

 LUTHER SEMINARY®

FALL 2020

STORY

 CREATING CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY



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LUTHER SEMINARY
STORY

On the cover and above:
Autumn colors surround the
Olson Campus Center on
Luther Seminary's campus
before winter sets in.

*All photos are by Courtney Perry
unless otherwise indicated.*



PHOTO BY STEVE HOLM

CREATING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

When 2020 dawned, none of us knew what was coming.

A pandemic. A reinvigorated movement for racial justice in the United States—and a backlash against it. An avalanche of disinformation. A period of increasing political polarization. Yet here we are, smack-dab in one of the most difficult moments in living memory.

It might feel hopeless at times, but even in the midst of all this, the Holy Spirit is moving to create Christian communities that love, bless, and serve one another and the world. After all, this is what God has promised to do!

In the Gospel of Matthew, the resurrected Jesus instructs his followers to go into the world and make disciples. Then he tells them, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (28:20).

These days, the forms of Christian community are changing, but there is no doubt that Jesus is with us, just as he said. Each day, Christian communities are being strengthened and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness to the reality of Jesus' presence in the world.

In this issue of *Story* magazine, we'll introduce you to some of what God is up to—both here at Luther Seminary and in the Christian communities our alumni serve.

You'll discover what our alumni and leaders of Christian communities are doing to help congregations work for justice and belonging during a politically polarized time (pages 8 and 20); how podcasts are keeping the seminary community and users from around the world connected and informed (page 16); and ways our international students have formed a tight-knit community on campus in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (page 25).

May the presence of the Risen One be a strength and comfort to you, even during this period of trial.

In Christ,

Robin J. Steinke
President

Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities called and sent by the Holy Spirit to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ and to serve in God's world.

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RADIO HOST, REPORTER, AND SINGER becomes Luther Seminary's new musician-in-residence

Jearlyn Steele '22 M.A. has been named Luther Seminary's newest musician-in-residence, a position she will hold until she graduates with a Master of Arts degree in leadership and innovation for ministry.

As a singer, Steele has performed more than once at the Minnesota State Fair, including on the grandstand with "A Prairie Home Companion" and as part of her family's winning performance in the 1980 amateur talent contest. In addition to singing, Steele hosts the WCCO radio show "Steele Talkin'," reports on entertainment for Twin Cities Public Television's "Almanac," and frequently is called on to deliver keynote speeches and facilitate panel discussions. In her role with the seminary, she will lead music and participate in chapel services and the new "Liturgy of the Hours" podcast (see story on page 16).

Faith+Lead offers new online courses for DIGITAL MINISTRY TRAINING

Faith+Lead, Luther Seminary's online hub for Christian leaders and communities, added new digital ministry courses to its robust collection of resources. When COVID-19 put a pause on in-person learning, additional online courses were developed to supply synods with timely and practical insights.

- + "The Faithful Innovation Judiciary Cohorts," with leadership consultant Alicia Granholm, provided videos, interviews, and group experiments to train innovative leaders to thrive in their contexts.
- + "Ministry in a Digital Age," a webinar series, was created to help leaders build on what they're learning during this time of physical distancing and to evolve ministry practices for a world in which people spend significant time online.
- + In September, "Stepping up to Supervision" was offered as a six-week course to develop practitioners' awareness and skills to better lead and manage teams and congregations as a whole. This popular course was led by church organization expert Susan Beaumont.

See the new courses at faithlead.luthersem.edu.

2020 FAITHFUL INNOVATION SUMMIT

Luther Seminary hosted the second Faithful Innovation Summit online June 24 to 26. The conference was video-streamed and brought together ministry practitioners from around the United States to network and explore how God is calling them to address core challenges of Christian faith and practice in the 21st century. Attendees listened to stories of innovative experiments in diverse ministry settings and learned how the Holy Spirit might be calling them to communicate the gospel in a secular context.

Did you miss this year's Faithful Innovation Summit?



Visit faithlead.luthersem.edu/summit to pay what you can for access to on-demand presentations, digital media, and online interaction.

One summit participant said:

"It was a powerful reminder that all of our work of innovation must be grounded in the presence and direction of God's Spirit."

Accelerated MDivX program enters its second year

The students in the 2019–21 MDivX Cohort 1 have completed more than half of their 24 months of theological study and internship, and they are looking forward to commencement in June 2021.

"The strongest feature of the MDivX program is how closely integrated the classroom learning is with the experience in the context congregation," said **Brad Frye '21 M.Div.** "I am able to immediately apply what I am learning at Luther Seminary to the issues and concerns of my supervisory pastor, staff, and parishioners."

The MDivX program was poised and ready to roll online during the pandemic, thanks to its already established residential focus sessions and blended synchronous learning. The 26 students in the 2020–22 MDivX Cohort 2 started their journey this past May.

Jody Nyenhuis, MDivX associate director, said, "Students in both cohorts have stepped up to the challenge of navigating an already robust accelerated program in the midst of a stressful year."

STUDENT PARTICIPATION INCREASES with redesigned online orientation

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Luther Seminary's new student orientation was changed from a 2 ½-day in-person event to a completely online orientation course, beginning August 31 and ending September 17.

Working with a former Iliff School of Theology admissions officer who had developed their online orientation, **Sarah Luedtke-Jones**, director of student affairs, and **Chenar Howard**, associate director of student affairs, created a course for new students. Orientation participants had opportunities to get to know their fellow students. Their coursework included:

- Completing the Association of Theological Schools' new student questionnaire
- Submitting a library assignment
- Using Moodle, a learning management system
- Engaging in an activity led by Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion staff

More than 85% of the seminary's 147 new students participated in orientation. "This level of participation is much higher than we have had in past years because there were many students who could not come to campus for in-person orientation," said Luedtke-Jones. "Students have enjoyed the orientation, appreciated getting to know their peers, and felt like they were more prepared to start their first semester of courses."

2020 MARKS 50 YEARS OF **ORDAINED WOMEN** IN THE ELCA

In 1964, Luther Seminary accepted its first woman full-time student, **Barbara Andrews '69 B.Div.**, who was born with cerebral palsy and used a wheelchair. She was ordained in 1970, only two months after the American Lutheran Church convention voted to adopt the Church Council recommendation that women be eligible for ordination. Andrews felt that having a disability as a chaplain allowed her to relate with patients experiencing suffering due to their ailments.

2018 was a historic year, with six women bishops appointed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Luther Seminary alumna **Laurie Skow-Anderson '86 M.Div., '10 Ph.D.** was elected to the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. Patricia Davenport of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod and Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin made history as the first African American women elected ELCA bishops.

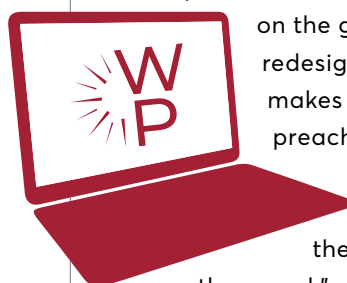
Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton celebrated 50 years of women's ordination in the ELCA through a June 25 video message on the ELCA's YouTube channel. Addressing women church leaders, she said, "Thank you for answering God's call. This church is so enriched by your gifts."

Reflecting on the 50th anniversary of women's ordination, Luther Seminary Pastor **Jeni Grangaard '09 M.Div.** said, "I haven't known a church without the leadership of women. Neither my daughter nor son has known a church without a woman as our presiding bishop. As a pastor and a woman, I am thankful to be on a road paved by others through fierce faithfulness and a commitment to the calling of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Working Preacher's **NEW SITE IS LIVE**

Working Preacher, a ministry of Luther Seminary, recently launched its new website design. Working Preacher provides sermon tools, interpretation, and inspiration to equip Bible teachers who want to help their audiences grasp timeless messages from Scripture. The new look and site offer mobile-friendly design, a Spanish-language landing page, and easy access to Working Preacher's books, podcasts, and smartphone app.

