

# FOCUS

The magazine of Union Presbyterian Seminary

Fall 2017



Teaching, preaching, healing



At the annual **WELCOME BACK COOKOUT** hosted by the Office of Advancement, the Union community gathered to welcome another academic year full of new beginnings. Above, **Sharon Blount** and **Sandy Irby** (M.A.T.S.'09), director of student services and the Communities of Learning Program, enjoy good food and fellowship.



Above, **Jim Wright** (M.A.T.S.'10) and his band WKNDR performed on the quad.



Mike Hennessey (left), M.Div. students **Sam Shields** and **Colleen Earp** ham it up for the camera.

**PHOTO ON OPPOSITE PAGE:** The entering class of 2017 attend a reception at the home of President Brian Blount and Sharon Blount.

**COVER:** At the beginning of each year, students, faculty, and staff from Union Presbyterian Seminary spend a day of service at a non-profit organization. Planned by the Service Committee, the annual event gives participants an opportunity to step beyond the seminary campus in the spirit of service and to touch the lives of others in the community.

This year's Service Day was held at Shalom Farms in Powhatan County, a local Richmond nonprofit working with communities to ensure access to healthy food and the support to lead healthy lives. In the spring of 2018, Shalom Farms will start growing food in the heart of Richmond's Northside neighborhood on the Westwood Tract of Union Presbyterian Seminary. The seminary is looking forward eagerly to being a partner in this important work through cultivating service opportunities for volunteers and interns, generating educational resources for seminary courses, and creating occasions for critical, constructive dialogue. More details on page 5.

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## Volume 29

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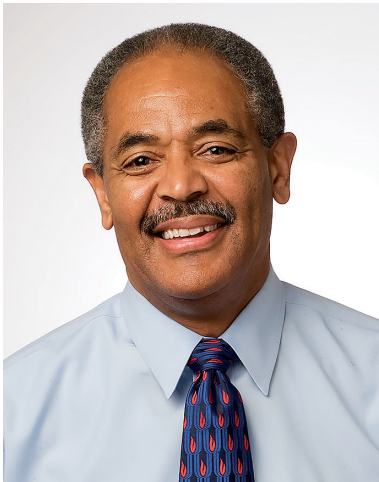


**Mission and Vision** *Union Presbyterian Seminary equips Christian leaders for ministry in the world—a sacred vocation that requires deep learning, commitment to service, and an ability to read culture and circumstance in the light of the rich resources of scripture and theological tradition.*

*The seminary's core mission is to participate in the mission of the church by forming and equipping leaders for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).*

*We confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus is God in the flesh, the Son of that One whom he called Father. His life, ministry, death, and resurrection have transformed the world. As the risen and living Lord, Jesus has called us to bear witness to his transformative presence in the world. We serve as a theological resource for church and society. We weave together distinctive approaches to theological education for pastoral and educational ministries. We educate, inspire, and empower leaders for congregational life, theological scholarship, and bold Christian service to the world. We seek to participate faithfully in the Holy Spirit's transformation of the seminary, the church, and through the church, the world.*

# Teaching, preaching, healing



## Dear Friends,

When Jesus preaches in the Gospel of Mark the future Reign of God erupts in the present. Jesus' preaching, though, is not what we would understand to be a conventional sermon.

While there is the "listen" parable "sermon" of chapter 4 and the "watch out" apocalyptic speech of chapter 13, Jesus primarily preaches in powerful, short bursts of word and deed. There are three primary preaching manifestations: teaching with an authority unlike anything previously seen; healing; and exorcism. With each of those moments, a manifestation of God's future Reign engages ignorance, illness, and possession. That is Good News! For some.

For many, these future "break-ins" are cause for alarm. Almost every Jesus teaching, healing, or exorcism is greeted therefore with conflict. Because the presence and movement of God's future—as Jesus represents it—is so often contrary to the reality and trajectory of the human present, the two seem incapable of hospitably occupying the same space and time. And so, Jesus touching lepers, proclaiming an ability to forgive sins, reaching out to tax collectors and "sinners," rummaging amongst the dead, engaging inappropriately with women, feeding unclean ethnicities with the literal and spiritual bread that belonged to the children of God represent for many an unacceptable representation of God's present and coming Reign.

A striking contest of wills erupts between those who want to maintain the present order and Jesus who wants to proclaim God's future order. It is a conflict that leads to Jesus' crucifixion. For perpetuating the Reign of God in the way that he perpetrates it, Jesus is deemed worthy of death. God overturns that death in the promise of a resurrection that is the final act of God's future Reign breaking into the historical present. Even in death, especially in death, by the way he is promised a victory over death, in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus preaches.

Our call is to follow our Lord's preaching example. Our preaching task is to envision the presence and movement of God's Reign and, having done so, to represent the power of that future in the midst of our present. We must teach authoritatively the message of God's inclusive love as Jesus taught it. We must heal brokenness wherever we encounter it. We must exorcise evil wherever people are oppressed by it. This issue of *Focus* focuses on people and ministries attempting to do just that. As are the men and women disciples in Mark's Gospel, we are called to go and do likewise. Even as we understand just how challenging such an undertaking will be, we, too, are called to Go Preach.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blount".

Brian K. Blount, President

## President Brian K. Blount receives humanitarian award

### UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY

President and Professor of New Testament Brian K. Blount received a Humanitarian Award from the Richmond chapter of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. The honor is presented to individuals and organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to the promotion of respect and understanding among people of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

President Blount is one of five honorees who received the award at a ceremony October 23, 2017. They include: Susan W. Adolf, vice president, Saxon Shoes; William A. Harrison Jr., president and executive director, Diversity Richmond;

Gail L. Letts, Virginia Market president, First Tennessee Bank; and E. Ayn Welleford, associate professor and chair, Department of Gerontology, Virginia Commonwealth University.

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success by addressing prejudices, in all forms, to improve academic achievement, increase workplace productivity, and enhance local trust. [Ω](#)



President Brian K. Blount presides over communion.

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## A vision for the Leadership Institute at Westminster Hall

**WESTMINSTER HALL** has been home to generations of single students where deep and lasting friendships were forged. In recent years however, Westminster has stood vacant while the seminary waited for the right moment to recast the 120-year-old structure for a vital, strategic new purpose.

Now this treasured building, which was home to so many seminary students in the past, will become the new home of the Leadership Institute, a resource for a new generation of church leaders.

As a state-of-the-art conference facility, Westminster will provide high-quality continuing education programs for pastors, Christian educators, and other church leaders. Large and small conference rooms, informal gathering areas, and comfortable suites will welcome our guests. Westminster will feature the latest technology and will be fully accessible, with an elevator to the upper floors.

Students who need short-term housing for intensive periods of on-campus study in our Blended Learning Program will find hospitality here, as well as participants on campus for programs hosted by the Global Mission Center and the Center for Womanist Leadership.

The seminary is in the process of raising an additional \$1.5 million for this \$7 million project. Naming opportunities are also available. Contact Vice President of Advancement Richard Wong at [rwong@upsem.edu](mailto:rwong@upsem.edu) for questions or additional information. [Ω](#)



Slated for renovation, Westminster Hall is the third of the three original campus buildings on the Richmond campus. It features an array of exterior porches and cast-iron balconies.



## Café is open for business

Each Wednesday the whole Richmond community gathers for community lunch after chapel in the Holderness Dining Room in Richmond Hall. For the rest of the week, **Wes Holland**, our resident chef, runs the popular café that is open for breakfast and lunch. Wes (right) serves M.Div. student **Alex Fischer**.

## Union recognized for superior fundraising performance

**UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY** is a recipient of the 2017 CASE Education Fundraising Award, one of 47 educational institutions in the U.S. and the only seminary to receive the honor for superior fundraising performance.

“It is a recognition for the wonderful support from our alumni, donors, campaign cabinet, churches, trustees, faculty, staff, and volunteers who made funding the important mission of Union possible,” said Vice President for Advancement Richard Wong. “It is through the hard work of our advancement team and by the grace of God that Union is given this honor.”

Each year since 1959, CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) and its predecessor organizations have recognized exceptional development programs.

The awards program recognizes overall performance and overall improvement in educational fundraising programs based on data submitted to the Council for Aid

to Education’s (CAE) Voluntary Support of Education survey. The survey is conducted annually by CAE and co-sponsored by CASE.

A panel of volunteer judges selects winners based on a number of factors, including: pattern of growth in total support (or adjusted total support if appropriate); evaluation of what contributed to the total support figure; overall breadth in program areas; pattern of growth in each program area; pattern of donor growth among alumni donors and other individual donors; impact of the 12 largest gifts on total support; total support in relation to the alumni base; and type of institution.

Judges use those factors to recognize institutions that show solid program growth, breadth in the base of support and other indications of a mature, well-maintained program. Among the winners this year are Harvard University, University of Virginia, Virginia Military Institute, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Davidson College. [Ω](#)

## Shalom Farms coming to Westwood Tract

**EVEN BEFORE THE TILLING** of the ground in the early fall of 2017, it was possible to see the potential and the promise of the five acres close to Rennie and Loxley avenues that will become “Shalom Farms at Union Presbyterian Seminary.”

