

Chimes



San Francisco Theological
Seminary Magazine
WINTER 2018

Revitalizing Congregation & Community

How do we know whether
the Church is thriving?

PAGE 4



Dear Friends,

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is promoting a new initiative called Vital Congregations. Sponsored by the Theology, Formation & Evangelism office, they are asking presbyteries to indicate their interest in participating in the first phase of a rollout leading to a 2020 launch.

In similar fashion, the United Church of Christ developed a set of resources to engage congregations and conferences in a New Beginnings program aimed at revitalization. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Christian Church Disciples of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and many others—all have recently introduced comparable programs aimed at strengthening congregational vitality.

When people join a congregation, what seems to matter most is the quality of that congregation's spiritual life, its sense of community, and its commitment to ministry. They care about the quality of the liturgy, the spiritual and intellectual depth of the pastor, and the degree of engagement in mission shared by the whole congregation. In a word, they are seeking a congregation that is vital.

Seminaries can, and should, be significant partners in these initiatives. Seminaries should be places that offer the spiritual and intellectual resources as well as the opportunity to develop the personal traits and professional skills needed to create and nurture life-giving congregations. SFTS is committed to being that kind of seminary, a place that educates persons for transformational ministries of peace, healing, and justice.

We are also committed—as we have been for many decades—to offering spiritual and intellectual resources to those whose vocation lies beyond serving the institutional church in order to help them live out their faith commitments in the other settings.

And as you have heard me say before, we are now engaged in the exploration of partnerships with other institutions that will help us carry out our mission in a financially sustainable way for many generations to come. What is exciting about this exploration process is the potential and possibilities that emerge for even greater reach and impact.

A potential partnership presents amazing opportunities and innovative pathways for educating leaders who can inspire others, energize communities, empower the faint-hearted, and create a better world. For example:

- Our MDiv and DMin degrees can offer concentrations, electives, and fieldwork opportunities that will make those degrees even more valuable.
- We can create new master's degrees that pair theology with a variety of other disciplines and professions.
- We can offer a variety of certificates and diplomas that would appeal to a much broader group of people.
- We can benefit from our ability to tap into the considerable resources, assets, and systems of a university, and stay abreast of the constantly changing world of best practices in higher education.
- We can tap into a new, potentially big pipeline of students who will experience SFTS as undergraduates, which allows us to create 3/2 or 4/1 degree combinations that allow students to finish their undergraduate degree and master's or MDiv degree in a shorter time period than doing them seriatim.
- We can offer dual degrees that will allow someone to obtain two master's degrees in separate fields—e.g., theology and business or theology and social work—which responds to the call for "bi-vocational ministry."

In other words, we can continue to carry out our mission in a financially stable and sustainable way, honoring the legacy of those who have gone before us, acting as wise stewards of the resources bequeathed to us by previous generations, and creating exciting possibilities for future generations of those seeking to live out their Christian vocation. This is SFTS's commitment to the church's vitality now and for the future.

In this issue you will encounter a variety of ways that SFTS students, faculty, staff, and alums are making important contributions to a vital church today. I hope you are as inspired by their example as I am.

Grace and peace,



Rev. Dr. James L. McDonald,
President and Professor of Faith & Public Life



REVITALIZING *the* CHURCH

Chimes

WINTER 2018

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Cover: Montgomery Chapel at SFTS, photo by Liz Huntington

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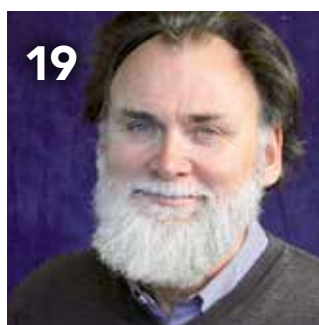
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The Marks of Church Vitality



Alumna Becca Rhodes-Sandness (MDiv 2018)
in worship in Stewart Chapel.



By Rev. Dr. James L. McDonald

Periodically, in my role as seminary president I am asked, “What’s your assessment of the state of the Church?” It’s an intriguing question, and one where the answer can take many forms, depending on what we mean by “Church.”

A statistical breakdown of the Church doesn’t really tell us much about the state of the Church, much less its vitality. Shifting numbers, whether up or down, don’t reveal much about the life—the liveliness, the dynamism—of the Church. So, the question becomes, “How should we measure the power of the Church’s witness in the world? How do we know whether the Church is thriving?”

Biblical Understandings of Church Vitality

If we look to the Bible for clues, we find a variety of ways that Jesus, and those who followed him, thought about the vitality of our faith and its expression.

When John the Baptist came to Jesus asking, “Are you the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (Matt. 11:1-11) he wanted to know whether anything had changed in the world as a result of Jesus’s life and ministry. And, when Jesus answered John, he did not talk about how big the crowds were when he spoke—though apparently there were some big crowds, numbering in the thousands. Nor did he reference how many disciples he had added to his “start up” leadership team—he seemed quite happy with twelve, thank you. Instead, Jesus’s answer pointed to the creation of a new reality—of captives set free, blind people given sight, deaf people now hearing, dead people brought back to life, lame people now walking, lepers healed and cleansed, outcasts returned to a place of dignity and inclusion in their communities, and poor people hearing good news and becoming blessed.

At the end of Matthew’s Gospel (28:16-20), Jesus gives the Great Commission to the disciples, saying “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” We often focus on the first two parts of the commission: make disciples and baptize them. But the third part is equally important: “teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.” And what are the things that Jesus commanded? Well, a rough count of commands given by Jesus just in Matthew’s Gospel nets more than 50, ranging from “repent” and “follow me” to “let your light shine” and “be persistent in prayer.” But of course, the summation of all that is what Jesus called the Greatest Commandment: Love. Love God, love your neighbor, love yourself.

If that’s the criteria for measuring the vitality of the Church, then the answer is going to be different than the statistical picture that’s often given as the best, most accurate measure. Strictly speaking, it’s not about the numbers. It’s not whether denominations are going to survive or revive. It’s not about whether congregations are big or small, or whether they are growing or dynamically maintaining a particular size.

The state of the Church is about the vitality of the people of faith who gather together regularly for worship, study and prayer. How deeply and faithfully do they love? How well do they love? How far do they extend their love? Our Christian witness is all about our capacity to love—God, neighbor, and self.

My assessment of Church vitality focuses on congregations as the expression of the Church. Here are six questions that congregations, no matter how large or how small, might use to evaluate their own effectiveness and the power of their own witness to the good news of Jesus Christ, and thus assess their vitality.

Six Questions for Congregations to Ask Themselves

1. How real are the prayers of the people?

For many, prayer does not come easily. Prayer can become routine and lifeless rather than life-giving and empowering. At its most fundamental level, prayer is conversation with God. It’s not about seeking answers so much as it is cultivating and nurturing a relationship. It’s not about finding the right words so much as it is quieting ourselves and opening our hearts to receive God’s Spirit.

In prayer, we come to know better the mind of Christ and make it our own. “Have this mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, counted equality with God not a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8) When Paul wrote these words to the Philippians, he was writing to a community, not to individual Christians. “Have this mind among yourselves,” he wrote.

Prayer is about making ourselves vulnerable before God and opening ourselves and our communities to the work of the Holy Spirit. The ability to pray in community and as a community is something that must be nurtured through example. It requires courage and humility to lift up questions, doubts, hurts, anger, and sorrow. It’s hard to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us. It’s not easy to pray for justice, forgiveness, and peace, if our community is also where we experience the lack of these things. Honest prayer changes people and it transforms communities in profound ways.



Rev. Steve Wilde
(M.Div. 1997),
Pastor at
First Presbyterian
Church of Livermore,
with the kids of BLAST
(Biblical Learning and
Spiritual Training)

2. How fully does your worshipping community embrace young adults and children?

Congregations with a dwindling number of children should be very worried about their future. But it's not just the number of kids that matters; it's how they participate in the overall life of the church. Yes, youth groups are important places for young adults to experience acceptance, ground themselves spiritually and develop their moral compass. But the vitality of a congregation is significantly strengthened when children and young people are integrated into worship, included in service projects, and given a voice in congregational life. They need to be invited and encouraged. Children and youth pay close attention to adults, even when you don't think they are. Children who work side by side with adults are exposed to new forms of wisdom, and adults are renewed by the fresh perspectives of youth. Congregations that practice this are lively things.

3. How diverse and inclusive is the congregation?

For some congregations, this is a tough problem, in part because of location. But there are other obstacles that impede diversity in congregations, many of which can be addressed. The United States is now much more culturally, racially and ethnically diverse than ever before, and there are some wonderful multicultural and multiracial congregations everywhere. These congregations have become intentional about their worship and leadership styles, adopting new habits of welcome and practicing inclusion.

Is the population in your community shifting? Is the social conversation changing? Do you know how to engage and connect with new audiences? Diversity is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Remember Pentecost? (Acts 2)

4. Does the congregation engage with the marginalized in its local community?

Vital congregations do not exist for themselves. They find ways to become involved in the issues that affect their local community—hunger, homelessness, drug abuse, domestic violence, police-community relations, jobs, clean water, human rights. Sometimes it's a new project they organize themselves, with other churches, or on an interfaith basis. Sometimes it's joining an effort already underway. But however it happens, the congregation shows up in the public square—meeting with local officials, business leaders, unions and associations—and when it does, it not only adds life to the congregation, but to the community itself.

As Peter Marty, a Lutheran pastor, publisher of *Christian Century* magazine, and son of well-known U.S. church historian, Martin Marty, wrote not long ago:
"Taped to my office bookshelf is a postcard with a William Blake poem: 'I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see; I sought my God, but my God eluded me; I sought my neighbor, and I found all three.' Plenty of congregations impressively pursue the first two quests. It's the third one that hangs them up. Reluctance to engage the third pursuit is why a friend of mine [Marty's] believes every congregation ought to own an 11-foot pole—a pole that would help the church deal with all the neighbors it won't touch with a ten-foot pole."¹

1. Peter Marty, "Need thy neighbor," *Christian Century*, August 31, 2016, p. 3.

5. Is the congregation invested in a mutually transformative relationship with another congregation or organization in a different part of the world?

This question is my way of talking about mission engagement in the world. There are many ways that congregations can be engaged with the world beyond their four walls and Sunday morning. In the San Francisco Bay Area I have seen African-American congregations and affluent white congregations build significant relationships that transform the people involved. Individual U.S. congregations also partner with other congregations, schools, hospitals, orphanages, and other organizations in developing countries, organizing short-term mission projects and “reverse mission” exchanges. Each approach has its limitations and been subjected to criticism. But congregations that make a long-term commitment to these efforts will also wrestle with the important

inclined toward prayer and meditation. The Church, of course, needs both—but congregations should encourage their members to integrate both aspects of the Christian life into their personhood. The doers should learn to take time out for prayer, and the pray-ers should let their prayers move them to get up off their knees and out of the pews to take some action for the sake of others.

The Church has important work to do—we must bear fruit for the sake of the world God made and which God loves. It’s a unique calling, a distinctive role in society and human life. The work of ministry is not just a job. It’s not just about running an organization. It’s not just about budgets and committees and meetings. It’s about life and death, hope and despair, redemption and reconciliation, forgiveness and freedom—the big things. Congregations that take seriously this calling will thrive and be a joy to the Lord. ✚

DMin student Bishop Ernie Jackson vitalizing worship at Grace Tabernacle Community Church, San Francisco

questions that these relationships engender. That self-reflection and deepening engagement in the wider world drives every congregation to a more profound understanding of God’s love and purposes—which adds to its vitality.

6. Can the congregation articulate how the Word of God shapes their lives and their life together?

Dynamic preaching is an essential element because good sermons help people understand how God is at work today and how we can participate in it. But congregations should also encourage regular group Bible study. And, it’s important how those Bible studies are conducted. Transformative Bible study is not really about “book learning”; it’s not about learning facts or even distilling a set of moral principles. It’s about understanding the Greatest Story Ever Told, and an ever-expanding realization that that story is our story as well, and then finding ourselves in it. The power of Bible study comes from the interaction of the Book, a community, and the Holy Spirit. Small groups are important contexts for learning because they foster the kind of relationships that allow the Bible to come alive, testimonials to be given, and questions to be asked. Those small groups are also likely to be places where prayer becomes real—which brings us full circle to Question One.

What these six questions imply is that as Christians we need to move back and forth between acting in the world and nurturing our relationship to God, moving from action to reflection and back again to action, over and over again. Some people, of course, are more comfortable as doers, while others are more



REVITALIZING YOUR Congregation and Community

By Laila Weir

Not so long ago, someone complained about difficulty parking at Prineville Presbyterian Church in Oregon.

