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# Sharon & Brook

CONNECTING THE UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY COMMUNITY

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## Azusa Street Revival Holds Lessons for Today

### 2023 Sprunt Lectures

For students of the rise of early Pentecostalism, the Azusa Street Revival, which started in 1906 in Los Angeles, was a seminal event. For scholar and 2023 Sprunt Lecturer Dr. Keri Day, it is more than an important event in history; it is a powerful example of the church speaking power and possibility to the wider American society that she describes as a “religious capitalist ecology.”

Dr. Day, associate professor of constructive theology and African American religion at Princeton Theological Seminary, is the author of the 2022 book *Azusa Reimagined: A Radical Vision of Religious and Democratic Belonging*. As she argues in her book, Dr. Day will make the case in her Sprunt lectures that the Azusa Street Revival still has the power to challenge and inform the church as it confronts race, class, and gender issues that characterize American society in the 21st century.

Speaking about her participation in the 2023 Sprunt Lectures, Dr. Day says, “This is the driving question: What is God doing at Azusa through these radical experiences of the Spirit? What I am after in these lectures is asking what God is doing today. I’m staking the claim that, within Christian theology, discourses on the Spirit are treated as an addendum. But Azusa teaches us that the theology of the Spirit should be understood as the *beginning point* of theology. So, you see, the Azusa experience revolutionizes how those individuals there saw their own Christian identity. It led them to rethink who they were when they said they were the church in the world.”

It was not a world that welcomed how they thought.

Led by a semiliterate itinerant preacher named William Seymour, the son of emancipated slaves, the Azusa Street Revival began in a small house on Bonnie Brae Street and, as its numbers grew, relocated to a dilapidated structure that had earlier been a barn. The revival lasted for almost 10 years and was a lightning rod for criticism.

The mixing of White and Black participants and the leadership roles of Black women at Azusa were an affront to the broader segregated, capitalist society. It was seen as scandalous that Whites were worshipping under Blacks. Further, the

*continued on page 5*

William J. Seymour and members of the Azusa Street Mission



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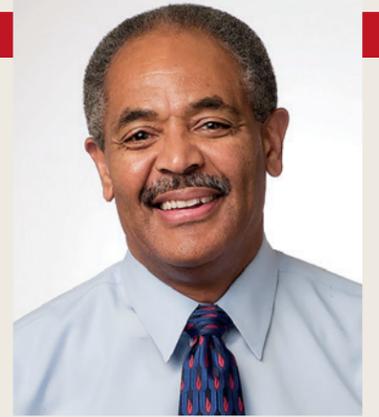


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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brian K. Blount

All Things New

Is it just me, or does "newness" seem to be everywhere this New Year? For starters, we are beginning 2023 in a very different place, pandemic-wise, from where we were at the beginning of 2022. Last January, mask-wearing was still commonplace, people's "personal bubbles" were the size of hot air balloons, handshakes were fist bumps, and parishioners were streaming more than they were sitting in church sanctuaries.

While we are not back to normal just yet, as the calendar has tripped over into 2023, we are edging closer. I actually traveled on an airplane sans mask recently (although I admit to scrambling to put it back on when I saw the crowds at the crazy-busy Atlanta airport). Faculty and students are mostly mask-less in class and chapel. And more and more, I preach to fully occupied sanctuaries. I like this new!

New things continue to happen at UPSem. New classes of master's and doctoral students began their work on the Richmond and Charlotte campuses this past fall. International students are back on the Richmond campus for the first time since the pandemic began. In May, we will resume our international travel seminar program with a trip to Egypt and Israel. And a Center for Excellence in Christian Education has sprouted on the Charlotte campus.

Two million-dollar Lilly grants have been awarded to members of the UPSem faculty: one for assisting new preachers (thanks to the work of Richard Voelz) and one for work in public theology (thanks to the work of Rachel Baard). Searches for new faculty members (three of them!) are either underway or about to start. Nine new staff members have joined the UPSem family, and seven new leaders have joined the UPSem board of trustees.

A whole host of new alumni have started using the electronic resources of the Seminary's Library Without Walls program. Multiple international schools and churches are partnering with UPSem through the Syngman Rhee Global Mission Center for Christian Education. A new vice presidency has been created and staffed on the Charlotte campus (thanks to Lisa McLennan), and an endowment named for John and Missy Kuykendall has

been established to support it. (There is still time for you to make a new donation in support of this endowment!)

A new initiative to create the William R. Klein Center as part of the Leadership Institute was funded (many thanks to Second Presbyterian Church of Roanoke and all of our wonderful friends in the Roanoke community), and a targeted capital campaign was kicked off at the November board meeting to renovate Westminster Hall as the new home for the Leadership Institute. I am both humbled and grateful beyond words to say that the board of trustees voted to give the renovated Westminster Hall a new name: Blount Hall at Westminster. It's kind of catchy, don't you think? Every time I think about it, a new smile sprouts uncontrollably on my face. (If you make a contribution to the capital campaign, you will be responsible for turning my smile into a big ol' grin!)

