A Biblical Foundation
Luther Seminary Continues to Spread the Word
Above: Master of Theology student Buntausa Sunday Amos and Doctor of Philosophy student William Obaga, ’07, play music at the GMI donor dinner March 29.

Above left: Visitors to April’s Fair Trade Fair browse items for sale from multiple countries.

Above middle: Luther Seminary students and friends dance the night away during March’s Spring Fling. Above right: Dr. Steed Davidson, assistant professor of Old Testament, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, speaks at this year’s Hein-Fry Lecture.

Right: Artist He Qi speaks at the Good Neighbors Luncheon, held in conjunction with the Fair Trade Fair. Bottom: Past academic deans reunite at Luther for lunch and conversation. From left, Henry French, Robert Roth, Paul Sponheim, current dean Roland Martinson, Terence Fretheim, Daniel Simundson, David Lose and Richard Bliese. (Not pictured: Marc Kolden)
See how Hilvie Ostrow is equipping future leaders of the church. Page 27.
The long-held tradition in my last congregation was to read the Word of God out of the bulletin, not the Bible. The reasoning seemed understandable. Congregants weren’t bringing their Bibles to church, church leaders wanted everyone reading the same translation and access to Scripture was easier.

This was devastating to the small congregation. These believers became less familiar with Scripture, had less confidence in their daily Bible use and started looking to the pastor as the only expert in interpreting Scripture. In short, the less they used their Bibles in church, the less they used them at home. The Bible was simply being opened less.

Once Bibles were provided in worship, instead of just individual Scriptures printed in the bulletin, the congregation came alive. They re-embraced Scripture and recommitted themselves to becoming a community centered in the Word of God.

A similar effort is being made throughout the ELCA today with the Book of Faith Initiative, directed by Diane Jacobson, Luther Seminary professor of Old Testament. In this issue you’ll read about the revitalizing effect this Initiative is having on congregations across the country. (See pages 8-11.)

At Luther Seminary we teach the Bible to our students so they become leaders who can then teach Scripture to others. You’ll read about the unique ways faculty are incorporating the Word into students’ daily lives. (See pages 6-7.)

Another hands-on way students are helping put the Word into the hands of the people? The Bible Initiative: Pass It On Project was started at Luther by donors David and Andrea Hayes in an effort to ensure Bibles would always be in the pews. Now that effort is moving beyond our walls into congregations ministered to by our students. It’s a concrete example of our students taking what they’ve learned here to those who need the Word. (See pages 4-5.)

The goal is always to build up the community by allowing the Word of God to become central to its life. How might we do this better within our congregations? To this complex problem, here’s one simple suggestion: Use Bibles in worship. The vision of a whole congregation opening the Scriptures together week after week is a powerful one. Or as the Psalmist writes:

“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
Or take the path that sinners tread,
Or sit in the seat of scoffers;
But their delight is in the law of the Lord,
And on his law they meditate day and night.
They are like trees
Planted by streams of water,
Which yield their fruit in its season,
And their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.”

(Psalm 1:1-3)

Pax,

Richard H. Bliese
President
Luther Seminary
“My father began decades ago to give away Bibles as a Gideon, and now, about 50 years after I first saw him do it, here I am carrying on the tradition,” says David Hayes, member of the Luther Seminary Foundation Board of Trustees. Hayes and his wife, Andrea, notable donors to Luther Seminary for the past 14 years, have given a gift and a challenge to the seminary, which has recently been extended to its graduates: give away as many Bibles as possible.

The program, named The Bible Initiative: Pass It On Project, began a year and a half ago when the Hayes offered to donate 400 hardcover pew Bibles to Luther Seminary’s Chapel of the Incarnation and Chapel of the Cross if the seminary agreed to replace the Bibles when they were given away. All of the initial 400 Bibles have been given away, and the seminary is in the process of ordering more. “We are distinguishing ourselves by lifting up the use of Scripture,” says President Richard Bliese. “We are striving to become who we actually are as Lutherans; that is, people centered in the Word, which are people of Word and Sacrament.”

Given the great success of this initial gift, the Hayes family decided to expand their contribution to the broader church. They set up a fund named for David Hayes’ father, Lloyd P. Hayes, to which other seminary trustees—including Michael Schwartz, Diane Kosnick Nelson and Lee Sundet—have already contributed. With money from that fund, up to 20 students each spring will be invited to participate in the Pass it On Project and receive Bibles for the pews of their new congregations. Like the Bibles gifted to the seminary, these Bibles also will be inscribed with an invitation to take the book home or to where it is needed.

In turn, the congregation will commit to replacing the Bibles that are given away. Once the congregations have given away and replaced one half of their Bibles, the congregation will officially be recognized by Luther Seminary as a Book of Faith: Pass it On congregation. They will be publicly recognized by the seminary and receive a small gift in recognition of their contribution to the project.

This program is a part of Luther Seminary’s involvement in the Book of Faith Initiative, a major initiative of the ELCA to increase fluency in the Scriptures, the first language of faith, over the next five years. “[The Pass It On Project] seems to be a...
great complement to the wider church’s Book of Faith effort, so God’s timing is, as always, perfect,” says Hayes.

“Both of these projects [the Pass It On Project and the Book of Faith Initiative] help us take seriously the agenda of the church: we should help all baptized Christians feel more at home in the Scriptures and allow them to help make its stories their stories of faith as well,” says Seminary Pastor John Mann. “This is a wonderful way to get seminarians concerned about their responsibility to teach the first language of faith—the understanding of the Scripture. It’s also a wonderful way to familiarize congregations with the use of the Bible in worship and study, and to introduce Scripture to people who have never owned a copy of, or read, the Bible.”

Seminary graduates of the 2008-2009 academic year who wish to participate in the project are required to take a workshop either this spring or summer. Spots are limited to 20 and available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The workshop, co-taught by Mann and Diane Jacobson, professor of Old Testament and director of the Book of Faith Initiative, will introduce both the specifics of the program and general pointers on Bible teaching in the parish. All senior students who participate will receive significant gift incentives.

“Seminary students really need to recognize that their questions and the things that will excite them in understanding the Scriptures are really quite different from lay people’s questions,” says Mann. “They need to learn how to listen to their congregation members, anticipate their questions and engage them in learning how God is present and at work in everyday matters. The workshops will help teach them how to do these things.”

Bliese agrees. “This project shows our commitment to teaching the Bible, teaching how to teach the Bible and giving away the Word of God,” he says. “The Bibles are a subtle yet powerful symbol that speaks volumes about who we are as both students and leaders.”

Excitement about the project has already reached beyond the seminary. “We’ve received word that the Luther Seminary pilot has already begun to inspire some Lutheran congregations in the Twin Cities area to start their own ‘Bible projects’ in their churches to place and give away Bibles in the sanctuary. That’s the kind of fire we hope to ignite and spread,” says Hayes. “Andrea and I enjoy few things more than giving away Bibles, and we’re thrilled to have a new vehicle at Luther Seminary to help germinate and spread the Word far beyond what we can do individually. Our ultimate hope is that all these Bible initiatives will one day result in hundreds of churches giving away thousands of Bibles every year.”

For more information about The Bible Initiative: Pass It On Project, contact John Mann at 651-641-3216 or jmann001@luthersem.edu.

Created and Led by the Spirit: Planting Missional Congregations
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Nov. 6-7, 2009

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Mary Sue Dreier, Associate Professor of Congregational Mission and Leadership, Luther Seminary

Lois Malcolm, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Luther Seminary

Miroslav Volf, Director, Yale Center for Faith and Culture; Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.

