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Sharon & Brook

CONNECTING THE UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY COMMUNITY

ISSUE 10 / FALL 2021

“Behold, I make all things new.”

Revelation 21:5

In a January 2021 interview with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Union President Brian Blount discussed the book of Revelation and shared a message about things made “new.”

“The new heaven and the new earth is not a destroyed earth,” he says. “It is not an earth that has to be thrown away and then reclaimed. “God doesn’t throw out the old and then create something new. He takes what we have.”

That perspective, expressed in the throes of the pandemic, applies to the fall of 2021. There is an excitement and an anticipation about things made new at Union Presbyterian Seminary.

On a practical, day-to-day level, the lessons learned when the pandemic forced remote learning will not be “thrown away,” but rather integrated into teaching methodologies going forward. New technology and hybrid approaches, adopted rapidly during the pandemic, will continue to be explored and adapted for changing conditions and hard-to-predict scenarios.

Students and faculty will rediscover the joys and rewards of discussion in a real classroom, able actually to shake hands, hug, and encourage each other in person.

Most profoundly, the new school year will see new faculty who bring an exciting and dramatically global character to Union.

Perhaps no one recognizes that “new thing” more than Dr. Sam Adams, a faculty member for 15 years who has participated in and chaired search committees on behalf of the Seminary for several of those years.

“The incoming group of colleagues represents one of most diverse and exciting set of hires in the history of the Seminary,” he says. “There will be new, creative, engaging perspectives.

“It’s very significant.

“As an example, consider that we will have an Egyptian-American scholar working with students on the Exodus.

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New faculty members (from left to right): Dr. Safwat Marzouk, Almond Ka Kwan Sin, Dr. Rubén Arjona, and Dr. Lakisha R. Lockhart

Four new faculty members who will “...reflect the diversity of our country, our world, and our Richmond community.”

Sam Adams

Mary Jane and John F. McNair Chair of Biblical Studies and Professor of Old Testament

“We will also have a female, Asian voice teaching the Old Testament and giving us innovative ways to think about the women we find in Genesis.

“We have been benefitting remotely already during this past pandemic year from a Latino voice in pastoral care,” he says. “Many students are meeting this professor in person for the first time this fall.

“Fourth, a brilliant new faculty member in Christian Education will bring her innovative methodologies, reflective of her experiences as a Black, female scholar.”

Dr. Adams is referring to four new faculty members who will “reflect the diversity of our country, our world, and our Richmond community.”

They are Dr. Safwat Marzouk, an Egyptian Presbyterian who is an associate professor in Old Testament; Almond Ka Kwan Sin who has been appointed Visiting Instructor of Old Testament; Dr. Rubén Arjona, an ordained minister in the National Presbyterian Church of

Mexico, teaching in pastoral care and practical theology; and Dr. Lakisha R. Lockhart, assistant professor of Christian education, womanist, practical theologian, and play facilitator.

Adams speaks of these individuals joining the seminary community as a continuation and renewing of a robust tradition of scholarship and ministry that has characterized Union’s faculty for generations.

“We celebrate the Seminary’s rich heritage,” says Adams, “especially those individuals who bravely stood up at moments when injustice was occurring in Richmond and nationally, and at the same time, we still have a lot of work to do to reflect the wondrous diversity of our churches and culture.

“We have an incredible tradition of Christian education, biblical exegesis, ethical engagement, and emphasis on pastoral care. We are excited that these new faculty members will help us live into that in ways that reflect where we are in 2021.”

It is, as Revelation promises, “all things new.”

CORRECTION

PSCE Wood Craft

This wood craft was an inspirational addition to the PSCE chapel in 1976, commissioned and financed by the class of '76. The walnut carving made from one solid piece of wood incorporated several Christian symbols: descending dove, a cross, an open Bible, a flame, and the world. The sculptor was Jim Best, a professional woodcarver and a brother of Dottie Best, class of '76. It was unveiled on Founder’s Day in the fall of 1976. (If you are in this photo, please let us know.)



Sculptor Jim Best and his sister, Dottie Best ('76), converse with others in front of the wood carving.

