

Life Together

THE MAGAZINE OF
WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Summer 2024



Photo Credit: Joe Brink

Celebrating the Class of 2024!

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 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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COVER PHOTO

Vica-Etta Steel, WTS '24; Brittany Perry, WTS '24; and Board Member Rev. Emily Norris, WTS '20

SUMMER EDITION 2024

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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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Celebrating the Class of 2024

170TH WARTBURG SEMINARY COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

—Romans 15:13, the Class of 2024’s chosen verse

The 170th Commencement at Wartburg Theological Seminary not only marked the culmination of rigorous academic and spiritual preparation for its graduates but also underscored the enduring sense of community and commitment to service that defines the seminary.

The commencement ceremony took place on Sunday afternoon May 12 at St. Joseph the Worker Church. Graduates of WTS are now prepared to serve the church and the world in various roles, including pastors, deacons, youth leaders, and chaplains, providing leadership and guidance in numerous ministry settings.

Zach Manzella, an M.Div. graduate, reflected on his journey: “When I first visited Wartburg it was the sense of community and the accountability in the community that attracted me to the seminary, and that feeling continued through my journey here. That sense of not doing this alone was bolstered by my peers and my community and that helped affirm my sense of call that I had originally felt in order to enter seminary.”

Classmate Vica-Etta Steel shared her transformative experience: “When I began this path, I expected it to be hard. I did not expect my entire world to be shaken. I did not expect to fall in love with all of it, the tears, the laughter, the great heart of this walk in faith. I did not expect to meet the love, the joy, and all the care of so many who will be colleagues and some who have become, already, life-long friends. I can move forward, rooted in this journey.”

In addition to celebrating the graduates, WTS honored three special guests for their notable accomplishments in the academy, the church, and society. This recognition highlights WTS’s commitment to acknowledging significant contributions to theological education and community service.



Yesenia Morales Bahena and Laura Jasiczek.



Wartburg Theological Seminary Faculty.



Gary Grinvalds. Photo Credit: Joe Brink.



Diana Cullen and the Rev. Dr. Jan Rippentrop-Schnell.



Zachary Manzella, Douglas Rothgeb, Curtiss Peterson, and Lisa Robison.



TEEM Students with the Rev. Carrie Greenquist-Petersen.



Daniel Volkman and Andrew Thompson. Photo Credit: Joe Brink.

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity was presented to the Rev. Peter Marty. The Living Loehe Award was given to Ralston Deffenbaugh and Barbara Fritschel. The Living Loehe Award was established by Wartburg Seminary in 1973 as a way of honoring individuals who have given distinguished service to and through the church and exemplify Christ's call to be disciples in the context of their own daily lives and professional commitments. WTS is grateful to God for each of these individuals and their contributions to a world that longs to hear and see the gospel.

The joy of graduates and honored guests was unmistakable as they received their awards and diplomas. TEEM student Tamarreau Evans reflected: "When starting as a TEEM student, I had wondered if it would be possible to develop a bond to a place that is so far away. I live in Oklahoma and would only visit Wartburg for intensives. Would we have the opportunity to really interact with others and develop a support system? My questions were quickly answered. Yes and yes! It did not take long to realize that I would get to be a part of the Wartburg community, even though I live more than 800 miles away. My husband was also made to feel welcomed and a part of the community! Wartburg has made me feel like this process is not mine to walk alone, but we are all in a mutual ministry. I feel an overwhelming gratitude to all of the people at Wartburg who took this journey with me!"

Wartburg Seminary is proud to send the 170th class of graduates out to serve in Jesus' name and take the next step as faith leaders in their call to ministry.

MORE ABOUT THE HONOREES

Rev. Peter Marty serves as senior pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, a 3,500-member congregation in Davenport, Iowa, and editor/publisher of *The Christian Century*, a journal devoted to shaping America's

conversation about religion and faith in public life. He writes a monthly column for the *Century*. A frequent preacher and speaker at churches and conferences across the country, Marty has written several hundred articles related to culture, character, and faith issues in our day. He is the author of *The Anatomy of Grace* (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). From 2004-2009, he served as host of the national radio broadcast, *Grace Matters*. In 2010, the Academy of Parish Clergy named him "Parish Pastor of the Year," an award recognizing leadership excellence and faithfulness in congregational development. He is a graduate of The Colorado College and Yale Divinity School, and was the recipient of an honors fellowship in history for study at Oxford University. He is the recipient of two honorary doctorates. Peter is married to Susan, and they have two adult children with families in Colorado.

Ralston Deffenbaugh is a human rights lawyer who has spent most of his career working for the church. He retired in June 2017 after seven years' service as the Lutheran World Federation's Assistant General Secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights. In that role, he coordinated the LWF's international affairs and human rights advocacy and policy development, advised the General Secretary, and served as the LWF's main representative to the United Nations offices in Geneva. Mr. Deffenbaugh's previous experience includes 18 years heading up the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (the U.S. Lutheran churches' agency for resettling refugees and working with asylum seekers, unaccompanied refugee children, and persons in immigration detention), six years heading up the Lutheran Office for World Community (representing LWF at UN headquarters in New York), and four previous years at LWF Geneva (also handling international affairs advocacy). During Namibia's transition to independence in 1989-90, Deffenbaugh served as legal adviser for the Namib-

Rev. Peter Marty

HONORARY DOCTOR OF DIVINITY
DEGREE RECIPIENT



Ralston Deffenbaugh

LIVING LOEHE AWARD RECIPIENT



ian Lutheran bishops. A graduate of the University of Colorado (in economics) and of the Harvard Law School, Deffenbaugh is licensed to practice law in Colorado. He is married to Miriam Boraas Deffenbaugh; they have two adult children.

