

2019 Graduation Tributes

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Seminary for a Day
this September

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Sharon & Brook

CONNECTING THE UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY COMMUNITY

ISSUE 3 / SUMMER 2019

Strengthening Faith Formation Among Children

Seminary Professor Awarded Lilly Endowment Grant

When Karen-Marie Yust considers how children form their faith, she has at least three troubling concerns.

First, children, are confronting a world rife with new and terrifying realities. She mentions “active shooter drills” in schools as just one of those realities. Second, Millennial generation parents are drifting away from mainline churches and, with that exodus, losing the opportunity for the church to help them and their children develop the faith necessary to confront the new realities. And, third, budget cuts throughout traditional Christian denominations are hamstringing church educators’ and pastors’ ability to reach the upcoming generation.

Yust has “worked with kids” throughout her 30 years as a Christian educator, pastor, and professor, and during those years she has seen the need for better understanding of how religious faith is formed and nurtured in childhood. The Josiah P. and Anne Wilson Rowe Professor of Christian Education at Union Presbyterian Seminary has also seen how research has tended to focus not on children’s early formative years, from birth to 12, but rather the years starting with 12—the time when people think critical thinking about religion begins to “kick in.”

“That focus on older youth is, of course, important, but so much of who we are is formed when we are children,” says Yust. Furthermore, she points to major shifts in how

families—particularly Millennial families—view organized religion and new ways children are absorbing information in the digital age from a world that is excitingly diverse but potentially confusing and frightening.

Yust has been awarded a two-year grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. of Indianapolis to convene leading researchers from outside the fields of theology and religion to bring innovative approaches to bear on how the church can strengthen its ability to reach children and families.

“We’re starting to ask new questions and take new approaches from worlds outside of religion and theology,” Yust explains. “We’re bringing in experts from fields like children’s museum curation, children’s libraries, sociology, media studies, and developmental psychology.” Yust sees a critical need for innovative thinking from whatever fields seem promising to address the unprecedented realities today’s children face.

“Contemporary children have *existential* fears and hopes, and we, as a church, have to pay attention to that.

“Things can get very bad,” Yust continues. “They can see on television a child’s body wash up on shore during a refugee boat disaster. They can become angry, upset, and hurt. But God is still there. Faith can help them process this. We put our hope in God, and we work toward



“Contemporary children have existential fears and hopes...But God is still there. Faith can help them process this.”

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2019 GRADUATION

Graduation Tributes



John Vest and Ben Brannan

**Benjamin Shaw Brannan,
M.Div.'19
Final Level Student
Representative, Richmond**

"Professor of Evangelism and Entrepreneurial Ministry **John Vest** reshaped my understanding of what it means to 'do church,' finding connections between old and new models of ministry, and learning how out-of-the-box ministry can make an out-of-this-world impact."

Delphia Newton, MACE '19, Charlotte

"Studying Hebrew and Greek with **Dr. Carson Brisson** was the defining experience. His passion for his subject area, depth of knowledge, and heart for his students is unparalleled. He always ended class with a reading and a blessing, and the blessing at the end of class has become a touchstone for me."

**Katie Rose Thomison,
M.Div.'19, Richmond**

"**Dr. Samuel Adams**, Mary Jane and John F. McNair Professor of Biblical Studies, takes the school's motto of 'For the Church in the World' seriously. He inspires students to both intentionally translate ancient texts and actively translate the texts to our various vocations. Deep and close analysis of prophetic and wisdom texts from the Old Testament has further inspired my call to nonprofit ministry."



Katie Thomison and Sam Adams



Charlotte Graduates



Heather Brannon and Sam Balentine

**Heather Woodworth
Brannon, M.Div.'19,
Richmond**

"I am immensely grateful for **Dr. Samuel Balentine's** (Professor of Old Testament) impact on my life. He recognized my potential to pursue biblical scholarship long before I was aware of my gifts. His dedication to nurturing my intellectual curiosity led me to pursue Ph.D. studies at Emory University. I cannot imagine a more exceptional mentor."

William Joseph Haynes III, M.Div.'19, Charlotte

"**Dr. Rodney Sadler** is the first African American professor I have had. One of the things I have appreciated the most is the opportunity to grow, and learn with others that come from very different backgrounds. I never thought once that the context in which I grew up and the worldview that I have would influence the way that I read Holy text. It has been deeply rewarding and impactful to listen to others, especially our African American brothers and sisters, and their experiences with scripture. Dr. Sadler helped push me out of my comfort zone and changed the way I read scripture."

LEARN MORE

Discover the degree programs that Union Presbyterian Seminary offers:



www.upsem.edu/academics/programs/



Richmond Graduates

Sharon&Brook

Sharon & Brook is published by Union Presbyterian Seminary for alumni and friends of the Seminary.



