



LTS TODAY

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

OUR NEW WORLD *Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President*



The transformation continues. We are taking up the challenge of changing world and church; we rejoice in the many people who are choosing to be challenged with us.

As **Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein** discusses “Our Classroom is

Western Canada,” LTS’s academic plan, she points to our new Common Faculty arrangement with our STU partner schools. In this issue, we begin to introduce the faculty with whom we are privileged to share our life and work. **Dr. Lynn Caldwell**, STU Academic Dean, and **Dr. Becca Whitla**, Dr. Lydia E. Gruchy Chair in Pastoral Theology, will tell you something about our work together and about themselves.

The STU has begun a Common Council (CCSTU). The CCSTU enables our three boards to connect on an ongoing basis; rather than replacing them, it serves as a shared table to foster our common lives. Members include the three heads of schools, plus two people named by each school. Our two members, **Bp. Jason Zinko** and **Audrey Roadhouse**, tell us about their hopes for the CCSTU and our 3-school partnership.

The ELCIC is changing. In our last issue, we heard from a candidate preparing to become a deacon. This time, **Heather Parrott-Howdle**, a candidate in the alternative route for admission to the roster of pastors – which we call Alternate Route to Ordination (ARO) – describes her sense of call and her LTS theological education and formation. We are excited to see synods embracing this path; we hope to see more people in this program in the future.

This year, our cross-cultural trip visited Prince Rupert and Haida Gwaii. **Wanda Walter** provides some reflections

on the power of the experience, and **Andrea Wilhelm** addresses some issues around visiting and understanding Haida Gwaii. Thank you to everyone who assisted our trip.

As I write, we are in the midst of a search for a **Grace Professor of Leadership**. This will be the first use of our Grace Fund for Faculty. Hugh Williams brings us good news about your generosity in support of the fund. The Leadership role is a new one for seminaries. Although a couple of schools in the US are moving into this area, LTS appears to be only Canadian school with such a professor.

This professorship reflects our priorities as we move forward in our transformation: 1. training leaders for a changing church in a changing world, and 2. bringing the voice of our Lutheran heritage to people of all faiths and no faith.

Christian leadership is taking on new forms, in the ELCIC and elsewhere, as we respond to shrinking congregations and growing relationships with people in other denominations and religions. Skills have been developed in leadership studies; if they meet our priorities, many of these can serve our students well.

Luther’s emphasis on the priority of God’s action is immensely important as we participate in today’s church and world. Even as skills in leadership and management participate in God’s work of transforming the world, all leaders – perhaps especially those called to new and innovative ministry – are in danger of becoming focused on our own action, with deleterious consequences. So, we bring the twin focuses: leadership and Lutheranism.

We thank God for your partnership with us in this time of challenge and change. Please continue in your support of us. And, if you can, please continue to give generously to the Grace Fund for Faculty.



LIVING “OUR CLASSROOM IS WESTERN CANADA”

Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein, William Hordern Professor of Theology, and Dean of Studies

“The future is ecumenical, and ecumenical means two things. It means having a tradition, but it means not being limited by your tradition.” These are the words of Brian McLaren, written in 2010, and they are important as LTS moves into a closer working relationship with the Saskatoon Theological Union. As each school becomes more intentional about teaching each other’s students and cultivating an ecumenical atmosphere, we want to think about why it is that we are doing so. From a theological perspective, we know that no denomination has the complete picture of God but together we can get a more holistic understanding. We also know that God has given different gifts to each denomination for the good of the whole body, and that we all benefit when we freely share these gifts with one another. Through ecumenical encounters, we come to learn about our own traditions as we explain them to others, coming to appreciate the unique blessings we have.

As part of this intentional ecumenical engagement, the faculties of the three schools are beginning to work together as a Common Faculty of the STU. Together we are shaping a new curriculum, working out how we might be able to teach courses together, and thinking about how we might honour the denominational commitments

of students from each school. LTS students are already experiencing this as they take Hebrew Scriptures and liturgy courses with St. Andrews and New Testament and spiritual direction courses with Emmanuel & St. Chad professors. The other schools’ students are encountering this in their theology courses with LTS professors.

As a Common Faculty, professors are able to share with one another the best ways to support each school’s students, to walk alongside each other in the joys and challenges of teaching, and to dream together about what forming church leaders for today and tomorrow should look like. In addition, we as faculty are engaging in the same ecumenical journey as the students – learning more about our own traditions as we teach them anew to students for whom it is different, and coming to appreciate the unique gifts and blessings of each denomination for the good of the whole body of Christ.

