

# Life Together

THE MAGAZINE OF  
WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Spring 2022



# 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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## SPRING EDITION 2022

Wartburg Theological Seminary  
Dubuque, Iowa 52003

Phone: 563-589-0200

Fax: 563-589-0333

[www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu)



## 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.

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# Largen Inaugurated as President

## 15TH PRESIDENT OF WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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History was made on November 6, 2021 as faculty, staff, students, churchwide representatives and friends gathered at St. John's Episcopal Church for the inauguration of The Rev. Kristin Johnston Largen, Ph.D. as the 15th president of Wartburg Theological Seminary. The inauguration was also live streamed.

Largen was presented for inauguration by Stephen Cornils, D.Min., chair of the Board of Directors. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton performed the Rite of Inauguration. Former presidents, the Rev. Duane H. Larson, Ph.D., the Rev. Stanley N. Olson, Ph.D., and the Rev. Louise Johnson, D.D., passed the presidential medallion to the chair of the board, Stephen Cornils, D.Min., who, together with Northeastern Iowa Synod Bishop Kevin Jones, placed it on the shoulders of President Largen.

Later that day, Largen delivered her inaugural address. "Today, what I want to share with you is how I am both experiencing and envisioning Wartburg's particular call to participate in the formation of spiritual leaders whom the Holy Spirit is calling to lead God's church—and our whole society—into God's new day," she stated. "Embracing that call, we draw upon three facets of Wartburg's identity that undergird our ongoing participation in God's mission, participation that will continue to support the flourishing of the gospel and the strengthening of the church, in a world that desperately needs healing and wholeness. These facets are as follows: our clear sense of mission and purpose; our existence as a resilient community that stretches, bridges and groans together; and our outward orientation as a community turned toward the wider world."

Following Largen's speech, responses were presented by the Rev. Troy Troftgruben, Ph.D, and the Rev. Winston Persaud, Ph.D.

Use this QR code to view the Worship and Installation Service:



Use this QR code to view the Presidential Address:









# Getting to Know Kellie Lisi

## A Q&A WITH THE NEW DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY LIFE AND CANDIDACY



familiarity in our new city, supporting the Admissions team at Wartburg, and developing opportunities for ministry through my calling to Word and Service. I partner with churches for food education, training and equipping leaders to enact food theology in their contexts through dinner church, Agape Meals, and other creative approaches to food, and I also develop virtual food education resources. I lead adult Sunday School classes and co-lead our church's Shalom Team, a team dedicated to collaborative culture shift for purposes of increased education, diversity, justice, and inclusion in our community. I'll soon complete my training as an ELCA coach, receiving certification from the International Coaching Federation, and will continue to implement those skills into my work here at Wartburg. My family's life is filled with elementary school activities, hiking, time with our black lab/Australian shepherd puppy, and lots of good food.

### What have you been up to since graduating from WTS?

I graduated from Wartburg with my M.A. in Diaconal Ministry in May 2020, along with my husband Jason Davis, who graduated with his MDiv at the same time. Our family moved to Huntsville, Alabama for Jason's first call as an associate pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. As we navigated life in a new part of the country in the midst of a pandemic, I focused on creating stability for our family of four, establishing routines and

### What is it like returning to Wartburg?

Truly, it is a joy. I left Wartburg in a time of uncertainty and many unknowns, unable to worship together in the chapel or to celebrate our commencement in physical community. To return to the Wartburg campus, to the chapel, to the Fishbowl (on-campus student

## Meet the Department of Vocation and Formation



Kristine Stache  
VP for Leadership  
Formation



Kellie Lisi  
Director of Community  
Life and Candidacy



Julie Higgs  
Director of Learning  
for Life and Dean of  
Chapel



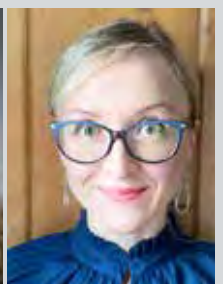
Stacey Nalean-Carlson  
Interim Director for  
Contextual Education



Barb Roling  
Director of Financial  
Aid and Student  
Services



Emily Prough  
Contextual Education  
Coordinator



Zanna Rappenecker  
Administrative  
Coordinator

housing) where our son learned to walk and our daughter created games of hopscotch with her bike helmet on—it's surreal. This is a place that deeply shaped me and my family and it's an honor and great privilege to now come alongside this community for the sake of the Gospel. My first week in this role was Prolog Week and I was surrounded by both familiar friends and new faces, hearing over and over again, "welcome home!" It does feel like a return home. At the same time I also embrace the opportunity to get to know this new community in a new way, acknowledging the time that has passed and all the ways this community has shifted and transformed. It is into this place that I return and work to partner with students, staff, and faculty, and synods throughout the ELCA.

**What are you looking forward to the most?**

There is much about this role that is familiar: the people, the place, the tasks. Prior to answering the call to Word and Service ministry, I was a teacher and then administrator, working in public education to accompany students and staff. In these leadership roles I worked collaboratively to plan events such as prom and graduation; to create rituals that connected our students, our school, our families, our community; to create systems meant to bridge gaps and to consider the whole people in our classrooms and hallways; to train staff and teachers in best practices based on the needs of our specific communities; to respond thoughtfully and

courageously to daily demands. This role as Director of Community Life and Candidacy feels like the perfect spot for me, and there is much that I am excited for. I especially look forward to walking alongside those whom I am called to serve, nurturing strong systems for the sake of strong leaders who will steward well the communities to which they are called by God in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

**What is one thing you'd like the Wartburg community to know about you?**

I subscribe to the Latin phrase, "Solvitur ambulando," which means, "It is solved by walking." In walking we connect to the earth, to our breath, to our God, to our community. If walking doesn't solve it, I suggest a snack, some water, or maybe a dance party.

