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The Easter season is full of wonder, repentance and hope. Just after Easter, we welcomed 85 pastors and lay leaders to a special week of continuing education (Kairos). This program gave me a brief privilege to return to my first vocation as a New Testament teacher. Under the title of “The Death of Innocence,” we searched the scriptures of Luke’s account of Jesus’ execution. As we listened for God’s word for us, we were aware that this Easter season is also filled with the public celebrations and agonies of the conquest of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. This is a difficult time, a humbling time for our witness to the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus both reveals the reality of sin and restores God’s mission in a broken world.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem in Luke’s story, he is confronted by an unholy alliance of adversaries, including Satan himself, who has been waiting for “an opportune time” since Jesus’ temptation (4.13). Now Satan enters Judas in his collusion with the religious leaders who were glad to give him “an opportunity to betray Jesus to them when no crowd was present,” (22.1-6). The High Priest, Herod, and Pilate are thoroughly evil, making a charade of justice in Jesus’ trials and taking malevolent delight in Jesus’ capture (see 22.63-65; 23.8-11). Herod and Pilate, old enemies, become friends (23.12). They have wanted to get their hands on Jesus for a long time.

Condemned repeatedly, Jesus is led to death with a sarcastic charge posted over his head, “The King of the Jews,” which is the prophetic truth. As the soldiers carry out the execution, the Centurion in charge pronounces the final verdict, “Certainly this man was innocent” (23.47). The word could be translated, “righteous,” announcing the deep biblical conviction that Jesus is “the righteous one,” the Messiah for whom Israel yearned. But “innocent” is strong enough.

The people are the tragic chorus in the drama, at first Jesus’ defense against the tyrants (19.47-48; 20.19,26; 45; 21.38; 22.2, 6). Then caught with Jesus in Pilate’s condemnation (23.14), their shout for his crucifixion prevails (23.18-25), as if it were their intent. But instantly a great number of the people join the wailing of the women as Jesus is led off to death (23.27). And when “all the crowds…saw what had taken place” as he died, “they returned home beating their breasts” (23.48). Complicit in the death of the innocent one, their innocence also has died.

The April 21, 2003 issue of *Time* magazine tells the terrible story of the fight for Karbala when small Iraqi boys were apparently pushed into the battle to pick up rocket propelled grenades to throw back at the Americans. “It sounds terrible when you hear about this cold, away from the fight,” says commander Lieut. Colonel Chris Holden. “We shot and killed children. But I accept full responsibility for that. That’s the kind of fight it was” (p. 57).

“Full responsibility” is a heavy burden, more than Lieut. Colonel Holden can be asked to bear. Nor could the Roman Centurion alone accept “full responsibility” for Jesus’ death. The Iraqi boys were not innocent. The soldiers were doing their duty. But as *Time* concludes, “as weeks fade to months to years, the remembered
The Seedbed (continued)

gaze of a clear-eyed Iraqi boy is certain to linger."

With exceptions, Lutherans are not absolute pacifists. We know the reality of evil. In the past months at Luther Seminary, Dr. Gary Simpson has taught us on “just war,” petitions were signed against American military action in Iraq, and prayers offered in support of our troops with names and photos of friends and family members posted in the chapel. Our graduates serve with distinction as military chaplains, and Dr. Roland Martinson has traveled to Europe to support their service. Now our congregations throughout the church will welcome back their sons and daughters who risked their lives and even their souls. Neither they nor we are “innocent.” The only “innocent” one was executed long ago. All are implicated, complicit. Our innocence died long ago with him. But what shall we say to those with whom “the remembered gaze of a clear-eyed Iraqi boy is certain to linger”? How dare we witness in a broken world to the hope that is ours in Christ Jesus?

Luke reveals a profound promise, hidden in a human story. Judas, the religious leaders, Herod, Pilate and the people with them are set against the Lord and his Messiah (Acts 4.26-27), but the apostle Peter who denied Jesus became the witness to his resurrection. Before Peter caved in with threefold denials (Luke 22.54-62), Jesus warned, then promised: “Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers” (22.31-32). After his denials, Peter “remembered the word of the Lord,” and like the people, he wept bitterly (22.61-62). His heart was broken by the Lord’s remembered gaze. The “turning back” toward his calling had begun.

In Luke’s account, Jesus saw it coming. Peter’s denial led both to Jesus’ death and to Peter’s apostolic leadership. God’s mission to the world will be entrusted to sinful humans. The risen Jesus is not waiting for perfect or innocent witnesses. The death of our innocence marks the beginning of the reign of the innocent Lord Jesus. The greatest apostles are forgiven sinners.

And what about the Centurion, the Colonel who is burdened with “full responsibility”? The New Testament does not tell us more about this Centurion, although early Christian tradition developed a lore about his conversion and sought to connect him with the Centurion whose slave Jesus had healed in Luke 7. Luke later tells a long story about Peter’s call from God into the house of another Roman Centurion, Cornelius. There is no hint this is the same soldier who was Jesus’ executioner, but Peter gets the point: “God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection” (Acts 10.28-29).

Jesus’ resurrection vindicates his innocence. Jesus is God’s “righteous one.” The risen Jesus restores his apostles to Israel’s calling into God’s mission of saving love for the world. Peter, whose innocence died in the night of his denials, has “turned back.” Now he “strengthens his brothers” by proclaiming the Easter promise to all the people: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far away” (Acts 2.37-38). Peter’s innocence has been replaced by a bold calling. Now this forgiven apostle will be sent even to the homes of the occupation forces.

Our combat veterans are now arriving home. We rejoice in our reunions and grieve our losses, including their innocence and ours. We refuse to forget what we have seen. We know God has deeper healing in store for all of us in repentance (turning) and faith. As Easter turns into Pentecost, we also know the risen Christ will send a new generation of forgiven apostles into God’s mission of mercy for the world.

David L. Tiede, president
Prayer and caring and spiritual growth—those were reactions among Luther Seminary students, alumni, faculty and others as war with Iraq erupted in March.

Some organized in support of the war, some against—affirmation in either case of the importance of Luther Seminary’s leadership training.

Many in the seminary’s extended community found new dimensions in their prayer life. Pastors and interns strove to comfort parishioners and bridge war-related disagreements in their congregations. And one Luther professor thinks war caught us morally unprepared. Here are their stories.

By Marc Hequet
Special to Luther Seminary Story

Praying by Name

Zach Thompson’s church reacted to the war as the nation reacted—some members pro-war, some anti-war “and many who are in the middle.”

But the gospel overarches any rift between pro-war and anti-war political factions. “Preaching Jesus—the gospel—and preaching a specific American political agenda are not at all the same thing,” says Thompson, intern pastor at Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines, Iowa.

The church, where more than 3,000 worship each week, has “encouraged passionate and frequent prayer” and “continually reinforced the fact that God is still in control,” says Thompson.

“Our world is a very sinful and broken place and war and pain are a part of that reality.”

Lutheran Church of Hope conducted two prayer services the day after the war started. A total of about 250 came to pray for members who had been deployed, for the rest of the troops, for leaders of the United States, “for the Iraqi people and also those who are our enemies,” says Thompson.

During worship, names of military personnel connected to the church went up on projection screens “and we prayed for each person by name,” he adds. The congregation also donated care-package items for the troops.

Thompson’s congregation is reading through the entire Bible this year and had reached the bloody pages of 2 Kings just as the attack on Iraq commenced.

