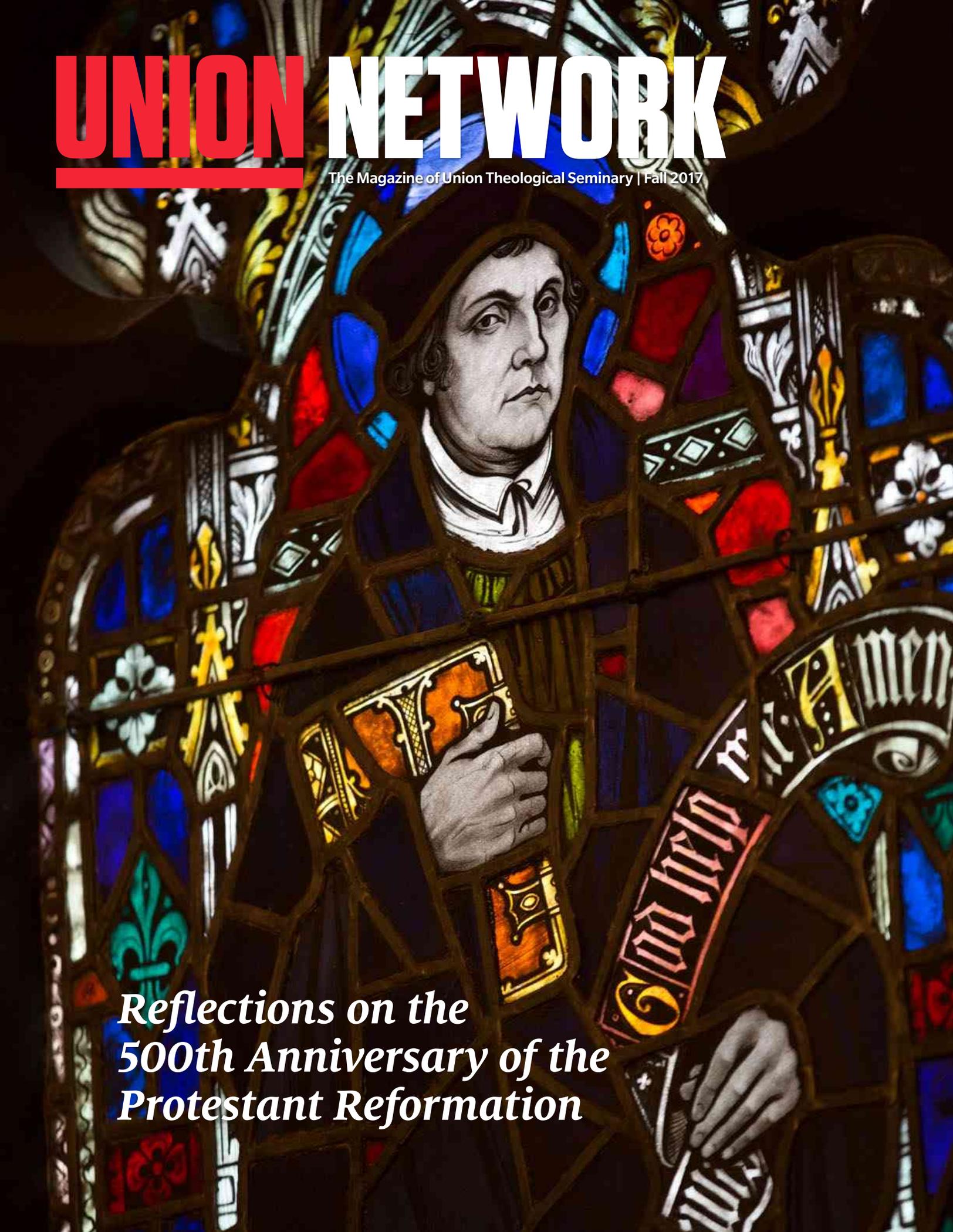


# UNION NETWORK

The Magazine of Union Theological Seminary | Fall 2017



*Reflections on the  
500th Anniversary of the  
Protestant Reformation*

# UNION NETWORK

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3041 Broadway at 121st Street  
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[uniontheologicalseminary@utsnyc.edu](mailto:uniontheologicalseminary@utsnyc.edu)  
212-280-1590  
[utsnyc.edu](http://utsnyc.edu)

## Editors-in-Chief

Emily Enders Odom '90  
Gabriele Gossner  
Kevin McGee

## Writers

Victoria Barnett '81  
Euan Cameron  
Cláudio Carvalhaes '07  
Kristine Chong  
Fred Davie  
Emily Enders Odom  
Sindy Morales Garcia '15  
Gabriele Gossner  
Christian Iosso '91  
Serene Jones  
Brigitte Kahl  
Nicholas Laccetti '15  
Kevin McGee  
Leah Robinson Rousmaniere  
George Zachariah '98

## Copy Editor

Barbara King Lord

## Principal Photographers

Ron Hester  
Jeremy Hultin  
Jay EsPhotography  
Kevin McGee  
Joe Routon  
Union Theological Seminary  
Photo Archive

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## Graphic Design

Ron Hester

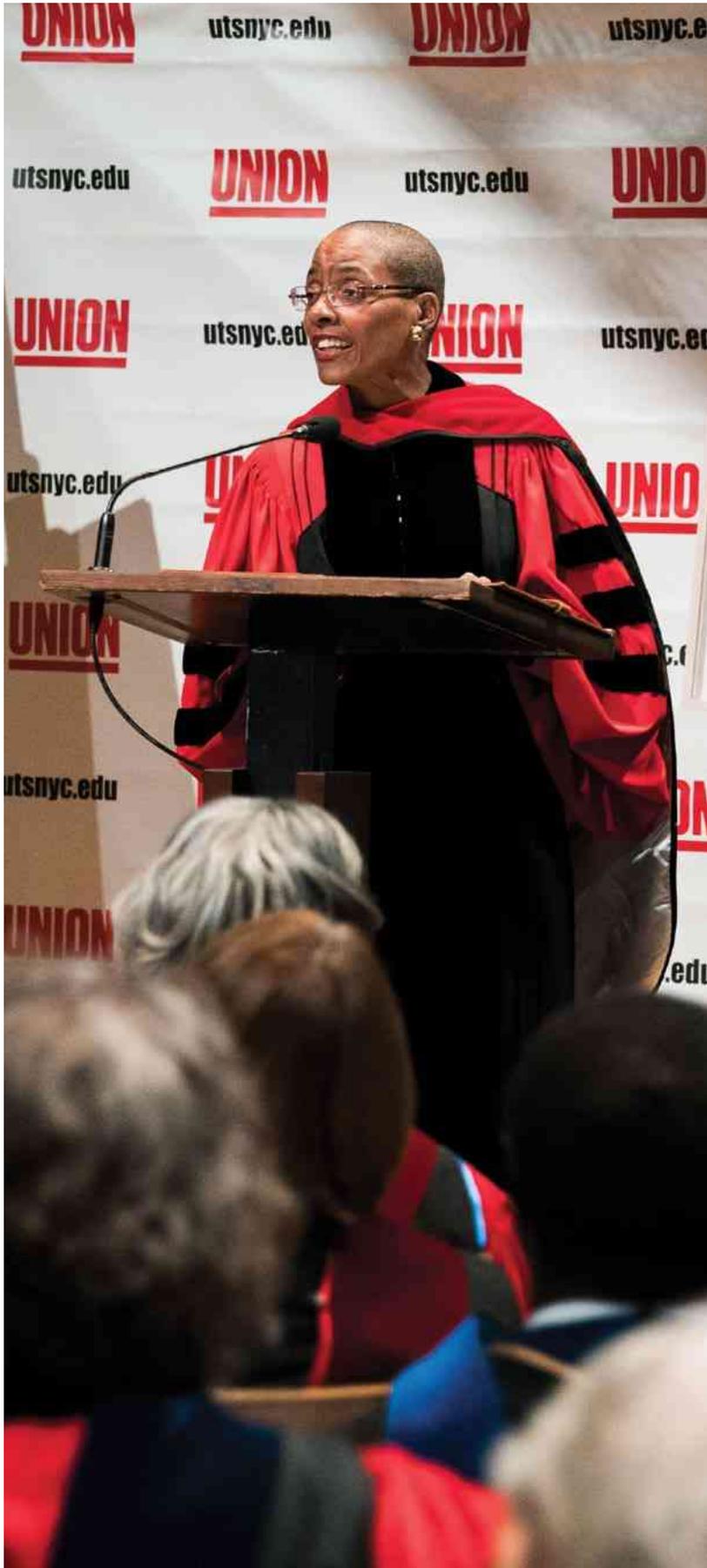
## On the Cover

Lampman Chapel, dedicated in 1929, contains three stained glass windows: St. Teresa of Ávila on the left, St. Francis of Assisi on the right, and the Martin Luther window, pictured on the cover, in the center. At the bottom of this window is the chapel's memorial inscription, while around the figure of Luther, who holds a Bible in his right hand, are the words, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

*Cover Photo by Ron Hester*



Confucius Temple in Nanjing, China, visited by Union Faculty in May 2017 (see page 3).



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The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas '82, '88, newly appointed Dean of Episcopal Divinity School at Union, speaks at Union's annual convocation service on September 6.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

**HOW QUICKLY** the summer has flown! As we commence another academic year at this remarkable institution, I am proud to report on the Seminary's progress in achieving several key goals and to share some exciting new prospects for our future.

Thanks to the generosity of our trustees, alumni/ae, and friends, we are on schedule to close a four-year capital campaign that is projected to successfully raise an astounding \$25 million to reinforce several core elements of Union's institutional mission, including student scholarships, faculty support, and social justice programming.<sup>1</sup>

Union continues to generate insight and action on the pressing social justice needs of the day. *Faith in America*, and programs like it, manifest Union's belief that we can—and should—courageously engage the world.

Beginning this fall, we will welcome the first cohort of students enrolled in the newly launched Doctor of Ministry program in Supervisory Spiritual Care Education. The 2017–2018 school year also inaugurates a reimagined Master of Divinity degree with the addition of concentrations in both Socially Engaged Buddhism and Socially Engaged Islam. We are confident that these curricular and co-curricular innovations play to Union's core strengths and will support and energize interreligious coalitions working for social change.

Like a true New Yorker, Union has long stood on the creative edge of theological education.<sup>2</sup> While our record of academic excellence and our deep commitment to social engagement frame who we are, two exciting new ventures are poised to define who *we will be*: Union's affiliation with Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) and the revitalization of our campus.

With our missions aligned, Union and EDS will usher in a new era of growth and innovation, offering Union students a pathway to Anglican ordination and the resources and expertise of an esteemed institution. Our newly appointed Dean of EDS at Union, the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas '82, '88, arrived on September 1, and we are very much looking forward to her visionary leadership. While the program in Episcopal studies does not formally start until September 2018, Episcopal students may begin their academic pursuits this year and segue into the official "EDS at Union" program when it starts the following fall.<sup>3</sup>

Since our founding, Union has had numerous addresses around the city, and each iteration was undoubtedly met with a diverse range of reactions and responses. In this issue's "Did You Know?" feature (p. 28), you'll see a series of evocative historic images that illustrate these phases of Union's development. In 1836, Union occupied a minimal four-story Federal-style structure on what is now University Place. By 1883, Union had morphed into

a red brick complex of varied rooflines that graced 200 feet of frontage along Park Avenue in the Lenox Hill neighborhood on Manhattan's East Side. It wasn't until 1910 that the Union we now know and love began to take shape. In the final photo on page 28, we see the graceful English Gothic lines of James Chapel Tower standing high above the surrounding neighborhood. I look forward to adding another image to this gallery—the new residential building and campus-wide renovations—as soon as we have an accurate rendering of an approved design. Stay tuned!

Together, these images are a reminder that our beloved campus was co-created by the vision and vigor of those who preceded us. I love these visuals because they speak to what propels us forward: the deep belief that we are stewards of an extraordinary mission of ministry in a global city. We cherish this campus because its ever-widening boundaries—both physical *and* spiritual—embrace our living community, one with deep roots in the past and a strong march towards a promising future of excellence and growth.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Serene Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "J".

The Rev. Dr. Serene Jones  
President and Johnston Family Professor for  
Religion & Democracy

- 1 You should have recently received your invitation to contribute by December 31st to the Campaign for Union for student scholarships.
- 2 We inhabit a landscape replete with challenges—of cost, of the perceived value of a seminary education, of disruptive technologies, of social inequality, and the loss of public confidence—but we are confident that Union is in a position not only to cope with this environment but also to thrive in it.
- 3 If you know of anyone who might be interested in EDS at Union—or any of our expanded degree and concentration offerings—please point them towards our brand new website! [utsnyc.edu/admissions](https://utsnyc.edu/admissions)

# Global Connections—Union Faculty Visit China

A DELEGATION OF SIX Union faculty members traveled to China May 22–28 to visit theological schools and church leaders. This trip was part of Union's Global Connections Initiative, an effort to reconnect with many of Union's longstanding international friends as well as discover new ones.

After returning to New York, Dr. Brigitte Kahl, Professor of New Testament, reported that there were “so many surprising and unexpected things: the overwhelming hospitality we received at a Buddhist temple and college in Nanjing; the strange mix of dedicated worshipers and crowds of tourists at a beautiful Taoist temple in the center of the bustling Shanghai market; the sheer size and impressive architecture of the railway stations with sleek high-speed trains gliding in and out around the clock; and the huge super-modern church on the campus of our partner school, the Union Theological Seminary of Nanjing. It was a magical experience, but we just scratched the surface.”

In addition to Kahl, the delegation included Dr. Su Yon Pak '99, Senior Director and Associate Professor, Integrative and Field-Based Education; Dr. Cláudio Carvalhaes '07, Associate Professor of Worship; Dr. Hyun Kyung Chung '89, Associate Professor of Ecumenical Studies; Dr. Jeremy F. Hultin, Visiting Associate Professor of Biblical Languages; and Sensei Gregory Snyder, Senior Director of Buddhist Studies at Union and President and Senior Dharma Teacher at the Brooklyn Zen Center.

As reported earlier (*Union Network* Fall 2016), President Jones visited Shanghai and Nanjing in 2016, and similarly on this trip, the faculty delegation began its tour in Shanghai, traveled to Nanjing to visit Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, where Kahl gave a lecture titled, “Paul among Believers and Non-believers: A Conversation with Paul and Bishop Ting,” in front of over 300 students and faculty. The delegation then returned to Shanghai to visit the China Christian Council, the Shanghai Christian Council, and the East China Theological Seminary. As Pak shared after the group had returned to Union, “This trip was immensely positive for all the Union delegates.... Not only were



CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: Dr. Pak (at right) with Xun Zhang, Union's host at the Nanjing Amity Printing Co., the main production center for Bibles in China; Powerful sculpture at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall; Members of the delegation on the steps of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum in Nanjing. Dr. Sun was the provisional president of the Republic of China at its 1912 founding.

we experiencing inter-religious and inter-cultural engagements on the ground, we were learning about a version of a ‘post-denominational’ Christian church and how Chinese Christians practice religion. Many hours at breakfasts and long van rides were prime opportunities for theological reflections on multiple levels.”

Hultin, in reflecting on the trip, observed that “for me, the trip was one of discovery on two fronts: there was China, and there was *Christianity* in China. Both surprised me. What most struck me about China was how ‘Western’ it felt. The cities we visited had all the prosperity and polish of European capitals. This left us with complicated feelings. And despite the rich history of Christianity in the country, we were always reminded that the church has been, since the time of the Cultural Revolution, beginning again in many ways. One could sense both the promise and the challenges that attend all such fresh starts.”

Carvalhaes summed up his experience this way: “The Chinese hospitality through meals is just incredible! We were offered Eucharistic tables all along! But getting to know China was like entering into a mystery. We have just knocked at the door of that mystery world, and there is so much to learn and to wonder.”



Members of the delegation are joined by the Rev. Dr. Manhong Melissa Lin, Associate General Secretary of the China Christian Council and Academic Dean & Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, for a banquet lunch.

# Reflections on the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation

This year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of a time of religious upheaval and violent change now called the Protestant Reformation. Its assigned starting point is October 31, 1517, the day the Roman Catholic monk, Martin Luther, nailed 95 Theses, also known as the “Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences” to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. In his statements, he challenged the Roman Catholic Church to stop practices suggesting you could pay money to earn God’s forgiveness. Little did he know then that his theological challenge would eventually stir wars about religion that would rage across Europe for the next hundred years, leaving devastating human carnage in its wake.

