

LifeTogether

THE MAGAZINE OF
WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Summer 2020



CREATIVITY AND CONTINUITY IN THE WTS COMMUNITY

LifeTogether

The official magazine of Wartburg Theological Seminary for our alumni and friends. Permission is granted for additional use in congregations. Founded in 1854 and located in Dubuque, Iowa since 1889, Wartburg Theological Seminary is one of seven seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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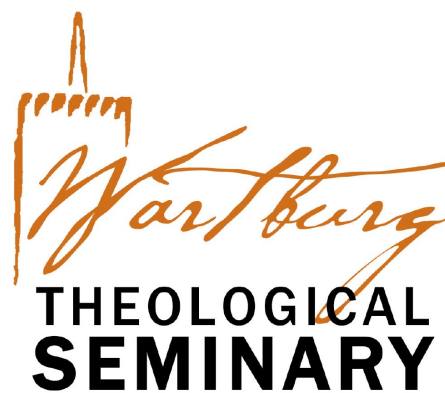
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Mission Statement

Wartburg Theological Seminary serves Christ's church through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by being a worship-centered community of critical theological reflection where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning.

The community embodies God's mission by stewarding resources for engaging, equipping, and sending collaborative leaders who interpret, proclaim and live the gospel of Jesus Christ for a world created for communion with God and in need of personal and social healing.



A Call to Repent and Respond

This semester has brought unprecedented and unexpected moments (to put it mildly). We adjusted to a version of daily life that integrates social distancing measures and watched as the pain of systemic racism in our country rose to a new level of consciousness across the country and our world. For the opening letter of this edition of LifeTogether magazine, we are reiterating the commitments of Wartburg Theological Seminary on behalf of our administrative cabinet.

The church is called to repent and respond at this historic moment. Wartburg Theological Seminary serves Christ's church through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) by being a worship-centered community of critical theological reflection where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning. The community embodies God's mission by stewarding resources for **engaging, equipping, and sending collaborative leaders who interpret, proclaim, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ for a world created for communion with God and in need of personal and social healing.** The needs of the world for "personal and social healing" have never been more acute than during the crisis of global pandemic and under the imperative to end systemic racism.

We affirm the claims of the Social Statement of the ELCA, *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*:

1. **We expect our leadership to name the sin of racism and lead us in our repentance of it.** Although racism affects each one of us differently, we must take responsibility for our participation, acknowledge our complicity, repent of our sin, and pray God will bring us to reconciliation.
2. **We expect our leadership to persevere in their challenge to us to be in mission and ministry in a multicultural society.**

In the words of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton: "...all of us must come together on the basis of our church's commitments to condemn racism against indigenous people and people of color, white supremacy, sexism, and anti-Semitism whenever they occur. Whether our

churches and communities are racially diverse or predominantly white, our work for racial and economic justice for all people is work for all of us. We are church together."

As a community of **critical theological reflection**, we seek to analyze and repent the many ways we, individually and institutionally, are enmeshed in systemic racism. We repent of racism as America's original sin and are committed as an institution to an intentional process of transformation related to "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." This includes, as a starting point, an intentional process of ongoing antiracism training for all faculty, staff, board members, trustees, and students as part of our strategic plan. Our identity as a **worship-centered community** convicts us never to be satisfied with who we are, beseeching the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to transform us into God's beloved community.

With our vocation as a teaching community **where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning**, we put together recommended resources for study, discussion, and active engagement. In the words of St. Paul: "I appeal to you therefore, siblings, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1–2).

Visit our website for recommended resources to read alongside this statement: **www.wartburgseminary.edu/news/repent-and-respond**.

Our work is not done. Our work has just begun.

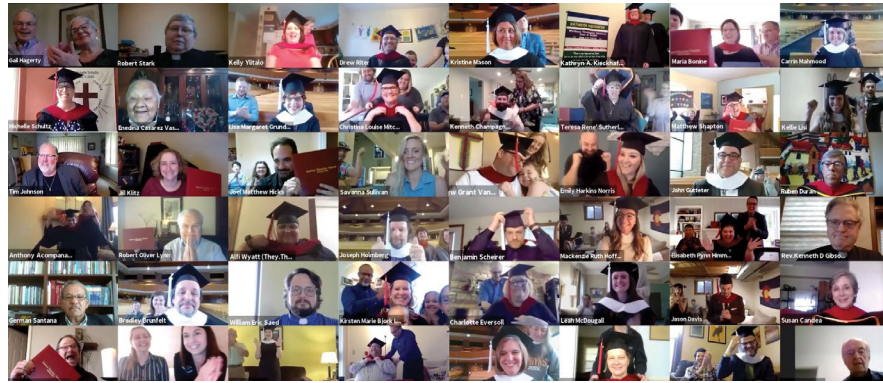
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Celebrating the Class of 2020

WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY HOSTS DIGITAL SERVICE FOR 166TH COMMENCEMENT

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”
—Ephesians 4:3–5, the Class of 2020’s chosen verse

The Wartburg Seminary Administrative Cabinet did not make the decision lightly to hold the 2020 Commencement and Baccalaureate as a distance celebration. While the WTS community grieved with graduates, we also knew it would be possible to honor graduates, certificate earners, and our special award recipients and guests through a distance celebration.

The Rev. Amy Current, Vice President for Admissions and Student Services, shared about this decision: “It is not ideal but we are doing our best to be thoughtful, creative, and to be realistic about this time in which we find ourselves.” The combined celebration via Zoom for Baccalaureate and Commencement was held in the afternoon of May 17 at 3 p.m. CT, the same date and time planned for the in-person gathering.

PLANNING AND PREPARING Rev. Amy Current

Final year master’s students—a mix of residential, commuting, distance, and collaborative—began the second semester with cap and gown measurements and professional graduation photos during Prolog Week. They shared stories, prayer, worship, and hopes for commencement in May. As the pandemic began to unfold, the joy for the coming graduation was mixed with palpable grief as students realized they wouldn’t receive their hoods in person with family and friends, the class would not share hugs, high fives, or fist bumps with classmates or professors, and, probably most poignant, wouldn’t worship together as students in Loehe Chapel again.

Due to this palpable grief, the task force chose to do our best to acknowledge it and at the same time proclaim the good news of Christ calling leaders forth into the world in a time like this. As we discussed planning graduation via Zoom, we talked about the essentials for graduation. We all agreed that

having a worship service was central that included the commencement. The idea of a “commencement kit” emerged, and one was mailed for each graduate and special guest, including (as it applied to each degree/certificate): a printed program, diploma sleeve/certificate, composite photo, a candle for the ceremony, and if a degree graduate: a cap, tassel, and hood.

Three staff members met for a social distancing box-stuffing event in early May to prepare a box for every grad, certificate recipient, and honoree. It was a great joy to see these boxes received in the days leading to the ceremony as graduates shared photos of the kit on their social media accounts. In the Loehe Chapel on campus, a chair was set for each graduate with a candle in each place as well as the chairs for the faculty in the chancel. The intent throughout the planning and preparation process was to create an intentional connection to the physical chapel and our life together through the ceremony.

Commencement weekend at WTS is always a beautiful effort shared among students, faculty, and staff annually. This year was different to be sure, but no less of a team effort. What a joy to celebrate together as community—all degrees conferred, the Gospel proclaimed, and Zoom held strong!

