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DEAR FRIENDS OF ULS:

I write to you during these uncertain and ever-changing times. Since the last issue of UNITED magazine, so much has happened to alter the way we preach, teach, learn and serve. Who could have predicted the ways we worship as a community could be so isolated? How could we have prepared for the numbers of people who have died or lost loved ones without the chance to hold their hand and pray with them? These are agonizing questions for which none of us have answers.

However, our God can bring good from evil: we should ask how this virus, and the devastation and loss in its path, has strengthened our resolve and prepared our graduating students to lead through times of crisis and uncertainty.

ULS was proactive in its response to COVID-19 as the situation quickly evolved. A task force was appointed, we went online with classes early on and shortly thereafter told our staff to begin working remotely in accordance with PA Governor Wolf’s directive. I am grateful for the collaborative spirit in which our ULS family worked together to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone. I am especially grateful for essential staff who continue to work on both campuses, so our residential students are looked after and our buildings and grounds are maintained and secured.

Our generous donors and alumni have continued to support the important work we do in teaching the Word of the Gospel and serving God’s people. To learn more about how some of our own faculty and alumni are leading the way through this time, please take a moment to read “Faithful ULS Servants in a Changing World” on page 9. We are encouraged by enrollment numbers as they stand for the fall and have also seen a substantial increase in the number of DMin applicants, as that program offers a flexible combination of intensives and distance learning.

Thank you for your partnership, courage and faith in United Lutheran Seminary. Now, more than ever, we need your ongoing guidance and wisdom. We are all in this together.

May God keep you and your loved ones safe.

In gratitude,

REV. ANGELA ZIMMANN, Ph.D., CFRE
Interim President, United Lutheran Seminary
Gettysburg & Philadelphia
President, United Lutheran Seminary Endowment Foundation
Adjunct Professor of Homiletics
Meet the United Lutheran Seminary Alumni Association (TULSAA)

TULSAA was officially formed in January 2020, after the merging of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg Alumni Boards. The purpose of this association is to encourage a closer relationship of former students with each other and the seminary; to foster the area of continuing education among alumni; to promote the welfare of the seminary including financial support; and, to serve as a liaison between administration and the alumni constituency.

Please welcome your new Alumni Board and its executive members:

TULSAA BOARD

Rev. Brian Armen
Rev. Dr. Donald Green (President)
Rev. Frederick Neu (Vice President)
Rev. Jacob Simpson
Rev. Joshua McCaffery
Rev. Kelley Ketcham
Rev. John Nelson
Ms. Barbara Satchell
Ms. Andrea Garnett (Secretary)

Rev. Tamika Jancewicz
Rev. Regina Diggs
Rev. Brian Campbell
Rev. Lenny Duncan
Ms. Louisa Klaven
Rev. Susan Ruggles (Executive Committee)
Rev. Judith Ann Cobb
Rev. Scott E. Schul

Rev. Dr. Donald (“Don”) B. Green (President) a native of York, PA, is an alumnus of Susquehanna University (Psychology ’70) and Gettysburg Seminary (MDiv ’74 & DMin ’83). He has served parishes in Hershey/ Hummelstown and Lancaster, PA for 18 years. In 1992 he was called to be the Assistant to the Bishop in the SWPA Synod. He then spent 11+ years as Executive Director of Christian Associates of SWPA (representing 26 Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant judicatories). Married for 50 years to Kathryn “Tangen,” they are the proud parents of three children and one grandson.

The Rev. Frederick K. “Rick” Neu, BCC (Vice President) has served parishes in Maine and Vermont. He established a social ministry organization in Maine which is part of Ascentria, a New England based Lutheran social service agency. Rick is co-founder of the Good News Garage, a program of Ascentria. He is a board-certified Chaplain at the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington and is Pastor in Charge at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Montpelier. He is married with two adult sons.

Andrea Garnett (Secretary) holds a MAR (’11) from LTSG and is a ’07 Wartburg College alumna. She currently works in a District office for the Church of the Brethren and takes classes part-time. While at LTSG, she met and married Micah Garnett. They welcomed their first child, Rosalind, in 2018. Andrea is “truly honored to serve on the TULSAA Board and grateful for this opportunity.”

The Rev. Susan Ruggles (Executive Committee) is a graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now known as ULS) in 2002. Served St. John’s Lutheran Church, Nazareth, PA 2002-2006; St. John’s Lutheran Church, historic downtown Easton, 2006-present.
We are grateful that 11 ELCA Bishops from Regions 7 & 8 were able to visit the Philadelphia campus in February. They enjoyed dinner with students and the chance to socialize and get to know them. They also attended a class, toured campus and met with staff to learn more about the latest developments at ULS.

