Above: President Richard Bliese, art collector Jerry Evenrud and artist He Qi gather for a photo near He Qi’s “Return of the Prodigal Son” at the PARTNERS/Heritage Society event in October. Right: October’s PARTNERS/Heritage Society event featured a portion of donor Jerry Evenrud’s collection of Prodigal Son-themed art, which he donated to the seminary.

Below: Master of Arts student Kang Yun Ryu and his daughter, Karis, enjoy the GMI-sponsored Agape Feast in November. Left: This year’s Singing the Faith Hymn Festival, held in October on Reformation Sunday, featured the Nordic Choir of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa.

Left: Jonathan J. Bonk, executive director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, was the speaker for November’s Andrew S. Burgess lecture. Below: Future seminarians in Wee Care pay close attention as President Richard Bliese treats them to a very special story time.
If you want to see where the energy is in the church today, go visit a new mission start. There is nothing more energizing for a congregation, a synod and, yes, for a whole denomination than giving life to a new congregation. Healthy churches give birth to churches. It’s that simple. Life breeds life. “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (II Corinthians 5:17)

Luther Seminary sees this ministry of equipping leaders for new mission starts as part and parcel of our calling to “educate leaders for Christian communities.” We have put together a strong infrastructure to form missional leaders who will be experienced, trained and energized to start new congregations as soon as they leave the seminary. In fact, some will be ready even before they leave our halls! Right now mission starts as internship sites are being identified around the country. Specific faculty have already been brought to the seminary to make sure we have the right resources in place to mentor mission developers for these budding ministries.

“The world needs what we’ve been given.”

Richard H. Bliese
President, Luther Seminary

The Chinese have a proverb: “If you visit for a week you can write a book; stay a lifetime and you won’t be able to finish a sentence.” The same could be said for starting new congregations. There are no easy rules for starting healthy new congregations. One size doesn’t fit all. You will read about various approaches to mission development in these pages from pastors Rob James, ’06; Molly Juntunen, ’06; and Justin Grimm, ’05. We could also add other emerging churches around the country like Jacob’s Well, which grew out of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Minneapolis; Mercy Seat in Minneapolis (Kae Evensen, ’95; and Mark Stenberg); the House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver (Nadia Bolz-Weber); and Mount Olivet Lutheran Church West in Victoria, Minn. (Paul Youngdahl). These leaders, in small settings and large, are pointing the way to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

The world needs what we’ve been given. For God’s mission to be accomplished, leaders must now be trained to form new communities of faith. May God grant us the grace to have the courage to form these new communities around the best story that’s ever been told. In Christ, we are indeed a new creation!

Pax,

Richard H. Bliese
President
Luther Seminary
Luther Seminary intensified its focus on missional development in the 2000-2005 strategic plan, Serving the Promise of Our Mission. It read, “We believe God is calling and sending the church of Jesus Christ to apostolic mission in the 21st-century world of many cultures and religions.”

Luther has not only fulfilled that promise, but is building on it in new and exciting ways. Many graduates have found a perfect fit in missional work. Here, three discuss what drew them to missional work and how they’ve flourished there.

Justin Grimm, ‘05, M.Div.
Advent Lutheran Church, Lake Ann, Mich.
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Some would say the odds were against the success of Justin Grimm’s first congregation. Advent Lutheran Church in Lake Ann, Mich., was a classic parachute drop—meaning Grimm and his family moved to the area and started the church from scratch. “We did it the way you’re not supposed to do it,” laughs Grimm. And the population of Lake Ann wasn’t the best audience for a new church. “Just the number of people who had a bad taste of church in their mouths, there were a lot of people scarred in previous churches,” says Grimm, who admits to at first not being too crazy about the idea of building a congregation from nothing.

“When my bishop first asked me if I would consider starting a new church, I said ‘It doesn’t sound like a good idea,’” he says. But he and his wife prayed about it, and Grimm realized, “I can do this. It’s ministry. It’s what I was trained to do.”

But the call of a mission developer is also different from a traditional call in myriad ways, says Grimm. For one, he must meet people where they are—instead of neighborhood residents seeking out a new church, Grimm seeks out his congregants.

In the early days of his ministry, Grimm knocked on a lot of doors. “One thing that sets mission development apart is the highs and lows are minute by minute,” he says. He would feel the joy of connecting with one person, only to feel rejection at the next house.

“There were a few days I wanted to curl up in the fetal position and cry, but on the other side of that is such joy. There were families so suspect of church who are now leaders. I have assistant ministers and ushers who had never stepped foot in the church who are now involved.”

Grimm tells one story that sums up why he does what he does. “A man once asked me to teach him how to pray, and he still comes back to that story,” says Grimm. “I have the opportunity to teach people just what it means to be a disciple.”

The first worship Grimm led at Advent, in December 2005, was held in the town hall in Lake Ann. Then the congregation moved to the town’s old fire garage, which they leased and renovated. Grimm recently received schematics for a new building, where he hopes to hold Advent’s 2011 Easter service. Advent currently worships between 150 and 160 on Sundays, with about a third of those young children.
We’ve really done a lot with spiritual gifts. We help people see how God has gifted them to further God’s kingdom. The biggest thing I attribute our growth to is that they have a part in this.”

Rob James, ’06, M.Div.
GPS Faith Community, Machesney Park, Ill.
pastorrobgps@hotmail.com
www.gps173.com

When he was 15 years old, Rob James announced to his congregation in Peoria, Ill., that he wanted to be a pastor. But it took him until his second year at Luther to figure out just what kind of pastor God was calling him to be. Around the same time, Luther was making strides in Congregational Mission and Leadership.

At a conference through CML James learned about redevelopment ministry. He spent the next six months learning what he could about a missional type of ministry that went beyond traditional pastoral duties. “It was a language I wasn’t familiar with, and it sparked my passion,” says James. Just seven months later, he attended a weeklong conference, where an ELCA representative challenged him to consider mission development. It was what he needed to hear. As interesting as he found redevelopment ministry, James says he’s “more of the entrepreneurial spirit.”

Though James had begun meeting regularly with area mission developers and had even started a group for students interested in missional work, FLEAS (Fellowship of Lutheran Evangelists Attending Seminary), he knew he needed to learn more. He set up a unique internship opportunity with two ELCA mission starts: Spirit of Joy in Buffalo, Minn., and Alleluia! in St. Michael, Minn. Neither congregation, which are 10 minutes from each other, had the resources or amount of work to fulfill James’ internship needs—but together they did.

“That year confirmed my call to mission development,” says James. “During that year I developed my passion for reaching out into the community with the gospel message and I saw the important role of the pastor to equip and release leaders for ministry.”

James found a good fit for his mission development skills at GPS Faith Community in Machesney Park, Ill. A satellite congregation of Grace Lutheran Church, GPS—which is now autonomous and worships out of a local movie theater—was started in March 2006. On June 1 of that year, James began his call. Shortly after he arrived the pastors of Grace accepted a new call.

“There were setbacks,” says James, but the congregation overcame them. On an average Sunday, GPS has 200 people in worship. Though James calls himself “a big believer in marketing,” he also believes that the best evangelism is simply word of mouth.

“They aren’t coming because of a sign but because of a relationship,” he says.

One such relationship led James into a whole new area of ministry that he wasn’t prepared for—adult baptism. The man who hands out mugs at GPS’ hospitality table each Sunday invited his neighbors to church after providing mechanic services for their cars. Word spread through the extended family members, and they’re all attending GPS. One of them came to James with a desire to be baptized.

