



# SOUTHERN BULLETIN

## FALL 2022

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Southern Bulletin is a publication of Lenoir-Rhyne University and produced for friends of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

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The seminary has adopted a new strategic plan for 2022-2025 to help revise program learning outcomes, update program curricula and make programs available to all students — residential, commuter and distance ed.

## Remember well the future: The new strategic plan for LTSS

In an effort to build on the accomplishments of the last three years, the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary is setting out to revise program learning outcomes, update program curricula and make all of the seminary's programs available to residential, commuter and distance education students as part of a new strategic plan.

"The seminary has always had formation at the center of what we understand our work to be. The plan has formation there, too," shared the Rev. Dr. Mary Shore, dean and rector for LTSS. "With this updated plan, one of the additions to what we've already been doing is that we're attending to formation in both the hybrid and the residential paths for our degrees.

**"Our students and our faculty are our best advertisements. Working with them more and lifting up their gifts is pretty exciting."**

THE REV. DR. MARY HINKLE SHORE

Also, it is our aim to increase the footprint of the seminary with lifelong learning programs, getting our name out there and expanding the mission of the school beyond the graduate degrees that we offer."

Through this strategic plan, a focus is put on four themes:

- Innovative teaching and learning, especially in teaching, assessing and revising the new M.Div. and M.A. curricula, while also continuing to improve online and hybrid teaching and learning, and expanding lifelong learning programs.
- Vibrant formation in leadership and ministry, as that formation happens in an intentionally diverse community of learning, in daily worship and campus ministry, and in mentoring relationships between students and faculty.
- Dynamic partnerships that help the seminary to connect with more prospective students, increase enrollment, deepen collaboration across the university and within its Columbia, South Carolina neighborhood, and strengthen ties to alumni and friends.

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### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Feeling the calling



Like so many seminary students before him, Mac Mullins '23 was first led toward ministry by his own pastor.

"I had a conversation with my pastor about where to study Lutheran theology, and he asked if I'd considered going into ministry. He said, 'I think you have the gifts,'" Mullins shared, who joined the Master of Divinity program at LTSS in 2019.

"There are three parts to the candidacy process. God calls you. That's one thing, but you also have to feel the calling. Then other people have to identify it within you. For me, it all happened fast. It was very much God calling me, but also kind of God shoving me out the door."

Mullins's internship at St. Paul's Lutheran Church — a mid-sized congregation in Durham, North Carolina — in 2021-2022 proved just as impactful as those early steps of discernment.

"It was an incredible year. I did everything — pastoral care, home visits, hospital visits and some campus ministry. I learned to fill out the paperwork and the church parish register. I learned that Wite-Out is my friend," he chuckled.

Most important for Mullins was getting time to practice preaching, an area where he didn't feel especially confident before the internship.

"I got to preach quite a lot and found I have some talent for it. It's something I enjoy and want to keep working on because one is not born a great preacher. It's a skill that takes years of practice to perfect."

Mullins looks forward to those coming years of practice as he begins the process of ordination. As closely as he connected with St. Paul's during his internship, his vision of his ideal church has broadened from the experience.

"I'm less worried about the size of the church, how it looks or how the congregation worships. I want a church that wants to live out the gospel," he said. "I'm interested in a congregation that's willing to challenge themselves. Lutherans are the church of the Reformation, our understanding is that God is always reforming the world. We have to be willing to be reformed and make the world a place where God's vision becomes how the world is." •

Mac Mullins '23



## RECTOR'S LETTER



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

Many of you will have heard by now that this semester will be my last one at LTSS. I am retiring from my role as rector and dean at the end of this calendar year. The nearly four years have gone quickly, even overshadowed as they were by the COVID pandemic. You can read the announcement of my retirement at [lr.edu/news/seminary-dean-to-retire](https://www.ltr.edu/news/seminary-dean-to-retire).

As I look toward ending my term, I am grateful to an extraordinarily gifted seminary faculty and to the students whose vision for ministry and service is a daily inspiration to us. Colleagues in Asheville and Hickory have also helped to make this work meaningful, as we continue to explore the ways that the seminary may thrive and contribute within Lenoir-Rhyne University.

Support from alumni and friends of the seminary has deepened in recent years. Thank you, dear friends, for your encouragement of students and all those who are part of LTSS, including me. I could not have hoped to work among a more dedicated or supportive group of partners in the gospel.

