

# Southern Bulletin

A PUBLICATION FOR FRIENDS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SOUTHERN SEMINARY OF LENOIR-RHYNE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2019

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Left: The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore accepts her call during the installation service at LTSS on Sept. 10, in front of nearly 200 in attendance. (Photo / Matt Brodie)

The LR College Singers with the Sanctuary Choir from the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Brevard, North Carolina, participated in the worship service. (Photo / Matt Brodie)

## The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore charges students to focus on sharing Christ's risen life at installation ceremony

On Sept. 10, the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of LR celebrated the installation of The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore as the rector and dean. The Rev. Dr. Herman Yoos officiated the Rite of Installation, and The Rev. Dr. Mark Fitzsimmons delivered the homily before a gathering of an estimated 175 seminarians, bishops, academic colleagues, benefactors, family, and friends. Southeastern Synod Bishop Kevin Strickland presided at the Eucharist.

Held in Christ Chapel on the LTSS campus, the celebration included a luncheon after worship and a lecture from Shore titled, "Christ Is Risen: Proclaiming the Gospel in a Culture of Fear." Basing her remarks on the New Testament story of the risen Christ's appearance to disciples on the road to Emmaus, Shore encouraged the seminary community to engage in similar work: journeying together, engaging the Scriptures, and sharing hospitality. "We see the risen Christ in the stranger and in one another," she said.

In her role, Shore serves as the lead academic and church administrator for LTSS and continues to lead the seminary of exemplary status within the ELCA. Shore began at LTSS in February, and in her first months, she has announced a search to fill the newly endowed Frances and Baxter Weant Chair in Lutheran Studies and launched Freed to Serve, a program that leverages ongoing scholarship gifts and endowment support for LTSS students to eliminate tuition costs for seminarians.

*"We see the risen Christ in the stranger and in one another."*

THE REV. DR. MARY HINKLE SHORE



Seminarians Philip Sandi and Josh Knutson share the bread and the cup of Christ. (Photo / Matt Brodie)



University President Fred Whitt welcomes all to Christ Chapel. (Photo / Matt Brodie)



Hannah Griffin, sophomore pre-medical science major, is part of the 13-member LR College Singers who performed at the installation service. (Photo / Matt Brodie)

*"We know that many of our students come to seminary with debt from their undergraduate study. We want to do everything we can not to add to that debt."*

THE REV. DR. MARY HINKLE SHORE

## Freed to Serve

*Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary launches full tuition support for ELCA candidates*

Prior to the start of the fall semester, LTSS launched Freed to Serve, a program aimed at eliminating tuition costs for seminarians within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

"We know that many of our students come to seminary with debt from their undergraduate study," said Rector and Dean of LTSS, The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore. "We want to do everything we can not to add to that debt. This program is possible through the generosity of congregations, alumni, synods, and other donors who have earmarked their gifts specifically for student assistance."

Freed to Serve funds were available to full-time students of LTSS beginning fall 2019. The scholarship provides full tuition support to ELCA members from any synod in the church. To be eligible, students must be in candidacy with their home synod. Freed to Serve scholarships will support those preparing for service on either the Word and Service or Word and Sacrament roster of ministers.

To learn more about Freed to Serve scholarships or to pursue studies at LTSS, contact The Rev. Jennifer L. Shimota, coordinator of seminary enrollment, at [jennifer.shimota@lr.edu](mailto:jennifer.shimota@lr.edu) or 803.461.3297 or visit [lr.edu/apply](http://lr.edu/apply).



## LETTER FROM THE REV. DR. MARY HINKLE SHORE



**The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore**  
Dean and Rector

The legendary Columbia heat held on through early October, with highs in the 100s for a few days early in the month. As I write this, however, we are enjoying the cool mornings and mild days that this Midwesterner associates with going “back to school.”

The chill in the morning air is offset by the energy of a new class on campus. Eighteen new students joined the LTSS community this fall, for a total of almost 70 students in degree-programs and another five who are either exploring seminary as non-degree students or taking classes to fulfill candidacy requirements for Lutheran formation. The student body includes people in every decade of life from their 20s to their 60s. While Lutherans make up the majority, ecumenical diversity continues to shape our life and learning, with at least six other denominations represented among our students.

Students are not the only ones to be leaning into new work this fall. Our enrollment coordinator, Pastor Jennifer Shimota, came onto the staff in August and is already welcoming prospective students to campus and accompanying them as they discern the next steps in response to a call from God that began for them in baptism. You can read a profile of Jennifer in this edition of the *Bulletin*.