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Sometimes God can accomplish new and wonderful things using God’s oldest material. Luther Seminary faculty take God’s Word and help students apply it to their lives in meaningful ways every day. By the end of their seminary educations, students have not only learned about Scripture, but also how to interpret it and pass it on to others. The Word isn’t just words, but a tool to change lives.

Changing message
The way the Bible is taught at Luther has evolved through the years. Professor Richard Nysse, who has taught Old Testament for more than 30 years, said, “I used to teach history and methods that I deemed necessary to have at hand before one could begin to read the Bible. I thought that was what I was to do as a teacher.”

Now students are encouraged to read Scripture from the start. “Notice what is in the text, notice what questions arise, notice the impact the text has,” he said.

Then the next questions emerge. What do I need to know? How might I learn the answers to my questions? With whom should I read the text? By integrating the wisdom of those who have read and studied the texts in the past with contemporary needs and readings, students learn that Scripture is meant for everyone. It has use in this very moment.

Start at the source
Much like learning their ABCs, students find their professors eager to teach the [Hebrew] Alef-Bet of Scripture, from Alpha to Omega. Master of Divinity students and those earning a degree in biblical studies often begin with a course in Greek or Hebrew.

Kathryn Schifferdecker, assistant professor of Old Testament, recalled how she first became interested in studying Hebrew. The first day she attended former professor Ellen Davis’ Introduction to the Old Testament course at Yale Divinity School, Davis said, “I’ll say this only one time: if you really want to study the Old Testament in depth, you need to know Hebrew.” Davis went on to give the time and place of her Hebrew class, strongly encouraging students to attend. So Schifferdecker signed up, quickly realizing she had underestimated its difficulty. “But by then it was too late,” said Schifferdecker. “I was hooked. That year began my lifelong love affair with the Hebrew language and, more significantly, with the Old Testament itself.”

Now Schifferdecker encourages students to use their ability to examine the text in its original language so they can read Scripture with new purpose. “Mostly I want students to love Scripture, to understand it and use it as a resource for ministry and as a resource for building up the body of Christ.”

Mark Throntveit, professor of Old Testament, teaches Hebrew and Old Testament courses. He said, “Most of my teaching consists of reading the Bible in class (in Hebrew and Greek) and then discussing what it can and may mean; what it should, could or would mean—especially in light of our best attempts to discern what it did mean, and why we believe that to be the case. We always seek to figure out what particular question or situation is being answered or addressed by this text.”

Bringing the words to life
Throntveit, who is known to strum his guitar while leading Hebrew students in a chorus of “I wish they all could be Qal imperfect verbs” to the tune of the Beach Boys’ “California Girls,” grabs the imagination of his students, inspiring them to use the language. Scripture brings up exciting questions about both the past and the present. Those questions are given greater depth when accompanied by language study.

New Testament Professor Craig Koester’s classroom is often filled with the strains of “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?” as performed by a room full of seminary students. The hymn recounts the crucifixion and death of Christ as told in the Gospel of John. Other days feature
An Education Grounded in the Word (continued)

Koester recounting the lessons of the Bible with a voice packed with excitement and turned up to full volume. For Koester, this style of teaching is not "stage presence." He sees Scripture as a form of communication. Using music, photographs and artwork to frame the narrative while telling the story, Koester draws his students into a conversation with Scripture.

“When we read Scripture aloud, the text is no longer ink on a page but live communication: from biblical writer to modern hearer,” he said.

M.Div. Senior Jeni Grangaard reflects on the biblical education she’s received as she sets her sights on international ministry and a future call.

“The Bible has been opened up for me and my eyes and heart as well. The faculty and courses at Luther have given a sort of palpability to the living Word, bringing it to life,” she said. “The biblical education I have received at Luther is a treasure unlike many others.”

Grangaard recalled the specific lessons—and the professors who taught them—that turned into the power and purpose behind her preaching, teaching and care of others Terence Fretheim, Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, taught her about God’s deep love for creation and transformation of evil into good. Mary Hinkle Shore, associate professor of New Testament, made clear Paul’s articulation of being made right with God and its implications for reconciliation and new life amidst brokenness and death. Koester expressed the depths and power of God’s love to overcome hatred and life to overcome death.

Learning from the past

Mary Jane Haemig, associate professor of church history, makes dates and significant events about more than rote learning. Studying historical documents of the faith such as the “Small Catechism,” she said, leads students further into Scripture itself.

“Luther intended his ‘Small Catechism’ to be an introduction to Scripture. The first three parts of the Catechism summarize what God expects from us (Ten Commandments), what God has done for us (Creed), and how we talk with God (Lord’s Prayer). For Luther, learning the Catechism and studying the Bible were intertwined,” said Haemig.

Mark Throntveit’s teaching includes playing guitar and devising mnemonics.

It was at Luther that doctoral student Joshua Miller learned that Jesus Christ was the center of Scripture. “He leaps off the page at us,” he said. “I came to Luther from an environment where the Bible was treated with great piety, but in which theories of the Bible’s inspiration and inerrancy were talked about more than the actual meaning of the text.”

With the guidance of the faculty, Miller learned “to love the Bible…and to read the Old Testament for all it’s worth as a story of God’s gospel of grace and God’s faithfulness to God’s people.”

Christian Scharen, associate professor of worship, uses stories from Scripture to clarify the importance of worship practices. He said that students easily remembered the story of Daniel and the lion’s den from their childhoods.

However, when Scharen asked, “How was Daniel trapped by the other jealous governors and vice-regents?” the students were stumped.

“Theyir eyes opened when we looked at how Daniel’s practice of praying three times a day without fail gave his opponents the perfect chance to trap him,” said Scharen. “We talked about how the exile shifted the faith practices of Israel and how daily prayer, facing Jerusalem, worked as a grounding point and orientation for daily life then and can for us today.”

Luther Seminary students see themselves in the characters of the Bible, learning from these characters’ mistakes as well as their examples of unfailing commitment to God. M.Div. Middler Nathan Strong said, “Often it is the lessons that are learned or explored within Scripture that have a great influence upon the way in which I do ministry.”

Delivering the message

The Bible is the living thread that draws seminary students from the classroom to their vocations. Students are prepared for delivering this message to those they serve.

“We start reading texts carefully so that we get a sense of how John tells the story of Jesus, how Paul develops an argument or how Revelation uses picture language,” said Koester. “Then we shift so that students create things that point in the direction of parish ministry.”

Congregations and communities may be reassured they are being sent leaders from Luther Seminary who both read the Bible with a careful eye and know these words are for all people in every time and circumstance.

M.Div. Middler Beau Nelson sums it up with a message Throntveit delivered to his class: “It’s not so much what the Bible says, it is what the Bible does that’s important.”
Since the Book of Faith Initiative kicked off in August 2007, it has swept through congregations in the ELCA, growing and evolving in unique ways. What is now a churchwide initiative came from one simple, compelling thought: “We really have to think about how Lutherans read the Bible.” That thought spawned a conversation among members of Philadelphia Lutheran Church in Dallas, N.C., who took their resolution to their state synod. In turn, that synod took the resolution to the 2005 churchwide assembly.

“This resolution really captured the imagination of the assembly,” says Diane Jacobson, Luther Seminary professor of Old Testament. “It morphed from simply talking about the authority of Scripture into getting the church more involved and engaged with Scripture, as well as learning more about Lutheran insights into how Scripture works.”

Two years later at the 2007 assembly that resolution would become the Book of Faith Initiative and Jacobson named its director. Since then, she has been traveling the country visiting with both lay folks and rostered leaders as congregations and other institutions of the church find unique ways to make the Initiative their own. The purpose of Book of Faith is “to increase biblical literacy and fluency for the sake of the world,” she says.