"We are so excited to launch this new site. It delivers great content in a beautiful new look, fully responsive to working preachers



on the go. The wholly redesigned Bible Index makes it easier for preachers to connect—wherever and whenever—with the commentaries

they need," said **Ben McDonald Coltvet**, editor of Working Preacher.

View the new website at
workingpreacher.org.

THE CRAFT OF PREACHING goes online at full capacity

This October, Working Preacher's The Craft of Preaching conference was hosted online. Registration reached full capacity more than a month before the event. Attendees explored how and why preachers craft their sermons the way they do. The conference also included time for questions, practical workshops, and opportunities for participants to engage in conversation with each other.

This year's event featured three guest speakers: Jared E. Alcántara, associate professor of preaching and Paul W. Powell Endowed Chair in Preaching at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary; Kenyatta R. Gilbert, professor of homiletics at Howard University School of Divinity; and **Joy J. Moore**, vice president of academic affairs and academic dean at Luther Seminary and ordained elder in the West Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Thanks to Luther Seminary's generous donors, sessions from The Craft of Preaching are available to view on-demand at faithlead.luthersem.edu.



FINDING HOPE

**in a divided,
socially distant
nation**

By Kate H. Elliott

Pastors share their experiences counseling through the ugliness, uncertainty, and unexpected insights of 2020

A Louisiana pastor collaborates with an out-of-work chef to serve up 500 to-go plates of Thai barbecue ribs for neighbors, then writes a sermon between rounds of I Spy and "Daddy, can I have a snack?"

A Minnesota church provides laptops and study space for students to complete online assignments.

Kentucky parishioners talk with their pastor on Zoom after the Breonna Taylor shooting; one month later, they hammer a Black Lives Matter sign into the brick of their church building.

These stories represent a sea of pastoral experiences that reflect the trauma, hope, loneliness, holiness, uncertainty, resilience, and ugliness of 2020. None of these church leaders profess to have all the answers, yet they are digging deep to find inspiration and energy to counsel and comfort congregations, lift up communities, and navigate technology to do so. The specifics look different for each pastor and congregation, but their stories share themes: Worship methods are evolving, churches run best with



an all-hands-on-deck approach, and Christians have an opportunity—if not an obligation—to drive compassionate curiosity, facilitate courageous conversations, and advocate for meaningful change.

Angela Denker '13 M.Div. resists the 'culture of contempt'

Transformation has begun, said Angela Denker, author of "Red State Christians," and it may be the one gift of this time. All the ambiguity, isolation, and heightened social awareness are illuminating truths and opportunities for progress and innovation. They are too widespread for the church to ignore.

In late May, Denker wrapped a clerical collar around her neck on the way to a rally for justice and peace in Minneapolis, where George Floyd died after a police officer pressed a knee on his neck for nearly nine minutes. "I feel far more comfortable telling stories and starting conversations," she said. "But this was in my backyard. I felt called to advocate for justice."

She stuck a Black Lives Matter sign in her yard, then drove out through the cornfields to Grace Lutheran Church in Brownton, Minnesota, where she carries on a family tradition of pastoring rural Midwestern congregations. Denker said it is where she sees the Holy Spirit move through grounded conversations and meaningful relationships.

She continues that work through regular posts on her blog and global webinars or Washington Post articles that she fits into her schedule of lawn-chair worship and socially distanced Sunday school. The Minnesota native is working on her second book, about hope in America, after the 2020 election resurrected interest in her first book, "Red State Christians," a collection of post-2016 election conversations with

DID YOU KNOW? Thousands of Christian leaders call on Faith+Lead, Luther Seminary's online learning hub, to connect and discuss their experiences forming Christian community. Some individuals in this story first shared their ideas in a Faith+Lead discussion forum.

Christian supporters of President Donald Trump.

Throughout October, Luther Seminary's Faith+Lead online community hosted Denker on a live webcast, "Finding Hope in a Divided Country: Election Edition." She addressed how to have productive conversations in the midst of polarization without sacrificing the gospel's call to mercy and justice.

She continues to place her faith in the endurance of love and to work to help move us all past contempt and judgment toward understanding and unity.

Ben Groth serves neighbors, seeks peace

For 132 years, Bethlehem Lutheran Church has stood for justice and weathered storms by showing up for its members and its New Orleans neighborhood. Then COVID-19 hit.

"On March 1, we kicked off a weekly community lunch, and on March 15 we ceased in-person worship," said Ben Groth, who has served as the church's pastor since 2018. "We regrouped, and through a grant from Lutheran Disaster Response, we've been able to pass out to-go lunches each Wednesday and Sunday, about 500 each week."

Groth reached out to De Wells, better known as "Chef De," who previously cooked at Commander's Palace, a New Orleans landmark. Bethlehem's Community Table offers gourmet dining to-go that has brought the church closer to its neighbors.

"Over the summer, I did quite a few porch confirmations and 'porch church' as families invited me to their lawns, where I held a short service for them and sometimes their neighbors," said Groth, a doctoral student of history at Tulane University.

The church also served as a COVID-19 testing site, where the City of New Orleans Health Department—in conjunction with Community Organized Relief Effort—administered about 500 tests.

"We're doing what we can to address immediate needs, while not losing sight of the emotional and

spiritual healing that needs to take place in the midst of so much darkness," he said.

Groth has preached frequently on the Psalms to reiterate that the kingdom of God is here and now, he said. "They remind us we can both see and be the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. It's a reassuring message but also one that calls us to act and work toward progress and change."

Rachel Small Stokes sees 'signs' of transformation

Rachel Small Stokes pastors Immanuel United Church of Christ in Louisville, Kentucky, whose church members agreed—via Zoom—to post a Black Lives Matter sign on church property.

"A church member said he would pay for the sign 'as long as it's big.' The sign is 8 feet long and 5 feet tall," she said. "It's a sign our church created, together, and that process was one of the biggest movements of the Holy Spirit I've ever seen. It showed me I don't have to create the vision but create the space for the vision to emerge."

Congregants also created a phone tree to call each parishioner weekly and kicked off Zoom Bingo nights. The director of education created a series of socially distanced games the youth come together to play each week, and participation has never been more consistent. A lawyer couple in the congregation found a ministry through making homemade jam, which they place on congregants' porches each week.



Families attended Bethlehem Lutheran Church's Community Table events.

"It's these moments of joy that remind us that we are expressions of God's love," she said. "It may be just the vision we need right now."

Glenn Monson '91 M.Div. and Dan Forehand witness the evolution of worship

Glenn Monson never thought he'd spend so much time in a parking lot. But on any given Sunday, you'll find him near the pavement outside of Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Rochester, Minnesota, where he serves as senior pastor. The audiovisual technician flips on the FM radio transmitter as parishioners set up lawn chairs alongside sedans or pull out their "Tupperware communion" from inside their minivans, radios turned up to hear the word. Monson also has led a luminary walk in the parking lot.

"COVID-19 has challenged us to innovate, and worship will never be the same," Monson said. Mount Olive Lutheran also shares highly produced online services, which have "gone global"—a neighbor's brother watches in Germany. Monson plans to replace its pre-COVID Saturday service with an online option that complements traditional Sunday worship.

"The online service has expanded our reach, and people appreciate the accessibility, which I know will seem like a good option as winter weather rolls in," he said. "We've also come to appreciate hosting certain meetings and book studies online."

One recent book study included a discussion about systemic racism. "Some people want to learn about and talk through issues of race, but they're nervous to do so or don't know where to start," Monson said. "It's my pastoral duty to find ways to meet congregants where they are and help them consider the gospel in the context of today."