Sharon&Brook

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

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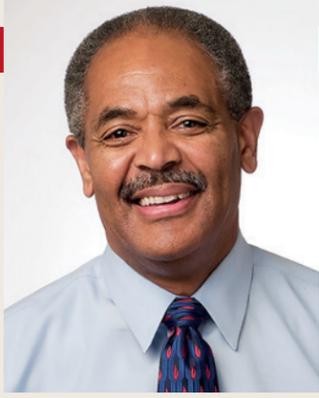
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Send us your updated information: Please send us the news of your life and ministry that we may share with others. The Seminary also welcomes updated email and mailing addresses, with current phone numbers.

The Alumni Office would love to hear from you! Send news and contact updates to Nicole Smith at alumni@upsem.edu or call (804) 278-4228.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brian K. Blount

“I have so missed this.”

That is what I thought to myself as I looked around the Holderness Dining Room in Richmond Hall. There were Krispy Kreme donuts. Always a most welcome sight. But I could get those during the pandemic. There was coffee, tea, fruit, juice, and, my favorite, Coke Zero. (Chef Wes thinks of everything.)

And there were people! On campus. Greeting one another. Laughing and smiling (you can tell even when they're wearing a mask—watch the eyes). The library was represented. The Global Mission Center was represented. Watts Hall was represented. The Leadership Institute was represented. Faculty was represented. Even that early in August (the second) and summer language being fully online and virtual, a student was there. Representing! *We were back!* Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond Campus, was back on the campus. And as I surveyed the gathering and listened to their voices, I took a deep breath, savored the moment, and thought, “I have so missed this.”

Later in August, though they returned to campus on August 3 and I didn't have a chance to have our celebratory gathering until September 10, I cherished the opportunity to belatedly welcome the Charlotte Campus back with donuts, juice, fruit, coffee, and, yes, Coke Zero. And yes, I was just as misty-eyed then. After 16 months of working productively at home, I was glad to have brought gatherings back on both campuses.

All we needed at that point was for students and faculty to be back in the classroom, teaching and learning. That started at Convocation: September 8 for Richmond and September 11 for Charlotte.

So, all is kind of right with the world. We're wearing masks and being diligent about washing our hands and keeping some distance because of

the variants that are still impacting our country and world. But we are facing that now in community, in each other's presence, and that feels good. After 16 months away, working from home, learning and teaching remotely, it feels new, even. A new, fresh start to rekindle the sense of community that has always been one of Union Presbyterian's strongest assets.

Now, to build out that sense of community to the fullest, all we need is you. I hope you will join us on campus when you can. But most of all, I hope you will continue to give not only your presence, but your support to Union Presbyterian Seminary. Our mission has never once faltered during this time of virtual classes and working from home. As you have continued to send us your prayers and your resources so that we could keep finding new ways in these unprecedented times to do this ministry that is now 209 years old, we have continued to nurture and equip the next generation of leaders for Christ's church. Together, across the years, in spite of even great obstacles like a pandemic, we have committed ourselves to the work that God has set before us. We may have missed the opportunity to work with each other in person these past 16 months, but we have not missed out on continuing to do that work and continuing to find in you partners for that work. Now I look forward to opportunities to thank you for that commitment in person. In your homes. In your sanctuaries. In your education buildings. In your community associations. In your fellowship groups. I'm excited to be back on the road and back in your company. To thank you. To worship with you. To plan our next steps of theological education with you. And I know when that happens, I'll look out at those who have gathered with you and I'll be prompted once again to say, “I have so missed this.”



LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Westminster Hall

For countless Seminary alums, Westminster Hall was home. It was, for many, their dorm. And, for many more, its porch and balcony were the perfect locations for conversations that lasted into the night and were remembered for years.

This 123-year-old landmark, one of Union Presbyterian Seminary's three original buildings, has sat empty and unused for several years, but it is about to see rebirth as the new home of the Leadership Institute.

The Institute will provide continuing education programs for pastors, Christian educators, and other church leaders. A campaign to raise funds for the renaissance of this historic structure is underway.