“We have seen how war is frequently a part of the story of the Israelites and their neighbors,” Thompson observes. “But we have also continually seen that God is faithful to his people and is always moving towards the future, where there is ultimately assurance and hope in Jesus Christ.”

What should Christians do about war? “We don’t presume to know exactly what the right response is at this time,” says Thompson, “but do know that God can work through any human circumstance to bring about peace and his will.”
Faith in a Time of War (continued)
War has reaffirmed some of Thompson’s convictions—“the great importance of taking Jesus’ Great Commission in Matthew 28 seriously,” for one thing.

“As we share the good news of Jesus Christ with people of all nations and invite them into a personal relationship with him,” says Thompson, “his message of hope, comfort, peace and discipleship will permeate the DNA of our world.”

And war has “shown me the importance of prayer,” he adds. “Prayer is not meant to be a last resort, something we do because we have run out of other options, but it is really the most powerful tool that we have.”

Praying for Both Sides
The Rev. David Mattson, ’87, says his church has been praying for both the United States and Iraq, especially for the innocent victims of the war. The church designated its Lent, Good Friday and Easter offerings for ELCA’s International Disaster Response.

Mattson’s Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Dana Point, Calif., is close to the U.S. Marine’s Camp Pendleton and the congregation has three servicemen in Iraq. Discussion of the conflict was “much more than just speculating on whether this met just-war theory or not,” Mattson says.

Opinion on the war divided his congregation. “The differences have not been hostile,” says Mattson, “but frank discussion has taken place, mostly in groups within the congregation”—the men’s breakfast, the women’s Bible study and Sunday morning adult education.

If you’re going to disagree, he says, maybe church is “the best place for the community to wrestle with these tough issues and then speak God’s Word.”

Divisions over the war “brought home again that we are all sinners,” he adds. “The war has exposed my own prejudices and my own sin” and “intensified certain aspects” of his own spirituality, Mattson says—particularly the importance of his personal prayer time.

What’s the pastor’s role in binding up war-related rifts among members? “A pastor has to wear different hats,” says Mattson. “At one moment you are a counselor sitting with a mother who’s grieving her child’s departure. To argue with her the justification of this war would be to destroy that relationship.”

On the other hand, “during the prayers, sermon, Bible studies, a pastor reminds the parishioner Bible’s words to pray for the enemy, that a military or even political solution is not the end-all, but that we live in a fallen world with fallen people and that it’s only through Christ that there is ultimate hope.”

And while families are waiting for the safe return of loved ones “it’s the pastor’s role to encourage the community that this is not to be wasted time, but prayer time, and deepening-of-faith time, and working for the day when God’s kingdom comes more fully, and above all trusting time.”

Walking with Humility
Mark Swanson stresses in his presentations to congregations that the Iraq war wasn’t a Christian-Muslim conflict. “There are Christians and Muslims on both sides,” he says, noting that the U.S. has the support of Muslim nations and many American soldiers are Muslim.

That Islam now is an established American religion is another key point Swanson makes. “Being an American is not a matter of being Protestant, Catholic or Jew,” says Swanson, an associate professor and director of Luther Seminary’s Islamic Studies program. “Islam is a growing piece of the North American religious mosaic.”

Swanson has done about 100 presentations on Islam since the terror attacks of Sept. 11. Attendees acknowledge the rise of Islam in their community—and confess that they don’t know much about it. Swanson covers the basics.

The conflicts of the Middle East remain unsettling to him as a Christian and “as a person who cares deeply” about the peoples of that area.

“I continue to pray for miracles of peacemaking, for miracles of reconstruction, for good things for the Iraqi people and that Iraq can become kind of a beacon in the region,” says Swanson.

The great question, he thinks, is this: “Can the United States learn to walk with a certain humility in this world?”

If not, Swanson is “deeply worried” that Muslims may perceive the U.S. as a “new colonial and new imperialist power” in the Middle East. That could mean ill will toward the U.S.—and more terrorism.

Prayer Banner
Luther Seminary student Deb Grismer lived daily with the prospect of her airman husband going to Iraq. Her response? Prayer—in fact, a prayer banner.

“I had a vision of it in chapel one day,” says Grismer, an master of divinity student. She felt an “overwhelming need to put names to those soldiers and to show people on campus there are direct connections—sons, daughters, friends, cousins. We can’t feel that we are remaining untouched by this war.”
Faith in a Time of War
(continued)

Her husband Rod, a member of the South Dakota National Guard, had been on active duty since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. He now is a tech sergeant in the Minnesota Air National Guard currently active with the Air Force. They have a daughter, age 7, and son, age 10.

As war with Iraq approached, Deb Grismer felt that “outward public support for the soldiers” was lacking. Grismer wanted the soldiers “front and center in people’s minds.”

The result is her white banner with red lettering, six feet long by three-and-a-half feet wide. It bears a dove outlined in gold—“to signify the Holy Spirit,” says Grismer, “and peace.”

By mid-April, the banner on the back wall of Luther Seminary’s Chapel of the Incarnation in Olson Campus Center carried more than 70 names of military personnel with some direct connection to Luther.

The banner may bring healing for those who were “torn apart because they don’t want war but their soldiers, their loved ones, are there fighting it,” says Grismer. “That was my call. It was my way to give to the soldiers.”

Student Chaplains and ‘Spaces of Reconciliation’

Seminary students launched an outreach effort to provide pastoral care and counseling and share the Good News even in dark times. They anticipated that when the war started, people would flock to churches for spiritual shelter.

As it turned out, few came. But organizers are glad they made the effort.

The idea for the chaplain outreach ministry occurred at an INVITE social gathering. “I believe the Holy Spirit interceded within the group as war in Iraq loomed and our hearts were heavy with concern,” says Stone. “An evening of hospitality, fellowship, prayer and support for one another” led to master of divinity student Sara Quigley’s “brainstorm”—a chaplaincy initiative.

INVITE recruited 35 individuals, including some from outside the group, to provide pastoral care and counseling at nine “spaces of reconciliation” in area churches.

Organizer Mark Salo, a second-year master of arts student in doctrine and theology, liked the prospect of “being out in public with other believers and praying with each other.”

Organizers commend Dean of Students Patricia Lull, Seminary Pastor Robert M. Brusic, Associate Professor Richard Wallace and Professor Charles Amjad-Ali for their help. Brusic and Wallace conducted a commissioning service for student chaplains March 16.

When war broke out, the chaplains deployed to the spaces of reconciliation. Organizers learned what they could accomplish in just nine days of preparation. Says Stone: “We used our faith, skills and love for one another as the tools necessary toward a sense of readiness in the event that our community needed us.”

Jesus’ atoning death on the cross, Stone adds, was the “ultimate expression of God’s compassion.” Moreover, Jesus’ great commandment—love your neighbor as yourself—and Jesus’ Great Commission—“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”—“are intimately woven with justice,” she says.
Corinne Johnson was among those who launched an initiative to support the troops.

Members of College Republicans at the seminary set up a table to collect the names of family and friends in the military to include in prayers and to receive packages of candy, toiletries, devotion books and other items to be sent by Lutheran World Relief.

The effort was important to “show troops we support them and support what they’re doing and hope for a fast victory,” says Johnson, a master of divinity student. It was gratifying, Johnson says, to see in the wake of the war “how happy the Iraqi people are to finally be free—to have just a small portion of the freedom that we as Americans have.”

And Johnson is particularly glad for what she sees as the “opportunity now to spread the Gospel in Iraq.”

Seminarians on both sides of the issue found themselves sitting at adjacent tables in Olson Campus Center after the war started—and by mid-April, pro-war and anti-war activists found common ground.

