

THE CONCORD

“All News is Conceived and Born in Sin”

February 2016

Luther Seminary

Volume 45, Issue 5

An Open Letter from the Faculty

Dear Luther students, and the broader community,

We, the undersigned faculty, want to affirm the concerns you raised in your letter to the Concord of November 2015. We agree with you that silence equals complicity in ways that are highly problematic for a Christian community.

We remember that Martin Luther teaches in The Large Catechism:

In the second place this commandment [“not to kill”] is violated not only when we do evil, but also when we have the opportunity to do good to our neighbors and to prevent, protect, and save them from suffering bodily harm or injury, but fail to do so. . . Therefore God rightly calls all persons murderers who do not offer counsel or assistance to those in need and peril of body and life [Matthew 25:42-43]. (The Book of Concord, 412)

And as the recent ELCA statement on criminal justice noted:

Racism is central to the deep and abiding problems of the current criminal justice system even though often unacknowledged. The extent to which inequality exists within the system through biased enforcement, adjudication and treatment remains a matter on which further

discernment is needed within this church and this society. It is fair to note, however, that such disparities may favor socially privileged groups that, because of this favor, often do not feel their privilege or understand its reach. (13)

It is far too easy, here on our campus on the hill, to be one such privileged group. We need to open ourselves in love and longing to the deep relationality God has created amongst us. When events such as the killings of Jamar Clark and Philip Quinn, the restraint of a 14 year-old girl at the Mall of America, and many, many other recent brutal interactions between police and our community occur, we must ask about the broader systemic issues at play, and we must bring our full theological resources to bear.

Lutheran theologians remind us that a theology of the cross demands that we “call a thing what it is.” Our participation in white privilege is sinful. Confronting and engaging that sin, seeking forgiveness, repentance, and reconciliation can only deepen our awareness of Christ’s presence and healing work in our lives together.

As we have stated in our recent curriculum revision:

... we recognize that both suffering and sin exist in the world, in our neighbors, and in our-

selves as neighbors. Neighbors offer their disruptive and generative presence to us and bring us to self-reflection as persons in relationship, who live in both brokenness and grace. Through the Holy Spirit we ourselves also become neighbors meeting others who need love, care, healing, justice, and peace. Pedagogically and theologically the curriculum is committed to communal inquiry about God’s promises for the world that come with, for, and from the neighbor

We do not see any way in which we can be faithful to this shared commitment without engaging in clear, open, and profound dialogue about, and action to resist and transform, racial injustice. We are grateful for and impressed by your thoughtful and compassionate witness to the painful realities of racial injustice locally and respect the urgency and compelling nature of your requests.

In your letter, you asked for a series of educational opportunities, and a public statement. As individual faculty, we commit to raising these issues in our classes, as well as in the various committees and other gatherings we attend at Luther. Further, we commit to hosting a public and campus-wide respectful conversation on

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Let’s Talk About...How This Might be Your Fault

EMILY MARTIN
M.DIV. INTERN

Hey you.
Yes, you.
You reading this column.
We need to talk.

It may seem that you’re at a bit of a disadvantage since I’m not there to hear your side of the conversation, but I assure you, I have been listening.

Since November, we at the Concord have been shoving community down your throats. There seems to be this question, played like a broken record, which asks, “What happened to the community here?” And, even being over 200 miles away this year, I think I’ve come up with an answer.

It’s us. We happened to the community here. We seem to have this attitude that community is something that exists in a cloud above us all in the campus buildings, where we just wait for it to rain. And I don’t know about you, but I find this especially ironic, because this institution is for leaders. So what are we doing wrong?

What do the movies, The Matrix, Harry Potter, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, and the Golden Compass, have in common (other than their arguable Christian allegories)? In each of these movies, the leader is chosen. They’re picked and told, “You’re the one.” And perhaps that’s what we’re waiting for. After all, for many of us here, we were approached at one time or another and told that we should go to seminary. I have to break it to you though; this isn’t what the

majority of leadership looks like, or starts off as. Leadership is often an aspect of following dreams uninvited. It’s acting upon a perceived need because it should be done.

I don’t know who coined the phrase, but I’ve heard it said that angels and devils often have the same spine; meaning that sometimes a gift is also a burden. Luther Seminary is no different. The spine in question here, is the number of leaders we have on campus. After all, “Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities.” Most of us show up here on our first day with some leadership qualities already. So, in essence, we formulate this weird version of a bystander effect. The bystander effect typically means that the larger the crowd is, the less likely it is that a person will help a victim of a crime. What we’ve done here is, we’ve gathered so many leaders in one place that it’s adversely affected the quantity of student leadership here on campus.

So, what we’re left with is a campus full of student leaders waiting for their fellow leaders to be leaders and lead them, and thus the cloud of community will cast down a shower of community upon them.

Now, I don’t want to ignore the fact that there are leaders on campus who are giving their time and effort and optimism into creating opportunities for community here. I know this is true because I see the posts on Facebook, and I get the emails from MyLutherNet. And I will be the first to admit that, even when I lived on campus, I would see those events as “just one more thing to do.” I know some of you do too, because you’ve told me. But here’s our call to action, friends. If we’re going to continue with this attitude; this

unwillingness to take a lead, and this unwillingness to take part in others’ solutions... then we no longer get to complain about a lack of community that we’re doing nothing about. It really is this simple.

It comes down to this: there are three categories of people. There are those that are taking the lead. The ones on the front line, creating events, maintaining optimism, and fighting for the community here. There are those that attend these events, the ones that continue to believe in the community here by being participants within it. And there are the ones with no interest in creating or participating in any community-building efforts. Whichever group you find yourself in, is proof of the decisions you make in this community. I close this column by humbly reminding you that whatever decision you do end up making, influences the entire community.

This is most certainly true.

If you would like to be part of the conversation on campus, please email contributions or story ideas to concord@luthersem.edu and we will give you \$20 if we print your article, artwork, or poem. Now, more than ever, we need to all be participating in the conversation about what is happening in the world around us. Join us at the Concord as we look to the future of our newspaper, our school, our country, and the communities we will be sent to.