A more bittersweet smile evolves as I contemplate the newness about to sprout in my own life. As you no doubt know, Sharon and I are planning for the next chapter of our lives that will start after I retire on June 30, 2023. It is difficult to describe the mixture of sadness and excitement I feel as I anticipate the events of this new year. Even as I mourn the loss of accompanying all of you who make up UPSem (students, faculty, staff, trustees, alums, friends) on this journey of theological education as your president, I also feel the joy of exploring the new things that God is even now dawning on my horizon. And on UPSem's horizon.

For out there in the near distance, through the work of a wonderful search committee, God is preparing the next president of Union Presbyterian Seminary for a new phase of the Seminary's ministry. A new president is coming! And with that president will come a newness of direction, a newness of energy, a newness of possibility, and a newness of faithful living into God's continuing, long-standing plans for Union Presbyterian Seminary.

"Behold," God says. "I make all things new." (Rev. 21:5) Even a 210-year-old seminary.

Kind of miraculous when you think about it.



ACADEMY OF HOMILETICS  
Voelz Elected  
2025 President

Dr. Richard Voelz has been elected to serve on the Executive Committee of the Academy of Homiletics, and in 2025 will serve as the Academy's president. The professional guild of more than 200 scholars represents a wide array of denominations. Over the past year,

Dr. Voelz has been co-directing a grant studying diversity, equity, and inclusion in the teaching and research of the Academy's membership.

"I am honored to have been elected by my peers to serve in this capacity," says Voelz. "The Academy of Homiletics has provided an environment to advance scholarship in preaching and to think deeply about how we teach preaching in a time when the church and ministries of proclamation are changing."

Founded in 1965, the Academy of Homiletics is open to teachers and doctoral graduate students of homiletics across the world. Voelz will serve as 2nd Vice President in 2023, 1st Vice President in 2024, and President in 2025.

"I'm excited Dr. Voelz has been elected to the Executive Committee of the Academy of Homiletics," says Brian Blount. "His scholarly leadership will continue to impact students here at Union Presbyterian Seminary and beyond."

Congratulations, Dr. Voelz!

Sharon&Brook

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

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# Sprunt Lectures

May 1–3, 2023

## SCHEDULE

### Monday, May 1

- 4:30–5:45 pm Registration & Opening Reception (Holderness Dining Room)
- 6:00–7:00 pm Opening Lecture: Rev. Dr. Keri Day (Watts Chapel)
- 7:30–8:30 pm Pipe Organ: Doug Brown (Watts Chapel)

### Tuesday, May 2

- 8:00–8:45 am Breakfast Conversation (Holderness Dining Room)
- 9:00–10:00 am Lecture II: Dr. Keri Day (Watts Chapel)
- 10:15 am Light Reception (Lawn or Early Center)
- 11:00 am–12:15 pm Worship: Rev. Dr. Kenyatta Gilbert, preaching (Watts Chapel)
- 12:30–2:00 pm Alumni Luncheon with Speaker Dr. Ted Wardlaw (Holderness Dining Room)
- 2:00 pm Class Photos (Morton Library Steps)
- 2:30 pm Class Reunions (Various Locations)
- 4:00–5:00 pm Lecture III: Rev. Dr. Keri Day (Watts Chapel)
- 5:30–7:30 pm President Brian K. Blount Farewell Reception (Holderness Dining Room)

### Wednesday, May 3

- 8:00–8:45 am Continental Breakfast (Holderness Dining Room)
- 9:00–10:15 am Lecture IV and Q&A: Rev. Dr. Keri Day (Watts Chapel)
- 10:30–11:30 am Trailblazer/Distinguished Alumni Award Reception (Holderness Dining Room)
- 11:45 am–12:30 pm Closing Worship: Rev. Dr. Kenyatta Gilbert, preaching (Watts Chapel)
- 12:45 pm Community Lunch (Holderness Dining Room)
- 2:00 pm BAA Annual Meeting (EC124)

## INFORMATION

A single fee of \$100 includes **all meals** (There is no à la carte).

There is no charge for current students or faculty. Lectures, worship, and receptions are open to all at no charge.

Information about local hotels can be found on the registration site.

**To register for Sprunt:** <https://na.eventscloud.com/sprunt23>



## KEYNOTE LECTURE

# Undomesticated Faith: An Afro-Pentecostal Theology of Spirit

## DR. KERI DAY

Associate Professor of Constructive  
Theology and African American Religion  
at Princeton Theological Seminary

## TO REGISTER FOR SPRUNT

Please visit us online for more event information and to register:



<https://na.eventscloud.com/sprunt23>



## SPRUNT WORSHIP LEADER

## Dr. Kenyatta Gilbert

Rev. Dr. Kenyatta R. Gilbert, professor of homiletics at Howard University School of Divinity, is a years-long student of African American preaching and the author of four books: *Exodus Preaching: Crafting Sermons about Justice and Hope*; *A Pursued Justice: Black Preaching from the Great Migration to Civil Rights*; *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching*; and *Just Living: Meditations for Engaging our Life and Times*.