“BACCOMMENCEMENT” SERMON Rev. Dr. Nate Frambach

Dear graduating class of 2020 from THE Wartburg Theological Seminary: Here I am, in the Loehe chapel at WTS. I close my eyes and I see you; we see you. There is a seat here for each and every one of you, and a seat for each of your faculty—including Gwen Sayler, her seat, her banner, her vigil candle—and on each seat there is a candle lit, a symbol, representing you, representing your light. Your presence is palpable here in this hallowed chapel space, as is that of the faithful



JUNE BERNTGEN, LYNNE BAUMHOVER, AND
REV. AMY CURRENT WITH COMMENCEMENT KITS



REV. DR. NATE FRAMBACH

departed, including our sister Gwen. Beloved ones, we see you from so many points along the Way—from so many places and occasions that we, all of us in the WTS community, have been a part of throughout the seminary journey—whether for you it was one year or six years. We are in community, as community, in Christ, as Christ’s Body together. And there is no going back. We can look back, to remember, to recollect, but we move forward in the power of God’s Spirit along the Way.

This day is a marker, a milestone to be sure. It is a grand moment: for those who are graduating; for all who have so graciously, generously, and faithfully prayed for and supported these graduates; for all of us who are gathered. As Professor Schattauer has so often reminded us at rehearsals before these festivities—a baccalaureate sermon is a farewell sermon to a graduating class—and this year, all the more, so very many farewells.

This is a day of festivity, of celebration—absolutely. But above all else—beyond farewell and leave-taking, beyond transition and celebration and, dare I say, global pandemic—this is a day about sending and being sent—on a sending day, at a sending place, with sent ones who are gathered. This needs to be said, it is the life blood of this beloved community, it is the life blood of beloved community in Christ. And there may be no better chunk of the Christian narrative than the farewell discourse from John to mark such an occasion.

Chapter 14 is the beginning of Jesus’ last conversation with His disciples in John’s Gos-

pel story, a farewell discourse that comes after they have shared the Passover meal. These disciples appear to be confused, disoriented, afraid. There is seemingly much the disciples do not understand, but at least they were listening. Their questions—Thomas, Philip, Judas (not Iscariot)—indicate that they were listening, engaged, curious. It starts out pretty well at the beginning of the chapter—comfort, reassurance, promise in the face of confusion and fear: “Do not let your hearts be troubled... I go to prepare a place for you... I will take you to myself... where I am, you may be also.” Good pastoral care for those facing the absence of the known, the familiar, the routines and rhythms to which they were accustomed and for which they hoped—not to mention the One on whom they had relied, to whom they had been loyal, who had led them and given them hope.

Shortly thereafter Jesus moves beyond the comforting opening promise to something rather startling: “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” Well that escalated quickly. If anyone other than Jesus had said those words we would call it blasphemy. Greater works than Jesus? How can that be?

Here’s how. Jesus promised to be present with the disciples in a different way. “I will ask God, and God will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.” But “forever” was not until further notice, at some later time, delayed, postponed to a time after death. Forever had stepped into the here and now. The Spirit of truth, the Advocate will come here. Jesus will

forever be tangled up in this world's messiness and earthiness, in the ever-present now.

The work to which we are called is to be the hands and feet and mouths of One who has no other hands or feet or mouth except our own. Like the first disciples, we are trying to figure out how best to do this faced with the seeming absence of so much that has sustained us.

We are sent out on a journey for which there are no sure maps but abundant promise: I will not leave you orphaned. The Holy Spirit, Advocate/Helper, will be with you forever. Our calling together is to discern a way forward on this road we have chosen, or better yet, that has chosen us—even and especially when the way forward is at best unclear and uncertain. But hear this, people of God: Christ will be the One who will sustain us—who will sustain you—along this way because there is no One else in the entire cosmos with love and power enough to do so.

I want to speak a song for you. I have said it before at such a time as this, and it is especially pertinent this year. I won't try to sing it, as did Bilbo Baggins, "softly...in a low voice...as if to himself." It's from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. "But the time has come," Bilbo Baggins announced, "I am being swept off my feet at last."

The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.

Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.

"I am the way," says Jesus, or, I am the Road. The Risen One is ever out ahead of us on the Road, as the Road, and bids us to come and follow as witnesses, to the ends of the earth. And in some crazy manner, we are all on the road that belongs to Christ, that is Christ, or such at least is our deepest hope and prayer. There is not a single shoe present here today that does not contain, from time to time, a foot of clay—stumbling, tripped up, confused, disoriented, wayward. Those of us who are part of the Church know we are not what Jesus called us to be. We spend too much and share too little; we judge too many and love too few; we wait too long and act too late. But in just such bodies as ours we seek to follow the Road that is Christ and make our way in and through this world that God so loves. We have been chosen by this Road, and by grace we are being swept along some larger Way. By grace there come moments when Christ shows up along the Way, often unbidden but seldom unwelcome, and we feel in our bones what it is like to be on that Way.

And so, we go—at times confused, disoriented, perhaps afraid, at other times hopeful, joy-filled—but never orphaned nor alone nor unac-

companied—that is Christ's promise. That is the promise of Christ for you.

We gather this afternoon in these latter days of Eastertide, with the Easter proclamation—that Christ is risen, indeed—ever near us, on our lips and in our hearts. At the conclusion of this commencement liturgy, this assembly of believers will rise, all in our own places, and be on our way—even if that's just to the next room. We will go, because we are sent, to live in, to live with the love of God in Christ. That love is what connects us to each and every person who lives in this world that God so loves. Church, go, in Love; WTS class of 2020, go, with Love; Christ is with you. And remember that you are a baptized child of God. Whatever else you are, remember you are that, for that is the basis of whatever else you are.

SPECIAL AWARDS AND HONORS

The Living Loehe Award, established by Wartburg Seminary in 1973 as a way of honoring individuals who have given distinguished service to and through the church and exemplify Christ's call to be disciples in the context of their own daily lives and professional commitments, was given at commencement to Rev. Kenneth D. Gibson '95 and Rev Dr. David Solberg '66.

Rev. Kenneth D. Gibson '95 is Senior Pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in Woodstock, IL, where he prayerfully leads a congregation of over 1700 members, cultivating a culture of love and generosity. He also provides key leadership in the Woodstock Area Community Ministries, an ecumenical and interfaith organization. Pastor Gibson served in the WTS Mission Support office from 2000–2008. In the spirit of Dr. William Weiblen, the air Ken breathes is Wartburg air. Rev. Dr. David Solberg '66 was baptized, confirmed, and ordained at Big Elk Creek Church in Elk Creek, WI. After earning his MDiv at WTS, he went on to earn a Doctor of Ministry from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He served on the WTS Mission Support team from 1984–2008. Rev. Solberg's fundraising efforts led WTS to be identified as the top seminary for alumni support among 214 accredited theological schools in the United States and Canada. During his fundraising career, Pastor Solberg raised more than \$100 million to support the church and its mission.

The Honorary Doctor of Divinity was presented to Rev. Susan Candea '83, Bishop of the Central States Synod, and Rev. Rubén F. Durán, Director for Congregational Vitality in the Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA. Rev. Durán also served as the Commencement speaker.

Rev. Susan Candea, Bishop of the Central States Synod, has been involved in many forms of ministry, including advocacy work, campus ministry, youth gatherings, community organizing, interfaith cooperation, and ecumenical work, and been a voting member at four churchwide assemblies. Bishop Candea has served as pastor for congregations in Colorado and Kansas and the Central States Synod as Assistant to the Bishop and the Director for Evangelical Mission prior to serving as Bishop. She emphasizes that all Christians are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ who listen to the Spirit to grow in their faith in Jesus Christ and participate faithfully in God's transforming work in the world.

