



MARCH 15, 2023



DIVERSITY IN ACTION

By Dean Heather Vacek

As I write, the Seminary community has begun its Lenten journey. With attendees gathered in Santee Chapel, and from many other locations via Zoom, we joined in a prayer by an unknown author titled, "[Invite Us Deeper](#)":

*Almighty and ever living God,
you invite us deeper into your world, your people, your Lent.
May this time be one of outward focus;
seeking you in those we often ignore.
Help us live a Lent focused on freedom, generosity, and encounter.
Give us hearts hungry to serve you
and those who need what we have to give.*

These petitions brought to my mind **Lancaster Theological Seminary's mission** to educate and nurture leaders to join in God's redemptive and liberating work so that all creation may flourish. At LTS, we invite our students to go deeper in our classrooms, in our community, and in the world. We invite our students to encounter the past and present witness of God's people, so that all of creation may know God's freedom and generosity. I might amend the last line of the prayer by adding, "...and what we stand to receive in relationship with others." LTS's mission is accomplished with a willingness not only to serve, but also to learn from and with one another.

Two years ago this month, the Boards of Trustees of Lancaster Theological Seminary, Moravian Theological Seminary, and Moravian University had just formed a set of exploratory teams to discuss the possibility of partnership. Those conversations emerged from, and were rooted in, the LTS Board's intent to find the most sustainable future for the Seminary's mission. For Moravian, the conversations emerged from desires to support its own offerings in theological education and to expand the geographical reach of its other graduate and undergraduate offerings.

Central to those early conversations two years ago was **identifying the core commitments** that would be necessary for a partnership to materialize. As a result, the formal agreement to consolidate includes commitments to LTS's staff, tenured and tenure-track faculty along with the denominational connection to the United Church of Christ. Of central significance is a commitment, drafted by LTS members of the team, that reads this way in the agreement:

"The combined LTS and Moravian identity and culture embraces and values the diversity of all members of the community. We are committed to remaining an ecumenical, open and affirming, anti-racist seminary that recognizes and supports persons of all races, sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions into the full life, ministry and sacraments of the church."

Two years later, we are doing new things together while firmly anchored in these commitments. We are doing a new thing together because we need to. Because the church and the world have changed, even while our institutional commitments have not.

The first two years of the partnership have brought much in terms of structural support and efficiencies of operation including investment in many capital improvements on campus. The health of our facilities is critically important, but this month I want to offer three examples of **our commitment to diversity in action.**

- The joint faculty's dedicated work in **crafting a common curriculum** that will span both seminaries has proven to be exciting work. The new curriculum, which will enroll its first students in the fall of 2024 includes, among other things, a commitment to an anti-racist pedagogy. Students will be equipped to interpret sacred and theological texts, artifacts, and practices from their own and other relevant traditions with sensitivity to literary, historical, and cultural contexts, and to the social and spiritual implications of interpretation. They also will be formed and equipped to articulate and practice a theological and ethical understanding of authority, power, and accountability that recognizes, supports, and affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. Stay tuned for more about the new curriculum in the months ahead!
- In early February 2023, nearly 40 trustees, staff members, and faculty gathered in the newly renovated Hafer Center for a two-day **anti-racism retreat** that continued the progress of the Seminary's President's Commission on Race and Inclusion. We were invited to understand more deeply ourselves, our worlds, and each other, and to take faithful action for change.
- In case you missed it, this year's **Baxter Forum**, *Retelling the Origin Story: The Power & Presence of the Afro-Christian Convention in the UCC*, is available [online here](#) (use the passcode *=ZNq!1q). More than 100 attendees gathered to learn from four distinguished leaders how the legacy of the Afro-Christian Convention continues to be a major force in our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for all.

All of this has been underway while we continue to work through the remaining stages of the **regulatory and accreditation processes of the consolidation, processes that will wrap up in the summer of 2024.** All of this has been underway as we, together, continue to do a new thing, holding fast to preserving the identity and witness of Lancaster Theological Seminary amid new partnerships. This work is not always easy, yet more often than not it is filled with joy and delight. It is filled with both challenge and affirmation. It is grounded in the past and bold enough to trust leaps of faith into the future.

Recognizing that these significant changes bring a mix of excitement and hope, sadness and grief that is unique to each individual who calls LTS home now, and all who have called it home in the past, we are grateful for the support of many as we teach and learn, as we worship and engage together in community. Peace to you during this Lenten season. May you experience a deepening of God's call to you and to those among whom you live, learn, worship, and play.