Barbara Fritschel has been a lawyer, a campus minister, and a law librarian. A 1987 graduate from Wartburg Seminary (M.A.), she served as a campus minister at the University of Iowa for four years. After receiving her Masters in Library Science, she served as a law librarian for the federal courts, first in Beumont, TX and then in Milwaukee, WI. She has participated in numerous volunteer activities, including leading tours at historical buildings, singing with the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus, shopping for elderly women to help them remain in their homes, teaching credit education programs for high school students, and fundraising for local animal shelters. She has served on numerous congregational committees and councils, been a Sunday School superintendent, and served on the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod's Campus Ministry Committee and the Greater Milwaukee Synod's Candidacy Committee. Professionally, she has served on the executive boards of the Wisconsin Law Libraries Association and the State, Court and County Law Libraries Special Interest Section. Currently she is doing original cataloging for Wartburg Seminary's Reu Memorial Library and serves as the local arrangements person for the Rural Ministry Conference.

Barbara Fritschel

LIVING LOEHE AWARD RECIPIENT





Rev. Dr. S. Helen Chalk Prof. Susan Ebertz (Emerita) Dr. Beth Eneas-Hanson (On Leave) Rev. Dr. Nathan Franzbach Rev. Dr. Ann Frischel (Emerita) Rev. Dr. Samuel Gars



Dr. Samantha Gilmore Rev. Dr. Kristi Johnson Largin, President Rev. Dr. Martin Lohmann Rev. Dr. Craig Nesson Prof. May Persaud, D.D. Rev. Dr. Winston Persaud Rev. Dr. Cheryl Peterson Academic Dean Rev. Dr. Thomas Schatzner (Emerita)



Rev. Dr. Jan Somers Dr. Kristine Stache Rev. M. DeWayne Teq.



Rev. Dr. Troy Trofgruben Rev. Dr. Mark Yacker-Julien Dr. Man-Hai Yu



Brittany Barhus MDIV Linda Bender MADM Hannah Bookbinder MDIV Dana Boyce-Cullen MA Gabrielle Brown MDIV Elizabeth Carr MDIV Kathleen Cartright MDIV Nancy Chapelle MA Bernice 'Sunny' Dillard MDIV



Michael Erickson TEEM Ignacio Estrada TEEM Tamara Goering-Evans TEEM Jerusalem Greer MA Gary Grivada MDIV Janelle Hansen TEEM Alana Harris MDIV August Hori MDIV Laura Jaccob MDIV Amanda Johnson MDIV



Christina Johnson MDIV Jennifer Larson MA David Lewis MDIV Gracie Loucks MDIV Zachary Marzella MDIV Anne McCall MDIV Da'Maria McFarland-Pollock MDIV Nancy Moore TEEM Thomas Muzic TEEM



Karen Nee MDIV Melissa Pige MDIV Mary Anne Panker MDIV Andrew Perge MDIV Brittany Perry MADM Lauren Peterson Adv Cert Youth & Family Curtis Peterson MDIV Jo Rabeaveto MA Heather Ramirez Moen MA Riley Reed-Rindas MDIV



Lisa Robson MDIV Emily Rosenberg MDIV Douglas Roghetti MDIV Jackie Schilling Adv Cert Diaconal Ministry Patricia Schubert TEEM Isaac Starnby TEEM Vica Steel MADM Andrew Thompson MDIV Kathryn Thompson MDIV



Yanyu Lu TEEM Daniel Volkman MDIV Moritz Webb Certificate of Absentee Jeremy Wolfe TEEM Nelson Woodworth MDIV

Sheree Hall MA Rhonda Hansen TEEM Edward Pease MDIV Amy Perza TEEM

Threads of Faith

A COMMUNITY BOUND TOGETHER BY FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP



In the Word, Image, Imagination class led by Rev. Dr. Martin Lohrmann '04 and Jennifer Agee '12, creativity is nurtured through the fusion of words and visuals, all centered around a Christ-centric perspective. This course dives deep into the realms of imagery and poetry, encouraging students to explore and express their faith through artistic mediums. With projects revolving around two- or three-word prompts, each student embarks on a journey of creative interpretation and expression.

For the final project, one student, Bunny Dillard, embarked on a particularly heartfelt endeavor. She decided to pursue a vision that began during her second year of seminary: crafting stoles, vestments worn by clergy, to encapsulate the essence of her class and community.