“I had never even heard the term adult baptism. I wasn’t trained for that,” he says. “But I baptized two adults, and it was a special day for them. They invited family and friends. Then I baptized their daughter, cousin, aunt, another cousin. I ended up doing eight adult baptisms in this family and each time, they invited others.”
Molly Juntunen is a firm believer that “there are enough buildings in the world.” She’s happy that the two worshipping communities she helped launch in the past three years gather in a middle and elementary school. Both are satellites of Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Juntunen co-pastored the first satellite, NorthBranch, as an intern at Hope. Both she and the leadership of the church found the mission of starting satellites such a good fit that Juntunen finished her senior year while simultaneously working at Hope. A position was created for her—kingdom expansion pastor—and she hasn’t stopped working at full speed since.

“Hope is 14 years old and was a mission start itself. It started from scratch. It’s been pretty much constant growth,” says Juntunen. In her four-and-a-half years there, Hope has gone from worshipping 4,000 to worshipping 7,000 between the three congregations. The second satellite, Hope CityBranch, started in June 2008.

Juntunen has worked both sides of mission development. After a year and a half of launching the first satellite, she moved back to a full-time developing position, in which she does leadership development for a group of people who then build teams under them to carry out the ministry of the satellite.

Throughout her ministry, Juntunen has followed two of the key rules of mission development: the permission to fail and to make it up as she goes along.

“The motive behind mission development can never be about numbers and growth and making any congregation or denomination bigger. I really believe that mission developers don’t start churches—God starts churches,” she says. “If we just go where God is going then we’ve done something right. That’s what I’ve learned here. It’s got to be a God thing. There can’t be any other motivation behind it.”

She would like to see some growth in Hope and the larger church, though, and that’s growth in leadership. She wants to see Hope’s internship program increase in size so leaders will be multiplied, and by partnering with other seminaries and churches she hopes to increase the effectiveness of Hope’s leadership development efforts.

As a developing leader at Luther, Juntunen learned she could, in fact, be a different kind of leader—the leader she truly wanted to be—and still be Lutheran.

“When I learned you can be Lutheran and care about building the kingdom, that was a big turning point for me,” she says. She soon found other students and faculty—like Craig Van Gelder, professor of congregational mission—who felt the same way about mission as she did.

“I thought, here is someone who sees us as different kinds of leaders,” she says of Van Gelder. “That was empowering for me.”

What empowers her now as a young mission developer is that “we’re reclaiming the idea of mission for our place and time.

“To me there’s a huge shift going on with the understanding of mission. Whether going overseas or in a U.S. context, being missional is and always has been the purpose of the church,” she says.

Juntunen believes that the major difference between overseas and U.S. mission work is that in one case, more people may have never heard the gospel. In the other, they may have received it in a confusing, irrelevant or destructive way.

“That’s the creative part of mission development, to figure out what’s kept them from knowing Jesus. In some cases they’ve heard it in 50 poor ways,” she says. “A missionary is someone who intentionally makes sense of the gospel to people who it didn’t make sense to before, whether you’re in Africa or downtown Des Moines. I think that’s the purpose of every Christian, but God calls some of us to be leaders to equip Christians to do that.”
Christians’ Callings in the World: Five-Seminary Grant Funds New Ways to Teach

By Laura Kaslow, Communication Specialist

If you had to guess which section of the Sunday newspaper God would be most interested in, what would you say? Religion? Faith and Values? The truth is, God would want to read the entire paper, cover to cover.

David Lose, Marbury E. Anderson Professor of Biblical Preaching, says he often uses this illustration when explaining that God is interested in “not just caring about our spiritual lives, our religious lives, but our physical, temporal, whole lives.”

To work toward a better understanding of God at work in our lives, Luther Seminary is leading a five-year initiative funded by a $1.49 million grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. The purpose of the initiative is to emphasize the work of graduates in preparing all Christians to understand and exercise their callings in the world.

The grant, titled Christians’ Callings In the World, will work to create new ways to teach seminary students how to prepare lay people for their work in the world. Where the current model of theological education tends to focus on the pastor as the primary agent of ministry, this grant will work to better teach seminary graduates how to equip laity in their understanding of God as a partner with them in their everyday lives.

“In one way there is a long-standing interest at Luther Seminary in vocation, or faith in daily life. It has manifested in various ways...through the Centered Life® initiative... it’s been in the last two strategic plans.

It’s not anything new,” says Jason Misselt, associate director for program development, Center for Lifelong Learning, who will play a large role in the implementation of this project.

Traditionally, mainline churches have had huge challenges in making that connection.

“For most of our people, it’s almost like they leave one world to go to church,” says Lose. “At church they expect to think about God, hear about God, then they kind of leave that there and go back to everyday life. Those two worlds only touch each other, but are not the same thing.”

Lose, who will lead the project, says, “What we’ve learned is that we’re fairly good at teaching our students about vocation but we haven’t done as well at equipping them to teach their parishioners about vocation. This grant gives these schools, each of which are of significance to their respective denominations, a chance to spend five years in conversation with each other thinking about how to equip our students to be equippers of the lay people.”

The project will take place over five years with the intention of imbedding the findings into the culture of each of the participating institutions: Catholic Theological Union, Duke Divinity School, Fuller Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary and Luther Seminary.

Misselt says the first three years of the project will be dedicated to experimentation “in ways that it is not an added burden,” but in a way to “do what you’re already doing with a twist.” The final two years will then be dedicated to “structurally integrate these findings into the curriculum.”

Says Lose, “It is really exciting to partner with these four schools. I don’t know of another grant that has brought so many traditions together in this way. We’re not just working on the future of the Lutheran church, but we’re working on the future of the North American church.”

Do you know an alum whose ministry exemplifies the excellent ministries of all Luther Seminary grads?

Faithfulness in Ministry Awards
The Luther Seminary Alumni/ae Council annually recognizes exemplary faithfulness of its alums who graduated within the last 10 years, within the past 25 years or more than 25 years ago. Whose ministry has inspired you?

Download a nomination form or complete your nomination online at www.luthersem.edu/fim. Nominations are due May 30. Questions? Contact Mary Steeber at msteeber@luthersem.edu or 651-641-3596.
In a time when the Bible was newly translated from Latin to common language, Martin Luther decided to bring God’s word front and center into the homes of parishioners. His mission was to bring large posters explaining the Ten Commandments, Apostles Creed, Lord’s Prayer and sacraments to the hearth, where families gathered for mealtime. He believed “the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household.” God does not live just in the church building. The lesson for today is that God also abides and belongs in the home, in the middle of everyday life.

Now, even Barnes and Noble carries them—Bibles, devotionals, even “Christian romance” novels. The Bible has been translated into nearly 3,000 languages and dialects. While the Bible is more commonplace and acceptable in many places now than in the 16th century, artist and seminarian Edith Gage noticed the Bible and other teaching tools of faith are often relegated to bookshelves and left unused in daily life. Gage’s mission? Bring God’s word and Luther’s simple explanations front and center as Luther once encouraged among his own parishioners so faith becomes part of central conversation and teaching in the home.

Edith Gage, a Master of Divinity intern, grew up in both Georgia and Indiana. Her passion for art began at an early age with crayons and gradually grew through experimentation in school with various mediums. While in high school, Edith was introduced to calligraphy and throughout college she continued to study and strengthen her calligraphy skills. After graduating from college with a degree in secondary art education, Edith worked as a youth director, often using her calligraphy skills in the congregations she served.

The Rev. Paul Hill, ’04, said of Gage’s artwork, “When I was at Luther I led chapel and Edith always painted for me during the sermon. Her artwork preaches the gospel as clearly as any spoken word ever does. She can do with a pen what the spoken word does in terms of proclaiming the good news.” Gage’s mission work is neither glamorous nor exotic. She seeks to bring the good news to everyday people in local communities.