It's little, presumably basic things like these that make up our lives, and it's the little things that can connect us to God. I come to the Wartburg community as a whole person, creative and resourceful, and I seek to come alongside each of you in the same way, knowing that you are perfectly made: creative, resourceful, and whole. Together let us seek God in all the basic moments of our lives, pointing to God and God's restorative will for all creation in everything we do.

**The Department of Vocation and Formation** has been formed to better and more consistently accompany our students on their journey from inquiry and discernment, through admission, into coursework and community life, and out into their first call and beyond. This new department includes admissions, financial aid, student services, ELCA candidacy, contextual education, worship, and learning for life. These areas each play a key role in the holistic development of ministry leaders and work hand in glove with the formation that happens in the classroom.

# Islam In America

*An Interview with Rev. Dr. Ann Fritschel*

*Islam is the third largest religion in the United States, after Christianity and Judaism. A 2017 study estimated that 2.45 million Muslims were living in the United States, about 0.78 percent of the total U.S. population.*

## **TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR CLASS, ISLAM IN AMERICA.**

The Islam in America class is designed to do several things to help students better understand that Islam is not monolithic as it's portrayed in the media. Like when we think of Christianity — that includes so many different groups of people, it's hard to bundle them all together. The same is true in Islam. So, part of it is to gain a basic understanding of Islam primarily through meeting Muslims and Muslim communities. Another goal is to begin to address Islamophobia in the United States and how we can be allies with Muslims as they face persecution and hatred in the country for just living out their faith.

When I say not monolithic what I would include in that is dismantling some myths about Islam that it's a religion of violence and terror, that it oppresses women. The women we talk to, they're saying it's not Islam that's the problem, it's patriarchy that is the problem. And I think that's true in certain aspects of Christianity as well. Dismantling some of these myths is really important. Because they are the ones that get pushed in the 40 second sound bite on the news.

## **WHY IS LEARNING ABOUT ISLAM IMPORTANT?**

By talking about people with a different faith, we learn more about our own faith. So that when we talk about Jesus we're

talking about Jesus in two different ways, from a Christian and Muslim perspective. And it helps clarify in our own minds, "why do we believe this about Jesus?" or "why do we think about it in this way?" It helps people gain a better understanding of their own Christian faith.

## **HOW DID YOU BUILD CONNECTIONS HERE IN EASTERN IOWA?**

It started with my visiting a lot of different Muslim communities in primarily the tri-state area, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and building relationships with them. And, over time we've been able to worship with them and to have food with them and then we also bring in different kind of speakers from outside of the tri-state area as well to talk about different aspects.

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TOPICS YOUR SPEAKERS COVER?**

In the past we've had people that work on creation issues out of the Islamic faith. We have had a transgender woman who spoke to us about queer Islam and Islamic liberation theology. We have had women who talk to us about Muslim women organizations and what they're doing to address patriarchy in the Islamic faith. And, we have had people who talk to us, just average Muslims who talk to us about what it means to be Muslim in the United States, when life is not geared towards being Muslim. For example, their main worship is Friday afternoon, so they have to take time off work to go to



worship. Whereas our calendar is scheduled so that most Christians don't have to take off work to get to worship. So when you're in a minority faith in a country — even with a separation of church and state it affects how you live it out. And then of course we talk to them about raising families and all sorts of similar questions that we face as Christians — and finding where the similarities are and finding where the differences are.

### **WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS?**

I believe, and most people believe, we worship the same God. We may disagree about the nature of God, but so do Christians and Jews. We find faith to be important to us and

in our lives; we find ritual expressions of our faith in community so that religion is not just a private individual thing but has community aspects of communal worship and communal prayer. We have the same sort of ethical code that love of God and love of neighbor are key to our faith.

### **HOW CAN STUDENTS LEARN MORE ABOUT ISLAM?**

We have another basic Islam course offered sometimes in the summer that can build on it. And for those who are in the Dubuque area there is an interfaith group that meets once a month, the Children of Abraham.

## *A Student Perspective*

### “ EMMA GRINDE, MASTER OF DIVINITY STUDENT



“One of our speakers shared a poem about a Muslim grandmother washing her feet in a Sears bathroom before Wudu, the ritual washing before prayer at appointed times of day. This grandmother was shopping and needed to stop what she was doing to pray and while she goes about Wudu, the non-Muslim women in the bathroom stare at her and make rude comments.

This poem, and the Muslim speakers who shared about their faith and lives in our class, invited me to reflect on our pluralistic world, where difference is often feared and demonized. Through the witness of our speakers and Ann's teaching I am more knowledgeable about Islam, better equipped to dispel misinformation about Islam, and more engaged and interested to continue to learn from, and with, our Muslim neighbors in what it means to be people of faith.”

# \$1 Million Gift Supports Scholarships and “Library of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”



Contributed photo of Joyce Redman

Joyce Louise Redman, longtime Waterloo, Iowa school teacher, has left a lasting impact on the mission of Wartburg Seminary through her estate. The more than \$1 million dollar gift will provide an endowed scholarship for future students, support programs vital to our mission, and will help Wartburg move forward with plans for the “Library of the 21st Century.”

