



Sharon&Brook

CONNECTING THE UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY COMMUNITY

ISSUE 15 / FALL 2023

Union Welcomes Jacqueline Lapsley

In 1990, Jacq Lapsley found herself at a crossroads.

The future president of Union Presbyterian Seminary was in Paris, studying what she loved: literature—specifically, 19th-century French literature, 19th-century British literature, and literary theory at the graduate level. At the same time, she started attending the American Church in Paris, where she found leaders, students, and programs that were, she said, "life giving." That year, in that city, this lover of literature decided she wanted go into the ministry.

It was not a total surprise. Her father, James Lapsley, was himself a Presbyterian minister and professor at Princeton Theological Seminary and a 1955 graduate of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.

"It was already in the air," Lapsley says. "But it was a huge 180. It was

and more, she wanted to teach. Was teaching, she asked herself, really "ministry"?

She found the answer in John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and the answer was yes.

Lapsley earned her M.Div. at Princeton, where she began a lifelong love affair with the Hebrew language, and then headed to Emory University for her Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible, a teaching assistantship, and exposure to renowned Old Testament scholar Carol Newsom. Newsom posed to her such intriguing questions about the book of Ezekiel that Jacq Lapsley decided to make Ezekiel the focus of her dissertation and her first book (*Can These Bones Live? The Problem of the Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel*).

With her Ph.D. completed, Lapsley was called back to Princeton to teach Old Testament—never abandoning literary theory, but instead employing it as a lens to study and teach scripture. She remained there for 25 years, right up to her call in 2023 to become professor of Old Testament and to be the first woman president in the history of Union Presbyterian Seminary.

a call from God—and not just looking back on it. I was aware of it when it was happening."

When she told her father of her decision, she says, he was tending to his crop of Jersey tomatoes. He paused and said, "Oh, Jacq," and let out something like a groan, painfully aware of the financial challenges that could come with a life in the ministry.

The Smith College graduate finished her M.A. in comparative literature at Chapel Hill, enrolled in Princeton Theological Seminary, and flourished there, but she found that she was still struggling with the fact that, more Her teaching years at Princeton saw an academic's steady output of books and articles and roles on leadership committees and editorial boards. She was director of Princeton Theological Seminary's Center for Theology, Women, and Gender and co-chair of the Ethics and Biblical Interpretation section of the Society of Biblical Literature.

continued on next page

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Look for the links following a story or section to find extended articles, videos, images, and discussions. Or visit us on social media to keep up with the latest at the Seminary.



Campus

"Union forms people to be agents of transformative change in their communities, in church, in society—especially now, with the brokenness, the fragmentation, the challenges of talking to people across great differences. It is critical that we do this work—as it says in the Old Testament, to be 'repairers of the breach." Dr. Jacqueline Lapsley

Her experience on the steering committee of Princeton's Farminary, with its integration of theological education with the areas of ecology, sustainability, regenerative agriculture, and food justice, deepened her interest in creation ethics. "The Old Testament is an underutilized resource for people of faith in tackling climate change and caring for the creation that God so loves," says Lapsley.

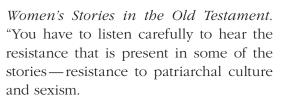
She has served on the editorial boards of the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel, and the Interpretation commentary series, co-edited with New Testament scholar Beverly Gaventa and with two other names familiar to the Union community: Brian Blount and Samuel Adams.

The 2011 book A Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics, for which Lapsley was an associate editor, received "Reference Book of the Year" designation from the Academy of Parish Clergy.

Throughout her Princeton teaching years, she retained a sensitivity to the literary power of the Old Testament—the beauty and arc of a story, the words and phrases, and the Bible as literature.

"That's what literary theory is supposed to help you do—to appreciate the artistry of the story as opposed to being solely focused on the historical details," explains Lapsley. "And I've come to see also that a good literary framework for reading scripture is also, by necessity, historical. Attention to literary artistry also makes the theological commitments of the Bible pop off the page. It's a critical tool for the faithful reading of scripture."

In her years of studying and teaching Old Testament, she has encountered ancient voices that have not been rightly heard. The evocative title of one of her books points to those encounters: Whispering the Word: Hearing



"It's not always on the surface, but part of the argument of my book Whispering the Word is that the scriptures are much more nuanced and powerful as a word into patriarchal culture than they are usually given credit for.