The campaign will relocate the Leadership Institute from its off-campus site and will provide a technologically advanced environment for continuing education opportunities for alumni and others who serve in diverse vocational settings. The Institute will include a large seminar room with a capacity of 75 and a small conference room with a capacity of 12, breakout rooms, and offices. And it will integrate digital media, webinars, podcasts, and other interactive tools to broaden engagement with new and current continuing education opportunities.

This elegant building constructed at the dawn of the twentieth century is being recast for a vital, strategic, and forward-looking purpose, restored as a center of learning and hospitality. Guests from around the world will walk the halls and reside where generations of ministerial students have studied before them.

To learn more about the campaign, contact Richard Wong, Vice President Advancement, rwong@upsem.edu (804) 278-4240.

Architectural renderings of renovated Westminster Hall

THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

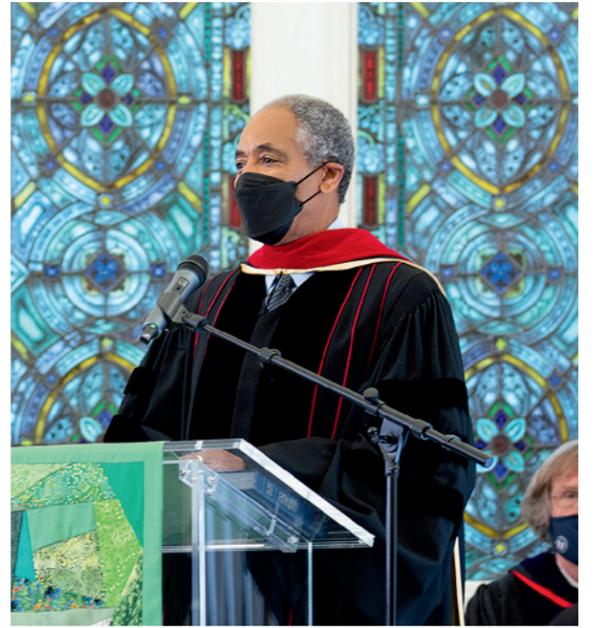
We Are Back...



Richmond Campus

On September 8, 2021, the Seminary's Richmond campus celebrated the joyful opening of the campus with the first in-person convocation, fellowship, and classes in a year. The Convocation was held in the Lake Chapel. The choir, led by Doug Brown, joined the congregation of students, faculty, and staff in celebrating the school year's beginning. Afterwards, a gathering on the quad for photos and bag lunches was followed by the start of classes—all following CDC COVID-19 guidelines. It was a wonderful day of fellowship!





Charlotte Campus

The Seminary held its annual Convocation in Charlotte on September 11, 2021, in the Thomas M. Belk Chapel. In addition to those gathered in Belk Chapel, the Convocation was streamed live for those not in attendance. Marked by its Convocation, classes, and fellowship, the campus gathered in person for the new academic year for the first time in 18 months.





GREETINGS

W. Clay Macaulay

Grace, mercy, and peace to you! We hope that you and your loved ones are well and have remained safe during this second year of the COVID-19 pandemic and its surging Delta variant!

As I write this greeting, we are so pleased to welcome the return to our Richmond and Charlotte campuses of our students, our faculty, and staff. All, in both communities, are fully vaccinated, and practicing safe social distancing indoors and in large social gatherings outdoors. The Seminary's opening convocations were held in the second week in September, after which we video-recorded our annual birthday greeting to you, our alums and friends of the Seminary! Look for that greeting, from your seminary, in your mailbox on the morning of your birthday!

Celebrations of life have occurred in this late summer and early fall, as alumni and many friends gathered in Black Mountain, on our Richmond campus, and in Montreat, to remember and give thanks to God for three of our beloved professors emeriti: Dr. Lamar Williamson (M.Div.'51), Dr. Paul Walaskay, and Glenn Bannerman (M.R.E.'58). All three gentlemen were professors in New Testament, Biblical Studies, and in Recreation in the Presbyterian School of Christian Education, for more than a generation. Lamar died in July 2020. Glenn died in October 2020. Paul died in April 2021. We give thanks to God for their lives, their winsome witness to the gospel, and their devoted service in theological education, and to the church.