@2019 Union Presbyterian Seminary

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Send us your updated information: Please send us the news of your life and ministry that we may share with others. The Seminary also welcomes updated email and mailing addresses, with current phone numbers. The Alumni Office would love to hear from you! Send news and contact updates to alumni@upsem.edu or call (804) 278-4382.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brian K. Blount

Like the visible and audible witness of a lightning strike, the Reign of God is on the move in our world. We respond to this Reign by charging behind and alongside it, endeavoring to emulate its prophetic, reconciling work through our witness of theological education.

In an increasingly pluralistic creation wounded by racial, ethnic, and religious divides, Union Presbyterian Seminary challenges itself to equip people of faith with the capacity to generate and sustain interracial, interfaith, and international community.

In a bitterly divided social and political culture, Union Presbyterian Seminary challenges itself to equip people of faith with the hermeneutical and pastoral tools needed to engender reconciliation.

In a religious and social context in which younger, spiritually interested, and invested generations continue to believe in the presence and pray for the intervention of God for social justice and yet increasingly reject the institutional church, Union Presbyterian Seminary challenges itself to equip people of faith to ignite more just communal transformation through spiritual formation rooted in deep biblical study and rigorous theological reflection.

In an increasingly mobile culture in which individuals and families frequently migrate across cities and regions, in which evolving vocations make sustained theological education in residential long-term programs impossible, and in which interest does not always draw students into formal degree-oriented programs, we challenge ourselves to equip people of faith to teach and learn across technology platforms so that access to theological education is

available to anyone, anywhere, who seeks it.

Union Presbyterian Seminary challenges itself with a particular vision: through its core mission of theological education, to equip people of faith to accentuate the ways in which God's Reign breaking into the world can impact the way in which the church and the world operate. Our goal is not only to place strong, capable leaders in every church; it is also to inspire and equip strong, capable, knowledgeable people of faith who can project the Reign of God in every component of church and world.

Union Presbyterian Seminary is teaching not just for church leadership, but also for leadership in the entire public sphere. We are dedicated to a vision of teaching not only Bible, theology, justice, and reconciliation, but also to positioning people of faith in churches, nonprofit organizations, schools, businesses, and politics who can and will embody God's inbreaking Reign.

That is the foundation for our 2019–2024 strategic plan. We are planning on doing all we can in our ministry of theological education to respond to the movement of God's Reign breaking in, even now, into our world. Our agenda for the next five years is outlined in three strategic priorities.

Priority One: We will witness, teach, and live into the movement of God's Reign by attracting, educating, and supporting increasingly diverse communities of learners for ministry in the church and the world. Educating leaders who carry the message and ministry of Jesus Christ into the world is our primary mission. As we move into a more diverse and inclusive world, we will do all we can to attract and equip a more diverse and inclusive student body.

Priority Two: We will witness, teach, and live into the movement of God's Reign by broadening the impact and reach of an increasingly diverse faculty and its work through an increased use of technology, new program initiatives, and strategic partnerships. We will strengthen our faculty by providing the resources necessary to innovate current degree programs and, where necessary, initiate new ones; to teach with tools appropriate to a world that is becoming more and more mobile; to equip students not only in the U.S., but from around the globe; and to extend the reach of our teaching ministry beyond our two campuses into all the places, religious and secular, where people seek to grow and deepen their faith.

Priority Three: We will witness, teach, and live into the movement of the Reign of God, whose Spirit of generosity has radical implications, both spiritual and material, by gathering financial resources and providing infrastructure support required to respond faithfully to our call as a theological resource to the church and the world. We will raise funds necessary to finance our vital ministry of theological education, secure the buildings and grounds in Richmond and Charlotte upon which that ministry is physically located, and expand our technological teaching platform.

If you would like to learn more about our future as outlined in our 2019–2024 Strategic Plan and find out how you can help us realize it, I invite you to view the Plan online.

Let's get to work.