The work continues even as a transition is on the horizon. In August, the Columbia campus hosted our inaugural "First Week" — an event where residential and hybrid students are together for classes, worship, meals, faculty and student

panel discussions, and more. This time on campus happens at the start of each semester, and it is an integral part of the vibrant formation that all of our students receive.

This semester marks the rollout of our strategic plan whose key priorities you will read about in this issue of Southern Bulletin. Dr. Brent Driggers, associate dean for academic programs, will be leading the faculty and staff in the interim as they move into strategic plan implementation.

The search for a new rector and dean is underway. See [lr.edu/work-at-lr](https://www.ltr.edu/work-at-lr) for the position description. We would be grateful for your prayers during this process and for your nominations of candidates to join the seminary's work in this position.

Thank you for all you do for the seminary, the church, and the good news of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for faithfulness in every season. ●

Grace and peace,

Mary Hinkle Shore, Rector and Dean



The cloud of dust and hydrogen is being pulled together in a process that will create more than a star. (Photo credit: The Rev. Dr. Brian Peterson)

## The intersection of theology and science through photography

In the library at LTSS hangs a unique photography exhibit featuring galaxies, nebulae and stars swirling in deep space, courtesy of the Rev. Dr. Brian Peterson, who marks his 25th year as a seminary faculty member. Peterson teaches New Testament courses and coordinates internships, but many alumni will remember him best as their Greek language professor.

"We used to have an informal group that would get together and read a little bit of Greek from the texts for the coming Sunday, just to keep that skill going. One day I probably got a little too excited about some obscure bit of Greek grammar, and one of the students perceptively said, 'You know Dr. Peterson, you really need a hobby,'" Peterson chuckled, remembering his start in astrophotography.

Shortly after that class, Peterson bought a telescope.

"I always wanted to take pictures through the telescope as a kid and made many futile attempts, but I never had the right equipment to do it," he recalled.

After a few months with his new telescope, he was hooked. He joined an astronomy club and was given his own small observatory in the South Carolina countryside — leading him to update his computers to capture more sophisticated images.

"I think part of what has always attracted me to astronomy is the way it expands our frame of reference," he shared. "We get so absorbed in all of the events of our lives and the world — of course it's important — but it's also important to step back and realize the vastness of it all."

The notion that science and religion shouldn't intersect persists among some religious groups and scientific circles, but Peterson doesn't see a conflict between astronomy and theology.

"I think that that sort of conflict between science and theology/religion, as far as I know, has never been part of the Lutheran tradition. Part of what has kept us out of that ditch is a fairly nuanced way of talking about what the word of God is," he shared.

Instead, he sees the intersection as a starting point to build a new frame of reference through inquiry.

"I don't think scientists have to look at the universe and wonder at the glory of God's creation, but they can. For theology, maybe learning how astoundingly vast and complex the universe is can inform how we talk about what it means that God creates." ●



The Rev. Dr. Brian Peterson integrates his astronomy photos into his teachings through expanding our notion of science and religion.

## IN MEMORIAM

The Rev. Charles B. Dawkins '54 4/15/2022

The Rev. Dr. Charles W. Easley '56 5/27/2022

The Rev. William E. Smith '56 4/19/2022

The Rev. James R. Connelly '57 4/29/2022

The Rev. James W. Kinney '63 1/15/2022

The Rev. J. Pierce Evans '66 4/17/2022

Mrs. Dorothea McCarter Lyerly '66 6/22/2022

The Rev. Eddie Cloma Miller '77 8/8/2022

Pastor Peter C. Picos '82 5/25/2022

The Rev. Elizabeth Joy Toler '85 11/29/2021

The Rev. William Charles Zima '98 9/6/2022

Mr. Robert N. Hubbs '03 2/10/2022

Ms. Lorie Gladyness 9/19/2022



## Strategic plan continued

- Telling the seminary story in unified, clear and fresh ways across social media, the website and communications with all constituencies.

In identifying these themes and priorities, constituents of LTSS — including alumni, faculty, staff, the seminary advisory council and directors of the Evangelical Mission within the ELCA — were consulted.

“It was a culmination of those conversations and a direct response to what we identified as the major challenges: diminishing enrollment in degree programs, innovation for a changing church and world and resource stewardship: property and money,” Shore commented.

