

LifeTogether

THE MAGAZINE OF
WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Spring 2023



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

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CORRECTION

Yesenia Morales Bahena was incorrectly referred to as Yesenia Bahena in the Fall 2022 edition of LifeTogether. Her advisor, listed as Kris, is formally known as Pastor Kristen Capel. We apologize for these errors.

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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.

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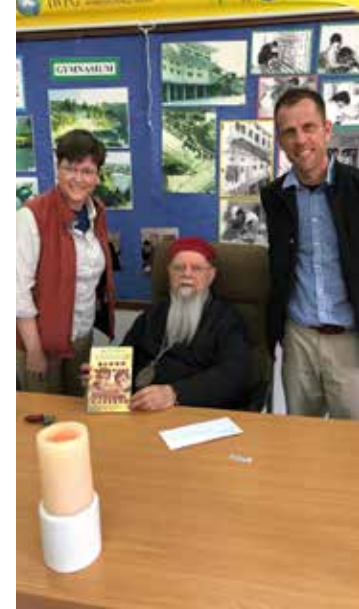
January Term (J-Term) Courses

CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AROUND THE GLOBE

The interim month of January (“J-Term”) provides students and faculty with a change of pace from the classroom work of the fall and spring semesters. At Wartburg Seminary, students are encouraged to consider carefully the religious, social, economic, cultural, and political realities of the world as they struggle to interpret and live out their faith in Christ.

One avenue for such learning is the Cross-Cultural Requirement: immersion (or immersion-like) experiences that bring students into a significant encounter with a different culture. Such encounters both enrich the students’ breadth of experience and provide an opportunity for them to reflect on their own culture. Because students come from many cultural backgrounds, there is no single course by which this requirement is met. Instead, the student consults with his or her faculty adviser to discern the kind of immersion appropriate to that student’s own prior experiences and readiness for future ministry.

Check out the photos and personal accounts within this edition to see where J-Term led our students this year!





J-Term Reflection: Holy Places and Holy People

By Angela Chacon, MDiv, Final-Year (DL)

Would you explain your J-Term course and why you chose it?

In the year before my internship, I attended a Sunday service at St Timothy's in Albuquerque, NM, with Pastor Rachel Powell. She had returned from sabbatical and was incorporating art into the service, and in particular her sermon. I felt how the Holy Spirit was able to use this medium to make the service even more alive. In going to the Holy Land, I aspired to emulate Pastor Rachel's example and incorporate photographs and my experiences in a similar way for the sake of the gospel proclamation.

As time got nearer to our departure, I read the assigned reading: *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, by Anne McGowen and Paul F. Bradshaw. In the reading the account, Egeria emphasized that a pilgrimage includes both the holy places and the holy people she encountered. In some cases, she made special effort to spend prolonged periods of time with people, disregarding any set timeframe or schedule. Her actions illustrated how people are equally as important as places, and sometimes, from an experiential spiritual perspective, even more valuable. In reading her account, my expectations and hopes broadened to include the hope that there would be time to practice curiosity, be contemplative, be surprised and moved by encounters with holy people, as well as, holy places.

What I experienced during J-Term far exceeded my expectations. It was full of paradoxes, as I walked and visited places where the Eternal Son who became flesh, Jesus, walked this earth. The fully divine and fully

human Jesus the Christ, the second person of the Triune God, lived on this earth: he was born and raised, ate and drank, laughed and loved, learned and taught, healed and fed, cried and suffered, died and was raised again. Buildings have been erected on many of the places where Jesus was present on this earth: where he was born, walked, did miracles, suffered, and died. There are so many buildings—synagogues, churches, mosques—full of people offering veneration. My preconceived expectations of quiet spaces for contemplation and meditation, to take in the awesomeness of God on earth, were fulfilled, and yet in some spaces, I was met with the reality of the unanticipated press of people.

I was surprised by the masses of humanity seeking what I, too, sought. I'll admit this was a "no-duh" moment. Taking deep breaths, engaging in prayer, song, and devotions, I found myself being swept away, overcome, and humbled. As a pilgrim in the Holy Land, I experienced "holy envy" at the spiritual dedication of our Abrahamic siblings—local people and those who come from all over the world to worship—the joyous dancing celebration of our Jewish siblings observing Sabbath at the Western Wall, and hearing five times a day the melodious call to prayer and the beautiful intricate patterns and colors of the mosques of our Muslim siblings. Spending time shoulder to shoulder in elaborately decorated worship spaces of Christian Orthodox churches, we encountered God in a personal and yet communal way—weeping, praying, touching places where Jesus was born, died, was buried, and resurrected—and leaving transformed. In other places, my

experiences were just as profound and yet different. The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem was an open space and the interior less elaborate, and in its simplicity, it created a quiet space that welcomed communal contemplation and a jubilant service.

I encountered God at the Western Wall on the Jewish Sabbath as I placed my hands and head on the wall and prayed. In the pit, under Caiaphas' house, where Jesus was held before his crucifixion, I wondered if he met Barabbas and what that possible meeting might have been like. In that holy place, I also reflected on the suffering of others who are in physical prisons and prisons that have no bars. I sat on the stairs that Jesus climbed when he was taken from the Garden of Gethsemane and imagined his anguished prayer, how he might have felt as he was betrayed and taken by the authorities. On Galilee in the "Jesus Boat," I encountered Jesus as we prayed on that beautiful, warm sunny day with a gentle breeze and heard the splashing of jumping fish. At the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves—remembering how Jesus had compassion for the crowds and fed the 5,000—I was reminded of a holy person in my life. My grandmother, Ruperta, who was poor, loved Jesus and also fed the hungry. God was present in the smiling faces of the Palestinian children playing soccer in the refugee camp saying, "Welcome." There were so many encounters that it is impossible to name them all.

