



LTS TODAY

Lutheran Theological Seminary, a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, nurtures and challenges all people for Christ-centred leadership and witness for God's mission in the world.

OUR HERITAGE AND OUR FUTURE *Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President*



In this issue, we celebrate our heritage and follow our new paths.

This semester, we mark the impending retirement of Dr. Gordon Jensen and give thanks for his rich ministry. Dr. Jensen's teaching, writing, caring, and

leading presence has been at the heart of LTS's Lutheran identity since he returned (he's an LTS grad!) as a professor in 2001. Dr. Jensen is among the top Luther scholars in the world, a capable academic administrator, and a deeply rooted Western Canadian ELCIC pastor. As shown in the variety of reflections, we will miss him! Dr. Jensen reminds us that the gospel is the centre of our lives.

We honour our family heritage. On September 10, we celebrated 75 years since the laying of the cornerstone for the former Luther Seminary building with a memorial plaque. Luther Seminary (Norwegian Lutheran Church in Canada) is one of our predecessor institutions. We thank the many who contributed, especially Bp. Allan Grundahl, who gave leadership, and Obert Friggstad, who provided construction and design. The Rev. Tom Nilson shares some memories with us.

Looking to the future, we continue to raise funds for the **Grace Fund for Faculty**. Hugh Williams has good news for us: the Fund is on its way! Please give generously. Also, if you want to **dress with LTS**, you can do so now (urstore.ca/lutheran-theological-seminary).

We have three educational initiatives going: Leading In Faith Today (LIFT) lay education curriculum (now going online), "Our Classroom is Western Canada," and growing cooperation with the Saskatoon Theological Union. All three are discussed in this newsletter.

The **Leading In Faith Today** curriculum (layacademylift.ca) was the final product of the Lay Academy initiative. LIFT is for lay people, enabling them to follow theological interests or train for leadership roles. All details for a course are in the Instructor's Manual, so any theologically trained person can lead a group course. We're moving to provide the materials

as online, broadly accessible, courses for individuals, working with CHURCHx, a Canadian mainstream church education web developer and host. The article gives details.

"Our Classroom is Western Canada: We Meet There in Mission" is the project that involves connecting us more directly with many of you, our community across the four Western synods of the ELCIC. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein discusses some of the ways that effort is moving forward. A student, Denise Pawliuk, is serving as a diaconal intern with LTS and supporting the work; she tells us something about herself in a q. and a.

Our growing closeness with the other schools in the **Saskatoon Theological Union (STU)** is reflected in words from Dr. Richard Manley-Tannis, Principal of St. Andrew's College (SAC - United Church), and Dr. Iain Luke, Principal of the College of Emmanuel & St. Chad (ESC - Anglican Church). In the summer, we created a shared Common Faculty, enabling us to work together more closely on the academic front.

The "Our Classroom is Western Canada" and Saskatoon Theological Union projects flow together. I am the first **Chair of the new STU Common Faculty**, and Dr. Lynn Caldwell (SAC) is the Academic Dean. Together, we are leading development of a shared curriculum, making the most of the limited educational resources in our three schools. We also seek to grow together as institutions, carrying forward our specific denominational identities in shared systems and facilities. Sept. 13 and 14, we held a shared staff and faculty retreat at Zion ELCIC in Saskatoon, reflecting upon the Covenant we signed in January and imagining new ways to work together.

Into this common life, we bring our **Lutheran identity**, both as wisdom for sharing and as approach to formation. The new teaching approaches that the "Our Classroom" project is developing will become part of the common curriculum, enabling us to expand our effort to connect more closely with the ELCIC and now, we hope, with Anglican and United Churches across Western and Northern Canada. We take joy in engaging the challenge of the church's future!

Farewell

Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen

I owe a lot to Dr. Gordon Jensen. I've known him since he arrived to teach at LTS, shortly after I began my first stint in Saskatoon, when I was Professor of Theology at the College of Emmanuel & St. Chad. As two Reformation scholars with shared traditions, Gordon and I worked closely together. We built and taught collaborative courses, in an early hint of today's STU directions. We also served together in ecumenical dialogue. Indeed, it's partly because of Gordon's presence at LTS that I returned to Saskatoon to work with our beloved seminary. In my time here, he has been an incredible worker in both his roles as Hordern Professor of Theology and as Academic Dean, producing many important publications (books, journal articles, accessible pieces) at the same time as he drafts most of the materials that we need to function as a school (policies, handbooks, calendars). Gordon, I and the whole LTS community will miss you as you embark on a well-deserved retirement. Godspeed!

~ Rev. Dr. William Harrison





I'm having difficulty imagining what LTS will look like once Gordon retires! Gordon, the consummate Academic Dean, the devoted and engaging professor, the outstanding scholar, the sought-after advisor and mentor, the one who held the entire seminary community to the highest standards. How fortunate LTS has been to have such an exemplary faculty member. How he will be missed.

