After a huge downpour the previous day, May 17 was sunny and warm, perfect weather to match the joy of graduation. The Class of 2014 included 19 recipients of Master of Divinity degrees; five Master of Arts in Religion; four Doctor of Ministry degrees and one Certificate of Lay Leadership.

The day began with the Baccalaureate Worship Service in Santee Chapel followed by the Commencement Service at Church of the Apostles UCC. Alumnus The Right Reverend Dr. Nathan D. Baxter, who retired at the end of May as bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, delivered the address, “The Impossible Vocation Revisited.”
FROM THE PRESIDENT

EMBRACING BOTH INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

By Rev. Dr. Carol E. Lytch, President, Lancaster Theological Seminary

Are you stretching? When I turned 50, a trainer at my gym determined that I was okay on physical strength and aerobic capacity, but I needed to work on the third measure of fitness: flexibility. Since then I have added 15 minutes of stretching to my morning routine.

At age 189, Lancaster Seminary has been stretching, too. This past year, the Seminary has been examining to what degree we live up to our value of racial ethnic diversity on campus. We are pleased that the percentage of students of color enrolled at the Seminary has increased since I arrived three years ago from 12 percent to 36 percent, thanks to the intentional recruiting of Rev. Kendal Brown and our Admissions team. But inclusion is not the same thing as diversity. Inclusion means that all are welcome; diversity means that we foster a learning environment where all that people bring is honored—especially their race, nationality, gender, gender orientation, and theology.

“Lancaster Seminary must be inclusive and diverse,” was the provocative comment of a pastor of a local African Methodist Episcopal church who joined us to reflect on the lessons we learned from a class we held on campus in May called “Theology from the Black Perspective.” This summer the faculty is reading together and discussing The Cross and the Lynching Tree by James H. Cone, and in the fall, we’ll turn to The Divided Mind of the Black Church by Raphael G. Warnock.

Lancaster Seminary has a well-established record of stretching when it comes to theological diversity from its Mercersburg legacy, the ecumenically broad theology of two early 19th century professors John Williamson Nevin and Philip Schaff. The annual Mercersburg Convocation brought scholars and pastors to campus last month to reflect on the contemporary relevance of the liturgically rich and ecumenically broad tradition. The theologically diverse group included United Church of Christ participants, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and other mainline Protestants, old school Calvinists, a Dutch neo-Calvinist, a Ukrainian Orthodox priest, a few Catholics, a Pentecostal philosopher, and an ecumenically minded Mennonite. Byron Borger, an astute observer and owner of the highly acclaimed Hearts & Minds Books, said, “...I am a member of Christ’s ecumenical church and find myself often wishing for more experiences of diversity within God’s big tent. With a few (significant) caveats, I’d say this event at the UCC seminary was one of the most ecumenical gatherings I ever attended. Thanks be to God.”

Borger’s comment indicates that we still have some stretching to do, and I’m thankful that we value both theological and racial ethnic diversity. We must give it our sustained attention, just like maintaining a daily stretching routine. We are a more excellent institution because of diversity and we are stretching—with God’s help—to be even more so.

Rev. Carol Lytch, PhD, President
GAINING INSIGHT into Cultural and Learning Differences

Lancaster Seminary held a weeklong workshop on campus for faculty, “Identifying and Dismantling White Privilege in Pedagogy,” facilitated by consultants from the Wabash Center for Training and Learning in Theology and Religion in Indiana.

The Wabash Center provided a grant that funded the workshop to, in its words, “extend the work that Lancaster has done over the years around the issue of racism and white privilege.”

According to the Seminary Dean, Dr. David Mellott, “We understand this workshop as the next step of our ongoing anti-racism work. We need to identify the cultural dimensions of our own assumptions of how students learn and how we evaluate their learning. And we need to modify our educational practices in light of such knowledge.”

The workshop was held in conjunction with the five-day master class “Theology from the Black Perspective,” taught by Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright in May. Media coverage awhile ago used sound bites that served to distort his political views, causing some supporters to raise concerns about inviting him to campus.

