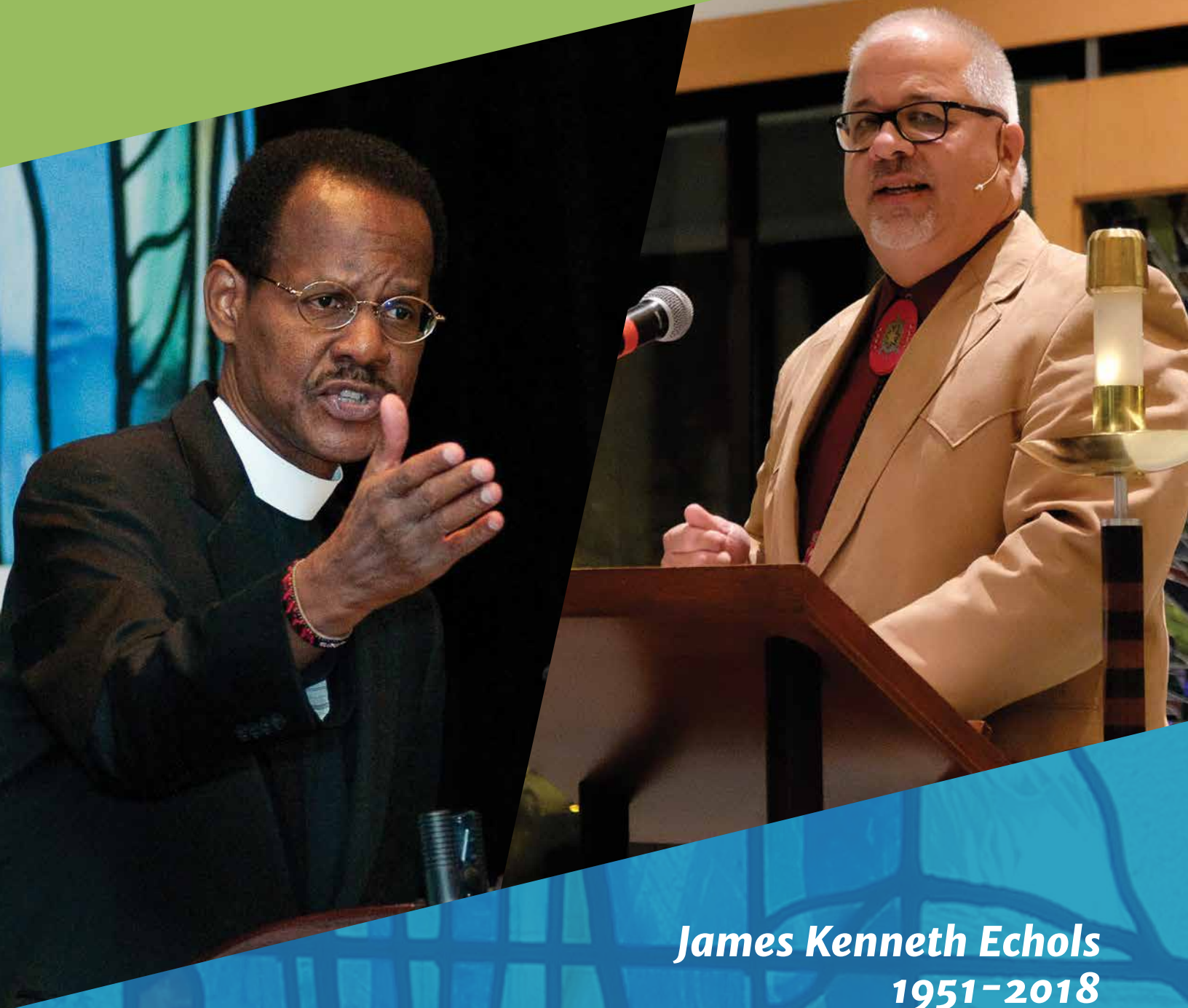


LSTC

WINTER 2019

Epistle

Magazine of the Lutheran School
of Theology at Chicago



James Kenneth Echols
1951-2018

Gordon J. Straw
1959-2019

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear friends in Christ:

Before coming to LSTC, I was on the faculty of two very different seminaries, one for thirteen years, the other for eight. Through my entire service, we had only one faculty death in each institution. During the last nine months at LSTC, however, we have suffered three: Vítor Westhelle, Gordon Straw, and James Kenneth Echols (who as fifth president of the school also served on the faculty). This rate is not unusual in most congregations, but for seminaries it definitely is. And it omits other sorrows that lately have visited our staff, faculty, and students less publicly, the illness and grief that are a regular part of community life.

The memorials for these three colleagues were held in Augustana Chapel, and each was heavily attended. Each was distinctive, powerful, and rare, befitting the qualities of each person. And though we're not used to hosting memorials, it's amazing what was summoned out from our community amidst shock and sorrow. Without prompting, already busy folks offered to pitch in and help with whatever needed to be done. Then came more subtle aid, the quiet, embodied work of listening, being present, taking time, showing patience—tangible marks of gentle kindness. As Erik Christensen, our pastor to the community, later remarked, "This place really knows how to come together."

All this led me to think about how we do our work as a school, and why. You might expect that our educational focus determines our structure, and to an extent we are indeed organized around courses and other formal modes of learning. But these recent memorials have helped me see that what really shapes our efforts are the practices of the wider church. I don't mean that, like a congregation, we also worship and pray. Nor do I mean that seminary is a practice venue for some sort of "real thing" that comes later. I mean instead that, as in the rest of the church, we are a place of embodied encounter.

Before all else, we encounter here our risen Lord, who bore our wounds and embodies the promise of lasting life. Based on that, we then encounter one another here through the tangible practices of the church: feeding, washing, sharing, speaking, singing, hearing, caring. And as we have lately learned, some practices are uncommon in our seminary repertoire: accompanying, grieving, carrying, commending, burying. All these practices ground our learning at

LSTC. We enact such practices because our faith is not reducible to ideas. It is an embodied encounter with Jesus and all those he loved. It is an in-person thing, not an at-arm's-length thing. That's why we are committed to forming leaders in community.

Perhaps it's easier or cheaper to fill heads with information, but we seek a different way. We long to be "in formation" together—not just students but all of us growing into a more ample public witness to the one who is our life. Doing so is a messy, costly business. When you learn in person with others, it cannot be constrained to an hour or in a book or on a screen. It spills over into life together, and so is often flawed and never finished. And that's when still other practices can be embodied: forgiveness, mercy, reconciliation, justice, peace. There is no shortcut to those lessons, the practices we can bring to a hurting world.

I am grateful to be part of an in-person learning community that forms leaders for an embodied church. To be sure, we cannot know the specific kinds of church the Spirit may call forth in days to come. Regardless the form, though, it will still be life together—not a theory to apply or a flag to wave, but an embodied practice of living faith. It will still involve "holding all things in common" (Acts 2.44) as did our ancestors, and "bearing one another's burdens" (Gal. 6.2) as did Vítor, Gordon, and Jim. We believe community like that is where our leaders are best formed. That's the risk we are willing to take and the gift we have to offer.



James Nieman

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

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.

Visit www.lstc.edu for more information about LSTC's programs, conferences and special events.

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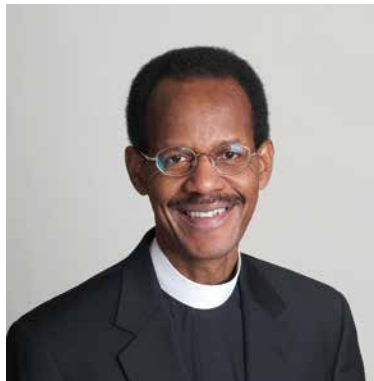
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Cover: James Kenneth Echols at a 2010 event; Gordon Straw delivering his 2017 inaugural lecture

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James Kenneth Echols



Gordon J. Straw

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Erik Christensen chosen Brugh Emerging Leader by Institute of Liturgical Studies



Erik Christensen

Erik Christensen, pastor to the community and director of worship, has been selected as the 2019 recipient of the Brugh Emerging Leader Award by the advisory council of the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso (Ind.) University.

The annual award recognizes leaders who have made significant contributions to the church in the areas of liturgy,

congregational song, preaching, music and or/writing for the whole church. Qualifications include publications or writings, involvement in the wider church, leadership among peers, an ongoing commitment to education and growth, a rootedness in the liturgical tradition and creativeness in expressing the liturgy and song of the church. The award will be presented on May 1 at the conclusion of the 2019 Institute of Liturgical Studies, which will gather around the theme “Table of Thanksgiving: How Eucharist Forms Us.”

“Erik is a fantastic choice for this award,” said Benjamin Stewart, Gordon A. Braatz Associate Professor of Worship and Director of Advanced Studies and also a member of the Institute Advisory Council. “He’s published innovative liturgical texts that draw on the riches of our traditions, helped to form congregations to live lives of integrity and justice that flow from their liturgy, and here at LSTC has given the practice of testimony a powerful liturgical and communal grounding. For years Erik was formed by the Institute and it is wonderful to see him now helping to enrich and shape it and the wider church.”

Before Christensen joined the LSTC staff in the fall of 2017, he was pastor of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church of Logan Square. He is a frequent contributor to Augsburg Fortress’ *Sundays & Seasons*, was co-author of *Worship Matters: An Introduction to Worship* and *In These or Similar Words: Crafting Language for Worship*.

He has been a leader in organizations working on justice issues, including the Logan Square Ecumenical Alliance; Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries; and Proclaim, a Lutheran community of LGBTQ+ rostered ministers, seminarians and candidates for ministry.

Christensen received a master of divinity degree with a certificate in Black Church Studies from Candler

School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga., a master of sacred theology degree with an emphasis in Christian ethics from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn.

Jennifer Thomas among class of fund raising executives



Jennifer Thomas

The Rev. Jennifer Thomas, deployed gift officer/alumni relations, is among the recent class of Certified Fund Raising Executives (CFREs). She is one of 180 graduates who join more than 6,300 professionals around the world who hold the CFRE designation.

“I’m delighted that Jennifer has pursued and earned the CFRE credential—it reflects her strong

commitment to best practices and ethics in fundraising,” said Clyde Andrew Walter, interim vice president for advancement at LSTC.

Thomas, an LSTC graduate, said she decided to pursue her credentials after being in the fundraising field for three years. The process ensures individuals are acquainted with all aspects of fundraising, administration, donor and volunteer engagements, major gifts. She utilized webinars, read books and took practice tests to prepare for the exam, and she looks forward to it adding to her continued work at LSTC.

“Our strengths on the team complement one another and enable us to achieve the mission and fundraising goals we have,” she said. “It’s great to be part of a team, and I’ve appreciated the congratulations and recognition I’ve received for this credential that’s recognized across the industry.”

As the CFRE news release explains, those who have achieved the distinction “have met a series of standards... which include tenure in the profession, education and demonstrated fundraising achievement for not-for-profit organizations. They have also passed a rigorous written examination testing the knowledge, skills and abilities required of a fundraising executive, and have agreed to uphold *Accountability Standards* and the *Donor Bill of Rights*.”

Varieties of gifts, many ministries

2018 Distinguished Alumni

LSTC will honor the ministries of seven of its graduates receiving the 2018 Distinguished Alumni Awards. The awards will be presented on Oct. 10 during the 2019 LSTC Homecoming (see details on page 25). The recipients reflect a wide range of gifts and ministries. The 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients will be announced in the summer issue of the *Epistle* magazine.