The Joyce Louise Redman Endowed Scholarship has been established in the WTS Endowment which will provide tuition funding for future generations of Lutheran pastors and deacons. A portion of Ms. Redman’s gift will also support the remodeling of Reu Memorial Library as a “library for the 21st century,” part of the rebuilding of Fritschel Hall slated to begin in late 2022.

“We are deeply honored to be stewards of Ms. Redman’s legacy,” WTS President Rev. Dr. Kristin Largen said. “As a schoolteacher who loved books and reading, we believe this is a great way to honor Joyce’s life of teaching.”

The redesign of Reu Memorial Library is shaped around a re-envisioned hub for learning. The anchor to this vision is access to the largest digital theological library in the world. All students, regardless of location or degree track will have full access to this library with over 500,000 volumes, including all books assigned for courses. (This itself presents a huge cost savings to students who are no longer required to purchase course books!) The remodeled space on the second floor will include expanded and fully accessible quiet student areas, and the basement will house a greatly enlarged climate-controlled rare book room to preserve our treasured Wartburg history.



Rendering of new Reu Memorial Library

Ms. Redman was born in Milbank, South Dakota in 1928, and died in January 2021. She received degrees from Wartburg College in Waverly, Saint John’s University in Minnesota, and Clarke College in Dubuque. Ms. Redman was a teacher at Waterloo Iowa Elementary schools for 35 years. She also taught in the Lutheran Youth Center in Alaska and at a residential center in Waverly, IA.

Ms Redman’s generosity also supported Wartburg College, Iowa Public Radio, Iowa Public Television and the Waterloo Public Library.

# What Do WTS Students Say About ...?

## *THE WARTBURG EXPERIENCE*



“Who among us has never had the experience of asking ourselves: ‘Where do I belong? What is God’s plan for my life? Who am I?’ Like any human, we want concrete, lasting answers to questions like these. Taking those first steps into discernment of a call to ministry, those questions seem to be amplified and we desire—perhaps all the more—reliable, established, safe answers. Over my four years of study at Wartburg, I am grateful these questions do have trustworthy answers: that God is bringing about God’s desired future for all the creation, that God claims us as God’s own, that God has created us in God’s own image as beloved and reconciled children of God, that God is always faithful to God’s promises. In Wartburg classes, with Wartburg professors and fellow Wartburg students, we are encouraged to delve deeper

into these questions and see both the mysterious and revelatory ways God continues to be at work in answering them. At Wartburg, I see God at work equipping ministry leaders to walk humbly, curiously, and faithfully in stewarding both the questions and the wonder of God’s always awesome, unexpected, and surprising answers.” — Adam Klinker, M.Div., Final Year



# Erika's Story

## THE JOURNEY OF FAITH AND CALL OF ERIKA BREDDIN

INTERVIEW BY NORMA COOK EVERIST

"The ELCA is a church that belongs to Christ and Christ's church is universal, where there is a place for everyone." — Erika Breddin

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**God never changed. God's call is not dependent on the hesitancy of humans to affirm it. The call remains and God waits for us to grow in our perception and be changed so we too can recognize the fullness of God's grace and support people's call. This is the story of Erika Breddin's journey and also the journey of the ELCA and Wartburg Seminary to affirm the calls of LGBTQ+ people. Erika speaks:**

It all started on a tropical island. However, my early life did not seem different to me. I grew up in Papua New Guinea those first formative years. My father from Australia and my mother from the United States had Christian ministry professions serving as teachers in a Lutheran High School for native New Guineans. I was the headmaster's eldest boy. I was shaped by a recognition and appreciation for diversity. It was just how life was.

Right before I was to start first grade, we came to the United States with the intention of my father entering seminary and returning to the mission field. My father had a teacher's degree from Australia; it was not recognized as a B.A and so more years were spent here than planned — nine. We lived in Des Moines and were members of Central Lutheran Church. There I first realized the call of God. I also realized my genderedness. When my father was finally able to go to Wartburg Seminary, he lived in dorms while my mother, my brother and I stayed in Des Moines. She was a music teacher.

I loved going to church. I sat on the aisle where I could see all the pretty shoes of women going up for communion. I also remember at the age of 9 or 10 hiding under a blanket at home with my finger in the toy section of the JCPenney and Sears catalogs while perusing the women's section. Knowing the family and community I was in, I understood that what I was drawn to was something I was going to have to hide.

Because of my parents' teaching I was one of those children who knew all the answers in Sunday School. When hearing children's sermons, I knew that every answer was "supposed" to be "Jesus." I was brought up as a person of Christian faith. I was interested in learning and serving at church and spent 4 or 5 hours a week there. It was a place I belonged.

In 1987 my father graduated from Wartburg Seminary, and we returned to the mission field in the Highlands

of Papua New Guinea. I was sent to a boarding school, 5 hours away. The school was run by the Summer Institute of Linguistics to serve children of Bible translators and missionaries.

After graduation I returned to the United States and went to Wartburg College with the intention of being a high school band director. I was consumed with music. I regularly went to chapel and campus ministry Bible studies. I felt a pull toward service in the church; however, I remember my father telling my brother and me that church would be our home, but if I felt happiness doing something else, I should. So, I majored in music, but the subject I enjoyed the most was religion class. After college graduation I went to a technical school pursuing a diploma in band instrument repair. I worked in Decorah and became a very active member of Decorah Lutheran Church, singing in the choir, being lead cantor, attending Bible study, and serving on council.