The church identifies solutions to problems facing the community. Several years ago, the congregation voted to serve as a site for affordable daycare, five days a week. During the pandemic, members of the congregation who work for IBM secured laptops and opened the doors of the church to provide access to technology for students needing to complete online assignments.

Self-care for pastors in a divided, socially distant nation

Beverly Wallace, associate professor of congregation and community care at Luther Seminary, said healing work—both at the individual and communal levels—cannot wait until everything is fixed.

"We need each other at this time, and we need to recognize the trauma that is within us, as well as communal and generational trauma. We cannot fully love the other if we do not know the other, and that's why we must listen," Wallace said. "This might be an opportunity for us to explore more fully our relationship with God."

Wallace encourages healing congregational practices in this time of social distance:

- Acknowledge and discuss the grief and loss parishioners are experiencing now and will experience even after community health restrictions are lifted.
- Engage in what Wallace calls "fearless dialogue": Come together, talk about difficult and painful issues without fear of retribution or shame, and graciously listen to each other.

What about pastors who feel overwhelmed or depleted?

"This is an opportunity to practice self-compassion: holding ourselves with tenderness as we would hold those for whom we care," said **Carla Dahl**, professor of congregational and community care leadership and George C. Weinman Chair of Pastoral Theology and Ministry at Luther Seminary. "Basic self-care—like nutrition, rest, movement, connection with trustworthy others, and grounding spiritual practices—must be a priority."

Dahl suggested practices to keep pastors physically and mentally grounded:

- Squared breathing: Breathe in for four seconds and then exhale for four seconds, thinking about how the air feels as it fills your belly like a balloon and then how it feels as you push it out.
- Physical movement: Take a walk, do yoga, or find a fun way to move your body.
- 5-4-3-2-1 method: Use your senses to list five things you see, then four things you hear, three things you can touch from where you are sitting, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

Dan Forehand of Grace Lutheran Church in Elkhart, Indiana, developed a solution for congregants who are tired of virtual gatherings. Each week, he works with parishioners to prepare a liturgy, links to hymns on YouTube, and adds the other parts of a service for groups of six to 10 members who meet in parks, backyards, or on the church lawn. These small groups pray, hear a sermon, and share updates about their communal service projects—like writing notes to community members or preparing care packages for first responders.

The church maintains its Facebook Live service at 9 a.m. and a drive-in service with communion at 11 a.m. each Sunday, but about two-thirds of the congregation is also involved in these small groups. The congregation, Forehand said, is committed to maintaining these groups after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

"This was the model of the early church, and, I believe, is the direction for the 'next normal' of the church," he added.

Coqui Conkey and Rebecca Zielke call congregants to live out the word

No matter the style, worship draws people of all perspectives together in faith. Coqui Conkey and Rebecca Zielke have focused their pandemic pastoring on helping their congregations learn to speak and listen to each other.

"The role of the church is to acknowledge differences

and learn the grace of allowing the congregation and the broader church to be diverse," said Conkey, who pastors Associated Church in Owatonna, Minnesota, which has started a midweek evening vesper and contemplative service around the church fire pit. "Real conversation means we can each be changed by it."

When seeking to take a stand or act as a congregation, Conkey has found it helpful to create a shared decision-making process that involves questions like, "How does this help us live out our call as a congregation?"

Zielke, who serves Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Canfield, Ohio, feels that her weekly sermons are no match for the daily onslaught of social media messages.

Her lessons, focused on grace and forgiveness, have encouraged conversations for the purpose of understanding rather than shaming or convincing: "As those who benefit from God's unearned mercy and forgiveness, we have no leg to stand on to justify us treating others any differently from the way God has dealt with us," she challenged with a teaching from Matthew 18 via Facebook Live video.

Trish Reedstrom '14 M.Div. on the power of prayer

Trish Reedstrom, pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in North Mankato, Minnesota, addresses topics in a way that keeps people listening, regardless of their views. "If we can't learn and talk about difficult issues at church, where can we do it? But we must practice," she added. That practice comes in the form of small group studies, where parishioners feel comfortable wondering out loud without fear of retribution or anger. There is a lot of talk about grace-filled responses, she said.

She has plucked relevance from the Bible story of Jesus feeding the 5,000, as it addresses sufficiency instead of scarcity, and from the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15, which calls followers to see the "other" in a new way.

Reedstrom has seen God's work through prayers of grief and gratitude, as parishioners open their hearts in frustration and hope. "Each week, we name [our grief], which diminishes its power but also helps us understand we are not alone," she said. 🌱



A small group from Associated Church in Owatonna, Minnesota, gathered during the summer.

COURTESY PHOTO

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

DURING THE 2019–20 FISCAL YEAR

- Approximately 55% of students graduated without seminary debt. For the others, median debt was \$48,882.
- 101 students graduated May 31.
- Donor sources made up 94% of Luther Seminary's operating revenue when combining individual donor support, the endowment, and church and synod appropriations.
- Luther Seminary had 43 international students from 18 countries.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 465 students enrolled at Luther Seminary during the 2019–20 academic year.
- ELCA members accounted for 75% of the student body. Thirty-three denominations made up the remaining 25% of students.
- When accounting for on-campus living expenses, a year of study cost approximately \$40,942.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

2020 was a year in which the world changed dramatically. Like many before us, we've been called to watch for what God is doing in the midst of disruption. It's hard to be sure what will emerge on the other side.

Yet even with so much uncertainty swirling around us, **God is faithful, and God is making a way.**

As we embark on the third year of our Jubilee Scholarship, which provides all incoming Master of Divinity and Master of Arts students a full-tuition scholarship, we're seeing dramatic decreases in student borrowing and indebtedness. In fact, 55% of the class of 2020 graduated with no educational debt whatsoever, student loan applications fell again this year by 20%, and we are now in the ninth consecutive year of decline among the number of Luther Seminary students taking out student loans. This means our graduates are not only theologically prepared, but they are also financially prepared to lead innovative ministries.

Our digital efforts have expanded our reach across the globe. Across all our digital properties since 2018, including Working Preacher, Faith+Lead, God Pause, and Enter the Bible, we have created new content formats, including podcasts, digital courses, virtual conferences, online magazines, and email newsletters. We served 6.8 million unique users in more than 50 countries; developed a subscriber base of more than 50,000; provided just-in-time training to 17,500 leaders; engaged 6,200 users in a private social network focused on faithful innovation; and formed partnerships with nearly 1,000 lay and ordained leaders in intensive, multi-month learning communities.

Our admissions team has also reported increased inquiries and enrollments. In 2019–20, we welcomed an incoming class of 153 students (and had a waiting list of qualified candidates)—including the first cohort of our MDivX pilot, which delivers our full Master of Divinity curriculum in 24 consecutive months.

I am pleased to report that Luther Seminary remains in a financially stable position so that we can continue to educate leaders for Christian communities and innovate faithfully for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even during this period of pandemic-caused economic decline, we've been able to build on the momentum of previous years' successes. Our net income was \$15,768,975 compared to a total cash expense of \$15,581,048 (excluding depreciation). This represented a better-than-projected outcome by \$200,000. In addition, we improved our cash position by \$1.6 million.

As we move into where God is calling us next, I pray for the health, safety, and sustained well-being of your families, congregations, and communities. May God bless you now and well into the future as together we draw strength in God's promise that "the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalm 46:1).



Peace and strength,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin J. Steinke".