Driven by a desire for inclusivity, she sought to involve everyone—students, deacons, and upcoming pastors and deacons—in the creation process. The stoles, meticulously crafted and imbued with prayers for each recipient, symbolized unity and support within the community. Through the choice of green fabric, representing Ordinary Time in the liturgical calendar, she reinforced the idea of growth and renewal in the everyday.

As she stitched each stole, Bunny poured her love and prayers into the fabric, weaving a tapestry of interconnectedness and spiritual devotion. The culmination of her efforts was not just a physical garment, but a tangible embodiment of love and support for



each wearer.

During the presentation of her final project, emotions ran high as Bunny reflected on the significance of her work. Tears welled up as she realized the profound impact of her prayers and intentions woven into each stole. With a sense of peace and fulfillment, she entrusted her creations to her classmates, hoping that the stoles would serve as reminders of their shared journey and the ever-present embrace of God's love.

The hours invested in this labor of love amounted to more than 200, a testament to Bunny's dedication and commitment to spreading light, hope, and love through her art. And as each stole found its home, it carried with it the collective prayers and blessings of a community bound together by faith and fellowship.



Steve Smart (back, right) pictured with members from his congregation.

From Business to Ministry: A Journey of Calling and Service



Steve Smart pictured with members from his congregation.

In the bustling city of Milwaukee, amid the ebb and flow of urban life, a remarkable journey of faith and service unfolded. It began with a seasoned entrepreneur, firmly established in his career, feeling the gentle tug of divine calling toward a new path. This journey led him to Wartburg Theological Seminary, where his life's trajectory took an unexpected turn toward pastoral ministry.

At 48 years old, with a thriving company and a family of his own, the decision to heed the call to ministry was not made lightly. Yet, it became increasingly clear that his life experiences, including leadership skills honed in the business world, were not coincidental but rather integral to the journey of faith. Thus, armed with a sense of purpose and a deep



conviction, Steve Smart embarked on the MDiv track at Wartburg, specializing in liturgy and worship.

An internship at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Milwaukee became a pivotal chapter in this journey. Situated in the heart of the city, the church, despite its modest storefront setting, radiates a spirit of warmth, welcome, and service. Through partnerships with community organizations like Rooted and Rising Washington Park, the church is a beacon of hope, offering tangible support to those in need.

Evangelism takes on a multifaceted form, rooted in the principle of sharing God's love through actions as well as words. From the SONshine Pantry, which provides essential household items and meals to those facing food insecurity, to the Safe Baby Sanctuary Program, which offers support and resources to new parents, the church embodies the gospel message in practical ways.

Grant writing and partnerships with neighboring congregations are lifelines, sustaining the ministry and enabling it to thrive amid financial constraints. The

church's commitment to mutual ministry fosters a sense of community and reciprocity, where all are welcomed, valued, and invited to participate in God's work.

Through this internship experience, Steve's confidence in pastoral leadership has grown, nurtured by the supportive community and the opportunity to serve in diverse ways. The journey illustrates the transformative power of faith, resilience, and the willingness to heed the call, even in the face of uncertainty.

As Steve reflects on his future ministry, he sees this experience as a foundation for his vocation, where lessons learned and relationships forged will continue to shape his pastoral journey. With gratitude and humility, he embraces the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, knowing that he walks not alone but alongside a community of faith, bound together by love and a shared mission.



Brother Bill Nybeck pictured with his wife, Nichi.

Brother Bill Nybeck: A Journey of Service and Community at Wartburg Theological Seminary

Brother Bill Nybeck's journey to Wartburg Theological Seminary is one marked by resilience, faith, and a profound sense of calling. As an engineer by profession, Bill's path to ministry took an unexpected turn following a life-altering stroke in 1998. It was through this experience and a transformative mission trip to Jamaica in 2003 that Brother Bill felt called to a deeper engagement with his faith and ministry.

Initially drawn to Wartburg to deepen his understanding of scripture for his role as a Bethel Bible Series instructor, Brother Bill's journey took a new direction as he found himself called to the seminary community. Despite physical challenges and doubts about embarking on a new career in ministry, Bill was guided by the Spirit and supported by mentors like the Rev. Dr. Nate Frambach and the Rev. Dr. Norma Cook Everist, whose words of encouragement affirmed his calling.

For Brother Bill, Wartburg became more than an academic institution; it became a community of belonging and support. Life together at Wartburg, as Brother Bill describes it, is characterized by deep care, respect, and a shared sense of purpose. Despite feeling different from his peers, Bill found acceptance and inclusion, particularly through his interactions with the international community and LGBTQ+ individuals.

At the heart of Brother Bill's experience at Wartburg was his daily ritual of greeting visitors in the refectory, a simple yet sacred practice that fostered connections and friendships. In his ten years at Wartburg, Brother Bill attended numerous classes, audited lectures, and engaged in pastoral care opportunities, continually deepening his knowledge and skills.

In a testament to his deep love for Wartburg, Brother Bill decided to donate a life insurance policy to the seminary, hoping to support its mission of attracting international students and fostering a worship-centered, community-driven environment. His hope for the future of Wartburg is rooted in its continued commitment to love, worship, and community, envisioning a seminary that produces pastors and deacons dedicated to the second great commandment: to love one another.