We hope you can come and join us for the Sprunt Lectures next May 2–4, 2022. We are making plans for the lectures to be offered on our Richmond campus as well as livestreamed. The Sprunt Lecturer is the Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney, Professor of Hebrew Bible, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, Texas. The preacher for the Sprunt Lectures will be the Rev. Dr. Kimberly Russaw, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis. President Brian Blount will be the keynote speaker for the annual Alumni Luncheon.

Yours faithfully,
W. Clay Macaulay (D.Min.'85),
 Director of Alumni Development
 cmacaulay@upsem.edu
 (804) 436-7471 (mobile and text)
 (804) 278-4382 (study)

Alumni Notes

TRANSITIONS

Wynter Benda (M.Div.'98, Th.M.'99) has been appointed as the city manager of Lynchburg, VA, effective August 4, 2021.

Anita Bernhardt (M.Div.'88) has been called as General Presbyterian for the Presbytery of Lake Erie in northwestern Pennsylvania. Her husband, **James Bernhardt (M.Div.'88, D.Min.'07)**, is senior pastor of Wayside Presbyterian Church in Erie, PA.

Heidi G. Bolt (M.Div.'07) was appointed the Co-Chair of the ACORP Board of the PC(USA) on July 1, 2021 for a two-year term. She and her husband, **Greg Bolt (M.Div.'07)**, remain co-pastors of First Presbyterian Church, Red Wing, MN.

George W. Chapman III (M.Div.'06) serves as Pastor in the United Protestant Church of France (Église protestante unie de France) for the region of Saint-Étienne and the Forez.

Daniel J. Commerford (M.Div.'11) serves as Pastor/Head of Staff at First Presbyterian Church in Gastonia, NC.

Colleen M. Earp (M.Div.'19) serves as Director of Programs with the Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center, Harrisonburg, VA.

Claire George-Drumheller (M.Div.'12) serves as the Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, PA.

B. Ronald "Ron" Gilmer II (M.Div.'06) serves as Pastor of the Woodstock Presbyterian Church, Woodstock, VA.

Kathleen Henrion (M.Div.'11) serves as Interim Pastor at John Calvin Presbyterian Church in Bridgeton, MO.

Noe Juarez (M.Div.'10) serves at the Puriyninchik Association, a nonprofit in Peru, working in the Quechua language with children and youth promoting literacy and education.

Phanta I. Lansden (M.Div.'16) now serves as Senior Pastor of the St. James Presbyterian Church, Greensboro, NC.

Jennifer Mitchell (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'10) began a new call on May 23, 2021, at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Corsicana, TX, as a Solo Pastor.

Crystal R. Sygeel (M.Div./M.A.'96) now serves as Associate Director for Call and Candidacy with the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Crystal Varner Parker (M.Div.'09) has been called as Associate Pastor for Christian Education and Discipleship with the Salisbury Presbyterian Church, Midlothian, VA.

Ellen Crawford True (M.Div.'96) serves as Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, First Presbyterian Church, Concord, NC.

CELEBRATIONS

Erin A. Burt (M.Div.'20) ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, PC(USA), August 28, 2021, Watts Chapel, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond campus. She serves as UPSEM's Director of Admissions for the Richmond campus.

Aaron B. Davis (M.Div.'20, Th.M.'21) serves as Youth and Family Minister with St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Wilson, NC.

Allen C. McSween (B.D.'68) was awarded an honorary doctorate degree, Doctor of Public Service, by Presbyterian College in October 2020.

Mary Grace Reynolds (M.Div.'21) ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, PC(USA), August 28, 2021, Madison Valley Presbyterian Church, Ennis, MT, where she now serves as Pastor.

Philip Turner (M.Div.'91) is celebrating 30 years as Pastor of Pine Street Baptist Church in Richmond, VA, on July 1, 2021. Pine Street was his first pastorate upon graduation from Union.