Robin J. Steinke
President

ANNUAL REPORT

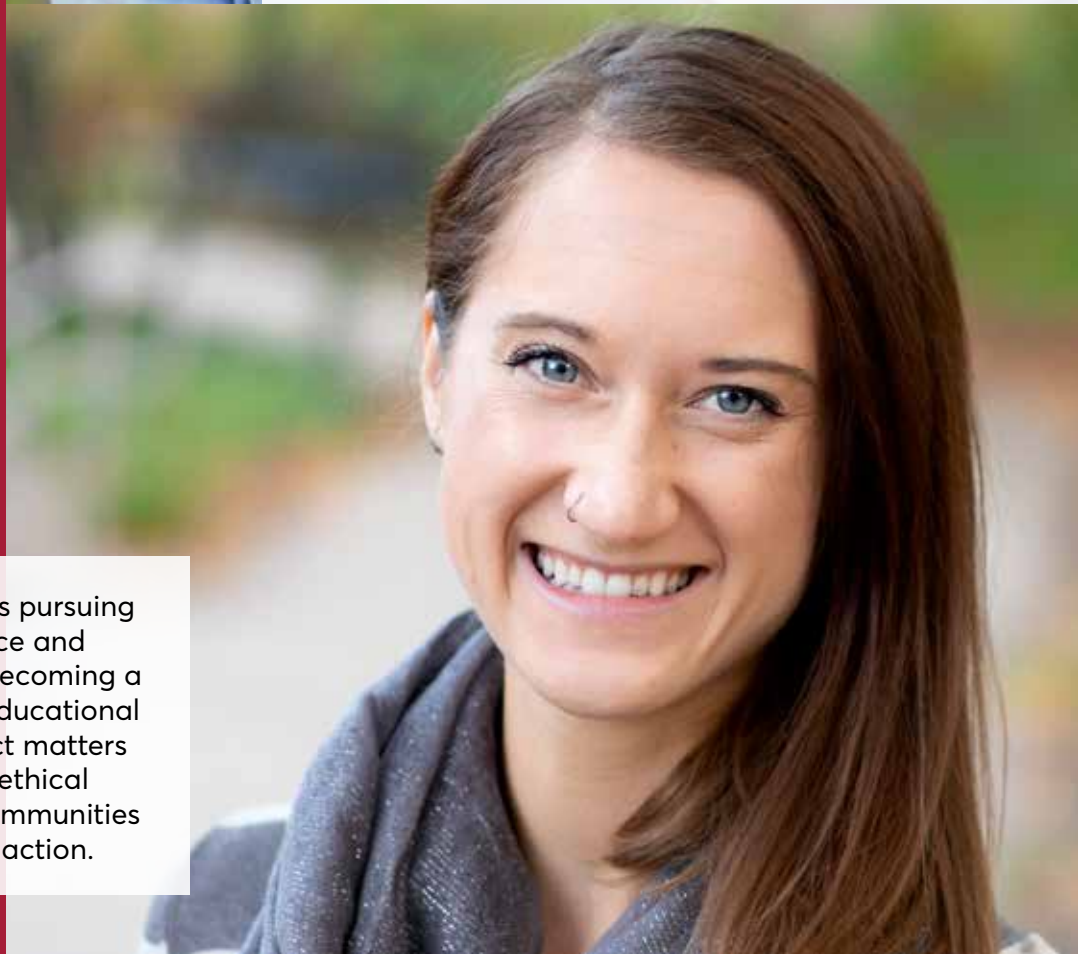
2019–20 AT A GLANCE

- Financial aid covered nearly 100% of the cost of tuition and fees for students like Menzi.
- Master of Arts students like Hannah made up 20% of enrolled students.
- As a scholarship recipient, Menzi received part of the \$5.9 million awarded during the 2019–20 academic year. On average, students receive \$9,437 in scholarships and grants from Luther Seminary.
- Menzi was among the 64% of students who pursued an M.Div. degree in 2019–20.
- The seminary awarded 532 scholarships in 2019–20.

Hannah Schmit '20 M.A., who is pursuing a Master of Arts degree in justice and reconciliation, is interested in becoming a professor and working within educational contexts to help people connect matters of justice and reconciliation to ethical practices. She wants to help communities strengthen their faith and take action.



Menzi Nkambule '22 M.Div. is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree in congregational mission and leadership. He hopes to serve as a pastor who is engaged in the surrounding community with the goal of building connections and helping people deepen their understanding of Christian faith and practices.



Finances 2019–20

Luther Seminary and Foundation consolidated balance sheets
as of June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2019

ASSETS

	2020	2019
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$14,703,368	\$14,385,909
Other Current Assets	496,865	714,998
Total Current Assets	\$15,200,233	\$15,100,907
Non-Current Assets		
Other Assets	\$2,279,738	\$2,141,224
Investments	108,327,576	110,301,270
Student Notes Receivable, Net	2,275,760	2,430,663
Land, Buildings, and Equipment, Net	11,599,592	12,087,723
Total Other Assets	\$124,482,666	\$126,960,880
Total Assets	\$139,682,899	\$142,061,787

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

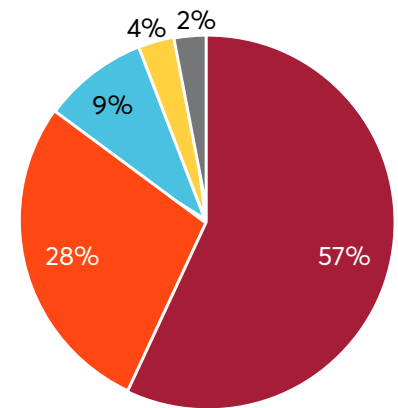
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities	\$3,382,208	\$2,781,683
Notes Payable and Line of Credit, Current Portion	3,081,574	2,824,109
Total Current Liabilities	\$6,463,782	\$5,605,792
Long-Term Liabilities		
Other Long-Term Liabilities	\$6,635,925	\$7,266,634
Notes Payable, Net of Current Portion	5,354,889	4,797,763
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$11,990,814	\$12,064,397
Total Liabilities	\$18,454,596	\$17,670,189
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$5,307,717	\$6,007,917
With Donor Restrictions	115,920,586	118,383,681
Total Net Assets	\$121,228,303	\$124,391,598
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$139,682,899	\$142,061,787

ENDOWMENT

Total Market Value (as of 6/30/20)*	\$107 million
Investment Returns	
1-year	-0.04%
3-year	4.62%
5-year	5.13%

* Includes \$285,715 invested by the endowment into Luther Seminary.

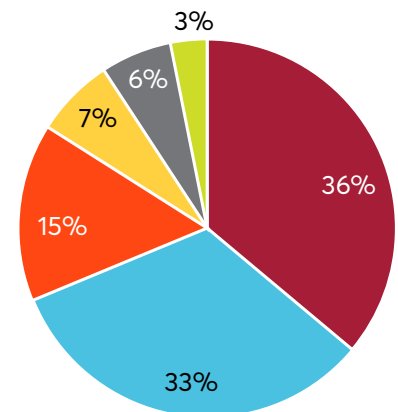
Luther Seminary's annual report numbers are also available at luthersem.edu/giving/annual-report.
Learn more about giving to support future church leaders at luthersem.edu/giving.



Unrestricted Operating Income

Donor Support	\$8,942,404
Endowment Draw	4,465,358
Churchwide and Synod Support	1,375,297
Auxiliary Enterprises	584,483
Net Tuition and Fees	401,433

Total Unrestricted Operating Income **\$15,768,975**



Unrestricted Operating Expenses

Student Instruction	\$6,041,606
Institutional Support	5,469,779
Physical Plant and Maintenance	2,448,921
Academic Support	1,212,214
Student Services	1,080,680
Auxiliary Enterprises	569,258

Total Expenses* **\$16,822,458**

*Includes depreciation

LUTHER SEMINARY PODCASTS DEEPEN WORSHIP, PREACHING, AND MINISTRY

By Kate Norlander



Luther Seminary embraces innovation, and its established practice of using technology to educate leaders for Christian communities has proven effective during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One way the institution has fostered community and learning during this time is through the digital technology of podcasts, increasingly popular on-demand audio programs that users can stream or download on a smartphone or computer.