Thirteen years ago, McLaren wrote that the future is ecumenical, and we have reached that future now. Christ’s church today is ecumenical, an *oikonomia* with many rooms (John 14:2). It has always been that way, but thanks be to God that LTS is intentionally embracing and living into that through its work with the STU Common Faculty.

AROS TAKE FLIGHT

Tomorrow’s ELCIC will be built around multiple kinds of leadership, reached by a variety of training paths. The alternative route to ordination (ARO, in LTS-speak) is already in the ELCIC Candidacy Manual, where the national guidelines for preparing pastors and deacons are kept (the category is officially called “Alternative Route for Admission to the Roster of Pastors of the ELCIC” but ARFARP is an awkward acronym that doesn’t fit our computers!). Across the Western synods, this approach is coming into use.

The ARO is “a special program designed to meet the church’s need to provide pastoral leadership in specific

communities which face difficulty in securing Word and Sacrament ministry through the church’s regular call process” (Manual, B-7,1). Synods take this approach when they have places that need pastoral leadership and: 1) have appropriate local leaders who are at least 40 years of age and bring substantial church experience, and 2) can’t bring in pastors by the usual route. Candidates undertake at least one year of seminary education, along with appropriate practical training and completion of the ordination examination.

Because they serve in places where they are needed, AROs can be a helpful support to other pastors and make an important contribution to the church. We’re excited to see synods approaching us to train AROs and hope to see more in coming years!

A HOME-MADE PASTOR: THE ALTERNATE ROUTE TO ORDINATION

Heather Parrott-Howdle

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” and I said, “Here I am; send me!” (Isaiah 6:8)

This calling came at a time when I had just retired from my physiotherapy career of 38 years. I loved that vocation of helping people understand their physical health and how to keep active. Now, I will be helping people in a different way: spiritually. Our pastor and deacon had just retired and I was doing my part of the pulpit supply. The general call process was not fruitful for many reasons—primarily because there were not enough pastors graduating and rural areas always seem harder to fill.

Bishop Jason Zinko phoned me one day and asked me to reflect on a new calling, for my own church: the call to ordained ministry by the Alternative Route. This route simply means that my previous experience, coupled with my coursework at LTS, would be taken into consideration when designing the two years of courses. This learning framework ensures that I have the tools to carry out the ministry that I am being called into at my home church, Erickson Lutheran Church, in the MNO Synod. As I embarked on this pathway, I was even given the nickname ‘Home-made Pastor’ by some of my parishioners!

This has been an exciting time to be making such a vocational shift in my life, as our children are all grown up and have vocations of their own. And Sue, my life partner of 31 years, has given me her full support as well. I could not be on this journey without her help, God’s help, and the support of my church, family, and friends.

This is an exciting time to be at the LTS, doing coursework primarily online, with some on-site classes as well, through

an approach to education that LTS calls, “Our Classroom is Western Canada”. This means that our professors are teaching from varied places, from Manitoba to B.C., and it also means that some of our classes are in the ‘field’; i.e. in the local context that we are learning about.

So, I have been in Intercultural Indigenous Awareness classes in Saskatchewan, at Waterhen First Nation, Wanuskewin, at Ancient Echoes in Red Deer, and in Bentley for the ‘Leadership in the Church’ course. I will also be visiting the National ELCIC office and CLWR offices in Winnipeg, as well as ‘The Urban’ (Lutheran Urban Ministry, in the heart of downtown Winnipeg) and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in the second half of this course.

This contextual learning is helping us see the gospel through different lenses than our own, and broadens our understanding of how BIPOC, queer, womanist, or differently abled groups or people experience the theology of the cross. It also

helps us to articulate the good news in a more inclusive language.

I am a 64-year-old woman, a white settler, and in a same gender marriage who has been accepted and respected by my church community. My plans are to continue to be committed to this calling to serve our church and community giving praise to God—Creator, Saviour and Sanctifier for all—as my belief is that we are never too old to learn.

In closing, I also wish to thank LTS for working with the other two colleges of St. Andrew’s and Emmanuel & St. Chad. Their ministry and teaching have enriched me, and are equipping me to be a lead-follower, as Christ is the leader. Christ is the Light that shines for us all.





THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE STU: SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC DEAN

Dr. Lynn Caldwell

There are people in my life who tease me about how often they come across me with a book called *The Beautiful Risk of Education*¹ in my hands. The title itself says a lot about education; the book of course says even more. At this point in the life of the Saskatoon Theological Union (STU) and the three Colleges that comprise it, I've been turning to that book often for what it has to say about the purpose of what we do together.

The three colleges of the STU have a long relationship collaborating in contextual theological education. We have now formed an STU Common Faculty to design and offer programs. Redesigning programs for MDiv and MTS students is a gigantic task. We are creating a structure that we hope will be responsive and adaptable in ways that courses and other educational activities are accessed and engaged. The college and their faculty are continuing to steward the academic life of their own institutions as we work together in this new way.