College Republicans and the war opponents of INViTE signed a joint statement on responsible public discourse and sat together at a table to gather care packages for U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians.

The days leading up to the attack on Iraq brought uncomfortable spiritual growth for Ivy Borgstrom. War, she says, has “really challenged my faith.”

In that setting, Borgstrom experienced real doubts about the war. But she also hears of the injustice of the defeated regime and acknowledges “that can’t go on.”

The urgent question in church, homes and workplaces has been this: What does faith mean in war?

“Throughout the Bible there are conflicts that God sends his people into,” she muses. “People are killed and nations are wiped out. How does that play into what we’re seeing now? Pounding our swords into plowshares—where does that fit in?”

During Lent at Luther Place Memorial Church, a congregacy study group read Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Cost of Discipleship and Life together.

Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian who left the United States to return to Germany and resist Naziism. He was hanged in the concentration camp at Flossenbürg on April 9, 1945, at the age of 39, a month before Germany surrendered.

In The Cost of Discipleship, Bonhoeffer argues that truly following Christ means a radical turnabout for Christians.

In the somber days prior to the Iraq war, Borgstrom, realized from studying Bonhoeffer, that discipleship is “meant to be life-changing.”

“It’s not an easy road by any stretch of the imagination,” she says. “It’s a real sacrifice being made when we choose to follow Christ.”

Gary Simpson has done many presentations at churches on the idea of a just war—and found that main-
Faith in a Time of War (continued)

stream Lutherans and Episcopalians to whom he spoke knew little about the idea.

“They don’t realize there’s a tradition that’s very old that has developed over time and has different criteria,” says Simpson, Luther Seminary professor of systematic theology. Just-war criteria “are always related to a concrete, particular situation.”

Centuries of tradition define a just war in which Christians may morally participate. “For what is just war but the punishment of evildoers and the maintenance of peace?” asks Martin Luther in Whether Soldiers Too Can be Saved. And in his Appeal for Prayer Against the Turks, Luther argues that war against those invaders of Europe was just “because it is for the purpose of preserving Christianity.”

Over the centuries, defining just war has taken into account imperial Roman military service, medieval chivalry and the threat of militant Islam. Twentieth-century discussions focused on warfare’s destructiveness and the economic burden of military spending. And now the discussion takes into account the merits of preventing terrorism.

At one of his sessions, Simpson elicited a provocative question from a participant: Who follows the just-war guidelines? Responded Simpson: “Nobody—unless you hold them to it.”

Nations follow just-war criteria, he explains, “just like they’ll follow any kind of moral criteria—if you hold them accountable to those moral criteria. We’re all citizens of this country. We all have the responsibility to press this case.”

“Our world is a very sinful and broken place and war and pain are a part of that reality.”

Zach Thompson, intern, Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines, Iowa

Simpson does think that the war cast faith in sharp focus. “People have a deep hope that their Christian faith has something really to do with all this,” he says. We hope that our faith and the “real, live things that are going on in our world” have something in common.

War, he says, is “a great opportunity to actually inquire more deeply” about your faith and how it does connect with everyday life in a very global, public way.”

What worries him is that the issue appears to have snuck up on us. “Why haven’t congregations been talking about this for the past three or four years?” Simpson asks. Congregations and seminaries, he argues, “still are unprepared for most of the big moral questions of our world.

“We tend to think more in terms of pastoral care and counseling. We’re really good there. But we’re not very good when it comes to moral consideration, moral reasoning, moral reflection.”

Nearly 150 readers responded to the March Story survey. The Story editorial committee will use this data to evaluate the magazine’s effectiveness and to consider changes. You can check out a summary of the results at www.luthersem.edu/story.

Thanks, Story readers, for your input
In the past eight years Luther Seminary’s mission to “educate leaders for Christian communities” has meant re-examining what these communities need in their leaders and initiating broad-sweeping curriculum changes to meet these needs. Did the changes work? Luther Seminary sought to find out.

In 1995, Luther Seminary President David Tiede visited seven congregations in the Midwestern and Western United States. He undertook it, he said, “as a Lenten journey by the seminary to listen more than speak, to learn more than teach.”

In 1997, three-person teams of seminary faculty, students and staff visited congregations as part of a Lilly grant to evaluate Luther’s effectiveness in meeting the needs of its graduates. Now, five years later, the self-evaluation process continues with an initiative called “Focus on Leadership.” Teams from Luther Seminary, led by Dr. Paul Berge, professor emeritus of New Testament, conducted focus groups in 12 congregations. It was a time to find out what the Spirit is saying to the church and also a time to reflect on ways in which Luther Seminary is responding to the leadership needs of the next generation of church leaders.

On May 8, Luther Seminary invited members of the 12 participating congregations to an on-campus Focus on Leadership Summit. The participants heard a summary of findings, attended chapel and classes, and met in small groups to brainstorm ways Luther Seminary and congregations can work together to train future leaders for mission.

Summit participants had one driving concern for the seminary and the whole church: prayer. God’s word is clear: “…ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

The Focus Group Summary

During the congregational visits, members and leaders were asked to describe their church.

Each of the 12 congregations reported change in their community and their church. Half of them noted their membership did not reflect the demographics of their immediate neighborhood. The largest change in congregations was in worship style and/or time of worship.

When asked how they equipped members for their callings, most congregations cited specific programs, gift discernment, education and Bible study. Many reflected on what should or could be done rather than what actually is taking place.

Most of the congregations interviewed indicated that they either were working on or wanted to work more on instilling a deeper Christian commitment among members and also wanted to be more intentional about mission and outreach.

When describing the specific leadership qualities of a church, “visionary” was by far the most frequently noted. Next came the abilities to be flexible, to think outside the box and to empower others.

With less than a third of the demand for first call pastors met each year, would members encourage those with gifts for ministry to become pastors? This question stimulated advice about what would be helpful in nurturing a call to professional church leadership.

Interviews showed strong support for lay professional church leadership and partnership in ministry on many levels. Participants also recognized the difficulties of sufficiently funding such positions.

Nearly every congregation visited said they would like more interaction with Luther Seminary. Some congregations were surprised to hear that only 16 percent of seminaries’ educational costs are paid by benevolence systems of the ELCA. The congregations recognized that they had some responsibility in helping fund seminary education.

The last question made in the focus group always generated a lot of discussion: If you could make one statement to the president or faculty of Luther Seminary, what would you say? Some comments included: “Leaders coming out of Luther Seminary are great!” “Work to develop relationships with individual congregations.” “Communicate seminary needs more.” “Encourage faculty to address issues and model healthy dialogue.”

Luther Seminary will continue to work with these congregations and others to learn how they can help each other equip the church for mission and ministry through effective ordained and lay leadership.
Seven Marks of a Good Sermon

Everyone wants to hear—and some preach!—a good sermon. But what exactly is a good sermon? Certainly you know one when you hear one, but pinning down the details can be difficult: preaching is an interesting mixture of theology (what we’re saying) and rhetoric (how we say it). Yet when a sermon includes the following seven central elements, and when the Holy Spirit is present, something happens—the word comes alive and people come to faith.

In brief, a good sermon engages the biblical text, proclaims the gospel, connects God’s word to the lives of God’s people, is well organized and easy to understand, captures the imagination of the hearers, is delivered well, and orients people toward life in God’s world.

By Homiletics Professor Michael Rogness and Assistant Professor David Lose

“Preaching... speaks to the whole person, and to do that we need to engage the imaginations of our hearers.”

