

# DIVINITY

DUKE UNIVERSITY | *Spring 2017*

## STRENGTH AND SUPPORT TO SOAR

*Empowering people  
for practical ministry*



**LEADERSHIP AND LAYPEOPLE:  
HOW PASTORS CAN  
PROMOTE DISCIPLESHIP**

*By Kevin Wright*

**DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE BUILT IN COMMUNITY**  
*By Matthew Scott*

**FINDING CLARITY AND COMPETENCY**  
*By Bridgette A. Lacy*



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# DIVINITY

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We'd like to hear from you!  
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# Preparing for Transformation

**I REMEMBER** the first time I made a pastoral care visit on my own when I was a seminary student. An elderly pastor who had had a long and significant ministry was in the hospital. Over his lifetime he had planted numerous churches, mentored countless young clergy, and been a powerful preacher. He had been supportive of my call to ministry. Now he was in his final days with congestive heart failure.

As I approached his bed and greeted him, he took my hand and looked at me for a long time. With great effort he finally whispered, "Please pray that my faith will not fail."

The feeling of Godforsakenness can happen to the most devout Christian. Indeed, on the cross Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Yet in that moment I was stunned and at a loss as to how to support this man. Scrambling to remember what I had learned in pastoral care, I assured him that I would pray, that he was beloved to the church, and that God was very near. I told him that even if he lost strength to hold on, God would never stop holding on to him. God would have faith for him.

That experience was more challenging for me than any exam I took in systematic theology. It was more demanding than learning doctrine. Someone's life was slipping away, and the test was whether I could be there for him in his great need.

Sometimes people refer to the fields of theology, biblical studies, and historical studies as "hard" disciplines and everything that has to do with ministry practices as "soft" disciplines, as if it is somehow more difficult to write a treatise about salvation than it is to help people find salvation in the hardest moments of their lives. The truth is that theological education should prepare people both theoretically and practically for the hard work of ministry. This is true for clergy and for laity.

In this issue of *DIVINITY*, we focus on the central importance of equipping laity and clergy alike for transformational practices of ministry. Whether teaching a congregation contextually the principles of asset-based

community development or helping a seminarian learn to conduct a funeral with dignity and compassion, developing skills and a solid theological foundation for the practices of ministry is essential.

We believe that field education is necessary for preparing people for pastoral practices of ministry, and two articles highlight stories of students, alumni, and field education supervisors. This issue also includes two essays on prayer and two articles about the ways that congregational leaders can empower their laity for vital ministry.

Because we take very seriously our work of preparing leaders for God's church, we have begun a strategic planning process to ensure alignment between our mission and the work that we do. In early March our strategic planning committee did a meditation exercise on Revelation 21:1–5 and 22:1–5, in which we remembered that our work in theological education is to be contextualized in the announcement of the risen Christ: "Behold, I make all things new!" (Revelation 21:5). We recalled that we are a gathered people whose center is the Triune God. We reflected upon the challenge of change, which never comes without struggle. We offered ourselves as participants in God's

good work. For indeed, the *telos* of theological education is participation in God's work of redemption, in the actual practices of making all things new.

We lean into the future with confidence because we are grounded in a long tradition of serving God's church. Our long-standing strengths in theology, biblical studies, and historical studies will continue to flourish and sustain us as we deepen and expand our capacity in practices of ministry. We are training students who will be powerful preachers and who can pray with the dying. They will challenge injustice and will love their neighbors. They will draw on the power of the Spirit and in turn empower others. May we move forward joyfully with the courage and humility of Jesus as we participate in God's work of making all things new. ■

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*Theological education should prepare people both theoretically and practically for the hard work of ministry. This is true for clergy and for laity.*

# LEADERSHIP *and* LAYPEOPLE

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HOW PASTORS CAN EMPOWER OTHERS  
AND PROMOTE DISCIPLESHIP

BY KEVIN WRIGHT

**P**astors tell terrible jokes.

We might imagine that our comedic chops rival Johnny Carson, Chris Rock, or Samantha Bee, but the polite—if not forced—laughter from our congregations when we crack a joke during a sermon is more likely to be an expression of sympathy than amusement. We are the last people executives from HBO would call when they need someone to headline a comedy special.







For instance, one of our favorite jokes goes like this: A pastor finds herself in an undesirable situation, say managing the fallout of a broken boiler that's flooded the church basement. When folks later ask her how she managed the crisis, she replies, "Oh, just fine—I took a class on this in seminary, you know?"

Don't laugh. It will only encourage us.

Ministry presents a myriad of situations that demand expertise beyond the learning that occurs in many seminary classrooms. But someone might say, *That's what field education experiences are for, right?* Those practical ministry experiences are intended to round out students' academic formation and equip them with the necessary skills to thrive as leaders. But not all field education experiences can prepare future pastors for what they might encounter: preaching the funeral service for an infant, leading a multimillion-dollar capital campaign, navigating organizational behavior (and changing it for the better!), even the broken boiler and flooded church basement. So what is a seminary-trained church leader to do?

#### **THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR AND LEADERSHIP PRACTICES**

In his 1999 essay "Sinsick," Stanley Hauerwas underscores the weight of this question when he writes: "Why is medical education so morally superior to ministerial education? I think the answer is very simple. No one believes that an inadequately trained priest might damage their salvation; but people do believe that an inadequately trained doctor might hurt them."

In my role as a pastor, I have the ability either to usher people into the healing presence of God or to inflict damage on their lives.

This is no laughing matter.

A primary way I've seen pastors hurt people is through the exercise of unhealthy leadership practices that undermine or misunderstand the vital role of laity in ministry.

One of my field education placements during seminary involved serving as a chaplain at the Murdoch Center, a place of residence for individuals with developmental disabilities. My first Sunday there I attended worship and watched as several members of the Murdoch Center's community played key roles in worship leadership. I observed Sarah, the blind pianist, churning out familiar hymns while a team of greeters received incoming worshippers with smiles and occasional murmurs of greeting. A team of ushers took up the offering midway through the service—some having to be pushed in wheelchairs up and down the aisle as they collected the coins and small bills dropped into the plate by congregants. A few individuals served as *de facto* song leaders and corralled the community members

into singing or gesticulating along with a chorus that was sung every week as a Spirit-filled call to worship.

After the service, my supervisor took me back to his office where we sat in hard plastic chairs and talked about what I had witnessed.

"So, what did you think?" he asked. "You looked surprised at some points in the service."

Embarrassed by my lack of a poker face, I shifted my weight in the chair and said, "Well, I don't know if I would call it *surprise*, but ..."

My supervisor saved me further embarrassment by jumping in. "Don't worry," he said. "A lot of students we get here have the same reaction at first. You don't expect the community to be so involved, do you? A lot of that expectation is usually based upon the abilities of our individuals—but they have gifts, and we need to say yes because the world loves to tell them no."

My supervisor's words were as poignant as they were profound, and they continue to drive two important questions shaping my ministry today:





## IN WHAT WAYS AS A LEADER AM I SAYING YES TO THOSE ASPECTS OF THE PERSONHOOD OF THE CONGREGATION AND PREPARING SPACE FOR THEM TO ACT AS FAITHFUL PERFORMERS OF THE GOSPEL?

First, in what ways is my congregation being told no in regards to their exercise of gifts, identity, or ability? Second, in what ways as a leader am I saying yes to those aspects of their personhood and preparing space for them to act as faithful performers of the gospel? These two questions are important, and it's equally important to understand why pastors might have difficulty answering them.

### EMPOWERING THE LAITY

I think it's generally true that while pastors love their congregations, they don't always love everything that their congregations do. A pastor can love her flock while still wishing that they would be more welcoming to first-time guests and not threaten to split every time the fellowship hall needs re-carpeting. Similarly, while congregations love their pastors, they don't necessarily fall head over heels for every act of clerical leadership. A congregation can cherish their shepherd but still want him to not be so long-winded in his sermons or to stop wearing jeans when he conducts hospital visits.

Over time, the reality of this I-love-you-but-I-wish-you'd-do-things-differently dynamic can lead a pastor eventually to become dismissive, even if ever so slightly, of lay involvement in ministry. Here's an example: a pastor, wishing that his congregation would

hasten their process of deliberating new ministry opportunities, might walk into a committee meeting thinking: "Here we go again with another talk-a-thon that leads nowhere. This would be so much easier if I could just do this myself."

In this instance, the pastor is not thinking about the past ways in which his committee members might have been told no and how he might be a positive voice of affirmation in their lives. Rather, the pastor is frustrated by what he perceives to be his laity's inaction and now flirts with bulldozing over their role in the life of the church. The situation is compounded by the fact that his ministerial formation might not have equipped him with the knowledge of how to effectively cultivate lay involvement in ministry.

When I served as the Protestant chaplain at Georgetown Law School, I tried to steer my students into using their legal training on behalf of underserved populations. While a conversation here or there might convince a student to volunteer time at a free legal clinic, my overall success rate was abysmally low. Certainly my student's intense schedules contributed to my low rate of success, but my approach to the overall conversation certainly did not help.

A wise colleague suggested I try a different tack and offer a program designed to stimulate their imagination

and expose them to resources designed to help them explore essential questions about vocational calling. I took his advice and launched a lunch gathering called "What Matters and Why?" Along with an ample supply of pizza and Diet Coke, students were given the opportunity to dialogue with visiting attorneys who, after years in their profession, were able to reflect on questions pertaining to the deeper meaning of their vocation.

The sessions were a hit. More than 50 students would regularly fill a conference room to listen to a high-profile litigator talk about the premium she placed on practicing her faith, even above pursuing corporate profits, or to hear how a big-firm attorney left a six-figure salary for the priesthood. Students became energized by these conversations and in turn began enthusiastically pondering how they might carry their faith with them into their own careers. Rather than playing the role of a wrangler trying to corral students into my narrow vision of what they should do, I became a broker of intentional conversations and relationships through which they might be affirmed in their longing to practice their profession as followers of Jesus. If, as former dean of Duke Chapel Sam Wells argues in his book *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics*, the "church's creative energies are largely concerned with preparing

its members to be able to respond by habit to unforeseeable turn of events,” then a pastor must be willing to play the role of convener, ushering her parishioners into conversations and situations that have the power to instigate prayerful reflection and faithful action in their lives.

On my good days I can remember the words of my supervisor at the Murdoch Center and recall the experiences I had at Georgetown Law School. This allows me to realize that the role of a pastor is to help them organize their lives and orient their imaginations around Jesus’ vision of beloved community. Perhaps it is not the case that the laity in any given church have *too much power* but rather that they might be vested with the *wrong types of power*.

#### **CLERGY, LAITY AND A LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP**

The only time I’ve ever hoped for an imminent Rapture was during a marathon church committee meeting that stretched on for well over three hours in a room whose air conditioner could not keep pace with the steamy summer temperatures. While there might have been one or two important things discussed during the meeting, the overall conversation was discursive, the energy of committee members waned as the meeting dragged on, and I figured that right now was as good a time as any to meet Christ in the sky if it would get me out of this meeting.

As the meeting dragged on and the Parousia did not take place, I made a mental note to follow up with committee members later to ask how they thought the meeting went. Over the next few weeks, I met with most of the committee members

and discovered a recurring theme: while each member was bursting with proposals that deserved careful consideration by the committee, they seemed reticent to express those ideas in any of our meetings. It was clear that, given the chance, the committee members were capable of leading our congregation into some exciting new initiatives. I spoke with the chairperson about my discovery, and together we designed a plan to coax people into vital conversations where their gifts might find fuller expression.

The solution arrived in the form of an altered agenda. The hour-long process of hearing reports—many of which had nothing to do with the committee’s work—was discarded. Instead, committee members were divided into three “think tanks” of four individuals each and charged with the task of discussing an assigned issue related to the committee’s purview. The groups discussed their topics, and after 20 minutes everyone reconvened to report on their conversations.

One group that was asked to focus on our discipleship ministries suggested how we might expand our young adult ministry by clarifying its purpose, aim, and goals. Another group, responsible for discussing our church’s outreach to young people in the community, recommended that we host a summer enrichment program for underserved children and youth. The energy in the room was palpable as idea after idea was put on the table. By the end of the 90-minute meeting, the committee had unanimously and enthusiastically approved a number of proposals, including the launching of an ambitious Freedom School summer program. In little more than an hour’s time, a committee previously known

for rambling three-hour meetings was transformed into a bold body of dreamers, visionaries, and risk-takers.

The issue was never that these lay leaders were incapable of modeling God’s vision of community to the world; rather, they needed a process that better affirmed their abilities and valued their voices. The “think tank” model of meetings told committee members that their ideas mattered and that the mission of the church depended on their contributions.

