



From the Development Office

Hugh Williams, Director of Communications and Development

Greetings and peace to all.

Advent Appeal

My sincere thanks to everyone who participated in our recent Advent Appeal. With more than 130 donors giving close to \$40,000 in total, it was one of the seminary's most successful Advent Appeals ever!

The two most popular designations for gifts were our Grace Fund for Faculty and our Annual Fund. Support for our Grace Fund ensures that LTS will continue to attract the finest theologians and educators available. Support for the Annual Fund ensures that the seminary always has the type of unrestricted cash that enables tranquil daily operations.

Community Survey

I wish to also draw your attention to the survey enclosed with this Newsletter. We would be grateful if you took the (approximately) 5 minutes to fill this in and return it to us. Its two guiding objectives are as follows: (i) for us to learn how many of you are happy to receive correspondence from us (such as the Newsletter, fundraising appeals and tax receipts) by email, instead of by post; and (ii) to see whether you wish to participate in LTS's 2021 Phone-a-Thon.

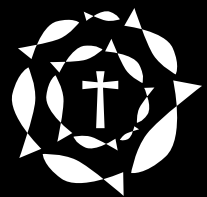
If it is not convenient for you to fill in the survey and post it to us, you might visit our website via the link provided in the Survey, where you can complete this survey online.

This information will allow a small office that has considerable administration to become much more efficient in its communications.

My warm thanks to our very supportive community.



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LTS TODAY

Lutheran Theological Seminary, a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, nurtures and challenges all people for Christ-centered leadership and witness for God's mission in the world.

114 Seminary Crescent
1968-2020



Blessing Those Who Have Brought Us Here

*Rev. Dr. William Harrison,
President*

"On seeing [the believers], Paul thanked God and took courage" (Acts 28:15). In this issue of our newsletter, we thank God for God's people and the gifts that they have granted us.

Recently, we have focused on the future into which we're living, as is appropriate for a school that has been fearlessly and faithfully following God's call in challenging times. Now is the time to look back and reflect on our inheritance.

The buildings at 114 Seminary Crescent have served LTS well for 50 years. They have been a physical manifestation,

an icon, of a powerful vision of formation and ministry: that leaders in God's church should be trained in a fully-equipped contemporary home on the campus of a major university, and should be engaged with the life of the larger academy, along with the church and community. We thank God for the people who committed prayer, love, and work to bringing into existence this space and sustaining it for five decades.

A variety of people who were part of the life of LTS in the Seminary Crescent days have shared memories with us. We welcome Bp. Don Sjöberg, Board Chair when the buildings were built, to take us right back to the beginning. Margareth Peterson, on the LTS Board between 1989-97, writes about her first visit to the buildings, in 1969. The Rev. Dr. Bill Nelson, who joined LTS as Professor of Pastoral Theology in 1972, draws our attention to the strength of our community, as does the Rev. Heather Kleiner, who arrived as a faculty spouse in 1975, became a student in 1979, and then saw her son graduate in 2011. Bp. Larry Kochendorfer, a 1989 graduate,

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reminds us of the joy of seminary worship and describes the baptism of his son in the Seminary Crescent chapel. The Rev. Dr. Cam Harder, Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, who began teaching in 1997, tells a story about zucchini and angels that captures the humorous love that we share.

We appreciate the richness of the love that many feel for the buildings. They have seen many people grow in the knowledge and love of God. Places are not simply geography; nor are they merely stone, concrete, wood, and glass – though these are not small things, themselves. Buildings become transformed by the work that God does in and through them. Grace permeates them. And, we are blessed to know them and be formed in them, by them.

Many of you are interested in the future of the Seminary Crescent buildings. I do not know what will happen because the decisions are not ours. The buildings are on University of Saskatchewan land; our lease was written so that we could use the land for a Lutheran seminary and that only. Now, the university is directing the process and will make the choices. Like many institutions, the university is unclear about space needs now, with COVID affecting all of their decision-making processes. We will notify you as soon as we know something and are given permission to share. Meanwhile, we give thanks for all that God has done in those spaces.