1 A good sermon engages the biblical text.

Historically, the Christian sermon has always followed the reading of Scripture. In a very real way, the sermon is a response to the Scriptures read. In the Scriptures the preacher has heard God speak in such a way that she must say something back, first as she works on her sermon and then to her congregation that Sunday. To think of the sermon as response takes seriously the nature of the Bible as God’s word, a living witness that still provokes a response from those who hear it. Therefore, good preachers strive to engage the biblical passages seriously, in a manner that is interesting, inspiring and relevant.

2 A good sermon proclaims the gospel.

Wait a second. Isn’t preaching the Bible the same as preaching the gospel?

Yes and no. Certainly our sense of the gospel (in brief, what God has done through Jesus Christ for us and all the world) emerges from the biblical witness. At the same time, though, there is some value in realizing that we cannot simply equate the two. Luther had a nice way of putting this. The Bible, Luther said, is like the manger in which the Christ child rests. So while we should flee to the Bible to find Christ, Luther counseled, we should avoid falling on our knees to worship wood and straw. To put it another way, we value the Bible so highly precisely and primarily because it contains the gospel.

The preacher’s primary task in dealing with any biblical passage, therefore, is to say a word about what God has done and is still doing through Jesus...
Sermon (continued)

Christ for us and for all the world. Our task as biblical preachers is to approach passages of Scripture (be they parables, wisdom sayings, passages from Old or New Testament) with two tasks in mind: a) to hear the particular confession of faith being made in the passage and b) to relate it to our overall sense of what God is up to in our lives and the world through Jesus. That is, whatever you’re preaching on, somehow it relates to the ongoing work of the God we have come to know most fully through Jesus Christ.

3 A good sermon connects God’s Word to the lives of God’s people.

Part of the significance of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is God’s commitment to be accessible, to speak a divine word in human form, to take on our lot and our life. Preaching is an incarnational word, one that reaffirms God’s commitment to meet us where we are.

To put it another way, we might go so far as to say that there is no universal gospel apart from the way it manifests itself in the particular and concrete aspects of our actual lives. To talk about “God’s love” or “forgiveness” or “grace” in general makes very little sense without pointing to specific examples and instances of love, forgiveness and grace in our lives and the world around us.

Preaching that is generic or universal in character and does not struggle to relate God’s word to our actual lives is boring, irrelevant, and gives the impression that God does not really care about what’s going on in our lives and world. On the other hand, preaching that is only “relevant”—focusing on the latest perceived need, trend or tragedy in the community without viewing these issues from the perspective of the gospel—is at best therapy and at worst mere pandering.

4 A good sermon is well organized and easy to understand.

As we all know, if the message isn’t clearly thought out and presented, it just doesn’t matter much what’s being said. If I can’t follow it, then I can’t appreciate it and certainly can’t be moved to faith by it. Likewise, preaching that is unclear, poorly organized or difficult to understand is ineffectual.

5 A good sermon engages the imaginations of the hearers.

One of the most significant insights of mainline preachers over the last two generations has been that the gospel is more than a head-trip. That is, the gospel is more than thinking in a certain way. It is not just cognitive, but experiential, deals not only with our rational side but with our whole selves—feelings, desires, needs, heart, soul and so forth. Preaching, we have come to realize, speaks to the whole person, and to do that we need to engage the imaginations of our hearers.

“… when the Holy Spirit is present, something happens—the word comes alive and people come to faith.”

6 A good sermon is delivered well.

To preach is to communicate. Therefore, it must be delivered effectively so that we may hear the message. In order for that to occur, two things need to take place:

a) The preacher must deliver the sermon with the appropriate affect. If you’re excited, bursting with good news, and think what you have to say really is good news, then your facial expression, body gestures, and voice should express those emotions.

b) The preacher must deliver the sermon with passion and integrity. People should know that you believe what you say, that you have something at stake in this message, that it is true for you, and that it matters. Insincerity is easily detected by most listeners and greatly undermines preaching.

7 A good sermon orients hearers to life in God’s world.

Christian worship is the gathering of the faithful so that they may be renewed in faith and sent once more into the world as the people of God. Preaching, as a central part of that worship, has the responsibility not only to proclaim the gospel so that hearers may come once again to faith, but also to re-direct those same people to the world as the arena in which they live out their Christian callings to be God’s people, and even God’s partners, in the world. God has chosen to use human means—the abilities and opportunities of our people in the various roles and dimensions of their everyday lives—to help sustain the world God loves so much.

For this reason, preaching that does not seek to orient hearers to their active lives as God’s people sent to care for God’s world risks engendering an inwardly focused, even self-centered version of Christianity that betrays God’s love for and commitment to God’s world.

The next time you are listening to or preaching a sermon, look for these seven marks. And later, when the appropriate opportunity presents itself, talk about the sermon with your pastor. Most preachers welcome, even crave, honest feedback. This outline of the seven marks of a sermon may give preachers and their hearers some guidelines to talk about what makes good preaching.
Ask Peter Sethre about the importance of continuing education, and he replies by quoting Lutheran theologian Joseph Sittler: “It does no good to undertake our witness to Christ with a full heart and an empty head.”

Sethre, who is retiring as Luther’s director of continuing education, understands the heavy demands faced by clergy and rostered church leaders. “Sometimes your tank drains out,” he says. “You can end up running on empty with nothing to say. Continuing education can help renew your sense of vocation and ministry. It can challenge you to rethink your faith.”

But Sethre is quick to point out that lifelong learning is not just for clergy and rostered leaders. He notes that over 500 lay people participate annually in Luther’s Lay School of Theology. “Our professors really enjoy teaching lay people because they read, they think, and they ask good questions,” Sethre says.

A Natural Career Progression

Sethre did not intend to go into education. He had always planned to be a parish pastor, and after completing his seminary training and graduate school, he spent 16 years serving congregations in Wyoming and Montana. But even then, he was involved in education, teaching courses at the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology and writing curriculum for Augsburg Fortress.

When he was invited to create a continuing education program for the American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church in America at Wartburg College, he accepted. Eight years later in 1991, he was named director of continuing education at Luther Seminary. “Moving into education was a natural progression for me, and it broadened my sense of ministry,” he says. “It’s a path that has made a lot of sense. The pieces have fit together well.”

An Ongoing Challenge

During the last dozen years, Sethre has enjoyed seeing Luther’s continuing education program grow and flourish. It draws clergy from all over the country and lay people from throughout the Midwest. Several clergy from overseas have enrolled after seeing the course offering on the seminary’s Web page. “People tell me that we’re providing a valuable service that energizes them and enriches their understanding of the faith,” Sethre says. “It’s very satisfying to know that people really do appreciate what we’re doing here.”

Planning courses and events that people will want to attend is an ongoing challenge. Sethre constantly asks for suggestions and “keeps his ear to the ground” for ideas. He has found that classes on biblical topics are consistently popular with clergy, rostered leaders, and lay people. Preaching is also a popular subject, and over the years, Sethre has arranged for well-known preachers like Barbara Brown Taylor, Thomas Long and William Willimon to lead seminars at Luther. Right now, Sethre is excited about this year’s “The Best Of…” series, which began after Easter. It showcased 12 Luther professors who each gave the one lecture they want everyone to hear.

Looking Toward the Future

Sethre believes that continuing education should be a bridge between the seminary and congregational life. “We need to strike a balance between being too academic and too watered-down. Our goal is to present programs of substance and depth that deal with issues people really care about,” he says.
Sethre (continued)

He predicts that the concept of lifelong learning will continue to broaden. Programs will focus on theology as it relates to life, and there will be a wider range of providers as various church groups, offices and regions begin offering continuing education opportunities.