The hard work of pastors is to accompany our lay members as they discern and discover the ways in which the community of Christ requires their participation as it pursues a common life constituted by faithful discipleship. My role as a pastor cannot be based on a zero-sum equation that empowers the clergy at the expense of disenfranchising the laity. Any conception of ministry that discounts the unique contributions and gifts of the laity will be just as dysfunctional (and dangerous) as a system that discounts the role of pastors who accompany their flock on the journey of discipleship.

There are many things one does not learn in seminary (especially if the distraction of Duke basketball is present!). This is OK—seminary isn’t supposed to teach you everything. And there is no substitute for the daily interactions a pastor has with her congregation. Nevertheless, I believe it’s important not only to train pastors to have robust appreciation for the role of the laity but also to equip future ministers with best practices for exercising that appreciation in a congregational context. Seminaries should be innovative and cross-disciplinary learning labs, where

# SUPPORTING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AT THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH

**AMY BUTLER**, Senior Minister of The Riverside Church in the City of New York



**THE REV. AMY BUTLER** was installed as senior minister of The Riverside Church in the City of New York in 2014. In addition to her pastoral ministry, she leads a large pastoral and administrative staff, has been profiled in nearly every national newspaper including *The New York Times* and *Wall*

*Street Journal*, and serves on the advisory council of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity (LEADD).

Both Butler and other ministers on staff at The Riverside Church have participated in LEADD programs. "I did not receive sufficient leadership training in my education, and Leadership Education has been significant and critical addition in rounding out that skill set," she says. "The challenge of leadership in the church at this moment is testing our skill, excellence, and creativity in unprecedented ways; offering this resource for leaders at all points in their careers is critically important."

Currently six Duke Divinity School alumni serve at The Riverside Church. "I do seem to have a disproportionate number of Duke Divinity School alumni on my staff, a fact that they enjoy

recounting often!" Butler says. "They're excellent colleagues, and share the qualities of highly developed intelligence, sophisticated and nuanced leadership skills, and a deep understanding of how the academic work of training for ministry and the day to day work of the church interface in effective and transformational ways." While leading a large staff might sound daunting, she says that a pastoral team is a great source of encouragement: "I think one of the most critical ministry resources for me is the friendship of my colleagues and the opportunities we have to speak honestly and vulnerably about the joys and challenges of ministry." Many pastors don't have the option of working with a large ministerial staff, but it's still important for them to find trustworthy colleagues for support and encouragement.

As pastor of one of the highest-profile churches in the nation, Butler has a unique vantage point from which to assess the importance of mutual support between churches, denominations, seminaries, and other institutions. "We have to see ourselves as partners in this work, two sides of the same coin," she says. "The future work of the church in the world hinges on seminaries' commitment to producing excellent and skilled leaders." ■

The Rev. Amy Butler will be a featured speaker for Convocation & Pastors' School at Duke Divinity School, October 9-10, 2017.

organizational behavior management and systems theory is explored alongside Christian ethics and biblical exegesis. If our seminarians are tested on how well they can commit church history to memory, then surely they should also be required to demonstrate proficiency with skills required for their role as leaders of institutions. I don't know of many pastors who've been fired for not being able to recall the events of the Marburg Colloquy, but I certainly know a few colleagues who have been reprimanded by their bishops for not providing effective church leadership.

Yes, pastors tell terrible jokes, but fortunately our calling is not to be comedians but rather faithful leaders within our respective organizations or institutions. We're charged with affirming our community members' gifts and making space so that they

can embrace the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives, ushering them into urgent participation with God's work in this world. Save the bad jokes for sermons, and let's work on the serious calling to empower and equip laity for ministry. ■





# DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

*built in community*

How one church provides theological formation for laypeople

BY **MATTHEW SCOTT**





**T**he sun is setting in San Antonio, Texas, on a February evening, but even though it's Thursday and has already been a long week of ministry, David McNitzky, senior pastor of Alamo Heights United Methodist Church, isn't heading home. Since 2010, his Thursday evenings have been devoted to a new development in the mission of this church: teaching and forming laypeople who are discerning a call to ministry.

In his office, McNitzky reviews student submissions from previous weeks. From 5:30 to 6:20, he holds 20-minute meetings with students from his class. They review assignments, he

offers encouragement, and they ask whatever questions they may have. By 6:20, he wraps up his last student meeting and heads downstairs for class. Eighteen students gather every Thursday evening from 6:30 to 8:30.

McNitzky and his former associate pastor, Scott Heare, now senior pastor of Riverside Community Church in Spring Branch, Texas, had discussed the idea of training lay leaders who were discerning a call to ministry and desired more formation but could not leave their families or jobs to go to seminary. These lay leaders in their church kept talking about this shared interest, and McNitzky and Heare wanted to respond to this desire that they saw emerging from their congregation.

This led them to start the Quarry in 2010, a lay training program to help dedicated followers of Christ. The name comes from Isaiah 51:1: "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn." In this context, theological training is offered in the place (the quarry) from which people have been formed and—in the words of the Quarry's mission statement—helps them find "community and confidence for their call."

Within a few years, word of the Quarry had spread. What had been envisioned as a group of 12 people had grown to more than 50. The Quarry meets at Alamo Heights, located about seven miles north of downtown San Antonio. Members from Riverside Community Church drive about an hour and a half round trip to come to the Quarry each week.

The meetings begin with dinner made by volunteers from the church, then worship, then teaching. The original curriculum had three main sections: first, looking back and getting healthy; second, going deeper in the text; and third, discerning each person's unique call to ministry. The curriculum also included prayers for healing for past pain, discovering gifts and calling, exegetical work through Scripture, and field trips to other churches and even Texas barbecue joints.

"Everyone asks about the barbecue visits," Heare says. "We go to have barbecue when we go through Leviticus. I tend to love to be active and seek adventure, to have fun, and this helps us do all those things while learning about the Hebrew Scriptures [Old Testament]. There is something special about talking about sacrifice

with the smell of barbecue wafting in the air.” Scott recognizes the irony of eating pork while reading through the Hebrew Scriptures, but maybe it is a new delicatessen of freedom in Christ.

#### CONNECTIONS FOR GROWTH

This lay training program has developed its current curriculum with the help of Duke Divinity School. Duke first visited the Quarry in 2012, when Dave Odom, executive director of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity (LEADD) and associate dean for leadership initiatives, brought a team to interview students, leaders, and other congregants to help Alamo Heights understand what the Quarry was and what it could become. “They gave us confidence and encouragement that we were on a good path,” McNitzky says. “Duke provided us with a discussion partner and coach. When you are going into new areas, a collaborative strength is very crucial. A discussion partner that could look from 30,000 feet at the landscape was so important.”

From his extensive experience in supporting leadership development in faith communities, Dave Odom has unique perspective on what is happening in the church in America. He also inspires thoughtful reflection and asks insightful questions. Odom and his team helped Alamo Heights identify what they had in the Quarry: a valuable program for their parishioners and possibly something that could provide a model of lay formation for the wider church.

Alamo Heights has also pursued a connection with Duke to provide a certificate for their student graduates. Odom and Lacey Warner, associate professor of the practice of evangelism and Methodist studies and senior strategist for United Methodist collaborations, have helped the Quarry sharpen its curriculum

to provide more structure to the students’ formation. The partnership with Duke also provides credibility for the Quarry. “When you connect with an institution like Duke, you know you are getting education at the highest level,” Heare says.

This connection raises the expectations of those inside and outside the program. Students expect more in-depth work and even ask for more to study. McNitzky and Heare noticed that the students bring insights and observations from their own studies that contribute to the class. Warner attends the Quarry monthly and also teaches. Stephen Chapman, associate professor of Old Testament, is slated to teach a class later this year via Skype, and several Duke alumni have also contributed to the program.

#### THEOLOGICAL FORMATION IN A LOCAL SETTING

Early on, Odom saw a great opportunity for the Quarry: “I see experiences like the Quarry as a key element to formation of leadership for Christian community in the future. Alamo

Heights UMC is a model for how large-membership congregations can be critical nodes in developing all sorts of community.”

The Quarry has helped to highlight the desire for theological formation in the local church, but the local church cannot carry the burden on its own. Both the academy and the church need each other in this process of theological formation. This partnership with Duke combines the experience and expertise of the academy with the personal connection of the local church setting. “The Quarry provides a wonderful example of the profound significance of theological formation in a local church setting,” Warner says. “Often in mainline Protestantism, the distance between theological education, usually in seminaries, and spiritual formation, usually occurring in local churches, is immense. The Quarry bridges that distance in stunning ways. Participants read, write, discuss, debate, and practice critically, compassionately, and faithfully.”

McNitzky always brings the focus back to the local church. After 37 years

## COULD YOUR CHURCH BUILD A QUARRY?

.....  
**HERE ARE SOME** helpful questions to discuss if you’re considering a program of theological formation in your church:

- What does formation look like in your setting?
- Could a program offered at a regional level be helpful for people in your church?
- What will these programs look like moving forward?
- Are there other churches or organizations who could be supportive partners?
- Will this lead to recognition from groups such as United Methodist Boards of Ordained Ministry?





serving as a Methodist pastor, he sees the importance of community-based theological education. “One of the great things about the Quarry is that our students are already in community, and we work on bonding them even more,” he says. “Their community becomes the base for their formation instead of theological education becoming the basis for their bonding.” This emphasis on local community has been a powerful factor in the formation of the students. By investing in them in their local setting, they remain connected to their families, communities, place of call, and support networks.

**POSSIBILITIES MOVING FORWARD**

Partnerships such as the one between Duke and the Quarry could fill a need for formation in the church moving forward. Currently a great divide exists between the formation available to most dedicated lay leaders in the local church and the formation found at seminaries for ministers. These types of connections between the local church and the academy are helpful for both communities, with the goal of making theological formation available to the church.

Warner, who has worked on many creative collaborations, explains: “Theological education flourishes when it happens in mutual relationships with the academy as well as local churches practicing ministry. Duke Divinity School’s distinctive identity as one of approximately a dozen theological schools in research universities directly facilitates the former relationship. However, this location could arguably stifle the latter relationship. Strong relationships with Duke Divinity alumni and other pastor-scholars practicing wise theological formation in vital local churches allows the latter also to flourish. When visiting the Quarry,



Participants at the Quarry enjoy conversation and camaraderie before a class session in February.

I consistently leave each session with a deeper sense of understanding of the concepts presented—and hope for the present and future pastoral leadership of churches.”

A deeper partnership between the local church and the academy is both necessary and possible. The local church has local people in their local context, callings, work, and families; and the academy has expertise on formation, resources, and credibility. “The Quarry may provide some insights and options for how to do theological and biblical education in a local setting while partnering with seminaries in meaningful ways,” McNitzky says. In order to flourish, these programs will require connection, support, and guidance. Alamo Heights is also working with the Rio Texas Conference on moving Quarry students through the process to become licensed local pastors, although they are still required to go through Course of Study.

The Quarry draws on the rich Methodist heritage for theological formation. “The United Methodist Church has a great tradition of classical theological education and has regularly found ways with the changing landscape to develop

innovative methods to train leadership and laity,” says Heare. “Right now we are at another time of great change and need creativity in significant places to meet these changing times. Duke has decided to join us at the front edge of this change and build our confidence in this model rather than protect the traditional structure of theological training. This gives the Quarry credibility and increases the quality of the program. Like Wesley, this takes the best of the tradition, infuses it with innovation, and connects it to the mission field.”

Much of the future of the church is uncertain as we face changing times in society and the church. But this much is clear: people will always thirst for formation in the ways of God, hear the still small voice of God calling them to serve in a life of ministry, and make great sacrifices to respond to this call. It is exciting to be part of God’s work to form lay leaders in a local setting. This formation will always be at its best when the academy and the local church partner together. ■

*Faith & Leadership* has more articles about the work of the Quarry and Alamo Heights UMC as well as a wealth of resources on church leadership: [www.faithandleadership.com](http://www.faithandleadership.com).





# FINDING CLARITY *and* COMPETENCY

*The gifts, challenges, doubts, and blessings of field education*

BY **BRIDGETTE A. LACY** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LES TODD**

# W

hen Duke Divinity student Cynthia Jacko first preached at a predominantly white church in Durham, she wasn't sure how her message was being received. She wondered, "Am I hitting home?"

Jacko, an African American woman, grew up in a small, black Baptist church in Louisiana, where the folks in the pew shouted out "Amen!" or "Can I get a witness?" Her textbooks didn't prepare her for the different ways worshippers react to a sermon. During her field education placement at Yates Baptist Church she learned that, while many African Americans prefer the Amen Corner, whites often digest their sermons in more subtle ways.

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The Rev. Christopher Ingram, senior pastor of Yates Baptist Church, and Cynthia Jacko M.Div.'17 outside the church sanctuary renovations in Durham, N.C.

## **DEVELOPING COMPETENCY IN MINISTRY**

Candidates for the master of divinity degree at Duke Divinity School are required to complete at least 800 hours of field education. That means going out and preaching sermons, assisting the needy, and serving congregations in churches and faith-based nonprofit organizations.