What was the best part of your experience?

There were so many wonderful experiences—communal and personal—that it is hard to narrow it down to just one. I would say that one of the personal highlights for me, besides being in fellowship and community with my fellow pilgrims, was the Affirmation of Baptism at the Jordan River. As some of you may know, I wasn't born into the Lutheran faith. Having been baptized in a different Christian denomination when I was around 13, I had been longing to reaffirm my faith in the Lutheran tradition, especially

since I've discerned a call to ministry.

It was a complete surprise to me when Troy and Beth led this service and invited us to affirm our faith in this beautiful and holy place. The day was sunny and mild, and the river was narrow and meandering, and reeds grew along the banks. Some of my colleagues had taken off shoes, socks and rolled up their pants to step into the river, assisting others to come to the water. As we were being anointed, we sang, "I've Got Peace like a River." Across the water, pilgrims on the other bank (in Jordan) were also having a service and being baptized.

There would be no better place to have my baptism affirmed than the river Jordan, where our Savior was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, and God the Father, is heard affirming that Jesus is his Son in whom God is well pleased.

There would be no better people to be surrounded by, to be in community with—seminarians, alums, family, and friends—and being anointed by my seminary instructors. Yes, I could never imagine a better place and better people. It was a deeply moving and spiritual experience that I will not forget.

What did you take away from this experience?

I feel moved, blessed, and unsettled, and am still processing all that I have experienced. I feel a deeper connection with Jesus as I have visited holy places and spent time with holy people. I've heard many stories and witnessed much. I also reflect on the paradox created by so many diverse believers united in desire to worship at this time and in these holy places, and yet we are also so divided. So many diverse people with diverse beliefs make claims on these places. I reflect on how walls were built then and continue to be built now that divide this land that is holy: how the land is divided up and lived in, depending on whether an individual is Muslim, Christian, Jewish or Palestinian, and the injustices that are imposed and experienced.

I felt the injustice in how my passport, despite my being a foreigner, gave me more liberty to travel than some people living on their own land. The Palestinian people are deeply affected, and I marvel at their resilience. In particular, I marvel at the Palestinian Christians, and their continued hope. This small population, around 2%, inspires hope, especially the work of the bishop emeritus, Elias Chacour, who is a Palestinian Christian working for peace in Israel. He asked our group if we were born Christian and his wise reply to his own question was, “No, were all born babies in the image of God.” He urges an equal sharing of the land, as he sees it belonging equally to both the Palestinians and the Jews.

The Israeli/Palestinian situation is a complicated and an emotional one. Sarit Michaeli, a Jewish activist born in Jerusalem and advocating on behalf of the Palestinian people, works for the International Advocacy Office of B'TSELEM. Sarit urges that justice for the Palestinian people will not occur until the international community becomes more involved. Both Sarit and Elias tell us that we, the pilgrims, are their hope; they have hope because we are there. As I ponder this in my heart, I too have hope—to be an instrument of peace, engaging in loving action for the sake of the people of the Holy Land and the world.

Dismantling Racism

By Shawn Juers, MDiv, First-Year (Res.)



I chose Dismantling Racism as my J-Term course. My past context being about as white as it gets, with even overt racism an occasional part of the atmosphere, I felt this class calling to me—to take a deep dive into unpacking that a bit. But perhaps even more importantly, is the need to open the blinds and see the systemic racism we are all a part of. It's a bit uncomfortable to realize the white privileges that many of us are born into, like it or not, and to learn just how deeply embedded systemic racism is in our world, and in fact, in our church. And it's something that I believe every seminarian needs to learn.

I walked into the sanctuary after class one day and got hit hard in looking up at the stained glass Jesus in our sanctuary – white, of course. I sat there for a bit and dwelled in that, let myself feel that a bit. What does that white image signify? I was able to identify some true transformation happening. It's not a little thing; oppression is right there in front of us, and we must see it as such if we are ever to change it.

Conocimiento—knowledge, awareness, knowing, consciousness, cognizance, familiarity—it's from there that we can move to confront that which we've been programmed to avoid. That's some class material there! The harm done in inaction is profound, and the action needed goes far beyond ourselves. I find myself in a new reality, and equipped with an important foundation to build on.

Getting to Know Rev. Lamont Wells

Strategic Advisor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, Wartburg's Strategic Advisor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion also serves as the Executive Director, Network of ELCA-Lutheran Colleges and Universities (NECU). NECU is an association of 27 colleges and universities of the ELCA, which were founded between 1832 (Gettysburg College) and 1959 (California Lutheran University). Wells directs the collective mission of ELCA colleges and universities by rooting and grounding their identity in the spirit of the Lutheran Reformation and being open to expanding connections and opportunities to reach everyone.

Rev. Wells is the former Program Manager for Campus Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (LuMin). LuMin is a network of inclusive faith-based and service communities on and near campuses at over 240 colleges and universities across

the country. He is also the current National President of the African Descent Lutheran Association (ELCA).

In his career, he has led programs and communities of multiple denominations in New York, Pennsylvania, and Georgia, including having served as the Lutheran Campus Pastor for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the Atlanta University Center (AUC).

He earned a Professional Certification in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion from Cornell University. As a professionally trained coach, he effectively helps individuals, groups, and organizations to unlock their potential and maximize their own performance.

Previously he earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion and Sociology at Morehouse College. Rev. Wells has also earned a Master of Arts in Christian Education and a Master of Divinity degree in Leadership from the Interdenominational Theological Center/Johnson C. Smith Seminary. He completed Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Emory University. Pastor Wells has studied Leadership at Harvard Divinity School, Princeton Theological Seminary and was named a clergy fellow of the Chautauqua Institute.

