

UNION COLLECTIVE

A photograph of three people sitting on a wide, ornate stone staircase. On the left, a man with a shaved head and a black long-sleeved shirt sits with his hands clasped. In the middle, a man with dark curly hair, glasses, and a grey blazer sits with his hands clasped. On the right, a woman with short dark hair and a grey t-shirt sits with her hands on her lap. The staircase has a decorative stone balustrade. The background shows a building interior with a wall-mounted light fixture.

A More Plural Union

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Black and Buddhist

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UNION COLLECTIVE

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TEL: 212-662-7100

WEB: utsnyc.edu

Editor-in-Chief

Emily Enders Odom '90

Editorial Team

Benjamin Perry '15

Robin Reese

Kate Sann

Writers

Emily Enders Odom '90

Kelly Brown Douglas '82, '88

Simran Jeet Singh

Serene Jones

Pamela Ayo Yetunde

Kenneth Claus '70

Tom F. Driver '53

Harmeet Kamboj '20

Benjamin Perry '15

Lisa D. Rhodes

Audrey Williamson

School of Sacred Music Alumni/ae

Copy Editor

Eva Stimson

Art Direction & Graphic Design

Ron Hester

Cover Photograph

Ron Hester

Back Cover Photographs

Mohammad Mia '21

Stay Connected

@unionseminary



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From the President



“A unique aspect of our interreligious programs is the emphasis they place on each tradition’s resources for addressing the pressing social justice issues of our day.”

—President Jones

Dear Friends,

We are moving into a season of profound change and spiritual renewal at Union Theological Seminary. You can see it in the verve and creative energy of our students, hear it in the committed voices of our faculty, and recognize it in the transformations soon to come to our buildings. As the world around us faces changes—the magnitude of which few, if any, previous generations have known—Union is facing those challenges with a sense of both resolve and hope. It’s not surprising Union is once again remaking itself so it can better meet the “claims of the world upon us.” It’s in our DNA to do so—as many of you know from your own time within the sacred space of this campus.

Concrete signs of that change are evident everywhere. In an age when seminaries across the country are wrestling with declining enrollment, our enrollment is growing in both numbers and diversity. At a time when many people are worrying about the future of theological education, our new initiatives and programs are bearing fruit and thriving.

An important facet of these changes started seven years ago with the bold decision by Union’s faculty to develop a new field of study devoted to “Interreligious Engagement.” That decision is now manifest in two new pathways of our master of divinity degree, where students can focus on Buddhism or Islam in addition to walking through the standard core curriculum. That saying from *Field of Dreams*, “If you build it, they will come,” is proving true: From across the country and around the world, a new crop of students is showing up at Union because we have built programs they want.

I’m delighted to share with you this issue of *Union Collective*, which features these innovative interreligious programs.

Union has long been a place that prepares people for ministry of all sorts, and while we remain grounded in the Christian tradition, we recognize that our world is a place of many faith traditions. It’s quite a change—and yet it isn’t. The open-hearted Christianity that started the seminary in 1836 is the same Christianity that demands we take this step and fully and enthusiastically embrace the religious pluralism and spiritual diversity of our world.

A unique aspect of our interreligious programs is the emphasis they place on each tradition’s resources for addressing the pressing social justice issues of our day: immigration, poverty, racism, imperialism, sexism, and the devastation of our earth. At a time when our country’s leaders are championing a hateful and exclusivist form of Christian nationalism, Union is moving forward in its commitment to educate and develop leaders of all faiths and spiritual traditions who will fight for those forced to the margins and for the survival of our earth.

I hope this issue conveys to you the excitement I feel about these programs. They are not just innovative, popular, and interesting—which they are—they are life-giving and necessary. And that’s what theological education is fundamentally about, yes? Educating students for the life-giving work of ministry in a world that yearns for healing.

Enjoy reading!

Peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Serene Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "S" at the beginning.

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

UNION MAKING NEWS



Bearing Witness Against Violent Immigration Policies

Last December, a delegation of Union students and staff traveled to the Tijuana-San Diego border to work with *Al Otro Lado* (“To the Other Side”), a pro-bono legal group that helps migrants file asylum claims. The Union group, which included M.Div. students Gabrielle Sclafani ’19, Jessica Miller ’21, and Elisa Rosoff ’21, and the Rev. Benjamin Perry, M.Div. ’15, Union’s Deputy Director of Communications and Marketing, visited the Barretal refugee camp and saw firsthand the dire conditions asylum seekers face as a result of unjust U.S. policy. While in Tijuana, the delegation served as translators, provided pastoral care, and also officiated at five weddings for migrant couples to help reduce the likelihood of family separation at the border.

In San Diego, the group joined a protest organized by the American Friends Service Committee decrying our government’s inhumane abuse of migrants as a violation of God’s will. After a press conference—at which the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, M.Div. ’04, Ph.D. ’14, Director of Union’s Kairos Center, addressed the media—more than 200 faith leaders and hundreds of community activists led a solemn procession to the U.S./Mexico border wall, where they intended to pray with migrants through the fence. However, when they arrived, Border Patrol officers had erected a concertina wire barrier and prohibited their approach. In an act of faith and solidarity, 32 clergy—including Union alumnae the Rev. Ranwa Hammamy, M.Div. ’15, and the Rev. Emily Brewer, M.Div. ’15—crossed the police line anyway and were arrested in an act of civil disobedience. **U**



↑ FROM LEFT: Deputy Director of Communications & Marketing Rev. Benjamin Perry ’15, Rev. Emily Brewer ’15, and M.Div. students Elisa Rosoff, Jess Miller, and Gabrielle Sclafani prepare to march.

↪ Rev. Emily Brewer ’15 and Rev. Ranwa Hammamy ’15 are arrested by Border Patrol.

📶 READ MORE: utsnyc.edu/love-knows-no-borders

“The borders have always been open when it’s been white people doing the moving.”

—**Jose Antonio Vargas**, author of *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen*, in conversation with visiting professor Michelle Alexander at her November Spirit of Justice dialogue.



Union Reads

Union’s faculty continue to publish at a prodigious rate, leading the intellectual vanguard to shape both academic disciplines and public understanding of theology, ethics, liturgy, history, and more. Check out some of the following books to read what our professors are writing about this year:

The Annotated Luther, Vol. 6 — edited by Euan Cameron

What’s Worship Got to Do With It? Interpreting Life Liturgically — by Cláudio Carvalhaes

Sabina Spielrein and the Beginnings of Psychoanalysis: Image, Thought, and Language — edited by Pamela Cooper-White

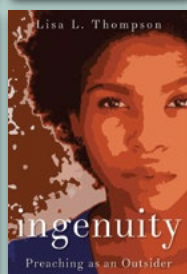
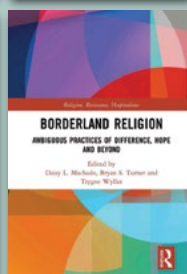
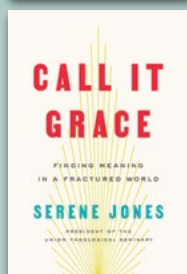
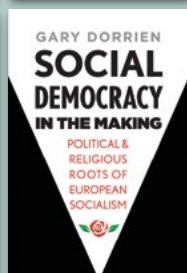
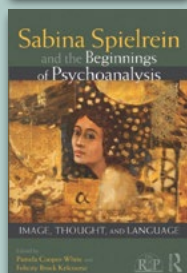
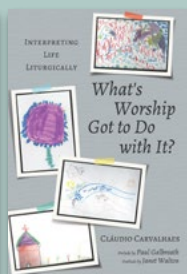
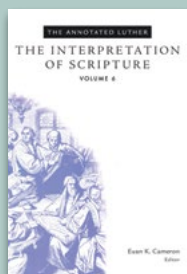
Social Democracy in the Making: Political and Religious Roots of European Socialism — by Gary Dorrien

Call it Grace: Finding Meaning in a Fractured World — by Serene Jones

Borderland Religion: Ambiguous Practices of Difference, Hope, and Beyond — edited by Daisy L. Machado

Divine Words, Female Voices: Muslima Explorations in Comparative Feminist Theology — by Jerusha Tanner Rhodes

ingenuity: Preaching as an Outsider — by Lisa L. Thompson



LaGrange and the Lynching Tree

BY BENJAMIN PERRY '15

Bobbie Hart has lived in or near LaGrange, Ga., her entire life; before 2015, she had never heard about Austin Callaway's lynching. Like so many other acts of terror, Callaway's abduction and murder in 1940 were shrouded in suffocating silence, erased by the fear such despicable acts were designed to engender in LaGrange's black community. That all changed when—while studying Union Professor Emeritus Rev. Dr. James H. Cone's masterpiece *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*—her friend Wes Edwards uncovered this devastating chapter in their town's history, and together they initiated a years-long endeavor to confront the truth.