We also celebrate the work of the Rev. Dr. Kristine Ruffatto,

who will retire in the summer of 2021 after a decade of teaching at LTS. Some of her students have written to remind us of the many gifts for ministry that Dr. Ruffatto has brought to us, and the Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen has spoken for the faculty. Dr. Ruffatto has been an engaging teacher, a fine scholar, and an inspiring preacher, helping LTS to understand both the wisdom and the challenges that we find in the Bible. I must add an appreciation for Dr. Ruffatto's attention to detail and ability to retain important information; numerous times I have needed to turn to her records and files, especially in her work as Interim Academic Dean over recent months. Thank you, Dr. Ruffatto, and, indeed, we thank God for you. We will miss you!

God has done great work through LTS, providing leaders who are truly formed in Christ Jesus and who help us all to participate in God's loving transformation of the world. We thank God for our graduates. We thank God for all of you who share in LTS's ministry, with your prayers, expressions of love, and generous financial gifts.

We continue to plan for the future, as we imagine the shape that LTS and formation of ELCIC leaders in Western Canada will take in coming years. As we move forward, we especially invite you to consider a gift to the Grace Fund for Faculty, helping us to ensure a continuing strong Lutheran voice. We thank God for God's glorious work in ages past, and for God's work among believers and among all people in days to come.

Seminary Crescent

By Rev. Emmanuel Aristide

From September of 2013 to May of 2017, while I was going to seminary to get my Master of Divinity, Luther Residence was my home. It was the place where I spent countless hours reading theological books and writing papers. It was the place where I met several people who later on became my lifelong friends. Two of them were my best man and my groomsman at my wedding. I proposed to my girlfriend in my dorm room, and we are now happily married and blessed with a child. My wife often says that I am a very nostalgic person. Yes, I am very nostalgic about Luther Residence and the old seminary building, because of the countless wonderful memories I have had and the wonderful people I met throughout the four years I lived there. There will always be a part of my heart and my soul in these buildings, and they will forever be missed.



Memories

114 SEMINARY CRESCENT

Rev. Don Sjoberg

LTS Board Chair, 1965-70

I remember many meetings leading up the organization of LTS, and the unanimous decision to move on to the U of S Campus followed by the construction of an impressive Seminary building. What we were to regret afterwards was our lack of foresight as to the changing student body dormitory needs and the accessibility requirements throughout the building. We did not anticipate such needs in the 60's, let alone the size of the student body today. But the building served us well for some 50 years.

Our search for the first President of LTS was not successful until Prof. Harold Floreen asked why we had not considered Dr. William Hordern, a graduate of U of S, whom he knew had wanted to return to Canada following his graduation from Union Theological Seminary. A contact was made with Dr. Hordern who came for an interview, and I recall his easy and relaxed manner - and the pipe. The rest is history as Dr. Hordern became the LTS President between 1965-85. I admired his administrative and organizational skills as shown at meetings, and he never appeared flustered; though I could sometimes tell impatience when he adjusted his seating and one leg moved. As with his lectures, his writings were concise and clear even on complicated subjects.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the strong support for the Seminary which Marjorie Hordern provided, one being when the kitchen was in a serious deficit. Under her management the kitchen turned a profit in one year.

Rev. Dr. Bill Nelson

LTS Professor of Pastoral Theology, 1972-98

The year was 1972. I was 33 years old, right out of graduate school, when I began my tenure as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at LTS. The setting in the new building was calm and peaceful with about 50 students, including interns, and seven faculty: myself, George Evenson, Harold Floreen, Walter Freitag, Roger Nostbakken, Martin Leeseberg, and the president William Hordern. It was a great atmosphere. The faculty were supportive of this new, young, still to do some maturing Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology.

In my first class in Pastoral Care I handed out the course requirements. There was a brief pause and a deep voice from somewhere in the room said "NO." I was stunned. I responded simply with a puzzled look. The deep voice again, joined by several others, said "NO." New and nervous, I stood confused when another voice jumped in with an explanation: "These requirements may have been O.K. for you as a PhD student but there are too many for us in the seminary." It was a kind voice. I located the deep voiced individual, sat silently for a few moments, and the students and I went on to discuss and agree upon what were reasonable requirements. They were right.. When the class ended I left the room feeling affirmed and connected with some wonderful students. Our relationship continued to grow over the year. I valued, and still do, the students I interacted with at LTS and the support I received from both students and experienced, grace-filled faculty.



Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room, Photograph Collection

Rev. Heather Kleiner

When my late husband John was called to teach at LTS in 1975, it was not his first contact with the seminary. His father, Conrad, had taught from 1939 - early 60's at one of LTS's predecessor seminaries. His brother Herb had graduated from there and his sister Ruth married seminarian Kurt Keitel.

John's teaching at LTS influenced and shaped our family's life. As a faculty wife, I attended and supported members of the student faculty wives' group with events held in the seminary building. Our family participated in services and other events held at LTS, entertained students and their spouses in our home, and in the early years joined dorm students weekly for dinner in the seminary cafeteria.

In 1979 I began studying part time at LTS, navigating my role as a student and a faculty wife. At that time there were few women students and a number of the early Christian feminist scholars and authors were being read. I recall interesting, and sometimes heated, discussions with male students around the tables in the cafeteria, in class, and sometimes after chapel. I graduated in 1986 and was ordained in the seminary chapel where all my family took part in the service. And in 2011 our younger son, Mark, graduated from LTS, carrying on the family tradition.



There were many other happy events at LTS that we were part of: student weddings, baptisms, banquets, Hallowe'en parties, Alumni/ae gatherings, etc. We also held a 95th birthday party for John's mother, Emilie Kleiner, in the cafeteria.

I will miss the building, but more importantly I cherish the memories I have of the students, faculty and staff with whom I shared beloved community. Thanks be to God!

Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

LTS graduate 1989

While I remember professors, classes, social gatherings and other aspects of student life, the most vivid memories for me of LTS Seminary Crescent are the worship services. These included regular daily chapel planned and led by students and faculty, and regular Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and United joint services.

Of particular memory is the baptism of our first son, Paul Arthur, during the final chapel service of the term. He was born November 26, 1986, at the University Hospital and he and Cathy were discharged on Sunday, November 30. The next day, Monday, December 1, 1986, Paul Arthur was baptized in the chapel by then graduate student and liturgy and homiletics professor, Rev. Volker Griefenhagen.

My twin brother and Cathy's sister were baptismal sponsors and both were present for the baptism. Also present were the seminary professors, staff, students, spouses and families...the entire seminary community gathered...as witnesses to and participants in the baptism.

Cathy and I, tired and weary and emotional, made a valiant attempt to sing a duet during the worship, John Ylvisaker's "I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry" which had recently been released (1985). It was sung quietly, stumbling all the way, with heartfelt conviction and profound truth.

And following the worship we provided homemade donuts for refreshments.

Years later my paternal grandmother, Aunt (an Anglican priest) and cousin stopped in Saskatoon to have a tour of the seminary where they discovered, as they signed the seminary's guestbook, the record of the Monday, December 1, 1986, baptism of Paul Arthur, child of God.



Margareth (Goos) Peterson

LTS Board, 1989-97

In June of 1969, we came to Saskatoon for my brother's wedding. He gave us directions to the new Seminary building. I think we had also been advised that there was a Roman Catholic Seminary right beside the Lutheran Seminary. We pulled up to the place and I noted that one was quite a bit larger than the other. I told my husband that the Lutheran Seminary had to be the smaller one. So, we walked inside. At the front door was what I thought was a baptismal font with water in it. I recall that I dipped my finger in the water and crossed myself. (I'm embarrassed now to admit that I was probably rather flippant about this!) As we began making our way through the hallways, we discovered that we knew absolutely no one in the photos on the wall. We realized, then, that we were in the wrong building and the font with water at the door was not simply a baptismal font. We made our way over to the larger building where we were greeted by Gus Werle, who was, at that time, the business manager (and my uncle by marriage). Gus graciously gave us a tour of this lovely new building as well as the dormitory. Gus was quite proud of the "pod" set-up of the dormitory, something that was probably a new concept at the time.