Dean Mellott explains, “Dr. Wright wasn’t invited to teach because of his political views but because of his research into theologies and practices from around the world that have been born from black perspectives. Course attendees, including degree students, continuing education students, and faculty members were exposed to an enormous amount of resources and materials for further study. Consequently, combining the weeklong faculty workshop with the course was enlightening and empowering for the faculty.”

Guided by this education, faculty will develop new measures of student success for our degrees and draft a revision of the “Student Learning Outcomes and Rubrics,” among other actions.

The Seminary continues to require students, faculty, staff, and trustees to complete anti-racism training during an intensive 3-day workshop designed to unmask the hidden forms of white privilege. And the Seminary’s strategic plan calls for faculty to be trained toward greater understanding of students of color and their ecclesial communities.

NEW DATE FOR STOLTZFUS RAFFLE

You still have time to get your chance to win this gorgeous 4’ by 3’ painting entitled “Lancaster Theological Seminary,” valued at more than $6,000.

The new date for the drawing is Thursday, October 23, during Fall Alumni/ae Day.

Lancaster artist Freiman Stoltzfus created this painting to be used to raise funds for the Seminary. We thank Freiman for his generous gesture and invite you to take part in a drawing to win this original masterpiece. Each chance is $100. Only 300 chances will be sold. Contact Crystal Mills at cmills@lancasterseminary.edu, or by telephone at (800) 393-0654 ext. 8738.

Notice that the four seasons pass from spring on the right (east) to winter on the left. The times of the day follow the seasons: morning/spring; noon/summer; twilight/fall; and winter/night. A map of West Lancaster is along the bottom.

Freiman depicts, in his words, “a bastion of warmth and nourishment, and a launching place for students who leave here for expanded, radiant lives of loving action in their native communities and around the world.”
ALUMNI HONORED FOR EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY

The Alumni/ae Council annually recognizes outstanding graduates who have demonstrated excellence in ministry with the Meck and Moss awards.

The Council’s Faithfulness in Ministry Committee, composed of alums, faculty, and judicatory representatives, reviews the nominations based on criteria including:

- Fostering the vitality of ministry
- Exhibiting excellent pastoral presence
- Demonstrating creativity in ministry
- Enlisting and nurturing the gifts of others
- Relating the Gospel to the commonly shared experience in ministry

The awards were conferred at Spring 2014 Alumni/ae Day banquet on May 16.

The 2014 Allan S. Meck Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry

Named to honor the 1911 graduate of the Seminary who served as president from 1947-57.

The Rev. Dr. Jason Leader, ’00, ’10

Since 2000, the Rev. Dr. Jason Leader has been the pastor of St. Jacob’s (Stone) UCC, Glenville, Penn., which had been a Union Church with the local Lutheran congregation since 1756. Pastor Leader led the congregation through a long, and at times, challenging process to dissolve the union to allow St. Jacob’s to become a vital congregation on its own.

Following that decision, made in December 2011, the congregation has grown in a variety of ways: worship attendance grew from about 85 to an average of 150, and the spiritual gifts of its members have been nurtured so that people of all ages are working together on mission projects near and far.

Jason has been very creative in revitalizing St. Jacob’s. There are special themed Sundays for which church members collect items, such as underwear, sunglasses, diapers, school supplies, bicycles, socks, hats, and food, for mission projects in their local community and in other countries.

He initiated youth group trips to repair homes in Pennsylvania with plumbers, carpenters, and other skilled workers from the congregation as chaperones. Through Jason’s leadership, the congregation has become involved in the work of the Gettysburg Association and the Penn Central Conference of the UCC.

The 2014 Robert V. Moss Award for Excellence in Specialized Ministry

Named to honor the 1945 graduate who was Seminary president from 1957-69, and president of the United Church of Christ from 1969-76.

The Right Rev. Dr. Nathan D. Baxter, ’76, ’84

Bishop Nathan D. Baxter, consecrated in 2006 as the 10th bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, retired June 1 as the leader of the 17,500-member diocese composed of 71 parishes in 24 counties.