It was the first time Rev. Michael Wilson (M.Div. 2013) had heard that complaint. “We said, ‘Yes! This is a good problem,’” recalls Wilson.

The church, located in the small town of Prineville, has added close to 60 new members in the past few years, nearly doubling its congregation. It’s now facing another “good problem”: expanding to accommodate its vibrant membership.

Wilson pins the growth largely on his church’s involvement in the community and social issues.

“We’ve been working on not only being the church here for an hour on Sundays, but really being the church outside the walls for the other 167 hours of the week,” Wilson says.

“People have come to see this church as concerned about not only the community within its walls, but just as much with the community outside its walls, and people are wanting to be a part of that,” he continues.

Even as average church membership and attendance are declining, some churches are experiencing growth and renewal by engaging their communities in new and powerful ways. *Chimes* spoke with several SFTS alumni around the country about the challenges and opportunities of church revitalization. Many were bringing in new people—and re-engaging old members—through social work, active efforts to welcome to new groups, and intentional creation of meaningful communities within their congregations.

Mission-Focused

About two and a half years ago, a couple with three children came to the Prineville church asking for help. They lived in a camping trailer and were being evicted from a local RV park. Wilson said they could stay awhile on church land, and a congregation member with a truck towed their trailer onto the property.

“We sheltered them for eight weeks, did a lot of listening, helped clarify some issues, tuned up their resumes,” says Wilson.

On the ground with churches around the country

“We gave them a safe space to catch their breath and while we did that, we breathed hope into their life.”

When the family moved on, the church gave them a micro loan to help them store their trailer while they got back on their feet. They went into homeless shelters at first, Wilson says, but the parents soon found employment.

Throughout, the church maintained its relationship with the family, which joined its congregation. And then last December, the family took the keys to their first house.

“When we share these stories about how extending Jesus’s love does work, that energizes a congregation,” Wilson observes. The church has sheltered numerous other people on its property and now has an official RV sanctuary policy under which people may stay for up to 14 days.

Prineville’s other efforts include holding monthly food drives, donating basic needs kits to children living in poverty, and working with local homeless shelters. It also runs a community garden that has offered space to a women’s shelter to grow vegetables, as well as to a county health initiative.

Across the country, a large, urban church in Manhattan is also engaged in active community work—and finding that it increases fellowship among its own congregants at the same time.

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church houses a homeless shelter, sponsors refugee families, organizes regular volunteer days and delivers weekend “Meals on Heels” meals to homebound seniors, among other activities.

In addition to helping those in need, these activities increase engagement among church members, according to Kenneth Henderson, President of Fifth Avenue’s Board of Trustees and current SFTS Trustee. Volunteer groups become communities within the larger congregation, he says, growing close to the point that some members who’ve moved away still return to participate in the Meals on Heels program.



▼ PRINEVILLE, OR: Prineville Presbyterian Church dedicated the first Peace Pole in all of Crook County, OR. "Through its dedication we declare: One with God. One with each other. One with ourselves."

▲ NEW YORK: Making noise with Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church children's program.

▼ NEW YORK: Every Saturday morning (holidays included), Meals on Heels volunteers gather to prepare home-cooked meals and weekend snacks for the homebound elderly in the neighborhood.



"It's important for us to find ways for individuals in the church to get involved in issues and reach individuals," comments Henderson.

Rev. Beverly Brewster (MDiv 2008) of Sleepy Hollow Presbyterian Church in San Anselmo, CA, also focuses on the importance of being "mission-centered" in a community that is known for being more spiritual than religious.

"Our mission feels meaningful to people," says Brewster, who has grown her church from about two dozen people to more than 100 over the last seven years of her ministry. "We just brought in 30 new members—23 adults and 7 teenagers," Brewster says. "God has really blessed us."

Sleepy Hollow's seven-community "Peace and Justice Ministries" include a Justice Garden to feed the hungry, REST (Rotating Emergency Shelter for the homeless), and Mexico Mission, engaging local high-schoolers to build houses for the homeless across the southern border.

Mexico Mission has grown from a dozen kids and adults building one house to more than 60 people building 4-5 houses for families in need. The participants come to the church to be trained in team-building and leadership, home construction, respect, neighborliness, and collaboration with other cultures. The feelings of compassion and accomplishment are immeasurable, and the word gets out.

"Our worship is inclusive, fresh, and relevant," she adds. In a place like the Bay Area, where "people are just not seeing the relevance of the church, we're very current and mission-centered."

Extending The Walls of Your Church

All of these socially-focused initiatives highlight another aspect of church revitalization. If bringing more members of a community into church is one side of revitalization, the other side may be bringing the church more into the community—increasing its relevance and impact beyond its walls.

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Billings, Montana, for example, offers a different kind of ministry—one that accommodates those disinclined to participate in a traditional church—through its community garden. The garden offers more than 100 plots for rent, plus a half-acre mission garden that all the gardeners maintain together, and which donates produce where it's needed most.

Not everyone who uses the garden attends church, but their garden involvement has nonetheless brought the church into many of their lives. The gardeners have become a community unto themselves, says Rev. Susan Barnes (MDiv 1989), with gardeners who don't attend worship but nevertheless come to her for pastoral care.

And Barnes has reached out to provide quiet support to other communities in Billings outside the church fold; for years, she's attended a local transgender support group.



▲ **LIVERMORE, CA:** Neighbor2Neighbor is First Presbyterian's annual day of service.

▼ **SAN ANSELMO, CA:** Mexico Mission group of students from Sleepy Hollow Presbyterian Church building for the homeless



BILLINGS, MT: Mission Garden for local community, complete with wheelchair access, at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church.



"They treat me as their pastor," Barnes comments. "By me just showing up to their meetings, it means God does love them. I don't have to say anything, I don't have to do anything; because I'm there, they know God loves them."

Bringing the love and comfort of God to people in need may be as valuable for some pastors as bringing people in need into the church itself. Nevertheless, Barnes's quiet outreach to the trans community has brought some new trans members to St. Andrew, and one trans woman even visited from a neighboring state after hearing about the church through the grapevine.

And after years of dwindling membership, St. Andrew has turned things around, bringing in new members every year for five years. "For a church of just 50 members, that's a big deal," Barnes acknowledges.

Bringing People Together in the Face of Change

DMin student Ernie Jackson, Bishop of Grace Tabernacle Community Church in San Francisco's Bayview neighborhood, is also embracing active inclusion efforts to help his church survive and thrive with shifts in neighborhood populations.

Grace Tabernacle is a historically African-American church in a neighborhood where naval shipyards once drew droves of African-American workers. "White flight" and racism had siloed the community for many years. Today, new development and gentrification are now causing another demographic upheaval, Jackson says.

To keep his church alive, Jackson is looking at bringing old and new residents together into one congregation.

"What's happening in Bayview is iconic throughout the nation in many areas in the inner city," observes Jackson. "If we want to remain where we are, how do we now bring all communities, all people, together and worship in one place?"

"Everyone is invited, regardless of race, regardless of culture, even regardless of denomination," Jackson says. "I don't want people to think that to come to my church they have to be of a certain denomination. I want them to come for the worship experience."

Grace Tabernacle has just renovated its church, focusing on creating a modern, welcoming space that evokes spirituality and calm.

Jackson brought in young consultants to help determine paint colors (they settled on earth tones) and replaced pews with chairs—comfortable ones. But while the chairs may be comfortable enough to sit for hours, Jackson plans services no longer than an hour and a half: "short and impactful."

Before the newly renovated church opened for services, its doors were open for an event happening on the sidewalk in front. A woman wandered in and

just sat, citing the calming effect of the space. She left a donation and said she'd return for worship. Upon hearing that, "I knew it was working," says Jackson.

Creating Connectivity Leads to Engagement

At Fifth Avenue Presbyterian, truly welcoming new members means fostering communities they can connect with. "We have a large church; you can come and be anonymous," comments trustee Henderson. "You have to create small communities if you want people to plug in."

The church actively encourages smaller fellowship groups that meet around all kinds of shared interests. In particular, it has been focusing attention on family and young adult ministries, the two fastest-growing groups in the church. Henderson says that building a welcoming environment for families leads to positive word of mouth that brings in more members.

"Young parents know other young parents. They say, 'We go to Fifth Avenue, you should come check it out. It's great for the kids, great for us, a wonderful community,'" Henderson observes. "That's probably the most powerful. You've got a core group in your congregation that's actually inviting people."

The church now brings in some 100 new members a year, enough for it to maintain a stable congregation of about 2,500 even within highly transient New York City, according to Henderson.

Wilson, of the Prineville church, also points to the power of developing small groups within the larger congregation to deepen member engagement.

Prineville has formed dinner groups that meet several times a year, mixing up the groups so members meet new people. This strengthens relationships, Wilson says, and turns a congregation into a community—even when members don't see eye to eye on every issue.

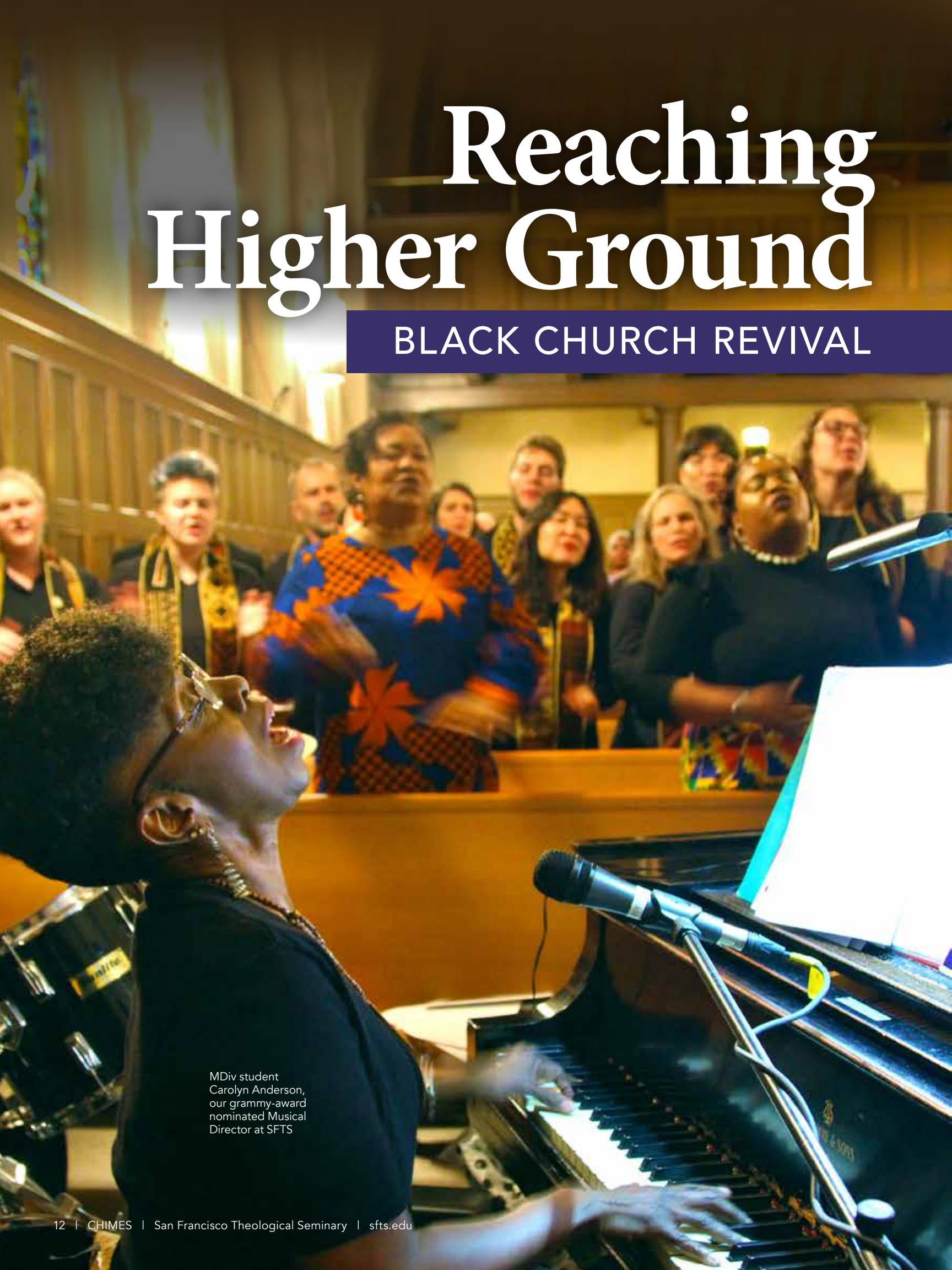
"Sitting down to a meal with somebody that has a different perspective helps demystify a lot and helps you realize we pretty much all have the same end goal, but we might have some different thoughts about what it takes to get there," muses Wilson. "I think it helps build tolerance and a strength of community: I may not agree with you, but I know I can count on you."