Matthew Floding, director of ministerial formation at the Divinity School, explains that since the M.Div. serves as both standard pastoral preparation and a professional degree, field education is mandatory. "It provides students with hands-on experience," he says.

WE ARE DEALING WITH PEOPLE'S MOST BASIC NEEDS. THERE HAS TO BE THAT CROSSWALK, A PLACE YOU CAN WALK OUT OF THE CLASSROOM AND INTO A CONTEXT WHERE THEOLOGY MATTERS.

—THE REV. MATTHEW FLODING, Director of Ministerial Formation

“That’s the place where students practice ministry, reflect on that practice and then go back and do it with greater competency.”

During those experiences students confront real-world issues such as food insecurity, homeless veterans, immigration policy, and everything in between. “We are dealing with people’s most basic needs,” Floding says. While professors can touch on various issues in a classroom, they have to move fast to cover a lot of theoretical ground. “There has to be that crosswalk, a place you can walk out of the classroom and into a context where that theology matters.”

“Field education helps you put flesh to what you learn in books,” says Jacko, now a senior.

#### **GIFTS AND CHALLENGES**

Field education presents both gifts and challenges. Haley Eccles, a Duke Divinity senior, is on her fifth placement. She served at two different Methodist churches with the Rev. Lori Higgins.

Eccles requested a second placement with Higgins because they are cut out of the same fabric. Higgins holds a degree in social work, and Eccles worked with children in foster care before coming to divinity school.

During her initial placement, Eccles

saw the grace and gentleness that Higgins brought to her small congregation, especially when she presided over 11 funerals in one year. “She was doing a lot of pastoral care. It’s an area she shines in. I also enjoy comforting people who are hurting and grieving.”

Higgins treated Eccles like a colleague, providing helpful feedback while allowing her to offer her own gifts as they offered comfort to families dealing with loss. The two even visited a patient in the hospital together. “We were able to hit the ground running,” Eccles says of her current placement at Efland United Methodist Church in Efland, N.C. Eccles serves as the interim choir director in addition to being a pastoral intern.

But a significant challenge came in November, when Higgins was diagnosed with throat cancer. Eccles’ duties increased substantially; the small church of 75 worshippers has only one pastor. The church hired someone to preach most Sundays, since Higgins was unable to work while she received treatment.

“Haley’s really taking on a leadership role at the church,” Higgins says. “She’s maintaining the rhythm of the church, performing all the administrative tasks—including attending meetings, leading Bible studies, and even preaching on some Sundays.”



“In a lot of ways the church has given me more responsibilities,” Eccles says. “They have contacted me if someone is sick. That’s been humbling.”

#### **QUESTIONS, CALLING, AND IDENTITY**

The Rev. John Stean D’14, the pastor at Ebenezer AME Zion Church in Seattle, Wash., found field education a great time to think more deeply about his own gifts and mission.

During his first placement at the Potter’s House, a nonprofit café, bookstore, and event space in Washington, D.C., he was able to decompress from his academic bombardment. “I had a lot of insecurity about my calling and identity. I think some of that may be





Haley Eccles M.Div.'17 and the Rev. Lori Higgins, pastor of Efland UMC, have worked together for two field education placements.

exacerbated for students of color in a predominantly white space, especially if that is not where we come from.”

One important lesson his supervisor/mentor bestowed on him was that following God’s will does not entail being sure about everything. Questioning and doubting come with the territory.

During his second placement at South Tryon Community Church in Charlotte, N.C., he found himself at a black United Methodist church located at the intersection of a couple of public housing projects. The church faced wealth disparities, practical daily challenges, and racial tensions.

Steane had to figure out how to

improvise with the Holy Spirit. “It’s not always as clear as presented on a syllabus. There’s often a lot of social work, psychology, and financial management needed in churches serving struggling communities.”

He was in good hands as he navigated the gap between the textbook and the church. The Rev. Tiffany Thomas D’10 was showing him the ropes. He appreciated the way she approached ministry.

“I admired her preaching and her willingness to confront some of the issues that her community was facing,” Steane says. “She brought a flexibility and creativity to her ministry that seemed to transcend

and overturn stereotypes of what it meant to be a community pastor. I learned a lot from her.” Thomas was known throughout the community as someone who preached in high heels with her natural hair styled in an Afro. “She was unapologetically committed to being who she was and letting you know that she was exactly who God called her to be.”

#### **SET UP TO THRIVE**

Josh Musser Gritter D’16, a Cynthia Price Pastoral Resident at First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, N.C., attributes his current position to his field education placements.

“I was extremely grateful for field

Ingram and Jacko discuss planning for Sunday services. Both the congregation at Yates Baptist Church and Jacko say they were encouraged as a result of her field education experience.



education, because I was able to get two very different experiences and different ways of doing ministry,” says Musser Gritter. “I came into divinity school after working in a church. I really wanted my first field education in a parachurch setting.”

He was able to find an opportunity to serve outside the walls of a church at Reality Ministries Inc. in Durham, working with people with developmental disabilities. “That experience really shaped and framed the rest of my education at Duke. It gave me a new lens for thinking about ministry. What is a human being? And who is God?”

In order to meet ordination requirements, he had to serve at a Presbyterian church, and his second placement was at Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church in Durham. “I worked with a really dynamic pastor, the Rev. Katie Crowe,” Musser Gritter says. During this placement, he was able to shadow Crowe and perform some of the daily routines of ministry. “Those experiences laid out the soil and groundwork to get the residency I currently have. I drew a lot on the practical experiences. My field education was indispensable.”

According to the Rev. Rhonda Parker, senior director of ministerial formation and student life at Duke, every year graduating students are asked to complete the Graduating Student Questionnaire from the Association of Theological Schools. While they ranked preaching as the most important area of study, field education was a close second. Students reported that field education was most effective at creating greater self-understanding and giving them a better idea of their strengths and weaknesses.

Musser Gritter would agree with that assessment. He discovered his current fellowship through field education. Now, he gets another couple of years of practical learning. “I get to try on different hats in a church setting. I get to do outreach, Christian education, preaching, discipleship, and pastoral care. Whatever my next call will be, it’s really a training ground that has allowed me to be not merely an intern but a full pastor. I feel like I’ve been given a lot of freedom to explore my calling in this setting and to bring in my own particular pastoral identity. I have been set up to thrive.”

#### **MUTUAL BLESSING AND BENEFITS**

The Rev. Christopher Ingram D’99, senior pastor at Yates Baptist Church in Durham, explains that congregations benefit from a new voice, especially if it belongs to someone bringing a fresh perspective. All the ministers on his staff are white men.

Ingram requested a field education student who didn’t fit the mold of his staff. In order for his church to remain relevant, it has to welcome people of different cultures, races, and ethnicities. His neighbors are black and white. They are Spanish speakers and refugees. They are ordinary folks and visiting scholars. They are prominent families from Durham and newcomers. “Only being accessible to people who look like me will not cut it in Durham,” says Ingram.

He was delighted to welcome Cynthia Jacko, and she connected to the congregation on several levels. “She is supremely gifted in worship leadership,” Ingram says. “The congregation was feeding on her energy and spirit.”

In return, Jacko was able to enter a space traditionally off limits to her. When she shared the news of her call to preach with the pastor of her childhood church, she was told to stay in her place.



MY HOPE IS THAT FIELD EDUCATION GIVES STUDENTS A SENSE OF CLARITY IN THEIR CALL. THEIR EXPERIENCES SHOULD STRENGTHEN THEIR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS. STUDENTS WILL BE CONNECTED TO SUPERVISORS AND MENTORS WHO WILL BECOME LIFELONG FRIENDS. THEY WILL BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE IN VALUABLE WAYS TO COMMUNITIES THAT NEED THEIR GIFTS.

—THE REV. DANIEL CORPENING, Director of Field Education

“Yates affirmed my gifts and encouraged me,” Jacko says. “They were my safe space to practice, learn, and grow, and I’ll always love them for that.”

Meanwhile, Ingram led his congregation in conversations about uncomfortable topics, such as the church massacre in Charleston, S.C., when a white supremacist killed nine African Americans during a prayer service. “We have neighbors who are weeping and lamenting and we have to understand why,” he says.

Jacko often spoke of her concerns as an African American and as a woman.

It had been awhile since Yates Baptist Church had had a woman preacher. Ingram noticed that especially women ages 50 and younger were responding to Jacko’s sermons. She reflected their concerns. One of Jacko’s sermons talked about the role of women. One church member felt so affirmed by the sermon that she left a comment on the church’s Facebook page.

It read, “I am not JUST a girl. I am not JUST a friend. I am not JUST a wife. I am not JUST a mom. Just as Mary was not JUST a girl, not JUST a virgin, not JUST a wife, not JUST

a mom. She was part of God’s plan, JUST like you and I are. We are exactly what we are meant to be. Trust God to make you (and me) the best JUST we are supposed to be. Thank you, to an amazing divinity student, for teaching this lesson today.”

The gender dynamic hadn’t registered with Ingram initially. He admitted he wasn’t tuned in to how some of the church women felt. It’s through those revelations that the mentors and the students learn from each other’s experiences. “I love being in conversation with students, their eagerness, their enthusiasm,” he says. “It buoys my spirit.”

“My hope is that field education gives students a sense of clarity in their call,” says the Rev. Daniel Corpening, Duke Divinity director of field education. “Their experiences should strengthen their God-given gifts. Students will be connected to supervisors and mentors who will become lifelong friends. They will be able to contribute in valuable ways to communities that need their gifts, to God, and to one another.” ■

Due to Higgins’ health issues, Eccles has been more involved in pastoral care in the church.

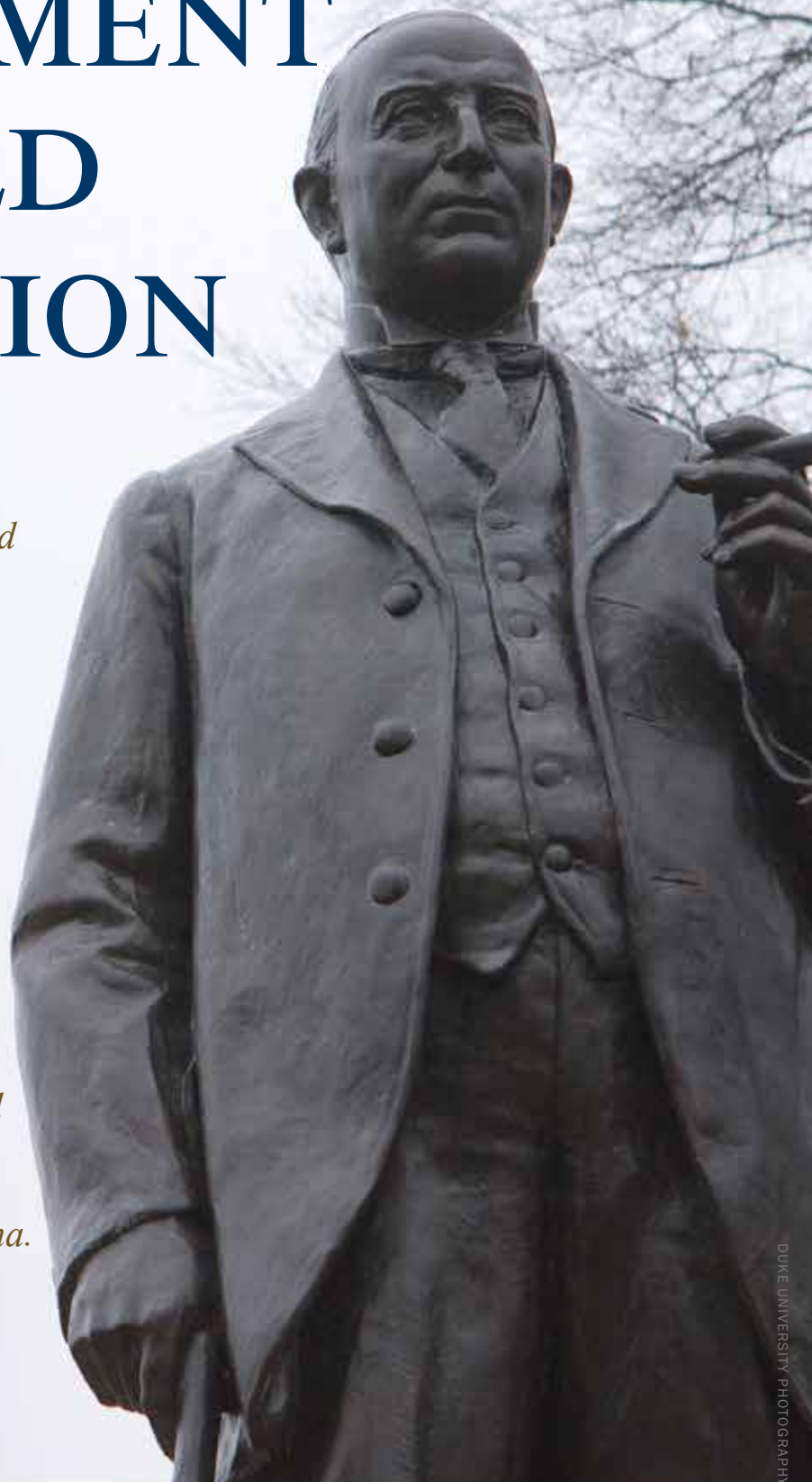



# THE DUKE ENDOWMENT *and* FIELD EDUCATION

BY ERIC FRAZIER

*Indeed, my observation and the broad  
expanse of our territory make me  
believe it is to these rural districts  
that we are to look in large measure  
for the bone and sinew of our  
country . . . assisting in the building  
and maintenance of churches in  
rural districts . . . to maintain and  
operate the Methodist churches of  
such a Conference which are located  
within the sparsely settled rural  
districts of the State of North Carolina.*

— Excerpts from the Indenture of Trust for The Duke Endowment,  
by James B. Duke, December 11, 1924





**E**very Duke M.Div. student must complete 800 hours of field education, and many of those placements will be facilitated by funding from The Duke Endowment, the Charlotte-based foundation industrialist James B. Duke created in 1924. Mr. Duke, who rose from poverty under the eye of his devoutly Methodist father, liked to say that if he amounted to anything in this world, “I owe it to my daddy and the Methodist church.”