Looking back from the vantage point of the present, it’s easy to see how much has changed in the world since then. In most communities in the U.S. today, Protestants and Catholics live side by side quite peaceably. No one speaks of indulgences or shouts battle cries over the nature of forgiveness. Indeed, in an increasingly secular America, being Christian and churchgoing makes active members of both groups more similar to one another than different. My guess is one would be hard-pressed to find many who could explain—theologically—what the differences between Catholics and Protestants actually are, apart from general comments about Catholics being beholden to Rome and the Pope, and Protestants allowing for married priests. Differences that once set fire to Europe today no longer strike even a spark.

As the words of Isaac Watts’s hymn remind us, “Time like an ever-rolling stream, bears all our sins/sons away,” today’s fiercest conflicts—as bloody and violent as they continue to be—when viewed in a longer flow of history, appear less justified and less urgent than we think. There is no better time than our present celebration of the Reformation to remember this. As Christians, we are called to step back from our most fiercely held truths and ask, if they lead us to violence, are they ultimately worth it? Are they true? If our beliefs make us hate, will time bear the truth of our truths out?

At a time when communal acrimony across our nation cuts deeper and deeper divides between us, perhaps the most important lesson of the Reformation is the humility it teaches.

—Serene Jones

*President and Johnston Family Professor for Religion & Democracy, Union Theological Seminary*

For our featured round table on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we invited several of our preeminent faculty, staff and alumni/ae to contribute a brief reflection in response to this scenario:

You find yourself seated next to one of the Protestant Reformers at a dinner party.

Who would it be?

What questions would you ask?

What would you tell them about the current state of the church and the world?





**Brigitte Kahl** | Professor of New Testament, Union Theological Seminary

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Kahl has written her reflection in the form of a letter.)

Dear Martin, I apologize for being a bit intrusive, but would you be willing to share why you sometimes called your wife "Herr Kaete," that is Sir/Lord? Was that a mere joke? Or did you bend the hierarchy of husband over wife here just the slightest bit? I came across a letter you wrote to "Herr Kaete" from the city of Dessau in 1534. You ask her to please send you some of her beer because you cannot stand the horrible brew they force down your throat at Dessau. We know that your home at the Black Cloister in Wittenberg was a huge enterprise that she oversaw, including a farm, a hospital, and even a brewery. She must have been a remarkable woman. In your last will you made Katharina von Bora your sole heir, which was against the law of the land at the time and thus not honored after your death, so she died poor and wasn't even buried next to you. I must say, your marriage was very unusual in many ways. And what an uproar right at the beginning—a former monk and a runaway nun. How scandalous! Actually, I was reminded of that when just this summer of 2017, in your native Germany, legislation was passed—after much uproar, too—that made marriage between two men or two women fully legal. I couldn't help thinking of you and your "Herr Kaete."

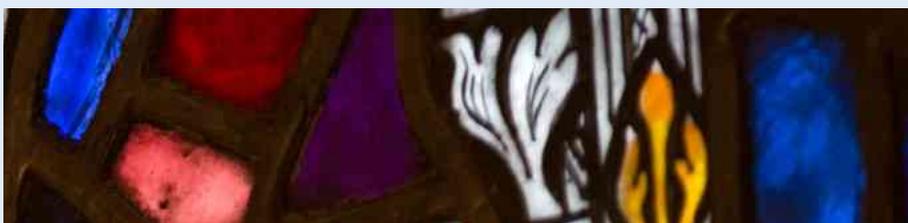
Sorry, I can see that you look baffled. I didn't mean to offend you. But you once said that the church must be permanently in a state of reformation, *ecclesia semper reformanda*. Probably, 500 years after the Reformation, there are quite a few things we have to revisit and rethink, wouldn't you agree?



**Cláudio Carvalhaes, Ph.D. '07** | Associate Professor of Worship, Union Theological Seminary

While I am a Reformed theologian, deeply influenced by Calvin's theology, I'd choose to sit with reformer Thomas Müntzer. This is what I would say to him, "Rev. Müntzer, Luther's calling you Satan still goes on. People are still scared of you, to the point that there is barely anything in seminaries that wrestles with your life and ministry. They mostly dismiss you, primarily because theology continues to be on the side of kings and princesses. You would be utterly disappointed. After you, very few Christian movements cared deeply for the peasants. No church challenges the powers of the rich today. Kings and princesses aren't slightly concerned that Christianity can change their status quo. In fact, Christianity is a full part of the economic engine of the rich and churches are mostly a protection of a certain class of people under the veneer of theological talking about God's love for all. We barely

have any sense of the presence of economic or class struggles in theological discourse! However, you would also be very pleased to see that in some places in the world, people think that God has a preferential option for the poor, that the economics is fundamental to the faith and that there are peasant movements trying to bring about a revolution. Not much in the U.S. though. We live in the belly of the beast and fundamentally we support that which we are trying to dismantle. Here we mostly talk the talk but we don't walk the walk. I wish you were here. The 'miners of Allstedt' are everywhere and continue to be pushed down and killed! We desperately need your rev-elevations! We need your folly, your radical commitment with the peasants..." At this point Müntzer stops my talk and says, "There is no point to be at this dinner. Let's continue this conversation with the homeless in town."



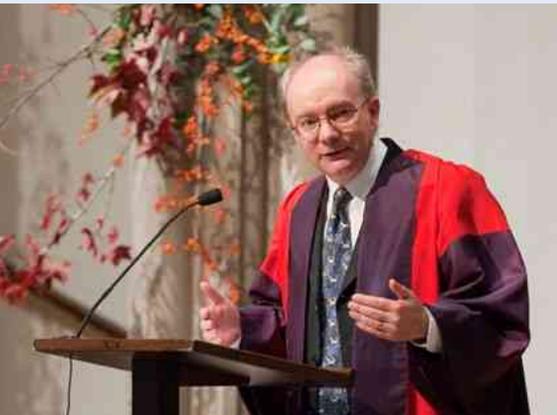


**George Zachariah, M.Div. '98**  
*Professor of Christian Ethics,*  
United Theological College  
Bangalore, India

In this dinner and conversation, I would like to share the table with Katharina von Bora. My conversation is informed and inspired by the struggles of women in my church, a Reformed Eastern Church in India, which has yet to offer women full participation in the total life of the church.

“In Reformation history, you are portrayed as the epitome of the ideal Christian woman. These historians praise you for your exceptional ability in managing the Black Cloister, running the students’ hostel, administering the farm and the brewery, and rearing six children. The revolutionary significance of your daring act of leaving the convent and joining the movement of reformation has been systematically erased by domesticating you as the spouse of the reformer without any interest in the church. For the contemporary kyriarchal and patriarchal church you are the quintessential church woman. They believe that you can inspire women to become wives, mothers, and homemakers as part of their true vocation, without disrupting the ethos of the patriarchal household and church.

Women, however, who envision church as an inclusive alternative community find your model disturbing and reactionary. For them, even the doctrine of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ is problematic because it does not destabilize the prevailing power relations. Instead they propose a new reformation movement to de-clericalize the church through which all theologies and practices of exclusion and discrimination can be eradicated from the church. In that process, they want you to come out of the cloisters of the dominant historiography and to speak out—to speak out against the church which continues to distort your story and your struggles to legitimize their interests. Your speaking out will not only shatter the kyriarchal and patriarchal structures within the church, but also support the initiatives to midwife the birth of an alternative ekklesia. May I request the real Katharina von Bora to stand up and speak out?”



**Euan Cameron** | *Henry Luce III Professor of Reformation Church History,*  
Union Theological Seminary

The reformer whom I can most easily imagine speaking with, and should most like to meet, would be Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560). Long-suffering colleague of Martin Luther, this brilliant and precocious polymath not only wrote biblical exegesis but also taught physics, logic, history and many other disciplines. A sensitive soul, he was constantly thrust into conflict. He drafted two key documents of the Lutheran Church, his Common Places (1521 onwards) and the Augsburg Confession (1530 and 1540) as well as the Apology for the 1530 confession.

The first, predictable question would be how did he find working with Luther. From his letters one can already guess part of the answer at least. He lived and worked close to Luther’s volcanic temperament and flawed genius for over 25 years—he, if anyone, could give a balanced insight.

A question closer to his heart might be how he would view the relationship between theology and the sciences. He wrote textbooks that revised scientific orthodoxy

to suit the Lutheran faith. How would he view the present-day distance between theology and natural science? What suggestions might he have for us to bring them into dialogue?

I should ask Melanchthon what he had learned as a theologian from his voluminous studies in history, after spending the latter decades of his life revising a history of the world written by a friend.

Philipp Melanchthon might be less surprised than Luther to learn that the world has not ended, as so many people in his own time expected. While the divisions of the church have not healed, we coexist better than in his time. He might take comfort from the fact that wars of religion among Christians are almost unthinkable. He might even have suggestions as to how different faiths could live together without compromise, but without conflict.



**Victoria Barnett, M.Div. '81** | *Director of the Programs on Ethics, Religion, and the Holocaust, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC*

As soon as I enter the room I spot her—and naturally Argula von Grumbach (1492–1554) is sitting alone. She is brilliant and intimidating, and she also knows how to fight. It is said that her first husband Friedrich von Grumbach was encouraged to beat or even kill her to stop her from writing.

But she persisted—she also outlived Friedrich, and remarried. The first Protestant laywoman theologian to emerge during the Reformation, Grumbach was a well-educated woman from a Bavarian noble family. Fascinated by theology and spirituality, she began corresponding with Martin Luther after reading his translation of the New Testament. In 1523 a university student, Arsacius Seehofer, was arrested for his pro-Reformation views and forced to recant. She sent a lengthy defense of the Reformation to the university officials that went viral—14 editions in two months—and became a prolific writer of pamphlets, letters, and poems.

So I think we would have lots to talk about. I'm interested to hear more about her support systems—perhaps other women who have gone unnoticed in history. She corresponded with a number of the Reformers; did they speak out on her behalf? Who treated her as an intellectual equal? She believed in the Reformation, but did it believe in her? Was there an intellectual spark in all the battles that she thoroughly enjoyed? I'm curious to hear what she really thought of Martin Luther, whom she met in 1530. With respect to the current state of the church and the world, unfortunately I suspect she would find many of the dynamics that confront feminists today all too familiar. But I would also want to describe the marvelously diverse and vibrant religious/cultural landscape of our times, and ask if any of that sounds familiar to her.



**Fred Davie** | *Executive Vice President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Union Theological Seminary*

John Calvin is the reformer I choose to engage for two principal reasons. First, he is considered the father of Presbyterianism, along with his student Knox, and I'm a Presbyterian of several generations. Second, after research—with the assistance of my summer intern—I discovered a couple of character traits in Calvin that caught my attention and could make good fodder for this reflection. Calvin is said to have manifested a “cold impersonality masking intense anxiety about the world around him.” It is said he was preoccupied at great length with “an abyss in which human beings have lost their way, creating a labyrinth from which they could not escape.” If I were sitting at dinner with John Calvin, I would tell him that's exactly the anxiety I feel for these United States of America.

I would tell John Calvin that the United States of America—with the election of Donald Trump—seems to sink further and further into an abyss of unreality, creating a labyrinth from which we cannot escape. I would explain that I believe racism—the work of evil itself—has so corrupted the heart of this country that we have found ourselves in such unfamiliar territory and the terror associated with it, with no clear direction for how to escape. I would make the case that I believe collusion by our White House with a hostile foreign nation, supported by white evangelical Christians and a white Republican Party, has to do with the fact that the hostile foreign power is led by white people, who, like most of the people who support the current administration, fear the black and brown hordes of Christians and non-Christians alike. I would say to Calvin that my anxiety is about an abyss wherein

our own White House would support a murderous, racist, homophobic, white dictator over building a truly multi-racial society representing the highest ideals of our fledgling democracy here in our own United States. I would explain to Calvin that this racist collusion, undermining our representative form of government, is supported by a majority of white, Christian Republicans.

I would then ask him how his brand of Christianity—his efforts at reforming the faith—might offer clues about how to escape this labyrinth. Or is it all predestined? Or are we doomed? I would ask him how we might get Christians in this land to truly commit to a multi-racial society of shared power and resources where all have an opportunity to flourish. I would ask John Calvin how we might help Christians out of the labyrinth of supporting racial gerrymandering that denies black and brown people full participation in the governmental process. I would ask him how we might effect a change of course for those Christians who would give tax breaks to the rich while taking health care and basic necessities from the poor and elderly. I would ask him how we might get Christians to embrace his belief that the state's responsibility is not only to maintain public order but also to be a positive force in ensuring the general welfare of society as a whole. I would ask him how we might get today's American Christians to subscribe to his belief that a person is defrauded when her “need is left unmet by someone who has the power to meet it.” I would ask him if we might get American Christians to simply do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Or are we doomed to a labyrinth of inescapable destruction? **!**



# Nourishing a Culture of Progress and Hope: Latinx Experiences at Union

BY SINDY MORALES GARCIA

EDITOR'S NOTE: Although the sample consisted of 40 participants, the percentages stated in the article are based on the actual number of respondents who answered any given question.

It was a defining time in the fall of 2014, as a group of over 20 Latinx<sup>1</sup> students, alumni/ae, and faculty gathered to honor the stories of our experiences at Union. As current Latinx students shared their frustrations and joys at Union, alumni/ae filled in the gaps of institutional memory by sharing their own experiences. Reminding us that our stories at Union are reflective of a national narrative, alumna Dr. Teresa Delgado '93, '05, told us about Dr. Edwin Hernandez's 2001 national survey on Hispanic Theological Education. Inspired by Dr. Hernandez's work, and the powerful stories of those who gathered that night, I decided to use my internship with the Office of Institutional Diversity and Community Engagement (IDCE) as an opportunity to explore and document some of the experiences of Latinx students at Union. In particular, I wanted to identify the areas of support and barriers the students encountered. In the spring of 2015, I designed and launched an online survey and focus group in collaboration with the administration and Union's Latinx student caucus.

Contacting Latinx alumni/ae was much easier said than done due to Union's incomplete records of Latinx students. Yet, a total of 40 self-identified Latinx students and alumni/ae responded to the online survey. This included 17 current students, 21 alumni/ae, one participant who identified as "other," and one participant who did not provide their status. The focus group consisted of six current students and two alumni/ae. The survey and focus groups explored three major areas: Recruitment and Admissions, Academics, and Student Life/Campus Climate. Below are some of the key findings.

## Recruitment & Admissions Experience

What was most important in the recruitment and admissions process as a Latinx student? Most participants found evidence of Latinx persons on campus other than staff to be the most important (30 participants, 72.5%). The visibility of and personal engagement with Latinx students, faculty, and alumni/ae ranked significantly higher than institutional initiatives such as an official diversity statement or bilingual recruitment literature.

Most respondents (33, 91.7%) considered financial aid to be a very important factor in their decision to apply to Union. Twenty-five participants (62.5%) reported taking on hefty loans to cover the cost of their education. Furthermore, out of the fifteen alumni/ae who indicated they borrowed money to attend Union, ten reported their debt was significantly/extremely impacting their ministry or career. This points to the economic barriers Latinxs at Union face at both ends of the student life cycle—gaining access to Union and life after graduation.

## Academic Experience

What about academic goals? The majority of respondents (25, 73.5%) communicated a clear commitment to dedicating their religious scholarship to serving their communities. Unfortunately, only nine (29.4%) felt Union prepared them to do so. A pattern of feeling left out of Union's commitment to diversity showed up multiple times throughout the survey. However, the majority of respondents agreed/strongly agreed (18, 54.5%) that the perspectives of communities of color are included in many of Union's courses. The majority of participants (26, 76.5%) expressed a desire for Latinx perspectives to be more intentionally included in Union's courses.

How were these students supported while completing their program? The top five answers in order of importance included fellow students, faculty advisors, the Financial Aid Office, faculty, and student caucuses. Although there are institutional support resources such as Student Affairs and the academic offices, fewer respondents made a connection with other institutional student support resources, representing a significant future challenge for Union as it continues to serve Latinx students.

## Campus Climate

Did the Latinx survey participants believe there is a supportive environment for students of color, in general, and Latinx in particular? Similar to the data patterns about the inclusion of diverse perspectives in the curriculum, most participants felt that, although there is support for students of color on campus, the needs of Latinxs are not included.