Ten of the Bishops and Pastor Angela are pictured here: (From left: Bishop Matthew Riegel (WV-WMD); Bishop Leila Ortiz (DC Metro); Bishop Bill Gohl (DE-MD); Bishop Patricia Davenport (SE PA); Bishop Kurt Kusserow (SW PA); Bishop Tracie Bartholomeo (NJ); Bishop Michael Lozano (NW PA); Bishop Samuel Zeiser (NE PA); Bishop Jim Dunlop (Lower Susquehanna); Bishop Wilma Kucharek (Slovak-Zion). Rev. Dr. Angela Zimmann is seated.

A Powerful Message

Each year, ULS’s Urban Theological Institute, currently celebrating its 40th year, offers Preaching with Power, a weeklong series of sermons and one lecture presented during the day on the Philadelphia campus and in the evenings at local churches. ULS in Philadelphia was fortunate to host Rev. Dr. Phaedra D. Blocker and the Sacred Music Concert in the African American tradition. Two students in the Black Church concentration of our Urban Theological Institute, Kim Upshaw and Brian Dunlop, received the J.Q. Jackson Merit Scholarship.

The Urban Theological Institute is dedicated to providing theological education to church leaders that is relevant and upbuilding for the African American community.

The funds raised at each church event support students in the Black Church concentration. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic interrupting the series, we did not reach our fundraising goal as in years past. If you are inclined to make a donation in support of Preaching with Power please mail a gift to the Urban Theological Institute, United Lutheran Seminary, 7301 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19119 or give online at uls.edu/giving, and select the J.Q. Jackson Scholarship Fund.

“Preaching with Power, celebrating its 38th year, is an exciting annual event that brings the best preachers in the African American tradition from around the country to our seminary community.”

Rev. Dr. Quintin L. Robertson, Director of the Urban Theological Institute and Black Church Studies Program at ULS.
Harry Potter, Dumbledore and the Hogwarts School Take Over Valentine Hall

The Sorting Ceremony: Assignment Reveal Party

The Rev. Dr. Mark Vitalis Hoffman played the role of Dumbledore from the Harry Potter book series as he placed the “sorting hat” on each ELCA candidate to reveal their assigned region. Each year, the ELCA delegation of bishops and seminary representatives meet at the churchwide office in Chicago and assign candidates for rostered ministry into each of the nine regions. From there, they are assigned to specific synods. The assignment party took place in Valentine Hall on March 4, the same day students received their assignments. This was all pre-COVID-19. Little did everyone know it would be the last time they would be with each other as a group.

Dr. Vitalis Hoffman was their summer Greek professor, so it was only appropriate that he would be the one to shepherd students through this milestone occasion. At the celebration, students were sorted into one of the four Hogwarts houses.

Elizabeth Peter (MDiv 2020) and A.J. Houseman (MDiv 2020) planned the event, getting creative with themed decorations, food, drink, games, music and costumes – all on a limited budget. “We made everything by hand,” said A.J., “including the wands, snitches, candles, brick wall and Hogwarts wax seal letters.” They also appreciated the support from the ULS community.

“Seminary is not an individual experience; it is a communal one,” said Elizabeth. “This was our opportunity to celebrate each other and the ways we have struggled together, studied together, learned from each other and will now go into ministry together. I’m thankful we had one final moment to celebrate God’s work in our lives before we go out into the world. A.J. and I didn’t know when we threw this party that it would be the last time we would be with our peers. I’m so thankful we put all the work into it.”

A.J., originally from Iowa, has been assigned to the Delaware-Maryland Synod. Elizabeth is originally from Harrisburg and has been assigned to the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Both are Fund for Leader Scholars and eagerly await a first call.

“As a graduating senior in the time of COVID-19, I will not get to celebrate that day with my classmates,” said A.J. “This was a beautiful celebration of our time together in seminary and last opportunity to celebrate in person our experiences and how far we have come in our formation together. It was a day to reflect on our past and our future with our friends, family, faculty, staff and fellow students.”

No doubt Harry Potter and Dumbledore would agree.
God Gave the Growth

If I had to pick a favorite Bible verse to describe my experience in philanthropic fundraising and stewardship, it would be 1 Corinthians 3:6: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth,” said Rev. Dr. Martin Otto Zimmann, Director of Church Relations. “This verse captures the quintessential axiom of our work, namely that it is never, ever, a solo effort.”