During his tenure as bishop, Nathan reorganized the diocese to more effectively encourage the development of lay ministries. He overhauled the diocese’s School of Christian Studies to focus on empowering the ministries of the laity and educating lay leaders for sacramental service. Further, he initiated a program of clergy wellness where parish priests agree to meet regularly for support and vocational improvement. Nathan has continued to seek new ways to communicate the Gospel, which he does through such modern media as “Day 1” online.

Before his election as bishop, Nathan was rector of Saint James Episcopal Church in Lancaster, the largest parish in the diocese, after serving 12 years as Dean of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

Earlier in his career, Nathan was administrative dean and associate professor of Pastoral Theology at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass.; seminary dean and associate professor of Church and Ministry at his beloved alma mater, Lancaster Theological Seminary; and chaplain and professor of Religious Studies at St. Paul’s College in Lawrenceville, Va.
SPRING ALUMNI/AE DAY

Several hundred alumni/ae, friends, and family braved torrential rains to get to campus on May 16 for the worship service, banquet, and class reunions held on campus this year for Spring Alumni/ae Day.

Save the Dates

August 22-24
Anti-Racism Institute, held twice a year with the Lancaster YWCA, for 10 participants. Cost is $275.
For more information, contact Nahkia Stevens at nstevens@lancasterseminary.edu.

October 23
- 11 am Lecture by Rev. Adam Hamilton
- Fall Alumni/ae Day
- Dedication of the Class of 2014 gift of the Dr. Frank Stalfa memorial in the Seminary’s Memorial Garden
- New date for the drawing for the Freiman Stoltzfus painting

September 11, 25 & October 2, 9
Dr. Greg Carey presents a series of 90-minute talks based on Paul’s theology as part of the Samaritan Center’s Leadership Series. For more info, go to scclanc.org.
- While We’re Eating: Diet in the Light of the Cross
- Law, Grace, and Improvisation: How Conflict Turned Paul into a Protestant
- Beyond Death
- What We Do with One Another’s Bodies: Paul on Sex and Slavery

November 13
Dr. Lee Barrett leads the workshop Theologizing after Pluralism: Babel or Pentecost? at the Seminary as part of the Samaritan Center’s Leadership Series. For more info, go to scclanc.org.
A REVIVAL IN SANTTEE CHAPEL?

By Rev. Paul Eyer, ’06, Director of Alumni/ae and Church Relations

It might strike some as surprising that Santee Chapel was the site of a Spring Revival service in late April. After all, this seminary was the birthplace of Mercersburg Theology, a 19th century movement that embraced renewed appreciation for “high” liturgy and more formal expressions of worship.

In many ways, the Mercersburg movement was a reaction AGAINST the revivalism of the early- and mid-1800s. John Nevin, a professor in the 1840s when the Seminary was located in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, wrote The Anxious Bench (1843), a forceful critique of what he perceived as the unbridled emotionalism of revivalist practices of his day. Santee Chapel, the aesthetically inspiring worship space on our campus, is arguably the ultimate architectural expression of Mercersburg theology. And yet, it was the site for a revival service.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuel, new trustee of the Seminary and pastor of Victory for the World Church, one of the most vibrant congregations in the United Church of Christ, stood at the pulpit. And the United Voices of Praise, a multicultural choir from North Carolina, performed. The choir included Jill Edens, DMin ’93, co-pastor of the United Church of Chapel Hill, and guitarist David Mateo, MDiv ’13, who leads the Latino ministry at that same church.

Actually, a revival here is not so unexpected. Ecumenism is at the heart of the Mercersburg movement. In fact, Mercersburg founder John Nevin was a Presbyterian who became enamored of Catholicism. Next year’s Convocation of the Mercersburg Society—to take place on the Lancaster Seminary campus in June 2015—will focus specifically on the ecumenical underpinnings of Mercersburg Theology.

