

# OUR CLASSROOM IS WESTERN CANADA NEW APPOINTEES

LTS is pleased to announce appointments for the “Our Classroom Is Western Canada: We Meet There In Mission” project. The Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein will serve as main facilitator and has been named as Associate Academic Dean for the duration of the project. Helping to coordinate and provide overall support is Mavis Hamilton, who has joined us as Executive Assistant to the President. Working with them in early stages is Denise Pawliuk, Project Assistant, an LTS student and diaconal candidate.

“Our Classroom Is Western Canada” is an effort to foster and support courses offered across Western Canada –

...serving people preparing for leadership in lay, deacon, and pastor roles, combined with a reorganization of LTS so that faculty and administration can serve from various places in the territory of the four Western synods of the ELCIC. The portion funded by grants to LTS from the Lilly Endowment runs through August 2024. This project is an LTS venture, preparing us for a changing world, that will also open opportunities for study with our partner denominations in the STU and will feed our efforts to develop shared educational possibilities.



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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-centred leadership and witness for God’s mission in the world.

## CALLED TOGETHER *Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President*



*Edited from address at Convocation 2022.*

We meet in Convocation. The word “convocation” is sometimes treated as synonymous with “graduation,” but the words aren’t the same. Both terms are dynamic; they speak about movement, but in opposite directions. “Graduation” suggests completion and departure; tonight, people who have been our students close a phase in their growth and look forward to new steps.

In contrast, a convocation is a group of people who are called together. The Latin root means “to summon” or “to convene.” This word is similar to the Greek word, ekklesia, which we use to speak of the church. We are a community called together, to give thanks to God, to worship God, and to go out in God’s mission.

In this context, we celebrate the achievements of new graduates, the hard work and insights they have contributed. As LTS President, I congratulate Sharon Kane, Diane Nokonechny, Patricia Sherk, Elina Singh, Andrew Minchau, Katherine Goertz Thompson, and Robert Butler. We pray God’s blessings on you as you go forth into ministry, trusting that God will sustain you and will build the Kingdom in and through you. Now and in the future, we invite you to be part of the life of the seminary – praying for LTS, talking about LTS, encouraging others to study with LTS... supporting the school. Graduates belong to our community.

Coming together means addressing our changing world. Church attendance was in decline pre-COVID; the pandemic has caused changes. We know that our treatment of Indigenous peoples has been at odds with principles of both Christianity and natural justice. Reconciliation, with roots in contrition, penance, and a commitment to true shalom – peace with justice – has become a central priority. We see profound shortcomings in the church’s response to people of different genders and sexual orientations, and to people

whose physical and intellectual abilities do not match some assumed societal norm.

For the ELCIC, these pieces connect to a vision of the church as diaconal. “Diaconal” means we are called together to go out in service to the world. From this vision comes the “Our Classroom is Western Canada: We Meet There In Mission” project. Lilly Endowment has generously given us over \$1 million for continued work, so we are moving forward on an effort to develop immersion-style courses. These courses will meet in places across Western Canada, fostering the learning of people preparing for lay, diaconal, and pastoral leadership, and engaging with local places, people, and concerns.

We will emphasize connecting with Indigenous people and the land where we meet. This approach, with planned multi-instructor arrangements, contributes to our ongoing work of decolonization. We will focus on mission, connecting directly with activities in the places where we are called together.

In January, the STU colleges covenanted together, committing “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.” Now, we work toward a shared faculty and curriculum, finding ways to work closely academically, and seek ways to build common organizational structures. We are three small schools, called together to serve God’s mission in the world, enabling the ongoing task of preparing leaders in God’s church.

Underlying these changes is a sense that our deepest purpose in being called together, being convoked, remains the same: A profound trust in the God who builds the Kingdom, who transforms all things in love, and who calls us together – along with all who seek to live in right relationship with God and the world – so that we might know all joy and peace in community. Amen.