In the case of one donor to United Lutheran Seminary, the work began over one hundred years ago when a young man named James Kelly returned from his work as a medic in the US Army during World War I. He answered the call to parish ministry and was ordained in 1920, serving various congregations for 38 years before retiring. In that time, he and his spouse had a child who, like her father, believed in a life of service. She became an RN and served most of her professional career assisting a family doctor in a small town in Indiana. They married, and for reasons unknown to us, never had children. They did have cats, and a hobby of investing their savings in the stock market.

In 1993, the daughter, who was then 71 years-old, gave a $200 gift to the seminary’s annual fund. The gift was acknowledged and logged into a new file. Little did we know that over the years and through nearly a dozen Advancement team members, this gift would blossom and grow into a relationship with the seminary which would include her visits to campus and our travels to her home in Indiana. Over the years, as she aged and bid farewell to her husband of many years, the daughter moved from her house into a retirement home in the same small town. She could not travel to Pennsylvania any longer, so members of the Advancement team at the seminary would periodically call, write letters and visit. By 2006 it was known that she was planning an estate gift of what was then believed to be about $5 million.

In December 2017, Pastor Angela Zimmann (then Vice President for Institutional Advancement), visited the daughter at her care facility, not knowing that this would be the last of hundreds of visits, phone calls, cards and letters over twenty-five years. Here’s her description of their time together:

“I flew to Cincinnati and drove to Heritage House for our first visit. She was alone, although a few nurses stopped in while I was there to help with her lunch, which she was eating off a tray with some difficulty. I worked diligently to let her know who I was, mentioning Michael Cooper-White and Em Cole – she smiled broadly at the mention of both of their names. I was able to thank her for her support of Gettysburg over the years. She said that both she and her husband were glad to do it. She seemed very clear at times, and then at other times the conversation turned foggy. She was in good spirits. I was with her about an hour – she started to fall asleep and I prayed with her, blessed her and headed out. I left with her an icon of the Holy Family from the seminary bookstore, with a note that it was from Gettysburg along with my name and phone number.”

The daughter passed into life eternal in February 2018. In April of the same year, the executor of the will called the Advancement office to announce that the estate of the daughter planned an anonymous legacy gift of over $30 million in honor of her father, the Rev. James Kelly. Because of this gift, our seminary now offers up to full tuition for every student. Seeds were planted, relationships cultivated, but God gave the growth.

A life of stewarding people in their generosity seldom yields these kinds of results. However, this life is not just about the return on the investment. This life is primarily about the relationships that we are privileged to have with folks whose compassion and generosity brings about God’s growth in the world, not to mention the amazing colleagues who share in the joys and tears of this vocation. It is a blessed life.

Thanks be to God.
Commencement 2020

Keeping our graduates, their loves ones and the ULS community safe in uncertain times

As graduation ceremonies around the world have been interrupted by COVID-19, the seminary developed alternative plans for 2020 Commencement.

ULS.edu/2020commencement
This dedicated webpage includes links to congratulatory videos from faculty and staff, the Farewell and Godspece service and a digital copy of the Commemorative Bulletin.

Service of Farewell and Godspece video can be found on the ULS YouTube channel and the dedicated webpage.

A Commemorative Bulletin in print and digital formats includes messages from Board Chair Rev. Dr. Peter Boehringer, Interim President Rev. Dr. Angela Zimmann, TULSAA President Rev. Mark Rigg and from the originally planned commencement speaker, Rev. Dr. Louise Johnson. Students were asked to submit headshots and personally selected Bible verses. They received a printed copy with their diploma or certificate.

2021 Commencement plans include the opportunity for 2020 graduates to walk at their own graduation ceremony the morning of May 21, 2021 at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Lancaster, PA. The Class of 2021 graduation ceremony will be held separately that afternoon.
Inspirational Alumni Stories

In an effort to invite alumni into a conversation about ministry narratives, the ULS Advancement office lifted up the stories of six predecessors during Lent this year, including Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne (LTSG 1832), Rev. Dr. Conrad Emil Lindberg (LTSP 1876), Rev. John Archibald Parkinson (LTSP 1954), Mrs. Maude Aurand McDaniel (LTSG 1955), Rev. Dr. John Aberly (LTSG 1889) and Rev. Jeremiah Franklin Ohl (LTSP 1870). These alums show how God’s narrative in the lives of our graduates is one of diversity, innovation and inspired dedication to the work of the Gospel.