Rev. Rubén F. Durán, Director for Congregational Vitality in the Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA, promotes synodical mission strategies, local initiatives, and innovative models to nurture life-changing relationships in new and existing communities of faith in the U.S. and the Caribbean. Pastor Durán served parishes in Seattle, WA and Los Angeles, CA prior to becoming Associate to the Bishop and Mission Director for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. He has also served as Associate Director for Latino Outreach and Director for New Congregations in the ELCA churchwide offices. Keenly aware that members of the body of Christ come from diverse backgrounds, Rev. Durán is passionate about equipping and forming disciples for their witness to the Gospel.

Rev. Durán also served as the Commencement speaker, sharing powerfully: "Enough of building walls. Vertical walls are not only an issue of borders, but also the walls that have been built in the hearts and minds of people. So, I call on you today to turn vertical walls into horizontal tables that don't divide but bring people together so we can plan our future with one another in community under God's grace. I call on you to set tables before people so we can come together and you can connect those tables with God's table where we are all welcome to be nourished and sustained for our journey."

CHARGE TO THE CLASS OF 2020 (EXCERPT) Dr. Kristine Stache

Congratulations to the class of 2020, each and every one of you. It is a privilege for me to be here today, in this role, sending you off with a charge, so to speak. I look out at your faces on my screen and can't help but be thrilled for the church. You are smart, creative, passionate, faithful, and most often patient leaders. Truth be told, you probably taught me far more than I ever taught you over the last few years.



JASON POOLE-XIONG



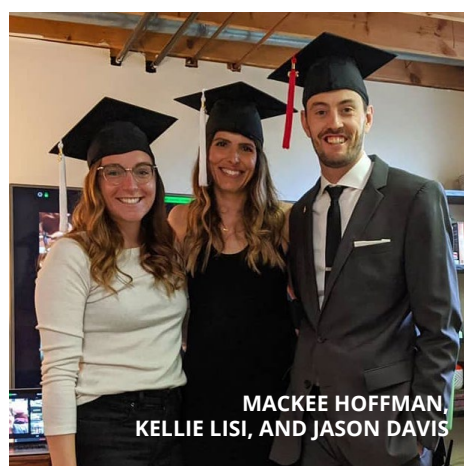
CHRISTINA KADELBACH AND FAMILY



GRANT VANDERFORD AND FRIEND



KIRSTEN LEE AND FAMILY



MACKEE HOFFMAN,
KELLIE LISI, AND JASON DAVIS



EMILY NORRIS



We live in an unusual time, in the midst of an unexpected year. We've experienced loss on so many levels—the deaths of dear ones, the departure of dear ones, and the disappointment and grief that comes from expectations that didn't turn out the way we had hoped. We grieve. We grieve the loss of what was and what might have been. My guess is that this isn't what you signed up for, but this is where we find ourselves. And it is from here we are called to lead. God's call to leadership is nothing if not unexpected, surprising, and yes, on occasion, filled with disappointment. But remember, when there is sorrow, there is also joy.

I pray, we taught you how to lead out of the past, in the here and now, and into the future. The Gospel of Christ transcends time and place as much as it is specific to time and place. Its particu-

larity is the very thing that makes it universal, for there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all. And if we've done our jobs as an institution of theological education, then your training and formation, your time with us has prepared you for particularly in whatever shape, place, and time it comes.

RESPONSE FROM THE CLASS OF 2020 (EXCERPT)
Grant Vanderford and Elisabeth Pynn Himmelman, Class Co-Presidents

As we are sent from this place, as the ground beneath our feet shifts from that of the Castle which has been shaped by deep-thinking faculty, heaps of reading, Zoom links, shenanigans, and daily assignments—God calls us to new holy ground in the next chapter of our ministry.

As we are sent from this place that has helped us claim our identity as God's stewards of word, service, and sacrament, our class knows we could not have done it without the gift of relationship with each of you gathered here—our family and friends, our children and loved ones—who have walked with us through thick and thin. We are humbled and grateful for your accompaniment on this path.

As we are sent from this place that has nourished our heads and hearts, our class takes with us deep gratitude to the faculty and staff of Wartburg Seminary. You have challenged us and talked us off the ledge, you have frustrated us and brought great laughter and wisdom. In many ways, we are who we are because you are who you are. Thank you.

As we are sent from this place, beloved dear ones, class of 2020, God gives us faith to do the very thing God has called us to; to dare to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. To dare to trust it is God who promises to make a way when there seems to be no way. To dare to live into God's gift of faith, trusting in God we are one. Sent from this place to be storytellers and curators for the sake of the Gospel.

IN CLOSING

Once a Wartburger, always a Wartburger. We can't wait to welcome this special class of graduates back to campus when the time comes. For now, Rev. Dr. Nate Frambach's words to the class during his sermon bring comfort in the promise of God to go forth to the work to which we are called with confidence that we are not alone.

Continuing as a Worship-Centered Community

REV. DR. THOMAS SCHATTAUER & MATTHEW O'REAR REFLECT ON NEW DAILY RHYTHM OF DIGITAL WORSHIP AT WTS

THE NEW RHYTHM OF DIGITAL WORSHIP Rev. Dr. Thomas Schattauer

During this time of heightened concern, uncertainty, and social isolation due to the coronavirus, it remains essential that we continue to be a worship-centered community—a community that sings and prays around God's word. We are committed to gather as a community for worship each day at the regular 10:30 a.m. CT hour. Students, faculty, and staff join as their schedule allows and hang around for fellowship and chat time in Zoom breakout rooms following the service.

We are keeping the worship services internal to the WTS community so that we can maintain a space for worship that allows us to experiment and practice the leadership of worship in this digital environment.

As we prepare for worship by Zoom, we have invited the WTS community to consider how they might create an appropriate environment for worship wherever they are. We suggest lighting a candle at the beginning of worship each day. On Monday, we also suggest a bowl of water as a reminder of baptism for Prayer at the Font; on Tuesday, perhaps an image of the sun rising for Morning Prayer; and on Wednesday, an opened Bible or something that conveys the Word of God to you for the Service of the Word.

We place our trust in God to gather us in the name of Jesus and to form us as a people free from fear and free for life-giving relationships with one another.

Though we are scattered and separated during the pandemic, Wartburg has continued to be a worship-centered community. We were quickly able to move daily Chapel into a Chapel Zoom room, where students, faculty, and staff gather online through a dedicated

link. The Chapel Staff with the assistance and inspiration of Matt O'Rear (Interim Dean of the Chapel beginning July 1, 2020) and Ted Winders (Technology Director) worked diligently to forward the regular patterns of our worship in this digital environment. Gathering in this way with one another around scripture, song, and prayer has been a great gift. There's even opportunity for after-worship fellowship in a virtual "coffee hour" each day with community announcements followed by breakout rooms—a "Zoomfectory." While the on-campus community indeed looks forward to the day we can gather again in person, we are learning ever new ways of gathering our hybrid community of residential and distance learners in digital space.

REFLECTING ON DIGITAL WORSHIP Matthew O'Rear

This Eastertide, the gospel for the second Sunday of Easter, reminded us that Jesus came to the disciples who were behind closed and locked doors. COVID-19 has indeed shifted the worship life at Wartburg Seminary, but we have remained a worship-centered community, even behind our own closed and locked doors.

