

Dear Grace siblings in Christ,

On Sunday, April 19, the Duke Lutherans celebrated our joyful year-end tradition of worshipping in Duke Gardens and blessing our graduates and wishing them Godspeed.

As you'll see from the pictures, we gifted and wrapped our graduates in colorful blankets to remind them of God's everlasting embrace and our sheltering friendship. We also said these words over them:

*When you came to this community we rejoiced to welcome you into the mission we share as the people of God. In this community you have come to know and to share in God's loving purpose for you and for all creation. God has blessed you in this community, and God has blessed us through you.*

Please join me in praying for our graduates in this time of transition, that God will guide their steps and give them wisdom.

## **2026 Graduates**

**Martin Heintzelman:** Economics & Public Policy Major, Minor in African & African-American Studies

**Andy Kapoor:** Master of Materials Science and Engineering

**Kyleia Rhodes:** Master of Divinity

**Jaden Rodriguez:** Public Policy Major, Minor in Economics and Russian Literature

**David Wang:** Master of Engineering, AI for Product Innovation

We also recognized our faithful and gifted Divinity student intern, Brandon Murphy Ward, and offered thanksgiving for our dedicated Duke Lutherans Committee and Student Leadership Team with these words: *Almighty God, your Holy Spirit equips the church with a rich variety of gifts. We give thanks for the ways these gifts have been shown forth among us through your servants here. We praise you for shared joys and accomplishments, and we commend our work to you.*

**DL Committee:** Laure Kmitch (chair and Duke Lutheran graduate student), Sara Craig and Rich Sanders (alumni reps), Bill Elkin (treasurer), Claire Cooney, Ellen Lavery, Geoff Heintzelman, John Kolba, Carole Ostrowski, Emily Pauline, Tyler Ruddy and Emerson Eickholt (alumni reps)

**Student Leadership Team:** Brandon Murphy Ward, Evan Brown, Emerson Eickholt, Cara Shield, Tyler Ruddy

As we now head into the summer and I complete my sixth year as the Duke Lutherans Campus Pastor, I'm grateful as ever for the myriad ways you support and love our students. Thank you for serving as our beloved partner congregations together with St. Paul's and for

making it possible for Lutheran Campus Ministry at Duke to reflect Christ's light, grace, and hope on campus, in Durham, and beyond. We are so blessed to share in life together with you!

Grace and Peace,  
*Pastor Amanda Highben*