These stories are found at uls.edu/giving. Each one of these exemplary alums contributed much to the world through their ministries. They are now part of that great cloud of witnesses that urge those of us who remain to strive for service of the Gospel in new and innovative ways.

Consider the life and witness of Maude Aurand McDaniel, who spent her career as a singer and writer, although it has been said that had the church been ordaining women at the time, she would have become a Lutheran pastor. She sang in the University of Maryland Chorus, the Pittsburgh Mendelssohn Society and the Cumberland Choral Society. She also wrote hundreds of published book reviews for the Washington Post, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Chicago Tribune, Milwaukee Journal, Book Page and other publications. Though this is not ministry in the traditional sense, her thinking touched the lives of thousands.

The Rev. Jeremiah Franklin Ohl also touched hundreds through his 1891 School and Parish Service Book and Hymnal. The book included musical settings for the Divine Service, Matins, and Vespers, and included over 150 hymns, many by Ohl himself.

In 1896, Ohl published a work outlining the specific work of deaconesses; little published material on the subject existed at the time. Ohl emphasized the rigorous and rewarding nature of the work of the deaconess at a time when women’s contributions were not necessarily taken seriously. For years, Ohl traveled to churches, hospitals, and prisons, renewing and revitalizing worship and ministry wherever he went across Pennsylvania, emphasizing the spirit of faith animated by love and mercy shown through good works for the poor, needy and discarded. Ohl began to stress around this time a philosophy of pastoral care, or “Seelsorge,” the care of souls.

“We thought that sharing these stories as a form of Lenten devotion would be inspiring to rostered leaders during what is often the busiest time of the church year,” said Conor Brooks, Acting Vice President for Institutional Advancement at ULS. “Little did we know in the midst of these weekly entries, the world as we know it would come screeching to a halt, adding time for more devotion and introspection.”

“We’d love to see more narratives of our current alums because it is amazing to see how folks are effecting positive change in the world due in part to their seminary formation,” said Martin Otto Zimmann, Director of Church Relations. Please consider sharing a story about your place in God’s grand narrative by visiting “Tell Us Your Ministry Story” at uls.edu/giving. It is often said in academia that we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. It helps us to remember that, even in the time of contagion and quarantine, we are not serving in isolation. We are, in fact, part of a much bigger story of God’s continuing Creation in our midst.

Thanks be to God!

“We’d love to see more narratives of our current alums because it is amazing to see how folks are effecting positive change in the world due in part to their seminary formation”
Coffee & Conversation
with
Pastor Angela

Pastor Angela is always interested in learning how our students are doing throughout the year, answering questions and hearing their concerns. What better way to do this than over coffee, cookies and conversation! In February, she held two in person gatherings, one on each campus and one via Zoom for DL students. Since it was Valentine’s Day, the theme was love – how it can heal and help us better understand each other. The scheduled April gatherings were held via Zoom on two nights due to campus closures. Pastor Angela asked students to bring their prayers to these sessions amid a time of uncertainty and crisis.

ULS Students Travel to Guatemala for Pilot Immersion Semester Program

Four of our students traveled to Guatemala this spring for an eight-week immersion in partnership with La Iglesia Luterana Augustina de Guatemala (ILAG). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project evolved in ways that were unanticipated.

The idea for this program originated from a conversation between ULS faculty members Rev. Dr. Gilson Waldkoenig and Dr. Crystal Hall, along with Pastor Jennifer Hope-Tringali (DMin student/LTSG alumna/ULS faculty member). The result was the ULS Guatemala Immersion Semester Program.

Prior to departing for Guatemala, Abby Johnson (MDiv), Emily Orner (MAML), Luke Swanson (MDiv) and Abby Cress (MDiv) took courses in “The Bible and Immigration” with Dr. Hall and “Latin American Liberation Theology” with Rev. Dr. John Hoffmeyer. Pastor Jennifer and Deacon David Hope-Tringali (DMin/ULS alumnus) live in Antigua and served as in-country hosts. Students took Spanish classes in partnership with La Unión Spanish School and a course in “Contextual and Theological Spanish” with Pastor Jennifer.

They would have partnered with local ILAG churches and ministries, as well as Hope Academy, a bi-lingual STEAM school for girls, but the virus outbreak meant both courses had to shift online. With the assistance of ULS, our students safely returned home.