Gordon has spent his career teaching, writing, and sharing his passion for Reformation history and theology. While Gordon's love for the 16th century is obvious, what matters to him is not so much what the church was but what the church is to be: living proclaimers of the gospel. Every student was challenged to "think the faith" and to be a bold proclaimer of grace. What defines Gordon most of all is his irrepressible passion for the gospel. Teaching, preaching, mentoring students, contributing to the work of the church, was not a "job" for Gordon but a labor of love, in service of the gospel.

Few people are aware of the many hours Gordon spent writing and editing handbooks, updating policies and procedures, attending committee meetings and conferences. These administrative tasks of the Dean are time-consuming and often thankless, yet Gordon undertook them with uncommon patience and grace, with careful attention to detail and a commitment to excellence.

Yet Gordon has been more than an administrator and professor for LTS. He contributed so much to the thriving of the seminary community. He saw to it that every person was seen and valued. He was a fount of amusing stories. He was the keeper of LTS's historical memory. For every community potluck, Gordon could be counted on to contribute something tasty and unique. He hosted meals for colleagues and students at his home. His contagious laugh and sunny disposition were/are a gift to us all.

Gordon was a fun and indefatigable travel companion, who relished new experiences and was always ready to seek out the best curry laksa, the strongest coffee, and the coolest brew pub.

On a more personal level, I'd like to thank Gordon and his wife, Brenda, for welcoming me into their family for the many years I was away from my own family. For this, and for so many other acts of kindness and friendship, I am deeply grateful.

Blessings on your retirement, dear Gordon!

~ Rev. Dr. Kristine Ruffatto

Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession* teaches that “there is one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel.” Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen has humbly devoted his life to God’s holy Christian church by preaching, teaching, and administering the sacraments. He works and lives through the lens of Luther’s theology of the cross, which insists that the cross of Jesus is the primary source of knowledge concerning who God is and how God saves. This lens, accompanied by the history and theology of *The Lutheran Confessions*, is what lays gospel-based groundwork for ecumenical relationships; and, ecumenism has been one of Rev. Dr. Jensen’s passions. His call to ministry, his extensive education, his teaching career, and his numerous publications have diligently proclaimed the Word of God and thus enriched this world.

Of course, right about now Rev. Dr. Jensen would be bowing and shaking his head upon reading this, and probably looking over his shoulder while blushing furiously to see whom I am talking about. That’s because he is an incredibly humble man and would give God all the credit for doing good works through, and despite, him. Theologically, he is correct in giving God the credit, but as a biased student I would say God gave him an incredibly unique character that shines God’s grace into this world. I am so honoured to have been his MDiv student and to have completed my thesis with Rev. Dr. Jensen as my advisor. The unconditional grace he extended to me when I struggled to give it to myself has forever transformed my spirit.

Rev. Dr. Jensen, I pray that God gift you peace beyond our understanding, rest in your retirement years, strength for your continued discipleship, and unconditional love for you and your family for all your lives. Though I would have loved to have you as my advisor for my dissertation, I offer you my most heartfelt congratulations on your retirement!

~ Rev. Sarah Urano



I cannot talk of my experience with Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon without mentioning your name, Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen. First, you were my critical link to the seminary when I was applying for admission to the Master’s programme, while I was still back in Zimbabwe. You guided me every step of the way until I acquired my visa to come to Canada. Second, and more important, in you I encountered one of the most prestigious and world-class professors in Lutheran scholarship. And luckily for me, you became my academic supervisor. All my achievements at the seminary have your prints on them.

When I heard of your retirement, two things came to my mind. The first was that you deserve this rest. You have made innumerable contributions to the benefit of the students that you encountered, the entire church, and the academic field of Lutheran history and theology. But secondly, I felt a sense of loss thinking of the students who will come to seminary after your retirement. They will miss one of the best lecturers the seminary has ever had.

As you transition into a new phase of life, it is my prayer that you will continue to share your invaluable insights through writing, so that we continue benefiting from your gifts. May you find joy, basking in the achievements that God brought to your life. Many blessings to you.

~ Rev. Munye Mtata



A lot of wonderful things can and should be said about Gordon Jensen—a brilliant theologian, scholar, educator, pastor, family member, and friend.

He's the kind of man who is beloved by many and respected by many more. He's made innumerable contributions through his own research, but it's the way he's shared his knowledge that has brought his work to life. Gordon preaches and teaches—above all things—the importance of grace as the breath and soul of Lutheran doctrine—the tie that binds us all, and the very thing that will bring us through this apocalyptic moment in the church.

We consider Gordon a beloved friend, a mentor, and a fierce ally. Gordon, of course, is known for his background in hockey. Well, we feel for any who've had to go up against him over the years — especially those who would try to run counter to the Gospel.

We know his presence will be sorely missed in the newly formed Saskatoon Theological Union, but we are deeply grateful for his dedication to seminary education because, in this way, bits of Gordon's work are scattered in congregations all over Turtle Island and beyond. We are also very excited for this next chapter: retirement, and hope there are beautiful memories ahead! We love you, Gordon!