Participants were also asked if they felt students of different racial/ethnic origins relate well with one another. Of the 34 who responded to this question, only eight (23.5%) agreed. Several of the focus group participants described struggling with a black/white racial binary at Union. One participant stated:

*"I was really happy with the diversity [at Union], and then...when I started realizing what that diversity looked like, I started seeing a very overwhelming binary. You were either African-American or you were white. And nothing else existed, or everything else was attacked in weird ways."*

The survey concluded by asking participants if they could do it all over again, would they choose Union for their seminary education? The majority (23, 67.6%) said yes, six (17.6%) were unsure, and five (14.7%) said "No." Of those who said "Yes," one participant explained:

*“Union is not a perfect place. Like any institution it is historically bound within a matrix of supremacies and injustices. And at the same time, Union is one of the only institutions I know that would accept this and proactively move towards change. For me that is more valuable than perfection. My critiques stand alongside hope.”*

When asked if they would recommend Union to prospective Latinx students, 18 (42.9%) said “Yes,” 11 (32.4%) said they were unsure, and five (14.7%) said “No.”

### Latinx Organizing at Union

The results of the study were presented to the administration, the Alumni/ae Council, and the student community throughout 2015. That same year, a group of Latinx students, alumni/ae, and faculty gathered once again during ReUnion to assess what could be done to improve the realities portrayed by the research. From



this meeting emerged a Latinx Working Group of students and alumni/ae to further study Latinx issues, meet with administrators about possible strategies, and pursue action. In an effort to hold accountable the administration’s expressed desire to support Union’s Latinxs, the students decided to write a letter to President Jones. The letter was composed of a series of demands shaped in accordance with the research report, as well as several conversations the Latinx Working Group had with various members of the administration. The recommendations included a number of strategies designed to enhance communication and networking with and for Latinxs, internally and externally. Recommendations also called for cultural competence training opportunities for Union administration and faculty, greater student support

including field education opportunities in more Latinx settings, Latinx-specific chaplaincy services, and increased recruitment of Latinx faculty and students. The letter envisioned a 25% increase of Latinx students in all programs by 2025.

The letter was sent to President Jones, the administration, and the Union community in December 2015. In January 2016, President Jones replied with a letter in which she wrote:

*“Your list of action items and demands, I believe, powerfully expresses the needs identified in...the study of the Latinx climate at UTS. The study is compelling and disturbing, as it clearly demonstrates the many areas in which Union has yet to fully embrace and effectively support the power and promise that Latinx students, faculty, and alumni/ae bring to Union and the world...as President of this institution, I am committed to addressing them, in both immediate and long-term ways.”*

Since the exchange with President Jones, some of the issues have been addressed. Union hired Dr. Cláudio Carvalhaes—who was already being interviewed for the position before the Latinx Working Group was created—increasing the number of Latinx faculty. Data began to be collected on Latinx applicants and those admitted to Union by degree program. And one Latinx student—who had already applied to Union before the Latinx Working Group was created—was admitted to the Ph.D. program. Much work still needs to be done to ensure the completion of the Latinx Working Group recommendations. However, with student body turnover and institutional focus shifting, it has been difficult to maintain accountability around some of the action items.

Latinx students and alumni/ae continue gathering during ReUnion to cultivate relationships and organize next steps. In 2016, a group gathered to share updates regarding the letter of demands. Participants identified the need to create a UTS Latinx Network of students, alumni/ae, faculty, staff, and allies to anchor and sustain our organizing efforts. This idea continues to be shaped by a working group of Latinx students and alumni/ae in a spirit of persistence and love for our people and our community at Union. **U**

1. I use this term to identify peoples of Latin American origin living in the United States. The use of the “x” as opposed to an “o/a” is meant to inclusively refer to our peoples of all genders.

# A National Call for Moral Revival: Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II and the Poor People's Campaign

BY NICHOLAS LACCETTI

**ON A HOT DAY** in late July, clergy and people of faith assembled in front of New York's City Hall to rally against racist voter suppression laws across the United States. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948, states, "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives." The drive to enact racist voting laws throughout the U.S. in recent years shows the U.S. in clear violation of this human rights mandate.

Gathering under the banner of the "Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival," and led by Campaign co-chairs Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II of Repairers of the Breach, Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis '04, '14 of the Kairos Center, Union



**L TO R: Rabbi Stephanie Ruskay, Jewish Theological Seminary; Imam Talib Abdur-Rashid, Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood, NYC; Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President; Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis '04, '14, Kairos Center at Union; Rev. Dr. William Barber II, Repairers of the Breach; Rev. Dr. Katharine Henderson '82, Auburn Seminary; Dr. Raymond Rufin-Blanchette, Clergy Campaign for Social and Economic Justice; Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes Jr. '62, Healing of the Nations Foundation.**

Theological Seminary, and Auburn Seminary, the assembled faith leaders held a press conference to announce that our democracy has been hacked from the inside. After the press conference, the group sent a delegation to the United Nations to personally deliver a letter on voter suppression to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, declaring that voting rights are human rights.

This historic event was the fruit of a long relationship between Barber (who rose to prominence as the architect of the Moral Mondays Movement), Kairos: The Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice, and Union Theological Seminary.

At the time of the New York rally, Barber—then a visiting professor at Union—had recently stepped out of his role as president of the North Carolina NAACP to step up to join the leadership of

the new Poor People's Campaign, which calls for a revival of Dr. King's 1968 Poor People's Campaign on its fiftieth anniversary. Calling for a Poor People's Campaign has been the primary mission of Kairos at Union since its founding in 2013. Kairos first established a relationship with Barber through Moral Mondays, which has been one of the most vital examples of building a grassroots, broad-based social movement for human rights in recent history.

Barber often explains how we need a "new political Pentecost" in this country, a Third Reconstruction to follow the unfinished First Reconstruction after the Civil War and the Second Reconstruction of the Civil Rights Movement. He sees the Poor People's Campaign as the vehicle for this Third Reconstruction:

"Fifty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King called for a 'revolution of values' in America, inviting people who had been divided to stand together against the 'triplets of evil'—militarism, racism, and economic injustice—to insist that people need not die from poverty in the richest nation to ever exist. Poor people in communities across America—Black, white, brown and Native—responded by building a Poor People's Campaign... We have not finished their work...the future of our democracy depends on us completing the work of a Third Reconstruction today. This is why I hear the Spirit calling us to build a new Poor People's Campaign."

With Barber and Theoharis as co-chairs, the Campaign has embarked on a public organizing tour across the country. We are reviving the message of the original PPC, which proclaimed that racism, militarism, and poverty are interconnected evils and must be fought together—and that the poor and dispossessed, united across color lines and other lines of division, must lead that fight.

As Barber preached at his recent consecration as bishop, "In America and in the world, the rejected are gonna lead the revival. I need to know, are there any folk that know what it's like to be rejected? But in your rejection, God has revived you and reconciled you and redeemed you and there is a rejoicing that only the rejected can do. I wonder is there is a rejection praise in here? They said I'd never make it. They said I wouldn't be nobody. They said I was too gay, too radical, too lesbian, too poor, but look at what the Lord has done! The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone!"

This first era of the "Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival" will culminate in 2018 with forty days of action from Mother's Day to the Summer Solstice in state capitals across the country and in Washington, DC, evoking the promised coming of the Holy Spirit 40 days after the first Easter. **U**

Nicholas Laccetti is the Communications Coordinator for Kairos: The Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice

# Half-Day Conference Examines Marginalization of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

BY KRISTINE CHONG

PHOTO: Jay ES Photography



**ON APRIL 21, 2017**, Union Theological Seminary and the Asian & Pacific Islander (API) Caucus hosted “Acts of Exclusion: Asian & Pacific Islander Responses to Migration, Otherness & Belonging.” Union and neighboring API community members gathered for this half-day conference to examine and deliberate around API experiences of and responses to marginalization in the U.S.

Bookended by the 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 (which sanctioned the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans in concentration camps during World War II) and the 25th anniversary of the Sa-I-Gu (also known as the 1992 LA Uprising), “Acts of Exclusion” was held both in remembrance of API histories and a looking towards continued resistance and solidarity against exclusionary oppressions.

Comprising two panels, API Conference speakers reflected on two questions: (1) How is otherness/exclusion an enduring experience of API communities in the U.S.? and (2) How do/can we respond to this enduring experience?

During the first panel, Dr. Timothy Tseng '87, '94, provided a historical overview of the racialization and foreignization of APIs; Dr. Anne-Marie Tupuola-Plunkett discussed the commodification of indigenous culture and invisibilized experiences of urban Pasifika people; Dr. Keun-Joo Christine Pae '07, '09, addressed U.S. militarization of East Asia and continued API exclusion in the military; Rev. Dr. Patrick Cheng '01, '09, '10, reflected on the multiplicity of otherness, and queerness and API identities as middle spaces; and Pastor Zhaodeng Peng offered stories and concerns of his parishioners at Tian Fu United Methodist Church in Brooklyn.

In the second panel, Dr. Tat-siong Benny Liew provided a postcolonial reading of race and resistance in 1 Peter; Sung-Ok Lee shared about her activism of living out metanoia and the beloved community through sanctuary movement activism with the United Methodist Women; Dr. W. Anne Joh dissected social patterns of inclusion at the expense of others' exclusions and called for the dismantling of all forms of exclusion (not just

around the API community) in relation to the white supremacist settler state; Lisa Asedillo Pratt '15 reflected on boundary crossing communities from a mixed race consciousness and called for a student-of-color consciousness at Union; and Thanu Yakupitiyage discussed her activism in immigrant rights advocacy and racial justice.

This rich mix of perspectives, expertise, and conversations during the API Conference was birthed out of a collective desire for more spaces to articulate and engage API perspectives and experiences at Union. In the spirit of the works of our foremothers and trailblazers such as Yuri Kochiyama, Grace Lee Boggs, Bishop Roy Sano '57, Aloysius Pieris, and Tara Hyun Kyung Chung '89, “Acts of Exclusion” provided a space to connect our API heritages, ethnic identities, and lived experiences with our theological journeys. And in doing so, it was a demonstration of “how to rewrite history and our theologies to liberate ourselves from the spells of European and Euro-American hallucinations that haunt our minds,” to quote Kwok Pui-Lan.

In addition to fostering much-needed API representation on campus, the API Conference marked the development of an API alumni/ae network (virtual) chapter, as the API Caucus worked with the Office of Alumni/ae Relations to generate an updated list of API alums for outreach. The participation of several alums as speakers and an API alum reception after the conference facilitated initial gatherings and connections that will continue to be cultivated in the coming years.

Composed of a small-in-number, but eclectic group of multiple API identities, origins, migration histories, and life experiences, the API Caucus is a coalition of students, faculty (and leadership of Dr. Su Yon Pak '99, Dr. Tara Hyun Kyung Chung, and Dr. John Thatamanil), staff, and supporters of API descent at Union. Sharing in the commitment to care for one another, to value our ancestries, and to contribute our unique cultures and peoples in the realm of theology, activism, and ministry, we began gathering on a monthly—often more frequent—basis during the past school year to offer honest, inclusive, and accountable spaces for API voices.

As we mark our collective rituals, such as an API chapel service or an API commissioning service, and as we support our other kin of color, we hope to, in the words of Lisa Asedillo Pratt, “cultivate a student of color consciousness...tell the truth, and understand and transform the present...to birth new worlds” here at Union. [U](#)

The API Caucus is grateful for the generous support of the President's Office and Union administration for the conference. We are working together to share learnings from the 2017 API Conference online and to increase API representation at Union in upcoming years.

# Union Making News *leadership to positively transform the world*

## SPRING SEMESTER 2017

### ***Encore Transition Program***

The first cohort of the Encore Transition Program completed its work on May 2, 2017. Sixteen participants between the ages of 46–80 spent four months during the spring semester engaged in a biweekly process of discernment about their “encore” stage of life. Participants discussed and planned strategies to make this time in their lives one of both personal and social renewal.

We were delighted when *The New York Times* reporter who writes a column titled, “Works in Progress,” learned about the Encore Transition Program and wrote an in-depth column about the experience of several participants, which appeared in the Sunday, April 2, 2017, edition of the *Times*. With the successful conclusion of the first year, we are excited to announce that there will be second Encore Transition Program offered this fall.

## JUNE 5–7, 2017

### ***The Center for Earth Ethics Ministers Training Program***

In early June, the Center for Earth Ethics hosted its second annual Ministers Training Conference. More than 40 ministers and faith leaders from around the country convened at Union for a three-day training to explore what faithful ministry looks like in the time of climate change. Participants learned strategies and tactics they can use in their congregations and local communities.

On Tuesday, June 6, 2017—just days after President Trump’s disastrous decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Accord—conference attendees were joined by more than 200 New Yorkers for a panel discussion featuring former Vice President Al Gore. (See related article on inside back cover.) The public event included perspectives from law, moral philosophy, and religion to explore the ethical and ecological implications of continued investment in and development of fossil fuel infrastructure, despite knowing the repercussions for planet and people alike.

## JULY 10–14, 2017

### ***Millennial Leadership Project Summer Conference***

For the fourth consecutive year, Union was pleased to host the Millennial Leadership Project (MLP) Summer Conference. Launched as an effort to build collaborative dialogue among young activists spanning many faith traditions and issue areas, the MLP provides networking, support and peer-to-peer learning opportunities to young and emerging social justice leaders from across the United States.

This year’s 31 participants are engaged in a broad swath of pressing social issues and bring a wide array of vocations. Attendees included farmers, community organizers, writers, public health educators, artists, performers, and racial justice and LGBTQ rights advocates. The theme of this year’s conference was mindfulness, which has become an increasingly important practice to enhance both awareness and self-care among young activists.

## ONGOING 2017

### ***Rise of the Religious Left***

Since the November election, several media outlets have documented the growing interest in the religious left by featuring Union. Our community is well aware of the important role that progressive religious activism has played in American history, but the recent media attention has helped share this narrative with a broader audience.

Union professors and administrators have been featured prominently in outlets including *The New York Times*, *Reuters*, *AP*, *The Christian Century*, *The Nation*, *USA Today*, and *National Public Radio*. These stories have highlighted the role religious leaders play in combating Islamophobia, providing sanctuary to immigrants seeking asylum, advocating for LGBTQ rights, and promoting productive discussion in the public square. Please visit [utsnyc.edu/in-the-news](http://utsnyc.edu/in-the-news) to read Union’s recent headlines.

## MAY 17, 2017

### ***Union on the Hill***

As an influential voice in the progressive faith movement, Union has actively rallied evangelical and other religious leaders from around the country to express the faith community’s mounting support for LGBTQ rights and equality. Thanks to a generous grant from the Arcus Foundation, Union has worked with this coalition to plan and execute several events aimed at raising this issue with legislators and within their congregations.

Last May, on International Day Against Homophobia, this coalition hosted a press conference in Washington, DC, to denounce the recent spate of national policies aimed specifically at rolling back rights for LGBTQ employees, LGBTQ seniors, and the transgender community. Partnering with the offices of Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) and Senator Chris Coons (D-DE), the diverse coalition of faith leaders promoted a pro-equality policy agenda for the Trump Administration and Congress. Following the press conference, our speakers facilitated panel discussions that outlined how the wider faith community can constructively support LGBTQ people.

Participants from this event have agreed to meet at Union this fall to strategize new ways to deliver their message of support for the full inclusion and equality for the LGBTQ community, and plan events and activities for 2018. **U**

# Union Celebrates Marvin Ellison, Director of Alumni/ae Relations, with Retirement Party

*Beloved staff member succeeded on June 30 by Emily Odom, M.Div. '90*

The Rev. Dr. Marvin M. Ellison '81, Director of Alumni/ae Relations, retired on June 30 from the position that he has held since 2014.

Over the past three and a half years, Ellison has been largely responsible for launching a national alumni/ae chapter program that has served to connect and engage alumni/ae in the life of the Seminary. In this important role, he has also staffed the Seminary's Alumni/ae Council in its role to support and promote Union's mission.

"I am thankful to have worked as a member of Union's outstanding Development Office staff and alongside our Alumni/ae Council," says Ellison, who was celebrated and thanked by faculty, staff, and Alumni/ae Council members with a festive retirement party at the Seminary on June 29.