Pastor Wells is a member of the National Honor Society of Theta Phi and the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Along with his years of service, he has received numerous honors and awards signifying his spirit of excellence, including his induction into the prestigious Board of Distinguished Preachers at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Q&A With Rev. Wells:

What have you enjoyed most about working at Wartburg?

I'm enjoying the lightbulb or epiphany experiences that I think are authentic from the students, faculty and staff about clear action and strategic ways to do diversity, equity and inclusion at the seminary in their future work and in their personal lives. That has been the most joyful thing!

What is your vision for the church and theological education?

John 17:21 says, "that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." For me, when Jesus says "so they may be one," it's not that we have to be the same, but that we be united, that is my prayer for the church and theological education, and that we will teach people how to live in community with each other in helpful and healthy ways that celebrate diversity and differences without creating those differences as deficiencies. So

that they be one—not in sameness—but in connectedness. And the connectedness that we have is in Jesus. So, when it comes to any type of diversity—racial, ethnic, gender, ability, etc.—if we can be "one" such that we can use different types of worship and programming that invites everyone to see themselves included in, and that is accessible, if we can see and connect with each other with the love of Jesus Christ that makes us healthy and whole, that vision gives me hope.

Has anything surprised you about working at Wartburg?

The thing that surprises me the most about Wartburg is that I did not expect the students to be so embracing—and like a sponge for the level of instruction and actionable engagement that I'm attempting to bring to the campus. It's enough that it encourages me to want to continue and to do more—and we're just starting!

Are you or is someone you know considering seminary?

Attend an upcoming **Online Open House** or **Considering Your Call Weekend** and start a conversation with the Wartburg Seminary Admissions team! We can't wait to meet and walk with you in your discernment journey.

Switzerland, France, and Germany

By Emily Erisman, MDiv, Final-Year (Res.)



The cross cultural J-term trip I went on included travel to the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, Switzerland, the Taizé Community, and the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasburg, France. We were introduced to staff of the Lutheran World Federation and World Council of Churches, and immersed in the greater ecumenical communion of Christian Churches institutionally and experientially. I chose this J-term for a few reasons. I was looking for a small dedicated group to travel with and I had never been to Europe. I was excited to gain more personal exposure to the wider church and intrigued by engaging in the simple lifestyle at Taizé.

The best part of my experience was our time at Taizé. It was eye-opening to be a part of a community of people from all over the world, brought together for this particular week. I became accustomed to and even looked forward to a simple breakfast of a baguette, butter, and chocolate with a cup of tea. Each day was centered in prayer, accompanied by the voices of the monks. The evening was full of laughter and jokes that

transcended the five languages spoken at the table.

What I found so remarkable was how little language barriers matter while in the midst of this ecumenical community. I expected to encounter challenges with navigating other languages and cultures. What I did not expect was how easy it would be to understand others even when we didn't speak the same language, and to become so close with someone with whom I could seemingly barely communicate.

What I discovered on this trip was a strong current of ecumenism that ran through everything we did. Each of our hosts: Chad Rimmer at LWF, Brother Raymond at Taizé and Theo Dieter at the Institute in Strasburg, guided us on a journey from learning about ecumenism, to encountering it, to living into it. That is what I will take with me from this trip, the recognition that I live out ecumenism with every encounter.

Preaching and Spiritual Formation

By Jonas Ellison, MDiv, Final-Year (DL)



My J-Term class was Preaching and Spiritual Formation with Professor Samantha Gilmore. I'd never seen a course like it that integrates preaching with spiritual formation, and I was intrigued. We read a diverse selection of material with subject matter ranging from monastic elements of preaching to more mainstream Protestant thinkers. We also read several current articles that had to do with today's culture and spirituality. Each of us had the chance to prepare and deliver a sermon and critique each other.

The best experience for me was the 'contemplative journal' that we were required to keep throughout the course. I've always been a voracious highlighter of my reading material. I highlight selections from the text (usually in my Kindle) and copy/paste the selections that best applies to whatever I'm working on. But in this journal, we weren't to copy direct quotes or merely say, "I really like this part." Instead, we were to journal our own reflections about our reading as we went along. First of all, I really enjoyed how non-structured it was. I decided to hand-write my journal in a notebook, so it served as a bit of a contemplative exercise in itself that got me away from my screen. I was able to opine on the material, make connections with other readings, draw pictures, use different colors, etc. This helped the content 'stick' better than merely copying/pasting things, and served as a spiritual practice in itself. I wish I would have learned how to use a tool like this earlier in my seminary journey.

For some reason, the thing that stuck with me the most was the value of distinctly Lutheran preaching. It was a topic that we covered fairly briefly in our first class, but Professor Gilmore showcased the idea so clearly and succinctly. For us, preaching is sacramental in character. We are giving Christ to people through our words. This is a deeply spiritual activity, this preached Word. What an honor to be a Lutheran preacher. Secondly, I took away the insight that being a preacher is not just something we do when we read, study, write our sermon, and preach. Being a preacher is a life—the preaching life. We are never not preachers and all of life can be used to serve this sacred activity.



Renovation Yields Ancient Virtues

IN RENOVATING, WE REDISCOVER NEW AND OLD THINGS

**By Troy Troftgruben, Associate Professor of New Testament
and the Wililam A. and John E. Wagner Professor in Biblical Theology**

In renovating, we rediscover new and old things.