Utilizing the same technology we use for classroom instruction, we have been able to continue our weekly pattern of worship. Faculty, students, and staff have continued to provide leadership, and we have seen a new way of being the body of Christ develop organically.

Each of the worship leaders has provided innovative ways to communicate the gospel: props during a sermon, artwork created to be displayed on the screen, and even providing special music to help focus our worship.

While we long to physically gather back in our beloved Chapel, what this time apart has

shown is that Christ is present, we still have an assembly of worshipers, and the gospel is proclaimed anew even behind our locked doors.

LOOKING AHEAD: WORSHIP AT WTS

Rev. Dr. Thomas Schattauer, who has long served Wartburg Seminary as Professor of Liturgics and Dean of the Chapel, will be retiring at the end of this 2019–20 academic year. Having taught in the ministry division and served as Dean of the Loehe Chapel since 1996, Dr. Schattauer treasures the relationships with students, faculty, staff, and alumni that have developed through the years. As he concludes this chapter of his life, he anticipates enjoying a new chapter of life in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota.

Interim President Dr. Kristine Stache announced to the Wartburg Seminary community the appointment of Matthew O'Rear as Wartburg's Interim Dean of the Chapel starting July 1, 2020. With a passion for liturgy and liturgical theology, Matt has served the Wartburg chapel and led numerous liturgies throughout the wider church. He worked with Thomas over several months to prepare for this transition.

In addition to working with the WTS community and its technology, Matthew has provided advice and resources to several local Dubuque congregations and his home congregation in New York City as they transitioned to worshipping online. He also co-led a webinar for LEAD on leading digital worship, which was attended by more than 400 church leaders.



Ponderings on Theological Education, Technology, and the “Rona”

REFLECTION BY REV. DR. SAMUEL D. GIERE

“My office is now something more like a studio. I teach all of my classes sitting at my table engaging students via webcam and screen. Yes, we do spend time talking about the impact of COVID-19 in nearly every class, as there is some impact on all of us. But learning continues. Preaching formation continues.”

—Rev. Dr. Samuel D. Giere, Professor of Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation

Midway through Lent, I was struck by how well-prepared our Wartburg Theological Seminary students and recent graduates are to tend to the unique impact of the flatten-the-curve social-distancing response to the “Rona” (a.k.a., COVID-19) pandemic—the shift of parish life from physical to digital space.

Literally overnight, people across the United States and around the globe were prohibited from gathering physically because of social-distancing measures. Out of care for the neighbor and trust that the Word can be a means of the Spirit with the internet serving as a semipermeable digital sanctuary, innovation happened. Boom! Overnight, sermons moved from proclamation shared with physical gatherings to digital proclamation shared via the likes of Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube. I have been and continue to be impressed with our students’ ability to hold together the technological innovations and faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A common thread that I lean on when speaking to students about preaching and leading worship is to encourage planning, tending, and leading worship as if it matters for the life of the world. While we don’t make the Triune God present, we as leaders invoke and steward Christ’s presence in a way that embodies and communicates Christ’s promise to show up. The 20th chapter of John regularly comes to mind. Jesus showing up to Mary in the fog of grief and fear and bewilderment and cutting through the fog with the intimacy of her name. Jesus showing up to the disciples—not once, but twice—when they are huddled in fear and

confusion behind locked doors. Jesus shows up, greets them with “Peace be with you,” and shows them by way of his wounds who he is—the crucified and risen Lord.

Lent has come and gone, and in the words of one of the many memes that have sprouted at the fertile intersection of pandemic and church: It was the Lentiest Lent ever! Even fully in the season of Easter, we continued to huddle behind locked doors. While fear motivates some, I’d like to think that many huddle for love of neighbor. Flatten-the-curve, after all, is an exercise of faith active in love, especially for those whose health is fragile, whose immune systems are compromised. It is an expression of love for healthcare workers, first responders, grocery store employees, truckers, delivery folks, gas station employees. So, we huddle. We practice social distancing.

The faithful use of technology has facilitated the Word passing into the locked rooms of our huddling. Our students and recent grads, along with many other tech-savvy (and some not-so-tech-savvy) leaders in the church have been hard at work stewarding the proclamation of the Word of promise and life, of forgiveness and grace, of healing and wholeness to those behind locked doors in this season of COVID-19. For this, I give thanks.

While the pandemic has altered (at least temporarily) life and church as we have experienced it, classes at Wartburg Seminary go on. Formation continues. Learning moves along with a particular kind of urgency and engagement. In the digital preaching classroom, I have seen and heard a heightened

engagement by students in stewarding the Word. They care deeply, and they understand the longing for good news, for hope, for love, for connection.

For me as a teacher and a member of this fine, dedicated faculty, the impact of social distances was relatively minor. The hybrid classrooms where we teach day in and day out have simply become all online. We have not missed a single class period because of the pandemic. What has changed is that our residential students are staying at home. Whether in the Fishbowl or the dorms or in Florida or Southern California, all of our students are distance students. Another thing that has changed is that my office is now something more like a studio. I teach all of my classes sitting at my table engaging students via webcam and screen. Yes, we do spend time talking about the impact of COVID-19 in nearly every class, as there is some impact on all of us. But learning continues. Preaching formation continues.

One particular aspect of my teaching has changed this year, but it happened a good while before the pandemic made an impact in Iowa. A group of second-year students

approached me during Prolog Week and asked if I would consider an asynchronous preaching precept. While I’ve been teaching preaching online for a number of years, I had to this point required all students to participate synchronously in preaching precepts (i.e., labs). As most of our asynchronous students work during the day and do schoolwork on evenings and weekends, the scheduling of asynchronous precepts has always been tricky—usually ending up with something early in the morning or in the evening. I learned with and from the asynchronous students to be time-contortionists. The group that approached me in early February 2020, however, won me over with their confidence that together we could make a fully asynchronous preaching precept happen.

This semester, then, in addition to the five real-time preaching precepts, there is one that is asynchronous. Eight students preaching, receiving feedback, responding to critique, and being formed as faithful stewards of the Word. Advances in technology have made this possible. Broader bandwidth for the internet, more stable connections, faster processors, and a program called VoiceThread.

“Centered in daily worship, the mutual care, prayer, support, and encouragement among the students **has been moving to observe and participate in** during these uncertain times.”

REV. DR. SAMUEL D. GIERE





REV. DR. SAMUEL D. GIERE

Without getting too deep into the weeds about how the software works, what we have here is digital means of taking a conversation that happens over the course of a few days and condensing it to a half-hour. Likewise, VoiceThread permits a conversation that would unfold in a real-time classroom in thirty minutes to unfold over the course of days as the students are able to tend to it. This software facilitates formative conversations for students who are answering a call to ministry while—for a whole host of reasons—continuing to work, care for family members, and so on.

Is it as effective as face-to-face real-time engagement? As someone who entered into this student-initiated experiment this semester with at least a wee bit of skepticism, I would answer yes. It is as effective. With students who are open and dedicated to the formation process, it is as effective. I have been delightfully impressed by the honesty and the depth of conversation that happens in this fully virtual preaching precept. This happens because the students are all-in, not only for themselves but for one another.