"I'm deeply touched by this outpouring of affection by my colleagues on campus as well as members of the Council who traveled in for the occasion," he continues. "I am heartened by the many ways in which the Council plays an incredibly important role in supporting Union's mission and in engaging other alums

*"Marvin's accomplishments in cultivating relationships with alumni/ae locally, regionally and nationally over such a short period have been truly remarkable."*

**—President Serene Jones**

both to 'go back' and 'give back' to our beloved seminary. I trust that the Council's good work will continue under new leadership."

After earning a B.A. in religion from Davidson College, an M.A. in religion and society from the University of Chicago Divinity School, and a Ph.D. at Union, Ellison was invited to join the faculty of the Bangor (Maine) Theological Seminary in 1981 as the Willard S. Bass Professor of Christian Ethics. Over the years he lectured widely on ethical issues related to human sexuality, health care, and economic justice and published essays on same-sex marriage, gender justice



**Emily Odom and Marvin Ellison**

in Protestant Christianity, and changing patterns of family life. When Bangor Seminary closed in 2013, Ellison assumed his position at Union.

"Marvin's accomplishments in cultivating relationships with alumni/ae locally, regionally and nationally over such a short period have been truly remarkable," said the Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, Union's president. "He has been an invaluable asset to our staff and will be greatly missed."

Upon Ellison's June 30 retirement, the Rev. Emily Enders Odom '90, assumed the position of director. She and Ellison overlapped for one month in order to ensure a smooth transition in serving Union's alumni/ae.

Odom, ordained in 1991 by the New York City Presbytery as a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), holds a B.A. in German and Spanish from Wellesley College, an M.Div. degree from Union, and is an alumna of the Fulbright Program. Prior to accepting the call at Union, she served the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the PC(USA) since August 2005 as a mission communications strategist. Previously a vice president for planning and administration at Montreat Conference Center, Montreat, NC, Odom has also served as a parish pastor and hospital chaplain. In addition to her background in

ministry, she has over ten years of experience in advertising, public relations, and television production. In 2017, Odom's writing was recognized both with an Award of Excellence from the Associated Church Press for her 2016 Presbyterian News Service story, "PC(USA) software engineer asks, 'What if God was our customer?'" and a DeRose-Hinkhouse Award for her magazine article, "Partners in Christ's Service," in *Presbyterians Today*.

"It was at Union where my professor and mentor, Dr. Phyllis Tribble '63, first identified my call to write—a call that I have lived out with great joy and fulfillment at the PC(USA) national offices for 12 years," said Odom. "I now look forward to serving the institution that so profoundly transformed me, especially in the important role of keeping our alumni/ae community networked, supported, and informed."

A resident of Louisville, KY, Odom will carry out her new responsibilities remotely, traveling extensively wherever—and whenever—alumni/ae gather.

"While we are saddened by Marvin's departure, Union will be well served by an excellent successor in Emily," Jones said. **U**



The Development Office welcomes **Gregory I. Simpson** as Associate Director of Alumni/ae Relations and Individual Giving. Gregory holds the M.Div '16 and S.T.M. '17 degrees from Union, as well as a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of the West Indies.

# Charles and Shirley Sherrod Receive Union Medals

BY LEAH ROUSMANIERE



L TO R: President Jones, Charles Sherrod '66, Shirley Sherrod, and Board Chair Wolcott Dunham Jr.

On May 3, 2017, the Rev. Charles M. Sherrod '66 and his wife Shirley M. Sherrod received Union Medals, the Seminary's highest recognition. The award ceremony was held following a day-long colloquium titled *Organizing for Racial Justice, 1960s and Today: An Intergenerational Conversation*. The day brought together alumni/ae who participated in the seminary movement called Student Interracial Ministry (SIM) with current Union students. As part of the event, the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas '82, '88, spoke on "White Supremacy in the Age of Trump." The day concluded with a faculty/student panel discussion, "White Supremacy and Student Activism Today."

In 1954 Charles Sherrod, at age 17, took his first step toward activism, when he and a friend "sat-in" at white church services—long before the sit-in movement began. Charles again joined sit-ins in 1961, this time at department stores in Richmond, VA. Later that year, he headed to Shaw University, Raleigh, NC, to found, with other student leaders from around the country, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced "snick").

Moving on to Albany, GA, Charles and SNCC field workers led demonstrations that would last for over three difficult

years, during which hundreds were arrested, Charles included. By printing up leaflets and holding seminars on non-violent resistance, they galvanized students to educate and register Black voters across southwest Georgia. Charles also co-founded the Albany movement after a student sit-in at the local bus station, which led to a years-long campaign that ultimately involved Martin Luther King Jr. and the intervention of President John F. Kennedy.

It is often pointed out that Charles went to southwest Georgia and never left. After a brief sojourn at Union to receive the S.T.M. in 1966, Charles returned to the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, where he served as director from 1961 to 1987. He also directed New Communities, Inc., a cooperative farming project, from 1969 to 1985. He served on the Albany City Commission from 1976 to 1990, and in 1996 ran unsuccessfully for Georgia State Senate.

Shirley Sherrod has spent nearly 50 years working on behalf of Georgia's rural poor. "[Shirley] and Charles are really some of the architects of the New South," said the Rev. Jesse Jackson in *The Washington Post* in 2010. He called Shirley "a long-distance runner," and said that she was still "as strong as she was 50 years ago."

SNCC historian Clayborne Carson said, "We tend to think of civil rights workers as people who, it was an episode in their life before they went on and did something else." But Shirley and Charles are exemplars of those who never left the movement. They stayed, and they're still fighting for equality, civil rights and social justice to this day.

The former Shirley Miller was born and raised on a farm in southern Georgia. When she was 17, her father was murdered by a white neighbor who was never held accountable. That summer, Shirley, her mother and her sisters joined the first mass marches in the county; that autumn they played a major role in desegregating the local schools. It was through their activism that Shirley met Charles Sherrod. They married in 1966, the same year Shirley graduated from high school and Charles got his S.T.M. at Union.

Shirley and Charles went to Israel to study communal farming on kibbutzim. In 1968 they gathered poor Black sharecroppers to form a communal farm in Lee County, GA. Incorporated as New Communities in 1969, the project was one of the largest tracts of Black-owned land in the U.S., but it collapsed in 1985 when the USDA refused a desperately needed loan. For the next 25 years Shirley worked for a non-profit that also helped Black farmers. But white farmers started showing up too, and Shirley began to see that the greatest struggle for farmers was poverty, not skin color.

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture named Shirley its director of rural development for the state of Georgia. It was a routine appointment, one of thousands made by the Obama Administration, except for the fact that never before had an African-American held the position. But the following year Andrew Breitbart published a video of Shirley featuring a tiny fraction of a speech she had given to a local branch of the NAACP. Edited in a misleading manner, the video made it look like she was

# Union Student Leads Design Team for New Online Platform to Serve Ministry Professionals

BY EMILY ENDERS ODOM

bragging about having turned away poor white farmers who had asked for her help. Within a few hours the clip was all over Fox News; the NAACP called her actions “shameful,” and the White House asked for her resignation.

The morning after Shirley was fired, she went on CNN. Two white farmers, Eloise and Roger Spooner, saw her on TV, called CNN, and stated vehemently and unequivocally that Shirley had saved their land. Only then did the rest of Shirley’s speech to the NAACP come out. The incident with the Spooners had happened 23 years earlier and had actually changed Shirley’s thinking. After initially sending them to a white lawyer, Shirley wound up helping them when the lawyer didn’t. It made her realize, Shirley said in her speech to the NAACP—a segment not shown by Breitbart—that she needed to work to help poor people no matter whether they were Black, white or Hispanic. After the CNN segment aired, Shirley was invited to appear on *The Rachel Maddow Show*, *Good Morning America*, *Today*, and *The View*. *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* covered her story. The NAACP apologized, President Obama called to express his regrets, and the Secretary of Agriculture offered Shirley a new, powerful position, which she politely declined. It was time, she said, to move on. She went back to helping train farmers and planting community gardens at local schools in Albany, GA. She also wrote a book, *The Courage to Hope: How I Stood Up to the Politics of Fear*, published in 2012. And then she sued Breitbart.

In 2009, New Communities joined the class action lawsuit *Pigford v. Glickman* and received a \$12.8M settlement. Since then, the Sherrods have bought an abandoned 1600-acre plantation close to where the cooperative farm had been. And in 2015, Shirley reached a settlement of undisclosed terms with Breitbart’s estate. [U](#)

**IN AN EVER-CHANGING** communications landscape, ministry—not unlike all professions—is best served by connecting and networking people, both practitioners and consumers, through a diverse mix of available platforms.

Toward that end, Shawn Hutchinson—a Union M.Div. student from a small community in Appalachia—is preparing to release a system that he hopes will allow 21st Century technology to more efficiently match people seeking ministerial services with ministry professionals.

The product of a team effort, the innovative service—under a company called Universal Schedule and Booking—will leverage new technology to develop a booking system that brings together the best features of social networking, searching, scheduling, pricing, and communication. The digital system will allow ministerial and religious professionals to list their specialties, training, experience, and credentials for members who are seeking services to book.

“Our aim is to allow ministerial and religious professionals to reach their audience wherever they are,” says Hutchinson, who has put his background in both technology and religion to good use through the development of this groundbreaking system.

“These days, ministry needs to connect with people in many ways,” Hutchinson says. “We’re paving these new digital pathways so people can find traditional ministerial services in the 21st Century while at the same time ministry professionals—especially bi-vocational ministers and those in private practice—can more easily earn a living by connecting with new clients.”

An initial preview was released in September. During the beta testing phase, the new platform’s development team invites Union alumni/ae, colleagues, and friends to log in and start using the system.

“One of the beauties of the system,” says Hutchinson, “is that people [providers] set the cost for their time, and our proprietary pricing engine steps in to put the price within an affordable reach. Providers are paid their

asking price, while members pay their own price. Our hope is that we’ll be better able to serve our ministries with the responsible use of technology.”

For preachers, pastoral counselors, chaplains, vocalists, musicians, theologians, wedding and funeral officiants, among other professionals, the team will be forging a new pathway to allow those trained in a variety of ministries to better support themselves and their families by following their passion to do what they love.

“We hope the broader Union community will join in this effort to help make a better future real,” says Hutchinson. [U](#)

**NOTE:** This new platform, which is independently operated by Union student Shawn Hutchinson and his team, is not a service of Union Theological Seminary.

To take part in testing the ministerial services website, visit [inrijs.com](http://inrijs.com)



# FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

These diverse offerings in biblical studies, theology, history, worship, civil rights, and more, are certain to expand minds and bookshelves.

**Sarah Azaransky**, Assistant Professor of Social Ethics

- ***This Worldwide Struggle: Religion and the International Roots of the Civil Rights Movement*** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

**Euan K. Cameron** | Henry Luce III Professor of Reformation Church History

- ***The New Cambridge History of the Bible: Volume III, From 1450 to 1750*** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, xx + 975pp).

**David M. Carr** | Professor of Old Testament

- German translation of ***Writing on the Tablet of the Heart***, was published in 2015 as ***Schrift und Erinnerungskultur: Die Entstehung der Bibel und der antiken Literatur im Rahmen der Schreiberausbildung*** (Wolfgang Oswald, Martin Leuenberger, Samuel Arnet, Louise Oehli, Dominik Rößler, Annette Schellenberg, trans; AThANT no. 107; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2015).

**Cláudio Carvalhaes '07** | Associate Professor of Worship

BOOKS:

- ***What Worship Has to Do With It: Interpreting Life, Church and the World Liturgically*** (Oregon: Cascade Books, forthcoming 2017)
- ***Liturgy in Postcolonial Perspectives—Only One Is Holy***, Postcolonialism and Religions Series, Cláudio Carvalhaes, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

JOURNALS:

- ***The Poetics of Religion in Rubem Alves***, BRASIL V. 32, N. 2 (2017), Cláudio Carvalhaes and Paulo Augusto S. Nogueira, Estudos de Religião, eds.
- ***Black Religion in Brazil***, CROSSCURRENTS, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Spring 2017), Cláudio Carvalhaes and Marcos Silva, eds.
- ***Forms of Speech, Religion and Social Resistance***, CROSSCURRENTS, Vol. 66, No. 1 (Fall 2016), Cláudio Carvalhaes, ed.

**Gary Dorrien** | Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics

BOOKS:

- ***Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit: The Idealistic Logic of Modern Theology*** (Wiley Blackwell, second edition, paperback, 2015)
- ***The New Abolition: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Black Social Gospel***, (New Haven: Yale University Press, first edition 2015; second edition, paperback, 2017)
- ***Breaking White Supremacy: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black Social Gospel*** (Yale University Press, 2017)
- ***Imagining Democratic Socialism: Theology, Marxism, and the Making of Social Democracy*** (New Haven: Yale University Press, forthcoming)



**Esther Hamori** | Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible

BOOKS:

- ***Women's Divination in Biblical Literature: Prophecy, Necromancy, and Other Arts of Knowledge***, Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015)
- ***Perchance to Dream: Essays on Dream Divination in Biblical and Other Ancient Near Eastern and Early Jewish Sources***, Jonathan Stökl, co-ed. (forthcoming 2017)

**John Anthony McGuckin** | Ane Marie and Bent Emil Nielsen Professor in Late Antique & Byzantine Christian History, Union, and Professor of Byzantine Christian Studies, Columbia University

BOOKS:

- ***Witnessing the Kingdom: Studies in New Testament History and Theology***, Collected Studies Volume One
- ***Seeing the Glory: Studies in Patristic Theology***, Collected Studies Volume Two
- ***Illumined in the Spirit: Studies in Orthodox Spirituality***, Collected Studies Volume Three
- ***The Path of Christianity: The First Thousand Years***, (IVP Academic, 2017)

**Troy Messenger** | Director and Visiting Assistant Professor of Worship

JOURNALS:

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## Professor Gary Dorrien Wins 2017 Grawemeyer Award in Religion

BY CHRISTIAN IOSSO

ON APRIL 20, 2017, Professor Gary Dorrien was presented with the Religion Award by the Grawemeyer Foundation of Louisville, KY. The recipients of this award and four others—Music Composition, Education, Psychology, and Ideas for Improving World Order—are selected annually for notable ideas in their fields, usually represented in recent books. In this case, the book was *The New Abolition: W.E.B. DuBois and the Black Social Gospel* (2016), which was seen to reintroduce and reinterpret the precursors of the civil rights struggle of the 1950s–1960s. The latter period is the subject of a second volume, *Breaking White Supremacy: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black Social Gospel*.

The winning books are chosen in a three-stage review process involving faculty and trustees of both the University of Louisville and, unique to the Religion Award, Louisville Presbyterian



Theological Seminary. Mr. Charles Grawemeyer was a Presbyterian elder, founder of a chemical company, and an engineering graduate of the University of Louisville. The award comes with a significant cash prize. Professor Tyler Mayfield of LPTS, who taught briefly at Union in Biblical languages, made the presentation

with the presidents of both sponsoring institutions joining in brief remarks.

Dorrien presented a public lecture at Louisville Seminary, and taught and met with faculty at the University of Louisville and the Seminary. He also met with faculty and students at Louisville's Simmons College, the only historically Black college founded by African Americans, a product of the Black Social Gospel described in Dorrien's book.

Dorrien is the third Union faculty member to receive the Grawemeyer Religion Award. In 1997, Dorrien's predecessor in the Niebuhr Chair, Larry L. Rasmussen, received the prize for *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* (1997). In 2009, Donald W. Shriver, Jr., President Emeritus and W.E. Dodge Professor Emeritus of Applied Christianity, received the award for *Honest Patriots: Loving a Country Enough to Remember its Misdeeds* (2005). ¶

## Professor John McGuckin Retires after 20 Years



**THE VERY REVEREND JOHN A. MCGUCKIN** has retired after 20 years as the Ane Marie and Bent Emil Nielsen Professor in Late Antique and Byzantine Church History at Union. On May 15, 2017, the community feted Professor McGuckin and his wife Eileen with ceremony and celebration. Eileen McGuckin is a professional icon painter and called her studio The Icon Studio.

In the afternoon the Burke Library hosted a party on the launch of John's most recent book, *The Path of Christianity: The First Thousand Years* (2017).