The site for the urban farm rests largely in the center of the seminary’s Westwood Tract at its Richmond campus. The farm will be adjacent to the tract’s walking trail, labyrinth, open field and shaded tree space, and existing seminary homes, as well as “The Canopy at Ginter Park,” 301 apartments that will be available to both the general public and to Union students.

“We think it will serve as one of the largest urban farms in Virginia, and we are hoping to be able to grow upwards of 200,000 servings of food per year to support Shalom Farms’ mission,” said Dominic Barrett, executive director of Shalom Farms.


The seminary’s Richmond campus sits along the avenue that largely divides east and west Richmond. Larger areas of poverty with limited access to affordable healthy food lie to the east, and affluent areas, generally, are to the west.

“This location offers an especially powerful place to learn about and work collaboratively to address the systemic and historically rooted reasons why many in metro Richmond lack the resources, support, and opportunities they need to thrive,” said **Nelson Reveley** (M.Div.’10) who is helping coordinate the project with Shalom Farms. “Food insecurity raises a host of additional questions around access to quality education, jobs, transportation, housing affordability, neighborhood safety, and health care, not to mention environmental ethics and care for the rest of creation.”

No less important than the location is the nature of the site itself. The soil is good, and its nutrient content will be strengthened, beginning in the southern end of the plot, with the fall 2017 planting of cover crops, such as grasses and legumes, which will be grown through April 2018. By mid-May, summer crops will go in, including tomatoes, squash, zucchini, cantaloupes, and watermelons. The area is expected to yield 25,000 to 35,000 pounds of food in the first half-year. This will be a significant addition to the 180,000 pounds grown annually at the Shalom Farms’ site in Powhatan County.

“We are enormously grateful to Union for the opportunity to be here at this site,” said Barrett. “This will be a wonderful partnership that will grow over the years, and we hope it will have a positive impact throughout the Richmond area.”

The urban farm is being undertaken with the recognition that for Richmond, like so many American cities, it is imperative for people of faith to engage issues of race, class, and opportunity so that everyone can flourish as God intends. The seminary seeks to be a partner in this work through cultivating service opportunities for volunteers and interns, generating educational resources for seminary courses, and creating occasions for critical, constructive dialogue.

The urban farm is a partnership that organizers hope will reflect the promise of Psalm 104:14, “to bring forth food from the earth,” in concert with the call of prophets like Amos to “let justice roll down like waters.” 



M.Div. student Ben Brannon (above) participated in the annual Service Day at Shalom Farms’ rural site.

Shalom Farms is a nine-year-old, local non-profit that works with communities around metro Richmond to ensure access to healthy food and the support needed to lead healthy lives.

# On Campus



## A new beginning

Faculty on the Richmond campus (left) gather outside Watts Chapel to procession in for Convocation and the beginning of a new academic year. President **Brian K. Blount** opened the 206th Session of the Richmond campus in early September and the 16th Session of the Charlotte campus on the prior Saturday.

## Congratulations to 2017 Union graduates

Forty-eight students across Union Presbyterian Seminary's campuses in Virginia and North Carolina received degrees in the Master of Arts in Christian Education (M.A.C.E.), Master of Divinity (M.Div.), Master of Theology (Th.M.), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) at commencement exercises in May 2017. Commencement addresses for the class of 2017 were delivered by alumna **Angela S. Duncan** (M.Div.'03) in Richmond and the Rev. Dr. W. Rush Otey III in Charlotte.

Graduates will serve as pastors, Christian educators, and scholars in churches, hospitals, colleges, prisons, and in the mission field.



Charlotte 2017 graduates celebrate



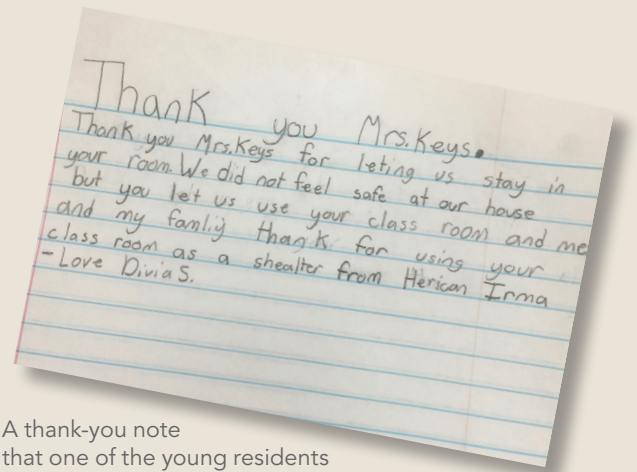
Members of the Richmond class of 2017



## Alums aid in hurricane efforts



Alum **Meg Pabst** (pictured above on far left) with Rita Dodge, a refuge from the hurricane (seated), and two other volunteers just before leaving the shelter to take Rita home after the all clear was sounded.



A thank-you note that one of the young residents left for the teacher whose classroom she and her family slept in during the hurricane.

"This year natural disasters, among so many other tragedies around our world, seem to be unrelenting. Some occur and we are far removed from them, and others occur in our backyard," writes **Meg Pabst** (M.Div.'15). "I have been extraordinarily fortunate to find myself safe in the midst of many close calls in my life, but with each of those close calls, I am reminded of the fragility of life and the critical importance of community.

"My mom is a principal at a local elementary school in Florida that is one of many designated Red Cross shelters and, as such, she has the responsibility to become the shelter manager if the county needs to open her school as a shelter. She got word at 6 p.m. on Thursday that her school would open as a shelter the next day at 11 a.m. Since the Red Cross' resources and volunteers were already stretched to their limit, the shelter would be run solely by the school district's employees and a rotation of four officers from the sheriff's office (two officers working 12-hour shifts). My dad and I joined her in helping out.

"There were only a few folks who stayed overnight Friday night, but Saturday night brought over 100



Elementary school classrooms were emptied by the dedicated school staff members to make room for anyone seeking shelter.

people to the shelter. By Sunday afternoon, there were over 500 with nearly 100 pets bracing for whatever Hurricane Irma might bring during the night. There had to be shelter staff available around the clock to tend to the needs of the shelter residents.

"The experience of working at the Red Cross shelter through Hurricane Irma was a humbling experience and gave me renewed resolve to not just look for the helpers during crises, but to be a helper in my community—a helper who looks for people, like Rita (pictured), who rely on others to get them to safety, a helper who reaches out so that others don't fall through the cracks or go unseen, and a helper whose actions share God's love with those around me."  $\Omega$

# Faculty Highlights

## Wealth and poverty in the modern world

“I went driving around the neighborhood immediately surrounding the seminary, and I noticed that in a two-mile radius there are 20 payday lending facilities where the money you end up having to pay far exceeds the original loan, and let’s call this what it is. It’s not payday lending. It’s predatory lending.



Samuel L. Adams

“When you look in the Bible, you see that it was very common practice in the period in which the Old Testament was written that those with resources also took advantage of the poorest in society by lending them money or grain at high interest rates. The prophet Amos is perhaps most passionate about social justice related to wealth and poverty. He condemns those lying at ease in their second homes while they oppress those who are poor. There’s also a passage in Nehemiah 5 where Nehemiah is very upset that wealthy lenders are taking advantage of a famine and a grain shortage and lending to their fellow Jews at great interest and says, ‘This isn’t what Moses commands us in the Torah. This isn’t what we’re supposed be about. Quit it.’”

*“When we think about poverty in the United States, it’s more diffuse. It has spread to the suburbs, and I think it’s more of an anonymous poverty and in many cases a more lonely poverty, because you don’t have the kind of neighborhood or family structure when you need immediate resources and someone you know to give you hope.”*

Professor of Old Testament **SAMUEL L. ADAMS** got his undergraduate degree at Davidson College, his M.Div. at the University of Chicago Divinity School, and his Ph.D. at Yale. He credits a year after college in India for quickening his interest in going to seminary and beginning a life-long interest in issues of wealth and poverty. Today, as he enters his second decade of teaching at the seminary, the tug of India remains strong: in recent years, he started a travel seminar for Union students to what he calls that “fascinating, friendly, complicated country.”

“Just a few months back, students, alums, and trustees were able to go and see what it’s like to be a Christian in India and to see what it’s like to live in a country with a billion people, where immense poverty and immense wealth live side by side. It’s important to learn about these places because our own American context is becoming so diverse...When we think about poverty in the United States, it’s more diffuse. It has spread to the suburbs, and I think it’s more of an anonymous poverty and in many cases a more lonely poverty, because you don’t have the kind of neighborhood or family structure when you need immediate resources and someone you know to give you hope,” he says.

“There is a Hebrew word called ‘mishpat’ which means ‘justice,’ and ‘justice’ in the Old Testament doesn’t only mean fairness or getting your say in court, it means equality. Justice in the Old Testament means kindness to those who are on the margins. Justice means making sure everyone in society has something to eat and a place to lay his or her head.