~ Rev. Lindsey and Danika
Jorgensen-Skakum

Professor Gordon Jensen taught from his heart as a pastor as well as an academic. While research of the highest quality and citations of the utmost accuracy were absolute musts in his class, he was also intimately aware of the busy life of ministry. He knew the vocation for which his students were being prepared. Thus, he modeled grace when students flagged under pressure, when life got in the way of academics, or when exhaustion simply refused to give way. His sense of fun—whether comparing tattoos or competing for his Luther bobblehead or introducing us to new craft beers—was always deeply appreciated. Well done, good and faithful servant. We will miss you, but we send you with all God's love and peace as you step into this new stage of your life.

~ Rev. Erin Thomas

“We believe, teach, and confess...”

A towering intellect, a wealth of scholarship, and a youthful sense of curiosity are all concepts former students will easily attribute to Prof. Gordon Jensen. His long list of professional accolades, however, is cradled in his self-effacing humility and profound pastoral sense. Taking a class with Gordon was a journey into a world where he became a trustworthy guide and fellow pilgrim. In fact, whenever I open my copy of *The Book of Concord* (Kolb-Wengert ed.) today, Gordon's voice still reverberates through the margin notes taken during his classes.

Gordon not only taught the material, but he did so in a manner which made us engage deeply with the material. No question was ever off limits, and he always found a way to honour each student's path of learning. Gordon was an expert at reducing the complex into manageable pieces of understanding. With Gordon, it was not only about appreciating the context in which our Lutheran Confessions came to be, it was also a matter of seeing how they remain relevant to our ongoing theological discourses today. I count myself most fortunate to have had the honour and privilege to have studied with Prof. Gordon Jensen. Professor Gordon, thank you!

~ Rev. Olav Traa

Gordon is one of those people that is a grand mix of compassion, justice, humour, patience, and scholarship—and all with a deep sense of family and community.

It was when I became Registrar at the seminary that I truly got to know Gordon. Without fail, he patiently took the time to field my numerous questions and to provide direction. His door was always open—both to me and to our students. We saw his commitment and dedication in action—whether in meetings, sermons, the classroom, and even on study-trips to faraway places.

In faculty meetings, I was touched many times as I watched Gordon consistently place a student's welfare 'front and centre', always looking to understand their situation and for ways to help them succeed. At times, situations could be challenging, but grace was always his 'go to', blended with thoughtful suggestions, discussion and decision-making.

Gordon was/is our "institutional historian", often providing explanations to others about what and how and why things are done the way they are at LTS. He has worked thoughtfully to balance institutional changes whilst being a protector of the seminary's values and traditions.

Gordon is a colleague and a friend. So many times he shared delightful stories about his past, his family and especially his beloved granddaughter! And did you know he's a great cook? When we had community potlucks at the seminary, it was always an unspoken competition as to who brought the best dish – Gordon or Leif.

Dear Gordon, I have been blessed to learn from you and to work with you. I will miss you in so many ways. LTS will miss you. Thank you for all of your support, wisdom and love. May your retirement, with Brenda at your side, be filled with God's blessings.

~ Colleen Rickard, Registrar at LTS





There is a Japanese proverb that translates: “Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a brilliant teacher.”

Dr. Gordon Jensen opened up the world of Luther’s Works in a way that not only shaped my theological orientation, but also grounded me to serve and proclaim the gospel. I will never forget the courses on Luther I took with him; his passion and insights oozed out of him. And being around Dr. Jensen, listening to him, being directed to what he read and what he learned all helped me to see the love and transforming power of what Luther had to share.

This love of Luther opened up a connection for me with a grandfather on my paternal side whom I never met. My grandfather was converted to Christianity through his encounter with Luther’s works and through a chaplain he met to translate German from Japanese. I never got to know the man who passed this faith onto now four generations of Lutherans in our family, but I am grateful for Dr. Gordon Jensen—who helped open a world upon which my faith has deep roots.

I give thanks to God for his servant Gordon: professor, preacher, pastor, and friend who has so faithfully lived out his passion and gifts in a way that ensured that I and so many students encountered the gospel and were transformed. May God bless and keep you always.