As worship leader for this year's Sprunt Lectures, he anticipates sharing a message that will be cognizant of today's racial and political climate, divisions

in society, and environmental concerns. When discussing his views on effective preaching, he moves quickly to Luke 4:16–21, where he finds Jesus's "inaugural vision," a vision for preaching in the Jesus tradition and

what Dr. Gilbert terms "tri-vocal preaching"—a blending of three voices: the prophet, the priest, and the sage.

"When preaching is functioning as 'prophetic,' that minister focuses on matters of justice and hope; when the sermon is 'priestly' oriented, it speaks of wellness, moral and ethical responsibility, prayer, and comfort of the soul; and when the voice functions in a 'sagely' way, it confers wisdom, based on a relationship dynamic between preacher and community, whereby the preacher's role is to decode and draw on the wisdom of the local congregation in order for that congregation to reach the next generation," Dr. Gilbert explains.

"This is tri-vocal preaching," Gilbert adds, "and I argue that when preachers overemphasize one voice to the disregard of the two others, their preaching life, over time, falls out of balance. To consider Luke 4:16–21 is to notice that all of those voices are integrated by the most important preacher in history. Jesus embodies the integration of prophet, priest, and sage."

*Dr. Gilbert will lead the worship on Tuesday, May 2, at 11:00 a.m. and on Wednesday, May 3, at 11:45 a.m. Both services will be held at Watts Chapel.*



## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

## Dr. Rosalyn Murphy

There were three powerful moments in Rosalyn Murphy's career when she felt the hand of God moving her in a direction that ultimately led to her 23 years of ministry in the Church of England and to receiving the Distinguished Alumni award from Union Presbyterian Seminary in 2023.

The first moment was in the 1990s, when she and her husband, Ken, were on a grocery trip. Ken pulled the car over at Brook and Westwood in Northside Richmond and said, "This is where you should go to school." She applied to that school on the corner (then called Union

Theological Seminary), obtained a grant to support her childcare costs, and went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree in 1999.

While she was at Union, the second critical moment occurred. New Testament Professor Dr. John T. Carroll recommended she read several books by a Scottish friend of his in the United Kingdom, James D. G. Dunn, launching a correspondence and friendship between the talented Seminary student and the renowned New Testament scholar. "Jimmy" Dunn invited her to pursue a doctorate at Durham University in England, and she went.

A career path in the Church of England seemed unlikely for an African American female raised in a Pentecostal family. However, while attending Durham University, Murphy met English New Testament scholar N.T. Wright, who was then Lord Bishop of Durham. Wright asked her what her plans were after completing her studies. When she mentioned that her plans were to return to the U.S. and teach, he responded, "Do you really believe God brought you all the way to England simply to send you back to the States? You are exactly the type of person we need in the Church of England." During that conversation, God planted the seed whereby ordination became an earnest consideration.

Murphy earned a Master of Theology (MTh) in research in 2000 and a post-graduate diploma (PGDip) in ministerial studies in 2005, both from

Durham University. She also received a Ph.D. in theology from Durham University in 2005.

In Blackburn Diocese, from 2008 to 2018, she was vicar to St Thomas' Church, Blackpool, and was responsible for all "occasional" offices (baptisms, weddings, funerals), worship services, pastoral care, discipleship, and leadership development for a large urban church in one of England's most underserved coastal towns. From 2018 to 2019, at Lambeth Palace in London, she was prior for The Community of St. Anselm. Working under the direction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, she was responsible for daily oversight of the "enclosed" religious community based at Lambeth Palace. Since 2020, she has served Coventry Diocese as parish priest and bishops' advisor for racial equality.

This all followed the third life-changing moment, which came during a walk in the English countryside with her visiting father, the late Rev. Mainer Thomas, minister at Word of Life Church of God in Christ. Her Pentecostal father knew she was pursuing a doctorate and had a desire to teach, but he did not know she was planning to be ordained in the Church of England, and she was nervous about telling him.

She shared with him what she felt God was calling her to do. He reassured her by acknowledging that he always knew God had something special in mind for her and said, "Who am I to question God's plans? If I had known 35 years ago all that God has revealed to me during my ministry, I would have been a different man back then. We must trust and follow God's path for us, wherever it takes us. His ways are not our ways." He then asked her to kneel, and, there, in a pasture, with cows grazing on one side and sheep on the other, he laid hands on her and prayed.

"He blessed me, affirmed my obedience to God's call, and invited me to preach at his church whenever I visited the U.S.," says Murphy. "And I am dedicating the Distinguished Alumni award to him."