A different kind of initiative

“There’s been great enthusiasm, but there’s been frustration borne of a church used to operating within programs. And that’s very natural,” says Jacobson. “It takes a while to say, ‘If this is going to work, it’s going to work because we’re all in it together, not because it’s a top-down thing. That takes a new imagination and a different kind of leadership than we’re used to.

“There have been some wonderful programs in the ELCA and its predecessor bodies—Word and Witness, Search, Bethel. But when we stop we’ve
Book of Faith Initiative Inspires
ELCA Congregations (continued)

not had in place ways to continue and
go deeper. By making this a grassroots
vision rather than a program, the hope
is that the Initiative will be the first
step in a recommittment of the ELCA
to Scripture being at the center of
a life of faith.”

As part of this grassroots approach,
the ELCA will hold various teaching
events across the church, including
the Book of Faith Jubilee Aug. 14-16
at Luther Seminary (see page 11).
The ELCA has also created a network
of synod advocates to create and talk
through various ideas. Nearly every
synod in the ELCA has at least one
advocate devoted to Book of Faith.

“These advocates are working with
people on the ground—bishops,
congregations, lay schools, colleges,
seminaries, camps, men’s and women’s
groups. In each different institution,
the question is ‘How does this vision
work out where we live?’ The advocates
are keys to helping this vision become
a reality,” says Jacobson.

Congregations find
new opportunities

Pastors and lay leaders are also working
to gauge how they can get their congre-
gations to delve deeper into the Bible.

“There are lots of fun things going
on across congregations,” says
Jacobson. “There are small groups
and new members and old members
joining together, encouragement in
the home, just all kinds of neat things.”

At Holy Cross Lutheran Church in
Menomonee Falls, Wis., Meredith
Bedker Musaus, ’86, senior pastor, and
David L. Shelstad, pastor of education,
small groups and congregational
outreach, are rising to the Book of
Faith Initiative challenge to “Join
the Conversation.”

“I am having so much fun trying
to think of creative ways to tell the
story,” says Musaus. “I have grown
in my understanding of Scripture,
especially when I have been preaching
and teaching.”

Holy Cross is an official Book of Faith
congregation, and it’s been involved
since the early days of the Initiative. So
far, Musaus has gotten her congregation
to look at the Bible in multiple unique
ways. She started with a card series
called Lutheran God Talk.

“Each week people received a brightly
colored card with a different descriptor
of the Lutheran Understanding of
Faith—for example, Grace, Two
Kingdoms or Saint and Sinner. The
first week four cards were given out
with an explanation of what was to
come,” she says.

The idea came from another pastor
at a KAIROS course led by Luther
Seminary faculty. The cards were on
a silver ring that allowed individuals
to add more cards, with Musaus
gleaning material from “The Lutheran
Handbook,” the “Lutheran 101” and
“102” series and “Crazy Talk: A Not-
So-Stuffy Dictionary of Theological
Terms,” edited by Luther Seminary
Associate Professor of Old Testament
Rolf Jacobson.

From there, her ideas—and attendance—
grew. She offered a six-week series
on How to Read the Bible and
Understand It using Book of Faith
materials and the DVD series “How
Lutherans Read the Bible.” Then she
went off the lectionary to teach a
well-received Epiphany series on major
Old Testament characters. During Lent,
Wednesday services were devoted to
how the Word of God continues to
speak to us today; on Saturdays and
Sundays Musaus used the church’s
stained glass windows to tell Bible
stories revolving around the windows’
portrayals of the four Gospels and
the symbols leading up to Pentecost.

Musaus, who has been in her current
congregation for three years, also
plans to use a method from her last
congregation to reach inactive members
through preaching.

“I want to gather some of the most
inactive members of the congregation
in text study, invite them to reflect on
the Scripture and help me craft my
sermon. Then I will ask them to come
to worship to hear the sermon and
give me feedback,” she says. “In my
last congregation quite a few people
came and kept coming back to church!”

Reaching the hard to reach

Musaus has hit her share of roadblocks
in getting her congregation to pick up
Book of Faith. For the most part,
adult Bible studies have been poorly
attended, both midweek and on
Sunday mornings.

“People are busy, distracted and
cocooning these days,” she says. “They
say they would love to attend and
desire to learn more about the Bible,
yet when it comes down to a time
commitment it just doesn’t happen.”

So Musaus is reaching her congregants
where they are: in the pew on Sunday
morning. And she’s not giving up.

“We are trying to do more biblical
education in worship. I’ve done
quite a few sermons that were more
like Bible study. We will do another
sermon series on New Testament
figures next Epiphany and I will
probably do some type of biblical
series this fall,” she says.
A team effort

Part of the responsibility of leaders like Musaus is to figure out the best ways to engage people who haven’t been engaged before, and to make it fun, exciting and challenging, says Jacobson. In Santa Barbara, Calif., multiple church organizations are coming together to meet that responsibility.

The recently formed SALT (Serving as Lutherans Together) is composed of Christ Lutheran, Grace Lutheran and Trinity Lutheran churches, plus Lutheran Campus Ministries at University of California, Santa Barbara. The purpose of SALT is to “create a common vision to expand and enhance our ministry together as congregations and throughout our community.”

The four organizations that make up SALT decided to tackle Book of Faith together after Karen Wilson, Trinity’s director of Christian education and a 2007 Luther graduate, found information about the Initiative on the Augsburg Fortress Web site in August.

“I was instantly captivated that Diane was leading an initiative that vocalized what I observed: congregational members do not know their Scriptures. I realized that this would fit the SALT congregations’ desire for inter-congregational studies. I also felt strongly that any joint missional work needed to be first strongly rooted in studying God’s Word together,” says Wilson.

The SALT committee enthusiastically agreed to Book of Faith. Before launching the first phase of their ministries in January, SALT held a combined service of all its congregations where everyone was encouraged to “Sign the Sign.” With their signatures, members showed their commitment to become more scripturally literate. That sign then traveled among the congregations throughout the month of January as SALT kicked off the initiative with “Rediscovering the Book of Faith.”

“Three of us pastors each took responsibility for one of the three sessions in ‘Rediscovering the Book of Faith’ and, on three Sundays in January, in round-robin fashion, taught and preached for each of the three congregations,” says Trinity Pastor Truls Person, ’85.

SALT dug deeper by bringing Jacobson in to teach the first three chapters of “Opening the Book of Faith.” Following the daylong event, 70 members signed up for a total of nine small groups, some of them inter-congregational, focusing on “Opening the Book of Faith.” After all groups finish, SALT will decide what to do next. Wilson is hopeful that the inter-congregational aspect of the groups will be maintained going forward.

Changes large and small

“When I brought Book of Faith to SALT my question was, ‘How will God change our community because our churches decided to break the spines on their Bibles together, approaching the text from a multitude of perspectives, including Lutheran?’” she says. “I fully expect our congregations to be changed by God speaking to them in community with others.

“The studies are doing what we have needed for decades. They are breaking down the walls between the congregations, mitigating decades of distrust between members. This can only positively strengthen our unity as Christians and as Lutherans here.”

Person sees the potential for Book of Faith and its accompanying resources to have a positive impact on a small and large scope.

“The conversation and resource sharing that is supported by the Book of Faith Web site holds enormous potential for individuals and congregations,” he says.
Book of Faith Initiative Inspires ELCA Congregations (continued)

In addition to joining Book of Faith, Wilson has also joined the Initiative’s NING site (see box below), where members can share ideas and progress. By leading small groups with Book of Faith methods—and some additional ones she picked up during her time as a student at Luther—she isn’t only seeing growth in her congregation but in herself as well.

