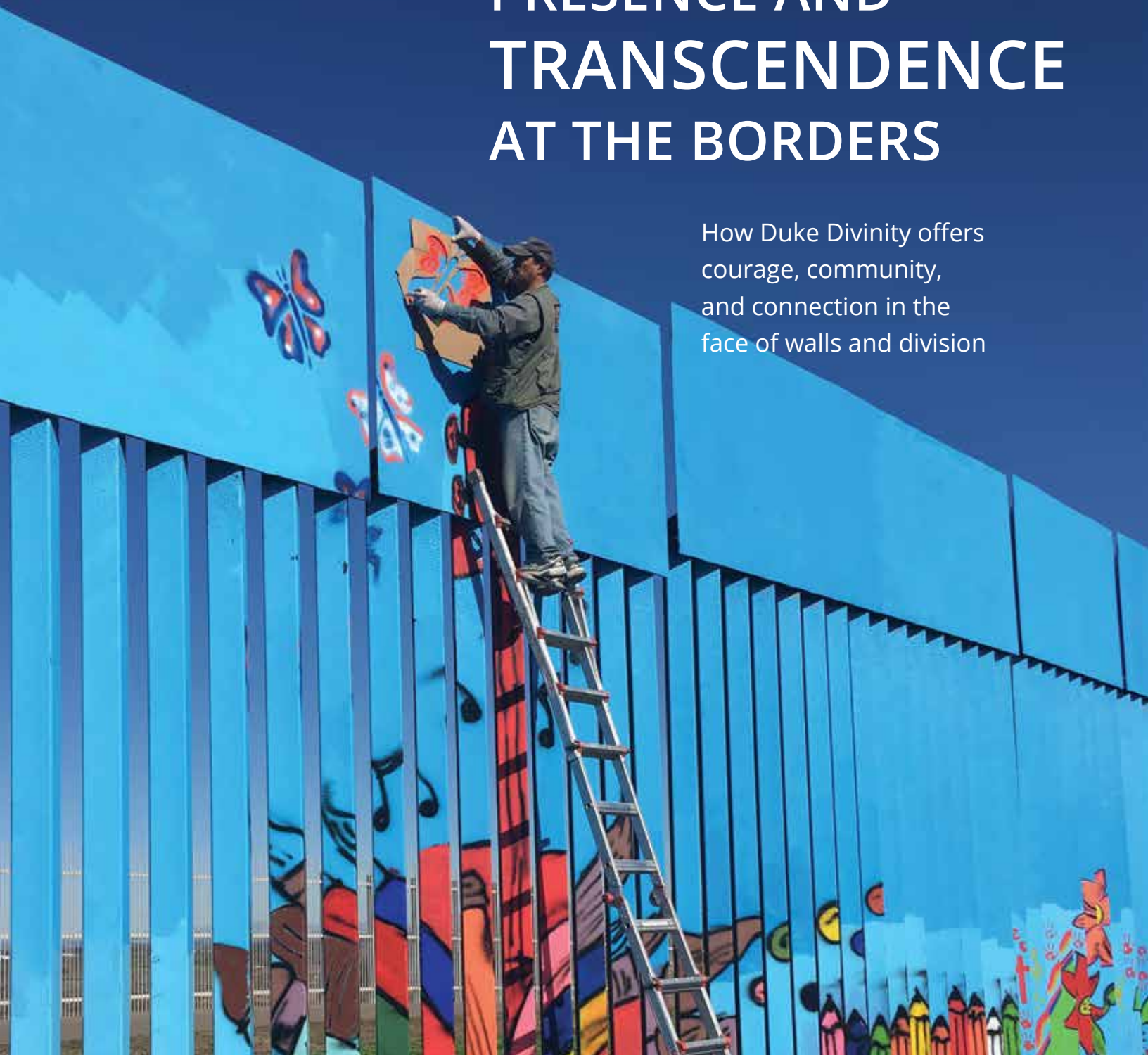


DIVINITY

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL
FALL 2023 • VOL. 22 • NO. 1

PRESENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE AT THE BORDERS

How Duke Divinity offers
courage, community,
and connection in the
face of walls and division



LEADERSHIP THAT MAKES a Difference

Your Leadership Gift to the Annual Fund today supports Duke Divinity students in transformational ministry for years to come!



My gift to the Annual Fund is a concrete way I seek to embody Luke's words, "To whom much has been given, much will be required." If I can return a fraction of what was invested in me as a Divinity School student through financial aid and other forms of support, then **I know I will have made a real and vital difference in the lives of people who are preparing for ministry in the years to come.**

DONNA CLAYCOMB SOKOL D'00,
pastor of Mount Vernon Place UMC in Washington, D.C.

Every gift to the Divinity Annual Fund is an important contribution, but through your generous partnership with a Leadership Gift of \$1,000+ you are welcoming even more students who want to prepare for transformational ministry. You are providing hope for churches who need pastors and ministers to nurture their congregation and serve their community. You are inspiring confidence in faculty and staff to develop the programs and resources that enrich Duke Divinity students.

Welcome. Hope. Inspiration.

Make a lasting, vital difference with your Leadership Gift to the Divinity Annual Fund today. For more information, contact us at 919-660-3456 or give online at gifts.duke.edu/divinity.



Scan to give online.

DIVINITY
Annual Fund

CONTENTS

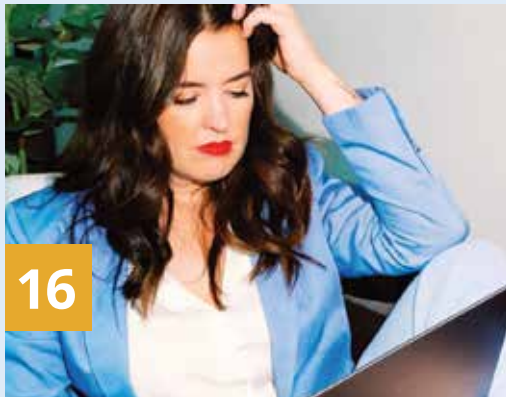


4 THE SCHOOL OF THE SPIRIT AND PENTECOST PLACES

A Pentecost pedagogy will lead us to places where the Spirit is at work

10 TEACHING BORDERLANDS @ DUKE

Courageous engagement with the experience of borders in communities and theological education



16 FROM DIGITAL DIVIDE TO BEAUTIFUL BLESSINGS

How Everything Happens transforms online barriers into life-affirming community

22 CREATING HOSPITABLE CONVERSATION

Formation in Christian theology to sustain healing work of mental health practitioners



28 A THEOLOGY PROFESSOR WALKS INTO A BAR ...

A short story about a surprising community

30 NEWS & EVENTS

36 NEW FACULTY BOOKS

40 FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

46 ALUMNI NEWS

DIVINITY

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

FALL 2023 • VOL. 22 • NO. 1

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS



STEPHANIE HUNT is a writer/editor based in Charleston, S.C. She is a graduate of Duke University and Vanderbilt Divinity School, and her feature writing has appeared in numerous publications, including *The Washington Post*, *Faith & Leadership*, *Veranda*, *Orion.com*, and *Charleston Magazine*, where she is editor-at-large.



YONAT SHIMRON is a national reporter and managing editor at Religion News Service. She was an award-winning religion reporter at *The News & Observer* in Raleigh, N.C., and her work has appeared in many publications including *The Washington Post* and *Faith & Leadership*. She is a past president of the Religion Newswriters Association.



EDGARDO COLÓN-EMERIC is the Irene and William McCutchen Professor of Reconciliation and Theology and dean of Duke Divinity School. His research explores the intersection of Methodist and Catholic theologies, and Wesleyan and Latin American experiences, guided by the conviction that Christian theology sounds best when it is symphonic.

ON THE COVER

A photo by Enrique Chiu, an artist and muralist based in Tijuana, Mexico, of a collaborator in Chiu's project *Mural de la Hermandad* on the border wall between the U.S. and Mexico. Chiu began the project in 2016, and it has attracted some 3,700 volunteers and now spans over two kilometers. Chiu was a featured lecturer at the 15th anniversary of the Hispanic House of Studies and has donated works from his exhibition *Humanidad Migrante* to Duke Divinity School.

PUBLISHER

Office of the Dean

EDGARDO COLÓN-EMERIC

Dean of Duke Divinity School,
Irene and William McCutchen
Associate Professor of Reconciliation
and Theology, and Director of the
Center for Reconciliation

EDITOR

HEATHER MOFFITT

Senior Content Strategist

PRODUCED BY

**THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS,
DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL**

AUDREY WARD

Executive Director of Communications

PROOFREADER

DEREK KEEFE

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

REGINA BARNHILL

DIVINITY magazine represents the engagement of Duke Divinity School with important topics and invites friends, supporters, alumni, and others in our community to participate in the story of what is happening here.

We'd like to hear from you!
For comments or feedback, please email:
magazine@div.duke.edu.

Copyright ©2023 Duke Divinity School.
All rights reserved.

FEATURES





THE SCHOOL OF THE SPIRIT *and* PENTECOST PLACES

BY EDGARDO COLÓN-EMERIC

SINCE I BECAME DEAN, I have turned again and again to the biblical account of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. I do so because I am Wesleyan and because I believe Pentecost holds the key to meeting our historical moment.

Our current moment is dense; it is constituted of complex confluences. On the one hand, we are approaching a season of centennials and celebrations in our community—both Duke University and The Duke Endowment will mark their centennials in 2024, followed by the Divinity School’s centennial in 2026. The Office of Black Church Studies has celebrated its 50th anniversary, and the Hispanic House of Studies held its *quinceañera*. And in 2025, Christians around the world will be commemorating the 17th centennial of the Council of Nicaea and the birth of the Nicene Creed. On the other hand, this is a time of ecclesial upheaval in the U.S.: the decline of mainline Protestantism, the fragmentation of United Methodism, the politicization of American evangelicalism, the rumblings in Roman Catholicism, and on and on.

Yet I believe the confluence of centennials and upheavals is not a perfect storm but a perfect opportunity to embrace a Pentecost pedagogy to become more fully what we already are, a Pentecost people.

ECCLESIAL CRISIS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In Acts 6:1–7, we find our mothers and fathers facing their first ecclesial crisis. The neglect of the Hellenist widows is not a minor matter for the church. Christian theologians speak of the church as bearing three responsibilities: *martyria* (witness), *leitourgia* (worship), and *diakonia* (service). Cut off one of the legs of this stool and the church collapses.

The book of Acts does not use this exact terminology, but it understood this balance well. The insistence of the Apostles on being free to devote themselves to prayer and preaching is not a pious platitude. It is a sober statement based on a non-reductive assessment of reality. Human beings are the kinds of creatures that hunger and thirst for the word of God. Thus, Christians are not addressing the fullness of human need if they neglect the ministry of the word.

Isaiah understood this. He likens the word of God to the precipitation needed for the earth to be fruitful (see Isaiah 55:10). The word of God is the word of life; we need to listen to live. The prophet foretold that people from all nations would run to Jerusalem to seek the Lord—and therein lies the origin of the crisis facing the disciples in Acts. According to the missiologist Andrew Walls, the church is born from a massive act of translation—the Word made flesh. “Christian faith must go on being translated, must continuously enter into vernacular culture and interact with it, or it withers and dies.” In Acts, the church grows through cross-cultural translation and transmission. Because of the outpouring of the Spirit, Greek-speaking Jews are expecting ministry in their own native tongue. This is a Pentecost problem.

In response, the Apostles do something unusual: they call together the entire Christian community. Scholars differ in how they understand the widows’ protest. Was the problem that the widows were not being served, or that they were not being invited to serve? In any case, the Apostles propose a new institutional framework: the Seven. This was modeled after patterns in Moses’ ministry and would complement and extend the ministry of the Apostles.

Tellingly, the Apostles do not impose this scheme on the community but seek their consent and collaboration. A Roman Catholic might call this the synodal way, a Hispanic theologian might call it working *en conjunto*, and I might call it Pentecost pedagogy. Whatever you call it, the account in Acts suggests that the plan worked, because this particular protest does not recur. The appointment of the Seven leads to enrollment growth in what we might call the School of the Spirit, and we read that even the priests begin to sign up in droves for the Pentecost program.

THE SCHOOL OF THE SPIRIT

I believe the School of the Spirit in Acts has something to teach us today. When you consider the apostolic criteria for the Seven, “good standing, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,” one thing is clear: the task is not trivial. The Apostles were looking for Pentecost people. Waiting on tables is not a menial job; it is Christian ministry. It is an imitation of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve. It is affirmation of the universal diaconate of believers. It is commitment to meeting human needs holistically. It is offering a cup of cold water to God’s little ones and pointing them to the streams of God’s grace.

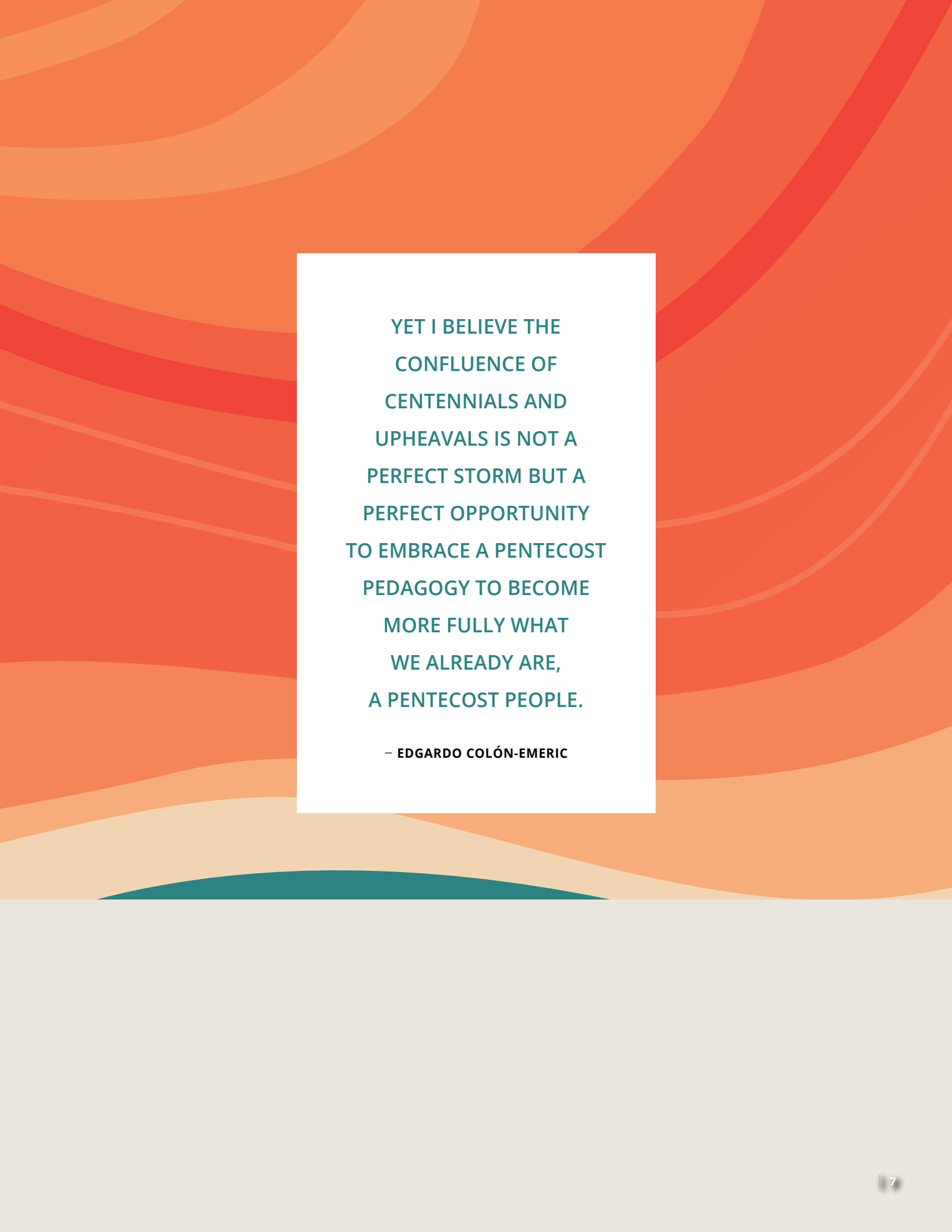
Duke Divinity School was established for the training of preachers. For almost 100 years, we have been teaching students how to break open the bread of life that is the Bible. We need Pentecost people in our church pulpits. This is why the formation of ministers of the Word cannot be neglected.