Online and distance offerings will remain popular. But they won’t eliminate the need for on-site, person-to-person programs. “Not everyone wants to sit and do online learning at their computer,” he says.

Led by God

Sethre has made no long-term plans for his retirement. He has, however, made two promises to his wife, Lynne: “That I will not take on extra assignments or duties for the first couple of years and that she will not have to spend another complete winter in Minnesota.”

His short-term plans include lots of reading; camping and hiking on the North Shore; a visit to Boston to see daughter Christina, her husband, and their new baby; and a trip to Norway where his daughter Lisa, a professor at Concordia College in Moorhead, will be spending a sabbatical year with her husband and two children.

As Sethre prepares for new adventures, he looks back on his time at Luther with satisfaction. “I’ve enjoyed my work here,” he says. “I’m glad God led me this way.”

Daniel Simundson: Connecting Students With the Old Testament

As a professor of Old Testament, Daniel Simundson has spent the last three decades connecting students with the traditions of the Bible so they can better understand how God is at work in their lives and in the world.

“When you read the Old Testament, you know you’re reading about real life,” he says. “Nothing is sugar-coated. God comes to people who have all kinds of flaws: people like Abraham who hid behind Sarah so the Egyptians wouldn’t kill him and claim his wife, or Jacob who was deceitful, or David who was a great king but also a seducer and murderer. God uses people like this, and that tells us that though we may not be perfect, God may still have significant and useful tasks for us.”

A More Sophisticated Seminary

Simundson says that during the last 30 years the seminary has become a more sophisticated, complex institution. When he arrived in 1972, the student body consisted of young men—and a mere handful of women—just out of college for ordained ministry. There was no such thing as a “second-career student,” and the options for those interested in lay ministry were limited.

Today women make up about 50 percent of the student body, and those interested in lay ministry have a variety of master of arts programs to choose from. Luther has also added Ph.D. and doctor of ministry programs.

New Perspectives

Another change is the presence of non-Lutherans on the faculty and among the students. It’s a change Simundson welcomes. “In a global, ecumenical world, you need awareness that although we’re all Christians, we don’t all emphasize the same things, interpret scripture the same way, or identify the same doctrines as key,” he says.

Simundson believes that having non-Lutherans on campus helps break down stereotypes and introduces both students and faculty to new perspectives. “We’re talking about the mysteries of God,” he says, “and no one can claim to have everything tied up neatly.”

Teaching and Learning

Simundson emphasizes that teaching is not a one-way street. Often the teacher learns as much as the students. He has learned, for example, how to articulate his subject matter in a straightforward, direct way so that students find it easier to understand. And he has also learned from his students’ experiences and questions. Even now, after many years in the classroom, he can still be surprised by a comment that makes him think about things in a new way.

He says the best part of teaching has been getting to know the students,
Simundson (continued)
both in and out of the classroom. He is still in contact with students who studied with him many years ago. Some have moved into leadership positions in the church. “It’s great to see people that you knew when they were beginners doing really great things out there,” he says.

Cherished Friendships
Simundson also cherishes his friendships with faculty and staff. “When you stay in one place so long, you get to know each other well,” he says. “You watch each other’s children and grandchildren grow up. It’s like a family that stays together a long time.”

Over the years, he and his colleagues have enjoyed going to concerts and plays together. For the last 15 years, Simundson has participated in a monthly book group that focuses on current bestsellers. Recent selections include The Lovely Bones and Peace Like a River.

A Wonderful Career
Simundson hesitates to plan too much right away because he wants to avoid becoming busier than ever in retirement. But he does look forward to traveling. His plans include a trip to Seattle where he grew up and where his brothers, sisters and cousins still live. He’ll also spend time in New England where he’ll visit his daughters and their families.

He hopes to travel to Iceland in the fall “before winter sets in.” There, he’ll catch up with relatives—his family is of Icelandic origin—and friends from the Church of Iceland and the university where he once taught.

Here at home, he’ll continue to serve on the church council at Galilee Lutheran Church in Roseville, where he also sits on the education committee and occasionally preaches.

As he looks back on his years at Luther, Simundson’s feeling is one of gratitude. “Many times I’ve thought what a privilege it is to be able to do something you really want to do—and get paid for it,” he says. “I’ve had a wonderful career.”

21-day Challenge Jump Starts Leaders to Good Health
If clergy and church leaders aren’t taking care of themselves, how can they take care of a congregation?

“The healthier you are, the better chance you have in being a successful leader,” Lydia Volz, Luther Seminary parish nurse, said. “We have to start here, at the seminary, to teach the church’s future leaders to make positive lifestyle choices. We can’t wait until they get out in the congregation.”

To help the Luther Seminary community understand the power of positive change, the Student Council sponsored a 21-day Healthy Leaders Challenge during Lent—following the adage that it takes 21 days to form a habit. More than 165 seminary students, faculty, staff and spouses joined the challenge.

“We found statistics on the ELCA Web site about how unhealthy most pastors are. It was quite distressing,” said Linda Webster, a master of divinity student council representative and one of the coordinators of the challenge. “We wanted to raise awareness and find areas where we could help students improve their health.”

Participants in the challenge received a water bottle and a journal to help track goals. Those who turned in their journals at the end of the 21 days got a T-shirt. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and the Office of Seminary Relations provided supplies and funds to help cover costs.

“We didn’t have a plan people had to follow. Everybody has different ways to improve their health,” Webster said. “They had to come up with their own goals—be it to get more sleep, to drink more water, to walk a little more every day, or to start eating better.”

One of the most successful elements of the challenge was Dining Services’ cooperation in providing a daily 1200- and 1800-calorie menu, and posting the menu on Inside Luther, the seminary’s Intranet site.

During the 21 days Luther’s wellness committee looked for many ways to help participants reach their goals. In addition to the healthy menu plan, they sponsored yoga and aerobics classes, led an afternoon walking group, posted inspirational quotes on Inside Luther, and hired certified personal trainers to be resources in Luther Seminary’s gym. Park Nicollet HealthSource offered a comprehensive health risk assessment—including a cholesterol check—at the beginning of the session.

Volz and Webster would like to see the challenge repeated in the future, possibly twice a year.

“I’m still hearing from people that they’re sticking to their goals,” Volz said. “I certainly think the work we’ve done to raise awareness is a good start.”

From left: master of divinity students Linda Webster and Rachel Oldfather handed out T-shirts to participants.
John and Eleanor Yackel are helping prepare leaders of the church to speak out boldly and prophetically when they see examples of oppression and inequality. The Yackels already have endowed the Martin Luther King, Jr. Chair for Justice and Christian Community at Luther Seminary. Now they are creating a $300,000 challenge grant to attract additional gifts to an endowed program fund for justice at the seminary. They will provide a double match for every new gift to this fund, either current or deferred. The challenge match deadline is Dec. 31, 2004. The monies will help support the activities of the chair, and fund programs specific to justice.

The program fund for justice currently provides scholarships for students pursuing cross-cultural education in settings that bring them face to face with justice issues: Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Shalom Hill Farm with its focus on rural ministry, Appalachia, inner-city Chicago, and the Iron Range.

“I feel students should have experiential activities to see, feel and do. This makes real what they read and talk about in class,” says John. “Having the chance to take part in the lives of people who are experiencing injustice brings about a different kind of understanding.”

