By Natalie Gessert, M.Div. senior

This year’s Faithfulness in Ministry recipients serve God in very different settings—a Guatemalan mission, a college and a Bible camp. What they have in common, however, is much more important. They all serve the Lord faithfully, everyday. Awards will be given to all the recipients during Mid-Winter Convocation, Jan. 14-16.

10 years or fewer

Amanda Olson de Castillo, 2004
Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala, Guatemala City, Guatemala

Amanda Olson de Castillo went to Guatemala in 2004 after being awarded Luther Seminary’s Graduate Preaching Fellowship, hoping to fine-tune her Spanish language skills and learn more about local culture and preaching. She never left. Today, not only is her Spanish nearly perfected, but she is married to Horacio de Castillo, the son of Guatemala’s Lutheran church president, and finds her daily work in ministry with the Guatemalan people.

After nearly 36 years of civil war, many citizens who fled Guatemala to escape the violence are slowly returning home. The Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala was founded to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ into what often still looks like a hopeless situation. The church is responsible for the spiritual needs of members, leadership development, education and training.

One of Olson de Castillo’s roles involves organizing local congregations and entrusting local leaders to the care and advancement of that community. The Rev. Ralph Baumgartner, former bishop’s associate for the Saint Paul Area Synod, wrote in his nomination, “The mission of ILAG is nothing less than heroic. This little church in Guatemala was formed only in 1992 and now has 17 congregations, adding roughly one new congregation per year.”

Olson de Castillo’s work is situated in the middle of this progress, both for ILAG itself and also in drawing ILAG and the ELCA into relationship with one another. The Rev. Paul Erickson of Augsburg Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn., wrote of Olson de Castillo, “…She functions as a cultural bridge, and her understanding of both North American and Guatemalan ecclesiastical and cultural contexts is a key component of making this partnership happen.”

Olson de Castillo was ordained last year by Padre Horacio Castillo, president of the Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala, under the commission of the Saint Paul Area Synod and the ELCA’s Global Mission Unit. She lives in Guatemala with her husband and newborn daughter, Abigail.

More than 25 years

Mark Gravrock, 1977
Trinity Lutheran College, Everett, Wash.

While a professor at Trinity Lutheran College, much of the time Gravrock’s office door bore the sign “talking,” meaning he was discussing classroom ideas or counseling a student. He championed deep relationships with his students and colleagues, believing time and care created disciples of Christ.

Though Gravrock was responsible for his own study and campus life activities, his students attest to the individual attention he provided. Three recent Luther Seminary graduates claim inspiration from Gravrock’s teaching and counsel during their time with him at Trinity: John Schraan (’06), Stephanie Johnson (’06) and Kristina Johnson (’06).

Stephanie Johnson said, “One of the most powerful comments I remember him making in class was in talking about the lament Psalms. He said, ‘Sometimes there are things in my Bible that just won’t smooth out in my blender, and I’m okay with the lumps.’ His words have been helpful for me both in my theological studies and in my ministry. I comfort people with his words. We want something
smooth and easily adjustable, but the Bible is more complex than that. There are lumps in our Bible and it also conveys there are lumps in our lives.”

In his nomination of Gravrock, the Rev. Dr. Lowell Stine, emeritus dean at Trinity Lutheran College, wrote, “As a beloved teacher, he [demonstrated] a unique ability to challenge his students not to settle for easy answers. He [helped] his students live with the questions of life, and to seek answers through study, prayer and good interpretation of Scripture.”

Ordained in 1977 by the American Lutheran Church, Gravrock served two thriving parishes, Bethany Lutheran Church in Kelley, Iowa, and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in SeaTac, Wash. Gravrock was called to the Biblical Studies Department at Trinity Bible College in 1986 and went on to earn his Ph.D. at Luther Seminary in 1998. Gravrock recently retired from Trinity and moved to Kalispell, Mont.

what is now Mount Carmel, turning the site into a full Bible ministry for all ages and Lutheran denominations.