Mr. Duke also felt strongly about helping rural communities, calling them “the bone and sinew of our country.” He specifically required through his 1924 indenture of trust that the Endowment support rural churches, even as it offered aid to orphans, selected universities, and hospitals.

Given Mr. Duke’s charge, The Duke Endowment has been supporting the field education program at Duke Divinity School for more than 90 years, with an emphasis on rural churches. The Endowment is spending nearly \$1.4 million to provide scholarships this summer for 142 students to serve rural churches as assistant pastors. It will spend another \$1.2 million to deploy 92 students during the academic year. Rural churches get much-needed help, and students get real-world experience in sensitive, spiritually demanding roles that cannot be replicated within the confines of the university.

The Duke Endowment primarily sends divinity students to small, rural churches in North Carolina towns, such as Mount Gilead and Goldston. Mr. Duke was once one of those

small-town North Carolinians in need of help.

His father, Washington Duke, eked out a living as a subsistence farmer after Union soldiers burned down the family’s Durham County farm during the Civil War. The Dukes eventually opened a small tobacco operation, which James “Buck” Duke slowly built into a global business empire stretching from America to Europe and Asia. The Duke Endowment, his philanthropic legacy, has distributed more than \$3.4 billion in grants.

Early leaders of both the Endowment and Duke University quickly saw the wisdom of providing internships for Divinity School students. In a statement published in the Endowment’s 1930 Year Book, Duke President William Preston Few called the rural church field education internships “the most significant experiment of its kind that is at this time being tried out in the country.”

The next year, 67 Duke students interned with rural churches, where they preached 1,395 times, led the singing in 856 meetings, conducted or assisted in 107 evangelistic meetings, led 71 prayer services, baptized 48 babies, and taught two missionary classes.

The Endowment’s 1933 Year Book reported that the special summer work “has been so successful that

requests for well-trained young men have come in beyond the ability of the fund to grant.”

The Graduating Student Questionnaire, administered by the Association of Theological Schools, asks graduating divinity school students to rank 16 areas of work by importance in their formation for ministry. At Duke, the field education program ranks second, tied with biblical studies.

To better understand the specific impact of field education, the Endowment’s Committee on Rural Church has engaged Auburn University to evaluate Duke’s program. Findings will be compared with peer institutions to determine best practices and to seek areas of growth for educating agile and adaptive pastoral leaders. Leaders at the Divinity School are fully supportive.

“We wanted to partner with the school in this important exploration, because we believe that experiential education is a critical component in ministerial formation,” said Robb Webb, director of the Endowment’s Rural Church Program Area. “Scripture lives and breathes in the local parish, and we hope that the work with Auburn will provide an opportunity to discover the very best ways to integrate those powerful, embodied moments with the rigorous academic atmosphere of Duke’s classroom.” ■

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A statue of James B. Duke stands in the Abele Quad of Duke University’s West Campus.

# THE LORD'S PRAYER

## *A Trinitarian Confession of Faith*

BY J. WARREN SMITH

**M**any preachers find it challenging to prepare a sermon for Trinity Sunday. The homily can so easily go awry,

turning into an abbreviated theology lecture from seminary, a pedantic presentation of church history, or a discourse in near-heretical analogies. How can we preach the Trinity as the gladsome center of the gospel proclaimed in every age? How does the Trinity come alive in our imagination and so deepen our worship of God and our study of Scripture in which God is revealed as Trinity?

In order to preach a good sermon on Trinity Sunday, we first must make the Trinity a central feature of our piety

expressed in daily and weekly worship. That is difficult when we confine the Trinity to the creeds, the doxology, or the Gloria Patri. It becomes an even more complicated task when our preaching—mine included—sounds modalist: that is, we may confess Father, Son, and Spirit, but we tend to preach about the work of each of the Divine Persons individually. For example, we describe God's adoption of Israel in the Old Testament, the Son's salvific work in the life of Jesus, and the commissioning work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost rather than describing the essential and economic unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We neglect to describe what the Cappadocians called the "unity of operations": where Scripture mentions one Person at work, the other two are

implicitly at work alongside.

If we are trying to connect our lived faith with the church's proclamation of the Trinity, I suggest that there is no better way than through the prayer Jesus taught his disciples—the Lord's Prayer. We can surprise and delight people by helping them discover the Trinity hiding in plain sight, permeating this prayer that for many is a beloved expression of popular piety. We may not use the same creeds, if we use creeds at all, or read the same Scriptures or share a common liturgy for celebrating Eucharist or Holy Communion or whatever we call it.

.....  
Artist Boris Penson has created a contemporary interpretation of the classical 15th-century Russian icon of the Trinity by Andrei Rublev.





THE TRINITY OF ANDREI RUBLEV, 20TH CENTURY (OIL & W/C ON FIBREBOARD), PENSON, BORIS (B.1946) / MEAD ART MUSEUM, AMHERST COLLEGE, MA, USA / GIFT OF THOMAS P. WHITNEY (CLASS OF 1937) / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

But the Lord's Prayer is as near to a universal feature of Christian worship as you can find. Here in the opening words, "Our Father who art in heaven," we discover an implicit confession of the Triune God.

#### **WHY JESUS SAYS "OUR FATHER"**

When Jesus teaches his disciples to address God as "our Father," he is doing something quite new. The Old Testament only occasionally describes the Lord as the father of Israel (Isaiah 63:16) or as a king (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7), and only three times is the Lord addressed in prayer as "Father" (Psalm 68:5 and 89:26; Jeremiah 3:19). In the earliest church writings, however, Paul routinely refers to God as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; also see 1 Peter 1:3).

In the Gospels, "Father" is the standard way Jesus speaks of God to declare his unique relationship to God. In John's prologue, Jesus is the Word made flesh—the Word who, before he assumed our nature, was in the beginning with God, existing in perfect unity with the Father, and sharing the Father's divinity (1:1) and glory (17:5). So intimate is the union of Christ and God that Jesus declares, "I and the Father are one" (10:30). In fact, John concludes the prologue by describing the unique relationship between the Word and God by invoking familial language: "No one has ever seen God;

the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (1:18). Because Jesus is the begotten Son of the Father, he is born of the Father's very nature, "God from God, light from light, true God of True God." Thus he is uniquely able to reveal the Father's glory—"glory as of the only Son from the Father" (1:14). This is the glory the Son shares with the Father from the beginning (17:5), a glory disclosed to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. Therefore, when Philip asks, "Lord, show us the Father," Jesus boldly—and not without a bit of frustration at the disciples' obtuseness—replies: "He who has seen me has seen the Father . . . I am in the Father and the Father in me" (14:8–10).

#### **JESUS IS THE SON**

Not only in John's Gospel but in the synoptic Gospels as well, Jesus uses the language of "Father" and "Son" to ground his identity and authority in his unique relationship with God. Classically, Mark puts it right up front: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The birth narratives in Matthew and Luke have a similar function. Perhaps Jesus' boldest claim to this relationship comes during his disputation in the temple with the chief priests and elders who question his authority. In the parable of the vineyard and wicked tenants (Matthew 21:33–46),

Jesus' point is that the Jewish leaders are merely stewards of the things of God. Jesus, however, is no tenant or steward. Nor is he merely another servant—one of the prophets—whom the owner repeatedly sent and whom the tenants repeatedly killed. Jesus stands apart from both the tenants and the servant messengers, for he is the son and heir of the owner of the vineyard. He alone can claim the vineyard as his own and exercise the authority of his father, the owner.

Jesus claims this authority when he prays to God as "Father." At the end of his farewell discourse in John, he begins his high priestly prayer: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son" (17:1). Likewise, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he famously prays, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me" (Luke 22:42). When we as Christians speak of God as Father, we are not simply using a metaphor to say that God is like a human father. Rather, we are speaking in a Trinitarian fashion; we are implicitly invoking the relationship between the Son and Father. The God we worship is the Father who abides in eternal unity and glory with the Son. To put it simply, when we pray to our "Father," we must be aware that our Father is first and foremost Jesus' Father.

When Jesus takes his disciples aside and imparts to them the Sermon on the Mount, in which he repeatedly refers to "your heavenly father," he is



**WE MUST REALIZE THAT TO ADDRESS GOD AS FATHER IS TO CLAIM OUR PLACE WITHIN GOD'S ECONOMY OR PLAN OF SALVATION—A PLAN THAT IS ACCOMPLISHED BY GOD'S SELF-DISCLOSURE IN HISTORY AS FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.**

taking the language of “Father” that was peripheral to the Old Testament description of God’s relationship with Israel and making it central to the disciples’ understanding of their relationship with God. In other words, to be followers of the Christ, who is the Son of God, is to gain God as our Father. When the Son takes on our nature and becomes our brother, his Father becomes our Father. This is the logic of the “great exchange” that Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 8:9: Christ, who was rich, for our sake became poor, so that we might become rich by sharing in the richness of his divinity. All that belongs to the Son has become ours, including his relationship with the Father. This is the logic of Jesus’ metaphor of the vine and the branches and Paul’s metaphor of the body. To become united in baptism to the Son, who is eternally united with the Father, is to receive a share of his sonship and so become united to his Father as adopted children.

**ADOPTION THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Son’s incarnation by itself is not enough to give us our new identity as adopted children of our heavenly Father. Not only does the Son take on our nature but he also makes us share the divine nature—giving us the power to become children of God (John 1:12)—by making us partakers of the Holy Spirit. We are children of God, not through the processes

of natural gestation and birth from our mother’s womb but through the second birth in the waters of baptism, when we, who die with Christ, are raised with him and given new life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And we know we are children of our heavenly Father, even in the afflictions of all who are pilgrims on the hard and narrow way, because the Spirit of Christ, our brother, raises our spirit to God when we cry “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15). This is the evidence, Paul says, that we have received the Spirit of adoption. It is to experience what John Wesley calls the “spiritual respiration” by which we breathe in the breath of God. Thus when we pray “Our Father who art in heaven,” we are claiming what is possible only by our adoption through the Spirit in whose power we are born anew. Indeed, we can truly pray “Our Father” because of the Holy Spirit, who raises our spirit up to fellowship with the Father.

We pray the words “Our Father” all the time, often unthinkingly. To understand what exactly we are praying, we must realize that to address God as Father is to claim our place within God’s economy or plan of salvation—a plan that is accomplished by God’s self-disclosure in history as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To pray to “our Father” is to see ourselves as the body of Christ united to the Triune God. It is to confess our deepest identity, not as

mere creatures but as children of God. Such an identity is intelligible only within the biblical narrative of how Father, Son, and Spirit work in a single, unified operation to raise us to the status of children. It is to confess the true identity of our brother Jesus who, as the image of God, reveals his Father to us and then gives us the Spirit of adoption. We cannot know the Father apart from the Son, who is the image of the Father’s divine form now veiled in flesh, and we cannot know the divine Son behind the veil of human flesh except through the light of the Spirit who enables us to confess “Jesus is Lord” and cry “Abba Father.”

Not to put too fine a point on it, we cannot know what it means to pray “Our Father . . .” or truly know who we are apart from the Trinity. Here is the touchstone. In contemplating the Lord’s Prayer within the fullness of the Gospel narrative, we have the hope of casting off our modalist tendencies to become richly Trinitarian in our thinking and worship.