Other opportunities supported through the program fund include race and diversity training on campus for students, faculty and staff, and prizes for students encouraging deeper study and scholarship through writing about issues on justice themes.

Because this endowed fund will be in place for generations, the specific programs it supports undoubtedly will change over time. The fund will continue, however, to address issues such as human dignity and freedom, peace and non-violence, diversity, economic equity, access to health care, and care of creation.

The Bremer Foundation has provided three years of current funding for these programmatic activities while the seminary works to expand the related endowment. The Yackels are part of a volunteer committee devoted to this fundraising effort.

The initial goal for the endowed program fund is $1 million—which, at the 5.5 percent endowment spending rate, would yield $55,000 in annual distributions. Currently, $581,000 has been given or committed to the endowed program fund. When other gifts and estate plan commitments come to the seminary to trigger the Yackels’ full double match, the endowed fund will exceed this $1 million goal.

Eleanor says: “We are anxious to see this endowment fully funded so that a strong base of support is in place to provide experiential learning for Luther Seminary students related to justice. John and I believe justice issues have great currency and urgency in our world. We hope others will join us in strengthening this educational focus at the seminary.”

To send current gifts to the endowed program fund for justice, mail them to: Office of Seminary Relations, Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. To inquire about making a deferred gift, call Jenny Peterson toll-free at 888-358-8437.


Mary Jane Haemig, associate professor of church history, was the featured speaker at the Kairos adult education events during January and February at Silverdale Lutheran Church, Silverdale, Wash. She gave five presentations on “Luther and his Reformation for the Twenty-first Century.”

Mark Hillmer, professor of Old Testament, led a Passover Seder at Hennepin United Methodist Church, Minneapolis, on Maundy Thursday, April 17.


Sheri Booms Holm, director of publications, and Maria Thompson, director of communication, each received a DeRose Hinkhouse Award of Merit from the Religion Communicators Council, one for other print media for the Luther Seminary Advent Devotional booklet and one for electronic communication for the e-mail “God Pause” daily devotions.

Craig Koester, ’80, professor of New Testament, has been recognized for his contributions to biblical scholarship by being made an honorary Associate of the Department of New Testament Studies at the University of Pretoria in the Republic of South Africa. He has contributed a study of salvation in the epistle to the Hebrews to a collection of essays written by South African scholars that will be published by Brill in the coming year.

Alvin Luedke, assistant professor of rural ministry, lectured at the Seminar on the Prairie on the Prairie, Cooperstown, N.D., in January. He attended the Region 3 Rural Leadership Conference and the Rural Ministry Initiative meeting at the ELCA offices in Chicago. In March, he attended the Rural Ministry Conference at Wartburg Seminary, where he preached in chapel, assisted by two Luther Seminary students. That month he also gave a presentation on “Looking at the Future of Ministry in this Context” at East Norway Lake Lutheran Church, New London, Minn., and led a workshop on rural ministry at the Annual Lutheran Mission Conference held at Luther Seminary.

Alan Padgett, professor of systematic theology, gave a lecture on “Evolution and the Theology of the Cross” as part of a discussion on theology and the new biology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in April. He led a two-part adult forum on genetics and biblical ethics at Ezekiel Lutheran Church, River Falls, Wis., in May. As part of the celebration of the 300th anniversary of John Wesley’s birth he spoke on “John Wesley for Today’s Church” at the adult forum and preached at Northfield United Methodist, Northfield, Minn.

Mark Swanson, associate professor of Islamic Studies, participated in the international conference “Secular Order and Religious Faith: Christians and Muslims in Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity in a Globalizing World” at the Evangelische Akademie, Loccum, Germany, in November 2002. In January he was part of an international consultation on “Interrogating Mission:
Reconceptualizations for the Ecumenical Church from a Religiously Pluralistic and Economically Developing Context,” sponsored by the Center for Theological Inquiry at Princeton University. He spoke at the closing session of the University of Minnesota’s symposium “Living for Eternity: Monasticism in Egypt” with Dr. Richard Valantasis.

**Coming to a Town Near You**


**Paul Westermeyer**, professor of church music, will be speaker and preacher for the Region III meeting of the American Guild of Organists, Alexandria, Va., June 22-25. On July 17 he will speak on “The Musical Impact of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy in Historical Context” at the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Heritage Society Celebrates “The Church of Christ in Every Age”**

Luther Seminary welcomed its Heritage Society members to campus May 7 for the 16th annual Heritage Society Dinner and Worship. The theme was “The Church of Christ in Every Age.” Heritage Society members are those donors who include Luther Seminary or the Luther Seminary Foundation in their estate plans. For more information contact Bradley Reiners, associate vice president for planned giving, at 651-641-3450, or toll-free at 888-358-8437.

Many members of the class of 1953 attended the Heritage Society event as part of their 50th reunion activities held the same day.

The Rev. Peter Rognness, ’72, bishop of the St. Paul Area Synod, preached on the intriguing title of “I’m Making This Up as I Go Along.”

**THE HERITAGE SOCIETY**

at Luther Seminary

Kim Maria Kramer, Seminary Relations office manager, at right, welcomed Heritage Society members at the registration table.

STORY Second Quarter 2003
Alum-in-Residence Ron Vignec Shares Vision for Public Ministry and Community Building

By Nathan Loer, ’03

With his bushy white beard and T-shirt apparel, Ron Vignec, ’78—who was on campus February 24-28 as the 2003 Luther Seminary alum-in-residence—has a very interesting appearance for a pastor.

He has an even more interesting ministry. In 1985, Vignec founded Salishan/Eastside Lutheran Mission in Tacoma, Wash., and began serving as its pastor. Salishan is the largest public housing development west of the Mississippi River, whose 3,500 residents are mostly immigrants from Cambodia, Vietnam, Mexico and Russia, many of whom speak very little English. Under Vignec’s leadership, the housing project has been transformed into what he would call an “authentic community.”

During his nearly 20-year tenure, crime has dropped drastically, neighborhood groups have emerged and the residents have been empowered.

The participants in the Salishan/Eastside Lutheran Mission meet each week for worship—but they have never had their own building. “We always had a worship space, but in a public building,” Vignec said. “That’s why we have such a low budget. We’ve never paid rent or utilities. The understanding has been that we use those spaces in exchange for community service.”

Vignec’s approach to such community service and community building has been one of seeing the residents of Salishan as assets for the mission rather than problems to be solved. “I call it the University of Salishan. We’ve really got something to teach the world and the residents are a huge part of that,” he says.

One way that Vignec connected with students and faculty at Luther Seminary was through his chapel sermon. Quoting Martin Luther King, Jr., Vignec began his sermon by saying, “Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted.”

He spoke of the gifts that people bring to life and ministry that do not need to be “adjusted” for the sake of conformity. Diversity and quirkiness, he said, “are the things that make for life in our communities.”

He concluded his sermon by telling listeners to “enjoy yourself if you are creatively maladjusted. Because God has given us the gifts on how to live the gospel out in community, homes, in work and in church.”

Throughout the week, Vignec spoke in classrooms and around dining room tables about the need for leadership and ministry that is truly public. “Church is not about buildings,” he said. “It’s about public leadership, leading people to really experience new life in their homes, jobs, communities. It’s about speaking on things like sinner and saint and justification by faith—but in the public language of the people.”

Fostering community and creating public ministry will require strong leadership, says Vignec. “By virtue of being ordained in the church, you are a leader. Eventually, we need to get away from Lutheran modesty and embrace that title.”