That is what happened this fall during Wartburg's renovation of Fritschel Hall. When construction workers took down the walls of what has been the President's Office for the last four decades, they found another layer of walls, decorated by ornate painting. At the top of these walls were words in an ancient language: Koine Greek.

In its earliest years, the ground floor room near the southeast corner of Fritschel Hall served as the Faculty Lounge (from 1916), later as an administrative office room (from 1958), and finally as the President's Office (from 1982 on). The walls discovered date to the earliest phase of its use, as a faculty lounge, from 1916 to 1958. During the 1958

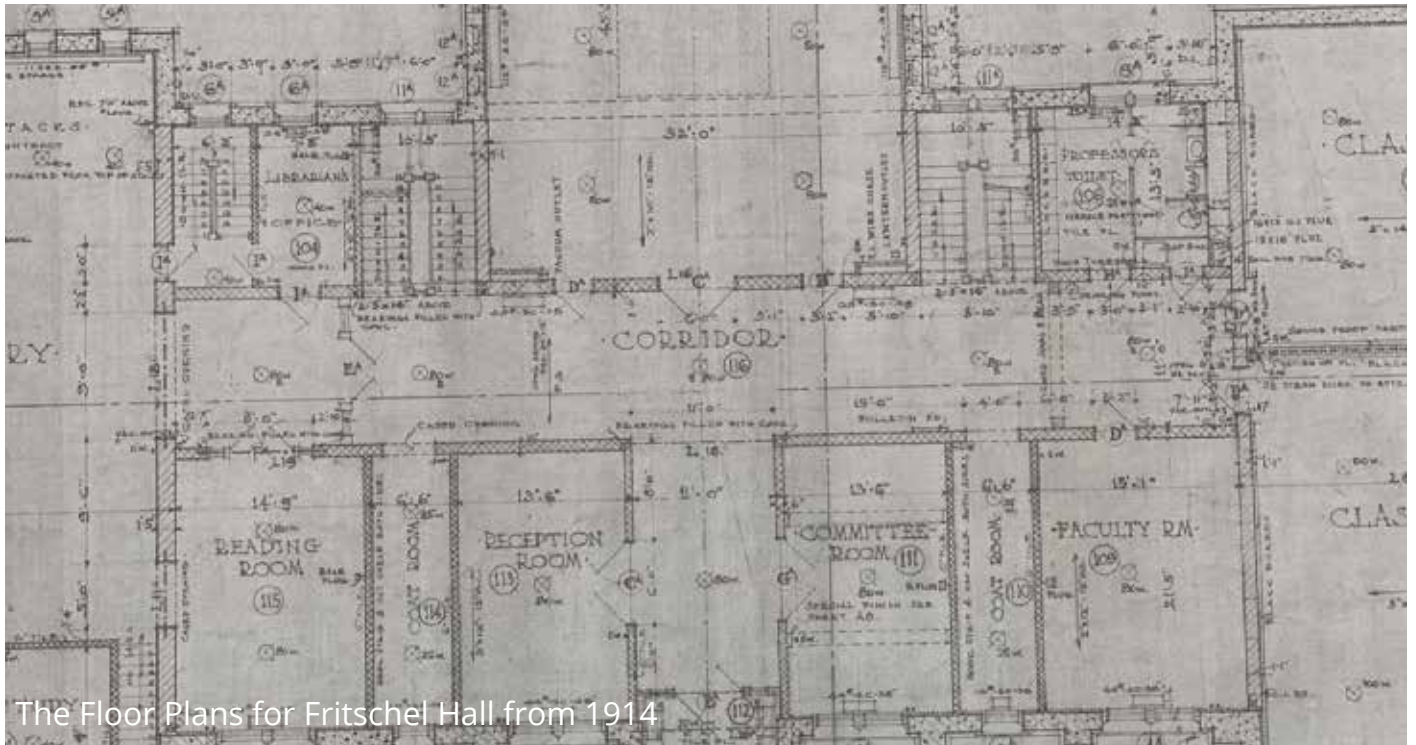
renovation, they were covered by sheetrock to serve better the needs of administrative and student service offices that began to reside there.

The painting is largely by hand, with stenciling used for patterns throughout. The Greek words were almost certainly done freehand. The words are as follows, moving clockwise around the room:

East Wall: πίστις (pistis) "faith," ἀγάπη (agapē) "love," ἐλπίς (elpis) "hope."

South Wall: χαρά (chara) "joy," ἐγκράτεια (engkrateia) "self-discipline."

West Wall: ὑπακοή (hypakoē) "obedience," εἰρήνη (eirēnē) "peace," εὐχαριστία (eucharistia) "thanksgiving."



The Floor Plans for Fritschel Hall from 1914



Endurance



Love



Faith



Obedience



Hope



Peace



Humility



Self-Control



Joy



Thanksgiving

North Wall: ὑπομόνη (hypomonē) “endurance,” ταπεινοφροσύνη (tapeinophrosynē) “humility.”

The words do not verbatim represent a specific, singular list. Instead, they reflect virtues identified variously throughout New Testament and early Christian writings as befitting the character of Jesus, the fruit of the Spirit, and the ethics of the Christian life. The fact that the words are written in Greek (vs. German, Latin, or English) suggests they originate from New Testament writings.

Five of the words—love, joy, peace, faith, and self-control—make up a slight majority of the nine traits named by Paul as the fruit of the Spirit: “Now the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, humility, and self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22–23). Most of the words on the eastern and southern walls are fruit of the Spirit, though their ordering and choice of virtues do not reflect intentional reproduction of Paul’s fruit of the Spirit.