The vision for this program is to equip students with Spanish language skills and multi-cultural competencies in Latinx ministry settings. It connects participants with a network of ELCA partners when they return to the US, including Latinx contextual education sites, immigrant rights groups and ELCA organizations and programs including Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities. This program grew out of responsiveness to the increasing need for the development of Spanish-speaking faith leaders and shifting demographics in the US. Although the program was cut short this year, we hope to be able to explore future opportunities.
Faithful ULS Servants in a Changing World

In the last few months, the seminary has taken crucial steps to examine its mission of becoming "A welcoming and diverse learning community equipping people to proclaim the living Gospel for a changing church and world." We can’t think of a more poignant time to demonstrate a changing church and a changing world than the moment in which we find ourselves. We are so proud to have members of our own community who are rising to meet the challenges of this new ministry. Here are just a few examples.

To see the videos and social media posts accompanying each of the four following profiles, or to make a gift to ULS, please visit uls.edu/giving.

The Rev. Regina Diggs (ULS ’19) is Pastor of St. Peter’s A.M.E. church in Shippensburg, PA. She has recently begun worship and Bible Study opportunities via conference call. She is also using CashApp to collect offerings for the congregation. We are grateful for her ministry!

The Rev. Victoria Larson (LTSG ’14) is Co-Pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Westborough, MA. A video of her sharing three things about how Good Shepherd’s ministry has changed to meet the challenges of this international health crisis can be found on our YouTube channel.

Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero, Steck-Miller Assistant Professor of Worship and Liturgy, has drawn on his previous experience in developing and supporting tech-enabled and online theological education programs, bringing attention to the immediate pedagogical concerns with this quick move to the online environment. This included unleashing interactive options in web conferencing and presentation software, and being attentive to accessibility and cognitive overload.

The Rev. Ben Siebert (LTSP ’14) and Deacon Kristin Vought (LTSP ’12) have begun a special morning devotional for the members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Arendstville, PA. Pastor Ben realized that this would be a great way to connect with church members as well as the wider community in which he serves. His spouse, Deacon Kristin, serves in philanthropic fundraising and is now working from home during the pandemic.

United Lutheran Seminary is doing the work of preparing the leaders or tomorrow, sometimes for a world we cannot imagine today. Many of our regular supporters are forced to curtail their normal giving during the resulting financial hardships of COVID-19. Gifts from synods, congregations, and even the national church are being affected. The future of the church is in God’s hands, but the leaders of that church are in your safe keeping. Know that our prayers and our hearts are with you, wherever you are.
United Lutheran Seminary faculty are at the forefront of scholarship and active in pastoral and social justice work. Here are highlights from Fall 2019 through Spring 2020.

**Rev. Dr. Reed Carlson**
*Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies*

Dr. Carlson was appointed Priest Associate at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston, with his first sermon offered on the First Sunday in Lent. A spotlight on Dr. Carlson’s dissertation, “Possession and Other Spirit Phenomena in Biblical Literature,” appeared in *Ancient Jew Review*. As an invited fellow, Dr. Carlson attended the Winter Gathering of the Louisville Institute, “Vocation of the Theological Educator” in person and via Zoom. He offered an adult forum class entitled, “Spirits in Scripture and in the Church Today” at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia. Dr. Carlson was a guest on the preaching podcast “First Reading,” offering commentary on the Revised Common Lectionary readings for the Day of Pentecost.

**Dr. Vincent Evener**
*Assistant Professor of Reformation and Luther Studies*

Dr. Evener submitted the final manuscript for his book, “Enemies of the Cross: Suffering, Truth, and Mysticism in the Early Reformation” (Oxford University Press) that will appear later this year. He published an article in the *Journal of Religion* (“‘Our Jews’: Anti-Judaism and the Formation of Reformation Era Christians”) and submitted a book chapter, “The Suffering and Death of Christ as Epistemological Framework in Reformation-era Lutheran Teaching: Martin Luther and Cyriacus Spangenberg,” for a forthcoming *Festschrift* in honor of his advisor, Susan Schreiner. He also wrote an editorial, “Reflections on Teaching the Tradition,” published in *Dialog*. He continues to serve as Book Review editor for *Dialog* and as Director of the seminary’s annual Luther Colloquy. The Fall 2019 Colloquy on “Theological Education in the Lutheran Tradition” brought a large audience to Gettysburg, and he is currently planning this fall’s Colloquy on “Lutheran Spirituality.” Note: In May, the ULS Board of Trustees voted to promote Dr. Evener to Associate Professor with tenure as of July.