Our half-time campus pastor, the Rev. Dr. Mark Fitzsimmons, is newly also half-time associate professor of field education. Dr. Susan McArver is chairing our search to fill the Baxter and Frances Weant chair in Lutheran Studies, and Dr. Brent Driggers is leading our effort to complete a self-study in anticipation of next fall’s visit from one of our accreditors, the Association of Theological Schools.

I continue to lean into new work too, of course, though the learning curve is happily leveling out a bit. It feels good to be underway and “official” now as your new rector and dean. I remain grateful for the prayers, blessings, and words of hope that many of you offered at my installation this past September. Thank you, and thank you for your continued prayers and other expressions of support for LTSS. Our shared work gives me great joy.

Grace and peace,

Mary Hinkle Shore, Rector and Dean

## LTSS Welcomes New Coordinator of Seminary Enrollment

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary has hired a new leader to transform prospective students into seminarians.

The Rev. Jennifer Shimota '12 joined LTSS in early August as the coordinator of seminary enrollment. Her primary focus is to create new recruiting strategies, with an overall objective to grow enrollment. Additionally, she supports seminarians throughout their time at LTSS by being engaged in their course registration, financial aid, and candidacy process.

Previously, Shimota was the pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in High Point, North Carolina, where she served for six years in her first call. In that role, Shimota said many members were Sudanese refugees so it was a multiethnic congregation, which is rare in the ELCA. “Living and serving together across cultural and racial differences was amazing,” Shimota said.

Additionally, the congregation of Shimota’s church completed the process to become a Reconciling in Christ church, which is a designation through which the Reconciling Works organization recognizes congregations that have declared themselves inclusive of all people.

“The journey included loving conversations and publicly declaring that’s who we are in Christ,” she said. “It was a gift to be their pastor during that time.”



During Shimota’s last two years at the church, she worked with a cohort of LTSS alumni in the Triad area that supported each other weekly in sermon discussion and pastoral care, which has brought her full circle to serve in her current role at LTSS.

“I love theological education and this particular school, and the fact that I get to work at LTSS is incredible,” she said. “Serving in this particular role, I am able to tell the story to the broader church about theological education specific to Southern. Getting

*“Getting to be a colleague in this mission with people who formed, shaped and ministered to me is unbelievable. I know that I am supposed to be here in this time of my journey.”*

**THE REV. JENNIFER SHIMOTA**

to be a colleague in this mission with people who formed, shaped and ministered to me is unbelievable. I know that I am supposed to be here in this time of my journey.”

During her spare time, Shimota enjoys moments on the phone with her daughter, Sage, who is earning her Masters in Communication at UNC Greensboro and her son, Micah, a 2012 graduate of Lenoir-Rhyne, who is program director for Baltimore Urban Debate League. She also loves long walks with her Siberian Husky, Eleanor Rigby.

## Faculty Updates

**Dr. Melanie Dobson** published an article on “John of the Cross and Spiritual Direction” in the peer-reviewed journal *Presence* and has a book review published in a forthcoming issue of *Dialogue*. She presented a paper on funerals, social media, and a Wesleyan eschatology at the Wesleyan Theological Society this spring and was the keynote speaker for the Duke Endowment Convocation on the Rural Church this summer. Dobson also led retreats for Methodist students at University of South Carolina and for ELCA women at Lutherock, taught in the Spiritual Direction Program at LTSS, and has been the guest preacher at several Columbia area United Methodist Churches.

**The Rev. Dr. James R. Thomas** contributed three chapters to “Luther’s Small Catechism with African Descent Reflections.”

**Brent Driggers** recently published short commentaries for *Working Preacher*, a ministry of Luther Seminary at [workingpreacher.org](http://workingpreacher.org). The studies feature Luke 13:10-17, Luke 17:5-10, Luke 17:11-19, and Luke 19:1-10. He is currently directing the Seminary’s self-study for re-accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools.

Over the summer, **The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore** preached at Grace Lutheran Church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and Cross and Crown in Matthews, North Carolina. On Reformation Sunday, she will preach at Holy Trinity in Hickory, North Carolina, and on Nov. 10, she will preach at Lutheran Church of the Epiphany in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Shore has an article on the Easter texts of lectionary year forthcoming in the spring 2020 issue of *Journal for Preachers*.

**Dr. Susan McArver’s** academic essay “Better a ‘Live Dog than a Dead Lion:’ The Remarkable and Unlikely Life of Manuel Simeon Corley: South Carolina Abolitionist, Unionist, Teetotaler and Scalawag” will be published in the *Journal of the Lutheran Historical Conference* in fall 2019. Corley was a member of the seminary’s board of trustees and treasurer of the South Carolina Synod in the 1850s. McArver also wrote an article on the study of church history for the June 2019 issue of *The Living Lutheran*. “Why Seek Ye the Living Among the Dead” is part of the periodical’s “Deeper Understandings” series on the ministry of theological education. McArver led a new cross-cultural course during the summer session on Native American Ministry at the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation in Box Elder, Montana.