It was then that the senior pastor said to me, "Have you ever thought about going to seminary?" The call is two pronged: the internal call, God awakening within me a call to pastoral ministry; and the external from others who can recognize gifts in us and tell us. The call which I had been denying was still active.

I had become very skilled at hiding from others my gender dysphoria (a strong desire to be of another gender). I looked like your average guy. I experienced turmoil over who I understood myself to be and who I felt the world expected me to be. While in Decorah I met and married a woman in 1998.

In the fall of 1999, I started my journey at Wartburg Seminary. My time at Wartburg was very successful academically and in the community. It included a year at the Augustana Hochschule in Germany. At the end of my WTS second seminary year, my wife made the decision to leave me and in so doing "outed" me to the seminary. In 2002 the ELCA and WTS had a different environment and culture than now. My being "outed" led to my having to leave abruptly. I officially withdrew and thought God had played a big joke. For six months I stayed away from everything, but six months later I was back in church. God would not let me go. My faith journey brought me to the United Church of Christ where the fullness of who I am was affirmed.



*Erika Breddin. Photo credit: Cheyenne Phillips of Moumantai, Photography by Chey*

Initially my time in the UCC was as a congregational member. It wasn't long before I was leading adult education and was a lay leader during worship. Those acts of service were recognized; I was encouraged to seek authorization as a lay minister of Word and Sacrament in the UCC. I served in that role for 7 years during which time I took final steps toward ordination. The UCC has multiple paths toward ordination, including one without completing an M.Div. I served as solo pastor in a rural congregation near Cedar Falls and then one in Eastern Ohio before returning to Iowa where I served as interim pastor of First Congregational Church in Mason City for 14 months. I was received well but was then told they didn't want a trans woman to be the face of their church in the community.

While in Mason City through an ecumenical clergy meeting, I reconnected with a Wartburg Seminary professor emerita who in a conversation encouraged me to reach out to WTS and complete a master's degree (rather than an MDiv because I had already been ordained). In 2020 the Seminary affirmed both my gifts and my call and recognized the previous 78 degree hours of seminary work I had done. I graduated in 2021. My Capstone Paper was "In God's Image: Toward a Trans Liberation Theology."

After I realized my first marriage was over, I met my current wife, a high school foreign language teacher in Waterloo. We have been married for 18 years and adopted two girls, both African American, whom we love dearly.

In 2009 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted to open the ministry of the church to gay and lesbian pastors and other professional workers living in committed relationships. In 2013 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution to recommit the church to principles of non-discrimination in employment and to encourage all ELCA synods, congregations, and members

to support legislation that prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Since then the ELCA and WTS have repeatedly spoken against discrimination related to sexual orientation or gender identity. However, I recognize there are cultural differences across the country. Ministry is not about one individual's personal call. We are called to serve the people of the church, to challenge them, not to change who they are. I do not want to hurt them or be a stumbling block to a congregation's faith.

I am now serving congregations that affirm both my gifts and my call. For the past year I have been interim pastor at Ripley United Church of Christ in Traer, Iowa. As of July 2021, I have also had a solo pastoral role at St. Ansgar Lutheran Church in Waterloo. (They had been served on a limited basis by another UCC pastor before me.) The congregation reached out to me, and the Northeastern Iowa Synod made it happen. So, I am a UCC pastor serving under contract within the ELCA. I'm 1/3 time at Ripley and 1/2 time at St. Ansgar, Waterloo. The time at each congregation is fluid. I may work 35 or 70 hours a week total. I have had eight funerals at St. Ansgar since I came last summer. The ministry includes Word and sacrament, preaching, baptisms, adult bible study, pastoral visitation and administration. I feel recognized and supported, doing what I'm supposed to be doing. I realize, however, coming up on 15 years of pastoral ministry, there still are a limited number of congregations who would call me.

The ELCA is a church that belongs to Christ and Christ's church is universal, where there is a place for everyone. The call of Christ's people today is to celebrate the diversity of God's creative work and embrace all people in the spirit of love, regardless of race or ethnicity, economic status, or gender.

# What Do WTS Students Say About ...?

## *TAKING THE NEXT STEP*



“Taking the step to pursue my masters at Wartburg was truly a leap of faith. This one, seemingly tiny step felt like the largest step I would ever take. Looking ahead at the degree programs, the different tracks, and reflecting on all the theology I didn’t quite understand—it was all overwhelming. But once I took that step and applied at Wartburg, I knew I wasn’t alone. Every step of the way I have had faculty, staff, and students at WTS who were with me, cheering me on, helping me discern my call, challenging me, and most importantly, reminding me that God is with me in every step

I take. Here at Wartburg, I have grown deeper in my relationship with God, I have learned so much about who I understand God to be, and I have gained confidence in my theological foundation that I use in my ministries every day. Taking that first step to follow where I felt God calling me was difficult, but I am so glad I listened!

— Lydia Brooks





## Class Challenges

Wartburg is honored to enjoy some of the strongest alumni loyalty of any seminary in North America. Over the years, classes have joined together in a unified effort to express gratitude for the blessings of the WTS community by giving back to the mission of the seminary. Recently, the Class of 1965 expressed their gratitude for the 55th anniversary of their graduation by creating a class fund in support of student scholarships. Upon graduation, the class of 2017 set a 5-year goal of raising \$25,000 to establish an endowed scholarship. This endowment is now over \$33,000.

