



LSTC Alums Jen Nagel and Meghan Johnston Aelabouni Elected Bishops



The Rev. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni

LSTC is pleased to announce that the Rocky Mountain Synod has elected the Rev. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni as its new bishop for a six-year term. The election took place during the synod assembly at the Embassy Suites in Loveland, Colorado, from April 25-27, 2024.

The Rev. Jen Nagel of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was selected to serve a six-year term as bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Minneapolis Area Synod. The selection occurred during the synod assembly from May 2-4 at Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Ramsey, Minnesota.

Bishop Johnston Aelabouni, who had been serving as pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem and as theologian in residence with the ELCA Middle East and North Africa Desk, was elected on the fifth ballot with 232 votes. Bishop Johnston Aelabouni brings a wealth of experience to her new role, having served in

various pastoral and leadership positions throughout her career.

Bishop Nagel, an LSTC alum, has been leading the University Lutheran Church of Hope in Minneapolis since 2015 and previously pastored Salem English Lutheran Church in the same city from 2003 to 2015. She also worked as a teaching staff coordinator at Holden Village in Chelan, Washington, in 2011.

Bishop Johnston Aelabouni officially took office on August 1, 2024, and was installed on October 5 at Augustana Lutheran Church in Denver. She succeeds the Rev. James W. Gonias, who has served as bishop since 2012 and retired on July 31.

Bishop Nagel was formally installed on September 21 at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. She succeeds the Rev. Ann M. Svennungsen who is embarking on a new chapter in retirement after serving as bishop since 2012, her last day was July 31, 2024.



The Rev. Jen Nagel

Have you considered including LSTC in your will or naming the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago as a beneficiary of your retirement account? These can be simple yet meaningful ways to make a lasting impact and help us form visionary leaders for the church long into the future. For more information on making a planned gift, please contact the Office of Advancement at (773) 256-0705 or visit lstc.edu/giving/how-to-give.

If you are a Thrivent member, one way you can help LSTC in forming visionary leaders to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ, is through Thrivent Choice Dollars.



LSTC Graduate Spotlights

Commencement for the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago's class of 2024 was held Sunday, May 19 at St. Paul & the Redeemer.

You can find the full video of the 2024 commencement event on **Facebook.com/LSTChicago/videos**.

We asked graduates: **How did you**

feel supported during your seminary journey? You can view their replies below and read more from each of them at lstc.edu/stories/.



Wu Mee

As an international student from Myanmar, a country under a military coup regime, I required more help and support than most. Throughout my life's ups and downs, God has always been there for me, often working through the wonderful people at LSTC.



Miriam Schmidle

I am thankful for the scholarship I got. Without this scholarship I would not have been able to graduate. The scholarship was an important piece on the way of my call. My Ministry in Context and internship congregation Griffith Lutheran Church (Indiana) was also an amazing support, I want to name here.



Eric Jensen

The wonderful web of community that coalesced for me in this time at LSTC has been such a blessing: the student body is so loving and committed to caring for each other, the group of friends I made at Holden has remained a support group post-graduation and on into our first calls, and I even met my now-fiancé [during] my first year at LSTC. I could not have completed this degree without the generous support of both the ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship and aid from LSTC itself.

LSTC Visionary Scholarship Changes Lives

Scholarships have the power to change the lives of our students, allowing them to fulfill their call. LSTC is committed to investing in the next generation of problem solvers, those who will lead the church of the future.

The Visionary Scholarship is LSTC's core institutional scholarship program and provides support

for tuition and related academic expenses. Gifts made to the Visionary Scholarship puts your dollars to use immediately to provide support for tuition and related academic expenses. Learn more about how you can support students and the impact these generous gifts make at lstc.edu/giving/scholarships/.

2024 Graduates at a Glance

- 11** Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- 3** Master of Arts (MA)
- 4** Master of Theology (ThM)
- 2** Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM)
- 4** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- 1** Master of Arts in Ministry (MAM)
- 2** Doctor of Ministry (DMin)



LSTC students gather outside for fun during the first ever "Better Together" event.

Better Together

LSTC, CTU, and MTS Kick Off the School Year with Fun, Food, and Fellowship

LSTC kicked off its 165th academic year on September 4, 2024, with a Service of Holy Communion and Convocation, under the theme of a "Season of Creation." As part of the new school year, LSTC, Catholic Theological Union, and McCormick Theological Seminary came together on September 5 for their first ever

"Better Together" School Year Kickoff event. Held in the shared parking lot, students, faculty, and staff celebrated the start of the 2024 academic year. The fun-filled day offered a chance for students and staff to meet, mingle, and forge new friendships across the three schools. Read more about this exciting event at lstc.edu/stories/.



A day filled with sun, delicious food, and meaningful fellowship.



New and returning students welcome the 24-25 academic year.

2024 – 2025 Academic Year Enrollment at LSTC

123 students enrolled, including:

12 DMin	31 PhD
5 MA	7 ThM
3 MAM	5 TEEM
40 MDiv	



President James Nieman preaching and presiding for Service of Holy Communion & Opening Convocation.

A New Chapter for Worship at LSTC: Changes in the Chapel Program for Fall

This fall brings exciting changes to the worship life at LSTC, offering a rich and dynamic spiritual experience for students, faculty, and the wider community. At the heart of these changes is a shift in leadership, as Christian Scharen steps into the role of Director of the Chapel, succeeding the Rev. Erik Christensen, who has thoughtfully led the chapel program for the past seven years.

Worship on campus will maintain familiar rhythms while embracing new opportunities for engagement and reflection. Regular Monday and Wednesday services will continue to serve as the backbone of LSTC's spiritual life. Monday services, modeled on ancient patterns of daily prayer, will feature student preaching from the Intro to Preaching course in the fall and Intro to Liturgy course in the spring, creating a space for emerging voices to share the Word. These services will include scripture, song, silence, prayer, and a brief homily, all within a 30-minute timeframe.

Wednesday services, centered



LSTC community worship services on Monday features student preaching from the Intro to Preaching course.

around Holy Communion, will provide a space for senior students, faculty, and guest preachers to preside and share in leading worship. These services will last about an hour and offer an opportunity for deeper reflection, fellowship, and engagement with the sacred.

For those looking for a more intimate and interactive experience, every other Wednesday evening will feature Dinner Church. Held in the Life Together Center in the student housing, this service provides a



Dr. Christian Scharen (right) steps into the role of Director of the Chapel.

unique opportunity to gather around the table for worship and a shared meal, fostering community through conversation, prayer, and music.

As always, the aim is to foster a deep sense of connection, community, and spiritual growth. This fall's worship offerings promise to be an enriching experience, grounded in tradition yet open to innovation and collaboration. All are welcome at LSTC's chapel—where the community gathers to worship, reflect, and grow together.