~ Rev. Margaret Koizumi Propp

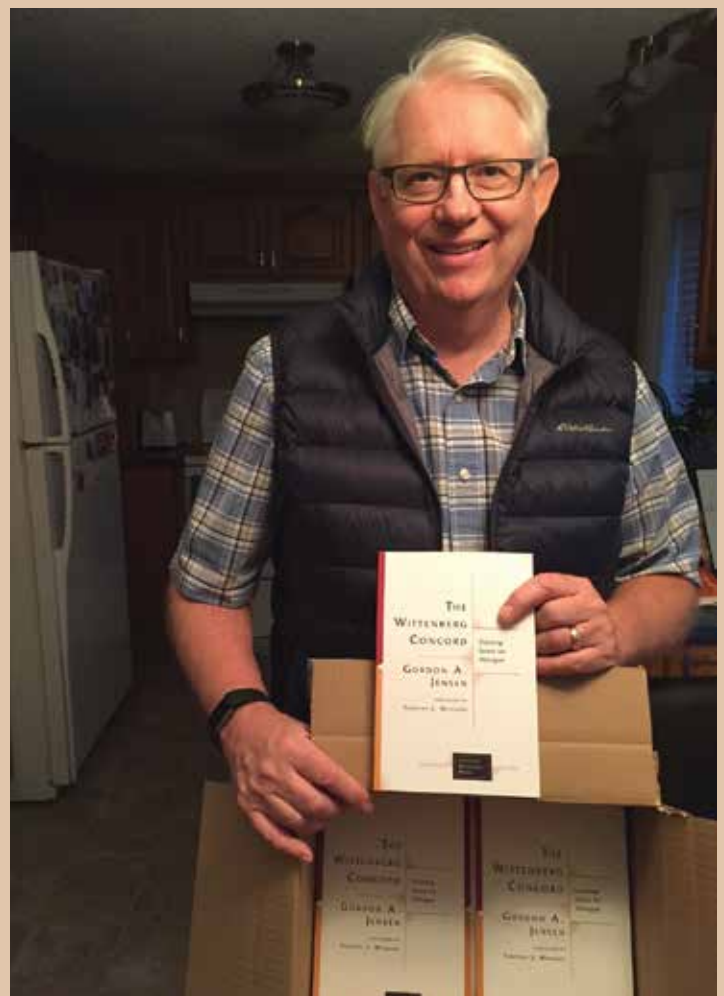
Gordon is a rare and gifted seminary professor.

Unlike most professors I have had over the course of my education, Gordon was willing (maybe even eager) to join in with students in activities outside of the classroom. He cheered on our mediocre hockey team. Gordon would join us for burgers and drinks at a local restaurant. He joked around. He has always been approachable, thoughtful, and fair in his responses. Gordon always maintained his pastoral presence with students and colleagues, which was especially important when the seminary was facing problems of its own.

I suppose what always struck me about Gordon is his unassuming nature. From our very first meeting, no one would guess his accomplishments – namely that he: is one of the world’s preeminent Luther scholars; was at the top of his class in his PhD program; regularly published academic work; took part in denominational ecumenical dialogues; has had such a profound impact on the training of our Church’s clergy.

I was blessed to have been shaped and formed by his teaching in history and theology. Gordon has been and is a gift to our whole Church, and I pray for a long and happy retirement for him.

~ Rev. Jason Zinko, Bishop of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario



THREE SCHOOLS: A MOMENT OF ALIGNMENT

We are in a constant state of becoming. Whether that is living into our own personal journey as a disciple, or a faith community more fully embracing its mission, or institutions finding themselves building upon years of deep relationship, becoming happens. I believe that, for St. Andrew's College, the act of becoming part of a more integrated and relationally mutual Saskatoon Theological Union is a trust that should never be taken for granted.

Each institution in the Union has confronted challenges throughout our history. In each of these moments, as partners, we have been present in the emergence of change. This faithfulness to one another has allowed us to fulfill our shared missional commitment to ensure that the Gospel is alive in those who answer Creator's Call.

I am excited that, this fall, the Union's becoming has led to the establishment of its first Common Faculty. With Dr. William Harrison assuming the role as the first Chair and Dr. Lynn Caldwell, the first Academic Dean, I have been humbled and excited by the creative energy being generated by this new community of scholars.

Let me be very clear why this energises me in my own vocational commitment to St. Andrew's. Since my arrival four years ago, I have learned about the deep relational history the College has with both the College of Emmanuel & St. Chad and Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon. In this learning, an awareness began to arise where convergence, Spirit, and opportunity were being revealed.

The signing of the STU Covenant earlier this year marked a commitment to not diminish any one partner's identity through this closer relationship, and indeed sought to highlight the uniqueness we each bring. In our pluralist and secular Canada, where discourse in the public commons is increasingly frayed, we can set a different tone. Our Covenant, as a living document, captures what I have heard

throughout the Union's long relationship: together we can do more than any one of us could do on our own.

As we emerge from the pandemic, I believe that whatever "normal" may be, it will never again mean stability. It will remind us, as Christians, that we have often been in the world. Being in the world, however, also means that our allegiance to Creator affords us a vantage that offers a message of radical love in the midst of oppression and marginalisation.

As we emerge from the pandemic, the partners of the Union share a commitment to recognise our complicity in colonial ways of being that have harmed both the land and Indigenous partners and kin in life-destroying and soul-devouring ways.

As we emerge from the pandemic, I believe that the path upon which the Union now finds itself is leading us in a good way. Our shared academic commitment places students at the centre of this integrated endeavour. This enterprise allows us to weave our ecumenical gifts, shared and diverse, into a vibrant tapestry of wisdom that will support those preparing to serve and bear the Good News. As each of the Union partners learns from one another and our denominational traditions, I believe we are creating something new (which happens ever so rarely).

It is an honour to share in this LTS Autumn Newsletter. I hope this brief reflection captures my own reoccurring thought: once in a lifetime does such an alignment occur, and that which is becoming is a marvel of the trust that the three STU partners continue to nurture. Together we will be resilient in chaotic times, and thus together will we thrive in innovative and generative ways, as the Spirit guides us. May it be so.