2018 honorees

Mike Blair (1985, MDiv) will receive the Specialized Ministry Award. Since 1991 Blair has served as campus pastor at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Before that, he served as campus pastor at Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., and associate pastor of First Lutheran Church in Freeport, Ill. The nomination for the award commends him as an “ally to students in a variety of life circumstances... his presence was empowering and encouraging for me and many others in our journey through college and beyond.”

Carolyn Fredricksen (1982, MDiv) will receive the Parish Ministry Award in recognition of her inspiring service in congregations in Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa. She is known as a gifted worship leader and preacher who connects faith and daily life in her sermons. Fredricksen is also active in interfaith and ecumenical partnerships, as a participant and chair of the local clergy group which sponsors several events a year for all member congregations. She has helped her congregations move beyond their walls and connect to their communities. Since 2001 she has been the lead pastor of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Greendale, Wis.

Paul K. Hanson (1966, MDiv) will receive the Faithful Servant Award. Even in retirement, Hanson remains engaged in the work of the church through the synod and his community in Montana. He has served as a parish pastor, taught at a seminary, and was a missionary in Slovakia. He has been a strong supporter of women in ministry and leadership in the church.

Angela Khabeb (2009, MDiv) will receive the Emerging Voice Award, given to alumni in their first decade of ministry. A Bridges Scholar at LSTC, Khabeb also won the James Kenneth Echols Prize for Excellence in Preaching in 2009. She is a regular contributor to *Living Lutheran* magazine and has made presentations and preached at Women of the ELCA and synodical events. She is currently serving as associate pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

Terry Kylo (1991, MDiv) will receive the Called to Lead Award. Currently serving as executive director of the Treacy Levine Center in Lynwood, Wash., and director of Neighbors in Faith in western Washington, Kylo’s ministry has been one of healing, revitalization and bridging divides among neighbors. He has revitalized both Lutheran and Episcopal congregations, more than once helping them heal from clergy sexual misconduct. He developed models of ministry that are house churches or do not require a building. In 2016 he founded Neighbors in Faith to respond to Islamophobia and to encourage faith communities to actively work for the well-being of their neighbors.

Daniel Rossing (1972, MTS) will receive the Lifetime Service Award, awarded posthumously. Rossing moved to Israel in 1971 and was granted dual American and Israeli citizenship. He converted to Judaism and became a significant presence in interfaith affairs in Israel until his untimely death in 2010. He served as the director of the Department for Christian Communities in the Israel Ministry for Religious Affairs from 1976–1987. From 2003–2010 he served as director of the Jerusalem Center for Jewish Christian Relations. He received the prestigious Mount Zion Award in 2009 for his tireless work in promoting interreligious understanding. Rossing was a member of numerous boards, working group and organizations, and presented scholarly papers, conference addresses, and speeches.

Karen Soli (1998, DMin in Preaching) will receive the Witness to the World Award. After retiring from pastoral ministry, she was elected to the South Dakota House of Representatives as a Democratic member from Sioux Falls. She completed her third term in early 2019. While serving in the House, she gave a voice to those who normally do not have one in halls of power. Soli served on legislative committees that dealt with domestic violence, nursing homes, school boundaries and government accountability. She also authored legislation that established a new Government Accountability Board.

Year in review: A progress update on the 2018–2020 Strategic Plan

by Christine Yucha, director of assessment and planning

What do antiracism, public church, and financial sustainability have to do with one another? Among other things, they were all addressed in the first year of implementing LSTC’s 2018–2020 Strategic Plan, “A Community to Form Leaders to Form Community.” The first year of the plan has been instructive on many levels, not only in focusing our work on the goals and strategies named within the plan, but also in developing the institutional capacities and structures needed to support that work.

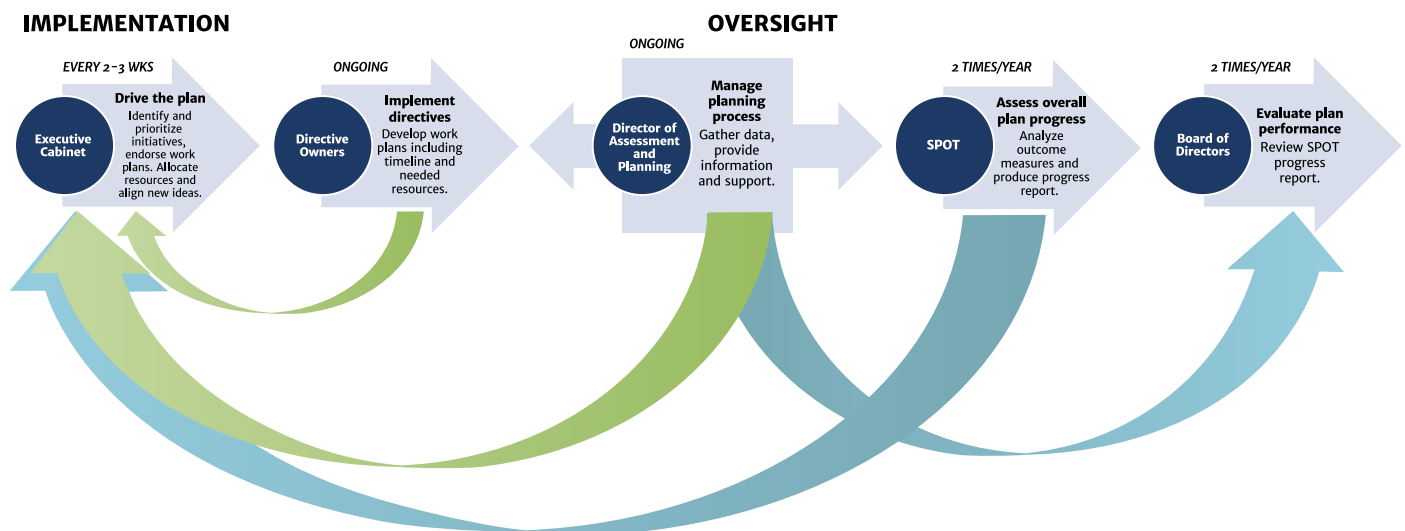
We began the 2018–2020 plan knowing that our multifaceted, multidisciplinary approach to implementing and overseeing the plan would take time to develop. And it has. Over the course of the year, we have reset and refined our implementation and oversight processes several times, improving them with each revision. What finally emerged was a clear process for making decisions, a limited number of strategic directives to focus our work, and cloud-based technology to hold it all together.

LSTC’s Executive Cabinet now meets every two to three weeks to drive the strategic plan forward, deciding what will happen with the plan, and determining if new opportunities align with our school’s priorities, resources, and capacity.

Members of the Executive Cabinet (president, director of assessment and planning, director of communications and marketing, dean of academic affairs, dean of student services, vice president for advancement, vice president for finance, and vice president for operations) also serve as Directive Owners. They document detailed action steps and timelines on a cloud-based spreadsheet, increasing transparency and enhancing collaboration.

The Strategic Plan Oversight Team (SPOT), comprised of representatives from the Board of Directors, faculty and staff, continues to measure plan progress and effectiveness, reflecting on what has happened with the plan. The Board of Directors is responsible for the plan as a whole. The chart below describes the cycle of plan implementation and oversight.

Additional opportunities for collaboration, planning and decision-making have been established by aligning meeting times and committee structures for faculty and staff, providing designated development opportunities for all employees, and creating new multidisciplinary groups, such as the Leadership Council, which meets monthly to workshop ideas and troubleshoot problems.



Here are a few key accomplishments in each goal area of the 2018–2020 Strategic Plan:

Goal Area I. Distinctive Profile

- Approving a working definition of “public church”
- Researching the effectiveness of our public church message with various external audiences
- Bringing back Tuesday afternoon “Recess” as a way of strengthening relationships within our community

Goal Area II. Formative Community

- Developing an enrollment plan to ensure student success from recruitment through graduation
- Hiring three new faculty members in mission-critical positions (New Testament, Homiletics, and Church and Society/Ethics)
- Launching the Planning and Design Task Force to propel our partnership with Chicago Regional Organizing for AntiRacism (CROAR) forward
- Training additional staff to serve as Qualified Administrators for the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

Goal Area III. Educational Impact

- Developing refined academic assessment tools and implementing a formal degree program review process
- Expanding the number of courses offered online and the number of faculty members certified in online education

- Beginning a partnership with Chicago Cares to connect the LSTC community with the people and needs in our neighborhood

Goal Area IV. Resource Sustainability

- Reorganizing leadership, staff, and functions of the Finance and Advancement offices
- Developing a realistic multiyear forecast and reconfiguring the campaign
- Pursuing the sale of two residential buildings

These many achievements demonstrate our serious commitment to and belief in the notion of becoming “A Community to Form Leaders to Form Community,” and fulfilling our four strategic goals. As we work to achieve these goals, we are learning what it truly means to be in community with one another, whether that is grappling with difficult decisions or rejoicing together in a classroom or a conference room. Aided by baseline metrics established by the Strategic Plan Oversight Team, we will be able to measure and analyze progress throughout this strategic planning process. In 2019, we will continue to build on these successes as we focus and dive deep into the five areas of Reach, Learning, Marketing, Measurement, and Revenue.

The 2018–2020 Strategic Plan is available on lstc.edu. Please direct all comments to christine.yucha@lstc.edu.

Video invites you to find your place in the LSTC community



A new video from LSTC has been making the rounds on social media since mid-February. It was produced by Jason Chesnut, an LSTC graduate and founder and chief creative

officer of ANKOS (A New Kind Of Storytelling) films (ANKOSfilms.com).

The video is located on YouTube, and can be found on LSTC’s Facebook page and at lstc.edu. It includes footage from our campus, music from the Gospel Choir, and interviews with students and alumni, faculty and staff and President James Nieman. In less than

three minutes, it hopes to tell enough of the LSTC story so that others will be led to support or attend the seminary. The video was produced in collaboration with Advancement, Admissions/Student Services and the Communications and Marketing team.

In the video, then-student Bridget Jones says, “Being here makes me really excited for the future of the church and seeing this community form leaders who are going to go out into the world and do awesome things.”

Linda Thomas, professor of theology and anthropology, makes reference to the Emmaus walk, and says “What we hope the students will do is to see in our neighbor the face of Jesus and to then listen to see what we might learn.”

Jürgen Moltmann to serve as co-advisor to doctoral student Brach Jennings

by Jan Boden



Jürgen Moltmann and Brach Jennings in July 2018

This April thematic doctoral student Brach Jennings travels to Tübingen, Germany, to study with world-renowned theologian Jürgen Moltmann on the topic of constructing a Trinitarian theology of the cross in dialogue with Martin Luther and James Cone. Even more extraordinary and exciting for Jennings is that, in December, Moltmann agreed to serve as co-advisor with Linda E. Thomas, professor of theology and anthropology, for Jennings's doctoral studies.

Jennings and Thomas phoned Moltmann together early on a Saturday morning to invite him to serve as co-advisor. "There was a long pause after Dr. Thomas invited Dr. Moltmann to be my co-advisor and I was sure he'd say no," Jennings said. "But then he said, 'If this is what you want me to do, I say yes!' Dr. Thomas and I both cheered. After I said how I honored I am to be his student, Moltmann told me, 'You don't know what you're getting into studying with me!'"