Working Preacher, a ministry of the seminary designed to help pastors become better preachers, has been producing podcasts for years. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Luther has added new podcasts to enhance worship and help church leaders better minister during a time of turmoil.



Michael Chan '09 M.A., assistant professor of Old Testament, hosts "Gospel Beautiful," an interview-based podcast that recently was added to Luther Seminary's expanding podcast lineup.



SERMON BRAINWAVE

Working Preacher offers two podcasts: one on the Revised Common Lectionary and one on the Narrative Lectionary. These podcasts are designed to help preachers enrich their preaching by deeply engaging with the assigned texts. "Sermon Brainwave" covers the Revised Common Lectionary; Luther Seminary professors **Rolf Jacobson '91 M.Div.**, **Karoline Lewis '94 M.Div.**, and **Matthew Skinner** join Academic Dean **Joy J. Moore** in discussing the assigned texts, including alternate texts, for the coming Sunday.

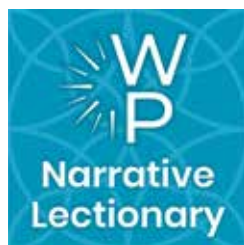
WHAT LISTENERS SAY:

One reviewer on Apple's "Sermon Brainwave" page wrote, "This podcast is a great way to begin to wrestle with the text for the upcoming week's sermon. I would recommend this podcast to any preacher who takes his or her craft seriously."

Left: The Fleshpots of Egypt recorded bluegrass intro music for the "Sermon Brainwave" podcast. Pictured [L to R]: **Steve Thompson**, **Scott Simmons '12 M.Div.**, and Professor **Rolf Jacobson '91 M.Div.**

Right: **Lara Moll '21 M.A.** is a producer for the podcasts "Sermon Brainwave" and "I Love to Tell the Story: Narrative Lectionary."





TIP: Search for
"Working Preacher
Narrative Lectionary"
in your podcast app.

I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY: NARRATIVE LECTIONARY

Created by Working Preacher, "I Love to Tell the Story" is a podcast on the Narrative Lectionary, a four-year cycle of readings that follows the sweep of the biblical story. This lectionary, initiated 10 years ago by professors Jacobson and **Craig Koester '80 M.Div.**, offers a narrative sequence and shows the variety of voices within Scripture, similar to Koester's Genesis to Revelation course, which he taught at the seminary for decades. (See "Becoming part of the biblical story" in the Summer 2020 issue of Story magazine.) Each weekly episode features a conversation between Luther Seminary professors exploring the text for the coming Sunday. The podcast frequently features professors Jacobson, Koester, and **Kathryn Schifferdecker**, and others, including **Cameron Howard**, Lewis, and Skinner, have appeared.

WHAT LISTENERS SAY:

Pastor Alan, a reviewer on Apple's page for the podcast, said, "The conversation held by these three professors around each selected text is a wonderful model for preaching in and of itself. As they talk about these passages, they are careful to let the gospel inform our life today rather than allowing us to determine what the gospel should have said. They also do a wonderful job of bridging the 2,000 to 5,000 years between us and the Gospels, letters, and Hebrew scriptures. They really help me find those connections and share them with the congregation. It is a must-listen."



WILDERNESS TIME

This limited series from Faith+Lead, hosted by **Dwight Zscheile '08 Ph.D.**, vice president of innovation and associate professor of congregational mission and leadership, and Stephanie Spellers, canon for evangelism and reconciliation for the Episcopal Church, explores the unfamiliar territory, adaptations, and possibilities facing churches now. Episodes include "Welcome to the Wilderness," which uses biblical wilderness narratives as a framework for the present situation, and "The Gospel in the Neighborhood," which discusses how church members can engage in evangelism during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

WHAT LISTENERS SAY:

One reviewer said, "Although we all seem to be wandering in the wilderness at this pandemic time, it was affirming and informative to listen to the discussions each week. I found hope ... for my church to forge forward in new and exciting ways."





PIVOT

"Pivot" is a podcast cosponsored by Faith+Lead and LEAD (Living Every day As Disciples). Hosted by Professor **Terri Elton '98 M.A., '07 Ph.D.**, it was born out of the pandemic as a way to come alongside ministry leaders as they lead in the midst of disruption. The episodes examine how Christian leaders can use times of turmoil to reimagine how they think about church, ministry, and leadership. Episodes include "Loss and George Floyd," "Exhausted in the Wilderness," and "Permanent Whitewater."

WHAT LISTENERS SAY:

Pastor Beth Ann L. Stone wrote, "Thanks for mentioning the exile story in Jeremiah on the 'Pivot' podcast several weeks ago. The idea of living where you didn't choose really stuck with me. A week after hearing the podcast, this passage came up in my Bible reading chart, which told me God wanted me to pay attention!"



FAITHFUL ADAPTATION

Hosted by **Dan Bielenberg '20 M.Div.**, this podcast was designed to help church leaders navigate the challenges facing churches during the pandemic. Sessions involve time for listening to God and listening to others through Lectio Divina (a meditative reading of Scripture), expert interviews, or small group dialogue. "Faithful Adaptation" covers topics such as how to build community during physical distancing, how churches might handle online worship as they reopen their buildings, and how to talk about money and stewardship during a crisis.

WHAT LISTENERS SAY:

One reviewer wrote, "So useful. The ideas and advice in this are helping us minister right now."



THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

This podcast is created by the Luther Seminary Pastor's Office and Campus Ministry at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. It offers listeners the opportunity to participate in an ancient practice of daily prayer and is designed to meet people where they are, helping them to get away from their screens. The second season began September 22 and focuses on Matins, morning prayer.

WHAT LISTENERS SAY:

"I have recommended 'The Liturgy of the Hours' podcast to students, shared it on Facebook, and shared it with my church," said Professor **Mary Hess**. "When Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died, I listened to one of my favorites: the Seventh Sunday After Pentecost with **Zach Busch '11 M.S.M.** and **Jearlyn Steele '22 M.A.** The psalms, the readings, and the music soothe my anxieties. Even when I can't discern what God may be doing, the podcast reminds me that God is always with us. I find myself humming the music even after I'm done listening; it becomes a kind of Spirit-filled prayer for me."



Listen to these audio programs and more wherever you subscribe to podcasts on your smartphone or computer. 📱



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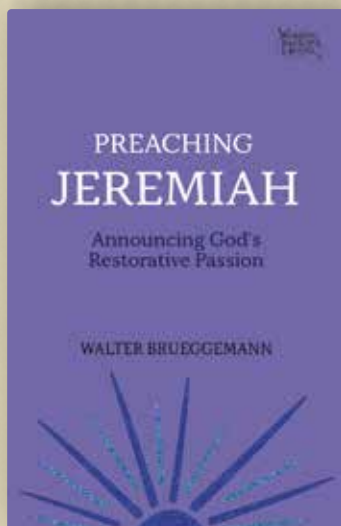
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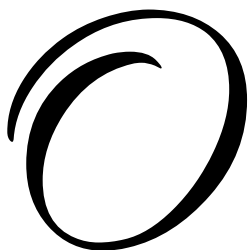
fortress press

NECESSARY CONVERSATIONS

ON *race* AND *racism*

By Lisa Renze-Rhodes

Pastors learn to get comfortable being—and inviting others to be—uncomfortable for the sake of building stronger communities of faith, belonging, and justice



n a day set aside for difficult conversation, rain poured down.

But the diverse crowd that gathered to hear the words stayed.

The clouds darkened, and a sound system intended to amplify the speakers' voices shorted out not once, but twice.

Still the crowd stayed.

Winds whipped water droplets into people's eyes, their shoes sloshed, and the ground became saturated.

But still the crowd stayed.

Then the rain stopped, the clouds parted, and a rainbow stretched across the sky.

