



Luther Academy of the Rockies Speakers



Kristin Johnston Largen, Gettysburg Seminary

“An Interreligious Examination of Prayer: An Exercise in ‘Holy Envy’”

Prayer is common to most, if not all religious traditions around the world. Yet, the manner, disposition and purpose of prayer varies greatly. In this series of presentations, prayer will be discussed first from the Christian tradition, and then in the context of four different religions: puja and darshan in Hinduism; the nembutsu and meditation in Buddhism; the “pillar” of prayer in Islam; and prayer as lament in Judaism. Through this examination, Christians learn more about how different religions view the relationship between God and humanity, inviting them to think in fresh ways about their own understanding of prayer.

Kristin Johnston Largen was born in Colorado and still considers Colorado the home of her heart. She attended Colorado College, and then attended Wartburg Seminary for her M.Div. She received her Ph.D. in 2002 from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California in systematic theology. She then returned to Colorado where she served as Associate Pastor at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Arvada. She married John Largen in 2005, also a Lutheran pastor, and began serving at Gettysburg Seminary in 2006. She teaches in the area of systematic theology, focusing particularly on comparative theology with Buddhism and Hinduism. She also works in 21st century theology, specifically with feminist and liberation theologies. She is the editor of *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, and her most recent books are *Finding God among our Neighbors*, vol. 1 & 2 (Fortress Press, 2013 & 2017). She is a runner, hiker, avid reader, longtime vegetarian and animal lover, and amateur harp player. She also is an avid Broncos fan, and this fall, she stood on the hallowed yard of the house in New Orleans where Peyton Manning grew up and learned to play football. (She also loves *real* football—soccer—and if anyone else listens to the “Men in Blazers” podcast, make sure to let her know!) She and John live in Gettysburg and have a very sweet Jack Russell Terrier, Henry.



Paul Wallace, Agnes Scott College

“Pilgrim at Peachtree Creek: Negative Theology, Science, and the Meaning of Creation”

The ancient *via negativa* will be explored in the context of the evolving cosmos. The talk will draw on scripture, science, and his own personal experiences as a scientist, theologian, and ordinary human being.

Paul Wallace teaches in the Department of Physics & Astronomy at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, and is ordained in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. He also teaches occasionally at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology and at Columbia Theological Seminary. He holds a PhD in nuclear physics from Duke University and an MDiv with a concentration in historical theology from Emory. He has twice been awarded a NASA Faculty Fellowship at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., and has twice served on the faculty of the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative in Dharamsala, India. His published articles range from the scientific to the popular and he blogs at psnt.net. His first book, *Stars Beneath Us: Finding God in the Evolving Cosmos*, was released in March 2016 by Fortress Press. Paul lives in Atlanta with his wife and three children.



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S.D. Giere, Wartburg Theological Seminary

“Reclaiming Faith as the Heart of Salvation”

The heart of the Protestant Reformation was the reclamation of the principle of *sola fide* – faith alone – as the heart of salvation. In the current ecclesial landscape, faith is largely eclipsed in favor of a well-intentioned combination of grace or works or “benign whateverism” (Creasy Dean). Dr. Giere’s presentation will explore the place of faith, moving to reclaim faith as the central orienting reality for the Christian toward God, Scripture, the Church, and the neighbor.

Sam Giere joined the faculty of Wartburg Seminary in the summer of 2006, where he currently serves as Associate Professor of Homiletics and Biblical Theology. An ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, he has served parishes in North Dakota. He earned a PhD (Old Testament) from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and is also an alumnus of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, and Wartburg Theological Seminary. He is the author of *A New Glimpse of Day One* (de Gruyter, 2010). He is currently engaged in research and writing in the areas of biblical theology, the theology of Christian proclamation, and the intersection of bible and film. He is also the author and designer of WithEarsToHear.org. In addition to this academic stuff, Sam is a dabbling photographer and bagpiper. More importantly, he is a husband and father. He lives and works in Dubuque, Iowa, with his spouse, Rev. Amy Current, and their two children.