



# SOUTHERN BULLETIN

## FALL 2021

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In Memoriam

### GET IN TOUCH

The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore  
Rector and Dean  
803.461.3240  
mary.shore@lr.edu

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Under the leadership of Keith Alexander, the seminary is building a quarter-acre farm on campus using bags to grow produce. The resulting crops will be used in foodservice on campus and shared with the local community. (Photo credit: Charles Uko)

## Food and Faith Formation: LTSS combats food deserts through farm-to-table initiative

Some people don't know when or from where their next meal is going to come. Food deserts exist where people may not have the financial means to acquire food or access to grocery stores with fresh food they can afford.

According to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, residents of the Eau Claire community, which is home to the seminary, struggles with food deserts. This challenge, in turn, has given the seminary an opportunity to act.

Food insecurities are a common occurrence in South Carolina, with all but a handful of counties in the state experiencing them to one degree or another, according to the SCDHEC.

The Rev. Dr. Melanie Dobson, assistant professor, was interested in teaching her students about those issues after attending an Eating Together

**“It’s a framework designed to explore the question of — how do Christians eat in a way that glorifies God? It also incorporates aspects of food justice, ecology and reading scripture together.”**

**THE REV. DR. MELANIE DOBSON**

Faithfully training program that explored food and food systems from a Christian perspective.

“It’s a framework designed to explore the question of — how do Christians eat in a way that glorifies God?” she said. “It also incorporates aspects

of food justice, ecology and reading scripture together.”

The program had two sessions at LTSS before the pandemic shut down the campus; however, it put Dobson and the seminary on a path with Keith Alexander, Axiom Farms and a new way of living — and eating — on campus.

LTSS is in a position to affect issues of food insecurity in its neighborhood. As a Christian institution of higher learning, its members are called to love thy neighbor and help those in need. With 10 acres and the humid subtropical climate of Columbia, South Carolina, it has the space to put those words into action.

**CONTINUED PAGE 3**



A native of Virginia, the Rev. Kermit Moss is completing his doctorate in practical theology while teaching courses at LTSS. (Photo credit: Mikeala Skelton)

### FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## Called to Serve: professor’s work for the Lord features Black church studies and hip-hop culture

The Rev. Kermit Moss’ work for the Lord extends beyond the walls of a church. He is the newest addition to the faculty at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary for fall 2021.

Moss joins LTSS after serving as a parish minister for the United Methodist Church in New York City and New Jersey, while also serving as interim director of the Betsey Stockton Center for Black Church Studies.

“We are thrilled to welcome Professor Moss as a faculty colleague,” said the Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore, rector and dean of LTSS. “His background in ministry and his scholarship in practical theology make him exactly the right person to join LTSS as we teach, form and nurture leaders who are able to form community in Christ across cultural differences.”

A native of Virginia, Moss began his ministry by pastoring churches in the South Bronx and Manhattan. While at Princeton, Moss taught courses and served in a director role while preaching at a church in New Jersey.

“Growing up, I thought I was going to be a lawyer,” he said. “But then I felt a progressive sense of calling, something I couldn’t run away from.”

Moss earned his Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary. In the final stages of completing his dissertation, Moss plans to present and earn his doctorate in practical theology from Princeton Theological Seminary by year-end.

“I’m looking forward to learning from my students as much as they learn from me,” he said.

At LTSS, he is teaching courses in practical theology, methodology, urban youth and hip-hop culture.

“Professor Moss’ reach will extend beyond the classroom as he helps us to strengthen ecumenical partnerships,” Shore said. “With his gifts for leadership and collaboration, LTSS has the potential to become a regional center of Black church and culture studies.”

He joined the LTSS and Columbia communities along with his wife Antoinette, also a United Methodist Church pastor who is joining the seminary as director of lifelong learning, and children Chloe, Sebastian and Kermit Jr. ●

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



The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore  
Rector and Dean (Photo credit: Charles Uko)

At the seminary, we are in the midst of three projects that require us to peer into the future.

- Writing a strategic plan
- Revising the curriculum for the Master of Divinity program
- Preparing, for rollout next fall, a path to the M.Div. that students can complete mostly at a distance from Columbia

All of these tasks require a focus on the future. Therefore, we are asking, “What will the future hold?” Into what joys and challenges is the Spirit leading LTSS, our students, and the congregations they will serve?