www.upsem.edu/strategicplan2019

THE CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW PIPE ORGAN

Appreciation of Music Is Motivation for Gift to Watts Organ Fund

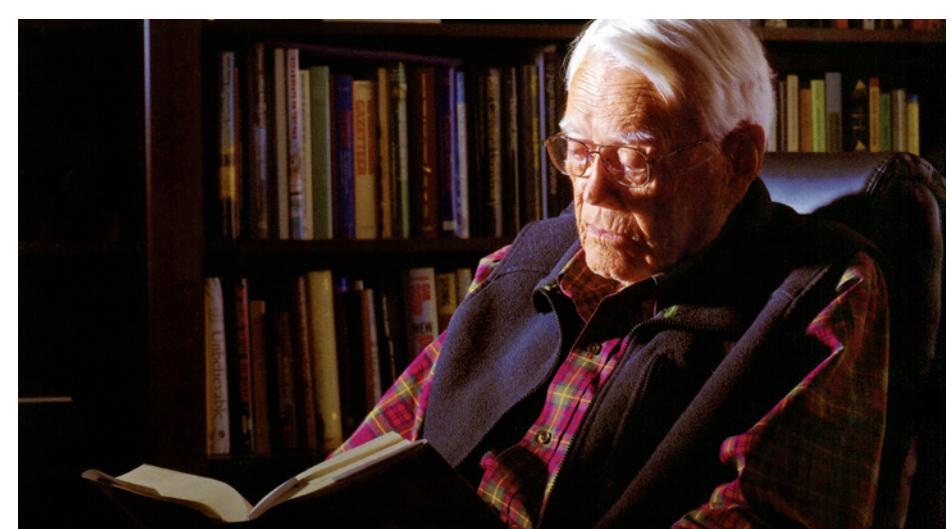
Dr. Earl Trevathan is not a musician, but he says he's a "good audience." And when he learned that Union Presbyterian Seminary is raising funds to replace the aging organ in Watts Hall, he wanted to help.

The 95-year-old retired pediatrician greatly enjoys organist Brad Collier's playing at First Presbyterian Church in his hometown of Greenville, North Carolina, on the church's new organ. He wants to see a new organ at Union, as well.

Over the years, Dr. Trevathan has traveled some distances to listen to organ music. He has heard the famed Massey Memorial Pipe Organ at Chataqua, New York, three times. He enjoyed organ music by Bach played in the master's hometown of Leipzig, in Germany. And his connection with Union Presbyterian Seminary goes back many years. "I knew Union from my Presbyterian beginnings," he explains.

Dr. Trevathan has fond childhood memories of visits from Seminary faculty, who preached in his parents' church in the town of Fountain—in Pitt County, North Carolina, some 18 miles from his home in Greenville. "My parents supplied the fried chicken dinner," he says.

"I wanted to make a contribution to Union, so I went to visit to learn about Union's needs, and the organ appealed to me," says Trevathan. "The need for an organ was paramount, and I love organ music, and I love



Dr. Earl Trevathan

church music, so it was a happy decision that our small contribution would go toward that."

"Many of us do have in our estates adequate funds to enjoy the pleasure and honor of making worthy contributions, and this seems to be a very worthy one."

LEARN MORE

For more information about the fund, or to make a contribution, please visit:



www.upsem.edu/wattsorganfund



GREETINGS

W. Clay Macaulay

Grace and peace to you in this summer season!

More than 200 alumni, friends, students, faculty, and staff registered and attended our annual Sprunt Lectures, held May 6–8, 2019, on the Richmond campus. Dr. John J. Collins, Yale Divinity School Professor of Old Testament Criticism and Interpretation, spoke on the theme “What Are Biblical Values?” and addressed biblical understandings of right to life, gender, the environment, and social justice.

Preaching in worship was Dr. Lance Watson (M.A.’86), of Saint Paul’s Baptist Church in Richmond. Rev. Anna George Traynham (M.Div.’14), of Central Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, was worship leader. Dr. Lewis Galloway (D.Min.’77, Th.M.’79) spoke at the Alumni Luncheon.

Dr. Harry Simmons (M.A.’84) was honored as Black Alumni Association Trailblazer of the Year, and Dr. Dean Thompson (B.D.’69, Th.M.’70, Ph.D.’74) was named 2019 Distinguished Alum.

Dr. Collins remarked to Sam Adams, “I go to a lot of seminaries and colleges where the buildings are tired and there is little energy. This time at Union has been such a refreshing and wonderful experience. The campus and buildings look great, and the community seems more on the upswing. That is a rarity these days in theological education.”

We appreciate Dr. Collins’s assessment of his time with us. And the Alumni Office appreciates the evaluations so many of you have shared! We hope you enjoy some photos taken during the event.

We encourage you to send news of your life and ministry to our Alumni Office at alumni@upsem.edu. Also, check out our alumni web page at www.upsem.edu/alumni.

Make plans to join us for next year’s Sprunt Lectures, May 4–6, 2020, in Richmond!

**W. Clay Macaulay (D.Min.’85), Director of Alumni Development
cmaulay@upsem.edu / (804) 278-4382**

From top to bottom, right:

Dr. Lewis Galloway (D.Min.’77, Th.M.’79) spoke on the theme “On Such a Time as This” at the Alumni Luncheon on May 7.

Dr. Harry Simmons, center (M.A.’84), was honored as 2019 BAA Trailblazer of the Year. He is shown here with Rev. Delano Douglas, left (M.Div.’04, Th.M.’11), Seminary trustee and BAA president, and Brian Blount.

Dr. Lance Watson (M.A.’86) and Rev. Anna George Traynham (M.Div.’14) were our preacher and worship leader for morning worship during the 2019 Sprunt Lectures.