Throughout her seminary studies Edith has gained increasing appreciation for the Greek and Hebrew languages. Her artistic sense allowed her to notice the beauty of the early biblical script, and coupled with her deep Christian faith, she began to wonder how these links of language might connect contemporary Christians to the early church. She was inspired to incorporate biblical Greek and Hebrew words and texts into her artwork. During a class on the Lutheran Confessions with Mary Jane Haemig, associate professor of church history, and Patrick Keifert, professor of systematic theology, she learned that Martin Luther’s “Small Catechism” was first published in poster form for people to hang in their houses in an effort to assist parents in teaching basic faith to their children. Gage wondered why the “Small Catechism” in our time has often been reduced

“[Therefore] I entreat you all for God’s sake, who are pastors or preachers, to devote yourselves heartily to your office, to have pity on the people who are entrusted to you, and to help us inculcate the Catechism upon the people, and especially upon the young. And let those of you who cannot do better [If any of you are so unskilled that you have absolutely no knowledge of these matters, let them not be ashamed to] take these tables and forms and impress them, word for word, on the people, as follows…”

—Martin Luther
Edith Gage (continued)

to a small book that is easily lost. She began to create posters for home and office walls filled with the words of the catechism. The Apostles Creed and Luther’s explanations were completed in 2006, and the Lord’s Prayer with explanations the following year. The other sections of the catechism are works in progress.

Gage recognizes the importance of this work, yet is quick to ascribe her inspiration and artistic ability to God. “I don’t believe it is simply me producing this art, it is God working through me. God gave me the ability to do this and I hope and pray God is glorified in my work,” says Gage.

The Rev. Kelsay Parker, ’08, of Trinity Lutheran Church in Richmond, Mich., and her husband, the Rev. David Parker, ’08, have Gage’s work in their home. “It was given to us as a gift. In our busy lives as a clergy couple one thing we have been doing is memorizing Luther’s Morning and Evening prayers,” says Kelsay Parker. “We say those together at the beginning and end of the day, and Edith’s artwork is a visual reminder that those foundations of our faith are part of our everyday lives, especially in our home.”

Gage’s work reflects the deep simplicity of God’s mission in the world. Her work conveys how the word of God belongs in our homes and in our hearts. When people come face to face with God’s word in the safest and most loving environment, God’s work follows into all matters of life. Mission happens when the word of God is the foundation of life—from the home, outward.

Gage’s mission empowers everyday people to a life of faith. “I’m very glad she is doing it,” says Kelsay Parker. “I think it really captures how the ‘Small Catechism’ was meant to be used, which is not just in our confirmation classes but around our supper and breakfast tables.”

Gage is a member of the Colleagues of Calligraphy and has been influenced by the work of local calligraphy artists Judy Dodds, Kirsten Malcolm Berry and Timothy Botts. She is currently on internship at Calvary Lutheran Church in Bemidji, Minn., with her husband, Ryan, also a seminary intern.

High-quality, limited edition giclee prints by Edith Gage are available in 11x14 and 22x30 sizes and printed on 140-pound, acid-free fine art watercolor paper. Each print is signed and numbered up to 250. To order, contact Edith Gage directly at egage001@luthersem.edu.
Legacies of Quello and Hanson Honored in Future Preachers


Luther Seminary has long been known for producing outstanding preachers, but two new efforts aim to deepen preaching skills for pastors already in the parish. The Revs. H.B. Hanson, ’30, and Julius Quello, ’37, inspired many a listener with their strong, faithful preaching during their long ministries. Now their families are carrying on their legacies and, in turn, hope to build up current preachers so they can do the same.

The H.B. Hanson Preaching Seminar
The H.B. Hanson Preaching Seminar began as a pilot project three years ago. Eight pastors were selected by the Minneapolis and St. Paul Area Synod bishops to participate in a year-long cohort group that would focus on two of the hallmarks of H.B. Hanson’s ministry: preaching and vocation, and how both glorify God and serve God in the world. This year, the seminar was expanded to include four pastors from each of the six synods in Minnesota.

“The hope was that these pastors would go out and meet with church members where they work to learn more about their vocations and the daily challenges they face,” said Mary Brown, assistant director of the Center for Biblical Preaching. “These personal conversations between pastors and parishioners in turn would help the pastors in their preaching to be more relevant to the ministry of the laity.”

Hanson spent many years as a campus pastor at St. Olaf College, where he mentored a number of students and encouraged them to consider ministry as a career. “He was a very strong encourager of young pastors in their preaching,” said Brown. “This seminar aims to capture that spirit.”

Barb Hanson said she and her husband, John, started the seminar because “we have experienced some very strong preachers over the years and we feel it’s important for many more pastors to develop and grow in that area.”

John Nelson, ’02, leader of the Minneapolis Area Synod’s group and senior pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Hopkins, Minn., said the two-day retreat that began this year’s seminar definitely carried on Hanson’s legacy of encouragement. “[It] was very affirming of our callings as pastors. They acknowledged the challenges we face and encouraged us to work together to support each other in facing those challenges.”

Nelson also appreciated the emphasis placed on the intersection of preaching and vocation. “We talked a lot about taking faith to work and how the lives of our congregants engage our preaching,” he said. “As pastors, we need to spend time in their workplace so it informs how we see ours.”

John Snider, ’82 and ’02, was part of the original group that started in fall 2006. Snider, who serves as senior pastor at St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church in West St. Paul, Minn., said he was initially intrigued by the concept of focusing on improving preaching through direct feedback. The group would watch one another’s sermons on videotape and analyze everything from content to style to delivery.

“At first, when it was time to view our sermons, the anxiety level went through the roof,” Snider said. “But we turned out to be a very pastoral group and we quickly learned how to hear each other’s comments as the truth spoken in love. I found that even when watching someone else’s sermon, I was still learning a ton about my own preaching.”

In fact, the group found the process so helpful that they have continued to meet once a quarter since the pilot ended. Though they’ve developed into more of a small group, they continue to talk about—and watch—each other’s sermons. Snider said it’s been one of the most helpful things he’s done in the course of his ministry.

H. B. Hanson

The Mission Field in Your Backyard

The Mission Field in Your Backyard

THE MISSION FIELD IN YOUR BACKYARD

10

STORY Winter 2009
Quello and Hanson Legacies (continued)

“I am getting quality feedback on something my congregation and my calling have lifted up as important,” said Snider. “And I’ve come to understand more about how my preaching reaches my congregation. It has been a tremendous opportunity to grow.”

The Julius Quello Academy of Preaching

After Julius Quello passed away in the late 1980s, the congregation he’d served in Sarasota, Fla., established a trust fund in his name to honor his gifts as a preacher. For years these funds were used to underwrite preaching-focused continuing education opportunities. Recently, Quello’s five sons—all of whom attended Luther Seminary and four of whom were ordained into the ministry—wanted to create a more meaningful event to hold up their dad’s legacy. Their vision became the Julius Quello Academy of Preaching.

“As a family, we knew preaching was a real passion for my dad,” said Chris Quello, ’66. “He was part of a generation that identified themselves as preachers, not pastors.

Julius Quello

“That was in the day when pastors truly knew how much they were appreciated. His congregations constantly affirmed his ministry. We agreed we wanted to find a way to show our appreciation for the churches that appreciated him, and to hold up the importance of preaching today.”

Over the course of the three days in November, 14 pastors from the East Central Synod of Wisconsin gathered at Ellison Bay Lutheran Church in Door County, Wis., for renewal, conversation and presentations on the craft of preaching by Bruce Foster, pastor of Ellison Bay and Luther Seminary’s David Lose, Marbury E. Anderson Professor of Biblical Preaching.

“There was a real sense of partnership between the synod and the seminary,” said Chris Quello. “It set the tone that good preaching is important; that it truly affects the life and future of the congregation.”

Lose cited the benefits of time spent together, both in building relationships between colleagues and in renewed commitment to the time, scholarship and creativity good preaching requires.

“Preaching is an important, challenging and sometimes lonely enterprise,” said Lose. “In a relatively short time, we were able to enter deeply into the nature of our shared calling, its struggles and its opportunities. What a wonderful way to affirm and strengthen the preaching of our church.”