Later, James Memorial Chapel saw faculty, students, alumni/ae and guests come together to share wonderful music led by Peace Industry Music, a family of musicians and friends discovered by the McGuckins singing in Central Park. Michael Orzechowski sang "Thanks for the Memories," with lyrics sweetly revised in a personal manner for John and Eileen. President Jones spoke of John's years at the Seminary, and both John and Eileen added their remembrances. Scripture readings and blessings for the McGuckins filled the evening.

Then, an old fashioned party was held in the Social Hall. There were balloons for hats and funny eye glasses/noses/moustaches as "suggested" by the notice of the party the McGuckins designed. Along with a Swing Band from the Manhattan School of Music, there were laughter and tears as we said thank you and farewell.

The McGuckins have returned to England to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Eileen will recreate her Icon Studio there and John will start an Orthodox mission parish in St. Annes on the Sea, Lancashire, where he serves as Rector of St. Gregory's Chapel. He is also Honorary Research Professor at Oxford University's Faculty of Religion. ¶





# UNION CLASS OF 2017

# 179TH COMMENCEMENT

On May 19th, Union students and their families, faculty, and staff congratulated the graduating class of 2017.



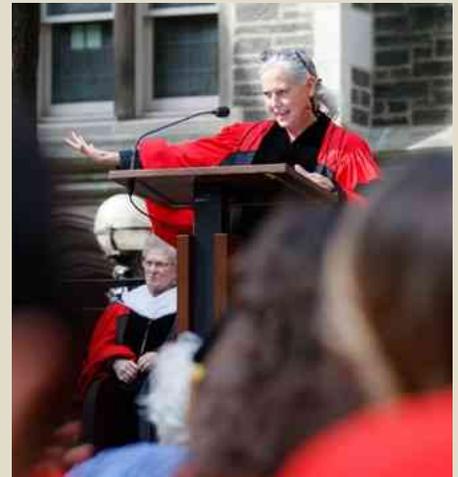
L TO R: Yazmine Nichols, M.A.; Kaio Thompson, M.Div.; and Michael Vanacore, M.Div.



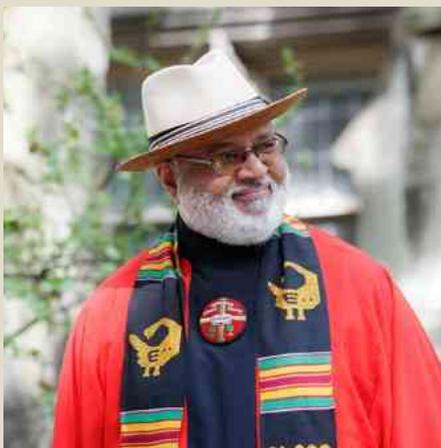
L TO R: Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, M.Div.; John James, M.Div.; and Whitley Butler, M.Div.



Graduates enter the Quadrangle cheered on by faculty, alumni/ae, family, and friends



President Jones addresses the graduates



DeForest Raphael, S.T.M.



President Jones and Nancy Taylor, M.Div.



Joshua Samuel, Ph.D.



L to R: Susan Shelhart, M.Div.; Candace Simpson, M.Div.; and Isaiah Fish, M.Div.



The Union Seminary Choir



L to R: Rebecca Stevens-Walter, M.Div.; Katherine Newell, M.Div.; Amanda Sutcliffe, S.T.M.; and Rachael Hayes, M.Div.



Judith Bannerman-Quist, M.A.



A mom graduate gets "Silly Stringed" by her son after the ceremony.



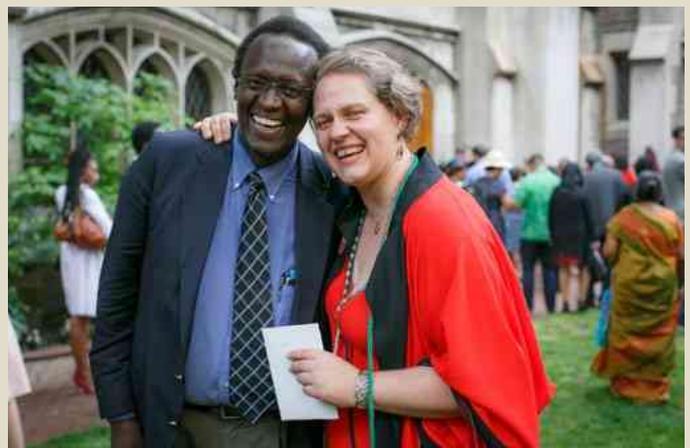
Michele Stanback, M.Div., and Prof. Chung



Crystal Hall, Ph.D.

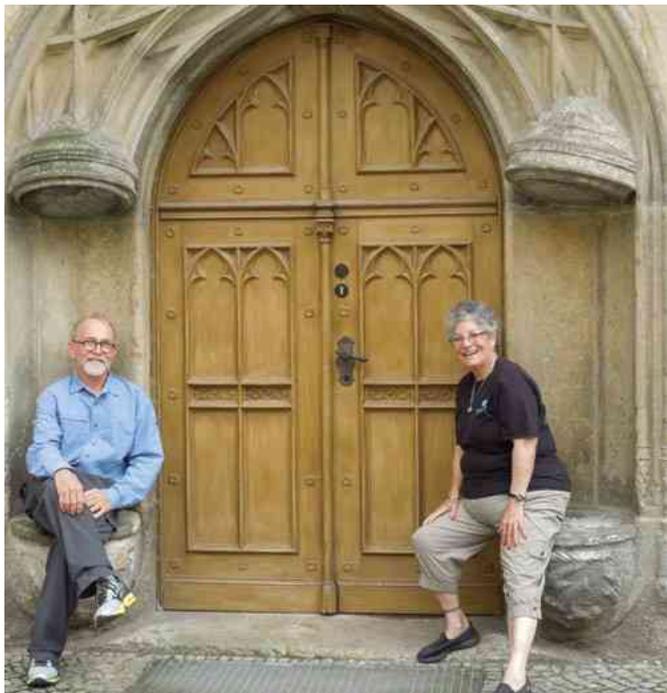


James Perry, M.Div., celebrates with his family



Petero Sabune '81 and Sara Wolcott, M.Div.

# ALUMNI/AE PROFILES



Diane and Paul Jacobson sitting at Katharinenportal (Katharina's Door) at the Luther House in Wittenberg, Germany

**Diane Jacobson, Ph.D. '90**  
**Paul Jacobson, S.M.M. '72**

📍 *Minneapolis, MN*

**Nathaniel Jacobson, M.Div. '09**

📍 *Brooklyn, NY*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Paul Jacobson '72, a graduate of Union's School of Sacred Music, is married to Diane Jacobson '90, who received her Union doctoral degree in Old Testament studies. Their son Nathaniel Jacobson '09 is a double Union graduate; he attended Union's Day Care Center back in the day and later earned his M.Div. degree from the Seminary, and his son's two godfathers are from Union. To their knowledge they are the only "Union family" in which both spouses as well as their adult child received Union degrees. Alums, if you know of others, please let us know.

## **What do you do?**

**DIANE:** In 1982 I began teaching Hebrew scriptures and language at Luther Seminary [St. Paul, MN] and served as a professor there for 28 years. During my final three years of teaching, I also directed the Book of Faith initiative for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), which is a grassroots biblical literacy program. After retiring from Luther in 2010, I continued that work until I officially retired in 2015, although I still speak and write here and there. While at Luther I was a "first" in several ways: the first woman to teach Bible at any U.S. Lutheran seminary, the first woman and first layperson to be hired on a tenure track at Luther,

and their first—and still only—person from a Jewish background. During my years at Luther, I also did a stint as dean of the M.A. program and department chair, so, as we Lutherans say, I was "in, with, and under" it all.

**PAUL:** I've done a variety of things after completing my M.S.M. degree in 1972, among them I married Diane and then we went to New College in Edinburgh to study theology for two terms. That was very formative for us both, and we made lifelong friendships. In the early years I served as a church organist and music director and taught at Concordia College in Bronxville, NY. I became active with the Baroque flute, and when we moved to Minneapolis when Diane was hired at Luther Seminary, I formed the Lyra Baroque Orchestra, which has just finished its 32nd season. Now I'm happily retired from arts management and still enjoy both composing and performing. When I was admitted as a Union music school student, I was brought in as one of two student composers, which was a kind of experiment by a very creative and supportive faculty. These days I've come full circle and am again engaged in church composition, mostly hymns. In addition, Diane and I do some teaching together. We've offered workshops combining music and biblical study of Hagar, Jonah, and other biblical stories, which has been a fun partnership for us.

**NATHANIEL:** I'm Vice President of Fundraising for A Free Bird, a small nonprofit [in New York City] that engages pediatric cancer patients in hospitals through the arts. The program inspires kids to be artists. We are all volunteer and have just received a grant for rebranding through an online voting process with Give a Brand. It is extremely rewarding.

## **What's the best thing about what you do?**

**DIANE:** Teaching is simply a gift, and I've had a wonderful and exciting career. And it's probably fair to say that I'm best known for my students rather than from anything I've done. For eight years I had a dream job, to take my teaching church-wide and help re-enliven congregants' relationship with scripture from their grassroots engagement in many different circumstances. We really can't get away with top-down stuff any more. And no doubt it's from my rabbinical heritage, but I'd also say that the heart of the matter is to engage the questions people are struggling with. That's far better than trying to provide answers.

**PAUL:** I've loved the variety in my career, which has included church music, orchestral, composition, and instrumental. The Union music faculty was very imaginative and taught students to be critical but also explorative. That's how I've approached my own career. It's been a "potpourri" career, and I'm still enjoying it.

**NATHANIEL:** I'm not a typical "by the numbers" fundraiser, but I do love the interactions with various companies and organizations. We also receive in-kind donations, including goods, services, and occasionally cash. I get to call on people, email and text them, and even go to their workplaces. The best thing I know is to live your dreams. I have learned at A Free Bird that communities can live dreams together.

### How did Union prepare you for this?

**DIANE:** Oh, my, gosh! First of all, Union has had great professors, and let me just name those with whom I worked in biblical studies: Raymond Brown, George Landes, Louis Martyn, James Sanders, Jerry Shepherd, Samuel Terrien '36, '41, and Phyllis Tribble '63. I have to list them alphabetically because each was remarkable in her or his own way. Second, I received wonderful experience as a teaching assistant for some of these incredible professors, and then I also taught for a while with Norman Gottwald at New York Theological Seminary. Finally, Union's location in New York matters. I belonged to a discussion group at Jewish Theological Seminary, and I had daily interactions with Jews, Catholics, and a range of Protestants. It was also formative for me that



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MANY MORE 70S BABIES TO ATTEND A PLACE OF  
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—Nathaniel Jacobson '09

I received a joint M.A. degree from Union and Columbia University. I also took a course at Teachers College so that I would know more about classroom teaching. What an amazing corner of the world resides at 120th and Broadway! But I also need to say that as one of the first female doctoral students who had a baby during her studies, I could not have done the academics without Union's day care program.

**PAUL:** The music school allowed me to be very independent with respect to field work and choosing various projects to do. The faculty was academically challenging and demanded creativity and, you might say, even ingenuity. Standards were high. Even my matriculation exam gave me an unexpected opportunity to be creative. The other thing is that Union's music program also prepared me theologically. When I was preparing for my final exam on Stravinsky's Mass, Diane encouraged me to study the theology as well as the music, and that was sound advice. What do you think the faculty asked me to speak about? Stravinsky's theology!

**NATHANIEL:** Union prepared me simply to be a Christian as well as negotiate my ethnic mixture. As a Brooklyn resident, I ended up driving to Manhattan each Sunday for church, which means that I've learned that the Sabbath requires work, too. Even though I may not practice my religion much during the week, I know that I'm given the opportunity to become a different person each day. Variety is the spice of life!

### How do you stay connected to Union?

**DIANE:** I've not stayed as connected as I might have. Certainly Paul and I have stayed connected because of our son Nathaniel's matriculation at Union, and we have a connection through Barbara Lundblad. I'd also see Union friends and colleagues at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. What's really exciting is to see the current development of the Union Alumni/ae Network. Paul and I loved hosting a gathering for Minnesotan Union alums in April, and we're ready to do that again.

**PAUL:** When the music school moved to New Haven, for a while I felt distanced from everything Union, but, over the years, I've come to realize how valuable my Union ties are—even though part of Union's school is no longer there. Union prepared me to be a musician, but even more, a thoughtful, engaged person. Plus, Union gave me my spouse! I'm very grateful for it all.

**NATHANIEL:** To make a long story short, when I did my field education I found my current church, Broadway Presbyterian. It happens to be down the street from Union, so occasionally I use the restroom there if I have parked in that direction. The people at the front desk on security detail are always affirming me as an alum “off the street.”

### What would you say to someone considering going to Union?

**DIANE:** Go, for goodness sake! Union has a marvelous faculty. It's an exciting place to study theology. As a student, you'll have the whole Union tradition behind you, plus the educational institutions in the neighborhood and the entire city beyond that. Union is always adapting to changing times, so your education will be very rich.

**PAUL:** As a member of Luther Seminary's Board of Directors, I encounter a lot of young theological students, the next generation of leaders in church and society. Union's strength is its combination of academic excellence in the context of Morningside Heights and New York City. That school is an exciting hub of different forces, and few places can begin to match it.

**NATHANIEL:** As a Gen X-er, I hope that this personality God has loaned to me will inspire more 70s babies to attend a place of worship and continue to question. We inherently carry the questions with us. I'm a living question. God does not mislead me in that. And I would add that if politics is your thing, Union is the place, so to speak. ♀

➔ [To submit an alumni/ae profile, please visit the Alumni/ae section of the Union website.](#)



**Rodney McKenzie Jr.,  
M.Div. '16**

📍 Washington, DC

**What do you do?**

I'm on staff at Demos, which our website describes as "a public policy organization working for an America where we all have an equal say in our democracy and an equal chance in our economy." After the 2016 elections, I've become even more convinced that we need to be talking together about race and racism. At Demos

we're encouraged to think about racial equity in everything we do and say. As Demos' Director of Partnerships, I'm based in Washington, DC, but I travel extensively to connect with organizations and people doing good work on the ground. I'm helping to build relationships with both grassroots organizations and with national tables and to support legislative and electoral strategies that affect marginalized communities.

I'm particularly excited about a project I've help found, the "Our Bible" app, which is an online resource for and by LBGQT people that offers resources, including sermons, devotionals, and reflections from a LBGQT lens. As of late June, we had 8,000 subscribers, and we expect many more before our official launch in early August.

**What's the best thing about what you do?**

For me, the best thing is to be on the ground and connected with POC [People of Color]-led organizations that often do not receive funding or technical assistance from bigger national groups. I'm delighted to offer trainings and other forms of support. And I feel very lucky to work at an organization that sees racial equity at the center of things.

**How did Union prepare you for this?**

When I arrived at Union, even before my first class, Charlene Sinclair '08, '17—now Dr. Charlene Sinclair—encouraged me to put my various courses into conversation with the larger questions I've long had about race and sexuality and religion. In Bible courses, for example, I kept asking about what the Bible does and does not really say about race, sexuality, and race and sexuality together. Her advice was the radical thing that propelled me to do the work I'm now doing on a national scale. Union provided the space for putting the questions together.

**How have you stayed connected to Union?**

Through a couple of ways. I've kept relationships going with former classmates and student peers, including using Facebook groups. And I'm grateful for ongoing connections with faculty and staff, including Sarah Azaransky, Fred Davie, and Su Pak '99, each of whom has been super helpful. All these connections are amazing.

**What would you say to someone considering going to Union?**

Union is special because of the ways in which professors interact with students with curiosity and with interest in real-world experience. Union attracts a special kind of person, both in its staff and faculty and in its student body—folks who put their knowledge and expertise in relation to people on the margins who are struggling. Union's strength is in putting together head-work and heart-work. 📖



**Rev. Robina Marie Winbush,  
M.Div '87**

📍 Louisville, KY

**What do you do?**

My title is Associate Stated Clerk and Director of Ecumenical Relations for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). I work on our Church's relationships with other churches and ecumenical agencies, (e.g., the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, and Christian Churches Together in the USA). I also work on bilateral and multi-lateral relationships with churches and people of faith.