**Dr. Crystal Hall**
*Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies*

Dr. Hall was an invited participant at the Inter-American Conference, “AYNI* From the Margins” of the ELCA’s Domestic Mission Global Mission Units in partnership with companion churches in Latin America and the Caribbean in Bogotá, Colombia. She was also an invited presenter at the Religion and The New Politics Symposium of the Kripke Center at Creighton University in Omaha. Dr. Hall is an invited presenter at The Borderlands Institute Forum on Immigration and Social Justice at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, which has been postponed until the fall. She is an invited panelist on “The Call for Biblical Justice in Theological Schools” at the Washington Theological Consortium Inaugural Event for the Institute for Justice Formation at the John Leland Center in Washington, D.C., and an invited presenter on “Biblical Foundations of the ELCA Social Statement Faith, Sexism and Justice” at the ELCA Rostered Leaders Gathering in Phoenix this summer. Note: In May, the ULS Board of Trustees voted to extend Dr. Hall’s contract as Assistant Professor on the tenure track by three years.

**Rev. Dr. Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman**
*Glatfelter Professor of Biblical Studies*

Dr. Hoffman co-authored the *Atlas of the Biblical World* (Fortress) and brought this expertise to bear in a course, “Reading the Bible through a Geographical Lens,” for the Lay School of Theology of the Northwest and Southwest Pennsylvania Synods. He also has an article published in *Word & World* on “Jesus and Jerusalem.” Last year, he and Dr. Crystal Hall led a group to Israel, Palestine and Jordan. In early 2021, he will co-lead a trip to Turkey and Greece focusing on biblical sites. The trip is open to anyone and he can provide more information. His article, “Online Teaching for Learning Together,” was published in *Didaktikos.* His interest in teaching Greek was explored in his article published in *Living Lutheran,* “It’s Greek to Me.” The grammar he wrote that is used in ULS Greek classes was released as a module in *Accordance Bible Software.*

**Rev. Dr. Kristin Johnson Largen**
*Professor of Systematic Theology*


**Dr. Jon Pahl**
*Peter Paul and Elizabeth Hagan Professor in the History of Christianity*

Dr. Pahl is Minister of Faith Formation and Community Engagement at Union Congregational United Church of Christ in Green Bay, WI. He also travels extensively to promote and discuss *Fethullah Gulen: A Life of Hizmet,* his biography of the controversial Turkish Muslim preacher. He has spoken about and signed the book in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Nairobi,
Kenya; Jacksonville, FL; Hartford, CT; Manchester, NH; Providence, RI; Boston, MA; Copenhagen, Denmark; Oslo, Norway; and Upsala, Sweden, among other venues. At Union, Dr. Pahl helped secure over $250,000 in donations and grants to start-up the Brain Center of Green Bay as a nonprofit dedicated to promoting brain health, including those facing neuro-degenerative diseases, from birth through the life course. With the help of a grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Dr. Pahl has instituted a Jazz Ministry at the congregation, with services on themes including “Protest Jazz” (for Black History Month), “Call and Response Worship—Honoring Green Bay’s First Responders” and “LGBTQ Jazz.” Dr. Pahl is also leading a year-long series in the congregation on “The Green Gospel,” which includes energy audits of the church’s physical plant, plans for solar panel installation and other initiatives.

Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero
Steck-Miller Assistant Professor of Worship and Liturgy

Dr. Schiefelbein-Guerrero chaired a panel on “Defining Digital Theology” at the American Academy of Religion in San Diego. He was appointed convener of the Lutheran caucus of the North American Academy of Liturgy and served as chairman of his first meeting in January in Atlanta. He was appointed co-editor of Teaching Theology & Religion and wrote the introduction to the first issue under his leadership. He led an adult forum, “Living the Liturgical Year” at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in San Francisco, where he also preached. He published “Whether One May Flee from Digital Worship: Reflections on Sacramental Ministry in a Public Health Crisis” on the Dialog: A Journal of Theology Facebook page.