During the gathering, the Quellos were able to spend time talking about their dad and his legacy. “It was very special for our family to remember his life and ministry like that,” said Chris Quello. “And the thank yous we have received indicated how appreciative they were of my dad, and of our gift. I was expecting a real meaningful event, but it went beyond everything I’d hoped for.”

The Quellos aim to continue this academy in the future, ideally at each of the congregations their father served. “We hope to make this an annual event,” said Chris Quello. “The opportunity to enhance the ministry of current pastors would be a wonderful way to honor my dad.”

Julius Quello (third from right), pictured with sons, from left, Peter, ’78; Dan, ’68; John, ’70; Chris, ’66; and Paul at John’s ordination.
“Quit preparing your graduates for a church that no longer exists.” This was the challenge a pastor gave then-President David Tiede in 1987.

Now Luther Seminary is focused on the new mission field. “We began to imagine North America as a missionary field and every congregation as a missionary community,” said Gary Simpson, professor of systematic theology.

The curriculum at Luther Seminary is changing and evolving to meet these needs. Students are presented with missional thinking in one of their first classes, Reading the Audiences, but they also have opportunities to apply missional thinking through joining middler cohorts, choosing internships geared toward mission work and working in mission starts in their first calls.

Year 1: Reading the Audiences
You could say Gary Simpson was one of the main mission developers of Luther Seminary’s current mission emphasis. Simpson, who has taught Reading the Audiences, was instrumental in the development of the curriculum that put RTA in place.

“RTA’s role is central and crucial to the curriculum,” said Simpson. “It fits into the interpreting and confessing division by bringing together confessional and missional theology. There is a rhetorical strategy in understanding that we proclaim good news to audiences in order to understand the community to which we’re sent.”

The outline of the course mirrors the three phases of the seminary curriculum, but over a shorter period of time. Junior year is about “Telling the Story,” middler year focuses on “Interpreting and Confessing” and the concept of the senior year is “Leading in Mission.”

The course also uses demographic and sociological tools to aid in teaching. Students participate in a group project directly involved with studying and applying their skills in a congregation in the Twin Cities. At the end of the term, the groups present their findings to the congregations, focusing on “What is God up to?” The students are challenged to theologically interpret the sociological data in an effort to understand what God is doing in that congregation.

This year there are four residential sections of Reading the Audiences, as well as a newly developed distributed learning version. Each is team taught. Mary Sue Dreier, associate professor of Congregational Mission and Leadership, teaches two sections with Lois Malcolm, professor of systematic theology.

“We are training evangelical public leaders for the mission of the 21st century,” said Dreier. “Luther Seminary is committed to leadership that is theologically framed.”

By going into congregations for further study, students get an opportunity to apply their classroom learning firsthand. “Congregations really become a learning opportunity because they open themselves up to students and talk about what God is up to,” said Dreier. “They help us see the realities of what we’re seeing theologically.”

Year 2: Congregational Mission and Leadership Middler Cohort
Dreier and Dwight Zscheile, assistant professor of Congregational Mission and Leadership, have teamed up to lead a CML cohort in missional leadership. This group of 14 students, mostly middlers (second-year seminarians), meets several times throughout the academic year to reflect on the theology and practice of missional leadership, to explore questions of vocation and process, and for mutual support and encouragement.

The cohort does not involve graded assignments like a regular course. However, there are opportunities for online and in-person discussion of case
The Path of a Mission Developer at Luther Seminary (continued)

studies and written reflections on real-life leadership challenges. Guests with hands-on experience are also brought in. In December, the cohort spent time with Pastor Jannie Swart, a Ph.D. student in CML and experienced missional leader from South Africa.

The cohort has helped extend students’ classroom experiences and join them with other missional-thinking students. “As I talked to people who were involved with it, I realized that it is a group of people who are like me,” said Lydia Nelson, middler. “They also want to know how to integrate the exciting things we are learning about mission into our education and how we can bring this to our future congregations.”

Sue Johnson, a junior from Duluth, Minn., joined the cohort despite being unable to attend every meeting. “I find the distributed learning piece to be a big part of the missional focus of Luther Seminary,” said Johnson. “I appreciate the program as a way of reaching out to those in rural communities, and lifting up those church leaders, while keeping them in their church contexts.”

Sarah Anderson joined the CML cohort because she was interested in congregational vitalization, in which she would serve in a struggling congregational and bring it back to life. But the cohort has opened her eyes to new ideas. “I truly think any congregation can be a missional conversation and the purpose of this new cohort is to be intentional about the process. It takes seriously our life as church and how it is involved in God’s mission,” said Anderson. “While I still have interest in vitalization, I’m also looking at mission development—particularly within a Latino context—and broadening that to more multicultural ministries within the ELCA.”

Middler Katy Warren joined the group to gain more exposure to an aspect of ministry that she was unfamiliar with. “I am looking at the possibility of entering a specifically missional internship next year,” said Warren. “Ultimately, I hope that wherever I end up I will be able to find ways to work on missional programs.”

So far, the CML cohort is off to a good start. “We are still learning as we go about how best to serve students in their learning and growth,” said Zscheile. “These students are already directly involved in shaping the cohort experience and we hope to give them increasing responsibility for doing so in the future.” There are plans to launch another middler cohort next fall.

Year 3: Missional Internship: Progress in the Grand Canyon Synod

The Grand Canyon Synod is one location clearly focused on providing a missional internship experience. Intern Scott Thalacker ended up at Central Lutheran Church in Casa Grande, Ariz., because he was drawn to a challenging internship involving the startup of a second site in a relatively small congregation. For the past several years, the Grand Canyon Synod studied the possibility of starting a new congregation and decided to follow a multi-site model for outreach in the area.

“The context I serve now is a good experience in what happens when a smaller congregation starts a new site—a fairly uncommon enterprise,” said Thalacker.

In 1989, Central Lutheran was built in Arizona City, a town of about 10,000. Casa Grande, located about 12 miles north of Arizona City, has a population of about 40,000. There hasn’t been an ELCA congregation in Casa Grande, and recent surveys show the unchurched population to be more than 40 percent.

“Central Lutheran decided it would be good to provide some of the same congregational opportunities in Casa Grande that exist in Arizona City,” said Thalacker. “So with this mission, the congregation started worship services in Casa Grande in October 2008.”

One of the initial goals for the site at Casa Grande was the possibility of adding more services. On Dec. 7, the church reached that goal, moving to two worship services serving a total of about 80 people.

Master of Divinity student Hannah Johnson is the current intern at Our Savior’s Lutheran in East Mesa, Ariz. Beginning in February, Our Savior’s will serve three campuses. As an intern, Johnson is experiencing congregational renewal with one campus and the beginnings of a new ministry with another. “Hannah has an incredible spirit that endears her to many,” said Mark Halvorson, ’73, senior pastor.
She loves to actively participate in all dimensions of ministry. Needless to say, she is thriving!

Johnson is also learning to go with the flow of a ministry that drastically changes throughout the year. Worship attendance in the winter averages around 3,400 people in nine services; in the summer, the number drops to 650 congregants over five services.

Halvorson believes there is a great opportunity for his church to be united with interns. “The Grand Canyon Synod has a strong missional vision,” said Halvorson. “Bishop Steve Talmage was excited about starting a Phoenix cohort of internship sites from some of the best congregations in our area. This is the first year of the cohort, with four participants from Phoenix and one congregation in Las Vegas.”

**Year 4: Preparing for a Call to the Mission Field**

Senior Jodi Houge’s first call is a product of asking herself one question: “What about my neighbor?” Little did she know that her first call would hold its services in a coffee shop that offered up rolls and coffee in exchange for a $100 facility fee.