Dea. Dr. Richard Manley-Tannis, Principal, St. Andrew's College



Rev. Dr. William Harrison, Rev. Dr. Iain Luke, and Dea. Dr. Richard Manley-Tannis.

TEACHING AND LEARNING TOGETHER IN THE STU

This June, the faculty of LTS, Emmanuel & St. Chad, and St Andrew's College began to meet regularly as a single body, the STU Common Faculty. This development is a natural progression of the close collaboration which has grown up between the three colleges over the last fifty years. Even so, it marks a fresh phase in our partnership, which gives me renewed confidence in the STU's future.

It is heartening to meet together with a significantly larger faculty cohort. We currently number ten in regular teaching positions, and each of us brings distinctive gifts of scholarship, classroom leadership, and church experience, along with complementary perspectives from our different subject areas and denominational roots. This diversity has an exponential impact on what we can achieve together.

Some of the immediate effects can be seen in classroom collaboration, with colleagues inviting each other as guest speakers in the courses they teach. Mutual invitation of this kind is not unknown in the STU, but the new faculty structure creates an ease and an expectation that promotes shared teaching. Deeper forms of sharing are already in view, as we imagine what courses could look like under the leadership of two or more faculty members from different colleges and disciplines.

That is just one aspect of a much broader conversation about how to implement a single curriculum for the Master of Divinity degree offered within the STU. In a time when the structure, format, context and content of theological education are very much in ferment, it is a blessing to have a

strong group of skilled colleagues each bringing their insights to the table.

Some of the markers I see emerging in that conversation are:

- the model of a single learning community in which all students and faculty participate
- a reorientation of formation towards the context for mission of the churches we serve
- an intentional leveraging of our ecumenical environment to equip our students
- a celebration of the adult learning model which has become the norm in ministry training.

None of this would be possible without the gifts and commitments of each of the partner colleges. Our STU covenant emphasizes that our respective traditions are treasures—not just for those who inhabit them, but for all of us. We need each other, and we need each other's gifts, in order to serve the church that shares in God's mission in the 21st century. I am grateful for LTS's and St Andrew's partnership in this work, and I look forward to seeing what God can do with us.

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Dr. Iain Luke, Principal, College of Emmanuel
& St. Chad



LIVING “OUR CLASSROOM IS WESTERN CANADA”

Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein, LTS Affiliate Professor of Theology and Director of Contextual Education

One of the goals of the Our Classroom is Western Canada initiative is to move classes from being exclusively classroom-based in Saskatoon out to immersion sites throughout the four Synods that LTS serves.

Leadership in the Church, a required class for students starting internship, is a wonderful experiment in this initiative. The class is a two-part immersion course, running for three days before the Fall semester and three days in the Winter semester. In the first part, students learn about the different types and styles of leadership and how they fall under the common office of the pastor. They also learn about the risks of Secondary Traumatic Stress and Compassion Fatigue (commonly known as burn-out). In the second part, students learn about congregations and how to understand congregational behaviour, along with distinguishing between discernment and decision-making. A common thread between both parts is the awareness that every congregation has its own unique context that shapes the relationship between leader and church.

In order to take advantage of the contexts provided by the different internship sites that students are serving, and to build on the importance of immersion and on-the-land learning, the classes in 2022 took place at two different locations: New Hope Lutheran Church in Regina, SK (Treaty 4) and Church of the Good Shepherd in Red Deer, AB (Treaty 6) (with a field trip to Grace Lutheran Church in Bentley, AB). New Hope and Good Shepherd are mid-size congregations in small prairie cities, while Grace is a small-size rural congregation that has been without a full-time pastor for a while. New Hope hosted Intern Wanda

Walter in the 2021-22 academic year, while Good Shepherd/Grace is hosting Intern Andrea Wilhelm in the 2022-23 academic year.

During classes, students were able to interact with congregation members who happened to be walking by the class, to speak with the pastors of the congregations, and to hear from lay leaders about what church life is like in a rural setting. To get back and forth from their lodging to the classroom in the church building, they travelled through the immediate community of the church. Although each student is serving their own internship site, they appreciated experiencing these different contexts and how a congregation's faith life is shaped by geographical and social contexts.

In February, the second half of the 22-23 class will take place in Winnipeg, MB (Treaty 1) (the home Synod of Intern Heather Howdle). Students will have the opportunity to visit the ELCIC Head Office and the CLWR Office and hear from staff there about what the church looks like from a national perspective. They will experience the more urban setting of Manitoba's

largest city, and have a chance to visit the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

As the instructor for these courses, I have greatly enjoyed being able to teach in the churches, where leadership is an embodied reality rather than an abstract idea; it also serves to strengthen the relationship between the seminary and local congregations. As the class is offered to future interns, I look forward to new locations that will help us all learn about the diverse contexts of the church that LTS serves.