Mount Carmel Ministries was founded in 1938 and Hinderlie was called to the site in October 1984. Under his leadership with wife Sonja and a full staff, Mount Carmel ministers to spiritual renewal and marriage enrichment, offers Walk Thru the Bible seminars, and uses the Moravian devotional “Daily Texts” for guidance and in prayer and Scripture. Pastor Joel Quie of Prairie Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie, Minn., points to the vast importance of the practical “Daily Texts” ministry. He said, “Johan has taught thousands to pray and draw closer to the heart of God with this simple tool.”

Under Hinderlie’s leadership, Mount Carmel continues to grow. A new capital campaign has led to the demolition of Mount Carmel’s aging chapel, with a new chapel and program center underway in its place. In the past he has managed building campaigns to completion—debt-free—and his vision for current construction is no different.

However, the greatest gift Hinderlie provides is his personal touch in ministry. For Hinderlie, ministry is more than bricks and mortar. As the Rev. Patricia and the Rev. Timothy Baglien wrote in nominating Hinderlie, “Johan always has an inviting presence for those who need a word of prayer, a listening ear or someone to provide theological reflection—even when he may be tired or overworked.”

Hinderlie’s ministry touches people of all ages and spiritual needs. “Johan has a heart for making Christ known; Jesus is not only the Good News, he is the Best News,” wrote Quie.

More than 25 years
**Johan Hinderlie, 1973**
Mount Carmel Ministries, Alexandria, Minn.

When the Rev. Johan Hinderlie arrived at the site of an aging Bible camp near Alexandria, Minn., he heard God’s call. Hinderlie is responsible for breathing life into Mount Carmel, turning the site into a full Bible ministry for all ages and Lutheran denominations.

Mount Carmel Ministries was founded in 1938 and Hinderlie was called to the site in October 1984. Under his leadership with wife Sonja and a full staff, Mount Carmel ministers to spiritual renewal and marriage enrichment, offers Walk Thru the Bible seminars, and uses the Moravian devotional “Daily Texts” for guidance and in prayer and Scripture. Pastor Joel Quie of Prairie Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie, Minn., points to the vast importance of the practical “Daily Texts” ministry. He said, “Johan has taught thousands to pray and draw closer to the heart of God with this simple tool.”

Under Hinderlie’s leadership, Mount Carmel continues to grow. A new capital campaign has led to the demolition of Mount Carmel’s aging chapel, with a new chapel and program center underway in its place. In the past he has managed building campaigns to completion—debt-free—and his vision for current construction is no different.

However, the greatest gift Hinderlie provides is his personal touch in ministry. For Hinderlie, ministry is more than bricks and mortar. As the Rev. Patricia and the Rev. Timothy Baglien wrote in nominating Hinderlie, “Johan always has an inviting presence for those who need a word of prayer, a listening ear or someone to provide theological reflection—even when he may be tired or overworked.”

Hinderlie’s ministry touches people of all ages and spiritual needs. “Johan has a heart for making Christ known; Jesus is not only the Good News, he is the Best News,” wrote Quie.

Is there someone whose ministry has inspired you? Download a nomination form at [www.luthersem.edu/fim](http://www.luthersem.edu/fim). Nominations are due May 30.

Questions? Contact Mary Steeber at msteeber@luthersem.edu or 651-641-3596.

Lucy Christianson, seated, couldn’t keep up the library at St. Stephen Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn., without her dedicated team. Read about how Christianson is helping Luther Seminary ensure that libraries will always have a place in congregations. Page 23.
There’s nothing like listening to a really good sermon—letting the words inspire you, challenge you, comfort you. But what if you’re the preacher, standing up in the pulpit every Sunday—when do you get to listen?

“In the Company of Preachers” offers an answer. It combines the best of Luther Seminary’s chapel sermons with insightful teaching and commentary, all centered around a theme that is both relevant and practical for preachers today.

“Preaching can be one of the lonelier aspects of parish ministry because you are regularly preaching to others and rarely hear the Word preached to you,” said David Lose, Marbury E. Anderson Professor of Biblical Preaching. “Most of the preparation for our sermons is done in isolation. Listening to these presentations reminds preachers that they are in great company, bound to countless other preachers by a devotion to proclaiming the Word.”

“In the Company of Preachers” was launched last year by the Center for Biblical Preaching. An annual subscription includes four audio CDs, delivered quarterly. It complements the CBP’s other primary production, WorkingPreacher.org.