A Tale of Two Seminaries

JOHN ANSELL,
M.A. SENIOR

At the introduction of Charles Dickens' novel, "A Tale of Two Cities," we find the words "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." These words, of course, continue a story that reflects the different perspectives of aristocracy and peasantry during the French Revolution. However, I also feel these words could be applied to other things. In my time here at Luther, which is five years, I have seen a lot of change, particularly before and after 2012. I would imagine most of the campus has heard stories regarding these times and I feel they are best summed up by those words of Charles Dickens. Whether it is stories about the camaraderie or a mistrusting of the system, there seems to be a wide range of emotions about Luther's recent past. However, I feel that when change occurs on any level, whether it be here at Luther, in the church, or in the world, our reaction can be expressed in the way of it being the best of times and of the worst of times.

As Lutherans, dualistic concepts are nothing new to us, what with our concepts of saint and sinner or law and gospel. However, I may have to go deeper into what I mean with regarding change as being the best of times and worst of times. To start, I will elaborate more on what I would consider the worst of times when it comes to change. The hard nature of change leads to something stopping and something else starting. With the end of something, especially if something is liked or is comforting, the loss becomes personal and painful on an emotional level. Such

change and loss can lead to hardship, difficult decisions, and eventually leaving people in a bitter state. From this perspective then we do feel we are at our worst. At the same time when we encounter ourselves feeling at our worst the changes that occur can bring us to better times. With change there can be new aspects introduced which become valued for the future. Change can also introduce new, and possibly better, opportunities for the future.

As I finish my time at Luther Seminary I feel, in regard to the change that has occurred, we find ourselves telling a tale of two seminaries. Yes, over the five years I have been here there have been some difficult situations about which people still talk. The overall change to the whole institution has given way to a loss of how we used to do things around here. However, with such a change comes many new and exciting things that are happening. Furthermore, I find we who are in the here and now are able to lay the foundations of traditions that will be cherished in the future. The tale of loss regarding the past few years can make Luther Seminary to be at its worst time but at the same time the tale of all that is new to come can make it the best time.

Please submit your opinions and editorial thoughts to concord@luthersem.edu and help shape and participate the ongoing important conversations on campus.



CARTOON BY PETER CLARK, M.DIV. SENIOR

The Shibboleth

PETER SUSAG,
WRITING CENTER

This month, "J.O." has a question about Oxford commas: "Can I hate on people that don't use them?"

Sometimes. But first, a refresher: The Oxford comma (also known as the Harvard comma and serial comma) is used before the last item in a list, and gets its name from the publication style sheets used at its eponymous universities. It's also used by most other style manuals, including the preferred style manual of the seminary, The Chicago Manual of Style.

Often, it doesn't matter if you use it, because most lists are clear (e.g., "I went to the store and bought butter, eggs, bread(,) and milk."). However, there are situations in which its omission can lead to ambiguity or misunderstanding (e.g., "At the Iowa caucuses, I took some great pictures of my two best friends, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump."). In this instance, it is unclear whether the last two names are being used to further describe "my two best friends." This is a grammatical construction called apposition, and it is the main reason for the use of the Oxford comma. The version with the Oxford comma lacks such ambiguity: "At the Iowa caucuses, I took some great pictures of my two best friends, Hillary Clinton, and Donald Trump."

However, there are situations in which use of the Oxford comma can actually create ambiguity (e.g., "I just took a photo of my mom, an award-winning actress, and my cat."). Are there two or three subjects in this photograph? Despite the fact that such ambiguous sentences can usually be interpreted correctly based on context and what linguists call pragmatic knowledge, it is best to avoid them. Fortunately, these rare exceptions are allowable according to The Chicago Manual of Style, which states that

"... there are times when using the [Oxford] comma (or omitting it) results in ambiguity, which is why it's best to stay flexible."

Is writing or journaling your oasis? We would love to share your thoughts and insights with the community and help propel the conversations around campus.

Email The Concord or talk to Editor-in-Chief Julia Olson during one of her shifts at the info desk about being a part of The Concord and making a difference in the on campus culture.

LGBT Students, we would love to hear from you and make your voices heard on campus and be an active participant in making Luther Seminary the place that you want it to be.

Email:

concord@luthersem.edu

Beer Review: Finnegan's

PETER CLARK
M.DIV. SENIOR

A beer review, in The Concord? What is this? This, ladies and gentlemen, is an excuse to drink beer and get paid for it. I promise to write an honest review of a beer for the student body, and The Concord promises to pay me for it. Win-win!

What isn't this? This is not some super snooty beer aficionado crap. I know a lot about beer, and I have a fairly good palette, but I'm not writing this for a beer magazine, I'm writing it for grad students. I will be drinking it straight out of a bottle or can, straight out of my fridge. No concern for temperature or presentation. I will also try to write this while I'm drinking it in order to get my immediate thoughts out for you. No reflection! Reflection happens during the second beer!

This month, I'm reviewing Finnegan's Irish Amber. This beer is brewed here in the Twin Cities, and "100% of the profits go to feeding the hungry" according to the beer bottle. It also lists its ingredients as "water, malted barley, hops, yeast."

First impressions? Malted barley verified on the very first sip. This is a nice malty beer with a whole wheat bread kind of finish. It's refreshing and a little filling all at the same time. A good reading beer. I can see myself doing some class reading while drinking this. It's not a distracting flavor, nor is it so flavorless as to feel like carbonated water. I feel like I could ignore it for a while, come back, and it will still be ok.

Chuggable? I guess? I took a solid couple gulps off of it and got nothing but a burp. It certainly isn't prohibitively heavy or sharp to keep you from chugging it, but I think it has too much flavor to be a good chugger.

Mid-bottle? Once we're through the neck, the

flavor develops a little and it is definitely getting some of that amber ale bite I'm used to. It has an International Bittering Unit of 20, so nothing seriously hoppy about it, but they are pleasantly present in my opinion. I mean, I don't like IPAs, so your mileage may vary.

The pulls are coming harder and longer now. This beer wants to be consumed. I am happy to oblige it as I begin to feel a little bit of the 4.75% ABV that this beer boasts. It's not going to get you drunk, but it just might help your systematics reading go down a little easier. Not recommended for Hebrew vocab review.