Even the Callaway family had very little information, according to Hart. "It had been passed down on Miss Callaway's side of the family that someone in the family was lynched, and it would come up at a family reunion, but they didn't know much about it. They were just piecing things together too." Indeed, Edwards notes how

obvious scandal of the cross in their midst, many white Christians reveled in communal crucifixion, then banished its shameful legacy to obscurity. "You still see the effects of that system [of lynching] in LaGrange," Hart says. "You still feel the division."

While obviously unable to rectify the profound evil of Callaway's lynching, Hart and Edwards helped lead a group of LaGrange community members to expose and confront this neglected trauma. They founded Troup Together, an organization committed to investigating Troup County's racial history. Working with the current leaders of Warren Temple United Methodist Church, they organized a pilgrimage to Liberty Hill, where Callaway was lynched, and gave him the funeral service he never received in 1940.

After the service, Troup Together worked to ensure that the lynching of Austin Callaway would never again fade from public memory. They wrote to Police Chief Lou Dekmar, describing LaGrange public officials' complicity in Callaway's murder, and Dekmar responded by issuing a full-throated public apology. "This was brutal," Dekmar said. "I think an acknowledgment and apology is needed to help us understand how the past forms and impacts the present."

"It was a real positive thing for the community to have the public apology, to have a [memorial] marker, to have the leadership of the police department and the city and our religious leaders all acknowledge, apologize, and confess that this occurred and place the marker at Warren Temple," Edwards says. "It's now harder to silence that part of our history."

Hart, too, says the process not only helped plant seeds of healing in the community but deeply affected her personally. "It has made my faith stronger," she says. "Dr. Cone, and this book, are bringing us back to Jesus, bringing us back to the cross. Today, that's where I think we need to be. We need to stay right here."

In June 2017, Dr. Cone responded to a letter Hart and Edwards sent about their work in LaGrange, writing:

"I am very pleased to know about the influence of my book in the very important work that you are doing...I don't usually respond to people who write to me about my book, but to know about your work helps me to know that the 10 years I spent writing it is indeed worthwhile."

The work of organizers like Hart and Edwards testifies to the enduring power of Dr. Cone's theology. His book's true impact is not measured in sales, but in the prophetic justice movements it helped birth. **U**

READ MORE: utsnyc.edu/LaGrange



LaGrange gathers at a memorial service for lynching victims.

"that's part of the way that [lynchings] were intended to work, to stoke fear." This discovery, however, began a process of public dialogue and atonement that brought the town together to name this evil—and resulted in what is believed to be the first public apology from a police chief in the South for failure to protect lynching victims.

Unfortunately, disregard from civil authorities was all too typical. In *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, Cone writes that between 1880 and 1940, "white Christians lynched nearly five thousand black men and women in a manner with obvious echoes of the Roman crucifixion of Jesus. Yet those 'Christians' did not see the irony or contradiction in their actions." Far from recognizing the



Bobbie Hart



Finding Healing in the Buddhist Tradition

PAMELA AYO YETUNDE *interviews* RIMA VESELY-FLAD, M.DIV. '02, PH.D. '13

INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: I first met Dr. Rima Vesely-Flad, professor and director of peace and justice studies at Warren Wilson College, online when she interviewed me for her research project on Buddhism and activism. We met in person several months later at The Gathering, a meeting of African-descended Buddhist leaders, at Union Theological Seminary last October. Because Vesely-Flad interviewed me for her project, I offered to interview her for *Union Collective*.

AYO: What do you think Union alumni/ae would want to know about how going to Union has influenced the work you're doing now?

RIMA: Union was very important for contemplating what it means to do faith-based social justice work over a sustained period of time. It was a community that emphasized marginalized voices and sought to privilege those persons and bodies that are routinely disregarded and invisible. I was 24 when I started my M.Div. at Union. Although I did not practice meditation in a formal way at that time, I had a deep interest in the idea of presence, and at Union, we often acknowledged the presence of God. In my last semester, I started a sitting practice during Lent on my own, using some early contemplative readings from one of my courses. It's interesting for me to trace back the history of my desire to meditate and how Union had a particular class—Hebrew Bible—related to that.

Union was important for me in thinking about what I could contribute to social justice movements, but I didn't develop practices that helped heal my heart. I never found in the Christian tradition the capacity to sit with and acknowledge the depth of my suffering. When I went back to Union in 2006 as a doctoral student in social ethics, I had a sitting practice; I had a merging of the worlds of contemplative life and activist life.

Last October, when I entered the space of our black Buddhist gathering with my practice, I felt deeply welcomed. Being with a group of people who have deep, long-term practices in different Buddhist traditions, who are also of African descent, was amazing for me. I felt an unprecedented sense of belonging.

The Buddhist tradition allows for a kind of psychological healing that is deeply liberating. I have a way of being in the world that is anchored in a contemplative practice and less vulnerable to the ebbs and flows of our social environment. Such a practice is essential for internal grounding. To come back to Union, a self-identified prophetic community that was not always easy for me to navigate, was profound. I carry that energy of The Gathering with me.

AYO: How do your students benefit from your Union education?

RIMA: My students at Warren Wilson College (near Asheville, N.C.) benefit from the prophetic witness articulated at Union. During my M.Div. and doctoral studies, I internalized this prophetic witness in the teaching that "The last will be first and the first, last." I took this to mean that the most marginalized persons in our society are children of God and should be treated as such. I have long worked with incarcerated persons, and when I arrived at Warren Wilson, I started an educational program for women at a minimum-security facility about five miles from campus. We now offer two classes a semester in the prison. Half of the students are from Warren Wilson and half are incarcerated. All of them receive a Warren Wilson College transcript. ♪

Pamela Ayo Yetunde, J.D., Th.D., is assistant professor of pastoral care and counseling and director of the Interreligious Chaplaincy program at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities.

Outliving Expectations

BY KENNETH CLAUS '70



“This presence that I have experienced—the ‘why’ of faith—gives me the strength I need. I don’t believe this presence is limited to one religion.” – **Kenneth Claus '70**

In the early morning hours of September 23, 1988, I had a heart transplant at Shands Hospital, in Gainesville, Fla. This was a new procedure; a lot was unknown, and the long-term prognosis was not good—no one knew, for instance, the effect of the new anti-rejection meds on other organs such as the liver and kidneys. But given the alternative, it was worth the risk.

The average life expectancy for a heart transplant recipient is just under 10 years. Very few people have lived 30 years or more. I am in my 31st year. I have taught at the university level for 23 years; I officiate at weddings regularly, and I remain the pastor of a congregation I helped form 12 years ago.

None of this makes any sense—to me or to the doctors. I have some thoughts.

Genetics. Often we don’t fully appreciate what we’ve inherited. I am hyperactive and have a high metabolism. I had no say about this. Ironically, what got me in trouble in elementary school—not being able to sit still, etc.—wound up sluicing away the toxins from anti-rejection meds.

Attitude. When mortality comes to visit, emotions can trump the need for a strong positive attitude. My academic training wasn’t much help in facing death. But as a famous quote says, “A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.”