IN MEMORIAM

Robert S. Dendy Sr. (D.Min.'81)
 July 31, 2021

Terry K. Eum (M.Div.'13)
 September 13, 2021

Clifton P. "Clif" Ford (D.Min.'84)
 August 13, 2021

Gordon F. Garlington III (M.Div.'72)
 July 9, 2021

William E. "Dub" Graham Jr. (Former Trustee)
 June 27, 2021

Patricia R. Hall (M.A.'60)
 September 29, 2020

Curtis Harper Jr. (B.D.'53)
 December 19, 2019

Melvin Stanford Hester (D.Min.'76)
 June 25, 2019

Donald K. "Donn" Langfitt (M.Div.'57)
 April 16, 2021

Neil C. Leach (B.D.'54, Th.M.'58)
 July 8, 2021

David T. Lee (D. Min.'81)
 January 22, 2021

Charlotte Machen Wilson (B.C.E.'60)
 July 27, 2021

Frances Craig Magruder (M.R.E.'52)
 May 26, 2021

Vernon D. Miller (B.D.'65)
 August 14, 2021

George Mallory Patton (PSCE'68–69)
 August 3, 2019

Patricia Turner-Olds (M.Div.'05)
 September 1, 2021

Charles Louis Priddy (M.A.'67)
 January 10, 2021

Joseph O. "Joe" Rand Jr. (B.D.'53)
 August 5, 2021

Robert E. "Bob" Reynolds (M.A.'61)
 June 8, 2021

Samuel Lee Rochester (B.D.'57)
 December 23, 2019

James P. "Jim" Sample (M.Div.'60, D.Min.'74)
 June 10, 2021

Donald W. Shriver Jr. (B.D.'55)
 July 28, 2021

ON THE SHELF

David R. Bauer (Ph.D.'85) *The Book of Acts as Story: A Narrative-Critical Study*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021.

James Black (M.Div.'63, D.Min.'73) *Weddings and Funerals... The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*, New York: Page Publishing, 2019.

David Howell (M.Div.'81) *Tethered to an Appalachian Curse: A Surprise Calling*, Eugene: Resource Publications, 2021. "A unique book about a unique life chronicles a persistent journey from an isolated Appalachian area mired in deep poverty."

Bruce L. Taylor (Ph.D.'88) has published the latest in his series of sermon collections for the Sundays and feast days featured in the Revised Common Lectionary, *Between Advents: Sermons for the Lectionary, Year C, Advent through Eastertide*, 2021. This latest work joins Taylor's earlier works *The Word in the Wind*, 2019; *No Business as Usual*, 2019; *Looking Up at Love*, 2020; and *Life Woven into God*, 2020, which together cover Years A and B of the lectionary. All are published by Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR.

Andrew Taylor-Troutman (M.Div.'09) *Hope Matters: Churchless Sermons in the Time of the Coronavirus*, Cleveland: Parson's Porch, 2021.

This list reflects notes received by the Alumni Office as of September 1, 2021.

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



bit.ly/UPSem-Alumni-Notes

ALUMNI EVENTS

October Events

Join us for two alumni events in North Carolina's Montreat area.

**“Reclaiming a Reformed
Unmentionable”**

October 22
1:00 pm–2:30 pm
Presbyterian Heritage Center
318 Georgia Terrace
Montreat

Dr. Mark Achtemeier is a Presbyterian minister, author, and theologian. He taught theology and ethics for many years at Dubuque Theological Seminary, in Dubuque, Iowa. In addition to serving other churches in Iowa, he has served churches in Virginia and North Carolina as well. Mark has traveled widely as a speaker and consultant in denominational, ecumenical, and interfaith settings. He is a 1984 graduate of Union Presbyterian Seminary and has a Ph.D. from Duke University. Mark is the author of *The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage* and is presently writing a theological commentary on Colossians for Westminster John Knox Press. He and his wife, the Rev. Dr. Katherine Morton Achtemeier, retired to Black Mountain in 2018. Together they have three grown children and four precious grandchildren



Dr. Mark Achtemeier

Light refreshments will be served!



Reception

October 22
5:00 pm–7:00 pm
Home of Carolyn
and Hartley Hall
Timber Park
Black Mountain

Join us for fellowship and hors d'oeuvres!

There is no parking available at the Halls' home at Timber Park. A shuttle service will be provided from the Ingles Markets parking lot in Black Mountain to the Halls' home. Please park in the empty spaces behind the car wash. Shuttle service will begin at 4:45 and run until 7:15 pm.