In Montana, Susan Barnes says her congregation's giving-per-member is unusually high, quite probably one of the best indicators of member engagement. "They're fun to preach to," she enthuses. "Everyone who comes on Sunday morning really, really wants to be here."

And in the end, when it comes to keeping churches alive and vibrant, some feel that growing this sense of community connection and engagement may be as important, at least initially, as growing member numbers. ✚

Reaching Higher Ground

BLACK CHURCH REVIVAL



MDiv student
Carolyn Anderson,
our grammy-award
nominated Musical
Director at SFTS



Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Thompson of Allen Temple Baptist Church leading the Black Power theme of Day Three.

Rev. Yolanda Norton, Rev. Reggie Sharpe, Jr. and SFTS Dean Rev. Dr. Jana Childers after Black Diaspora theme of Day One.

Rev. Dr. Lisa Thompson of Union Theological Seminary leading the Womanist theme of Day Two.

By Anna Lebedeff

The first ever Black Church Revival at San Francisco Theological Seminary brought together parishioners near and far, all eager to participate in three nights of preaching, prayer and praise, courtesy of Rev. Yolanda Norton, H. Eugene Farlough Chair of Black Church Studies, and Assistant Professor of Old Testament.

Three preachers from different parts of the country came to the SFTS campus to deliver powerful sermons to a rapt congregation over three evenings in Stewart Chapel. Music, art, spoken word, and altar design were all planned in careful detail around the themes for each evening. Through the themes of the Black Diaspora, Womanist Theology, and Black Power, the preachers lifted ancient scripture to new heights, giving depth and modern context to familiar stories, uniting them in a common call to action for social justice.

Rev. Norton talked about the importance of having a Black Church Revival at SFTS: “My primary concern was my students—that there is an appreciation for where they come from. For Black people, so much of our history and our resilience is embedded in the Black Church. So when we talk about Black theology and Black politics, we’re talking about Black Church.”

The Revival was planned in collaboration with students Carolyn Anderson, Denise Diaab, Alonzo Fuller, and Ashley Reid. Reid, a third-year MDiv student, shared her feelings, “It really took me back home, and allowed me to embody the Blackness in my worship. The different themes each night showed the rich diversity of worship that’s possible. I think it’s important for people to be able to see themselves and be themselves in their worship, and these types of services create the space for that to happen.”

Rev. Reginald W. Sharpe Jr. of Atlanta, GA started off the Revival reminding us of the great “cloud of witnesses” that follows us, renews our faith, and supports us in our struggles (Hebrews 12:1). Rev. Sharpe spoke of his grandmother’s recent

passing, and how he now imagined her in the “great cloud” along with many others who had struggled in the fight against racism, hatred, and inequality. He found comfort knowing that “the same God that brought them through the fire and carried them through the storm, is the same God who will take care of us right now.”

The following evening, **Rev. Dr. Lisa Thompson** of Union Theological Seminary in New York City preached on 1 Kings 17:8-15. Rev. Thompson reconciled her frustration with Elijah asking more of Essie than seemed possible, by realizing that Essie’s empathy was the lesson to be learned. “Empathy helps bring about change—helps us align and identify with experiences. Hook up your meal with my oil, and I believe God can do something more. Trust the God who lives within us, the God who calls us out, and the God who calls out to us from other people.”

The final evening of the Revival began with a powerful tribute to Black Lives Matter and Black Power, featuring “This is America,” a song by rapper Childish Gambino, addressing gun violence, discrimination and racism in the United States.

Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Thompson of Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland was joined by the Allen Temple Men’s Chorus as she left the pulpit to walk among the pews, lifting up the lessons of 2 Samuel 21:18-22, “When facing new giants, we need a new strategy, a new generation, a new game plan. If each of us uses what God has given us, eventually we will slay the giants.”

Rev. Thompson applauded the use of pop culture to create a modern and engaging liturgy for a new generation: “Gambino... a new strategy for a new giant. If we’re going to empower and speak to a generation that’s coming behind us, we have to be open to how others may connect to God. We have to find a way to show them that the things they engage in culture are very much relevant. The only thing that’s required is an open heart and an open mind.” ✚

Engaging the next generation of leaders

DRAW THE CIRCLE WIDE



John Lyzenga (MDiv 2019)



By Professor Yolanda Norton

At its core, theological education has been a heteronormative, Eurocentric, patriarchal endeavor. A person simply cannot move through seminary, divinity school, etc. without a thorough examination of Barth, Wellhausen, Augustine, and the like. These white, male thinkers have been the gold-standard of a “fine” education and

dominated the canon of Christian thought. In institutions of higher learning, the philosophy has been that all other modes of theology—or God-thought more broadly—are extrapolations of the canon. At best, we see curricular and extra-curricular commitments to Womanist, Mujerista, Black, and LGBTQ theology as addendums. There is no penalty in theological education for not encountering Clarice Martin, Judith Butler, Fernando Segovia, Katie Geneva Cannon, Renita Weems, James Cone, or Delores Williams.

However, ignoring the host of scholars who have done meaningful work from the margins in the range of theological disciplines redacts the presence of God in ways that reinforce white supremacy, cisgenderism, xenophobia, and a host of other social ills. Blinders to the contributions that individuals from a variety of identity locations and socio-economic strata make to the breadth and depth of Christianity’s scope do violence to God’s mission.

So, the compelling question for communities of faith is, “Are we still trying to prepare new generations of church leaders and world changers with an antiquated curriculum

that distorts the kingdom of God?” Further, “Are we presenting a myopic view of Christianity and theology?” As San Francisco Theological Seminary continues to evolve and decide who and what we will become, the imperative is in front of the entire community to develop a new model that draws the circle wide. We have got to confront head on the task of de-centering “traditions” in our curriculum and community.

Beyond doing the work of diversifying the scholarly material that our students encounter, we are obligated to acknowledge that education can no longer occur “on a hill.” Disembodied, theoretical discourse does not work in an era of the #MeToo movement, immigrant detention centers, a health care crisis, and the Black Lives Matter movement. There is little to be gained by pointing to the problem and giving lip-service to our Christian obligation. Life at the intersection of spirituality and justice must be more than buzz words that we use for marketing. They must be the ethos that drives institutions into the world.

White, mainline churches are in decline, and the critique of millennials and beyond is that the church does not take seriously the problems of the world and does not give people resources to confront these issues head on. Tackling these difficult problems must be woven into the curricula of seminaries that desire relevance today and into the future.

In recent months I have been encouraged watching students in this suburban seminary that literally sits on a hill in the middle of privilege. In the interdisciplinary lectures, students are tackling issues of race, ethnicity

to move ministry forward



Erin Green (MDiv 2021)

Andrew Deeb (MDiv 2019)

Ashley Reid (MDiv 2019)

and religion; trying to make sense of the church's role in constructing theologies of oppression and its capacity to generate theologies of liberation. Students, staff, and faculty alike are being pushed far outside their comfort zones. We are being asked to think critically about our own complicity in the problem and pushed to be part of the solution.

Further, I'm excited to continue work with **John Lyzenga (MDiv 2019)** on his new worship album that tackles issues of environmental racism, constructing womanist/feminist God imagery, the prison industrial complex, and poverty. I'm encouraged by the work of **Erin Green (MDiv 2021)**, who is working to create intentional space for persons from the LGBTQ community on college campuses, particularly conservative Christian campuses. I'm proud of **Andrew Deeb's (MDiv 2019)** bravery to publicly name the wounds that he experienced as a transgender person in hostile Christian spaces. I'm energized by **Ashley Reid (MDiv 2019)**, whose work with Marin Interfaith Council is tackling issues of racism and microaggression. This is not the seminary's work. It is the work of our students. However, my hope is that we are giving them the tools and resources to have these conversations and carry out their mission. My desire is that we make more conscious efforts to intimately engage this work in our classrooms.

San Francisco Theological Seminary has in front of it the charge to make this space a laboratory of mission and justice. Daily we must encounter our individual and

communal mess and hope against hope that we are moving in the right direction.

The future of this endeavor of head and heart—*wissenschaft* and *paideia*—belongs to those who have the courage to create something that lifts up the LGBTQ community, Black people from across the diaspora, women, Latinx, Asians, and all others who have been pushed to the periphery of Christianity and the theological endeavor. Seminaries are called to do this work because it is a full representation of God's vision for the world. However, if we cannot find it in our hearts to live out the full calling of the kingdom of God then we must remember that our own self-interest is wrapped up in creating something better and more. No matter the motivation, I am glad that we are fighting and not simply content to be left on the sidelines.

In a sermon that I gave in chapel recently, I quoted my mentor Dale Andrews who said, "if we are going to die, we should go out being the church...we should go out believing that death is not the final word." All the research suggests that no one knows what is in store for theological education. I choose to believe that SFTS is far from death. However, since the end can never be predicted, I would just as soon be the church—be a loving, missional representation of God—in a world that needs something more. I would just as soon understand our scholarly endeavor to be motivated in compassion and bent towards justice. This is the work that will make way for us in the days ahead. ✚

INNOVATION

By Laila Weir

Ministry. Carrying forth Christ's mission into the world. What does that mean in today's society? Listening to Floyd Thompkins, Vice President of SFTS's Center for Innovation in Ministry, it seems summed up in the word "impact." This is church growth outside the pews and the walls.

Beyond Pink & Blue

In October, the Center teamed up with the University of Virginia Health System, *Presbyterian Outlook* magazine and Westminster Presbyterian Church to co-host "Beyond Pink & Blue: Transitions and Transgender Care" in Charlottesville, VA.

The goal of the conference was to provide cultural competency, compassionate care, affirming ministry and practical skills to professionals administering care to transgender persons and their families. The three-day conference was designed for any professional in public care—community leaders, church ministry, hospital chaplains, educators and social workers—to learn about clinical, pastoral and community responses to address the needs of transgender persons and their families.

"This conference was a space where people could bring their questions, bring their ignorance as well as their passion, and be in dialogue with one another and with people who are from that community," commented Thompkins before the conference.

Thompkins emphasized that the Center does not see serving this community as a challenge, but rather as an opportunity for pastors and religious communities to expand their spirituality as well as ministry, eventually leading to church growth.

"The gift that trans people bring to the church or to any spiritual community is to reassess things like gender, and family, and what it means to grow into love," he observed.

Jill Duffield, Editor of *Presbyterian Outlook*, offers her heartfelt hope: "I felt compelled to participate in this initiative as a result of personal and pastoral experiences. My teenage children have transgender friends struggling to find acceptance and welcome. Most of them believe that the church is the last place they will be embraced for who they are. I know church members grieving the suicide of a transgender sibling who don't feel they can share their story with others in the congregation. I also hear from pastors and other faith leaders eager to be places of welcome for transgender people but unsure how to be. My hope is that events such as this one enable faith communities to take the lead in being places of inclusion, welcome and care for transgender people and for everyone. We need to equip faith leaders with caring, appropriate responses to transgender people and their families in our pews and community. We wanted to address this need in an innovative, collaborative way where everyone feels safe asking questions and seeking solutions to dissolving barriers."✝



Rev. Dr. Justin Sabia-Tanis, from the Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Religion at Pacific School of Religion, leading morning Bible study.



Rev. Dr. Michael Adee, Director of the Global Faith & Justice Project, and Rev. Dr. Erin Kartina Swenson, the only fully ordained Transgender Presbyterian minister, lead worship at the conference.



Rev. Dr. Erin Kartina Swenson, along with Yasmyne Hunter and Kleopatra McGlothlin of LaGender Inc, leading a seminar at the conference.



MINISTRY FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

Groundbreaking
Transgender Care
Conference

Katy Schaffer with Rev. Mac Schaffer, a Presbyterian pastor, leading a session on pastoral care as they tell the story of their child's transition and involvement in the North Carolina Bathroom Bill.