As I think about this, all of our students have really stepped up. From our castle and campus here in Dubuque to the four corners of the country, there is an obvious esprit de corps among the sprawling web of Wartburgers. Centered in daily worship that like everything

else has moved online, the mutual care, prayer, support, and encouragement among the students has been moving to observe and to participate in during these uncertain times.

The end of the semester didn't look much like what I assumed it would when the semester began. While I want to say that it has been a wild ride, at Wartburg it has really been quite smooth. As schools around the world have been forced to move into online space because of the pandemic, our curricular innovations over the past four years put us in a place to handle the necessary changes with barely a hiccup. I think that because our school had the collective technological chops to make this move smoothly, we have maintained the capacity to continue to be both faithful and creative technology users, especially with preaching and worship, sharing much of this learning with local parishes around the country for the sake of the gospel.

As I ponder the impact of the "Rona" on the preaching classroom, I am confident that we have remained centered in the cross of Christ, where the Triune God shows us God's commitment to the world and the suffering of the world in a way that we don't have to minimize. Technology is not an end in itself but a means for sharing the Triune God's revelation of who God is to quarantined, huddled folks in need of good news: "Peace be with you."

Faith-Filled Quarantine: Lessons from the Iranian Hostage Crisis

KATHRYN (KATE) KOOB'S STORY

"I was a political prisoner, but not in my own country. I prayed for those people being held by their own governments. I prayed for parents dealing with the terminal illness of a child. I prayed for people without a place to live or who had to send their children to bed hungry at night! I was warm and had enough to eat. That helped put things into perspective. It did not stop me from asking God to deliver us and send us all home safely, but it reminded me that I could continue to do God's work in prayer."

—Kathryn (Kate) Koob, Iranian Hostage Crisis survivor



KATHRYN (KATE) KOOB

Kathryn (Kate) Koob is a lifelong Lutheran, dedicated person of faith, and longtime Wartburg Seminary supporter. The faith learned at home and in church shaped her choices and life's path, eventually leading to a career in foreign service with a posting in Tehran, Iran in 1979 shortly after the Iranian Revolution had begun. Kate was one of the 52 American State Department staff members taken hostage at the U.S. Embassy. The Iranian Hostage Crisis lasted 444 days.

During the 14-month captivity, Kate cites faith as foundational to sustaining her: "I put into practice everything I learned at home, in Sunday school and confirmation, at college and Bible study: praying, remembering others in greater need than I was, learning how to forgive my enemies, hymn singing and relying on the promises of Scriptures. I pray in many ways and for many things. I pray for my family, friends, church and world.

I know firsthand the power of prayer for others. During my time in Iran, I felt held up by the safety net of prayer that was being said for all of us during the time of our captivity." She continued in an interview with her alma mater, Wartburg College, published in *Wartburg Magazine* to describe the impact of God's presence in her life in and beyond captivity: "We often face things over which we have no power, like an unexpected illness, death of a loved one, loss of a job, so many different things. And yet we have the grace of God to face those things with the support of friends and family. Even though I wasn't talking with my friends and family, I knew that they were praying for me. You use those resources you have, and you deal with the unexpected in your life one day at a time, or 15 minutes at a time. Sometimes, it was just, 'Dear Lord, get me through the next 15 minutes.'"

Since her return to the U.S., Kate continued her career in foreign service with assignments in Austria, Australia, and Germany through to her retirement. She continued a lifelong commitment to cultivating curiosity and deepening her faith and earned a master's degree in Religion from the Lutheran School of Theology at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary) in retirement.

Kate published an account of her experience in *Guest of the Revolution: The Triumphant Story of an American Held Hostage in Iran* in 1982, speaks and has been interviewed by countless publications (including C-SPAN, AARP, *Living Lutheran*, and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs), received the Living Loehe Award from Wartburg Seminary in 1981, and

donated several artifacts to the Wartburg College Archives to form the Kathryn Koob Collection.

We interviewed her to hear more of her story and how faith shaped her life beginning at home, throughout the Iranian Hostage Crisis, and in the time we find ourselves now—a much different kind of isolation, but the lessons from her time as a hostage continue to guide her.

How were you introduced to faith in your childhood? What practices and pieces of the Lutheran belief system became important to you and your formation?

I grew up in a household of living faith. I was prayed for before I was born and one of the very first places I was taken as a newborn was to church to be baptized. I am sure one of the first words I was taught was to say “Amen.” Prayer was a constant in my life—asking a blessing before every meal and returning thanks at the end of the meal. Bedtime prayers were as much a part of the bedtime ritual as was the bedtime story. And that included asking God to bless family members by name. As the oldest of six, I was encouraged to help my little sisters say their prayers. It was a family affair. Faith was a part of life—home, school, and special events. Church came first, no questions asked. It was just the way things were!

I wanted to teach speech and drama, but that would require a four-year degree that my family could not afford. I found a course at Wartburg College where I could get training to be a lay worker in the church. That appealed to me. I could continue to do the things I loved—teaching, working with older youth, etc. I opted for that and ended up with a job helping the development of new

churches. I would work for a congregation for two or three months doing everything from door-to-door calling to teacher training to youth work and in a real emergency playing the piano for Sunday worship. I did this for two years, then went back to Wartburg to finish my degree in Secondary Education. After receiving my BA, I taught speech and drama and went back to school during the summer months, eventually earning a Master of Arts in Theater.

You shared with the *Living Lutheran* team that someone suggested you might enjoy the work of the cultural section of our embassies and ultimately became part of the U.S. Foreign Service. You were on assignment in Iran when you were taken hostage. We are in a time of extended isolation from places of worship, friends, family and much of what we held as basic or normal about our daily routines. Is there anything applicable now from what you learned or what sustained you while being held hostage in Iran?

I think it is important to establish a routine. For example, during the hostage crisis, I recognized I had been given a gift of time, so I decided to spend part of that gift to explore the contemplative life. It was something I had wondered about for a long time. I decided to study the Book of Psalms during this time, reading three a day, and thinking about how they addressed God. I love the Psalms because they express the whole gamut of human emotions.

One other practice gave me a lot of help: I turned to a list I had created of people who were worse off than I was and spent time in prayer for them. I was a political prisoner, but not in my own country. I prayed for those people being held by their own governments. I prayed for parents dealing with the terminal illness of a child. I prayed for people without a place to live or who had to send their children to bed hungry at night! I was warm and had enough to eat. That helped put things into perspective. It did not stop me from asking God to deliver us and send us all home safely, but it reminded me that I could continue to do God’s work in prayer. It also reminded me of Romans 8:38-39 that promises nothing can separate us from God! God was with me.



KATE'S SISTERS HANG YELLOW RIBBONS



KATE REUNITING WITH HER PARENTS

Is there anything emerging in this time—a creative moment, worship practice, way of learning or relating—that you hope continues beyond our current quarantine?

I have reveled in the wonderful ways I have been able to worship during this time. Virtual services, but in so many ways: my own parish, a former parish, and worldwide with former churches in Berlin, Vienna, Paris, and Wednesday virtual chapel with ELCA headquarters. I miss my Bible study group and will be glad to get back to face-to-face meetings, but in the meantime, there is a wonderful number of online worship opportunities, and I revel in the possibilities for joining this network of the faith family.

We (WTS) often use language of “preparing leaders for a changing church and world.” Many are feeling that everything changed almost overnight. What do you find important from your faith in times of rapid change like these?