**What's the best thing about what you do?**

I love the work that connects me with both church leaders and activists in this country and around the world. I have been blessed to be part of a global family of faith, sharing in both struggles and celebrations. We work both responsively and strategically on issues facing our world and how we faithfully respond to current realities. I am humbled, as a person who lives and holds citizenship in the U.S., by the willingness of partners to both critique the U.S. as empire and work with U.S. faith leaders for an alternative witness. I also have had some of the best continuing education through my work with global ecumenical groups.

**How did Union prepare you to do this?**

WOW...Without question my studies with Professor Kosuke Koyama at Union laid a foundation for future ecumenical and interfaith work. Professor James

Washington gave me an appreciation for church history and how to read the shifts in religion. Professor James Cone taught me how to ask the theological questions and consider the theologies broader than European men. Professor Mercy Oduyoye and Professor Delores Williams helped me claim my womanist voice. Professor Christopher Morse helped me appreciate and articulate the Creeds and Confessions of the Church. The community of Union taught me how to be in relationship with

people who hold very different theological perspectives and to allow my own theology to be challenged and stretched and appreciate God's justice moving in and through people of faith. I suspect I would be a very different person had I studied at any of the other seminaries to which I applied.

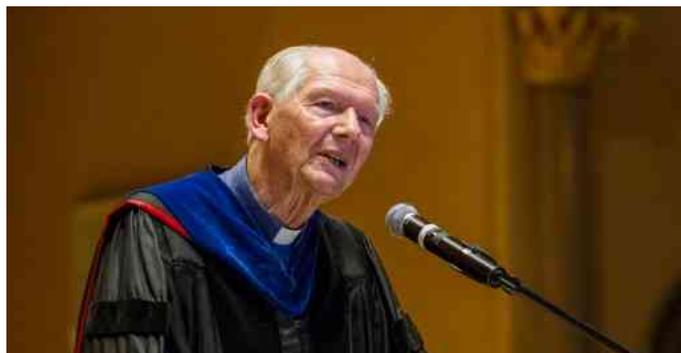
#### **How have you stayed connected to Union?**

I'm probably not as connected as I would like. I connect mostly through other alumni/ae. Some of my dearest friends in

ministry and life came through Union. While I wish I was still in New York and able to take advantage of the different events at Union, I do follow as closely as possible. I was honored to be named a Union Trailblazer in 2013.

#### **What would you say to someone considering going to Union?**

Be ready to learn, grow, and have your worldview changed so that you can make a difference in this world. **U**



### **Rev. William C. Nelsen, M.A. '67**

**St. Peter, MN and Cambridge, MA**

#### **What do you do?**

Thinking about this question takes me back to my student days at Union and Columbia when Union's dean of students asked me one day, "Who are you?" My reply then was, "a man in search of a mission," and that question and answer led me to affirm that I wanted to serve people educationally and spiritually. I've been blessed to have opportunities to do both consistently throughout my vocational life.

First of all, I'm a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Having served as a university president, I'm also a member of the Registry for College and University Presidents, now serving as interim president of the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Cambridge. EDS has ended granting degrees and has entered into an important partnership with Union, that will allow, we believe, both schools to thrive in new ways. Through the Registry I've served as an interim higher educational leader in several different capacities, but this is the first time a Registry member has served as an interim seminary president, so we are breaking new ground.

#### **What's the best thing about what you do?**

My work continues to allow me to fulfill my life mission to help people educationally and spiritually. I'm especially fortunate to have this opportunity to offer transitional leadership at EDS as our two schools pursue a meaningful and remarkable new partnership for theological education. For EDS, this provides an

opportunity to serve not only the Episcopal Church in new ways, but also the church at large, and to join with Union in advocacy and action for social justice in our nation and world.

#### **How did Union prepare you for this?**

Union provided me with a wonderful foundation for my life work in four ways. First, it provided me with excellent teaching in theology, Bible, church history, and ethics, and it allowed me to take advantage of Columbia University's offerings, including becoming selected for Columbia's International Fellows Program and an internship at the United Nations, an experience that led me to later gain a Ph.D. in political science. Second, Union exposed me to multi-denominational connections and colleagues, including working with Quakers, Presbyterians, Methodists, Jewish groups, and others. Third, Union provided opportunities to put faith into action, something encouraged by the faculty and the entire community. I was elected chair of the Student Social Action Committee, and in 1965 a number of us went to the South to work with Martin Luther King, Jr. in voting rights issues and the Selma to Montgomery March. Our student committee also organized one of the first anti-apartheid demonstrations in the nation and some early actions against the Vietnam War. Fourth, Union gave me the transformative experience of living in a close, caring community. The sense of community at Union is a powerful way to be reminded of Jesus' call to build a "kingdom" of human love and support.

#### **How have you stayed connected to Union?**

I've kept up mainly through Union's publications, the website, and regular email communications from the Seminary about various programs and events. I've also stayed connected to other alumni, including my Lutheran colleague, Dr. Darrell Jodock, who also lives in St. Peter, MN. I'll be attending my 50th class reunion on campus this October and am helping out on the planning committee for that event.

#### **What would you say to someone considering coming to Union?**

Union is a great place with a well-rounded program in theological education, and it's a special place for discovering what God is up to in our world. And, above all, it's a place to discern the meaningful possibilities for a life of service. **U**

# Celebrated Church Musician, John Weaver, Honored on 80th Birthday with Gala Concert

BY EMILY ENDERS ODOM

**HUNDREDS RAISED** their voices in song on the afternoon of Sunday, April 30, to honor John Weaver, S.M.M., '68, as part of a gala concert in celebration of his 80th birthday on April 27.

"John Weaver's contributions to Presbyterian worship and music have been profound and will long endure," said the Rev. Dr. David Gambrell, associate for Worship, Office of Theology and Worship for the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). "Generations of worshipers are now familiar with his harmonizations of beloved hymn tunes, among numerous other original works and arrangements. We are grateful for his creative and faithful service to the church."

Greeted with thunderous applause and affirmed on Sunday by his successor at the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Andrew Henderson, as "a wonderful teacher and an influential composer," Weaver—the church's Director of Music and Organist from 1970–2005, a title he now holds as emeritus—served as Chair of the Organ Departments of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia (1972–2003) and The Juilliard School in New York City (1984–2004). Upon his retirement in 2005, Weaver continued to concertize and lead workshops and master classes around the world. His published works continue to be widely performed.

Weaver, who was seated at the front of the sanctuary with his wife Marianne—whose April 30 birthday was simultaneously recognized—was then celebrated with a program of his own organ and choral compositions, along with organ works by Mozart and Brahms, performed by his students and successors: Paul Jacobs, Chair of the Organ Department of The Juilliard School; David Enlow, organ faculty, The Juilliard School; Henderson, Director of Music and Organist, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church; and Mary Wannamaker Huff, Associate Director of Music and Artistic Director of the New

York City Children's Chorus at Madison Avenue. Together, Henderson and Huff shared in conducting the church's choir.

"It is overwhelming to consider the life of John Weaver—as a performer, as a teacher, as a composer, as a dedicated church musician, as a father and as a

friend," said Jacobs in introducing his selections. "This was a gentleman in every sense of the word. What filtered into my own philosophy of teaching [from John Weaver] was to encourage students to develop their own musical signature in their artistry and in their playing." ❗



**FRONT ROW (L TO R): Mary Wannamaker Huff, John Weaver, Marianne Weaver;**  
**BACK ROW (L TO R): Andrew Henderson, Paul Jacobs, David Enlow**

PHOTO: Joe Roulton

John Weaver was at Union Seminary's School of Sacred Music while I was getting my S.M.M. in the early 1960s, though he was far ahead of me in his education. He was a formidable presence in both stature and musicianship, all recitals by memory. He is much admired by all his colleagues. When Marianne came along, a flautist, they seemed the perfect couple. Now, seeing them these many years later, at his 80th birthday celebration, we can see they are indeed the perfect couple. The marvelous concert was a fitting tribute to both of them.

But no accounting of this event would be complete without including the matter of the birthday cake. It looked like a normal white cake, even though the decorations were in black. Then I read the writing—"All the best to the bikers"—with a photo image of a bike. John Weaver had gotten a biker cake for his birthday! One can only wonder what the bikers felt about getting a cake for the 80th birthday of an organist. But there was more drama to come. There were whispers of how John cuts a cake. Well, when the time came John grabbed the cake knife and swung it around like a dagger for a few seconds, then rushed at the biker cake, plunging the knife into the middle, giving me another dimension of the real John Weaver. I wouldn't have missed it.

—Maureen M. Morgan, S.M.M. '63

# Got Sermon?

Newly Redesigned Lectionary Study Series  
Launches October 27, 2017

BY EMILY ENDERS ODOM

**IN ORDER TO BEST MEET** the continuing education needs and busy schedules of Union's alumni/ae, students, and neighbors serving—and regularly preaching in—congregational settings, Union's Alumni/ae Relations Office will be reintroducing and sponsoring the popular *Got Sermon?* lectionary study series as a twice yearly, day-long conference corresponding to the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent.

Launched in 2008, *Got Sermon?* was intentionally designed to bring the gifts of Union's faculty to primarily parish-based preachers seeking inspiration for the homiletical task during the most demanding times of the year.

"Returning year after year to familiar texts and searching for a fresh word can at times be an exciting challenge," says Dr. Su Yon Pak, '99, Union's Senior Director and Associate Professor for Integrative and Field-Based Education, "but it also can be frustrating or exhausting."

Faculty who have participated in the series since its inauguration nine years ago are Barbara Lundblad, David Carr, Hal Taussig, Mary Boys '75, '78, Brigitte Kahl, Aliou Niang, Lisa Thompson, Pamela Cooper-White, and Phyllis Tribble '63.

*Got Sermon?* will be held from 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. on Friday, October 27, 2017, for Advent-Christmas preparation, and Friday, February 9, 2018, for the study of Lenten-Easter texts. In addition to giving participants the opportunity to explore the exegetical intricacies of the texts for these liturgical seasons, each of the two day-long conferences will offer the option of doing textual studies on a particular theme, such as interreligious engagement. New to the series will be sessions dedicated to homiletical methods and practice, coaching, and peer coaching. As always, there will be the added benefit of building community and sharing a meal with friends and preaching colleagues.

"Many who have attended this series in past years have said that because they often felt isolated pastoring their own churches, they welcomed this community of learners who engaged these familiar texts in order to bring fresh words to their congregants," says Pak.

The lead instructor for *Got Sermon?* on October 27 will be the Rev. Dr. Lisa Thompson, Assistant Professor of Homiletics, with the Rev. Dr. Cláudio Carvalhaes '07, Associate Professor of Worship, preaching and leading opening worship. Participants will have the option of attending a workshop on the Old Testament lectionary texts led by Dr. David M. Carr, Professor of Old Testament; the New Testament lectionary texts led by Dr. Brigitte Kahl, Professor of New Testament; or developing rituals of lament during Advent-Christmas, led by Carvalhaes.

The cost of each day-long conference is \$50, which includes lunch. Pre-registration is required. Visit the website for complete information and registration instructions. [U](#)

# USQR Ceases Publication

BY EMILY ENDERS ODOM

**AFTER CONSISTENTLY INFORMING** and challenging its readers for more than 70 years, the *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* (USQR)—a small but influential student-run journal—has ceased publication effective with Vol. 65: 3 & 4.

Fittingly, as USQR itself retired, its final issue was a tribute to Dr. Ann Belford Ulanov '62, '67—Christiane Brooks Johnson Memorial Professor Emerita of Psychiatry and Religion—upon her retirement.

USQR, according to Robert T. Handy's seminal work, *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York*, traces its roots to *The Union Review*, a student-published, quarterly journal founded in 1939. The first issue of *The Union Review*, which appeared in December 1939, lists Ernest A. Becker and Roger L. Shinn '41, '51 as managing editors. Handy subsequently identifies USQR as "the successor to *The Union Review*, which was merged with the *Alumni Bulletin* in 1945."

"Shinn, of course, is well known around Union, but Becker is fascinating too," says Jason Wyman '12, '16, who served as USQR's final editor. Wyman, who began as assistant editor in the final year of his M.Div. program, at first did book reviews and assisted with proofreading. When the editor at the time, Justin Lasser '06, '11, graduated, Wyman assumed the position.

"I was never able to find out much more about Becker, but I believe he went on to work in publishing rather than theology," Wyman continues, "and he published one of the most ridiculous but entertaining pieces in one of the very first volumes of USQR about theological foods. I always wanted to reprint it, but never had the opportunity!"

Other entries in USQR's inaugural issue address such timeless themes as "The Old Testament and the Christian minister," James Muilenburg; "What is Christian worship?" Henry Sloane Coffin; and "Some theological implications of mental illness," Homer L. Jernigan '46. Since its earliest years, USQR also regularly published alumni notes, a tradition which continues in the "Class Notes" feature in the pages of *Union Network*.

Although no further issues of USQR will be published, USQR's entire 75+ year catalog will continue to be available online, open access, to any user without charge.

"My major project was to establish a website and web presence for the journal," Wyman says. "With the help of the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship (CDRS) at Columbia, we launched the USQR website, which gives readers access to so many great articles from such towering figures as Paul Tillich, Albert Einstein, Reinhold Niebuhr, James Cone, and many other professors at Union—pretty much every major figure in theology since 1945."

The journal will also be deposited in the Academic Commons at Columbia. "We have Kerri O'Connell at the CDRS to thank for spearheading that effort and acquiring the digitized back issues from ATLA [American Theological Library Association]." [U](#)

To read recent past issues of USQR, visit [usqr.utsnyc.edu](http://usqr.utsnyc.edu).

# Did You Know?

BY KEVIN MCGEE

**1836** Union was founded and quickly located to 9 University Place, at approximately 7th Street. Population of New York City was 275,000. Union's enrollment in 1838 was 92, making it the third largest seminary in America!

**1855** Allen Wright, a Choctaw Indian, was the first indigenous American to graduate from Union. He became a Presbyterian minister, developed a Choctaw dictionary and wrote a complete translation of the Psalms directly from Hebrew to Choctaw. He also suggested the name of "Oklahoma" during treaty negotiations between the Indian Nation and the United States government: "okla" = people and "huma" = red soil.

**1861** John Bunyan Reeve was the first African American to graduate and, after serving as a pastor, became the first dean of the Howard University Divinity School.

**1863** In the academic year 1863-64, Union's enrollment dropped to 85 with some students and faculty joining the Civil War and new students being diverted to it. Enrollment jumped to 123 after the war.

**1874** Two women applied to study at Union but were told, "no provision has been made for young women at this institution."

**1889** NYC population was 1,400,000.

**1884** Union relocated from downtown to 700 Park Avenue, at 69th Street.

**1890** Seminary enrollment surpassed 150.

**1895** Union Settlement (Association) was founded by Union alumni/ae,



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Union's original structure at 9 University Place, 1838–1884; the Seminary's second location, 700 Park Avenue between 69th and 70th Streets, until 1910; and the Seminary location at 120th Street viewed from the southwest (Claremont Avenue) with the Academic wing to the right and James Chapel to the left.

faculty and students and opened at 202 East 69th Street in response to the desperate conditions of immigrants struggling to make a new life in America. Five months later, Union Settlement moved to 237 East 104th Street, where it is today.

**1897** Emily Grace Briggs, Professor Charles A. Briggs's daughter, became for first woman to receive a Bachelor of Divinity degree summa cum laude. The degree is today's M.Div. By 1910, 18 women had been admitted as full-time students and four had graduated.

**1898** New York City incorporated into five boroughs: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Manhattan.

**1900** The population of the incorporated city was 3,437,202 and jumped to 4,766,833 in 1910.

**1910** Union dedicated its new campus at Broadway and 120th Street after closing the Park Avenue location.

**1917** Forty or more Union students were in "active service" during WWI—the Great War. Five students died and are memorialized in the War Memorial Window in James Chapel. Enrollment did not decline sharply, and, in 1924, enrollment reached 422, including 145 women in a group of 192 "special students," which included international students.

**1936** The Great Depression led to a decline in enrollment to 300.

**1940** The Union Eight, male students who refused to register for Selective Service—the draft—were indicted, tried and sentenced to serve a year and a day in prison. Five returned to complete their degrees.

**1948** Mary Ely Lyman '19 became the first tenured female professor and Dean of Women Students.

# 2016-17 Annual Fund Report

JULY 1, 2016–JUNE 30, 2017

**1951** Enrollment swelled to almost 650 due to the G.I. Bill, joint degrees with Columbia, women pursuing Master of Religious Education degrees and an increase in international students—almost 100—with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

**1960** Student Interracial Ministry (SIM) became a national program to place white seminarians in Black congregations and Black seminarians in white congregations. The Union program ended in 1968 with 50 seminarians and 300 students across the country involved.