Lancaster Seminary has a long history of looking beyond labels and establishing space where people from a variety of denominations and faith backgrounds can come together. And that uplifting revival service this spring was one more particularly meaningful such moment. The ecumenical spirit of the Mercersburg tradition was in evidence in a powerful way.

MERCERSBURG CONVOCATION NEWS

Lancaster Seminary was the site of the three-day Mercersburg Convocation in June, during which Seminary President Dr. Carol E. Lytch was elected president of the Mercersburg Society. Jocelyn McKeon, MDiv ’14, recipient of the 2013 Roth Prize, presented her paper, “John Williamson Nevin and Teilhard de Chardin: Mystic Eucharistic Theologies in the Reformed Protestant and Roman Catholic Traditions.”

Lancaster alumnus David Bradnick won the 2014 Roth Prize for the best student paper on any topic in Mercersburg theology. His paper, “What Has Azusa to Do with Mercersburg?: A Pentecostal Engagement with Nevin and Schaff” will be considered for publication in the New Mercersburg Review. In addition to the $750 prize, David is invited to present his paper at the 2015 convocation. David, MA(R) ’04, is a PhD candidate in systematic theology at Regent University School of Divinity in Virginia.

The Mercersburg theology lifted up the importance of the nurture of faith within congregations through liturgy, sacraments, and the rearing of children in mature faith through the catechisms and creeds, as well as the unity of the Body of Christ and the inclusion of Roman Catholics and other denominations.

Mercersburg theology did not provide a new systematic theology, rather it focused on the person of Christ as the ultimate fact of Christianity which makes the incarnation the essential starting point of Christian theology. Today a notable number of theologians and church leaders find vitality and relevance to contemporary church life in the Mercersburg theology.
MARCHING IN THE LIGHT OF GOD

At commencement, we joyously sang the South African tune *Siyahamba* or *We Are Marching in the Light of God*, a celebratory song cycle that evokes determination, perseverance, and community.

The members of Lancaster Theological Seminary’s Class of 2014 have, during their seminary experience, sought and followed the light of God, emerging well equipped with the knowledge and desire to carry that light into the world. They march in the footsteps of the long line of Lancaster graduates who have, for 189 years, illuminated the way for more to follow each year, and who, in turn, have spread the light to countless thousands of others in the world.

No one marches alone. No one can do it alone. Our seminarians are able to march in the light of God and flourish with the prayers and support of those faithful people who are willing to generously share their gifts in order that those gifts be multiplied and sanctified.

*Rev. Celestine Brooks*, Class of 2013, had help. When she was called to seminary, she had to leave three jobs: full-time office work, part-time accounting, and pastoral work. Scholarships, she says, made it possible “to immerse 100 percent fully into the learning, the formation and the focus it takes to succeed.” It was on her cross-cultural trip to Thailand, where street children were so drawn to her, they clung to her as she walked, that her gift for youth ministry was revealed. She now is associate pastor at David’s United Church of Christ in Canal Winchester, Ohio, with primary ministry for children and youth. *She carries the shining light, nurtured here at Lancaster Seminary, into the future for the next generation to follow.***

*Rev. Dick Whitney*, Class of 1952, had help. More than 60 years later, he still remembers the exceptional education and critical formational discussions with professors like Nevin Harner and his classmates that shaped, in his words, “who I am and how I might carry out ministry.” Rev. Whitney has, in turn, helped others march in the light of God, continuing the virtuous circle of giving by generously contributing to the Seminary and his class endowment. He says he is motivated to “keep the institution strong ... to continue to do its very best in training church leaders to be well-equipped to carry out ministry.” He and his wife Esther encourage their children to donate to Lancaster Seminary.

**WILL YOU JOIN US?**

**WILL YOU MARCH WITH US?**

Please consider using the enclosed envelope to help us continue to nurture leaders to march in the light of God, carrying our storied tradition of innovation, involvement, and inclusion.