We draw from existing programs and traditions belonging to the colleges and the professors (who bring different areas of specialization, and experience from community engagement, scholarship, and teaching across broader networks of education and church).

We draw from long experience with, and consistent anticipation of, generations, geographies, and faith traditions of theology students and all that they bring and seek in the tasks of study and in the experiences of educational community.

We draw from diverse lives of faith and different teachings within our studies and communities of faith.

We respond to a world and anticipate futures that we cannot know with any certainty.

At the heart of recognizing education as the risk it is, is recognizing education as a risk. It does not arise from, or

promise, certainties. In this is a reminder and affirmation that co-creating a program for theological studies is, as always, theological as well as educational work.

The MDiv program will have options--for student choice and discernment, for denominational requirements, for college options, and for community life. Options include things such as whether an MDiv student completes an internship as part of their program of study (as required by LTS and Emmanuel & St. Chad) or completes such requirements after graduation (as is currently the case for United Church of Canada students through St. Andrew's). There will be other kinds of options available to students in terms of remote or in-person learning. Some of this will happen at the level of courses, with some courses offered in one format or another or required of students in one college or another. Some options will reside in the choices that students will be able to make as they plan their programs.

The program we are designing is new. The risk of education is not. Education, as education, involves relationships, creativity, and faith.

Dr. Lynn Caldwell, Professor of Theological Ethics and Academic Dean of the STU, is an alumna of St. Andrew's College (MDiv, 1995); her theological studies led to work as an educator with an ecumenical anti-racist education project called AYAPSA (Alberta Youth Animation Project on Southern Africa) and then with the Saskatchewan Conference program staff team of the United Church. In 2000, she returned to graduate studies: an MA and a PhD in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Since the fall of 2008 she has been back in Saskatoon with St. Andrew's College and with the University of Saskatchewan.

¹ The book is by Gert J. J. Biesta, and available through the STU Library!



A VIBRANT, ECUMENICAL FUTURE

Dr. Becca Whitla

Warm greetings to the LTS community! I teach liturgy, preaching, Christian education, and practical theology for St. Andrew's and the Saskatoon Theological Union (STU). Originally from Toronto, I worked for many years leading church and community music in downtown Toronto at the Anglican Church of the Holy Trinity, with a big community women's choir called Echo, and as a leadership animator with the trade union movement through singing. One foot in the world and one in the church, I felt a call to deepen my engagement through further stories. As a result, I pursued a Master of Sacred Music Degree and then a PhD in Liturgy from Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto. One thing led to another and I find myself in my fourth year here in sunny, friendly—and often quite chilly—Saskatoon. Quite loving it here, I am a secret ambassador for the Paris of the Prairies. My children Emma (24) and David (17) and nephew Kyle (17) have all spent time here.

The theme of this newsletter, "The Emerging Church," resonates deeply with my own scholarship which focuses on liberating liturgy and includes explorations of what it means to decolonize our worship. My book *Liberation, (De)Coloniality and Liturgical Practices: Flipping the Song Bird* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2020), wrestles with these issues, especially with respect to singing. The theme is top of mind for the common faculty of the Saskatoon Theological Union too, as we seek to discern how to guide, support, and inspire tomorrow's church leaders. Building on our tradition of sharing theological education at the STU, our three schools have committed to a fully collaborative curriculum for our students. In this shared endeavour, I offer chapel leadership and classes in which all our

students learn about Christian practices and traditions across our denominations. You are all invited to join us at chapel when you can!

So how do we do all that? First, we learn about history and culture in what we're studying. Second, we pay attention to present day realities, a focus lived out in the STU's ongoing commitment to contextual education. From the grassroots, in our diverse contexts—from rural to urban, from mono-cultural to multi-cultural, from small to large—we bring together the gifts of our denominational inheritances. We're also mindful of the brokenness of our world due to colonialism, the pandemic, poverty, war, the climate crisis, racism, sexism, homo/transphobia, etc. These are our contexts, and the realities of our students and their communities. So, with a commitment to praxis—reflection on our lived realities, with a view towards transformation—the STU common faculty is forging a program to equip students for meeting the needs of the church and our communities into the future, for the church that is emerging. Third, we aim to build robust pathways for the future. We do not face these challenges alone, of course. We are guided and inspired by Jesus of Nazareth who embodied a message of love, justice, and inclusion in the face of violence, persecution, and death. We also have each other. I am inspired and filled with hope in the shared task of what we are building at the STU. From our distinct denominational perspectives, we can model a vibrant, ecumenical future for all our churches—one that celebrates our distinctness, but recognizes that our future is better together.