The early church had a tradition that encouraged Christians to pray the Lord’s Prayer at least three times each day. If we become conscious of the implicit Trinitarian character of our prayer and let that understanding inform our daily worship, then perhaps we will come to see the Trinity not merely as an enigma on which pastors are obliged to preach once a year but as the God who is our all in all. ■



## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

*Focus on Empowering People for Practical Ministry*

### Embodying Sanctuary

On Jan. 28, Duke Divinity School sponsored the conference “Loving Our Neighbor: Embodying Sanctuary” to equip religious leaders and places of worship in the ministry of providing sanctuary to immigrants and vulnerable populations. The event—which drew more than 200 pastors, lay leaders, and students—took place at Duke Memorial United Methodist Church in Durham, N.C.

The conference explored how sanctuary is grounded in faith convictions, the history of the Sanctuary Movement, implementation for today, and potential legal implications for providing safe haven to immigrants and others in the state of North Carolina—including tensions between legality and Christian witness. Speakers included Isaac S. Villegas, the pastor of Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship in North Carolina; Erin Guzmán, program facilitator at Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville, Tenn.; AmyBeth Willis, an organizer with the National Sanctuary Movement based in Tucson, Ariz.; and Hans Christian Linnartz, the lead attorney at the Linnartz Immigration Law Office in Raleigh, N.C.

“The conference reminded members of the Duke Divinity community and the community at large how important it is to create spaces of reflection and action that go beyond political convictions and that address critical issues impacting vulnerable populations,” said Ismael Ruiz-Millán, director of the Hispanic House of Studies. The conference was sponsored by the Office of the Dean, the La Unión Latina student group, and the Hispanic House of Studies, with support from Durham Congregations, Associations, and Neighborhoods (CAN) and the Western North Carolina and North Carolina Conferences of the United Methodist Church.



During the conference, breakout sessions encouraged participants to make connections with other attendees and develop concrete action plans. Daniel Camacho M.Div.'17, a co-organizer of the conference, said that attendees are developing a sanctuary task force and are planning a public action with other community organizations.

“Loving our neighbors is a fundamental gospel issue,” said Camacho. “Given our current political climate, we believe that churches can’t sit and wait to see what happens. Instead of feeling powerless, religious leaders need to see how their churches and ministries can be on the front lines of holy resistance. We must stand with the marginalized because God stands with the marginalized and because Jesus Christ himself was a refugee who was rejected and killed with the silence/approval of religious and political establishments.”



Top: Dean Elaine Heath addresses the attendees.

Left: Isaac Villegas M.Div.'06 leads an introductory session about the purpose of the conference.

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## Divinity Students Learn from African Pastors and Practitioners

A group of 10 M.Div. students from Duke Divinity School attended a conference Jan. 9–13 in Kampala, Uganda, as part of a class on contemporary African biblical interpretations. The conference, the Great Lakes Institute (GLI), provides theological content and discussion for pastors and peace workers from the Great Lakes Region in Africa (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda) and other African nations. Around 100 people participated in the conference.

The class, which focused on African theologians such as Musa Dube from Zimbabwe and Gerald West from South Africa, was co-taught by Ellen Davis, Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology, and Fr. Jacob Onyumbwe, a Th.D. candidate originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After spending the fall semester reading the selected works, students joined attendees at the conference, which included worship, plenary sessions, testimonies, and seminar groups.

Divinity School students participated in a seminar titled “The Prophetic Word in Conflict Zones: Lament and Hope, Judgment and Healing” and heard from attendees who spoke about traumatic events as part of the aim of the conference to guide participants on a journey from lament to hope.

“Even as I come to the GLI, I am traumatized,” said Pastor Rose Wani Andrew from Juba, South Sudan. She described the 20 fresh bullet holes marking her house and the people who came to take refuge with her during the most recent episode of violence just weeks before the conference. Her clothes were donated items, since she lost her belongings in the violence and looting. At the GLI, she said she gained hope for South Sudan after hearing stories from places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

Mark McHugh M.Div.’17 said there was a contrast between the way theology is done in a classroom in the U.S. and the way the people he met at the GLI are “doing theology for their lives,” which he said was inspiring and challenging. Shakeel Harris M.Div.’18 reflected on the need for lament across cultures, noting that it is easy for people to try to skip to reconciliation and hope too quickly, especially in race relations in the U.S.

The Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School is one of the founding sponsors of GLI, which is now in its seventh year and is part of a larger initiative that continues throughout the year. The Divinity School class “Reading(s) for Our Lives: Contemporary African Biblical Interpretation” is sponsored by the Issachar Fund.

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## Clergy Health Initiative Report on Flourishing in Ministry



For the last decade, the Duke Clergy Health Initiative has assessed and worked to improve the health and well-being of clergy, recognizing that they often face challenges to their physical health such as obesity and high blood pressure. Clergy also experience mental illness in the form

of depression and anxiety, and they experience burnout at rates higher than other professions.

In the latest report, “Flourishing in Ministry,” the Clergy Health Initiative explores what it means to be well, both physically and mentally. This report highlights a recent study on positive mental health and includes numerous practical tips for physical and mental health from clergy who are flourishing in both their ministry and their lives.

The report can be found at [www.clergyhealthinitiative.org](http://www.clergyhealthinitiative.org).

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## Celebration Honoring Inaugural Year of Dean Elaine Heath

A celebration to honor the inaugural year of the deanship of Elaine A. Heath was held on April 20. The closing convocation worship service was held in Duke Chapel, followed by a community lunch in the Divinity Café.

A panel discussion was held in the afternoon in Goodson Chapel on the theme “Leading the Church to be a Prophetic Witness in Our Day,” moderated by Dean Heath. The conversation focused on how to empower the church for prophetic ministry, spiritual formation and direction, and Christian justice and activism.

Panelists included Michael Waters, founding pastor of Joy Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Church in Dallas, Texas, and author of *Stakes Is High*; Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, former general secretary of the Reformed Church, author of numerous books including *From Times Square to Timbuktu*, and a founding member of the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C.; and David Wilson, a Choctaw leader and conference superintendent of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of the United Methodist Church, who focuses on the interlocking relationships of environmental justice and social justice at Standing Rock and the church’s response to it.

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

*Focus on Empowering People for Practical Ministry*

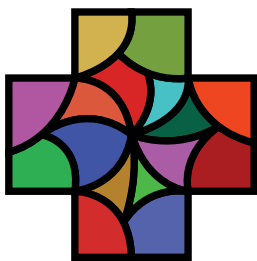
### Worship Music Symposium on Choosing the Right Music

A symposium was held March 24–25 in Goodson Chapel to focus on how worship leaders and pastors can discern the right kind of worship music to use in any given context. The conference, “What Is the Right Kind of Worship Music, If ...?”, featured leading experts in the fields of church music, liturgical studies, ethnomusicology, and theology, including Jeremy Begbie, Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology, and Lester Ruth, research professor of Christian worship, both at the Divinity School; Monique Ingalls, assistant professor of church music at Baylor University; Swee Hong Lim, director of the master of sacred music program and Deer Park Assistant Professor of Sacred Music at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto; Neil Coulter, professor of world arts at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics, Dallas, Texas; and John Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and professor of worship, theology, and congregational and ministry studies at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary.

The symposium was a collaboration between New Creation Arts (a student organization at Duke Divinity School) and Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts, North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, Thriving Rural Communities initiative, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, International Council of Ethnodoxologists, and the Center for World Arts at the Graduate Institute for Applied Linguistics.



### Practice & Presence: A Gathering for Christians in Healthcare



The Theology, Medicine, and Culture initiative at Duke Divinity School hosted a conference, “Practice & Presence: A Gathering for Christians in Healthcare,” May 19–21 at Duke Divinity School. The conference is for healthcare professionals (physicians, nurses, therapists,

etc.) who desire to deepen or re-imagine the relationship of faith with vocation in community with like-minded practitioners. For more information about the event and the work of the Theology, Medicine, and Culture initiative, see [tmc.divinity.duke.edu/programs/practice-and-presence/](http://tmc.divinity.duke.edu/programs/practice-and-presence/).

### Summer Institute for Reconciliation

The Summer Institute for Reconciliation, sponsored by the Center for Reconciliation, will be held at Duke Divinity School June 5–9. This focus on reconciliation is grounded in a distinctively Christian vision and a framework that is richly practical, contextual, and theological. Rooted in Duke Divinity School’s conviction that reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel, the Summer Institute for Reconciliation draws on the strengths of a faculty of world-class scholars and practitioners. The institute is nurtured by the deepening formation, teaching, and content of a biblical vision of reconciliation that inspires and ferments a movement of transformed communities and relationships. This formation of communities is nurtured by each other’s witness that Christ is strengthening us to the end, affirming us so that we do not “lack any spiritual gift” in our life together (1 Corinthians 1:4–9).

For more information on the Summer Institute, contact [dukesummerinstitute@div.duke.edu](mailto:dukesummerinstitute@div.duke.edu).



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## A Faith Response to Domestic Violence and Abuse

Over the course of three sessions, presenters from Duke Divinity School participated in the “Dear God, Make Me a Bird: A Faith Response to Domestic Violence and Abuse” forum sponsored by White Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, N.C.

The goal of the forum was to start conversations among Christians regarding domestic violence and abuse of children and adults. Pastors, professors, and other professionals explored how to address domestic violence and abuse of any type, including physical, emotional, and sexual.

On March 8, the first part of the forum, “An Informed Church,” was led by Dina Helderman, director of the events management department at the Divinity School, who previously worked at the Durham Crisis Response Center. Anthea Portier-Young, associate professor of Old Testament, and Brittany Wilson, assistant professor of New Testament, presented on “The Word of God” on March 15. Dean Elaine A. Heath, author of *We Were the Least of These: Reading the Bible with Survivors of Sexual Abuse*, presented at the final session, “A Faith Response.”

The event was planned by Denise Noble, a member of White Memorial who is pursuing a master of divinity degree at Duke Divinity School.

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Denise M. Noble, student at Duke Divinity School and event organizer; Elaine A. Heath, dean of Duke Divinity School and presenter; and the Rev. Dr. Lisa Hebacker, associate pastor of White Memorial Presbyterian Church and host for the “Make Me a Bird” event

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## Resources that Empower Leaders from Leadership Education

Leadership Education at Duke Divinity (LEADD) offers a wealth of resources to strengthen the ability of leaders to empower their institutions and constituents. LEADD designs educational services, develops intellectual resources, and facilitates networks of institutions that cultivate a coherent vision of Christian institutional leadership and form Christian leaders.

### Online Resources

- *Faith & Leadership*, an online magazine that aims to strengthen the practice of Christian leadership by offering a new language and way of thinking about work and institutions. New educational content is published every two weeks, and a news digest that draws on interdisciplinary resources around the Internet is published daily.
- *Living Like They Believe*: Ordinary Christians ponder how God is transforming their struggles and calling them into new life. Explore their vocations, daily lives, and redemption stories through small group lesson plans that include films, Scripture study, and practices.
- *Sourcing Innovation*: A five-week online course led by visual anthropologist and filmmaker Marlon Hall that teaches ways to capture the true needs of a community through careful listening and observation.
- *Writing from Your Life of Faith*: A one-hour webinar designed to provide the skills needed to write a theologically rich personal essay. The session discusses on how to sharpen the focus of writing, develop a personal voice, and present work professionally for publication.

### Programs

- Foundations of Christian Leadership, a learning community that aims to help leaders cultivate the kinds of practices that are essential for transformative leadership within vibrant Christian institutions and congregations.
- Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising, a training program to support faith-based organizations and people of faith who wish to gain expertise in fundraising principles and practices.

### Grants from LEADD

- **Traditioned Innovation Awards:** Each year, four institutions are awarded \$10,000 for responding to challenges by holding the future and past in tension, acting creatively while remaining true to the traditions of the institution and faith.
- **Leadership Development Grants:** Vibrant Christian institutions are constantly developing current and potential leaders, identifying talent, nurturing growth, and encouraging the formation of wise, sustainable practices. As many as five Leadership Development Grants, of up to \$50,000 each, will be awarded in 2017 to institutions that develop a yearlong project to nurture the leadership of their staff and partners in ministry.



Learn more about LEADD at [leadership.divinity.duke.edu](http://leadership.divinity.duke.edu).

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

*Focus on Empowering People for Practical Ministry*

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### Retreat for Pastors Serving the Hispanic and Latino Community

A retreat for pastors serving the Hispanic/Latino community, “Immersed in the Heart of the Good Shepherd,” was held in Lake Junalaska, N.C., May 1–3. The retreat featured on praise, worship, theological reflection, and talks given by a team of Christian community developers from Neighborhood Ministries in Phoenix, Ariz., about the power of telling one’s own story, the significance of learning healthy ways to tell the stories of those who are served, and the importance of creating spaces so that those served can share their story themselves.