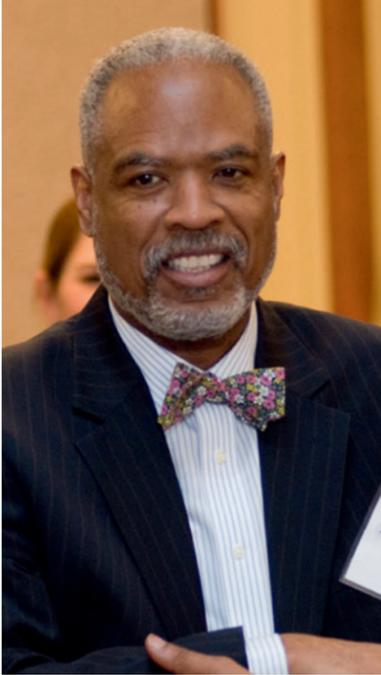
*Dr. Murphy will be presented with her award at the Trailblazer/Distinguished Alumni Award Reception on Wednesday, May 3, at 10:30 a.m. in the Holderness Dining Room.*

### TO REGISTER FOR SPRUNT

Please visit us online for more event information and to register:



<https://na.eventscloud.com/sprunt23>



## 2023 BAA TRAILBLAZER

## Dr. Hoffman Brown

The recipient of the 2023 Black Alumni Association Trailblazer award is modest about his own accomplishments. But Rev. Dr. Hoffman Brown is also an individual who is hugely ambitious for the church to meet the challenges in society that have been laid bare by the events of the past few years.

In an August 2022 article for the BAA newsletter, he wrote: "I am no longer a pastor with romanticized notions of life, but now I am a retired, 'woke' resident of this time and space, and I am angry at what I have discovered about Black and White America!" The 1981 UPsem

graduate offered up his thoughts as a challenge to the larger Seminary community and as a way to address "this major transition in my life and the place where I continue to find hope." (The full article is available at [www.upsem.edu/news/black-alumni-association-newsletter-august-2022-2/](http://www.upsem.edu/news/black-alumni-association-newsletter-august-2022-2/))

Dr. Brown has served the congregations of Beulah Presbyterian Church and the Wilkesboro Presbyterian Chapel in Wilkesboro, North Carolina;

Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Staunton, Virginia; Main Street Baptist Church in Smithfield, Virginia; and Wayland Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

"I am honored that my colleagues think enough of me to give me the Trailblazer award," says Brown, "though I think the work I've done is simply in keeping with what any good Union Presbyterian grad does. I was probably a trailblazer at Union in the sense that I was the only Black registered on the campus and the only Black in my class." He was also the first president of the Black Alumni Association.

"The class of 1981 was the best class in history!" he recalls. "We did something unprecedented. The entire class passed the senior exams on the first try. Everybody. My grandfather died during the first week of the three-week exams, so I missed my second week, took the third, and came back to do the second week. My classmates rallied around me to make sure that I passed.

"I came to Union as a wide-eyed, ambitious Christian who wanted to be about changing the world for good," he says. "Union gave me the raw material to be able to do that as a pastor. I am indebted to the school for that."

*Dr. Brown will be presented with his award at the Trailblazer/Distinguished Alumni Award Reception on Wednesday, May 3, at 10:30 a.m. in the Holderness Dining Room.*



## LUNCHEON SPEAKER

## Dr. Ted Wardlaw

Since his retirement in 2022 as president of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Ted Wardlaw has reflected on the challenges of leading a seminary during demanding times. He will bring those thoughts to Union Presbyterian Seminary as luncheon speaker during the May 2023 Sprunt Lectures.

As he considers the challenges that have faced his peers in this era, he thinks of a seminary president he sees as a model for leadership: President Brian Blount of Union Presbyterian Seminary.

"I've had a sense of inspiration from how seminary presidents have managed their leadership," says Wardlaw. "This is particularly true about Brian. He inherited a strong school, and he did a lot of things to break new ground. I've been impressed with his hiring and the diversity he has brought to the faculty, and with the growth and successes of the Charlotte campus.

"I love watching the way he leads," Wardlaw adds, "and his representation of Union always begins with his commitment to the church—how to

strengthen the campus to edify the church. He has always had a deep sense of the importance of scholarship and all the other disciplines that form an effective pastor.

"Brian gets up at the crack of dawn and runs. Then he leads multiple meetings and deals with all of the issues, expected and unexpected, that arise in the course of the day. And somehow he has continued with his own scholarship. That takes incredible self-discipline. He has also been important to the Committee on Theological Education, never reluctant to take his rounds of chairing committees and leading that family of seminaries.

"Union has always stood for scholarship and ecclesiology, serving the church with scholarship," says Wardlaw. "Brian stepped into the important role of president and distinguished it in new ways, and, at end of the day, the ongoing scholarship and ecclesiastical focus is still there, interpreted in his own way. He is a credit to the ethos of Union, to his predecessors, and to the future of the institution."

*Dr. Wardlaw will speak at the alumni luncheon, Tuesday, May 2, at 12:30 p.m. in the Holderness Dining Room.*

Azusa Street Revival *continued from page 1*

Azusa movement was seen as incorporating "crude" or "demonic" rituals from the days of enslavement and from Africa. The question was asked, "Why would White people want to mimic these slave practices?"