Dr. Becca Whitla is the professor of practical ministry and the Dr. Lydia E. Gruchy Chair in Pastoral Theology at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan where she teaches worship and liturgy, preaching, and religious education. Her book *Liberation, (De)Coloniality, and Liturgical Practices: Flipping the Song Bird* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2020) examines ways to liberate and decolonize liturgical practices, especially community singing.

THE STU COMMON FACULTY: A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

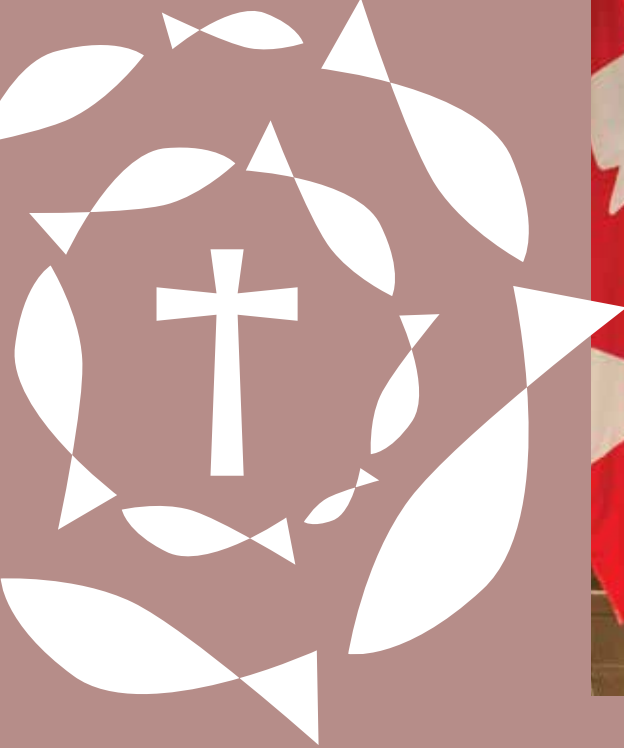
The STU Common Faculty continues to move forward on developing a shared curriculum, which will debut in the 2023-24 academic year. Coming up quickly!

This is truly joyful work, even as it carries challenges. As faculty, we are richer for being at a larger table, where we engage with a variety of viewpoints. Classes next year will reflect this, with a stronger ecumenical presence. Some courses will benefit from the involvement of more than one instructor, so that we can bring multiple disciplines and different denominational perspectives into the same classroom. The larger faculty enables us to teach in a variety of modes, so we will bring our students (which could include you – perhaps at the low, low auditing price of \$75!) more online and local in-person options.

As we move forward with the Common Faculty, you will start to see more of them in the pages of our newsletter. We invite you, as members of the LTS community, to see them as yours also, and take them to heart as you have taken LTS professors to heart.

In this edition, you are hearing from Dr. Lynn Caldwell and Dr. Becca Whitla, two professors within the STU, who contribute greatly to our shared life and work.

~Rev. Dr. William Harrison, Chair,
STU Common Faculty



Congratulations to President Bill Harrison upon being selected to receive a Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, for services to education.

This medal was created to celebrate the 70th anniversary year of HM Queen Elizabeth II's Accession to the Throne. It is a tangible way for the province of Saskatchewan to honour Her Majesty for her service to Canada.

Queen Elizabeth II approved the design of the medal in May 2022. Permission has been sought from the Office of the Governor General of Canada to have this medal

included in the Order of Precedence with the other commemorative medals of the Canadian Honours System. Those receiving the medal have made a significant contribution to Canada, Saskatchewan, or a particular region or community.

"I am honoured and encouraged to receive this recognition," said President Harrison, "and I believe that it reflects the commitment that Lutheran Theological Seminary and Saskatoon Theological Union communities bring to transformational education in Saskatchewan and across the West and North."

THE STU HAS A COMMON COUNCIL!

The Saskatoon Theological Union (STU) continues to develop in new ways, enriching the work of all the partners: LTS, College of Emmanuel & St. Chad (ESC – Anglican), and St. Andrew's (SAC – United). The most recent development is the creation of a Common Council (CCSTU), to help us find new ways to cooperate. The process of integration is moving forward.

The CCSTU accomplishes several things:

1. It functions like a committee of the three boards, examining ideas and preparing materials for presentation to the boards, so that conversation and basic work occur before items reach board agendas.
2. It works with the heads of colleges, helping them to consider possibilities and accomplish shared tasks.
3. It supports the work of the Common Faculty, and especially the Chair.

