



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.

TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE *Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President*



As we celebrate a new graduating class, I bring three reminders. First, **take joy** in this celebration of accomplishment. In a world that doesn't always value education, you have followed a challenging call. Secondly, remember that this is an end that begins, as good endings do.

Your education is not over. Your studies with us are a springboard. Continue to grow and to invite others to learn.

Thirdly, we have sought to train you as **critical thinkers**. Often, people think that means they must live entirely in a destructive mindset. This approach is the easy option. Today, it's made especially powerful by social media, which thirst for easy denunciations. This is not what we have sought to teach.

We invite you to follow advice that I draw from Canadian philosopher and theologian, Bernard Lonergan:

Be attentive: Pay attention to the world. When considering a question, make sure that you use a large enough data set: not just one that gives the answer that you want. Seek out all relevant information, using the excellent research skills that you've been taught, before formulating a conclusion.

Be intelligent: Seek the best understanding of all the data. Don't accept an answer simply out of anger or pressure. Work it out in community; you can always come back to us for conversation, in addition to learning with your other colleagues.

Be reasonable: Always check your work and consider differing viewpoints. Remember Snoopy's perfect title for

a book on theology, "Has it ever occurred to you that you might be wrong?" Most of our conclusions ought to be provisional, partial, and revisable, open to development as we learn and grow.

Be responsible: Be prepared to decide and act based upon the best conclusions that you can reach.

Be in love: This is the most decisive one. Love is not all you need, but if you are truly in love and truly well taught, you will seek to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible in all things. This is the core of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We see profound changes in the life of all voluntary organizations. People today do not join organizations that expect long-term, active, commitment. So, they don't join churches. Thus, we in the STU are in a time of profound change. You are, and will be, part of that change. You will need all the skills that you've learned with us, and more. With the STU, you have experienced life in institutions facing today's challenges and making significant changes, with a critical mindset of the kind that I've described.

This LTS graduation group, two MTS degrees, one MDiv degree, and one DMin degree – going to an ordained deacon – is a reminder that our student body is now spread broadly across degree and certificate programs. Two graduates were born in Africa, evidence that our community is growing more diverse in other ways.

We work with a changing vision of ministry, led by "Reimagining Our Church: Public Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada," which invites us to imagine a less pastor-centric church. We are part of reimagining the ELCIC, reimagining contemporary Lutheranism, in an ecumenical context – where a Lutheran vision of God's gift of transforming love in the world has much to say,

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even as there are fewer of us in pews, wooden or virtual.

Our future is in training people for lay, diaconal, and pastoral ministry in different configurations, often built around teams, led and/or supported by highly trained people who are thinking deeply about the church, its challenges, and its possibilities. This is a change from the days when our students were almost entirely MDiv program people intending to be pastors.

This new vision is fundamentally ecumenical, as is the STU. We are a team of schools that creates, provides, and supports initiatives to train lay, diaconal, and presbyteral leaders for churches across Western, Northern, and Pacific Canada and beyond, in a process of growth. We are driven by new data, voices of all kinds from around the world; we seek to understand world and church in new and more profound ways; we consult widely to ensure that we understand correctly; and we take action

to ensure that our work and its outcomes truly serve the new conceptions. We are doing this in love – love of God and of neighbour. Imperfect, yes, but love, nonetheless. We do this because we are called by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We provide an education that reflects wisdom in texts and conversations that have occurred over thousands of years. We include voices that are not often heard, along with voices often heard and misunderstood. We bring diverse heritages. And we focus on the real questions, big and small, that people care about, that many educational institutions won't touch.

This brings me back to our graduates: We are deeply proud of all of you – and blessed to be called to common mission with you. We pray that you will go forward, thinking deeply and critically, living responsibly and faithfully, in the spirit of God's love.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM HARRISON ELECTED TO ATS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

President Bill Harrison was elected to the Board of Commissioners for the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) at the 2024 Biennial Meeting in Atlanta.