At the same time, the ministry of waiting on tables cannot be neglected, either. We need Pentecost people in the nonprofit sector. We need graduates of the School of the Spirit in the professions. This is why we offer certificates in Faith Based Community Organizing and Advocacy and in Food, Faith, and Environmental Justice. This is why we have initiatives in Theology, Medicine, and Culture and in Theology and the Arts. The School of the Spirit in Acts teaches us to reject a pedagogy of the gaps. We cannot limit the scope of our mission to whatever is not taught in the wider university. Instead, we need to embrace a Pentecost pedagogy that forms people who are not afraid of translating Christianity into the academic vernacular.

We need a Pentecost pedagogy that shapes Christian imaginations for addressing big problems like climate change *en conjunto* with political scientists, engineers, and ecologists. We have a humble but crucial contribution to make to these endeavors. For one thing, we know that we are ministers, not messiahs. For another, we believe that we have found the Messiah. We need Pentecost pedagogy for Pentecost people.

PENTECOST PEOPLE

The Pentecost people named in Acts 6 are an interesting group. As often happens in Scripture, we know little of their stories beyond their names. We know Stephen turns out to be a fantastic preacher, and



YET I BELIEVE THE
CONFLUENCE OF
CENTENNIALS AND
UPHEAVALS IS NOT A
PERFECT STORM BUT A
PERFECT OPPORTUNITY
TO EMBRACE A PENTECOST
PEDAGOGY TO BECOME
MORE FULLY WHAT
WE ALREADY ARE,
A PENTECOST PEOPLE.

– EDGARDO COLÓN-EMERIC

**WE NEED MORE THAN PENTECOST
PUPILS. WE ALSO NEED PENTECOST
PLACES THAT HELP US EXPERIENCE
THE SPIRIT IN FRESH WAYS.**

– EDGARDO COLÓN-EMERIC

that by Acts 7 he turns out to be the first Christian martyr. We know that Philip is called the evangelist, though we do not know why, and we know that he has four daughters who have the gift of prophecy. We also know that God used Philip to lead the Ethiopian eunuch to baptism, and that in this way Christianity came to Africa long before European or American colonists and missionaries arrived.

We know next to nothing about Nicanor or Parmenas or Prochorus or Nicalaus except that they have Greek names. But these names are no coincidence. To minister to the needs of the Hellenist widows, one needed more than moral rectitude, though that was important. One needed cultural competency and credibility. No doubt many disciples

were wise and good, but the most effective response to the crisis would come from members of the neglected community. This is good Pentecost pedagogy.

Again, on this point, I think Acts 6 has something to teach us at Duke Divinity. Some of us come from communities that have been historically neglected. They have things to learn here, and they have things to say. I want this to be the school that helps them find their Pentecost voice. Some come from communities that have been historically privileged. They have things to say and things to learn. I want to help them develop their Pentecost ears. I believe God wants all of us to grow as Pentecost people. This is the purpose of our pedagogy.

Let us consider a few pupils of the School of the Spirit from our community, like alumnus Dr. Benjamin Chavis. Dr. Chavis was arrested as one of the Wilmington 10 for his role in fighting for school desegregation. While in prison, he wrote a collection of psalms and completed an M.Div. at Duke Divinity School. When he graduated in 1980 and was released from prison, he did not play it safe. He joined the protests in Warren County against a PCB landfill and coined the term “environmental racism” to denounce the actions of the state government. Through his ministry of preaching and teaching, advocacy and activism, Dr. Chavis makes it clear that sacrificing certain counties and zip codes for the greater good of the few is blasphemous. Calling on the name of the Lord is incompatible with poisoning the

earth, because the earth is the Lord's. This is Pentecost pedagogy.

Pentecost pupils are found among our global partners. This summer, I and several students serving in field education placements in Africa were blessed to attend the Great Lakes Institute for Reconciliation just outside Kampala, Uganda. While there, we went on a pilgrimage to a community called Watoto Suubi, which translates roughly as “children’s hope.” It is a Christian ministry whose guiding text is James 1:27: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”

In this community, orphans are matched with widows who raise them as their own in homes built and maintained by the church. Psalm 68:5–6 comes alive in Watoto: “Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God gives the desolate a home to live in.” Watoto is a dramatic realization of Acts 6. It is something to behold—widows as heads of large households, and orphans cared for and educated in loving community. Augustine says, “If you see charity, you see the Trinity.” When you walk into Baby Watoto, a community clinic where 1,600 children have been born, 80% of these premature, and placed with widows, you see the Trinity. Widows and orphans are windows to God. They are Pentecost pupils, exemplars of Pentecost pedagogy for a Pentecost people.

PENTECOST PLACES

We need more than Pentecost pupils. We also need Pentecost places that help us experience the Spirit in fresh ways. This past January, Alma Tinoco Ruiz led a small group of colleagues and me to the U.S.–Mexico border. We spent several days at la Casa del

Migrante, a migrant shelter run by a Catholic religious community that has served as a field education placement for years. We met with asylum seekers from Latin America and the Caribbean. We shared lunch with a couple from Venezuela traumatized by their traversing of the notorious Darien Gap. We washed dishes next to a man from Haiti eagerly awaiting an interview to make his case before immigration officials, a case that he was all but certain to lose. The director of the Casa del Migrante took us to visit other shelters, food pantries, and soup kitchens. Two things struck me. First, these ministries were ecumenical. Second, they were mostly led by lay people.

On Sunday, we visited Friendship Park. It is a space set up by the U.S. and Mexican governments where people from both nations could meet. Friendship Park is cut in half by an 18-foot-high fence that extends about 200 feet into the Pacific Ocean. It is not a solid wall but a fine mesh steel fence pocked by holes big enough that you can touch someone on the other side of the border with the tip of your pinky finger. On the Mexico side, people have turned the fence into an expansive mural with colorful messages of love and calls for justice. On both sides, the salt air and seawater is corroding the wall—and the U.S. government has promised to tear down the fence and is already building a new one twice as high.

Every Sunday at that fence, a small group of pastors, activists, friends, and bystanders gather for worship. We joined them. The experience was overwhelming, for two reasons. First, directly on the other side of the fence from us, on the U.S. side, was a small band of around seven people waiting to be picked up by Border Patrol so they could petition for asylum. It was a blustery January afternoon, and the agents who saw them

were in no hurry to pick them up and process them. They preferred to let them wait, sitting on the cold ground, exposed to the ocean wind.

Second, we were worshipping during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This is a week when Christians give God thanks for what unites us. It is also a time to lament and repent of the dividing walls that we have built. The theme for this year came from Isaiah 1:17, “do good, seek justice.” It was a theme chosen by the Minnesota Council of Churches in 2020 right before the murder of George Floyd. Worshipping at the wall, I thought again of the remarkable proximity of this annual week of prayer with the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. Truly, the pedagogy of the Spirit is a pedagogy of the oppressed. This is Christian ecumenism from below. This is eucharistic communion beyond borders. This is a Pentecost place for a Pentecost people.

I pray that Duke Divinity School will be a Pentecost place where we can seek the Lord and find him because he is near, as near as the breath in our lungs and the Pentecost pupils in our midst. We can be a School of the Spirit, an Acts 2 academy. We can be a community where Pentecost people serve in many kinds of ministries and where Pentecost pedagogy prepares the way for Pentecost doxology—many voices, many languages, and many accents singing one song to the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

This essay is adapted from Dean Colón-Emeric's sermon for Opening Convocation in 2023. ♦

TEACHING BORDERLANDS @ DUKE

COURAGEOUS ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF
BORDERS IN COMMUNITIES AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The Hispanic House of Studies and the Hispanic/Latinx faculty at Duke Divinity School launched an immersion program in 2022–23 to foster ethical, courageous, and critical thinking about prevailing issues at the U.S.–Mexico border. This program, Teaching Borderlands @ Duke, also focused on ways these border issues affect communities, ministries, and theological education.

The initial faculty cohort included Douglas Campbell, professor of New Testament; Edgardo Colón-Emeric, dean and Irene and William McCutchen Professor of Reconciliation and Theology; Jan Holton, associate professor of the practice of pastoral theology and care; Anatheia Portier-Young, associate professor of Old Testament; Warren Smith, professor of historical theology; Ross Wagner, associate professor of New Testament; Norbert Wilson, professor of

food, economics, and community; and Wylin Wilson, assistant professor of theological ethics. Hispanic/Latinx faculty from Duke Divinity included Peter Casarella, professor of theology; Daniel Castelo, William Kellon Quick Professor of Theology and Methodist Studies; and Alma Tinoco Ruiz, assistant professor of the practice of homiletics and evangelism and director of the Hispanic House of Studies.

Participants committed to a series of workshops, a worship service at Goodson Chapel, and two immersion experiences, a local event celebrating the Virgin de Guadalupe Day and a trip to the U.S.–Mexico border.

Teaching Borderlands @ Duke is a project funded by the Wabash Center in collaboration with the Hispanic Summer Program.

LANDS

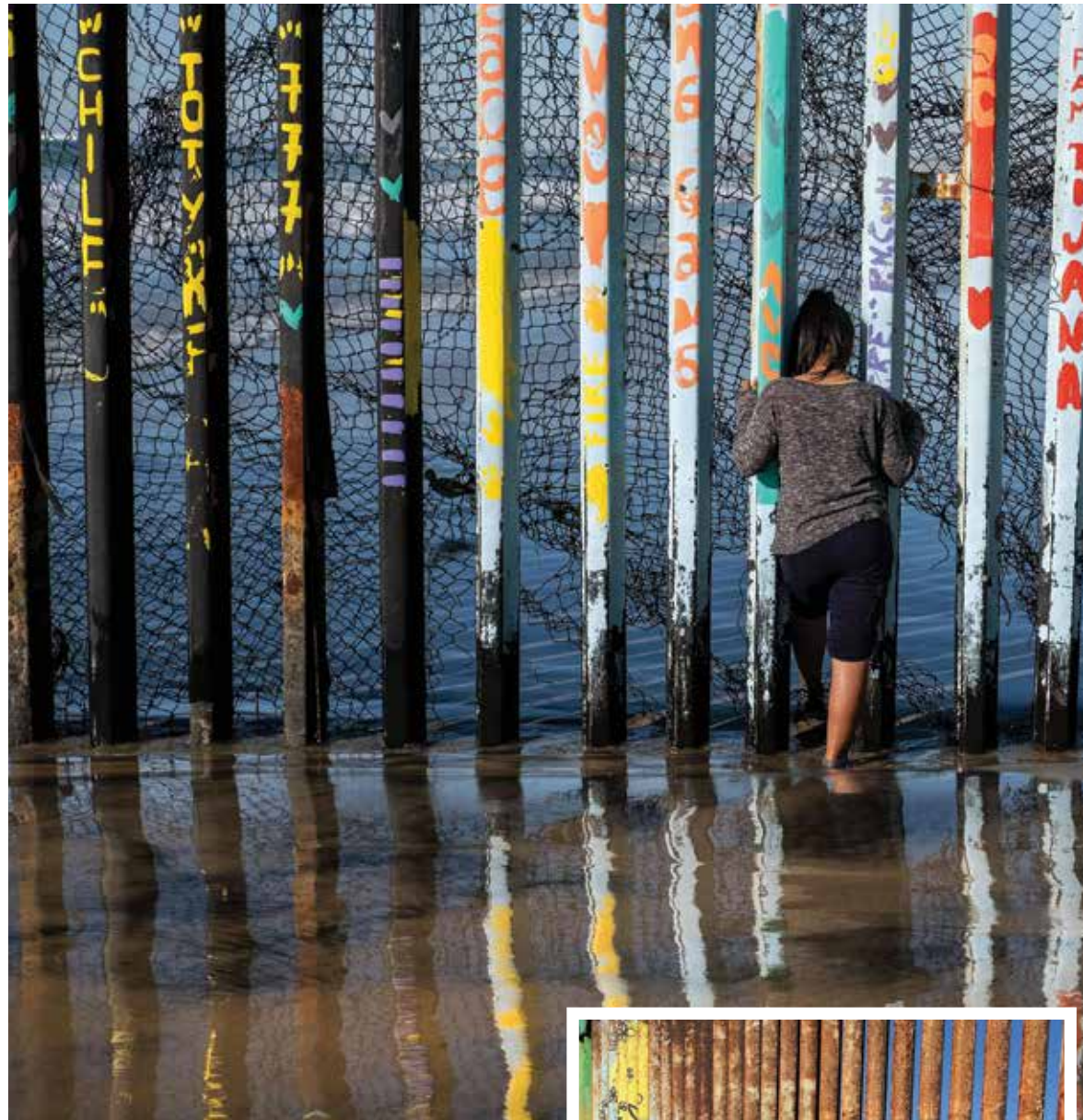


THE U.S.–MEXICO BORDER, AND SHELTERS SUCH AS LA CASA DEL MIGRANTE IN TIJUANA, ARE SACRED SPACES. IN THESE PLACES, WE ENCOUNTER JESUS IN THE LIVES OF OUR MIGRANT SIBLINGS AND THOSE WHO PROVIDE THEM RESPITE FROM THEIR ARDUOUS JOURNEY. THESE IMMERSIONS HELP US IMAGINE HOW WE CAN PARTICIPATE IN GOD’S MISSION TO BRING DOWN THE WALLS THAT DIVIDE US AND CREATE OPPRESSIVE REALITIES.

– ALMA TINOCO RUIZ



PHOTO BY ALMA TINOCO RUIZ



THIS IMMERSION EXPERIENCE PROVIDED THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL BUILDING BLOCKS THAT WILL ALLOW US TO MORE SKILLFULLY FACILITATE A MOVE WITHIN OUR CLASSROOMS FROM STRIDENT RHETORIC ABOUT IMMIGRATION TO COMPASSIONATELY EMBRACING OUR ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR MIGRANT SIBLINGS. OUR ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY INCLUDES NOT JUST HOSPITALITY BUT ALSO SOLIDARITY AND JUSTICE.

– WYLIN WILSON



PHOTO BY ROSS WAGNER



PHOTO BY GUILLELMO ARIAS / GETTY IMAGES

I PARTICIPATED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A VIRGEN DE GUADALUPE PROCESSION AS PART OF THE TEACHING BORDERLANDS @ DUKE EVENTS. IT WAS AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNAL SOLIDARITY, IN TERMS OF NOT ONLY THOSE WHO WALKED IN THE PROCESSION BUT ALSO THOSE WHO WATCHED AND SUPPORTED US THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF DURHAM. IT WAS A SPECIAL TIME WHEN PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE CAME TOGETHER IN A CELEBRATION NATIVE TO A PARTICULAR CULTURAL HERITAGE. IN SHORT, LA VIRGEN WAS OURS AND FOR ALL OF US AT THAT BEAUTIFUL MOMENT!

– DANIEL CASTELO



PHOTO BY ALMA TINOCO RUIZ



PHOTO BY ALMA TINOCO RUIZ



PHOTO BY ROSS WAGNER

LATINX COMMUNITIES DON'T HAVE THE LUXURY OF OWNING A COMPARABLE HERITAGE OR HISTORY IN THIS COUNTRY. LATINX CANNOT BE DEFINED BY COLOR. THEY AREN'T NECESSARILY FROM THE SAME COUNTRY. GENERALLY, THE SPANISH LANGUAGE IS THE COMMON CONNECTION. YET RESEARCH SHOWS THAT WITHIN LATINX CULTURE THERE ARE FOUR COMMON IDEALS: *RESPETO* (RESPECT), *CONFIANZA* (MUTUAL TRUST), *CONSEJOS* (VERBAL ADVICE OR TEACHINGS), AND *BUENOS EJEMPLOS* (GOOD EXAMPLES). THESE IDEALS IMPACT HOW STUDENTS INTERACT IN CLASS WITH THEIR CLASSMATES, HOW THEY RESPOND TO CONFLICT, HOW THEY RESPOND TO AUTHORITY, ALL OF WHICH IMPACTS HOW THEY LEARN.