**The Rev. Dr. Mark Fitzsimmons ’86**, associate professor for field education and campus pastor, continues to serve as teacher and leadership team member of the North Carolina Synod’s Lay Preaching Program. This ELCA-grant-funded Holy Innovation graduated its first cohort in May and began its second cohort in September. Fitzsimmons enjoyed serving tables at Lutheridge for two weeks in July and returned in October to lead a workshop “Community Isn’t Just for Extroverts” at the 50Forward Living Well Retreat.

The peer-reviewed *Wesley Theological Journal* has accepted for publication an article written by **The Rev. Dr. Melanie Dobson**, “Offering Christian Hope Instead of Individual Hype: Funeral Sermons Rooted in a Wesleyan Eschatology.”

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## MATT CANNIFF-KESECKER

In the fall of 2015, Matt Canniff-Kesecker moved with his family into campus housing at LTSS as he began his seminary career. Matt, his wife, Aubrey, and infant daughter, Nora, were eager to join in the life of the seminary community and found a home among fellow students, caring staff, and engaging professors. Aubrey taught across the street at Hyde Park Elementary School, becoming connected to students and teachers there.

While the Canniff-Keseckers were settling into life on campus, they also looked to participate in the life of the surrounding neighborhood. When Matt learned that the Eau Claire Community Council was putting on a unity festival, he helped organize a group of students to volunteer. At the festival, they experienced a crossover between the various parts of their lives: students in Aubrey's class and Matt's LTSS classmates were there celebrating the unity of the neighborhood. For Matt and Aubrey, this was deeply important.

Matt explains, "I moved to LTSS without knowing what kind of ministry I felt called to, and the opportunities to connect with the culturally diverse community of Eau Claire led to some discernment which led to a particular kind of internship working in North Minneapolis at Redeemer Lutheran Church."

During his internship year, he completed the ELCA's process for becoming a mission developer or redeveloper. The Spirit seemed to clarify Matt's call to ministry in diverse communities with varying needs, and upon finishing his internship, he was invited to consider working with a congregation in North Carolina while finishing his seminary classes.



Over the summer, Matt Canniff-Kesecker enjoyed family time at the beach with his wife, Aubrey, and daughters Nora and Ada.

The possibility of answering this call depended largely on the seminary's willingness to accommodate the changes that would come with the Canniff-Kesecker's new circumstances. With gratitude, Matt remembers the way LTSS and his professors were helpful with discernment, as well as flexible and accommodating when something unexpected came up. For example, LTSS designed a way he could blend commuting with video-conferencing to allow him to work with the people of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In December, Matt will finish his seminary studies at LTSS, and he and his family will continue to serve the world in Jesus' name.

## The Reinartz Scholar Program Returns to LTSS



The Rev. Martha Miller Sims

The Reinartz Scholar Program, which provides a two-fold purpose to support a scholar-in-residence with continuing education and give seminarians contact with best parish practices, has returned to LTSS. As this semester's Reinartz Scholar, Rev. Martha Miller Sims '94 will join the seminary community Nov. 18-22.

Sims has faithfully served in parish ministry for more than 25 years. For most of those years Sims ministered at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Winchester, Virginia, where she currently serves as senior pastor. Previous calls to a two-point parish, campus and team ministries, widen her understanding of pastoral ministry. Moreover, her service on the Virginia Synod's Candidacy Committee has kept her connected to

future leaders. During her visit, she will engage in preaching and teaching opportunities, as well as meals and conversations. Additionally, Sims will have hands-on access to Lineberger library and professors to research special interests and to develop further skills.

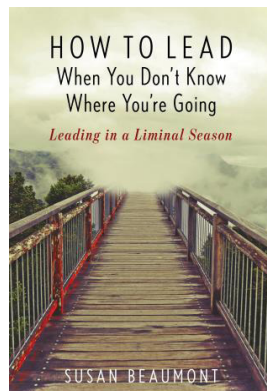
*The Rev. Dr. F. Epling Reinartz served as President of LTSS from 1961-1970. Gifts from the family and friends of Dr. and Mrs. Reinartz endowed this Scholars Program. Its purpose is to provide time for study and renewal through interaction with the seminary community. Proposals for future Reinartz Scholars should be submitted to mark.fitzsimmons@lr.edu.*

## The Rector Reads

A series on book recommendations by The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore, Rector and Dean

I have recently discovered a book I love, but one I am a little embarrassed to read in public. (No, it isn't part of the "Twilight" series!) As leaders, we have learned that in times of disorientation it is important to "set a vision." People want strong, confident, and forward-looking leadership. The last thing many of us have the courage to do is to admit, "I don't actually know where we're going."