Thomas said, "I invited Dr. Moltmann to be co-advisor with me for Brach's dissertation in recognition of Moltmann being my senior and an eminent scholar. This gesture on my part is culturally appropriate from the African American perspective. I am excited that Brach is expanding his work with Martin Luther's theology to include the body of work written by my late mentor, Dr. James H. Cone. I am doubly excited that Dr. Jürgen Moltmann encouraged this dialogue with James Cone, and moreover that Moltmann will supervise Brach's dissertation work with me. I predict that Brach's engagement of Luther and Cone will lead to the production of a seminal work that will change the landscape of Lutheran theology."

Jürgen Moltmann is both a wide-ranging and highly influential scholar whose books include *Theology of Hope* (1967), *The Crucified God* (1974), *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (1981) and, most recently for the English-speaking world, *The Living God and the Fullness of Life* (2015). He has written and taught on eschatology, ecclesiology, Christology, the

theology of creation, and a political interpretation of Martin Luther's theology of the cross. He states that God suffers with humanity in our catastrophe because of Golgotha while also promising a better future through the hope of Christ's resurrection.

Not his first visit with Moltmann

Jennings calls Moltmann "my favorite living theologian." His expansion of Luther's theology of the cross was a large part of the master of theology thesis Jennings wrote at Luther Seminary, "The Relevance of Martin Luther's Theology of the Cross as the Critique of Consumerism and Capitalism." During the oral defense of the thesis, one member of the committee, Dr. Patrick Keifert, professor emeritus of systematic theology at Luther Seminary, grilled him particularly hard. When he was done, Keifert complimented Jennings on how well he blended Moltmann's theology and biography. The committee awarded the MTh to Jennings with distinction, a rare honor.

Only half seriously Jennings asked Keifert, "Do you think I should send Moltmann my thesis?"

Keifert said yes, and offered to write Moltmann to let him know that the thesis was coming. Jennings then spent time thinking carefully about what to say in the cover letter to the thesis. He took the risk and sent his thesis in late June 2017. "I mailed it with trepidation and wondered if he would respond," Jennings said.

Nothing came. No response. Then, in December 2017, Jennings received a letter with the German *Luftpost* sticker on it and he knew it must be from Moltmann. It was a brief letter apologizing for not being in touch sooner. Moltmann explained that he'd lost Jennings's Chicago address and had sent a response to Luther Seminary. He added, "Your study is excellent. You should develop your thoughts into a dissertation and a book."

Jennings caught up with the longer letter from Moltmann when he returned to Luther Seminary in February 2018 to meet with his MTh advisor, Dr. Guillermo Hansen, who had Moltmann's letter. It was a one-page response that included recommendations for further reading and concluded "All good wishes and much inspiration for your PhD studies. Let me know about your theme—In Christ's brotherhood, Jürgen Moltmann."

Encouraged by the letter, Jennings wrote asking if he could come meet Moltmann. The two agreed on a July 2018 visit at Moltmann's home in Tübingen. Thomas also explicitly encouraged Jennings to go to Moltmann and ask him to take him on as a student.

After traveling 4,400 miles one way, involving an eight-hour flight and a three-hour train ride, Jennings hesitated as he walked to Moltmann's house and thought about turning back. Finally, he rang the bell and Moltmann answered the door. "He invited me into his study and it was the strangest sensation," Jennings said. "Stepping through that door, I felt as if I had always known him and

James Kenneth Echols

Pastor, teacher, leader, child of God

by Jan Boden



James Kenneth Echols in his office at LSTC

James Kenneth Echols made history in 1997 when he was elected the first African American president of a North American Lutheran seminary. He brought to LSTC a deep knowledge of the Lutheran church and theological education. Echols served as LSTC's fifth president until 2011. He died on Dec. 22 in his hometown of Philadelphia, Pa. Celebrations of his life took place on Dec. 28 at United Lutheran Seminary and on Feb. 13 at LSTC. He is survived by his wife, Donna Skinner Echols, and their daughters Jennifer and Courtney.

"For 14 years, President Echols led our school during a period of accelerating change in theological education, with a vision for new possibilities that was often far ahead of his time," said James Nieman, president. "With quiet intensity and firm resolve, he set in motion local, ecumenical and global ventures that others had not yet imagined. He was also a person of substantial scholarly and ecclesial grounding whose very presence as a seminary leader was an inspiration to many. We are blessed to be beneficiaries of all the good to which he was committed, and saddened that his time among us has ended so soon."

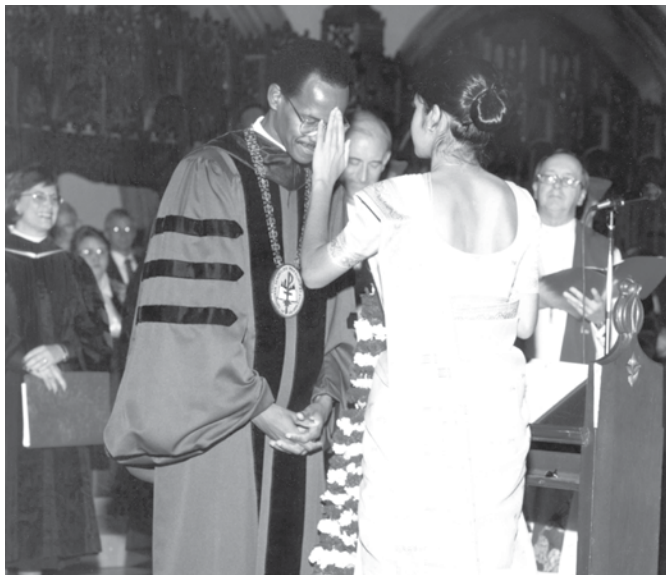
Drawing on LSTC's strengths and commitments, Echols was instrumental in creating A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, an endowed chair in Christian-Muslim studies and interfaith relations, the Albert "Pete" Pero Jr. Multicultural Center, and a program of spiritual formation for youth. He also worked closely with partners within the ELCA, seeking opportunities to make leaders in the church more aware of the central role of theological education.

Tributes from colleagues and friends

Richard J. Perry Jr., professor emeritus of church and society and urban ministry said, "I am deeply saddened that the Rev. Dr. James Kenneth Echols has walked on to join the ancestors. Jim was a giant in the world of theological education. His passion for and concern about the well-being of students, faculty, board members and pastors within the global Lutheran communion stood well beyond his years. He was a valuable colleague who stirred many people of African Descent to aspire to be faithful in their service in the church and the world. He was the first person of African Descent to serve as an academic dean and president of a Lutheran seminary in North America, and he served with grace, a strong faith, and a sense of humor. His wisdom, knowledge and, indeed, his quiet personality will be missed. I thank God I had the privilege of being his friend and colleague over the last 43 years."

Jonathan Strandjord, who served as ELCA director for theological education from 1998 to 2018, said, "When James Echols began his service as president of LSTC, the ELCA had just finished a long 'Study of Theological Education' that asked what the church most needed from its seminaries and how these schools could best be partners with each other and the rest of this new church. The Study's ambitious set of proposals were to expand the forms of theological education to reach more people, to deepen collaboration among the seminaries and other partners, and to grow the financial support needed for this crucial work. President Echols was a leader in the new generation of seminary presidents who took up this tall order.

"Very quickly a national recession and then a second much deeper one created strong economic headwinds. Controversies over ecumenical relations and sexuality took a great deal of the church's attention and strained some existing relationships. Through it all, President Echols was a persistent voice, reminding the seminaries and the rest of the church that if we are to serve the gospel of Jesus Christ, we need to serve one another. His commitment to



Eranthie Mendis applies the *tilaka* or *pottu*, a symbol of blessing, during Echols's installation as LSTC's president.

the gospel and his deep integrity are a major reason that the ELCA still has the increasingly rare privilege of having seminaries that are close both to one another and to the rest of the church.”

Cheryl Stewart Pero, who served as director of the Albert ‘Pete’ Pero Jr. Multicultural Center from 2010–2016, said, “James Kenneth Echols was my friend since 1978. As friends we sometimes agreed to disagree, but that’s what made our relationship such fun. He was also my colleague. In September 1986, we traveled to Harare, Zimbabwe, for the first gathering of the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL), a place and space where Black theologians would gather normally and regularly. This had not happened anywhere else in the church! Jim contributed to our body of knowledge. He listened and put into wonderful words the thoughts of our hearts, those ideas that sometimes are so very elusive. And as the first African American woman to complete the requirements, it was truly a blessing to be awarded my PhD in New Testament by the one and only African American president of a Lutheran seminary. CIBL will dedicate the African Descent Catechism, his brainchild, to the Rev. Dr. James Kenneth Echols.”

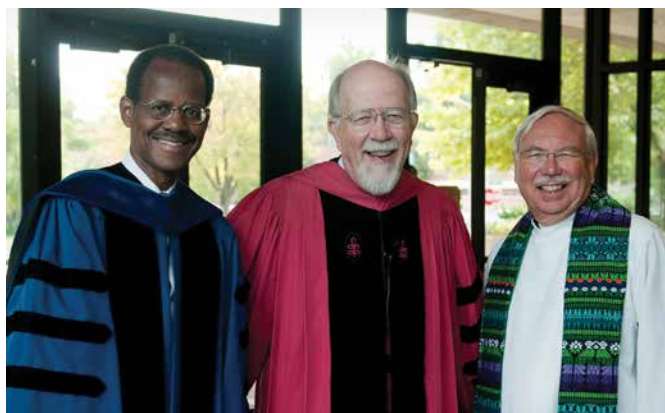
Kathleen “Kadi” Billman, John H. Tietjen Professor of Pastoral Ministry, Pastoral Theology, and Director of the Master of Divinity Program, said, “James Kenneth Echols brought to LSTC a deep concern for the spiritual formation of future ministers. During his presidency the Cornelsen Chair for Spiritual Formation was established and launched. Establishing A Center of Christian–Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, along with the Vogelaar Chair, cemented LSTC’s commitment to interfaith dialogue and relationships. For all the burdens he bore, his vision that changed the

face of the campus, his deep Christian faith and love for the church, and his pastoral heart, I offer heartfelt thanks.” Billman served as dean and vice president for academic affairs for 10 years while Echols was president.

Francisco Javier Goitia-Padilla, ELCA director for theological education, said, “Dr. James Kenneth Echols was my first professor—and dean—at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He and Donna invited Denise and me to their house during the holidays when everyone else traveled home. Years later he was my president at LSTC. He received us, again, with a smile. Dr. Echols gave credibility and academic competence to the African American theological community in the ELCA and paved the way for many of us. Doing so, he paid the toll trailblazers usually do. I celebrate his life with a line from one of his sermon: Human promises are shaky, at best. But God’s promises are forever.”

Changing spaces

During Echols’s presidency, the seminary undertook its first major construction project since the building was dedicated in 1967. It was a project that brought together his concern for spiritual formation with a vision of creating dedicated worship space at LSTC.



Echols, Ralph Klein, and Philip Hougren in 2010 at the dedication of the Ralph W. and Marilyn R. Klein Chair of Old Testament



Echols in 2017 with longtime friend and LSTC supporter Art Gustafson



Echols, Syngman Rhee, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA); ELCA Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson; McCormick Theological Seminary President Cynthia Campbell at the groundbreaking ceremony for the McCormick building

When Echols arrived at LSTC, the space that now holds the Augustana Chapel and third-floor meeting rooms was the Chapel Auditorium. The three stories of theater-type seating perched on steep narrow ledges of concrete with a stage at the bottom along the south windows accommodated large lectures and performances but was not a good space for worship. Echols proposed creating a new chapel in the space. He brought together a team of faculty, staff, alumni, donors, architects and liturgical artists to guide it into being.

