



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.

LEADERSHIP AND WITNESS *Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President*



Blessings on all STU graduates, and on those from LTS: Wanda Walter, Rob Goertz, Tewodros Gebrehiwot, Denise Pawliuk, and Heather Parrott-Howdle.

I have two joyous announcements, one new and one reminder.

Today's news: LTS announces the appointment of Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero (Dr. KSG) as our first ever Grace Professor of Leadership, supported in part by the Grace Fund for Faculty. A tenure-track chair in leadership is most unusual in today's seminary. We rejoice in Dr. KSG's willingness to join our Common Faculty.

The reminder: In January, LTS announced the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein (Dr. Kayko) as our William Hordern Professor of Theology.

Dr. KSG and Dr. Kayko are gifts to LTS and the STU.

We begin our reflections with LTS's mission statement, focusing our commitments: "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."

The church faces challenges: fewer members and resources, aging membership sustaining small congregations, buildings that we don't need and aren't sure how to use, difficulty in discerning mission in the maelstrom. At the same time, the world faces challenges: wars and rumours of wars, climate change, environmental destruction, oppression in many forms. We call our students, our church community, and the whole world to engage with these challenges, witnessing to the Good News of God's transforming love.

We respond by fostering understanding and skills for leadership in church and world. The Grace Professor of Leadership will help us to think about leadership in a transforming church, and to provide students with practical skills and tools – all directed to enhancing the capabilities of lay leaders, deacons, and pastors. Dr. KSG brings an impressive range of teaching experience and

publication in a variety of areas, including leadership, digital education and ministry, and liturgy. He edited *Church After the Corona Pandemic: Consequences for Worship and Theology*.

LTS responds to contemporary challenges by focusing on the Christian message and its deep meanings for the contemporary world. For Dr. Kayko, this is core vocation. She brings an impressive range of public work, including a book, *Dual Citizenship: Two-Natures Christologies and the Jewish Jesus*, and papers on challenging topics such as: the Holy Spirit in the online Body of Christ, medical assistance in dying, and process in clergy sexual abuse claims. Dr. Kayko is helping to pioneer our effort to offer classes in places across Western Canada.

We bring these gifts to our partnership with The College of Emmanuel & St. Chad and St. Andrew's College. STU's mission statement: "The Saskatoon Theological Union (STU) is committed to participating in God's transformative work in the world, sharing the good news of God's love. Inspired by the Anglican, Lutheran, and United church heritages that we sustain, we prepare leaders to serve in lay, ordained, scholarly, and teaching roles in Northern, Western, and Pacific Canada and beyond."

LTS and STU: sharing the Good News of God's love and preparing leaders. Coming together, reflecting God's Good News.

We have moved to a new level of cooperation, creating a Common Faculty with integrated faculty operations for academic activities. We are creating a Shared Curriculum – common degree programs for Master of Theological Studies and Master of Divinity degrees, like our common Doctor of Ministry degree. Our students will be in shared classrooms for all but specifically denominational courses. We have a Common Council, which functions as something like a committee of the three boards, accomplishing tasks assigned by the boards, in concert with the heads of colleges. We are moving toward incorporation, so that we will have a legal structure to employ shared staff.

Coming together, we learn more deeply, teach more richly, and witness more strongly. Coming together, we live out the message of Convocation. "Convocation" means "coming together."



OUR GRADUATES CLASS OF 2023



Wanda Lee Walter – Master of Divinity

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind... You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”
(Matthew 22:37-39)

It is with deep gratitude that I thank our God, who is love, for calling me, accompanying me and empowering me on this life-transforming journey. I have experienced God’s support, encouragement, love and grace in and through the many people who have walked with me on this journey: faculty, support staff, classmates, my internship site, my home congregation, SK Synod and the family I stayed with while I was in Saskatoon for class. I felt God’s love most intensely from my friends and especially my husband Trent who gave me a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on, and arms that enveloped and held me up when I could no longer stand. Praise be to God!



Heather Mary Parrott-Howdle – Alternative Route to Ordination Certificate

I am a white settler, queer woman, living on Treaty 2 territory in Manitoba. After working as a physiotherapist for 38 years, I endeavour to serve my community further as a Pastor. I practice proclaiming the gospel through my lens and the theology of the cross. My prayer is to be a lead follower of Christ and provide a non-coercive safe space in the church and community for BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, differently abled, and those in poverty.

Let my heart be good soil for the living Word. Here I am Lord, answering the call to ordained ministry for my home church, to share the good news of your free Grace, and glorify your name through social justice in our communities.