“In Matthew 25, when Jesus talks about who will be with him in the Kingdom of Heaven, it’s not theological beliefs, it’s not what denomination you belonged to. It was ‘did you tend to the least of these? I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.’ Those who recognize the importance of that ‘will sit at my right hand in the Kingdom of God.’” [Ω](#)

## Skreslet featured in Korean documentary film

**STANLEY H. SKRESLET** (D.Min.'79), F. S. Royster Professor of Christian Missions, was featured in a Korean-language documentary film entitled "Suh-Shu Pyoung, Slowly and Peacefully," on the life of Presbyterian missionary Elisabeth Shepping (Suh-Suh Pyoung). He was interviewed about the history of the Presbyterian missions in Korea. The film premiered in Seoul in April 2017.



Stanley H. Skreslet

Skreslet is part of the planning team for the centennial meeting of the Eastern Fellowship of Professors of Mission, a meeting which was held in October 2017.



Skreslet's scholarly interests are focused particularly on the field of missiology, but also include the history of Christianity, Islam, and Orthodox Christianity, especially as these latter topics relate to the Middle East. He is an ordained Presbyterian minister and the immediate past president of the American Society of Missiology. His most recent book, *Comprehending Mission*, a comprehensive introduction to the field of missiology, was the first publication to receive the American Society of Missiology's annual book award. Ω

## Cannon honored as a Living Legend



Katie Geneva Cannon

**KATIE GENEVA CANNON**, the Annie Scales Rogers Professor of Christian Ethics, was honored in August as a Living Legend at the North Carolina Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Scholarship Gala. HBCU Living Legends is an initiative coordinated by community volunteers in North Carolina to provide scholarships to currently enrolled students.

Cannon was the first African American woman ordained in what is now the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Her work focuses in the areas of Christian ethics, womanist theology, and women in religion and society. She has lectured nationally on

theological and ethical topics and is the author or editor of numerous articles and seven books, including *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* and *Black Womanist Ethics*. In October, Cannon was the keynote speaker at the 2017 Women in Ministry Conference at Princeton Theological Seminary, entitled "Telling Our Stories: Breaking the Mold, Taking Risks, Paving the Way." Ω

# Faculty Highlights

**SAM VALENTINE**, director of graduate studies and professor of Old Testament, and **CARSON BRISSON**, associate professor of Bible and biblical languages, co-taught a Howie Center-funded travel seminar to Italy in May 2017. The course focused on the interplay of art, science, and theology with students and non-students alike participating in the study. Students selected a topic of interest, researched it, and presented their findings on-site to the group when the seminar arrived at the location of their chosen subject. Several evening debriefings explored the tensions among art, science, and theology, as well as points of connection among these disciplines, in the framework of what a difference seminar discoveries and impressions made for how one lives. [Ω](#)

**JOHN CARROLL**'s latest book, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (Abingdon Press) is at press and will be published in March 2018. Carroll is the Harriet Robertson Fitts Memorial Professor of New Testament. [Ω](#)

**SUNG HEE CHANG** (D.Min.'85; M.Div.'89) and **SUSAN FOX** (M.Div.'82; Ph.D.'88) contributed to the recently published book, *Engage: A Theological Field Education Tool Kit*. Chang's chapter was titled "Engaging in Faith Formation" and Fox wrote "Engaging Technology in Field Education." Chang is the director of supervised ministry and vocational planning in Charlotte and associate professor of supervised ministry. Fox is the director of supervised ministry and vocational planning and professor of supervised ministry. [Ω](#)

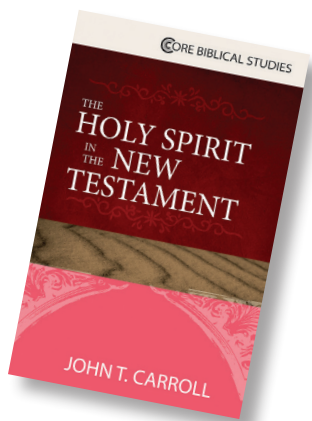
**PAUL GALBREATH**, professor of theology, was the keynote speaker at the North American Association for the Catechumenate Annual Conference, July 2017. [Ω](#)

**FRANCES TAYLOR GENCH** (M.Div.'82; Ph.D.'88), Herbert Worth and Annie H. Jackson Professor of Biblical Interpretation, delivered the John L. Yost Lecture at Lutheran Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC, for Alumni Day in May 2017, entitled "When the Bible Raises Your Blood Pressure: Faithful Wrestling with Challenging Texts." She led a workshop at the 2017 NEXT Church Conference in Kansas City, MO ("Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts: Helping Congregations Wrestle with Biblical Authority"). [Ω](#)

**STAN HARGRAVES**, registrar and United Methodist advisor, taught in the UMW Mission Encounter event on the Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church in the U.S. [Ω](#)

**KEN MCFAYDEN** (M.Div.'87), academic dean of the Richmond campus and professor of ministry and leadership development, was the lead writer of a grant proposal for which Union received a faculty development grant from the Association of Theological Schools. [Ω](#)

**KAREN-MARIE YUST** published a blog entry "New Discoveries about Young Children's Faith Formation" posted on <http://advocateblog.apcenet.org/2017/01/22/new-discoveries-about-young-childrens-faith-formation/>. Yust is the Josiah P. and Anne Wilson Rowe Professor of Christian Education. [Ω](#)



For a complete list of our faculty with their contact information, biographies, publications, and speaking engagements, please visit faculty resources at [www.upsem.edu/about/faculty/](http://www.upsem.edu/about/faculty/).



# THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH: Teaching, preaching, healing

BY JIMMIE R. HAWKINS

WHAT IS PUBLIC WITNESS? As the director of the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., this is a question I hear time and time again. Public witness is the Christian's response to the call of God to engage in advocacy, or witness, in a public forum. In the past, it has been referred to as social action or justice ministry. Christians are called by God to participate in public witness so that the reign of God is experienced through acts of justice, love, and mercy. Jesus understood very intensively that a vital part of his mission as the Son of

God was to proclaim that the *"kingdom of God has come near"* by enabling people to experience it firsthand. (Mark 1:15)

Advocacy has enhanced my life and transformed my ministry. On April 29, 2013, Seventeen of us, along with Rev. William Barber, were arrested for civil disobedience protesting legislation enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly. Moral Monday was born. By August almost 1,000 people were arrested for actions of resistance to draconian policies denying healthcare

Jimmie Hawkins's wife, Sheinita, is pictured above with their two children, Kaela and James, in front of the Union sculpture

***The church has a long history mirroring the teaching, preaching and healing ministry of the Christ... But while the church has a Ph.D. in teaching and preaching, it has a high school diploma in holistic healing as modeled by Jesus.***

expansion, unemployment benefits, voting rights, and later HB2. For an entire summer, we prayed, sang, rallied, chanted, protested, and were arrested as a statement of our faith in a living God who cares still for the least of these our brothers and our sisters. Many were clergy, but mostly laity demonstrating faith-in-action. For many, this was their church, and for others, it provided the call to discipleship they desired from church. It was one of the most spiritual disciplines in ministry I have ever experienced. My participation in Moral Monday has given me a more intimate understanding of God's call for justice.

Jesus, the head of the church, established this mandate by demonstrating a threefold paradigm of teaching, preaching and healing. Matthew 4:23-24, "And (Jesus) went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them." (Mark 1:32-39; Luke 4:40-44; NRSV)

Through his ministry Jesus seeks to remedy any manner of pain a person experiences, whether it is temporary suffering or hardship (hunger), permanent disability (blindness), or societal injustice (poverty).

Humanity is broken, sick, and made ill by the curse of sin (Genesis 3:16-19). Only God can restore humankind to its true self, made in the image and likeness of God. To accomplish this, God sent Jesus to save, or heal (*sozo*, "I save, heal, preserve or rescue") a wounded world. But it is

the total self that needs healing, the diseased body and the tormented soul. We cannot seek to save the soul and leave the body in the agony of poverty and the mind in despair. When Jesus was confronted by four friends carrying a lame friend, "He said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven... I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home."

Dr. Shirley C. Guthrie wrote: "throughout scripture God's justifying grace also means that God helps and gives rights to people who are 1) poor, helpless, and without rights because they are ignored and excluded by the rich and powerful; 2) victims of unjust social systems; 3) denied the opportunity to care for their own and their family's health and welfare; 4) deprived of the 'civil rights' and freedom others enjoy. Moreover, as God's justifying grace gives poor sinners oppressed by their own sinfulness all the 'rights and privileges' of belonging to God's acceptance and help, so it also gives those who are politically poor and oppressed all the 'rights and privileges' that belong to all human beings in a just and humane society without their having to prove themselves 'worthy' of them." (Christian Doctrine, rev. edition, 328)



*Jimmie R. Hawkins (M.A.'86), director of the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), leads chapel at Union Presbyterian Seminary. He is also a member of the Union Board of Trustees. Previously he served as the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in New Hope Presbytery.*

***Christians are called by God to participate in public witness so that the reign of God is experienced through acts of justice, love, and mercy.***

Jesus openly criticized and challenged religious rituals and customs which oppressed the poor. He was an active proponent of prophetic advocacy to challenge exploitation. He challenged the culture of clean or unclean (Mark 7). He confronted and challenged mores which denied justice and worse, ignored injustice. He revived the prophets in his promotion of social equality. In his first sermon he read from Isaiah (61:1): *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”* (Lk 4:18-19). He paraphrased the prophet Hosea (6:6): *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others”* (Matt. 23:23).