“WorkingPreacher is designed to help preachers with the week-to-week process of sermon writing,” said Mary Brown, associate director of the Center for Biblical Preaching. “But we believe good preachers are always students. The best preachers I know are using every opportunity to learn more about their craft.”

They’ll find opportunity with “In the Company of Preachers.” Each session focuses on a particular aspect of preaching—such as ‘Preaching the Law’ or ‘Telling the Story,’ two recent offerings—with a 15-20-minute teaching session and four sermons related to the topic. Each sermon includes an introduction about what makes that sermon stand apart.

The presenters and preachers are most often seminary faculty but also include guests and friends of the seminary who are teaching and preaching there. Luther Seminary President Richard Bliese offers introductory remarks and narration on each disc.

“Our goal is to help people grow in their preaching, but we are also mindful that pastors are very busy on the front lines of life and ministry. Continuing education doesn’t always happen in neat, weekly chunks,” Brown said. “With ['In the Company of Preachers'], you can listen in the car on the way to the hospital or while out for a jog. It’s a way to use that time to feed yourself … and maybe remember those great days at seminary when you were able to go to chapel every day.”

“’In the Company of Preachers’ is part instruction and part encouragement, meant to lift up the spirits, as well as edify the minds, of our listeners,” Lose said. “By including sermons in each volume, we’re hoping to address preachers’ needs to receive, as well as give, the Word.”

Issued four times a year, a one-year subscription to “In the Company of Preachers” is available on CD ($59.95) or via download ($49.95). The next two issues will feature “Preaching the Gospel” (Fall 2008) and “Preaching Difficult Texts” (Winter 2009). Gift subscriptions are also available. To place a subscription or order individual issues or previous offerings, go to www.luthersem.edu/cbp or call 651-641-3508.
The ‘00s
Mikyoung Park, ’08, led the worship service at the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church on May 30.

Craig Nehring, ’07, was installed as a pastor at Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, New Auburn, Minn., on Jan. 13.

William Nelsen, ’07, was ordained on June 22 at Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Peter, Minn. He serves as pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran and Trinity Lutheran churches, Gaylord, Minn.

Rachel (Oldfather) Stout, ’06, was called to serve as associate pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Wadena, Minn., on June 24.

Erik Gronberg, ’05, and Kendra Mohn, ’05, welcomed their first child, Annika Christine Marie Gronberg, on April 15.

The ‘00s
Dorcas Wang, ’92, received a call to serve as a pastor in China under the Global Mission Unit of the ELCA with the partnership of Beijing International Christian Fellowship in July. This is a newly created position within the ELCA.

The ‘70s
Kay Jurgenson, ’74 and ’86, published “Hold On! Life is Precious!” a collection of short stories from around the world, in May.

Morris Vaagenes, ’79, began pastoral duties at Lutheran Church of the Master, Brooklyn Center, Minn., on July 1.

Jim Parks, ’70, will serve as a volunteer English teacher in a Lutheran high school in Kosice, Slovakia, through the ELCA Global Mission Unit until June 30.

The ‘60s

Ronald Christian, ’65 and ’79, was elected chairman of the Fairfax, Va., County Redevelopment and Housing Authority in the Braddock District.
Charles Amjad-Ali, Martin Luther King Jr. Professor for Justice and Christian Community, led a seminar for the faculty of New York Theological Seminary on “Challenges to the Theological and Ministerial Vocation Globalized World and the U.S. Empire” in January. During the same month, he was one of three panelists who led the Diversity Task Force Annual Gathering at University of Minnesota’s Dialogue on the Intersections of Faith and Sexuality. In February, Amjad-Ali was the keynote speaker at the Pacifica Synodical gathering in San Diego. The theme was Good News for the Poor. From Feb. 19-27, Amjad-Ali delivered three lectures on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the United Nations University, Bonn, Germany. While there, he also gave a seminar at University of Freiburg’s Arnold Bergstraesser Institute.

Richard Bliese, president and associate professor of mission, is part of a team of administrators from ELCA seminaries discussing issues related to student debt. He was part of a consultation on the National Congregations Study at Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C., in October. Later that month, he was part of an international advisory board for Johannelund Theological Seminary, Sweden, and attended the 100th Anniversary of the Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo.