Closer collaboration

McCormick Theological Seminary and LSTC are longtime partners in the JKM Library and from the 1970s until 2009 McCormick also leased classroom space from LSTC.

When Echols shared the plans for the new two-story chapel with Cynthia Campbell, then president of McCormick, she asked whether the new third floor space over the chapel would be large enough for McCormick's faculty and administrative offices, which were housed in several buildings in the neighborhood. They quickly determined that the new space was not. McCormick leaders then inquired about constructing a building on the area that served as LSTC's parking lot. Months of negotiations led to an agreement and a closer collaboration in the form of a shared campus.

The collaboration was hailed by the Association of Theological Schools as an innovative way to benefit both schools. It was lifted up as a model at a time when mainline

denominational seminaries were exploring ways to become more financially viable through partnerships. Details of the collaboration have evolved over the years but McCormick remains LSTC's closest partner.

A life in theological education

A career in the church wasn't what James Kenneth Echols imagined for himself as a young man. He planned to go to law school.

As a youngster in Philadelphia, Echols and his two brothers were involved in the Lutheran congregation they attended. Many, including Grover C. Wright, a lay leader who was instrumental in encouraging young African American men to consider becoming pastors, recognized gifts for ministry in James. Their encouragement changed the direction of Echols's life and career.

Echols graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP, a predecessor school of United Lutheran Seminary) and was ordained in the Lutheran Church in America in 1979. He served parishes in New Haven, Conn., and Hempstead, N.Y. He joined the faculty of LTSP in 1982 as professor of American Church History. While teaching and serving parishes, he earned three degrees, including the doctor of philosophy in the history of Christianity, from Yale University. Echols served as dean at LTSP from 1991–1997.

Following his tenure at LSTC, from 2012 until his retirement in 2015, Echols served as Director of Theological Education and Networks, Office of the Bishop, for the ELCA.

Globally, Echols participated in Lutheran and ecumenical conferences in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. He was a leader in the Conference of International



Echols blesses the altar during the dedication of the Augustana Chapel, as ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hansen and student Wendy Anderson look on.



Echols presents the Presidential Shoe Award to students Sarah Semmler and Matthew Voyer after their team won the annual faculty and staff versus students basketball game.

Black Lutherans (CIBL) and the African American Lutheran Association. He published in the areas of church history, theology and Black American Lutheranism. He edited *I Have a Dream: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Future of Multicultural America* (Augsburg Fortress, 2004).

The James Kenneth Echols Prize for Excellence in Preaching was established in 2008 by the late LeRoy T. Carlson in honor of Echols and to promote excellence in preaching among LSTC students, the Lutheran church and the world. In addition to honors and awards from Wagner College and Carthage College, Echols received a Luther Institute Wittenberg Award in 2000 and a Wheatridge Seeds of Hope Award in 2005.

In 2017 LSTC presented him with the doctor of divinity *honoris causa* in honor of his more than 37 years of dedicated service in parish ministry, theological education, ecumenical and interfaith work, as well as his service to communities of color in the United States and the Caribbean and his distinctive contributions across the global Lutheran communion.

Complex, competitive child of God

It may have been James Kenneth Echols's own complexity that made him well-suited for the complex job of leading a seminary.

Echols's heavily starched shirts gave him an aura of formality, yet he would casually stop students in the hallway to chat about how they were doing. He remembered details about people's lives and would inquire about family members weeks after a conversation.

Echols's competitiveness came out during the faculty/staff versus student basketball games, yet his concern for others extended to the rival team. During one of those games a student's glasses broke and Echols gave the student the lace from one of his shoes to hold the glasses in place. The Presidential Shoe Award was born: a shoe glued to a board and annually inscribed with the name of the winning team.

Echols would walk around Hyde Park with his head down, as if weighed down in thought. And he may have been, but he was undoubtedly looking for coins on the sidewalk. He loved to find change that others had lost and collected it in jars in his office.

To use one of his own phrases, there's much more we could say, but we'll stop there.

We remember both his great gifts to the church and the man who was a friend, a colleague, a child of God.

Gordon J. Straw, 1959-2019 *‘We will miss him deeply, as we strive to carry on his legacy’*

by Julie B. Sevig



Evelyn, Amanda and Gordon Straw stand in the same spot that was filled with photos and remembrances of Straw for his memorial service.

The Rev. Gordon J. Straw was only in his dream job as an associate professor at LSTC for 18 months, but his influence at the seminary, and throughout the church, has been measured by the heartache and remembrances since his unexpected death Jan. 5 at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Ill.

Straw, 59, was diagnosed with an aggressive lymphoma last fall, and died of complications related to his treatment. A Facebook post from his hospital room as the New Year dawned showed a smiling patient who was hopeful for restored health. But in the days that followed, friends, family and acquaintances turned to fervent prayer after Straw contracted pneumonia and a MRSA infection. He was removed from life support systems, and a service of commendation held by a small group of family, friends and his pastor represented some of what “Gordy” loved: a Led Zeppelin playlist that included “Stairway to Heaven,” a Dakota prayer, funeral sage and scotch whiskey.

His family (including wife Evelyn and daughter

Amanda), the LSTC community and many others filled Augustana Chapel (and an overflow room) for a memorial service on Saturday, Feb. 9.

Straw began as Cornelsen Chair for Formation and Coordinator of Candidacy July 1, 2017, frequently calling this position his “lifelong dream.”

“Gordon told us being a seminary professor was a dream job,” said faculty colleague Kadi Billman, who has taken on his advisees and candidacy work. “I don’t know if he felt that every moment once he was called to this work, but from everything I have witnessed and heard, he was a dream colleague and professor. Clear in his values and positions, he welcomed others to disclose theirs, too.

“His clear, firm, gentle presence was a gift to the faculty, and his egalitarian principles embraced all members of the community as partners in theological education and the gospel. Students and colleagues alike have witnessed to the way his rootedness in indigenous American experience and values challenged and inspired.

His absence has left us deeply grieving and deeply grateful for the time he enriched our life together,” Billman said.

Facebook full of remembrance

MDiv student Maija Mikkelsen publicly wrote about her sadness. She had taken three classes from Straw; the first was Vine Deloria Jr. and Native Christian Thought, which she said helped her understand the experience she had at Standing Rock a year prior.

Straw taught about federal Indian law, telling his students they would become “some of the few non-Indians to have any exposure to the utterly complex topic,” Mikkelsen wrote. “Even then, it was abundantly clear to me how much more Gordy had to teach.”

Recalling his attentiveness to the importance of “place” she told about when he took students into the seminary courtyard to share with them the practice of smudging. “As I remember Gordy’s captivating self, his resilient faith and his fierce kindness, I also remember the sweet smell of the burning sage as he so deliberately smudged each of his students in this place... He was a beacon of hope and strength.... The world has lost a great prophetic voice, a fighter and a foodie, and an incredibly warm and feisty soul.”

The last time Mikkelsen saw him he was eating an Indian taco at the Chicago American Indian Center Powwow, turning in the bleachers to explain the different parts of the powwow. “A fitting place for one of my last memories of him,” she wrote.

Straw’s love for connecting cooking to spirituality and hospitality was well known. He had been scheduled to teach a J-Term course entitled “Spirituality of Food and Drink” until his disability leave. He traced his passion for hospitality to his mother and his grandmother, who was his spiritual mentor.

Greg Villalon, his friend and former colleague at the churchwide organization, is filled with memories of their years together. He remembers how proud Straw was when speaking about his wife’s work at churchwide, and his daughter’s graduation from DePauw University.

Villalon remembers the day he invited Straw to lunch with a hidden agenda.

“I will never forget the look on Gordon’s face when I asked if he was interested in the position of Program Director for Lay Theological Formation. I can hear him responding, ‘Yes’—and affirming the important ministry of all of the baptized.”

Straw reiterated how important lay leadership was, and with a smile said to Villalon, “if the ELCA has 3 million members, and you subtract all of the pastors, you would still have 3 million members... Gordon was a scholar and teacher who was a proud member of the Brothertown Indian Nation. He was a friend and colleague, deeply rooted

in his faith in a loving and grace-filled God. His faith and strong sense of justice led to his commitment to human rights and justice for all people. As a member of the leadership for mission team in the ELCA’s Domestic Mission unit, he taught us to be strong advocates for justice in all of the work that we did.”

Serving the wider church

In addition to his position at LSTC and other prior teaching experiences, Straw served 11 calls as interim pastor in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, was a practitioner of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and proficient in the Open Space Technology method of leading meetings and conferences. Since the early 1990s, he served in several ELCA churchwide capacities, including program director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries, and program director for Lay Schools for Ministry and Missional Leadership. He wrote and lectured on Native American Christian theology and related contemporary issues, and on topics in systematic theology and American Lutheran church history. Straw worked with other Native American ELCA leaders to develop both the Native American Emphasis and the Vine Deloria Jr. Symposium at LSTC, at which he gave his inaugural lecture in November 2017.

Straw’s skill and experience as a Native American scholar “brought a perspective to how we talk about these things that most of us don’t think about,” said Gregory Kaufmann, Straw’s friend, an assistant to the bishop in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and a member of the LSTC Board of Directors.

Kaufmann appreciated Straw’s depth of wisdom about the history of the church, especially when Straw posed the questions: “Why is it the way it is now and should it stay



George “Tink” Tinker, Albert “Pete” Pero Jr., and Gordon Straw during a Native American Heritage symposium at LSTC.

this way?” He was a favorite teacher in the Lay School of Ministry in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin.

“He asked critical questions in such a gentle giant way. His presence filled a room, but he nurtured conversations in the room and didn’t demand attention so that those in the room didn’t even know it happened. I watched him do it in a number of venues... he had an ability to sit in a room as an equal, with deep confidence, but on equal footing that allowed everyone else to be part of the group with him. It is a rare gift. Seldom are our best teachers and leaders able to do that. Through no fault of their own, they take over the room.”

Kaufmann and others acknowledged Straw’s regard for the ministry of the baptized. He remembers Straw saying, “You don’t go up from baptism, you go sideways.”

It was those contributions that were recognized on May 20, 2018, when Straw received the honorary degree of doctor of divinity from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. He was praised for his advocacy for theological education among ethnic specific communities by Craig L. Nesson, academic dean at Wartburg, “[Gordon’s] support for lay schools for ministry and the education of the universal priesthood of all believers has been exemplary.”