Register online for one or both events at bit.ly/AlumniFallEvents.

Face masks, vaccinations, and social distancing are required.
Both events are free.



THE
GARGOYLE
SPEAKS

Professor Carson Brisson

Ever Back Again to New

“New” appears nearly three hundred times in the Bible, usually taking the basic form *chadash* in Hebrew and *kainos* or *neos* in Greek. It serves as the beautiful common denominator in some of the biblical texts' most compelling images and claims: new covenant; new heart; new song; new creation; new earth; new heaven; new commandment; the God who is “about to do a new thing”; the God who is making “all things new”; the new way Jesus relates to sinners, “receiving and eating with them” (Luke 15:2), and inviting everyone scandalized by this, scandalized by him, then or now, to rejoice that this is God's will and way (Luke 15:3-32).

There are also explicit objections to “new” in the biblical texts, just as there were and are serious objections to the guest list that delighted Jesus more than once and increased the dangers he faced between meals. Perhaps the best-known objection is found in Ecclesiastes. The preacher there takes a deep look around, and declares with unwavering and now famous or perhaps infamous honesty his truth that “there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccle. 1:9). We might ask what he would have thought of the new way Jesus relates to sinners. Surely we do not know. But perhaps he would have leapt for joy, made a new and glad entry in his honest scroll, reformed his treatment of wrongdoers, and taken a hungry seat at the banquet God throws for sinners. “Pass the grace and truth, please. Pass the forgiveness. Pass the faith, hope, and love. Pass the peace, kindness, and joy. Pass the justice and the reconciliation. Pass the dignity and opportunity for all, and the nonviolent, courageous, sacrificial witness wherever and whenever these are withheld. Pass the gentleness, the patience, the generosity, and the self-control. Pass the wisdom and discernment. Pass the mercy. Oh, wait. I've already had several helpings of mercy. Perhaps I should pass some to you?”

Dear, beloved Gargoyle reader, as fall arrives, a new season, new semester, and countless new beginnings are open to us in our homes, workplaces, schools, houses of worship, and at Union and other seminaries.

With so much new, what shall we do?

Here's a thought. Why not seize this “new” to review our lists of people and relationships and systems we believe God cannot make new, which lists may include even our own names, and then throw these lists away? Why not begin new lists, lists of what God is renewing in and through our own lives, and of what God will renew far beyond our knowing, our asking, our approving, or even our imagining? Part of our calling may be to return ever back again to new, resisting the grotesque temptation of believing that others need to do so, but we need not.

To the God of Jesus the Christ, the Lamb, Slain yet Alive, who by the Holy Spirit is able to accomplish in us all that is pleasing in God's sight, to God and to the Lamb be glory, honor, praise, thanksgiving, and dominion, until all things have been made new.

GET IN TOUCH AND GO ONLINE

We love hearing from you! We encourage you to send news of your life and ministry to our Alumni Associate, Nicole Smith.

Also, check out our alumni web page.

Email:



alumni@upsem.edu

Visit:



upsem.edu/alumni

UPCOMING EVENTS

Online Workshops and Courses:

Teaching for Understanding and Engagement Workshop

Thursdays / October 14 and 21
11:30 am–1:30 pm

Dr. Rebecca Davis, Associate Professor of Christian Education

Exploring a new approach to teaching in congregations, this workshop shapes identity, nurtures meaning-making, and engenders faithful living in the world through transformative pedagogy and propositional curriculum to ensure our lives embody our faith.

Virtual Gathering for Music and Worship Leaders

Thursday / October 28
1:00 pm–2:30 pm

Facilitated by Doug Brown, Director of Music & Adjunct Instructor

Open to all who play a role in worship or music ministry, this conversation is aimed at allowing time and space for music and worship leaders to discuss and reflect on obstacles and opportunities presented within the pandemic related to music ministry and worship.

Womanist Leadership Institute

Fall 2021 / Winter and Spring 2022

A series of online courses designed to promote and support womanist scholarship and leadership, co-sponsored by The Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership and the Leadership Institute.



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