The church has a long history mirroring the teaching, preaching and healing ministry of the Christ. Every church participates in weekly Sabbath proclamation paired with strong Christian education programs. But while the church has a Ph.D. in teaching and preaching, it has a high school diploma in holistic healing as modeled by Jesus. For centuries, there has existed a limited definition of what comprises a healing ministry as many congregations have concentrated on charitable giving and avoided advocacy. The church must do both, help people in their day-to-day challenges, but also challenge the systemic sins of racism, homophobia,

sexual violence, misogyny, human trafficking, criminal injustice, and economic poverty.

Advocacy in the form of public witness is vital to the ministry of the church. Our advocacy addresses issues, not individuals or political parties. We are committed to the affirmation that as Christians our faith informs our politics; rather than politics informing our faith. The church is not to be liberal or conservative, Republican or Democratic, rich or poor. The church is to be “a house of prayer for all people” who come seeking to be loved, treated fairly, and finding guidance and strength for daily faithful living.

This claim must be made without apology or excuse. When one examines the history of civil and human rights in this country there is a symbiotic relationship between faith and advocacy, worship and public witness. We have memorized the teachings of James (2) that *“faith without works is dead.”* There is not one major civil rights movement which did not involve both religious institutions, to a limited degree, and people of faith, to a greater degree. The abolitionist movement which helped to bring about the end of American slavery would not have occurred without the participation of people of faith, white and black, rich and poor. It was the Christian church which laid the tracks for an invisible yet viable Underground Railroad. Escaping slavery in Kentucky, safe haven was granted in Ohio at Concord Presbyterian Church and Cincinnati’s Zion Baptist Church; in Michigan at Blissfield Presbyterian and in Chicago at Quinn Chapel. Twelfth Baptist Church of New Bedford, Massachusetts,

**“The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’ But...the good Samaritan reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’”**

*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

with pastor Rev. Leonard A. Grimes became known as “The Fugitive Slave Church.” Christians served as underground conductors and risked their own freedom and put their lives on the line to serve the God of the Exodus. The executive leadership of the Civil Rights Movement was dominated by Christian clergy who partnered with Christian foot soldiers. The headquarters of the movement was in southern African American churches that were the target of frequent bombings. The North Carolina Moral Monday movement continues that tradition; it is dominated by people of faith. The tradition of offering refuge to the refugee found life in the 1980s sanctuary movement and does so even today in sanctuary churches.

Union Presbyterian Seminary has been shaped by answering the call to public witness in a state which was overtly racist in its response to integration. Union President Brian K. Blount reported in his 2015 Sprunt Lecture how in 1937 Samuel Govan Stevens became Union’s first African-American graduate despite the fact that the year before the state passed the 1936 Dovell Act granting scholarships for black college students to be educated out of state. Professor Ernest Trice Thompson encouraged Christian involvement in current issues. In the March 21st, 1949 issue of *The Presbyterian Outlook*, he wrote a Bible study arguing that racism was unbiblical. In 1965, to fight school desegregation, Virginia Senator Henry F. Byrd, Sr. called for “massive resistance to prevent a single Negro child from entering any white school.” That same year the Union Board of Trustees unanimously adopted *A Brief Statement of the Practice of the Seminary*

*in Educating Negro Students*, which recommended admitting and housing all qualified students regardless of “racial origin”: “The Christian Scriptures indicate that racial distinctions have no place within the life and fellowship of Christian believers...there is no alternative but to offer to qualified Negro students the full facilities of our Seminary as they prepare themselves for leadership within the life of the Church.” In 1960 Union students accepted a challenge from Virginia Union seminarians to march in downtown Richmond to protest Jim Crow segregation. This resulted in the howls of both community and seminary supporters, many threatening to withdraw financial support. After 196 years of existence, Union became the first Presbyterian seminary to call an African American president with the inauguration of the Reverend Dr. Brian K. Blount on May 7th, 2007.

There is risk in this work, but sometimes the risk is found in what will happen if we do not do this service of love. On April 3, 1968, on the eve of his assassination, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech. He said, “The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’ But...the good Samaritan reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’”

The church is called to follow the example of Christ Jesus our Lord, to be identified by a ministry of teaching, preaching and healing as modeled by our living savior, Christ Jesus our Lord. Ω





# Union's Alex Evans is tested police chaplain

BY JOE SLAY

It was Sunday morning, less than a week after the April 16, 2007 massacre of 32 students and teachers at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. A CNN reporter turned to **Alex Evans** (M.Div.'87), then chaplain to the Blacksburg Police Department, and asked him: "Well, preacher, what are you going to tell your congregation this morning?"

Evans, who was then serving as pastor at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, was not a stranger to sudden violence. That past fall, at 4 a.m. on another Sunday morning, police had pulled him into a bloody incident where an escaped prisoner had shot his way out of a hospital emergency room, killing a security guard, and later, a sheriff's deputy.

Now, in the wake of the Tech shootings, Evans faced gut-wrenching conversations with those who had been in or near the Norris Hall shootings, visits with grief-stricken families, and two shooting-related funerals in his own church. And, there was the toll on the police...the often invisible effects of violence on those whose jobs really don't allow them to "feel" what they're going through.

This firsthand awareness of what police experience with lack of support and counseling encouraged Evans to

*Alex Evans (above) is flanked by Detective John Walker and Sergeant Carol Adams of the Richmond Police Department.*

***“We ask our cops to do a lot of things. They find themselves in unspeakable situations. We have become a culture of fear and violence, and police need resources to deal with the emotional effects of that reality.”***

create, with fellow Blacksburg police chaplain Tommy McDearis and some police officers, the Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP).

“We ask our cops to do a lot of things,” said Evans. “They find themselves in unspeakable situations. We have become a culture of fear and violence, and police need resources to deal with the emotional effects of that reality. They need to stay healthy and whole, and we need to respond to that need.”

**Eric Skidmore** (M.Div.’90), a fellow Union Seminary graduate, had himself started the South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program. He came to Blacksburg and encouraged Evans to start a similar program in Virginia.

By 2009, VALEAP was a reality. The first year’s participants in a 3-day Post Critical Incident Seminar included 25 police officers who were still dealing with the personal aftershocks of the Tech shootings.

At least 400 police officers have attended the free-of-charge conferences held since 2009 by all-volunteer VALEAP. VALEAP’s largest funding source in recent years is the Peacemaking Fund of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.

Said Evans, “A ‘critical incident’ can be the shooting of a cop’s partner, a violent car wreck, child abuse, any number of things. One attendee said, ‘I shot someone. My department sent me here for that, but that’s not what bothers me. There was a car wreck years ago, and I saw this kid...and I can’t get him out of my mind.’”

“At the conference, there are lectures on trauma, family issues, alcoholism and addiction,” said Evans. “Cops sit around a table, and each one takes 15 or 20 minutes and describes the critical incident he or she experienced. It’s cops talking to cops; cops helping cops.”

“There is a growing need for this,” Evans said. “We started with one conference a year, and it filled up immediately. If we had more funding, we’d go to three or four. It’s a safe space. And it’s a sacred space.”

There’s a session titled “The Search for Meaning,” where participants can talk about the effect their experience may have had on their lives, their psyche, and their desire to go to work.

“It’s a chance for cops to come together and find support from one another and from those who understand the rigors and trauma of police work. It’s a chance to say, ‘Bad things happen. God understands. And we keep living by faith, and that’s hard to find sometimes.’ Trauma affects your sleep, your daily life and relationships, your sense of God, and your faith, no matter what your faith is.”

On that Sunday morning in 2007, after the Tech shootings, Evans was able to tell the CNN reporter what he would say to his church.

“I told him it would be Psalm 46...‘God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.’”

“All through the ages, people have suffered, and God is our help. That is what we say.”  $\Omega$

*Alex Evans (M.Div.’87) is pastor at Second Presbyterian Church in Richmond, VA, and chairman of the board of trustees of Union Presbyterian Seminary.*

# Making a difference: The Missionary Emergency Fund

BY JOE SLAY

It is tempting to think of nations in terms of their economic and military power, and history books pay homage to the great epochs and empires. But it is equally true that in faraway and sometimes unheralded places, world-changing events can occur, in numbers modest enough to fit around a dinner table. First-century Palestine. Sixteenth-century Wittenberg. Twenty-first century Ghana.

It is a miracle that Ghana even exists. By the early 1800s, more than six million Africans had been enslaved and shipped to the New World from the castle prisons lining Ghana and the West African coast. More recently, the country has been buffeted by rising and falling prices for its minerals and oil and has endured the inexorable inflows and outflows of West Africans seeking to make a living from those industries.

Somehow, over the centuries and most likely through the sustaining work of modest numbers, Ghana has emerged as a nation of great strength and faith. At least 72 percent of the nation identifies as Christian, a mix of Protestant, Pentecostal/Charismatic, and Catholic.

There is something to be learned and something to be shared when members of the church in America and the church in Ghana meet.

Every two years, since 1980, the Missionary Emergency Fund has made possible the Ghana Travel Seminar, a dynamic and vital part of the curriculum at Union Presbyterian Seminary. This support has made it possible for the school to send students and faculty to Ghana to learn from its people, its churches, and its culture.