My confirmation verse was Matthew 28:20: “Lo, I am with you to the end of the ages.” God is constant—but God’s creation is not. We are part of that creation and we are always in change—hopefully for a better, stronger relationship with God—and God’s creation. I heard an astronomer acknowledge that creation could very well be continuing in the deep reaches of space. The change of seasons in our world also

teaches us about growing and being made new. It is exciting, humbling, and awesome. Sometimes changes are slow and sometimes they seem to come out of nowhere very suddenly. We must celebrate that.

What made you decide to return to school for a degree in religion?

Following one of the talks I gave after coming home from Iran, someone asked me how much Tillich I had read. I had not studied Tillich at all, but that got me thinking and eventually I had an opportunity to audit a class in Tillich’s theology at the University of Vienna, in Vienna, Austria. That was super. I had discussed some of the questions I had pondered during my stay in Iran with my pastor, Rev. Ron Christian, and he said he suggested auditing a seminary course or two to get some of the answers I was seeking. I started with a class or two at the Gettysburg House of Studies in Washington, D.C. and I enjoyed them so much I ended up at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary). I loved it. It built on what I had been taught first of all in Sunday school, then confirmation, and then college.

I also by that time had had the privilege of working on some national and international activities of the church, been able to visit historic sites related to my faith, and met some wonderful people who encouraged





me. I am so grateful for the many people God sent my way—Dr. E. A. Schick (who taught at both Wartburg College and Seminary), Henri Nouwen, Miroslav Volf, and the writings of Catherine Marshall as well as a myriad of others who listened to my questions, engaged me in discussion, and continue to help me as I continue seeking. God’s riches are abundant.

How did you get connected to Wartburg Seminary and why do you feel it is a mission worth supporting?

Wartburg has always been “my” seminary, and I remember hearing about it when I was a little girl. Many of the pastors of my home congregation were graduates of WTS, and when I was at Wartburg College many of my classmates were “pre-theology” students and headed to Dubuque on graduation. The Lutheran church since the time of the Reformation has been a teaching church, and WTS trains people to teach. That alone would be enough, but this teaching school turns out pastors and church leaders who

work with compassion for justice and equity for all—whether it is in our own backyard or in Namibia or assisting in the resettlement of refugees at the end of World War II and more recently. It is a living center of God’s relationship with God’s created image—humankind.

If you were to share a “nugget of wisdom” or piece of advice for WTS students/future ministry leaders, what would that be?

Listen! I’ve long admired the contemplative lifestyle, and in Iran I had a chance to explore that. It means listening to many voices, and always being extra quiet for that “still, small voice” that comes in the midst of the thundering noise of life. Continue seeking and above all, loving as you have been loved by our gracious God.

All images courtesy of the Kathryn Koob Collection at Wartburg College. Printed with permission. View the archives online at wartburg.edu/archives.

#NoPlasticsforLent Initiative with ELCA Young Adults

WTS STUDENTS PLAY KEY ROLE IN CHURCHWIDE INITIATIVE

Savanna Sullivan, Program Director of ELCA Young Adults and WTS Master of Arts 2020 graduate, launched #NoPlasticsforLent as part of her role with the ELCA and as a project for an independent study. Read about the initiative, contributions from additional WTS students, and how it shifted in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

WTS Master of Arts 2020 graduates Baird Linke and Savanna Sullivan, who also serves as Program Director of ELCA Young Adults, traveled to Madrid, Spain in December 2019 as part of the ELCA and Lutheran World Federation delegation to the 25th United Nations Climate Change Conference (also known as COP25). The delegation was composed fully of young adults who had also led the call for the ELCA to increase its commitment to caring for creation at the most recent Churchwide Assembly held in Milwaukee, WI in August of 2019. Out of that call, the #NoPlasticsforLent initiative was born.

THE PROJECT: AN INTRODUCTION

The #NoPlasticsforLent initiative was led by young adults across the ELCA and called us to both acknowledge the ways we have been complicit in degrading the planet and its resources, and to take tangible actions to better

care for each other and the earth. In the ELCA Young Adults blog, Savanna Sullivan described the project and centered it in the Lenten practices of prayer (for creation), lament (for complicity), and fasting (from harm to creation).

Savanna described the concrete actions for the initiative: “Our suggestion is that individuals, families, and communities fast for 40 days from single-use plastics. We want this initiative to be accessible to all, and if this is not possible for you in your context or community, we invite you to sustainability practices that make sense for you.” Savanna, along with several WTS students and faculty, offered resources for those following along with #NoPlasticsforLent in weekly blogs from young adult writers, a video series that shared tips and single-use plastic switches, and by creating space for idea-sharing and encouragement. For the video series, WTS diaconal



SAVANNA SULLIVAN (LEFT OF CENTER) AND BAIRD LINKE (THIRD FROM RIGHT) WITH ELCA /LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION DELEGATION AT COP25 CONFERENCE IN MADRID, SPAIN

ministry student (now graduate) Kellie Lisi used Facebook Live to talk theology and practical tips for individuals, families, and congregations for living sustainably.

Savanna also shared in her blog introducing the initiative: “We know that it will take more than giving up plastic cups at communion to heal the earth, but we hope that walking together as the Body of Christ in this initiative during this Lenten season will help us both individually and communally be better neighbors to plants, animals, the earth, and each other in our day-to-day lives. We also hope that it will move us toward more long-term justice-seeking for the creation in our care.”

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PHYSICAL-DISTANCING MEASURES

Kellie Lisi, Master of Arts in Diaconal Ministry 2020 graduate

Prior to physical-distancing due to COVID-19, the plan was to host Facebook Live conversations with a different WTS Sustainability Task Force (STF) member each week. Lars Anderson [WTS Master of Divinity student] led with me the first week, Martin Lohrmann [WTS Professor] the second, and Elise Hynek [WTS Master of Divinity student] the third. We had plans to engage each of the leaders on STF (and their own areas of expertise) throughout the series—and even had ideas to reach outside the WTS community to connect with leaders of different faith groups to learn about sustainability in their own contexts/faith communities. Because of the pandemic and the capacity limitations that resulted, the conversation became smaller.

I worked to make connections between sustainability and the current context and to continue to offer swaps and actionable items even once everything shifted. Both Savanna and I felt that this was essential to the series. In the midst of this, I focused on actionable steps that could still be used in the midst of societal and cultural shifts. The work did not change in the sense that the objectives remained the same. Here are a few of the objectives I was personally focused on:

- To educate around habits of consumption
- To provide action-focused opportunities to initiate change
- To connect the work of sustainability to theological grounding
- To create a community of dialogue and resources

Given this was an online movement, we were largely able to press on as planned.

THE GRAPHIC & PROJECT CLOSURE

The #NoPlasticsforLent image—shared across the wider church—was designed and created by WTS Baird Linke, 2020 Master of Arts graduate. Baird was among the delegation that represented the ELCA at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (pictured on the previous page) and also contributed to the ELCA Young Adult blog with the closing post, titled “What Good Is a Meal?” In the blog (centered on the Last Supper), Baird shared: “I am terrified by the challenges we face. I worry that I am not enough to confront them on my own and that nothing short of a miracle will be able to save me. But Jesus tells us, ‘on the night in which he was betrayed,’ that we have exactly what we need. Throughout the No Plastics for Lent campaign I’ve seen people sharing the small, holy ways that they pay attention to the world around them and I’ve gotten so much hope from the small and the holy. Thank you for walking this journey with me, and I look forward to breaking bread with you.”