Brother Bill's journey at Wartburg is not just about his personal growth but also about the transformative power of community, service, and faith. As Brother Bill, he embodies the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity that defines the Wartburg community, leaving behind a legacy of love and commitment to Christ's mission.

Benefits of a Life Insurance Policy Given to Wartburg Theological Seminary

- Receive a charitable income tax deduction.
- If Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) retains the policy to maturity, you can receive additional tax deductions by making annual gifts so that we can pay the premiums.
- If WTS cashes in the policy, you will be able to see firsthand how your gift furthers the seminary's mission.
- If WTS retains the policy to maturity, or you name us as a beneficiary, once the policy matures, the proceeds of your policy will be paid to Wartburg so that we can use them to further our mission.

How to Make a Gift of a Life Insurance Policy

To make a gift of life insurance, please contact your life insurance provider, request a beneficiary designation form from the insurer and include Wartburg as the beneficiary of your policy.

Your deduction for the gift of a life insurance policy to WTS will depend on whether the policy has increased in value above the premiums and whether the policy is paid up or there are remaining payments to be made.

You can also designate WTS as a partial, full or contingent beneficiary of your life insurance policy. You will continue to own and you can make use of the policy during your lifetime.

If you have any questions about making a gift of a life insurance policy, please contact us. We would be happy to answer questions that you have.

Spinning Grace: A Journey into Laundry Ministry

In the heartland of Bessie, Oklahoma, amid the warm embrace of two cherished parishes, a transformative ministry emerged—one that speaks volumes about the power of community, empathy, and service. At the helm of this initiative stands a TEEM graduate, Tamarreau Evans '24, whose journey into pastoral ministry intertwines with a commitment to address tangible needs beyond the church walls.

The genesis of this remarkable journey traces back to the departure of the previous pastor in June of 2021. Two congregations, deeply rooted in their shared mission, found themselves pondering avenues to extend their reach into the community. Concurrently, the Oklahoma Child Welfare System weighed heavily on their hearts, igniting a conversation that would eventually lead to the birth of a unique ministry.

It all started with a simple act of kindness, dating back to 2016, when a friend of Tamarreau's fell on hard times. The realization that clean laundry was a luxury for many struck a chord. Thus began the humble yet profound endeavor of providing not just clean clothes, but dignity and hope to those in need.

The laundry ministry took shape gradually but purposefully. Conversations with both church councils paved the way, as they recognized the need to transcend traditional boundaries and embrace a more inclusive form of outreach. Armed with quarters, laundry soap, and a shared commitment, the ministry found its home at Grace Lutheran in Weatherford. The group would simply hand out quarters and soap at different laundromats throughout town.

But why laundry? Clean clothes, it turns out, are not just a matter of comfort, but a catalyst for change. Studies reveal that access to clean laundry significantly improves school attendance, self-confidence, and overall well-being, particularly for children. For families living paycheck to paycheck, the financial burden of laundry expenses can be alleviated, allowing precious resources to be redirected toward essentials like food and shelter.



Are you or is someone you know considering seminary?

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



Funding this ministry became a communal effort, reflecting the spirit of generosity and compassion. One church integrated it into their general operating fund, while another established a dedicated community fund. Donations poured in, ranging from laundry essentials to practical items like laundry baskets, embodying the collective commitment to uplift and support those in need.

As Tamarreau neared the culmination of her internship, reflections on the profound impact of this ministry abounded. Beyond the tangible benefits, the experience has been transformative, shaping her vision for future pastoral endeavors. The ministry's growth prospects appear promising, with a steadfast community commitment to expanding its reach, fostering inclusivity, and nurturing community bonds.

In essence, the laundry ministry encapsulates the essence of Gospel proclamation—a testament to unconditional love, grace, and service. It transcends barriers, welcomes all, and embodies the profound truth that sometimes, the most profound acts of ministry unfold in the humblest of settings.

As the journey unfolds, one truth remains abundantly clear—in the rhythm of spinning machines and the scent of freshly laundered clothes, grace abounds, and lives are forever changed.

This is Wartburg—Live *Bearing Witness In a New Day*

With Rev. Dr. Troy Troftgruben

July 22, 2024 | 7:00 PM CT

Register online at:
https://mywts.wartburgseminary.edu/ICS/Engage/Event_Registration.jnz

Or, call or email Elizabeth Schmal at (563) 589-0328 or
eschmal@wartburgseminary.edu



ELCA Fund for Leaders Scholarship Program

The ELCA Fund for Leaders Scholarship Program provides financial support to students attending ELCA seminaries and anticipating becoming rostered leaders in the ELCA. Students are eligible to receive full-tuition scholarships, mission developer scholarships, federal chaplaincy scholarships, and TEEM scholarships. Fund for Leaders also works with synods and congregations to support their own candidates in ministry. In the 2023–2024 academic year, the fund provided almost \$3.1 million in scholarships to 345 ELCA seminary students.