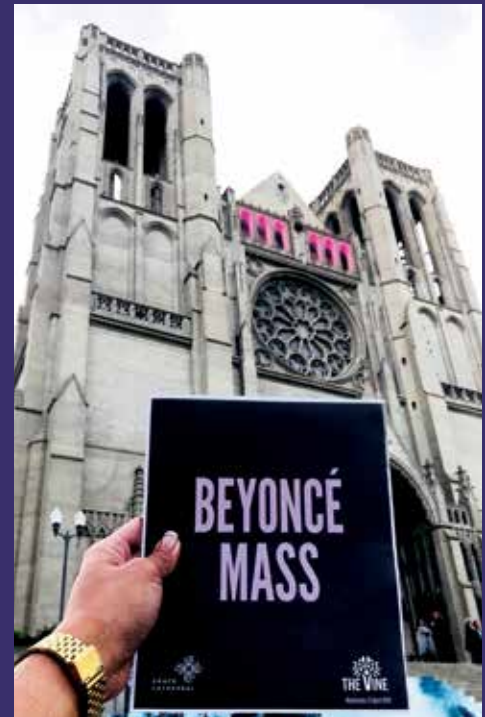
Beyoncé Mass Empowers Conversation

On April 25, 2018, Grace Cathedral in San Francisco held a groundbreaking Beyoncé Mass as part of their progressive The Vine worship series on Wednesday evenings. This service was centered around the SFTS course titled “Beyoncé and the Hebrew Bible,” created and taught by Rev. Yolanda Norton. Attended by approximately 1,000 people, the Beyoncé Mass has been covered worldwide since then by many media sources, some offering misleading information.

In response, Professor Norton created a web page to provide a resource

expressing the theology, witness, and mission of the Mass and Beyoncé and The Hebrew Bible course. “This is not a service deifying Beyoncé,” she said. “This is a service that uses Beyoncé’s music as a tool to engender positive, empowering conversation about Black women. The premise of this work is that if we look at the personal life, career trajectory, music and public persona of Beyoncé, so much of her life reflects aspects of Black women’s stories.” ✚

Read about and see videos from the Beyoncé Mass at sfts.edu/beyonce-the-hebrew-bible/

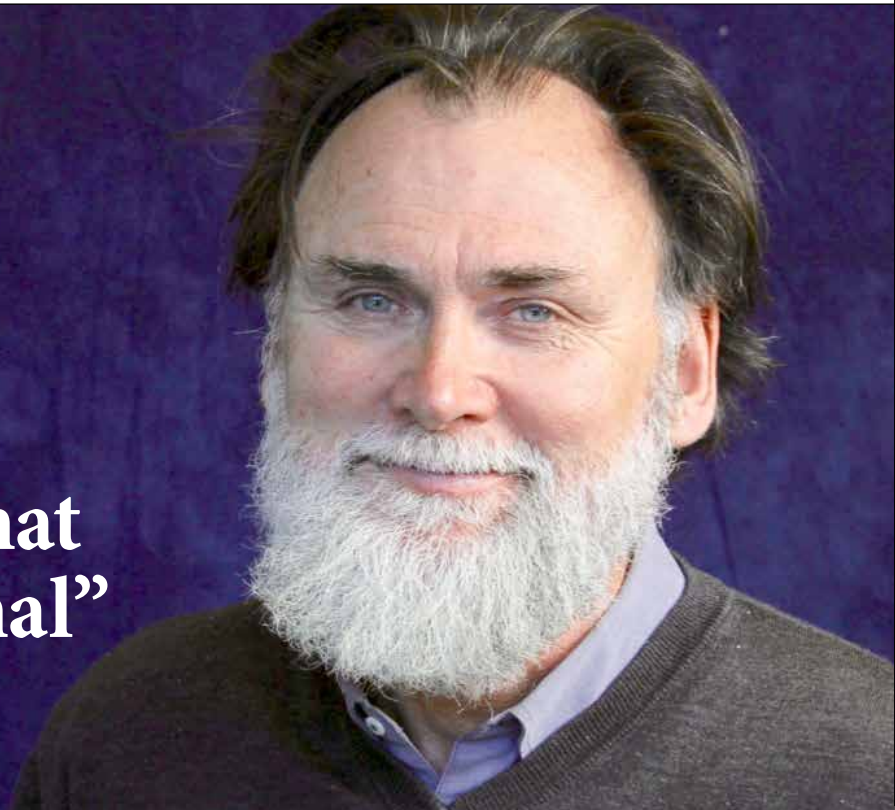


Above: Pia Cortez holds the Beyoncé Mass program up in front of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. Below: Rev. Yolanda Norton with her students following the Beyoncé Mass



Carlos Avila Gonzalez / San Francisco Chronicle / Polaris

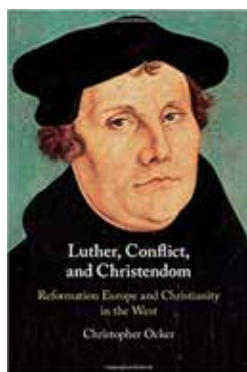
Our “Somewhat Unconventional” Ocker



Reflections on *Luther, Conflict, and Christendom: Reformation Europe and Christianity in the West*

By Chris Ocker

I tried to write an introduction to the Reformation from a somewhat unconventional perspective, one that decenters the individual and underscores the importance of studying the “ecology” within, which a religion like Christianity “lives.” I think we should study religious conflict rather than the influence of famous individuals, if we want to understand what Christianity really has been and is in the world. So rather than trace the development of Luther’s influence, I introduce readers to conflict as a Reformation theme. I address how intractable the conflict over Luther was. I emphasize four of its dimensions of conflict around Luther in the sixteenth century: the regulation of heresy, church politics, the politics of the Holy Roman Empire, and church property. I also explain the variety of ways Luther’s image and reputation were adapted



in the centuries after the Reformation, and how these relate to the several shapes of Christendom in our world today.

Taking this approach, it seems to me, helps us understand how the history of Protestant-Catholic division was just one of several major tensions in Christianity since the Middle Ages. Equally important are Christendom’s conflicts with Judaism and Islam, the spread of Christianity beyond Europe, and the emergence of a kind of epistemological pluralism in modern times, according to which

numerous religious and non-religious outlooks on life coexist, while people routinely switch between their competing codes.

To purchase the book, please visit [Cambridge University Press at Cambridge.org](http://CambridgeUniversityPress.org), or visit amazon.com.

Award-winning Ocker

In September of 2018, the 2017 Natalie Zemon Davies Prize for the best article in *Renaissance and Reformation*, volume 40 was awarded to Christopher Ocker for his essay, “After the Peasants’ War: Barbara (Schweikart) von Fuchstein Fights for Her Property.” This insightful essay provides an innovative and nuanced perspective on the political, social and religious tensions experienced in the aftermath of the German Peasants’ War. This thoroughly researched case study presents the shaping of religious identity as a complex and shifting process. It is both exciting as it brings to life the journey of an ordinary woman striving to regain her property, and exemplary as it shows the full relevance of exploring the “margins” of the Reformation. It opens new ground for fresh research into the history of religious controversy.

Renaissance and Reformation is a peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary, bilingual quarterly. The journal publishes articles and book reviews on all aspects of the Renaissance, Reformation, and Early Modern world: literature, geography, history, religion, art, music, society, and economics. Articles on related periods of history are also considered.



From left to right: Rev. Dr. Eugene Eung-Chun Park, Rev. Yolanda Norton, Rev. Dr. Jana Childers, Dr. Greg Love, Dr. Wendy Farley, Rev. Dr. Teresa Chávez-Sauceda, President Rev. Dr. James L. McDonald, Rev. Dr. Laurie Garrett-Cobbina, and Dr. Chris Ocker

Reshaping the MDiv with Science in Mind

By Rev. Dr. Jana Childers

The SFTS faculty has changed. Gone are the days when “curriculum review” meant years of negotiating over which courses would be required and who would teach what. These days if you want to figure out what it means to be a new kind of seminary, if you want to help lead theological education into the 21st century, you have to be nimble. You have to make friends with change. Yes, the SFTS faculty has changed and is embracing change. And the proof of the pudding is that, just four years after they last revised the MDiv curriculum, they are doing it again.

This Spring faculty completed their study of the current MDiv curriculum and decided upon a set of themes that will guide its reshaping. A new emphasis on science is key to the process. The list below is excerpted from a faculty document fleshing out plans for developing the new curriculum around these themes:

1. Appreciative and critical interpretation of the Bible and the Christian tradition: This includes but is not limited to historical-critical study of the Bible, the Bible in various cultural contexts, history and the historicity of tradition, and attention to classical and marginalized theological texts of both historical and contemporary significance.

2. Science: The new emphasis on science in the curriculum offer students a chance to explore the various ways science can be in dialogue with the Bible and religion. Professors offering four core courses, representing all the areas of the curriculum, are preparing proposals for incorporating science related units. Particular interest in cognitive sciences (neuroscience, psychology, biology, medicine) and pastoral care, healing, spiritual practice, et al; scientific and theological cosmologies; social sciences (anthropology, sociology, political science) characterize the faculty’s plans.

3. Religions of the world and Christianity’s relationship with other spiritual traditions: This theme represents the faculty’s commitment to exposing our students to traditions beyond Christianity. For example, courses in church history might expand on Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist influences on Christianity; Professor Laurie Garrett-Cobbina will continue to highlight interfaith elements in her pastoral care work; Professor Gregory Love might teach a course introducing

the basic theological ideas of a number of major religious traditions; Professor Wendy Farley already intersperses other traditions in her courses and may also teach a course on interfaith or trans-religious contemplative traditions.

4. Practice: Courses reflecting this theme will establish intercultural competence and other spiritual ‘muscles’ in students—especially in courses focused on Pastoral Care, Speech and Preaching, Ritual Theory and Worship as well as those focused on contemplative, activist and spiritual practices.

5. Experiential learning: A new emphasis on study travel trips to such places as Israel/Palestine, Europe, Central and Latin American, Korea, China and India is an exciting one. Other venues might include local and regional settings for capstone experiences; work in social justice ministry settings and context-sensitive courses taught in SF, LA, Oakland or Montana. ✚

UPDATES



Dr. Wendy Farley, Professor of Christian Spirituality
Director of the Program in Christian Spirituality
Rice Family Chair in Spirituality,

continues to work hard with alums and advisory groups on the restructuring of the DASD program. In particular, they are seeking ways to integrate spiritual practice and hospitality to make a difference in every aspect of their training. Applications have more than doubled, and she marvels at the contributions to the spiritual and ethical health of our church and society our graduates are making. Wendy is also working on a manuscript, tentatively titled: *Beguiled by Beauty: Dark Times and the Power of Divine Love*. She continues her letter-writing to legislators, participating in retreats, and dawn walks by Phoenix Lake.



Gregory Love, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, taught at the Zephyr Experience Conference at Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center at Lake Tahoe June 25-29, 2018. The course, *Across the Divide: Conversing and Finding Connection With Those With Whom*

You Vehemently Disagree, used recent works by political scientists, moral psychologists, and the gospels to explore the virtues that lead to the ability to talk and create positive movement with those of vastly different views.

On September 16, 23 and 30, Prof. Love taught a three-week series at St. Luke Presbyterian Church, San Rafael, on *The Historical Jesus*.

On October 7 and 14, Prof. Love preached and taught a two-week series on *God and Human Suffering* at First Presbyterian Church of Livermore.

On four Thursday evenings, in October and November, Prof. Love taught a series on *God and Human Suffering* at the Presbyterian Church of Novato. In January, 2019 at the church, Prof. Love begins teaching a weekly series on *The Gospel of John*, which includes a hands-on look at the gospel and how it feeds our spiritual life.

Prof. Love is currently editing his doctoral dissertation for publication. It is on the doctrine of divine providence, explaining how God can act in our lives and in the world in ways that make sense with our knowledge of natural laws, chance, human free will, and our experiences of horrendous evil and suffering.

Two of Prof. Love's courses are also currently available completely online. *ST 8108, Systematic Theology I—Online*, will be offered again in spring 2020, and looks at our Christian faith and such topics as the authority of the Bible, who is God and what is God like, how did God create the world and how does God act in it, and why do horrific things happen. *ST 8109, Systematic Theology II—Online*, continues looking at our faith by asking who we are as human beings, what Jesus does to save us and heal us, and how we are to live in the Christian life. It will be offered again in fall of 2020.