Dr. Dean Thompson, center (B.D.’69, Th.M.’70, Ph.D.’74), was recognized as 2019 Distinguished Alumnus. He is shown here with his wife, Rebecca Thompson, and Brian Blount.



The D.Min. That Moves Your Ministry *Beyond Boundaries*

The new D.Min. for the Church in the World degree program begins Fall 2019 on the Charlotte campus and Fall 2020 on the Richmond campus.

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Alumni Notes

TRANSITIONS

Eileen B. Best (M.A.'84) retired in May as Connections Coordinator, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Portage, MI, Presbytery of Lake Michigan and Synod of the Covenant.

John M. Best (D.Min.'84) transitioned from General Presbyter of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan to temporary pastor of Pine Island Presbyterian Church in Kalamazoo, MI.

Jenny Day (M.Div.'06) has accepted a call as pastor of Dayton United Methodist Church in Dayton, VA.

Louis A. Florio Jr. (M.Div.'05) is serving as Associate Pastor for Community Engagement, Christian Formation & Pastoral Care at Christ Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Fredericksburg, VA. He was recently appointed chaplain of the City of Fredericksburg Police Department.

Caitlin Hahn (M.Div., M.A.C.E.'19) is serving as Director of Youth, Young Adults & Community Engagement at Bon Air United Methodist Church in Richmond, VA.

Ronnie A. Hankins Sr. (M.Div.'99) is serving as pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Odessa, TX.

Katie Barrett Todd (M.Div.'11) is serving as transitional pastor at Stony Creek PC in Burlington, NC, and as Church Leadership Connection Associate for the Office of the General Assembly.

Mason M. Todd (M.Div.'11) is serving as transitional pastor at Stony Creek PC in Burlington, NC, and as Church Leadership Connection Associate for the Office of the General Assembly.

Mary Ellen Vernon (M.A.'95) has been called to serve as Director of Discipleship for Youth and Adults at Community Presbyterian Church in Pinehurst, NC.

CELEBRATIONS

Andy Blackwelder (M.A.C.E.'11, M.Div.'18) was ordained into the ministry of the word and sacrament and installed as Associate Pastor for Youth & Children at Greeneville Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Greeneville, TN.

Elizabeth Lovell Milford (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'09), along with husband Matt and son Nathan, celebrated the birth of Andrew Norman Milford on October 2, 2018.

Elizabeth (M.C.E.'69) and Yugo Suzuki (Th.M.'66, Th.D.'71) celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in May.

William Upchurch (UPSem Charlotte student) and his wife, **Erin**, celebrated the birth of son William, born April 12, 2019.

IN MEMORIAM

William E. Alexander (M.Div.'68, M.A.'70)
February 10, 2019

Cornelia Hale Bryans (M.R.E.'55)
March 26, 2019

Carolyn Stuart Burgess
(wife of Samuel A. Burgess, M.Div.'52)
January 19, 2019

Janet Allen Chin (M.C.E.'67)
December 22, 2018

Jane Anderson Clark (M.A.'49)
May 15, 2019

G. Wayne Cole (M.Div.'78)
July 25, 2018

Edward James Conner Jr. (D.Min.'77)
January 5, 2019

William H. Duke (B.D.'61)
March 12, 2019

Margaret Ann Dyson (M.R.E.'54)
October 7, 2018

Cecil O. Eanes (B.D.'45)

January 25, 2019

Benjamin W. Farley (B.D.'63, Th.M.'64, Th.D.'76)
December 28, 2018

Lydia Nomi Frias (PSCE'53-'55)
January 25, 2019

Daniel E. Fullerton (Th.M.'77)
October 30, 2018

Helen Jenkins Goodwin (PSCE'50-'51)
July 19, 2018

Lucius A. Gray (B.D.'58, S.T.M.'72, D.Min.'78)
April 7, 2019

Dawes B. Graybeal (M.Div.'55, D.Min.'73)
February 26, 2019

James Bernard Hatch Jr. (M.Div.'71)
September 28, 2018

Jane Wilson Holmgren (M.C.E.'59)
June 8, 2018

Dick R. Kinser (M.R.E.'58)
November 21, 2018

Mary Hays Kinser (M.R.E.'58)
June 6, 2018

Richard Henry Little (B.D.'58)
March 21, 2019

Steve A. "Sam" Martin (M.Div.'62)
February 21, 2019

Mildred S. McIver (wife of Malcolm C. McIver, PSCE Dean of Faculty, '52-'81)
April 24, 2019