The CCSTU includes the three heads of colleges, plus two representatives from each college; the STU Academic Dean also attends as a non-voting participant. LTS's two members are Audrey Roadhouse and Bp. Jason Zinko. Audrey is a member of BC Synod's Committee on Theological Education and Leadership, and is a former Deputy Minister of Education in Saskatchewan. Bp. Zinko serves Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Synod and is a member of the LTS Board of Governors.

We're doing a lot of imagining, right now, as the partnership grows into a shared present and future. Our churches work together now and our ecumenical reality will grow, especially in rural areas where we cannot support multiple congregations. The STU is becoming both symbol and instance of what is possible. The Common Council is a pivotal part of envisioning our new way of serving.

Together, we are stronger.



RADICAL UPHEAVAL: A GOOD PLACE TO BE

*Jason Zinko, Bishop of Manitoba
and Northwestern Ontario*

Phyllis Tickle’s book *The Great Emergence* was at the forefront of Emerging Church thought in the first decade of this century. In it, she pointed to the historical precedent of radical upheaval and change in the church, and argued that the Christian church is in, or will very soon begin, another radical shift. In her estimation, the emerging church will be one defined as global, relational, non-hierarchical, paradoxical, and mystical.

You may argue that a deepening partnership with colleges and seminaries with whom we already work is not exactly a ‘radical upheaval.’ But I do believe that something very important is unfolding for the Saskatoon Theological Union, and for our Church more broadly.

All three colleges and seminaries come from traditions with long histories. We have well-developed and well-defined ways in which we operate. We are used to doing

things the way they have always been done, at least in our denominations. To veer from that, at an institutional level, is no small feat.

And yet, LTS is poised to be part of a growing partnership that will maintain our Lutheran identity while shifting many of the ways in which we have operated for decades. We have an opportunity to give and receive support from our partner colleges. Through a distributed model, we can interact with our students anywhere and accommodate students, professors, and instructors for whom a move to Saskatoon is difficult. We can work more closely with other denominations – something that many of our graduates need to do after graduation anyway.

Perhaps most exciting to me about the developments with the STU are the ways in which we can more strongly live out our mission – *to nurture and challenge all people for Christ-centered leadership and witness for God’s mission in the world*. Our partnerships allow us to do that more effectively so that we will continue to have well-trained leaders serving our church and helping others to grow in faith.

This puts LTS in a good place to follow Phyllis Tickle’s direction for the church. It will help us to be global, relational, non-hierarchical, paradoxical, and mystical, even as we remain LTS.