“The ability to have the questions be the goal and not the answer fuels me,” she says. “These methods have given me the freedom to challenge people and not simply be the talking head of the room. In turn, I am able to learn from them what God is teaching today through God’s Living Word.”

Learn more about the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative at www.bookoffaith.org
Join the conversation at http://bookoffaith.ning.com/

Do you know a Luther grad with an exemplary ministry?

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 Aug. 4. Questions? Contact Mary Steeber at msteeber@luthersem.edu or 651-641-3596.

Book of Faith Jubilee Equips Everyday People to Read the Bible

“They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was opening the Scriptures to us?’”
— Luke 24:32

“This is a conversation, not a program,” says Diane Jacobson, Luther Seminary professor of Old Testament and director of the Book of Faith Initiative. “There is a conviction that if we open Scripture and join the conversation the Spirit will be at work in this.”

One of the best opportunities to join the larger conversation about the Initiative, what is or isn’t working in your congregation and what tips you can glean from your peers will happen Aug. 14-16 at the Book of Faith Jubilee. The Jubilee is hosted by Luther Seminary in partnership with the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative, Augsburg College, The Youth and Family Institute and Augsburg Fortress.

This fun-, information- and conversation-packed weekend will fuel your desire to lead congregational and community renewal through reading the Bible. Participants will take part in engaging worship throughout the Jubilee, including an outdoor service led by Larry Clark, executive director of the Lutheran Theological Center in Atlanta.

Four inspiring keynote presentations will be given by:

- David Anderson, director of congregational renewal and leadership, The Youth and Family Institute, Bloomington, Minn.
- Rolf Jacobson, assistant professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary
- Eugene Peterson, author, “The Message”
- Deanna Thompson, associate professor of religion, Hamline University, St. Paul, Minn.

Workshops and affinity groups will focus on the following topical areas:

- Teaching the Bible in Congregations
- Opening the Bible at Home
- Book of Faith in Your Congregation
- Bible and the Arts
- Bible and Culture

For more information or to register for the Book of Faith Jubilee, visit www.luthersem.edu/jubilee or call 651-641-3416. Chat now with others planning to attend the Jubilee at http://bookoffaith.ning.com/events/book-of-faith-jubilee.
What is Biblical Preaching?

By Karoline M. Lewis, Assistant Professor of Biblical Preaching

What makes preaching “biblical?” Isn’t all preaching “biblical” preaching? What does a “non-biblical” sermon sound like and should it really matter? What is at stake when we claim the need for biblical preaching? What difference does biblical preaching make for our congregations, our communities and for the church in the world?

Of course, the compelling issues are also: Why do it? and What does it look like? We know biblical preaching when we hear it, but are we able to identify and articulate the necessary elements?

In answering the first question, Why do it?, perhaps the most obvious answer is that much preaching these days begs the response, “Was there a text in that sermon?” There is a willingness, even a perceivable contentment, to move quickly away from the text, never to return. As a result, the biblical text no longer provides the content of the sermon, no longer guides the sermon and there is little interest in having the sermon do what the text is doing. In his book, “The Bible in the Pulpit: The Renewal of Biblical Preaching,” Leander Keck writes, “The actual content of the sermon is derived elsewhere and frequently could have been suggested just as well by a fortune cookie.” In this move, the text becomes irrelevant, unable to speak itself into the lives of congregations. In an effort to bridge the gap between text and sermon, the bridge is burned in the process.

Biblical preaching is also necessary because of the lack of biblical knowledge in our congregations. The ELCA’s Book of Faith Initiative is an important move toward helping people grow in biblical fluency. More and more, our sermons themselves need to be moments and opportunities for gaining biblical knowledge, literacy and fluency. This is not an argument for a return to expository or pedagogical preaching but rather recognizes that our sermons need to attend to how we can help people of faith be better readers of the Bible.

The preaching triangle, that conversation between text, preacher and congregation, is not a linear dialogue where we mine the text for its nugget of meaning and then impart that to our listeners in the pews. It is truly a conversation where all participants have a voice, where we allow texts to talk back and that does not end with the sermon’s “Amen.”

So, what does biblical preaching look like? We should keep four elements in mind. First, biblical preaching is incarnational. The Word of God became flesh and needs to be enfleshed over and over again. The content of our sermon is never just words on a page—it is the very presence of the risen Christ who makes God known (John 1:18). In the Gospel of John, the word “grace” is never again used outside of the prologue to the Gospel. The “grace upon grace” that we are given in Jesus is not talked about in the rest of the Gospel. Rather, the Gospel shows us what grace looks like. Biblical preaching shows grace. It is a “reincarnation” of God’s grace for us.

Second, biblical preaching is textual. That is, the sermon is attentive to the particularity, the specificity and the details of the text and does not try to make the text say what it doesn’t or make it sound like another. This means slowing down the process of reading, getting to know the text inside and out, listening for the specific ways that it is articulating itself, and being aware of how it...
what, we begin to see that these writers do not just want us to know something, they want us to feel something and they expect their words to do something. And perhaps our preaching might follow suit.

Third, biblical preaching is contextual. In other words, the whole interprets the part and the part interprets the whole. If you are preaching on John, preach John and bring the entirety of John’s story to bear on the passage you are preaching. Our listeners do not need any more harmonization and the early church felt the same. There are four very different Gospels for a reason and each of them—in fact, each book in the Bible—needs to have its own voice. There is a reason why Paul does not talk about justification by faith in 1 Thessalonians. There is a reason why John locates Jesus’ arrest in a garden, not Gethsemane or the Mount of Olives. In the interplay of the part with the whole and the whole with the part, mutual interpretive and creative possibilities for preaching can happen.

Finally, biblical preaching is situational. “What the biblical writers found necessary to say was determined not by truth in general but needs in particular,” writes Keck. Preaching should not be about applying the situation of the text to, in or upon our lives but about helping us see and hear that the text is addressing us, too. Biblical preaching speaks a text into a community of faith so that the concrete ways in which God works in the lives of God’s people are not only recognized in the text but can be seen in our “everydayness” of life.

Karoline Lewis, assistant professor of biblical preaching

Celebration of Biblical Preaching: Bridging the Gap Between the Bible and Our World Today—Oct. 5-7, 2009

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Otis Moss Jr., Pastor Emeritus, Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, Cleveland

Thomas Long, Bandy Professor of Preaching, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta

Haddon W. Robinson, Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Mass.

Workshops will be led by the following Luther Seminary faculty: David Lose, Rolf Jacobson, Karoline Lewis, Chris Scharen, Dirk Lange, Craig Koester, Sarah Henrich, Mary Hinkle Shore, Gracia Grindal, Matt Skinner, Fred Gaiser, Antonio Machado and Andrew Root.

Register today! www.luthersem.edu/celebration

STORY Spring 2009
Finding a

By John Klawiter, M.Div. junior

The Bible is a lot of things, but simple isn’t one of them. It wasn’t easy to write. It’s sometimes hard to fully comprehend. And finding the right Bible for you or a loved one can seem as daunting as parting the Red Sea.

“Selling Bibles is one of the most complicated things we do in the bookstore,” says Roberta Shaw, office coordinator at the Luther Seminary Bookstore.

Bookstore customers are faced with myriad translations, editions, types and audience-specific Bibles to choose from.

Terry Boehlke, Bookstore manager, suggests taking the following three factors into consideration:
1. Have your translation chosen.
2. Know how you plan on using your Bible (devotions, Bible studies, etc.).
3. Have a price range in mind.