End of the bottle? The closing finish on this is stereotypical of bottled ales. I swear somehow the hops all settle at the bottom in an ale. It gets sharper as I go, but never becomes undrinkable like some cream ales. The burps have become belches, and I worry a little about waking my child up. I have had this before as a draught, and it finishes much more consistently from a tap than from the bottle. Again, this seems to be fairly stereotypical of amber ales.

It is worth noting that this beer is bottled at the Summit Brewing Company and uses their bottles, so it has an interesting contradiction of the label bearing one brand and the glass on the bottle bearing another.

Full disclosure, this is one of my go-to beers in general, but I've not really thought of it critically before. If I were to list one shortcoming, that would kind of be it. This is not a very interesting beer that begged for a critical review. It doesn't need to be, though. We don't always want a craft-brewed jalapeno/pickle beer that has an IBU over 9000. Actually, I never want that. Ever. Like, that's my personal version of hell. And while Finnegan's is not exactly my beer heaven, it is good enough for my time on this earth and makes my exile from Wisconsin slightly more bearable.

Faculty Letter, continued

the topic of race and the criminal justice system before the spring semester has ended. Additionally, we call upon our faculty colleagues, faculty leadership, and school administration to begin to build a process and plan whereby we develop a set of practices and policies that equips Luther Seminary to become more responsive to pressing, time-sensitive public issues. Finally, we add our voices to yours in seeking a public way for Luther to end its silence around the killing of Jamar Clark.

In the long run we seek to transform this learning environment which we love so much into a community which truly represents the rich and complex diversity of the Twin Cities. We are certain that your leadership will continue to play a crucial role in that transformation, and we thank you for your vision, your passion, and your wisdom in calling us to be faithful to our shared commitments.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Hess, Professor of Educational Leadership

Gary M. Simpson, The Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary Chair in Theology

Adam J. Copeland, Director of the Center for Stewardship Leaders

Amy Marga, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology

Michael J. Chan, Assistant Professor of Old Testament

Eric D. Barreto, Associate Professor of New Testament

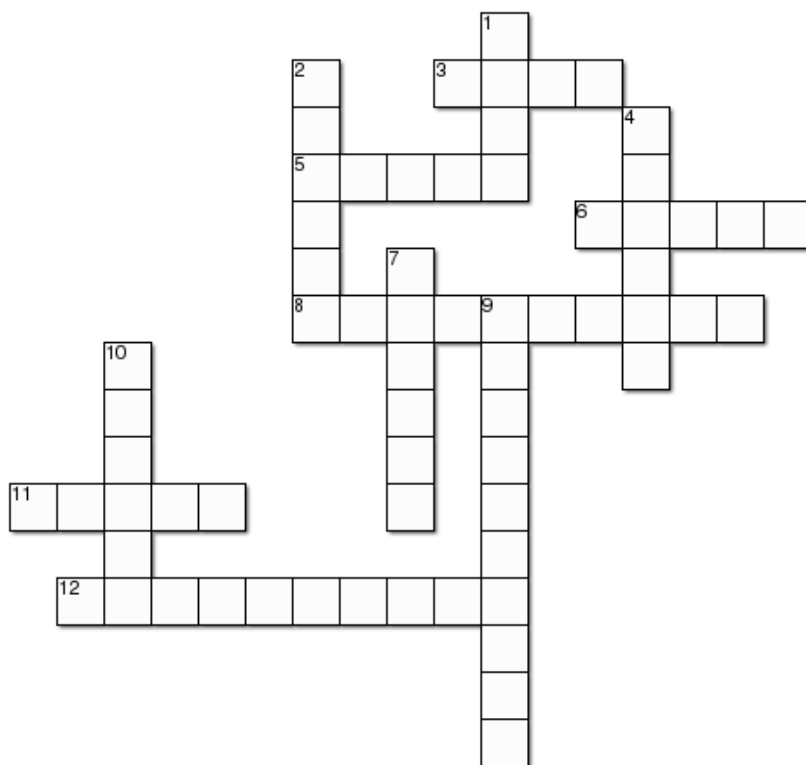
Lois Malcolm, Professor of Systematic Theology

Cameron Howard, Assistant Professor of Old Testament

The Children's Bulletin

February Fruit

Complete the crossword below



Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across

3. furry on the outside
5. Steve Jobs
6. when life gives you one of these...
8. seeds on the outside
11. Georgia fuzzy fruit
12. orange melon

Down

1. green and tart
2. a bundle of fruit
4. top your sundae with this
7. try to rhyme this one
9. popular summer snack
10. yellow and curved

SAVE THE DATE!

April 11th 5pm to 9pm -
Northwestern

Campus Wide Respectful
Conversation on Policing
and Criminal Justice Issues
in the Twin Cities.

Mark your calendars and
stay tuned for more details!

The Rise of Luther Seminary

JENN HERRON
M.A. SENIOR

Time will tell. We're working on it. That still needs to be figured out. These phrases were beginning to sound trite and quite frankly like a load of crap to the students who were pursuing our seminary education in the midst of this transition; as if the path for a seminary student allows for time to tell. How could these answers possibly be comforting to those of us who are waiting for these changes to happen? I mean time marches on, people! From CPE, internship, and DL intensive schedules to varying graduation dates, Luther's fluctuating student body cannot wait for these changes to be made. We needed answers and we needed them now! For those of you who agree with me, ask yourself this question: why are you waiting? Not 'why are you waiting' like you need to be doing something but 'why are you waiting' on the ontological level. How are you changing while you wait? From a theological standpoint, we can look at the transition from Holy Saturday to Easter as a time of nothing or a time of something, a time for waiting or a time for change. I would argue that all of these concepts are true. The difference depends on us, and where we are on our journey.

Jesus' resurrection is a wonderful depiction. According to the gospel of John, in the early morning after the Sabbath following Jesus' crucifixion, Mary Magdalene went to look at the grave and saw that the stone had been rolled away. She went to tell Simon Peter and another disciple that Jesus had been taken away. They ran to the tomb, Simon Peter arrived first and went in. The other disciple looked but did not go in. When he did go in, he saw the empty tomb and believed. Are you like Simon Peter who rushes into change? Are you like the other disciple who thoughtfully considers?