Humor. For me, humor is a divine antidote. My type of humor tends toward *The Far Side* and George Carlin, who remarked about life, “It takes up a lot of your time, and what do you get at the end of it?”

Faith. Secular studies have shown that people who believe in a higher power tend to live longer, have more inner peace, and accept better when it’s time to go. Though I gave up belief in a god who is all powerful and all knowing but unable to stop evil and injustice, I do believe in a divine presence.

This presence that I have experienced—the “why” of faith—gives me the strength I need. I don’t believe this presence is limited to one religion. People of multiple religions, in multiple times and places, have affirmed a divine guidance and sense that when we walk that lonesome valley, we are not alone.

This presence keeps me grateful for what time I have left. **U**

Kenneth Claus, M.Div. '70, teaches English literature and composition at Florida International University and is the founder of the Religious Studies program at Miami Dade College, Kendall Campus. He is an associate member of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association.

Serving the Seminary

BOARD MEMBERS SHARE WHAT LED THEM TO UTS *interviews by EMILY ENDERS ODOM '90*

Rhonda Joy McLean & J. Clifford Hudson

What led you to serve on the Union Board?

RJM: I have been aware of Union since my high school years as the institution where so many prophetic civil rights leaders studied. Union is an incubator for faith-led social justice warriors from all over our world at a time when we need them most.

JCH: Given the decline in respect for the church throughout 200 years of history, I was drawn to Union to help shape an institution that trains spiritual leaders to move into our communities and deal with critical issues in healthy and respectful ways.

What gifts and interests do you bring to your role?

RJM: As a former corporate attorney and federal prosecutor, I have experience in organizational management, legal compliance, and strategic planning. I have served on other boards as a catalyst for change and a galvanizer for fundraising campaigns. My parents were ministers of music, and I am a mezzo-soprano and classical pianist. I love sacred music of all kinds, from Gregorian chants to Verdi requiems.

JCH: Having just retired as chairman and CEO of the company I ran for 25 years, I'm now in a position to use my time and my extensive management and legal background in a board leadership context. My expertise includes the evolution and development of an enterprise, real estate and capital asset issues, and experience with organizational transformation.



What excites you most about Union's mission, Union's future?

RJM: I am keenly aware of the diversity, enlightenment, brilliance, and passion of our graduates. We have broadened our curriculum to include Muslim and Buddhist studies, ensuring both scholarship and responsiveness to the needs of the many communities we serve. I also am excited about the arrival of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union.

JCH: Working with President Serene Jones to help the Seminary make a strategic shift in its approach to mission in order to meet a changing societal context is a rich and rewarding experience.

What can you tell us about the campus renewal project?

RJM: The changes will make Union more student-centered and accessible.

JCH: The project is a timely opportunity to help develop a healthy and sustainable institution.

What special initiatives are you supporting?

RJM: I am a mentor in the RISE Together program, which supports women of color who are exploring their calls to ministry. We currently have seven cohorts of participants across the country.

JCH: I am currently serving on the campus revitalization oversight committee.

What would you say to someone considering service to Union?

RJM: Now is the time to join us in securing the future of an institution that brings Leadership, Light, Joy, Peace, Clarity, Truth, and Justice to our world!

JCH: This is a unique point in time to have a transformative impact on the evolution of a 21st-century seminary. I'm encouraging my own son to look at Union. Although he can study philosophy at a lot of places, I'm interested in having him study where there is a deeper evolution of his perspectives around social justice. That's the number-one attraction of Union. **U**

Worship Beyond Bounds

Memories of Lampman Chapel BY TOM F. DRIVER '53

My memories of Lampman Chapel stretch from 1950, when I arrived at the Seminary as a student, to 1992, when I retired from teaching here. It was in this space that some of us students kept a sad vigil on the night of November 4, 1952. That night U.S. presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson went down to defeat by the victorious Dwight Eisenhower. That news caused my classmate Bob Davidson, later the pastor of West Park Presbyterian Church, to leave this room and take to his bed in Hastings Hall, from which he did not get up for several days, preferring to mourn horizontally.

One among my many memories of Lampman Chapel stands out above all others. I devoted an entire chapter to it in my book *Patterns of Grace*. The chapter begins: “Walking into Lampman Chapel that day, I had no signal of the chaos to come. We had taken to meeting in Lampman Chapel because it was smaller than the high-ceilinged, rattly-windowed old [room] 205, where we had started our work. I conduct a course called ‘The Word of God as Human Experience,’ more like a workshop than a lecture course or a seminar. We use no furniture. The floor is our great leveler. ...[In Lampman Chapel] we could easily remove and put back the few chairs in the place, and we found a number of small carpets to cover the tile floor.”

I called that chapter “God, Self, and Authority.” It has to do with the mystery of God’s authorship of all creation and the human mystery of gaining authority by assuming responsibility for our own actions. On that particular day here in Lampman Chapel, genuine authority broke down. We were going to do a skit in which one person would play God. But the person who volunteered to take that role also did *not* want to take it. She hesitated. We waited. We waited some more. Nobody did anything. We were at that moment which W. H. Auden has called the lion’s mouth:

...but how

Shall we satisfy when we meet,

Between Shall-I and I-Will,

The lion’s mouth whose hunger

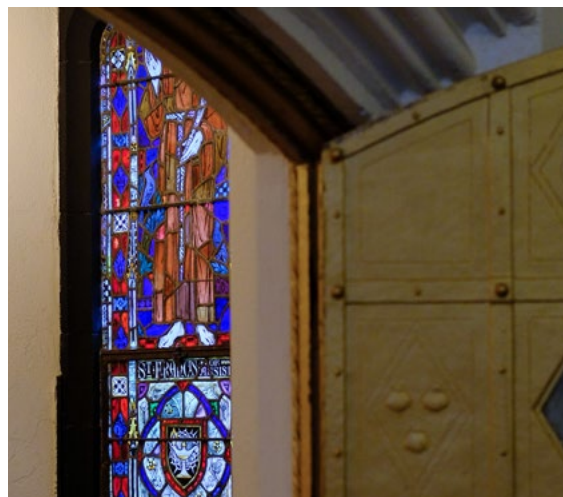
No metaphors can fill?

One of the students let out a scream and suddenly fell flat on the floor. Shrieks of alarm burst out from other students who thought he was having a seizure or perhaps was dead. He was actually venting his frustration, but it seemed like more than that. The room descended into half an hour of chaos. Thereafter we referred to it as “chaos day.”

Today I memorialize this room not only as a place of traditional worship, which it most often was, but also as a place where dramatic experiences of living have taken place. It is a place where the authority of God has been known, and where we human beings have been challenged to accept responsibility for what we author and what we authorize in our response to the authorship of God.

God bless Lampman Chapel. ¶

Tom F. Driver '53, Paul J. Tillich Professor of Theology and Culture Emeritus, Union Theological Seminary, delivered a longer version of these remarks at the decommissioning service for Lampman Chapel last November.



The Borders We Must Cross

BY KELLY BROWN DOUGLAS '82, '88

“The phenomenon of refugees is not an El Paso problem, it’s a U.S. problem.”

Those words come from Ruben Garcia, the founder and director of Annunciation House. And he should know. Annunciation House provides the hospitality of food, beds, showers, and other necessities for at least 2,000 migrants a week. It is one of the first stops for immigrants who are released by ICE when they cross the border into El Paso from Mexico. So it was the first stop for me, along with 30 other Episcopalians, on a pilgrimage in December to learn about the border realities in this country.

I witnessed a busload of immigrants arrive at Annunciation House—not rapists, not drug dealers, not criminals, but mothers and fathers with their

sons and daughters. In them, I saw the refugee parents of Jesus who crossed borders to ensure that their newborn child would be safe and free.