For Vignec, public ministry and authentic leadership have taken a particular form. He regularly leads important community events, including public services of blessing following a homicide, suicide or other deaths in the community. He often shares that leadership with other faith traditions, predominately Cambodian and Vietnamese Buddhist monks.

When leading such events, Vignec must find new ways to communicate Lutheran theology and Christian witness. “I walk in. I know my faith and my theology. I recognize that I’m a guest, and I lead publicly.”

Vignec also regularly accompanies government officials from human service agencies on guided community tours, connecting the visitors with residents for real conversations.

He is quick to add that public ministry is a risky venture. “Once you become public, you make yourself vulnerable
Vignec is not a “native born” Lutheran. “I’m an ‘adopted’ Lutheran, so I have a different perspective on the church,” he says, referring to his baptism into the Eastern Orthodox Church. “Growing up in New York City, there wasn’t an Orthodox church in our neighborhood, so my mother sent me to the Norwegian Lutheran church down the street.”

His unique roots must have something to do with his creative leadership and vision at Salishan. And for one week, Luther Seminary had the privilege of being introduced to his vision for Salishan and the rest of God’s church.

Know an alum with an exciting ministry? Nominate her or him for Alum-in-Residence

The Luther Seminary Alumni/ae Council is receiving nominations for the 2003-2004 Alum-in-Residence Program at Luther Seminary. All Luther Seminary graduates are eligible.

The alum-in-residence stays on campus for approximately one week, preaches in chapel, speaks in classes, meets with faculty, visits formally and informally with students, and eats meals in the dining room. All expenses are covered by the Office of Seminary Relations. The schedule is flexible to meet the needs of the seminary and the candidate. To nominate someone, send a letter of submission by August 31, 2003, to:

Office of Seminary Relations
Luther Seminary
2481 Como Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108

For more information, call 651-641-3448, or toll free at 888-358-8437.

M. Laurel Gray, ’56, received the Christian Unity Award from the San Diego County Ecumenical Council. He founded the Third World Opportunities program, a project that enlists volunteers to do service projects in poor neighborhoods in Mexico. He helped organize the Senior Gleaners of San Diego County, a group that collects excess food from area farms and stores for local food shelf agencies. Gray was the first area director of Lutheran Social Services of San Diego and worked to organize Centro de Asuntos Migratorios, a social service agency for immigrants. He also founded the Interfaith Task Force on Central America and started a house church for Americans in Rosarito, Mexico. He has been active in numerous interfaith dialogues. He and his wife, Patricia (Sorenson), recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They live in El Cajon, Calif., and have five children and three grandchildren.

The ’70s

O.K. (Orville Keith) Anderson, ’70, is celebrating nearly 33 years of full-time ministry. He has served congregations in South Dakota, Iowa and California. He and his wife, Kathleen (Peterson), have two children and four grandchildren. Though he has suffered the loss of one eye, has glaucoma in the other eye and has prostate cancer, he is living happily and celebrates each day even more fully, especially after meeting a person who told him: “When the praise goes up—the power comes down.” He has many fond memories of Luther, teachers and relationships and is grateful for the many “tastes” of the Kingdom.

James Stenson, ’74, was re-elected as county commissioner from the second district in Nicollet County. He lives in rural Nicollet County with his wife, Diane. They are members of First Lutheran Church in St. Peter, Minn.

Ron Vignec, ’78, received the president’s medal from Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Wash. He was honored for his work with Salishan/Eastside Lutheran Mission, the largest federal housing project on the West Coast. Vignec founded the Mission in 1985. It is home to more than 3,500 people, mostly immigrant families, in 850 homes.

The ’80s

Jonathan ’80, and Ann Sorum, ’81, are ELCA missionaries in the Slovak Republic. Jonathan teaches at the Evangelical Theological Faculty at Comenius University in Bratislava. Ann is an associate pastor at the International Congregation in Bratislava. The congregation is sponsored by the ELCA.
In 1999 she began working at BOP the ELCA Board of Pensions (BOP). The new regional representative for Catherine Malotky denomination to use his hymns. Church of Scotland is the 30th stewardship for Augsburg Fortress. In addition to her current work with the Board of Pensions, she writes a regular column for Lutheran Woman Today and a column on stewardship for Clergy Journal.

Kurt Jacobson, ’87, recently traveled to Romania with Global Volunteers, an organization that coordinates short-term service projects in 18 countries. For three weeks, Jacobson and a team of volunteers worked to fill a caregiving gap by comforting children in a “failure-to-thrive” hospital. He also taught conversational English classes to local junior high students. Jacobson is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wis.

Paul Johnson, ’87, was called to be an assistant to the bishop for ecumenical relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. He began his duties in March. Previously, he served congregations in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Along with assisting the bishop, Paul is the chairperson for the Local Worship Implementation Group and member of the International Worship Planning Group. Currently he is assisting with preparations for the 10th Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation set to take place July 21-31 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He and his wife, Melanie Lewis, ’89, live in Winnipeg.

Mark Yackel-Julent, ’89, and wife, Margaret, celebrate 10 years of ministry at Shalom Hill Farm this year. The two co-founded Shalom Hill as a center for experiential learning in small town and rural ministry in 1992. Since its beginning, Shalom Hill has hosted guests and seminary students from all over the world, including three bishops from Africa; established a holistic, integrated food policy connecting meals with local gardens and food producers; added the Prairie Spirit Commons, the main housing/meeting facility open to the larger community; and, instituted Common Ground, a metro/rural youth exchange program.

The ‘90s

Timothy Eichler, ’90, and his wife, Cindy, celebrated the birth of their third daughter. He currently serves as a chaplain with the 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa, Japan.

Rebecca Lucky Shjerven, ’92, serves as co-pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in the heart of Tacoma, Wash. She lives in Gig Harbor, Wash., with her husband, Ray, and three children.

She can be reached by e-mail at luckyrev002@earthlink.net.

David Fenrick, ’94, accepted a position with the Global Center for Education at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, as faculty liaison/program coordinator. He is in the final stages of his dissertation for a doctoral degree in intercultural studies through the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., where he has also been serving as an adjunct professor of Christian mission.

John, ’97, and Alisa Norquist, ’95, celebrated the birth of their daughter in August. They live in Toledo, Ohio.

Wendy Sue (Earle) Kissa, ’96, married Dr. Karl Martin Kissa in March at Duke University Chapel in Durham, NC and had a two week honeymoon in Hawaii. Wendy Sue is the associate minister at East Granby Congregational Church in East Granby, Conn. Karl designs fiber optic components for JDS Uniphase. Wendy and Karl live in Simsbury, Conn.

Martin and Melinda Halom, both ’99, expect the birth of their second child in August. Nicholas, their first child, is 20 months old. Melinda serves as associate pastor at the Lutheran Church of Mahomet in Mahomet, Ill. Martin serves as associate pastor at American Lutheran Church in Rantoul, Ill. Martin and Melinda live in Champaign, Ill.

Jerilyn (Dunlap) Hander, ’99, see The 00s.

The ‘00s

Jillene Fritch-Gallitan, ’01, was called to serve as associate pastor at Elim Lutheran in Scandia, Minn. She and her husband, Peter, live in Scandia and have two children.

Marc, ’01, and Jerilyn (Dunlap) Hander, ’99, announced the birth of their son, Gabriel Marc, born in November. Marc is pastor of Redeemer
Lutheran Church in Greenville, Texas. In February 2003, he celebrated the second anniversary of his ordination and call.

Jerilyn works part-time as a data control technician with Trust Services Inc., in Greenville.