The Board of Commissioners is responsible for all decisions relating to the accreditation standing of ATS member schools, including evaluation, program approval, and continued conformance to the Standards of Accreditation.

The Commission on Accrediting is the accrediting agency for the ATS. According to the ATS website, the purpose of the Commission is “to contribute to the enhancement and improvement of theological education through accreditation ... [and to] collect data from all members ... for use in accrediting.” As of January 2024, the ATS listed 278 member schools.

President Harrison shared: “I am very pleased to be able to participate in the future of Canadian and American seminaries through ATS. I will learn a lot about ATS and accrediting that will serve LTS and our STU partners in important ways.”

President Harrison in Atlanta.





*Bishop Larry Kochendorfer,
Bishop Allan Grundahl,
and Bishop Sid Haugen*

BISHOP ALLAN GRUNDAHL RECEIVES LTS HONORARY DEGREE

At our recent Convocation ceremony, Bishop Allan Grundahl was nominated for the degree of Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa, for his significant contributions to the church and the community.

Allan is a well known and loved member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). Through serving in his local church, Zion Lutheran, the broader church and in the wider community, Allan is a living testimony to living out one's Christianity through presence, action, and words.

Over the years, Allan has served on many committees and boards, in varying capacities, within the ELCIC and the broader community. Some of the organizations he has served with are Saskatoon Ministerial, Multi-Faith Saskatchewan, Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, Kinasao Lutheran Bible Camp, Luther League, Friars' Brier, the refugee sponsorship program (which continues to this day and has sponsored over a dozen refugee families), InterChurch Health Ministries (ICHM), LutherCare Communities, Lutheran Ministry in Hospitals of Saskatoon (LuMinHos) and Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Allan has submitted many letters and editorials in support of the ELCIC, the Anglican Church of Canada, the community of Saskatoon, and for the many other committees and organizations of which he has been a part through newspaper articles, church publications and organizational newsletters.

He is a friendly, well-respected presence wherever he goes. His colleagues consider him a dear friend. Allan has been and continues to be a real advocate for people, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, social status,

and religion. Allan is a singer/song leader, pastor, guest speaker, master of ceremony, host, administrator, and is widely known as a person who "gets things done."

Allan has published many articles, including "In Christ... a future with hope" and "We Would See Jesus", which can both be found online in *Consensus*, a scholarly journal of Canadian Lutheran Theology.

Allan's call to ministry over the years has included working as a lay assistant, ordained minister at various locations, Dean of Saskatoon SK ELCIC, Bishop of the SK ELCIC, Interim Director of Spiritual Care, LutherCare Communities, and Interim President of Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute in Outlook.

A long-time hobby of Allan's is baking Norwegian tasty treats that represent his Norwegian heritage. He is known for sharing his delicious goodies throughout Saskatoon. A delivery of Allan's ever-famous Krumkake and Rosettes was always heightened by his visits that accompanied these treats. LTS enjoyed these weekly cookie runs for many years. Allan acquired his pilot's license, enjoyed curling, golfing, yard care, bicycling, and reading.

Allan's family is especially important to him. He loves spending time with his three sons: Marcus, Jason, and Joel.

Bishop Allan, through many years of dedication and devotion to your faith in the communities you served and continue to serve, you have lived out Lutheran Theological Seminary's mission of "nurturing and challenging all people for Christ-centered leadership and witness for God's mission in the world." To this we say, "thank you."

OUR GRADUATES CLASS OF 2024



Andrea Luise Wilhelm – Master of Divinity (with Honours)

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”
– Matthew 5:6

Righteousness - God making things whole, as God intended them. I live as a settler on Treaty 6 land, and desire this in all my relations and for all creation. I am experimenting with living it out in my garden, in academia, in my neighbourhood and in the church. I am looking forward to walking with other hungry and thirsty folk and to experiencing Jesus' promise that we “will be filled.” I thank my husband, family, friends, LTS students, faculty and staff, Trinity Lutheran Edmonton, Grace Lutheran Bentley, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Red Deer, the ABT Candidacy Committee, and Inner City Pastoral Ministry Edmonton for their tremendous support and encouragement. Special thanks and blessings to my relator Myrna H. for prayers every single day!