“A lot of people don’t know there are different translations,” says Shaw. “Often, people will ask for ‘the real Bible’—and they mean the King James Version. Usually, they grew up with it and they don’t know there are choices.”

If you’re Lutheran, your best bet is NRSV (New Revised Standard Version). More than 90 percent of Bibles sold at the Luther Seminary Bookstore are the NRSV translation. “That’s pretty unusual for general Bible sales,” says Boehlke. “NRSV is not one of the bestselling translations overall but it fits our mainstream Protestant market perfectly.”

Here, seminary faculty and Bookstore staff weigh in on options for three of the Bookstore’s most popular customers: a seminarian, a confirmation student and someone new to the faith.

The Seminarian

Most seminarians buy study Bibles, which provide notes in the text and descriptions of the events taking place, says Boehlke.

The New Interpreter’s Bible
(Abingdon Press)
“I like the New Interpreter’s Bible for its extensive notes and high-quality attention to matters of structure, message and theology.”
—Mark Throntveit, professor of Old Testament

“The New Interpreter’s Bible seems to have additional emphases that appeal to students. The notes have the flavor of the dual exegetical [passage study]/expositional [passage exposition] style of the New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary series.”
—Terry Boehlke

The confirmation student

“Most churches that buy Bibles in large quantities select NRSV and that translation is being used in the new Lutheran Study Bible,” says Boehlke.

Lutheran Study Bible
(Augsburg Fortress)
“This study Bible is trying to speak to the confirmation student and anyone seeking re-engagement with or fresh approaches to Scripture. The newly released Lutheran Study Bible includes insight from various scholars from around the country, including more than a dozen current or former Luther Seminary faculty.”
—Terry Boehlke

“I like the new Lutheran Study Bible because it has helpful study notes without being too academic. It has a particularly Lutheran focus and it

HarperCollins and Oxford Annotated Study Bibles
“They are good study Bibles for all the Bible courses here because they have scholarly notes and good introductions to each of the books.”
—Kathryn Schifferdecker, assistant professor of Old Testament
Finding a Good Book (continued)

has questions for further reflection that can be used as starting points for discussion.”
—Kathryn Schifferdecker

The Message
(NavPress Publishing)
“The Message draws people in and engages them in the text, a good thing for youth; but it is a paraphrase, not strictly a translation. Still, it is a very good way to get into the Bible.”
—Kathryn Schifferdecker

Learning Bible
(American Bible Society)
“I like the NIV version of the Learning Bible because it is helpfully noted, and for its simple presentation, connections with art and user-friendly format.

Also, truth in advertising leads me to explain that my wife and I are responsible for 75 percent of the Old Testament notes!”
—Mark Throntveit

Good News Bible and Contemporary English Bible (American Bible Society)
“[I recommend] ‘meaning-for-meaning’ translations like these as opposed to study Bibles, which are ‘word-for-word’ translations.”
—Mark Throntveit

Someone new to the faith or becoming reacquainted with the Bible

Lutheran Study Bible
(Augsburg Fortress)
“With many people opening their Bibles because of the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative, the Lutheran Study Bible is an attempt to engage people who are learning about the Bible. Like the Initiative itself, this Bible is meant to open things up to conversation. Study notes are clear and direct and assume that the reader has relatively little experience reading and studying Scripture.”
—Gary Anderson, manager of Augsburg Fortress store at Luther Seminary

Regardless of translation, depth of insight or amount of scholarly content, Boehlke and Anderson agree that one thing is vital above all. “As long as they are reading the Bible,” says Boehlke. “That’s the most important thing.”

If the above categories don’t apply to you or you’re looking for a unique spin on your Bible, there are plenty of interesting options.

WOMEN’S DEVOTIONAL BIBLE: CLASSIC EDITION (Zondervan)
Includes devotions written by well-known women including Jill Briscoe, Joni Eareckson Tada and Corrie ten Boom.

THE GREEN BIBLE (Harper Bibles)
Verses speaking of creation are highlighted in green; printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink and a cotton/linen cover.

PEOPLES’ BIBLE (Fortress Press)
Includes perspectives of multiple backgrounds with essays highlighting issues of culture, ethnicity and identity.
Fine Arts Collection Brings New Depth to Biblical Stories

By Laura Kaslow, Communication Specialist

Craig Koester brings the Bible to life by incorporating photos and artwork in his teaching.

“Texts come alive with new vitality when they are accompanied by powerful visual images, making learning happen in very different, often challenging, ways,” he says. “We have hundreds of years of great imagery at our fingertips. It’s only right that we use this gift to enhance our teaching, whatever format it takes.”

Beyond the use of art as a classroom tool, Luther also prominently features touring shows of premier religious art. The main purpose for the touring art shows is to expose students and the wider seminary community to the riches of a wide range of religious art.

“We aim to challenge, inform and delight our audiences with the art exhibits we bring to campus,” says Daniels.

This spring Luther showcases “works of reconciliation,” an exhibit by Chuck and Peg Hoffman. The Hoffmans explore relationships between art and faith, and understand prayer and art as ways to share a deeper understanding of self and community.

Their faith is so deeply woven into their work that before they begin a new painting each canvas is inscribed with a prayer, a process they describe as “permanently fusing the prayer and the painting.” Named Genesis Art®, it draws from the common elements of the creation story of Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions. It is guided by a time of prayerful thought and spiritual infusion.

After the Hoffman exhibit ends in June, Luther will showcase pieces from the permanent collection through the remainder of the summer. The permanent collection boasts more than 500 paintings, sculptures, textile items and photographs and continues to grow. It includes the more-than-250-piece Prodigal Son collection, gifted to the seminary by Jerry Evenrud.

An exhibit of selected reproductions from the seminary’s Prodigal Son collection recently traveled across the state of Arizona and to Oregon. The exhibit will also be on display at the ELCA National Assembly, held in Minneapolis in August. To learn more about the traveling Prodigal Son exhibit, contact finearts@luthersem.edu.

Chuck and Peg Hoffman’s “works of reconciliation” will be at Luther Seminary through mid-June. To learn more about Chuck and Peg Hoffman and view their art, visit their Web site at www.genesisartstudio.com.

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities with the Luther Seminary “Friends of the Arts” group, contact Mary Steeber at msteeber@luthersem.edu or 651-641-3596.
This Spring Luther Seminary also showcased the He Qi/"Women of Hope" quilt. The quilt served as a stage backdrop at the 2008 ELCA Global Mission Event and now tours the country.

At 22-by-24 feet and approximately 65 pounds, the He Qi/"Women of Hope" quilt tells a missional story of Christian witness through vibrant colors and illustrations of three biblical stories of accompaniment.

The design is based upon the artwork of He Qi, a Chinese Christian artist known for his brilliant, colorful and contemporary paintings that set Bible stories in a Chinese context. It was created by participants in Women of Hope, a program located in Jos, Nigeria, that gives support to Nigerian women who suffer stigma due to their HIV-positive status.

In celebration of this exhibit, Luther Seminary invited He Qi to speak at the annual Good Neighbors event, honoring Luther Seminary volunteers, on April 22.

Read an article about the HeQi/"Women of Hope" quilt in the Spring 2009 issue of Global Vision at www.luthersem.edu/gmi/globalvision.

Fine Arts Bring New Depth to Biblical Stories (continued)

“The permanent collection is important in educating students at Luther because it is broad-based in terms of subject, style, era and media. Consequently, it exposes students to a great variety of artistic treatments of Biblical stories and themes,” says Daniels.