Hence my concern that someone will see me in possession of Susan Beaumont's *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in Liminal Times* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019). Yet the book is too good to hide! In the author's words, "The premise of this book is that traditional leadership stances and practices do not serve us well in liminal seasons. An alternative way of being and a different body of work are needed to negotiate liminality" (17-18).



A liminal time is one in which your organization is changing. Perhaps a parish that used to have two pastors is realizing a different staffing structure is needed, but what? Or maybe a congregation is located in a neighborhood that has changed around it. What is its calling among its neighbors now? Or maybe you are part of a seminary during a time when both higher education and the shape of Christian community is changing faster than any of us can keep up. Dare we

admit we don't know where we're going? In such an admission, Beaumont does not see shame but rather courage and hope.

The leadership style that emerges in the book is less frenetic than I have often thought I needed to be to energize others. The leader Beaumont describes is comfortable with unknowing, can sit with questions and the stories of an institution, and is honest about the challenges we face. As a spiritual director might tend the soul of an individual, Beaumont offers practical ways to tend the soul of an institution through change. She is not commending passivity, but rather openness to what the Spirit is enlivening in a place, and she gives us tools to invite others into such openness. *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going* offers excellent guidance for all of us who are called to bridge to what is next for our institutions, and who are building that bridge while we walk on it.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

# UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

5

Fall 2019 semester ends

DEC JAN

13-12

Christmas break for students

DEC JAN

26-6

LTSS cross-cultural education trip to Israel and Palestine

JANUARY

13

Spring 2020 semester orientation

JANUARY

13

Spring 2020 semester begins

JANUARY

15-18

Spiritual Direction Intensive

JANUARY

30

Region 9 / LTSS Council for Stewardship Education meeting

JANUARY

31

Annual Stewardship Symposium

FEBRUARY

16-17

Discernment Weekend

MARCH

11-12

Advisory Council meeting

MARCH

16-20

Student Spring Break

MARCH

26

Columbia Campus Open House

APRIL

16

Columbia Campus Open House

APRIL

22

Scholarship Luncheon for donors and scholarship recipients

APRIL

23

Alumni Day

APRIL

28

Spring 2020 semester ends

APRIL

29

Closing Eucharist in Christ Chapel

MAY

6

Baccalaureate Service

MAY

7

Columbia Campus Commencement





4201 North Main Street  
Columbia, SC 29203

# Save the Date



## SCHOLARSHIP DAY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020



## ALUMNI DAY

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020

ir.edu/ltss



Gifts to Lenoir-Rhyne's New Life Fund impact the lives of seminarians at LTSS each day. Through the New Life Fund, those committed to the mission of LTSS can make a major difference in the training of future servants of the church.

Join the many supporters of LTSS in making sure the needs of the seminary and our seminarians are met. Please make a gift prior to Dec. 31, 2019, for an approved tax credit.

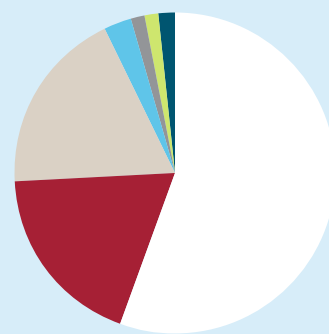
LTSS is truly thankful for the loyalty and support of the ELCA's seminary in the South. A gift of any size expresses faith in LTSS' continued prosperity and demonstrates the value and commitment LTSS and its supporters have for its students.

Visit [ir.edu/givetoLTSS](http://ir.edu/givetoLTSS)



## INSIDE THE NUMBERS

### THE LTSS STUDENT BODY

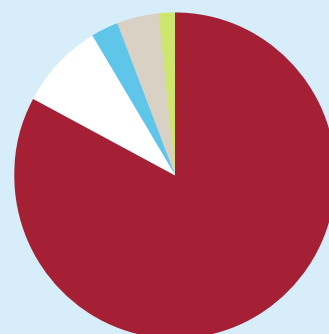


#### DENOMINATIONS

- ELCA - 39
- UMC - 13
- BAPTIST - 13
- PRESBYTERIAN - 2
- NON-DENOMINATIONAL - 1
- AME ZION - 1
- NALC - 1

37  
MEN

33  
WOMEN



#### DEGREE PROGRAMS

- MASTER OF DIVINITY - 53
- MASTER OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY - 6
- STM (TEACH-OUT) - 3
- MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES - 2
- MARL (LR DEGREE, ONLINE) - 1

53  
CAUCASIAN

16  
AFRICAN DESCENT

1  
ASIAN