Rudorwashe Ronald Shumba – Master of Theological Studies

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”- Joshua 1:9

It seems like yesterday when I enrolled with LTS. The journey was not smooth; but God, you were with me. Thank you. I want to say thank you to the administrative staff and faculty for your unwavering support. For the support of the ELCIC, the Eastern and Saskatchewan Synods, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church- Melville and the Parkland Region Ministry area ministerial, I am grateful. This journey would not have been possible without support and patience from my lovely wife, Mercy, and son, Arnold. Special mention goes to our second son, Ariel, who joined the team along the way.



Leonard Mavengere – Master of Theological Studies

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love God, who have been called according to God’s purpose.” – Romans 8:28.

Embarking on my academic journey at LTS, in the STU, has been a transformative experience, both personally and in my approach to ministry. Originating from a background marred by corruption, poverty, dictatorship, violence, and human-caused calamities, I often pondered, “Where is God in all this?” This question loomed large in my heart until my studies under the guidance of compassionate and patient professors who provided clarity and hope. Their wisdom and support have not only answered my lingering questions but also revitalized my spirit and vision for service. I extend my deepest gratitude to the LTS faculty, board, and staff for their instrumental role in helping me realize my dream. A special thanks goes to my brother, Munye, and his wife, Gladys, whose incredible support and love have been my bedrock.



Faith Marie Nostbakken – Doctor of Ministry

I am grateful for the spiritual formation I received growing up in a Christian home and for all that life has taught me since then, even the hard but profound learnings that have come through living with chronic illness. Ordained as an ELCIC deacon ten years ago, I engage in diverse ministries, including my role as spiritual director, my opportunities to lead retreats and workshops, my experience preaching in pulpits across various denominations, and my appointment as Northern Ecumenical Officer for the ABT Synod. I also continue to find myself in the classroom (virtual or tangible) as teacher and/or student. The DMin program has enriched my engagement with the practical theology so relevant to my ministries, while I also draw on my English literature background, teaching creative writing and academic writing skills, as well as advising graduate students in theology. All life is learning. Thanks be to God!



BOARD PASSAGES

Honesty compels me to admit that I do boast about LTS, and one of the things that I crow about is our board. Under Laureen's guidance, we've always had fun. How's that? Laureen has brought unfailing good nature and all sorts of skills and strategies to help us to work both effectively and joyfully. At the same time, she has always been a teacher (a true compliment, where I live!), bringing rich insights from her studies in leadership. In that vein, congratulations, Laureen, on the M.A. in Leadership (Royal Roads, '24)! Most of all, Laureen has always been there for me, prepared to spend substantial amounts of time on the phone, listening, providing helpful advice, and suggesting productive directions. Thank you, Laureen. We will miss you.

~ President William Harrison

Q+A WITH OUTGOING BOARD CHAIRPERSON, LAUREEN WRAY

How has LTS progressed in your time on the Board of Governors?

I think time will show the last eight years have been a significant time for LTS. When I came onto the Board in 2016, there was a sense that God was calling LTS to new ways of preparing people for ministry. Many steps had been made already. We have worked hard to keep discerning that call and put the appropriate structures, processes, and partners in place to support continued discovery of what God has in store for the LTS community. There is a spirit of adventure at LTS that is exciting and will be important as the Board leads LTS amid changes in the church, across western Canada, and beyond.

What are the accomplishments of which you are proudest? How were these achieved?

I can start rattling off a list - hiring an excellent President and attracting world class faculty. Growing partnerships

with the STU and St. Thomas More. Navigating difficult decisions together. Balanced budgets. Strategic successes. Renewing our ATS accreditation and receiving the Lilly Pathways Grant, demonstrating positive affirmation from others in theological education of what we have been pursuing.