– TERESA DELGADO

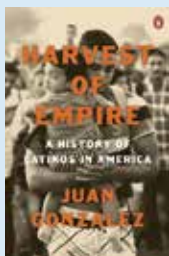


THE DIRECTORS OF CASA DEL MIGRANTE ARE REALISTS. THEY KNOW HOW FEW MIGRANTS WILL BE ADMITTED TO THE U.S., SO THEY PROVIDE TRAINING TO HELP THE MIGRANTS TO BE EMPLOYABLE IN THE U.S. OR, AS IS MORE LIKELY, IN TIJUANA, THEIR TEMPORARY BUT POSSIBLY LONG-TERM HOME. MOST OF ALL, I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE TRUST IN GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE EXPRESSED BY THE DIRECTORS OF CASA DEL MIGRANTE. THEY DO NOT HAVE AN ENDOWMENT THEY CAN DEPEND ON. THEY LIVE HAND-TO-MOUTH, YET THEY TELL STORIES OF HOW GOD DAILY PROVIDES FOR THEM. WHERE THERE IS SEEMING SCARCITY, GOD SUSTAINS THEM OUT OF DIVINE ABUNDANCE.

– WARREN SMITH



BOOKS TO EXPLORE



**Harvest of Empire:
A History of Latinos
in America
(revised edition)**
Juan González
Penguin Books, 2011



**Borderland Religion:
Ambiguous Practices
of Difference, Hope
and Beyond**
Daisy L. Machado,
Bryan S. Turner,
Trygve Wyller, eds.
Routledge, 2018



**Atando Cabos: Latinx
Contributions to
Theological Education**
Elizabeth Conde-Frazier
Eerdmans, 2021

FACILITATORS FOR TEACHING BORDERLANDS @ DUKE

Daisy L. Machado

Executive director of the Hispanic Summer Program and professor emerita of American religious history at Union Theological Seminary

Gregory L. Cuéllar

Associate professor of Old Testament at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Teresa Delgado

Dean of St. John's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and professor of theology and religious studies at St. John's University

Eduardo C. Fernández, S.J.

Professor of pastoral theology and ministry at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University



AS POPE FRANCIS OBSERVES, “THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ALWAYS ‘A SURPRISE,’ BECAUSE IT IS ‘A GIFT GIVEN BY THE LORD.” AT THE CASA DEL MIGRANTE IN TIJUANA, WE TASTED THE SURPRISING GIFT OF GOD’S KINGDOM AS WE WORKED AND ATE AND SLEPT AND WORSHIPPED ALONGSIDE THE FAMILIES WHO HAD FOUND THERE A REFUGE IN THE MIDST OF THEIR BORDERLAND EXISTENCE. THE CASA OFFERS NOT ONLY FOOD, SHELTER, AND MEDICAL CARE; IT OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE KNOWN BY NAME, TO BE GRANTED THE DIGNITY OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH SERVICE, TO BE INVITED INTO THE RHYTHMS OF WORSHIP AND PRAYER, AND TO BE REMINDED OF THE LOVE OF GOD THROUGH THE LOVING ACTS OF FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS.

– ROSS WAGNER


FROM DIGITAL DIVIDE TO BEAUTIFUL BLESSIN

HOW **EVERYTHING HAPPENS** IS TRANSFORMING
ONLINE BARRIERS INTO LIFE-AFFIRMING COMMUNITY

BY STEPHANIE HUNT

On Thanksgiving night in 2020, Alex Treyz (M.Div., MPP '17) was a chaplain on call at the Duke medical center campus. A friend brought some turkey and fixings to the hospital for her, but Treyz was missing her family and feeling the despair of the pandemic, of not being able to be fully present for patients given the restrictions in place. "There was so much fear and loneliness for patients removed from their loved ones," Treyz said.

During her chaplaincy training, Treyz had read *Everything Happens for a Reason, and Other Lies I've Loved* by Kate Bowler, associate professor of the history of Christianity in North America at Duke Divinity School. The *New York Times* best-selling book had made an impression, offering valuable insights about illness, faith, and facing unanswerable questions, through Bowler's reflections on her diagnosis at age 35 with Stage IV colon cancer.



The Everything Happens Initiative hosts a popular podcast, nurtures an active online community, and produces a range of resources for people walking through this hard, beautiful life.

GS

WITH EQUAL PARTS humor and heartbreak, Bowler writes in a disarmingly personal, non-academic voice in the memoir, sharing with brutal honesty and tender hilarity about what it means when the bottom falls out. Suddenly she was confronting a terrifying prognosis—as a Christian, as a wife and mother of a young son, and as a scholar of religious history who ironically had just published a history of the prosperity gospel called *Blessed*. Like many who read *Everything Happens*, Bowler’s *New York Times* op-ed columns, or heard her on NPR’s *Fresh Air*, Treyz started following her on social media.

“As chaplains, we often felt helpless in the heavy days of COVID. Kate’s posts would pop up on my Instagram feed, and I’d see her blessings,” says Treyz. “On that particular Thanksgiving, she offered a blessing that voiced gratitude for health care workers caring for the sick. At a time when I was feeling low and alone, she gave words to my lived experience. There’s something about that sense of being seen and being kindred with others that can uplift you.”

Treyz, now a hospital chaplain in Charleston, S.C., did not study with Bowler at Duke and has never met her in person, but now three years after that pandemic Thanksgiving, she still values the sense of connection and community she feels from being one of Bowler’s 168,000 (and counting) Instagram followers. That’s exactly the point of the Everything Happens Initiative at Duke Divinity School, a multimedia project “dedicated to storytelling, research, and spiritual formation.” It has evolved from Bowler’s books, podcasting, and her social media presence, which are saturated with her Manitoba Mennonite-influenced wit and “incurable optimist” personality. The mission, according to the project’s website, “is simple: we seek to bear Christian witness to the fragility of life.”



Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie have co-authored two books of blessings “for the lives we already have.”

NOT ABSTRACT

The blessings that meant so much to Treyz are one aspect of the Everything Happens Initiative. The project also encompasses a wildly successful podcast series, now in its 11th season; three more best-selling books published since the initial *Everything Happens* memoir (including a book of devotionals and one of blessings co-authored by Bowler and Everything Happens project director Jessica Richie M.Div.’22); resources for pastors, congregations, and individuals; and a robust online presence via social media (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter/X).

Despite being the bright, smiling face of the initiative, Bowler is the first to admit that everything at Everything Happens happens thanks to her team of producers and managers, and with the help of supporters including Duke Divinity School, The Duke Endowment, the Lilly Endowment and Leadership Education.

“I could have done this as a more market-facing enterprise, but the goal was a mission-minded, institution-loving, faith and media organization that creates resources for people who are sad and tired. Everybody on our team is devoted full-time to creating resources for a person that we know,” said

Bowler of her audience. They are pastors, caregivers, and those like Treyz who are in emotionally costly professions, reeling from illness or loss or dealing with some leveling experience. “It’s not abstract at all. They write to us all the time; we respond to them all the time. We send care packages. We make things for people we feel like we know and love, and we do it from inside Duke Divinity. Everybody on the team is wildly over-educated: they have divinity degrees and master’s in social work, and that’s really important to us,” she said.

THE THEOLOGY OF INSTAGRAM

Knowing who her audience is, however, doesn’t mean Bowler initially knew how to cultivate and reach them. The project has entailed a steep learning curve that evolved out of her own experience of illness and isolation. For the last few years, Bowler, now seven years post-diagnosis, has felt “pretty good,” although the toll of chemotherapy, two major surgeries, and a long-shot—and fortunately successful—clinical trial, remains vivid. Everything Happens is her response to the depths of loneliness and despair that she experienced, barraged at every turn by the toxic American positivity and the messages prevalent in the prosperity gospel that she had spent years studying. The premise that “God promises abundance” and “You are blessed” rang hollow to this seemingly now not-so-blessed mom-slash-cancer-patient.

“It was one of the most surreal experiences of my life to be facing my impending death and feel like I had no one to tell. It seemed all too awful for anyone to hear; or the forms you want to give people, like ‘a life of faith has made all of this easier,’—well, that’s wasn’t true either,” Bowler said. “The myth that everything’s going to get better basically meant I had nothing to say. I felt overwhelmed by the silence created when there’s no acceptable way to be honest.” The one place she found solace was her

“THE MYTH THAT EVERYTHING’S GOING TO GET BETTER BASICALLY MEANT I HAD NOTHING TO SAY. I FELT OVERWHELMED BY THE SILENCE CREATED WHEN THERE’S NO ACCEPTABLE WAY TO BE HONEST.”

– KATE BOWLER

small online community of family members and Caring Bridge subscribers. And there were also her Divinity faculty colleagues who would “slip on their clerical collars at all hours to come be with me, flagrantly violating visiting hours in the way only clergy can,” Bowler laughed. “But this all really began with me posting health updates and people reaching out to bring meals or donate airline miles,” she said. “I’d never felt so alone, and connecting with people online made me feel less isolated.”

Bowler’s intellectual curiosity and theological lens quickly kicked into gear. She had spent five years studying and interviewing pastors’ wives for her scholarly book, *The Preacher’s Wife: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities*, a project that taught her about online ministries. “I knew a lot

about institutions because I’d studied largely men and big churches. But I didn’t know a lot about influence, which is to say how soft power works. Which is typically stuff that theological education does not invest in and frankly thinks is beneath them,” she said. “But I began to wonder and to think constructively about the theology of Instagram.” What would it mean to create a place for “people who want to practice being honest and want to have more courage, and what if we can do that together, even do it online? Even though that would seem like the last place on earth.”

BREAKING CULTURAL SCRIPTS

On January 30, 2018, a post on Bowler’s Instagram first hinted at an Everything Happens podcast. “This podcast is for those times when you realize that your life does not

look great on Instagram. I have conversations with wonderful and hilarious guests who don’t shy away from the dark,” her caption stated. Her first episode, a conversation with Nadia Bolz-Weber, launched in early February 2018, around the same time her memoir of the same title came out. In the early days, the podcast was largely a DIY endeavor, with a sound guy poached from the Duke athletics department. Today, some 145 episodes later, the production quality is professional, the aesthetics sharp, the following extensive. From the beginning, the guest roster has included revered thinkers in theological circles (Barbara Brown Taylor, Stanley Hauerwas, Elaine Pagels, the Archbishop of Canterbury) and some of the leading figures in popular culture (Susan Cain, Glennon Doyle, Malcolm Gladwell), as well as comedians, poets and authors,



Kate Bowler recording an episode of her podcast, *Everything Happens*.

Part of the Everything Happens team
(from l. to r.): Harriet Putman, Kate
Bowler, and Jessica Richie.



television personalities, and even a former supermodel.

The early days of cajoling podcast guests are long gone; now the team sifts through loads of incoming pitches from publicists and requests from those eager to be on it. With the pandemic largely over, they are glad to again be taping some episodes in person, with added video components, and occasionally traveling to be with guests on location, like the Archbishop in London—“Here I am with my very dainty tea cup,” said Bowler before introducing the Most Rev. Justin Welby in an episode that has since been downloaded more than 166,000 times.

For Bowler, hosting a podcast is not unlike teaching, which she continues to do, along with her range of faculty responsibilities. “As an academic, the only thing I really know how to do is language,” she explained. “That feeling I get in the classroom is exactly the feeling I’d get in a podcast conversation. Where you come in with the language you know, the books you’ve read, then partway through the conversation, something magical happens. If you’re lucky, there’s this fairy-dust moment where they’ve added some words and you’ve added some words, and together something is crystalized.” She’s discovered that podcasting and social media turn out to be a great place for breaking trite cultural scripts that discount grief and suffering, “precisely because that is the place where they are made.”

Listeners are responding, and that dream of a supportive online community that Bowler envisioned early on is now real, and robust. To date, 15 million listeners have downloaded the podcast, and a weekly email from Kate goes out to Everything Happens’ mailing list of 90,000. For executive producer and project director Jessica Richie, who finished her M.Div. at Duke while working full time with the project, the work feels like

her ministry. “It’s a gift all the time to get to serve real people with real problems with something meaningful and true,” she said. “People are using the language we’re making, the episodes, the blessings. It feels like food to them.” Richie is quick to add it’s never been the project’s aim to replace a real community or congregation, those who show up with actual meals. “People definitely still need casseroles!”

Every week Harriet Putman, the project coordinator and assistant producer, fields 20 or more letters and emails and five times that in social media direct messages from listeners with specific concerns, fears, needs, and requests. “We write back, we send resources, and our team prays for every one of them,” Putman said. She recalled responding recently to the mother of a three-week-old infant undergoing chemotherapy for a rare infantile myofibromatosis. “Thank you for bravely sharing. ... Thank you from the bottom of my healing heart,” the mother wrote. That message of “*thank you for making me feel less alone*” bubbles up constantly,” Putman said. “What we provide hasn’t cured or fixed anything. But I do think we are present in people’s digital lives, naming the human condition and affirming that yes, life is beautiful and terrible and hard.”

SMART CLASSY STUFF

Both Richie and Putman appreciate Bowler’s entrepreneurial spirit and the creativity that infuses the team. “Kate is all about trying new things and working with what we have at hand. We’re scrappy and agile, but

we stay true to our community. We never cross the line into self-help,” Richie said. When necessary, they’ve recorded episodes in garages or in closets. They’ve learned about algorithms and the art of 59-second reels. When the pandemic hit in 2020 and podcasting demand skyrocketed, they quickly ramped up from 20 planned episodes that year to 35, “basically one a week,” Richie said.

And now that their podcast production and engineering has hit a sturdy stride, the team is focusing on producing other resources, including liturgical guides for Lent, Easter, and Advent, and an Easter sermon resource guide that was downloaded 3,000 times. As Richie described it, the goal is to create a “deep well of evergreen content” built around themes. “Ministry Happens,” “Illness Happens,” and “Empathy Happens” are examples of packaged resources available for individuals or groups (Sunday schools, book clubs, support groups), all accessible from the Everything Happens website. Meanwhile, the needs of the broader church are always front and center. “Pastors are burnt-out and time-poor, and with the current beleagueredness of the institutional church, we want to offer really good support, so we make a lot of free, smart, classy stuff for them,” Bowler said.

According to Katherine Smith, the Divinity School’s associate dean for strategic initiatives, the Everything Happens Initiative occupies a unique space, extending Duke University and Divinity School to the broader public. “It’s an anomaly. Nothing else like it exists at Duke,” Smith said, adding

“WHAT WE PROVIDE HASN’T CURED OR FIXED ANYTHING. BUT I DO THINK WE ARE PRESENT IN PEOPLE’S DIGITAL LIVES, NAMING THE HUMAN CONDITION AND AFFIRMING THAT YES, LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL AND TERRIBLE AND HARD.” – HARRIET PUTMAN

that the project’s success and scale—growing from an average of 55,000 downloads per episode to now near 600,000 per episode, with more than 400,000 social media accounts that regularly repost and share content—has made Everything Happens “one of Duke’s most successful faculty-led initiatives, and I would argue has made Kate one of Duke’s most widely recognized brand ambassadors.”

It’s not about show or celebrity, however, but about furthering the Divinity School’s mission to “think about theological education beyond our walls,” Smith said. “Given the crosswinds facing organized religion in the U.S. and theological education in particular, it’s easy to see that we need a greater imagination for what God is doing. The Everything Happens project offers a beautiful and fascinating model for what a public theology looks like. They’ve figured out the mystery that’s elusive for others: How do we reach those who are not seeking out what we have to offer? In particular, how do we reach those hungering and thirsting for a true word they can actually hear in the life they actually have and not in the life that churches are waiting for them to inhabit?”