This year, the Fund for Leaders Scholarship awarded 30 new full-tuition scholarships (\$40,000 to \$60,000 each) and six mission developer scholarships (\$8,000 per remaining year of coursework). Wartburg is pleased to share that 14 new Wartburg students received the full-tuition scholarship and one current TEEM student received the mission developer scholarship. We give thanks for these people who have answered God’s call to rostered leadership in the ELCA and celebrate the many ways they will continue to be formed and serve in the church and the world.

If you would like to learn more about the ELCA Fund for Leaders, please visit www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership/ELCA-Fund-for-Leaders.

FUND FOR LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP—FULL TUITION RECIPIENTS



Name: Claudine Zoughbi
Synod: Upstate New York
Hometown: Jerusalem, Palestine
Degree: Master of Divinity
What are your hopes for ministry leadership?

My hopes are to build a church that welcomes everyone and a church that supports feminist or women leadership in the United States and among the Arab community.



Name: Ellie Taylor
Synod: Northeastern Iowa
Hometown: Johnston, IA
Degree: Master of Arts in Diaconal Ministry
What are your hopes for ministry leadership?

I hope to be able to create space, through garden ministry, for youth to connect with the earth and learn of their important role in healing the earth. Both for themselves and for our hurting planet so that God’s grace, love, and peace may be felt throughout all creation.



Name: Tamika Wells
Synod: North Carolina
Hometown: Bridgeport, CT
Degree: Master of Divinity
What are your hopes for ministry leadership?

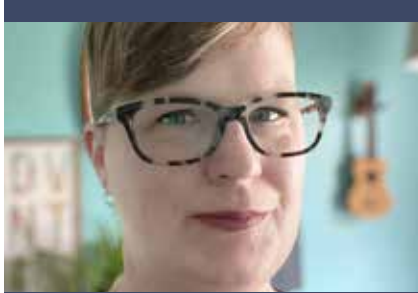
I hope to learn how to be impactful for such a time as this and not be chained to tradition or religion but the heartbeat of God without burning myself as a badge of honor. Also, creating and duplicating disciples which is a missing art of the Holy Spirit.



Name: Kristin Johnson
Synod: Southwest California
Hometown: Lake Mills, IA & Cedar Rapids, IA
Degree: Master of Divinity

What are your hopes for ministry leadership?

As a leader in ministry, I hope to provide others with support and guidance through life's ups and downs, especially during complicated experiences. I also hope to create spaces for discernment and authentic conversation as we, as a church, prayerfully consider how God calls us to use our resources—ourselves, our time, our finances—to live the Gospel.



Name: Meganne Masko
Synod: Indiana-Kentucky
Hometown: Avon, IN
Degree: Master of Arts in Diaconal Ministry

What are your hopes for ministry leadership?

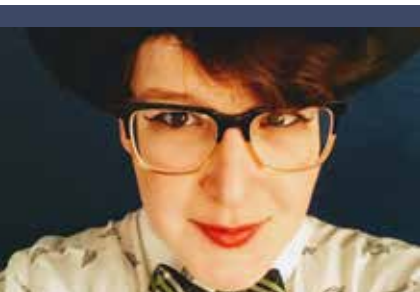
I hope to highlight the important work chaplains do in our communities, congregations, and healthcare systems. I think chaplaincy can be misunderstood and I'm excited to make chaplaincy more understood by other types of ministers in the church.



Name: Aaron Colwick
Synod: Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana
Hometown: Lewisville, TX
Degree: Master of Divinity

What are your hopes for ministry leadership?

Simply put: Love. It's my hope for all who experience any part of my ministry to know and feel Christ's love, in whatever shape or form that looks like for them. Jesus' love is both complex and simple, and when we experience that love through others, that is how Christ's light shines through us!



Name: Bee Reed
Synod: Southeastern Pennsylvania
Hometown: Philadelphia, PA
Degree: Master of Divinity

What are your hopes for ministry leadership?

My biggest hope is to share the Gospel truth with people like me—people who are uncomfortable in most traditional churches because they've received the message that they must first change who they are before they approach Christ's house or table. I want to shatter the myths that God's love is conditional, and that there are a finite number of "right" ways to experience and have a relationship with the Triune God.



Name: Kali Kadelbach
Synod: South Carolina Synod
Hometown: Cloquet, MN
Degree: Master of Arts in Diaconal Ministry

What are your hopes for ministry leadership?

My vision for ministry is deeply rooted in spreading the message of Jesus' love and grace to everyone I meet. I am particularly passionate about enriching the lives of children and youth, nurturing their spiritual growth, and encouraging their active participation in the church and community.



Name: Nathaniel Knutson
Synod: Northern Illinois Synod
Hometown: New Lenox, IL
Degree: Master of Divinity

How is the Fund for Leaders making an impact in your life?

The Fund for Leaders scholarship is making a huge impact on my life, as I do not have to worry about paying for my education. As a collaborative learner, I can focus my time out in the community in which I live and serve.



Name: Allison Klein

Synod: Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Hometown: Cedar Rapids, IA

Degree: Master of Divinity

How is the Fund for Leaders making an impact in your life?

Being a recipient of the FFL scholarship is such an honor and I feel blessed to be a part of a community that is uplifting voices of people who have not always been given opportunities to succeed. As a first-generation college graduate, I didn't have a lot of resources and knowledge of scholarships and ways to fund my education. I'm still paying off student loans, so receiving the FFL scholarship means I will get a quality theological education and not have to worry about adding to my debt.