Retired Bishop Lyle Miller, WTS '65, said, "We are grateful to Wartburg Theological Seminary for the blessings given to us while we were there." This has inspired his class to continue to impact future generations of church leaders.

As part of the Lead BOLDLY initiative, class leaders and presidents have been invited to engage their classmates in a "Class Challenge" to support the priorities of the campaign. The Class of 1985 has already

stepped forward to form the "Class of 1985 Scholarship" with a \$25,000 goal. Other classes are planning to join together to dedicate faculty offices in the new Fritschel Hall or to provide financial support for one of the new innovative programs.

Pastor Kathy Franzenburg, WTS '85, explains the motivation of her class this way: "When we give as alumni, we not only acknowledge the past, but we support the future in the now!"

Alumni are encouraged to contact their class leaders to explore making an impact in gratitude for the Wartburg experience.

### Lead BOLDLY

- Current Gifts of \$21.4 Million\*
- Goal \$28 Million
- 5 Year Comprehensive Campaign
- Launched July 1, 2018
- Priorities: Scholarships and Innovation

\*As of March 1, 2022

## FORMING VALUED LEADERS FOR GOD'S MISSION



Visit [wartburgseminary.edu/lead-boldly](http://wartburgseminary.edu/lead-boldly) to learn more!

# Germany J-Term Trip: Christ in the Unexpected

## AN INTERVIEW WITH REV. DR. MARTIN LOHRMANN

**It's safe to say Covid-19 has transformed the world of travel. How did COVID affect your trip?**

Our group prepared to travel during the pandemic by requiring vaccinations and being ready to wear masks. Some participants had to show a negative covid test result before connecting through countries like the UK, but Germany itself didn't have that requirement for vaccinated travelers. We knew we'd have to be flexible about our itinerary due to local regulations.

As a group, our participants were excited about the chance to visit Germany over J-term and realistic about the challenges posed by the pandemic. Throughout our trip, they impressed me with their support for each other and the ways they adapted. It was a great group of people to travel with!

**Travel experts have warned travelers not to expect a pre-COVID experience; did you find that to be true? How did this trip differ from others?**

Germany has very clear protocols for living with this pandemic, which most people there willingly follow. This includes a requirement to show vaccination status (sometimes including being boosted) before entering places

like museums, restaurants, and many stores. Masks also need to be worn in shared spaces like churches, shops, and public transit regardless of vaccination status. I really appreciated that social concern for public health and disease prevention. These policies work, as Germany has had much lower rates of spread than the US. To me, wearing a mask started to feel as normal as washing hands and covering a cough. Common courtesies.

**In your blog you state that you had your share of pandemic-related twists, turns, and challenges.**

Our tour started exactly as the omicron variant was surging in the United States. With over 20 people traveling from the US, it seemed realistic to expect that some might catch the virus before or during their travels, despite taking precautions. Indeed, the first positive cases of covid in our group appeared around day four and five of our trip. Thankfully, we had already enjoyed some wonderful experiences in Berlin and Wittenberg by then.

Because our group had what turned out to be the first case of omicron in the county around Wittenberg, local health officials wanted us to quarantine as a group. Our tour operator owns a dormitory style building in Witten-







berg, which meant that we had freshly cooked meals, complete with German “Kaffee und Kuchen” (afternoon coffee and cake) while we stayed. Those of us who tested negative could use the common spaces and the outdoor courtyard.

While we were in quarantine, I developed a “monastic retreat” pattern for the days: breakfast, morning prayer & Reformation history lesson (over Zoom), lunch, afternoon

lesson and discussion, coffee and cake, dinner, and evening prayer. This shift in our days gave us a bit of structure.

There was a clear sense of grief at not being able to travel like we had planned for those five days. At the same time, we saw blessings in how well we were cared for in Wittenberg. None of the people who caught covid required outside medical attention, which was also a blessing. We noticed how our expe-

## A Student Perspective



**AMANDA BERG, M.DIV. CLASS OF 2022**



The Germany J-Term trip will be remembered for many reasons; the culture, touring Luther sites, learning about the reformers, the German Resistance Movement, political extremism, and our talk from a Syrian refugee.

But halfway through, COVID made its presence known, disrupting plans, and changing expectations. And though it prevented us from showing up to places as planned, it did not keep Christ from showing up.

Christ showed up in our quarantine, reframed by Dr. Lohrmann as ‘monastic time,’ complete

with morning and evening prayer, and time for learning via Zoom. Suddenly, Wartburg’s motto ‘Together Wherever We Are’ resonated even deeper. Christ showed up in the hospitality of the kitchen staff at College Wittenberg, in the meals place at our door, in our tour guide, arranging COVID testing and itinerary changes, and in friends throwing gummy bears up to our window from the courtyard below.

The day before quarantine began, we had the opportunity to worship at Castle Church in Wittenberg on Epiphany, where Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to its famous doors. These doors are rarely opened today, but on Epiphany, worshippers are invited to process through them during the closing hymn. As we walked out those doors, singing about Christ, the ‘grace-bringer,’ and remembering Christ’s manifestation in the world, little did we know, that in the coming days, Christ would be manifesting to us in ways we will never forget.



periences with quarantine in a foreign country stirred up empathy for the many people — past and present — whose lives have been disrupted much more dramatically by forces beyond their control.

In many ways, this was not the trip we had expected, but God was good and our group supported each other in beautiful ways that I continue to cherish.