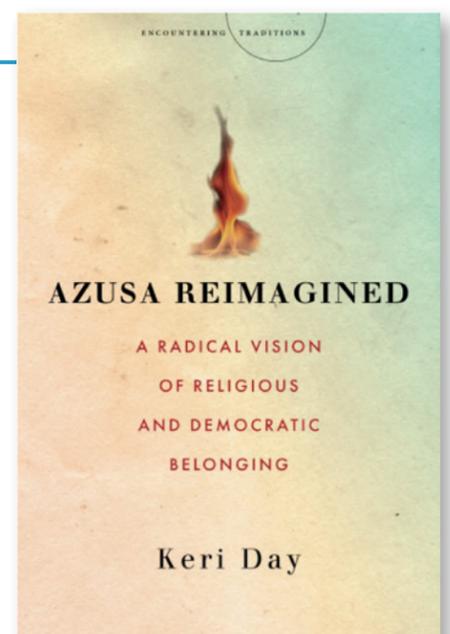
The *Los Angeles Times* gave Azusa Street heavy coverage, much of it mocking, and the Azusa movement was heavily policed.

"There was real divestment among White people of their White privilege... of their Whiteness," says Day. "They were entering into an experience of religious conversion on the terms of a Black community. At Azusa, there was a powerful sense of religious and democratic belonging.

"Reflecting on Azusa Street, how might we think today in fresh, creative, and invigorating ways about the Spirit and how the Spirit empowers us as we rethink who we are as a Christian church?" asks Day. "What this community was doing at this moment in history is a reference point for

today and for the Sprunt lectures that I plan to give."

*Dr. Day will present her lectures on Monday, May 1, at 6 p.m.; Tuesday, May 2, at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.; and Wednesday, May 3, at 9 a.m. All lectures will be held at Watts Chapel.*



*Azusa Reimagined by Dr. Keri Day*

DR. REBECCA DAVIS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## A New Center for Christian Education

The late Dr. Sara Little, a pioneer in Christian education and the first full-time female professor at Union Theological Seminary, once said, “Everything the church does teaches.” That is an article of faith for Rev. Dr. Rebecca Davis, Associate Professor of Christian Education, for whom Christian education has been a passion since her teen years.

Today, she looks forward to the establishment of a Center for Excellence in Christian Education at Union in Charlotte and is working with a design team to envision the makeup of the Center. The foundational paper for the Center states:

*“Contextually and historically, the need for a Center for Excellence in Christian Education comes from the focus and emphasis the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has placed on education. Unique to Union Presbyterian Seminary is its relationship to the former Presbyterian School of Christian Education, making it especially appropriate to establish the Center for Excellence in Christian Education at Union Presbyterian Seminary.”*

Dr. Davis believes there is an urgent need for the Center and the leading-edge thinking it can provide for the changing, often turbulent, world that confronts the church. She borrows from a leadership theory that is often used in the field of strategic leadership to characterize our current environment: VUCA. The acronym is used to describe the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of situations.

“The pandemic brought to the fore what the church was inching toward—the need for new ways of teaching and leading in Christian education in order to serve in a shifting church and world,” explains Davis. “PSCE offered leading-edge thinking. We want to build on that legacy and meet the world with a new meaning for VUCA: vision, understanding,

creativity, and adaptability. We want the Center to lead in discovering new ways to teach faith, provide opportunities for current professionals to retool, and form seminary students who can meet the challenges and possibilities of today.”

Davis believes the Center’s three platforms—Research, Practice, and Leadership—will foster creativity, innovation, and generative conversations between academics, practitioners, and Seminary students. She also sees the Center as being able to nurture church educators, pastors, and church leaders in Christian education—a process that began for her when she was a high school student.

Dr. Davis was in tenth grade when her small church first invited her to teach Sunday school. When she was a few years out of high school, the part-time director of Christian education invited her to write Vacation Bible School curriculum, thus beginning a years-long involvement in Christian education. “They recognized gifts for ministry before I did,” she says. “The congregation, Presbytery educators, and a great cloud of witnesses invested in and nurtured them into being.”

She visited PSCE, meeting such major figures in Christian education as professors Donald Griggs, Lamar Williamson, and Sara Little, who became her professor and mentor and nurtured her as she earned a M.A.C.E and M.Div. “Doing both degrees,” she recalls Sara Little advising her, “empowers you to do education throughout the whole church.”

As the newly named director of the Center of Excellence for Christian Education, Dr. Davis is grateful for President Blount’s commitment to Christian education as a vital part of UPSem’s mission. One of his first presidential acts was to name a task force to “envision the role of Christian education in the life of the Presbyterian Church broadly and, more particularly, to consider how the work we do at Union-PSCE can better facilitate that role.” As he prepares to retire, Brian Blount will establish this new Center to ensure UPSem will continue to lead in Christian education.

“The field is growing, with educators who are emerging from their local congregations,” says Davis. “The Center is not just for people with theological degrees. We want it to be a resource that is available for anyone who has a passion for Christian education—experienced and new educators, pastors, and lay leaders.

