

Southern Bulletin

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

WINTER 2016

FEATURES

Meet David Ratke, Dean of the School of Theology

Dr. Fred Whitt Named New President at LRU

Student Profile:
Andrea & Kyle Bates

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letter from the Dean

Student Referral Program

Groundbreaking Ceremony for OT Program

Columbia Campus Overview

Calendar of Events

Inside the Numbers

GET IN TOUCH

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“Christian faith needs to work throughout people’s lives, not just within the walls of the church, but everywhere.”

DR. RATKE

Dr. David Ratke Named Dean of Newly Formed College of Theology at LRU

In September, Lenoir-Rhyne University named the Reverend Dr. David Ratke as the first Dean of the newly formed College of Theology. The College replaced the former School of Theology at LRU, and encompasses the graduate courses provided at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS).

“We are pleased to welcome David to this leadership role,” said University Provost Dr. Larry Hall. “We are very confident he is right person to continue to guide theological study at Lenoir-Rhyne and LTSS, fulfilling our commitment to prepare servant leaders for the church and the world.”

An ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Dr. Ratke is a distinguished scholar and teacher who specializes in systematic theology. He has worked at LRU for 17 years, holding numerous leadership positions at the University and within the ELCA. For the past four years, Dr. Ratke has served as acting and then elected Chair of the Faculty. Prior to his appointment as Dean, he served as Chair of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Dr. Ratke earned his bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Alberta in Canada. Following his graduation, he accepted a position in the business industry but an inner sense of a higher calling compelled him to pursue a different path. Dr. Ratke served as a volunteer missionary for a year in a Native village in Ontario – an experience

he considers as a turning point in his life. He went on to pursue a Master of Arts in Theology at the Graduate Theological Union and a Master of Divinity at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, California. He also earned a Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Regensburg, Germany. During that time, Dr. Ratke served in parishes in Alaska, North Dakota, and Germany. He continues to share the gospel through service as a supply preacher for the NC Synod.

In addition to his new role as Dean, Dr. Ratke will continue to serve as an instructor and guest lecturer for various classes and events. He is currently teaching Lutheran Confessions, a foundational course for Lutherans at LTSS who are studying towards rostered ministry in the ELCA.

“Dr. Ratke is not only a well-recognized and respected theologian but a captivating professor,” said Jennifer Casey, Director of Enrollment Management. “The students and faculty of LTSS will benefit greatly from his expertise, and we welcome his leadership and vision for our institution.”

According to Dr. Hall, Lenoir-Rhyne’s new College of Theology is one of five at the University and will serve to strengthen the position of theological education and programming. “Through this reorganization, we are able to more fully integrate our theological programs and the important

mission of LTSS into the academic life at Lenoir-Rhyne University,” Hall added.

In 2013, Dr. Ratke was awarded the LR Faculty Scholar Award which is presented annually to the faculty member who has made the greatest contribution to his/her discipline during the academic year. Beyond his scholarly activities and commitment at LRU, Dr. Ratke shares his insights and knowledge of Lutheran theology through his writings. He is the author or editor of four books as well as numerous other articles focusing on various aspects of theology.

Dr. Ratke’s commitment to community service is evident through his extensive work with the Catawba Valley Interfaith Council. He also served six years on the Hickory Community Relations Council. He is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church where he teaches adult Sunday school classes and has held numerous leadership roles.

Dr. Ratke is married to artist Noelle Rasmussen. The couple, who have been married for over 22 years, are the proud parents of two children: Cecilia (19) attends college in Georgia and Paul (16) is a student at University Christian High School located on the LR campus. The family dog, Buddy, is a close companion to Dr. Ratke and regularly accompanies him to work.

LEARN MORE: lr.edu/ltss

Provost Recognized for Faithful Service

Four years ago, The Reverend Dr. Clayton Schmit became Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary’s (LTSS) first Provost. During his tenure, Dr. Schmit dedicated himself to the Seminary and laid the foundation for what is now the College of Theology at Lenoir-Rhyne University.

“We thank Provost Schmit for this faithful and dedicated service,” Dr. Wayne B. Powell, President of Lenoir-Rhyne University said. “His integrity and vision helped establish the new and exciting

arrangement between the University and the Seminary. We extend our best wishes to him in the future.” The merger between Lenoir-Rhyne University and LTSS took place in 2012.