Mary Magdalene stayed and wept outside the tomb when two angels appeared to her asking why she was crying. She told them that Jesus had been taken away. She was about to leave when Jesus appeared to her and asked why she was crying, she mistook him for a gardener and asked him to tell her where Jesus had been taken. When Jesus called her by name, she cried out 'Teacher'. Jesus told her to tell the disciples about his appearance, and she did. Are you like Mary Magdalene who takes the time to learn and share?

Later that evening, Jesus appeared to the disciples and they were overjoyed. However, Thomas who was not there, did not believe them when they told him about seeing Jesus. He needed tangible evidence. When Jesus appeared to Thomas the following week knowing Thomas' doubt, he told him to touch him. Thomas touched Jesus and finally believed. Are you like Thomas who needs proof of the result? Wherever you are on your journey is where you are and that is where you need to be. An important thing to remember is that everyone else is on a journey too. In my opinion, if there is anyone who struggles with their life journey, it is a seminary student. I think it has something to do with God. And perhaps our obsessive determination to hear our call.

My article in the January 2016 issue summarized some major changes that took place at Luther over the course of the past three years. What I did not highlight were the tireless efforts put forth by those who led us through those years. As much as I would love to name names, there are just too many dedicated, wise, courageous leaders to list but includes the board, faculty, staff and

students who were present, available and providing ways to help Luther Seminary rise again. There was the myriad of committees that sought and brought us our permanent chief leaders like President Robin Steinke and CFO Michael Morrow. There were countless teams that finished the development and massive implementation of our current curriculum. And then we had the innumerable focus groups and formal lunchtime conversations in an effort to gain insight and feedback on everything to pedagogy to strategic planning to dining services. Needless to say, there is an incredible amount of work that needs to happen to overcome death.

So when will we see a resurrection for Luther Seminary? It has already happened. You will see it when you are ready to see it. The realization of the resurrection did not happen at the same time for the disciples just as the awareness of change is not happening at the same time for our community. Some of us were around to witness that fateful day in December of 2012, we knew of Luther life 'before' and we needed to accept and grieve that loss. Some of us began our journey in the midst of interim staff and a curriculum shift, we needed to be patient with that time of transition. And some of us have just begun our time at Luther and are witnessing changes too, we need have faith in the process and be a part of the solution. As Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "Change is the only constant in life". The more we accept that paradox, the more we will embrace the change in waiting and the waiting in change.

"Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!" - Psalm 27:14

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Scribbler's Sidebar

"Love Always"
by Joe Davis

I love you.
I love you at your best, I love you at your worst.
I love you in a dress or sweatpants and t-shirt.
I love you when you gain weight, I love you when you stay in shape,
I love everything about you that you love and even everything that you say you hate.
I love you when you wake up, I love you without makeup,
I love you any time a day in any way because I mean it when I say love.
I love you.

I love you from start to finish, from head to toe.
I love your every spot, wrinkle and blemish, every freckle and mole.
I love both your dimples and your pimples, your mind, body, spirit and soul.
I will love you before and after the here and now, and now I'm here to let you know:
I love you.

I love the way you walk, you talk, you smile, you laugh, you sing.
I could cut this poem in half and say I love your everything.
Because if you ever think that you're not loved, that just isn't so.
No matter what, my love for you is unconditional.
I will love you forever and a day and today is the day I will forever say
I will love you just the same when your hair turns dusty gray,
I will love you just because
I love you
always

*Please submit poems or melodic prose to
concord@luthersem.edu*

The Concord needs your help to keep going. Every month we have to read articles and make sure that we spell things good and use more right grammar, or else we end up looking like uneducated gits, like the Pioneer Press or something *shudder* and we don't want that. So if you're willing to help proofread even one or two articles a month, please email concord@luthersem.edu and we will get you connected and ready to help The Concord put its best foot forward so that we can promptly stick it in our mouths and let students say what they really want to say about the school and world we find ourselves in.

Our (Buddhist) Siblings Are Right The Holy Land:

STERLING LYNK
M.DIV. JUNIOR

Life is struggle...unease...dissatisfaction... suffering. The world, and existence in it, is ultimately unreliable and cannot satisfy. This is because nothing lasts. The impermanence of everything may be logically obvious to any adult, but we live our lives as if we are oblivious to that fact.

Instead of seeing reality for what it is, we work. We work to make things different – like different relationships, different possessions, different careers, different credentials, or different wisdom. We work for more – like more friends, more stuff, more fun, more sex, more food or more knowledge. We work for better – like better beer, better bodies, better families, better schools, better churches, better communities, or better school newspapers. What does different, more and better get us? Freedom. Happiness. Contentment.

But this tragically wrong. This work doesn't bring freedom, happiness or contentment. Enough is never enough. Losing any of what we have, even if we manage to get enough, is unbearable. There is always more to get done. There is always something else out there to hope for. There will also always be more people to help – even Jesus observed this.

What brings freedom and salvation from all this misery? First, you must wake up to the fact of impermanence and begin seeing the world as it really is. This will give you access to the profound poignancy that is normally reserved for people near death or who just escaped death. Next, you take that poignancy and learn to not be enslaved

by the stuff, the people, the experiences and the striving all around you; you will appreciate all of these things, and participate in many of them but you will not grasp on to them for dear life. Finally, with practice, you will come to see how impermanent and ever changing even your body, your feelings, your mind and your consciousness are. Look hard enough and you will see that there is no “you” in you, nothing real to hold on to.

After that, all that's left is freedom and love and compassion for all beings and all of creation.

Editor's Note: What do you think? During this semester we will be posting a series of these pieces, each focusing on a different perspective we encounter in the world. We would like to invite you to respond to the case being made. Each issue we will print one or more of the responses, and then offer the next worldview to consider. We also plan on asking the brilliant minds that make up our faculty to offer their thoughts. In your response you may agree, disagree or reframe the issue - it is up to you. Sharing a response is a gift - it will help all of us be better at our current and future ministries. Please send your response to concord@luthersem.edu by 11:59 pm on Monday, March 7. Please shoot for 300 words or less. Feel free also to include a headshot we can reprint in the Concord if you would like.