**1964** Seminarians maintained an around-the-clock vigil for seven weeks at the Lincoln Memorial during the Congressional Civil Rights Act filibuster.

**1967** Twenty-six Union students turned in their draft cards in protest of the Vietnam War and draft policies. Union enrollment was at an all-time peak of 793.

**1968** The Black Manifesto: pressured by students, Union's Board of Trustees pledged \$1M for Black economic development.

**1984** Diversity in enrollment attained with 159 male and 164 female M.Div. students including 33 Black male students and 20 Black female students.

**2001** Union students, faculty and alumni/ae served at Ground Zero.

**2008** Serene Jones became Union's first female president.

**2016** Population of NYC at 8.5 million. 🇺🇸

Throughout its history, Union Theological Seminary has been the grateful beneficiary of generous alumni/ae, friends and trustees who provide financial support for its crucially important work. This past fiscal year, the generosity of 1,399 committed donors, including 1,116 alumni/ae, 50 first-time givers, and 683 who increased their contributions, put Union over the top, having raised \$1,091,756 against an Annual Fund goal of \$1,085,000. We are so thankful to all who joined Union in making this wonderful success possible.

Responding to the urgency of the need, this year's Annual Fund focused exclusively on student scholarship support. The positive impact it makes on our students' ability to have the transformative experience of a Union education and a future freer of debt, clearly resonated with alumni/ae and friends alike. In the

“Our cultural landscape highlights a deep void in compassionate religious leaders. I'm grateful to be at Union because I know I'm being prepared for a ministry that will be radically transcendent and speak directly to a hurting world.”

—Elijah McDavid, *M.Div. candidate*

words of M.Div. candidate, Elijah McDavid, recipient of the James A. Forbes, Jr. Scholarship for Excellence in Church Ministry: “I am convinced that Union is producing the type of ethical change agents that this world desperately needs. Our cultural landscape highlights a deep void in compassionate religious leaders. I'm grateful to be at Union because I know I'm being prepared for a ministry that will be radically transcendent and speak directly to a hurting world.”

Profound thanks to one and all for partnering with the Seminary in this vital undertaking. 🇺🇸

## GIVE TO THE ANNUAL FUND

Please continue to be as generous as you can.  
For further information, please contact:

- Gabriele Gossner, *Director of Individual Giving and Annual Fund*  
[ggossner@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:ggossner@uts.columbia.edu)  
212-280-1412
- Martin Duus, *Vice President for Development*  
[mduus@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:mduus@uts.columbia.edu)  
212-280-1426



GIVE ONLINE: [myunion.utsnyc.edu/donate](http://myunion.utsnyc.edu/donate)

# Four to Receive Unitas Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards on October 6

The Unitas Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards, established in 1994, bear witness to the faith and perseverance of living Union alumni/ae who exemplify the Seminary's academic breadth, its diversity and inclusiveness, and the range of vocations its graduates follow. Recipients represent all of the Union graduates who have distinguished themselves in the church, academy, and society across the country and around the world.

Union alumni/ae George McClain, Robert Evans, Tracey Lind, and Melanie Harris, will receive Unitas Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards at an October 6 ceremony in James Memorial Chapel that will close the 2017 ReUnion on a celebratory note.

## The Rev. Dr. George McClain '64

The Rev. Dr. George McClain, Executive Director Emeritus of the Methodist Federation for Social Action, received his M.Div. from Union in 1964. McClain was Co-Coordinator of the Student Interracial Ministry (SIM) at Union, and in 1963 served on the staff of the Alabama Council on Human Relations in Birmingham, AL. As interracial field staff of the Methodist Student Movement, McClain participated in the Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964 and helped organize the Selma to Montgomery March. He was the Executive Director of the Methodist Federation for Social Action for 25 years, bringing it back from near oblivion after it was targeted by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and Senator Joseph McCarthy, eventually building it to over 30 chapters of progressive leadership in the United Methodist Church (UMC) focusing on such key issues as South Africa divestment, developing a spirituality for activists, and early support for LGBTQI

organizing, which led to the Reconciling Ministries Movement. He is also a trainer in the Deaconess & Home Missioner Program of the United Methodist Women, teaching theology and New Testament as an adjunct through the St. Paul School of Theology.

## The Rev. Dr. Robert A. Evans '69

As Executive Director and co-founder with his wife Alice of the Plowshares Institute, the Rev. Dr. Bob Evans has devoted his life to transforming conflict and pursuing peace around the world. After earning his Ph.D. in the joint Union Columbia doctoral program in 1969, Evans held a series of academic positions, while at the same time helping to shape new and constructive pedagogies in the academy through his work and publications, notably such books as *Pedagogies for the Non-Poor* and *The Globalization of Theological Education*. Together the Evanses have authored 12 books, taught hundreds of workshops, and led more than 1,000 leaders from industrialized countries overseas in immersion seminars since the inception of Plowshares.

## The Very Rev. Tracey Lind '87

For 17 years, the Very Rev. Tracey Lind—who earned her M.Div. from Union in

1987—has been a voice for God's love and justice in a struggling rust-belt city that is finally on its way to new life. As one of the three co-founders of Greater Cleveland Congregations, she has helped start a powerful grass-roots movement that continues to impact the city. Now she has retired early over health reasons, and is sharing her journey in order to help others by destigmatizing brain disease.

## The Rev. Dr. Melanie L. Harris '06

The Rev. Dr. Melanie L. Harris, who earned her M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees from Union, is presently serving in an American Council of Education Leadership Fellowship at the University of Denver. A Professor of Religion and Ethics at Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth, TX—where she teaches in the areas of Christian Social Ethics, Womanist Religious Thought, African American Literature and Religion, and Media and Religion—Dr. Harris is the Founding Director of the African American and Africana Studies program at TCU. Author of the book *Gifts of Virtue: Alice Walker and Womanist Ethics; Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth Honoring Faiths* (Orbis Press); and *Ecowomanism, Religion and Ecology* (Brill), Dr. Harris's scholarship provides insight into ethical theory by uplifting the moral practices and values of women. An ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and a former broadcast journalist, Dr. Harris worked as a television news producer and news writer for ABC, CBS and NBC news affiliates in Atlanta and Denver. [U](#)

Recipients of the annual Unitas Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards are nominated by fellow alumni/ae and selected by Union's Alumni/ae Council. To submit a nomination, please visit the Union website at [utsnyc.edu/unitas](https://utsnyc.edu/unitas).

**ReUNION 2017**  
**OCTOBER 4-7**

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1967, 25th anniversary of the Class of 1992, and 10th anniversary of the Class of 2007.

# ALUMS CONNECT



➡ Louisville-area alums gathered for breakfast on July 15 at the home of Emily and John Odom. **KNEELING IN FOREGROUND:** Tricia Lloyd-Sidle '80; **SEATED (L TO R):** Carol Somplatsky-Jarman '81, Gene March '66, Bob Williams-Neal '74, Matthew Arlyck '13, Camille Williams-Neal (Bob's wife), Robina Winbush '87; **BACK ROW STANDING (L TO R):** Emily Odom '90, John Odom '90, Tom Bennett '95, Christian Iosso '89, Phil Lloyd-Sidle '80, Dee Wade '78

⬇️ The Union Alumni/ae Network hosted a well-attended luncheon on July 1 during the United Church of Christ General Synod at the Baltimore Convention Center.



⬆️ On May 25th, Baltimore-area alums attended an open house co-hosted by Christa Fuller Burns and David Hornbeck. **FRONT ROW (L TO R):** Marvin Ellison '81, Joan Townsend '57, co-host Christa Fuller Burns '75, James Snodgrass '77, and Carl Hickey '63; **SECOND ROW (L TO R):** Bill Ryan '53, Fred Muir '75, and Carl Schneider '67; **THIRD ROW (L TO R):** Riley McDonald '65 and co-host David Hornbeck '66

➡ Alums and friends gather with President Jones at the 2017 Disciples of Christ General Assembly, Indianapolis, where Jones preached on July 10. This lively selfie was taken by Toni Reynolds, '14, '16, in foreground at right.



# CLASS NOTES

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## 1950s

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**William J. Nottingham, M.Div. '53, Ph.D. '62,** and co-author Charles R. Harper have published *The Great Escape That Changed Africa's Future*. The story of a dramatic clandestine operation, sponsored by the World Council of Churches and the French human rights organization CIMADE in June 1961, to help 60 African students escape Portugal and cross Spain to France, has also been made into a documentary. Many of the students later became leaders in their home countries—two presidents, two prime ministers, a bishop, several ambassadors and many government ministers.

## 1960s

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**Herbert F. Freitag, M.Div. '66,** has retired after 36 years as pastor of Chapel-By-The-Sea Community Church on Clearwater Beach, FL. Previously he served pastorates in East Williston, NY; and Columbus, OH. Freitag has also served as president of the International Council of Community Churches, chairman of the Clearwater Community Relations Board, and chairman of the Professional Advisory Committee of the Morton Plant-Mease Hospital / Suncoast Hospice CPE training and certification program.

**Ronald L. Phillips, M.Div. '69,** was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Public Service on May 13, 2017, by Saint Joseph's College in Standish, ME. He was recognized for developing financial investment and legislative initiatives that have created economic opportunity nationwide for people and places at the margins of the economy. Phillips is the founder and retired president and CEO of Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), which helps to create good jobs, environmentally-sustainable enterprises, and shared prosperity in Maine and in rural regions across the country. He was appointed by the Obama Administration to the (CDFI) Fund Advisory Council of the U.S. Treasury in 2012, and he also served on the Federal Reserve Bank's Board of Governors' Consumer Advisory Council.

## 1970s

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**B. Glenn Wilkerson, S.T.M. '70,** and Robert B. Brooks, a Harvard psychologist, have co-edited an anthology, *Reflections on Mortality: Insights into Meaningful Living*. **David V. Mason, M.Div. '79,** wrote a chapter on philosophy and death. Wilkerson is the President and founder of ARK (Adults Relating to Kids). Mason teaches English at Houston Community College, and is a former pastor at St. Peter UCC in West Houston.

**Bruce A. Buchanan, M.Div. '76,** has announced his retirement from First Presbyterian Church in Dallas; his last day will be December 31, 2017, when he and his family will participate in the New Year's Eve service. Buchanan and his wife, Carol Adams, with two-and-a-half-year-old Douglas in tow, arrived at First Presbyterian thirty years ago. An article about Douglas and Adams, "Thriving in Place: Community Ministry in Dallas," was published in the Spring 2017 issue of *Union Network*.

**Johanna W.H. van Wijk-Bos, Ph.D. '76,** retired as the Dora Pierce Professor of Bible and Professor of Old Testament, as well as the faculty liaison to the Women's Center, after nearly 40 years at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She was the only woman on the faculty when she first arrived, she notes, and the first woman to receive academic tenure at LPTS.

**John Robert Brown, S.T.M. '78,** was received in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church in 2001. He had been an Episcopal priest since 1972, serving in Oklahoma City; Cambridge, MA; Brussels, Belgium; Washington, DC; and Atlanta, GA. A Knight of Malta, in 2003 he was awarded a License in Canon Law at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. Currently Brown serves as Defender of the Bond on the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

**William A. Palmer, Jr., M.A.E.T.S. '78,** retired from every-Sunday preaching at the end of 2012. Within a week he was asked to serve as chaplain of the local fire department, in which role he has now been ministering for five years. Recently he was asked to serve as chaplain of the town's police department as well. He reports that he is finding new challenges and satisfactions in ministry at age 70 that he never expected—and that occasionally riding in a speeding vehicle with lights and sirens does tend to get the adrenaline running.

## 1980s

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**Kelly Brown Douglas, M.Div. '82, Ph.D. '88,** Unitas Distinguished Alumna 2013, was appointed the first Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union. EDS and Union announced in May that they have signed an agreement that will allow EDS to continue as an Episcopal Seminary through collaboration with Union at its campus in New York City beginning in May 2018. Brown Douglas is the Susan D. Morgan Professor of Religion at Goucher College in Maryland, and Canon Theologian at Washington National Cathedral. The first African-American woman to be ordained an Episcopal priest in the Southern Ohio Diocese—and one of only five nationwide at the time—she is the author of many articles and five books, including *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*.

**R. Michael Stuart, M.Div. '85,** has been Spiritual Care Manager of Home Care and Hospice of Western New York, Inc., since 2008, as well as pastor of East Bethany Presbyterian Church since 2014. The church is celebrating its 200th anniversary in 2017. He is a board certified chaplain through the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) and has served on certification committees and in professional education roles. He is also active with National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). He is married to the Rev. Dr. Roula Alkhouri, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in

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Batavia, NY. She is a Syrian American who graduated from the University of Damascus prior to relocating to the U.S. to do theological studies.

## 1990s

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**David P. Gushee, M.Phil. '90, Ph.D. '93**, has published a 3rd edition of *Changing Our Mind* (Read the Spirit Books) in which he calls for full and unequivocal inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the life of the churches. He has also just released a memoir, *Still Christian: Following Jesus Out of American Evangelicalism* (Westminster John Knox Press). He is currently President of the Society of Christian Ethics and will become President of the American Academy of Religion in November.

**Jennifer R. Harper, M.Div. '93**, has been appointed Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, effective July 1, 2017. She has been a member of the D.Min. faculty there since 2008. Harper is a practicing psychoanalyst and psychotherapist and also serves on the faculty of the Blanton-Peale Institutes for Religion and Health, and in a number of leadership roles in the psychoanalytic world. She holds a Certificate in Psychoanalysis from the Westchester Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy.

## 2000s

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**Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Ph.D. '01**, gave a one-hour interview that was broadcast by Utah Public Radio during which she discussed the links between climate change and racial injustice, and the theological implications. In an area of the country where public theological voices tend to be male and conservative, she offered a female theological voice to the broader listening public. Moe-Lobeda is Professor of Theological and Social Ethics at both Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and Church Divinity School of the Pacific. She currently serves as a member of the Union Alumni/ae Council.

**Rima L. Vesely-Flad, M.Div. '02, Ph.D. '13**, has published *Racial Purity and Dangerous Bodies: Moral Pollution, Black Lives, and the Struggle for Justice*. In the book, she examines the religious and philosophical constructs of the Black body in U.S. society, examining racialized ideas about purity and pollution as they have developed historically and as they are institutionalized today in racially disproportionate policing and mass incarceration.

**Elizabeth A. Theoharis, M.Div. '04, Ph.D. '14**, has published *Always with Us? What Jesus Really Said About the Poor*, a reinterpretation of "the poor you will always have with you" (Matthew

26:11) showing that it is actually one of the strongest biblical mandates to end poverty. Co-Director of the Kairos Center, and a Founder and the Coordinator of the Poverty Initiative, Theoharis has spent the past two decades organizing among the poor in the United States. She has worked with and advised numerous grassroots organizations, among them the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the Vermont Workers Center, Domestic Workers United, the United Workers Association, and the National Union of the Homeless and the Kensington Welfare Rights Union.

**Cláudio Carvalhaes, Ph.D. '07**, officially adopted his three beloved stepchildren, Libby, Cici and Ike, on May 12, 2017. Carvalhaes is Associate Professor of Worship at Union.

**Amy F. Strano, M.Div. '07**, was promoted to Vice President of Programs and Services at HealthCare Chaplaincy Network, a nonprofit organization that partners with healthcare institutions in providing spiritual care resources and professional chaplaincy services. As a spiritual care advocate, Strano aims to transform healthcare so that the spiritual needs of every patient and family member will be addressed as part of their overall care. She enjoys the opportunity to offer resources and guidance to address the challenges many patient-care professionals face in providing whole-person care.

**Amy Bentley Lamborn, Ph.D. '09**, accepted the call to be Vicar of the Southeast Tennessee Episcopal Ministry (STEM), and began there on January 1, 2016. STEM was established by the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee in 2003; today it consists of Trinity in Winchester, Holy Comforter in Monteagle, Christ Church in Alto, Christ Church in Tracy City, and Epiphany in Sherwood. Lamborn previously was Professor of Pastoral Theology at General Theological Seminary from 2011-2015, and was one of the GTS-8.