Although Dr. Schmit has closed this chapter in his career, Lenoir-Rhyne has greatly benefited from his dedicated service. His vision and creativity have brought national attention to programs and the mission of LTSS. He has served as a valued colleague and a good friend to all. The impact of

his contributions will be felt long after his departure.

“It was after much contemplation and spiritual reflection that I came to the decision it was time for this chapter of my ministry to come to an end,” Dr. Schmit said. “I accepted the position of Provost with a clear ringing sense of call, and I have been blessed to serve in this role for the past four years. I am grateful to Lenoir-Rhyne University, Dr. Powell and the many faculty members, staff and students who have impacted my life and shared in this journey.”



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



The Reverend Dr. David Ratke
Dean of the College of Theology

“How are you?” we often ask each other. Typically we answer, “Fine” or something similar.

Recently my pastor, himself an alumnus of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, challenged us in a sermon to say, “I’m grateful.”

I’ve thought about that a lot over the past few months as I consider my experience as the Dean of the College of Theology. I’m grateful to serve in this ministry alongside incredibly dedicated, capable, and faithful faculty at LTSS. Some of them I’ve known as long as I’ve been at Lenoir-Rhyne; others I’ve only known since LTSS and Lenoir-Rhyne merged four years ago. The faculty members at LTSS have been – and continue to be – wonderful witnesses to the gospel.

I’m grateful for the alumni and other supporters of LTSS. I’ve met many alumni since I came to North Carolina from Germany nearly 18 years ago. The creativity, knowledge, and faithfulness of LTSS alumni has impressed me from the beginning. I’m even more impressed and grateful as I get to know many of them and their ministry even more.

There are challenges ahead for us. I was recently in Chicago at the meeting where the most recent Seminary graduates are assigned for call. At that assignment there were only enough graduates for 40% of the requested first call congregations. These are congregations which have the financial capacity to pay their pastor at synod guidelines. The church only has enough graduating seminarians to place in less than 40% of the congregations.

I’m concerned. LTSS has provided the church with wonderful pastors, but the church is rapidly approaching a crisis where there won’t be nearly enough pastors to lead congregations.

I hope that you’ll support LTSS – and even more importantly the church – by encouraging people you know to consider a call to ministry. Perhaps you’re that person.

Ask that person if they’ll consider a call to ministry. Maybe it will be a call to ordained ministry. Maybe it will be a call to lay rostered ministry as a deacon. The church needs servants. The church needs faithful ministers now more than ever.

LTSS has long been known as a place which teaches, forms, and nurtures people for ministry. Its graduates are known for their commitment to excellence in their ministry and for their faithfulness.

I hope that, for the sake of the church and its ministry of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, that you’ll encourage people around you to consider a call to ministry and that they’ll consider LTSS as they place to be taught, formed, and nurtured as they prepare for ministry.

May Christ be praised and his gospel proclaimed,

David Ratke

Dr. Frederick Whitt Welcomed to LR Bear Family

Dr. Frederick (Fred) K. Whitt has been named Lenoir-Rhyne University’s 12th president. The Board of Trustees made the much anticipated announcement on October 24. Faculty, staff, students, board members, constituents and other friends of Lenoir-Rhyne filled Grace Chapel to welcome and meet Dr. Whitt, who will officially assume his new role on February 1, 2017.

Dr. Whitt succeeds Dr. Wayne B. Powell who has served as University President for the past 14 years. “Dr. Whitt has a long history of distinguished leadership in higher education,” Dr. Powell said. “I am confident that Dr. Whitt is the right person at the right time to lead Lenoir-Rhyne to even greater heights in the next generation.”

the second largest college at Appalachian with 3,400 students. In addition, new graduate degree programs have been added and construction has begun on the new \$80 million, 203,000 square foot health sciences building (scheduled for completion mid-2018). Dr. Whitt is also credited with the establishment of Appalachian’s successful partnership with the Wake Forest School of Medicine, which is the first of its kind in the UNC system. Additionally, he secured funding for the first two endowed professorships in BCHS and was responsible for establishing the Dean’s Scholarship, now the third most prestigious scholarship at Appalachian State.

The recommendation to hire Dr. Whitt was brought to the Board of Trustees by



of CommScope and an alumnus of LRU. He is serving his seventh year on the Board of Trustees for the University and is chair of the board’s finance and investment committee.