“Will you come and follow me, if I but call your name?” (Hymn 798 ELW). It took most of my lifetime to listen, acknowledge and be open to the Spirit calling me.



Tewodros Shibru Gebrehiwot – Master of Theological Studies

As I reflect on my journey to LTS and my time here, I am reminded of Psalms 37:4, “Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

My desire to study theology was realized through LTS and its generous donors. Despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, I persisted in my studies and was able to attend classes online from thousands of kilometers away. It is God’s providence that brought me and my family safely to Saskatoon in the midst of the pandemic. So, my journey to LTS has been nothing short of a miracle. The challenges made me realize that “everything in life is a miracle”, and I am grateful for the lessons I have learned along the way. Finally, my sincere thanks to the staff and faculty of LTS, as well as to my wife and children for their support and encouragement.



Robert Isaac Goertz – Master of Theological Studies

“God is love, those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them.”
(1 John 4:16)

After thirty-plus years as a tradesman and adult educator, I entered the seminary at age fifty-four, at the urging of my big sister (Thanks, Kathie!). I have been married to Meredith for thirty-five years, and we have four amazing kids (Max, Kate, Ben, Corin & one son-in-law, Denver). I am currently serving as Interim Pastor in Rosebud Alberta (ECCC) as well as a prison chaplain at three jails in Calgary. Studying at LTS has been an unexpected honour. At times I thought my brain would explode. Seminary has taught me to study, think, and write (if not well...better than an orangutan...thanks Grammarly!), and given me an increased appreciation for the ministry and the scriptures. I am looking forward to serving wherever the Good Shepherd leads.



Denise Caroline Maier Pawliuk – Certificate in Diaconal Ministry

“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?”
(Hebrews 13:6b)

I wandered in the wilderness for years—uncertain, worried, and fearful of the next. But God was with me and pointed me towards pursuing my lifelong call to ministry. I thank God for the nudge and LTS for their guidance, support, and academic rigour. During this journey I have been consistently embraced in love and support by my husband Karl and our adult children.

Thank you to the British Columbia Synod, Bishop Kathy, my relator Pastor Ed, First Lutheran Church - Vancouver, Lutheran Church of the Cross - Victoria, Luther Court –Victoria, the Fort Nelson First Nation, and the entire diaconal community of the ELCIC who have all supported my faith formation as a deacon.

Finally, I thank my brother Craig, who taught me about advocacy and the love of God.

DR. KYLE SCHIEFELBEIN-GUERRERO

GRACE PROFESSOR OF LEADERSHIP

Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero starts this fall as the Grace Professor of Leadership and Director of Contextual Education at Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon. “I am honored to be appointed the first professor of leadership at LTS. Theological education has been at a crossroads for over a generation. LTS has committed to living into this challenge through creative thinking, devoted leadership, and strong faculty members to enact God’s reign of justice and peace both inside and outside the classroom. I am excited to be part of this community of scholars and practitioners to forming leaders for the 21st-century church.”

Originally from the farmlands of west-central Minnesota, Kyle grew up in a Lutheran family that regularly attended worship and community activities. His early mentor in the faith was his maternal grandmother, who participated in weekly Bible studies, made quilts and soap for the overseas missionaries, and fried donuts for the annual harvest festival. “As I reflect on my own faith journey, Grandma Nora served as one of my early mentors. In simple ways, she integrated her personal faith with her everyday practice, never in an in-your-face way but through her compassion. Of course, that doesn’t mean she wasn’t also feisty on occasion.”

Kyle was active in his local congregation, and when he went off to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, he became involved in Lutheran Campus Ministry. It was in his first semester of college, planning to major in computer science and chemistry, that Kyle’s call to serve the Church was rekindled, one that had first sparked in high school. After a period of discernment, he changed his majors to history and German studies with hopes of entering seminary. During college, he also started attending worship at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in south Minneapolis, known for its music and historic liturgy. “While growing up I had always asked the question, ‘Why

do we do what we do in worship?’ It was seeing the formal liturgical practices at Mount Olive that made these questions come to the foreground.”

Kyle enrolled in Luther Seminary with the expectation to be ordained a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. “My call to being a theological educator began in seminary, when by coincidence three of my classes – pastoral care, worship, and Lutheran Confessions – were all covering the topic of confession and forgiveness. This experience taught me that our theological disciplines must always be in conversation with one another, forming a symbiotic relationship between faith and practice.”