And nobody would question **Bonnie Wilcox '97 M.Div.**, senior pastor at First Lutheran Church, who witnessed something more than refracting light.

Nobody would doubt that those in the crowd saw God that day.

A place to hear

It was not quite a month after the death of George Floyd, and Wilcox and her leadership team at First Lutheran, located in the Minneapolis suburb of Columbia Heights, Minnesota, continued to brainstorm about how the church community could best respond to the pain and unrest within the Twin Cities.

Protests rippled throughout the metro area—and around the world—calling for justice after Floyd, a Black man, was killed by police on May 25. At the Minneapolis intersection where the encounter occurred, a collection of memorials rose up to remember Floyd and the many Black lives lost at the hands of police.

In Columbia Heights, about seven miles north of the Longfellow neighborhood that was the epicenter of the unrest, Wilcox said the church community had a strong desire to respond to what was happening. The primarily white congregation wanted to do the right thing, though they weren't sure where to begin.

To get some direction, Wilcox turned to community partners.

"We talked to Black leaders in the Columbia Heights community

and asked, 'What do you need?'" Wilcox said. "They said, 'We don't need anger; we need a place where people can hear our stories.'"

So on the night of June 23, more than 100 people from the church and the Columbia Heights area came to hear Black community members share stories of how they had been discriminated against as immigrants, how racial slurs had been hurled at them and their children, how they feared for the safety of their children, and how they experience—and try to forgive—aggressions large and small.

"The night of the rally, we thought we could invite our white neighbors in to learn how to have better conversations with people. The response was overwhelming," Wilcox said.

The event wasn't the first conversation church leadership had with members of the community, and it would be far from their last.

"We have to work at this," she said. "We can't just say 'It's four months now, so I guess we're done.' We have to acknowledge that long view of God working to do good in the world, despite all that humans are doing to block it."

Putting in the work

Nathan Roberts '12 M.Div., First Lutheran's director of community engagement, said for many white people, conversations about race and racism are hard. No one wants to say the wrong thing, so they just don't say anything. Then a tragedy like Floyd's murder occurs, he said, and well-meaning people, often faith leaders, want to get involved but they don't know how.

"Race and racism is a new conversation for many white people, but it is not a new conversation," Roberts said. "It's something that people of color have been talking about around their dinner tables, something Black educators have studied and advised on, something Black leaders have been speaking out about for generations."

Roberts said it's challenging for pastors and faith leaders who often are more comfortable counseling a family through the death of a loved one than they are talking about race. They face their own insecurity of saying or doing the wrong thing, being vulnerable and having to admit they aren't well-versed on race, and realizing they can't make others immediately comfortable.

"Having these conversations



takes trust, and that trust takes a long time to build," Roberts said.

Roberts, Wilcox, and a racially diverse team of First Lutheran leaders recognized the need to provide opportunities for their congregants to be necessarily but safely uncomfortable. Several years ago they started what the church calls storytelling nights, which feature members of the community speaking about their life experiences to the congregation.

In the past four years since the storytelling nights began, the church has welcomed Asian American, Black, Latinx, and Somali community members for what have become open and frank discussions that have revealed what they experience over the course of a routine day—from bigotry and racism to language barriers and navigating their children's education systems.

The church also opened an after-school care program for neighborhood families that offers a safe, reliable, affordable place for kids to go in the afternoons, and they hired local Black moms to help run it.

Those years of conversations, of programming for demonstrated needs of the community, of humbling themselves to the needs of others hasn't been easy—and they haven't always gotten it right.

Roberts is more direct: "There's a 100% chance you're going to make a mistake in talking about race—you have to get past that."

'Practice being uncomfortable'

Both Roberts and Wilcox said it's imperative that pastors and other faith leaders do the work needed to be able to tackle the difficult and ongoing conversations of race and racism. The work, Roberts said, starts within.

"Before you start trying to teach anybody else, you need to start going to restaurants owned by Black people and people of color. Go to conferences where Black people are the expert speakers," he said. "Practice being the only white person in the room. Practice conversations about race with your friends. Practice being uncomfortable."

The journey isn't meant to be taken alone. Additional help is essential to stay on the path.

One of the ways Luther Seminary supports leaders and churches is through the Faith+Lead platform. This online learning hub provides opportunities for pastors and congregations to dig into the intricate work of evolving ministry practices and ideas, offering courses, podcasts, articles, events, and a social network that facilitates connections. Those tools are especially important for faith leaders who are facing difficult conversations—including ones about race—with congregations hesitant to engage in ideas and practices that are new to them.

Members of Luther's enterprise leadership team spent time at their fall retreat focused on the current landscape of the seminary's own diversity and equity leadership training and what shape it can take in the future. The seminary's leadership recognizes the important role the institution plays in helping faith leaders and their congregations to adapt their methods, including addressing race and racism, while staying faithful to their calling.

It can start, said **Leon Rodrigues**, by agreeing to enter into what he calls holy conversations.

"Just because we as individuals don't know about something doesn't mean it doesn't exist," said Rodrigues, Luther Seminary's chief diversity officer and director of diversity, equity, and inclusion. He recommends "inviting people into conversation, and even if we have differences, first agreeing to a set of guidelines. We are there to learn, listen, love each other, think, and reflect."

Listening to learn, not to respond, is crucial because race and racism are complex, deeply personal, and emotionally charged issues. For faith leaders, recognizing they may not be the ones who have all the answers can be especially difficult. That acknowledgment requires a vulnerability—a letting go—to get to a collectively stronger, better place as a community.

But always, Rodrigues says, the conversations must be built in love.

"We humans tend to default to competitiveness and not to compassion, caring, and love for each other. But we have to start with love. That's what we're called to," he said. "If I love someone, and I know they are being harmed, I am going to step up. I'm going to reach out."

be a struggle; it's going to be a challenge."

A theology of showing up

As a contextual learning associate with Luther Seminary, **David Scherer '15 M.A.** works to provide additional tools for faith leaders who may be working with community members resistant to change.

"Jesus comes for both personal and collective liberation, but we're not finding ways to integrate that into our articulated theology," Scherer said. "How did we get to this false choice of either focusing on personal salvation or on God's liberating love and justice in the world?"

When Christians and faith communities talk about living the gospel, they must recognize that theology is built on justice and kindness. The seminary's Beloved Community Scholars program works to instill this core understanding in Christian public leaders for the communities they foster.

"In so many churches, we've done the loving kindness really well, but we haven't done the justice," Scherer said. And it's not a side project, he added.

"When we start to realize, 'Wow, my own journey as a Christian, my faithfulness to God, is tied in with how I show up to this conversation,' that's when we start to develop this healing language together, and we start to dismantle the system tearing us apart."

It won't be easy

"To those leaders who are going to have issues with their congregation, one thing that always comes to mind for me is that God doesn't give us anything we can't handle.

It is going to be a struggle; it's going to be a challenge," said Chris Dansby, a member of the church council at First Lutheran.

But in some ways, that makes the work even more important, he said. As a Black member of First Lutheran, and a member of its leadership team, Dansby recognizes there are some crucial conversations that simply must be led by a church's pastor.

Wilcox said she began introducing an understanding of race and racism by first assessing what resources she and her church community had available.

"What are the gifts and assets that God has blessed your community with that allow you to respond faithfully, with justice and with peace?" she said.

Almost inevitably, there will be some church community members who accuse leadership of bringing politics to the pulpit.

"We get accused of being too political at times, but in our baptism promises we say we will strive for justice and peace in all the world," Wilcox said. "We don't take that seriously enough."

"To talk about race is political," Roberts said. "You have to get tougher skin on that topic and know that you're going to lose some people and gain some people. There are times in history when you need to be brave. You have to decide if now is the time in your community."