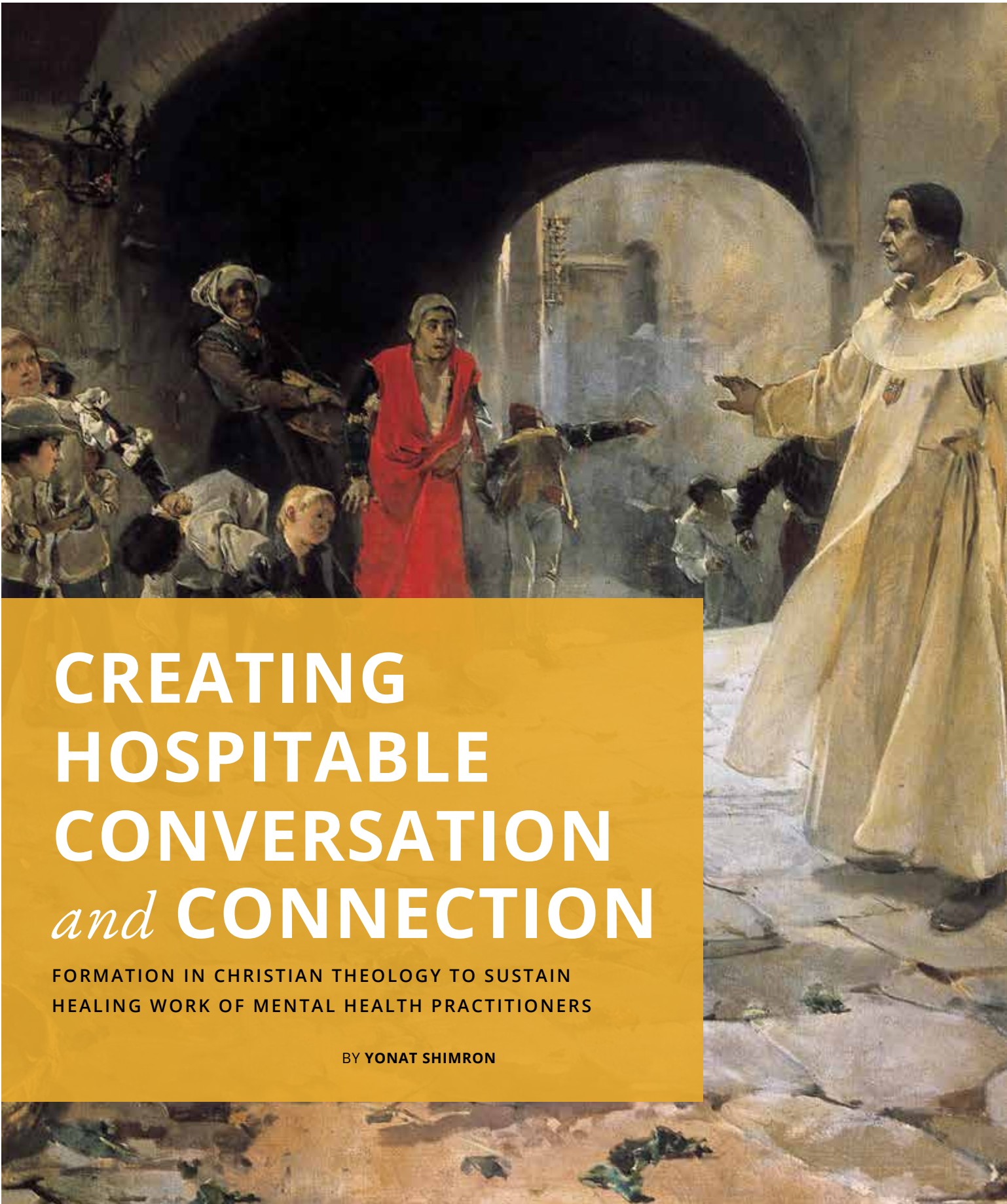
There’s a gut-punch line in her first memoir when Bowler, suddenly confronting a reality very different from the life she envisioned with her adorable toddler and husband and her dream job in “gargoyle land,” realizes, *I’m preparing for death, and everyone else is on Instagram*. Thanks to the witness of the Everything Happens Initiative, that divide, that stark “before-and-after” world, is no longer such a lonely, alienating place, at least online. “Our listeners and followers will always find honesty, courage, and a more nuanced account of hope and a message of interdependence,” Bowler said. “That’s my ongoing mission, to make the world a gentler place for people like me who are barely going to hit their okayest life now.”

A BLESSING (NOT #BLESSED) FOR THOSE WHO MINISTER

Oh God, we are surrounded by so many to love.
They need you. And we need you to carry *them*.
And us too, if we’re being honest.
Let love bear up the weight of us all.
Bless all the kids and grandkids.
Children here and those gone.
Bless the people who quicken our hearts,
now and in years past.
Bless our parents and grandparents;
strengthen our roots and our branches.
Bless our pets and your creation,
and the comfort they bring.
Bless our friends and chosen families,
all the bonds that hold us.
Bless our good, good work
that brings us purpose (or at least it used to
— and we long to discover it again).
God, I will openly admit
that my plan was to rescue us all.
Pry this out of my hands.
Absolve my guilt.
Calm my spirit.
Let me allow you to do the impossible
and bear up the weight of the world
I am determined to carry alone.
Give me enough for today.
And then some for tomorrow too.
As I share myself, my loves, my burdens
with you, oh God.
Thank you for this love,
this absurd and wonderful love.

*“Whoever brings blessing
will be enriched,
and those who water
will themselves be watered.”
— Proverbs 11:25 (ESV alt.)*

*The Lives We Actually
Have: 100 Blessings
for Imperfect Days,
by Kate Bowler
and Jessica Richie
(Convergent, 2023).
Used with permission.*



CREATING HOSPITABLE CONVERSATION *and* CONNECTION

FORMATION IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY TO SUSTAIN
HEALING WORK OF MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

BY YONAT SHIMRON



Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida
(1863–1923), *Father Jafré
Protecting a Madman*, 1887,
oil on canvas, Palau de la
Generalitat, Valencia.

As a second-year student at Harvard Medical School, Warren Kinghorn took a class that taught would-be doctors how to make mental-health diagnoses using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Leafing through its many pages, he found the standard protocol for diagnosing mental illness sterile and dull.

“It was incredibly lifeless,” said Kinghorn, who has a joint appointment as the Esther Colliflower Associate Research Professor of Pastoral and Moral Theology at Duke Divinity School and associate professor of psychiatry at Duke University Medical Center.

Frustrated with what he saw as a reductionist approach to mental health, Kinghorn took two years off from medical school and earned a Master of Theological Studies degree at Duke Divinity. Through it, he was able to ground himself more deeply in his Christian faith and form spiritual habits and disciplines that would inform his practice of medicine.

He then returned to Harvard to complete his medical degree; during his residency at Duke, he decided to specialize in psychiatry. “It was actually the theological study that led me into the work of psychiatry,” he said. “I think I love psychiatry in part because of my study of theology.”

Now both a staff psychiatrist at the Durham VA Medical Center and the co-director of the Theology, Medicine, and Culture (TMC) initiative at Duke Divinity, Kinghorn wants to offer other mental health practitioners—psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, licensed marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical mental health counselors, and others—an opportunity to delve into those spiritual disciplines and perspectives that can nurture their life and work.



Warren Kinghorn John Swinton

Kinghorn’s vision is shared by theologian John Swinton, Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland) and consulting faculty at Duke Divinity.

Swinton is also a registered mental health nurse and renowned expert in disability theology. Together with their TMC colleagues, Kinghorn and Swinton have created a track in the Certificate in Theology and Health Care for mental health practitioners.

THE HOSPITABLE CONVERSATION

“What we’re trying to do is to create a hospitable conversation between the things that theology can bring and the current practice of mental health across the board,” said Swinton. “It’s also hospitable in the sense that we want to learn from one another.”

Swinton, who worked for 16 years as a psychiatric nurse before going into academia, has argued that spirituality is a forgotten dimension of mental health care—to the detriment of both the patient and the practitioner. An appreciation for spirituality more broadly can help mental health practitioners personally, by giving meaning and purpose to their work.

“It means that you see things differently, and when you see things differently you practice differently,” said Swinton. “Theology opens up perspectives and options for understanding and practice that are vital for effective mental health care. *Is God really in religious delusions? Where is God when you have forgotten who God is? Where is God when I as a practitioner am overwhelmed? What is the role of prayer and the Holy Spirit in my practice? Are healing and curing the*

same things? These theological questions help us to look at our experiences and those of our clients differently. The certificate track will help us explore such complex questions and develop new ways of caring that are compassionate, spiritual, and faithful to the God we seek to worship in all of our lives.”

A grounding in Christian theology and practice can also give mental health providers more perspective on the conditions or the symptoms that a patient is experiencing. A patient suffering from depression might be reminded that her sense of disconnection to the world is not a failure of faith, nor is it alien to the Christian tradition. Jesus too felt abandoned on the cross, crying out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). A patient suffering from dementia—as well as loved ones—might be counseled that their identity as a Christian is not dependent on their capacity to remember. Their identity rests with God.

The mental health track of the certificate aims to equip professionals to view their psychologically struggling patients as people of intrinsic worth made in God’s image and on a common quest for wholeness. Jesus’ proclamation in the Gospel of

John—“I came that they might have life and have it abundantly”—refers to those with mental health problems as well.

Both Kinghorn and Swinton use the image of human beings on a journey, regardless of their emotional afflictions. “We want them to be able to understand the human person not as a machine but as someone who is a wayfarer or a pilgrim, someone who’s on a path,” said Kinghorn.

In seeking to provide good care, mental health clinicians often wonder, *What new technique or technology can I use to fix my patients’ problems?* “But good mental health care is not a matter of fixing,” Kinghorn said. “Instead, it’s about being a person who can walk alongside those who are suffering, with wisdom, compassion, patience, and joy. We’re inviting clinicians to dig deeply into the resources of their faith to sustain that healing work.”

A CHRISTIAN TRADITION OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Psychiatry and religion have had a fraught relationship over the years. Freud, who was raised in a Jewish home, considered himself an atheist and famously thought belief in

NEW FORMATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

The mental health track of the **Certificate in Theology and Health Care** is another example of the innovative programs at Duke Divinity School that cross disciplinary boundaries to create “hospitable conversations” between theology and other fields.

Through graduate coursework, formation seminars, and mentorship, this one-year certificate will engage mental health clinicians in any discipline who desire to deepen and to strengthen their practice by connecting their healing work to the resources of Christian faith. Specifically, the program will appeal to clinical psychologists (Ph.D., Psy.D.), clinical social workers (L.C.S.W. or equivalent), marriage and family therapists (L.M.F.T. or equivalent), licensed professional counselors (L.P.C. or equivalent), psychiatric nurse practitioners or physician assistants, psychiatrists (M.D. or D.O.), and licensed substance use counselors.

You can find more information on the Certificate in Theology and Health Care at the TMC website (tmc.divinity.duke.edu).

“GOOD MENTAL HEALTH CARE IS NOT A MATTER OF FIXING. INSTEAD, IT’S ABOUT BEING A PERSON WHO CAN WALK ALONGSIDE THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING, WITH WISDOM, COMPASSION, PATIENCE, AND JOY.”

– WARREN KINGHORN

God was a kind of neurosis—a longing for a father figure. Although he later came to see religion as playing a more positive role, the field of psychiatry initially regarded religion with suspicion.

Standard psychiatric assessment and treatment is still expected to be rigorously empirical and scientific. But the tension between psychiatry and religion has eased—and relations even warmed—in the past few decades.

For many patients, religion is not only important in their lives but the central aspect of coping with life’s difficult challenges. In fact, according to a survey of research conducted by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (U.K.), religious people often have better indices of mental health than do people with no religion. Similarly, mental health professionals are finding that they can better deal with the stress and exhaustion of their jobs if they are grounded in a faith tradition that guides them and gives their work value and meaning.

Care for those suffering from mental illness predates modern psychiatry, and scholars credit Gilabert Jofré (1364–1417), a Spanish priest in the Order of Mercy, with founding the first psychiatric hospital in Europe. He was serving in the city of Valencia when he came across a group of teenage boys throwing stones at a bloodied, half-naked person, described in the literature as a “madman.”

The priest picked up the man and carried him to his convent, and then he preached a Lenten sermon at the city’s cathedral, urging Christians to establish a hospital for Valencia’s mentally ill. The Hospital of the Innocents was formed in 1410, little more than a year after the sermon.

It was an extension of the Christian notion of hospitality and the recognition that all people—including the mentally ill—have human dignity and are capable of knowing and loving God. That powerful Christian belief has informed countless other Christian efforts through the years, including notably during the 1940s, when some 1,500 Mennonites served in American psychiatric hospitals as part of Civilian Public Service (an alternative to the draft) and later established a series of homes for the mentally ill.

A COMMITMENT TO CARE

The story of Christianity’s commitment to mental health care continues today. A 2023 graduate from the Certificate in Theology and Health Care program, Robin Liles, has begun a practice of clinical mental health at her church, First UMC in Asheboro, N.C.

Liles has a Ph.D. in counseling and counselor education, and she is a licensed professional counselor and retired counseling professor at North Carolina A&T State University. As she sat in her classes at Duke Divinity, she could see how she might infuse theology in her counseling sessions, “even if it didn’t mean outright discussions of theology,” with clients, which she thinks isn’t necessary.

She is applying what she has learned in a new, church-based mental health practice. She meets with clients in a specially designated room in the church. Not all her clients are church members, but they are all referred to her by the church’s pastor.

Liles tells all new clients at the beginning of their time that she is inviting God’s presence into the counseling session and asks if they feel comfortable with that. If they aren’t, she is willing to refer them to someone else.

She often prays silently during the session, but on occasion she has asked clients if they would like to pray together. Most, she said, welcome it.

“I believe in healing through prayer, but I don’t necessarily think that everyone is in a space where they can receive that level of healing, and I’m not trying to push them to that space,” Liles said. “I’m meeting them where they are.”


Liles’ church practice is only a few months old, but she has already decided to make it the subject of her thesis for the Doctor of Ministry program she has begun at Duke. In particular, she is focused on research protocols that might bridge the historical bifurcation of theology and psychology.

A MODEL OF FRIENDSHIP

Kinghorn and Swinton want to encourage professionals in the mental health track to develop fresh ideas and models for mental health care that better meets the needs of both patients and practitioners.

The two have known each other for years, having met frequently at conferences and other professional gatherings, and have discussed the mental health track for about a decade.

They hope their friendship and professional ties will be a model for mental health practitioners, too.

“The idea, really, is to develop a physical community and an online community where all of us can get together and discuss these issues and all of us can grow,” said Swinton. “At the end of that time when we leave, we will leave not only more informed, but hopefully we will also leave as better people.” 



FULLY ONLINE

Divinity+ courses are accessible from anywhere. Courses are designed to support you wherever your ministry and leadership takes you.



YOU SET THE PACE

Most Divinity+ courses are self-paced. Some courses offer group options with a facilitator guide or a blended course with live and online session options.



PART-TIME

Divinity+ courses are designed to meet the needs of busy people needing flexibility in pursuing personal and professional development goals.



Introducing

Church Administration Course 2: Strategic Management

NEW online course for church pastors and leaders

LAUNCHING OCTOBER 2023

In case you missed it . . .

Church Administration 1: Theology and Time Management

Duration: 4 weeks AVAILABLE NOW!



FOR MORE INFO VISIT: plus.divinity.duke.edu — OR — email: divinityonline@duke.edu

NEWS & NOTES



Detail from *Ode to the Holy Trinity*, by Daozi.
Scroll, ink, and watercolor on paper, 2018.

SHORT STORY

A THEOLOGY PROFESSOR WALKS INTO A BAR ... AND A BIBLE STUDY BREAKS OUT

How God's relentless love transformed the lives of people who didn't feel welcome at church



The Rev. Lacey Warner (center), with two members of the Bible study at an event to support survivors of human trafficking.

In December 2021, Lacey Warner was not planning to start a Bible study group. She already had a full schedule: she was the Royce and Jane Reynolds Associate Professor of the Practice of Evangelism and Methodist Studies and the associate dean for Wesleyan engagement and hybrid programs at Duke Divinity School. She was an interim co-pastor of a UMC church with her husband, Gaston. She was an in-demand speaker and actively involved in the Texas Annual Conference.