Her congregation, Humble Walk, is the product of an ice cream night that Houge hosted this past summer in which she invited people from the community to her house. “It was about creating conversation and community,” said Houge. “The overwhelming response was ‘Thank you!’”

She asked community members what their hopes were, and how the church could meet them where they were. What she found was that many of the people from her working-class neighborhood weren’t used to feeling invited or welcomed. “Many of the people were looking to connect, but needed community,” said Houge. “They want church, but not the pew. They want to walk in and have people know their names.”

There was an emphasis on having a non-threatening and welcoming environment. The next step was starting a congregation. The only problem? Houge was, and still is, a student. Before the idea took flight, she met with Bishop Peter Rogness, ’72, of the St. Paul Synod. “I told him, ‘I don’t want to lead if it’s not an OK thing to do.’” And Houge was willing to go anywhere for her first call.

After hearing her idea and seeing her energy, Bishop Rogness was excited. “He went to bat for me,” said Houge. Until recently, students needed to serve at established parishes for three years prior to working in mission development. A recent decision by the ELCA bishops approved mission development as a potential first call for graduates, so Houge went through that approval process and Humble Walk began its journey. They’re currently meeting on Sunday evenings at Fresh Grounds coffee shop in St. Paul, Minn.

Her goal is that Humble Walk will “never grow so big that it needs to be plugged in. Once it gets uncomfortable, we’ll split into two groups.” Houge is also realistic that the members of Humble Walk will never be able to support her financially and she is looking for a partner congregation to support her.

It’s apparent that Houge’s motivation for starting Humble Walk was to serve the neighbor and not to ask, “What can my neighbor give to me?”

Luther Seminary has taken the lead on preparing students for the new missional church. Directly or indirectly, mission will play an integral role in how each student can discern the needs of his or her congregation and community.

“It’s theology of the cross,” said Simpson. “We are little Christs sent to get inside our neighbor.”

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Students interested in participating in the CML cohort are encouraged to contact Mary Sue Dreier (mdreier001@luthersem.edu) or Dwight Zscheile (dzscheile001@luthersem.edu).
During finals week at Luther Seminary, a joke told among frantic students when completing assignments is to hold one’s arms out, hang the head and declare with exhaustion, “It is finished.” The wry humor is not lost. But what does it look like to live a truly cruciform life? A life beyond poking fun at the daily grind? The Rev. Greg Boyd took up this question during February’s Aus Lecture, “Advancing the Cruciform Revolution: A Kingdom Perspective on Evangelism.”

To live a life molded to the work of Christ, a cruciform life, is to manifest the whole life in service. Boyd takes care to notice the details of Scripture. A particularly important passage for him comes from Ephesians 5:1-2: “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Boyd notes, “This [text] is a bullseye for what it means to live in the kingdom. He gave his life while we were yet enemies. This is our call for all people at all times.”

For Boyd, imitation of God’s work is true evangelism. Evangelism takes priority in discussion these days among Christians. This work of drawing those who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ into the life of the Christian church is a primary goal. Boyd says, “Contrasting to the world, I am going to suggest, is intrinsic to literally have hands stretched out, cruciform to the work and love of Jesus Christ.

Evangelism is a two-fold matter—actions completed in words. Boyd says, “In a classical model there has been a divorce between words and good deeds. If we are the church in close community, both inside and outside of our fellowship, that is to be the primary draw of people into the kingdom.”

For Boyd, the bottom line of evangelism is a “kingdom approach,” or leading a cruciform life to the person and work of Jesus Christ. As Boyd puts it, “A kingdom approach to evangelism is focused on living like Christ lived and loving like Christ loved. While we use words when we have to, our main message is our life. People are to be drawn into the kingdom by the beauty of our self-sacrificial love.”

Aus Memorial Lecture
“Advancing the Cruciform Revolution: A Kingdom Perspective on Evangelism”

Greg Boyd, senior pastor, Woodland Hills Church, St. Paul, Minn.

View Greg Boyd’s lecture at www.luthersem.edu/lectures/aus, where past lectures can also be watched.
As Christians we are called to read the Bible. What does it mean to read the Bible “for the sake of the world?” How might the biblical word give shape to Christian life? Pastors and lay leaders came to Mid-Winter Convocation Jan. 14-16 to learn how to help their congregations read the Bible for the sake of the world.

Convocation participants heard from preeminent Old Testament scholars Walter Brueggemann, professor emeritus of Columbia Theological Seminary, and Terence E. Fretheim, Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary. Video of each of the keynote presentations and chapels are available at www.luthersem.edu/convo.

In addition to the keynote presentations, the more than 600 Convocation attendees heard from Greg Mortenson, author of the New York Times bestseller “Three Cups of Tea.” Video of Mortenson’s moving presentation about the work he has done to build schools for children in remote regions.

Many former classmates gather during Convo each year for reunions, including the class of 1968.

Greg Mortenson, author of the bestselling “Three Cups of Tea,” gives an inspiring presentation on the first night of Convo.

Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament Terence Fretheim delivers one of Wednesday’s keynote addresses.
Convo 2009 (continued)

of Afghanistan and Pakistan is available at www.luthersem.edu/threecupsoftea. Copies of “Three Cups of Tea” are available at the Luther Seminary bookstore at a 25 percent discount. Copies can also be ordered at the Web address above.

Convocation participants were encouraged to take part in the Convocation Challenge prior to and during the event. During Convocation 2008, participants were challenged to engage Scripture in new ways in their congregations’ daily lives. Ideas were shared Friday morning during the Book of Faith breakfast. To find new ideas and share ways you’ve engaged Scripture in your congregation, go to www.luthersem.edu/convochallenge.

Luther was pleased to have faculty members as leaders in all workshops at Convocation. Highlights and tips from each of the workshops for use in your congregation are available at www.luthersem.edu/convo.

Recent graduates use Convo as an opportunity to catch up on families and first calls.

President Richard Bliese addresses a crowd of more than 600 at Convo.

The class of 1963 is one of many who celebrated at a Convo reunion.

Mark your calendar now for Mid-Winter Convocation 2010, which will take place Jan. 13-15 under the theme “Engaging Scripture in a Community of Faith.”
Common wisdom reasons that one can best move into the future when one has a clear sense of the past.

Since 2005 Luther Seminary has been engaged in a long-range strategic planning process to shape a vision and set a course for the future. To help lead that process, President Richard Bliese has been researching Luther Seminary’s history, including working with Archivist Paul Daniels and talking with alums and former faculty from Luther’s predecessor seminaries.

“We can be stronger if we can hear deeply these stories and how they have shaped the seminary’s values,” Bliese said.

One of these predecessor schools is Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary, the former seminary of the United Lutheran Church of America (ULCA). For more than 50 years, Northwestern Seminary and Luther Theological Seminary served Lutherans of different denominational and ethnic traditions in the upper Midwest. They were even across-the-street neighbors for nearly a decade before deciding to come together in 1976. But though the Northwestern Seminary name no longer stands apart, the school’s heritage remains.

Last fall, Bliese gathered with a group of Northwestern Seminary alums to tour the former Northwestern Seminary site, the Pillsbury Mansion in Minneapolis. His research and conversation with those alums has revealed a legacy as rich as the ornate woodworking in that stately building. It’s a legacy that shines through much of what makes Luther Seminary strong today.

“The Church Must Be Planted”

In the decades before World War II, the Northwest Synod of the ULCA was starting churches throughout the upper Midwest—in the Red River Valley and the prairies of North and South Dakota. The goal was to “get pastors out on the prairie,” Bliese said.

Former Northwestern Seminary New Testament professor Bob Bartels, ’47, said this was encapsulated by the phrase, “The church must be planted.” Northwestern Seminary’s mission impact was global as well as domestic. Northwestern graduates served as missionaries in India, China, Indonesia, British Guiana and Liberia. Northwestern Seminary sent its graduates out by the dozens to begin new congregations. The close ties between students, synod and seminary served to create a deep loyalty between them.