When we crossed the border into Juarez, we stood at the “wall” just a few hundred feet from one of the poorest neighborhoods in Mexico. As we stood looking through the slats

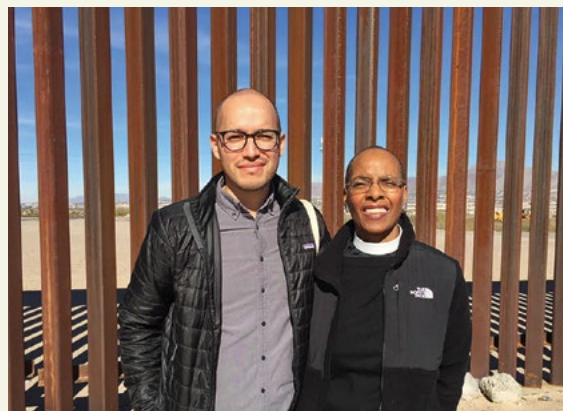
with children from the neighborhood watching us, I thought of Jesus who was born in a manger because there was no room for him in the inn.

And as we ended our trip, in Tornillo, Texas, at the fence surrounding the tent encampment where some 2,000 unaccompanied children are detained, I heard the voice of Jesus saying, “Bring the little children to me.”

As a person of faith, I am dismayed by the number of Christians, especially white evangelicals, who fervently support the Trump Administration’s immigration policy, which, as Christina Garcia, an advocate in El Paso’s Las



Episcopal leaders, including the Rev. Winnie Varghese '99 and the Very Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas of Episcopal Divinity School at Union, visited the U.S. border to learn more about the immigration crisis on a trip organized by Trinity Church Wall Street.



Director of Anglican Studies Miguel Escobar '07 and Dean of EDS at Union, the Very Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, stand in Juarez, Mexico, next to the U.S. border wall.

Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, says, is “dehumanizing in every aspect and ignores the humanitarian right to access.”

In January 2018, a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll found that a staggering 75 percent of white evangelicals in the U.S. described “the federal crackdown on undocumented immigrants” as a positive thing, compared to just 46 percent of Americans overall. And according to a May 2018 Pew Research Center poll, 68 percent of white evangelicals—a full 25 points over the national average—say America has no responsibility to house refugees.

I wonder what borders of racial and ethnic privilege we must cross as Christians to recognize the sacred humanity of nonwhite persons? What walls of unwarranted fear must Christians cross to know that the vast majority of immigrants crossing the border are looking for a safe place to live and raise their families?

As I prepared to leave El Paso, I was haunted by Ruben Garcia’s questions to us: “Where are you? Where is the church?” It must mean something to Christians that the One we claim to follow was born in a manger to refugee parents and crossed borders to bring the salvation of life, love, and liberation to victims of dehumanizing injustices—especially to children. **¶**

UPDATE: The Tornillo Detention Center was closed in January over safety and health concerns.

The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas is Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union.





A More Plural Union

BY SIMRAN JEET SINGH

Stop me
if you've heard
this one before.

A Zen Buddhist priest and a Muslima scholar of Islam walk into a seminary and propose new M.Div. programs not tied to Christian ministry.

To those unfamiliar with Union Theological Seminary, this might sound like the setup to a bad punchline for religion nerds. But those who know Union's history of being at the cutting edge of social change might be more inclined to believe that, of all places, Union would be one of the first major seminaries in the U.S. to open its doors to new programs devoted to non-Christian communities.

And those people would be right.

Union proudly boasts two newly-minted programs that fit this description: Islam and Interreligious Engagement (IIE), designed and directed by assistant professor Jerusha Rhodes, and Buddhism and Interreligious Engagement (BIE), founded and led by assistant professor Greg Snyder. Both are attracting students of diverse backgrounds, offering unprecedented depth in different traditions, and doing all of this with an eye towards what it means to deal with the disparities we encounter in the world around us.

For an institution to invest its resources in such programs at a time when provincialism and ethno-nationalism are building political momentum around the world is no accident. Union is putting its money where its mouth is, staking its claim with values of pluralism and inclusiveness.

If silence is complicity, then what Union is doing is the opposite. And just a few years into the experiment, the institution is already witnessing positive results.

← FROM LEFT: Mohammad Mia '21, Rachel Arrey '20, and Ian Case '20

New Perspectives on Justice

Though the degree programs are new, their genesis was long in coming—harkening back to when professor emeritus Paul Knitter and others helped establish interreligious engagement as a stand-alone discipline at Union. This strong foundation set the stage for the Buddhism program—conceived about 4 years ago at a gathering of interfaith contemplatives in Iran, where Greg Snyder first met President Serene Jones, aware of Union’s interest in interreligious engagement.

“Serene and I were there for about a week, and we had extensive conversations around Buddhist chaplaincy, social justice, and interreligious engagement at Union. She loved the idea and eventually invited me to come on and structure that program. That was exciting for me. A Buddhist chaplaincy program seated at a seminary with a storied history of commitment to social justice? With a history of liberation theology? That particular nexus didn’t exist anywhere else. How could I say no?”

The program covers expansive ground, and its benefits are immediately discernible. For example, BIE addresses a unique challenge that American Buddhist leaders face currently: the common form of monastic training in the U.S. often does not equip emerging Buddhist leaders with skills for working with lay populations, such as families, rites of passage, community organizing issues, or caring for the sick and dying. BIE closes that gap.

Ian Case, a student in the program who previously studied Zen Buddhism for 12 years and is ordained as a Zen priest, says he was drawn in by the prospect of connecting the philosophies he had studied with the communities he interacted with and served: “I thought that Union—and the BIE program specifically—would help me clarify what it means to be a Buddhist priest in the world and in this city at this moment in time. Union’s unwavering focus on social justice and its intersection with faith and ministry made me excited about the possibility of continuing this dharma work in a seminary environment.”

In addition to building skills, the program opens up new conversations around Buddhist worldviews, experiences, and justice. Snyder explains that justice is not a concept indigenous to Buddhism—at least not the ways we understand social justice in relation to systemic violence and the state. And he believes that having this program situated at Union creates an opportunity for students to help shape a new American Buddhist liberation theology.

“For Buddhism to deepen its roots in the United States, it will have to metabolize notions of justice. That’s been happening since the violence of colonialism in Asia. Buddhists have had to understand what to do about that. So this is not something that’s brand new. But we’re still in the process of exploring that, and students are actually engaged with that question. Waters of social justice are flooding into the tradition and changing the flow. I think that’s important. I think that’s exciting. And students are doing really good work in that area.”

A student in the Buddhism track, Rachel Arrey, echoes this sentiment, saying the program’s attention to justice has been one of the most powerful aspects of her experiences so far: “Because Union has such a reputation for being committed to issues of justice, being here has presented an important opportunity to really examine my own commitments. In particular, I find myself considering deeply my own aspirations to be a part of and to nurture a community that is both loving and committed to justice. What does it really look like to live into both of those things in our relationships? How can we be both principled and kind?”

Snyder smiles when I read this statement back to him, clearly satisfied with how things have progressed so far. “Buddha was asking us to cultivate communities that have the capacity to metabolize our historical karma in ways that create a more compassionate and loving world,” he tells me. “But to metabolize that karma is serious work. And that’s what we’re starting to do. To sit down together and say we’re going to vow to be the beings we’re called to be.”

He smiles again, a glimmer in his eye. “You know what we’re doing here? We’re building a sangha. This is the first year we’re feeling like a sangha. It’s not perfect - we’re still figuring this out. But it feels right. We’re doing good stuff here. I’m excited to see how this develops.”

Engaging the Tough Questions

There are many symmetries between Union’s BIE program and its sister program on Islam, Social Justice, and Interreligious Engagement. Both are one-of-a-kind courses of study that are intellectually rigorous, praxis oriented, and rooted in the realities of marginalized experiences. Both are designed and led by charismatic and passionate educators who are beloved by their students. And both are attracting a range of students that has helped make Union the most diverse it has ever been.

At the same time, Professor Jerusha Rhodes is quick to point out that the two programs are markedly different—and intentionally so—to meet the unique needs of the students who come to the program and to account for the different dynamics within the Buddhist and Islamic experiences.