Marcia McFee, Ford Fellow Visiting Professor of Worship, created a worship series this year based on the Center for Innovation in Ministry's thisweaffirm.org affirmation on prayer called "Listen: Hearing the Still Small Voice and Finding Your Own" that was utilized by hundreds of congregations across the U.S. and Canada. Her new Advent/Christmas worship series is based on the 200th anniversary of the hymn "Silent Night" (worshipdesignstudio.com/silentnight), and an original song written for it was featured at the SFTS Seminary Singer's Christmas Concert on December 1st in Stewart Chapel. Dr. McFee's annual fall worship planning retreat was attended by 78 church worship teams representing 10 different denominations in over 20 states. She is teaching two sections (onsite and online) of the core worship course this semester and plans a course for the spring about spiritual practice and ritual for the growing population who identify as "spiritual but not religious." She will be working on two more worship series for the Center for Innovation in Ministry during her tenure at SFTS.



Eugene Park, Dana and Dave Dornsife Chair, Professor of New Testament, published a book review of Vinko Mamić, "Matthew's Response to an Early Missionary Issue" in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 80 (2018). Globehopping: Eugene taught an intensive course on the "Parables of Jesus" for the Glacier Presbytery in Montana (May 5-8), and traveled to South Korea to give a series of lectures on Second Corinthians at the SFTS-Hanshin Conference (June 4-7). He taught in the summer research program as a mentor for junior scholars at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (June 15 - July 15). He convened a seminar at the annual meeting of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas in Athens, Greece in August 7-10. He gave a series of lectures on the "Socio-Economic Realities of First Century Palestine" at First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael, September 23 & 30, 2018.

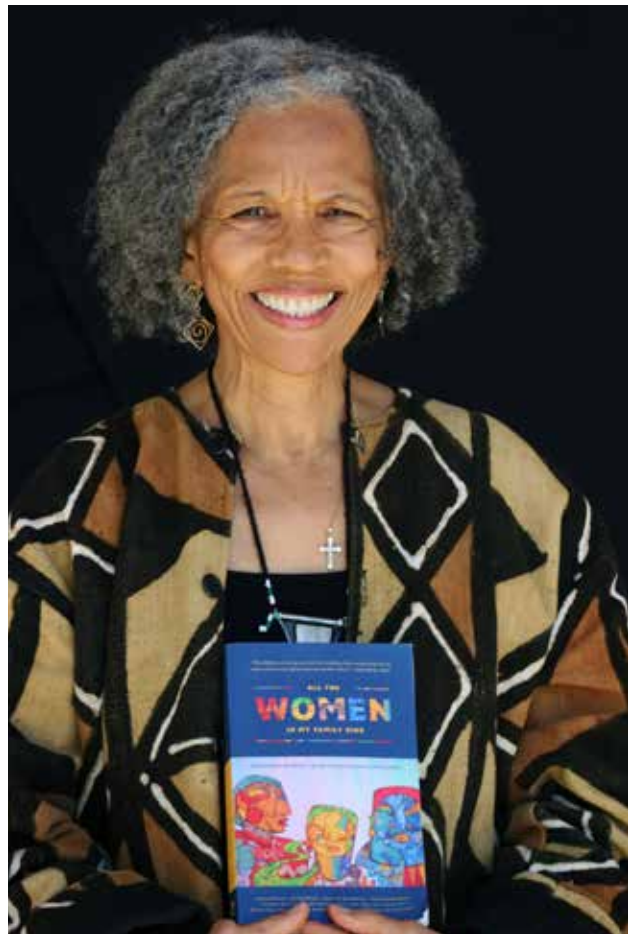


Teresa Chávez Saucedo, Director, Advanced Pastoral Studies and Associate Professor of Ministry. The newest concentration in the Doctor of Ministry Program, Chaplaincy/Spiritual Care Research Literacy, is designed for Clinical Pastoral Educators and Directors of Spiritual Care in the health care arena, who are increasingly expected to be able to utilize evidenced-based research to assess the effectiveness of their practice. Developed by Dr. Laurie Garrett-Cobbina, Shaw Family Chair for Clinical Pastoral Education and Asst. Professor Pastoral Care and Education, this new concentration is an innovative and a forward-looking response to the professional development needs of professional chaplains and spiritual care providers. In addition to the DMin degree option, students may opt to do a Diploma in Chaplaincy/Spiritual Care Research Literacy. The Diploma option allows participants to develop their knowledge and skills through the same graduate level coursework taken by DMin students, but does not require a dissertation/project. The core courses in this concentration are designed to accommodate a chaplain's schedule. For updates to the DMin program, please visit sfts.edu/doctor-of-ministry



Featured
(top down, left to right):

Wendy Farley,
Sharika Gregory,
Laurie Garrett-Cobbina,
KM, Yolanda Norton,
Bran Stiligile-Wright,
Gráinne Buchanan,
Wanika Stephens,
Andrew Deeb,
Denise Diaab,
Grace Kim,
Carolyn A.



WOMANIST PORTRAITS

*Class Project
Brings New Lens
of Interpretation*



Ashley Reid



Photos and story by Ashley Pogue (MDiv 2019)

OT-2054 Beyoncé and the Hebrew Bible.” With a course title like that, and Professor Yolanda Norton teaching, I had to be in the class. It’s BEYONCÉ.

Womanist, ethicist, and theologian Dr. Katie Cannon wrote, “Black women are the most vulnerable and the most exploited members of the American society. The structure of the capitalist political economy in which Black people are commodities combined with patriarchal contempt for women has caused the Black woman to experience oppression that knows no ethical or physical bounds.” (Black Womanist Ethics, 2006. 4.)

Dr. Cannon’s truth is the scope of the class: to study and understand the history of the Black woman’s multifaceted, traumatic, and lived experience over the centuries and today. The cross-disciplinary biblical scholarship of Womanism combines the experience of women of the African Diaspora with the biblical text using three key elements: race, class, and gender. Ultimately, the Black women in the Womanist discourse aim to find strength, love, and autonomy for Black women within the biblical narrative. Beyoncé is a critical contemporary example of a Black woman who has intentionally moved herself into a space of personal freedom, self-love, and agency.

Our class approached the initial Beyoncé worship at SFTS, and later the Beyoncé Mass at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, with this mission statement provided by Professor Norton: centering the needs of Black women grounds an open movement for the liberation of all.

I enter as a Bay Area native, woman, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, and feminist who does not occupy any space within the Womanist frame—nor should I. I can learn from these scholars as my feminism is not in competition with Womanism.

As a student in the “Beyoncé and the Hebrew Bible” course who firmly supports the above mission statement, I took portraits of people assigned female at birth for my final project. From there, I deliberately created the color contrast to center on and highlight these Black women—students and professors. Limiting everyone else, especially white women, to Black and white accentuates a crucial role reversal.

By looking at Black women’s experience through the lens of systematic and historical oppression, and then placing Black women at the center of interpretation, we can be challenged and learn where hope and agency exist in the places that we did not see it before.

Let the colors, light, love, strength, and passion of these portraits show you where hope and agency exist. ✚

To see more of Ashley’s photos, please visit ashleylanephoto.com/g/portraitproject/.

*“As a student in the
‘Beyoncé and the
Hebrew Bible’ course
who firmly supports
[Dr. Cannon’s]
mission statement,
I took portraits of people
assigned female at birth
for my final project.”*

— Ashley Pogue
(MDiv 2019)

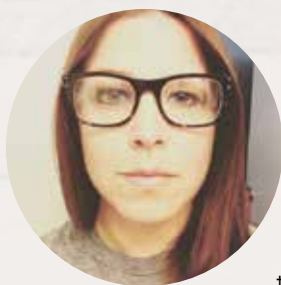


Creating Convergence with Brave Commons

By Erin Green (M.Div. 2021)

I grew up in the Evangelical church and suppressed my being gay until my early thirties, where I had a very spiritual and cathartic moment that would change the course of my life forever. I was thirty-two when I came out as gay and Christian, fully affirming myself and LGBTQ+ inclusion in the church.

I have been passionate about Scripture since I was a child and never lost that passion, even while being ignored as a woman and marginalized as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. I became a member of the PC(USA) shortly after coming out, and decided to return to academics to achieve my Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies. I went to Biola University and led their underground



LGBTQ+, non-school sanctioned affirming group, Biolans' Equal Ground. We held several demonstrations, events, and protested on campus when a lecture on campus endorsed conversion therapy for LGBTQ+ folks as a way to "heal" from their "sinful identity."

While training in biblical studies, I was also involved in The Reformation Project, a Christian, intersectional non-profit which focuses heavily on the Bible, inclusion, and racial justice. I did an extensive leadership cohort training with them and worked as a faith advocate and activist for other nonprofits as well.

In 2016, I transferred to Azusa Pacific University to complete my Biblical Studies

degree and also helped consult APU's underground LGBTQ+ movement, called "Haven." I spent my senior year negotiating a controversial policy removal that previously banned "romanticized same-sex relationships." The policy was reinstated by the school's Board of Trustees once they received public criticism and backlash from Conservative constituents and donors. I am currently working on action to protect LGBTQ+ students at APU and holding Christian institutions accountable by not allowing them to further marginalize and "other" our community within Christian university spaces.

Brave Commons, the current organization I help head, is a new organization structured to unify and converge all LGBTQ+ underground and overground student



Above: LGBTQ+ folx and allies demonstrate on the campus of Azusa Pacific University. Below: Protesters placed chalk messages around the Azusa Pacific University campus to show LGBTQ+ visibility and support.

groups at Christian universities across the U.S. Our specialty is understanding the various dynamics of specific school regions, institutional politics, and emboldening LGBTQ+ student group movements. We employ a horizontal model of leadership with three Co-Executive Directors strategically located in critical regions of the U.S. with non-affirming Christian universities nearby. Each one of us is trained in biblical exegesis, hermeneutics, intersectionality, pastoral care, racial justice, and direct action organizing. Along with my colleagues, Michael Vazquez and Lauren Sotolongo, we are also members of the Latinx community.

Brave Commons seeks to provoke a movement of faith and justice within Christian institutional and faith community spaces that oppress LGBTQ+ folks and Queer People of Color. Our Sermoncast series is a movement of Homiletical activism and resistance where we utilize the common lectionary to preach to those on the margins and on the peripheries. We grieve the trauma imposed on our community and we seek to restore it, build it up, ignite it, and invite our LGBTQ+ siblings to take their seats at God's table as beloved children of God. †

To learn more about Erin and her courageous initiatives, please visit bravecommons.org.





Above: Inmate Juan Haines is the Senior Editor of the *San Quentin News*. Below: San Quentin State Prison in Marin County, CA.



*SFTS Student Mentors
Generations of Men
at San Quentin*



Reverend Stewart Perrilliat

LIVING *his* FAITH

By Laila Weir, Photos by Matt Anderson | Part I of II

By the time Reverend Stewart Perrilliat was in the fourth grade, he knew how to disassemble a machine gun and put it back together.

"I grew up in East Oakland when it was the murder capital in the early '80s," says Perrilliat, (MATS 2016) and current DMin student. "What I was being exposed to as a young person is what most people are never exposed to in a lifetime."

Still, Perrilliat says he was fortunate. He was highly talented in basketball and that earned enough respect that he didn't feel he had to join a gang. Basketball was his gang.

Another young man was not so fortunate. Perrilliat met him during a basketball game, and quickly learned that besides sharing his sports talent, the younger man was also from East Oakland and had even attended Perrilliat's high school. But that is where the similarities ended.

The basketball game during which Perrilliat met the young man took place in California's San Quentin State Prison. Perrilliat was doing prison ministry, including some friendly games with prisoners, and the other man was an inmate. "He said he'd had a full scholarship to Morehouse College," recalls Perrilliat. "During the summer, he thought he'd hustle to make some money before he went back to college. He got caught." That was more than 20 years ago and Perrilliat still ministers to inmates weekly.

These experiences inspired him to create Man 2 Man - Urban Youth Advocate, a nonprofit organization designed to impart life skills, including anger management and conflict resolution, to young men of color. He is also an ordained minister, for whom Man 2 Man and his other service activities are important ways to live his faith outside the walls of the church.

"I have a passion to speak to these young men and share the word of God the way Jesus shared," he explains. "I share my faith through stories—stories of the Bible, of my life, of friends who are no longer around."

"I lost a lot of friends to crack, to selling drugs," Perrilliat says. "When I share my stories with these young men, it resonates. I tell them, 'You are who I used to be.'"

Man 2 Man holds classes and group mentoring sessions for young men referred through word of mouth and various organizations, or sometimes mandated through the courts for anger management. Reverend Perrilliat also produces a talk show, "Can We Have a Conversation?," which airs on a local cable channel, and addresses issues of social and economic concern for people of color.