*We need you. We thank you. We praise you with our song.*

---

**ALUMNI/AE NEWS BRIEFS**

*Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma*, DMin ’11, adjunct faculty and pastor of Saint Paul’s UCC in Westminster, Maryland, authored *Church Be Nimble: Organizational Dynamics and Creativity in Mainline Congregations*, now available on Amazon.com. Drawing insights from organizational innovators in a variety of specializations, the book invites churches to become organizationally nimble by clearing away bureaucratic clutter, engaging emerging possibilities, and organizing for now not forever.

*Rev. William P. Worley*, MDiv ’94, has been elected Conference Minister and President of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ in Pottstown. The conference includes 173 churches from Philadelphia to Schuylkill Valley. Bill leaves First Reformed UCC of Lancaster where he has served as senior pastor for 13 years, with the exception of 2006-2007 when he was a Navy chaplain in Iraq.
I’ve been thinking about language lately. I’ve lived in Virginia, where people talk an unusual language called Southern. After years of puzzlement, I finally figured out that when a colleague says, “We were worried about you when you weren’t at the meeting,” it really means: “Where the heck were you, you irresponsible jerk?” Similarly, “Bless your heart” translates into “You really are one major loser.”

South Central Pennsylvania also has its own patois. When you ask a Pennsylvania German, “How are you doing?” and the answer is, “Not bad,” that actually means “I am so ecstatically happy that I can’t contain myself.” Or when a dyed-in-the-wool Pennsylvanian responds, “I could be better,” that implies: “I am about to have all my limbs amputated and my bedroom is infested with rabid skunks.”

These examples are not just cute regional peculiarities of vocabulary; they are part and parcel of divergent ways of talking about life and, therefore, of seeing life. Lancaster Theological Seminary is an emporium of different religious languages, each with its own codes, own grammar, and own vocabulary. We don’t all talk alike here about God, Christ, or the Bible. Consequently, you can be pretty darn sure that we don’t all experience the faith in the same way. We people of faith are deeply, deeply different. Not just in regard to the small, peripheral stuff, but in regard to the big central stuff. Now, usually different linguistic groups are mutually suspicious, hostile. Those who speak Russian fear those who speak Ukrainian, and vice versa. Is it inevitable that antagonism will result when people of faith and goodwill employ different vocabularies, and see the world through different linguistic lenses?

By all worldly calculations, yes. Empirically, dissention and conflict is what is likely. But, there is another variable to take into account. In Acts 2, Christians have this crazy memory of an utterly irrational, counter-intuitive event called Pentecost. The issue it focuses on is language, the speaking of it and the hearing of it. The passage foregrounds a formidable roster of different language-speakers: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judeans and Cappadocians, people from Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt, Lydia, Rome, Arabia and Crete. And all of them possessed different native tongues, and therefore different cultural lenses.

But here is the deal: in spite of the Babel-like variety, each representative of a different language group heard what was being said by Galileans in their own languages. Intelligibility happened. The intelligibility was nothing less than miraculous, and it was exceedingly disruptive. It causes a commotion. The Spirit does not come upon the folks assembled like a gentle breeze or a still small voice. It is a “rushing wind,” an explosion that knocks people’s socks off. Intelligibility of this sort is unexpected, unprecedented, disruptive, frightening, and, in fact, just plain weird.

Lancaster Seminary-ese is the language of Pentecost. Or, more precisely, the languages of Pentecost. It is unsettling, often disturbing, and generally perplexing. It can explode into a room like a mighty rush of wind and blow the windows out of classroom 206, or the pews out of a local congregation. The effort to encourage multiple languages, and to hope for mutual intelligibility across profound differences in theological lingo, is nothing less than the reckless hope that Pentecost happens. Not through our own efforts, but through the volcanic inbreaking of the Holy Spirit.
Notice something else about this story. The individual languages are not erased. Their distinctive accents are not reduced to a lowest common denominator generic speak. No, the Egyptians heard what was being said in Egyptian, not in some fabricated universal Christian language. So also here. We don’t talk a CongrePentePresbyBaptodist jargon, with a smidgen of Anabaptist vocabulary. The Presbyterians continue to sound like Presbyterians, the liberationists continue to sound like liberationists, and the evangelicals continue to sound like evangelicals. A single group-speak would be boring, and would be spiritually sterile.