Work for assessing and creating the new plan started in September 2021 with planning sessions, gathering

documentation and history. Focus groups and draft planning continued into early 2022 with the new plan approved for adaptation beginning in October 2022. The plan is currently being implemented from 2022-2025.

As the seminary moves forward with a new academic year and this new plan to ensure a bright future for LTSS, Shore conveyed her excitement for the changes to come.

“I’m elated about raising the profile of the faculty of the seminary. We have talked about how students routinely say, ‘You’re not a number here. You have friendships. I have mentors among faculty people,’” Shore said. “Our students and our faculty are our best advertisements. Working with them more and lifting up their gifts is pretty exciting.” ●

## The Carroll Robinson Scholarship Fund: Honoring more than 60 years of service

In May 2022, Bethel Lutheran Church in Salisbury, North Carolina, funded the Carroll Robinson Scholarship in honor of a beloved Bethel pastor and financed through the estate of an anonymous church member. The scholarship will assist one student at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary with tuition costs each year in perpetuity.

“The donor preferred to remain anonymous, but he left the funds to Bethel to pass along to LTSS in recognition of Pastor Robinson’s help during his life and in recognition of his 60-plus years since ordination,” said Bethel’s pastor, the Rev. Michael Lang.

Robinson graduated from LTSS in 1962 and retired from full-time pastoral ministry in 2018, after 14 years as interim pastor at Bethel — the second longest tenure of any pastor in the church’s history. He has also served at several Lutheran churches around North Carolina, including Salem in Salisbury, Lebanon in Cleveland, Holy Trinity in Reidsville, Ascension in Reidsville, St. Paul’s in

Dallas and Our Saviour in Dallas.

Although Robinson has been officially retired for four years and is currently in his mid-80s, he continues to serve as a supply pastor to area churches around Salisbury, performing and assisting with marriages, funerals, baptisms and Sunday sermons whenever he is needed. He also remains involved with Bethel’s Men on Mission group, serving the larger community.

“Pastor Robinson is a wonderful man. It is amazing how he still lives out his call of serving God and serving others,” shared Lang.

Any LTSS student is eligible to receive the Carroll Robinson Scholarship, with preference given to ELCA church members. Details about the application process are available through the financial aid office at Lenoir-Rhyne. ●

## UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

6-7

Seminary Snapshot

JANUARY

27

ELCA Region 9 Stewardship Symposium, Speaker Bonnie Ives Marden

FEBRUARY

5-6

Seminary Snapshot

FEBRUARY

16

Alumni Day/Day of Giving, Yost Lecture Ann Garrido

FEBRUARY

28

LTSS Advisory Council Meeting

MARCH

21

Dr. Willie Jennings Lecture

\*To learn more about LTSS events, visit: [calendar.lr.edu/columbia](https://calendar.lr.edu/columbia).



Brandy Schneck '23

## Redevelopment in the time of COVID

Redevelopment — facilitating membership and activity at established churches — is challenging in the best of times, much less during a global pandemic. As a pastoral intern in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 2021, Brandy Schneck '23 found purpose and success revitalizing a community of faith at Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

“When my supervisor, Pastor Matt Powell, got there in 2018, they had 18 members. When COVID happened, they had 50,” explained Schneck, who is working on her Master of Divinity. “When I arrived, the goal was to maintain the members they had and make everyone feel part of the worship service, even though they weren’t all there in person.”

The congregation had discussed preliminary plans to make hybrid worship more interactive before Schneck’s arrival.

“Pastor Matt said, ‘We’re going to work on this, figure out all the plans, and we’ll have it running halfway through your internship,’” she recalled. “Then two days later he said, ‘Actually the congregation wants to do it right now.’ So, we got the cameras and started.”

Holy Cross became the first church in the Rocky Mountain Synod with a fully hybrid Sunday service.

“We had people in the congregation and on Zoom, but it wasn’t just like watching on Facebook or YouTube. Everyone was actually part of the service,” Schneck explained.

Schneck also led a weekly Bible study on Zoom that proved popular not only with Holy Cross members but other local churches.

“The Sunday service was important, but it was just as important for the congregation to be involved with the community and other ministries throughout the week,” she said.

Post-graduation, Schneck plans to continue working in redevelopment wherever she is needed, and she feels well prepared by her experience at Holy Cross.