Speakers included Ricardo Zamudio, a DREAMer who came to the U.S. at the age of 9 with his two younger sisters and parents. His journey to find his voice in this country has taken him to community organizing, where he has been part of immigrant rights organizing, addressing policy on a local and national level. “I was able to find Christ in the midst of my pain and struggle as an undocumented Latino in Phoenix, Ariz., and in being able to relate to others in similar circumstances of struggle,” he writes. “Today my faith is the fuel for my work, and the work connects me to my deepest desire to

walk with Christ in this journey we call life.” Throughout his work of civic engagement and activism, Zamudio has led and been part of many campaigns to empower and build a strong immigrant community in Phoenix. He graduated from Arizona State University with a B.A. in social work and a minor in urban and metropolitan studies. He is the director of Neighborhood Ministries’ Social Justice Team.

Speaker Alfonso Vazquez is originally from Guanajuato, Mexico, and came to the U.S. when he was 4 years old. Vazquez is a DREAMer who has found a powerful voice in community organizing in Phoenix. He is currently the deputy director of the Social Justice Team and youth programs coordinator at Neighborhood Ministries. Alfonso studied social work at Arizona State University, which has enabled him to continue working toward social change with the most vulnerable in our society. “The fight for justice and dignity has been very painful,” he writes. “In the midst of all the chaos I continue to walk with Christ, for he will not forsake us in times of trouble. My faith has allowed me to continue moving forward in times of darkness.”

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### Institute of Preaching Accepting Applications

The Institute of Preaching is a nine-month program of three retreats designed to help clergy from the Florida and Western North Carolina Conferences of the United Methodist Church improve their preaching. Unlike programs that focus only on style or techniques, the Institute of Preaching takes a comprehensive approach to preaching. Pastors examine not only their sermon content and delivery but also the contexts in which they preach and the integrity of their life and work.

During each retreat, participants hear from recognized authorities on preaching—including pastors and Duke faculty—and also work with other participants in small peer groups to discuss their ministries and review each other’s sermons. Between retreats, participants are encouraged to work with a small group from their own congregation that will provide them with critical and constructive sermon feedback.

The Institute of Preaching is a partnership of the Florida Institute of Preaching Committee and Duke Divinity School. It is sponsored by the Florida Conference and the Parish Ministry Fund of the Western North Carolina Conference. All full-time elders and local pastors serving in either conference are eligible to apply. For more information, contact [events@div.duke.edu](mailto:events@div.duke.edu).

### Peacemaking Circles Training for Engaging Conflict



Duke Divinity School’s Center for Reconciliation co-sponsored an initiative of Duke Transformative Prison Project to host Kay Pranis for an intensive three-day training in peacemaking circles March 31 to April 2.

Pranis is a trainer and writer on restorative justice and peacemaking circles, an indigenous community process used to address conflict by starting with shared values and building relational trust before broaching the conflict. She served as the restorative justice planner for the Minnesota Department of Corrections from 1994 to 2003. Since 1998, Pranis has conducted circle trainings in a diverse range of communities from schools to prisons to workplaces to churches, and from rural towns in Minnesota to Chicago’s South Side to Montgomery, Ala.

The purpose of a peacemaking circle is to provide a safe space for differing viewpoints and strong emotions to be conveyed. The process allows participants to “experience the world from more perspectives than [their] own,” Pranis says. “Drawing on diverse knowledge and experiences, Circles generate options and solutions that are often outside the box of conventional thinking.”



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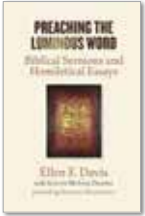
2018 Applications available November 2017

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## Preaching the Luminous Word: Biblical Sermons and Homiletical Essays

By Ellen F. Davis, Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology  
*Eerdmans, 2016*  
 365 pages, Paperback, \$33.00



**INVITING SERIOUS** theological engagement with texts from all parts of the Christian Bible, *Preaching the Luminous Word* is a collection of 51 sermons and five related essays from noted preacher and biblical scholar Ellen F. Davis. A brief preface to each sermon delineates its liturgical context and theological themes as well as distinctive elements of structure and style. Arranged in canonical order, the sermons treat a wide range of texts: Torah, Prophets, Writings, Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation. They are complemented by essays on various aspects of biblical interpretation for preaching. At once accessible, theologically informed, and rhetorically rich, this volume will engage preachers, teachers, seminarians, church leaders, and serious lay readers.

### Writing Home, with Love: Politics for Neighbors and Naysayers

By Amy Laura Hall,  
 Associate Professor of Christian Ethics  
*Cascade Books, 2016*  
 136 pages, Paperback, \$19.00



**FOR THE LAST** two years, Amy Laura Hall has written a lively, wide-ranging, opinionated column for her local newspaper. In her column, Hall has sought—without flatly rejecting globalism—to think and act locally. She has also responded to what she sees as a disturbing Christian turn toward asceticism and away from abundance. Drawing from her scholarship, but also from conversations at coffee shops and around the dinner table, Hall’s “missives of love” engage topics such as school dress codes, ubiquitous surveillance cameras, LGBTQ dignity, and bullies in the workplace. They draw richly and variously on pop songs, dead saints, young adult literature, and many stories about actual neighbors and family members. Often offbeat and always riveting, they ask how the world around us works and can work much better for the sake of daily truth and flourishing.

### Worshiping with the Anaheim Vineyard: The Emergence of Contemporary Worship

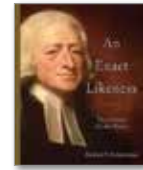
By Lester Ruth, Research Professor of Christian Worship, Andy Park, and Cindy Rethmeier  
*Eerdmans, 2016*  
 162 pages, Paperback, \$25.00



**THIS BOOK**, part of the Church at Worship series of documentary case studies, tells about the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship and its remarkable influence on the entire Vineyard movement, which contributed to the renewal of worship in thousands of evangelical churches during the 1970s and 1980s. In presenting an in-depth look at founding leader John Wimber and the Anaheim Vineyard’s early years, Andy Park, Lester Ruth, and Cindy Rethmeier tell an inspiring story of revival and renewal among people desperately hungering for a deeper knowledge of God. Enhanced with interviews, sermon excerpts, sidebars, timelines, and photos, *Worshiping with the Anaheim Vineyard* addresses core issues for all Christians desiring to know and worship God more intimately.

### An Exact Likeness: The Portraits of John Wesley

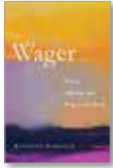
By Richard Heitzenrater, William Kellon Quick Professor Emeritus of Church History  
*Abingdon Press, 2016*  
 128 pages, Hardcover, \$39.99



**A UNIQUE PICTORIAL** art history book that describes John Wesley’s legacy through the many portraits and sculptures that attempt his exact likeness, in life and in death. While examining these portraits, Richard Heitzenrater considers three questions. What was Wesley’s attitude toward the portrait (if any)? How did the public respond to these portrayals? And what was the artist attempting to convey? This book focuses on the main portraits and their derivatives, looking at them within the three main categories that developed over the years: Oxford don, Methodist preacher, and notable person. Although these types seemed to arise in chronological order, there is some overlap between categories, especially toward the end of Wesley’s life and beyond.

### **Wager: Beauty, Suffering, and Being in the World**

By Raymond Barfield, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Christian Philosophy  
Cascade Books, 2017  
148 pages, Paperback, \$16.00

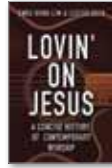


**HOW DO HUMANS** explore beauty, virtue, love, justice, and goodness? This book argues that the instrument for people to investigate these aspects of reality comes from

philosophical attention to their lives, and this attention is shaped in part by their choices. Constructing a life is a philosophical act, and everyone has a philosophical style, which is fundamentally about the way people live in the world through their bodies, reason, imagination, and virtue. It is about what they love and how they are loved. Beauty, suffering, and being in the world are placeholders for everything that makes up a lived experience. Through a lived experience between beauty and suffering, people learn most about being in the world. Barfield moves the argument of the book from a discussion of philosophical style through these three placeholders for human experience as they are affected by philosophy to arrive at a reworking of Pascal's wager about living in relationship to the presence or absence of God as a way of understanding the commitments that reveal the truth about anyone's life.

### **Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship**

By Lester Ruth, Research Professor of Christian Worship, and Swee Hong Lim  
Abingdon Press, 2017  
176 pages, Paperback, \$29.99

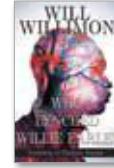


**LOVIN' ON JESUS: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship** is a compact—but thorough—history of changes in North American Protestant worship that occurred in the

second half of the 20th century and led to the specific phenomenon known as “contemporary worship.” This scholarly but accessible work reveals a fascinating and complex lineage that led to the worship forms common in many Christian worship services across the globe. Lester Ruth and Swee Hong Lim argue that the rise of the term *contemporary worship* in the early 1990s was the pivot point in the phenomenon's history, with multiple points of origin and with new ways of worship developing along many different lines. They also trace the promotion and adoption by mainline congregations. The book documents this phase, as well as the earlier phases, with original source material including personal interviews.

### **Who Lynched Willie Earle? Preaching to Confront Racism**

By William H. Willimon, Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry  
Abingdon Press, 2017  
152 pages, Paperback, \$17.99



**PASTORS AND LEADERS**

long to speak an effective biblical word into the contemporary social crisis of racial violence and black pain. They need a

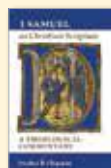
no-nonsense strategy rooted in actual ecclesial life, like the one in this book by Will Willimon, who uses the true story of pastor Hawley Lynn's March 1947 sermon “Who Lynched Willie Earle?” as an opportunity to respond to the last lynching in Greenville, S.C., and to explore its implications for a more faithful proclamation of the gospel today. By hearing black pain, naming white complicity, critiquing American exceptionalism/civil religion, inviting and challenging the church to respond, and attending to the voices of African American pastors and leaders, this book helps pastors of white, mainline Protestant churches preach effectively in situations of racial violence and dis-ease. ■

## **RECENT AWARDS FOR FACULTY BOOKS**



**RICHARD HAYS' BOOK** *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* was named the *Christianity Today* 2016 best book in biblical studies. It also won the PROSE award for the category of theology and religious studies from the Association of American Publishers at the Professional Scholarly Publishing Annual

Conference in Washington, D.C., which recognizes the best in professional and scholarly publishing by bringing attention to distinguished books, journals, and electronic content in 53 categories.




**STEPHEN CHAPMAN'S BOOK** *1 Samuel as Christian Scripture* was named the Reference Book of the Year for 2016 by the Academy of Parish Clergy at its Annual Meeting in Detroit. The award recognized the value of this book for clergy as well as students and scholars, and described it

as a significant contribution to the renewal of the church. ■

## FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

**LUKE BRETHERTON** has been named a Henry Luce III Fellow in Theology for 2017–18 for his project “A Constructive Theology of Conversion.”

**CHRISTINE PARTON BURKETT** gave the lectures “Goldilocks’ Dilemma: Image and Illustration” at the Clergy Conference of the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas (Camp Mitchell, Ark.) and “Finding the Light Switch: Language and Exegesis” for the Leadership Excellence Advancement Program of the UMC Center for Clergy Excellence (Camp Allen, Texas). She presented “The View from the Pew: Preaching with the Whole Self,” taught a master class on “Black Fire/White Fire: Exploring Scripture through Embodiment,” and preached on “Gomer’s Story: Perspective on a Prophet” at Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, Ky.). She presented “The View from the Sycamore: Exploring Perspective and Story for Preaching” at the Homegrown Women’s Preaching Festival, Trinity UMC (Durham, N.C.), and recorded a Seedbed webinar (Asbury Theological Seminary) on “Conversing in a Changing World.”

**DOUGLAS CAMPBELL** published  “Panoramic Lutheranism and Apocalyptic Ambivalence: An Appreciative Critique of N.T. Wright’s *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*” in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* (69.4, 2016).

**MARK CHAVES**, with David Voas, published “Is the United States a Counterexample to the Secularization Thesis?” in *American Journal of Sociology* (121.5, 2016). He delivered the plenary lecture “Changing

Congregational Realities” for the Presidential Leadership Intensive Conference of the Association of Theological Schools, held Jan. 23 in San Antonio, and gave the lecture “Changing American Religion” and the workshop “Religious Congregations in 21st-Century America” at Emory University, Nov. 3–4. He received a \$1.5 million grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. to support the fourth wave of the National Congregations Study.

**JEFF CONKLIN-MILLER** gave the paper  “Formation for (Faithful) Fresh Expressions: The Necessity of Theological Education for Methodist Ecclesial Innovation” to the Wesleyan Theological Society meeting, held March 2–4 at Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, Ky.). He was the invited preacher for Holy Week and Easter Sunday at the Village Chapel of Bald Head Island (N.C.), April 12–16.