Photos from Bentley, AB





AN INTERVIEW WITH DIACONAL INTERN, DENISE PAWLIUK

Q: Who is Denise Pawliuk?

A: A storyteller, a Haiku poetry master, a love note writer, a singer, a parent to three adults, living life fully with my partner Karl, and someone who loves being by the water.

Q: Describe your diaconal internship.

A: My internship with Lutheran Theological Seminary, which is being completed remotely, consists of four parts. First, I am involved in curriculum development as part of the Our Classroom is Western Canada project. Second, I am producing weekly devotions in a podcast format. Third, I am developing and will be facilitating a Zoom-based Bible study on deacons. The fourth and final component of my internship includes the creation of four Advent YouTube videos targeting pre-confirmation aged children. All of these components are being completed under the supervision, mentorship, and support of Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein, faculty at LTS and Deacon Michelle Collins, Assistant to the Bishop with the Manitoba Northern Ontario Synod.

Q: What led you to pursuing a diaconal call?

A: The short answer is I have discerned that God is calling me to diaconal ministry. Through conversations with seminary students, ELCIC deacons, pastors, and bishops, I have been gifted the discernment stories of others. This has provided me with an opportunity to reflect on each of the stories I have heard and to imagine myself as a pastor and as a deacon. These imaginings enabled me to discover that pursuing a call to be a deacon fills me with excitement, enthusiasm, and hope. Truly, a nudge from the Holy Spirit at work!

Q: With the need for pastors, what can diaconal ministry bring to the ELCIC?

A: The ministry of deacons is often described as being on the margins—that place where the church and the world meet. This means deacons can be found being educators, working with elders and the differently abled, being a musician or composer, as foster parents, and film makers. Using my gifts in the areas of education, advocacy, and storytelling I imagine finding new ways to tell the sacred stories from the Bible; creating faith formation educational experiences for children and adults; and lifting up the voices of children and the differently abled within our church. But for now, you will find me continuing to learn, grow, and experiment during my final semester.

HISTORICAL MARKER RECOGNIZING LUTHER SEMINARY

LUTS sponsored the creation of a historical marker to recognize the Wiggins Avenue seminary building, whose cornerstone was laid 75 years ago in 1947. This project has been led by retired Bishop Allan Grundahl.

Appropriately, 2022 marks the 75th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of this original Seminary building, built primarily by Scandinavian Lutherans, now remembered and recognized in this historical project—and celebrated in a public ceremony on September 10th.

“Joy and satisfaction, along with many memories.” Those were the words of Bishop Allan Grundahl, reflecting upon a gathering of some 80 people at the ceremony recognizing the old Luther Seminary building at 212 Wiggins Avenue.

Church leaders gave presentations in recognition of the historical marker on that site. The marker contains a bronze plaque with a picture of the old seminary building; the pedestal atop which it sits contains the old building’s original cornerstone.

A special thanks to all who attended, as well as to everyone who has donated to this project.

With the support of many generous donors, the project exceeded its fundraising target of \$14,000.



Left-Right: Rev. Harold Hesje, Rev. Orville Kaminski, Rev. Lori James, Bp. Allan Grundahl, Bp. Sid Haugen, and Rev. Dr. William Harrison.





REFLECTIONS FROM A LUTHER SEMINARY GRADUATE

The recent unveiling of the historical marker at 212 Wiggins Avenue commemorating the 75th anniversary of the building of Luther

Theological Seminary at that location led to my father, Pastor Thomas Nilson, sharing vivid memories about his time spent at seminary and particularly in that building. Tom, 96 years old, is one of two living students (also Gordon Hendrickson) who moved in, in early 1948. The top floor had room for 24 students in shared double rooms. There was a chapel and library on the main floor; and the rec room and dining hall were in the basement. Dad remembers the excellent food provided by the cook, Hannah Haugen.

Initially, I will share the commitment that these young men had to their call into the ministry. Many had little or no financial means. They would pick up work where and when they could. Dad cared for the boiler daily at Zion Lutheran Church among other caretaking duties there, others cut hair (advertising “no bowls at this shop”) or washed other students’ shirts at 10 cents a shirt.

Students were expected to spend each summer interning, precluding other employment. Dad’s trusty CCM single speed bicycle accompanied him to internships in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba. He rode as much as sixty miles a day on gravel roads (we mapped this), visiting parishioners and holding vacation Bible school and Sunday services at multiple locations. One summer he visited the home of every parishioner. A place to stay was provided at these assignments (in one, a bed in the church kitchen) and often wonderful hospitality at parishioners’ tables, but with little financial remuneration. Dad, one summer, had to stay an extra week stooking wheat just to buy a bus ticket back to Saskatoon. There was no time or money even to visit his own family. He had not been home in two years when he received word one spring that his father had died.

Central to seminary life, of course, was the spiritual emphasis and vocational discipline. Days started at 7 am with chapel prior to breakfast. The Laviks lived on the main floor, and Dr. Lavik, the seminary president, supervised the students’ development closely. The academic course was rigorous, with students working simultaneously on university and seminary degrees in a five-year program, with classes at both university and seminary daily.