The three words on the eastern wall—faith, love, and hope—offer the clearest scriptural pattern. These are the realities with which Paul concludes his praise of love in First Corinthians: “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (13:13). In fact, the order of the three words on the eastern wall appears to have this verse in mind: it follows the verse’s ordering (faith, hope, love), but makes a change, placing love—the “greatest” of these three—at the center.

The remaining words—obedience, thanksgiving, endurance, and humility—all appear in exhortations throughout various New Testament writings. Paul speaks of obedience, for example, as a natural response to the Gospel (Romans 1:5; 15:18; 16:19, 26). Thanksgiving is a trait in which believers are to abound (Colossians 2:7; 4:2; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 5:4). Endurance is especially encouraged by later NT writings, to audiences experiencing increased societal hostility (James 1:3–4; 5:11; 2 Peter 1:6; 1 Timothy 6:11; Titus 2:2). Humility, although infrequently named in the New Testament, is to characterize the entirety of believers’ lives (Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:2).

In my estimation, the ten words likely reflected key virtues of the Christian faith, as depicted in the New Testament (hence the use of Greek), with 1 Corinthians 13:13 and Galatians 5:22–23 as central starting points—as seen in the eastern and southern walls. The words were most likely chosen by the four Wartburg Seminary faculty at that time—Max Fritschel (President), George Fritschel, J. Michael Reu, and George Zeilinger—as reminders of the call to faithful living that they were to embody in teaching, faith, and life. Speaking personally as a current faculty member, they inspire me to think about the ways we as a faculty today continue to reflect upon and aspire to tangible signs of Spirit-shaped character and renewal in the community of Wartburg today.

One of the walls (the western) was early on taken down. Another (the eastern) has since followed. The remaining two walls (the northern and southern) will likely be covered once again by new sheetrock, perhaps to be uncovered yet again in a future renovation.



Rev. Dr. Troy
Troftgruben



Vocations and Formation Suite



Auditorium



Library



Board of Directors Visit

Fritschel Hall Renovation Photos



Main Entrance



Library



New Piping



Uncovered stone



Demo of 1st floor of Fritschel

Alfombras de Aserrín

By Violeta Siguenza

SAWDUST CARPETS [ALFOMBRAS] DURING LENT

The creation of “sawdust carpets” is one of the most beautiful and famous Lenten traditions in Latin America. It can be found in many countries, but is particularly characteristic of Guatemala, especially in Antigua, where they can be seen on the streets in cities and towns all around the country. Often starting several days in advance, beautiful ‘carpets’ are created from sawdust that is dyed in vibrant hues of all colors. Flowers also can be used in the composition of elaborate designs, featuring both religious and natural motifs. They can be seen throughout Lent, but are most prominent during Holy Week. The tradition goes back hundreds of years and was brought to Guatemala from the Spanish conquistadors from Mexico; however, it originated with the Feast of Corpus Christi in the Canary Islands, off the coast of Spain. They are not meant to last, but provide a beautiful path for sacred processions, which hundreds of Christians walk, often carrying holy images of Jesus Christ and Mary. The making of these carpets then, is a holy act, meant to honor God during the season of Lent.



ALFOMBRAS DE ASERRÍN DURANTE LA CUARESMA

La creación de “alfombras de aserrín” es una de las mas bellas y famosas tradiciones de Cuaresma en Latinoamérica. Se puede encontrar en muchos países, pero es particularmente característica de Guatemala, especialmente en Antigua, en donde pueden verse en las calles en ciudades y provincias alrededor del país. Usualmente se empiezan a hacer con varios días de anticipación; estas hermosas alfombras son creadas de aserrín que se pinta en tonos de colores brillantes e intensos. Las flores también son incluidas en la elaboración de los diseños, que son representativos de la naturaleza y la religiosidad del pueblo. Se pueden ver a través de la Cuaresma, pero más prominente durante la Semana Santa. Esta tradición data a ciento de años y fue traída a Guatemala por los conquistadores Españoles que llegaron de México; sin embargo esta tradición se originó en el Festival del Cuerpo de Cristo en las Islas Canarias, en la costa de España. Las alfombras no se diseñan para que duren mucho tiempo, sino para proveer un camino hermoso para las sagradas procesiones, en las cuales ciento de Cristianos pasan cargando el anda de Jesucristo y Maria. La hecha de estas alfombras se vuelve un acto santo, significativo para honrar a Dios durante la época de Cuaresma.



Malaysia and Thailand

By Jonathyn Lys, MDiv, Year 4 (CL)



My J-Term course took me to Southeast Asia specifically Sabah, Malaysia and Bangkok, Thailand. We learned and reflected on the multiculturalism present in this part of the world, the unique development of Christianity in the region, the ecumenical nature of the church in Malaysia and Thailand, and how Christianity expresses itself when it is growing from a place of a minority religion. I specifically chose this course because I wanted to be immersed in a completely different context and learn from a place that has its own unique story to tell.

My favorite part of the course was meeting the people and seeing the churches of the interior regions of Sabah. I also appreciated being welcomed fully into a community with radical hospitality expressed through food, dance, culture, and joy, and partnering together for the

sake of the gospel. It was wonderful to learn from them and be opened by the Spirit to a wider experience of the global church.

I was inspired and reinvigorated by the Spirit for the work of ministry here in the States. I saw and experienced firsthand how ecumenical partnership, cultivation of lay leadership, and wrestling with questions of identity can bring life into a congregation. The church of Jesus Christ is not dying! There are places and people who can teach us new things as we move forward together in a global community.



Holden Village

Amy Mambu, MA/MADM, Year 3 / (DL) - Diaconal Ministry

I chose the Holden Village Sojourn for my J-term because I have wanted to travel to Holden for years, but just getting there has always seemed so daunting. It is truly a sojourn, taking multiple days simply to make it to Holden. I wanted to have the opportunity for a true retreat with my colleagues, off-the-grid, just being present with one another.