“We want to nurture and invest in their ministries, just as I was nurtured.”



DR. PAUL GALBREATH, PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY

## Discerning God’s Presence in Nature

For years, Dr. Paul Galbreath had a strong belief that the season of Lent was less about “giving things up” and more about “opening up to discover God’s presence around us”—a presence that is readily apparent in the natural world. Further, he believed that, as Christians, we are called to care for that natural world. But he discovered early on in his journey that most people lack the resources to connect stewardship of the earth with their own faith.

His work toward creating such a resource, which he describes as “a simple devotional book,” began 10 years ago, during his work with congregations in the Pacific Northwest. “I was interested in how people in local congregations understood their own individual environmental activities to be related to their Christian faith,” says Galbreath. “They did not have a deep vocabulary to speak to that.” His new book, *Elemental: A Journey through Lent with the Earth*, offers an intriguing, scripture-based format to bridge that gap.

“In order to provide a meditation for every day of Lent, I began by assigning an element to each day of Holy Week,” he explains. “Those seven elements and their corresponding days are: Trees (Friday), Rocks (Saturday), Wheat/Bread (Sunday), Sky/Sun (Monday), Wind (Tuesday), Earth (Wednesday), and Water (Thursday).

“The day to consider rocks, as an example, is Saturday, the day the rock was over the tomb. So, on the first Saturday, we consider a scriptural passage where rocks are significant—in this case, Genesis 28, Jacob’s dream. The passage reads, ‘Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep,’ and, in the dream, he hears God’s

promise of land for him and his descendants. The scripture continues, ‘So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone which he had placed under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel.’”

It is possible, says Galbreath, that meditation by any individual on a simple rock can suggest God’s presence and even characteristics of God—in the case of a rock, God’s strength and endurance, God’s everlasting nature.

Along with scripture related to rocks, Galbreath provides, for the corresponding day in Lent, a page or two of reflection. “What is going on in the text? How does the text suggest that we can see God’s presence around us—in this instance, ‘marked by a rock?’” This is, he says, an associative way of reading scripture.

Galbreath imagines Jacob and others who look at rocks. They know the connection with rocks as a sign of God’s presence.

Do we look at rocks that way?

“We rarely do,” says Galbreath.

“But by reclaiming an incarnational theology that affirms God’s creation as good and celebrates materiality as God’s gift, we can begin the process of erasing the dangerous dualism (spirit vs. matter) that has haunted us and supported economic models that have exploited the planet’s resources.”

**Union Presbyterian Seminary is purchasing copies of Dr. Paul Galbreath’s book, *Elemental: A Journey through Lent with the Earth*, and will give a copy to the first 30 people who request it.**



## GREETINGS

W. Clay Macaulay

**Grace to you, and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!**

Last summer, at Massanetta Springs, I was having lunch with one of our “younger alums” who has graduated since I returned to UPSem as director of alumni development. One of the questions he asked of me was, “What is the Seminary doing at Sprunts to honor the retirement of Brian Blount?” He added, “If there is a reception honoring Brian at Sprunts, that is something my wife (also an alum) and I would return to attend!” Well, I have good news!

As you will note on the schedule for Sprunts, we will have a reception to honor Brian and Sharon Blount at the Sprunt Lectures, being held May 1–3, 2023. The reception will take place on Tuesday, May 2, in the later afternoon, at 5:30. At that time, we will join with alumni, friends of the Seminary, and others to celebrate the 16 years Brian has devoted to the Union and PSCE community in serving as president,

professor, pastor, administrator, counselor, leader, and so much more for us all!

At the recent “Calvin Ball,” at the end of the fall term, current students recognized their leaders—as our seminarians have for generations—naming those with “Irresistible Grace” and “Total Depravity”! This year, the students named an additional honoree in a category designated for a member of the faculty. It was fitting that the inaugural award for “Perseverance of the Saints” was awarded to Dr. Blount! Another appropriate way for the Seminary community to recognize the leadership we have come to enjoy during Brian’s tenure as president.

Please plan to join us for the annual Sprunt Lectures in May for our wonderful program, and to help us mark and celebrate the ministry and presence of the seventh president of UPSem!

Since good food and fellowship are always a key part of this annual gathering, you will

note that there is a simple flat fee for attending any or all events on campus (not including lectures, worship, or receptions, for which there is no charge, of course). Your generous understanding and support of this annual homecoming of those like you, who love and support UPSem, is greatly appreciated.

We encourage you to send news of your life and ministry to the Associate for Alumni and Advancement at [alumni@upsem.edu](mailto:alumni@upsem.edu). You may also call (804) 278-4228 and leave a message.

We hope you will enjoy reading the alumni updates listed here and also share your news with us!