**COVID has had a major impact on various political, social, economic, and legal issues around the world. How, or did it, factor in/frame your conversations and experiences in Germany?**

We lived a lot of these challenges in very personal ways, which each of us processed uniquely. Even though it was challenging, I'm glad we had the chance to be in another country during this strange moment in world history and thankful for the many great things we enjoyed on this trip. This time also further highlighted for me the im-

portance of Jesus's words to "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12) through personal and public health practices that show that we care about the people around us.

**Do you have any advice for people planning international travel?**

Vaccines and masks work! Even with breakthrough infections in a group of people traveling together, no one became severely ill and the majority of us did not test positive during the trip.

In the best of times, international travel and being a foreigner can be daunting. Traveling in a pandemic magnifies those challenges, as we experienced very directly. It helped us that we went through it as a supportive group and that we continued to see the blessings around us.

## A Student Perspective

### “ MARK GLAZENER, MASTER OF DIVINITY STUDENT

International travel can be fun and exciting in normal times, but during this period of the Covid pandemic, what some have termed as our "new normal", traveling outside of the United States might better be described as unpredictable and challenging. Such words could be used to describe this year's Germany Immersion J-Term trip. The trip was extremely rich and rewarding, but, in the end, it wasn't quite the one that was planned or expected with Covid playing a factor in both the travel to and from Germany as well as the planned activities.

The original plan incorporated a 14-day itinerary including major sites of Luther's life and the Reformation plus memorials and museums dedicated to such topics as the Holocaust and the Jewish Resistance. By the end,

the time spent became evenly split between the enriching tour days and the quieter days spent in quarantine due to some of the travelers contracting Covid.

The days of touring were filled with wonderful and meaningful sites and activities. Worshiping on Epiphany inside Castle Church in Wittenberg and walking through Berlin's Holocaust memorial were just two of the many highlights. Days spent in quarantine were not quite so exciting, but due to the resourcefulness of the leaders and the resilience of the group as a whole, those days were made meaningful through quiet devotion and reflection.

In the end, the result was an adventure none will soon forget!



“

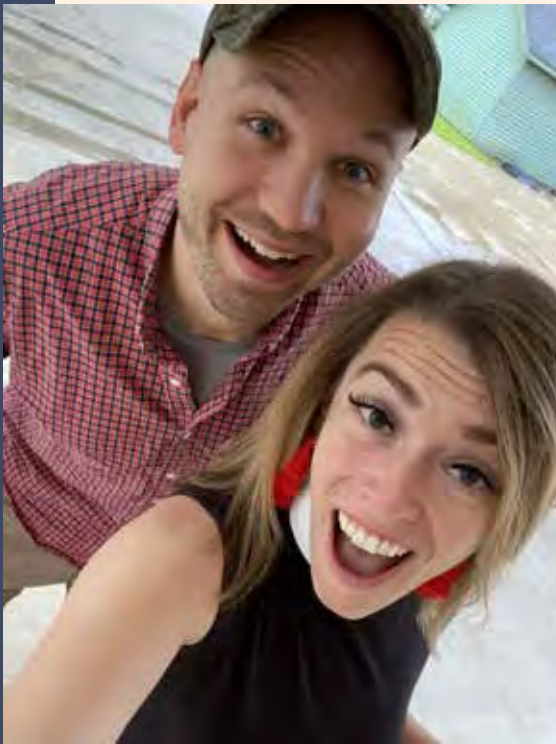
**JOHN VICKERY, MASTER OF DIVINITY STUDENT**

Our lives are full of steps. Steps forward, steps backwards, and even steps that keep us walking in place. As I think about all of the steps that I have taken over the course of my life, I see all three. Yet, each have brought me to where I stand in this moment. Then, the question becomes, what is the next step? For me, that looked like becoming a Collaborative Learning student. This particular step feels more like a leap of faith, and perhaps it should; though it has not presented itself as anxiety inducing. There is, instead, an overwhelming sense of peace and affirmation that I am following a call that I feel toward ministry as a minister of Word and Sacrament.

As a community at Wartburg, we get to share in one another's educational and formational lives. This is the story that I wish to amplify in this writing. Together, MDAM, MA, and MDiv students alike get to walk in faith together, discovering, and rediscovering our shared mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth; and what a privilege that is! Thanks be to God!

# What Do WTS Students Say About ...?

## *THE WARTBURG EXPERIENCE*



Following our campus visit in November 2017, my spouse, Bjørn, and I walked out of the castle, got into our car, looked at each other and said, “We’re moving to Iowa, aren’t we?” Seminary was (seemingly) always in the cards for me, but Iowa, less so. And yet, that day Wartburg became home for us.

Our time at Wartburg Theological Seminary has been incredibly formative, life-giving, and love filled. From the beginning of our time here, I was struck by the care extended to us, and grateful for those who have loved us along the way — faculty, administration, and staff. I’ve delighted in the community found with my beloved classmates, as we’ve been knit together through experiences we could have never anticipated or imagined at the beginning of our seminary journey.

These past four years have formed me in countless ways — as a student, pastor, and person. The time Bjørn and I have spent at Wartburg has been rich with relationships, laughter, grief, and growth — much like life itself. This community of faith has embodied Christ’s love and grace to us, and I am thankful that we followed God’s call — to Iowa and wherever the Spirit may lead us next. — Laura Anderson, M.Div., Final Year



# Alumni Notes

'46

**Rev. Armin Reitz** died on October 19, 2021. He served as pastor for four congregations in Oregon and Washington and as interim pastor in Kentucky and Indiana.