We have great partners and good tools for this planning. Still, such work is both energizing and daunting. If you have been part of congregational planning, you know the daunting questions: What about all the contours of the future that we cannot predict? How do we know what to let go of and what to take up? What if we get it wrong?

In the midst of questions like these, two things give me hope and courage.

First is the faithfulness of God. I have been reading through Acts again just to remember what the Spirit can do with people like us. Ours is not the first generation to be tasked with ministry that is way beyond our capacity.

When I was studying for my Ph.D., I felt inadequate to the work pretty much every day. There is so much to learn, and some of it is really hard to understand. I would encourage myself with the thought, “People dumber than me have read this book.”

In the same way, the company of saints and apostles who have gone before us were not all the highest quality “raw material” for God to work with. Some might have even been people dumber to understanding God’s call than us. Still, the gospel of Jesus Christ was and is proclaimed. Lives were and are being transformed by the mercy of God.

The promise of the Triune God to be with us and for us in the future—whatever that future is—gives us the courage to risk all this planning. We walk by faith, not by sight. And God is faithful even to people like us, for Jesus’ sake. Secondly, the gifts of each day encourage me and give me hope. Psalm 118:24 says, “This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” While I cannot find the citation, Maya Angelou is credited with paraphrasing that psalm verse with the words, “This is a wonderful day. I haven’t seen this one before.” In the midst of all our focus on the future, we at the seminary, like you, have the gifts of each new day. Every day is a gift we haven’t seen before.

Take yesterday, for example. As part of a faculty review process, I observed the class of a professor who is early in his career. What a joy! I said to him afterward, “Watching you teach gives me such hope for the future of the church.” to which he replied, “That’s what watching this group of students gives me.” These were two of the gifts of one particular Wednesday on the LTSS campus: a teacher growing into his vocation and students doing the same. What a daily privilege it is to teach and learn theology, history, Scripture, and the arts of ministry in this place.

I look forward to sharing the outcome of our planning with you, and I look forward to the work that will follow the planning. In the meantime, I offer these reasons for my hope and yours: we know God is already in the future to which we are headed. We experience God’s provision in each new day. With these assurances, we dare to plan and work. ●

Grace and peace,

Mary Hinkle Shore, Rector and Dean



Kirsten Beth Starr (right) is in her second year as a seminarian; however, she only arrived on campus in person for the first time for the fall 2021 fall term after the pandemic forced classes to be held virtually during the 2020-21 academic year. She is seated at chapel with Adriana McMurphy (left) and Bridget Whately (middle). (Photo credit: Jennifer Shimota)

## Delving Deeper: Second-year seminarians join LTSS in person for the first time

Kirsten Beth Starr had never set foot on Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary campus before she arrived for classes Aug. 30.

Yet, the second-year seminarian in the Master of Divinity program was surrounded by friendly faces.

After a year of taking classes remotely online due to the pandemic, Starr and her classmates found themselves in classrooms, sitting for lectures and discussing assignments like typical graduate students.

“It was different but funny,” Starr said. “I didn’t know where my classrooms were, but I know everyone in my classes. We’ve been Facebook friends for a year.”

Hailing from Fuquay-Varina, a suburb of Raleigh, North Carolina, Starr was in a unique position due to COVID-19. While being forced to attend classes online deprived her of the in-person instruction and interaction with her classmates, eliminating the nearly four-hour drive one way was a welcome reprieve. And it didn’t rob her of pursuing her calling to be a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

“A call to ministry is different from a lot of calls,” said Starr, who is a mother of two and works full time as a procedure writer at Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant for Duke Energy, in addition to her responsibilities as a seminarian.

“It appeared that once I finally made the decision to follow my call and go to seminary, the world shut down. It could have felt like it was the end of the road, but it wasn’t. Every time we ran into a roadblock, there always seemed to be a way around it.”

While in-person instruction wasn’t an option, Zoom turned out to provide an avenue for more in-depth education.

“We used a flipped classroom style, which I discovered is my absolute favorite,” she said. “We had our readings and watched lectures outside of class, so our classes were all discussion. That allowed us to dive deep into topics.”

Classes returned to campus for the 2021-22 academic year, and, after nearly four hours in the car, Starr was there for morning prayer in Christ Chapel. For the rest of the day, she

attended classes, met with her advisor and took a tour of campus. She even met the Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore, rector and dean of LTSS.