“We hope the outcome of this exposure is a lifelong, ministry-long appreciation for, and use of, the visual arts in proclaiming the gospel.” ●

UPCOMING SHOWS:

Summer: Showcase of the Luther Seminary Permanent Collection
Mid-June – September
www.luthersem.edu/archives/museum.asp

Fall: Images from the St. John’s Bible
September – October
www.saintjohnsbible.org

Winter: Religious Works of Rob and Diane Lawlor
Mid-December – Mid-February
www.lawlorgallery.com

New Graduate Certificate Programs at Luther Seminary

Luther Seminary now offers graduate certificates in the following seven areas:

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• Methodist Studies

These certificate programs are designed to equip lay leaders across denominational lines. A bachelor’s degree or its equivalent from a regionally accredited college or university is normally required. For more information, contact the Office of Admissions at 651-641-3521 or admissions@luthersem.edu.
Would Martin Luther Tweet?

If Martin Luther were alive today, would the father of Lutheranism use modern-day technologies to spread the Word? Would he blog about the 95 Theses? Change his Facebook status? Edit the “indulgences” page on Wikipedia? Tweet his philosophies on Twitter in 140 characters or less?

From the Reformation to today Lutherans have taken advantage of technology to share God’s message—but back in Luther’s day, that meant movable type and printed material, not bytes and electronic transmission.

“Luther and his followers really knew how to make use of the new media,” said Mary Jane Haemig, associate professor of church history. “The Catholics tended to print in Latin, because they weren’t concerned about appealing to the laity. But Luther wanted to get the Bible into the hands of the people, so they could use it themselves.”

Movable type and the printing press were invented in the mid-15th century. Luther and his followers published pamphlets, treatises and broadsides, figuring they could reach a wide slice of society by using the printing technology and publishing in German.

But when Luther translated the New Testament into German in 1522, it brought the Bible closer to the people in a whole new way.

“Martin Luther wasn’t the first person to translate the Bible into German, but what distinguished Luther’s Bibles from the others was that it was such a good translation,” said Haemig. “It was accurate, but it didn’t sound like a translation. It ’spoke’ German.”

This was important. Since only an estimated five to 10 percent of the population was literate, Luther intended his Bible to be read aloud.

“Luther believed that even the most uneducated person could understand the Biblical message,” said Haemig. “So he sought to guide people in reading the Bible” by giving them tools to help. He wrote prefaces to the Old and New Testaments, and to individual books, that gave the plot and main themes. He also included notes in the margins of his translation that explained a particular theological perspective—not unlike the “Lutheran Lens” notes in the newly published Lutheran Study Bible.

In addition, much of what Luther did was intended to get people reading...
Would Martin Luther Tweet? (continued)

and studying the Bible together. His Catechism was meant to be a basic introduction to the Bible: what God expects from us, what God promises and gives to us and how we are to act and communicate in response. His goal was that once people learned their Catechism at home or in church, they would be drawn deeper into the Bible itself.

Today people find faith communities not only in the home and at church, but online. Mary Hinkle Shore, associate professor of New Testament, has long been a proponent of using the Internet to connect with others. She started keeping a blog when she was on sabbatical five years ago as an academic enterprise, but soon found it became more devotional.

“I missed chapel so much and I needed a way to feed myself and share what I was discovering about life and God,” she said. “Some people think online community disembodies you, but as people read and responded to my blog I got a sense of being upheld and cared for.”

Faculty blogging is only one way Luther Seminary takes advantage of changing technologies to spread the Word. Chapel is available via the Web or podcast. Lay school classes are offered over the Internet. And the seminary is currently developing a new Web-based resource called Enter the Bible, which will “put the expertise of our faculty literally at your fingertips,” said Sally Peters, director of the Center for Lifelong Learning. “It is an easy-to-use and comprehensive way to find answers to your Bible questions without having to search through reference books.”

Enter the Bible, a free online resource, will include video clips, artwork, historical and chronological references and theological perspectives in addition to basic information about the biblical books, characters and themes. It will be launched as part of the Book of Faith Jubilee that Luther Seminary is hosting Aug. 14-16.

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- Dell.com

www.luthersem.edu/distributedlearning
Pomp and circumstance gave way to hearty cheer as 159 students received degrees at the 140th Commencement, May 24 at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. Eighty-five students earned the Master of Divinity degrees necessary for ordination. Master of Arts degrees were handed out to 49 students, and eight received Doctor of Ministry degrees in biblical preaching.

Speaker Terence Fretheim, Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, framed the day around Psalm 56. Though a psalm of lament might seem an unconventional choice for such an occasion, Fretheim said, “A dose of realism seems appropriate for a time such as this. We are living in a time of much lament, both within the church and without. Our people are, in the words of Jesus, ‘harassed and helpless.’ How will we minister in a time such as this? What words and actions will meet the needs of the people we are called to serve? How might you, who are called to lead these communities, be best able to hear this word for yourselves?”

Despite Fretheim’s acknowledgment of the realities many graduates will face, he did offer a hopeful word: “Few, if any, of God’s gifts to you are of greater value than imagination—for life and for ministry. Your imagination should be carefully nourished [so you can] speak in fresh ways about the faith you hold dear.”

He reminded the assembly of God’s promise to all believers: “Do not be afraid; neither be dismayed; for I will never leave you or forsake you,” he cited. “Come what may, God will take you forward. Wherever your journey may take you, you can be certain that the God you know in Jesus holds you in his scar-filled hands and will never, ever let you go.”

Master of Divinity candidate Andrew Olaf Nelson offered the response on behalf of the graduating class, citing a poem by Marge Piercy titled “To Be of Use,” which describes the “work of the world, common as mud…but worth doing well done.”

“It is real work for which we have been trained; real work to which we are going,” Nelson said. “There is real work waiting for us—in congregations, communities, schools, agencies—wherever people need a good word, which is everywhere.”

During the ceremony, Janet Ramsey was awarded the Pastor George Weinman Chair of Pastoral Theology and Ministry. Ramsey joined the faculty as associate professor of congregational care leadership in 2002.

The Christus Lux Mundi Award was presented to Lloyd Svendsbye, former president of Luther Northwestern...
When I was working on a sermon last week about the prodigal son. It’s a story I have heard over and over again but as I worked with the text I came to realize there are so many details and images packed into that familiar story.

Jeanette Bidne, Master of Divinity middler

When I was surprised by the Bible during my class on Mark this past fall. There were so many insights from people in different contexts that I saw the texts in completely new ways.

Dennis Gelinek, Master of Divinity junior

When I was reading a story about Elijah running away from God and through an angel God provides him enough food to keep running.

James Muske, Master of Divinity junior

I took a class on women in the Old Testament, and I was surprised at what a jerk Samson was.

Maggie Saylor, Master of Arts junior

The last time the Bible surprised me was when I tripped over it this morning.

Antonio Spargo, Master of Divinity junior

I was reading some of the really heavy law parts of Deuteronomy, Leviticus and Exodus and I was shocked to see how explicit God was to Moses in saying that you cannot charge interest on loans. I’m usually not one for literal interpretation, but that is definitely a billboard I want to put up!

Joseph Skogmo, Master of Arts junior

Jeanette Bidne, Master of Divinity middler

Theological Seminary, who oversaw the merger of Luther Theological Seminary and Northwestern Lutheran Theological seminaries during the 1970s and ‘80s. In addition to 14 years leading the seminary, Svendsbye’s life of service to the church includes time as a parish pastor, an administrator for the Lutheran World Federation Assembly, a professor at Concordia College, editor-in-chief for Augsburg Publishing House, vice president of St. Olaf College and president of Augustana College.