Paul Daniels, Region 3 and Luther Seminary archivist, was elected to the board of the Archivists of Religious Collections section of the Society of American Archivists at the society’s annual meeting in San Francisco in August.

Terry Fretheim, ’60, Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, co-edited a volume of essays titled “The Child in the Bible,” to which he contributed the article “God Was With the Boy (Genesis 21:20): Children in the Book of Genesis.” It was published in October.

He led Bible studies Oct. 3-6 for the ELCA Conference of Bishops.


Karoline Lewis, ’94, assistant professor of preaching, wrote two articles for “Living by the Word,” published in Christian Century’s August issue.

David Lose, Marbury E. Anderson Professor of Biblical Preaching, was asked to provide analysis on the 2008 political party conventions by PBS’ religion and ethics Web site. His posts can be read at www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/blog.

Amy Marga, assistant professor of systematic theology, taught a mini seminar on Karl Barth’s view of prayer at the annual Karl Barth Conference, Leuenberg, Switzerland, in July.

Alan Padgett, professor of systematic theology, was featured in a radio program studying the theological implications of the new Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva. The program, “Prime Time America,” is produced by Moody Radio. It aired in the Twin Cities on KTIS’ AM station and can be downloaded at www.moodyradio.org. He was also featured on Fox 9 News KMSP’s evening broadcast Sept. 23 discussing the same topic. He led Bible studies at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, in October. The studies, “Leadership and Gender Roles” and “Jesus on Leadership and Service,” examined servant leadership in the New Testament as it applies to male-female relationships at home and in the church. This topic is the focus of Padgett’s forthcoming book, “Does Christ Submit to the Church? A Biblical Challenge to Man-Centered Leadership.”

Kathryn Schifferdecker, assistant professor of Old Testament, joined David Lose at the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology’s continuing education event in July. She spoke on “Praying the Psalms.”

Mark Sedio, who has served as one of Luther Seminary’s featured organists for 25 years, has regretfully resigned his position. Sedio, who is the organist at
Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, was honored by the seminary community after chapel Sept. 17.

Mark Throntveit, professor of Hebrew and Old Testament; and book editor, Word & World, co-produced “Adult Crossings: God’s Journey with Us.” The adult Bible study on eight core biblical stories was published in September by Logos Productions, Inc., with Seraphim.

Paul Westermeyer, professor of church music, published “Rise, O Church: Reflections on the Church, Its Music and Empire,” in May. It was published by MorningStar.

Coming to a Town Near You

Richard Bliese will be at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind., Nov. 3-5. He will speak at an event sponsored by the Metro New York Synod’s Commission for Evangelical Outreach Nov. 21-23.

Craig Koester will teach sessions on the book of Revelation on Sunday mornings at Normandale Lutheran Church, Edina, Minn., through Nov. 16.

Steven Paulson, ’84, professor of systematic theology, will be at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S.D., for a Reformation Day celebration. He will deliver a lecture and preach during worship.

Gary Simpson, professor of systematic theology, will present his paper, “‘Partakers of Divine Majesty’: The Question of American Empire and the Hope of International Law in Light of Martin Luther’s Realistic Principle and Practice of God’s Publicity,” at Atlanta’s American Academy of Religion, Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Consultation, Nov. 1-3.

Matt Skinner, associate professor of New Testament, will be at Faith Lutheran Church, Bellingham, Wash., Nov. 7-9, to lead several sessions about “The Gospel According to Mark.”

Your Gifts Make Ministry Happen

By Laura Kaslow, Communication Specialist

Each year gifts to Luther Seminary make ministry happen. In this last year gifts aided Luther in launching the Distributed Learning Master of Divinity program, helping students who couldn’t previously attend seminary answer God’s call.

These students are people like James Brooks, who calls the program “a godsend.” Prior to learning of the program, Brooks wrestled with his call, knowing it would be difficult to pursue a traditional seminary education without moving his working wife and school-age daughters.