"There is a lot more going on within the scriptures themselves around these matters, through storytelling, whereas some people who are no longer people of faith just want Vhispering Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament

to throw it all out because they see the Bible as steeped in patriarchy. You are very flatfooted if you are reading the Bible in that way."

President and Professor of Old Testament in the

Walter W. Moore and Charles E. S. Kraemer Presidential Chairs

When Lapsley left Princeton for Union, she had been serving for five years as dean and vice president of academic affairs. "This afforded me the opportunity to work with colleagues at the executive leadership level to think about the institution as a whole and how to work together to live into and fulfill the mission of the school," she explains. "I think we are at a time in both the life of the church and in society when we need what seminaries have to offer more than ever.

"Union forms people to be agents of transformative change in their

communities, in church, in society-especially now, with the brokenness, the fragmentation, the challenges of talking to people across great differences. It is critical that we do this work-as it says in the Old Testament, to be 'repairers of the breach.'

"We need to be weaving the frayed threads of our unraveling society back into a whole. We need people who can do that kind of work, and we at UPSem need to provide them with the resources that will form them for that work."

Clearly, at that crossroads in Paris in 1990, Jacq Lapsley took the right road.



Dr. Lapsley and her husband, Rev. Greg Bezilla, on the Richmond campus

MORE ONLINE

Learn more about Jacq Lapsley and her vision for Union Presbyterian Seminary in this video series by scanning the QR code.





bit.ly/MeetJacq23

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2023 FALL ISSUE

Campus 3

HONORING THE PAST, MEETING THE FUTURE

The Campaign for Blount Hall at Westminster

Chris Burton, the head of Union's Leadership Institute since December 2022, sees the potential of its planned location in the newly named Blount Hall at Westminster and feels the excitement and momentum of the campaign that is underway to make it a reality.

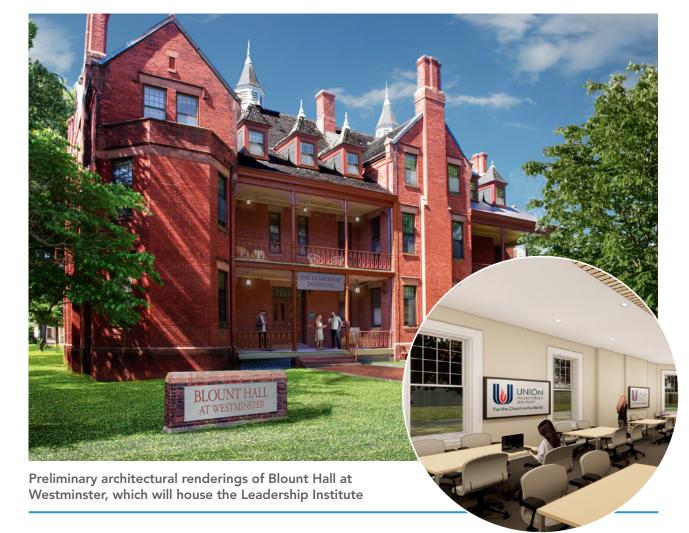
"The Leadership Institute grew out of the Seminary's long-standing commitment to continuing education. We are talking about folks who are already in ministry or getting ready to retire and people looking at new ways they can contribute."

Marvin Daniel, Union's vice president for advancement, is himself a beneficiary of the Institute's programs. Through its Pathways program, the former president of KDW Home, a kitchen design company, now serves as the commissioned lay pastor for mission and advocacy at Richmond's Second Presbyterian

Church. Two Sundays a month, he is busy preaching at Gregory Memorial Church in Prince George, Virginia.

"The vision, creativity, and leadership of President Brian Blount, whose name is now part of the historic 197-year-old building, has been extraordinary," says Burton. "Brian valued innovation, and that shows up in all the features that will be built into the Institute's new quarters.

"The importance of having a space where we can have conferences and housing for participants, be able to easily access the library, take advantage



of state-of-the-art technologies, share a meal, participate in worship in Watts Hall, and work with Union's Centers is impossible to overstate.

"For decades, Westminster was home to so many Seminary students," Burton adds. "They remember it with fondness, and the support that's coming in from so many of these folks for the Campaign for Blount Hall at Westminster has been so inspiring.

"They see the Leadership Institute at Blount Hall as a wonderful way to honor the past and to meet the needs of the church in the future."



