in 1959 and served congregations in Michigan and Wisconsin. In retirement he served in various roles, including pulpit supply and organist.

He died December 15 in Negaunee, Mich. A memorial service was held December 21 at Bethany Lutheran Church, Negaunee. He is survived by three

sons, two daughters, and 10 grandchildren.

Byron R. Swanson
1930-2017
Augustana Lutheran
Seminary Class of 1956

The Rev. Dr. Byron Swanson was an enthusiastic environmentalist who was ahead of his time. He practiced care of the earth in the many places he lived, first as a parish pastor in Missouri, then as a master's and doctoral student in Connecticut, Arizona, Sweden and New Jersey.

He served as professor of religion at Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Neb., and then had the same title at California Lutheran University. He was passionate about his subjects (theology, church history and the Reformation, Christian ethics, environmental ethics, and peace and justice) as well as his students.

In 2012 he was diagnosed with Multiple Systems Atrophy, which left him confined to a wheelchair and unable to communicate verbally. He handled his disease with strength and grace. He died on October 24, surrounded by his family.

A service was held November 11 at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, Colo. He is survived by his wife, Kathryn, four children, and six grandchildren.

Vice President for Finance Bob Eder retires



Bob Eder

On February 28, Bob Eder, LSTC's vice president for finance since October 2014, retired. He has provided sound leadership and direction for the Finance Office and the seminary. During his brief tenure, he oversaw the installation and implementation of the Financial Edge software, which necessitated a major revision to the school's chart of accounts and endowment accounting system. He leaves LSTC with a more accurate and accessible reporting system, allowing the school to plan how to improve its financial position and lasting sustainability.

In addition to these major projects, he supported board and trustee

committees, provided honest and thoughtful counsel to administrative leaders, oversaw the annual financial audit process and carried out other ordinary tasks rarely seen by others but essential to effective functioning of the Finance Office and the seminary.

He looks forward to spending time with family, traveling with his spouse and volunteering with local nonprofit organizations.

We are grateful for his succinct budget planning meetings, the expertise and experience in the nonprofit sector that he brought to his work at LSTC and for his honest and faithful service. We wish Bob good health and much joy in his retirement.

New positions, new titles

The retirement of Vice President for Finance Bob Eder provided LSTC with the opportunity to take a fresh look at the administrative structure of the Finance and Operations Office, which include Information Technology, Building Services, Human Resources, and Housing.

The result is a new position, vice president for administration, who will be

the chief financial officer/ chief operating officer.

This new person will oversee the director of information technology, the director of operations, the director of human resources, and the controller.

Welcome

Brenda Cantu joined the JKM Library staff on February 1 as the new digital instruction librarian. She will work with faculty, students, the Language Resource and Writing Center, Information Technology and all on campus who use technology to teach, research and learn. She holds a doctorate in Informational Science from the University of North Texas-Denton and she is currently enrolled in the online masters of library information science at the University of Illinois. This is her first time living outside Texas.

Rickey W. Copley-Spivey joined the LSTC Advancement Office on December 11. He is the new director of development, which includes building the annual giving program, ensuring a cohesive communications strategy for all areas of giving, and cultivating a portfolio of leadership donors. Read more on page 2.

Andrea Finnegan joined the Finance Office as controller, director of finance on January 29. She is a certified public accountant and has previously served as a project manager and interim controller for the Greater Chicago Food Depository and as vice president of finance and operations of Community Support Services. As controller at LSTC, she will oversee the day-to-day operations of the Finance Office and our work with outsourced staff and functions with Quattro FPO Services. She is passionate about building a more peaceful and just world.

Accomplishments

Julie Sevig, communications specialist—advancement, published “King or no king?” on the ELCA worship blog for Christ the King Sunday, November 16. She also provided weekly discussion questions for the Working Preacher resource from Advent through Ash Wednesday at www.workingpreacher.org



Senaa Debela

“Stay Connected” at the 30th Anniversary LSTC Gospel Choir Concert

Celebrate with the LSTC Gospel Choir and special guests on Sunday, April 8, at 4 p.m. This year features an LSTC Reunion Gospel Choir, soloist Senaa Debela, A4L (All 4 Love), the Shekinah Chapel Choir, the Keith Hampton Singers as well as the LSTC Gospel Choir.

The Gospel Choir has set a goal to raise enough to fund a full-year of tuition for the Grover Wright Scholarship and a semester of tuition for the Rev. Carol A. Burns Scholarship. Be generous with your support to help make this vision come true. See the article on page 8 to learn more about the anniversary and what the Gospel Choir means to students and to the entire LSTC community.

OTHER EVENTS AT LSTC

Discipleship Today: What on Earth Is Discipleship?

On April 12, the World Mission Institute welcomes keynote speaker Anthony Gittins and respondent Reggie Williams to explore what Christian discipleship looks like today. A light dinner will be served at 5:45 at LSTC, with time to meet and greet. The lecture begins at 6:30 p.m. Anthony Gittins, CSSp, is professor emeritus of theology and culture at Catholic Theological Union. Reggie Williams is associate professor of Christian ethics at McCormick Theological Seminary. For more information, contact Peter Vethanayagamony at pvethana@lstc.edu.

#lstcgives18

On April 18, that's 4·18·18, LSTC will be holding its first “campus takeover” and social media blitz giving day. It's the brainchild of Gift Officer Jennifer Thomas, who especially wants to inspire alumni to give. Join the fun! See page 5 for more about Giving Day.

Seminary Sampler Night

To add to the excitement of April 18 (see above), LSTC welcomes those discerning a call to ministry to Seminary Sampler Night. This “fun-size” version of Seminary Sampler begins at 4 p.m. and gives prospective students the chance to talk with faculty and students, hear about classes and degrees, learn how to fund a seminary education, and get a feel for the LSTC campus. If you or someone you know is discerning a call to ministry, especially if they need to begin their studies part-time or will be a commuter student, encourage them to register for Seminary Sampler Night by clicking the Visit button on lstc.edu.

The James Kenneth Echols Prize for Excellence in Preaching

Each April, the LSTC community gets to hear excellent sermons preached on a text chosen for the James Kenneth Echols Prize for Excellence in Preaching. This year's “preach off” happens on Thursday, April 26, at 11:45 a.m. in the Augustana Chapel at LSTC.



Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

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WINTER 2018

Pictured from left to right: Guests at LSTC's Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration share their experiences as part of the Civil Rights Movement; Gordon Straw gives the Cornelsen Chair inaugural lecture; Bishop of Sweden Antje Jackelén presents a Reformation anniversary lecture