The strong sense of community reflected how the ULCA was structured. For many years the synod office shared the same building with the seminary, and the affiliation between the two extended to the congregations of the Northwest Synod.

“One of the influences of theological education at Northwestern was that pastors absorbed the belief that congregations belong to the church,” Bartels said. “They were seen as one with the church in message, in stewardship, in mission.”

Alum William Seabloom, ’54, experienced Northwestern’s ecumenical as well as international impact.

“There was a real feeling that the ‘church’ was larger than just the Lutheran Church,” he said. “When I was a student there were students of other denominations—Greek Orthodox, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, a Franciscan—this was long before the emphasis on ecumenical training came into vogue.”

Seabloom recalls classes in human sexuality and social work that were in the curriculum of Luther, co-led by United Theological and St. Paul seminaries in the 1970s.

“We were taught to focus on our love for the church and the work of the church,” he said. “Those things existed together wherever we were.”

Today, Bliese promises, “We are going to be the leading school in the field of mission development.” The M.Div,
Luther Seminary Honors Past, Moves Into Future (continued)

MA, D.Min. and PhD programs all offer concentrations in Congregational Mission and Leadership for pastors and leaders who have a passion for transforming churches and communities in the name of Christ. The key faculty involved with CML are some of the country’s top missiologists. In the past decade Luther Seminary has partnered with Augsburg College to offer a dual degree in theology and social work, and developed the Center for Stewardship and Social Action’s Centered Life® initiative to equip lay people to see their life’s work as vocations, their callings from God.

“Pray God and Tell the People”
Northwestern Seminary’s heritage of strong stewardship reflects a move away from more legalistic, apportionment giving giving to grace-based giving. Congregations in the Northwest Synod responded with tremendous generosity in supporting the seminary as well as other ministries and missions.

“We were taught that you didn’t give to a cause; you gave because you were grateful,” former Northwestern Seminary Professor of Systematic Theology and Ethics Robert Roth, ’45, said. “Northwestern Seminary never accepted a dime from the national church because the Northwest Synod and the Red River Valley Synods were so generous in supporting their seminary.”

In turn, the seminary made good use of its resources, amassing a substantial endowment, paying off its mortgage, and funding tuition for all students from the ULCA.

“Students came with a real sense of wanting to serve their synod, and the synod took care of them,” Seabloom said.

That tradition of strong stewardship is carried on as Luther Seminary has developed a wealth of resources for congregations and future church leaders. The Stewardship for the 21st Century Web site, www.luthersem.edu/stewardship, targeted classes and coaches on financial management—both personal and in the parish—for students, and continuing education courses like “Root, Walk, Lead” have made the Center for Stewardship Leadership “one of the best in the country—not just among Lutherans, but among all traditions,” Bliese said.

“Faith of the Parents in the Language of the Children”
Northwestern Seminary taught and proclaimed the faith of the parents in the language of the children. This was first and foremost in the consciousness of faculty and students, producing professors who made contributions to at least four major movements in modern theology.

Worship was one place that united believers from many different traditions. Because the Northwest Synod encompassed so many different ethnic groups, worship was typically held in English, not Norwegian, Swedish or German. “There were so many immigrants from so many countries, but what they all had in common was that their children were learning English in school. We led worship in English because it helped transfer faith from one generation to the next,” Bartels said.

The identity of Northwestern Seminary as a worshipping community shaped the way courses were taught. Professors understood that a seminary education was not merely a matter of receiving information and learning skills; rather, it was an opportunity to establish a personal relationship with teachers through Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life.

“We did not think of Northwestern as a school that occasionally worshipped,” Roth said. “We were a worshipping community, first and foremost, that had a specific function: to train pastors for the church. People identified themselves as members of that community—we worshipped, we worked, we lived together.”

Added Bartels, “And Northwestern graduates knew that their mission was to go into pulpits to preach the gospel, and into chancels to lead their congregations in reverent worship of Jesus Christ.”

Liturgical worship was a cornerstone of the seminary; in fact, in 1967 when the seminary moved from the Pillsbury House to its new campus on the corner of Hendon and Fulham streets (what is now Northwestern Hall), the building was designed around a formal worship space, the Chapel of the Cross. While still in the Pillsbury House, students and faculty worshipped daily in the chapel furnished by Charles Pillsbury.

Into the Future with Hope
As the strategic plan continues to take shape, Bliese wants to lift up the stories of Luther Seminary’s heritage.

“We have so many students, so many new faculty who were not a part of these traditions,” Bliese said. “They want to know what has made us strong in the past, and how those things will make us strong in the future.

“Discovering these stories gives me the confidence that we are headed in the right direction,” he said. “We have deep roots and our heritage will carry us forward.”
James Boyce, ’66 and ’71, emeritus professor of New Testament and Greek, gave a two-session presentation on the “Gospel of Mark” at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Minn., Feb. 1 and 8. He presented at a Befriender Ministry meeting at Calvary Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, Minn., on Jan. 12. On Dec. 12 and 13, he gave a presentation on the “Gospel of Matthew” at the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin’s Lay School of Ministry. He led a four-session Bible study on Book of Faith at Roseville Lutheran Church, Roseville, Minn., Oct. 26-Nov. 23. He led a three-session study, “How the Bible Came to Us: First Things for Reading the Bible,” on Oct. 29, Nov. 5 and 12, at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church West, Victoria, Minn.

Terri Elton, director of the Center for Children, Youth and Family Ministry, was the keynote speaker for the Northeastern Minnesota Synod middle school gathering Nov. 21-23.


Fred Gaiser, professor of Old Testament, spoke on “Healing in the Bible” at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, East Bethel, Minn., on Jan. 25. He spoke on “The Authority of the Bible” in connection with the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minn., Nov. 16 and 23; Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Oct. 19 and 26; and Lutheran Church of the Cross, St. Petersburg, Fla., Oct. 3-4. He spoke on “Preparing for Christmas with Isaiah” at St. Michael’s

Mary Jane Haemig, associate professor of church history and director of the Thrivent Reformation Research Program, gave an adult forum on “Advent: The Season and Its Celebrations” on Dec. 7 at Hope Presbyterian Church, Richfield, Minn. She lectured on “Martin Luther and the Bible” at a Lutheranhostel event at the Heartwood conference center in Trego, Wis., on Sept. 29, Oct. 6 and 13.

Steven Häggmark, ’80 and ’92, associate professor of Islamic studies and Christian mission, logged more than 60 hours of presentations in more than 15 area congregations in the last year. Topics include “Introducing Islam,” various topics in theology and church history, and the work of the Global Mission Institute as a key part of the mission of Luther Seminary.

Guillermo Hansen, associate professor of systematic theology, co-taught at the Lutheran World Federation’s international course, “Ecumenical Church in a Globalized World,” in Geneva, Switzerland, Jan. 7-21. He was the keynote speaker at the LWF’s consultation on “Critical Lutheran Beliefs and Practices in Relation to Neo-Pentecostalism” in Soweto, South Africa, in July.


Walter Sundberg, professor of church history, provided a historical introduction to Vilmar’s life and work.


Mary Hess, associate professor of educational leadership, contributed to “Revitalizing Practice: Collaborative Models for Theological Faculties,” published in October by Peter Lang Publishing.

Zebulon Highben, ’05, adjunct faculty in church music, was a member of the ELCA Composers’ Retreat Aug. 18-21 at St. John’s University, Collegeville, Minn. The retreat was convened to create new musical resources for the liturgies of Lent and Holy Week. Augsburg Fortress published two of his choral hymn arrangements, “Love Has Come,” in July, and “Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty,” in October.


Jerry Hoffman, director of Center for Stewardship Leaders and adjunct instructor of pastoral theology, was appointed in May to chair a Stewardship of Life Institute task force charged with the mission to advocate, fund and implement
Faculty News (continued)

financial stewardship coaching ministry in all ELCA seminaries.