Being at Luther Seminary exposed Kyle to the sociological study of congregations. He became involved in the Church Innovations Institute, founded by one of his professors, which assists congregations in asking “What’s God up to?” He worked

with the team that developed an online tool to help congregations create ethnographic studies of themselves, and served on reading teams that assisted congregations in deep listening practices.

Since ELCA policy at the time would preclude Kyle from ordination for being openly gay, he shifted gears to continue his theological studies by enrolling in the PhD program at Graduate Theological Union (GTU). It was at GTU that Kyle met Kayko Driedger Hesselin, the current Dean of Studies at LTS, and became colleagues and friends. Kyle pursued his work in liturgical studies and systematic theology, while also serving as a teaching assistant at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS), where he would later teach.

He also became connected with St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in San Francisco, where he coordinated faith formation and worship ministries and served as congregational vice president. “Another of my role models in faith, especially for leadership, is Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale at St. Mark’s. She was firm, fair, and faith-filled, finding a balance between supervision and delegation. She helped me hone my own



congregational leadership skills.”

Under the direction of Professor Michael Aune, Kyle’s dissertation, *Sin and Brokenness, Passage and Purpose: Reforms in Recent American Lutheran Rites for the Pastoral Care of the Sick*, puts forward an interdisciplinary approach to understanding sickness and healing through historical-theological, liturgical, and anthropological lenses. “My dissertation allowed me to answer the question of ‘why?’ in a particular way and to analyze the relationship between faith and practice, one that I had observed since growing up.”

For Kyle, leadership is an organic outgrowth of his work as a liturgical scholar. “Dr. Aune would often speak of ‘liturgical pastoring’ (rather than ‘pastoral liturgy’) to emphasize the worshipful nature of pastoral ministry, in which Christ revealing himself to us through word and sacrament stands at the center of all ministerial leadership.” In addition to teaching worship at PLTS, Kyle also taught Lutheran historical theology, pastoral care, congregational studies, American Lutheran history, and writing; all these disciplines connect with one another in the formation of ministry leaders.

It was during this time that Kyle met Rommel. “On our first date, we broke the most common rule and spent the entire time talking about religion and politics. And since that led to a second date, I would call that a success.” After a year of dating, the two became engaged and were married at San Francisco City Hall. Months later they would have their marriage blessed during the Sunday liturgy at St. Mark’s, complete with the Bach cantata *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* and the incorporation of Filipino wedding traditions.



During his graduate study and after earning his PhD, Kyle took an interest in technology-assisted pedagogy, which hearkened back to his initial undergraduate studies. He earned a Learning Technology Leadership microcredential from Educause and an Instructional Design Mastery badge from the Online Learning Consortium. This experience led him back to GTU to serve as Director of Digital Learning and Lecturer, where he oversaw the long-term and day-to-day operations of the consortium's online learning offerings and taught doctoral students about best practices with teaching.

The fall of 2019 brought Kyle to United Lutheran Seminary (ULS) to serve as the Steck-Miller Assistant Professor of Worship and Liturgy and later Co-Director of Worship Life. "The pandemic and lingering issues from the earlier merger made my experience somewhat less-than-smooth, but being at ULS was an important part of my formation as a scholar and leader." Kyle served as Faculty Secretary and as faculty representative on the Strategic Planning taskforce, in addition to serving as project director on the first phase of the Lilly Pathways for Tomorrow grant.

During his time at ULS, Kyle expanded his research to include digital theology, which became even more important during the pandemic. He was sought after by congregational leaders who were dealing theologically and practically with online worship. He brought his critical reflections and those of his colleagues together in the book *Church After the Corona Pandemic: Consequences for Worship and Theology*, published recently by Springer.

Kyle also experienced a renewal of his call to ordained ministry, so he resumed the candidacy process in the ELCA and started a detached internship at St. Timothy



Lutheran Church in Philadelphia. He recently concluded his time as their "bridge pastor" as the congregation continues to discern the future. Kyle's time there included preaching and presiding every week, providing pastoral care, offering Bible studies, and engaging with the congregation's preschool. "My ministry at St. Tim's has allowed me to experience leadership from all aspects of the congregation's life, embodying 'liturgical pastoring' and figuring out what God is up to in this corner of Philadelphia."

Kyle officially began his work at LTS on July 1. "I am excited to join the LTS community, one that is committed to being an inclusive and hospitable community, learning from and welcoming one another's diversity, and one that is serious about formation through contextual learning done with integrity."