Dr. Whitt expressed his excitement about his new appointment. “I am beyond excited about this extraordinary opportunity at Lenoir-Rhyne. I am honored and humbled to be named the 12th President of Lenoir-Rhyne University. I have always had great respect for Lenoir-Rhyne. The bedrock principles that are unique to Lenoir-Rhyne are values I enthusiastically embrace and support. I welcome this incredible opportunity to work with faculty, staff, students the greater community to advance the strategic plan of Lenoir-Rhyne and lead the University to an even higher level of excellence.”

“I believe that Dr. Whitt has the talent, experience and enthusiasm to lead Lenoir-Rhyne to new levels of achievement,” said Boyd George, Chairman of LRU Board of Trustees and Chief Executive Officer of Alex Lee, Inc. “I am excited by the potential growth under his leadership and look forward to what the future will bring.” George initially headed the search committee following Dr. Powell’s announcement of his retirement in September 2015.

Under Dr. Powell’s leadership, the University has undergone bold initiatives, unprecedented growth, and financial success that have defined its administration. He will retire on January 1, 2017.

“I commend the leadership of Dr. Powell, faculty and staff, alums, community leaders and the members of the Board of Trustees for the work they have done over the years advancing LRU to the status it enjoys today,” Dr. Whitt said. “The mission and traditions of Lenoir-Rhyne are compatible with my own interests and values. I look forward to embracing and advocating for the core values that have and will continue to be unique to Lenoir-Rhyne.”

Dr. Whitt is also looking forward to becoming significantly involved in the broader community. “It is evident that Lenoir-Rhyne University has a strong relationship with the Hickory and Catawba County region,” he said. “We will continue to embrace and support the greater community, promoting a welcoming and collaborative campus environment.”

Dr. Whitt earned his Doctorate from the University of Tennessee, and his Master of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees from Appalachian State. Prior to joining Appalachian State, he served as Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences at Georgia Southern University from 1992 to 2010.

A native of NC, Dr. Whitt grew up in Mt. Holly about 40 miles south of Hickory. His wife, Donna, is also a NC native and a Nurse Educator. They have been married for 38 years and are the proud parents of two adult married sons. In his spare time, Dr. Whitt enjoys landscaping and yard work, music, the arts, following college sports, and spending time with family. Dr. Whitt and his wife are members of Grace Lutheran Church in Boone.

“I have always had great respect for Lenoir-Rhyne. The bedrock principles that are unique to Lenoir-Rhyne are values I enthusiastically embrace and support.” DR. WHITT

Dr. Whitt brings over 30 years of successful leadership experience in higher education to Lenoir-Rhyne. He currently serves as Founding Dean of the Beaver College of Health Sciences (BCHS) at his alma mater, Appalachian State University. He has served as Dean since 2010 when he was appointed to lead the development of the first new college at Appalachian State in over 40 years. Dr. Whitt’s visionary leadership, passion for excellence, commitment for creating a collaborative culture, and development of significant community partnerships are credited for the success he has achieved at Appalachian State. The BCHS has doubled in enrollment over the first four years of existence and is now

Jearld Leonhardt who served as chairman of the search committee. “The Presidential Search Committee was very pleased to have found and nominated Dr. Whitt to the Trustees of the University,” Leonhardt said. “There was a strong consensus among the Committee in support of Dr. Whitt’s nomination based on his outstanding academic credentials, significant experience and noteworthy achievements in higher education. The Committee also believes that Dr. Whitt clearly respects the history, accomplishments, traditions and values of Lenoir-Rhyne and is altogether a good fit for the University at this time.” Leonhardt is co-founder and former Chief Financial Officer



REFER THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHURCH LEADERS

Have you ever met someone who you knew would be an exceptional servant to the church? Or has someone directly asked you about serving in the church? These are important opportunities that we cannot let slip by. Each of us has the responsibility to recognize individuals who need guidance in developing their vocational plans. You can make a significant difference in the life of another and the church by simply making a referral to the Seminary. The church relies upon pastors, congregation members, families, and friends to express a committed interest in others that will inspire men and women to consider a variety of church vocations.

TO MAKE A REFERRAL:

Contact the Office of Enrollment at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at Admissions_columbia@lr.edu or 803.461.3238. You can also mail a referral to LTSS, 4201 North Main Street, Columbia, SC 29203. Be sure to include the following information: name and email address of the person making the referral; person referred, along with their email address, cell phone, denomination, and program of interest.

There is a great need in the church for strong, dedicated and visionary leaders to serve, and no satisfaction greater than serving Christ and His people. Take the time to recognize and refer candidates who should know more about serving the church.