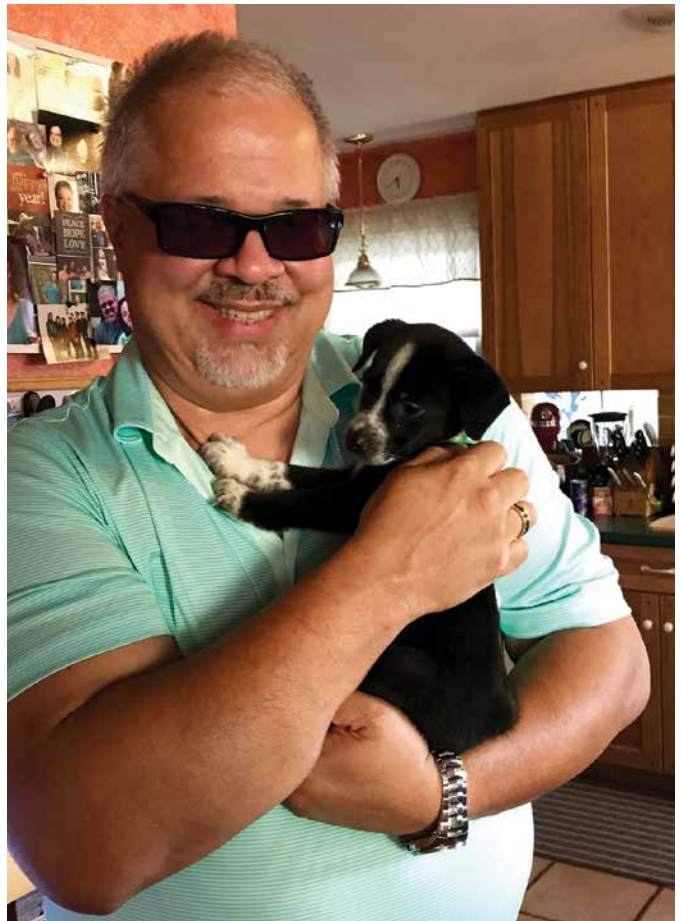
The measure of impact and loss, Kaufmann said, has been evident on the various teams that have met, sometimes via technology, since Straw’s death. “We’re grieving that he died so quickly, way too soon, just as he was beginning to live into his dream call... The measure of a person is the way other leaders in church could weep openly, share shock and disbelief and anger—all the emotions of grieving someone gone so quickly,” he said.

Indeed, it was just two years ago in April when the LSTC Board of Directors elected Straw to his position. At the time, Esther Menn, dean of academic affairs, called him “the right person at the right time for LSTC.” Reflecting on his time at the seminary, Menn said, “Gordon made a great impact at LSTC, in the classroom and beyond. He was beloved for taking time for meaningful conversations and for enjoying communal lunch in the Refectory. His kind and grounded presence inspired many of us to live into our best selves. We will miss him deeply, as we strive to carry on his legacy.”

In the official LSTC news release widely circulated on the day Straw died, President James Nieman said, “Gordon brought to us a remarkable array of gifts, from his distinctive Native American perspective, to his grounding as a faithful Lutheran, to his commitment toward forming students in spiritual practices, to his clarion and irenic voice for genuine justice. I deeply valued his wise counsel and am grateful his light shone among us so brightly, if but briefly. We will honor his legacy by this school’s enduring commitment to spiritual formation.”



James Nieman, right, installs Straw into his new position as associate professor and coordinator of candidacy in fall 2017.



Straw, at home holding new puppy, Huck.

Katie's Closet stocked with food for students

by Julie B. Sevig



Donations are welcome for Katie's Closet, including rice, shelf-stable milk, toilet paper, peanut butter and pasta sauce.

Japanese organizer Marie Kondo encourages people to clean out their closets, but LSTC is encouraging folks to fill one.

Katie's Closet, located in the community lounge in LSTC's lower level, opened in December and is stocked with shelf-stable food products for students. Although aimed at students, organizers say it is not their intention to turn anyone away. When the seminary is open, so is the closet.

Kondo promises that tidying can be "life changing," and for some, food from Katie's Closet can be, too. A survey done at LSTC last year revealed that more than one-third of students have experienced food insecurity while at seminary. Since then, a team of students and staff has been imagining ways to combat food insecurity on campus. The team has included students Christina Montgomery, River Needham and Stephani Shumaker.

"As Life Together Coordinator, I feel some responsibility for the health and safety of students and families," Montgomery said. "The number of people experiencing food insecurity on this campus is appalling. Something had to be done. Katie's Closet aims to address this problem by providing basic grocery items to empower community members to take what they need, when they need it, without any registration, sign ups, limits, or shame. It is my hope that through donations Katie's Closet will become a self-sustaining fixture of the LSTC community."

A Lilly Endowment grant, Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers (known to LSTC folks as "Pathways"), covered the start-up costs and food to stock the shelves.

Those needing food items are urged to bring their own bag and take only what they need. Shelves are filled with a variety of items, including pasta, soup, cereal and canned vegetables. There are also paper products. A refrigerator stands among the new shelving, but was empty at the beginning of the semester. Organizers are in the

early stages of determining how to request and monitor perishable items, such as fruit, vegetables and meat.

Those wanting to donate nonperishable, unopened and unexpired items may leave them just inside the closet on a shelf marked for donations.

Both Needham and Shumaker said they hope area churches will eventually think of LSTC when they collect food items, either on a regular basis or for a special event. Donations of money, sent to LSTC and earmarked for Katie's Closet, would also help stock the shelves, and perhaps the refrigerator, with items most needed.

Response to the closet has been positive, said Needham and Shumaker. Even if students haven't used it yet, they appreciate knowing it's here. Sometimes, financial checks are slow in arriving in students' mailboxes, or support for tuition has changed. Students are grateful Katie's Closet is here as a safety net, Shumaker said.

Montgomery will track inventory and put out requests for specific items.



Congregation uses creative flair to support seminaries

by Julie B. Sevig



Susan Rehwaldt, longtime chair of Epiphany's dinner auction committee and former member of the LSTC Board of Directors

"Dear President Nieman, Seminary education is very important to a little ELCA congregation in Carbondale, Ill., the home of Southern Illinois University..."

That's how a letter LSTC received in December began. It was from Susan Rehwaldt, who told us about the results of Epiphany Lutheran Church's Dinner Auction, and it was accompanied, as it is every year, by a generous check.

The 177-member church (average worship attendance 92) clearly had fun raising that money. The auction is held annually, with the sole purpose of supporting seminary education. Identical checks are sent to LSTC and Wartburg Theological Seminary, from which its pastor, Paul Waterman, and his wife, Melissa Waterman, graduated.

The dinner auction is part of the rhythm of Epiphany, says Rehwaldt, chair and driving force. Decades ago, members made a clear decision to support seminary education, but not by adding another line item to the annual budget. They adopted a "hands on" event which also had the potential for more dollars, and with proceeds split between the seminaries, she said.

Here's how it works

On the night of the auction, guests are treated to a delicious supper prepared by the auction committee. On each table are booklets summarizing what is to be auctioned: dinners, breakfasts and luncheons, including the date, number of guests, and a hint about the menu. This is the chance to

decide on what to bid, and how many "seats at the table" to purchase.

Epiphany's auctioneer gives a description of the dinner and requests an opening bid for a single place at the table, perhaps \$5 or \$10 just to get the bidding started.

The highest bid wins and the auctioneer asks the bidder how many seats the bidder wants to purchase. If "Bill" wins at \$15 a seat, and decides he should take his spouse, he pays \$30, more if he chooses to bring other guests. The auctioneer may also ask the other bidders if they want to buy spots at the table for the same price (\$15), and if any spots are still open, non-bidders may also purchase a place at the table.

Sometimes families or individuals host a meal together. All food and drinks are paid for by the generous hosts. A descriptive name for the dinner is key, such as:

- Opening day of the 2019 Major League Baseball season, hosted by Pastors Paul and Melissa Waterman at "Parsonage Yard and Garage Shelter." Traditional ballpark food and snacks, beer. Wear game day gear and come play yard games. All ages and all team affiliations welcome!
- Lake of Egypt Cruise, surf and turf supper featuring steak and salmon and concluding with a chocolate raspberry trifle.
- Christmas at the Cabin, supper by the fire at the three-generational Terry family cabin; appetizers in the in-law suite and supper in the main cabin.
- Lake Wobegone at the Chatterbox Café, slow cooked pork chops, mashed potatoes, powder milk biscuits, Minnesota hot dish, Jello, pie and ice cream.
- Train excursion across the USA, with five courses representing travel from the Northeast to the southern regions and finally across the plains to the Northwest.

Rehwaldt points out that the dinner auction isn't just a one-time fall event. It really is year 'round, with dinners stretching out into other seasons. And while it appears someone who bids \$60 for a meal is making a significant contribution to seminary education, just think of the costs to the hosts who wine and dine the bidders, she said.

Usually those attending the dinner auction know what they intend to bid on because it's been advertised in advance, but it's not unusual to go away empty-handed, she said. Bidding can go fast and high, so it can be competitive. Occasionally the host will graciously add another place at the table if possible. Rehwaldt says the creativity is fun to watch. One group often builds a menu around a Jane Austen book, for instance. Another, with a Downton Abbey theme, sold out immediately.



Epiphany's business manager, Elise Mandat (seated center), with, from left, Melissa Waterman, Marcia Anderson and Kate Renshaw

A favorite this year was the Christmas Ladies Only Lunch hosted by Linda Grace. The most recent one sold out—at \$200 a plate. “Linda loves to create meals and decorate her home for the holidays. Thus, the bidding went on and on,” Rehwaldt said.

A little history

The concept for the dinner auction was introduced about 1988 when then-Pastor Sally Albrecht at All Saints Lutheran in Carbondale suggested it as a fundraiser. They raised \$500 and continued doing it every year. When All Saints merged with Epiphany in the early '90s, the money was deposited into Epiphany's building fund. But once the new church was built, the money went toward ELCA seminary education.

But Epiphany does more than raise money for seminary education. For the last 30 years, Epiphany has been the home congregation of at least one board of directors member at either LSTC or Wartburg.

“I'm just so impressed with how strongly the congregation feels about theological education,” Rehwaldt said. “They just do. We're a college town and half our people teach at the university or work in its administration, or as office workers. This is natural for us. This year, we suggested to our members that we wanted to ask seminaries that all the money raised be used to lower student debt. Given the amount raised (\$7,670), it would appear that the bidders agreed.”

The dinner-auction, members agree, is a win-win. It benefits seminaries (and congregations which will eventually receive well-trained pastors), and it is an especially good way for new and long-time members to get to know one another. And since the winning bidder rarely buys all the places at the table, it's a great mixer.

“There are so many levels of community in this,” said Pastor Waterman. “The seminaries benefit, the connections people make at the dinner auction are things you can't replicate and force. It's an organic gathering of people of different interests, ages, expertise.”

He marvels at the intentionality, commitment and work that go into the fundraiser, and points out that the meal before the auction is as important as anything else.

“As a fairly recent seminary graduate, I understand the importance of this,” Waterman said. “This is an investment in the larger church that will pay off for years and years and years.”

WE REMEMBER

Daryl Siebens 1937-2018

Daryl Siebens of Sioux City, Iowa, formerly of Akron, Iowa, died on Nov. 29. He served on LSTC's Board of Directors from 1996-2005, as a representative of the Western Iowa Synod. Not satisfied with sitting in board meetings, Siebens got to know and worked with LSTC's building crew. He asked where he could be of assistance and they put him to work. On several occasions he made special trips to LSTC between board meetings to assist with building repairs and renovations.

Siebens grew up on a family farm in Akron, Ohio. After graduating from South Dakota State University with an agricultural engineering degree, he joined the United States Air Force. While stationed at Columbus Air Force Base in Columbus, Miss., he met and married

Claire McWilliams, also an officer in the U.S. Air Force.

They moved back to Akron where they took over the family farm. Siebens also worked for John Deere and taught farm management at West Iowa Tech in Sioux City. In addition to serving on LSTC's board, he served on the council of Trinity Lutheran Church in Akron, the Growmark Board, Plymouth County Farm Bureau, and the Iowa Farm Bureau. He also volunteered for the American Red Cross.

He is survived by Claire, and children Daryl “Jay” Jr. and Allison; five grandchildren, and one great grandchild. He was preceded in death by son Christopher. A funeral service was held on Dec. 4 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Akron.