J. Harold McKeithen (B.D.'59)
January 27, 2019

B. Denton McLellan (B.D.'61, Th.M.'62)

December 10, 2018

Ann Jordan McNeill (M.R.E.'53)
January 17, 2019

Billy A. Melvin (B.D.'56)
February 1, 2018

David L. Morgan (D.Min.'82)
November 3, 2018

Joseph B. Mullin (D.Min.'76)
December 19, 2018

Martha Mayfield Newcomb (M.R.E.'54)
February 6, 2019

Glenda Selman Owen (B.R.E.'54)
March 24, 2019

Harry G. Paris (M.Div.'12)
April 6, 2019

Calvin R. Parks (PSCE'62-'63)
February 16, 2019

Mary Susan Pisano (M.Div.'09)
December 2, 2018

Mary Elizabeth Smart (B.C.E.'68)
September 1, 2018

James H. Smylie (UTS Faculty, '62-'96)
January 5, 2019

Charles E. Sutton (UTS'52-'55)
December 31, 2018

Anne E. Treichler
(former UTS trustee, '87-'97)
July 22, 2018

Pat Gilmer Tubbs (PSCE'44-'46)
November 14, 2018

Eleanor Bear Wallace (M.A.'52)
March 18, 2019

John Richard Wilcox (M.Div.'62)
April 8, 2019

Helen Riblet Woodward (D.Min.'86)
July 25, 2018

AWARDS

Ophelia Garmon-Brown (M.Div.'08) is being honored as the Charlotte Post Foundation's 2019 Luminary for healing and promoting opportunity, the Charlotte Post Foundation's highest award.

ON THE SHELF

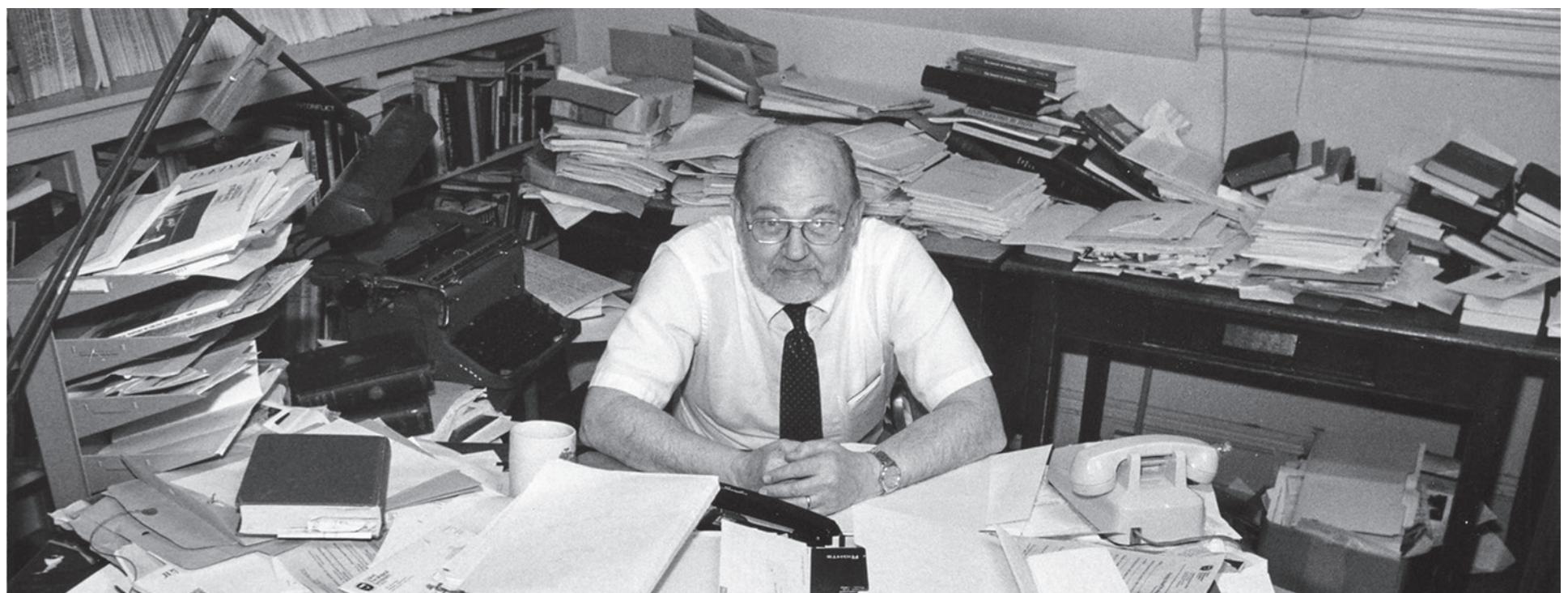
A. Joseph Everson (Th.M.'66, Ph.D.'69) is the author of a new book, *A Vision of the Prophet Isaiah: Hope in a War-Wearied World, a Commentary*, published by Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Roy A. Harrisville III (Ph.D.'90) is the author of *The Faith of St. Paul: Transformative Gift of Divine Power*, published by Wipf and Stock Publishers.