The distinctive cadences of each way of speaking must be preserved. The truth, I mean the fully orbed, multidimensional truth, may just emerge through the tensions among the languages, in the push, pull, and tug of rival vocabularies. Forgive me for indulging in a rock-n-roll analogy. Mick Jagger, reflecting on the career of the Rolling Stones, claimed that they were at their creative best in the 1960s. That’s when there was a tug of war in the band between Keith Richards, who wanted them to remain faithful to their rhythm and blues roots, and Brian Jones, who wanted to experiment with British folk traditions, Asian scales, and electronic distortion. The result of that tension was, according to Jagger, magical. You can hear it in “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction,” with Richards’ blues tune in the foreground, and Jones’ acoustic guitar strumming something baroque in the background. Remove either one, and the song flops. Reduced to a uniformity, with everyone playing electric, or everyone playing acoustic, it would have been trite. But juxtaposed, the song soared.

That is the way it is with divergent languages at Lancaster Seminary and in the Christian churches in general. I think God has ordained a divine division of labor. For example, Pentecostals have been commissioned to concentrate on the ecstatic, healing, cathartic, and unpredictable energies of God. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, have been assigned to focus on God’s mighty acts that bring order and regularity out of chaos. The trick is: the two groups should leave each other’s loaf. Pentecostals should stir Presbyterians up when they get too stuffy, and Presbyterians should structure Pentecostals when they get too wild.

This mutual check and balance can happen, and it has happened, right here in Lancaster Theological Seminary. On rare and wondrous days, I’ve witnessed Unitarians hearing and appreciating what it means when their Baptist brothers and sisters rejoice because they have been “bathed in the blood of Jesus.” And I’ve seen Evangelicals being cross-fertilized by Unitarians, really developing a taste for the interconnected web of life, without ceasing to be Evangelical. I’ve seen Methodists who expect to be totally sanctified adding spice to the piety of Lutherans who are quite sure that their sanctification prospects are bleak. Now, I really don’t want the Lutheran to become a Methodist, or vice versa. The Lutheran message must be heard in its purity, and the Methodist message must be heard in its purity. The truth lies in the tension between them.

We all need each other, with our different languages. The saying of what must be said can only be accomplished through a plurality of vocabularies. For that to happen, we must speak to one another, hear one another, and empathize with one another without sacrificing our own unique identities.

We don’t talk a CongrePentePresbyBaptodist jargon, with a smidgen of Anabaptist vocabulary.

So, what is the depth grammar of Lancaster Seminary-ese? It is unity in diversity, with the caveat that the diversity will not be resolved into sameness. And that is what the church universal should incarnate. Everywhere you look in Christianity you bump into this unity-in-diversity pattern. We have two testaments, not one, as inconvenient as this often is. And we have four Gospels, not one, and they resist harmonization. And Jesus is proclaimed to be a colossal instance of the unity of two natures, in one person, without admixture. And here comes the big one: the inconceivable perfect fellowship of sheer Otherness is built into our understanding of God, the eternal Trinitarian dance of differentiation and integration.

At times our different lingos have grated against one another and ignited sparks. But, in spite of the explosions and clashes, Pentecost happens, mutual intelligibility happens. Our graduates have been reflections of God’s eternal dance of loving, empathic unity in the midst of honest differentiation. On those magical days when grace abounds, we speak the language of Pentecost. May it be so for all God’s children.
SUMMER READING, FACULTY STYLE

Since summer is prime time for reading — whether on the beach, the deck, or before turning out the lights at night — we thought it would be fun and informative to take a peek at what’s on our faculty’s summer reading lists.