Rolf Jacobson, ’91, associate professor of Old Testament, was the Reformation Festival lecturer for the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod and the Lutheran Bible Institute California keynote speaker in November. He presented his papers, “The Experience of Disability and the Theology of the Psalms” and “The Faithfulness of the Lord Endures Forever: The Central Theological Witness of the Psalter,” at the 2008 national meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, in Boston in November. He served as Reformation lecturer at Zion Lutheran Church in Kent, Wash.; keynote speaker during the Southwest Minnesota Synod fall conference; and a speaker at the Bible-in-Life event at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Summit, N.J., on Oct. 26. He was the keynote speaker at the Eastern North Dakota Pastors and Spouses conference in September.


Dirk Lange, associate professor of worship, co-taught a special intensive course for deaconesses at Southern Seminary in January.


David Mesner, adjunct instructor of New Testament, presented “The Beginning of the Gospel: Experiencing the Year of Mark” for the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology, held in Bigfork, Missoula and Billings, Mont., Oct. 27-30. He presented a workshop on Oct. 13 titled “Living and Preaching Mark: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany” as part of the Koinonia Lecture Series of Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn. He led three preaching and worship retreats Sept. 22-30 for the pastors and lay leaders of Iglesia Cristiana Luterana de Honduras, held in Lago de Yojoa, La Ceiba and Talanga. They were part of an ongoing theological partnership between ICLH and the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA.

Christian Scharen, assistant professor of worship, is directing a research project titled The Learning Pastoral Imagination Project, which is receiving a $1.1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. His book “Faith as a Way of Life: A Vision for Pastoral Leadership” was published in June.


Gary Wilkerson, ’04, visiting professor of congregational and community care leadership, became president of the Board of Augusta Care Corporation in January. He was appointed director of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church Counseling Services, Minneapolis, June 1.

Dwight Zscheile, ’08, assistant professor of congregational mission and leadership, gave a presentation on “Social Networking and the Church” for the Mission Strategy Network of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota on Nov. 22.

Coming to a Town Near You

Fred Gaiser, professor of Old Testament, will speak on “Healing in the Bible” at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Lakeville, Minn., on April 19, 26, May 3 and 10.


Dirk Lange, associate professor of worship, will provide a keynote address.

Karoline Lewis, ’94, assistant professor of biblical preaching, will present “Getting to Know the Gospel of Mark” at an adult forum at Westwood Lutheran Church, St. Louis Park, Minn., March 15 and 22. She will be a presenter at Montana Synod Continuing Education, Chico Hot Springs, Mont., April 14-17.

Janet Ramsey, associate professor of congregational care and leadership, will be a retreat facilitator for the pastor-to-pastor program of the Southwest Minnesota Synod, held at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn., Feb. 12. She will co-present with graduate student Lucy Mungai a paper titled “Fresh Perspectives, Increased Depth: Teaching Gerontology Collaboratively Across Cultures” at the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, San Antonio, Texas, Feb. 28. She will deliver the mid-winter lecture focused on the practice of parish ministry for the CHARIS Ecumenical Center, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn., March 5. She will be the keynote speaker at a conference on grandparenting and spirituality, St. Olaf’s Lutheran Church, Austin, Minn., May 5.

Michael Rogness, ’60, emeritus professor of preaching, will lead adult forums during the month of February at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Lakeville, Minn.; and Christ the King Lutheran Church, New Brighton, Minn.

Mary Hinkle Shore, ’86, Associate Dean of First Theological Degree Programs and associate professor of New Testament, will present her Hein-Fry lecture, “Does This Text Have a Future? Eschatology in Lutheran Biblical Hermeneutics” at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Gettysburg, Penn., March 5; Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Manchester, Conn., March 22; and Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S.C., April 2.

The Christian church in China is growing in exciting and unexpected ways. This January a group of 10 students ventured to China as part of their cross-cultural experience. Their trip was captured on the China 2009 blog. The blog captures the experience through journal entries, photos and videos.

Highlights of the experience include:
• Visits to cultural and religious centers in Beijing and Chengdu.
• Encounters with congregational life and ministry in parts of mainland China.
• Exploration of the traditional Chinese religions and Asian spirituality.
• Visits to congregations in rural China.
• Engagement in theological dialogue and reflection with Chinese people, religious leaders and pastors.

We invite you to share in their adventures at www.luthersem.edu/gmi/china.asp.

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Meet Luther Seminary’s Newest Faculty Members

By Kari Aanestad, M.Div. junior

Christian Scharen
Assistant Professor of Worship

Prior to joining the Luther Seminary faculty, Christian Scharen spent four years as director of the Faith as a Way of Life program at the Yale Center for Faith & Culture and assistant professor of congregational studies and practical theology (adjunct) at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.

**What are you most excited about as you begin your time at Luther Seminary?**

Luther has a clear identity focused on God’s mission of reconciliation through the church for the sake of the world. It has clarity of purpose in preparing leaders for participation in God’s mission. It has a long tradition of outstanding faculty who seek to further this identity and purpose. That clarity and the challenge of living it out in our teaching, learning and living excite me most.

**What do you see your role as in respect to the mission of the church?**

There are many ways to deepen our awareness and understanding of the world and God’s work within it. I will try to see the big picture, both in terms of my own courses in relation to other faculty at Luther but also in relation to a whole learning trajectory over student lives that began with their families and home churches, schools and friends, colleges, and life experience of very many sorts. One key, I believe, is making sure our questions are big enough to catch us up into the work of God in Christ. That when we gather to learn together, the stakes are as high as God would set for us.

**Dwight Zscheile**
Assistant Professor of Congregational Mission and Leadership

Dwight Zscheile, ’08, served as executive pastor of a relatively new, larger congregation outside Washington, D.C., in what was at the time America’s fastest-growing and second-most unchurched county. He completed his Ph.D. in Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther in 2008.

**Why do you think what CML does is important for the mission of the church in North America?**

The church in North America is facing an epochal change in relationship to its surrounding culture. Preparing leaders to start new congregations or shepherd existing congregations in faithfulness to the gospel amidst such changes is vital to the church’s survival and flourishing.

**What drew you to Luther Seminary?**

Luther Seminary is taking seriously the challenges of what it means to be church in a rapidly changing world. I value the depth of Luther’s theological and confessional commitments along with its serious attention to leadership and mission.

**Dirk Lange**
Associate Professor of Worship

Dirk Lange’s lifelong concern has been the church and its witness to the gospel. As a young man, this concern took him to live as a monk in the community of Taizé, France. Besides being responsible for the prayer and music at Taizé for almost 10 years, he was also deeply involved in the “lived” liturgies of Christians in Communist Europe.

**What are you most excited about as you begin your time at Luther?**

The great Lutheran and ecumenical diversity excites me. Here is a school committed to understanding the Lutheran Confessions in a multi-cultural context and, at the same time, redefining what mission means for the church and the world. The challenge is not only “translating” the Confessions for today’s world, it is also the challenge of the Sermon on the Mount: living (and then of course teaching) a spirituality in a world that is both deeply counter-cultural and yet continually tuned into the longing of culture, society, and world.

**What are your particular interests?**

My interest in the Confessions is paralleled with a deep interest in Luther’s own liturgical theology. My dissertation, “In, With, and Under: A Liturgical Disruption of Theology” explores Luther’s eucharistic hermeneutic. Luther, in order to reform the church in his day, turned first to the liturgy. My writing focuses on liturgy through the lens of a post-structuralist understanding of “event” and engages a deconstruction of classic liturgical theology, applying this deconstruction to the contemporary North American scene. I hope it will foster creative and gospel-founded discussions within the ELCA (and the broader church) on the meaning of worship, mission and ethics, as well as open the door to a methodology for theological study itself.