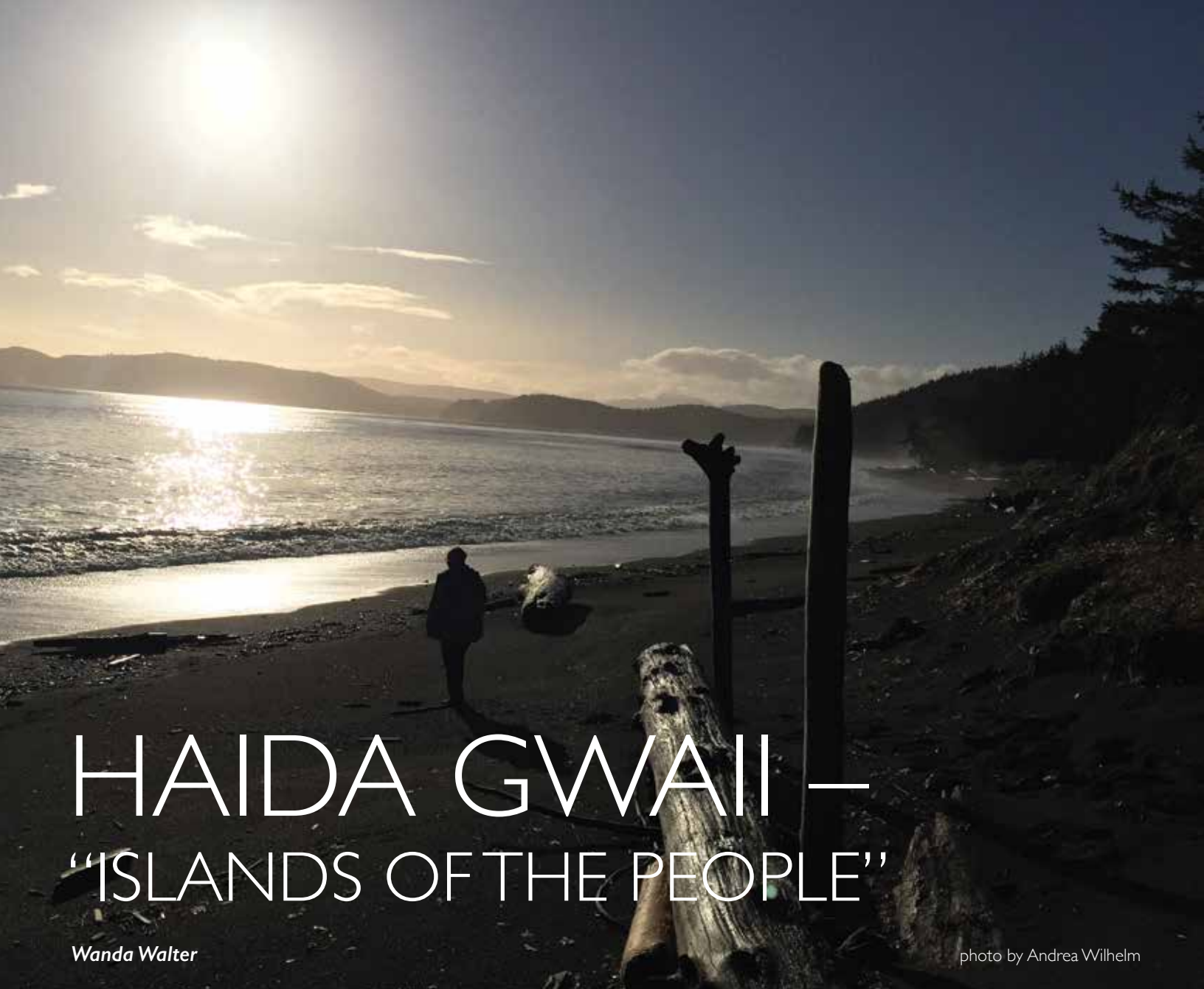
A VISION FOR THE EMERGING CHURCH

Audrey Roadhouse

I became a part of the Common Council of the Saskatoon Theological Union (CCSTU) at the request of Dr. Bill Harrison, whom I met at a British Columbia (BC) Candidacy Committee for Theological Education and Leadership (CTEL) meeting in November 2022. My background is educational leadership with my last full-time position as the Deputy Minister of Education for Saskatchewan. Currently, I am an associate faculty member in the Masters of Education Leadership and Management (MAELM) program for Royal Roads University. My husband Trevor and I travel between a home in Regina, SK and a condo in Burnaby, BC, where we are members of Grace Lutheran Church. Our Pastor, Rev. Nathan Fong, is a Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) graduate and former board member.

My hope for the CCSTU is that we will consistently use the Saskatoon Theological Union (STU) covenant commitments as our guide. Commitments such as honouring identity, respecting differences, openness to innovation, building a shared life, and establishing important forms of consultation are important for our success. These commitments speak to a wonderful vision for “The Emerging Church”. Learning and building from the work that has begun on a unified Faculty structure, (“Three Colleges, One Faculty”) the STU provides us a challenging and rare opportunity to participate in God’s transformative work.

The CCSTU is committed to supporting the STU through the many steps it will take to fulfill God’s vision. The steps are diverse and complex, and include legal, technical, procedural and sensitive elements. Well planned meetings, careful research, thorough follow-up, and consistent communication and work with our governing bodies are essential elements to be successful.



HAIDA GWAII — “ISLANDS OF THE PEOPLE”

Wanda Walter

photo by Andrea Wilhelm

Haida Gwaii opened the door for me to learn about and experience a part of Haida cultures and peoples. One of the highlights of the trip was our time at the Haida Gwaii Museum in Skidegate, which contains a wealth of Haida art, stories, and history. We were fortunate to have a Haida curator and archeologist give us a tour of the museum, sharing with us his abundant knowledge. One piece of art that I found striking was a painting created by Haida high school students that powerfully and hauntingly portrayed what residential schools mean to them.

Another experience that stands out for me was our visit with the Haida artist Chris White, who gave us a tour of his studio and workshop while discussing his art and culture. The eye-catching shapes, contours and intricacies of the masks and poles, as well as their vivid colours, were stunning to behold. Our time with Rev. Lily Bell, a priest

with the Anglican Church in Old Massett, was another high point of the trip. We began our time together in the sanctuary, where we are able to see the wooden altar and pulpit—both engraved with beautiful Haida art. During the remainder of the visit, we had the privilege of talking with Lily—learning and sharing stories.

The landscape, ocean, and vegetation of Haida Gwaii is beautiful and majestic – especially for a person who has lived on the prairies all of their life! The raw power of the ocean that smooths and carves rock; the BC toothpicks (trees) that are so large that it takes multiple people to encircle the trunks with their arms; the lush ferns that line the forest floor and the moss that hung on trees—were all sights to behold, especially in the middle of winter!

It was a gift to have this experience - thanks be to God!