REV. DR. GORDON JENSEN: LTS'S NEWEST EMERITUS PROFESSOR

The President and Board of Governors of Lutheran Theological Seminary are pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen, who was granted the William Hordern Professor of Theology in 2010, has been granted the title Emeritus William Hordern Professor of Theology.

A graduate of LTS, he earned his PhD from the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto, where he received the Governor General's gold medal for academic excellence. Besides serving as a parish pastor for 14 years, he also taught as a sessional instructor at Augustana University College in Camrose, AB. He began teaching Reformation history and theology full-time at LTS in January of 2002 and became Academic Dean in 2006.

An internationally recognized Luther scholar, he has published numerous articles and chapters in academic journals and books, and his second book is being published this fall. He has given lectures on five continents and served on the Canadian Anglican-United Church Dialogues for 17 years.

When informed of his emeritus status, Jensen stated, "It is an honour to be recognized for following Bill Hordern's tradition of helping a generation of students consistently recognize and proclaim the gospel." Since retiring at the end of 2022, he continues to write books and journal articles, in between enjoying family, golf, and trying new recipes.



GRACE AND THE GRACE FUND FOR FACULTY

Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President

Thank you and thanks be to God.

LTS thanks all of you and thanks God for your ongoing generosity and faithfulness. The **2023 Easter Appeal** reached a total of over **\$50,000**, making it one of our most successful. Moreover, it follows on the heels of an enormously successful Advent Appeal. Your gifts to our shared work in fostering leaders for the church touches us deeply, providing constant encouragement as we are transformed in response to a changing world.

Your gifts do more than make us feel good. Your money has a direct impact on what we do. This newsletter gives solid evidence: The appointment of Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero as our Grace Professor of Leadership is your gift to us. He is designated as a “Grace Professor” because

his position is partly funded by the Grace Fund for Faculty. Yes, the Grace Fund is now in action!

This is a milestone, one that I’ve been anticipating since we inaugurated the Fund. **We now have over \$500,000 in the Grace Fund**, enough to start making use of it.

We have reached a significant step toward our **next step of \$750,000 by December of 2025**.

We continue to welcome gifts to the Grace Fund, along with our Annual Fund. Both are still needed. The Grace Fund needs to grow to support Kyle’s work and perhaps the work of others in the future, while the Annual Fund helps to sustain our daily operations. LTS deeply appreciates your gifts, your prayers, and your support in our mission.

CERTIFICATE IN LUTHERAN LEADERSHIP (LAY TRACK): A NEW PROGRAM AT LTS

Are you a lay leader interested in building your skills to help your congregation? The Certificate in Lutheran Leadership (Lay Track) is a series of 9 courses designed to equip lay leaders to take on leadership roles within ELCIC contexts. Courses are online as two-week intensives (4 hrs/day) or onsite as one-week intensives, taken with degree students planning for professional leadership

in the church. Preaching, worship leadership, biblical interpretation, church administration, and understanding Luther’s Catechisms are just some of what’s included.

Application to the Certificate Program is open. Please visit: <https://lutherantheological.ca/programs/current-programs/certificate-in-lutheran-leadership-lay-track>

Funding is available to assist Certificate students.

LTS COURSES FOR **YOU** THIS FALL

LTS is excited to open the following courses to continuing ed students, occasional students, and auditors.

Register now before spots fill up!

What is the Good News? A Historical Approach (FND101)

What is the Good News? If asked, could you answer in terms that a non-Christian could understand? This introductory course will help you develop an “elevator speech” presentation of Christian gospel and an awareness of what that speech might have sounded like from previous generations of Christians.

Online, or onsite in Saskatoon, SK,
August 28-Sept 1, Dr. Bill Harrison

Lutheran Formation I – Foundations (LTS101)

What does it mean to be Lutheran? This introductory course focuses on the foundations of Lutheran theology, including Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms, what we mean by a “theology of the cross,” and why Lutherans focus so much on “faith alone.”

Onsite in Calgary, AB, October 16-20,
Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein

Queer Theologies (SL349)

What do theologies developed in the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities have to offer the church today? This intermediate course explores the life-giving contributions of queer theologians to the proclamation of the gospel. Special topics include: transgender and nonbinary identities, asexuality, 2-Spirit peoples, and consensual/ethical non-monogamy.

Online, Fridays and Saturdays, September 8-9,
22-23, and October 6-7

For Continuing Education students, please go here to register: <https://lutherantheological.ca/programs/current-programs/continuing-education>

For Occasional Students or for Auditors, please go here to register: <https://lutherantheological.ca/programs/current-programs/occasional-non-program>



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