The numbers on the trip are modest...five one year, ten another...but the memories are rich, and the encounters are life-changing.

Said **Allysen Schaaf** (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'14), "I came home inspired to do greater things for my own community after witnessing the many ministries Ghanaian ministers have set up to meet the educational, health, and spiritual needs of their community."

*continued on page 19*



The 2016 Ghana Travel Seminar led by **John Vest**, visiting assistant professor of evangelism, (far left) and **Karen-Marie Yust**, Josiah P. and Anne Wilson Rowe Professor of Christian Education, (far right) prepares to leave from Watts Hall. Students **Emily Krudys** (M.Div.'17), **Eric Koenig** (M.Div.'16; Th.M.'17), and **Maegan Norman** are pictured.



Kakum National Park is one of Ghana's most beautiful natural resources and home to a treetop canopy walk that affords spectacular views of the park. **Eric Koenig** (above) makes his way across the swaying bridge between platforms.

# PURPOSE. PHILANTHROPY. LEGACY.

by Richard S. Reynolds III

“Generosity, kindness, love are like the sun  
that lights the garment of flowers  
worn by the glad earth.”

—Julia Louise Reynolds

The spirit of these words poignantly reflects what my grandmother Julia Louise believed was important and how that philosophy influenced her life.

In the early 1900s, when they were both very young, my grandfather Richard S. (RS) Reynolds heard a beautiful girl singing in a church choir near Bristol, VA. Then and there, he knew Julia Louise would become his wife. They married in 1904 and spent the next 50 years creating a business and building a family together. Little did they know they would create a legacy that would last their entire lifetime and even beyond.

Growing up, I remember my grandmother’s warmth and contagious enthusiasm for anything she put her heart into. Her stories took us to other places and her poetry reflected her inspiring and purposeful spirit. My grandfather was a man of tremendous intellect and strength of character, who created a major industrial corporation and, in doing so, broke the aluminum monopoly in the United States.

Creative, faithful, and resilient visionaries for the future, they lived lives filled with purpose and achievement.

The Reynolds legacy began back in the 1800s with Abram David Reynolds (AD), a devout Methodist and my great-grandfather. After he survived the civil war at a very young age, AD attended a week-long revival in Bristol, VA, where he responded to the “altar call” each night. It originated at the Presbyterian Church (my great-grandmother was a Presbyterian) and ended at the Methodist Church, where he had long fostered his Christian faith. During this week-long revival, AD had a conversion, an epiphany defined by the Greeks, as a “Vision of God,” and declared it “as the most precious gift ever bestowed on mortal man.”

This revelation was the catalyst for his founding of Missionary Emergency Fund (MEF) in 1920, to perpetuate the ministries of both Presbyterian and Methodist congregations, providing scholarships, supporting missionary work, and facilitating missions around the world. He believed he had been “hand-picked” to make a difference in the world and his vision, his entrepreneurial spirit, and business success created opportunities for him to do this. This spirit of commitment and purpose was passed to the next generation and inspired my grandfather to continue the legacy.

The Richard S. Reynolds Foundation, founded by Julia Louise in 1955 after my grandfather’s death, honors her husband’s accomplishments and continues the vision both devoutly shared: strengthening communities and supporting future generations. The foundation works in dedicated partnership with Union Presbyterian Seminary to further those goals.

Today, generations later, their legacy continues to recognize students who are passionate about sharing the Gospel at home and around the world through the mission and vision of Union Presbyterian Seminary. Those of us associated with the foundation know that in supporting the seminary, we are fulfilling our grandparents’ wishes. Ω



Richard S. (RS) and Julia Louise Reynolds

*Richard S. Reynolds III, the oldest grandson of RS and Julia Louise Reynolds, shares memories about his family and the Foundation’s integral support of Union Presbyterian Seminary.*

The biannual trip provides an extraordinary range of activities that begin well before boarding a plane.

There is a series of research-based discussions and required readings before leaving the United States and follow-up discussions and reports afterwards. Experiences on the trip are recorded in written personal logs, photos, and video.

In Ghana, professors and church leaders lecture on the history of Christianity in Ghana, Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in that country, African Christianity and enculturation, gender issues in the Ghanaian context, African drumming and dancing, and the mission of the church in Ghana.

The group visits the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church in Ghana (PCG) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) and PCG and EPC educational institutions to get a sense of the educational ministries in which Presbyterians are engaged.

“Like many of the students, I traveled to Ghana for the first time on this seminar,” said President Brian K. Blount, a member of the 2014 trip.

“Though I was one of the leaders of the seminar and the professor of record, I learned as much as my students and was equally inspired and enriched by the interactions with church leaders, seminary staff, and Ghanaian citizens.”

He continues: “This exchange has developed a strong alumni pool of ministers and church leaders in Ghana. Our seminar was able to meet with a substantial number of these alums during our journey. Renewing connections with our alums is, and will continue to be, a valuable component of the travel seminar.”

The rich immersion in Ghanaian culture and life included side trips to explore environmental, historical, artistic, and health and medical aspects of the vibrant nation.

“During our visits with a “cured lepers” village and a community self-advocacy group for the aging,” said **Rick Carlson** (Ph.D.’83), “I felt a sense of injustice but admired the strength and courage they seemed to bring with them to our meetings.”

Coming home, participants have been moved to raise funds to support a clinic that is part of the ministry of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana providing health and obstetric services in the remote Volta region in eastern Ghana where hospital facilities are not available. It is a modest number in a sometimes forgotten corner, with people they did not know before...changing the world.

“I cannot imagine my life now without the friends I made,” said Allysen Schaaf. “I left a piece of my heart in Ghana.” [Ω](#)



The travel seminar took classes on African dancing and drumming at the University of Ghana.



The Ghana Travel Seminar provides students with an opportunity to learn from the people, churches, and cultures of Ghana and to explore theological education and evangelism in an African context.

## Alums aid in hurricane efforts *continued from page 7*



Three weeks after the storm hit, a machine was brought in to keep the sanctuary at a constant 126 degrees. That serves the purpose of killing bacteria and drying it out, which could take six months to a year.



"The last two years, we've had so-called 500-year floods in the neighborhood," Burnham said. "This one is 20 times worse as far as the number of people affected. It was like a 40,000-year flood."

In his 10 years as pastor of St. John's Presbyterian Church in Houston, **JON BURNHAM** (M.Div.'94) has been no stranger to flooding. Until Hurricane Harvey hit in early September 2017, his church had been unscathed. This time the category 5 storm flooded the sanctuary rendering it unusable for at least six months. This was the fourth major flood to hit the area since 2008.

Burnham and his wife were stranded in their home as five feet of rain fell in two days. They couldn't go anywhere for seven days since all the streets were flooded. Thankfully, their home was not damaged and their power stayed on.

Burnham has been going around his community to see if there's anything he can do for his church members. He was sitting in the house of his former church secretary recently. Her house had flooded, and she was meeting with contractors with a blank look on her face. He said that is typical of how the situation is surreal and sad.

One of the good things to come from the storm is the cooperation of the faith community. Burnham said the alliance is strong between all churches and when a disaster hits, the relationship is already there.

"Houston is the most diverse city in the United States. Every religion on the face of the earth is within a 20-minute drive of my church. The faith community in this city is extremely well connected and plays well together," he said.

The most pressing needs are money and prayers. Burnham's church needs \$50,000 to pay its insurance deductible for repairs. Many residents need help with basic living expenses because their flood-damaged workplaces are closed.

You can help Burnham's church by mailing a donation to: St. John's Presbyterian Church, Attn: ACTS Fund, 5020 West Bellfort Ave. Houston, TX 77035 [Ω](#)



**LANA HEATH MARTINEZ** (M.Div.'16) is helping Richmonders from Puerto Rico and Mexico collect much needed items—bottled water, flashlights, batteries, baby wipes, disinfectants, canned food, toilet paper, blankets, pillows, canned milk, and more. They can be dropped off at the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, 1716 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23223. These items will be delivered directly to churches in devastated neighborhoods for distribution. Lana is the Welcoming All coordinator for the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. [Ω](#)

**JANET RUSSELL** (M.Div.'92), pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, CA, reports that the church has sent \$4,500 for total hurricane relief to be divided among Harvey, Irma, and Maria. "Although First Pres is a relatively small church (146 members) in a poor rural location, we are pleased to be able to share what we have with those whose need is greater than ours." [Ω](#)

**Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria along with our gratitude and admiration for those on the front lines. We say a special prayer for our sister seminary, The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.**



# No Matter What

The preschooler's face was ashen, and he made no sound. He opened his left hand. A crumpled, bright orange foil wrapper glittered in his palm, proclaiming that his mother and I, who thought we had gathered up all the hard candy left on our table by our server moments earlier, were almost right and terribly wrong.

I found myself on my knees on the floor with the child. I placed him with his back solidly against my chest and wrapped my arms around him. I began a series of quick thrusts on his abdomen. This is not happening, I thought. This is not happening.

His mother, holding our sleeping newborn, kneeled in front of us and with her free hand steadied the frightened youngster. She asked for a 911 call with her eyes fastened on him. Several voices responded affirmatively. She told our preschooler that candy was stuck in his throat and that we were going to get it out so he would feel better. She told him to look at her and only at her, no matter what.