“She was there to meet me on my first day with tea,” Starr said. “It was very welcoming.” ●

**“The highlight of being with my peers in lecture classes this year is being in their presence. You can feel the joy and enthusiasm that comes from gathering in person to learn and fellowship.”**

CANDICE CLARK '25 MASTER OF DIVINITY



Adriana McMurphy and Candice Clark, both seminarian students, engage in conversation about classes. ((Photo credit: Jennifer Shimota)

## Food and Faith Formation, continued

“On a larger scale, less than 2 percent of the population farms, but 100 percent of us eat,” Alexander said. “That’s not a sustainable model. We’ve entered a partnership with Lenoir-Rhyne to bring a food hub or farm to campus.”

Dobson attended the Eating Together Faithfully training program, which put her in touch with Alexander through the nonprofit Koinonia of Columbia. Through their interactions, they developed the spring pilot program of Eating Together Faithfully on campus. This led to LTSS forming a relationship with Alexander and Axiom Farms to become the foodservice vendor on campus using his restaurant Rare Variety Café. It also creates an opportunity for the seminary to address food insecurities in the community by providing fresh fruits and vegetables to residents in Richland and Lexington counties.

Using roughly a quarter of an acre plot on campus, Alexander uses grow bags, similar to potted plants. This allows him to maximize yield and minimize labor by providing a better quality of soil and limit the necessity to pull weeds. He also has raised garden beds surrounding the farm itself to plant flowers and even introduce various insects that promote pollination and prevent infestation.

“The implications are going to be enormous,” he said. “We already have a relationship with the community. Not only are we going to feed the campus, but also people in the community are already excited for us to open and have access to fresh food.”

**“The implications are going to be enormous. We already have a relationship with the community. Not only are we going to feed the campus, but also people in the community are already excited for us to open and have access to fresh food.”**

KEITH ALEXANDER

The menu features vegetarian and vegan options, such as a fried eggplant filet. Other options include raw collard green and kale salads; however, the menu changes with the seasons as different produce is grown to maximize the space.

“We’ll be able to make everything from baba ghanoush with eggplants to sides that we can add to our salads,” he said. “It’s a much fresher taste.”

LTSS and Alexander broke ground on the new farm in September with plans to grow a few fall crops in preparation for the spring and a complete growing cycle.

To help get the farm off the ground, the seminary applied and was approved for grants from In Trust Center for Theological Schools and the North Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. ●



Alexander formed Axiom Farms to address food insecurities through his restaurant Rare Variety Café while providing fresh produce to the community via food hubs. (Photo credit: Charles Uko)



The garden-to-table initiative offers vegetarian and vegan meal options such as fried eggplant filet and baba ghanoush. (Photo credit: Charles Uko)



Antoinette Gaboton-Moss joins the seminary as the inaugural director of lifelong learning. (Photo credit: Charles Uko)

## Lifelong Learning: Gaboton-Moss brings experience, passion to new role

Lifelong learning provides continual opportunities for theological education, formation and just-in-time learning for current and contemporary needs. As the inaugural director of the Center for Lifelong Learning at LTSS, the Rev. Antoinette Gaboton-Moss will work alongside clergy and laity eager to explore Christian vocations, continue their formation journey and develop leadership skills in today’s world.

In her role, Gaboton-Moss is responsible for several certificate programs – spiritual direction, public safety chaplaincy and military chaplaincy, among other continuing education opportunities.

“Discipleship is a lifelong journey,” said the Rev. Mary Hinkle Shore, rector and dean. “With the addition of Antoinette to our staff, the seminary is poised to serve the church with continuing education for

rostered leaders and lifelong learning for everyone.”

Previously, Gaboton-Moss served as senior pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Highland Park, New Jersey. In addition, she is the founder and executive director of Black Community Watchline, which provides free and confidential support to Black people in Middlesex County, New Jersey, experiencing racist violence or abuse.