"In your heart, you can know you are doing the right thing for your congregation and community," Dansby said. "You are doing the thing that Jesus Christ is calling you to do." 🗨️



Showing up to serve

The Star Tribune featured **Bethany Ringdal '19 M.Div.** (left) and **Kelly Sherman-Conroy '16 M.A., '18 Th.M., '22 Ph.D.** among the volunteer chaplains who showed up to this summer's protests, emergency food distribution sites, and community events.



Visit luthersem.edu/story to see the article: "Minnesota 'crisis mode chaplains' seek to heal trauma of George Floyd's death."

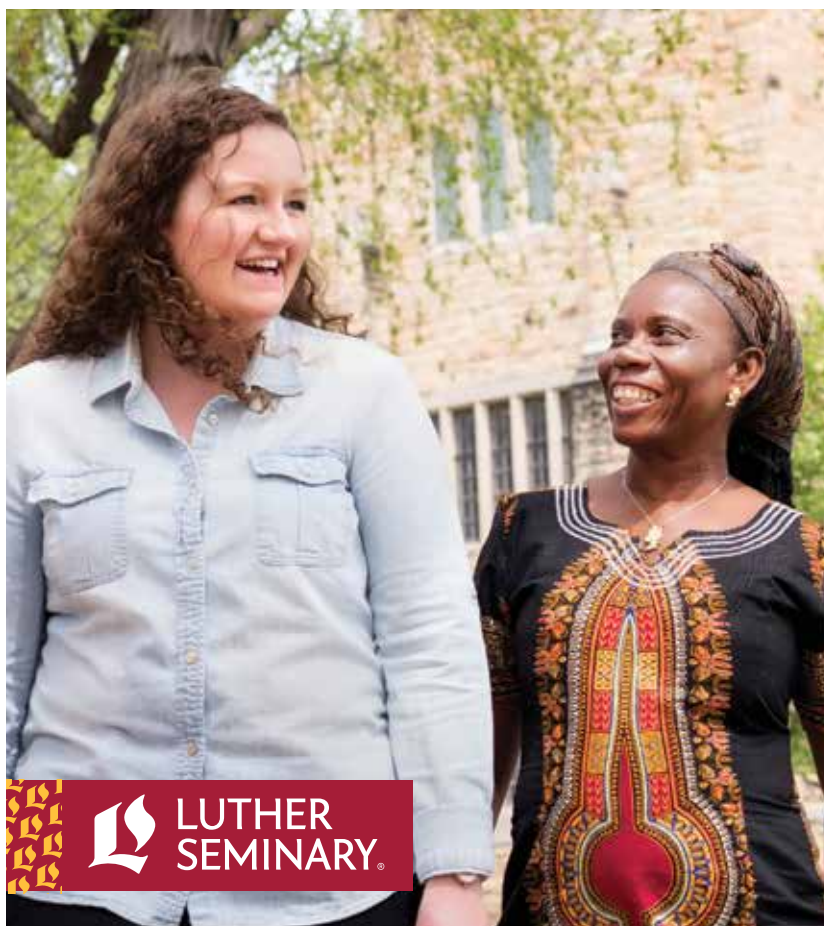
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Far from home but close to family

How international students at Luther Seminary became a tight-knit community under COVID-19 stay-at-home safety measures

by Heidi Hyland Mann

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached the United States, international students were caught in a complex situation. In late March, to slow the spread of the coronavirus, the governor of Minnesota issued a stay-at-home executive order—but for international students, home was thousands of miles away.

COURTESY PHOTOS



"Most of us felt like the world had come to an end for us," said **Stanley Ayashim '21 M.A.**, a Luther student from Nigeria. "Not only that, but we were in a foreign land away from our families and loved ones."



Phyllis Tettey '21 M.A. (left) with Innocent Webinumen Anthony '20 Th.M., who preached a sermon during the group's worship gathering.

The seminary's international students typically number around 50, with most living on campus or nearby. When the institution transitioned to fully online learning to mitigate viral spread, the international students' status in the United States was in limbo. Most didn't have the chance to return home before travel restrictions made such trips impractical or impossible. On the other hand, proposed federal rules in the summer would have required international students to receive in-person education to remain in the country or face deportation. It was an uncertain time, but it also marked the beginning of something new.

Residential experience deepens relationships, curbs anxieties

"While people are counting losses, we count a lot of blessings that came with the pandemic," several students wrote in a joint summary of their experiences. One of those blessings was a deepened sense of community that they developed through shared meals, Sunday worship gatherings, and mutual support during a global crisis.

During the spring and summer, 15 international students and one American student lived in Stub Hall on the seminary campus.

"Luther Seminary has been really understanding with the international students," said **Janice Gonoe '21 Th.M.** from Liberia.

Marie Y. Hayes, director of international student and scholar affairs, hosted weekly Zoom video chat check-in meetings with the group, and **Chenar Howard**, associate director of student affairs, provided detailed official health guidance for how students could keep themselves and each other safe from the virus. For three months the campus dining service provided hot meals for pickup on weekdays at noon—often with enough food for the evening meal, too. For breakfasts and weekends, the campus food shelf was available, and students received gift cards to a nearby grocery store. Before long, the

Stub Hall residents pooled their efforts and resources—as well as some funds secured through the student council—to cook Sunday meals together and share them as a family.

"Since all of us had families very far away, it became important for us to become a family, not only a community," the students wrote in the joint statement.

The decision to function as a family was key for the students to adapt to the challenging situation. Early on, they held a meeting in the Stub lounge to discuss how to move forward and keep one another safe. Though some students were still participating with their contextual education congregations through online video-streams, they missed in-person worship. Some met regularly for prayer and encouragement, and soon an idea surfaced: Why not worship together on Sunday morning and eat together afterward?

Forming a new rhythm

Several students within the group stepped up to serve in voluntary leadership roles.

Frank Steiner, a visiting scholar from Germany, led worship in March. As the knowledge of COVID-19 transmission was new and consistent health guidelines weren't yet widespread, even coming together in one room

of their dormitory made many students nervous. Yet they gathered—masked and physically distant—to hear God’s word and share in worship. Steiner preached on a passage from Jeremiah, encouraging listeners to trust God amid fear and anxiety. One week later, Steiner was able to fly home to Europe.

A visiting scholar from Ghana, **Thomas Oduro '94 M.A., '04 Ph.D.**, was another leader within the group. “His sabbatical took a very different turn with COVID-19, and he became a valuable mentor to our students,” Howard said.

Oduro participated in 21 Sunday worship services and helped the other students plan and lead Bible studies and fellowship dinners. Students took turns preaching and sharing music, liturgy, and holiday celebrations from their own cultural backgrounds.

Gonoe enjoyed the Mother’s Day worship the most. “Our male colleagues prepared the Sunday meal,” Gonoe said. They did everything in order to celebrate the women through service.

Hope Johnson '22 M.Div., the American student living in Stub Hall, gave a bouquet of flowers to Gonoe and another woman. “I appreciated it so much,” Gonoe said.

Over several weeks, Sunday meals included dishes from Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Mexico,



Students celebrate a birthday together [L to R]: **Daniel Mazuri '21 M.A.**, **Hope Johnson '22 M.Div.**, **Austin Krohnke '22 M.Div.**, **Janice Gonoe '21 Th.M.**, **Stanley Ayashim '21 M.A.**, **Sifa Kadiva '21 M.A.**

Myanmar, Nigeria, Tanzania, and the United States. Those who had prepared the meal told the others about the food’s cultural importance. “I called it ‘Introduction of International Cuisines,’” Oduro said.

After their Sunday meals, students danced to YouTube videos of music from their countries of origin. “It was a joy to see choreographies from different countries,” Oduro said.