I continued to try to dislodge the candy but to no avail. Suddenly my mind's eye saw a closed door at the end of a tunnel, the child standing before it. Something was on the other side of the door, pressing against it, firmly, consistently. This cannot be happening, I thought. This cannot be happening.

As his mother continued to speak to and steady him, nearby movement caused her to glance up. A woman was leaning our way, balancing herself over a walker which had worn, black tape wrapped around its contoured grips. Her blue hands were stretching toward our preschooler. She seized his left arm. How can this be happening? I thought. How can this be happening?

"Give me the other," the unknown woman said forcefully. "Give me his other arm." The child's mother immediately lifted his other arm toward her. The small hand on the end of it dangled like a bird falling out of the sky. The closed door at the end of the tunnel appeared in my mind again, our child standing before it, something unseen still pushing against it.

The unknown woman raised our preschooler's arms into the air. "Now," she said. "Try now!"

We heard the pebble of candy strike the floor and skip to a stop. The youngster gasped. His mother, still holding his infant sibling in one arm, scooped him up with her other and rose. He burrowed his face into her shoulder, taking in gulps of breath in loud heaves and beginning to sob. She comforted him. The faint wail of a siren called out from a distance.

Our server was the first to speak remembered words. "She saved us," she said. "She saved us." She bowed her head into her bib apron and leaned on my wife, who received her as if she were her own and kissed her trembling brow. Someone advised us to sit down for a while. Someone brought us ice water in amber, plastic tumblers. Someone offered to hold our awakened infant. Someone offered to assist with our server's other tables for a few minutes. Someone told us giving children hard candy could choke them.

By the time we regained our wits, the woman who had saved us had left. We agreed I should hurry after her while we gave our preschooler a few more quiet moments to recover.

She was in the parking lot, a sloping expanse on the east side of the restaurant paved with disintegrating asphalt and crushed, sun-bleached seashells that crackled underfoot. She was maneuvering her walker skillfully across the broken surface. Two people were with her, friends it appeared.

She was gracious as we spoke. She introduced her friends and they were warm in their greeting and good wishes. She said that before they had left they had heard the emergency medical responders assuring us the child

**"It's Abel, no less. He's looking for brother Cain. Wants to see who will help go find him. Wants brother Cain to come home now, no matter what."**

would be fine. I asked her how she had known how to help. She responded that her late husband had been bedridden for many years. “Meals could turn hard,” she said. “I learned what to do.”

I told her I was sorry for her loss. I asked her if my wife and I could have her name and a mailing address or some form of contact information. She gave her first name but didn’t think anything else was necessary. She said she no longer lived at home, but did not explain what that meant. Her friends were attentive and silent.

“I wish we could thank you,” I finally said, meaning it but thinking we must be nearly finished talking. The woman looked me over, drawing it seemed to me more than one conclusion. “Alright,” she replied. “Alright. I used to see things when I helped my husband. Did you see anything, an opening, a gate, something like that?”

I was taken aback. “An opening?” I managed to say after some delay. “Yes,” she said. “Some kind of opening. Or maybe not.”

I hesitated. She and her friends waited. A perfect breeze arose and washed over us. I wanted to say no and goodbye. “I saw a door,” I said, too tired to lie.

The woman who had saved us moved her walker forward and nested it into balance among the remains of pavement and glistening patches of shells around her. She took a careful step and paused. “I think perhaps you did,” she said, her eyes studying her walker. “Yes, I think that you did.”

Maybe it was her. Maybe it had all been too much. Maybe inhibitions are the last thing on your mind when first you understand that a candy-sized mistake is all it takes to summon instantly out of the darkness a squadron of demons whose wings are destruction and whose will is oblivion and who apparently have a hall pass from providence. I don’t know. But I felt compelled, or perhaps free, to make a request. “Please,” I asked. “What’s pushing on the door? Do you know what’s pushing on the door?”

The woman who had saved us shifted her walker around far to the side in several increments and then oriented herself to it in one experienced movement. She was leaving. Her friends were leaving with her. “Abel,” she said over her shoulder. “It’s Abel, no less. He’s looking for brother Cain. Wants to see who will help go find him. Wants brother Cain to come home now, no matter what.”

At these words, the breeze thickened into the scent of rain and unmet promises, inciting a veil of dust to rise and spiral around the unwashed feet of the three friends walking away together. Banks of darkening clouds now hurrying by overhead like bruises late for Judgment Day marked the flesh of these companions with wave upon wave of shadow. Meandering shafts of gray sunlight broke through the heavens and stenciled the silence of the world. It was in this moment that the stained ground on which these friends walked as one trembled and contracted in travail with the ignited celestial prerogative, the flames of whose scandalous recompense—admitting to no adjudication, breaking and healing, terrible and merciful—prevail, enkindling, without exception or exclusion, in life and in death, all things, those things they have heretofore consumed and made new, those things they have yet to consume and make new, no matter what, no matter what. [Ω](#)



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*E. Carson Brisson is associate professor of Bible and biblical languages on the Charlotte campus.*



# Praying for the enemy

Members of the Union community joined demonstrators protesting the August 12, 2017, white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, VA. Christopher Tweel reflects on what they saw, heard, and learned amid the violent clashes.

By Christopher Tweel

I made the decision to attend the rally as soon as I heard that there was a call for pastors to come and support the counter-protesters in a peaceful way. Some thought it would be more helpful to stay clear of the situation, but I didn't find that to be true. Pastors answer and are responsible to a different call. Protests, especially demonstrations like this one, need the pastors' presence; to wear the robe, the collar, the stole, whatever, and simply walk around as a powerful witness to the faithful and the hateful alike. It sends an important message to bear witness to peace in the face of rank hate.

When we arrived I was surprised the Neo-Nazi groups and racists that were gathered there were as heavily armed as they were. From the first moment I saw them walk by the church that was our home base on the way to the park across the street, I knew their intentions. They carried assault rifles, handguns, homemade shields, helmets, riot padding, vests, clubs and metal poles. They were girded for war.

Our part was largely to be the active arms of the church in offering water, pastoral care, food, safety and love to everyone who was there working against racism and fascism. It was good work and had the feel of a field hospital. As the day and the violence wore on, the presence of the pastors and clergy were more deeply felt. And there was singing.

Standing at the barricades as I was called racial slurs and screamed at, I watched one protester get bloodied by a group of men twice her size before any of us could rush over. I saw the KKK pull out a handgun and point it at the crowd only 20 feet from where we stood. And still, we sang. We stayed safe and gathered people into the church several times for a lockdown, but always re-emerged to tend to more wounded folks, give more water, hold more hands, and sing again together.

It was meaningful for pastors to be there in numbers because a lot of these racists and Nazis invoke scripture and the name of God to support their broken and utterly abhorrent ideology. It meant something to the other protesters that the true church was there, standing with them, giving them water and food, and kindness. When people entered the church boundaries you could sense a small release. It was also meaningful for us to pray for the enemy. Christ commands that we have love for our enemies and never has that verse had a more powerful effect than when as the enemies of God and humanity surrounded churches, chanted hate, and drew weapons on new friends we had made. Even though it made me sick to my stomach at times, we prayed for them. Ω



Christopher Tweel (M.Div.'14) (pictured above at left) with Lana Heath De Martinez (M.Div.'16) and Union library staff member Jay McNeal. McNeal is associate pastor for Christian education at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA.



PHOTOS COURTESY JAY McNEAL.

# Alumni Notes

## CELEBRATIONS

JOSEPH SLANE (D.Min.'81) married Beverly Brasell on February 18, 2017.

OS BARNES (M.Div.'82) married Lee Ann Grace on June 3, 2017, at the First United Methodist Church, Tupelo, MS.

WILLIAM D. EISENHOWER (Ph.D.'85) received his Master's Degree in Bioethics from Loma Linda University in 2016.

LISA WILSON (Th.M.'93) and ROY MARTIN (D.Min.'83) were married on August 19 at Cove Presbyterian Church in Coveville, VA.

TROY BRASWELL (M.Div.'06) is working at The Counseling Source, serving long-term residents in nursing homes. He will graduate with a Master of Arts in Counseling Ministries in May 2018.

TJ REMALEY (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'14) and his wife, Megan, rejoice in the birth of

their first child, a son, Layton Jeffrey Remaley, on April 17, 2017.

## TRANSITIONS

ROBERT E. (BOB) BUTTON (M.Div.'67) began a new interim pastorate at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church in Martinsville, VA, on October 1, 2016

KITCH SHATZER (M.Div.'78) has retired from chaplain at the United Presbyterian Home in Washington, IA, by the Presbytery of East Iowa at the end of January 2017.

WAYNE COLE (M.Div.'78) retired March 31, 2017, from serving as associate pastor at First Presbyterian in Greer, SC. He was recognized as honorably retired by Foothills Presbytery on April 30.

JOSEPH SLANE (D.Min.'81) was honorably retired on January 31, 2017, from the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley after serving 29 years as the pastor of Southminster Church in Birmingham, AL.

KIRBY LAWRENCE HILL (D.Min.'84) will be serving at Abington Presbyterian Church in Abington, PA.