REFLECTION ON THE HAIDA GWAII STUDY TRIP, JANUARY 2023

Andrea Wilhelm

Haida Gwaii is beautiful, gorgeous even. The trees, beaches and the contours of hills, then mountains, all often shrouded in mist, inspire wonder and a sense of supernatural, divine presence. That presence has been felt and expressed in stories, ritual, and art by the Haida for millennia. Their art and stories are everywhere, and with that a keen awareness that this place is *Haida Gwaii*, 'The Islands of the Haida (People)' or more traditionally, *Xhaaydla Gwaayaay*, 'The islands on the Boundary between Worlds.'¹

It was a wonderful privilege to get to know this place. We were inspired to do so responsibly, by following the Haida ways of being:²

- *Yahguudang/Yahgudáng* – Respect: "Respect for each other and all living beings is rooted in our culture. We take only what we need, we give thanks, and we acknowledge those who behave accordingly."
- *Ad Kyanag Tlaagang/Ahl Kyáanáng Tlágang* – To Ask First: "We accept that not all areas and events are open to everyone. We ask permission before taking pictures of people and places, and follow all official orientations and guidelines."
- *Tli Yahda* – Make It Right: "We accept responsibility when we do wrong, we are all humans and make mistakes. We are mindful of our environmental

footprint and impacts on the earth, air and water. We strive to leave everywhere we visit cleaner than when we arrived."

- *Gina 'Waadluxan Gud Ad Kwaagid/Ginn 'Wáadluwan Gud .Ahl Kwáagidang* – Everything Depends on Everything Else: "We take only what is given and leave behind rocks, feathers, sand, and artifacts. We respect Haida Gwaii's bounty, only taking what we need to feed ourselves today. We support local businesses and give back when we can."

These ways of being resonate for me with the teachings of Jesus and "the law and the prophets." Would that they inspire us wherever we are on Turtle Island.

References and recommended reading:

1: Robert Bringhurst, *A Story as Sharp as a Knife: The Classical Haida Mythtellers and Their World*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011, p. 20.

2: From <https://haidagwaiipledge.ca/> (scroll down). The two versions of the Haida expressions (separated by a slash) are the Masset and Skidegate dialects of the language.

Teri-Lynn Williams-Davidson/Gid7ahl-Gudslaaay Lalaxaaygans, *Out of Concealment: Female Supernatural Beings of Haida Gwaii*. Victoria: Heritage.



photo by Andrea Wilhelm



CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE: A TRIP TO HAIDA GWAI

Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President

We went to Haida Gwaii!

A cross-cultural experience has been an important part of the MDiv degree (the one most pastors have) for a long time at LTS. Commonly, this has been an international trip; however, we have recently placed more emphasis on including Canadian locations and, of course, Covid has complicated travel to many places in the last couple of years.

This year, Andrea Wilhelm, Wanda Walter, and I went to Haida Gwaii. Haida Gwaii, which some of you may know as the “Queen Charlotte Islands” is off Canada’s West Coast. To get there, we (well, some of us – Andrea had travel challenges and joined us later.) flew to Prince Rupert, where we stayed for two days, visited the town and area, and talked ministry with Pr. Diana Edis (who generously took us under her wing and showed us around – thanks, Diana!) and the Very Reverend Paul Williams, Rector of the Anglican Cathedral and Dean of the Diocese of Caledonia.

We took the ferry to Haida Gwaii, a gentle trip this time – though it isn’t always. We stayed in Daajing Giids, previously known as Queen Charlotte City. Our main hosts on the islands were Pr. Jim Whaley and Deacon Judy Whaley. Jim, along with Pr. Benedicte Hansen, enabled us to engage with Haida culture in the area. On Sunday, we visited Skidegate United Church, where Pr. Hansen is serving.

On Monday, we went up-island to Massett, stopping in Port Clements along the way. In Old Massett, the predominantly Haida community in the area, Christian White (noted Haida carver) showed us poles, masks, and other works, and helped us to think about Haida art and life. We sat with the Rev. Lily Bell, Anglican priest in Old Massett, as she talked about her work in the community.

On Thursday, we headed back down to Skidegate, a largely settler community, where we visited with the Lutheran congregation served by Jim and Judy. They honoured us with a potluck. Andrea and Wanda responded by taking leadership in the Sunday morning worship service, alongside Pr. Jim.

Everywhere, we were welcomed generously. Everywhere, we met lovely people. Everywhere, we found a beautiful world.

Some insights:

Haida Gwaii is isolated. That brings a kind of peace and sense of community that I’ve seldom encountered elsewhere, in experiences all over North America and beyond. People pull together. Life is always uncertain and everyone knows that, so people “roll with it” and go out of their way to care for each other. They certainly went out of their way for us. (Special shout-outs to Jim and Judy, Benedicte, and Carol Wagner at Budget Rentals).