FOR THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Seminary Welcomes International Students

Students from all over the world are a valuable part of the Seminary and enrich the ministry of all students, staff, and faculty. A new video featuring a number of interviews with the UPSem community, shows how different languages, experiences, and understandings of the global church enrich the conversation on campus.

Some of the new international students attending the Seminary this fall

MORE ONLINE

View the video by scanning the QR code.





ELIZABETH HINSON-HASTY

Connecting the Church and the Academy

For Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, faith is more than "the three feet around you." The new professor of theology and ethics for Union Presbyterian Seminary, who will teach on the Charlotte campus, describes herself as "very intentional about connecting the church and the academy and doing that in a way that addresses the needs of the local and global community." A noted author, scholar, teacher, and religious leader, Hinson-Hasty sees deep connections linking issues of healthcare, housing, mental health, wealth inequality, social mobility, and the environment with faith.

She is particularly excited about the first class she will be teaching in the 2023–2024 academic year, "An Introduction to Christian Ethics." It will feature readings and case studies and a hybrid format that will allow participation by pastors who can communicate what is going on in their congregations and how that might inform academic conversations in Christian ethics. "A case study in a second class will focus on environmental ethics," says Hinson-Hasty, "and how that relates very practically to denominational policy as well as congregational life and how to incorporate an environmental ethic, even in the context of liturgy."

Hinson-Hasty brings exceptional experience to that discussion. In addition to her other work, she has also served as a member of the PC(USA)'s Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), which is charged with reviewing the denomination's financial investments and determining how it can apply what she describes as "an ethical lens" to them. The committee recently devoted three years to conversations with community leaders, congregations, and corporate leaders in different parts of the country about climate change and examining companies' intentionality and transparency.

Hinson-Hasty's group saw its recommendation to divest from five fossil fuel companies adopted in 2022 by the PC(USA)'s Environmental Justice Committee. She will be bringing experiences like these—what she refers to as "a rich and important dialogue"—into her classroom for the course she has titled "More Than Money, Math, and Markets: Theocentric Visions of a Just and Sustainable Economy." She is also teaching a third class in Reformed theologies.

Hinson-Hasty holds an M.Div. from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Union Presbyterian Seminary.

"Union played a significant role in my own formation as a scholar and a teacher," she says. "I am excited and honored to be part of the witness I see Union making to the broader church and to the world, trying to live out an authentic Christian life in the midst of the challenges we are facing and to witness to the reign of God during these very difficult times."

"I am excited and honored to be part of the witness I see Union making to the broader church and to the world."

> Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty Professor of Theology and Ethics

JOSH MORRIS

From Kandahar to Classroom

In April 2014, Army reserve chaplain Josh Morris put his Ph.D. studies at Claremont School of Theology on hold for a nine-month deployment to Kandahar province in Afghanistan, where his assigned unit carried out "route clearance," finding and disarming IEDs (improvised explosive devices), and engineering and construction missions to descope many of the US bases in Afghanistan. "It was an honor to be the one who was in their lives and be able to walk with them, go on their routes, and go through what they went through," he says. In later assignments, this included jumping out of airplanes to be with his soldiers.

Morris will bring those wartime experiences and insights, as well as more than 11 years as a chaplain in pediatric hospital settings, to his newest assignment as assistant professor of practical theology at Union's Charlotte campus.

His last position was at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, where he was assistant director for spiritual services, helping manage 1/ chaplains

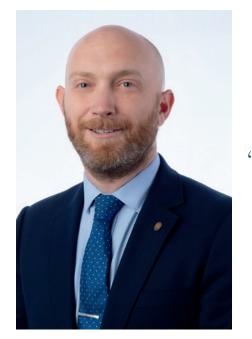
It was while he was working on his Ph.D. and as a chaplain at the hospital that he began considering teaching. "I would really love to teach," he remembers thinking, "and to train people, even if they're not going to be chaplains or even pastors."

"I heard about Union from Presbyterian chaplains in the military and in hospitals—about its incredible faculty and always being at the forefront of theological thinking," says Morris. "Some of the students Union serves are at the beginning of a second career, attending to what the Holy Spirit is saying and what God is calling them to be. I asked myself, 'How can I be on that journey with them?"