'49

**Dr Reuben Clarence Lang** died on July 3, 2021. He served Trinity, Tea, SD, then taught history at Midland Lutheran College, Fremont, NE, and taught German at Texas Lutheran University, Seguin, TX.

'59

**Rev Calvin Goerdel** died on October 23, 2021. He served as pastor of St. James, Llano, TX and Prince of Peace, Beaumont, TX; and as a Care Coordinator for mental health services at Denver General Hospital, Director of the Health Planning Agency in Ft. Collins, CO; Seattle area director of Lutheran Social Services of Washington; Vice President of Social Services for Lutheran Social Services of Texas; and with Lutheran Welfare Service and Lutheran Sunset Ministries. He also served as interim pastor for Faith, Meridian, TX and Our Saviors, Norse, TX.

'73

**Rev. Robert Kruempel** died on September 23, 2021. He served First, Ruso, ND and Hope, Sawyer, ND; Concordia, Benedict, ND; St. Peter, Toeterville, IA and Faith, Mitchell, IA; St. John Lutheran Church, Akron, IA; and St. Paul, Missouri Valley, IA.

'76

**Rev. Phillip Olson** died on July 21, 2021. He served Immanuel, Earlville and Immanuel, Delaware, IA; as a missionary in Senegal; Union State Line Lutheran, Petersburg, MN; Palestine, Dolliver, IA; and Ridgeway Lutheran Parish, Ridgeway, IA.

'77

**Rev. Clarence Gall** died on October 25, 2021. He served parishes in Drayton, ND; Hazen, ND; Rhineland, WI; Rome, WI; Wausau, WI; Lincoln, IL; and Saginaw, MI.

'78

**Rev Dr Maxwell E Johnson**, professor of theology (liturgy) at the University of Notre Dame, received the Berakah award from the North American Academy of Liturgy, which honors "a person who has made outstanding contributions in the field of liturgy." His award says: "The North American Academy of Liturgy awards to Maxwell E. Johnson the 2021 Berakah, giving thanks for your stunning ecumenical scholarship; diverse allegiances: Lutheran, Benedictine, Episcopal; litany that history is an inexacting teacher; reminder each year that Chrysostom did not write that Easter Homily; ability to hear the Holy Spirit singing in the Oblates of Blues;

steadfast ministry — teacher, writer, preacher, friend; Bless you." Johnson has also recently co-authored with Stefanos Alexopoulos, Introduction to Early Christian Liturgies (Collegeville: Liturgical Press Academic, 2022).

'87

**Barbara Jean Kopperud** died on October 21, 2021. After Barbara was ordained in 1988, she served churches in Wykoff, MN from 1988-92; Zumbrota, MN at United Redeemer 1992-98; Wanamingo Lutheran 1998-2002; LaCrescent 2009-12 and Sibley, IA 2012-2020, retiring last summer.

'89

**Rev. Lowell Halvorson** died on October 20, 2021. He served the Crosby Ecumenical Parish in Crosby, ND; St. John and St. Olaf, Belmond, IA; and as Visitation Pastor for First, Eau Claire, WI.

2007

**Rev John Strackbein** was ordained on February 5, 2022.

2011

**Rev. Dan Ofstehage** died on October 6, 2021. He served Trinity, Mobridge, SD; and Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Watertown, SD.

2017

Elijah Theiss, son of **Kelsie and Paul Theiss**, was born on September 1, 2021 and baptized on November 14, 2021.

2018

**Rev. Jamie Reising** was ordained and installed as pastor on September 24, 2021, at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tipton, IA.

2021

**Deacon Amanda Randall** was ordained on November 13, 2021. She has been called to serve Peace Lutheran in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

**Rev. Amalia Vagts** was ordained on October 23, 2021 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Decora, IA. She has been called to serve as pastor with Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Tucson, AZ.

**Rev. Dennis Rodenberg** was ordained on January 8, 2022, at Seeds of Faith Lutheran Church, Lisbon, IA. He has been called to serve as pastor of St. John, Olin, IA; and Zion, Wyoming, IA.



## Faculty & Staff Updates



**Susan Ebertz**, Director for the Reu Memorial Library & Associate Professor of Bibliography & Academic Research, has been appointed to serve on the search committee for the new Executive Director of Atla (formerly known as American Theological Library Association). She currently serves

on the Atla Board of Directors. She is celebrating 25 years of service at Wartburg Seminary.



**Paul Erbes**, Vice President for Development, taught a 2-week class recently at Christ Lutheran Church (Inner Harbor) in Baltimore, MD, entitled "God's Economy," providing an exploration on the use of "oikonomos" in the New Testament. During Advent, Erbes presented a class for

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Gaithersburg, MD based on the book *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks* by Diana Butler Bass.



**Rev. Dr. Nathan C.P. Frambach**, Professor of Pastoral Theology, will serve as the Interim Academic Dean beginning on July 1, 2022 and will serve through June 30, 2023. During this time, Wartburg Seminary will launch a search for a new permanent dean, with that

person beginning July 1, 2023. This spring (2022) Nate is chairing the search committee for an Assistant Professor of Homiletics at Wartburg Seminary. At the invitation of Bishop Shelley Wickstrom, Nate looks forward to joining the Alaska Synod Collegium (rostered leaders gathering) either this spring (2022) or next fall (2022) as a guest presenter.