# OUR GRADUATES - CLASS OF 2022



## **Robert Charles Butler - Doctorate of Ministry**

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." Romans 1:16

I have been privileged to serve God for more than 35 years, through pastoring, teaching, church planting, mentoring, refugee advocacy, compassionate ministry, evangelism, curricula development, youth leadership, worship, community development, and 'frontier' mission ministry. Through all of it, God equipped me to serve. Although only part of my ministry has been informed by studies at LTS, I recognise that all of my service has benefitted. It has been that contributive! Therefore, I offer my thanks to the professors, staff, cohort, committees and directors, for their guiding in this journey. I reserve my deepest gratitude to my wife, Patty, for standing by my side through significant deaths, cancer, and Covid. God has strengthened you to stand with me. Lastly, I thank God – for whom I will gladly spend my life.



## **Sharon Sarah Kane - Master of Divinity**

"For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Do not fear, I will help you." Isaiah 41:13

I want to thank God for calling me on this exciting journey and for continually giving me the strength and courage I required to persevere with each new task I encountered.

I am grateful to Lutheran Theological Seminary for expanding my knowledge in so many areas including the Old and New Testaments, the Gospels, Christianity, and on Martin Luther. Also, for introducing me to a new friend – dictionary.com. We are best friends now. I have never used a dictionary so much in my whole life! It's been a great help when playing speed scrabble too.

I want to thank everyone who has supported me. My family and friends, the congregations in Estevan and Lampman, and especially my husband Bill. Thanks be to God.



## **Diane Margaret Nokonechny - Master of Divinity**

"You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15:16a

I had a career I loved as a Dental Hygienist for over 20 years when I first sensed a call to ministry. It was unexpected. The journey has been filled with doubts, fears, tears, and frustrations. It's also been incredibly life-giving with many joys, laughs, new friends, and new ideas. I give God thanks for all those who have walked with me. Most especially, my spouse Peter and our daughters Bree and Brooke, Pastor Carla who I credit/blame for starting all of this, Pastor Stewart for being a mentor and friend, Pastor Sarah for being an incredible supervisor, the faculty of LTS for giving me the words to express who I have experienced God to be, and my classmates who I'm excited to soon call colleagues.



## **Patricia Faye Sherk - Master of Divinity**

"Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea 10:12

I never expected to be a Canadian. Or a Lutheran. Or a pastor. Never let anyone tell you God isn't full of surprises – or doesn't have a sense of humor. Thanks for the scholarship.



## **Elina Talvikki Singh - Master of Divinity**

"The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes." John 3:8

Life is full of unexpected turns. While I was searching for direction, the Spirit blew in the sails and my boat landed on LTS's shores. It's been quite a ride since – smooth sailing in fair winds, but also unsettling waves and rocky shores, more questions than answers. This passage is now complete; it's time to head towards other open waters and let the Spirit fill the sails again.

My thanks to Jason for keeping the house in order when I was away, either in Saskatoon or Borneo – or at home, lost among the books and papers... Also, my thanks to Jacob for cuddles, laughs, curious questions, and pulling me away from work to come and play. I love you both!



## **Andrew Michael Minchau - Master of Theological Studies**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1

It has been a long journey. When I started academic studies, seminary wasn't on my mind; there was a "real" world to understand. After years of being active in the church and given opportunities, I kicked the tires of Seminary for several years, then felt an ultimatum from God calling me to finish this program. I am very grateful to faculty and staff at LTS for their support and patience, and to my fellow students who I have come to know and love. I thank Bishop Tel for his guidance and encouragement, and Pamela and Craig for opening up their home and lives while I was in Saskatoon. Finally, I thank Advent Lutheran in Calgary for all their gifts and being a foundation for my journey.



## **Katherine Helen Goertz Thompson - Master of Theological Studies**

"Lead me, Lord, I'll follow...anywhere you open up the door."

The words of this song continually flooded my mind as I tried to ignore the call of God to seminary. As President Harrison's initial emails went unanswered, those words ran on 'repeat' through my mind and I was reminded of my response to them originally: "Yes, God, I'll go wherever you open the door." (EXCEPT I had never considered seminary!) And so, here I am, almost four years later - full of gratitude for the gift I have been graciously given through LTS.

I am so grateful for the leadership, passion, and support of all the faculty and staff. I am so very grateful for the relationships formed with students. Most of all, I thank my God for the privilege of being a part of LTS and for the knowledge and growth I have experienced while attending.