The talk show aims to give guests a platform to discuss issues and challenges they are facing in a safe, non-judgmental environment. "These young men feel hopeless and helpless, which is often expressed as anger

"I lost a lot of friends to crack, to selling drugs. When I share my stories with these young men, it resonates. I tell them, 'You are who I used to be.'"

—Reverend Stewart Perrilliat (MATS 2016)



Rev. Perrilliat speaks with inmates at San Quentin State Prison.

and because of this anger, many of them act out in violence,” he comments. “That’s their way to communicate.”

One of his goals is to help young men become positive, involved fathers. Men of color who lack father figures have greater rates of incarceration, domestic violence, low self-esteem, drug addiction, alcoholism, teenage parenthood and other issues, says Perrilliat, who is himself an involved single father of two children aged 12 and 15.

Perrilliat remembers an encounter while working with boys incarcerated in juvenile hall, most of them 15 or 16 years old. He asked the group how many of them had children, and the majority raised their hands. Then he asked how they provided for children at their ages, and one replied that he took what he wanted.

“I asked him about this,” Perrilliat recalls. “I said to the man, ‘You take what you want? That’s how you provide for your family? You steal? I’m a single father and I go to work to take care of my children. So you’re going to steal from me and take what I worked for, to take care of your children?’”

“The guy said he never thought about it like that. They don’t think, they just respond, because they’re in survival mode,” says Perrilliat.

Through its various programs, Man 2 Man endeavors to impart personal and communication skills to the young men who participate. “It taught me how to better manage myself and taught me that I have control over nobody but myself and my actions,” says a dreadlocked young man in a video testimonial Perrilliat recorded after one session.

The young man continues: “How to control things I do and better understand other people and not be so centered on myself... It’s made my relationships a lot better and made who I am a lot better person too.”

For Perrilliat, that’s what it’s all about. ✚

Stewart Perrilliat’s story continues in the next Chimes magazine, where Man 2 Man expands into a full-length feature film currently in production!

To donate or get involved with Man 2 Man, please visit www.man2man-uya.org.



Can We Have a Real Conversation about Race in Marin?

In predominantly white Marin County, the issue and topic of race and equality can often miss the mark. In the spring of 2018, Rev. Stewart Perrilliat (MATS 2016 and current DMin student) and the SFTS student group, Students of the African Diaspora (StAD), convened a panel to educate and enlighten Marin’s community on the issue of racism and equality. With Perrilliat moderating, the panelists spoke frankly about their own experiences as people of color and explored ways to learn how we can embrace each other regardless of color and economic status. An alarming encounter experienced by Perrilliat’s own son prompted the President of Marin Catholic High School to be among the panelists and share his ideas for schools in Marin to educate and embrace diversity and inclusivity. A one-hour panel discussion was followed by a Q&A session open to the audience. ✚

Resources and Q&A from the event can be found online at sfts.edu/can-we-have-a-real-conversation/

PANELISTS:

- Rev. Dr. Valerie Miles-Tribble**
Associate Professor of Ministerial Leadership & Practical Theology, American Baptist Seminary of the West
- Rev. Floyd Thompkins**
VP Innovation and Online Education, SFTS
- Rev. Dr. Laurie Garrett-Cobbina**
Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Chief Diversity Officer, SFTS
- Rev. Yolanda Norton**
H. Eugene Farlough Chair of Black Church Studies, Assistant Professor of Old Testament, SFTS
- Tim Navone**
President, Marin Catholic High School



Left: SFTS neighbors pitched in and raised over \$8,000 in honor of their friend Annie Rupers, who spearheaded the community involvement to restore the bells. Below: SFTS VP of Advancement Walter Collins, Alumni Relations Director Marissa Miller, third-year MDiv student Andrew Quick and President Jim McDonald.



The Bells of SFTS

Thanks to our neighbors and friends, they are ringing once again!

By Marissa J. Miller

"The Dollar Chimes will shed a spiritual benediction upon our neighboring valleys with the passing of time, they will become a unifying influence in our community, strengthening the sense of home and locality, and blending with our tenderest recollections."

These words were printed in the original program to dedicate the newly installed Dollar Family Chimes on September 22, 1923, and now, 95 years later, these words still hold true. In the autumn of 2017, the electrical system that operated the hourly carillon malfunctioned and the familiar chimes went silent. After our neighbors took to social media to express their sadness about the loss of the music, we launched a crowdfunding campaign in the summer of 2018 and raised over \$70,000 for their repair. On October 11, 2018, in conjunction with our well-attended Alumni Weekend, we hosted a re-dedication and donor appreciation reception where our beloved chimes rang out again, much to the thrill of our neighbors and friends.

Third year MDiv student, Andrew Quick (who also wrote and starred as Carl Modo in the fundraising video "The Bell Ringer in a Post-Bell World"), wrote and delivered a beautiful prayer to bless our new system and join our community together in appreciation of

A list of donors to the Bells campaign can be found on page 43.

our bells' glorious music. We unveiled a plaque to honor donors over \$1,000, which included alumni and neighbors, as well as a special group who raised money in honor of the woman who spearheaded the campaign: Annie Rupers. "The Friends of Annie Rupers" came together and raised over \$8,000, lifting up Annie's name to a place of honor on the plaque. It was truly a moving moment to see her look of surprise and deep gratitude when the plaque was unveiled. The silver lining of this project was the added bonus of getting to know our wonderful neighbors, as well as the San Anselmo business community.

Through the generosity of our donors, we were able to purchase a custom-made electronic carillon that controls our 13 bells in the tower of Geneva Hall. We can choose various hymns to play for special events, such as holidays, concerts and weddings. We have also created a special fund to pay for regular maintenance of both of our bell systems—in Geneva Hall and in Montgomery Chapel. This fund will continue to accept donations to ensure that our beautiful music is never silenced again. ✝

To donate to the Friends of the Bells fund, please make checks payable to SFTS and note "BELLS" in the memo section. If you'd like to donate online, you may securely do so at sfts.edu/donate, and reference "BELLS" in the tribute section of the form.

SFTS Students Honored with Prestigious Scholarships

O maha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation awarded generous scholarships to three of our talented, industrious MDiv students. Congratulations on a well-deserved tribute to your continued faith and hard work!

Apollos Scholarship

Andrew Quick



Eugene C. Dinsmore Named Scholarship

Ashley Pogue



Samual Lundquist



Some People
are Silent
on Diversity,
Equity, and
Inclusion...



NOT BE
SILENT

By Rev. Dr. Laurie Garrett-Cobbina

Not now. Not when everyone's voice is critical to disrupting the silence that makes humans more vulnerable to dominant and hegemonic structures of injustice.

At SFTS, we are responding to the omnipresent sin of covetousness, injustice, and inaction through our **Imago DEI** initiative, which affirms that the image of God is expressed through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

We may have thought these truths to be self-evident; that all people are created diverse, equal, and included. We may have thought this battle was decided in church and state, yet, with homogeneity-loving governments and religious fanaticism, we are at critical risk of the annihilation of the prophetic vision of Imago DEI.

As a pastoral care scholar, educator, and practitioner, I know that when we in theological education speak of injustice, trauma, terror, bigotry, poverty, hunger, and violence through biblical text, history, theology, ethics, preaching, worship, spiritual care and counseling—we are not only speaking theoretically; we are talking about things that happen to people's minds, bodies and spirits. When we are silent about assaults on the body, brain and spirit, we not only contribute to its propagation, we create a more ontologically violent world.

We at SFTS affirm our united commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our community. With engaged students, faculty, administrators and board members serving on an SFTS Guiding Coalition for Community Transformation, we will make recommendations for actions that support diversity, equity, and inclusion, and strike at the foundation of the great hubris of unchecked arrogance by dominant powers that always ultimately drag the whole society toward irrational acts, trauma and tragedy.

In these efforts we will create structures to engage:

- Critical Inquiry
- Naming of Injury
- Fearless Self-Reflection
- Radical Truth-Telling
- Liberating Action
- Collective Compassion

I am involved and committed to this work because I believe that theological education is not simply a personal commitment to learn, teach, research and administrate; not just an institutional commitment to mission; not just an ecclesial matter of reproducing the kinds of leaders we prefer with the standards we have established; but, that theological education is a spiritual responsibility to the world to seek truth, knowledge and wisdom; to engage life-giving, transformative promises of justice; and to practice radical love. When I speak of radical love I do not mean love that is sentimental or maudlin. I mean love that seeks critical, conscious, mutual humanization; and takes risks, empowers, and liberates. For those holding on to the lies, illusions, and insinuations of a homogenous utopia, may we remember that Jesus is faithful to us even when some yearn for the very things that lead to death and decay.

We are in the midst of many difficulties in the church, nation, and world, yet this moment—it is perfect. It is the perfect moment for empowerment. Join us at SFTS in speaking, acting, and caring about DEI: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. As followers of Christ and as an institution for theological education, we are holding ourselves responsible to disrupt the complicity of silence and speak up. Some People are Silent on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—We Will Not Be Silent. ✚

Rev. Dr. Laurie Garrett-Cobbina is the Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Education, holds the Shaw Chair for Clinical Pastoral Education, and serves as the Chief Diversity Officer at SFTS.

Statement from The Guiding Coalition for Community Transformation

We the people and stakeholders at SFTS—students, staff, faculty, administrators and trustees alike—have produced the following statement to affirm our united commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our community, and a platform for recommended future actions to promote a heart-based collaboration. We are united by our commitment to pursue knowledge, social justice, dignity, collaborative power and well-being for all people, and to meet the needs of our ever-changing, interconnected global society.

2018-19 Guiding Coalition

(pictured at left)

Laurie Garrett-Cobbina
 James McDonald
 Eugene Park
 Adlai Amor
 Jana Childers
 Scott Clark
 Grace Kim
 Erin Green
 Kris Dableo-Martel
 Isai Garcia
 Daeseop Yi

Welcome Mary Louise McCullough as Alumni Council President!



The Office of Alumni Relations is pleased to announce that Rev. Dr. Mary Louise McCullough (MDiv '02), also a current SFTS Trustee, has been voted to serve as our new Alumni Council President for the 2018-19 term! Mary Louise will be replacing the outgoing president, Dr. Kikanza Nuri-Robins, who has provided years of excellent leadership and service to our Alumni Council.

Mary Louise is a second career pastor who worked in corporate communications and journalism prior to attending SFTS in 1998. She met her husband, Mike

Wilson, while attending seminary. Prior to her current call as Pastor and Head of Staff at Second Presbyterian Church in Nashville, TN, Mary Louise served as pastor of Sixth Presbyterian Church, a More Light Presbyterian church, located in Pittsburgh, PA. She received the Doctor of Ministry degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 2012. We look forward to a new year of fresh energy and objectives for the Alumni Council.

If you are interested in serving on the Alumni Council, please email alumni@sfts.edu.



President Jim McDonald, Rev. Dr. "Theo" Gill, Jr. and sculptor Welton Rotz unveiling "Through a Glass Darkly."

Honoring Rev. Dr. Theodore A. Gill

President of San Francisco Theological Seminary 1958-1966

During Alumni Weekend, SFTS unveiled a majestic granite sculpture honoring former SFTS President Theodore Gill (1920-2005). "Through a Glass Darkly" was created and donated by sculptor Welton Rotz, a student

at SFTS during Ted Gill's leadership. Gill's son, Rev. Theodore "Theo" Gill, Jr., was also in attendance and provided a moving commemoration on the accompanying bronze plaque.

"For this is theological education: bumping into, shaking out, trying to make sense of real issues—not just the familiar, safe, traditional questions long propounded to keep abstract intellects pleasantly engaged, but the real thumpers, the tough ones, the disquiets and dissemblings and distempers that matter, that make a present difference in this, God's earth, at this, God's time, to these, God's people." — President Theodore Gill



Coming Fall 2019: SFTS Alumni Directory!

Wondering about the postcard you received? We are taking the first step to strengthen our networking connections with a data verification project and creation of a new printed alumni directory. You may have already been contacted by our partner, Publishing Concepts (PCI)— located in Dallas, TX—to update your contact information with SFTS via a postcard in the mail, email, or phone. We want you to know that their request for your information is legitimate, and it is safe to share your information with PCI. This service is being offered free of charge to SFTS, but to cover their costs, they will ask you to purchase a directory package. You are under no obligation to purchase, and we will make this directory available to you in Fall 2019. If you would prefer to update your information directly with SFTS, you may do so at our alumni website: alumni.sfts.edu/update



New Alumni Website: alumni.sfts.edu!