Its People, Places, and Prayers

TIM SCHROEDER
M. DIV. MIDDLE

Traveling to the Holy Land has been on my bucket list since I started discerning my call as a sophomore in college. Just as I imagine many other Christians, Jews, and Muslims have an interest or need to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, I felt as a future leader of the Church I wanted to have that first hand experience and witness of the holy sites. I know as a seminarian it is a bit cliché to say that “I wanted to walk where Jesus walked;” but being able to see this land in person has allowed my all of my senses to be brought to life in understanding all the bible stories we have been learning about since childhood. Being able to stroll along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, drive through the hills and mountains of “wilderness,” float in the Dead Sea, and wade in the Jordan River has allowed me to fully experience holy sites and holy scripture. The scriptures take on a transformation as you sit and listen to our fantastic bible professors- Dr. Schifferdecker and Dr. Lewis- read scripture in the places that these stories took place. It is a spiritual experience to remember your baptism in the River Jordan and read about Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist. These experiences stimulate all of your senses, and some are even difficult to articulate into words.

As we began the trip together as a class, our first introductory question was asking “what is one thing that we hope for or want from our trip to the Holy Land?” My response was that I had hopes to having meaningful conversations with the people that we were going to meet. The title of this course is “The Holy Land: Its People, Places, and Prayers.” I wanted to hear the stories first hand from the Israelis and Palestinians. Growing up as a young adult, I have always taken to Jesus's commands of loving God and loving people, heading to Israel I wanted to learn to love the people. Israel and Palestine is a place of high tension; where oppression, hatred, war, and religion are always present and always felt. I was humbled to be invited into these conversations both through our prearranged speakers but also meeting locals on the streets and in the shops. It is amazing to be invited to hear just one person's story; I learned about their family histories and traditions that went back 12 generations, the struggles of being a citizen living daily life, and understanding the cries and prayers for peace and justice. It is through visiting these holy places, meeting holy people, that we have prayers to offer to God. It is prayers that we have been offering for thousands of years; to have a home, to have a strong relationship with our God, and to know that we are doing everything to take care of our neighbor. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

#biblicaltweets

CARRIE SMISEK,
M.DIV. SENIOR

@Joseph: “Brothers are visiting and want food. They don't know it's me. #lol” @Judah: “@Joseph. Uh, we have Twitter...” @Benjamin: “@Joseph @Judah Awkward.”

@Yahweh: “@Jeremiah I knew you before I knit you in your mother's womb.” @Jeremiah: “@Yahweh Creepy...”

@Paul: “@realDonaldTrump Technically, you read from 3 Corinthians...”

@Ezekiel: “Have you guys seen Pulp Fiction? Interesting flick.”

@Freud: “@John Let's chat.”

@Solomon: “Wait. They printed that?!”

@Justus: “Always picked last for kickball in grade school, too. #sigh”

@DeuteronomicHistory: “Is this guy seriously still talking?” @Mosheh: “@DeuteronomicHistory Quit tweeting and keep writing.”

@Jonah: “Can't wait to watch those Ninevites pay for what they did!” @Ninevites: “@Jonah Woah! We're still here!”

@Jonah: “@Yahweh Um...”

@Jonah: “No smiting. Tree died. Worst. Day. Ever.”

@Joshua: “@Phlistines HELLO FROM THE

OUTSIDE!! WE MUST HAVE MARCHED A THOUSAND TIMES!!!”

@David: “We built this temple on rock and roll.” @Moses: “I didn't start the fire. It was always burning since the bush was turning.”

@Yahweh: “@Moses Ooh! Now play ‘Uptown Girl!’”

@Naomi: “@Ruth www.eharmony.com/boaz”
@Ruth: “@Naomi *blush*”

@Boaz: “Before I got married, I was Ruthless.”

@Peter: “Looking to stay on mountaintop. Anyone know of anyone good with tents?” @Paul: “@Peter DID SOMEONE SAY TENTIST?!?”

@Paul: “Wait. I didn't write that...WHO HAS BEEN WRITING UNDER MY NAME?!”

@Yeshua: “@Zacheus Hey. I'm gonna hang at your house today.” @Zaccheus: “@Yeshua Um. Okay. Gimme ten minutes to clean up quick?” @Yeshua: “@Zaccheus Nope. Now.”

@SheBears: “Oh, this is gonna be fun.”

@David: “Anyone know of a good tailor?” @David: “Never mind. I'll just go with the sling.”

@Abraham: “You guys, I'm really smart. I know a Lot.” @Isaac: “@Abraham #dadjokes”

@Noah: “Apparently, sometimes, cheetahs do prosper.”

Ask a Biblical Character: John's Relevant Revelations

Dear John,

I have to write my monthly news scroll for my congregation and I'm kind of coming up short. Lately they've been especially idolatrous and evil. All they want to do is drink wine and worship false gods. I've tried getting through to them but it's like they just don't care. Do you have any advice for my news scroll that might help me get through to them?

Signed,

Speechless in Sardis

Dear Speechless,

There's nothing worse than a shiftless bunch of idolaters in your church, am I right? The only way to get through to them is to use almost uninterpretable metaphors in your letter. That'll really get them thinking. The more ridiculous the better, in my opinion. Let yourself get creative - imagine some horrifying beasts (maybe some sort of locust/man crossbreed, that's always weird) and threaten their lives with it. The nightmares alone will sober them up, that's for sure. Also - repeat a lot of numbers. Just pick a few, though, and really run with it. They'll spend a lot of time trying to figure out what kind of code you're giving them, they won't even have time to get drunk and worship idols. With these few things, you'll have every ear in the congregation turned toward you.

Hoping this letter finds you with a rapt audience,

John

Dear John,

The empire I live in is really cramping my style. My congregation and I are just trying to worship in peace but the man just keeps coming up in our business. What can I do to tell them that I'm not cool with all the interference they're running?

Signed,

Peeved in Pergamum

Dear Peeved,

If I know anything about terrible kingdoms, I know that nothing gets to them more than a crazy prophecy. First, tell everyone that you've had a vision. This will get them listening. Then, tell them all sorts of crazy stuff that you saw. Throw in some details about women of ill repute, wine presses full of blood, and stuff like that, and you're golden. But here's the real curveball. Tell them that giant peals of thunder spoke to you, and then prohibited you from sharing the discussion. To really drive that home, have it written out and then eat it. That way they'll know that no one will ever read it but you. That ought to shake them up a bit. Even if the prophecy doesn't freak them out, the fact that you're willing to eat something in order to keep it secret will show them just how radical you are. Watch out, empire scum! Peeved is here and he's not messing around.