MORE ONLINE For a complete and updated listing of transitions, retirements, in memoriam, and publications of our UPSem alums, visit:



bit.ly/UPSem-Alumni-Notes



HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Remembering James H. Smylie

Naturally curious about a great many things, Jim Smylie spared no effort to gather information and then generously shared what he learned with a variety of publics. His office was a testament to his industry, even if a challenge to human mobility. Unsteady mounds of books, papers, and newspaper clippings vied for space with overstuffed filing cabinets and personal mementos. Jim Smylie embodied the historian's primal suspicion that every piece of physical data touching on one's subject area could become meaningful, if only placed in its proper interpretive context.

Some packrats never produce anything of their own, content merely to guard hemorrhaging troves of ephemera. Not so with Jim Smylie. In nearly 600 publications, he ranged widely across the landscape of American religious history. Much of this activity was connected to the journal he expertly edited for more than a quarter-century, *American Presbyterians: Journal of Presbyterian History*.

In a steady stream of articles and book reviews, he often returned to topics related to the subject of his doctoral dissertation, "American Clergymen and the Constitution of the United States of America, 1780–1796." Through these writings, Professor

Smylie carefully considered how America's religious experience might have shaped the formation of civil institutions in the early Republic, how faith convictions were expressed through political processes, and the role of churches in American public life. Beyond these studies, Smylie wrote on a host of other topics that also deeply interested him, including American literature, art and architecture, Presbyterian missions, films, and the religious culture of Appalachia.

Refusing to be an antiquarian, Jim Smylie moved with ease from his study of past centuries to more recent developments in American history. During his service on the faculty of Union Theological Seminary (1962–1995), he gladly brought his historical sensibility to bear on a thick collection of interrelated controversies that disturbed not a few Presbyterians in the South at mid-century. His writings in *The Christian Century* and elsewhere helped many outside the region understand better how different church communities in old Dixie were engaging with desegregation, civil rights, urban poverty, the rise of feminism, and the Vietnam war.

On campus, he organized students to talk about these and other pressing issues of the

day in anticipation of future conversations they would lead on equally difficult subjects in parishes and other ministry settings. With Ken Goodpasture, Smylie also created a number of experiential learning opportunities for students off campus, including travel seminars to New York City, Appalachia, and Washington, D.C.

My earliest memory of Jim Smylie is running into him on the second floor of Watts Hall. He was urgently searching for a student, perhaps with the intention of sharing yet one more citation to consider or another book to read. Suspecting that his quarry had unwisely decided to take too many biblical electives, he declared to no one in particular, "Students don't study enough history."

Even so, not a few of those with ears to hear learned from Jim Smylie that historical consciousness is empowering. Without it, one's context remains a mystery. How else to understand the interrelatedness of faith commitments and one's actions in the world?

Stanley H. Skreslet (D.Min.'80)
F.S. Royster Professor of Christian Missions

Faith Formation *continued from page 1*

justice. This is something the Christian story can offer: to help explain...when these things happen.

"We can find new forms of ministry that can replace the Sunday/church school model and help Millennial families see their digital identities and justice-seeking inclinations incorporated into religious experiences.

"It can't be a simple 'Religion is the answer and everything will be okay' response," Yust adds. "But we can offer tools and help for children in a world that can seem out of control."

Currently, she says, the church is not reaching many of these children. Old methods are not working, Millennial families are skeptical, and attendance numbers are falling. New approaches are needed, and the Lilly Endowment grant will make it possible to explore them.

Yust has already convened a group of contributing researchers, who met for two days in

Indianapolis in March to begin compiling "a list of what matters." She emphasizes that it is a tentative list, and still evolving. Early items include:

- » A need to confront not only the skepticism of Millennial families about organized religion, but also their hopes and fears;
- » Recognition that future programs need to be holistic and family centered, not child centered, and issues need to be approached as "something we do with the entire family...inter-generational...not segregated by age"; and
- » Understanding that the religious learning environment should not be focused only on worksheets and conveying information, but more interactive—like children's museums, with "scaffolding" between activities...between thinking and talking...and before entering into immersive exercises.

Yust says the focus of this research should not be on the specific information children are absorbing, but on observable behaviors and "practices we want to see." She suggests that we should consider new rubrics for faith development (along the lines of milestones like height and weight that might be captured in a doctor's office). "This could be a set of standards that capture what faith looks like at different ages and the observable behaviors we'd like to see, say, in a six-year-old.

"This research is 'very experimental,'" says Yust. "It's a new world, and we're asking people to take new approaches and consider frameworks that don't just 'talk about religion.'

"In a way, we're stepping out into a vast unknown."