Join us online! We have created a special place just for SFTS Alumni to reconnect and learn:

- Explore curated resources
- Keep up to date on news

- Check out events near and far
- Peruse "Herman's Hermeneutics"
- Watch Interdisciplinary Lectures
- Receive discounts for venue rentals
- Shop for SFTS logowear

Jubilarian Years 1958, '68, '78 Celebrated at Alumni Weekend

By Marissa J. Miller,
Director of Alumni
Relations

On a sunny weekend in October, SFTS hosted a wonderful group of graduates for two days packed with thought-provoking academic presentations, invigorating conversation with current SFTS students and faculty, restorative spiritual practices, and community worship while catching up with old friends and new.

The weekend kicked off on Thursday, October 11 with a fascinating discussion hosted by the venerable Dr. Herman Waetjen entitled, "The Pioneering Vision of the J Strand and the New Testament," which was well attended by many of Dr. Waetjen's former students. The video of this presentation is available online at alumni.sfts.edu. Following his lecture, SFTS alumni authors Mark Shaw and Rev. Tom Norton discussed their recent publications: *Courage in the Face of Evil*, and *South Korea: My Adventures and Sermons*, respectively. They were on hand to sign books purchased at the event and entertained many excellent questions.

The day culminated in a celebration on Geneva Terrace where we brought neighbors, students, and alumni together to re-dedicate the Dollar Family Chimes, which had fallen silent in the past year due to equipment malfunction (pg. 39). It was a wonderful way for alumni to enjoy our beautiful campus, catch up with old friends, and get to know our students and neighbors—one of whom was third year MDiv student, Andrew Quick, who delivered the blessing of our newly repaired carillon.

Friday proved to be full of challenging academic presentations, starting with a panel convened by Assistant Professor of Old Testament & H. Eugene Farlough Chair of Black Church Studies, Rev. Yolanda Norton, on the Future of Biblical Education. Joining Rev. Norton were leading scholars Dr. Luis Menendez-Antuna (Assistant Professor of New Testament, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary), Rev. Ekaputra Tupamahu (PhD Candidate, New Testament & Early Christianity, Vanderbilt University), and Dr. Jennifer Williams (Assistant Professor, Religious Studies, Linfield College). After Community Worship and a cookout with the students, we enjoyed a presentation on recent archaeological digs in the Jezreel region of Israel by Jezreel Field School Director Ian Cipian, followed by Beer & Theology, a casual academic discussion with



Top: Lynn Jones (MDiv '79), Susan Craig (Certificate '94), Bear Ride (MDiv '78, DMin '91), Ann Hayman (MDiv '78), and Deborah Wright (MDiv '78) catch up at the re-dedication party for the Dollar Family Chimes.

Above: Classmates Dale Whitney (BD '68, ThM '70) and Dean Myers (BD '68) enjoy the October weather on campus with Dean's wife, Maxine.

current students, hosted by Dr. Greg Love, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology.

Director of the Program in Christian Spirituality, Dr. Wendy Farley, ended the long weekend with a spiritual practice session, *Beauty as the Threshold to the Divine*, in which participants explored the idea of beauty in some ancient Christian sources and also experimented with a few simple beauty practices—using nature, poetry, and music as lectio divina for rediscovering the links between the beauty of God and the beauty—and suffering—of creation. †

Lasting connections were made, friendships were rejuvenated, and the current SFTS community enjoyed hosting a wonderful group of devoted alums here on campus.

Participants included: Cecil Hoffman, Jr. (MDiv '58), Michael Brown (BD, MA '68), Robert Hirni (MDiv '68), Keith Myers (BD '68), Dale Whitney (BD '68, ThM '70), Thomas Norton (BD '69, MDiv '70), Dale Whitney (BD '68, ThM '70), Robert Bacon (DMin '71), Mark Merrill (MDiv '77), Geoff Nelson (MDiv '77, DASD '07), Donald Smith (MDiv '77), Ann Hayman (MDiv '78), John Newton Hickox (MDiv '78), Bear Ride (MDiv '78, DMin '91), Deborah Wright (MDiv '78), Carol Saysette (MDiv '80, DMin '95), Roger Hull (DMin '82), Larry Vilardo (MDiv '85), Scott Schaefer (MDiv '87), Kris Moore (MDiv '90), Chris Von Lobedan (MDiv '91, DMin '12), Scott Mason (MDiv '92), Nancy Hatch (MDiv '97), Cornelia Cyss-Carter (MDiv '98, PhD '02), Mary Louise McCullough (MDiv '02), Janice Reynolds (DASD '03, MDiv '10), Mark Shaw (MATS '08), Debra Dybsky (DASD '10), Douglas Olds (MDiv '10), Janice Reynolds (DASD '03, MDiv '10), Jamie Lee Sprague-Ballou (MDiv '17).

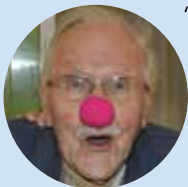
UPDATES



Ian Vellenga (MDiv 2014) and Jhan Dotel-Vellenga (MDiv 2017) have been called to serve as PC(USA) Mission Co-Workers. They will serve with the Council of Protestant Churches in Nicaragua (CEPAD), as part of CEPAD's international partnership program, helping to coordinate U.S. church delegation visits, develop new partnerships, facilitate communication between partner bodies and encourage and accompany partnerships as they deepen their understanding of doing mission together. From a young age, both Vellenga and Dotel-Vellenga say they were drawn to mission service. She grew up in the Dominican Republic and he grew up in North Carolina. They met and married while studying at SFTS. The couple is excited to be joining in mission with the people of Nicaragua. "The current struggle of the people of Nicaragua for justice and righteousness shows how hard they are willing to fight for what they believe is right and true," the couple recently wrote.



Rev. Sarah Chivington-Buck (MDiv 2017) has been called home to her native Albuquerque, NM to serve as Associate Pastor for Shepherd of the Valley Presbyterian Church. She began her call on August 20 and was installed on October 7, 2018. Her mother, who is a ruling elder at First Presbyterian Albuquerque, delivered the charge to the congregation—and one of Rev. Chivington-Buck's childhood Sunday School teachers, now in his 90s, served on her commission. "I'm so happy to be back home, near my family, serving [this] vibrant congregation," she commented.



"May grace continue to be your leading motive."
Rev. Elmer "Bud" Frimoth (MA, BDiv 1954) was recently profiled by the Presbyterian Mission Agency for his memories of fighting fires in Northern California in the late 1940s. Rev. Frimoth, a 92-year-old World War II veteran and retired minister of the PC(USA) was reading accounts of those working to contain the Mendocino Complex fires that burned through 350,000 acres in California, which brought back memories from years ago. Frimoth remembers the awe-inspiring power of the fires, relaying knowledge of what all firefighters endure. "What a sensation to be on the line at night," he said. "The wonder of the fire. Your appreciation for its warmth, knowing full well the awful damages it brings. I wanted to put that damn fire out. It's strange, the mixed feelings I had, because it kept me warm at night."

Shortly after the harrowing experiences of firefighting, Rev. Frimoth attended SFTS, where he met his late wife, Lenore, the love of his life, who served in ministry alongside him until her passing in 2006. In addition to traditional and radio ministry, Bud and Lenore had a clown ministry in which they once did a non-verbal clown communion service. "Caring clowning," as Frimoth described it, employed clowning as a therapeutic listening skill, encouraging viewers to use imagination and innovation in their everyday lives. Frimoth published a book in 2006, *Bring in the Clowns—a Metaphor for Ministry*, which is still available today. Here at SFTS, we look forward to the cheerful emails that Bud sends to us, sharing his memories and stories of his past and his present, recalling his life of service as a soldier, firefighter, pastor, radio host and clown. *You can read the full story here: alumni.sfts.edu/bud-frimoth*



Rev. Dr. Elaine Hanson-Hysell (DMin 1998) is looking forward to meeting community residents and implementing the values of her new church, Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church in Cottage Grove, WI. "I want to encourage people to find their own spiritual direction individually and as a community so people know where they are going," she said. "I am so grateful for my education," she said. "It was a life changing experience." Since joining Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, she is impressed with the focus of the church being a "little church with a big heart."



Rev. Gwendolyn Morgan (MDiv 1992), current chaplain and the spiritual care manager at the Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center in Vancouver, WA, has been named Clark County's newest Poet Laureate. Rev. Morgan has lived all over the world—serving and living alongside everyone from homeless women in a Seattle shelter to needy villagers in Costa Rica, Bulgaria and Liberia. Since then, she's won many awards and published many poems, as well as two books: *Crow Feathers, Red Ochre, Green Tea* in 2013, which won the Wild Earth Poetry Prize; and *Snowy Owls, Egrets & Unexpected Graces* in 2016, which was a finalist in the 19th annual Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Awards last year. As Clark County's Poet Laureate, Rev. Morgan plans to highlight other local poets. "I like to read poets from other traditions," she said in a recent interview with a local newspaper, and she's looking forward to generating more exposure for them.

Have an update to share? Email us at alumni@sfts.edu or go online to alumni.sfts.edu/submit-story to share your story. We'd love to hear from you!



Survival Guide for the Soul: How to Flourish Spiritually in a World that Pressures Us to Achieve

by Ken Shigematsu
(DASD 2008,
DMin 2013)



What keeps us from flourishing in our spiritual lives is a neglect of the inner life of the soul. And more and more today, this neglect is driven by our ambition to accomplish something big outside ourselves. We live in a society that pressures us to achieve professionally, socially, and through the constant acquisition of material possessions. Drawing on a wide range of sources including scripture, church history, psychology, and neuroscience, as well as a rich variety of stories from his own life, Ken Shigematsu demonstrates how the gospel redeems our desires and reorders our lives. He offers fresh perspective on how certain spiritual practices help orient our lives so that our souls can flourish in the midst of a demanding, competitive society. And he concludes with a liberating and counter-cultural definition of true greatness.

This book will appeal to anyone who longs to experience a deeper relationship with Christ in the midst of the daily pressures to succeed, as well as to those on the borderlands of faith seeking to transcend the human tendency to define ourselves by our production and success.

"This book explores how we can pursue achievement, not out of an anxious need to validate ourselves, but out of a deep sense of gratitude that we are already accepted by God."
—Ken Shigematsu, Author

"Ken gently instructs us in life-changing ways to stay intimately connected to God's love, grace, and peace..."
—Suzy Welch, New York Times bestselling author of *10-10-10* and CNBC correspondent

BOOK REVIEWS

Denial of Justice: Dorothy Kilgallen, Abuse of Power, and the Most Compelling JFK Assassination Investigation in History

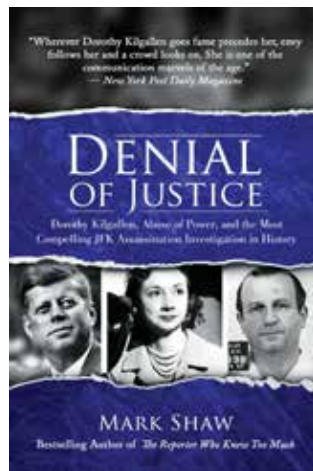
by Mark Shaw (MATS 2008)

Why is *What's My Line?* TV star and Pulitzer-Prize-nominated investigative reporter Dorothy Kilgallen one of the most feared journalists in history? Why has her threatened exposure of the truth about the JFK assassination triggered a cover-up by at least four government agencies and resulted in abuse of power at the highest levels?



Ruby's part in the JFK assassination that only Kilgallen knew about, causing her to be marked for danger. Peppared with additional evidence signaling the potential motives of Kilgallen's arch enemies—J. Edgar Hoover, mobster Carlos Marcello, Frank Sinatra, her husband Richard, and her last lover—*Denial of Justice* adds the final chapter to the story behind

Denial of Justice—written in the spirit of bestselling author Mark Shaw's gripping true crime murder mystery, *The Reporter Who Knew Too Much*—tells the inside story of why Kilgallen was such a threat leading up to her unsolved murder in 1965. Shaw includes facts that have never before been published, including eyewitness accounts of the underbelly of Kilgallen's private life, revealing statements by family members convinced she was murdered, and shocking new information about Jack



why the famous journalist was killed, with no investigation to follow despite a staged death scene. MATS alumnus Mark Shaw appeared at the recent Alumni Weekend to share notes on his latest book, *Courage in the Face of Evil*, and will be appearing at SFTS for a reading on *Denial of Justice* this winter.

Check the events calendar at alumni.sfts.edu for more details.