Groundbreaking Ceremony Celebrates Expansion of OT Program to Columbia

Community leaders and members joined officials of Lenoir-Rhyne University at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Occupational Therapy Building at the Center for Graduate Studies of Columbia. The event was led by University President, Dr. Wayne B. Powell; Provost, Dr. Larry Hall; Assistant Provost, Dr. Amy Wood; and newly appointed Dean of the College of Theology, Dr. David Ratke. The new 24,000 square foot building will include a state-of-the-art laboratory, classrooms and student work space, as well as faculty and administrative offices.



COLUMBIA CAMPUS OVERVIEW

Welcoming and accommodating a diverse student population



There are **2** major academic thrusts. One is in **theological** education and the other is in **graduate** education. Of the **136 enrolled students**, 76 students are enrolled at the **Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary**, and 60 are enrolled in the **Center for Graduate Studies**. // For the Fall 2016 enrollment, the following denominations are represented by students: **48** Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, **18** United Methodist Church, **6** Baptist, **1** Episcopal, **1** Presbyterian, **1** Roman Catholic, and **1** Non-Denominational. // Of the Seminary students, **75%** are full-time and **25%** are part-time. // The types of programs that are available at the Seminary are varied. **64** students are Divinity students and, thereby, pursuing ordination. **3** have as their focus Christian Ministry, **4** a Master of Religion, and there are **5** non-degree students. // Currently the Center for Graduate Studies has **25** students pursuing a Master in Counseling degree and **35** students pursuing a Master in Human Services. Of these 60 students, **50%** are full-time, and **50%** are part-time. // There are a variety of housing options on the Columbia campus. Single, double, and triple dormitory rooms are available. Two, three, and four bedroom apartments are available as well. A variety of individual needs and preferences can be accommodated.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Andrea & Kyle Bates '09 & '17

Andrea (Stover) Bates was living in Nebraska when she first heard about Lenoir-Rhyne University. She and her father, a Lutheran pastor, were looking through the directory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) for college options. There was something about Lenoir-Rhyne and the Hickory area that intrigued her and they went for a visit. "It was the people I met there that made the biggest impression," Andrea said. One individual in particular was the Campus Pastor, Andrew Weisner. "I remember he took mine and my mother's hands and we prayed together. I just knew that Lenoir-Rhyne was the place God was calling me to be for the next four years." Andrea would continue to meet people at Lenoir-Rhyne who would impact her life – including her future husband, Kyle Bates. They met during their junior year through mutual friends. They were both members of the Lutheran Student Ministry and fraternity/sorority life. Kyle majored in Theology and Religion, minoring in Sacred Music and Andrea studied Human and Community Services. At LRU, they grew as individuals and Christians, and felt prepared for the next chapter of their lives.

Following their graduation in 2009, they each held jobs in Atlanta but were excited to discover openings at Lutheridge in Arden, NC – a Christian summer camp that Kyle often attended as a youth, and had served as a summer counselor during college. The couple worked at Lutheridge for two years – during which time they became engaged and married in 2013. The experience reinforced their passion for sharing the gospel and dedicating their lives to ministry. They chose the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS) to pursue Master of Divinity degrees.

"I am proud to be a part of an institution that is ecumenical, embracing students of other denominations and learning from their beliefs." **KYLE BATES**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

03

J Term Courses Begin

JANUARY

16

MLK Jr. Commemorative Lecture – The Reverend Dr. Obery Hendricks, Jr.

JANUARY

23

Spring Semester Begins

JANUARY

27

Lecture, "Why Give? The Christian Practice of Almsgiving"

JANUARY

29-30

The Experience, Seminary Open House

FEBRUARY

24-25

Scholarship Weekend

FEBRUARY

10

AFL Presents: Mental Health: Opportunities and Challenges for Congregations

MARCH

10

AFL Lecture: Dr. Jacqueline Bussie: Outlaw Christian: Finding Authentic Faith by Breaking the Rules

MARCH

26-27

The Experience, Seminary Open House

APRIL

07-16

Spring Break

APRIL

16

Easter

MAY

05

AFL Presents: Physical Disabilities: Opportunities and Challenges for Congregations

MAY

19

Alumni Day and Baccalaureate Service

MAY

20

Commencement

AFL: Academy for Faith and Leadership

"The faculty members are top notch at LTSS," Kyle said. "As a student, you are welcomed by name and have the opportunity to get to know and work closely with your professors." He and Andrea agree that the smaller, more intimate class settings promote more thought-provoking and meaningful discussions. "I am also proud to be a part of an institution that is ecumenical, embracing students of other denominations and learning from their beliefs," Kyle added.