Faculty

Klaus-Peter Adam, associate professor of Old Testament, published “Bloodshed and Hate: The Judgment Oracle in Ezek 22:6–12 and the Legal Discourse in Lev 19:11–18,” in *Second Wave Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* edited by Marianne Grohmann and Hyun Chul Paul Kim.

Tom Blanton, auxiliary in New Testament studies, presented at the “Abraham as Ritual Model” workshop at the Kleine Synagoge in Erfurt, Germany. His topic was “The Expressive Prepuce: Philo’s Defense of Circumcision in Greek and Roman Contexts.”

Kurt K. Hendel, Bernard, Fischer, Westberg Distinguished Ministry Professor Emeritus of Reformation History, presented “Reconciled and Reconciling in Christ” during an adult forum at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hinsdale, Ill. He also wrote “Another Quincentennial: The Leipzig Debate” for *Lutheran Quarterly*, (Winter 2018)

Ralph W. Klein, Christ Seminary-Seminex Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, published “Reading Daniel as Part of the Writings” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Writings*, edited by Donn F. Morgan, (Oxford University Press, 2019); and “The ‘Sin’ of Jeroboam,” in *Golden Calf Traditions in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, edited by Eric F. Mason and Edmondo F. Lupieri, (Brill,



Esther Menn

2018) pp. 26–35. *Esther Menn*, Ralph W. and Marilyn R. Klein Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and dean of academic affairs, was moderator for a panel on institutional responses at an American Jewish Committee-sponsored Christian Leadership Initiative Alumni Symposium on “Religious Discourse: Race, Ethnicity, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism. How did we get here and where do we go?” in Dallas, Texas.

Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament, lectured and was a keynote speaker at Luther Seminary’s mid-winter convocation, “Food, Land, and Sustainability” and was a speaker at Luther’s Theoprobe in Winter Park, Colo.

Benjamin Stewart, Gordon A. Braatz Associate Professor of Worship and director of advanced studies, presented two lectures on “Christian Death and Burial Practices” in the Adult Enrichment Guest Speaker series at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Munster, Ind. He spoke at Pacific Lutheran University’s conference, “Troubled Waters or River of Life? Christian Worship and Care for Earth’s Waters.”

His lectures were titled “Mapping the Sources of Baptismal Water: a Mystical Tradition for Ecoethics Today” and “In Over Our Heads: An Overwhelming Era, the Gift of Baptism, and Immersion in Lives of Justice.” He also preached at Christ Episcopal Church in Tacoma, Wash. Stewart presented “Wisdom’s Buried Treasure: Ecological Cosmology in Funeral Rites” to a joint gathering of the Liturgy and Culture Seminar and the Ecology and Liturgy Seminar of the North American Academy of Liturgy’s annual meeting in Denver, Colo. At the academy meeting he



Benjamin Stewart

chaired a joint seminar discussion with plenary speaker George “Tink” Tinker, and completed his second three-year term as convener of the academy’s Ecology and Liturgy Seminar. He also attended the annual gathering of ELCA professors of worship at the churchwide offices and completed the semester-long professional certificate in online education through the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He contributed “All Saints Day” to the Deeper Understandings

series in *Living Lutheran* magazine in November, and contributed the article “Fault Lines in the Graveyard: The Contested Nature of Green Burial” to *Dialog* (December 1, 2018).

Mark Swanson, Harold A. Vogelaar Professor of Christian-Muslim Studies and Interfaith Relations, presented the after-dinner address on “Coptic Education and Patronage” at a fundraising dinner for the Friends of Coptic Education (FOCE) in Los Angeles. He presented on Copto-Arabic studies to a faculty/graduate-student working group on “Religion and Pluralism in the Medieval Mediterranean” at the Medieval Institute, University of Notre Dame. Swanson also participated in seasonal manuscript cataloguing at the Syrian Monastery, Egypt (sponsored by Yale University). He published “Luther in Arabic,” in *Lutheran Quarterly* 33 (2019). He is an editor, with David Bertaina, Sandra Toenies Keating and Alexander Treiger, of *Heirs of the Apostles: Studies on Arabic Christianity in Honor of Sidney H. Griffith* (Brill, 2019). He also contributed “The Church and the Mosque in Wisdom’s Shade: on the Story of ‘Alexander and the Hermit Prince,’” in *Heirs of the Apostles*.

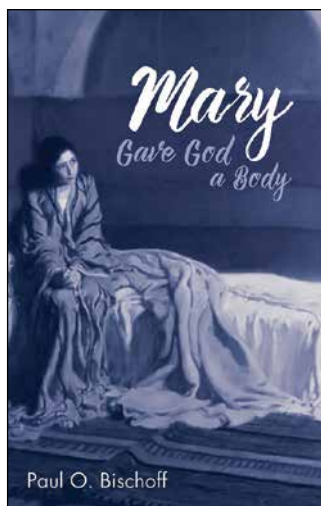
Linda Thomas, professor of theology and anthropology, published “A Womanist Response to Donald Trump: What Pastors are Called to Do,” in *Taking it to the Streets: Public Theologies of Activism*

and *Resistance*, edited by Jennifer Baldwin (Lexington Books, 2018).

Peter Vethanayagamony, associate professor of church history, preached and presided at Trinity Lutheran Church in Park Forest, Ill., and Resurrection Lutheran Church in Channahon, Ill. He presented “World Christianity in the Post-Christendom and Post-colonial Age” at the men’s prayer breakfast at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Naperville, Ill. He presented “Ethnography: Its Identity, Methods and Ethics” at Bethel Bible College, Guntur, India, and presented “The Altered Landscape of World-Wide Christianity: A Quick Peek” to a synod conference meeting.

Kimberly Wagner, assistant professor of homiletics and Axel Jacob and Gerda Maria (Swanson) Carlson Chair in Homiletics, was the convener/moderator of the History of Preaching Workgroup at the 2018 Academy of Homiletics. She reviewed “The Museum of the Bible, Washington, D.C.” in *The Journal of American History*, (December 2018).

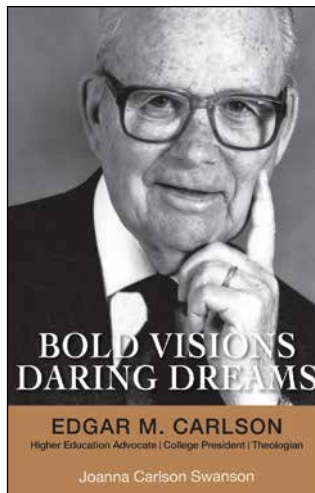
New Books from Alumni



Mary Gave God a Body

In his second book, *Mary Gave God a Body*, Paul Bischoff (2002, ThM; 2005, PhD), demythologizes Mary, making her accessible in her humanity. He dismantles the fictitious Mary to show us the young teenage mother who became a model disciple of her son, Jesus Christ.

Mary Gave God a Body (ISBN 9781532662706) is available from Wipf and Stock Publishers for \$13 (online price \$10.40).

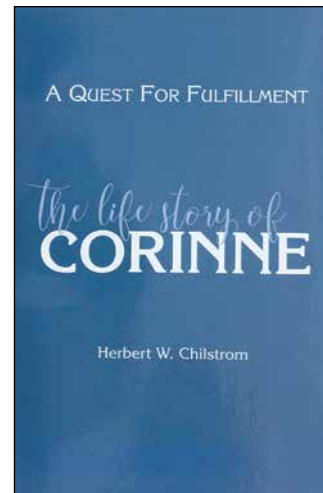


Bold Vision, Daring Dreams

Dr. Edgar M. Carlson (Augustana, 1933, MDiv), was a theologian and educator who served as president of Gustavus Adolphus College from 1944–1968. *Bold Vision, Daring Dreams*, written by Carlson’s daughter, Joanna Carlson Swanson, traces his leadership of the college and his impact on higher education nationwide, through his advocacy for student financial aid programs.

Swanson notes that Carlson “encouraged students and faculty to perform for the benefit of others, to seek the common good.” This came from his study of theology, especially how God calls us into service.

Bold Vision, Daring Dreams is available through the Gustavus Book Mark bookmark.gustavus.edu for \$24.95.

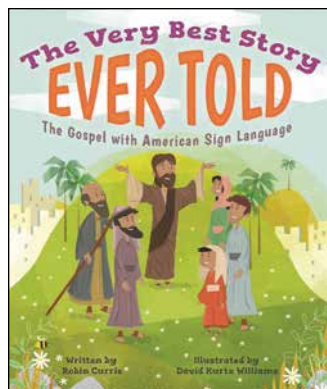


A Quest for Fulfillment: The Life Story of Corinne

In his latest book, Herbert W. Chilstrom (Augustana, 1953, MDiv) chronicles the life of his beloved spouse, Corinne. He traces the circumstances and experiences that shaped her life and their life together. Steeped in the values of rural life and a conservative Lutheran tradition, she excelled in her roles as wife, mother, and nurse, but with a growing sense of another call to become an ordained Lutheran pastor.

Following her call to pastoral ministry meant challenging stereotypes, including the ones she held about women in the public arena. Her story about breaking through those barriers is an inspiration to others to follow their own call.

A Quest for Fulfillment is available for \$21.95 each from Chilstrom Books, 635 S Park Centre Ave, Apt. 2121, Green Valley, AZ 85614 or online through The Book Mark at GustavusAdolphusCollegebookmark/gustavus.edu.



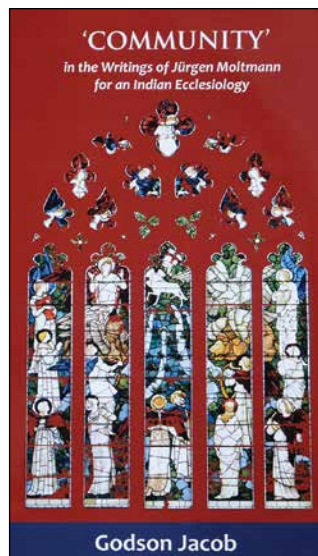
The Very Best Story Ever Told: The Gospel with American Sign Language

Author Robin Currie (1995, MDiv; 2004, DMin) and illustrator David Williams share the gospel story in words and pictures,

reinforcing important words with American Sign Language. Children are able to learn the signs and repeat the words, reinforcing the stories through visual learning, auditory learning, and kinesthetic learning to be fully engaged and able to retell the gospel stories. *The Very Best Story Ever Told* is available from Beaming Books beamingbooks.com for \$16.99

Community in the Writings of Jürgen Moltmann for an Indian Ecclesiology

Godson Jacob (2015, ThM) looks at the theological



of community, its role in different faiths, and Jürgen Moltmann’s concept of community. Jacob brings Moltmann’s ecclesiology into dialogue with the church in India to envision a Sarvodaya or “liberation of all” ecclesiology.

Community in the Writings of Jürgen Moltmann is available from the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (ISPCK) Post Box 1585, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006 www.ispck.org.in

relevance of the concept of community. His thorough exploration includes different aspects

Jürgen, Jennings

Continued from page 6

also that everything in my life had been leading to that moment.”

During their visit, Jennings asked Moltmann to be on his dissertation committee and if he could spend a semester doing an independent study with him in Tübingen. Dr. Moltmann agreed to both requests and promised to come to Chicago one time for my dissertation. I was overjoyed. But what really surprised me is that he had a list of questions and recommendations for me in response to the thesis I had sent him. I thought we were just going to discuss Luther and Dr. Moltmann’s evolution as a systematic theologian over time.”