**Rev. Kristin Johnston Largen Ph.D.** has contributed an article titled "Women, Come!" Transforming the Difficult but Indispensable Church," for the Festschrift for Norma Cook Everist, for a forthcoming issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*.



**Rev. Dr. Martin J. Lohrmann**, Associate Professor of Lutheran Confessions & Heritage, recently completed a sabbatical that included writing several essays for publication or presentation, a project in the field of food theology, extensive reading, and intentional practices of personal

renewal. He returned to teaching by leading the January intensive immersion trip to Germany.



**Rev. Dr. Craig L. Nesson** has published a new book, *Free in Deed: The Heart of Lutheran Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2022), the book chapter, "Attending to the Cries of Children in Liberation Theologies," in Marcia J. Bunge, Editor, *Child Theology: Diverse Methods and Global Perspectives*

(Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, pp. 1-20), and two articles: "Disposable People and the Death of White-god" in *Dialog 60* (Fall 2021), pages 177-184 and "On Friendship in Jesus Christ" in *Currents in Theology and Mission*, Festschrift for Norma Cook Everist, April 2022. He also will serve as the Bible Study Leader for the Rural Ministry Conference in March.



**Rev. Winston D. Persaud, PhD**, Prof. of Systematic Theology, Holder of the Kent S. Knutson and UELC Chair in Theology and Mission, and Director of the Center for Global Theologies, as a teacher of the church, via Zoom, participated in conversation with 2009 WTS graduates, on theology

and ministry, 14 Oct. 2021; and in a gathering of faculty of colour at ELCA seminaries, 22 Oct. 2021; attended meeting of Central States Synod Cand. Com., 10 Dec. 2021; video-recorded presentation on “The Doctrine of the Trinity” for Adult Ed. series, Trinity Lutheran Church, Mason City, IA, 30 Dec. 2021; taught TEEM course, *Systematics 1*, 24-17 Jan. 2022; via ZOOM participated in follow-up meeting re. LWF theological study on “Lutheran Identities,” 27 Jan. 2022, and gave presentation, ‘Confessing that “the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel...”: A 21st-Century Challenge,’ to *Ignite the Church* Conference, 8 Feb. 2022.



**Rev. M. DeWayne Teig**, Instructor in the Pastoral Arts & Advisor for TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries), completed a course last summer through the University of Minnesota focused on Trauma, Resiliency, and Ambiguous Loss. He incorporated these foci into a

recent J-term course he taught — *Resiliency and Renewal* — exploring matters of secondary trauma and resilience, especially as these relate to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students explored many personal and communal losses we have experienced, noting there are losses yet to be named. DeWayne also took part with other Wartburg faculty in a consultation — Expanding the Latinx Vision of Borderlands in Theological Education.



**Rev. Dr. Troy Troftgruben** taught on preaching lectionary texts to leaders in the Southeastern Synod in November and the Allegheny Synod in February. In November, he gave one of the responses to President Largen’s Inauguration Address. Troy contributed to Augsburg’s 2022 Lent

devotional *Grace Unbounded* and wrote personally about Acts for *The Living Lutheran* (April 2022). He is working on articles for *Word & World* and *Currents in Theology & Mission*, as well as on a percolating book project. In February, Troy was installed as the William A. & John E. Wagner Professor of Biblical Theology at Wartburg, on which occasion he offered a lecture entitled “The Spirituality of Exegesis.”



**Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen** recently published a book with Fortress Press entitled, *Everyone Must Eat: Food, Sustainability, and Ministry*. The book encourages the church to be a voice of hope to bridge the rural/urban divide and to bring food producers and food consumers to common

ground for the sake of God’s desire for justice in the food system and sustainability for God’s creation. Mark has also helped establish *Engaging God’s Future*, a continuing education program focused on equipping leaders of small membership congregations facing sustainability and vitality challenges, which is a collaboration of WTS and DialogWorks.



**Dr. Man-Hei Yip**, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, wrote a journal article, “A Deterritorialized People: Toward Constructing a Theo-Diasporic Space” for the September 2021 issue of *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*. She was invited to be a respondent of the Chinese Christianities Unit

panel at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, November 2021.



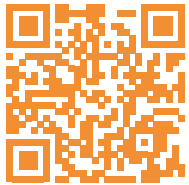


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## Upcoming Events

**April 18–20, 2022**  
ReFormation and Reunion

**July 24–27, 2022**  
International Loehe Society Conference



## Save the Date!



***Beloved Hebrew Bible professor Ann Fritschel is retiring from her position at the end of this academic year!***

To celebrate her, we are having a prayer service and festive dinner at Wartburg Seminary on Thursday, May 5, 2022 —with a Zoom option available.

We will be gifting her a book of congratulatory letters. If you are able to contribute, please email a letter to [lbaumhover@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:lbaumhover@wartburgseminary.edu), or send a hard copy to the Office of the President no later than April 25, 2022.

More information will be forthcoming, but in the meantime, save the date, and please keep Ann in your prayers during this time of transition as we give thanks to God for her many years of faithful service!

**Thank You for Supporting Future Ministry Leaders!**

Give today using the enclosed envelope to have an immediate impact on our students in this season.  
GIVE ONLINE AT [WWW.WARTBURGSEMINARY.EDU/GIVING-OPPORTUNITIES](http://WWW.WARTBURGSEMINARY.EDU/GIVING-OPPORTUNITIES)