Before entering the ministry, Gaboton-Moss worked in the New York City office of two global advertising agencies – as a media planner for Grey Global Group and an advertising executive for Ogilvy & Mather. She later formed her own marketing firm and was on staff at a 6,000 member church implementing innovative ministry and serving in pastoral care. ●

## IN MEMORIAM

The Rev. Dr. Philip Lawrence Conrad Wahlberg '46 5/9/2021

The Rev. Dr. Robert Quincy Beard '58 3/8/2021

The Rev. John F. Taylor '58 4/5/2021

The Rev. Dr. Robert F. Sims '61 and '78 8/4/2021

The Rev. Dr. C. Earnest Brooks '64 5/11/2021

The Rev. Dr. Henry Mann McKay '64 8/28/2021

The Rev. Roger L. Beaver '71 2/7/2021

The Rev. Marion C. Brazell '73 6/10/2021

The Rev. James W. Campbell '81 8/22/2021

The Rev. Dr. Sandra Kay Johnson '01 8/27/2021

The Rev. Timothy D. Bryson '03 4/29/2021

The Rev. Scott R. Stein '03 4/15/2021

The Rev. Richard Conrad Davis Inman '11 9/6/2021

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

## UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

3

Last day of fall semester classes

JANUARY

5-8

Spiritual Direction program intensive

JANUARY

18

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Service of Commemoration

JANUARY

28

LTSS/Region 9 Stewardship Symposium  
Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Daniel M. Bell Jr.

JANUARY

30-31

Seminary Snapshot

FEBRUARY

17

Alumni Day and Second Annual Day of Giving

FEBRUARY

23-24

LTSS Advisory Council meeting

MARCH

7-11

Spring Break

APRIL

7-8

LTSS/Region 9 Candidacy Summit

MAY

5

LTSS Baccalaureate Columbia Graduate Hooding and Commencement

\*Events are subject to change as university schedules, policies and safety measures evolve.

## SCENES FROM SOUTHERN

Beautiful scenes from Southern can be captured daily at LTSS or catch a glimpse of these images and more by following LTSS on Facebook at [facebook.com/LutheranTheologicalSouthernSeminary](https://facebook.com/LutheranTheologicalSouthernSeminary).



4201 North Main Street  
Columbia, SC 29203

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## THANKFUL FOR YOU

Gifts to the New Life Fund, the seminary's annual 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.

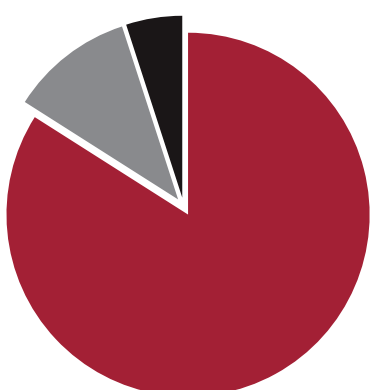
Join the many supporters of LTSS in making sure the needs of the seminary and our seminarians are met. Please make a tax-deductible gift prior to May 31, 2022, our fiscal year end.

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 the seminary's continued prosperity and demonstrates the value and commitment LTSS and its supporters have for its students.

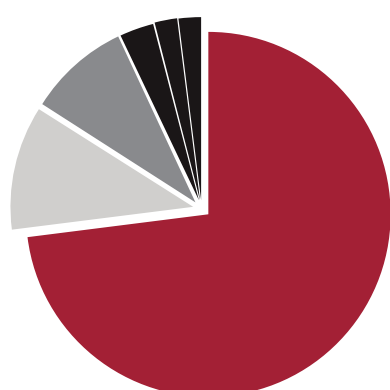
Visit [lr.edu/IGive2LTSS](http://lr.edu/IGive2LTSS).

## INSIDE THE NUMBERS: ENROLLMENT

### BY DEGREE PROGRAM



### BY DENOMINATION



## INSIDE THE NUMBERS: GIVING

The following are the results of a successful fiscal year, which culminated on May 31, 2021.

# \$2.67 MILLION

IN CASH AND COMMITMENTS RAISED FOR THE SEMINARY

# \$1.5 MILLION

RAISED IN SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT, ENHANCING ACCESS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE SEMINARY STUDENTS

# 15.45%

LTSS ALUMNI MADE A GIFT, MARKING THE HIGHEST PARTICIPATION IN GIVING BACK IN THREE YEARS

# \$134,000

RAISED ON INAUGURAL DAY OF GIVING FROM 144 DONORS

# \$342,000

DONATED FOR 2020-21 LTSS NEW LIFE FUND

# \$350,000

GOAL FOR 2021-22 LTSS NEW LIFE FUND GOAL