This fall, Morris is teaching "Introduction to Pastoral Care" and, in the spring, "Preaching and Proclamation." A third class will draw directly from his experience on the dusty, dangerous trails of Kandahar: "Moral Injury: Spiritual Care Implications and Pathways to Recovery."

In contrast to physical wounds and even PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), moral injury—a term that emerged from Vietnam-era trauma language—results from what Morris says is "a betrayal of what is right and wrong." In its wake lies a potent brew of guilt, shame, and regret, and individuals dealing with moral injury can fall between the cracks in our society.

he was assistant director for spiritual services, helping manage 14 chaplains.



Morris uses that same phrase—"an honor"—to describe how he felt about working with children and their families "when they had received a diagnosis for their child that completely ripped their lives apart."

As part of his teaching, Morris will be examining the place of the church in addressing this kind of injury.

"I heard about Union from Presbyterian chaplains in the military and in hospitals—about its incredible faculty and always being at the forefront of theological thinking."

> Josh Morris Assistant Professor, Practical Theology

Faculty 5

THE GARGOYLE SPEAKS

Carson Brisson

Older Than Water

"He is not improving," the voice on the phone from my father's retirement home said. "We have moved him to our emergency COVID hall. You might want to get here soon. Please pass this information on to any others you deem appropriate. Do you want the contact information for our chaplain?"

I made the calls, including the most difficult one. It was to my younger brother—a former teacher, now a pastor, whose relationship with our father had been at times more off than on.

My brother was serving a church near Wounded Knee, South Dakota. It was going well. At his installation, his congregation had changed its name for him from "Man Looking for His Horse" to "Stars in His Heart."

My brother was appreciative and gracious. He had several pressing pastoral duties, but he would book a flight back to the east coast as soon as possible. It would take a few days. Would I let our father know he was on his way?

After completing the calls, my wife and I packed an overnight bag and a prayer and headed out.

Not many miles down the road, I sensed something in the back seat of our car. I glanced in the rearview mirror, and there it sat—wearing a cap just a little too small for its head, smiling ever so slightly. It was the feeling of helplessness.

"I hate you," I said.

"I know," the feeling responded, "but I'm here for you, nonetheless."

I didn't think I'd heard that correctly. "Here for me, nonetheless?"

"Yes," the feeling answered. "Only I meant the plural 'you,' as in you and your wife and everyone else involved in this. English has significant weaknesses in terms of pronouns. Maybe you missed the plural aspect of the 'you' I used. You teach languages, I think. You should know better."

I adjusted my grammar: "Just how are you here for us? Explain yourself?"

"No," came the response, with a disconcerting calmness. "I am not allowed to explain myself. It is up to you to discern my purpose. But I am allowed to say that some things are older than water. Learn this."

"Some things are older than water?" I responded. "Riddles? You think this is a time for riddles?" I decided the feeling of helplessness and I did not need to continue our discussion. I was wrong.

Hours passed. Sharing driving duties, my wife and I made good time. We arrived at the retirement home in mid-afternoon. Identical COVID notices on laminated paper were attached with blue masking tape to both panels of its locked front door. We rang the bell.

A staff member opened the door, stepped outside, and closed the door behind her. She held a clipboard with a pen attached to it by string. She she asked, staring at her clipboard. "Which resident or residents are you here to see? Are you family? Have you been vaccinated? Do you have proof of vaccination?"

We would be allowed 10 minutes for each visit, one person at a time. We would be given protective clothing to wear. It was to be taken off and left outside the room. We were to exit the facility by a side door. Any violation of any of these protocols would disallow further visits.

Then she added, lowering her clipboard, "I'm new here, as you probably know. I am truly sorry for all of this. My mother is a resident. She's on the COVID hall, too."

My wife took her hand.

The 10 minutes passed quickly. My father, fit nearly all of his life, with thick, midnight-black hair that never grayed, looked worn out. Just before our time ended, I began to explain to him the circumstances of my younger brother's delay. As soon as I mentioned his name, my father perked up. "He was here," he said. "Yesterday. He didn't come in my room. He stood in the elevator. He waved. He smiled. He said everything was good. He looked strong. Then the elevator door closed."

I didn't know what to say. The retirement home was a one-story building. It had no elevators. My brother was 1,500 miles and several days away.

"Oh," I finally responded. "I'm glad he came to see you."

"Yes," my father sighed, closing his brown eyes. "He waved. He looked well. He said, 'All the bad things are over. All the bad things are over."