Yours faithfully,

W. Clay Macaulay (D.Min.’85)

Director of Alumni Development

[cmacaulay@upsem.edu](mailto:cmacaulay@upsem.edu)

(804) 436-7471 (mobile and text)

(804) 278-4382 (study)

## Alumni Notes

## TRANSITIONS

**Jayne Babczak (M.Div./M.A.C.E.’20)** now serves as Associate Pastor for Spiritual Formation and Congregational Connection at Immanuel United Church of Christ in Reading, PA.

**Scott T. Crane (M.Div./M.A.C.E.’02)** now serves as Temporary Bridge Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Corvallis, OR.

**Berry French (M.Div.’08)** is now serving as Associate Pastor for Campus Ministry at University Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill, NC. Berry is the Executive Director of Presbyterian Campus Ministry of Chapel Hill, a UKirk Ministry, now hosting a two-year, full-time pastoral resident for campus ministry.

**Kathleen Henrion (M.Div.’11)** now serves as Pastor of Glendale Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, MO.

**Karen “Kerry” Pidcock-Lester (M.Div.’81)** and **W. Carter Lester (M.Div.’90)** have retired as Co-Pastors of First Presbyterian Church in Pottstown, PA, after 28 years of ministry.

**Carol Pierson (M.Div.’11, M.A.C.E.’20)** was installed as Pastor for First Presbyterian Church in Sidney, OH, by the Presbytery of Miami Valley on November 6, 2022.

**Lorenzo R. Small (M.Div.’13)** now serves as Pastor at historic First United Presbyterian Church in uptown Charlotte, NC.

## CELEBRATIONS

**Hannah van Oeyen Altman (M.A.C.E.’20)** and **Scott Altman** welcomed the birth of **Natalie O’Neal** on October 25, 2022, in Harrisonburg, VA.

**Courtney “Essie” Koenig-Reinke (M.Div.’17)** and **Eric A. Koenig-Reinke (M.Div.’16, Th.M.’17)** welcomed their child **Lucy Elizabeth** on December 29, 2021.

**Elizabeth L.C. McGuire (M.Div.’09)** and **Will McGuire** welcomed their third child, **Dorothy “Dottie” Elizabeth McGuire**, on August 18, 2022. Dottie joins older siblings **John Howell** and **Moriah**.

**Dan C. West (B.D.’65)** gave the Founders Day convocation address at Lyon College in Batesville, AR, on October 21, 2022, on the 150th anniversary of the founding of the college. He was the 14th president of Lyon, from 1972 to 1988.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Charles H. Cobb Jr. (B.D.’57)**  
September 12, 2022

**Donna M. Cook (M.A.’65)**  
November 30, 2022

**Price H. Gwynn III (former UPSem Trustee)**  
September 28, 2022

**Katherine Willson Stokes Hart (M.R.E.’49)**  
July 22, 2022

**Jerry W. Houchens (M.A.’75)**  
January 8, 2022

**Diane Hymans (M.A.’77, Ed.D.’92)**  
October 28, 2022

**Margaret H. Jameson (B.R.E.’50)**  
April 24, 2021

**James “Jim” Keegan (M.Div.’90)**  
July 22, 2022

**David E. King (M.Div.’71, M.A.’72)**  
July 13, 2022

**Edward L. Moore (M.Div.’71, D.Min.’75)**  
September 3, 2022

**Bernard F. Nass (M.A.’75, D.Min.’78)**  
June 15, 2022

**Homer C. Phifer Jr. (M.Div.’59, D.Min.’75)**  
October 17, 2022

**Jack R. Pousseau (M.C.E.’59)**  
June 25, 2022

**Lora Kinsinger Scott (M.R.E.’56)**  
July 14, 2021

**Elsie Todd (M.C.E.’68)**  
July 13, 2022

**E. Douglas “Doug” Vaughan (M.Div.’63)**  
October 7, 2022

**William W. Winters (M.Div.’94)**  
September 30, 2022

## ON THE SHELF

**Lal “Hmingi” H. Browne (M.A.’92)** has a new book titled *Children’s Sermons – Year C* that was illustrated by her granddaughters **Lilly Browne** and **Emily Browne**. Fall 2022.

**Ronald P. Byars**, Union Presbyterian Seminary professor emeritus of preaching and worship, has written *Preaching and Praying as Though God Matters: In the Post-establishment Church*, with **Don E. Saliers** as a contributing writer. The paperback is available for order through Amazon or as a Kindle book. “This book presumes that trying to reverse the loss of (the mainline church’s) traditional status in society is both futile and beside the point,” says Byars. “What’s called for when we find ourselves in a state of crisis is to rediscover the big picture, the Christian hope projected on a large screen. This requires the courage to revisit the sources from which all Christian hope springs, rediscovering their life-giving power.”

**David Howell (M.Div.’81)** was invited to read from his recently published book, *Tethered to an Appalachian Curse: A Surprise Calling*, at the Carolina Mountain Literary Festival (Burnsville, NC), Arts in the Middle (Urbanna, VA), and the Wild Goose Festival (NC). As founder of the Festival of Homiletics, he continues to work as a consultant to Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. His next book, *Buried Dreamer*, a historical novel about an exiled Scottish Presbyterian minister who assists with the Underground Railroad in Virginia in the 1800s, will be released in the spring.