Christus Lux Mundi (which means “Christ the light of the world”) is the most distinguished award presented by Luther Seminary. Svendsbye is the 10th recipient of the award.

Mary Hinkle Shore, associate dean for first theological degree programs, hoods M.Div. graduate Hitoshi Adachi.

Svendsbye was gracious in acceptance. “I am awed and overjoyed in wonderment,” he said.

In addition, several graduates were recognized for academic excellence. They included:

The G.M. and Minnie Bruce Award in New Testament, presented to Michael Jay Chan and Jordan John Scott; The A.E. Hanson Prize in Homiletics, given to Sarah DeYoung Brouwer and Andrew Olaf Nelson; The John Milton Prize in Old Testament, awarded to Michael Jay Chan, Anna Elizabeth Marsh and Jordan John Scott; The Graduate Preaching Fellowship, given to Jennifer Falkman Grangaard; and The Children, Youth and Family Prize, awarded to Paul Michael Clark.
**Lois Farag**, assistant professor of early church history, was awarded a 2009-10 Lilly Theological Scholars Grant for her project, “The Balance of the Heart: Desert Spirituality for Twenty-First Century Christians.” She led a three-week series on “Desert Spirituality” at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church in St. Paul in March.

**Terence Fretheim**, Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, offered the keynote address, “Implications of God in a Relationship,” at the Gustavus Adolphus College “Hear the Word—Live the Word” convention in April. Fretheim, **Mark Throntveit**, professor of Old Testament, and **Mary Sue Dreier**, associate professor of congregational mission and leadership, also led workshops exploring different aspects of our relationship with God. On March 12, Fretheim presented a series of reflections on biblical interpretation to the rostered leaders of the Pacifica Synod. On Feb. 21 he gave a series of lectures at Harding University in Searcy, Ark.

**Mark Granquist**, visiting professor of church history, participated in a conference on “The Pietist Impulse in Christianity” in March at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minn. He presented his paper, “The Pietists in English: Translation of a Tradition” and was part of a panel discussion on pietism and the historiography of Scandinavian-American denominations.

**Guillermo Hansen**, associate professor of systematic theology, contributed “Tolerance, Democracy and Fundamentalism(s): Challenges in Time of Systemic Bifurcations” to “Overcoming Fundamentalism: Ethical Responses from Five Continents” (Geneva: Globethics.net, 2009) earlier this year. He also contributed “Blessing, Well Being and Salvation: Should Lutherans Learn to Dance to Another Tune?” to “Lutherans Respond to Pentecostalism” (Lutheran University Press, 2009). He was a keynote presenter at the Lutheran World Federation’s Augsburg Conference in Augsburg, Germany, March 25-31. He was an instructor at the International Theological Course organized by the LWF in Geneva, Jan. 7-21.

**Hollie Holt-Woehl**, adjunct instructor of pastoral care, wrote six sessions on holy baptism for the Building on the Rock Confirmation Curriculum. She also wrote an article on “Kids with Special Needs.” Both are for the Augsburg Fortress Vacation Bible School Discovery Canyon director guide. She also self-published a 20-session Bible overview to be used as a confirmation curriculum.

**Rolf Jacobson**, ‘91, associate professor of Old Testament, was the keynote speaker at the Minneapolis Area Synod assembly May 29-30. He served as Wabash Center consultant to the LCMS Theology Professors Convention in Raleigh, N.C., in March. He was the keynote speaker for the Northeast Pennsylvania Synod Learning Day in January. That month, he also addressed the joint ELCA-LCMS gathering of military chaplains in San Diego.

**Craig Koester**, ’80, professor of New Testament, was the keynote speaker at the Northwest Wisconsin Synod assembly May 29-30. He conducted workshops in February on “Revelation and Popular Culture” and “The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John” at the Religious Education Congress sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He published “Revelation’s Visionary Challenge to Ordinary Empire” in the January 2009 issue of Interpretation. In January he preached and presented workshops on interpreting the book of Revelation for personnel on the Tokota Air Base in Tokyo.

**Dirk Lange**, associate professor of worship, was the keynote presenter at the Global Consultation of the Lutheran World Federation on Transformation Perspectives and Practices Today in Munich, Germany, in March.


**James Limburg**, ’61, professor emeritus of Old Testament, was the lecturer at the Midwinter Theological Conference of the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology in Essex, Mont., in February. He gave a series of presentations on the theme “First Things First: Creation Theology for Our Time.” He is currently Theologian in Residence at Christ the King Lutheran Church in New Brighton, Minn. In February and March he presented a 10-session series on “The Psalms: God’s Guidebook for the Trip of a Lifetime.” In January he gave a series of lectures, “Tales from the Wild, Wild West Bank” on the Book of Judges.

**Alvin Luedke**, associate professor of rural ministry, presented and preached at an “Equipping the Saints” event in Cuero, Texas, in February. He gave three presentations at the Mosaic of the Small Congregation—Pieces of the Whole workshop for pastors of small congregations in Green Bay, Wis., in January.
Faculty News (continued)

Lois Malcolm, ’89, associate professor of systematic theology, wrote essays on “Jesus and the Trinity,” which will appear in the next Word and World, and “Forgiveness as New Creation,” which will appear in a volume of Christology and Ethics. She also contributed an entry on Theodicy for the “Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology” (Cambridge University Press).

Amy Marga, assistant professor of systematic theology, led a two-week adult forum on prayer at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Eagan, Minn., in December.

Janet Ramsey, associate professor of congregational care leadership, led a CHARIS continuing education event on “Building Caring Congregations: Collaboration, Spirituality and Forgiveness” for the Eastern North Dakota Synod in March.

Kathryn Schifferdecker, assistant professor of Old Testament, led adult forums on “Bible and Ecology” at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minn., April 19 and 26. She led adult forums on “The Book of Job: God, Evil and Suffering” at Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, March 8 and 15.

Diane Shallue, ’93, adjunct instructor of educational leadership, was elected president of the Lutheran Association of Christian Educators.


Paul Sponheim, professor emeritus of systematic theology, served as editor of the winter issue of “Creative Transformation.” He also wrote a piece that appeared in the issue. In February he spoke on “Our Creaturely Adventure: Faith After Darwin” at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Roseville, Minn.

Coming Soon...
Terence Fretheim will present Bible studies at the Southeastern Synod Assembly in Atlanta June 5-6. He will teach summer school at Gettysburg Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa., July 27-31.

Hollie Holt-Woehl will deliver the keynote address at the Southwestern Minnesota Parish Nurse bi-annual conference in Marshall, Minn., Oct. 2. Her presentation is entitled “Congregations Becoming Caring Communities and Welcoming Members with Mental Illness and Developmental Disabilities.”

Dirk Lange will be a presenter at the bi-annual conference of Societas Liturgica in Sydney, Australia, in August. In November, he will offer lectures on “Re-thinking Sacramentality” at the University of Uppsala and the Peter Fjellstedt Foundation, both in Uppsala, Sweden.

Zebulon Highben, ’05, adjunct faculty in church music, will serve on the faculty of the annual Lutheran Summer Music Academy, June 21-July 19, at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. He will present a workshop on repertoire for smaller church choirs at the biennial national convention of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, Aug. 2-5, in Milwaukee.

Faculty’s Published Books

Terence Fretheim’s “About the Bible: Short Answers to Big Questions” was published in a revised and expanded version by Augsburg Fortress in March.

Mary Hess, associate professor of educational leadership, co-edited “Teaching Reflectively in Theological Contexts: Promises and Contradictions,” published in July by Krieger Publishing. The book reads, “Luther Seminary is a very special place. ...I have a recurring fantasy of collegial conversations born out of a shared faith. This book reads like that fantasy.”