Simply being at Holden is an experience in itself. There is something truly humbling and magical about being in the mountains, among the trees, with no contact to the wider world. It felt like returning to myself—being reminded of who I am and whose I am, that



I am beloved by God, and created for meaningful connection in intentional community with others. I spent time in deep rest and joyful play with my colleagues who quickly became my close friends.

The most surprising part of this experience was how quickly I felt at peace upon getting to Holden. As our travel had been delayed a few days, I expected to feel stressed and exhausted when we finally arrived. Of course I was tired from all the travel, but I almost instantly felt this sense of calm when we pulled into the village. The community that greeted us was incredibly welcoming, cheering for us as our bus pulled up and helping us get all of our luggage to our rooms. This

was an intentional community unlike any I had experienced before—grounded in deep hospitality and love for neighbor.

The day we had been scheduled to arrive at Holden, I heard news that a colleague and friend from my home synod had died in a tragic car accident. I arrived at Holden with this deep sense of grief and sorrow, particularly as I had been speaking with her just one week earlier about the trip, and she expressed such joy and excitement for me to be in a place that had had such an impact on her in her own formation. The day after we arrived, I chose to be open and vulnerable with our class about what was going on, and I was greeted with such deep love and support that I needed. At one point during one of our class times, we shared 6-word stories that came to our minds after some silent reflection. The one that stuck with me most was this: joy and grief are not mutually-exclusive.

The Development of Wartburg Seminary's Land Acknowledgment Statement

President Kristin Johnston Largent

At a special Wartburg Theological Seminary Board of Directors meeting on November 21st, 2022, the Board approved an official Land Acknowledgment Statement, which can be found on our website. Wartburg is the first ELCA Seminary to have such a statement. The full text of the statement is included in this issue of Life Together, and I wanted to share some of the rationale and background that supports it.

The request to research and possibly adopt a Land Acknowledgment Statement first came from students, after a J-Term course in 2022, where such statements had been studied. The request ultimately came to the DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Taskforce, which appointed a subcommittee for this purpose. This subcommittee was composed of students, a board member, a faculty member and a local ELCA bishop. The subcommittee then brought a proposed statement to the DEI Task Force, where it was discussed and approved, and then brought to the seminary staff and faculty for further discussion. The final draft was brought to the board for their approval.

The first paragraph of the statement is what is widely reproduced and shared: in email signatures, chapel bulletins, etc. The full statement—the text of which is reprinted in this issue—is important for several reasons.

- First, the full text of the Land Acknowledgment makes clear that the presence of Indigenous people on this land is not merely a matter of history; rather, it affirms that Indigenous people still live on these lands and continue to care for them.

- Second, it provides the correct pronunciations of the names of these peoples, which is important and respectful.

- Third, it places in context—and rejects—claims that land was ceded to white settlers and colonists by treaty, rather than stolen through the misuse of treaties.

- And, finally, it reflects a further commitment by Wartburg Seminary to continue the journey toward greater justice and toward building relationships with Indigenous peoples.

In its own research, the subcommittee considered the ELCA's Land Acknowledgement Guide, a similar document from The Native Governance Center, other available land acknowledgements from the regions, as well as historical resources and websites.

Of particular importance for our deliberations was the ELCA's Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People, which was approved on Sept. 27th, 2021. In that Declaration, the ELCA first confesses:

We confess that we have not listened to the stories of Indigenous people and have not taken the time to understand history. We have devalued Indigenous religions and lifeways and have not challenged the invisibility of Indigenous people in American society. We have treated American Indians and Alaska Natives as a "minority group" rather than as sovereign nations. We have not taken seriously the importance of land and how complicit we are in accepting the benefits of stolen land. We confess that in our church life we have failed to keep promises about funding and autonomy made at the inception of the ELCA. We confess that we have underfunded and over-interfered in the workings of Indigenous congregations and ministries. While we adopted the "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" in 2016, we have not yet taken action to live out the Repudiation. We confess that we are complicit in the annihilation of Native peoples and your

cultures, languages, and religions, and that we have refused to truly recognize the harm that we have caused our Native siblings. We confess that we must continue to learn more about our complicity and the roles our church played in dehumanizing Indigenous peoples, especially as it relates to the forced assimilation, abuse, and death in Indian boarding schools, adoption, and foster care; the ecological damages in Indian Country and beyond due to climate change; the breaking of sacred treaties meant to govern the relationships between Native sovereign nations and the U.S. federal government; and missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and relatives. (MMIWGR)

And then pledges:

We give thanks for the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutherans who have been present from the beginning of the ELCA and its predecessor bodies, sharing their wisdom, steadfastness, and leadership to help make our church better. Therefore, we commit to working toward the elimination of racism and white supremacy that exists in our church's governance, leadership, congregations, and membership that has always

had and continues to have detrimental effects on Native communities and our ELCA Native siblings, congregations, and ministries. We commit to honor Native leadership, learn from them, and secure a place for that leadership at decision-making tables....We commit to consistently communicate American Indian and Alaska Native concerns across the church and to respond to those concerns accordingly, and we will begin celebrating holidays and anniversaries associated with Indigenous people appropriately....We commit to supporting forms of leadership, education, and certification that are Native-focused and Native-led, and we commit to developing future Native leaders, pastors, and theologians. We commit to encourage and support wherever possible the buyback and return of tribal land, and further commit to support creative programs resulting in reparations for stolen lands.

At Wartburg Seminary, our Land Acknowledgment Statement is a faithful response to this Declaration and signals our willing participation in the ongoing work of inclusion and support it promises.