“One of the main differences between our programs is intention. Greg leads a religious community in a way that I don’t. He was looking to train people who would be in the same role as him. Another significant difference is that about half of the students in the IIE program identify as Muslim, and the other half are not Muslim but have interest in working with Muslim communities. Our program is designed to serve all of those students, not just



Professor Jerusha Rhodes (LEFT) and Professor Greg Snyder (RIGHT)



“This program is helping me understand how Christian privilege impacts other communities... we need to invest more in understanding what people’s whole selves actually are.” — Neonu Jewell ’21

future imams. We want to equip them to be able to lead with a knowledge of Islam and an ability to answer questions most other people can’t answer. And I want to do this for all the students in our program, whether they hope to become chaplains, journalists, or social workers.”

Rhodes describes her approach as being simultaneously outward looking and inward focused. Its intention is inward in that she wants to train people to read Islamic sources, understand Islamic debates, and become familiar with Islamic practices. It is outward in that she wants people to be able to use this core knowledge in conversations about topics that have been hard for the Muslim community to discuss openly, from Islamophobic hate and intra-Muslim racism to misogyny and violence. Students in the program say that they have never before encountered a space where they can talk about these issues and not have their commitments questioned.

It was in anticipation of these sorts of tough conversations that student Mohammad Mia applied to Union. And so far, he hasn’t been disappointed. “What I have received at Union has been a space to engage in critical questions surrounding religious differences, religious plurality, and what it means to live a life informed by faith. As a child I would often turn to my parents with questions about my religion, yet the ways in which they had been taught Islam rarely made room for questions. They struggled to provide me with answers they themselves did not possess and I was often directed to spiritual teachers within my community, who often felt disconnected from the realities of navigating the United States as a young Muslim immigrant.”

Rhodes employs this pedagogical approach with intention, hoping to open up spaces for students to engage the tough questions around their traditions, their convictions, and the social

disparities they witness. She believes this examination is precisely the way to help students cultivate agency, particularly seminary students who are inclined to grow through personal reflection and challenging conversations.

The practice of questioning is not just beneficial for practicing Muslims, Rhodes points out. The program is also designed to help non-Muslims understand the tradition from multiple perspectives, including history, texts, practices, and lived experiences. For student Neonu Jewell, IIE serves as a powerful case study for enhancing how we think about diversity and inclusion, particularly because of its commitment to exploring how Muslims relate to other communities in modern America.

“Before coming to Union, I had been doing a lot of work in diversity and inclusion in corporate spaces. I had been noticing that workplaces are talking a lot more about diversity and workplaces are becoming more diverse—but religion is the aspect of inclusion that gets discussed the least,” says Jewell. “This program is helping me understand how Christian privilege impacts other communities, whether it’s how Muslims might want to pray at work and what that ritual means to them or if it’s something like Ramadan, where a Muslim may not have eaten all day but is expected to sit through late meetings. If we really mean it when we say people should bring their whole selves to work, we need to invest more in understanding what people’s whole selves actually are.”

The three-pronged approach of Islam, Social Justice and Interreligious Engagement means that students come in with a range of experiences and expertise in each of those three aspects. Whereas Jewell might have more experience with interreligious engagement, Mia might be more steeped in the Muslim community. And as anyone who attended the institution can attest, this is the magic of Union: thoughtfully bringing together people with



A Sikh Student's Perspective

BY HARMEET KAMBOJ, M.A. '20

“So what’s seminary?” is a common question my family and close friends have asked me since I chose to pursue my graduate degree here at Union. And while pursuing an interreligious education at a predominantly Christian institution may not seem like the intuitive choice for other Sikh Americans, Union feels as close to a perfect fit as I could have imagined for myself. The institution’s commitment to social justice and its burgeoning interreligious engagement programs offer students of diverse faith backgrounds a great variety of learning opportunities, but more importantly, an incredible potential for personal exploration.

While classrooms buzzing with discussion and theological inquiry can feel both suffocating and lonely for the only Sikh student currently studying here, I find space among peers and professors who warmly welcome my unique theological, sociopolitical, and diasporic perspective. I’ve immersed myself in deep learning about Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic traditions. Beyond the classroom, I’ve sought out opportunities to better understand myself and my own tradition—from giving testimony at chapel with the Asian and Pacific Islander Caucus to speaking on the *Inside Union* podcast and at events hosted by Columbia’s Office of the University Chaplain.

Indeed, the most gratifying—and challenging—part of my graduate experience so far has been seeking personal enrichment in an academic environment that has yet to fully represent the diversity of our student body. With the endless support of my advisor, Dr. John Thatamanil, as well as cooperation with the offices of academic affairs and admissions, I have the freedom to explore my personal faith, my activism, the legacy of my Sikh ancestors, and all the intersections therein. Only one semester into my two-year degree, I already see my evolving faith profoundly transforming my commitment to justice for Sikh Americans and other marginalized religious communities here in the U.S. ¶

diverse experiences and skill sets to facilitate incredible conversations, maturation, and friendships.

Of all her accomplishments within her still-young program, Rhodes says this is by far the aspect of which she is most proud. As always, she shares this feeling with a touch of her sincere modesty.

“There’s a lot to be happy about already, but I’m happiest about what it’s done for the students. I love watching them be fully engaged, I love watching them grow intellectually, and I love watching them grow in their ability to empathize with and respect one another. I’m more of a shepherd in that respect than a guide. But it’s still exciting and satisfying for me. I love being present to watch people grow in their commitments. It’s all a beautiful privilege.”

A Model for Religious Education

As an outside observer and admirer of Union Theological Seminary, and as a Sikh who was born and raised in the United States, I find that these two new programs inspire a bubbling of hope inside of me. Here are three reasons why.

First, they come as relief in a world that seems increasingly fractured along the lines of religious difference. For a powerful institution like Union to reflect seriously on its own role in resolving these issues, and then to make a conscious decision to break from tradition and open its doors to other religious communities—this is a meaningful display of authentic compassion.

Second, these two programs offer compelling models for what religious education ought to look like in our country. Religious diversity is a reality of our time, and religious leaders no longer have the option of whether or not to engage with communities other than their own. Training on how to live with one’s own commitments while respecting and honoring our neighbors—this is sorely needed in our world today.

Third, the testimonies from the students and faculty in these programs prove what so many of us believe but so rarely see come to fruition. We have faith that if we are purposeful about creating the right conditions, and if we are able to bring in people with the right intentions, interreligious engagement has the potential to be an immeasurably transformative experience for everyone involved—this is what these new programs are modeling for us today.

That these cutting-edge programs and their unique contributions align with the mandate, vision, and history of Union Theological Seminary should come as no surprise to those of us familiar with the institution. But that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t stop to celebrate them. Rather, this is precisely the type of progress that we must acknowledge and honor if we truly want to press forward together. ¶

Dr. Simran Jeet Singh is an educator, writer, activist, and scholar. He earned his Ph.D. in Religion from Columbia University, where he currently serves as the first-ever Sikh Religious Life Advisor. He is a post-doctoral fellow at NYU’s Center for Religion and Media, Senior Fellow for the Sikh Coalition, and on the board for the Religion News Association. Singh lives with his family on the Upper East Side, and he spends far too much of his time playing and watching sports.

Initiative Empowers Women of Color to Thrive in Ministry: RISE Together Mentorship Network

BY LISA D. RHODES



The Rev. Dr. Katie Cannon's (Ph.D. '83) enduring exhortation, "Do the work your soul must have," resonates throughout RISE Together, a national mentorship network that connects women of color seminary students and early- and mid-career clergy with experienced women ministers, pastors, scholars, and community leaders. Founded as an initiative of Union Theological Seminary in collaboration with the Women of Color in Ministry project, RISE supports the professional and pastoral formation of women of color ministry leaders.