Rev. Dr. Cam Harder

LTS Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, 1997-2017

In one of my first years of teaching at the seminary I told this story as part of a sermon in chapel: "When I was a pastor I visited a woman in hospital who told me that one night while she was standing at the sink, washing dishes after supper, she felt a crunch in her hip and fell to the floor. She said "The pain was intense. I tried to pull myself over to the phone to call an ambulance, but I was just too weak. It hurt so much! So I lay there on the floor shivering. Eventually I drifted off, but sometime in the night I woke up and there was an angel over me, covering me with a blanket. The next morning I woke up again at the sound of someone knocking on my door. I was still on the floor. I called out weakly, "come in." It was my neighbour. She'd stopped by to offer me some of her excess crop of zucchinis (there's always enough zucchinis to give away!). She called 911 for me. She was the second angel that visited me that day." The next day after I had told that story, I arrived at my office to see the display that is in the photo--zucchini angels placed there by some creative students!





Farewell

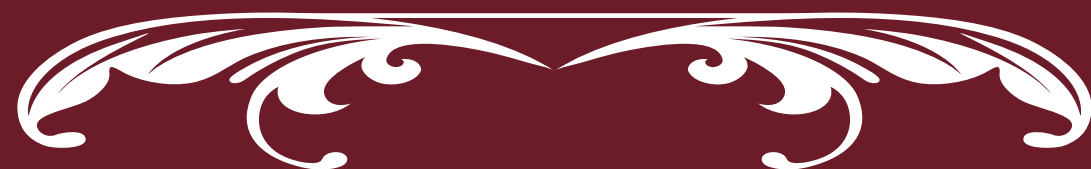
Rev. Dr. Kristine Ruffatto



Celebrating

Dr. Ruffatto is a joy to celebrate. Her work among us has been marked by her warm and welcoming personal presence, and by her willingness to go out of her way to care for other faculty, for staff, and for students. She is a fine scholar in the field of Hebrew Scriptures and Intertestamental Literature, and a well-loved teacher known for her engaged and enjoyable classes. As Cross-Cultural Coordinator, Dr. Ruffatto has enabled many students to encounter different worlds and emerge transformed. Thank you, Dr. Ruffatto, for all that you have given LTS over the past 10 years. Godspeed!

~ Rev. Dr. William Harrison



Gratitude

Dr. Ruffatto has the mind of a Biblical scholar and Theologian, and the heart of a pastor. While current in scholarship, she was always concerned with how this new teaching would be heard and felt. She loves the scriptures, our Lutheran heritage, teaching, and her students.

How she taught was also how she encouraged us as pastors to be. She might say, "Be very careful that you do not try to deconstruct what a person has believed and holds to be true, unless you have the time to care for them pastorally" (paraphrased). Kristine made me a better pastor.



Farewell

It has been an honour sitting in Dr. Ruffatto's classes. A well-rounded intellectual and academic, Dr Ruffatto graciously pushed the boundaries of our thought processes and in the process facilitated our academic maturity. Furthermore, Dr Ruffatto proved to be a genius in being able to marry academic issues with matters of faith. There were moments when we dug deep through the layers of biblical texts and our life experiences, thinking we were only engaging in academic exercises, only to come out the other side in deep spiritual moments of adoration of the divine. Such are the experiences our seminary will miss upon Dr Ruffatto's retirement, and we pray God's grace as she moves into retirement.



Love

For me, kindness, humility, calm, and wisdom perfectly define the Rev. Dr. Ruffatto. These qualities echo the kind of Christian and person she is at the core. Despite her busy schedule, her office door was always open for any students in need of further explanations on her classes, on the assigned readings, or on the Old Testament in general. She is blessed with a listening ear and a pastoral heart which warmed her students' hearts. When a professor like Dr. Ruffatto cares for you genuinely and clearly invests their time and energy in you, it makes a profound difference in the lives of the students. We will miss you and we love you.

Godspeed

to the Rev. Dr. Kristine Johnson Ruffatto: Disciplined Scholar, Passionate Pilgrim, Respected Colleague

Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada have been very fortunate. For the last ten years, we have had the great privilege of experiencing a scholar, a pilgrim and a wonderful colleague in our midst. Dr Ruffatto has taught Old Testament and Practical Theology courses, while also being the director of the Cross-Cultural/ Globalization program at LTS, serving on the ELCIC Faith, Order, and Doctrine Committee and the BC Synod Candidacy Committee, and chairing accreditation committees at LTS. But these facts do not really tell the story.