Dr. Lee Barrett, Mary B. and Henry P. Stager Chair in Theology, and Professor of Systematic Theology, is reading The War that Ended Peace, by Margaret MacMillan (Random House, 2013), a very lively narrative of the foreign policy blunders that led up to World War I. He says it is a chilling cautionary tale: “Our own era is frighteningly similar: few people in 1913 imagined that war could actually happen because the global economy was so interconnected and world travel and international communications had become so widespread. The peace movement was at its height. But one bluff in diplomacy, Austria-Hungary’s mobilization (shall we think of some recent proposals about Ukraine?), triggered a chain reaction that toppled empires, even though none of the major leaders wanted armed conflict.”

Charles Marsh’s new biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Strange Glory (Knopf, 2014) is on Dr. Greg Carey’s reading table this summer along with Chris Keith’s Jesus Against the Scribal Elite (Baker, 2014), which traces Jesus’ conflicts with Pharisees, scribes, Saducees, and others due to Jesus’ lack of scribal training. Greg says it makes a compelling case for Jesus’ illiteracy and its implications for how people perceived Jesus. Our Professor of New Testament also is nibbling on Flannery O’Connor’s Prayer Journal (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), a “stunning combination of spiritual earnestness, emotional immaturity, and O’Connor’s blazing and brilliant honesty.”

On President Carol Lytch’s bedside table is Eros & Self-Emptying: The Intersections of Augustine and Kierkegaard (Eerdmans, 2013) by our own Dr. Lee Barrett, along with James Cone’s The Cross and the Lynching Tree (Orbis, 2011); Lynne Twist’s The Soul of Money (Norton, 2003); and Christopher Wiman’s My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013). The Dean of the Seminary, Dr. David M. Mellott, who is associate professor of Practical Theology and vice president of Academic Affairs, is diving into The Rise: Creativity, the Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery by Sarah Lewis (Simon and Schuster, 2014). According to the New York Times review, “The Rise points us toward the dazzling afterlife of the dead end, shining light on numerous other counter-intuitive paths to mastery.” He also is reading Colored People by Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Vintage Books/Rand House, 1994).

Dr. Julia M. O’Brien, Professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, is working through Walk Together Children: Black and Womanist Theologies, Church and Theological Education, Dwight N. Hopkins and Linda E. Thomas, eds. (Wipf and Stock, 2010), essays on the history and future of Black theology, including sections on masculinity and sexuality; and The Genius of Genesis: A Psychoanalytist and Rabbi Examines the First Book of the Bible by Dennis G. Shulman (iuniverse, 2003). She downloaded two novels to her iPad: Donna Tartt’s The Goldfinch (Little, Brown, 2013), and Sue Monk Kidd’s The Invention of Wings (Viking Adult, 2014), a fictional account of the Grimke sisters, 19th c. abolitionists and women’s rights activists, interwoven with the voices of the African Americans enslaved by the Grimke family.

Professor of Practice Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Soto’s summer reading includes Jacob’s Choice: Return to Northkill by Ervin Stutzman (Herald Press, 2014). The author researches facts of the 1757 Hochstetler Massacre, the murders of three members of his Amish ancestral family by Native Americans. Jacob’s faith was tested when he had to choose whether to respond with violence or not to resist. Northkill was northwest of Reading, where Amish farmers, recruited by William Penn, held land since the 1700s. She also is reading Shirley Hershey Showalter’s autobiography, Blush: A Mennonite Girl Meets a Glittering World (Herald Press, 2014), Showalter, a Mennonite raised on a farm near Lititz, became the first female president of Goshen College, a well-known Mennonite college in Indiana.

Professor of Church History Dr. Anne T. Thayer is reading a study of medieval sanctity, Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation by Robert Bartlett (Princeton University Press, 2013). It has been on her “to-read” list and she’s glad to be asked to review it. Anne expects that Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry by Hans Boersma (Eerdmans, 2011) will contribute to her deepening love for the sacraments. And she is planning to read a book suggested by Visiting Professor Dr. Daphne Wiggins, Some Sing, Some Cry: A Novel by Ntozake Shange and Ifa Bayeza (Macmillan, 2010). It traces an African-American family from Reconstruction to the modern day.
Ms. Myka Kennedy Stephens, Seminary Librarian, arrived in May from Morton Grove, Ill., where she was a library and information services consultant. She has a background in theological and church libraries and her credentials include a Master of Library and Information Science from Florida State University, a Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and a Bachelor of Arts from Southern Methodist University with a major in English and minors in Music and Religious Studies. Myka is a Deaconess of The United Methodist Church, and a member of the American Theological Library Association, Church and Synagogue Library Association, and American Library Association. She succeeds Rev. Richard R. Berg who retired after 26 years of service.