But one evening Warner was visiting the restaurant/bar owned by her neighbor in their small, rural Texas town. As they talked, the neighbor described her questions about God and her discomfort in church. People sitting at nearby tables first listened in and then joined the conversation. They also felt uncomfortable in church. They also had questions about God. From that spontaneous, unplanned conversation, a Bible study group was formed. As Warner said, “The Holy Spirit gathered a group of people who were wounded by the church, but who were also hungry to learn about God. The topic that drew us and kept us gathered was God and the many embodiments of church.”

Nearly a dozen regular participants and other frequent visitors joined Warner week after week at the bar to learn more about the Bible and to talk about God. Most of them had suffered trauma and loss—incarceration, addiction, abuse, and more. They felt excluded, ignored, or criticized by the churches they knew, despite their hunger for and interest in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible study gathering was declared to be a time and place of “no judgment” among and beyond participants. Inspired by Psalm 62:7, which says that God is the “author of salvation,” the group agreed: “Our main role is to love God and love each other well.”

The Rev. Lacey Warner baptizes a member of the Bible study group in a service held in her backyard.



At the beginning of every gathering, each participant would share where they had seen God at work in their lives and community. “No matter how sad, angry, guilty, or grumpy, we share about God’s work of love in our lives and in the world,” Warner said. “And, if I cannot see God, my neighbor describes God’s work in and through me. The testimonies that unfold during these initial minutes set the tone for our prayers and biblical study. We’ve discovered that the more we practice seeing God, the more of God’s work in the world we see.”

The Bible is often mistakenly described as a rule book or a reference manual. But the Bible is the narrative of God’s salvation for all creation, the story of God’s unrelenting love. As the group studied the Bible to learn about God’s forgiveness extended to all in Jesus Christ, they began to see themselves transformed by receiving and participating in God’s forgiveness. “We discover the depths of love’s possibilities in hearing the confession of a long-held deep wound of betrayal and the request for forgiveness. In offering that forgiveness, we release the burden of the wound-wielder and receive God’s healing for the wounded—that is the gospel of Jesus Christ,” said Warner.

Bible study and Christian practice need each other—a mutually reinforcing rhythm that moves toward holiness. Formation as a Christian disciple begins at baptism and continues through participation in God’s work of sanctifying in love. The Bible study group, filled with people whose lives had often not been deemed “churchy” enough, was moved by the story of Scripture to participate in God’s work in changing the world. After reading the Magnificat together,

they lamented the persistent oppression of systemic poverty and gender exploitation. They decided to join a fundraiser event to support survivors of human trafficking in their own community.

Two participants wanted to be baptized, and Warner baptized them in a service held in her backyard. Each member of the group visited the church where the Warners were pastoring. “In the context of this Bible study, I have witnessed the kind of inquiry, embrace, and sharing of the gospel I describe and long for when teaching seminary students at Duke Divinity School,” Warner said. “This is church in a New Testament, particularly Acts of the Apostles, Paul-meets-Lydia kind of way.”

According to Ephesians 2:14, Jesus tears down the dividing walls of hostility, and

through God’s relentless love in Jesus Christ, people can find peace with God and each other. Too often churches want to maintain the barriers to the community of faith that Jesus has removed.

What began as a conversation one December night between a theology professor and her neighbor at a bar grew into a community of people who found that God’s welcome extended to them, no matter their race, gender, trauma, history, or conformity to expectations of appropriate “church” behavior. As Warner said, this gathering demonstrates “God’s work in us to courageously and persistently respond to the Holy Spirit’s compelling us to share God’s relentless love in Jesus Christ.” ♦



Victoria Atkinson White lectures for the Interfaith Lecture Series in the Hall of Philosophy.

CHURCHES PROMOTING RECOVERY OFFERS RESOURCES FOR THE OPIOID CRISIS

Churches Promoting Recovery (CPR), a project of the Theology, Medicine, and Culture initiative at Duke Divinity School, seeks to equip Christian communities in North Carolina and beyond to respond faithfully to substance-use issues and to support and empower people affected by these challenges. Drawing from the wisdom of trauma-informed care, CPR creates, curates, and disseminates theologically grounded resources for Christian faith communities of all denominations. Resources include Bible studies, sermons, prayers, toolkits, programs, action guides, websites, books, and articles are now available on the CPR website: churchespromotingrecovery.com

THREE DIVINITY WOMEN SPEAK AT CHAUTAUQUA INSTITUTION

The Chautauqua Institution invited three women from Duke Divinity School as lecturers for their 2023 Interfaith Lecture Series. For the theme “On Friendship” in Week One, Victoria Atkinson White, managing director of grants for Leadership Education at Duke Divinity, taught two master classes on “Holy Friendship: Source of Strength and Challenge.” Kate Bowler, associate professor of American religious history, gave a featured lecture on the decline in religious affiliation in U.S. in favor of commercial individualism during the Chautauqua Lecture Series Week Four theme, “The State of Believing.” She and Katherine Smith, associate dean for strategic initiatives, also held a public conversation that week.

“For close to 150 years, Chautauqua has lived into its reputation for being a relevant, provocative, and thoughtful seedbed of discussion, exploration, and discovery, addressing the most pressing religious, social and political issues of the time,” White said. “Lecturing in the Hall of Philosophy about holy friendships enabled me to offer some thoughts on what it means to be human—seeking friendship, connection, and belonging in a world fraught with individualism and loneliness.”

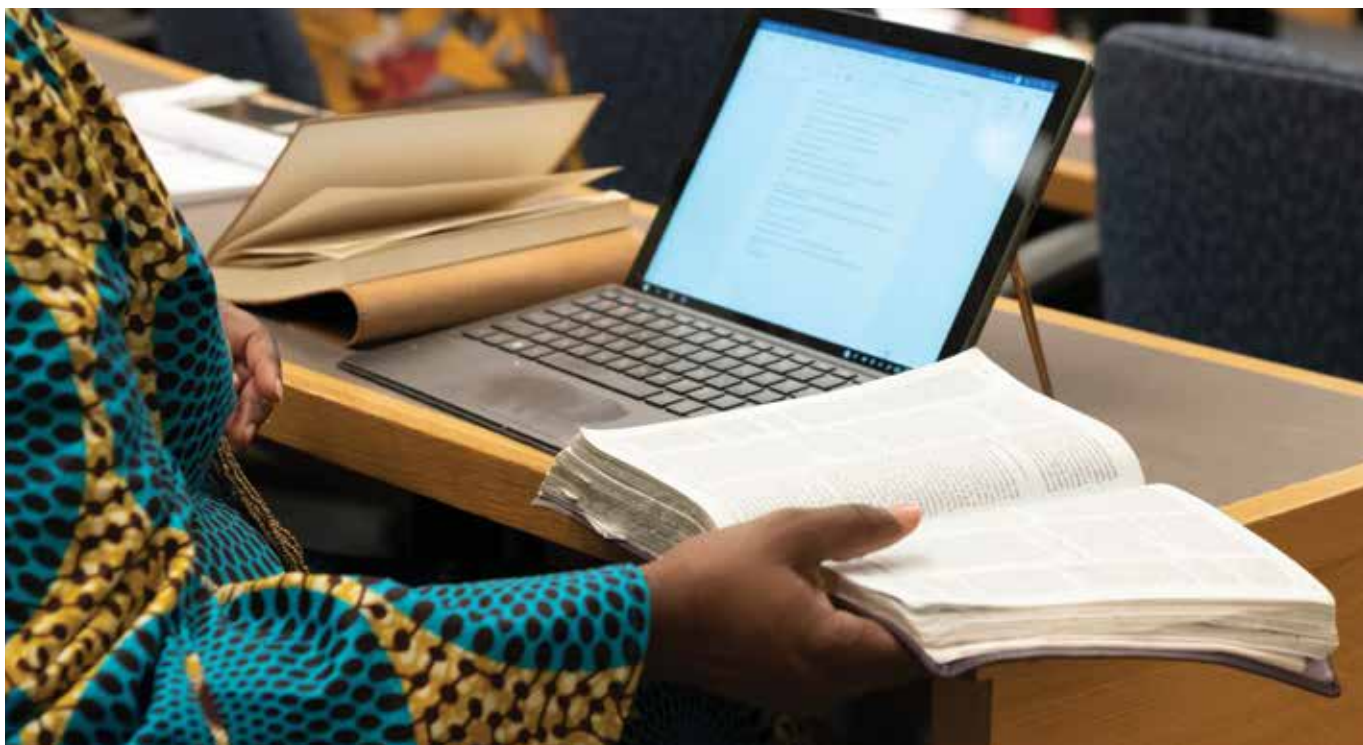


CERTIFICATE IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION INVITES APPLICANTS

The Certificate in Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation (CCTR) welcomes applications for the next cohort of participants in this program focused on equipping pastors and lay leaders to respond to conflict-related needs in their families, congregations, and communities. “These unprecedentedly divisive times had led this cynical and pessimistic layperson to view conflict with others as a dead end,” said Larry Reeves, from Epworth UMC in Durham, N.C., and a member of the first CCTR cohort. “I now view disagreements as opportunities—opportunities to reach common ground by using Christ’s teachings on respect and compassion to transform constructively not just my foe but especially myself, for which I am most grateful.”

Using a Freirean pedagogy, each cohort seeks to become a learning community in which everyone has something of value to contribute. CCTR participants are invited to

cultivate a theology, tools, and a personal disposition to help them recognize conflict as intrinsic to the human experience and then to seek transformation and reconciliation by addressing expressions of injustice in their respective contexts. “I enrolled in the Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation program in search of the equipping and encouragement needed to help bring about healing conversations in our churches, communities, and beyond,” said Laura Greer, a cohort member from Long Chapel UMC in Waynesville, N.C. “In this time of conflict and division across our nation, the need to listen to one another and seek understanding is vital. I am grateful for the inspiration, awareness, and practical tools this program provides, as we seek to be vessels of God’s healing in a hurting world.” For more information on the program or to apply, see divinity.duke.edu/initiatives/cfr



TRANSCENDENCE + IMMANENCE: THE SACRED INK WASH ART OF DAOZI

Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts (DITA) hosted the esteemed Chinese contemporary poet, critic, and painter DaoZi for a gallery installation and visit. Also known as Wang Min, DaoZi works in a unique style called Sacred Ink Wash Painting, through which he combines traditional Chinese ink painting techniques and materials with themes informed by his Christian faith. In *Transcendence + Immanence*, the artist uses the technique of ink wash painting to call for redemption, criticize darkness, and point to a spiritual world of universal values. On display in Duke Chapel and in the Westbrook Building of Duke Divinity School Oct. 20–Nov. 26, the exhibit focused on a selection of representative pieces from the artist's vast body of work since 2007. It is the U.S. premiere for this installation.

An artist of faith with extensive knowledge of art history, DaoZi also gave an artist lecture, "The Spirit of Christ and Holy Ink Painting," at Duke Divinity School on Oct. 26 that examined the canon of sacred art as well as the theological connections between his Christian faith and the unique medium of Sacred Ink Wash Painting. Additional opening-week events included a gallery reception with music by the Duke Chapel Choir.



"Blessing of the Autumn Rain," Sacred Ink Wash by DaoZi, 2018



SAVE THE DATE! SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR RECONCILIATION

The 2024 Summer Institute for Reconciliation will be held May 15–17 at Duke Divinity School. Designed with morning plenaries and afternoon breakout seminars, the Summer Institute is structured around themes of New Creation, Lament, and Hope & Liberation, and offers participants more extensive conversations around climate change, creation care, conflict transformation and reconciliation, and justice. Christian leaders examine these topics from theological and practical perspectives to cultivate resilience and to continue working for reconciliation and transformation. Claudia Oviedo, a first-time participant in 2023, said, "It was a gift to be surrounded by people with a calling. ... The topics provided so much reflection, and even if we have so much to lament, we also have so much hope to look forward to." Recordings of 2023 plenary sessions are available on the YouTube channel of the Center for Reconciliation (CFR). Subscribe to the CFR newsletter for more information about speakers and panels as well as registration information for the 2024 Summer Institute.



Divinity students and staff leaders from 2023 Project Bri(DDD)ge.

PROJECT BRI(DDD)GE INTRODUCES STUDENTS TO MINISTRY IN DURHAM

Since 1991, the Office of Student Life has offered Project Bri(DDD)ge, (Building Relationships In Durham through Duke Divinity Graduate Education). This intensive pre-orientation program for students entering all degree and certificate programs seeks to nurture Christian outreach within the Durham community and bridge areas of separation. Director Sarah Belles and incoming Divinity students participated in a DurhamCares Pilgrimage, shared worship at First Calvary Baptist Church, and served at Open Table Ministry, which walks with people experiencing homelessness in Durham. “The Bri(DDD)ge experience was a terrific welcome into the Duke community. I couldn’t have imagined a better process of transition into a new community and a new field,” said DNicole Williams, M.Div.’22. “It allowed me to consider the theological implications of societal boundaries, and thanks to Bri(DDD)ge, I now have a formulation of how to be a bridge and how to build bridges.”

BEYOND MEASURE: A MUSICAL CELEBRATION FOR ABUNDANTLY MORE

A musical evening was held to celebrate the release of *Abundantly More*, a new book by Jeremy Begbie, Thomas A. Langford Distinguished Research Professor of Theology and the Arts and the McDonald Agape Director of Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts. Featuring players from the New Caritas Orchestra and directed by Begbie, the program explored the power of music—along with words and images—to expand theological imagination. From classical to contemporary music, poetry to paintings, violas to timpani, the evening was a celebration of the superabundant life of Christ and the love of God that is beyond measure.



STUDENTS AND ALUMNI RELEASE A NEW SONG

A group of students and alumni at Blacknall Church in Durham, N.C., have formed the Blacknall Arts group and have released their first single, “Living Water.” The song was written by Sarah Lapp, a Divinity student in a hymn writing class with Zebulon Highben, associate professor of the practice of church music and director of chapel music at Duke University Chapel. In the recording, Lapp plays the fiddle alongside Divinity alumni and fellow musicians Kat Burgett, Timothy Crouch, and Wen Reagan. Reagan also serves as consulting professor of worship at Duke Divinity. A link to the song is available at onerpm.link/372291315319.

ORMOND CENTER PARTNERS WITH CHURCHES IN THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING LAB

In partnership with six churches across North Carolina, the Ormond Center has launched the Church and Community Placemaking Lab, which focuses on the ways churches can use their property for purposeful service in their communities. Participating churches include Central UMC in Asheville, Macedonia UMC in Cary, Church of the Holy Spirit in Greensboro, First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, First Presbyterian Church in Kinston, and All Saints Episcopal Church in Warrenton. This fall, they presented initial plans for their projects, described by Dean Edgardo Colón-Emeric as examples of “little Pentecosts that are showing that we are not just in a place, but for a place.” To learn more about the projects and the Church and Community Placemaking Lab, visit ormondcenter.com and subscribe to its newsletter.

SHARING GOD’S HOPEFUL AND PARTICIPATORY LOVE Central United Methodist Church—Asheville

For almost 190 years, Central UMC has been placed in the heart of downtown Asheville. The church desires to walk alongside its downtown community and has developed a four-fold strategy focused on education, food accessibility, a public park, and utilizing building space.

CONNECTING THE ISOLATED TO GOD’S FAMILY Macedonia United Methodist Church—Cary

In the mid 1990s, the town of Cary experienced massive growth, and with its prime location in the area, Macedonia UMC saw rising church attendance. But in recent years, church attendance has dropped, and the church wanted to better use its 25,000-square-foot facility to serve its mission—to connect isolated people to God’s family. It has studied the mental health options in its community and plans to offer services through mental health providers.

STEWARDING LAND FOR THE LEAST OF THESE Church of the Holy Spirit—Greensboro

Church of the Holy Spirit is located on 11 acres of undeveloped wooded land. When they bought the property, church and community leaders dreamed of stewarding the land to impact the community in a meaningful way. With their twin commitments to environmental preservation and affordable housing, they are making the most of new opportunities for their church and land to be beautiful assets that can serve the “least of these.”