Holy Spirit moment

Moltmann suggested that Jennings set aside Paul Tillich and “go to Jim Cone instead.” Moltmann had been friends with James Cone for 50 years and this advice coincided with what Jennings was already discussing with Thomas. Moltmann was delighted to learn that Jennings is studying with a womanist theologian.

Thomas took Jennings’s request a step further and invited Moltmann to be co-advisor with her for Jennings’s dissertation out of a strong sense of God’s call to make the invitation.

“When Dr. Thomas said she would invite Moltmann to be co-advisor with her, it was an ideal situation and a profound Holy Spirit moment. I couldn’t ask for better co-advisors than Dr. Thomas and Dr. Moltmann,” Jennings said.

Jennings added, “Dr. Thomas’s encouragement was monumental. I think she saw my gifts as a systematic theologian early on. The most affirming thing in all of this is the public affirmation by so many people that I am called to be a systematic theologian. I struggled with the fact that I left the ordination process because of a call to be a teacher and a theologian. I now claim my vocation to the teaching ministry with confidence.”

In February, Moltmann participated in Jennings’s qualifying exams. Jennings has his first lesson with Moltmann in Tübingen on April 10. “The work I’ll do with Dr. Moltmann is very much going to shape me. I never could have expected he would be my doctoral co-advisor. I just wanted to hear from him when I sent him my MTh thesis,” Jennings said.

Jennings’s studies in Tübingen are made financially possible thanks to the Eric W. Gritsch Memorial Fund Fellowship for Reformation studies, which he was awarded in January 2019.

1977

Bruce Modahl (Christ Seminary–Seminex, MDiv) was a speaker at the 2019 International Crossings Conference, “When God Is Silent,” in January in Belleville, Mo.

Martin A. Seltz (Christ Seminary–Seminex, MDiv) was awarded the Berakah Award by the North American Academy of Liturgy. It honors the many and various ways his scholarship and service have been a gift to the church.

1978

Larry Sexe (MDiv; 1992, DMin) retired in December after 40 years of ordained ministry and 25 years as pastor of Deerfield Lutheran Church, Deerfield, Wis. The congregation celebrated his ministry with a retirement luncheon Dec. 2. His many forms of ministry were noted in a Nov. 16 article in the *Cambridge News/Deerfield Independent*.

1979

Fredrick Niedner (Christ Seminary–Seminex MDiv) was a presenter at the Crossings Conference, “When God Is Silent,” held in January in Belleville, Ill.

Ruth Hanusa (Christ Seminary–Seminex, MDiv) was a presenter at the Crossings Conference, “When God Is Silent,” held in January in Belleville, Ill.

1982

Jerry Koch (MDiv) is now honorably retired with the Presbyterian Church

(USA), after 24 years as Stated Supply Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Post, Texas, and 36 years in the ministry of word and sacrament. He continues as professor of sociology at Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

1993

Lori Cornell (MDiv) was a presenter at the Crossings Conference, “When God Is Silent,” held in January in Belleville, Ill.

1997

Caryn Riswold (ThM; 2000, PhD) was inducted as Wartburg College’s Mike and Marge McCoy Family Distinguished Chair in Lutheran Heritage. Riswold came to Wartburg last fall from Illinois College, where she taught more than a dozen religion and women and gender studies courses.

1998

Beverly Collinworth (MDiv) began a new call as pastor of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Port Clinton, Texas, in October. She was featured in a Nov. 12 article in the *News Messenger* of Port Clinton.

John Kotovsky (MDiv) president and CEO of Lutheran Senior Services in St. Louis, Mo., published a blog post about his work and the high level of care given by the staff at Laclede Groves and Lenoir Woods residences. He includes a photo of himself in lederhosen at an Oktoberfest celebration at Laclede Groves.

Jennifer Thomas (MDiv) is now a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) by meeting a series of standards set by CFRE International. See page 2.

2002

Paul O. Bischoff (ThM; 2005, PhD) recently published *Mary Gave God a Body* (2019, Wipf and Stock). See more on page 18.

2003

William Flippin Jr. (MDiv; 2005, ThM) was a featured speaker for the Martin Luther King Jr. Convocation at Tuskegee University on Jan. 21. He contributed to the article “Uplifting Christmas gifts” in the December 2018 issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Javier Goitia–Padilla (ThM; 2014, PhD) is quoted in the article “New tool helps unites ELCA seminaries” in the November issue of *Living Lutheran*. Goitia–Padilla now serves as the ELCA program director for theological education.

2006

Meghan Johnston Aelabouni (MDiv) published “Peace on earth, and pass the popcorn” in the December 2018 issue and “What is grace? Meeting grace again for the first time” in the January issue of *Living Lutheran*.

Liv Larson Andrews (MDiv) was a presenter at the Crossings Conference, “When God Is Silent,” held in January in Belleville, Ill.

2007

Amy Lindeman Allen (MDiv) presented “From pageants to the Pulpit: Child Shepherds in Luke’s Gospel Account” in a joint meeting of the Children and the Biblical World and Economics in the Biblical World sections and “Baptism as Transformation and Promise: The Concept of Sealing in the Letter to the Ephesians” in the Contextual Interpretation Program Unit at the National Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature meeting in Denver in November.

Robert Saler (MDiv; 2009, ThM; 2011 PhD) published the In Trust blog post, “Seminary classes in churches: creative experiments and tough questions,” Oct. 26. He was one of a host of LSTC and Seminex alumni who presented at the Crossings Conference held in Belleville, Ill., in January.

2009

Tim Brown (MDiv) published “A simple thanks–giving” in the November issue of *Living Lutheran*. He contributed to the article “Uplifting Christmas gifts” in the December 2018 issue of *Living Lutheran*.

2013

Becca Ajer (MDiv) spoke at the Upper Adams Prayer Breakfast in Upper Adams, Pa., Feb. 5. She is pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, Littlestown, Pa.

2014

Rebecca Bekki Lohrmann (MDiv) and spouse Marcus Lohrmann (2017, Affiliate)

welcomed their son, Elijah Marcus, into the world Oct. 28. He weighed 7 lbs., 11 oz., and was 20" tall.

Alex Raabe (MDiv) began a new call as pastor of Oceanside Lutheran Church, Oceanside, N.Y., in October. He was featured in an Oct. 25 article in the *Herald Community News*.

2015

Godson Jacob (ThM) published the book *Community in the Writings of Jürgen Moltmann for an Indian Ecclesiology* (ISPCK, 2019). See more on page 19.

Elsa Marty (ThM) was ordained at Augustana Lutheran Church of Hyde Park, Chicago, Nov. 10.

2016

Jonathan Barker (Affiliate/Lutheran Year) received a Gateway's Humanitarian Award from Gateway Technical College for his work co-founding EmpowerUptown!, a voter registration program in Kenosha, Wis. He is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Kenosha.

2017

Allison Bengfort (MDiv) was ordained Dec. 8 in the Augustana Chapel at LSTC. She was installed as pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wilmette, Ill., on Dec. 9.

Shane Brinegar (ThM) reviewed *Eucharistic Body* by Frank C. Senn in the December 2018 *Currents in Theology and Mission*.

Liesbet Duerinck Van Gysegem (MATS) in January began a new job as a librarian in the theological library of the Evangelisch Theologische Faculteit, Leuven, Belgium.

2018

Chrisida Anandan (ThM) presented a paper on "Your Brother/Sister, not a Slave: Ideal Ethical Ethos of Siblinghood and Love in Deut. 15:12-18" during the SBL Midwest regional program at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind. She also attended the 3rd Annual Chicago-Yale Pentateuchal Colloquium at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

Hans Becklin (MDiv) was ordained Feb. 17 at Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lebanon, Pa. He is serving as pastor of Salem Lutheran Church in Lititz, Pa.

Erin Coleman Branchaud (MDiv) was ordained Dec. 1 at the Augustana Chapel at LSTC. She is serving as pastor of St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Logan Square, Chicago.

Joshua Evans (MDiv) was ordained at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Dec. 1. He is serving as associate pastor of Unity Lutheran Church in Brookfield, Wis.

Day Hefner (MDiv) was featured in the article, "Rev. Day Hefner finds her way back to the Lutheran church," published Dec. 31 in the *Schuyler Sun*. She is serving as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Schuyler, Neb.

Brittany Baurle Kooi (Affiliate/Lutheran Year) was ordained Feb. 2 at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Blue Island, Ill. She has been called as pastor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church and St. Philip Lutheran Church in Blue Island.

Eric Schaefer (MDiv) was ordained Jan. 12 at Grace Lutheran Church in Libertyville, Ill., where he has been called to serve as associate pastor for youth and families.

Future alumni

Brach Jennings (ThM; PhD student) published "Rudolf Bultmann as Theologian of Radical Trust in the Gospel" *Currents in Theology and Mission* (December 2018).

Levi Powers (2019, MDiv) was ordained Jan. 11 at Our Savior Lutheran Church in La Crosse, Wis. He is serving as pastor of Mount of Olives Lutheran Church in Rock Springs, Wyo.

Eddie Rosa-Fuentes (PhD student, staff) presented "Pulse and the Closet: Frameworks for an Eschatological Discourse" at the Queering Interdisciplinary Conference in Chicago.

In Memoriam

Donald L. Berg
1929-2018
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1955

After his ordination in 1955, Donald L. Berg served congregations in Wisconsin and Michigan for 34 years, with 20 of those years as pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran in Superior, Wis. In 1989 he and his wife, Mary Ann, served as missionaries in Cameroon, West Africa, for two years, retiring in 1991. He returned to pastoral ministry in 1993, as pastor emeritus at Pilgrim Lutheran. He served there for an additional 25 years.

Berg served as a member of synod executive boards, as vice president of LSTC's Board of Directors, as president of the Northern Waters County Library System, and a member of other civic and social organizations.

He died Nov. 1. A celebration of his life was held on Nov. 16 at Pilgrim Lutheran. He was preceded in death by his wife.

Bruce Berggren
1936-2018
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1962

Pastor Bruce W. Berggren was ordained in 1962 and served as a full-time pastor at seven parishes and two as an interim, all in Nebraska, during his 56 years of ministry. He always wanted to grow his congregations, no matter their size, knocking on doors and being a faithful witness in his community. He was a renaissance man whose talents ranged from

gymnastics to music to the visual arts.

He died Dec. 19. A memorial service was held at United Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 22. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Joan, four children, nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He was preceded in death by a son, Andrew.

Hans-Fredrik Gustafson
1935-2018
Augustana Theological Seminary Class of 1960

Ordained in 1960 at the Centennial Synodical Convention of the Augustana Lutheran Synod in 1960, Hans-Fredrik Gustafson went on to doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He directed the Chair of Ecumenical Studies at Edgewood College of the Sacred Heart in Madison from 1969-71. He served parishes in Wisconsin, Illinois and Connecticut. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church relocated from Bridgeport to Trumbull, Conn., under his leadership.

After he retired, Gustafson was certified by the Interim Ministry Network and licensed by two diocese of the Episcopal Church. He served as interim pastor to congregations in Connecticut and Florida. On occasion he also served as a chaplain for Holland America Cruise Lines. He also worked with the Speaker's Bureau for

Food for the Poor, advocating on behalf of the destitute in Central America and the Caribbean.

He died Aug. 19. A funeral service was held at Trinity Cathedral in Miami, Fla., Oct. 6.