What I'm really proud of, though, is the approach and thinking underneath all of these accomplishments. The Board has been very honest and intentional in one of our key pieces of work - determining what we are called to preserve in a time of significant change and uncertainty. At the same time, we have been very open, creative, and strategic about new possibilities that further the mission of LTS. Everyone in the church is wrestling with this paradigm in some way right now and LTS is no different. Our answers will not be the answers for every congregation and ministry but I hope that others look at the accomplishments of LTS and see God's faithfulness when God's people ask big questions.

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What did you enjoy most about your service as Chairperson?

Working with wonderful, faithful people from across Western Canada was a labour of love for me. We genuinely enjoyed each other's company, had many meaningful conversations, and many laughs together. Disagreements happened, but with a sense of curiosity and respect that led us to our mutual goal of making better, bolder, and wiser decisions together.



FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Hugh Williams, Director of Communications and Development

I share my most sincere thanks with you, our supporters, for your generosity. In our recent Easter Appeal, close to 100 people donated \$45,000 to the seminary's Annual, Grace, and Student Aid funds. You bless us again and again!

It was also quite encouraging that there were multiple first-time donors during this Easter Appeal—as well as close to 20 people who had given to LTS before, but not in the past year. We appreciate that it isn't always possible to give consistently, and that some years are better than others, so our thanks for returning to the fold.

Grace Fund for Faculty

It is worth noting that, since the appointment of Dr. Schiefelbein-Guerrero as our Grace Professor of Leadership—which would not have been possible without your impressive support for the Grace Fund for Faculty since its inception in 2020—giving to the fund has decreased somewhat.

This is not unusual. In the fundraising world, it is quite common to see a considerable downturn in momentum once a major project—such as a new building, or major scholarship, or, as in our case, a new faculty position—appears to be complete. But fundraising for the Grace Fund is very much ongoing.

What advice would you give to a new member of the board?

Come with an open heart, a curious mind, a courageous spirit, and a sense of humour. That combination will serve you and LTS well, whatever opportunities and challenges present themselves (and don't forget to read the "Welcome to the Board" material we have prepared).

At this point, the summer of 2024, your generosity has meant that we are considerably ahead of the goals we set for ourselves when the Grace Fund was introduced. We ask that you continue to consider this fund, when you give to LTS.

I am always available to speak with you about the various ways to support LTS financially, and to share the many positive impacts of your support; so please feel free to email me or call me if you wish! Both my email address and phone number are always on the bottom of this magazine's back page.

My most heartfelt thanks to you for your support of the seminary.



TRIBUTE TO THE REV. DR. VERN H. RATZLAFF

16 June, 1937 – 16 February, 2024



While serving as a pastor at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, and later at Aberdeen Mennonite Church, Vern still found the time to study, teach, counsel, and supervise students at Lutheran Theological Seminary. One of the gifts Vern gave to us was to personally bring our two traditions closer together. He showed us what was the very best in ecumenism. For Lutherans, who are often known for their emphasis on God's grace, it was, nevertheless, Vern, our beloved Mennonite, as we called him, who consistently showed us what it meant to live fully by God's grace.

Vern defined gracious—even though he would prefer you not focus on him. It was who he was. It was an honour for the faculty, staff, and students at LTS to be able to have extended conversations and discussions with him, but also to sit at his feet and learn from him. He was the epitome of what it meant to be a pastor, a preacher, a teacher, a mentor, a colleague, and a friend. He taught us, as the prophet Micah said, how to “do justice, love kindness, and to walk

humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). He taught us what it meant to be a disciple of Jesus the Christ. He made LTS better. He made his congregations better. And he made this community better, by his presence. Thus, when we granted him the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree a few years ago, it was our way of thanking him, his family, and his worshipping communities, for gifting us with his presence.

For Vern's life, his passion for the Gospel and his compassion for God's people and God's creation, we say, on behalf of LTS, and the ecumenical community, “thanks be to God,” and then, in the same breath, to utter, as he would no doubt want us to do, “To God alone be the glory.” Soli deo gloria.

~ Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen,
Emeritus William Hordern Professor of Theology,
Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon



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