Sorry if the prophecy you have to eat gives you a stomach ache, but it's all part of the game.

Signed,

John

Dear John,

Lately my church attendance has been down. I don't know what's causing it, but every week our

numbers get smaller and smaller. I'm trying everything to keep people interested, but nothing seems to work. What can I do to bring in a larger audience?

Signed,

Losing them in Laodicea

Dear Losing,

There's nothing we prophets and clergy hate to deal with more than dwindling numbers. I mean, can't these people set down their wine cups long enough to come to church? But I digress. Here's what you can do. Give church a sort of exclusive "Members Only" type feel. Tell them that there's this book, let's call it The Book of Life. Tell them that only the popular people are listed in it and those who aren't in it are in for a world of hurt. This will get them wondering if they or their neighbor is on the list. They'll show up just to find out who's going to get burned this week! Another thing you can do is throw around the words "mark of the beast." It's a nice, catchy phrase, and one that will last for awhile. Everyone will be looking out for it and guess what? The best place to examine your neighbor for the mark is...wait for it...in your pews! Before you know it the entire town will be clamoring to your church to find out if they're on the "Who's Who" list of salvation or next in line for the diving board into the sulfur lake. Scare them into coming. It worked for me!

Hoping your annual meeting is a real rager,

John

The Revenant: Will Leo Get Justice?

ERIC CHRISTENSON

M.A. SENIOR

Leonardo DiCaprio is: Hugh Glass, frontiersman extraordinaire, left for dead by his trapper buddies to almost die again and again! The Revenant is one of those movies that has you in awe for its duration, then makes you think hard about it after it's over. In this case, you have to wonder "what was the point of that?"

Don't get me wrong, there's a lot to love about this movie. The fact that it was shot on location is impressive and makes it feel very real compared to lots of movies these days. There are frequent shots of the scenery between the scenes that provide a backdrop of beauty for all of the senseless, violent action of the plot. The juxtaposition is engaging, especially considering the violence includes nature against man in addition to what the men bring upon each other.

The action scenes are top notch as well. The two best are probably the Native attack on the trapping party in the first five minutes and the bear attack in the first hour (of a nearly three hour film). While there are a few other solid ones along the way, the movie seems to try to grab you with shock toward the beginning, but then allows itself to settle into a sort of plodding inevitability for the whole second half.

This ended up being my main gripe with this film. As a genre fiction writer, I place a lot of emphasis on plot. The plot of The Revenant is exceedingly straightforward. It turns out that everything that happens immediately after the bear attack is the fault of one man. What keeps

Hugh Glass going through his numerous brushes with death? Probably a pretty strong survival instinct; but mostly revenge. Despite all the moving pieces, including Glass's own trapping party, the man who left him, a different party of French trappers, and at least two bands of Natives, it's pretty obvious how everything is going to play out. Once Glass survives the bear attack

and being left behind initially, you know he's not going to die to something else because then you wouldn't have a movie. You know he's going to track the guy down instead of finding another Native woman to settle down with or something like that, because the desire for revenge is the driving force of the whole thing. And it's been done before.

My other main gripe was one not noticed by my movie-going partner, so hopefully I'm not crazy. But if you end up seeing this film, pay attention: when any native languages are spoken, the actor's lip movements do not match the sounds. It's as if, for some reason, they had to rerecord the lines later and dub them over the mismatched video. They almost get away with it because you're busy reading the subtitles. But I wasn't on the lookout for the sake of being critical or anything and it stuck out like a sore thumb. It's very jarring in light of the hyper realism of the rest of the movie and it's one of those seemingly unnecessary letdowns that really leaves a bad taste in your mouth.

Despite these issues, I still recommend seeing this movie. It has very strong visuals and relies them to hold up the predictable plot, which works. And sure, you know it's going to end at the Ultimate Showdown of Ultimate Destiny. But you don't know everything that's going to happen to Leo in the meantime. The ride becomes witnessing each new calamity in all of its gorey splendour, and potentially even more so how Glass gets out of it. And of course, the ultimate uncertainty is this: I liked it, you'll probably like it, but will Oscar like it?



[REDACTED] Scholars

JESSICA PUTLAND

M.DIV. JUNIOR

In the following article you will find the day in the life of the kings and queens that walk among the lowly peasants of Luther Seminary. These kings and queens are known as Presidential Scholars. Due to the overwhelming requests from our loyal and interested readers we have decided to grant your request. Consider yourselves blessed because this article is taking up some very precious Presidential Scholar time, and time is money. More specifically, our time is worth precisely 4 million dollars.

I wake up every morning and put my pants on two legs at a time. I come down the stairs from my ivory tower and eat my breakfast served on a silver platter straight from the President herself. Sometimes she even spoons it straight into my mouth from my own personal silver spoon. After breakfast it is time for me and the rest of the [mostly] white, [mostly] young, [incredibly] attractive Presidential Scholars to get dolled up for the day. We of course have to look our very best to be ready for our daily photo shoot, and later in the day we must be ready to be whored out to the donors to whom we owe our entire lives and educations.

Later in the evening we will dine in the President's board room with all of our pimps, we will drink the finest wine, eat couscous and lobster, and laugh about how much more beautiful we are than the rest of the student body. Because we are so busy, we don't have time to attend classes, go to work, or do our homework. I think they use some of the 4 million dollars that we leached off of the seminary to pay other students to attend the classes for us, go to work for us, and do our homework for us. But I'm not really sure; a queen doesn't trouble herself with silly details such as these.

Now, in case you haven't gathered already, the above paragraphs are satire. Pretty well done satire, if I do say so myself. Two months ago, an incredibly hurtful "satirical" article was written in the Noncord about how Luther Seminary's 4 million dollar deficit can be attributed to the Presidential Scholarships. This "article" made lewd statements about how Presidential Scholars are "whored out" to donors. How is it appropriate to write these statements in a seminary newspaper, joking or not? That article wasn't satire, it was thinly veiled bitterness and it was incredibly hurtful.