Isolation doesn't come cheaply. Food can be expensive and choice limited, as you might guess. Housing is more expensive to create and maintain than we tend to expect. Shipping materials and machinery to the islands is challenging and pricey. Moreover, Haida Gwaii has demanding weather patterns, with wind and rain that wear structures surprisingly swiftly.

Very few people go to church. The Lutheran, United, and Anglican parishes in Haida Gwaii that we visited are all kept alive by the work of dedicated clergy and the support of a handful of people. There, the shrinking church is very visible.

Haida culture is re-emerging. The Haida Museum and Cultural Centre in Skidegate keeps masks and other cultural items, but not simply as "dead" items. Instead, the pieces are lent out, as needed for ceremonies. Items taken by settlers from around the world are being returned, kept, and even used. Chris White and other carvers are producing magnificent poles that connect traditional Haida stories and meanings with the contemporary world. Though it is a long, slow process, this recovery seems to be bringing new health and a sense of possibility to struggling Haida communities.

The prologue to the trip is a course that I taught on "Globalization and Ethics," which addresses ethical reasoning skills and brings them to concrete religious, economic, cultural, and political issues created by globalization. In the spirit of that course, I note that the re-emergence of Haida culture is a source of economic regeneration for the community. Haida art is spectacular. It has a market around the world, reflecting Haida self-respect and bringing needed income.

Final note:

As we enter into a new curriculum and work with limited resources, in a world where travel impacts must be considered, we aren't sure exactly what form our cross-cultural programme will take in years to come. We will keep you posted. Meanwhile, I rejoice that I've been able to visit Haida Gwaii!

* Unless otherwise noted, all photos in this section are of Prince Rupert and environs, or Haida Gwaii, courtesy of William Harrison.





FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Hugh Williams, Director of Communications and Development

Thank you!

I wish to extend the most enthusiastic thanks possible to this community for your extraordinary response to the Advent Appeal.

Your incredible generosity meant that the seminary received \$80,710 from 142 gifts.

Significant numbers of those gifts were directed towards our Grace Fund for Faculty, with many in honour of Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen, upon his retirement. Professor Jensen's legacy—both on the lives of his many students and in the larger firmament of the ELCIC—is simply incalculable.

Grace Fund for Faculty

As President Harrison has indicated in his article, we are well on the way to achieving our goal of raising \$750,000 for the Grace Fund by the end of 2025. We thank you for your belief in this fund; we feel blessed to have such support.

In the summer edition of *LTS Today*, we will celebrate our graduates—as we always do—and will also welcome our new Grace Professor of Leadership. The interview process for this new position is set to conclude at the same time as this edition of the magazine goes to press; so, we look forward to introducing you to our new faculty member very soon. In the meantime, you might wish to visit our website—where that news will be shared when the hire is official.

LTS website: gifts and photos

Speaking of our website, please consider these two notes.

Gifts

The first website note is that I have noted an increase in direct online giving to LTS. If you wish to give online to the seminary, the ideal way is through a direct e-transfer to our Finance email. And it's very straightforward: once you have determined the gift amount, you choose our name — **Lutheran Theological Seminary** — and

then the email address to which the transfer is directed: Finance.LTS@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca

While several of our donors give through platforms such as CanadaHelps—and of course, we appreciate this greatly!—the one drawback to this method is that CanadaHelps removes a small percentage of the gift to cover their own administration fees.

One further point: if you do make an e-transfer to LTS, please remember to include your address, as well as the fund to which you wish to see the gift directed. If we have your address on file, then this is unnecessary. However, if you are a new donor, we will most certainly require your address to generate a tax receipt.

Photos

The second website note is that it is my hope to eventually dedicate a unique website page to archival photographs that tell the history of our seminary.

When we moved from Seminary Crescent to our current—and much smaller—space, we retained our class photos over the decades, along with many other historical photos, but we lost the physical space to display them. It would make sense to digitize these photos, which we hope to do eventually.

Our autumn 2022 edition of *LTS Today* shared some of the stories associated with the former Luther Seminary building. I received enthusiastic feedback about this from many people, and note how important it is to celebrate our heritage.

I would therefore welcome photos depicting your time at the seminary, with the hope that we can eventually create several pages of 'Life at LTS over the years.' If you would like to contribute to this project, please email me: development.lts@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca.

Thanks be to God.



LUTHERAN
theological seminary
SASKATOON

1121 College Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W3
phone: (639) 398-8555

email: development.lts@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca
web: www.lutherantheological.ca
Facebook at www.facebook.com/LTSSaskatoon/