D. KYLE ALLEN (D.Min.'85) will be serving at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, VA.

WILLIAM D. EISENHOWER (Ph.D.'85) has recently been named to two hospital ethics committees: Loma Linda University Hospital, Loma Linda, CA, and Eisenhower Medical Center, Rancho Mirage, CA.

ANITA BERNHARDT (M.Div.'88) is serving as interim senior pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Erie, PA.

JAMES BERNHARDT (M.Div.'88; D.Min.'07) is currently serving as senior pastor of Wayside Presbyterian Church in Erie, PA.

BOB INSKEEP (M.Div.'94) is serving as part-time stated supply St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Henderson, NC, and preaching at Warrenton Presbyterian.

KATHRYN (KATHY) BEACH (M.Div.'97) has accepted a call as pastor at the Ruple Memorial Presbyterian Church in Blowing Rock, NC.

LORI BEACH (M.A.'98; M.Div.'01) is now serving as pastor at Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church in Toano, VA.

TERRY MENEFFEE GAU (M.A./M.Div.'98) landed a role in the highly acclaimed 2016 film "Loving," that chronicles the landmark 1967 Loving v. Virginia case that invalidated state laws prohibiting interracial marriage. Gau only had one line in the movie, but it's a role and a movie of which she was proud to be a part. She played the secretary to a Constitutional law professor at Georgetown University named Chester Antieau. In her scene, the lawyer who represents the Lovings meets with Antieau and another Constitutional lawyer and the three of them come up with the strategy that will ultimately bring victory.

This was a personal role for her. "Virginia is the battleground where the miscegenation law is struck down because two people fall in love with each other...Love wins is the ultimate bottom line," Gau said. "In the Christian tradition, it's the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the idea that Jesus is the incarnation of God come to Earth to show us what love looks like."

Gau said the movie shows that you may have sacrificed or have been treated poorly all these times in the past, but in the end, love will always win. [Ω](#)



Terry Menefee Gau

TIMOTHY (TEE) BODDIE (Ed.D.'03) is currently serving as the general secretary of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

PAUL SEELMAN (M.Div.'03) is the senior pastor at Huguenot Memorial Church in Pelham, NY.

JOANN STAEBLER (M.Div.'03) was ordained on September 18, 2016 by the National Capital Presbytery. She is currently serving as stated supply pastor at PALS Church in Bealeton, VA.

DARIS BULTENA (D.Min.'05) has been called as the general presbyter for the Presbytery of Tropical Florida.

NATHAN LAMB (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'05) received a new call to serve as designated pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Pipestone, MN.

DANIEL LEWIS (M.Div.'05) is now the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, NC.

ARAM BAE (M.A.C.E.'06) has received a call to be the associate pastor for youth and mission at First Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, VA.

CHRISTINA TUTTEROW (M.Div.'06) has received a call to serve as interim pastor at Bream Memorial Presbyterian Church in Charleston, WV.

YONAS YIGEZU (M.Div.'06) was elected to be the next president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church at its 20th General Assembly.

GREG BOLT (M.Div.'07) and his wife, HEIDI BOLT (M.Div.'07), have been called as designated co-pastors at First Presbyterian Church in Red Wing, MN. Their installation date was May 7, 2017.

MARY ANNE WELCH (M.Div.'08) received the Doctor of Ministry degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary on June 3, 2016. She is currently serving Sharon Presbyterian Church in Farmington, IA.



Five laptop computers refurbished by **Charlie Pratt** (M.Div.'17) were delivered to the Protestant Center for Pastoral Education in Central America (CEDEPCA), a PC(USA) mission partner in Guatemala, in August 2017. Delivered by **Mary Jane Winter** (M.Div.'76), one of the computers was donated by her and the other four were funded by Pratt's ministry.

Photo credit: Karen Stanley (M.A.'98).

ELIZABETH LOVELL MILFORD (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'09) has accepted a call to serve as pastor of Heritage Presbyterian Church in Acworth, GA.

DAVID CSINOS (Th.M.'10) is the assistant professor of practical theology at Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

AMELIE WILMER (M.Div.'10) is the new priest-in-charge at the historic St. John's Episcopal Church in Richmond, VA.

JESS COOK (M.Div.'12) is now serving as More Light Presbyterian's new program and communications manager.

GEORGE (HOWARD) DUDLEY (M.Div.'12) is serving as head of staff at First Presbyterian Church in Dunn, NC.

JAMES TANETI (Ph.D.'12) was ordained as teaching elder by the New Hope Presbytery on December 11, 2016.

THOMAS (TOMMY) TAYLOR (M.Div.'14) was ordained June 5, 2016 and accepted a call as pastor to First Presbyterian Church in Seminole, TX.

ELIZABETH EASON NIX (M.Div.'17) is serving as director of Christian education at Johns Island Presbyterian Church in Johns Island, SC.



**Matthew Whong** (M.Div.'63; D.Min.'80) returned from a mission trip to Korea and Myanmar. He is pictured above at Yangon National University in Myanmar where he lectured to faculty members on the subject of international leadership.



Co-moderators of the 2016 General Assembly Jan Edmiston (left) and Denise Anderson (center) with **Gary Charles** (D. Min.'80), pastor of Coveseville Presbyterian Church in Virginia, at the 1000 Ministers March for Justice on August 28 in Washington, D.C.

## RETIREMENTS

AL REYNOLDS (M.C.E.'60) retired from his position as reference librarian at Frederick Community College in Frederick, MD.

JAMES (JIM) MCCLANAHAN (M.Div.'80; Th.M.'81; Ph.D.'88) was honorably retired on October 31, 2016, in St. Andrew's Presbytery of Oxford, MS.

**Update your contact information.** Have you moved? Changed your e-mail? Send us your news! Digital photos are welcome!

**Please inform us at:**  
 Alumni Office  
 Union Presbyterian Seminary  
 3401 Brook Road  
 Richmond, VA 23227

**Or e-mail:**  
 Director of Alumni Development  
 W. Clay Macaulay  
 cmacaulay@upsem.edu  
 Phone: 804-278-4382

This issue of *Focus* includes information received through September 15, 2017.



## On the Shelf

RICHARD LYON MORGAN (M.Div.'53; Th.M.'56; Ph.D.'66) and his brother have published a book on their family member, Congressman Matthew Lyon of Vermont. The book, entitled *Resist Tyranny: Matthew Lyon Defender of Liberty*, tells of Lyon's advocacy for free speech and freedom of the press when those freedoms were being denied by then President John Adams. It is available through Amazon.

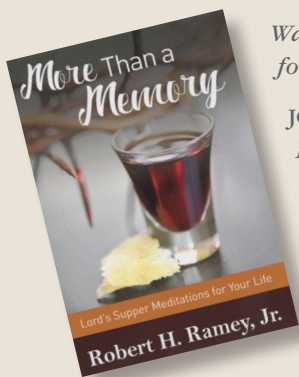
ROBERT H. RAMSEY, JR. (B.D.'54; Th.M.'55; D.Min.'74) published *More Than a Memory: Lord's Supper Meditations for Your Life*, Ramey Publishing Company, Danville, VA.

PETER STEINKE (M.A.'67) has self-published two books he has written, *Teaching Fish To Walk: Church Systems and Adaptive Challenge* and *To Make A Difference: Preparing Your Congregation for a New Day*. Both are available from the New Vision Press website.

JOHN F. HELGESON (M.Div.'74) has published a book on interim ministry entitled *Freedom and Interim Ministry: 12 Freedoms of the Interim*.

PHILIP W. JACOBS (M.Div.'79) has published his fourth book, *Joseph the Carpenter: His Portrayal in Literature and Art from the Second to the Ninth Centuries*. His article, "The Angelic and Didactic Roles of the Virgin Mary in Lyric VII of the Old English Advent Lyrics," was published in the *Toronto Journal of Theology*.

MILTON WINTER (M.Div.'80; Ph.D.'88) has published a bicentennial volume for Mississippi Presbyterians, *Citadels of Zion: A History of Mississippi Presbyterians*. He recently retired after 28 years as pastor in Holly Springs and now makes his home in Memphis, TN.



GARY YAMASAKI (Ph.D.'95) has published a book entitled *Insights from Filmmaking for Analyzing Biblical Narrative*. It is one of the two inaugural volumes of the Reading the Bible in the 21st Century series by Fortress Press. MARK ALAN POWELL (Ph.D.'88) is the series editor.

ANDY EDWARDS (M.Div.'01; Th.M.'02) has been awarded the 2016 Colin Gunton Memorial Essay Prize for his article, "Conscience and the Eschatological Self: The Retrieval of Teleology in Karl Barth's Moral Theology of Divine Command," which will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *International Journal of Systematic Theology*.

ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN (M.Div.'09) published a short story entitled "I Know Queen Elizabeth" in *Intima, The Journal for Narrative Medicine*.

WILLIAM ROBINSON (Ph.D.'15) recently published his dissertation, *Metaphor, Morality and the Spirit in Romans 8:1-17* which is available through Amazon and the Society of Biblical Literature bookstore.