CREATING SPACES OF BELOVEDNESS First Presbyterian Church—Greensboro

For almost 200 years, First Presbyterian Church has served the city of Greensboro. This downtown church is made up of teachers, doctors, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. In order to meet needs in the neighborhood around them, the church wants to revitalize its Shelter building, which has been empty, to offer affordable housing and community

to the elderly. The church believes this space can become a place where people know they are beloved by God—where their names are known by the community and where people want to be part of each other’s lives.

GROWING INTO GOD’S CALLING First Presbyterian Church—Kinston

Founded in the late 1800s, First Presbyterian Church in Kinston has seen membership dwindle from 850 to 180. Instead of becoming insular, the church wants to live out its faith and repurpose its property to allow others to grow and thrive in its space. With a focus on using their church space to serve neighbors who are substantially food insecure and hungry, they are working to partner with the Boys and Girls club, the local school district, and the local food bank to help provide food for children over the weekend when schools are closed.

REIMAGINING SERVICE AND WORSHIP All Saints Episcopal Church—Warrenton

All Saints Episcopal Church was born from a desire to have a Black church where people could worship in Warrenton, and it offered regular worship from 1910 to 2015 when it closed due to needed property repairs that it could not sustain. But they are now reimagining how All Saints could be a loving presence in Warrenton aside from regular worship, including through a partnership with a neighborhood food hub that provides education on environmental and economic justice.

CFR PARTNERS HOST SUMMER GATHERINGS

International partners in Asia, Africa, and the Americas gathered for their annual in-person meetings. While applying the CFR's Word Made Flesh methodology, they considered serious issues affecting their respective contexts, lamented together, and discerned the next steps to pursue God's signs of hope around them.

The Northeast Asian Reconciliation Initiative (NARI) met in Paju, South Korea, June 5–10, to celebrate its 10th Reconciliation Forum. The NARI Council members met after the forum to strategize for the future of their regional initiative.



The Great Lakes Initiative (GLI) met in Kampala, Uganda, June 18–24, to celebrate its 12th Leadership Institute on Reconciliation. Dean Edgardo Colón-Emeric and GLI leaders were hosted by Mama Christine at her home in Watoto Suubi Children's Village.



Forty-nine leaders of the organizations, congregations, and academic institutions affiliated with the Americas Initiative for Transformation and Reconciliation (AITR) met in Río Negro, Colombia, July 23–26, for their second in-person gathering.



DIVINITY FACULTY PARTICIPATE IN "A LIFE WELL LIVED" CONVERSATION

Divinity professors C. Kavin Rowe, George Washington Ivey Distinguished Professor of New Testament and vice dean of faculty, and Sarah Jean Barton, assistant professor of occupational therapy and theological ethics, participated in a roundtable discussion sponsored by Forever Duke, for all Duke University alumni. The conversation was part of the Transformative Ideas series at Forever Learning Institute. Philosophers and theologians from across the university offered their perspectives on one of humanity's enduring questions: What is a life well-lived? Rowe is also co-teaching the Transformative Ideas undergraduate course available to Duke sophomores on, "The Good Life: Religion, Philosophy, and Life's Ultimate Concerns." The roundtable discussion is available at the Forever Learning Institute's YouTube channel.



KEEP UP WITH ALL THE NEWS AND EVENTS AT DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL!

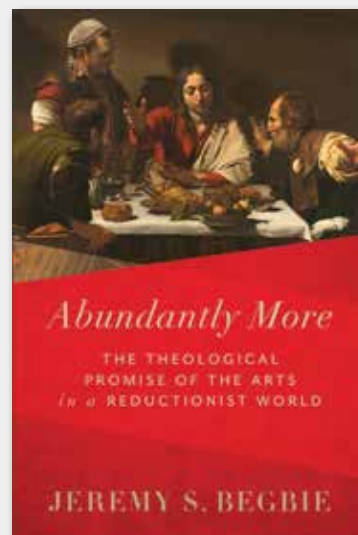
Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, and sign up for our e-newsletter!

Abundantly More:

THE THEOLOGICAL PROMISE OF THE ARTS IN A REDUCTIONIST WORLD

By Jeremy S. Begbie, *Thomas A. Langford Distinguished Research Professor of Theology and McDonald Agape Director of Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts, Baker Academic, 2023*

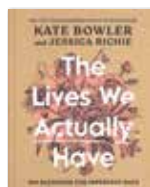
LATE-MODERN CULTURE has been marred by reductionism, which shrinks and flattens our vision of ourselves and the world. In this book, Begbie analyzes and critiques reductionism and its effects, showing how the arts can resist reductive impulses by opening us up to an unlimited abundance of meaning. Engaging the arts in light of a trinitarian imagination (which itself cuts against reductionism) generates a unique way of witnessing to and sharing in the life and purposes of God and helps us understand and experience more deeply the infinite richness of God's love and of the world God has made. Theologians, artists, and any who are interested in how these fields intersect will find rich resources here and discover the crucial role the arts can play in keeping our culture open to the possibility of God.



The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days

By Kate Bowler, *Associate Professor of American Religious History*, and Jessica Richie, *Executive Director of the Everything Happens Initiative*
Convergent Books, 2023

WE LIVE IN A WORLD that demands relentless perfection. Happy marriages and easy friendships. Bucket list-level adventures and matching family photos. But what if our actual lives don't feel

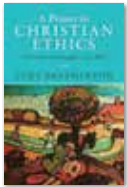


very #blessed? Might our everyday existence be worthy of a blessing too? Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie offer creative, faith-based blessings that center gratitude and hope while acknowledging our real, messy lives, providing an oasis for weary souls. These heartfelt blessings are a chance to exhale when we feel everything from careworn to restless, devastated to bored. They remind us that we don't need to wait for perfect lives when we can bless the lives we actually have.

A Primer in Christian Ethics: Christ and the Struggle to Live Well

By Luke Bretherton, *Robert E. Cushman Distinguished Professor of Moral and Political Theology*
Cambridge University Press, 2023

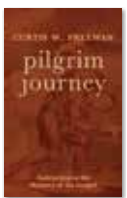
HOW DOES Christian belief and practice relate to living well amid the difficulties of everyday life and the catastrophes and injustices that afflict so many today? In this introduction to Christian ethics, Bretherton provides a new, constructive framework for addressing this question. Connecting the theory and practice of Christian moral thought to contemporary existential concerns, this book integrates classic approaches to the pursuit of wisdom with contemporary liberationist and critical voices. The relationship between human and nonhuman life provides a central focus to the work, foregrounding environmental justice. As well as addressing a broad range of ethical questions, Bretherton situates moral formation and the pursuit of human and nonhuman flourishing alongside a concern for spirituality, pastoral care, and political struggles to survive and thrive in the contemporary context. Written for those seeking a place to start, as well as those seasoned in the field, Bretherton's book provides an innovative ethical framework that moves beyond many of the impasses that shape current moral and political debates.



Pilgrim Journey: Instruction in the Mystery of the Gospel

By Curtis Freeman,
Research Professor of Theology and Baptist Studies
Fortress Press, 2023

PILGRIM JOURNEY guides newly baptized Christians to discern the mysteries of the gospel, written as a series of letters by Interpreter, the teacher, to Pilgrim, the newly baptized Christian. The theological and ecclesial scope of the letters is evangelical-catholic, free church-ecumenical, and ancient-future. Each letter is shaped by the prophetic imagination of the biblical illustrations of William Blake and informed by the narrative spirituality of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. The introduction looks into the mystery of redemption hidden through the ages and revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The program of instruction contains the exposition of seven mysteries, including the Trinity, the nature of Jesus Christ, the canon of Scripture, and more.



These deep, hidden, and mysterious truths shape the daily active living of Christians as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Napkin Theology: Small Drawings about Big Ideas

By Emily Lund, *Director of Communications for Leadership Education*, and Tyler Hansen
Cascade Books, 2023

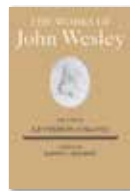
MANY CHRISTIANS know that something mysterious and powerful happens on the cross—and that it has something to do with salvation. They know that God created out of nothing. They know that Jesus was both human and divine. But what do those various doctrines and concepts have to do with one another? This book provides an accessible, rich introduction to Christian theology, illustrated with simple, memorable drawings that describe the classic concepts of Christian belief. It offers a glimpse of the depths of two thousand years of theology in the length of a CliffsNotes guide. Far from watered-down, the book explains terms like *creatio ex nihilo* and *eschatology* because they contain truths that all Christians, and not just seminarians, should know. Theology is for everyone—so let's start drawing.



The Works of John Wesley, Volume 28: Letters IV (1766–1773)

By Randy Maddox, *William Kellon Quick Professor Emeritus of Theology and Methodist Studies*
Abingdon Press, 2023

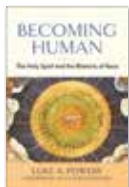
THE CORRESPONDENCE presented in this fourth volume of Wesley's letters casts light on the growth of his movement, documenting (for example) the emergence of connection-wide financial campaigns and continuing debates over the desire of lay preachers for ordination. It covers the decisive split between the Wesleyan and Calvinist wings of Methodism, including the ways in which Charles Wesley drew closer to his brother through these developments. The volume includes over 100 items not found in previous editions of Wesley's letters.



Becoming Human: The Spirit, Race, and the Future of Proclamation

By Luke Powery, *Professor of Homiletics and Dean of Duke Chapel*
Westminster John Knox Press, 2022

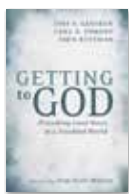
DISCUSSIONS OF racial difference always embody a story. The dominant story told in our society about race has many components, but two stand out: (1) racial difference is an essential characteristic, fully determining individual and group identity; and (2) racial difference means that some bodies are less human than others. The church knows another story, if it would remember it. That story says that the diversity of human bodies is one of the gifts of the Spirit. That story's decisive chapter comes at Pentecost, when the Spirit embraces all bodies, all flesh, all tongues. In that story, different kinds of materiality and embodiment are strengths to be celebrated rather than inconvenient facts to be ignored or feared. In this book, Powery urges the church to live up to the inclusive story of Pentecost in its life of worship and ministry. He reviews ways that a theology and practice of preaching can more fully exemplify the diversity of gifts God gives to the church. He concludes by entering into a conversation with the work of Howard Thurman on doing ministry to and with humanity in the light of the work of the Spirit.



Getting to God: Preaching Good News in a Trouble World

Luke Powery, *Professor of Homiletics and Dean of Duke Chapel*,
and Joni S. Sancken and John Rottman
Cascade, 2023

DURING TIMES of deep trouble, God generates new and creative ways to break through the fear and pain to get to us even as we seek to get to God. What we say on Sunday morning matters, and nothing is more important than communicating the power and presence of the living God, who for us and our broken dying world is strength, hope, healing, and salvation. And yet, the age-old challenge of how to name God in our world looms large. Amidst the immense challenges of preaching today, three preachers and teachers of preaching show a way forward by walking readers through a sermon-creation process for specific challenging circumstances that gets to God. This book demonstrates how preachers can proclaim God's grace in our world today by building on the theological grammar and preaching method proposed by Paul Scott Wilson, and it shows preachers how to contextualize a theologically rich approach to preaching, expand the horizon of ministry, and equip preachers with a vital practice, that of learning to look for and name God's active presence in our world.



Living the Questions of the Bible

By Luke Powery, *Professor of Homiletics and Dean of Duke Chapel*
Cascade, 2023

WE MAY THINK the Bible is only about getting answers, but the Bible is also a question book, revealing how the life of faith is a quest with and for God. By exploring various passages in the Bible, this book attempts to invite readers into an interrogative spirituality, one in which we learn that even God questions. Faith seeks and keeps on seeking. It may reach understanding, or it may not. Either way, our questions are a way to live the Christian life honestly, faithfully, and doxologically.



Leading Christian Communities

C. Kavin Rowe, *George Washington Ivey Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Vice Dean for Faculty*
Eerdmans, 2023

WHAT DOES it mean to be a Christian community? And what does it mean to lead one? How does a pastor address today's challenges, from lack of faith in institutions, to conflict in the church, to the tension between tradition and innovation? This book addresses these topics and a multitude of others in this collection of keen essays. Bite-size and conversational, yet deeply rooted in Scripture and recent pastoral theology, the essays reflect on the shaping of Christian leaders for the flourishing of their communities. Pastors and seminarians, as well as all those involved in church ministry, will find inspiration and insight in these pages.



Naming God: Addressing the Divine in Philosophy, Theology and Scripture

Janet Soskice, *William K. Warren Distinguished Research Professor of Catholic Theology*
Cambridge University Press, 2023

GENERATIONS OF Christians once knew God and Christ by hundreds of remarkable names. These included the appellations *Messiah*, *Emmanuel*, *Alpha*, *Omega*, *Eternal*, *All-Powerful*, *Lamb*, *Lion*, *Goat*, *One*, *Word*, *Serpent*, and *Bridegroom*. This book argues that contemporary understandings of divinity could be transformed by a return to a venerable analogical tradition of divine naming. These ancient titles— drawn from Scripture—were chanted and sung, crafted and invoked (in polyphony



and plainsong) as they were woven into the worship of the faithful. The 16th-century philosopher Descartes moved from naming to defining God via a series of metaphysical attributes. This made God a thing among things: a being among beings. Soskice argues that reclaiming divine naming is not only overdue but can also re-energize the relationship between philosophy and religious tradition, and she shows just how rich and revolutionary such reclamation might be.

Protest at Midnight: Ministry to a Nation Torn Apart

By Peter Storey, *Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the Practice of Christian Ministry*
Cascade Books, 2022

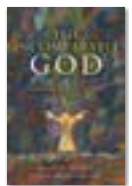
“LET ME SAY to President Botha: apartheid is doomed! It has been condemned in the councils of God, rejected by every nation on the planet and is no longer believed in by the people who gave it birth. Apartheid is the god that has failed. ... Let not one more sacred life be offered on its blood-stained altar.” Bishop Peter Storey preached these words in 1986, in the darkest hours of Black suffering in a South Africa torn apart by racial oppression. This memoir explores how Storey’s ministry was shaped by one simple question: “What does it mean to obey Jesus in apartheid South Africa?” Join him serving as a youthful chaplain to Nelson Mandela on Robben Island, defying armed police entering his pulpit, heading the South African Council of Churches with Bishop Desmond Tutu, leading 25,000 marchers against Johannesburg’s secret police headquarters, and confronting Winnie Mandela’s wrongs. The book also challenges the silence of American churches in the face of nationalism, systemic racism, and right-wing populism.



The Incomparable God: Essays in Biblical Exegesis and Theology

By Brent A. Strawn, *D. Moody Smith Distinguished Professor of Old Testament*, with editors Collin Cornell and Justin Walker
Eerdmans, 2023

ATTEMPTING TO describe the nature of God often prompts the exclamation of the psalmist—that God is unlike anyone or anything else. And yet the claim is not simply the overflow of an adoring heart: God’s incomparability is a truth lodged deep within Christian Scripture. This volume collects 18 of Strawn’s most provocative essays on the nature of God, several of which are published for the first time here, to offer thoughtful insight into this theological



mystery. Encompassing close readings of Scripture, biblical-theological argument, and considerations of praxis, *The Incomparable God* is essential reading for Old Testament scholars and students.

Holy Friendships: Nurturing Relationships that Sustain Pastors and Leaders


By Victoria Atkinson White, *Managing Director of Grants at Leadership Education*
Fortress Press, 2023

PASTORS AND Christian institutional leaders serve more creatively, effectively, and joyfully when they feel supported and part of an intimate community of colleagues and friends who care about their personal and professional wellbeing, and yet many leaders sacrifice critical relationships, citing lack of time or competing priorities, and end up isolated, lonely, and burned out. Holy friendships are mutual and sacred relationships deeply rooted in God’s love. What Christian leaders need is a circle of holy friends to walk alongside them in the challenging and constantly changing work of ministry, an investment in resilience, sustainability, and flourishing in their vocation. This book recounts the stories of meaningful holy friendships, reveals the benefits of challenging conversations over time, and offers hope, grace, and humor. It provides examples of how holy friendships can change institutions and systems, helping pastoral leaders cultivate beloved community.



Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation

By Will Willimon, *Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry*
Abingdon Press, 2023

IT’S NOT within our own power to make a fresh start. If we’re to have a future different from the past, it must come as a gift, something not of our devising. What we need is a God who refuses to be trapped in eternity, a God who not only cares about us but is willing to show up among us and do something with us, here, now. In this book, Willimon points to the God who does just that, bringing heaven to earth and changing everything. In Advent we celebrate and anticipate the earth-shaking, life-transforming good news that God is coming to us. Watch out. Get ready. God is on the way. 



FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

Abdullah Antepi has been named Duke University's first associate vice president/associate vice provost for community-engaged research and teaching, with responsibilities for advancing community-engaged scholarship, civic engagement, and integration of academic activities with the university's wide-ranging community engagement initiatives. He received the ADL's prestigious Daniel Pearl Award for his work in building bridges of understanding between Jews and Muslims and for promoting peace and religious tolerance. In 2023, he was elected as a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

Sarah Barton was named a Duke AHEAD Fellow. Her invited lectures include "Becoming the Baptized Body: Disability and Vocation," at Western Theological Seminary, in collaboration with the Collegeville Institute; and "Disability Worship and Prayer as Spiritual Practice," with R.F. Spurrier, K. Stevensen, and B.M. Anderson, at the Institute of Theology and Disability (Waco, Texas). She was a guest on the *Two Cities* podcast and on *Pew & Beyond*, a Facebook Live webinar through Spiritual Formation for Discipleship: A Network for Canadian Anglicans. Her conference presentations include "The Personal Is the Professional: A Curricular Approach to Professional Identity Formation in Occupational Therapy," a poster presentation at the American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference (Kansas City, Mo., April 2023); "Compassionate

Communication for Connection: Approaches for Occupational Therapy Education and Practice," with A. Keefe and J. Kim, a short course at the North Carolina Occupational Therapy Association Fall Conference (Nov. 2022); "Formation for Service: A Novel Approach to Professional Identity Formation in Occupational Therapy Education," with B. Hooper, a poster presentation for the American Occupational Therapy Association Education Summit (Nov. 2022); and with R.F. Spurrier, John Swinton, J. Watts-Belser, and Lauren Winner a book panel on her book *Becoming the Baptized Body* and R.F. Spurrier's book *The Disabled Church*, at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (Nov. 2022).

Jeremy Begbie published *Abundantly More: The Theological Promise of the Arts in a Reductionist World* (Baker Academic). He gave two plenary presentations: "Living Under Pressure: Theological Education and a Renewed Imagination," for the Duke Anglican House of Studies Conference; and "Learning from Music: The Uncontainability of the Spirit in Worship," for Calvin University's Symposium on Worship (Feb. 10). He presented at Sing! Europe in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and preached on Pentecost at King's College Chapel at the University of Cambridge (May 28).

Kate Bowler published *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days* (Convergent), with **Jessica Richie**.

Luke Bretherton published *A Primer in Christian Ethics: Christ and the Struggle to Live Well* (Cambridge University Press). He was interviewed by *New York Times* columnist David Brooks for "Christian Humanism: An Invitation to a Truer Story" in *Comment Magazine* (Oct. 6, 2022). He wrote, produced, and hosted the second series of the *Listen, Organize, Act! Podcast*, consisting of 12 episodes on the theme of Christianity and democracy.

Daniel Castelo published "God" in *The Edinburgh Critical History of Twentieth-Century Christian Theology*, ed. Philip Ziegler (Edinburgh University Press); and "Holy Spirit" in *The New Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. Michael Allen, (Cambridge University Press). He lectured at the Aberdeen Centre for Protestant Theology, University of Aberdeen (Scotland; Oct. 11, 2022). He was named associate editor and member of the board of directors for *Methodist Review* and named a theology co-editor for *Religious Studies Review*.

Mark Chaves published, with Anna Holleman, "US Religious Leaders' Views on the Etiology and Treatment of Depression," in *JAMA Psychiatry* (online, Jan. 11, 2023); with Joseph Roso and Anna Holleman, "The National Survey of Religious Leaders: Background, Methods, and Lessons Learned in the Research Process," in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. He received a research grant (\$428,561) from the John Templeton Foundation for the

project, “Disseminating Data and Results from the National Survey of Religious Leaders.”

Jung Choi was selected by the World Methodist Council as a delegate on the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission and presented the paper “Jerusalem Council in Acts 15” at the meeting in Rome, Italy (Oct. 2–8, 2022). Her other paper presentations include the “First Book Review Panel: Febbie Dickerson’s *Luke, Widows, Judges, and Stereotypes*” for The Womanist Interpretation Section at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Denver (Nov. 19, 2022); and the panel “Post-Colonial Biblical Interpretation and the Wesleyan Tradition” for the Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in Denver (Nov. 20, 2022). She was a guest on the episode “Biblical Scholarship for the Church” (season 8, episode 4) of the podcast *Centering: The Asian American Christian Podcast* at the Asian American Center at Fuller Seminary (Nov. 9, 2022). She represented Duke Divinity School at the conference Transforming Lives: Methodist Education International Conference hosted by the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU), in London and Bristol, U.K. (April 25–May 1).

Linda Coley was ordained as a minister of the Gospel at Word of Truth Christian Fellowship in Goldsboro, N.C., on Aug. 27, 2023.

Curtis Freeman published *Pilgrim Journey: Instruction in the Mystery of the Gospel* (Fortress Press), his second volume on catechetical theology, and the introduction to *The Word Made Fresh: Preaching God’s Love for Every Body*, by the Rev. Dr. George Mason (Front Edge Publishing). He published the articles “The Southern Baptist Convention’s Coming ‘Great Ejection’” in Religion News Service (March 22); and “Once Ordained, Always Ordained?” in Baptist News Global (Dec. 6, 2022); and a review of *Seeds of the Church: Towards an Ecumenical Baptist Ecclesiology*, in *Perspectives in Religious Studies*. He contributed a response paper to “Normalizing Progress in Theology: From Conditions of Possibility to Science-Engagement,” for a seminar workshop titled Heresy, Dissent, and Progress sponsored by the Templeton Religion Trust in Nassau, Bahamas (Feb. 24–27). He also preached in Duke University Chapel (May 7) and the South Yarra Community Baptist Church in Melbourne, Australia (July 10).

Polly Ha guest edited a special issue of the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* titled, *Remapping British Protestant Thought in the Long Reformation* (Jan. 2023). She contributed the articles “Reorienting English Protestant Thought” and “Who Owns the Hebrew Doctors? Oriental Scholarship, Historical Proportionality, and the Puritan ‘Invention’ of Avant-Garde Conformity” for the issue. She served as chief editor, with assistant editors Jonathan D. Moore and Edda

Frankot, of *Reformed Government: Puritanism, Historical Contingency, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Late Elizabethan England* (Oxford University Press). She participated in a discussion of her book *Reformed Government* at the Duke University Department of History Colloquium, consulted on historical content for the History Channel, delivered papers at the Duke Divinity Faculty Colloquium, and presented at the “Reimagining Modernity” seminar at the Kenan Institute for Ethics as well as at conferences in Cambridge (U.K.) and Dublin (Ireland) on the freedom of consent, Milton and marriage, and the freedom of conscience.

Amy Laura Hall received a grant for the 2022–2023 academic year from the Josiah Trent Memorial Foundation for her project “Human reproduction as bulwark and battle in contemporary, mainstream evangelical culture.” She received a letter of commendation as a top instructor from the dean of academic affairs for Duke University’s Trinity College of Arts & Sciences for her course “Faith and Feminism in North Carolina” (Nov. 2022). She presented at the session “A Vision for Reproductive Ethics” at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics. She delivered guest lectures on sex, race, and U.S. history at Lenoir-Rhyne University; the Department of History at UNC Chapel Hill; the Peace, War and Defense program at UNC Chapel Hill; the Chapel of the Cross (Chapel Hill, N.C.), and United Methodist congregations in Tampa, Fla.; Alexandria, Va.; and

Austin, Texas. She preached and taught at Elizabeth Street UMC (Durham, N.C.) and University UMC (Austin, Texas). She served as the program coordinator for the WildAcres Interfaith Institute and staff for the Eno River Festival (N.C.). She was a guest contributor on faith and politics for Religion News Service and was interviewed on the podcast *Charlotte Talks*. She is the vice president of the North Carolina Conference of the American Association of University Professors and president of the Duke AAUP chapter.

Zebulon Highben published the compositions *God Is Our Refuge* (Psalm 46), SATB chorus, organ, violin, and assembly (Augsburg Fortress), and *A Christmas Carol*, SATB chorus, harp (MorningStar Music), which won the 2023 Weiger-Lepke Sims Award for Sacred Composition from the American Harp Society, announced in April. He curated and conducted “A New Song to Thee: A Hymn Festival” for the fall conference of the North Carolina American Choral Directors Association at Duke University Chapel and served as chair of the artistic director search committee for the National Lutheran Choir (Minneapolis, Minn.). He was the featured presenter at the Vi Messerli Memorial Lectures in Church Music held at Concordia University Chicago and at the National Lutheran Choir Annual Gala (Edina, Minn.). He delivered a virtual lecture on music and worship planning at Duke Chapel for Polyphony Music Resources (Oct. 2022) and conducted the Duke Chapel Schola Cantorum in “Lord, Hear

My Cry: An Evening of Spiritual Songs” for the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music conference at Duke University Chapel (March 2023).

Richard Lischer delivered the lecture “To See the Kingdom” for the conference “Visions of the Reign of God: Preaching and Catholic Social Teaching” at the University of Notre Dame. He published “What’s the Secret to Spiritual Memoir? Honesty” in *Faith and Leadership* (Feb. 21, 2023); “King’s Letter to an Unfaithful Church” in *The Christian Century* (April 2023); and reviewed *King: A Life* by Jonathan Eig in *America* magazine (May 2023).

Emily Lund published *Napkin Theology: Small Drawings about Big Ideas*, with Tyler Hansen (Cascade Books).

Randy L. Maddox was selected as the 2023 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH). The award is given in recognition of significant academic contributions to the ministry of memory of the United Methodist Church.

Thomas Pfau published *Incomprehensible Certainty: Metaphysics and Hermeneutics of the Image* (University of Notre Dame Press). Symposia on the book were held at the Catholic University of America (Feb. 28, 2023) and the University of Notre Dame (March 9, 2023), and he was interviewed on the *Mars Hill Audio Journal* podcast (vol. 158). His articles “European Literature & Theology, 1700–1900” and

“1900–present” were published in the *St. Andrews Encyclopedia of Theology*. He lectured at the Morningside Institute at Columbia University (Feb. 2023), Hillsdale College (April 2023), the American Catholic Philosophical Association (Nov. 2022), the University of Bergen (June 2023) and the European Academy of Religion Annual Meeting at the University of St. Andrews (June 2023).

Anathea Portier-Young published “Book of Daniel,” in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, digital edition (2022), and a review of Kathleen O’Connor’s *Genesis 25B–50* in the Smith & Helwys Bible Commentary in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*. Her invited lectures include “From One to Many: ‘This is Only the Beginning of What They Will Do’ (Gen 11:1–9)” at the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 2023 General Assembly; “The Kingdom of God: Within Us, Among Us,” Louisville, Ky., (July 2023); “Between the Throne and the Cross: Divine Encounter and Prophetic Mediation in *The Saint John’s Bible*,” Escobedo St. John’s Bible Lecture, and “Ezekiel and Eco-Justice,” at St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, Texas. Her conference presentations include “Walking Naked and Barefoot: Bodily Performance in Isaiah 20,” in the Divinity in Ancient Israel Continuing Seminar, Catholic Biblical Association Annual General Meeting; “Apocalyptic Literature as Strategy of Resistance” for the conference “Nonviolent Resistance,” jointly sponsored by the Minerva Center for Human Rights, the Minerva Center for the Relations between Israel and Aram in Biblical Times, the Minerva Center for the

Rule of Law under Extreme Conditions, and the German-Israeli Foundation, held at Bar Ilan University, Israel; “Constructing Imperial and National Identities: Monstrous and Human Bodies in Book of Watchers, Daniel, and 2 Maccabees,” a panel presentation on “1 Enoch, the Text and Its Reception: New Trends and Most Recent Contributions,” for “Enoch Studies in the 2020s,” the 2023 Enoch Online Seminar; “Early Jewish Apocalyptic Literature as Resistance to Imperial Violence: Summary of Previous Research and New Avenues for Analysis,” at the conference “Violence in the Name of God: From Apocalyptic Expectations to Violence,” at the University of Lisbon; “Between Resistance and Collaboration: Architecture, Archive, and the Politics of Memory,” a symposium on “Antiochus III’s Edicts to Jerusalem: Between Imperial Stress and Local Agency,” at Harvard University; and “Praying in Jazz: Tobit as Improvisation,” for the Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft für Theologie conference “Late Strata of the OT Canon—Hellenistic Scripture in the OT,” held at the Humboldt University in Berlin.

Luke Powery published *Becoming Human: The Spirit, Race, and the Future of Proclamation* (WJK Press); *Getting to God: Preaching Good News in a Troubled World*, with Joni S. Sancken and John Rottman (Abingdon); and *Living the Questions of the Bible* (Wipf and Stock). He also published “Between Text and Sermon: 2 Corinthians 12:2–10” in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* (April); the

foreword for *Nobody Told Me that the Road Would Be Easy: Devotions for People Working for Justice and Peace* by Floyd Thompkins Jr.; and essays for the (Duke) *Chronicle*. His numerous preaching engagements include Village Chapel of Bald Head Island (N.C.), St. James UMC (Kansas City, Mo.); Trinity Cathedral (Cleveland, Ohio), Howard University (Washington, D.C.), and Lake Junaluska (N.C.). He delivered the sermon “The ‘N Word’ (John 1:43–51)” for the 3rd Annual Black History and African American Heritage Month Chapel Series, Black Church Traditions and African American Faith-Life program at Phillips Theological Seminary; “Deep River: Preaching and the Holy Spirit,” for the Schooler Institute on Preaching at Methodist Theological School in Ohio; “Waiting on Angels in a Weary World” and “Praise During Pandemics (Psalm 150)” at the Festival of Homiletics (Minneapolis, Minn.). His conferences and workshops include the Philadelphia Theological Institute Preaching Day Workshop, the Synod of the Covenant workshop, the Academy of Homiletics, the Hampton University Ministers’ Conference, and the Interprovincial Clergy Retreat: Renewal and Hope for the Moravian Church in North America. Keynote lectures include “Every Time I Feel the Spirit: The Music and Message of the Unknown Black Bards” at the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music Annual Meeting held at Duke University (March 2); and “Deep River: The Spiritual Wisdom of the Unknown Black Bards” at the Center for Contemplative Leadership Conference held at Princeton Theological Seminary

(March 9–11). The (Duke) *Chronicle* recognized him as one of the “Chron15: Leaders” in 2023.

Kavin Rowe published *Leading Christian Communities* (Eerdmans), the first of three volumes of essays.

Ronald Rittgers served as a senior research fellow at the Leibniz Institute for European History in Mainz, Germany. He published “Early Modern Protestants and the ‘Hard Knots’ of the Epistle to the Hebrews: A Study of Reformation Certainty,” in *Reading Certainty: Exegesis and Epistemology on the Threshold of Modernity: Essays Honoring the Scholarship of Susan E. Schreiner*, ed. Ralph Keen, Elizabeth Palmer, and Daniel Owings (Brill); and “A Widower’s Wisdom: The Early Evangelical ‘Art of Dying,’” *Crux: A Quarterly Journal of Christian Thought and Opinion*.