“I take confidence from solving those challenges, and I also find so much hope from seeing how valuable relationships can still happen, even if we’re not in person together.” ●

## Honeycutt presented with J. Luther Mauney Leadership Award

In recognition of his gracious ministry among the whole people of God and his exemplary leadership in service to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Rev. Dr. Frank Honeycutt '85 was awarded the J. Luther Mauney Leadership Award in August 2022.

Presented annually to a graduate of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, this award honors the memory and ministry of J. Luther Mauney — revered pastor of the Lutheran Church, former president of the seminary Board of Trustees and former president of the Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

A native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Honeycutt earned his bachelor’s degree in elementary/special education from Clemson University in 1979, his Master of Divinity from LTSS in 1985 and Doctor of Ministry in preaching from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago in 1998. He served 18 years in the Virginia Synod (Stephens City and Abingdon) before accepting a call to Ebenezer in 2003.

He received the Bedenbaugh Distinguished Alumni Award from LTSS in 2001.

Honeycutt is the author of 11 books and more than 100 magazine articles. As a Lutheran (ELCA) pastor for over 30 years in the Virginia and South Carolina synods, his writing interests include homiletics, short fiction and parish practice of the historic catechumenate.

He and his wife, Cindy, an English teacher, have been married more than 30 years and have three adult children, Hannah, Marta and Lukas. An avid outdoorsman — Honeycutt has backpacked the length of the 2100-mile Appalachian Trail (1984) and bicycled across the country from Puget Sound to the Maine coast via the 4225-mile Northern Tier route (2018). ●



The Rev. Dr. Frank Honeycutt '85  
(Photo Credit: The Rev. Dr. Frank Honeycutt)



## Meet Laura Crawley, Ph.D.

Crawley joined LR on July 1, 2022, as the inaugural vice president for mission, engagement and innovation (MEI). In this new role, she will lead areas tied to the priorities of Lenoir-Rhyne University's and the seminary's strategic plans, including admissions, student life, the Living Well Center for Vocation and Purpose, and the Office of Spiritual Life.

"While I've spent my career at public colleges and universities, my heart has always been drawn toward private liberal arts education," shared Crawley. "I'm a lifelong Lutheran who has been a lay leader in the church for decades, and I have several friends who graduated from LR or LTSS. This new role is a professional and personal dream come true."

She previously held the role of assistant vice president for academic affairs at the

University of Georgia (UGA) and director of UGA's Gwinnett Campus. Crawley earned her bachelor of arts in American studies from the University of Texas at Austin, and her master's and doctorate in women's studies from Emory University.

As VP of MEI, Crawley will have an active role in the future of LTSS and is looking forward to working with the seminary's faculty, staff, students and alumni.

"Lenoir-Rhyne and LTSS offer students the chance to grow not only in knowledge but in spirit," she said. "It's an honor to work with President Whitt and our entire leadership team and university community to continue to nurture and expand the mission together." ●



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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.

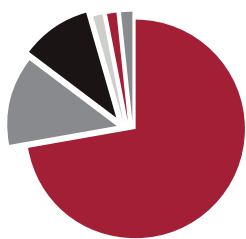
Join the many supporters of LTSS in making sure the needs of the seminary and our seminarians are met. Please make a tax-deductible gift prior to May 31, 2023, our fiscal year-end.

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).

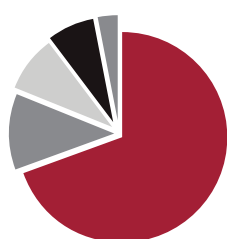
## INSIDE THE NUMBERS: STUDENTS

BY DENOMINATION



- ELCA 50
- Baptist 9
- Methodist 7
- ARPC 1
- ECUSA 1
- Non-Denom 1

BY DEGREE PROGRAM



- MDiv 48
- MACM 8
- MTS 5
- Affiliate 6
- Non-Degree 2
- Total 69**

## INSIDE THE NUMBERS: GIVING

**\$1.87 MILLION**

DOLLARS RAISED FOR LTSS IN FISCAL YEAR 2022

**16.7%**

ALUMNI WHO GAVE BACK TO LTSS IN FISCAL YEAR 2022

**\$353,000**

NEW LIFE FUND GOAL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

**\$58,540**

GIFTS TO THE NEW LIFE FUND, AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2022