GLOBAL IMPACT: OVER 100,000 REACHED

Kellie and Savanna led a workshop titled “Creation Care for Lent, Creation Care for Life” during the one-day digital conference Creation in Crisis: Science and Theology Respond. During that workshop, they shared the impact of this young-adult led movement globally:

- Reached over 100,000 online
- 30 states represented
- 5 countries reached
- Article featured Savanna in the *New Yorker* about faith communities committing to reducing carbon footprint.

We have curated resources from this project on our website. Visit wartburgseminary.edu/student-story/no-plastics for links to the ELCA Young Adult blogs, video series, Creation in Crisis conference videos and details, and more about this exciting and impactful initiative.

Read More Stories on Creativity & Continuity in the WTS Community

VISIT: WARTBURGSEMINARY.EDU/COVIDRESPONSE

Creation in Crisis

WTS HOSTS ONE-DAY DIGITAL CONFERENCE

The Creation in Crisis: Science and Theology Respond Conference focused on the urgent environmental crisis facing humanity and our entire planet. We were privileged to welcome Nalini Nadkarni, Cornelia Mutel, and Larry Rasmussen as our keynote presenters. This conference was offered as a result of a grant award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) to participate in the Science for Seminaries project of the AAAS Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion (DoSER) Program.

Rev. Emily Norris

BEGINNING A NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITY IN COVID-19

Preparing for graduation from the WTS Master of Divinity program in 2020, Emily Norris launched the new church community called The Dwelling in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The Dwelling is specifically, but not exclusively, for those experiencing homelessness. Emily shared her excitement for this new venture in partnership with the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit and North Carolina Synod and planned to open the doors to The Dwelling on Easter this year. As the coronavirus began to spread and lockdowns began, everything changed.

Easter Surprise

“HE IS RISEN” CROSSES PLANTED ON CAMPUS OVERNIGHT BEFORE EASTER

Master of Divinity student Nichole D’Onofrio began in the Fall of 2019 as a distance learner in southern California. She had roots in Iowa and fell in love with the community at WTS and decided to move to Dubuque with her family to become a residential learner beginning with the spring semester. With her, she brought a decades-long tradition from her congregation in Ventura, CA which made for a beautiful Easter surprise on campus—made even more joyful during this unprecedented season of quarantine.

Fieldwork Follow-Up

UPDATES FROM HANNAH PURKEY AND TINA BEAUVAIS

Hannah Purkey and Tina Beauvais, both first year Master of Divinity students, shared their fieldwork stories in the Spring 2020 Edition of *LifeTogether*. As the world rapidly changed around us during the COVID-19 pandemic and physical distancing measures, so did their fieldwork experiences. Tina began to use her business (a small sewing factory) to make and donate cloth masks for people in need of them. Hannah (previously abroad in Costa Rica), moved to campus and began tutoring online through WhatsApp.

WTS Alumni Rally to Support Student Scholarships

CLASS OF 2017 AND CLASS OF 1965 EXCEED MILESTONE YEAR FUNDRAISING GOALS DESPITE REUNION CANCELLATION



CLASS OF 2017

Rev. Megan Preston and Rev. Kyle Barton

As we approached graduation in 2017, our class was very aware of the changing landscape of theological education and the financial burden students and families were bearing. A few of us were sitting around the dinner table at the Bartons' Denver Court home and we sort of stumbled on the idea of creating a scholarship fund. We thought maybe our class gift could show our investment in the healthy future of Wartburg, seminary education, and trained theologians. We also wanted to show our gratitude for the many ways we had been supported through our time in seminary and pay that forward to students we trusted would follow us.

Kyle spoke with the Development Team and got the process rolling. We got our class jazzed about the idea, and before we left campus we had about \$7,500 cash capital raised through initial gifts from class contributions, our home congregations, internship congregations, and other sources. Then, we pledged 1% of our salaries for a minimum of three years to the fund. We needed to get to a principal amount of \$25K in order for the scholarship to be endowed. Our goal was to make that happen by our three-year reunion. Unfortunately, our reunion was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distanc-

ing measures, but we were still committed to achieving our goal. We're all very excited we achieved our goal and many plan to continue contributing.

CLASS OF 1965

The Wartburg Seminary class of 1965 has come together to make a difference. With the leadership of Rev. Dr. Lyle Miller, WTS 1965 class president, they set a goal to raise \$5,500 to gift to student scholarships. When asked why his class would want to set such a challenge goal, Lyle shared it was their "discovery of the need for gifts," coupled with their "gratitude." He continued, "We are grateful to God for God's graciousness to us in so many ways. We are grateful to Wartburg Theological Seminary for the blessings given to us while we were there." Lyle started this movement by writing a simple letter asking his classmates to join him in a celebration that might spark gratitude in others.

This was not the first time the class of '65 has come together to make a difference for the students at Wartburg. For their 50th anniversary of graduation they came together to raise a similar goal. "Most of our classmates realize that seminary students and newly ordained pastors have heavier financial burdens than we experienced," Lyle explained. "At that time the national church body was able to carry more of the costs of our education. Recent surveys show that the average graduate now carries an average debt of \$40,000 to \$50,000. That is a weighty load to carry into your first call as a pastor!"

This understanding of need and deep gratitude for Wartburg Seminary fueled their mission to make a difference as Lyle and the class of 1965 met their goal and gifted over \$8,600 for student scholarships, almost a half-tuition scholarship for a student in need. Wartburg Seminary gives thanks for Lyle and the class of 1965 for their faithfulness and leadership.

Alumni Notes

'50

Rev. Dennis Schlossin died on May 27, 2020. He served St. Paul's, Aurora, IA; Trinity, Hawkeye, IA; and Christ Lutheran, Duluth, MN.

'60

Rev. Harold Laursen died on March 9, 2020. He served parishes in Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado.

'66

Rev. Theodore Kalkwarf died on May 19, 2020. His 48 years in ministry included service around the Midwest as a parish pastor, camp director, hospital chaplain, and lecturer at a chemical treatment center.

'69

Janis Eckermann, wife of **Rev. Stanley Eckermann**, died on February 2, 2020.

'73

Rev. Donald Feuerhak died on February 13, 2020. He served congregations in Ames, Wyoming, Clarksville, Fredsville, and Cedar Falls, all in Iowa, as a chaplain at Bremwood Lutheran Services in Waverly, and Covenant Medical Center in Waterloo. He also taught a course on Death and Dying at the University of Northern

Iowa and at Wartburg College.

'84

Rev. Don Klepzig died on February 26, 2020. He served Faith, Benton; Zion, LaMoille; and Calvary, New Windsor, all in Illinois, as a hospital and hospice chaplain in California, as chaplain for the Civil Air Patrol in Las Vegas, NV, and as an interim minister for more than 20 congregations in California, Nevada, and Illinois.

'88

Rev. Kathleen Kraft died on February 27, 2020. She served Calvary Lutheran Church in Antigo, WI, for over 20 years.

'89

On October 1, 2019, **Rev. Michael Burns** began a new call serving First and Trinity, Tioga, ND.

Hélène Ralivao died on February 23, 2020. She was one of the first female theologians in the Malagasy Lutheran Church, was known for advocating gender justice, and served as a delegate to Lutheran World Federation Assemblies in Hong Kong in 1997 and in Winnipeg, Canada, in 2003.