Hard goodbyes

Just as the students were nourished around the table of shared meals, they were sustained by the communal support during a distressing time. “Sunday worship services, Sunday evening worship through songs, and Wednesday Bible study really helped to build me up to know and feel that God was with us,” Gonoe said. “Even if COVID-19 caught me and I died,

I was sure of my home with Christ.”

Emotions ran high when some students graduated or prepared to depart from Luther after a time of such close-knit community. They celebrated the people who left for their home countries by eating farewell meals together, signing cards, and giving parting gifts.

Luther’s multiyear plan to develop its campus to meet the educational and instructional needs of future students was outlined in 2019. This plan includes the sale of Stub Hall. With gratitude for their memorable experiences together in that building, the remaining international students moved out at the end of August, and many now reside in Bockman Hall. The community of students continues to worship together in the Olson Campus Center’s Chapel of the Incarnation following COVID-19 health guidelines. 🙌

FACULTY AND STAFF NOTES

Lois Farag, professor of early church history, published "Athanasius of Alexandria: An Introduction to His Writings and Theology" in April.

David Fenrick '94 M.Div., dean of students, was reelected secretary-treasurer of the Association of Professors of Mission. He also serves as the book review editor for the journal *Missiology: An International Review*, which is published by the American Society of Missiology.

Mark Granquist, professor and Lloyd and Annelotte Svendsbye Chair in Church History, published three articles: "Georg Sverdrup and the Purpose of Theological Education," in *Lutheran Forum*; "Lutherans and African Immigrants in Minnesota," in the *Journal of the Lutheran Historical Conference*; and "Historical Introduction," for Bo Giertz's book "Faith Alone: The Heart of Everything."

In July **Mary Hess**, professor of educational leadership, taught a virtual course, "Universal Basic Income: Theological Challenges and Opportunities," for

Seattle University, and in September she presented a faith and citizenship message via Zoom to Easter Lutheran Church in Eagan, Minnesota. She was interviewed for the Wabash Center's podcast episode, "What Matters Now?" and presented at the Association of Theological Schools' Women in Leadership seminar on "Revisiting Course Design and Delivery: Virtual Teaching and Learning."

Craig Koester '80 M.Div., Asher O. and Carrie Nasby Chair and professor of New Testament, published "The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation." The volume is a collection of 30 essays by an international group of scholars who write on major aspects of the interpretation of Revelation. He is transitioning to retirement in 2022.

In October **Karoline Lewis '94 M.Div.**—director of the Doctor of Ministry program, professor, and Marbury E. Anderson Chair of Biblical Preaching—delivered the Kyes Lecture for Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church in Michigan. In the fall she was the keynote speaker for the ELCA's Northeastern Minnesota Synod Fall Theological

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Conference and the Trinity Days of Trinity Lutheran Seminary. In December she wrote the cover story for Living Lutheran magazine.

Professor of Biblical Preaching **Joy J. Moore** was elected vice president of academic affairs and academic dean. She assumed the role in September.

In December **Daniel Sassenberg**, director of advancement services for Seminary Relations, will conclude the second year of his two-year term as president of the board of the Minnesota Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Mark Tranvik '92 Th.D., professor of reformation history and theology, taught two adult education sessions on "Learning from the Black Plague: Lessons for Dealing with COVID-19" for Elim Lutheran Church in Robbinsdale, Minnesota, and Bethel Lutheran Church in Rochester, Minnesota. He taught a series on "Lutherans and the Upcoming Election" for Roseville Lutheran Church in Roseville, Minnesota.

He also wrote an op-ed piece for the Star Tribune titled "Coronavirus Pandemic: How God Speaks to Us in Times of Challenge." He developed a seven-session course for pastors and lay leaders called "Love for Lutherans," which is an introduction to the basics of the Lutheran faith for the Faith+Lead Learning Lab and the Iona Collaborative at the Seminary of the Southwest.

Beverly Wallace, associate professor of congregational and community care, spoke at the Lutheran World Federation's "Being Lutheran" webinar series in July.

This summer **Dwight Zscheile '08 Ph.D.**, vice president of innovation and associate professor of congregational mission and leadership, co-hosted the podcast "Wilderness Time" (see story on page 16). He led virtual clergy retreats for the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta in September, the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, in the United Kingdom, and the ELCA's Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. He also published a book chapter, "Learn: Finding Meaning in God's Story," in the book "Walking the Way of Love."



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ALUMNI NEWS

The listings in this publication include notifications received by September 16.

1940s

Lowell Larson '48 M.Div. died May 10.

1950s

Oliver Carlson '51 M.Div. died July 15.

Arland Fiske '52 M.A. died June 16.

Luther Larson '56 M.Div. died July 6.

1960s

Myron Fodge '61 M.A. died August 9.

Glenn Hetland '61 M.Div. died July 23.

Gene Peisker '62 M.Div. died September 6.

Norman Nelson '64 M.Div. died September 4.

Merrill Ronning '69 M.Div. died August 10.

1970s

Gene Anderson '72 M.Div. died March 16.

Henry Thorberg '73 M.Div. died June 6.

1980s

Glenn Berg-Moberg '85 M.Div. retired from St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, in May.

1990s

Edward Foster '90 M.A. accepted a call to serve Kent Memorial Lutheran Church in Sunrise Beach, Missouri, in September.

Bonnie Wilcox '97 M.Div., Luther Seminary Alumni Council president, appeared on Twin Cities Public Television's "Coronavirus: An Almanac Special" in the episode "A Church Finds Renewed Purpose."

> See how her church found new ways to support and connect with its community (story on page 20).

2000s

Capt. Christopher Fiske '04 M.Div., a chaplain in the Iowa Army National Guard, recently launched an online suicide prevention program called Beyond Awareness.

Lee Ann M. Pomrenke '05 M.Div. published "Embodied: Clergy Women and the Solidarity of a Mothering God" in September.

2010s

Terry Frankenstein '16 M.Div. accepted a call to serve at Bethany Lutheran Church in Escanaba, Michigan.

Slewion Lewis '16 M.A. was appointed dean for the undergraduate program of Cuttington University's College of Theology in Suakoko, Liberia, and director for theological education for the Episcopal Church of Liberia.

In December **Ryan Panzer '19 M.A.** is releasing his book, "Grace and Gigabytes: Being Church in a Tech-Shaped Culture," which explores what it means to do effective ministry in this digital age. View the resources section of faithlead.luthersem.edu to read an excerpt.

Submit your own alumni news, and nominate someone for Luther Seminary's Alumni Award for Leadership, Witness, and Service, at

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That's why Joyce A. Thompson, former chair of Luther Seminary's Board of Directors, and John R. Wright Jr. chose to include the seminary in their estate planning.

TIM LARSON

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"Luther Seminary is truly at a critical inflection point for the sake of the gospel—one that can stimulate meaningful impact within our congregations for generations," Joyce said.

For more than 25 years, they've financially supported the seminary because of its engagement with students through rigorous theological education. Luther's students go on to become pastors and leaders who work at churches and nonprofit organizations, employing practical faith formation within the communities they serve.

The couple has expressed that the preparation of well-equipped leaders presents the best return on their gifts, and they invite others to consider Luther Seminary as a worthy investment.

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This September's Give Day was a monumental achievement for our innovative learning community. Your generous gifts made Luther Seminary's fifth annual Give Day one for the record books.

394
DONORS

gave \$166,696 with the Sustaining Fund 1:1 matching gift.

123
ALUMNI

contributed to the Give Day campaign.

71
**FACULTY
AND STAFF**

gave for 75% participation, unlocking the \$15,000 Board of Directors Faculty Staff Challenge Match.

55
**CURRENT
STUDENTS**

gave for a \$5,000 grant to be awarded to the Luther Seminary Student Council.

The Admissions Department reached 100% participation in record time for an added bonus of work-from-home care packages.

\$181,696 was raised on Give Day 2020. Thank you!

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