THEOLOGY

Worship, Ecology, and Community Revisited

Testing the connection between action and faith

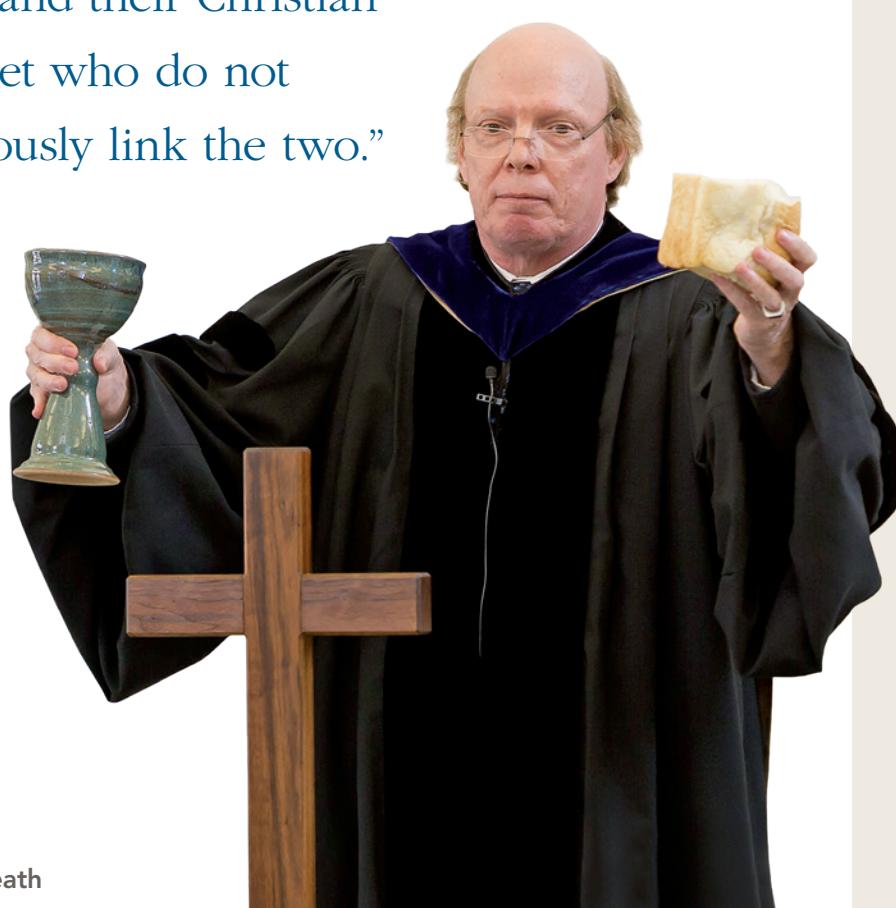
How does worship shape and form the theological vocabulary, imagination, and action of participants—especially the ways in which liturgy supports engagement in caring for creation? This question drives Paul Galbreath, Union Presbyterian Seminary Professor of Theology, in his new research funded by a grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

The result of conversations and teaching conducted with six congregations nearly a decade ago, Galbreath's original research led to his 2014 publication, *Leading into the World*, in which he explored how congregations engage in acts of caring for the earth. In his new research, he seeks to investigate the inverse. He is now exploring the intersection between ecology, ritual studies, and Christian worship—intentionally working with those six original congregations in developing liturgical acts of earth care and assessing how those acts shape their theological imaginations. His hope is to examine whether intentional liturgical practices lead to the “elimination of a perceived disjunction between many who are deeply committed to environmental action and their Christian faith, yet who do not consciously link the two.”

To test the establishment of this new connection between action and faith, Galbreath will return to those congregations and see what has transpired in the intervening years with regard to their environmental commitments, practices, and theology. From his learnings, he will craft a Lenten study focused on earth care habits as integral liturgical practices within a worshiping community, exploring the capacity of such practices to shape theological imagining and to link earth care and faith commitments.

Galbreath hopes his pilot study will prove effective in creating this link and form the basis for a new resource for the wider church community, “shaping ecological practices and theological imaginations of congregations around the globe.”

[The] hope is to examine whether intentional liturgical practices lead to the “elimination of a perceived disjunction between many who are deeply committed to environmental action and their Christian faith, yet who do not consciously link the two.”



Paul Galbreath

THE GARGOYLE SPEAKS

Professor Carson Brisson



Unscheduled Beauty

This issue of Gargoyle is dedicated to the memory of Katie Cannon and Harold McKeithen

Four Union Middle East Seminar participants and I descended limestone steps into the excavated remains of an ancient pool complex. The pool, its waters glittering among marble ruins in the morning light, had been fed for centuries by a stream flowing out of a long, dark tunnel cut through a nearby ridge of exposed bedrock. The site was so close to the eastern flank of Jerusalem’s Old City wall that we could hear public buses grinding slowly up steep streets and polyglot sidewalk peddlers professing the merits of their wares to passing crowds of discerning shoppers.

Minutes after our arrival, a group of about eight people, each dressed in what appeared to be a baptismal robe, came silently down the steps we had just taken. We acknowledged one another with smiles and nods. No words were exchanged.