'13

Rev. Raymond McKechnie died on March 22, 2020. He served St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Grand Junction, CO; and Creator Lutheran Church, Clackamas, OR.

'16

Deacon Koren Lindley was ordained on May 17, 2020. She has been called to serve as Deacon of Family and Social Ministries at Luther Memorial, Omaha, NE.

'20

Rev. Kimberly Frederking was ordained on February 29, 2020, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, WaKeeney, KS. She has been called to Prairie Faith Shared Ministry to serve Emanuel, Ogallah, KS; and St. John, Ellis, KS.

Rev. Gail Hagerty was ordained on June 17, 2020, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Bismarck, ND. She has been called to serve Heart River Lutheran Church in Mandan, ND.

Rev. Emily Harkins Norris was ordained on May 22, 2020. She has been called to serve The Dwelling, Winston-Salem, NC.

Faculty and Staff Updates



Meet a Member of the WTS Board of Directors!



Susan Ebertz,
Director for the
Reu Memorial
Library &
Associate
Professor of
Bibliography

& Academic Research, spoke on a panel at the Atla (American Theological Library Association) annual conference on "Planning Strategically for Small Libraries." The conference was held online June 18 and 19. She also led a discussion at the conference on "Theological Libraries Serving Immigrant Communities."



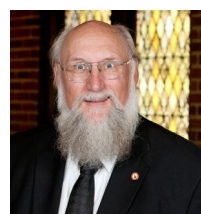
Rev. Dr. Nate Frambach,
Professor
of Pastoral
Theology,
led the sixth
January term

immersion to Holden Village in Washington state. Later in the spring he helped to organize and host a retirement reception for colleague Thomas Schattauer, who has served WTS since 1996, and also chaired the search committee to identify a new Professor of Liturgics, Rev. Dr. Jan Rippentrop Schnell, who begins her service at WTS July 1, 2020. Dr. Frambach was the preacher for the WTS 2020 Commencement Liturgy, and also preached at the ordination of 2020 graduate Rev. Emily Harkins Norris on May 22nd at The Dwelling in Winston-Salem, NC.



Rev. Dr. Martin Lohrmann,
Associate
Professor
of Lutheran
Confessions
and Heritage,

published an article entitled "This Is Not Martin Luther" in the Winter 2019 edition of *Lutheran Quarterly*. The article shows how an image of a 16th-century English bishop came to be wrongly identified with Martin Luther, an error that has multiplied on the internet. The essay can be read online at LutheranQuarterly.com/essays.



Rev. Dr. Craig L. Nesson,
Professor of
Contextual
Theology
and Ethics,
The William

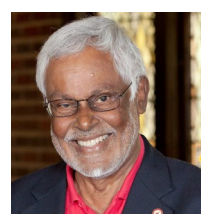
D. Streng Professor for the Education and Renewal of the Church, and Academic Dean, served as editor for five case studies written by WTS students and published as "Case Studies on ELCA Social Statements: For Personal Reflection and Group Discussion" in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 47 (April 2020): 25-40. He also contributed to the recording of the podcast on "Embodying the Sacraments" in the WTS Digital Worship series (www.buzzsprout.com/949903). Dr. Nesson serves as co-editor of the July 2020 issue of *Currents in Theology and*

Mission and editor of the section on "Creation in Crisis: Theology and Science Respond" based on the April 2020 WTS conference held. Presentations from this conference are available at www.wartburgseminary.edu/creation-in-crisis/.



Matthew D. O'Rear, former
Assistant to
the President
for Strategic
Initiatives, has
been appointed

Interim Dean of the Chapel beginning July 1, 2020.



Rev. Dr. Winston D. Persaud,
Professor of
Systematic
Theology,
Holder of

the Kent S. Knutson and UELC Chair in Theology and Mission, and Director of the Center for Global Theologies, is presenting via Zoom on the theme "Being Lutheran in the 21st Century: Hearing the Witness to the Gospel in Martin Luther's Hymns!" at the Lutheran Lakeside Online Continuing Ed Camp (Spirit Lake, IA) in July; taught Systematics for TEEM students in January; taught Systematic Theology to the largest class—61 students!—since he began teaching; and participated in the Immigration Forum, "Mental Health and Immigrants," in May.



Rev. Dr. Thomas Schattauer,
Professor
of Liturgics
and Dean of
the Chapel,

embarks on a final sabbatical year with deep gratitude for his years of teaching liturgy and serving the seminary community at worship. In the fall semester Thomas led the efforts to bring several thought leaders to campus (in person and by Zoom) for a consultation on worship and digital media. The December 2019 *Living Lutheran* published his thoughts on training the liturgical imagination. Thomas continues to serve on an ecumenical working group on the catechumenate. As co-president of the International Loehe Society, he is shepherding plans for a meeting of the Society at Wartburg, July 2021. Thomas enjoys life with Paula and their new puppy Lykke ("happiness" in Norwegian) in the Loring Park neighborhood in Minneapolis.



Rev. Dr. Troy Troftgruben,
Associate
Professor
of New
Testament,
led several

multi-session learning events this spring by Zoom using his book *Rooted and Renewing* (2019, Fortress) in March with

Silverdale Lutheran church (Silverdale, WA) and in June with rostered leaders of the Western Iowa Synod (ELCA). Besides reviewing some books and contributing to worship resources for Augsburg Fortress, he is also investing energy into reading works by historically marginalized voices (on biblical theology and anti-racism) and developing a survey project to learn from ministry leaders about their experiences leading worship online during the pandemic.



Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen,
Director for
Small Town
and Rural
Ministry, is

Chair of the International Rural Churches Association. As such, he has been coordinating and networking information for Christian churches responding to the global pandemic in various rural parts of the world. He is also helping to plan an International Rural Church conference hosted by Wartburg for April 2022 under the theme: The Creation Groans: Faithful Response to Global Climate Change. In addition, Mark is serving on an ELCA Churchwide research team working on the project entitled *Discovering Vitality: A Study of Vitality and Sustainability in Small ELCA Congregations*.



KATHY PATRICK
WTS welcomed
Kathy Patrick to
its Board of
Directors in
January 2020.

Kathy Patrick is

a partner at Gibbs & Bruns LLP, a premier litigation boutique based in Houston. In her thirty-four years of trial practice, Kathy's cases have run the gamut of high-profile, high-dollar, and high-risk cases.

She has represented clients pursuing recoveries for securities frauds in Brazil, Thailand, and Indonesia, the private prison industry, the waste disposal industry, and in mortgage-backed securities. She has also pursued commercial cases for clients seeking to enforce leveraged buyout agreements, construction contracts, and corporate indemnities.

On the defense side, she successfully defended a client accused of a market allocation conspiracy in the North Sea, defended the outside directors of Enron and Westar in regulatory investigations and securities litigation, and is leading the defense of a large energy company in environmental and energy litigation.

Kathy's representative clients include: Occidental Petroleum Corporation, ExxonMobil, PIMCO, BlackRock, Trust Company of the West, Invesco, Western Asset Management, the former outside directors of Enron Corporation, and the State of Arizona. Kathy is also a member of the ELCA Churchwide Council.

Upcoming Admissions Events:

September 18-20, 2020

Considering Your Call Weekend (Online Event)

November 17, 2020

Online Open House

January 12, 2021

Online Open House

March 19-21, 2021

Considering Your Call Weekend

April 20, 2021

Online Open House



For more information and to register, visit www.wartburgseminary.edu or use the QR code above.



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