Both Kyle and Andrea hope to graduate in May 2017 and are looking forward to their ordination through the ELCA. "We couldn't have asked for a better educational experience than we have had with Lenoir-Rhyne and LTSS, and are grateful for the guidance and support we have received," Andrea said.



4201 North Main Street
Columbia, SC 29203



Academy of Faith and Leadership Enhances Education at LTSS

The Academy of Faith and Leadership (AFL) is an important component of the educational experience offered through the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. The Academy provides a variety of programs and resources to equip students and clergy members for their lifelong work as servants of the gospel.

Founded on the premise that all Christians are called to the vocation of ministry, AFL seeks to empower women and men to be faithful disciples of Christ both in the church and throughout the world. As the seminary's primary avenue for offering continuing education and lifelong learning, the AFL offers:

- Educational workshops and seminars for lay and clergy audiences, focusing on a variety of topics affecting the church and its leaders today;
- Lectures, which are free and open to the public, featuring prominent guest speakers;
- Library of resources for congregations like the "What Does This Mean?" video series;
- Free audio downloads of past lectures and other events;

- Certificate programs including the Public Safety and Military Chaplaincy Programs; and
- Study leave options for current church leaders.

The Reverend Dr. Ginger Barfield serves LTSS as Executive Director of the AFL and Professor of Theology. For more information about services provided through the AFL, contact Dr. Barfield at ginger.barfield@lr.edu or 803.461.3253. Visit lr.edu/AFL for a listing of upcoming events.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Don't miss the next guest scheduled as part of the Lenoir-Rhyne Institute of Faith in Learning Speakers Series, sponsored by the AFL:

The Rev. Obery Hendricks, Jr.
Monday, January 16 at 7 p.m.
Stavros Lecture Hall, LTSS

Hendricks is a professor of biblical interpretation at the New York Theological Seminary. He previously served as a professor at Drew University and a visiting professor at Princeton Theological Seminary.

lr.edu/ltss



THE CALENDAR YEAR END APPROACHES

To continue the faithful work of the faculty and staff of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, our most critical need is for the financial support of people like you so that:

Men and women can be prepared day by day to **serve the church**

Congregations will have **regularly-called pastors**

Church leaders in non-ordained vocations can be **professionally trained for lay ministry**

It is your committed giving that assures that consecrated individuals will be prepared to be in congregations across the world. Regardless of the size of the gift, every dollar will be joined to every other dollar to produce a yield that has the potential of making a huge impact. What will your response be?

Remember that giving prior to December 31, 2016 is tax deductible.

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
4201 North Main Street
Columbia, SC 29203

Or visit lr.edu/givetoLTSS

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: GIVING

\$176,940

GIFTS TO NEW ENDOWMENTS

NEW GIFTS TO EXISTING ENDOWMENTS

\$56,315

PAWLEY'S ISLAND SCHOLARSHIP - SS

\$12,284

PASTOR CARL O. AND EDITH W. NELSON
ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP - COLA

\$11,394

CHAIR-LUTHERAN STUDIES - LTSS

\$3,669

OTHER ENDOWMENT GIFTS

\$49,987

VALUE OF STOCK RECEIVED FROM THE
ESTATE OF VERNA CAVANAUGH
AND DESIGNATED FOR THE NEW LIFE FUND.

\$2M

GIFTS MATCHING FUND FOR
THE METHODIST STUDIES CHAIR
CAMPAIGN AND THE FRANK
AND PEARL LEFLER ENDOWMENT

\$149,327

2017 NEW LIFE FUND:
GIFTS RECEIVED IN SUPPORT OF
THE EDUCATION AND FORMATION
OF FUTURE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH

→ **77%**
INCREASE FROM 2016

\$435,370

TOTAL UNRESTRICTED:
GIFTS RECEIVED FROM THE ELCA
AND SYNODS PRIMARILY

→ **13%**
INCREASE FROM 2016

\$173,388

TOTAL RESTRICTED:
INDIVIDUAL GIFTS SPECIFICALLY
DESIGNATED FOR LTSS NEEDS

→ **8%**
INCREASE FROM 2016