# In Remembrance

*Well done, good and faithful servant.*

*Matthew 25:21*

## 1940s

PETER COSBY (B.D.'40; Th.M.'43)  
September 17, 2016. †

MAXINE DUNLAP MCINTYRE (B.R.E.'41)  
December 17, 2017. †

ELEANOR LEWIS MULLIGAN (B.R.E.'41)  
January 2, 2017. †

FRANCES QUERY (M.R.E.'41)  
February 26, 2017. †

HARRIET STIMSON DAVIS (M.R.E.'42)  
February 7, 2017. †

GRAHAM MCCHESENEY (B.D.'45;  
Th.M.'53) October 29, 2016. †

ROSANNA BARNES FOUNTAIN  
(M.R.E.'46) August 7, 2017. †

GRACE WILLIAMS GATHER (PSCE '46-  
'47) July 12, 2017. †

JOSEPH OWEN (B.D.'46)  
June 17, 2017. †

JESSIE NEWBOLD KENNEDY (M.R.E.'47)  
December 18, 2016. †

ERNEST LEE STOFFEL (B.D.'47)  
November 22, 2016. †

H. BRUCE FISHER (M.Div.'48)  
September 27, 2016. †

GRACE THOMPSON (B.R.E.'48)  
February 17, 2017. †

MARTHA STRIBLING TROUT (M.A.'48)  
November 1, 2016. †

## 1950s

HELEN BROWN HALL (B.R.E.'51)  
February 19, 2017. †

ROBERT PARK (M.Div.'51)  
April 24, 2017. †

HERBERT MEZA (B.D.'52)  
February 9, 2017. †

WILLIAM BROWN (B.D.'53)  
July 22, 2017. †

MARY FAITH CARSON (M.A.'53;  
B.D.'61) January 3, 2017. †

L. RANDOLPH HARRISON (M.Div.'53)  
May 18, 2017. †

CHARLES KIRBY (M.Div.'53)  
February 5, 2017. †

STEWART MCMURRAY (B.D.'53;  
Th.M.'56) March 6, 2017.

EUGENE ENSLEY (B.D.'54; Th.M.'60;  
D.Min.'81) November 29, 2016. †

H. GARY JONES (M.Div.'54; Th.M.'56)  
March 27, 2017. †

J. WHITNER KENNEDY (B.D.'54)  
December 16, 2016. †

JACK STEVENSON (B.D.'55)  
October, 2016. †

BETTY JO WALKER (M.R.E.'55)  
July 19, 2017. †

H. EARL WOODALL (B.D.'55)  
May 3, 2017. †

BETTIE KERSEY GORDON (M.R.E.'56)  
April 3, 2017. †

D. ELEANOR SANDERS (M.R.E.'56)  
December 29, 2016. †

MABEL HOLT (PSCEÆ57)  
October 4, 2017. †

DANIEL DICKENSON (B.D.'57; Th.M.'63;  
D.Min.'73) June 10, 2017. †

ELIZABETH APPERSON RAMSEY (PSCE  
'56-'57) December 13, 2016. †

EUGENE DAVIS (M.Div.'58)  
October 31, 2016. †

ZEB HOLLER (B.D.'58)  
December, 2016. †

HUGH LEACH (B.D.'58)  
June 22, 2017. †

W. NEWTON TODD (M.Div.'58)  
July 13, 2017. †

J. RICHARD HOLSHOUSER (B.D.'59)  
August 10, 2017. †

ARCHIE FAIRES (B.D.'59)  
April 21, 2017. †

HUGH WINSON (M.Div.'59)  
November 21, 2016. †

## 1960s

THOMAS BIGGS (B.D.'60; M.C.E.'61)  
February 15, 2017. †

JOHN PAGE (B.D.'60)  
January 29, 2017. †

LAWTON POSEY (M.Div.'60)  
October 2, 2016. †

CHARLES HUNTLEY (B.D.'61)  
June 6, 2017. †

ROBERT LEDBETTER (M.Div.'61;  
D.Min.'74) January 8, 2017. †

KATHERINE EISENHART PARSE (PSCE  
'63-'64) February 16, 2017. †

ALICE WARDLAW (M.C.E.'66)  
July 6, 2017. †

FREDRICH SCHILLING (M.Div.'67;  
D.Min.'76) July 20, 2017. †

WILLIAM ABERNATHY (PSCE '67-'68)  
November 1, 2017. †

RICHARD FORBES (M.Div.'68)  
May 20, 2017. †

THOMAS BYRD (B.D.'69)  
May 7, 2017. †

WILLIAM DEPRATER (UTS '69-'70)  
December, 2016. †

## 1970s

HAROLD MANNING ('70-'71)  
July 8, 2017. †

TED DAVID (M.Div.'73)  
June 23, 2017.

DONALD STEELE (M.Div.'73;  
D.Min.'75) October 2, 2016.

WILLIAM STARNES (D.Min.'74)  
November 24, 2016.

A. MARK CONARD (Th.M.'75; Th.D.'79)  
October 18, 2016.

LLOYD JACKSON (D.Min.'75)  
October 20, 2016.

KAREN DUNN MORGAN (M.A.'75)  
April 21, 2017.

GARY AVEN (D.Min.'76)  
January 26, 2017.

DORCAS FOWLER (M.A.'76)  
June 26, 2017.

MICHAEL WRIGHT ('77-'78)  
March 6, 2017.

JAMES BANBURY (D.Min.'80)  
August 23, 2017.

## 1980s

DENNIS HAMM (D.Min.'80)  
February 21, 2017. †

RICHARD CARTER (M.A.'80)  
May 23, 2017. †

PAUL LEE (D.Min.'81)  
November 27, 2016. †

KAREN LONG (M.A.'81)  
December 23, 2017. †

JAMES ROHNE ('86-'87)  
July 28, 2017. †

## 1990s

BARBARA DODD WARD (M.A.'90)  
May 21, 2017. †

KATHLEEN PETTY (M.A.'94)  
May 9, 2017. †

## 2000s

JOSEPH YOUNG (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'04)  
June 30, 2017. †

SCARLETT SAMS (M.Div.'10)  
June 29, 2017. †

DAVID BINDATI (2010-'11)  
December 26, 2016. †

BARBARA ETTA (M.Div.'13)  
January 17, 2017. †

CHARLENE BEETHOVEN, Union-PSCE advisor for United Methodist students from 1998-2011, June 29, 2017. †

JOAN DANIEL, former PSCE registrar, January 27, 2017. †

VIRGINIA C. PAYNE (B.R.E.'48), former ATS/PSCE registrar, February 12, 2017. †

# Leadership Institute

## Upcoming online Pathways to Learning and Leadership courses:

- **January 9 – February 6:** Confronting Racism in the Congregation (Tuesdays)
- **January 11 – February 8:** Administration and Polity (Thursdays)
- **February 20 – March 20:** The Christian Life (Tuesdays)
- **February 22 – March 22:** Pastoral Care (Thursdays)
- **April 10 – May 8:** Mission and Evangelism (Tuesdays)
- **April 12 – May 10:** Preaching the Bible (Thursdays)
- **May 24 – June 21:** Parables of Jesus (Thursdays)

Each course is five weeks long and costs \$100. They are open to church members in any size church, pastors, educators, and those preparing to become Commissioned Ruling Elders.

## Other 2018 Leadership Institute workshops:

- **January 8 - February 5** (at home and online) and **February 6-8** in Charlotte: Worship and Sacraments – this hybrid course meets the requirements for Christian Educator certification in the PC(USA), but is open to anyone who would like to learn more
- **March 7:** Render Unto Caesar – Structuring your terms of call, presented by the PC(USA) Board of Pensions
- **March 8-9:** Growing Into Tomorrow . . . Today – Pre-Retirement seminar from the PC(USA) Board of Pensions
- **March 19 – 22:** Preaching Finances – How do we preach on the sticky subject of stewardship?
- **April 16 – May 14** (at home and online) and **May 15-17** in Richmond: Biblical Interpretation – this hybrid course meets the requirements for Christian Educator certification in the PC(USA), but is open to anyone who would like to learn more

For more information about these and other programs of the Leadership Institute, please visit our website at [www.upsem.edu/leadership-institute](http://www.upsem.edu/leadership-institute).

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**Marilyn Johns** (M.A.C.E.'94)  
Director of Program Development  
The Leadership Institute  
Union Presbyterian Seminary

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FAX 804-278-4360  
[mjohns@upsem.edu](mailto:mjohns@upsem.edu)  
[www.upsem.edu/leadership-institute](http://www.upsem.edu/leadership-institute)



The Leadership Institute sponsored Seminary for a Day, an opportunity for alums, students, and friends of the seminary to experience workshops held by Union professors and others. Keynotes were given by Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship **Rich Voelz** at Union and Professor Luke Powery of Duke Divinity School.



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The Union community gathered on the Quad of the Richmond campus for an Eclipse Party to experience an 88 percent solar eclipse over lunch, fellowship, and scripture. As it reached its maximum, we felt the oppressive summer heat drop several degrees and noticed the brilliant sunlight dim. Pictured is dual degree student **Annie Franklin Arvin** and her husband, Thomas Arvin.

#### IN THIS ISSUE

- The Mission of the Church
- Alums making a difference
- The Gargoyle Speaks