Thanks to the DL M.Div. degree program, Brooks is able to take a combination of online classes and on-campus intensives, which allows him to remain in his context as a youth ministry coordinator at Grace Lutheran Church and School in Forest Lake, Ill. Through the support of his congregation and cohort members, Brooks is on track to finish his degree in the six-year time frame required for the DL M.Div. degree.

This program is just one example of what a gift to Luther Seminary can make happen. Students like Brooks are now able to say, “Yes!” to God’s call.

A generous friend of Luther Seminary is eager to work with you to help the church continue to build strong, new leaders. Through this donor’s Make it Happen Sustaining Fund Challenge Match, your gift to the Sustaining Fund between now and Nov. 15 will automatically be matched dollar for dollar by the Make it Happen Challenge. That means that a gift of $250 will be worth $500, doubling your impact.

We ask that you prayerfully consider how your gift will strengthen the church today and for many years to come. To learn more or make a gift online, go to www.luthersem.edu/gifts.
Continue Your Education with Lay School Classes
Informal, non-credit classes taught by seminary professors for lay persons who want to learn more about matters relating to their Christian faith and life.

Angels Past and Present
Noon-2 p.m.
Faculty: Michael Rogness, professor emeritus of preaching

The Rise and Impact of World Christianity
7-9 p.m.
Faculty: Mark Granquist, visiting professor of church history

Toward an Understanding of Islam
7-9 p.m. (webcast available)
Faculty: Steven Häggmark, associate professor of Islamic studies and Christian mission and world religions

Winter classes are held Mondays, Jan. 26-Feb. 23. To attend Toward an Understanding of Islam via webcast you will need a high-speed Internet connection. For class descriptions or to register, visit www.luthersem.edu/layschool. For more information, call 651-641-3416 or e-mail kairos@luthersem.edu.

Register Now For Upcoming KAIROS Courses!
www.luthersem.edu/kairos
Continuing education opportunities for pastors, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers and lay leaders.

November
3-6 New Visions for the Long Pastorate
10-13 Thriving as an Associate Pastor
17-18 Revisiting Relational Ministry: From Influencing to Place-Sharing

December
1-4 School for Lay Ministry
10-12 Effective Multiple Staff Ministry: Nurturing Healthy Relationships

January
5-16 Genesis to Revelation
22-23 Exemplary Youth and Family Ministry: The Next Stage
22-23 Trinity Institute — Radical Abundance: A Theory of Sustainability (broadcast live from New York via webcast)
Lucy Christianson entrusts her legacy to Luther Seminary

Lucy Christianson and her late husband, Woody, wanted their passion for libraries to be passed on to future church leaders. So Christianson, who has worked in church libraries for more than 45 years, created The Lucy Endowed Media Fund through a number of charitable gift annuities. “We agreed on this. We decided this was the direction to go,” Christianson says. “And I thought Luther Seminary was the place to start.”

The Fund is meant to educate seminary students, clergy and lay leaders about the role modern library-media centers can play. Since 2002 Christianson has set up 14 charitable gift annuities that allow her to support a cause she believes in while creating a stable income for herself.

“It took a long time for schools to create media centers—churches need them even more.”

Who will carry on your legacy? Ask us about the ongoing benefits of charitable gift annuities.

Contact the Office of Seminary Relations
Michael Johnson
888-358-8437
mjohnson005@luthersem.edu
www.luthersem.edu/gifts

Lucy Christianson in the library at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Bloomington, where she has volunteered for 20 years.
**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.

**Editor**
Kelsey Holm

**Contributing writers**
Shelley Cunningham
Natalie Gessert
Laura Kaslow
Kari Aanestad

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.

*The Luther Seminary Story* is published four times a year and distributed via third class mail to alumni/ae and donors by Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108.

Correspondence concerning *The Luther Seminary Story* should be sent to Office of Communication, Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108, via e-mail communic@luthersem.edu or by phone at 651-641-3399.

---

**Table of Contents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
<td>2-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 Faithfulness in Ministry</td>
<td>16-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Honorees</td>
<td>16-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In the Company of Preachers “</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alum News</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Poll</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty &amp; Staff Notes</td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make It Happen Challenge Match</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Calendar</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay School and KAIROS Schedules</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

© 2008 Mixed Sources

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
St. Paul, Minn.
Permit No. 794