Name: Juliana Margarita Jiménez Arévalo

Synod: South Dakota Synod

Hometown: Floridablanca, Colombia

Degree: Master of Divinity

How is the Fund for Leaders making an impact in your life?

The Fund for Leaders Scholarship means serenity, trust, and time to focus on my learning, explore my faith, and improve/get my abilities and skills as a church leader. This scholarship is a gift, reinforcement, and assurance for me to begin this new path. It's also a reminder of God's love and generosity to us, spread through God's daughters and sons who support this fund and work to make all this possible.



Name: Matt Grobinski

Synod: Lower Susquehanna

Hometown: Harrisburg, PA

Degree: Master of Divinity

How is the Fund for Leaders making an impact in your life?

The Fund for Leaders has already made an enormous impact on my life. Serving the church and its people has always been a passion, one until now I have never let myself entertain as a vocation. The Fund for Leaders has made it possible for me to explore God's call without the worry of financial constraints—to be open to how God wants me to serve people using the gifts I have identified and those involved with the Fund for Leaders have affirmed in me.

MISSION DEVELOPER RECIPIENT



Name: Levi Faas

Synod: Southeastern Iowa

Hometown: Des Moines, IA

Degree: Master of Divinity

How is the Fund for Leaders making an impact in your life?

Receiving the Fund for Leaders scholarship has been, in a word, transformative. It affirms my calling, relieves financial burdens, and grants me invaluable time with my spouse and two kids. It's more than just money; it's a vote of confidence in my future as a pastor and leader of the church. With this support, I'm empowered to pursue my studies and family life without the weight of debt. It's a gift that inspires confidence and deep gratitude, shaping not only my education but also my entire journey in ministry.



Name: Darra Kingsley

Synod: Grand Canyon Synod

Hometown: Albuquerque, NM

Degree: Master of Divinity



Name: Juan Carlos Cabrera

Synod: South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Hometown: Madison, WI

Degree: Classic TEEM Program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries)

How is the Fund for Leaders making an impact in your life?

This fund has been a guiding light, a breath, and a feeling of relief to continue God's work in our communities. It will allow me to continue my education and have the certainty of being able to finish my studies without financial worries. Additionally, it has facilitated connections and networks with other leaders and resources. These connections have expanded my understanding of the specific needs of the Latino community in a ministry context.

Women of St. Luke's Lutheran Visit Wartburg Theological Seminary

On a beautiful day in late April, Wartburg Theological Seminary welcomed a busload of women from St. Luke's Lutheran Church in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. After tours, participating in chapel with the Wartburg community, and enjoying a community meal, four participants (pictured below) shared their reflections on the day with Director of Communications, Jessica Schneider.

Kris Sonnentag

Preparedness for a Changing World: Kris was particularly impressed by how Wartburg students are prepared for contemporary challenges. She emphasized that educating pastors and deacons today requires diverse talents and strengths to navigate these challenges effectively.

Marilyn Dalton

Passion for Ministry: Marilyn appreciated that Wartburg instills a passion for ministry and storytelling in its students. She noted that the essential role of pastors is to convey the story of Jesus, which can inspire others and help fulfill various pastoral roles.

Linda Janousek

Flexible Educational Paths: Linda valued the variety of educational options available at Wartburg, allowing students to find a path that suits their individual desires while still gaining leadership and education. She highlighted the seminary's dedication to accommodating different needs, which Marilyn echoed, noting that Wartburg goes above and beyond to support its students.

Ruth Fruehling

Inspirational Professors: Ruth was moved by the passion and dedication of the Wartburg professors. She observed that their enthusiasm and love for the institution create a memorable and impactful learning experience.

The women collectively noted that Wartburg places a strong emphasis on the experience and community aspect of ministry education. Marilyn, drawing on her experience at a technical college, remarked that students may forget specific lessons but will always remember how their classes made them feel. This emotional and communal engagement is something she sensed strongly at Wartburg, facilitated by passionate professors.

The visit underscored the seminary's commitment to preparing students for diverse and evolving pastoral roles, fostering a community where experience and personal growth are paramount. The reflections of these women from St. Luke's highlight the seminary's efforts to balance tradition with modern educational needs, ensuring that graduates are well-equipped to serve in various capacities within the church.



L-R: Linda Janousek, Marilyn Dalton, Kris Sonnentag, and Ruth Fruehling.

Meet M.Div Student: Mark Glazener



Mark Glazener with members of his congregation.



Mark Glazener with members of his congregation.

My Journey to Wartburg

My journey to Wartburg began in April 2021, during a period of personal discernment following my wife's passing. My pastor in Florida encouraged me to consider exploring new paths. After discussions about my calling and potential seminary options, my pastor, Steve Winsor, a Wartburg alumnus, recommended Wartburg based on my desire for community involvement. After conversations with the admissions counselor, I felt Wartburg was the perfect fit, and I have been pleased with my decision ever since.