Jennifer (Krueger) Larson, ’01, works at the Southwestern Washington Synod of the ELCA. She serves on the synod’s outreach board and is chair of ministry of ethnic diversity, an anti-racism training resource for congregations.

Eric Nelson, ’01, and his wife, Ann, celebrated the birth of their first son, Ambrose last June. While awaiting a call, Eric works as a technical writer for a security access company in southeastern Wisconsin. He can be reached by e-mail at eric.nelson@securityint.com.

Dean Smith, ’01, and his wife, Bridget, celebrated the birth of their first child in February. Dean is pastor of youth and families at Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna, Minn. He was ordained in Chicago in December 2001. Following ordination, he served as an associate pastor at Good Shepherd in Palos Heights, Ill. until October 2002.

In Memory

Jacob Enderson, ’31, died in March. He served 38 years of full-time ministry in South Dakota, Montana and Iowa. In 1941 he became president of the Rocky Mountain District of Lutheran Pastors. In his retirement, he served as an interim pastor. He is survived by two daughters, a brother, five grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Lowell Swantz, ’45, died in January. Ordained in 1945, he was called to serve as a pastor of Our Savior’s Lutheran in Clarkston, Wash. In 1952 he started a new church in Great Falls, Mont. He has led congregations in Montana, Idaho, Michigan, Wisconsin and North Dakota. He retired from full-time ministry in 1998. He is survived by his wife, Gertrude, a son, three daughters, five grandchildren, a great grandchild, a brother and a sister.

James McCalmant, ’61, died in January. Following seminary, he re-enlisted in the Navy and served as a chaplain until his retirement from the military in 1978. He served congregations in California until he retired from full-time ministry in 1994 and relocated to Paynesville, Minn. In his retirement, he served many communities as an interim pastor. He was active in Paynesville Lutheran Church, a member of the Koronis Nite Owls Square Dance of Paynesville, VFW, American Legion and the Paynesville senior golf league. He was president of the board of directors of Paynesville Area Center, chairman of Block Nurse Program and a member of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA. He is survived by his wife, Arlene, a daughter, a son, two granddaughters and three sisters.

Donald (Don) Juel, ’68, beloved professor and dear friend to many in the Luther Seminary community, died in February following a long illness. He was the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. Previously he served congregations and taught at Indiana University and Luther Seminary. A member of the Society for the Study of the New Testament and the Society of Biblical Literature, he translated, edited and authored a number of articles and books in New Testament studies, including Messiah and Temple; Messianic Exegesis; Mark (a commentary); and A Master of Surprise: Mark. He is survived by his wife, Lynda, his mother, two children, a brother and sister.

Timothy F. Lull, president and professor of systematic theology, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS), Berkeley, Calif., died May 20 of complications following surgery. He was 60. “The church has lost a great theologian, a great leader and a great friend,” said the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the ELCA, in a letter to the PLTS community. PLTS is one of eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and a partner in theological education with Luther Seminary through the Western Mission Cluster. Lull’s sister, the Rev. Patricia Lull, is the dean of students at Luther Seminary.

Word & World Explores “The Holy Spirit”

Those who witnessed the outpouring of the Spirit and the wonders of Pentecost asked the question now made familiar by the catechism, “What does this mean?” (Acts 2:12). A good question! And what does it mean now, when Christians throughout the world proclaim and celebrate the glorious reign of God through the power of the Spirit? Word & World’s new spring issue “The Holy Spirit,” explores these questions, helping us to think the faith for the tasks of ministry.

To order, contact the Word & World office at 651-641-3482 or visit the journal’s Web site at www.luthersem.edu/word&world. Selected articles from this and previous editions are available, free, on the Web site.
**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### Explore Luther’s World, Visit “Martin Luther the Reformer” Travelling Exhibition

**Aug. 10 to Sept. 26**  
Northwestern Hall Atrium

**View more than 100 artifacts** (high quality facsimiles) of the life and times of Martin Luther. Luther Seminary is the first U.S. stop of this major exhibit, sponsored by the Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten (Foundation for Luther Memorial Sites) and the Luther Center, Wittenberg, Germany. This is the first time these items have been seen outside of Europe.

### Not-to-Miss KAIROS Classes

**July 7-11**  
Women Leaders of the Medieval Church  
A fascinating look at the women mystics, reformers, monarchs, martyrs, saints and theologians who influenced medieval Christianity. Led by Paul Rorem, Princeton Theological Seminary.

**July 14-18**  
Biblical Healing for Ministry Today  
A study of God as healer in the Old Testament and the healing ministry of Jesus. This broad perspective will help build a Christian biblical framework for conducting a contemporary healing ministry. Led by Frederick Gaiser, Professor of Old Testament.

**July 21-25**  
Deuteronomy and the Church’s Mission Today  

**July 28-30**  
Discover Your Strengths Workshop  
Learn how to identify your unique pattern of excellence by examining your successes and the good experiences in your life. Led by Sarah Fortin and Sally Peters of Centered Life, Luther Seminary’s ministry in daily life initiative.

### Making Choices for the Common Good

**7 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 21**  
Northwestern Hall

Free lecture by Dr. John Cobb Jr., professor emeritus, Claremont School of Theology, and founder of the Center for Process Studies. For more information visit www.luthersem.edu/events.

### Audio Recording of Story Now Available

Selected articles of this issue of Story are now available on audio CD or cassette. This is perfect for those with vision problems or those who would love to listen to Story while on the go. To order your free CD or cassette, contact the communication office at 651-641-3399.

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New CD-ROM Has Many Uses!

Mia Harber, daughter of Shelley Cunningham Harber, ’98, found Luther Seminary’s new CD-ROM tasty as well as informative. If you are interested in a helping of seminary information—for yourself or someone you know with the gifts for lay or ordained ministry—contact the Office of Admissions at 651-641-3521, toll free at 800-588-4373, or via e-mail at admissions@luthersem.edu.

Make Plans to Attend Elderhostel 2003

Specially designed for individuals ages 55 and older, this year’s Elderhostel will take place Sept. 14-19, 2003 at Luther Seminary. Courses offered this year are:

• “Revelation and the End of All Things,” led by professor of New Testament and noted Revelation scholar Craig Koester;

• “Living Out Our Calling,” led by Jack Fortin, director of the Center for Lifelong Learning; and,

• “The Best of Luther Seminary!” led by Luther Seminary professors who will share their favorite lecture from their subject area of Bible, theology and church history.

In addition to courses, Elderhostel activities include fellowship, field trips and more! This program provides wonderful opportunities to meet new people, time for fellowship with good friends, and numerous scheduled activities as well as time to relax, rest and visit.

The cost for the six-day, five-night program is $432, which includes room, board and tuition. Commuters are also welcome. The deadline for registration is Aug. 28. For more information, contact Lynne Moratzka toll-free at (888) 358-8437, locally (651) 641-3419, or via e-mail at lmoratzk@luthersem.edu.

Luther Seminary Web Site Sports New Look

Eye-catching, colorful, easy-to-read and easily navigable—today’s Luther Seminary Web site is all of these and then some. What’s more, it coordinates with Luther Seminary’s new line of print materials entitled God Could Use Someone Like You. To see the new design (and try it on for size!), visit www.luthersem.edu.

Participants enjoy lectures, field trips and camaraderie.
Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities + called and sent by the Holy Spirit + to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ + and to serve in God’s world.

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Luther Seminary, the largest of the eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. It is a part of the ELCA’s Western Mission Cluster, along with Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

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