This building also provided a setting for camaraderie and fun student life. The stories are many, of the wonderful time the students had living together and bonds they formed which endured their entire lifetimes. One prank that still summons the well-known ‘Tom Nilson laugh’ was one played on John Lokken, the resident head. John was going with Borgny Sylte (his eventual wife) and was out later than recommended. Leonard Sogge happened to have a Model T horn with a very loud roar. Dad mounted it underneath John’s bed. John, attempting to sneak in, took his shoes off, tiptoed down the hall, then proceeded to jump into bed, setting off the horn and waking the entire dorm, including the Laviks right below his room. Later John admitted he was angry initially but then saw the humour in it and laughed most of the night, not saying a word about it the next morning. It was brought up at the year’s closing ceremonies by Dr. Lavik, who indicated the students had great fun occasionally in the dorm.

Many students formed the relationships that led to their marriages during their time at Wiggins Avenue. Tom courted Randi Farden, often walking to and from the Sanitorium where she worked as a dietitian across the river at the far south end of Saskatoon. His beloved Randi was his partner in almost 70 years of marriage and more than 35 years of ministry in the three western provinces and graduate work in St. Louis MO.

Lifelong connections formed by classmates were passed on to their families. Family vacations across Canada often included drop-in visits with classmates. I suppose my husband, James Lokken, and I are evidence of these enduring friendships.

This building, through its faculty and students, still provides a powerful historical and living legacy to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and further, embodied in the words on the 1947 cornerstone “The Word Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone.”

On behalf of Tom and family, I want to thank Bishop Allan Grundahl and Obert Friggstad for their insight, time, and energy resulting in this great commemorative and reflective monument.

Rev. Tom Nilson’s memories as recounted by his daughter JoAnn Nilson and son-in-law James Lokken.

LTS AND CHURCHx TEAM UP TO LIFT ONLINE

Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President

Working through the now-completed Lay Academy project, LTS has created the LIFT (Leading in Faith Today) curriculum for training lay leaders, predominantly in Lutheran and Anglican contexts. We are pleased to have completed and made available 22 courses in a wide range of relevant areas, in print format (<https://layacademylift.ca/courses/>). Working together with CHURCHx, a non-profit, ecumenical (United, Anglican, Lutheran) online course provider, we are now preparing to make this material available in an accessible electronic format online. This change will make the courses suitable for individual learning, in addition to the existing group-study format.

Currently, the LIFT curriculum exists as a set of 22 courses, in a downloadable format. They are intended for group use with a leader, in much the same way as Sunday School and Confirmation courses have long been delivered. CHURCHx provides the expertise to transform many of these courses into online, individualized learning programs, available to anyone in Canada or other countries, potentially serving the Lutheran World Federation. With this transformation, the courses will be hosted on the CHURCHx e-learning website, making them visible to a larger audience and available in a more interactive, web-first format. CHURCHx will also ensure that the courses are accessible for people with different learning needs in accordance with the latest accessibility standards. This update will transform a print-first set of resources into a web-first curriculum built for a post-COVID audience.

Working with CHURCHx, we plan a complete conversion and revision of the LIFT Curriculum with experienced

Instructional Designers who bring extensive background in online learning for theological formation. In the first phase of this project (2022) we hope to create a “Preaching Stream” composed of seven courses out of the original 22. In consultation with the course authors, the designer will reformat these for online learning, adding graphical and video elements, plus interactive self-assessments. The completed “LIFT 2.0: Preaching Stream” will be a comprehensive preparation for lay preachers presented in an accessible, affordable format based on the best available thinking about online education in Theology.

CHURCHx is a project of the Innovative Ministry Centre of the Toronto United Church Council, which receives grant funding from United Church and Anglican Church sources for the purposes of equipping churches to minister faithfully to a rapidly changing world. Using its resources, CHURCHx has built a university-grade learning website to bring together multiple institutions onto a common platform with a unified audience.

Empowering the whole people of God to provide leadership is an essential feature of a healthy congregation and a central challenge for today’s church. LIFT 2.0 will increase the capacity of lay leaders to glorify God through improved preaching, deeper theological insight, and greater biblical literacy, leading to more effective and resilient faith communities. Dedicated lay leaders are becoming a core part of the church’s mission and ministry. In their preparation for service, God is glorified and the challenge to live the life of the Kingdom upheld.

UPDATE FROM THE LTS STUDENT UNION

Andrea Wilhelm, Chair

Some of you who are alumni may know, and fondly remember, LTS’s student union (LTS SU). Like much else in the church and at the seminary, the LTS SU has changed! We are small in numbers – twelve to fourteen members this semester – and because of the intensive and online formats, we have few opportunities for all of us to be together. Our meetings have been virtual since the outset of the pandemic; many of them were virtual even before. However, we continue to be an important platform for mutual support, celebration and advocacy.