Internship at St. Andrew Lutheran Church

I am currently interning at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Charlestown, Rhode Island, within the New England Synod. My duties include assisting in worship services, preaching, teaching confirmation classes and adult Bible study, planning worship and events, and serving on the stewardship team and budget committee. A significant project I'm involved in is building an outdoor sanctuary that includes a prayer labyrinth, organic garden, and memorial garden. This project is community-focused, and I have been actively participating in its various phases, from fundraising to planning and construction.

Embracing Permeable Edges

The St. Andrew's community believes strongly in creating a church environment that extends beyond the traditional boundaries of membership and Sunday services. It emphasizes inclusivity and community engagement through various activities and services that allow people to connect and feel part of the church community without needing to be formal members. For example, participating in yoga classes, food pantry services, or community dinners makes individuals part of the community. This approach seeks to reach out to more people, fostering connections and support networks within the community.

Outdoor Sanctuary Project

The outdoor sanctuary project is designed as a community initiative, not just for St. Andrew's. It aims to create a permanent worship space that can also serve multiple community functions such as funerals and weddings. The project includes building an organic garden, a prayer labyrinth, and a memorial garden. Fundraising and community involvement have been key components, and we have exceeded our financial goals. We are now in the clearing phase, preparing the site for construction, which will begin in early fall. The project has garnered significant support and involvement from local businesses and community members, highlighting our commitment to serving the broader community.

How Has Wartburg Prepared You for This Role?

Professor Samantha Gilmore and the preaching class really helped prepare me. Before I delivered my first sermon here on internship, the pastor took me aside and reassured me that this is a very forgiving congregation, that they show a lot of grace—all those things you would tell an intern on their very first sermon to reassure them. I had a normal amount of nerves leading up to it, but people told me afterward that I seemed so confident it seemed like I had been preaching for years. And I think having that preaching class and preparation was a direct influence to allow me to feel confident and step right into that role.

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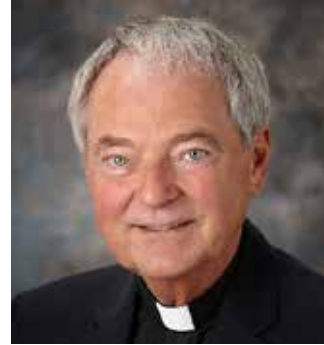
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* New Board Members in 2024

Faculty & Staff Updates



Rev. Dr. Helen Chukka, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, organized Dalit History Month events for the first time at Wartburg Theological Seminary in April. As part of her class work, her students from “Mothers in the Hebrew Bible with a Womanist Lens” planned and conducted

womanist worship in Loehe Chapel. On April 10, she was a panelist on the webinar on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault organized by The Episcopal Diocese of New York. In June, Helen will teach a TEEM Hebrew Bible I intensive. Currently, she is working on a chapter entitled “Dalits and the Use of Bible” for the Oxford Handbook of the Bible in India.



Rev. Dr. Kristin Johnston Largen, President, contributed a chapter to *Christian Perspectives on Transforming Interreligious Encounter: Essay in Honor of Leo D. Lefebure*, edited by Peter C. Phan and Anh Q. Tran. The chapter is titled, “A Christian Reading of The Bhagavad Gita: Relationship and Service with God and with Others.”

Relationship and Service with God and with Others.”



Rev. Dr. Martin Lohrmann, Associate Professor of Lutheran Confessions and Heritage, led a study entitled “Caring for Creation in Luther’s Catechisms” with the Rural Ministry Conference hosted by Wartburg Seminary this past March. With colleagues Ericka Raber and Jennifer Agee, he helped organize a recent “Seminary Arts Showcase,” in which several final-year students shared projects that expressed theological reflection through creative works like poetry, music, and the visual arts. Dr. Lohrmann also attended the recent in-person meeting of the board and staff of *Lutheran Quarterly* in his role as associate book review editor.

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Susan Ebertz, Emerita Director for the Reu Memorial Library & Associate Professor of Bibliography & Academic Research has been elected as President of the Board of Directors for Atla (formerly known as American Theological Library Association). Atla is a membership organization and provides research databases in religion. She served on an Evaluation Committee for an Association of Theological Schools reaccreditation visit to a seminary in the spring. Prof. Ebertz is serving as a consultant to a seminary seeking ATS reaccreditation in the fall.

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Rev. Dr. Nathan C.P. Frambach, Professor of Pastoral Theology, will offer a presentation on “Best Practices for Providing Care to those Who Come to Camp” to summer staff from Camp Shalom and Sugar Creek Bible Camp during the “Camp at the Castle” day on May

31st. Nate will represent Wartburg Seminary at the Central/Southern Illinois Synod Assembly June 6–8 in Decatur, IL. He will serve as the guest presenter and adult Bible study and discussion leader during the intergenerational week July 28–August 2 at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp in Crystal Falls, MI.