Satire is social criticism that is basically meant to shame politicians, governments, institutions, etc. with hopes that they will respond to the satire by improving what was imitated in the satirical piece. Satire can also be used to draw people's attention to issues in society that are not being recognized. Satire is funny, especially for people who carry the same views as the author. What did the author of this article want changed? Should the seminary just take away our scholarships? What did the author think needed to be brought to people's attention? It is widely known that the seminary is at a deficit, and it is common knowledge that there are people who get scholarships to attend Luther. Who holds the same views as the author? Did anyone laugh when they were reading this article? All I heard was outrage and hurt from the student body.

In all truthfulness, when I began at Luther this year, I was afraid to share with people that I was a Presidential Scholar. The process had been so competitive and I didn't want to hurt anyone's

feelings if they were not also a scholarship recipient. I had just become comfortable sharing with people that I am a Presidential Scholar when this article came out. But the article was so poorly presented and inherently flawed that I am not going to let it affect me. I am, however, going to clear up the misconceptions from this article, because I can't just let people think that the poorly done satire was actually pointing out a real issue, because it wasn't.

First and foremost, it is important to understand that Presidential Scholarships do not just come out of the school's budget. Scholarships come from donors who designate their money to specific items. Sometimes these donations can go to the school's general operating budget, but most often not. Donors get to choose where their money goes, because it is their money to give, not just the seminary's to use. So, donors can choose to have their money go specifically to helping students pay for school. They often get even more specific and give their money to named scholarships such as the Presidential Scholarships. To use this money for anything other than what the donor designated would not only be disrespectful, it would be illegal.

Secondly, Presidential Scholars are not "wined and dined" and we are not "whored out to donors." We recently had a dinner to meet one another and to write thank you notes to our donors. I have never met a donor in person and we have not had an event since.

Lastly, we are all real humans with feelings. Feelings that were incredibly hurt by the satirical Noncord article. We are not whores or poster-children. We are hardworking students, we lead really normal lives, and we do not deserve to be treated any differently than any other student at Luther. There are other students who are not Presidential scholars who also get a lot of scholarship money and assistance from donors. Everyone at Luther has worked hard to get where they are. Scholarship recipients have earned their scholarships with amazing accomplishments in their previous schooling, careers, ministry and mission work. They are people who work multiple jobs, who have written theses, directed camps, done work abroad, are full time parents, and much, much more. They are amazing humans who make a difference on our campus and in the world.

So in conclusion, please don't scapegoat your friends and classmates. I'm not sure what the intent was behind the article in the Noncord, but it was unproductive, misleading, offensive, and hurtful. Presidential Scholars don't deserve to be blamed for the school's financial situation, called names, or made assumptions about. If you are interested in improving Luther's community and improving Luther Seminary as a whole, uplift all students for their amazing accomplishments. Write productive articles with tangible suggestions for improvements. Use the wonderful resources provided to students by the administration and student council to help enact change at the seminary. This is how we can become an even more beloved community that is striving towards improvement.

This article was written in response to a Noncord Article from December. We encourage you to respond to articles that inspire thoughts and strong reactions from you. If you think something should be addressed, odds are you aren't alone. So be the one who raises their voice to bring issues to our attention and further the discussion on campus in productive and insightful ways.

Book Review: All The Light We Cannot See

SAMUEL CHAMBERLAIN
M.A. JUNIOR

Despite allusions within the title, this is not a theological book about darkness or anti-light or the triumph of what may lurk in the shadows. The light that we cannot see isn't meant to be a thought experiment in the tradition of "the tree that falls in the forest." Though there are metaphorical notions of good and evil—the light as a means of conquering the darkness, evil—this novel is about the light that illuminates in all the ways we're physically and emotionally blind to it. Love as a light. Courage as a light. And hope, maybe the brightest light of all. The light that triumphs is part of a spectrum beyond the brilliance of our visual recognition. A light we cannot see, but must believe is there. Maybe it's a book about faith, because isn't that what faith is? A light we cannot see, but one that illuminates beyond the temporal.

All The Light We Cannot See is set in the late 1930's and early 1940's in war-torn Europe. The novel follows several points of view, shifting chapter by chapter, but pays particular attention to three main characters. Marie-Laure, a Parisian girl who loses her sight when she is six. Werner, an orphaned German boy taken from his rural mining town and raised at a Hitler Youth academy where they discover his skill repairing radios. And Sergeant Major Reinhold von Rumpel, an expert gemologist apprenticed in crystallography and tasked by the Third Reich with collecting the most precious diamonds across Nazi occupied territory. After the invasion of Paris, Marie flees with her father—a skilled locksmith working at the Museum of Natural History—to the French coastal town Saint-Malo. Little does she know that hidden with her is something so precious von Rumpel will stop at nothing to get it. The three characters' isolated stories quickly become an interwoven ensemble and inevitably collide at the novel's climax.

Doerr's sentences are loaded with as much action as they are acute detail. Whether Werner is dismantling short wave radios or Marie is memorizing the sounds and smells and steps of her obscured world, the imagery is palpable, illuminating a world in which the reader tenders hope. The chapters are short—some less than a page—but vivid, quickly propelling the reader through an unfolding story. If you start this novel on Friday, you probably won't leave your house until finishing it Sunday night.

All The Light We Cannot See recently won the Pulitzer Prize, an award reserved for not only the most important titles each year, but bestowed upon literature that speaks, cries, into the void of humanity—literature that illuminates the world in new ways for its readers. And so what if the reader is the subject of the first person plural pronoun "we" to whom the title refers? Because as readers, we're swept into a world filled with as much danger as with hope. Drawn into a time when individuals had little control over awful situations, but only the conviction and chance to change the outcome—pitying von Rumpel, hoping for Marie and Werner, and praying for light's reconciling way with the darkness of the world.

CPE: I Guess You're Just What I Needed

LAURA SLEZAK
M.Div. MIDDLEL

CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) is an acronym that I had never heard of before starting seminary. Last fall, while I was completing my unit of CPE, the most succinct way of explaining it I found was describing it as a chaplaincy internship. However, that description only scratches the surface. I remember dreading CPE from the moment I heard about it. From looking at the half-sheet the Office of Contextual Learning hands out, you would think it would not be all that scary, until you start digging into the process. From an ACPE website that is not always clear to looking at the application itself, diving into the process can feel overwhelming. And once you open the application, the process does not feel easier with prompts such as “a reasonably full account of your life” and “a description of your spiritual growth and development” that will be going to total strangers upon completion.