Land Acknowledgement Statement

We at Wartburg Theological Seminary acknowledge our campus occupies ancestral lands stolen by the U.S. Government and white colonizers from the Sauk, Meskwaki, Miami, Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi, Očhéthi Šakówinj, and Kickapoo peoples. The Wartburg Seminary diaspora community continues to occupy these and other stolen lands first given to Native nations by the Creator.

Discernment regarding Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the ways actions and inactions of white colonizers have taken away this land from its original use as home, transit hub, and place of connection for Indigenous people. We grieve the colonizing mentality that continues to make invisible our Indigenous siblings who first cared for and continue to reside on this land.

This acknowledgement is just the first step in a longer journey towards justice for Indigenous peoples. Therefore, we commit to building relationships, and seek to honor, uplift and support Indigenous individuals and communities.

Pronunciation Guide

- Sauk (Saak)
- Meskwaki (Mesquakie)
- Miami (My-am-ee), formerly Myaamia (Me-YAH-me-yah)
- Ho-Chunk, formerly Hoocąk (Ho-Chunk)
- Potawatomi, formerly Potawatami (Pow-tuh-waa-tuh-mee)
- Očhéthi Šakówinj (Oh-chey-tee Shah-koh-ween)
- Kickapoo, formerly Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo)

Treaties Established to Steal Land in and Around Dubuque:

- Treaty with the Sauk and Fox and Ioway Indians, August 04, 1824
- Treaty of Black Hawk Purchase, September 21, 1832
- Treaty with the Sacs and Foxes, September 27, 1836
- Treaty with the Sauk and Fox, October 11, 1842
- Treaty with Potawatomi Nation, June 05 and 17, 1846

Learn more about Land Acknowledgment Statements here:

https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Ethnic-Specific-and-Multicultural-Ministries/Indigenous-Ministries-and-Tribal-Relations?_ga=2.149854000.783417689.1664978138-374173195.1651782116

Find out whose land you're on: <https://native-land.ca>

- Treaties
 - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/04/06/can-indigenous-landback-movement-secure-self-determination>
 - <https://www.meskwaki.org/history>
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sac_and_Fox_treaty_of_1842

Alumni Notes

DEATHS

1950

Eugene Ketterling died on December 28, 2022.

1955

Charles D. Probst died on September 4, 2022.

Kenneth Pohlmann died on January 17, 2023.

1957

Robert D. Lynne died on December 4, 2022.

Eimo E. Hinrichs died on October 24, 2022.

1959

William C. Behrens died on January 3, 2023

1961

Wayne E. Weissenbuehler died on September 2, 2022.

1962

John C. Wilker died on October 9, 2022.

1963

Dennis H. Dickman died on September 21, 2022.

1966

Melvin Frahm died on July 22, 2022.

1967

Neil R. Thompson died on November 28, 2022.

1972

Larry G. Henrichs died on October 1, 2022.

ORDINATIONS

2021

Micah Louwagie was ordained on December 3, 2022.

Amanda Randall was ordained on November 13, 2021.

2022

Laura Mills Anderson was ordained on December 17, 2022.

Heather Yerion-Keck was ordained on November 4, 2022.

Aneel Trivedi was ordained on November 13, 2022.

Lillian Brondyke was ordained on October 29, 2022.

2023

Eric Haitz was ordained on February 26, 2023.

Susan Cira was ordained on March 19, 2023.

Patrick Kaley was ordained on March 11, 2023.

Savannah Olaphson was ordained on February 19, 2023.

NEWS

1971

Fred Erler is the founder of FAME Enterprises, an Executive Coaching firm.

1987

David Rask Behling has been called by the NW Synod of Wisconsin to serve as the Campus Ministry Director at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls. Journey House is a non-profit ecumenical organization that works with students and others in the UWRF and River Falls communities to help build a more equitable, affirming, and inclusive community. After completing candidacy in the SE Minnesota Synod, he was ordained as a Deacon in November 2019. He lives in Chippewa Falls with his partner, Karen Rask Behling (**1989**), who serves as the pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

1995

Kurt Hansen recently published his second book, *Daughters of Teutobod*.

2001

Mark Carr has received endorsement from the ELCA for Specialized Ministry following his certification as a chaplain from the Association of Professional Chaplains. Pastor Carr serves as chaplain at the Mayo Hospital in La Crosse, WI under call from the La Crosse Area synod.

Faculty & Staff Updates



Hannah Bernhard, Library Services Coordinator, coauthored a book called *Sacred Fantasies: Medieval Illuminations in the Loras College Library*. It is available for purchase at the Loras College Bookstore and River Lights Bookstore.



Susan Ebertz, Director for the Reu Memorial Library & Associate Professor of Bibliography & Academic Research, serves as the Wartburg Theological Seminary representative on the Institutional Review Board at the University of Dubuque.

The IRB is responsible for protecting human subjects of research. Plans continue for the remodel of the library and the staging of the return of the books to Fritschel Hall.



Dr. Beth Elness-Hanson, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, was invited to write an article, "Bridge Building beyond Youth Mission Trips: Transformation through Inter-cultural Youth Groups Reading the Bible Together," and it was published in the Fall issue of the *Word & World* journal.

She co-presented two papers at the Society of Biblical Literature conference in Denver, CO, in November. These were: "Comparative Methodologies in African Biblical Hermeneutics: Analysis of Past Approaches as a Foundation for Engaging Epistemologies in Tri-Polar Comparisons," with Knut Holter of VID Specialized University, Norway; and "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent!": An Analysis of Isaiah 62 with Poetic Aurality and Tri-Polar Comparative Approaches," with PhD student, Johanna Rönnlund of Uppsala University, Sweden. She also supported Troy Troftgruben in facilitating a large group of 56 students and other participants in the January-term course to the Holy Land.