The group quickly formed a circle where the stream emerged from the entrance of the stone tunnel. One of its number then produced and read from a hand-sized book with an Ethiopian Cross embossed on its front cover. The reading was perhaps in the Ge’ez language, but we were not sure. Following the reading, the group prayed. Then, after removing their sandals and setting aside twine-bound bundles of street clothes, towels, and food items, they formed a line and waded into the stream. To our amazement, with the first and last persons in line cradling lit candles, they quietly disappeared upstream into the tunnel’s waters and darkness.

Before long, we heard them begin to sing what sounded like a hymn, its verses punctuated with a captivating *hallelujah* refrain that grew more moving with each waning repetition echoing out of the tunnel’s mouth. We fell silent and stared into the middle distance, submerged in what we were hearing—receiving without giving, unable to define the moment, contributing nothing to it. Empty-handed guests in the arms of unscheduled beauty.

What, exactly, was happening? Could the song ascending from the pilgrim choir wading through the candle-lit darkness be inspiring the very stones of the tunnel to lift up their voices? Why not? Was this sacred music a rehearsal for the day when no one need ever again say to any other, “Know the Lord”? When every last division and every last depredation—even death itself—shall be no more? When we as nations forever cease our crimson anthems of war to join with the new creation in hymns of endless worship? Why not? Were we being asked how best our own incredibly privileged lives might become attuned even now to the transcendent reality, incarnate presence, and incumbent values of that future day? Why not?

Dear beloved Gargoyle reader, it was amid these questions that our eyes were suddenly opened and we saw that the waters of the pool beside which we stood, upon hearing *hallelujahs* rising out of upstream darkness, had begun to tremble.

So did we.

UPCOMING EVENTS



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For the Church in the World

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Church Business Administration Seminars in Richmond

July 23–August 1, 2019

Early Center, Richmond Campus

The eight days of seminars meet the core curriculum requirements for certification as a Certified Church Administrator (CCA). You need not be seeking certification through The Church Network to attend any or all of the seminars, as they are open to all.

Cost: \$700 for full 8 days, \$375 for 4 days, and \$100 for individual seminars. Prices include lunch and snacks.

bit.ly/UPSemCCA2019

Alumni Luncheon at Massanetta Springs Bible Conference

July 25 / 12:00 pm–2:00 pm

Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center, Harrisonburg, VA

Union will host an alumni luncheon featuring guest speaker Dr. John T. Carroll, Harriet Robertson Fitts Memorial Professor of New Testament. His lecture will be "Just Mercy: Parables in Matthew's Gospel."

Cost: Free if you are already registered for the Bible or Church Music Conference. For those not registered, tickets are \$12 at the door.

bit.ly/UPSemAlumniLuncheon

SEMINARY FOR A DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2019

8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

EARLY CENTER, RICHMOND CAMPUS

LEARN WITH OUR SEMINARY FACULTY

Seminary for a Day is an excellent opportunity to engage important and relevant theological topics with Seminary faculty. Participants will gather for two keynote addresses over the course of the day and select one morning and one afternoon workshop to attend. Cost is \$25 (includes lunch).

To register, please visit:

www.eiseverywhere.com/semforaday

MORNING SESSION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

What Does the Lord Require? – Rodney S. Sadler Jr., Associate Professor of Bible

WORKSHOPS:

When the Bible Becomes a Pop-Up Book: Finding Feet for Religious Leadership in the Midst of the Ferguson Freedom Movement – Deborah Krause, Professor of New Testament, Eden Theological Seminary (guest speaker)

Preaching to Teach: Rethinking the Image of the Teacher for Preaching in Our Time – Professor Richard W. Voelz

Images of Jesus in Other World Religions – Professor John T. Carroll

Mission and Missionaries in Film and Fiction – Professor Stanley H. Skreslet

Womanist Theology & Ethics – Melanie Jones, new to faculty as Instructor of Ethics, Theology, and Culture and Director of the Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership

The Dynamic Power of Anger in Conflicted Relationships – Professor Kenneth J. McFayden

AFTERNOON SESSION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

Toward a Monumental Reading of the Gospel of Mark: Design, Performance, and Formation for the Empire of God – Deborah Krause, Professor of New Testament, Eden Theological Seminary (guest speaker)

WORKSHOPS:

The Role of the Church in Racism and Reconciliation – Professor Rodney S. Sadler Jr.

Judaism and Christianity on the Arabian Peninsula on the Eve of Islam – Professor Christine Marquis Luckritz

Jesus Was a Mammal: Reading the Gospel of John Ecologically – Professor Frances Taylor Gench

Modern Missions at the Margins – Professor James Elisha Taneti

Living Faithfully in an Era of Hate – Professor Rachel Baard, new to faculty as Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics

The Book of Order as a Mission Manual – Adjunct Instructor Carson Rhyne