## 2010s

**Ann E. Adkinson, M.Div. '10**, was appointed Pastor of Shelton United Methodist Church in Shelton, WA, beginning July 1, 2017. Previously she was at Tacoma First United Methodist Church.

**Nichelle L. Jenkins, M.Div. '11**, stepped down as Union's Associate Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid on August 18, 2017. After a farewell party at the Seminary, she posted on Facebook: "WEST SIDE STORY: As with all stories, eventually the page must turn... Grateful for all who were part of my Union student-staff story."

**Emily West McNeill, M.Div. '12**, was appointed Executive Director of the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition. LRC's mission is to unite faith, labor and community in a statewide movement for economic, social and racial justice.

**Nathan M. Bledsoe, M.Div. '13**, married Sarah Lonsdale on September 24, 2016, and has changed his name to **Nathan Lonsdale Bledsoe**. On July 1, 2017, Nathan assumed his appointment as the Senior Pastor at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church in Houston, TX. Previously he was at St. Peter's United Methodist Church in Katy, TX.

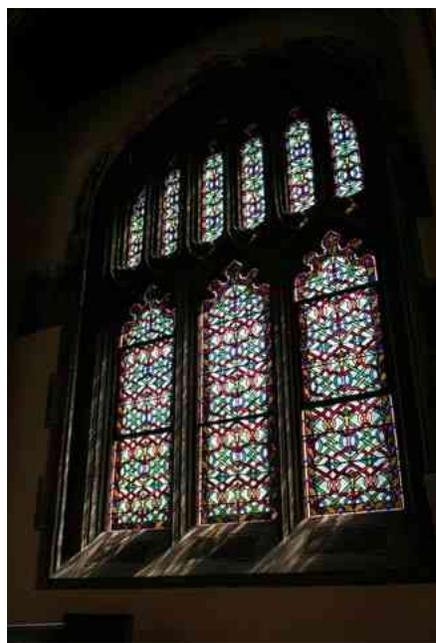
**Sara C. Goodman, M.Div. '13**, was recognized for having achieved preliminary fellowship in the Unitarian Universalist Ministry at the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, on June 22, 2017, in New Orleans, along with **Kimberley Debus, M.Div. '14**; **Elizabeth M. Assenza, M.Div. '15**; **Dylan Thomas Doyle Debelis, M.Div. '15**; and **Emily DeTar Birt, M.Div. '15**. **Cheryl M. Walker, M.Div. '04**, president of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, delivered the sermon at this service, known as the Service of the Living Tradition.

**Meghan P. Toomey, M.A. '13**, announced her engagement to Wes Dingman. She and he are both lecturers and Ph.D. candidates at Loyola University in Chicago.

**Jennifer C. A. Wilder, M.Div. '13**, announced her engagement to Greg Wallace. A June 2018 wedding in Maryland is planned. Wilder is Pastor of Broadview Church in Sunderland, MD; Wallace is a Politics Video Producer at CNN.

**Micah A. Bucey, M.Div. '14**, and Matt Cleaver were married on April 29, 2017 at Judson Memorial Church in New York City. Bucey has served at Judson since 2010, first as a Community Minister, then as Community Minister of the Arts, and now as Associate Minister. He is also a performer, playwright, lyricist, trumpeter, and ukulele player.

**Todd Andrew Clayton, M.A. '14**, completed his first year at Harvard Law School as a candidate for the J.D., and was accepted for a summer 2017 legal internship at the ACLU Nationwide's LGBT & HIV Project.



**Kimberley Grace Debus, M.Div. '14**, was ordained on May 27, 2017, by the First Universalist Church of Southold, NY. She has served at First Universalist since August 2015; previously she was intern minister at One Island Family, Key West. Before accepting the call to ministry, Debus was a budget analyst, a technical writer, an English teacher, an arts center manager, and most recently the owner of a small editing and publishing business, with eight titles published under her imprint.

**Michael J. Crumpler, M.Div. '15**, was ordained at United Church of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, on June 10, 2017.

**Benjamin J. Perry, M.Div. '15**, was appointed Assistant Director of Communications and Marketing at Union. Since graduating from the Seminary, he has served as an associate editor for Time, Inc. He is an award-winning writer; his work has appeared in publications such as *Slate*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Motherboard*, as well as religious outlets like *Sojourners* and *Justice Unbound*. His writing focuses on the intersection between religion and politics, a matter of grave concern in the current civic climate.

**Elise A. Hanley, M.Div. '16**, has been appointed Assistant Rector at Trinity Church on the Green in New Haven, CT. She was ordained to the priesthood in October 2016, and previously served at the Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Hanley is married to **Christopher J. Ashley, Ph.D. '16**. ♪

To submit a class note or death notice, please contact **Emily Odom**, Director of Alumni/ae Relations, at [eodom@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:eodom@uts.columbia.edu) or **212-280-1419**.

# IN MEMORIAM

AS OF  
JULY 1, 2017

## ALUMNI/AE

Wayne K. Clymer '44  
Edmond L. Cherbonnier '47  
Grace M. Ota Mathews '50  
Jean Price Gausby '50  
Marjorie Jean Marlowe Glassco '50  
Richard Tippen Lambert '50  
David G. Buttrick '51  
Lawrence A. Glassco '52  
Caroline Hassinger Lindsay '53  
John B. Kelley '53  
Patricia Ann Gray Hollett '53  
Philip J. Ramstad '53  
Thomas N. Kalshoven '54  
Bertrand P. Helm '55  
Celia Allison Hahn '55  
Mary Virginia Orr Clyne '55  
Richard W. Haskin '56, '68  
Lowelle Lee Simms '56  
Edward Pierce Johnson '57  
Eugene B. Borowitz '57  
L. Hadley Lynn Hunt '58  
Thelma F. Dixon-Murphy '58  
Alice Kresensky Cunningham '61  
J. Gurdon Brewster '62, '71  
Robert E. Chiles '64  
Judith Ann Newton Brown '65  
Raymond Thomas Jones '65  
Felix Bendann III '66  
Willem van Kouwenhoven (William Blake Kownover) '68  
Seth E. Kasten '73  
John Carey '80  
Lynne St. Clair Darden '01

## FACULTY, STAFF, TRUSTEES, AND FRIENDS OF UNION

Jonathan O. Beasley  
Peter Elvins  
James S. Irvine  
Josephine N. McFadden  
Geraldine Rose Homan McKenna  
John O. Meloy  
Albert E. Munz  
Donald T. Oakes  
David Rockefeller  
David W. Swanson  
Frances Allen Ward  
Garrett H. Weaver  
Richard P. Woodson III

# Seth Kasten '73, Former Reference Librarian, Dies



**SETH KASTEN '73**, who retired in December 2010 after more than 35 years as Reference Librarian and Head of Reader Services at Union's Burke Library, died suddenly at home on June 21, 2017. He was 71 and had been in declining health.

Kasten was "the soul of the Burke Library: its institutional memory, its constructive critic and fondest lover, and its most resourceful and collegially helpful research librarian," wrote the Rev. Dr. Milton McC.

Gatch, former Director of the Burke Library, and Academic Dean and Professor Emeritus of Church History.

Many other tributes to Seth were posted on Facebook, among them:

"He was a great scholar, a brilliant researcher and a dedicated, incomparable guide to the annals of theological manuscripts, articles, books and primary sources. He was also a friend," wrote Judith Scott '10.

"How many of us could have accomplished what we did at Union without Seth? So grateful for his life. Heartbroken to hear this news," wrote David Wellman '88, '03.

A man of many talents—and a resolute work ethic—Kasten completed the Master of Sacred Music degree at Union while simultaneously studying for his Master of Library Science at Columbia University. For many years he worked as both church organist and librarian, and joyfully shared his love of music with anyone who cared to listen or sing. Beginning in 1994, he directed the men's Schola Cantorum at Union in singing Gregorian Chant Vespers. He also put together a choir at meetings of the American Theological Library Association, introducing sometime singers to unfamiliar choral works, and teasing out a level of musical achievement none would have thought possible. All this while also serving on ATLA's Board of Directors and various committees, and compiling the Association's yearly compendium of reference works published.

He was for many years a member of Congregation Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue; and more recently of Temple Emmanuel on Fifth Avenue, and B'nai Jeshurun on the Upper West Side.

While working and in retirement, Kasten enjoyed traveling with friends. Among other places, he visited ancient sites in Syria and India, relishing history and soaking up new knowledge wherever he went. He played church organs all over Europe.

But most of all he loved helping students.

Kasten is survived by his brother, Donald and sister-in-law, Karen; and by his friend, Mim Warden '98, '04. — **By Leah Rousmaniere**

# Thich Nhat Hanh '63—Zen Buddhist Monk, Teacher, Author and Peace Activist—Receives Union Medal on September 6, 2017

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY in the City of New York awarded Thich Nhat Hanh—internationally celebrated Zen Buddhist monk, dharma teacher, scholar, author, and peace activist—with the Union Medal. Known affectionately as “Thay” (*teacher*), Thich Nhat Hanh coined the term *Engaged Buddhism* and is globally recognized as one of the movement’s pre-eminent leaders. Thay’s powerful teachings and bestselling writings integrate ancient Buddhist wisdom and practices with contemporary issues and skillfully bridge Eastern and Western spirituality.

“Thay has touched deep chords among people of many different backgrounds, faiths, and experiences,” said Union President, Rev. Dr. Serene Jones. “We are so proud to recognize his remarkable global endeavors.”

The September 6th Union Medal ceremony was held during Union’s annual convocation service, which welcomes new students and faculty and marks the official start of the school year. Sister Chan Duc, an emissary from Plum Village, the renowned monastery Thay founded in southwest France, accepted the Union Medal on his behalf. The program also featured the participation of the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas ’82, ’88, newly appointed Dean of Episcopal Divinity School at Union, as well as the Rev. Dr. Lisa D. Rhodes, Executive Director of RISE Together, a soon-to-be-launched national mentorship network for women of color in ministry that will be based at Union.

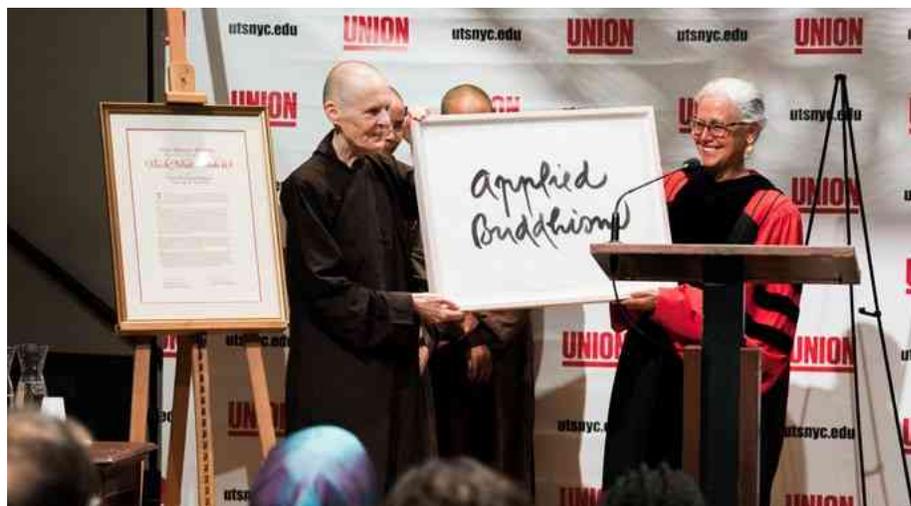
Both the Union Medal ceremony and the convocation service were live-streamed and can be viewed on Union’s YouTube channel: [youtube.com/user/unionseminary](https://www.youtube.com/user/unionseminary)

Thay earned the joint Master of Arts in Religion from Union and Columbia University in 1963. Just a few years later, he famously formed a friendship with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and was

instrumental in encouraging King to speak out against the war. In 1967, King reached out to the Norwegian Nobel Committee, writing: “I do not personally know of anyone more worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize than this gentle Buddhist monk.”

During his decades of exile from Vietnam, Thay established the international Order of Interbeing and France’s

students can pursue theological training in non-Christian chaplaincy through concentrations in either Buddhism & Interreligious Engagement (BIE) or Islam & Interreligious Engagement (IIE). Union will also be launching the Thich Nhat Hanh Program for Engaged Buddhism, which will promote academic and public education around issues concerning socially engaged Buddhist practitioners



Sister Chan Duc presenting a gift to President Jones; a print of Thich Nhat Hanh’s “calligraphy”

Unified Buddhist Church. Recognizing that mindfulness finds its most genuine expression when practiced as a community, he founded six monasteries and dozens of practice centers in the United States, Asia, and Europe, as well as over 1,000 local mindfulness communities, known as “sanghas.” A vibrant network of some 600 nuns and monks, alongside tens of thousands of lay students, apply Thay’s teachings on mindfulness, peace-making, and community-building in schools, workplaces, businesses, and prisons throughout the world.

While founded as a Christian seminary, Union has long benefitted from the insights of other faiths and Thay’s receipt of the Union Medal highlights the newly expanded Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree program. Beginning this fall,

and scholars. The program seeks to generate a diverse set of Buddhist dialogues and responses around topics such as peacebuilding, interreligious engagement, climate change, racism, violence, poverty and economic inequality, incarceration, and gender and sexuality.

“We live in an increasingly complex world with diverse cultural and spiritual faith traditions,” said Senior Director of Buddhist Studies, Sensei Greg Snyder, an ordained Zen Buddhist priest and dharma-transmitted teacher. “Union’s rich history of fostering inclusion and building compassion within a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, graduate institution that values diversity makes it uniquely suited to meet the educational needs of students from non-Western traditions as well as to amplify Thich Nhat Hanh’s teachings.”

# SAVE THE DATE FEBRUARY 24, 2018

## Trailblazers 2018 | Honoring and Celebrating Union's Black Alumni/ae

**Sisters in the Wilderness Preaching Series:** Four Friday evening worship services at 7:00 p.m., February 2, 9, 16, 23; Trailblazers 2018 culminates on Saturday, February 24, with a day-long celebration of Delores Williams, Paul Tillich Professor Emerita of Theology and Culture:

### **Beyond the Temple Door There is No Promised Land: *Black Women and the Challenge of God Talk in the 21st Century***

The celebration also marks the 25th anniversary of the publication of her groundbreaking work, *Sisters in the Wilderness*. Details will be available soon on the Union [website](#).



TOP: Al Gore and Karenni Gore '13; ABOVE: Al Gore, Rabbi Burt Visotzky, Director of the Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue at Jewish Theological Seminary, and Patricia Williams, the James L. Dohr Professor of Law at Columbia University Law School

## MINISTRY IN THE TIME OF CLIMATE CHANGE

For a second year in a row, Union's Center for Earth Ethics partnered with the Climate Reality Project, hosting a weekend-long conference from June 5–7, titled *Ministry in the Time of Climate Change: A Multifaith Approach*, for 40 faith leaders eager to address the ecological crisis in their own communities. Hailing from across the United States, attendees represented a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. While well-versed in religious scripture and community engagement, many arrived struggling to integrate climate awareness into their sermons, fearing backlash.

Conference highlights included a highly anticipated community discussion moderated by Karenni Gore '13 and the Rev. Dr. Derrick Harkins '87 featuring former Vice President Al Gore; legal scholar and Columbia Law School professor, Patricia Williams; Azza Karam of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and Jewish Theological Seminary professor, Rabbi Burt Visotzky.

**WATCH ONLINE:**  
[utsnyc.edu/ministry-time-climate-change-ministry](https://utsnyc.edu/ministry-time-climate-change-ministry)

# UNION

Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York  
3041 Broadway at 121st Street  
New York, NY 10027-5792

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Upcoming events: [utsnyc.edu/calendar](https://utsnyc.edu/calendar)

## WOMEN OF SPIRIT

The Seventh Annual Judith Davidson Moyers Women of Spirit Lecture was delivered on April 26, 2017, by Winona LaDuke. LaDuke is a rural development economist and author working on issues of indigenous economics, food and energy policy. For the greater part of 2016, she lived at the Red Warrior Camp in the Standing Rock Reservation where she urged the dismantling of the fossil fuel infrastructure.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Nancy Taylor '17, Casey Donahue '17, Winona LaDuke, Kathryn Berg '17, Gary Dorrien '78

WATCH ONLINE: [utsnyc.edu/laduke\\_livestream](https://utsnyc.edu/laduke_livestream)