Snowy Owls, Egrets & Unexpected Graces

by Gwendolyn Morgan (MDiv 1992)



Celebrating the light within and our deep connection to the earth, *Snowy Owls, Egrets & Unexpected Graces* is a book of poetry that has been called "a portal to an interior landscape that mirrors the natural world—the majesty of western red cedar and snowy owls, the murmurations of songbirds and the incantations of astral showers." Morgan simultaneously reflects on the suffering of those living with cancer and chronic illness as well as the on-going habitat destruction amidst climate change, and the violence of war and poverty. This book invokes hope and gratitude in the midst of sorrow and grief—an invitation to take a breath in the midst of the turning of the wheel of the year, to pause and recalibrate to the music of the cosmos. Brave in revealing its seams and extravagant in its passion for landscape, this is a healing book that circles through seasons and lands on timeless themes of gratitude.

[Morgan] has graced us with a new collection of poems that entreat us to lean into the world, into the vital conversation that awaits all who pay attention... Woven into this vivid landscape, [Morgan] extends her tender touch to the sorrows and suffering of modernity—cancer, capitalism, greed, violence, suicide—all seen through the heart of compassion and transmuted by the alchemy of her eloquence. We are awakened and healed through her generous offerings."
—Francis Weller, author of *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief*



IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Rev. Dr. James Emerson

San Francisco Theological Seminary mourns the passing of Rev. Dr. James G. Emerson, former SFTS Interim President (2000-2002) and a past member of the Board of Trustees (1987-1997). Dr. Emerson, the long-time pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, served the Seminary in a number of ways, and in crucial times. A scholar-practitioner in the area of Pastoral Counseling and a talented administrator, he was perhaps best known for his great pastor's heart and extraordinary gift for empathy. "[Emerson] had one of the largest pastoral hearts I have ever known. He lived with a deep awareness of the joy and suffering that life can bring, helping others celebrate the good and wondrous, and find solace in times of pain and sorrow," commented SFTS President Rev. Dr. James McDonald. Dr. Emerson held degrees from Stanford University, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the University of Chicago. Before coming to San Francisco, he served churches in Philadelphia, the New York metropolitan area, Indianapolis, and Denver. He is predeceased by his wife Margaret (Migs) Bonnell; sons John and Jed, and daughter Lynn survive him. Memorial services were held at Calvary Presbyterian Church in San Francisco in October. †



Father Benedict LeRoy Auer (DMin 1993), O.S.B. died

June 8, 2018, in Aurora, IL. He was born in Chicago on November 4, 1939. Father Benedict received his BA from Loyola University (Chicago); Master's degrees from Creighton and from St. Meinrad School of Theology; and his Doctor of Ministry from SFTS. He did additional advanced work at the Angelicum (Rome), Harvard, and Bennington College. In 1976, Father Benedict entered the Benedictine novitiate at Marmion Abbey, Aurora, IL. After ordination in 1980, Father Benedict served the parishes of Rockford, IL, for eight years. He was Campus Minister at Saint Martin's College from 1988 to 1994. A published poet and author, he saw his poems and articles appear in national and international publications. He also published six books, including one on poetry therapy and another on suicidal depression and spirituality.



Rev. Dr. Hugh Burroughs (MA 1973, MDiv 1974, DMin 1983) died August 29, 2018. Over the course of his

ministry, he served the Presbytery of San Francisco in many forms: as an interim pastor at First Oakland and at Calvary San Francisco; and as pastor of Northminster Presbyterian Church in El Cerrito (now home of the Presbytery office). Dr. Burroughs also pastored at First Presbyterian Church in Santa Monica and at the First Presbyterian Church in Roswell, NM. As assistant to Howard Rice at SFTS in the late 1970s, Dr. Burroughs ran many successful elections for General Assembly Moderator and Stated Clerk. Perhaps most notably, he founded and was the host of the CBS (KPIX-TV San Francisco) television show "Mosaic," produced in the Bay Area for many years. Dr. Burroughs also served SFTS on staff as a recruitment officer in the early 90s. He was honorably retired in 2012. Dr. Burroughs is survived by his wife, Gail Burroughs.



Rev. E. Gordon Crider (MDiv 1952) died March 28, 2018 in

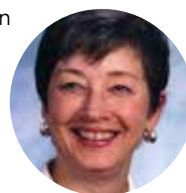
Portland, OR. Born in 1927 in Los Angeles, he graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1948 before graduating from SFTS in 1952. An ordained Presbyterian minister, Rev. Crider was the organizing pastor of Covenant United Presbyterian Church in Eugene, OR, serving from 1962 to 1976. Throughout his life, he supported

many social causes, including services for at-risk youth, opposition to the Vietnam War, and construction of affordable housing in South Eugene. As a pastor he served churches in Brownsville, OR; Santa Cruz, CA; Bellingham, WA; Eugene, OR; and Ridgecrest, CA. He is survived by his three children and three grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Irene Loucks Crider.

The Right Honourable Rev.

Dr. George Grubb (DMin 1993) died

June 9, 2018 in Edinburgh, Scotland. Born in Edinburgh in 1935, he earned degrees at the Open University, the University of Edinburgh, and his Doctor of Ministry from SFTS. Dr. Grubb was ordained as a minister in 1962 and then became parish minister at Craigsbank Church in 1971. He was a Church of Scotland minister for over 40 years before becoming involved in local politics. Dr. Grubb was Councillor for South Queensferry (later Almond ward) from 1999 until 2012. He was the first Liberal Democrat elected Lord Provost of Edinburgh; he served in that capacity for from 2007 until 2012. He is survived by his wife, Liz Grubb, and their two children.



Rev. Margaret Rush Hankins (MDiv 1979) died April

12, 2018. She was born in 1940 in Anniston, AL. She graduated from Birmingham Southern College with honors and was selected for membership in Phi Beta Kappa. After Rev. Hankins earned her Master's in Religious Education at Duke University, she worked as a Christian educator in United Methodist churches in Fort Worth and Dallas and became involved in the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Upon graduation from SFTS, she became the 10th woman to be an ordained elder in the Rocky Mountain Conference of The United Methodist Church. She went on to pastor at the Lyons, Emmanuel, and Hope UMC. Rev. Hankins and her husband, Jim Hankins, shared a Samaritan Institute National Award in 2013. Last year, she received the Faith and Freedom Award from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. Margaret is survived by her husband; her two sons; four grandchildren; three step-children; and six step-grandchildren.



Rev. Eugene William Lee (BDiv 1952) died April 5, 2018 in Turlock, CA. He was born in Livingston, CA, in 1927. Rev. Lee held positions of pastor, missionary, business executive, and management consultant. Rev. Lee graduated from Bob Jones University, and received post-graduate degrees from SFTS, the Spanish Language Institute in Costa Rica, and the University of Southern California. He was a member of the San Francisco Presbytery and the Rotary Club of San Francisco; he was also a volunteer at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Rev. Lee is survived by his wife of 67 years, Jeanne Marie.



Rev. Donald Boyd Pearson (BDiv 1955) died July 27, 2018 in Burlington, WA. He was born on June 19, 1930 in Seattle. Rev. Pearson earned a bachelor's degree in music and secondary education at the University of Washington before attending SFTS. An ordained minister for the Presbyterian Church (USA), Rev. Pearson served at First Presbyterian Church in Tacoma, WA, for three years and Mount View Presbyterian Church in White Center, WA, for 11 years. He later became the non-denominational pastor of Maranatha Chapel. After 25 years of ministry, Rev. Pearson worked for the City of Seattle Parks and Recreation and the State of Washington Department of Corrections as Recreation Leader, retiring in 1995. Rev. Pearson is survived by his wife, Maybelle Pearson, three children, two step-children, many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and a great-great-granddaughter.



Rev. Harry Maghakian (BDiv 1962) died May 15, 2018 in Maple Grove, MN. He was born in 1924 and grew up in Los Angeles. Harry Maghakian was a member of the U.S. Army's 10th Armored Division during World War II; he came home from Europe with a Purple Heart. He was ordained in 1962 after attending SFTS. Rev. Maghakian is best known for his St. Paul-based non-profit People Incorporated, an organization that started with cookies and coffee for homeless vets at the Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church and has grown to be the largest community mental health provider in Minnesota. The organization currently operates in 40 locations in seven countries, touching 13,000 clients each year. "Harry left a huge footprint in terms of working with vulnerable individuals in our community," Jill Wiedemann-West, CEO of People Incorporated told the Pioneer Press. Rev. Maghakian is survived by his wife of 59 years, Judy Maghakian; their two children; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.



Rev. Donald Smith, P.S., D.D. (BDiv 1947) died June 16, 2018 in Pompton Plains, NJ. He was born June 28, 1922 in the Philippines. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and graduated cum laude from the University of California at Berkeley. After receiving his divinity degree from SFTS, he earned an STM from Union Theological Seminary in New York. In 1979, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree at Carroll College in Waukesha, WI. Rev. Smith's early ministry began in the Philippines in 1946, where he and his wife Verna worked as missionaries and fraternal workers to the United Evangelical Church. He served for two years as pastor of the Cosmopolitan Student Church there. Rev. Smith was Personnel Secretary of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church (UPCUSA) from 1956 to 1962 and General Director of the Vocation Agency of the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) from 1972 to 1987. He built and directed the Ecumenical Training Center in Stony Point, NY, which became the Inter-denominational Missionary Orientation Center. In retirement, he was co-interim pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Ramsey, NJ. Rev. Smith published four books and his leadership in the Vocation Agency stimulated numerous research projects and significant publications. He is survived by his wife, Verna Gabrielson Smith (DASD 1996); four children; nine grandchildren; and fourteen great-grandchildren. ✚



Dr. Frank Matule (DMin 1977) died May 12, 2018 in Missoula, MT. He was born in Butte and attended Carroll College and St. Paul Seminary before coming to SFTS for his Doctor of Ministry. Dr. Matule was ordained into the Catholic priesthood in 1967 and served Missoula parishes until 1981. After coming into conflict with the Roman Catholic Church over the role of women in the church, the near-punishment of divorced Catholics, and the exclusion of people being invited to the communion table if they were not Catholic, he left the priesthood and embarked on a new career at the University of Montana as Director of Admissions and Student Enrollment. Dr. Matule married in 1983. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Susan Matule, their daughter, and two grandsons.

Additional tributes to our loved ones can be found at alumni.sfts.edu. To report the passing of a loved one, please email alumni@sfts.edu or send a letter to SFTS/Alumni Relations, 105 Seminary Road, San Anselmo, CA 94960

Remembering Dan Hoggatt, Professor of Church Music

Dr. Daniel Hoggatt, former SFTS Professor of Church Music, organist, and conductor of the once 50-voice Seminary Singers, passed away on October 30, 2018. When asked to remember her fellow faculty member, Rev. Dr. Jana Childers (Dean of the Seminary) reflected, "Dan Hoggatt was an extraordinary teacher. He had the kind of charisma that many of the best have, but more than that, he had a gracious, joyful spirit that drew people to his classes and choirs. A master of his art, he touched many lives during his time at SFTS and will be missed by his colleagues and students." Dr. Hoggatt also served as the Organist Choirmaster at The Episcopal Church of Our Saviour in Mill Valley, CA, was the conductor of the critically acclaimed San Jose Symphony Chorus and Midsummer Mozart Chorus and toured internationally as a conductor, singer and organist, and most recently served at Morehouse Presbyterian Church in Portland, OR. He held degrees from Lewis and Clark College, San Jose State University, and University of Colorado at Boulder. Rev. Scott Clark (MDiv '09, SFTS Chaplain and Dean of Students) commented, "For those of us lucky enough to call Dan colleague, partner in ministry, and friend, he was a true and worthy companion, full of compassion and wisdom. While I will miss my friend, there is also gratitude and praise welling up within me, knowing that he has joined that 'happy chorus, which the morning stars began.' Indeed, I imagine that he may already be conducting that chorus." ✚



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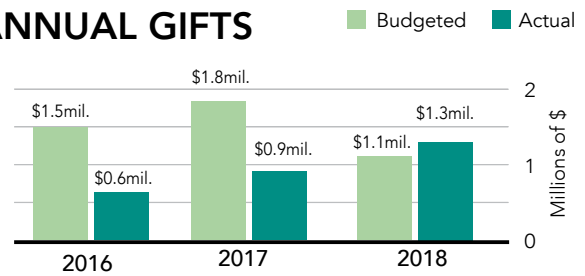
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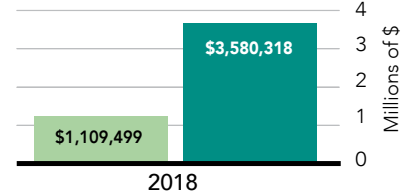
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