For more in-depth interviews with these faculty members, go to www.luthersem.edu/story.
The ‘00s
Robert Myalll, ’08, and Emily Myalll, ’08, welcomed a baby girl, Audrey Renee, on Sept. 18.

Alvina Olstead, ’07, has accepted a call to First Lutheran in Opheim, Mont. She was ordained Oct. 12.

Christopher Byars, ’07, and Dawn Byars welcomed Jameson Daniel Byars, born July 6 in Zephyrhills, Fla.

Becca (Martin) Pook, ’06, and Matthew Pook, ’08, were married Aug. 30 at Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp, Story City, Iowa.


Dan Overbo, ’03, and Laura (Atyeo) Overbo, ’03, welcomed a baby boy, Micah Daniel Overbo, on Oct. 29.

Joanne Otte, ’01, married Jason Millet on Oct. 18.

Jennifer Jelinek, ’00, and Erik Jelinek, ’97, celebrated the birth of Scarlett Deborah in September.

The ‘90s
Shauna Hannan, ’98, joined the faculty of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, S.C., in the summer of 2008 as assistant professor of homiletics.

David Fenrick, ’94, was appointed director of intercultural unity and the office of racial and ethnic diversity at Northwestern College, St. Paul, Minn., in August.


The ‘80s
Paul N. Swenson, ’85, pastor and chaplain, died Aug. 25 after an eight-year battle with prostate cancer. Swenson served as pastor at St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, Marshall, Minn.; Trinity Lutheran Church, Montevideo, Minn.; and Bethesda Lutheran Church, Alexandria, Minn. Paul later worked as the director of chaplaincy for the St. Croix Chaplaincy Association. Paul is survived by his wife, Valerie, and sons, Joshua and Andrew; his parents Neil and Marie Swenson; and his sister.

The ‘70s
Chris Brekke, ’77, wrote a creative devotion book, complete with comics, called “Faith Appetizers, A Sampler Platter of Biblical Christianity.” It was published by Bethany Press in November.

James Schroeder, ’73, died June 20.

The ‘60s
Dr. Darrel Gilbertson, ’64, co-authored with Dr. Lynn Anderson “Exit Stage Right,” about our final baptismal tasks. It was published by Leafwood Publishers in fall 2008.


The ‘50s
John Nicolai, ’52, and his wife, Lorraine Nicolai, of Bismarck, N.D., died in an automobile accident near Dickinson, N.D., on Oct. 7. They were traveling to John’s 60-year anniversary of graduating from PLC (PLU). John was ordained into ministry at First Lutheran in Orland in 1952. He served all of his ministry in North Dakota, retiring in 1989. John is survived by five children, 14 grandchildren, his sister, and five nieces and nephews. Services were held at Trinity Lutheran Church, Bismarck, N.D., on Oct. 12.

The ‘40s
A.R. Herbert Johnson, ’43, died Oct. 15 at the age of 93. He served Lutheran congregations in St. Paul, Minn.; Albert Lea, Minn.; Pacoima, Calif.; and Lemon Grove, Calif., where he retired in 1981. He is survived by his wife, Ione, three daughters, eight grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and a brother.

Ragnvald Severin Aanestad, ’42, died Nov. 14 at the age of 98. Aanestad served calls in Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota for more than 40 years.

Ray M. Mathsen, ’48, died Sept. 4 in Surprise, Ariz., at the age of 78. He is survived by his wife, Rebecca, four children and 13 grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a son. ●
Convergence Brings Together Young Clergy and ELCA Leaders

By Kari Aanestad, M.Div. junior

Young clergy members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America met for Convergence, an event inviting those 35 and younger to speak with key leaders of the ELCA who have shaped churchwide policies and ministries, Oct. 26–27.

Convergence aimed to give voice to the ELCA’s young leaders’ thoughts and hopes regarding ministry. Leaders of the ELCA guided discussions and were listeners and conversation partners.

Facilitated by: I. Shelby Andress, Search Institute Adjunct Senior Consultant and Facilitator

Key listeners included:
- Rollie Martinson, Academic Dean, Professor of Children Youth and Family Ministry, Luther Seminary
- David Lose, Marbury E. Anderson Professor of Biblical Preaching, Luther Seminary
- Kristen Glass, Director for Young Adult Ministry, ELCA
- Jonathan Strandjord, Director for Theological Education, ELCA
- Melissa Wiginton, Vice President for Ministry Programs and Planning, The Fund for Theological Education
- Kevin Spears, Regional Director, Calling Congregations, The Fund for Theological Education
- Mark Narum, Bishop, Western North Dakota Synod, ELCA
- Peter Rogness, Bishop, St. Paul Area Synod, ELCA
- Larry Wohlrabe, Bishop, Northwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA
- Representatives of Augsburg Fortress

“In our work at the Fund for Theological Education, we have thought a lot about the qualities of excellent leadership as we seek to call forth, nurture and support young leaders for the church,” said listener Melissa Wiginton, of the Fund for Theological Education. “Our list of qualities of excellence most often includes genuine and lively faith, commitment to the church, agency, creativity, imagination, compassion, critical thinking, and exceptional communication abilities. The leaders who envisioned, planned and implemented Convergence 2008 demonstrated these qualities.”

What do you hope for in 2009?

To try a new vegetable every month. This month we’re doing avocados. My family will eat healthier in 2009!
Sarah Goldammer, Master of Divinity senior

A job!
Andy Nelson, Master of Divinity senior

To come to an understanding of other people.
Sarah Harrold, Master of Divinity senior

God’s will to be done in our country and our church.
Michael Feltes, Master of Arts junior

The rapture.
Thomas Jackson, Master of Arts senior

I would like to finish my studies and see the changes expected in the world.
Sam Tindiwensi, 2nd-year Master of Theology student

Luther Seminary students are faithfully answering God’s call to ministry today! In order for them to serve where God most needs them, they need your help. To learn how you can help, visit www.luthersem.edu/scholarship09.

For more information visit www.luthersem.edu/convergence.
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.

Suffering and Hope in the Bible
Noon-2 p.m.
Faculty: Dan Simundson, professor emeritus of Old Testament

Crazy Talk: A Not-So-Stuffy Introduction to Theology
7-9 p.m.
Faculty: Rolf Jacobson, associate professor of Old Testament

A Walk Through the Old Testament
7-9 p.m.
Faculty: Mark Throntveit, professor of Old Testament

Spring classes are held Mondays, March 23-April 20. To attend Crazy Talk: A Not-So-Stuffy Introduction to Theology 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.

Previews
April 23 and 28
Olson Campus Center
High school students and their pastors are invited to help youth explore their gifts, callings and various ministry opportunities.
www.luthersem.edu/previews

FRIENDS Spring Luncheon, Program and Silent Auction
April 25
Olson Campus Center
For registration and information, contact Lynne Moratzka at 651-641-3419 or lmoratzk@luthersem.edu.

The 140th Commencement
May 24
Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
Graduate information, calendars and key dates at www.luthersem.edu/registrar/graduation.
Mary Sue Dreier sees the fruits of yesterday’s gifts today

When Mary Sue Dreier, associate professor of congregational mission and leadership, looks back on her career, she has one particular person to thank.

“I am here today because someone cared about this seminary and gave me a scholarship more than 30 years ago. Gen Stelberg died in 1988, but her gift made it possible for me to become a pastor in the ELCA for more than 25 years, eventually returning to Luther for my Ph.D. and becoming a member of the faculty.”

Stelberg established an endowed scholarship fund at Luther Theological Seminary in 1978 and also remembered Luther in her will.

“The full impact of donors’ gifts will live on long after they do,” says Dreier. “I can’t fully thank Gen for her gift, but I can thank today’s donors in her name and on behalf of the future they’ll make possible.”
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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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 communc@luthersem.edu or by phone at 651-641-3399.

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