Rev. Dr. J. Jayakiran Sebastian
Dean and H. George Anderson Professor of Mission and Cultures

Dr. Sebastian was a participant and panelist in the program unit Martin Luther and the Global Lutheran Traditions at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA, where he made a presentation on the theme: “The Annotated and Global Luther: Producing and Using the Volumes (In Classroom and Beyond).” He was a participant at the Intercontinental Mission Conference Towards an Ecumenical Missiology – Witnessing Christ, organized by Missio Aachen and Evangelishes Missionswerk in Deutschland, in Mainz, where he presented a paper entitled “Strangering the Stranger? Revisions and Re-visioning Ecumenical Missiology.” Among other forthcoming publications is one entitled “Revitalizing the Fading Ecumenical Memory and Reenergizing the Promise of our Ecumenical Future: Can Ecumenism be Taught?” to be published in a book entitled, The Whole is Greater than Its Parts (Herder and Herder).

Rev. Dr. Storm Swain
Frederick Houk Borsch Associate Professor of Anglican Studies, Pastoral Care and Theology

In terms of COVID-19 response, faculty are being called on to support, care, and offer resources beyond the seminary. Dr. Swain participated as a panelist in two online Townhalls: “Caring for the Caregiver” for the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, where she spoke on “Lessons from 9/11 for COVID-19,” and “Navigating Communal Trauma in Faith,” for Odyssey Impact. Dr. Swain’s “Embodied Coping in a time of COVID-19 Crisis,” is one of the video resources offered by the Institute for Collective Trauma and Growth. She has also co-presented on disaster chaplaincy to the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital Chaplains team, of which she is a member.

Rev. Dr. Gilson Waldkoenig
Paulussen-Hale-Maurer Professor of Church in Society and Director of the Town and Country Church Institute

Dr. Waldkoenig was appointed to work on a research project on small congregation vitality by the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit. Seventy-five percent of ELCA congregations have average weekly attendance of 75 or fewer. The ELCA Domestic Mission Unit has assembled a team of researchers to investigate vitality practices as well as sustainability challenges over a two-year period and will produce resources appropriate for small congregations. Dr. Waldkoenig also serves on Candidacy Committees in two synods and is a guest teacher at Lancaster Theological Seminary this spring.

Rev. Dr. Karyn Wiseman
The Herman G. Stuempfle Associate Professor of Homiletics

Dr. Wiseman was one of the keynote presenters for LEAD’s webinar “Digital Worship During the Time of COVID-19.” Her participation was on the topics of “Preaching in a Digital Community” and “Pastoral Care in a Digital Community.” This was a webinar that came about the first full week of the crisis as a resource for pastors, preachers, and churches living into the new reality of digital worship. She presented for the Boston Theological Seminary Preaching Series “Coffee with the Preaching Professor” on “Preaching in the Time of COVID-19.” The students engaged with her about technology, media and preaching today. She was keynote presenter on Preaching Easter, Upper Bucks Conference of Rostered Leaders and Performance Studies Workshop Presenter, Academy of Homiletics Annual Meeting, New Brunswick, NJ. “Sacred Worth,” an essay focused on Romans 1: 18-28 for the “Between Text and Sermon” portion of Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology, issue 73.4, will be published this summer.
Alumni Updates

We encourage alumni to fill out our update form by visiting uls.edu/alumni and selecting “Send us Updated Information” or by emailing advancement@uls.edu.

Col. Walter Courter (LTSG ‘75) retired from the USAF Chaplain Service completing over 30 years of Active Duty service. Pastor Courter served as full-time Senior Pastor of St John’s Lutheran Church, San Antonio for 9 years and is currently serving both Highland Park Lutheran Church, also in San Antonio, as well as serving as the Chaplain to the Bracken Fire Department.

Rev. Dr. Karen Soli (LTSG ‘78) recently received the 2018 Witness to the World Distinguished Alumni Award from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, where she received her DMin in Preaching in 1998.

After retiring from pastoral ministry, she was elected to the South Dakota House of Representatives representing her north Sioux Falls district. She completed her third term in early 2019. While serving she gave a voice to those who normally do not have one in the halls of power. She served on standing committees dealing with health and human services and local government as well as other legislative committees dealing with domestic violence, nursing homes, school boundaries and government accountability. She authored legislation that established a new ethics board as a watchdog for the entire state executive branch. Prior to serving in the legislature she led a mobile food pantry and other relief ministries for a non-profit formed by a dozen ELCA congregations in the Sioux Falls area.

This all has followed her 31-year career as a parish pastor in Minnesota and South Dakota.


Rev. Warren Heintzelman (LTSG ’80) retired in 2017 but continues to serve at part time chaplain at the Spiritrust Lutheran LIFE center in Chambersburg and since 2019 serves as interim pastor at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Mercersburg, PA.