I did not have the easiest road leading up to CPE. Personal events in my life led to a downward spiral in my mental health and I did not feel up to the process when December came around. Luckily for me, the staff at the Office of Contextual Learning was very understanding and supportive as I decided to put CPE on hold and try again for the fall application process. (Something to note, if you are interested in going on internship during your third year and want to apply for the international Horizon sites, CPE has to be fully completed before filling out those applications, typically by the end of the

summer between junior and middler year. It can also impact endorsement for M. Div. students. I highly recommend keeping an open line of communication with the Office of Contextual Learning during your entire seminary career. They are great and play a key role in several important pieces for various degree programs.) By March, I had finished the application and sent it around and was already set to interview at several places by April. By the time I entered the interview process, I was in the middle of another mental health crisis. I mention this reality to point out the understanding nature of CPE supervisors. These people were complete strangers and yet handled my interviews with grace and a caring presence, important qualities to notice when choosing someone to lead your supervision. I chose a site that allowed me to work in a nursing home, while being on call at a hospital. I wanted to get a sense of both settings. By the time I began CPE orientation in August, I was in a relatively healthy place mentally, which turned out to be for the best.

During my first year, other students told me how important CPE was to their sense of call and experience at seminary as a whole. I sort of shrugged off everything that they said. How could one class/internship experience be that important? It turns out I lived into the cliché. For me, CPE was an opportunity for experiential learning which forced me to get out of my own perfectionist way as well as out of the classroom. Instead of theorizing, I was asked to go and do. There were terrifying moments when I wondered

what I was doing. There were moments that redefined what I think it means to do ministry and have a pastoral identity. I still vividly remember the first time I was called to the bedside of someone who was dying. One day, I arrived on site and walked into the office. I found a note on the desk, asking for a chaplain to come immediately. I went to the receptionist to find out where the staff chaplain was and it turned out he was out of the office for the day. I then planned to tell the chaplain resident before remembering that he did not come in on Thursday afternoons. A series of expletives ran through my head as I realized I was the only chaplain on site. Taking a deep breath and squaring my shoulders, I headed up the stairs to find the nurse who had made the request. I was ushered into a room and was asked to sit with a dying resident, a first for me. Do I think I offered stellar care for this resident? No, not really, but I often hope the Holy Spirit works through what little I have to offer. I survived that afternoon and the many others that followed and slowly fell into a rhythm. I had numerous experiences with residents and patients that challenged me and changed me and added a level of meaning to my life that I would not have thought possible.

CPE was not what I expected, but it turned out to be what I needed. Weeks after my program ended, I continually go back to the lessons I learned and the experiences I had. So, if CPE is still on the horizon in your program, I urge you to take a deep breath and jump right in and fully commit to the process. Who are the people that will change you?

Interns Anonymous Rides Again

How did your application process go? What was easy about it? What was difficult?

Pretty straightforward. I went into it with an open mind – open to anywhere, and just saw what played out. There were some hiccups between candidacy endorsement expectations as far as geographic location for internship, but those ended up getting sorted out by Contextual Education. That was the only difficult part of the whole process.

Did you restrict? If so, what is your experience with that?

No, I didn't restrict – I was open to anywhere, but ended up interviewing exclusively in the Upper Midwest.

Did you end up where you wanted to/thought you would?

Yes – I wanted a rural context that encouraged participation and leadership in all aspects of ministry and in life of the congregation – I've definitely found that here at my site. Reflecting on the first six months, I'm exactly where I need to be.

What was the first week after your arrival like? How was meeting your supervisor?

A whirlwind! My supervisor, his wife, and I went out to dinner the night of my arrival at the local diner. The next morning (I had just started unpacking), we were off on a hospital call, my first round of devotional times, and that first week I had my first funeral! It was definitely jumping in with both feet, but I appreciated that immensely – the fact that I was included so quickly into the leadership of this congregation.

Have you encountered any unexpected difficul-

ties while on internship?

Teaching confirmation is a definite “growing edge” of mine – not that I don't relate well to the kids, it's more of a behavioral/discipline conversation. In realizing this, however, it has welcomed a rich conversation about new ways of doing confirmation and the chance to draw upon others' experiences.

Any positive surprises so far?

I knew the people here would be welcoming – but they've surprised me again and again with how they support my formation as a future pastor, how they have welcomed me into their homes, how they are willing to let me take the lead on my own ministries here and participate. The people here in this congregation are amazing at making known the fact that their intern's participation and leadership in the faith and life of this church matter.

What are you glad you learned before you started, and what do you wish you would have learned or prepared for?

Interning in a rural context, I'm thankful for all of the rural ministry courses I took during my first two years on campus! They have definitely provided a lens and insight into how the people here understand church, faith, and tradition – this community is definitely steeped in an oral cultural tradition, and rural ministry classes in seminary provided the backdrop to experience this all in.

I wish I had taken more classes on children, youth, and family ministry, or developed more experience working with youth – specifically, teaching confirmation.

What has been the biggest difficulty so far? Anything that totally caught you off guard?

As above, teaching confirmation has been a difficulty. Other than that, nothing has really caught me off guard – expectations were laid out clearly from the get-go and my supervisor is really good about bringing up growing edges as a part of healthy pastoral formation.

Do you have any advice for those who are currently in the application process?

Be open to what may come your way as much as possible. I thought I was going to be in Wisconsin for internship, I ended up in a Minnesota site rather unexpectedly – things can change in the process and it's helpful as much as possible to be able to be flexible.

How about for those who are waiting for placement/beginning their internship?

Go in with an open mind – you know your strengths and growing edges, and look for ways to develop both of those during your time on site. See what the congregation is already doing in God's mission and find ways to include yourself in that.

Are there any resources you can recommend for dealing with the potential stress of applications?

Alongside being in conversation with Contextual Education (I was at several points), I found it extraordinarily helpful to reach out to my home congregation pastors. I encourage each future intern to be in touch with their outside support networks to talk through any issues that may crop up.