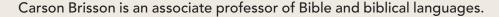
I called my younger brother that evening.

Our father died the next day.

He died worn out, and at peace.

Dear belov'ed Gargoyle reader: Some things are older than water. And, moreover, some of them are beautiful.

Laus Deo.





father of Carson Brisson

was clearly stressed. She did not greet us or identify herself. "Your names?"

Sharon&Brook

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

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



STANLEY RAYFIELD

Painting the Presidential Portrait

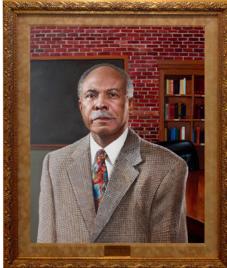
Richmond artist Stanley Rayfield had already painted three outstanding individuals from the Union Presbyterian Seminary community—Katie Geneva Cannon, Syngman Rhee, and Sam Roberts—when he was commissioned for retiring president Brian Blount's portrait.

"I had met him and wanted to capture what I thought were salient aspects to his character," says Rayfield. "To immediately establish him as preacher and teacher, I set the painting in Watts Hall, with him at the pulpit.

"I knew how important family is to him, so his wedding ring is prominent, as is the Bible he has carried for so many years. I also knew that he is an excellent listener. He is very interested in others. He respects them and pays close attention to them. In the painting, he is looking directly at you... and very seriously.

"I deliberately did not choose a photo of him smiling to work with. He of course has a wonderful smile, but I wanted a serious expression because I thought it contained so much of what he is as scholar, preacher, leader, and pastor."

Stanley Rayfield's work has garnered national acclaim, starting when he entered the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery portrait competition at age 19. A painting of his father titled "Dad" earned second place in the competition. Rayfield has honed his portraiture skills throughout the years, and his award-winning fine art portraits have been acquired by the United States Pentagon, universities, collectors, and museums, including the Virginia Museum of Fine Art. His work is often featured in prominent art publications. A famous collector of Rayfield's artwork is Academy Awardwinning film director Spike Lee.







In 2022, Rayfield painted the official portrait of Ralph Northam, governor of Virginia from 2018 to 2022. He is the first African American to paint a gubernatorial portrait in Virginia.

MORE ONLINE

Learn more about Stanley Rayfield online. His biography and a selection of his paintings can be seen at:



www.stanleyrayfield.com

Stanley Rayfield poses with Brian and Sharon Blount (top) at the unveiling of Dr. Blount's presidential portrait in the spring. The artwork now hangs in Watts Hall.

Other portraits by Stanley Rayfield include Sam Roberts (above left), Katie Geneva Cannon (above right) and Syngman Rhee (bottom). All of Rayfield's portraits are exhibited on the Richmond Campus of the Seminary.

Sharon&Brook

2023 FALL ISSUE



Alumni 7

W. Clay Macaulay

Grace and peace to you!

Our alums have gathered in a variety places in the late spring and summer, and will continue to do so this fall. During the last week of April (22–28), a group of seven UTS grads gathered on Anna Maria Island, off the west coast of Florida, for a week of continuing ed to celebrate 40 years since starting seminary in 1983. Those attending included Agnes Norfleet Arney, Kitty Hahn Campanella, Helen Montgomery DeBevoise, Sally Campbell Evans, DC Grubb Horne, Kim L. Rodrigue, and Ellen Fowler Skidmore. They also met with Susan Forester DeWyngaert (D.Min.'83) and Eugenia Gamble to talk about "story" and to explore their own faith journeys.

GREETINGS

At Montreat, members of UTS Class of '72 gathered in late May (24–28) at William Black Lodge, as convened by Danny and Tita Massie, with David and Riitta Anderson. In early October (9–11), Union-PSCE alums from the mid-1990s will gather on the Richmond campus with former UTS Professor Doug Ottati. We hope you will come and join us for the Sprunt Lectures next May 6–8, 2024, on our Richmond campus. The Sprunt Lecturer is Rev. Dr. John J. Thatamanil, professor of theology and world religions director for Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Please continue to send news of your life, ministry, and alum gatherings to me. We love hearing from you (see the web links below)!

A very pleasant fall season to you!