As the three colleges are moving closer together, the LTS SU has begun to reach out to the other student bodies, to explore forming an (additional) joint SU. It would make sense to work together, since we will be sharing professors, and it would provide a home for the doctoral students as well. It was a surprise, then, to realize that this reaching out

is not as simple as anticipated. I find it very interesting to step out into this unfamiliar territory. There is no clear path, so we take one step after another, occasionally even one step forward and two steps back – or sideways! Openness, creativity and discernment are needed, and that inspires me. Where is God leading us?

One thing that is important to the LTS SU students is that as the Saskatoon Theological Union takes shape, the standards and policies that we have enrolled under as students of LTS are maintained. LTS has robust policies on inclusive language, academic accommodation for students with disabilities, the prevention of discrimination and harassment, sexual assault, and it values teaching excellence. We would like to see similar policies for the STU as a whole. In our eyes, they reflect the justice and mercy of the God we attempt to serve. They certainly improve the quality of our lives as students.



FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Hugh Williams, Director of Communications and Development

Greetings and thanks

I wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to you for your support of the seminary. Whatever one's giving focus—the Grace Fund for Faculty, our Annual Fund, Student Aid, or to supplement existing endowments—it is clear we are blessed with generous supporters who are keen to ensure that LTS remains in a good financial position.

It is especially encouraging that in just the past two years, the money raised for the Grace Fund for Faculty has exceeded **\$350,000**. This places us on course to hire a new faculty member in the foreseeable future—an exceptional achievement for a small theological school in these ever-changing times.

Historical Marker

While the times change, it is nevertheless important to honour our history. I give my most sincere thanks to Bishop Allan Grundahl for his tremendous work in steering the Historical Marker project (please see pp.12-13) to its successful completion. Not only is the space a meaningful way to mark and remember key moments in the seminary's history, but the overall work of the project—the fundraising, storytelling, history-sharing—has heightened my appreciation of the interconnectedness of Lutherans in Canada and beyond.

Moreover, it is joyous when a fundraising endeavor exceeds its original targets. That is what was accomplished here, and so my gratitude to everyone who made this project such a success.

LTS apparel

Finally, a note for those among you who have expressed an interest in purchasing LTS apparel. While the seminary does not produce and sell branded apparel, we have set things up for you to purchase such products yourself.

If this interests you, please go online to 'URstore': <https://urstore.ca/lutheran-theological-seminary> where you can browse and purchase LTS-branded clothing (and other products) at your leisure.

Peace be with you.

Hugh





GORDON'S RETROSPECTIVE

As I move toward retirement, I have been reflecting upon how to measure success. There are a multitude of ways. In sports, success is based on the medals and the number of times your name is etched onto trophies. In business, it can be personally measured by promotions, salaries, bonuses, or corporately, by the company's share prices on the stock market. As professors, success is often measured by the number of scholarly books and articles published, peer recognition, and the number of speaking engagements you get invited to. However, I have concluded that seeing the excitement in the eyes of students in my classes, when they grasp the radical, audacious gospel of God's grace, is what gives me my greatest sense of satisfaction. Most important to me has not been what wisdom I accidentally spouted in class, or wrote in a journal article or book, or even the amount of success I may have accomplished in keeping people awake during one of my sermons. No, what has always been most important to me is whether the students and listeners have 'caught' and experienced the liberating gospel found in Christ Jesus. For this has been, and continues to be, at the heart of seminary education at LTS. It was the focus at LTS when I was a student, long ago, when my profs helped me learn that apart from this gospel, we are left with a "care-taker" ministry. When we experience the gospel, however, we and the church cannot help but be engaged in the transformation of lives and the transformation of society. Once that core piece is in place, then the rest of the time in seminary is meant to teach students how to proclaim this explosive, life-giving, transformative gospel in whatever context they encounter.

My single-minded focus on doing all I can do so that people can experience the gospel is not something new. In fact, Luther

translated the Bible into the everyday language of the people for one main purpose—so they could experience the gospel themselves as they read and heard the Living Word. In the sacraments, Luther wanted people to experience the gospel of life, forgiveness of sin, and salvation as well—to actually taste, feel, and experience the crucified and risen Christ in their lives. What could be more important?

In my time as a teacher these past 20 years at LTS, all of the staff and faculty who were there when I started have come and gone. The students all leave as they graduate. The curriculum revisions (at least three!) have demanded time and energy as have the accreditation self-studies and visits (those I won't miss!). Enrollments have gone up and down, again and again. We have moved from our landmark home of many years into a new space. Over this period of time, I have had the great privilege of following in the footsteps of wonderful faculty at LTS and teaching with them as well as my colleagues in the Saskatoon Theological Union. They have made great impressions on generations of students. I have had the great privilege of working with LTS staff; every one of them has taught me about living the gospel in this world. And I have had the privilege of teaching a generation of students that have challenged me to be clearer about what this gospel looks like in our world. So as I pack up my office, I believe that my greatest achievements are to found by the times that someone experienced the radical, liberating gospel in something I said or something they read. Realtors may say it's all about "location, location, location," I would say, "no, I've learned that it's all about experiencing gospel, gospel, gospel." There's no other bandwagon I'd rather be on.



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