**Eric Killinger (M.Div.’88)** has a new book titled *Adoration in Secret, An Uncommon Book of Prayer II: Transitional Prayers (on the Way) to the Last God*. It is available now through Amazon and in bookstores.

**Thomas Shields (D.Min.’83)** has a book titled *Upstream Teaching in the Church: a Transformative Teaching Method*. During his years as a pastor, Dr. Shields discovered he was not alone in his awareness that teaching in the church can and should be proactive as well as a transformative aid. The question is, why are we so reluctant to acknowledge and employ it to help our hurting learners by using this or some other equally effective method? Westbow Press. Fall 2019.

**Bruce Taylor (Ph.D.’88)** has a new book titled *Love Walks on Wounded Feet: More Sermons for the Lectionary, Year A, Advent through Eastertide*. It is a collection of lectionary-based sermons for Sundays and feast days, including several story sermons. Wipf and Stock Publishers. 2022. The follow-up volume, *God at Work: More Sermons for the Lectionary, Year A, Pentecost through Christ the King*, was published in November 2022.

## AWARDS

**Hoffman F. Brown III (D.Min.’81)** has been named as the recipient of the 2023 BAA Trailblazer Award.

**Jenna Campbell (M.A.C.E.’05)** has been named as the recipient of the 2023 ENRICH Educator of the Year award by the Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE).

**Rosalyn F.T. Murphy (M.Div.’99)** has been named as the recipient of the 2023 UPSem Distinguished Alumni Award.

*This list reflects notes received by the Alumni Office as of December 14, 2022.*

**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](https://bit.ly/UPSem-Alumni-Notes)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### On-Campus Workshop: The Bible and Film

March 6–8 / 7:00 pm–9:00 pm

Led by Dr. Samuel L. Adams, Professor of Old Testament and Director of Community Engagement at Union Presbyterian Seminary

This three-day workshop will explore the different ways in which Christianity, the Bible, and film can be placed into mutually enriching conversation.

 [bit.ly/BibleFilmWorkshop](https://bit.ly/BibleFilmWorkshop)

### Routed 2:67 “CBF Night”

Tuesday, March 14 / 6:00 pm–7:30 pm

Monthly dinner gathering of the Baptist House of Studies

Get to know the staff of CBF Virginia and CBF Global, who are visiting us from Decatur, Georgia.

 [bit.ly/cbfnight](https://bit.ly/cbfnight)

### 2023 Dawe Lecture

Wednesday, March 15 / 7:30 pm

Presenter: Dr. Leela Prasad, Professor of Religious Studies at Duke University

In her lecture, “That Religion Which Underlies All Religions,” Dr. Prasad will discuss Gandhi and the practice of generous orientation.

 [bit.ly/2023DaweLecture](https://bit.ly/2023DaweLecture)



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# The Sprunt Lectures Issue

Schedule, Speaker, and Awards PAGES 3–5



## Scholar. Pastor. Leader.

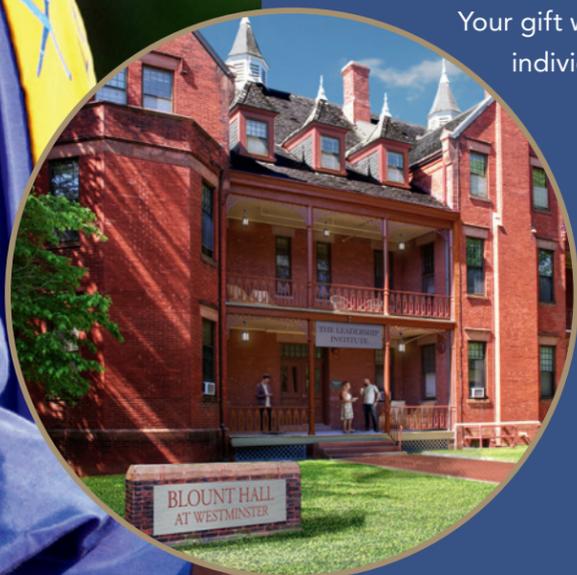
### Blount Hall at Westminster

For generations of students, Westminster Hall was their home away from home at Union—a place where lifelong friendships were formed during late-night discussions. Now, after years of sitting vacant, the building is taking on a new life as the home of the Leadership Institute. The board of trustees has voted to name the building Blount Hall at Westminster to honor President Brian K. Blount for his 16 years of leadership and service to the Seminary.

We are in the process of raising \$7 million to restore Westminster to its original glory—with all of the modern technologies needed to provide continuing education to visiting pastors, Christian educators, and other church leaders.

Your gift will help us turn this vision into reality. Would you like to honor an individual who has served Union as a scholar, pastor, leader, or friend?

For more information, contact Marvin Daniel  
at [mdaniel@upsem.edu](mailto:mdaniel@upsem.edu) or at (804) 278-4240.



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