Lester Ruth’s book *A History of Contemporary Praise & Worship: Understanding the Ideas that Reshaped the Protestant Church* was a finalist in the History & Biography division of the Christianity Today 2023 Book Awards. He delivered the plenary address “Can Anything Good Come from a Canadian Nazareth? Re-evaluating Significant Spaces and Places in the History of Contemporary Praise & Worship” at the Annual Meeting of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, held at McGill University in Montreal, Canada (July 19). He compiled and published *Judson Cornwall: A Bibliography* in the Voices

of Independent Pentecostalism Series (Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University).

Katherine Smith delivered a plenary session with **Kate Bowler** at the Chautauqua Institution as part of the Interfaith Lecture Series on the theme “The State of Believing” (July 21).

Patrick Smith was named a Hastings Center Fellow, a group whose work has informed scholarship and public understanding of complex ethical issues in health, health care, science, and technology. He was also selected as one of Duke University’s 2023 ACC Academic Leadership Network Fellows.

Janet Soskice published *Naming God: Addressing the Divine in Philosophy, Theology and Scripture* (Cambridge University Press). She also published the article “Science, Beauty and the Creative Word” in *After Science and Religion: Fresh Perspectives in Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Peter Harrison and John Milbank (Cambridge University Press). She delivered a lecture as part of her appointment as the visiting distinguished scholar at the Vancouver School of Theology, and she participated in the fourth meeting of the working group “At the Foot of the Cross,” on the theology of the cross for today’s world. She was on the webinar episode “Mysticism and Theological Aesthetics,” with Maria Clara Bingemar, for the series “Women and the Church: An Intercontinental Appraisal” on the network *Ecclesia in America*

(May 11). She is a member of the English and Welsh Anglican/Roman Catholic Committee and the Westminster Abbey Institute Council of Reference.

Peter Storey published *Protest at Midnight: Ministry to a Nation Torn Apart* (Cascade), with a foreword by **Will Willimon**.

Brent A. Strawn was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for his project, “‘I Shall No Longer Want’ (Psalm 23:1): The Critical Edition of the Hebrew Psalter.” He published *The Incomparable God: Essays in Biblical Exegesis and Theology* (Eerdmans). With Josey Bridges Snyder, he published “Reading (in) Moabite Patterns: ‘Parallelism’ in the Mesha Inscription and Its Implications for Understanding Three Cruxes,” *Maarav*. With Drew Longacre, he published “A New Identification of a Psalm Manuscript from Qumran: 4Q85 + 4Q98c,” *Dead Sea Discoveries*. He also published “*Vocatio Interrupta*: Jonah’s Call, Jonah’s Silence, and Form Criticism,” in *Historical Settings, Intertextuality, and Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney*, ed. Hyun Chul Paul Kim, Tyler D. Mayfield, and Hye Kyung Park; (Mohr Siebeck); “Introduction to Exodus,” in *The Hebrew Scriptures*, ed. Joshua Stewart (McGraw-Hill Publishing House); and “Who’s Afraid of the Old Testament? Tough Texts for Rough Times,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Orthodox Christianity*, ed. Eugen J. Pentiuc (Oxford University Press). He presented “*Vocatio Interrupta*:

Jonah’s Call, Jonah’s Silence, and Form Criticism,” in the Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible Section/Israelite Prophetic Literature Section of the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature; “The Spiritual Significance of the Old Testament: Problems and Prospects” at Cambridge House at William and Mary College; and “The Old Testament Is Dying and What You Can (and Should) Do About It,” President’s Speaker Series at George Fox University. He also preached at Christ Central Church (Durham, N.C.) and was interviewed on NBC for Good Friday.

David Toole was appointed Nannerl O. Keohane Director of the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University, effective July 1, 2023.

Lacey Warner presented “Celtic Inspired Evangelism: Creation, Women Saints, and Pilgrimage,” for the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education/American Society of Missiology Annual Meeting at St. Mary’s College (Notre Dame, Ind.); and “Simply Grace: Wesleyan Doctrine and Practices,” at the Western North Carolina Annual Conference. She spoke on *The Weight Podcast*, with Chris MacAlilly and Eddie Rester, on the topic “United Methodism: Hopes, Opportunities, and Constraints”; and was a panelist on the “Fresh Expressions” webinar and the “Space at the Table” academic panel, hosted at Lovers Lane UMC (Dallas, Texas). She preached on “Jonah and God’s Calling” at First UMC Houston, and co-pastored with Gaston Warner

First UMC in West, Texas, and First UMC in Cayote, Texas (June–Nov. 2022). In *Ministry Matters*, she published “Have We Fruit?” (March 1, 2023), “Leading Simply,” and “Putting Intentionality Back into Our Discernment.” She was a contributor with Ella Clare Warner to #picturelent2023 devotional, and she was unanimously endorsed by the Texas Conference of the UMC delegation as a candidate for the episcopacy in the South Central Jurisdiction.


Victoria White published *Holy Friendships: Nurturing Relationships that Sustain Pastors and Leaders* (Fortress Press). She served as an interfaith lecturer and taught two master classes on holy friendship at the Chautauqua Institute (June 2023).

Will Willimon published *Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation* (Abingdon). He contributed to *Poetic Living: Theological Education, Culture, and Pastoral Ministry: Essays in Honor of M. Craig Barnes* (Pickwick), and published reviews of *Becoming Human* by Luke A. Powery and *Karl Barth for Everybody: Church Dogmatics*, vol. 2, ed. Marty Folsom, in *The Christian Century*. He lectured on the future of preaching at Yale Divinity School and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and lectured and preached at the Festival of Homiletics in Minneapolis, Minn.; the National Conference on Preaching in Charlotte, N.C.; and the Lester Randall Preaching Mission in Toronto, Ont. His quarterly publication *Pulpit Resource*, keyed to the Revised Common Lectionary, marked

its 120th issue. His many preaching and speaking engagement included congregations in Ohio, Michigan, Texas, the Carolinas, Florida, Virginia, and Alabama, including meetings and workshops in UMC congregations and conferences about his book *Don't Look Back: Methodist Hope for What Comes Next* (Abingdon).

Norman Wirzba's book *This Sacred Life: Humanity's Place in a Wounded World* won the Aldersgate Book Prize and was published in a Portuguese translation. He published “The Trouble with Sustainability” in *Sustainability* (Jan. 2023). He presented “Considering Hope in a Climate Crisis World” as the William Beldon Noble Lecture at Harvard Memorial Church and “Loving Creation: An Agrarian Approach” for the “One Earth, One Love: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Scholars” symposium at Oxford University. His keynote lectures include “The Ministry of Eating” and “The Spirituality of Eating” for the Perkins School of Theology Fall Convocation; “Is Humanity Becoming Obsolete?: The AI Revolution” at the Veritas Forum at the University of Chicago; and “Be Not Afraid/Consider the Lilies: A Conference on Theology, Climate Change, and Creation Care” hosted by A Rocha Canada & St. Margaret's Anglican Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Brittany Wilson published “The Scriptural Shape of God: Divine Anthropomorphisms in Synoptic Perspective,” in *New Testament Studies*, Spring 2023 (vol. 69), which

she presented at the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (SNTS) in Leuven, Belgium (July 2022). 

ALUMNI NEWS

MINISTRY UPDATES

62

S T Kimbrough Jr. B.D.'62

published the following books with Wipf and Stock: *Wrestling the Angel: Charles Wesley Struggles with Vital Questions of Faith*; *What Do You Think About? Poems that Keep You Thinking*; *Becoming Just: Poems that Explore Commitment to Justice for All*; *The Struggle to Believe: Poems that Wrestle with Christian Truth*; *Nature's Final Curtain Call? Who Cares about Creation's Care?*; and *Nature's Sorrows and Nature's Joys: Poems for Reflection and Action*. He also published his first children's book, *Leo and Lou: When We Grow Up* (Archway).

65

James H. Charlesworth

B.D.'65, Ph.D.'67 received his third honorary doctorate

from Athens University in Athens, Greece, in recognition of his publications and service to Judaism and Christian Origins. He is the editor of the Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project (over 10 volumes) and edited the two-volume *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

76

Michael Anthony Battle

M.Div.'76 was nominated by President Joe Biden to serve as

ambassador to Tanzania. Battle took his official oath for the office Dec. 21, 2022. His distinguished career of public service as a diplomat, in academia, in the faith community, and as a military chaplain spans four decades.

77

G. Corwin Stoppel M.Div.'77

published his eighth novel in The Great Saugatuck Murder Mystery Series, titled *The Hand on the Deck*. He continues to serve as the priest associate at the Episcopal Church of the

Good Shepherd in Allegan, Mich., and is a journalist with the Allegan County Newspapers.

87

Randall Jay Cirksena Jr.

M.Div.'87, Th.M.'94 received his Doctor of Ministry degree

from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky. His thesis is titled "The Best Practices of Attracting and Ministering to Non-European Immigrants in Minnesota." He is a State Farm insurance agent in Albert Lea, Minn., and has served as pastor of Ellendale UMC in Ellendale, Minn., for 10 years.

94

Shane Stanford M.Div.'94

published *JourneyWISE:*

Redeeming the Broken and

Winding Roads We Travel (Whitaker House), a personal approach to the study of the Beatitudes that introduces "the wisdom values" of Jesus.

96

Cecelia Brooks M.Div.'96

was appointed district superintendent of the

Coastal Virginia District of the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

03

Sarah Musser M.Div.'03,

Ph.D.'15, edited *Protest at*

Midnight: Ministry to a Nation

Torn Apart by the Rev. Peter Storey (Cascade), a memoir of his ministry confronting apartheid and pursuing reconciliation in South Africa.

04

Elise Erikson Barrett

M.Div.'04 has been selected

as a member of the 2023 class

of the Mutz Philanthropic Leadership Institute, which provides a leadership



GREAT NEWS FROM THE CLASS OF 79!

Cynthia L. Hale M.Div.'79 is the recipient of the 2023 Duke University Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest award presented to university alumni from the Duke Alumni Board of Directors in recognition of their contributions in their fields, their service to Duke University, and their contribution to the betterment of humanity.

Gregory V. Palmer M.Div.'79, bishop for the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church, was elected to the Duke University Board of Trustees. He began his six-year term July 1, 2023.

Karen Westerfield Tucker M.Div.'79 received the 2023 Berakah Award from the North American Academy of Liturgy. The award recognizes the distinguished contribution of liturgical scholars and practitioners to the field of liturgy.

training experience for professionals serving in board and executive roles at foundations, corporations, and social impact organizations across Indiana.

06

Bradley James Davies

M.Div.'06 published *School Leadership from A to Z: How to Lead Well without Losing Your Way*, a

humble and humorous guide to help school leaders in every stage of their career take their work to new levels.

07

Timothy Alan Marsh

Th.M.'07 was named senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Laurens, S.C.

09

Meredith Poe Martin

M.Div.'09 was named vice president of programs at

Crossnore Communities for Children,

a child welfare and mental health nonprofit serving children and families throughout western North Carolina.

10

Joshua Johnson M.Div.'10

was ordained to the Transitional Diaconate in

the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. Fellow Duke Divinity alumni present for the service included the Rev. Fr. Justin Fletcher D'13, the Rev. Fr. Gregory Tipton D'13, and the Rev. Fr. Sam Keyes D'09.

Karen R. Keen Th.M.'10 published *The Word of a Humble God: The Origins, Inspiration, and Interpretation of Scripture* (Eerdmans). Bringing together both historical criticism and theology, this investigation examines ancient scribal culture through the lens of faith. What we find is a divine-human

collaboration that points to the character of God and the value of human agency.

11

Charles Dewey Williams

M.Div.'11 published *Finding Joy on Death Row: Unexpected*

Lessons from Lives We Discarded (Dexterity), an expanded memoir of his ministry at Central Prison in Raleigh, N.C., and his sermon series that won Yale Divinity School's Theology of Joy and the Good Life competition.

18

Jacqueline McCall M.Div.'18,

associate pastor at St. James UMC in Kansas City, Mo.,

was commissioned as a provisional elder in the United Methodist Church on June 11, 2023. ✦

ALUMNI NEWS

IN MEMORIAM

1950s

John Wesley Chandler B.D.'52, Ph.D.'54 died Aug. 5, 2022.

Laura G. Elgert M.Div.'52 died Nov. 17, 2022.

F. Bundy Bynum Jr. A.B.'53, B.D.'59 died Oct. 9, 2022.

Russell Thompson Montfort B.D.'53, Th.M.'64
died on Nov. 15, 2022.

Joseph H. Beasley M.Div.'54 died Feb. 12, 2023.

Robert Keith Glover M.Div.'54 died Feb. 10, 2023.

William Thornton Hawkins M.Div.'54 died Dec. 24, 2022.

J. Conrad Glass Jr. M.Div.'57 died Nov. 14, 2022.

Jerry A. Means B.D.'58 died Oct. 30, 2022.

George C. Weekley M.Div.'58 died April 17, 2023.

J.C. Gilland M.Div.'59 died July 1, 2023.

Herbert G. Hobbs B.D.'59 died Oct. 28, 2022.

1960s

Robert S. Barnes B.D.'60 died Oct. 14, 2022.

William Bert Friday B.D.'61 died Sept. 4, 2022.

Duran M. Palmertree B.D.'61 died Dec. 14, 2022.

Richard H. Petersen B.D.'61, Ph.D.'64 died Aug. 16, 2022.

Jerry Neal Fast B.D.'62 died Oct. 11, 2022.

Lewis H. Morgan B.D.'62 died Feb. 5, 2023.

John Terrell Rush B.D.'63 died Oct. 15, 2022.

Robert M. Van Hook II M.Div.'64 died April 29, 2023.

R. Russell Lewis Th.M.'66 died Dec. 16, 2022.

Elliott Wannamaker Hardin Jr. M.Div.'67 died June 15, 2022.

Fred Perry Pierce M.Div.'67 died April 28, 2023.

Gerald Lloyd Edge M.Div.'69 died Oct. 8, 2022.

1970s

Larry E. Adams M.Div.'70 died Dec. 21, 2022.

James R. Reeves M.Div.'71 died Feb. 13, 2023.

Randolph P. Waugh M.Div.'71 died March 16, 2023.

Earl G. Dulaney M.Div.'73, Th.M.'75 died Feb. 7, 2023.

Charles McNeill Turner Jr. M.Div.'73 died Dec. 9, 2022.

James Parr Philipson A.B.'74, M.Div.'78 died Oct. 16, 2022.

1980s

Vance Wright Lowe M.Div.'80 died April 18, 2023.

Barrett Thomas Alewine M.Div.'82 died Dec. 15, 2022.

Stephen Williams Austin M.Div.'84, Ph.D.'89 died Jan. 15, 2023.

David Henry Francis M.Div.'84 died May 29, 2023.

Andrew Murdock Marshall M.Div.'85 died Sept. 30, 2022.

David Blair Ramsey M.Div.'88 died Dec. 11, 2022.

Douglas Donald Gestwick M.Div.'89, Th.M.'90
died May 24, 2023.

1990s

Penny Patricia Godfrey M.Div.'91 died April 14, 2023.

Dale Walker M.Div.'92 died March 8, 2023.

John Exley Upham Jr. M.Div.'93, Th.M.'96 died Feb. 23, 2023.

William M. Budzinski M.Div.'97 died March 24, 2023.

2000s

Barbara Eldridge Crammer Th.M.'02 died April 26, 2023.

Scott Shoger M.T.S.'05, Th.M.'06 died June 3, 2023.

Jared Carlton Wilkins M.Div.'08 died Oct. 19, 2022.

Contact us to learn more about the unique opportunity for individual or group Study Leave.

events@div.duke.edu



REGISTER TODAY!
divinity.duke.edu/studyleave
 Pricing as low as \$150 per participant,
 based on scholarship availability.

SPRING 2024		<i>Application Deadlines</i>
January 22–26, 2024		<i>December 8, 2023</i>
February 12–16, 2024		<i>December 29, 2023</i>
March 4–8, 2024		<i>January 19, 2024</i>
March 18–22, 2024		<i>February 2, 2024</i>
April 8–12, 2024		<i>February 23, 2024</i>





DIVINITY MAGAZINE

Duke University · Duke Divinity School · Box 90966 · Durham, North Carolina 27708-0966

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Durham, NC
Permit No. 60