As women of color enter pastoral ministry in unprecedented numbers, along with the joys of ministry they are also challenged by inequalities related to race, gender, and age. Funded by the generous support of the Lilly Endowment, Inc., the RISE initiative is a response to the need for female mentoring relationships, safe gathering spaces, and leadership training opportunities to help cultivate excellence in pastoral ministry. RISE Together was officially launched at Union in March 2018 with *The Power of Our Voices Leadership Forum*, a dynamic two-day conference that attracted more than 200 women. This cutting-edge mentorship network has quickly become a vibrant national movement designed to Renew, Inspire, Support, and Empower women of color in ministry.

Currently the mentorship network has ten cohorts in seven cities—New York, Atlanta, Nashville, Chicago, Lancaster, Pa., Oakland, and Los Angeles—and approximately 100 mentees and 30 mentors. Monthly cohort gatherings are guided by a two-year leadership curriculum. As RISE approaches its one-year anniversary, one of our Atlanta cohort mentees shares this thought, "RISE has been the sacred community I've longed for and the protective incubator I never knew I needed as a young woman in ministry. My Atlanta cohort has served as a safe space for me to make sense of the many faces of ministry—the good, the bad, and the indifferent." ♪

The Rev. Dr. Lisa D. Rhodes is executive director of the RISE Together initiative. [READ MORE: utsnyc.edu/rise](https://utsnyc.edu/rise)

Collaborating on "Faith Forms Anew"

Reflections from the Author and Composer

The anthem "Faith Forms Anew" was commissioned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Union Theological Seminary's class of 1968. Harvey Burgett, who composed the music, and Charles "Chuck" Lippy, who wrote the words, are both Union alumni from the class of '68. Both returned to the seminary last year for the premiere of the anthem at their class reunion.

Asked what inspired the text of the anthem, Lippy says, "My hope is that the words capture some of the excitement as well as the impetus to work for social justice that marked life in the U.S. in the late '60s."

Lippy's text speaks not only to the issues and injustices that prevailed in the midst of that turbulent era but also to how many of the same issues—poverty, racism, war, increasing gaps in terms of distribution of wealth—still haunt us today.

"The text I wrote," says Lippy, "also tried to capture that shift back to what

Reinhold Niebuhr would have labeled a more realistic appraisal, a reminder that the final fulfillment of our visions comes when we approach history's end."

Burgett says he was profoundly affected by Lippy's words about racism. He has

our wounded country since the graduation of the class of '68 as pre-Trayvon and post-Trayvon. Our ideals and activism gradually seemed to work and wounds seemed to heal. But the acquittal of Trayvon's killer ripped off the scab."



dedicated his musical composition to the memory and legacy of Trayvon Martin, the African American teenager who was fatally shot by a neighborhood watch captain in Sanford, Fla., in 2012.

"The death of Trayvon Martin haunts me daily, and I rarely go out not wearing a hoodie," Burgett says. "I have come to see

Burgett says collaborating on the anthem led to "a reevaluation of my moral core, which was molded at Union and for which I am grateful, even in these lonely times of division and animosity." ♪

[READ THE TEXT OF "Faith Forms Anew": utsnyc.edu/anthem](https://utsnyc.edu/anthem)

The School of Sacred Music: A Proud Legacy

“Rather than curse the darkness,” the engaging phrase that opens Ken Burns’s review of Jon Meacham’s *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels*, prompts us to open a door to beam light on the past events set forth in the account of the closing of the School of Sacred Music at Union Seminary published in the Spring 2018 edition of *Union Network*.^{*} This challenge also provides an opportunity to celebrate the School of Sacred Music’s incredible legacy, which continues to bear fruit!

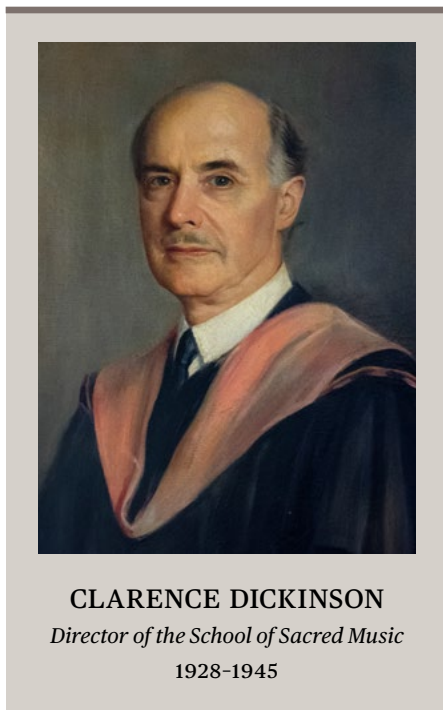
Now for some contextual reality, centering on a “family affair” that lasted for almost three quarters of a century: The continuity of Union’s leadership (both academic and musical) is remarkable, beginning with the pivotal “mover” for the founding of the School of Sacred Music in 1928, Henry Sloane Coffin, whose association with the Seminary began in 1899, when he entered as a B.D. student, and culminated with his presidency (1926–45). Clarence Dickinson, noted as a founding member of the American Guild of Organists in 1896, began his association with the Seminary in 1912 as the Harkness Instructor in Sacred Music. He served as the first director of the School of Sacred Music (1928–45), along with his wife, Helen, an equal partner and academician and the first woman to be awarded the Ph.D. from Heidelberg University. The Dickinsons remained faculty members until 1953.

In 1945, Henry P. Van Dusen (B.D. ’24) succeeded Coffin as president of Union, and Hugh Porter (S.M.M. ’30, S.M.D. ’44) followed Dickinson as director of the School of Sacred Music. Porter’s tenure was marked by the addition of distinguished faculty, lecturers and private organ and voice teachers that drew from the wealth of talent that New York City afforded. Included in that talent pool was his gifted wife Ethel, who was lecturer (Junior Choirs, 1953–69), and Robert S. Tangeman (1950–64), who was first lecturer (Musicology) and later director of graduate studies (1961–64).

Hugh Porter died of a heart attack in the organ chamber of James Chapel,

September 22, 1960, while tending to a cipher, the continuous sounding of an organ pipe. His successor, Robert Stevens Baker (S.M.M. ’40, S.M.D. ’44), a star pupil of Dickinson and renowned concert organist, was named director in 1961 and the Clarence and Helen Dickinson Professor of Sacred Music (a title changed to “Dean” in 1965). During his tenure, eminent musicologist Richard French became the Robert Stone Tangeman Professor of Sacred Music and director of graduate studies.

Upon Van Dusen’s retirement in 1963, John C. Bennett (B.D. ’27) became president



of Union, serving until 1970, when the continuity and the Calvinist tradition was broken by the appointment of Brooke Mosley, a bishop of the Episcopal Church. With Mosley having no institutional association with the Seminary and no affinity for the role of sacred music in the curriculum, a major blow was sustained by the School of Sacred Music, ending in its closure in 1973. Bennett commented that with the demise of the School of Sacred Music, the heart of the Seminary was removed.

The following excerpt from Mosley’s obituary, which appeared in *The New York*

Times in March 1988, reveals significant information regarding the precarious status of the Seminary:

Bishop Mosley’s tenure at Union Theological proved stormy. In 1974 he was forced to resign from a seminary troubled by deficit problems, degree of minority representation among students and faculty, the direction of academic priorities and the manner in which decisions were made.

Take note of the “troubled deficit” reference. Financial woes had plagued the Seminary for decades: separate funding for the School of Sacred Music was not secured at the time of its founding, and the following year (1929) saw the collapse of the national economy. From its inception, the School of Sacred Music operated on a shoestring. Not until the presidency of Donald W. Shriver (1975–1996) did the Seminary set aggressive goals to increase its endowments, and it was under his leadership that the musical presence at the Seminary was enriched by the appointment of Janet Walton to the faculty as professor of music and worship, a position she held with great distinction for 36 years.

There is no doubt that the student protests and social unrest during the Vietnam years had a profound effect on academic institutions throughout the country, including Union and Columbia.