Rolf Jacobson’s “Crazy Book: A Not-So-Stuffy Dictionary of Biblical Terms,” was published in April by Augsburg Fortress.

David Lose, Marbury E. Anderson Professor of Biblical Preaching, published “Making Sense of Scripture” (Augsburg Fortress) in May.

Michael Rogness, Alvin N. Rogness Professor of Preaching, had “Lord, Help My Unbelief,” published in February by Wipf + Stock.

New Lutheran Study Bible Features Multiple Luther Faculty Members

With the publication of Augsburg Fortress’ new Lutheran Study Bible, readers will have a glimpse into the talent of Luther faculty. The Bible features the NRSV translation as well as introductions, notes and articles by more than 60 Lutheran pastors and teaching theologians, including 15 current and former Luther faculty.

- James L. Boyce
- David E. Fredrickson
- Terence E. Fretheim
- Mary Jane Haemig
- Arland J. Hultgren
- Frederick J. Gaiser
- Diane L. Jacobson
- Rolf A. Jacobson
- Karoline M. Lewis
- James Limburg
- Richard Nysse
- Kathryn Schifferdecker
- Walter Sundberg
- Mark A. Throntveit
- David Tiede

For more information on the Lutheran Study Bible, visit Augsburg Fortress at www.augsburgfortress.org. The Lutheran Study Bible is also available at the Luther Seminary Bookstore, www.luthersem.edu/bookstore.
Wherever God is, it is holy ground.”

On March 13 Rev. Mary Rowe proclaimed this message to those gathered at Luther Seminary’s Chapel of the Incarnation as she preached from Acts 7. Rowe was the 2008-09 Alum-in-Residence at Luther Seminary. She spent time on campus March 9-13, giving students insight into parish life. Rowe was the ninth woman ordained in the ALC [American Lutheran Church, a predecessor of the ELCA] after graduating from Luther in 1975.

“I like the image of the whirlwind and I struggle with the silence of God,” said Rowe.

These images have strengthened her in the midst of turmoil and uncertainty surrounding her ministry. She was sometimes the center of conversation as church members began to feel their way into a new sense of normalcy—having a woman in the public role of ordained pastor. But as much as Rowe experienced the pain of God’s silence, often surrounded by chaos, she still believed she was on holy ground—wherever she was sent to serve.

Rowe has served in a number of places, including her first call in Anchorage, Alaska. She served parishes in Whittier and Alameda, Calif., and served as campus pastor at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. She also served as Western regional director for Lutheran Campus Ministry. In each of these places she believed she stood on holy ground and used these opportunities to root herself in God’s Word among those she served. Sharing in God’s Word in a variety of settings led Rowe to the conclusion that God’s presence was always there. She could not flee from it, no matter the silence or chaos. It was this reality that sustained her in ministry.

Rowe’s ministry has been about drawing people to the holy ground of God’s Word so they are equipped to go out with hope and the ability to minister in a hurting world of whirlwinds and deafening silences. For Rowe, God’s language is one of openness and uses the biblical story to help others access fresh ways to develop relationships with God. For example, to break free from the limitations of gender language is to introduce the imagery of God as a mother or a nurturer.

Because God has often been silent and chaotic for Rowe, she said, “I believe that the God who has called me is the God who is in and with all—but in ways that are beyond my imagination but at the same time holds me close.”

After spending time on campus and seeing the use of Scripture among current students, she is excited and full of hope as a fresh new crop of pastors is sown in the world. While the God of Rowe’s calling is often silent and unnamed, she finds herself on holy ground. It is the same holy ground today’s seminarians stand and study upon. It is the same ground those at Luther Seminary find themselves reading Scripture upon. But there is always the call, the hope and the wideness of God’s presence to announce with confidence, “Wherever God is, it is holy ground.”
The ‘00s
Anna Laino, ’08, died Feb. 5 at the age of 25. Anna was the music director at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Minnetonka, Minn.
William Nelsen, ’07, was ordained June 22 at Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Peter, Minn. He serves as pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran and Trinity Lutheran churches in Gaylord, Minn.
Christopher Byars, ’07, was ordained Feb. 17 at Advent Lutheran Church in Boca Raton, Fla. He was installed as pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Dade City, Fla., on March 30.
Andar Parlindungan, ’06, of Indonesia, started Ph.D. work at the University of Hamburg, Germany, in April.
Steve Bliss, ’05, began serving as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Buffalo Lake, Minn., on Jan. 10.
Scott McAnally, ’04, and his wife, Jennifer, welcomed Jacob Connor McAnally on Feb. 6.
Paul Finley, ’04, was installed March 15 as lead pastor of Lutheran Church of Hope in Westminster, Calif.
Stephanie (Coltvet) Erdmann, ’04, and Paul Erdmann, ’05, were married Jan. 3 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn.
Ross Murray, ’03, accepted a position last winter as the interim associate director at Lutherans Concerned/North America in St. Paul, Minn.
Clint Schnekloth, ’02, wrote “Daily Office” for the April issue of The Lutheran. He published “Dying and Rising” for the November 2008 issue.
Chad Christensen, ’00, began serving as full-time pastor at Vermont Lutheran Church in Black Earth, Wis., on Jan. 15.

The ‘90s
Robert Fisher, ’90, retired on Nov. 1. He is doing pulpit supply and teaching adult classes at Prince of Peace Church in Coloma, Wis.

The ‘70s
John Allen, ’79, received a call on Feb. 27 to be associate to the Bishop of the Montana Synod.
Ronald Marshall, ’75, had “Why I Teach the Qur’an” included in the March 10 Lutheran E-newsletter. He published “Constraining the Berserk: Kierkegaard on Adler and the Ideal Pastor” in the International Kierkegaard Commentary in October.

The ‘60s
Denny Brake, ’61, and his wife Sarah, were honored with a cabin built in their name at Camp Agape in Fuquay-Varina, N.C.

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Gospel of Luke (webcast available)*
7-9 p.m.
Faculty: Sarah Henrich, professor of New Testament

Fall classes are held Mondays Sept. 14-Oct. 12. For class descriptions or to register, visit www.luthersem.edu/layschool. Registration opens in July. For more information, call 651-641-3416 or e-mail kairos@luthersem.edu.

*To attend Gospel of Luke via webcast you will need a high-speed Internet connection.

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17-18 Discernment for the Practice of Intentional Interim Ministry
21-23 Process Preaching: A System for Delivering Extemporaneous Sermons

October
5-7 Celebration of Biblical Preaching: Bridging the Gap Between the Bible and Our World Today
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Hilvie Ostrow,’82, equips others to explore their calls

Hilvie Ostrow has always been interested in theology, but she didn’t enter seminary until she was in her 50s.

“When I was a young woman, women were not in ministry,” she said.

But when a young woman in her church entered seminary, Ostrow was called to do the same. Her father, a pastor, didn’t have much when he died, but he left Ostrow enough money to pay her tuition. In 1982, she received a Master of Arts in systematic theology.

Ten years ago, Ostrow decided to pass that opportunity on to others. She established the Oscar A. Benson endowed scholarship fund for students who have an interest in social action, evangelism or world mission—three things her father was passionate about.

She hopes others find what she has at Luther—a second home.

“There’s a feeling of belonging and acceptance here,” she said. “It’s a very special place.”

Are you interested in helping tomorrow’s leaders explore their calls? Contact us today.

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Hilvie Ostrow enjoys playing hymns for others. Here, she plays the piano in the Chapel of the Incarnation at Luther Seminary.
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