**SUSAN EASTMAN** participated in a panel review of *Paul: The Apostle’s Life, Letters and Thought* by E.P. Sanders and presented “Questions of Agency” at a panel honoring the legacy of J. Louis Martyn at the SBL Annual Meeting (San Antonio). On Nov. 30 she presented her research on Paul and anthropology for an interdisciplinary roundtable of Duke faculty through the Christians in Scholarship program. She spoke on Pauline theology at All Saints Episcopal Church (Chevy Chase, Md.), Dec. 7, and St. Michael’s Episcopal Church (Raleigh, N.C.), Jan. 22 and 29. She gave the paper “Paul’s Anthropology and the Care of the Person” for a Theology, Medicine and Culture seminar at Duke Divinity School on

Feb. 17 and the paper “The Goals and Limitations of Psychopharmacology: A View from the Apostle Paul” for the conference “Taking Our Meds Faithfully? Christian Engagements with Psychiatric Medication” held March 3–4 at Duke University.

**MATTHEW FLODING** presented (with Barbara Blodgett) the workshop “Brimming with God: Reflecting Theologically on Cases in Ministry” at the Association for Theological Field Education consultation in St. Paul, Minn., Jan. 20. He also edited and contributed to *Engage: A Theological Field Education Toolkit* (Rowman and Littlefield).

**MARY MCCLINTOCK FULKERSON**, at  the AAR Annual Meeting (San Antonio), presented “The Use of Ethnography for Theological Research” at the Ethnography and Theology Workshop, Nov. 18, and presided over a book panel on *Christian Practical Wisdom* for the Practical Theology Group session, Nov. 22. She presented the webinar “Theology, Ethnography, and Practical Theology” for Boston University School of Theology students on Oct. 17.

**MARÍA TERESA GASTÓN** received her certification as a Certified ToP® Facilitator on Jan. 15.

**PAUL GRIFFITHS** was a featured contributor on *Hi-Phi Nation*, a radio show and podcast, for the episode “The Name of God,” available at [hiphination.org](http://hiphination.org).

**JENNIE GRILLO** published “Qohelet and the Marks of Modernity: Reading Ecclesiastes with Matthew Arnold and




Charles Taylor” in *Religions* (7.6, 2016). She gave a paper on “Afterlives and Otherworlds in the Tales of Daniel” at the SBL Annual Meeting (San Antonio) and was a panelist at the Duke-UNC Center for Late Ancient Studies Spring Symposium on “Traces and Echoes: Scribal Culture, Texts, and Orality in Late Antiquity” on March 31. In January she was awarded a fellowship at the National Humanities Center and a Louisville Institute Sabbatical Grant to fund a year of research leave in 2017–18.

**RICHARD HAYS’** book *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* won the PROSE award for the category of theology and religious studies and the *Christianity Today* 2016 book award for best book in biblical studies. He gave two presentations at the SBL Annual Meeting (San Antonio): “Not a System but a Story: A Response to N.T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*,” and a response as part of a panel on *Echoes of Scripture*. He preached two sermons at CityWell UMC (Durham, N.C.): “The Government Shall Be upon His Shoulder,” Jan. 22, and “Gathering,” Oct. 23; and the Australian Broadcasting Company posted two of his sermons on its Religion and Ethics website: a Maundy Thursday sermon originally preached at King’s College, Cambridge, in 2012 and an Easter sermon originally preached at CityWell UMC in 2016.


**RICHARD LISCHER** is serving as visiting professor of preaching at Princeton Theological Seminary. He published the sermon “That’s When the Trouble Starts” in *Faith & Leadership*, “Martin Luther and Martin Luther King—Why We Need Them Both” in *Lutheran Forum*, and “Voices from the Great

Migration” in *The Christian Century*. He gave a public lecture and taught a class at Roanoke College (Salem, Va.) in January and led a workshop on the parables of Jesus for ELCA clergy in the New Jersey Synod in the spring. He had several preaching engagements: the installation sermon for Mack Dennis Th.D.’14 at First Baptist Church (Asheville, N.C.), the service honoring Richard and Judy Hays with the placement of a weaving created by Sharon Schultz at Goodson Chapel, and the morning service in Duke Chapel for the Martin Luther King Jr. observance.

**RANDY MADDOX** published  “Untwisting the Tangled Web: Charles Wesley and Elizabeth Story” in *Wesley and Methodist Studies* (8.2, 2016) and “Wesleys Beschäftigung mit den Naturwissenschaften” in *EMK Geschichte* (37.1, 2016). He also presented lectures at Asbury University on “Wesleyan Perspectives on the Redeemed Self and Christian Higher Education.”

**RUSSELL RICHEY** gave the paper “Today’s Untied Methodism: Living with/into its Two Centuries of Regular Division” as part of a theological colloquy March 9–12 at Candler School of Theology. He chaired a session of the Wesleyan Historical and Theological societies meeting held March 2–4 and on Feb. 28 addressed the United Methodist Church’s Commission on a Way Forward. On March 27, Emory University’s Emeritus College recognized him with its EUEC Distinguished Faculty Award for “significant professional contributions since retirement to Emory University or its affiliated institutions as well as

contributions to local, state, regional, national, or international communities or professional organizations that reflect the ‘spirit of Emory.’”

**MEREDITH RIEDEL** published  “Leo VI and the Cleansing of the Law” in *Medieval Perspectives* (31, 2016), “Biblical Echoes in Two Byzantine Military Speeches” in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (40.2, 2016), and “Demonic Prophecy as Byzantine Imperial Propaganda: The Rhetorical Appeal of the Tenth-Century *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*” in *Fides et Historia*. She gave papers at several conferences: “‘God Has Sent the Thunder’: The Role of Religion in the *Taktika* of Leo VI” for “Greek and Roman Military Manuals: Genre, Theory, Influence” at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba; “Baghdad to Constantinople: Building Identity Where Power Dwelt” at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Medieval Association (Knoxville, Tenn.); and “Photios’ Hermeneutic for Wisdom Literature in *Amphilochia* 9” at the International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Belgrade, Serbia). On Sept. 29 she was a panel respondent at a screening of the film *Catherine ou le corps de la Passion* by the Duke Center for French and Francophone Studies.

**LESTER RUTH** (with Andy Park and Cindy Rethmeier) published *Worshiping with the Anaheim Vineyard: The Emergence of Contemporary Worship* ((Eerdmans) and (with Swee Hong Lim) *Lovin’ On Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* (Abingdon Press). He gave the paper “Enthroned on the Praises of Israel: The Role of Psalm 22:3 in the Historical Development of

## FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

Contemporary Worship's Music Sets" at the North American Academy of Liturgy on Jan. 6 (Washington, D.C.) and on April 11 delivered "When the Music Fades: The Many Facets of Contemporary Worship's Historical Development" as the Northcutt Lecture at the Baylor University School of Music (Waco, Texas).

**LACEYE WARNER** published revised editions of two of her books: *The Method of Our Mission: United Methodist Polity and Organization* (Abingdon Press) and *Grace to Lead: Practicing Leadership in the Wesleyan Tradition*, with Bishop Kenneth Carder (UM GBHEM). Her book *The Study of Evangelism*, co-edited with Paul Chilcote, was translated into Korean. She published "Challenges and Opportunities for Institutions in the Wesleyan Tradition," with L. Gregory Jones, in *Leadership the Wesleyan Way*, edited by Aaron Perry and Bryan Easley (Emeth Press). She was the plenary speaker on "Academic Deans and Financial Officers" for the Chief Financial Officers Gathering of the Association of Theological Schools (Orlando, Fla.) on Nov. 9 and led the workshop "General Conference Methodism in the 21st Century" as part of Convocation & Pastors' School at Duke Divinity School, Oct. 10–11.

**WILL WILLIMON** published *Who Lynched Willie Earle? Preaching to Confront Racism* (Abingdon Press). He gave lectures on various topics: on campus protest and resistance in an era of increased xenophobia, as a video lecture for campus ministers at the invitation of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education; on late Impressionist painting, for an

Educational Opportunities cruise through Provence, France; on Christian art, for an Educational Opportunities cruise through the Duoro region of Portugal; and on racism and the Christian faith, at the Prophetic Ministry Conference of the North Carolina Conference of the UMC. He also spoke at the Martin Luther King Commemoration Service (Ferguson, Miss.), gave lectures for the Presbytery of Phoenix and a consortium of small-membership churches in Chatham, Va., and attended the UMC Council of Bishops meeting (Dallas, Texas). Preaching engagements included Church of the Resurrection (Leawood, Kan.), Grace UMC (Greer, S.C.), Aldersgate UMC (Alexandria, Va.), St. Paul's UMC (Greenville, S.C.), Lutheran Theological Seminary (Philadelphia, Pa.), Episcopal Church of the Advent (Birmingham, Ala.), Episcopal Church of the Nativity (Greenwood, Miss.), St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Richmond, Va.), Grace Episcopal Cathedral (Charleston, S.C.), Wilkesboro UMC (Wilkesboro, N.C.), and the Easter sunrise service at Duke Gardens.

**BRITTANY WILSON** published "Sight and Spectacle: 'Seeing' Paul in the Book of Acts" in the edited volume *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark) and "Assessing Masculinity in the Book of Acts: Peter and Paul as Test Cases" in the edited volume *Reading Acts in the Discourses of Masculinity and Politics* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark). She also published "Between Text and Sermon: Luke 1:46–55" in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* (71.1, 2017). In April she delivered the keynote address "Making Sense of Sight: Vision and Corporeality



in Early Christian Discourse" at the interdisciplinary conference "Embodiment, Corporeality, and the Senses in Religion" at the University of Texas at Austin.

**NORMAN WIRZBA** (with Jed Purdy, faculty at Duke Law School) received a \$550,000 grant from the Luce Foundation to direct a four-year project on rethinking the disciplines in an Anthropocene world. He co-edited (with Todd LeVasseur and Pramod Parajuli) *Religion and Sustainable Agriculture: World Spiritual Traditions and Food Ethics* (University Press of Kentucky) and published "Seeing a Fallen World" in *Evolution and the Fall*, edited by William T. Cavanaugh and James K.A. Smith (Eerdmans). He delivered several lectures: on eating and religious traditions, at the 20th anniversary of the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Harvard Divinity School, Oct. 14–15; on peace with creation, at the annual Interfaith Peace Conference at Lake Junaluska, Nov. 10–12; on a Christian food imagination, at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.), Jan. 10–11; on faith and ecology, at Brigham Young University, Jan. 26–27; on a spirituality for creatures, as the McFadin Lecture at Brite Divinity School (Fort Worth, Texas), Feb. 20; on Sabbath, at a retreat for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship pastors, March 3–5; on food and faith, at the King Institute on Faith and Culture (Bristol, Tenn.), April 10; on the spirituality of working and eating, at Christ Church Cranbrook (Bloomfield Hills, Mich.), April 22–23; and on humility and joy, at Yale Divinity School, April 28. ■

## 60s

**S T KIMBROUGH D'62** published *Partakers of the Life Divine: Participation in the Divine Nature in the Writings of Charles Wesley* (Wipf & Stock), which explores Charles Wesley's understanding of "participation in the divine nature" within the full spectrum of his prose and poetical compositions and in relation to many of the church fathers. Kimbrough has also recorded an album of musical settings of texts from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets covering four centuries of composers, titled *Shakespeare's Songs at 400* (Arabesque Recordings).

## 70s

**JOHN W. LIPPHARDT D'73, '75** recently retired after 47 years of ministry with the United Methodist Church to a home on the Elk River just north of Charleston, W.V.

**J. DENNY WEAVER G'75** published *God Without Violence: Following a Nonviolent God in a Violent World* (Cascade Books). Playing off a five-year-old boy's question about whether parents would put their child to death on a cross, this book discusses issues of violence and nonviolence in theology, along with other questions of social justice for congregational study groups and college theology classes. A German translation of the second edition of his book *The Nonviolent Atonement* was recently released: *Gewaltfreie Erlösungen: Kreuzestheologie im Ringen mit der Satisfaktionstheorie* (LIT Verlag).

**STEVEN MILLER D'78** has been named vice president of institutional advancement at Columbia Theological Seminary, which is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He also serves on the publishing advisory committee for the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

## 80s

**WENDY KILWORTH-MASON D'81, '96** is now in the third year of a five-year invitation to the Whitehaven Circuit in the Cumbria District of the Methodist Church in Britain. As the sole minister in the circuit of nine churches and two Fresh Expressions, she serves as superintendent. She welcomes any Duke Divinity alumni who would like to visit the rural Western Lakes area to serve as guest preachers.

**TODD OUTCALT D'85** published four books: *Praying through Cancer* (Upper Room), *All About Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Children's Blue River Press), *Bleak Midwinter* (novel under nom de plume, R.L. Perry, Blue River Press), and *The Seven Deadly Virtues* (InterVarsity Press). He is senior pastor of Calvary UMC in Brownsburg, Ind.