In the midst of this chaos, Robert Baker approached Clementine Miller Tangeman and J. Irwin Miller, directors of the Miller/Sweeney Foundation, for additional funding for the School of Sacred Music. After an investigation of the administrative health of the Seminary, the request was denied. Subsequently, the needed monies went to establish the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, where the aspirations of the founders of the Union experiment have flourished and expanded magnificently for 45 years.

The admonition to the music students to “just keep on practicing”—an encouragement to stay the course while addressing issues of change—has valid precedents: Note Britain’s famous World War II slogan, “Keep calm and carry on,” and Rudyard Kipling’s wisdom, “If you can keep your

VISION

Exploring Faith Leadership

BY AUDREY WILLIAMSON

head when all about you / Are losing theirs and blaming it on you....”

Not all alumni/ae would agree that “Over time, music acceptable to the music school leaders became more restricted, tending toward Bach and earlier composers.” A review of School of Sacred Music theses in the Burke Library reveals topics covering a wide scope of musical styles, as do the choral and organ repertory and compositions by graduates.

It is with pride of “family” that we, the undersigned, celebrate the inestimable legacy of the School of Sacred Music, remembering the contributions of its graduates over the past 90 years: leading music for churches large and small; training musicians in colleges and universities; providing leadership for the American Guild of Organists, the Hymn Society of America, denominational musical associations and the Choristers Guild; editing major hymnals and musicological treatises; composing a significant corpus of music for church and concert venues; and creating treasured memories that bind us all together. ¶

Lois-Eve Anderson S.M.M. '64; Bruce P. Bengston S.M.M. '66; Ruth Anne Maier Bengston S.M.M. '66; Maureen McCormick Carkeek S.M.M. '50; Quentin Faulkner S.M.D. '75; David M. Gehrenbeck S.M.M. '57, S.M.D. '71; Ronald L. Gould S.M.M. '56, S.M.D. '70; Kenneth W. Hart S.M.M. '67; Charles Huddleston Heaton S.M.M. '52, S.M.D. '57; Helen Garvey Jensen S.M.M. '65; Marilyn Keiser S.M.M. '65, S.M.D. '78; Dan Locklair S.M.M. '73; Wilberta Naden Pickett, S.M.M. '52; George Ritchie S.M.M. '67; Jeffery Rowthorn M.Div. '61; Mary L. Simmons S.M.M. '53; Morgan F. Simmons S.M.M. '53, S.M.D. '61; Robert L. Simpson S.M.M. '72; Norman D. Stanton M.Div. '64; Fredrick Swann S.M.M. '54; John Weaver S.M.M. '65; Paul Westermeyer S.M.M. '66; Mina Belle Packer Wichmann S.M.M. '55

* “A Collision Course with Reality: The Rise and Fall of Union’s School of Sacred Music,” *Union Network*, Spring 2018. Union’s semi-annual magazine is now *Union Collective*.

One of the more common sentiments of ministers is the feeling of isolation subsequent to the transition from the relative safety of the seminary to the places they are formally called to serve. While the work of ministry is a holy call, current research finds that after the first five to ten years, faith leaders are susceptible to isolation and many exit the profession. In response to these findings, the Lilly Endowment, Inc., has funded the VISION program at Union. VISION welcomed its first cohort of mid-career faith leaders in September 2014. Under the leadership of Union President Serene Jones, the VISION program invited conversations among faith leaders, community and civic leaders, and seminary faculty to rethink ministry at mid-career. VISION participants developed new ministries and thought out loud together. Their new ministries varied in scope—some were community focused, others ecumenically engaged, and many have remained sustainable beyond the life of the program.

This September, VISION welcomes its third cohort of faith leaders. VISION participants come from diverse communities, ministries, denominations, and faiths. They are supported by VISION’s director, the Rev. Dr. Jane Huber, and mentors, the Rev. Linda Tarry-Chard, the Rev. Arden Strasser, and the author. The two-year program seeks to create an atmosphere of trust, collegiality, and mutual purpose and to engage the sacred work of thinking about ways leaders can celebrate their congregations and communities.

In the Book of Exodus, Moses created an atmosphere in which he was responsible for the leadership of the community. But he learned that asking and teaching others to be leaders was a more enduring model of leadership. VISION is committed to imagining new ways to sustain faith leaders through the arc of ministry and to asking what communities can become when leadership is shared. In the fall of 2019, VISION launches a new pilot program directed by the author. ¶

The Rev. Audrey Williamson is a VISION mentor and director of The Collaborative for Faith Leadership.



READ MORE AND APPLY: utsnyc.edu/life/institutes/vision-program

Faculty News | COMINGS AND GOINGS



Michelle Alexander, Visiting Professor of Social Justice, has agreed to extend her appointment for another three years. She is best known as the author of the *New York Times* bestseller, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in*

the Age of Colorblindness. Alexander recently joined *The New York Times* as an opinion page columnist.



Obery M. Hendricks has been appointed Visiting Professor of Systematic Theology. A lifelong social activist, he is one of the foremost commentators on the intersection of religion and political economy in

America. Cornel West calls him “one of the last few grand prophetic intellectuals.”



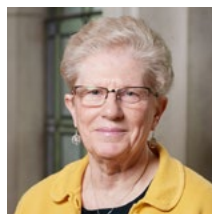
William J. Barber II, Visiting Professor of Public Theology & Activism, pastor, and civil rights activist will extend his appointment. He was one of 25 MacArthur “Genius” grant recipients in 2018. Barber was also named the North

Carolina News & Observer’s 2018 “Tar Heel of the Year.” Since 2016, Barber and Elizabeth A. Theoharis, M.Div. ’04, Ph.D. ’14, co-director of Union’s Kairos Center, have led a resurrection of Martin Luther King Jr.’s Poor People’s Campaign.



Julia Kelto Lillis has been appointed Assistant Professor of Early Church History. Her primary research interests concern ancient constructions of social difference, especially in areas of gender and sexuality, and the ways these are

discussed in early Christian literature. Her article “Paradox in Partu: Verifying Virginity in the Protoevangelium of James” was awarded the American Society of Church History’s Jane Dempsey Douglass Prize.



Mary C. Boys, Ed.D. ’78, will step down at the end of the current academic year as Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs. She will continue on the faculty as Skinner and McAlpin Professor of Practical Theology.

Pamela Cooper-White, Christiane Brooks Johnson Professor of Psychology and Religion, will assume the role of Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs on July 1.



Troy Messenger, Director and Visiting Assistant Professor of Worship, will retire at the end of the current academic year after nearly 24 years at Union. He has overseen the daily chapel program and has brought a

diverse mixture of sound, word, and image as well as various art exhibits and installations to campus. The search for a new Director of Worship will begin shortly.



Derrick Harkins, M.Div. ’87, concluded his tenure as Senior Vice President for Innovation in Public Programs. Previously he was pastor of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church in northwest Washington, D.C., and

a member of the Seminary’s Board of Trustees. He has a long history of working for social justice in both the church and in the public square.



Yvette Wilson-Barnes, M.Div. ’09, who has served nearly a decade as Union’s Associate Dean of Student Affairs, has accepted the position of Associate Dean for Student Affairs at the City University of New York School

of Law. Over the years, Wilson-Barnes has brought her many talents and her experience as an alumna to bear in guiding Union students. William P. Crawford, M.Div. ’81, S.T.M. ’90, has been appointed Interim Associate Dean of Student Affairs at Union. He recently retired as senior pastor of the Larchmont Avenue Church in Larchmont, N.Y. ¶

Alumni/ae Gatherings



↶ Annual dinner for alumni/ae and current Union students at the 2019 Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Birmingham, Ala., Feb. 19, 2019.

↓ Alum gathering in Chapel Hill, N.C., March 2, 2019, with President Serene Jones (FAR RIGHT).



↑ Greater Los Angeles-area Union and EDS alumni/ae gathering, Sept. 29, 2018.

↘ Portland, Maine-area alumni/ae gathering, March 28, 2019.