They don't mention her enthusiasm for scholarly research in Pseudo-Philo, Moses typology, or the book of Enoch. They don't mention her passion for helping students discover themselves and the church through encounters with the church around the world. She has modelled being a pilgrim in the best possible way, sensitive to and respectful of the surroundings and the churches which have so much to teach us. She has incorporated both a local and global perspective of the church in her teaching, honed as a missionary in Central African Republic and through her teaching at a seminary in Cameroon during a sabbatical. Nor do these facts capture her willingness to assist the staff and faculty whenever a call for assistance goes out, including two stints as the acting Academic Dean.

And perhaps, most importantly, the data does not reveal Dr. Ruffatto's passion and commitment to students and the lengths she has gone to help them discover the joy of the text and the passion for both proclaiming the gospel and working for justice for all. Nor does the data reveal how much she likes good and hot spicy food from all corners of the world, watching good movies and reading good books. But we know and we give thanks.

From a very selfish perspective, the staff and faculty at LTS and the Saskatoon Theological Union, along with the LTS students past and present, are going to miss Dr Ruffatto when she retires this summer. At the same time, however, we wish her all the best, as she can finally spend more time at home with her family, spend more delightful hours in dusty, enticing libraries doing more research, and in the near future (hopefully!) travelling with her family. Kristine, enjoy the hiking, the wine and food tasting at home and around the world, witnessing God at work, all the while learning as you go. On behalf of all of us, we wish you Godspeed and exciting adventures! Just one question: Can we come with you?!

~ Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen



Congratulations to Dr. Ruffatto on her retirement. I was always impressed with Dr. Ruffatto's gentle, thoughtful, scholarly, and pastoral presence. She always offered a grace filled word and had a heart of hospitality. My graduating class enjoyed a delightful meal hosted by her in my final year of seminary. I also remember she came to the Alberta Synod's Study conference as our keynote speaker where she lead us on a thought provoking exposition of the Psalms, among other topics. I also enjoyed working with her when we were on the ELCIC's Faith, Order, and Doctrine committee together. I am so grateful for her ministry among us and I want to send her all blessings and good wishes as she retires from her distinguished academic service at LTS.

~ Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry

Rev. Dr. Kristine Ruffatto lives what she teaches. If there's any one thing I could share about her, that would be it. She is not only an accomplished scholar and academic, but she is a pastor with a tender heart for people and for God. Her spiritual intimacy and her praxis inform her research and her teaching, even as her research informs her teaching and her life. In a world that desperately needs faith to be put into action, Kristine models such faith with integrity and love.

Personally, Kristine helped me survive seminary. The process of seminary is not strictly an academic exercise. It demands a complete life overhaul that requires each seminarian to not only balance course work, but all the personal challenges that inevitably arise at the same time. Kristine pushed me to do my best scholarship at all times, no doubt. When it was less than my best, there were always more chances to try again. For Kristine, the lessons came when we could dig into theology and biblical studies, and not when we had the right answers immediately the first time.

When personal struggles rose up and threatened to derail me, Kristine was rock solid. She helped me create alternative plans when they were needed, gave me extensions if extensions could be helpful, and listened when I simply needed someone to listen. We got to know one another a little bit over dinners, chats about books, travelling (especially through Wales), social justice and, of course, theology. We were even able to work together, along with Professor Gordon Jensen, on ways to help LTS decolonize our curriculum.

When I began to plunge into the world of thesis writing with all the grace of a bull in a china shop, Kristine helped me frame my thoughts, distill my ideas, and begin to craft a project that meant a lot to me to write. She supported my endeavour, offered fair and wise critique, let me blow off steam, and celebrated with me through each step of the writing and presentation process. When someone such as myself chooses to write about being a queer person and the need for inclusive theological spaces for LGBTQ2SIA+ people, but has not had a positive history within Christendom for being queer, you can imagine the anxiety that came along with such a thesis project. Yet Kristine created a safe space. From the beginning, I knew I was in that safe space, and that made all the difference going forward.

LTS will not be the same without Kristine. Her steady spirit that guided us all through the dimmest of days was always a balm for students. I'm grateful to have had her as a professor, but also to have gotten to know her as a friend. May God bless her and keep her as she steps into this next phase of her brilliant life. Until we meet again, my friend!