Rev. April M. Dailey (LTSG ’87) has served as the interim pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Vincennes, IN since August 2018. She thoroughly enjoys the congregation, as it is quite involved in the community and allows 20 groups to use building space. Although geographically quite close, she crosses state lines, synod lines and time zones each time she is there! She remains rostered in the Central-Southern Illinois Synod (aka the “CSI” synod). When able, she attends the synod conferences for the Southern conference of that synod.

She also tries to attend as many of the Evansville conference meetings for IN/KY (aka the “inky” synod). The other major effort these days is serving as president of her local food pantry in Olney, of which her husband is treasurer. She said “life is busy, but certainly good and blessed these days.”

Rev. Melissa Mahoney Peterson (LTSG ’90) lives in Fairfax VA with her husband Tom and their two dogs, four cats and hermit crab. Her daughter Claire started her freshman year at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. Her husband runs a small nonprofit organization that develops solutions to global warming and climate change. He also teaches at Johns Hopkins University in the field of energy policy and climate change. She serves as Pastoral Care Assistant and Organist at Washington Street United Methodist Church in Alexandria VA and opened a home piano studio. When not working, she and her husband take care of aging parents, are renovating an old farmhouse and see their daughter as often as they can.

Pastor Carl Ames (LTSP ’92) has served Christ the King since March 2011. Son Devin is a first-year student at Luther and a graduate of St. Olaf. Daughter Paula is a sophomore at the University of Kentucky.

Rev. Ryan Fischer (LTSG 2000) received as a Priest in the Episcopal Church from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on March 25, 2018. He has served as Rector of St. Anne’s Episcopal Church, Warsaw, IN since March 15, 2019.

Rev. Arthur Hebbeler (LTSP 2001) is Chaplain, Office of the Maryland State Fire Marshal. He recently celebrated the birth of his 13th grandchild.

Rev. Chris Halverson (LTSP 2011) co-edited the first major update to Doberstein’s Minister’s Prayer Book since 1950. It is available from Augsburg Fortress.

Rev. Jane Mountain (LTSG 2013) was installed as pastor of Harbor of Grace Lutheran Church, Muskegon, MI last November. Harbor of Grace became a new congregation of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and the ELCA. Our Savior’s Lutheran, where Pastor Jane now serves, is one of four ELCA churches that are giving up their congregational life in order to form a vibrant Lutheran Christian presence in Muskegon going into the future. This has been a work of many years of cooperation with Immanuel, St. Luke’s and Samuel Lutheran Churches.

Pr. Alexa Kvande (LTSP 2016) was called to Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, IN, in May 2019, ordained in Philadelphia on June 15, 2019 and installed at Risen Savior on August 24. “It is good, Lord, to be here!”
In Memory

With hope in the power of resurrection, we share news of the death of the following alumni/ae. Rest eternal grant them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

(List as of April 24, 2020)

The Rev. Howard J. McCarney LTSG ’45
The Rev. Dr. John W. Vannorsdall LTSP ’48
The Rev. Donald R. Gallion LTSG ’51
The Rev. Dr. Kenneth C. Senft LTSG ’52
Ms. Maude A. McDaniel LTSG ’53
The Rev. John W. Fehringer LTSG ’53
The Rev. Dr. Paul L. Buehrle LTSP ’55
The Rev. Carl J. Frederick LTSG ’56
The Rev. George E. Handley LTSP ’56
The Rev. Frederic B. Geehr LTSP ’58
The Rev. Dr. Paul H. Spohn LTSP ’58
The Rev. John F. Seibert, II LTSG ’61
The Rev. Vaughn E. Taylor LTSP ’65

The Rev. George E. Buechner LTSG ’66
The Rev. Irvin E. Straw, Jr. LTSG ’66
The Rev. Dr. Gerald B. VandeMark LTSG ’70
The Rev. Dr. Edward A. Neiderhiser LTSG ’73
The Revs. H. Thomas Miller LTSG ’79
The Rev. Frederick L. McElderry LTSP ’80
The Rev. Cindy L. Ray LTSP ’83
The Rev. Repsie M. Warren LTSP ’83
The Rev. William E. Bogholtz LTSP ’85
The Rev. Frederick P. Guy LTSP ’86
The Rev. Dr. William Staton, Jr. LTSP ’87
The Rev. Sue Ann Riley LTSP ’93
The Rev. Jack E. Hernstrom LTSG 2003