MEET KELLY JOHANSSSEN

First-year Master of Divinity student



I am a mom of two amazing kids, married to my husband, Andy, for 23 years, and a member of New Goshenhoppen United Church of Christ in East Greenville, Penn., where I am the Lay Minister of Visitation.

I have a passion for biblical studies, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and a deep desire to serve the will of God. I have heard God's call and I am ready to receive the necessary education to serve Him with humility and grace. I plan to pursue a pastoral ministry and to seek ordination within the United Church of Christ.

In 2022, I attended the UCC Penn Southeast Conference annual spring meeting where I met many Lancaster Theological Seminary graduates. They all shared wonderful stories of their experiences at LTS and encouraged me to apply. Learning about the weekend Master of Divinity program made me see how attending LTS could fit into my life. Now, after completing the first fall semester of the MDiv program, I feel blessed to be a part of the Lancaster Theological Seminary community. The rich academic environment, the support of the faculty and staff, and the bond that has formed among the students have all exceeded my expectations.

To anyone considering going back to school for a graduate degree at LTS: First and most importantly, talk to God and turn to Him in prayer. Trust in the Lord, lean on Him and He will direct your path. And second, talk to people! Find as many religious leaders, former LTS graduates and current seminarians as you can and ask them to share their experiences with you. Learning from others will help guide you in your own journey to seminary.

ONLINE RECRUITING EVENTS

Please share with friends, colleagues, and congregants!

LEARN LTS: MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAMS

Thursday, March 23 at 7:00pm on Zoom. Register [here](#).

THIRD TUESDAY TALK:

Tales From The Other Side: Navigating Seminary and What Comes Afterwards
Tuesday, April 18 at 7:00pm on Zoom. Register [here](#).

REFER A PROSPECTIVE SEMINARIAN

EVENTS COMING UP



TUESDAY, MARCH 21

Zoom, 6:00pm
Associate Dean Vanessa Lovelace presents "Still Womanist: Reading Biblical Texts Intersectionally," part of Moravian University's Women's History Month events.

[Register here.](#)
[Poster here.](#)



MONDAY, MARCH 27

Zoom
The Doctor of Ministry Symposium will feature one-hour capstone presentations from our DMin candidates. For the schedule and the link to join, please check the LTS website

[Events page](#)
for details!



SATURDAY, APRIL 29

9:00am
Lace up your sneakers and join LTS at the annual YWCA Race Against Racism. As a sponsor again this year, along with Moravian University, we have some free registrations available. Interested?

[Email us for details.](#)

SENDAI CONNECTIONS



Associate Dean Vanessa Lovelace earlier this month welcomed Mr. Satoshi Hino (left) and Professor Michitaka Suzuki back to Lancaster as honored guests representing [Tohoku Gakuin University](#), Sendai, Japan. Before the pandemic, the gentlemen often visited LTS to conduct research and visit historical sites meaningful to their university. In the late 1800s, missionaries from LTS founded a school that grew into Tohoku Gakuin University. Dr. Lovelace accompanied the men to Bethlehem where they toured Moravian University and Moravian Seminary, and explored partnership opportunities.

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF MINISTRY New Class Starts April 11



In this upcoming six-session PAM class, **Rev. Matthew Deal** covers the sea-change brought about by the Protestant Reformation, the reaction to the reforming impulses sweeping Europe, and the continuing ripples of those reforms to the present day. Explore how the church reacted and participated in the great societal changes that swept the world. Areas of exploration will include: the Renaissance & Reformation, the dawn of denominationalism, political change & colonization, the Enlightenment & Great Awakening, American Christianity, the Civil Rights movement, and the retreat of Christendom. Ideal for lay

leaders, members in discernment, as well as ordained clergy. Convenient evening classes from 7:00-8:30pm ET held on Zoom, from April 11- May 18. [Register here.](#)

LEASE AGREEMENT WITH ERHS

Lancaster Seminary and the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society announce a lease agreement that allows the historical society's offices and archives to remain in its current location in the library rent free at least until 2025. For details, [click here.](#)

FACULTY NEWS



Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Dr. Vanessa Lovelace this week co-moderated the Association of Theological Schools African American Presidents and Deans Gathering. **April 12-14** at the ATS Chief Academic Officers Conference in Orlando, she will lead a workshop on diversities, and co-present two workshops on curriculum revision with **Dean Heather Vacek**.



Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of Chapel Worship Rev. Dr. Catherine E. Williams is one of five homiletical consultants selected by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship to assist the Institute in its coordination of the Lilly Endowment's Compelling Preaching Initiative. Over 30 national organizations, each awarded \$1.25 million dollar grants towards this initiative, convened in Indianapolis in **early March** to share their projects and receive support from Dr. Williams and the other consultants.



Professor of Systematic Theology Dr. Lee Barrett will present "The Challenges of a Changing World," at Derry Presbyterian Church in Hershey on **March 15, 22, 19, 25**. **March 23 and 30**, he will co-present "Decades that Transformed the Modern World," with Adjunct Professor Randall Zachman as part of the Quest educational series at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster.



Professor of New Testament Dr. Greg Carey, back from presenting lectures in Australia, will be preaching and teaching locally on the following dates later this month and in April:

March 19, 10:45am, teaching "Eschatology: Where Are We Headed?" at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's Sunday Forum, Lancaster.

March 26, 10:45am, preaching at LifeChurch Lancaster.

April 16, 10:45am, teaching "Update: Christian Nationalism and the Public Schools" at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's Sunday Forum, Lancaster.

April 30, 9:30am, preaching at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Lancaster.



Professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Dr. Julia M. O'Brien on **March 23** will deliver a virtual presentation, "Reading the Bible for the Sake of the Planet," for the Oblate Community of Holy Wisdom Monastery in Middleton, Wisconsin, at the invitation of LTS alumnus Rev. Brad Lutz, Class of 1974.

April 22 at the Earth Day [Lancaster County Climate Summit](#), Trinity Lutheran Church location, she will present "Beyond Creation: Reading the Bible for the Sake of the Planet," More information about her talk is [here](#).

SEMINARIAN AND ALUMNI NEWS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Windy Cooler, Doctor of Ministry seminarian, will present the keynote address: "Provocation to Love: A Prophetic Future for Friends," during the Pendle Hill Quaker Institute April 28 - May 1. Windy also is contributing to a bible curriculum on the Epistle of Jude to be published by Barclay Press. Congratulations Windy!

NATIONAL PRESENTER



Linwood M. Smith, Jr., Doctor of Ministry 2019, co-presented a poster session on "The Role of Clergy in Promoting Health and Wellness, and Disease Reduction Strategies Among African Americans Residing in Philadelphia" this week at the Conference of Medicine and Religion at Ohio State University. [Read more](#). Congratulations!

[Click here](#) to see Rev. Dr. Smith's poster presentation.

INSTALLED



Hyiwot Teshome, MDiv 2022, was installed as the pastor and head of staff at First Presbyterian Church of Johnstown, Penn., in January. He is pictured at the installation with his family: wife, Yeketenesh, and sons Noah (left) and Lucas.

"LTS prepared me well for this new call at FPC," he said. "I was taught not only how to preach well and prepare a well thought-out and meaningful Order of Worship, but how to minister to every different kind of believer and nonbeliever. And not because I was more learned than them but because all of them are children of God and that I need to accept them as such and

affirm their dignity." Many blessings to Rev. Teshome on his new role!

HONORED



Louis K. "Butch" Kuykendall Jr., DMin 2016, senior pastor of Zwingli United Church of Christ, Souderton, Penn., has been inducted into the [Who's Who Biographical Registry](#). Congratulations Rev. Dr. Kuykendall!

ALUMNI DAY REGISTRATION IS OPEN



We invite our beloved alumni to join us on campus in person (and online for worship and a panel discussion) for **Alumni Day on Friday, May 5**. [Register by April 28](#). We look forward to welcoming our newest alums (like Angela Palle and Neil Reeves pictured celebrating last year with their Class of 2022) along with graduates from years past. We'll also celebrate the ministries of Meck and Moss Award recipients **Rev. Dr. Martha Boyer**, Class of 2000, and **Rev. J. Kenneth Trauger**, Class of 1962.

IN MEMORIAM

The Rev. Judson Floyd Parker, PhD, Master of Divinity Class of 1970, died March 2, 2023, at the age of 84. Rev. Parker earned a doctorate in Systems and Information Science from Vanderbilt University where his dissertation applied the techniques of artificial intelligence to scriptural interpretation and contributed both to graph theory and structural exegesis.

[Obituary.](#)

Alums, share your news! Tell us! [Click here](#)

Please consider a gift to the Annual Fund to support our seminarians.

GIVE