Rev. Dr. Craig L. Nesson, Professor of Contextual Theology and Ethics, The William D. Streng Professor for the Education and Renewal of the Church, and Interim Dean of the Chapel will be leading an alumni tour to Germany—Luther, Bonhoeffer, Pietism—from July 15–27,

2025. Participants may choose to stay on additional days in Neuendettelsau to attend the International Loehe Society meeting. Nesson also gave an interview for the *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* podcast on child abuse and child protection. Nesson is the co-editor of a book submitted for publication on diakonia entitled *Diakonal Studies: Lived Theology for the Church in North America*. Nesson continues to host interfaith conversations in the series Pathways to the Divine organized by Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat Center in the Quad Cities.



Rev. Dr. Samuel Giere, Professor of Biblical Interpretation, had the pleasure of presenting in February at “Pitchfork and Hay,” a continuing education event held at Shalom Hill Farm in southwestern Minnesota. His topic was “Fear Not: Faith, the Challenge(s) of Nationalism, and the Reconciled Imagination.” He reports: “It was a rip-snorting good time!”

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Rev. 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, continuing his vocation as a teacher of the church, preached on the sixth word of Jesus from the cross

at the 2024 Good Friday ecumenical worship service, St. Luke’s UMC in Dubuque, and spoke at SEIA Synod Women of the ELCA Cluster 5, St. John’s LC, St. Donatus. He will attend Central States Synod Assembly, Olathe, KS, 6–8 June. His annual trip to Guyana (22 June – 16 July 2024) will include listening, visiting, preaching, and teaching. To mark the 25th anniversary of signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (31 October 1999), he will lead two anticipated ecumenical gatherings of pastors/lay leaders to study and reflect on the JDDJ.



Dr. Samantha Gilmore, Assistant Professor of Homiletics, is working on four essays for the *Sundays and Seasons: Preaching* resource in addition to an article on “Performance Studies” for the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Christian Homiletics*. This summer, she will

teach two TEEM preaching courses and take a workshop on embodied pedagogy.



Rev. Dr. Cheryl M. Peterson, Academic Dean and Professor of Ecumenical Theology, was honored to receive the 2024 Faithful Servant Distinguished Alumni Award from her alma mater, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, at LSTC's Homecoming in April (pictured



to the left). She gave a presentation on the International Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue (via Zoom) at the "Transformations of Ecumenism Conference" held at the Christian

Theological Academy in Warsaw, Poland, and attended the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies in Atlanta, where she was elected to a three year term as co-convenor of the Ecumenical Studies Interest Group. Her second book, *The Holy Spirit in the Christian Life: The Spirit's Work For, In, and Through Us*, was released in March by Baker Academic Press. She gave a presentation on the book for Wartburg's Reformation and Reunion Event in April. Dean Peterson represented Wartburg at the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly on May 17-18, where she is again rostered (having previously been rostered in that synod in the early 2000s when she served as a pastor in downtown Milwaukee).



Rev. Dr. Jan Schnell, Assistant Professor of Liturgics, developed a course on trauma-informed worship so students have access to thinking about the science behind trauma and rather widespread impacts of trauma in the lives of congregations they will serve, along with worship-centered practices that move toward healing.

- Received a grant to develop, with more than 60 authors, a one-year, Zoom-based, synchronous Queer Confirmation program that the ELCA will run annually.
- Received and directing a grant to explore, with key partners, intersectional pedagogies for seminaries, ELCA colleges, and churchwide
- Building JustLiturgies.com—a liturgical commons of sorts to share liturgies many partners have developed because of known needs in assemblies they love. These add to the resources at the fingertips of worship planners and are free to use with attribution!
- Developing a course in liturgical theology that looks at scholars who have defined the field, while asking the open questions students have about liturgies.



Rev. DeWayne Teig, Instructor in the Pastoral Arts & Advisor for TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries), continues his work each semester as a small group facilitator for the Spiritual Practices course and he is currently working on a Certificate of Completion

in Trauma-Informed Spiritual Care offered through the 2024 World Congress on Moral Injury, Trauma, Spirituality, and Healing.



Rev. Dr. Troy Troftgruben, Associate Professor of New Testament and The William A. & John E. Wagner Professor in Biblical Theology, was a keynote speaker in April for a Theology Day event hosted by the NW Minnesota and Eastern ND synods. This spring he also led scripture

studies for a South Dakota synod staff continuing education day and assisted with camp staff training at EWALU and on Wartburg's campus. This summer he is working on a "Deeper Understandings" article for the *Living Lutheran*, several entries on Luke for *Working Preacher*, an article on prayer and scripture for *Word & World*, and overseeing the fall issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission* on Luke's Gospel (Year C).



Dr. Man-Hei Yip, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, participated in the ELCA Theological Roundtable in March 14-16, 2024. It is an annual meeting that convenes representatives from various theological networks of the ELCA to share updates on theological initiatives

and projects, as well as provide counsel in theological issues to the ELCA Churchwide Organization as needed. Professor Yip will travel with other ELCA seminary faculty and ELCA Churchwide staff for an immersion study trip to Indonesia in June.

Upcoming Events

July 22, 2024

This is Wartburg Live with Troy Troftgruben

September 2, 2024

Opening Worship for the 171st Academic Year

Friday, October 11, 2024

President's Dinner

April 22-24, 2025

ReFormation & Reunion

For more information and to register,
visit wartburgseminary.edu
or use the QR code below.



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