Rev. Dr. Samuel Giere, Professor of Biblical Interpretation, has published a little splash in the January/February 2023 *Living Lutheran*, "Day One and the Eighth Day of Creation." He has an article with perhaps his most pretentious title yet forthcoming in the Winter 2023 issue of *Word & World*, "The Ubiquity of Impermanence at the Intersection of Qoheleth and Entropy."

He also has a book set to be published by Fortress Press this spring, *Freedom and Imagination: Trusting in Christ in an Age of Bad Faith*, which is available for pre-order where (at least some!) good books are sold.



Dr. Samantha Gilmore, Assistant Professor of Homiletics, contributed to the "Preaching Helps" section of the last issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*. At the Academy of Homiletics in Louisville, KY, in December, she presented the paper "Empathetic Responsiveness: An Intervention Against Patriarchy in the Preaching Classroom."

After the meeting, she was appointed to lead the Performance Studies Workgroup of the Academy of Homiletics for the next three years. She has been admitted to the Wabash Center's 2023 Hybrid Teaching and Learning Workshop for Early Career Theological School Faculty, which meets seven times over the course of the year, with a weeklong meeting in June.

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Rev. Dr. Kristin Johnston Largen, President, represented Wartburg Theological Seminary, along with Professor Kris Stache, at the Celebration of 75 years of the Augustana Hochschule, in Neuendettelsau, Germany. She also presented a paper at the accompanying consultation organized by the Augustana Hochschule and Mission OneWorld, "Theology in an Intercultural Perspective. On the Future of Academic Theology at Theological Seminaries and Colleges." She also has a chapter titled "Heaven and Sukhavati: Martin Luther and Shinran Shonin on Death and What Follows," in *The Routledge Handbook of Buddhist-Christian Studies*, edited by Carol S. Anderson and Thomas Cattoi.



Rev. Dr. Martin Lohrmann, Associate Professor of Lutheran Confessions and Heritage, recently attended the Lutheran Historical Conference, presented a paper at the Sixteenth-Century Society

Conference, and participated in a roundtable discussion about denominational histories with the American Society of Church History. He also led a J-term class on global Christianity and ecumenism, visiting Geneva, Taize, and Strasbourg. He continues to research and write on Lutheran history and theology.



Rev. Dr. Craig Nesson, Professor of Contextual Theology and Ethics and The William D. Streng Professor for the Education and Renewal of the Church, co-presented on the topic "Educating Faith Leaders: The Role of Seminaries and Religious Institutions in Addressing Child Maltreatment" in January 2023 at a national conference "bringing together faith and child protection communities to end child abuse and neglect in the U.S." In January and April, Dr.

Nesson is helping to lead the interfaith series, Pathways to the Divine, sponsored by Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat in the Quad Cities, Iowa.



Rev. Dr. Winston D. Persaud, 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, wrote Lenten devotions

for the 2023 Lenten booklet of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Guyana; shared in leading an online worship service attended by diaspora communities; is teaching the 2023 Select online course in Systematic Theology; and taught the WTS TEEM intensive course, Systematics 1, 23-27 Jan. 2023. In spring 2023, his course offerings are: HT140W Systematic Theology (with Dr. Man Hei Yip); IN142W Formation for Discipleship (with Dr. Jan R. Schnell), Spiritual Practices (Small Group), and HT264W2 L1 Readings in Theology (from Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue).



Rev. Dr. Jan Rippen-trop-Schnell, Assistant Professor of Liturgics, is writing a chapter on Reformation Worship for the *Cambridge Companion to Christian Liturgy*. She was also accepted to a

year-long Wabash program called "Becoming a White Antiracist" that equips teachers in higher education in religion and theology to incorporate pedagogies and dispositions that participate in dismantling systemic racism. She has become the Convener for her Seminary Group: Liturgical Theology at the North American Academy of Liturgy.



Rev. DeWayne Teig, Instructor in the Pastoral Arts & Advisor for TEEM/Certificate Students, again taught the Church as Learning Community intensive last summer. He also completed a Professional and Continuing Education Certificate through the Maryland University of Integrative Health on “Resilience and Well-being,” which included six Masterclasses in: Philosophy & Science of Wellbeing, Physiology of Building Stress Resilience, A Brain-Based Approach to Upgrading Human Interactions, Using Modern Neuroscience to Facilitate Positive Change, Psychoneuroimmunology—How Thoughts Impact Disease, The Microbiome and Mental Health, and Meditation for Everyone. The lessons gleaned relate well to the practice of self-care for ministry leaders.



Rev. Dr. Troy Troftgruben, Associate Professor of New Testament and the William A. and John E. Wagner Professor in Biblical Theology, published an article in *Word & World* (“A Spirituality of Studying Scripture”) this past fall, contributed to Augsburg’s Advent devotional, and finished an article for the Spring issue of *Currents in Theology & Mission*. He also taught on Matthew’s Gospel to two pastors’ gatherings and published two book reviews on recent Luke commentaries. In January, he and Dr. Beth Elness-Hanson led 56 travelers to the Holy Land as a cross-cultural course. This spring he is assisting Dr. Samantha Gilmore with two preaching courses. Meanwhile, he is working on a book project on bearing witness in Acts with reflection on its significance for today.

Upcoming Events

April 11-23, 2023
ReFormation and Reunion

April 16-18 2023
Rural Ministry Conference

May 14, 2023
Commencement

May 23, 2023
Admissions Online Open House



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