**KAREN HALL D'86** recently joined the faculty of Memphis Theological Seminary as an adjunct professor teaching Christian political thought. After graduating from Duke, she earned a J.D. from the University of Memphis in 1997. She maintains a private law practice in Memphis.

## 90s

**JOERG RIEGER D'90, G'94** and Rosemarie Henkel-Rieger published *Unified We Are a Force: How Faith and Labor Can Overcome America's Inequalities* (Chalice Press). The book addresses the problem of income inequality practically and theologically and seeks to help the working majority understand what is happening and how to make a difference.

**DIANA BUTLER BASS G'91** published *Grounded: Finding God in the World—A Spiritual Revolution* (HarperOne). The book argues that what appears to be a decline in traditional religious practice and affiliation actually signals a major

transformation in how people understand and experience God.

**LEDAYNE MCLEESE POLASKI D'93** received the 2016 Richard Furman Baptist Heritage Award from Furman University. She is the executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America (Bautistas por la Paz).

**ROBERT C. SCOTT D'94** is senior pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C. The church is currently undertaking a \$17.3 million housing development to provide senior-citizen and mixed-income housing. He previously served as senior pastor of Central Baptist Church in St. Louis, Mo., from 1999 to 2016. He is married to Pier Charisse Scott, and they have a daughter, Charis.

**LOUIS E. KUYKENDALL JR. D'94** graduated with a D.Min. in May 2016 from Lancaster Theological Seminary, where his research focused on hospice volunteers and the spiritual care of patients. He serves as senior pastor at Zwingli United Church of Christ in Souderton, Pa., and as a volunteer hospice chaplain.

**GARY CARR D'96** is now serving as associate endorser for chaplaincy for the Wesleyan Church. In this position, he will work with military, hospital, organizational, and public safety chaplains.

## 00s

**DAWN R. NELSON D'00** was a guest on the *Dr. Peter Breggin Hour* Feb. 1, 2017. The show is permanently archived at [www.prn.fm](http://www.prn.fm). She is the founder of the Centre for Human Flourishing in Milwaukee, Wisc.

**C. NICHOLAS LYERLY D'03** has published *Finding My Way Home* (LifeRich Publishing), a memoir of his life growing up in rural South Carolina and his call to ministry. He is a United Methodist



minister and director of the Evening College at Florence Darlington Technical College. He resides in Florence, S.C., with his wife, Staci.

**ERIC LEWIS WILLIAMS D'05** completed a Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the University of Edinburgh in the U.K. in June 2015. His thesis was *More Than Tongues Can Tell: Theological Significations in Black Pentecostal Thought*. In December 2016 he was appointed curator of religion for the new Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. He is an ordained minister in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC).

**TINA PETERMAN HUBERT D'07** is program manager of the Ozanam Center for Service Learning at the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Ozanam Center offers immersion experiences that connect people from diverse backgrounds, engage participants in poverty and justice issues in Cincinnati, and grow a commitment to long-term service and community engagement.

**MATT ASHBURN D'07** and his wife, Elena, announce the birth of their second daughter, Ingram Reeves Ashburn, born July 29, 2016.

**MATT RAWLE D'07** was the featured preacher Feb. 26 for *Day 1*, a nationally broadcast ecumenical radio program, which is accessible online at [Day1.org](http://Day1.org). He published a series of books for small group study in The Pop in Culture Series by Abingdon Press: *The Faith of a Mockingbird*, *Hollywood Jesus*, *The Salvation of Doctor Who*, and *The Redemption of Scrooge*. He is lead pastor of Asbury UMC in Bossier City, La.

**LORI ANNE BROWN D'09, '15** is a part-time adjunct professor online at Grand Canyon University's College of Theology in Phoenix, Ariz., where she teaches the courses "Spirituality in Healthcare," "Christian Character Formation," and "Theories of Leadership (Christian)." She was licensed to preach in 2009 and ordained in 2012 at Amazing Grace World Fellowship in Richmond, Va., and she continues to write for *The Word in Season*, a devotional resource by Augsburg Fortress Press.

## 10s

**MIRANDA HARRISON-QUILLIN D'11** is spending 10 months in the Community of St. Anselm at Lambeth Palace in London (U.K.), which is a monastic community sponsored by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Along with 15 other members, she will spend this "year in God's time" living in residential community according

to the Rule of St. Anselm. She is a certified candidate in the Florida Conference of the UMC, anticipating commissioning in June.

**MITZI JOHNSON D'14** is director of programming at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center. She oversees the summer worship series, choir music weekend, youth events, and other programs and events.

**KELLY O'LEAR D'14** serves as the director of regional and cultural studies and a world religion instructor at the U.S. Army's Special Forces School in Fort Bragg, N.C. He was recently accepted to Wesleyan Theological Seminary's D.Min. program in public engagement.

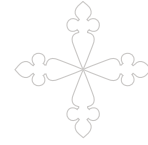
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**ALBERT F. FISHER T'51, D'54** died Feb. 3, 2017. An elder of the North Carolina Conference of the UMC, he served various parishes and appointments in North Carolina, including a term as superintendent of the Goldsboro District. From 1974 to 1996, he worked for The Duke Endowment, most of those years as director of the Rural Church Division. He also served as adjunct professor of parish work at Duke Divinity School. He held many leadership positions throughout his career, including membership of the Divinity School Board of Visitors and president of Duke Alumni Association. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Rebecca Smith Fisher, two sons, a daughter, two daughters-in-law, a son-in-law, three grandchildren, a younger brother and his wife, a younger sister and her husband, and several nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews.

**LOY H. WITHERSPOON T'51, D'54** died Jan. 15, 2017. An elder in the UMC, he held a variety of parish and academic posts throughout his career, including Myers Park UMC in Charlotte, N.C.; American University in Cairo, Egypt; and UNC Charlotte. He spent most of his career in teaching and administration at UNC Charlotte and is credited with launching the school's Department of Religious Studies, of which he was the first chair when it became independent in 1972.

**C. CLYDE TUCKER D'52** died Dec. 14, 2016. He was an elder of the North Carolina Conference of the UMC and a missionary under the auspices of the UMC General Board of Missions. He served 20 years in Chile, where he started new missions and a school, built church buildings and a parsonage, and hosted a daily radio program. After returning to the U.S.

with his family, he served five appointments in the North Carolina Conference. Upon his retirement in 1998, he returned to South America each year. Tucker is survived by his wife, Margarita Arango, five children and their spouses, and seven grandchildren.

**D. MOODY SMITH JR. D'57** died May 10, 2016. He was George Washington Ivey Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, where he taught for 37 years. After receiving his B.D. from Duke Divinity School, he completed a Ph.D. at Yale in 1961, where his dissertation focused on Bultmann's literary theory and the Gospel of John. He wrote numerous books and articles throughout his career, including the widely read *Anatomy of the New Testament*, of which he was a co-author. He taught more than 2,000 divinity students and directed 24 Ph.D. dissertations. His family will remember him for his quick wit, his abidingly kind nature, his passion for tennis, his dedication to social justice, and his devotion to his family. He is survived by his wife, Jane, four children, and six granddaughters.

**DAVID L. HILTON D'64, D'70** died July 29, 2016. He spent seven years as a missionary of the General Board of Global Ministries in Malaysia and served a number of pastorates in the Kentucky Conference of the UMC. Following retirement he lived in the Otterbein Community in Lebanon, Ohio. He had great interest in end-of-life issues and spiritual care and worked as a chaplain in hospice care. He is survived by his wife, Mary Lois, a son, a daughter, and three grandchildren.

**JERRY JAY JUREN D'68** died Oct. 30, 2016. He was an elder in the North

Carolina Conference of the UMC and pastored 17 churches over a span of 42 years. His 13 appointments were in Pine Level, Eureka, Timberlake, Durham, Council, Pembroke (where he also served as campus minister at Pembroke State University), Mt. Olive, Mt. Gilead, Fuquay-Varina, Henderson, and Roanoke Rapids. He served as minister to older adults at Christ UMC in High Point, N.C., before moving to Riverview, Fla. In addition to his wife, Sarah Ann Martin Juren, he is survived by two daughters, two sons, and nine grandchildren.

**E. DOUGLAS STANFIELD D'77** of Piedmont, S.C., died Feb. 16, 2017. He was a graduate of the University of South Florida and Princeton Theological Seminary as well as Duke Divinity School, and he was a member of the North Carolina Conference of the UMC and served churches in Rougemont and Pink Hill before becoming a U.S. Navy chaplain. He was named Armed Forces Chaplain of the Year in 1983. Surviving him are his wife, Vera Jaudon Stanfield, a son, two sisters, and 10 nieces and nephews.

**RACHEL DOWNS-LEWIS D'01, '03** of Charlottesville, Va., died July 22, 2016. She was a Methodist elder, having served congregations in Virginia as well as the Sheffield Methodist Circuit in England. Upon her graduation from the Divinity School, she and her husband jointly received the Hoyt Hickman Award for Liturgical Studies. She was passionate about ministry with the elderly, the developmentally disabled, university students, and the arts community. She is survived by her husband, **ROBERT LEWIS D'00, '03**, her father and his wife, and a sister and brother-in-law. ■

# An Armor of Adoration

BY CHRISTENA S. CLEVELAND

**GOD IS GOOD** *all the time—all the time God is good.*

This is the refrain I most closely associate with my Grandmommy, a sweet and powerful woman who embodies the black Pentecostal Holiness tradition more than anyone I know. No matter what disappointment she faces, no matter what oppressive force she encounters, she prophetically and emphatically insists on God's goodness. As a young girl with nascent cognitive abilities, I took Grandmommy's simple action of proclaiming God's goodness in all circumstances at face value in the same way that I took rainbows at face value. I was unaware of the multiple layers, processes, and shades that gave breadth and depth to what appeared on the surface.

As I grew into young adulthood and my critical race theory developed, I began to see all of the ways in which racism, a key element in America's DNA, is at work in every space, especially Christian churches and institutions. As I grieved this reality, my commitment to proclaiming God's goodness crumbled. In my youth, I didn't make the connection between Grandmommy's fierce practice of adoration and her equally fierce resilience. Rather, I thought that adoration was a cheap form of transcendence, a distraction from the real work of justice and equity.

At the time, I didn't recognize that Grandmommy was drawing from a rich tradition of adoration in black American Christianity, one that dates back to the enslaved people who while facing unconscionable injustice proclaimed:

*He's the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords,  
Jesus Christ, the first and last,  
No man works like him.  
He built a platform in the air,  
No man works like him.*

Nor did I realize that my enslaved ancestors, like many other oppressed peoples in global history, had developed a sophisticated practice of adoration that encompassed both transcendence and immanence. As the Negro spiritual continues:

*He meets the saints from everywhere,  
No man works like him.*

*He pitched a tent on Canaan's ground.*

*No man works like him.*

*And broke the Roman Kingdom down,*

*No man works like him.*

Indeed, it is clear that the enslaved people's adoration does not focus on a God in the sky who is distant from the plight of the oppressed. Rather, it focuses on Jesus' flesh-and-blood, earthly action against Empire. It is in this context that I've come to understand that adoration is central to my vocational call to justice. Consequently, this understanding has shifted my spiritual practices toward an integration of lament and adoration.

We can easily meditate on how racist, sexist, ignorant, or entitled the oppressor is. But while those meditations are often true, they aren't particularly fortifying. Speaking truth about God fortifies us by expanding our hearts and enabling us to receive the good gifts of God, even in the midst of distress. In his book *The Return of the Mother*, Andrew Harvey writes: "Constant adoration is the one force nuclear enough in its intensity to do this great work. Constant adoration, constant opening of the heart, in whatever circumstance, in whatever pain, in whatever difficulty and whatever grief, in whatever bitterness. Constant opening in adoration to divine beauty, the divine magnificence, the divine generosity, of all the different names of God."

As I face oppressive forces today, I take time to engage in holy lament, and then I follow the lead of my Grandmommy and my ancestors by declaring truths about who God is: compassionate, the God of justice, a mother bear who fiercely protects her cubs, a lover who knows our worst pain, the one who came and comes to a world full of strife and oppression and genocide, the Victorious One, and more.

Adoration is fortification, not escapism. Through the practice of adoration we are armed with the strength to skillfully and fiercely face what is broken, incomplete, or seemingly hopeless. Through the practice of adoration we are humbled and liberated by the reality that we do not fight alone, that the God of the oppressed is immanent and for us. With renewed mindfulness of this reality, we are empowered to do the work of justice and peacemaking, which is in itself a form of adoration. ■



Now may the God of peace—  
who brought up from the dead  
our Lord Jesus, the great  
Shepherd of the sheep, and  
ratified an eternal covenant  
with his blood—may he equip  
you with all you need for  
doing his will. May he produce  
in you, through the power of  
Jesus Christ, every good thing  
that is pleasing to him.

— Hebrews 13:20–21, NLT



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