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)

MORE ONLINE

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bit.ly/UPSem-Alumni-Notes



Visit our Alumni page:



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Alumni Notes

IN MEMORIAM

Pat Baxter (M.A.'86, Th.M.'03) June 21, 2023

Raymond C. Bell (B.D.'60) May 26, 2023

Joseph F. Condro (M.Div.'69, D.Min.'79) May 23, 2023

John R. Goodman (M.Div.'68, Th.M.'69) August 8, 2023

David A. Long III (D.Min.'77) May 3, 2023

Humphrey Marshall (M.A.'77) July 14, 2023

Geraldine Cottingim Richards (M.A.'49) March 25, 2023

Peggy Fitch Witherspoon (M.A.'56) June 30, 2023

ON THE SHELF

William Caruso (M.A.'79) has a new book titled Out Franklin Road: The Oak Hill Home of

MEET ED MCLEOD

Seminary Alum Will Help with Advancement

Ed McLeod graduated from Union Presbyterian Seminary in 1985, but his ties to the Seminary stretch back farther than that. Both of his parents graduated from Union in the 1950s.

"One of the most important things I took away from my time at Union was the wonderful professors," says McLeod. "But what I am most grateful for are the relationships I made with my professors and classmates—many of whom I have still been in study groups with since we were in seminary. Friendships are the lasting



Nashville's First Presbyterian Church, published by First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, TN, in 2023. Beginning during the French and Indian War, the book is the story of the congregation's 60 acres of land, which at one time was part of a 1780s North Carolina Land Grant. Bill Caruso was the editor of *Appointed to Serve: 100 Years of Memories*, published for the 2014 Centennial of the Assembly's Training School/Presbyterian School of Christian Education.

William E. Thompson (B.D.'61, Th.M.'62, D.Min.'92) authored *In Stonewall's Long Shadow: James Powell Smith, Aide de Camp*, which tells of Lt. James Smith's service on the staff of Lt. General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson in the CSA army. Smith (1837–1923) was a graduate of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (B.D. 1861). After the American Civil War, Smith served as a pastor of PCUS churches in Virginia and as editor of *Central Presbyterian* (a Presbyterian Church news journal).

CELEBRATIONS

Camille LeBron Powell (M.A.C.E./M.Div.'02) earned her Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia Theological Seminary (Decatur, GA) in May 2023. She continues to serve as pastor of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Tucker, GA.

This list reflects notes received by the Alumni Office as of August 25, 2023.

thing."

McLeod recently retired after 19 years as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Raleigh. He has also served three other churches in South Carolina. He says he had been getting used to the idea of retirement, but still wanted to make a difference. He approached Brian Blount last

Ed McLeod, D.Min. '85 Advancement Associate

spring about doing some work for the Seminary, and the two developed the idea of McLeod reaching out to friends of Union in North Carolina and South Carolina to encourage their support of the Seminary.

"My role is about staying connected with people who have been faithful in the past and encouraging them to be faithful with their prayers and financial support, McLeod explains. "I am familiar with a lot of churches in North and South Carolina, and I will be sharing my excitement about the new president and new developments on the horizon for an institution that means a lot me."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Charlotte Admissions Days of Discernment

October 7, 2023 or Saturday, November 4, 2023

Interested in exploring theological education at UPSem Charlotte? Join us for a Day of Discernment. To register, complete the registration form:



bit.ly/discernmentCLT

Interim/Transitional Ministry Education Week 1

November 13–17, 2023 Monday / 1:00 – 7:00 pm Tuesday and Wednesday / 9 am – 5 pm Thursday / 9 am – 7 pm Friday / 9 am –11:30 am

This course is for pastors and church leaders interested in interim ministry and/or congregations in transition. The intense, 30-hour course provides the basics for understanding both interim and transitional ministry.

This training week satisfies the Week 1 Interim/Transitional Ministry training credential required by most church councils within the PC(USA). Other denominations may recognize the Interim/Transitional Ministry training, as well, so please feel free to inquire. This event is open to all, regardless of denomination affiliation. Registration is limited to 25 participants.



bit.ly/MinistryWk1



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JANUARY 16 Decentering Whiteness MARCH 19 Womanist Theopoetics

APRIL 16 Clean Water & Indigenous Justice Movements JUNE 18 LGBTQIA+ Justice

Just Talk / Talk Just is a webinar series sponsored by Union Presbyterian Seminary's Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership and the Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation.

For more information, please visit **upsem.edu/csjr**