Rev. Ruth-Aimée Belonni-Rosario of Lawrence Township, N.J., joins us in July as Dean of Admissions from Princeton Theological Seminary where she was associate director of admissions. Prior to that she was pastor of Iglesia Presbiteriana San Andrés, Bronx, N.Y. She received a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary where she received the Edward Howell Roberts Scholarship in Preaching, and a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration cum laude from the University of Puerto Rico, with a major in Human Resources Management. Ruth-Aimée is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church USA, and serves on the church’s National Racial Ethnic Task Force, and as a member of the Synod of the Northeast Transition Working Group.

Rev. Kendal Brown is now Dean of Students and Director of Recruitment, focusing primarily on external recruitment efforts. He joined us in 2011 as admissions director, and he and the admissions team have recruited most of the students who are currently at the Seminary. His new role as Dean of Students will enable the community to maximize his tremendous pastoral presence, expand the leadership he already brings to the community and provide opportunities to continue to nurture existing and new relationships with key external constituents. A native of Virginia, Kendal received a Master of Divinity degree from Virginia Union School of Theology with additional graduate work in pastoral counseling taken at Loyola University in Baltimore. He also served as senior pastor of City of Refuge Church in Washington, D.C., and Associate Pastor of Christian Education at City of Refuge UCC in San Francisco.

Dr. Stephanie M. Crumpton, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, starts this fall as Assistant Professor of Practical Theology. She is relocating from Salisbury, N.C., where she was assistant professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Hood Theological Seminary. Previously she was an adjunct professor at Chicago Theological Seminary, a lecturer at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and a teaching fellow at Atlanta’s Interdenominational Theological Center. In Georgia she has served as a state court advocate, and consultant on the Georgia Commission on Family Violence. Stephanie has a Doctor of Theology, Pastoral Care & Counseling, from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia; a Master of Divinity from Johnson C. Smith Presbyterian Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta; and a Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Journalism from Oklahoma’s Langston University. Stephanie succeeds the late Rev. Dr. Frank Stalfa.

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Soto adds the title of Professor of Practice to her continuing roles as Coordinator of Field Education for Master of Divinity students and Advisor for Global Theological Education.

“Professors of Practice are those teachers who help us better understand how the practice of ministry is its own distinct context for learning and transformation,” said Dr. David M. Mellott, Dean of the Seminary. “Dr. Soto has brought significant gifts to the Seminary, the students, and the curriculum including teaching “Family Violence: A Sociological and Theological Response,” co-teaching the Cross-Cultural Seminar, facilitating the creation of the new Chaplaincy Specialization, and serving as a faculty advisor to students, among other responsibilities.”

Elizabeth joined Lancaster Seminary in 2008. An ordained Mennonite minister, she is serving until 2015 as moderator of Mennonite Church USA, the denomination’s highest leadership position. She is the author of Family Violence: Reclaiming a Theology of Nonviolence (Orbis Books, 2008) and Seek Peace and Pursue It: Women, Faith and Family Care, Mennonite Women Bible Study Guide (2011). Elizabeth earned a Doctor of Ministry from San Francisco Theological Seminary, a Master of Arts in Religion from Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico in San Juan, and a bachelor’s degree in Health Education from University of Puerto Rico.
LEADERSHIP LETTER

Published by
Lancaster Theological Seminary

Please advise us of address changes:
Office of Advancement
Lancaster Theological Seminary
555 West James Street
Lancaster, PA 17603
(717) 290-8725
advancement@lancasterseminary.edu

189TH COMMENCEMENT