Carl Thomas Kangas
1931-2018
Suomi Seminary Class of 1954

Pastor Kangas, known as Tom to family and friends, was born in Ishpeming, Mich., and attended Suomi College and Seminary. He was ordained in 1954 and served parishes in Massachusetts, Oregon, Minnesota, North Dakota, Alaska and Washington state. He served for many years on the board of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, on the Examining Committee for pastoral candidates, and as a part-time campus pastor at Moorhead State University. In Anchorage, Ak., he was instrumental in organizing the first Ministerial Association of Anchorage and served as its first president. When Pope John Paul II visited Alaska in 1981, Kangas represented the Lutheran Church in America at the ecumenical gathering.

Kangas and his wife, Jane, retired to Bremerton, Wash., in 1997.

He died July 27. A funeral was held Aug. 2 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Bremerton. He is

survived by Jane, his wife of 65 years, their four children, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Nels P. Ritola
1947-2018
Class of 1985

Pastor Nels Ritola served in the U.S. Army for 10 years between graduating from college and entering seminary. Ordained in 1985, he served parishes in Nebraska until, in 1998, due to health issues, he was no longer able to continue his ministerial duties. He remained active in congregations in Emerson, Neb. He had served as a volunteer fireman while serving a parish in Dalton.

He died Nov. 8 in Sioux Rapids, Iowa. A memorial service was held Nov. 16 at First Lutheran Church in Sioux Rapids. He is survived by his five children, and 11 grandchildren.

Robert A. Wendelin
1928-2019
Concordia Seminary Class of 1953
LSTC Class of 1992

Robert Wendelin was ordained in 1953 and served congregations in Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois until 1971, when he became pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church in Eggertsville, N.Y. In 1976, during the

upheaval in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod over biblical interpretation, he led a group of about 100 parishioners who broke away from Calvary, which was affiliated with the Missouri Synod, and formed Peace in Christ Lutheran Church. In 1980 Peace in Christ merged with North Park Lutheran Church and Wendelin became its pastor. He retired in 1993.

In retirement he was chaplain for more than 10 years at the Buffalo Veterans Affairs Medical Center. In 2001 he was appointed chaplain of Niagara Lutheran Health System, where he served for 15 years as an active board member and then as an honorary member. He was chaplain of both Niagara Lutheran Home and Rehabilitation Center in Buffalo and GreenFields Health Rehabilitation Center in Lancaster.

He died Jan. 31 in Caledonia, Mich. He was preceded in death by his wife, Margaret. He is survived by their four children, five grandchildren, two step-granddaughters, and four step-great-grandchildren. A celebration of life was held Feb. 7 at North Park Lutheran Church.

Advancement Office reorganization

To support the critical fundraising work needed to sustain LSTC, the Advancement Office is undergoing a thorough reorganization. Every role in the department has been reshaped in some manner to support the goal of significantly growing the level of giving to core programs and operations over the next five years. The department will be comprised of a Philanthropic Engagement unit focused on gift work and donor engagement and an Advancement Operations unit focused on data, gift management, and development programs and services.

In the new organization of the Advancement office, current full-time staff began in these new roles March 1:

- Ryan Fordice, Donor Relations Manger
- Jessica Houston, Advancement Events, Programs, and Operations Manager
- Langston Roberson, Gift Processing and Data Services Manager
- Jennifer Thomas, Alumni and Church Engagement Manager

On Feb. 1, Anna Moorhead joined the Advancement staff as Mission Ambassador (see below).

At press time, there were a number of staff searches underway to fill new roles in Advancement, including: Director of Philanthropic Engagement, Director of Advancement Operations, Major Gift Officer, Annual Giving and Campaign Manager, Executive Administrative Assistant.

In the coming months, additional searches will

be conducted for a Gift Processing and Advancement Operations Coordinator and a second Mission Ambassador.

Welcome



Vima Courvertier-Cruz

Vimary (Vima) Courvertier-Cruz joined the Student Services staff as Admissions Recruiter Oct. 16. Originally from Puerto Rico, Courvertier-Cruz holds a bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Puerto Rico and a master of divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary. She has worked in hospital chaplaincy, marketing, and coordinating services for the Women's Advocacy Office of Puerto Rico. She lives in Hyde Park and is an active volunteer as a peacemaker, accompanier, community educator, women's rights advocate, and coordinator of humanitarian and advocacy efforts in countries of Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, and the U.S. Her email is vima.couvertier@lstc.edu.

Anna Moorhead began a new position of Mission Ambassador in the Advancement Office Feb. 1. She will build and cultivate a pipeline of donors and donor prospects for LSTC through alumni, donor, and church engagement

strategies. She will regularly travel around the U.S. to tell LSTC's story. She most recently served as an ELCA Campaign Interpreter. She has served as a Young Adult in Global Mission volunteer in Great Johannesburg, South Africa, and worked in the International Programs and Services Office at Benedictine University, Lisle, Ill. She is a graduate of Augustana College, Rock Island, where she studied business marketing and finance. Reach her at anna.moorhead@lstc.edu.



Lena Washington

Lena Washington became Director of Dining Services at LSTC Oct. 22. She most recently served as director of dining services at the University of Chicago's Campus Residence Commons directly across the street from LSTC. Her interest in a culinary career began in high school and she completed an AOS in Culinary Arts and a bachelor's in Hospitality Management at Kendall College. She has worked at Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Starbucks and Mariano's. She is a native of Jamaica who came to the U.S. when she was three years old. She grew up in Hyde Park and Chicago's south side. Her email is lena.washington@lstc.edu.

Accomplishments

Erik Christensen, pastor to the community and director of chapel, has been selected as the 2019 recipient of the Brugh Emerging Leader Award by the advisory council of the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso (Ind.) University. The award will be presented May 1 at the conclusion of the 2019 Institute of Liturgical Studies. See more on page 2.

Aaron Copley-Spivey, director of human resources and Title IX coordinator, attended a training in Baltimore, Md., to become a qualified administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory. This training allows him to administer the IDI for students, faculty and staff.

Julie Sevig, communications specialist – Advancement, wrote 14 weeks of discussion questions for Luther Seminary's Working Preacher resource. The questions related to Sunday texts appeared on the website and were tweeted during the seasons and Sundays of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and Transfiguration.

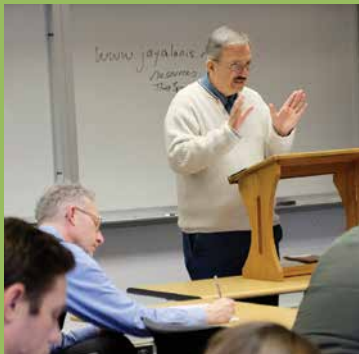
Marji Shannon, associate director of contextual education, attended the 2019 Consultation for the Association for Theological Field Education (ATFE) in Asheville, N.C. She convenes and leads the Lutheran caucus at these biennial events.

Jennifer Thomas (1998, MDiv), Alumni and Church Engagement Manager, is now a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) by meeting a series of standards set by CFRE International. See more on page 2.

LIFE AT LSTC



Students Wu Mee, Baiju Markose, Denise Rector, Veronica Mwakasungura, Karen (Di) Kang and Alex Aivars used their “jazz hands” to enter data into LSTC’s new cloud solution system.



The Rev. Dr. Jay Alanis delivers a lecture on borderland ethics.



LSTC’s Culinary Manager Frank Perez prepared healthy “Buddha bowls” for the Wellness Fair.



Barbara Rossing points out the Imperial Cult inscription KAISAR (Caesar), to those on the Middle East J-Term tour.



PhD student Denise Rector preached and the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Stewart Pero presided during the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance at LSTC.



MDiv students Bristol Reading, Robin Lovett, Ashley Rosa, and Kirsten Wee have a “mountaintop experience” on the Middle East study tour.



New for 2019:

BACCALAUREATE AND COMMENCEMENT

This year, after decades of holding a combined worship service and commencement ceremony, LSTC will hold a baccalaureate service on Saturday, May 18, 4 p.m. in its Augustana Chapel. The commencement ceremony will take place Sunday, May 19, 2:30 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, 5472 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago.

The change came after requests from community members and alumni for a ceremony that would be shorter and more hospitable to LSTC's ecumenical and inter-religious graduates.

Prepare for LSTC Homecoming 2019: *Hear My Voice*

LSTC's Alumni Board and staff have heard alumni say they would prefer a two-day event of reunions and learning, so that's exactly what will happen Oct. 9 and 10. This replaces what was previously the fall leadership conference, and reunions connected to graduation.

LSTC will host the return of graduating classes, continuing education, curriculum immersion, meeting current students and the alumni awards banquet.



Kim Wagner

Alumni who have continuing education funds may find the learning of particular interest this year. LSTC's new assistant professor of homiletics, Kimberly Wagner, will present a keynote address "Out of the Depths." Wagner's specialty is preaching about trauma. As a PhD student, Wagner searched for resources about preaching after mass shootings but found none. She is filling that void with her research, writing and teaching. Her dissertation is entitled "Out of the Depths," the beginning of Psalm 130. Homecoming's theme, "Hear My Voice," is the second verse. Homecoming organizers want participants to have ample opportunity to have their voices heard, and facilitate the same in their own communities. Thursday's Service of Testimony will honor the voices and experiences of trauma.

Each year (beginning in 2019), the seminary will feature reunions of five years; this year for the graduates of 2009, 1994, 1979 and 1969, although every graduate and all rostered leaders are welcome. The alumni award

The Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, president of Chicago Theological Seminary, will be the 2019 commencement speaker. Faculty members chosen by the graduates will preach and preside at the baccalaureate service.

The 50-year graduates' reunion that has taken place over Commencement Weekend for many years will become part of the October Homecoming.

All are welcome to attend the baccalaureate service and commencement.

31st Annual LSTC Gospel Choir

On Sunday, April 28 at 4 p.m., join the LSTC Gospel Choir led by Keith "Doc" Hampton, guest choirs and artists for the 31st Annual LSTC benefit concert. For nearly 25 years, the annual concert has been a benefit for The Grover Wright Scholarship Fund. Since 1994, more than 45 scholarships have been awarded to students of color supporting the education that undergirds their ministry. Students will be awarded this year's Grover Wright Scholarship and Carole A. Burns Memorial Scholarship during the concert. A freewill offering will be gathered to support the two scholarship funds.

You may make a gift ahead of time at lstc.edu/giving or by using the envelope in this issue and noting which scholarship you wish to support.

banquet and ceremony on Thursday evening is open to the LSTC community. This year, the 2018 and 2019 Distinguished Alumni Awards will be distributed.

Registration and logistical information will be shared in early April. Contact Thomas with questions, jthomas@lstc.edu; 913.269.9825.

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Oct. 9

9 a.m. – noon	Registration – LSTC lobby
11:15 a.m.	Worship – Augustana Chapel
12:30 p.m.	Lunch on your own
2 p.m.	Dr. Kim Wagner
4 – 6 p.m.	Alumni Engagement reception
6:30 p.m.	Individual class plans for dinner

Thursday, Oct. 10

Morning and afternoon opportunities include sitting in on a seminary class with faculty and students, attending a Public Church Fellows site with a student, or arranging your own class excursions in Chicago.

11:15 a.m.	Liturgy in response to gun violence led by Klaus-Peter Adam, associate professor of Old Testament
6 p.m.	Alumni Award Banquet and Program



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WINTER 2019

More than fifty students, alumni, and friends of LSTC traveled to the Middle East with Professors Klaus-Peter Adam and Barbara Rossing in January. The Dome of the Rock was one stop on their journey.