ReUNION OCTOBER 2-5 | SAVE THE DATE

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1969, 25th anniversary of the Class of 1994, and 10th anniversary of the Class of 2009. 📶 utsnyc.edu/reunion

UNITAS CEREMONY

Friday, October 4, at 5:00pm in James Chapel

Alumnae Receive Awards for Activism

The Rev. Peggy Howland, M.ST. '66, is the recipient of the 2018 Anne Barstow and Tom Driver Award for Nonviolent Direct Action in Retirement. Presented annually by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF), the award recognizes the unique contribution that retirees can make to a more just and peaceful world. It is named for two long-time nonviolence advocates with Union connections: both are alums and Driver is an emeritus faculty member.

A member of PPF for 50 years, Howland has been a long-time advocate for the rights of women, LGBTQ people, and conscientious objectors. She was ordained to the ministry in 1958, serving as a pastor at a time when few Presbyterian congregations were open to women in leadership.

During her ministry, Howland supported efforts to ban nuclear weapons and close the School of the Americas, demonstrating from a wheelchair in her later years. Since her retirement in 1998, she has participated in the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and served as secretary of the New York Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and as president of the International Association of Women Ministers.

Howland has also lobbied for the rights of Palestinians, spoken out against gun violence, and supported a program to accompany endangered church leaders in Colombia. She received the Peaceseeeker Award from PPF in 2008 and a Woman of Faith Award from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2010.

The Rev. Dr. Rebecca “Toddie” Peters, M.Div. '96, Ph.D. '01, received the 2018 Walter Wink Scholar-Activist Award from Auburn Seminary for her work as a feminist, ethicist and activist. The award is named for Union alumnus and former faculty member Walter Wink and honors scholars who use their academic work to advocate for justice.

Growing up, Peters was inspired by her minister father’s social justice work and learned from him the language of faith. After college, she worked in the Justice for Women office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), where she learned about feminist



↑ FROM LEFT: Three recipients of the Walter Wink Scholar-Activist Award, Dr. Traci C. West '95 (2015 inaugural award), the Rev. Dr. Rebecca Todd Peters '96, '01 (2018), and Dr. Najeeba Syeed (2017) joined with the Rev. Dr. Katharine Rhodes Henderson '82, president of Auburn Seminary, at Auburn’s reception and award presentation on Nov. 19 at the 2018 American Academy of Religion annual meeting in Denver.



← The Rev. Peggy Howland '66

theology and the plight of women around the world. This position led to ecumenical work with the World Council of Churches (WCC), where she became involved in the global struggle for economic justice.

Her studies at Union Seminary focused on liberation theology and the social gospel and examined how globalized economies might build structures that are oriented toward justice.

Peters is currently a professor of religious studies at Elon University. She has written several books, including *Trust Women: A Progressive Christian Argument*

for *Reproductive Justice and Solidarity Ethics: Transformation in a Globalized World*. She is also a member of the WCC Faith and Order Commission.

In accepting her award, Peters said she was proud to be a scholar-activist. “In my scholarship—whether it is on economic globalization, poverty, gender justice, or reproductive justice—I strive to combine insightful social analysis with ethical reflection that offers a vision of a new and different world and empowers people to participate in the work of social justice and social change.” ¶

Class Notes

1960s

Ralph M. Moore Jr., M.Div. '61, retired from full-time ministry after serving from 1996 to 2007 at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Rockland, Maine. He continues to serve occasionally as a guest celebrant or officiant in area congregations (Episcopal, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ). From 2003 to 2017 he was a part-time ethics teacher at the Watershed School in Camden, Maine, which he and his wife helped found, and from which their son graduated in 2007. Moore currently serves as a member of the board of directors of OUT Maine, a center for services and support for LGBTQ children, youth, and families in rural communities.

Alice Beekman Updike Scannell, M.R.E. '63, has published *Radical Resilience: When There's No Going Back to the Way Things Were*. Animated by inspiring stories, this short book, available in paperback and Kindle, presents practical tools and techniques for resilience in the face of adversity. Scannell has been a member of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church in Portland, Ore., since 1979. She is a gerontologist, researcher, educator, musician, and Episcopal priest. She was director of music at St. Michael's from November 1979 through June 1984. Her husband, John, is St. Michael's rector emeritus.

Tilda A. Norberg, M.Div. '66, is the founder of Gestalt Pastoral Care Associates, and as a United Methodist minister she is appointed by her bishop to the ministry of Gestalt Pastoral Care. Their goal is to bring spiritual modalities into the mainstream of psychotherapeutic thought and practice. Recently the practice received a prestigious grant for "Grace Examined: Evaluating Gestalt Pastoral Care Spiritually Integrated Strategies for Clinical Effectiveness." The grant, administered by Brigham Young University, is funded through the Templeton Foundation to study "spiritually integrated psychotherapeutic strategies" and how they impact long-term holistic growth and healing.

Sara E. Gould, M.Div. '80, is also an ordained United Methodist minister and psychotherapist at Gestalt Pastoral Care. Both she and Norberg are taking part in the study.

Robert E. Maurer, M.Div. '68, has published *Passing Through the Sixties*, a novel about four young adults who learn about and participate in the turbulent social movements of the decade: the Vietnam War, civil rights movement, rise of feminism and anti-colonialism, and more.

1970s

Marvin A. McMickle, M.Div. '73, has published *The Making of a Preacher: 5 Essentials for Ministers Today*. McMickle is president of the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, where he is also professor of African American religious studies and director of the doctor of ministry program.

Wing Tek Lum, M.Div. '73, contributed substantially to the documentary *Shanghai 1937: Where World War II Began*, recently aired on numerous PBS stations. Produced by Emmy Award-winning international producer/director Bill Einreinhofer, the documentary incorporates little-seen footage located in film libraries around the world as well as original interviews and scenic footage shot specifically for this production. Lum is a widely known Chinese American poet. His poetry about the Nanjing Massacre, a war crime that was a direct outgrowth of the Battle of Shanghai, is featured in the documentary's free Teacher's Notes.

Hope Douglas Harle-Mould, M.Div. '78, has published seven devotionals in the October–December 2018 issue of the Presbyterian devotional magazine *These Days*. In the United Methodist devotional for youth, *Devotion*, two of his writings are chosen for publication every month. And in *Purpose*, a Mennonite magazine, Harle-Mould's true-life narratives are featured four times a year. Along with supply preaching, performing guitar hymns, and delighting children with his white dove, Gracie, he is active in refugee resettlement through his home church, Pilgrim St. Luke's United Church of Christ, the first "sanctuary church" in Buffalo, N.Y. He also continues to love and cherish his wife, **Linda Harle-Mould, M.Div. '79**, as they approach their 40th anniversary next June and recall the preachers at their wedding, Robert McAfee Brown and Sydney Thomson Brown.

Martin A. Seeley, S.T.M. '78, received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Berkeley Divinity School, an Episcopal seminary at Yale University, in recognition of his leadership in the Church of England, in theological education, and in the strengthening of ties between the Church of England and the Episcopal Church in the United States. Seeley is bishop of the St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese in England.

1980s

Augustine Chingwala Musopole, M.Div. '86, Ph.D. '91, was appointed associate professor emeritus upon his retirement in 2014 from the department of philosophy and religion at Chang Jung Christian University in Taiwan. Since then he has served as acting director of the M.Th. International Program at Tainan Theological College and Seminary, also in Taiwan, and as an adjunct professor at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya. Musopole is the author of numerous articles and book chapters and has served church organizations in the United States and around the world. He and his wife now divide their time between Kenya and Malawi.

Emma Jordan-Simpson, M.Div. '88, has been appointed executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the oldest interfaith peace and justice organization in North America. "We face political, social, and communal challenges today that are both new and historic," Jordan-Simpson said at the time of her appointment. "I'm looking to engage with the people who have been left out of the work of imagining a new world, the people who bring the tools needed to address structural violence, and the people whose interests and life experiences point the way for us to create a more just world."

Nancy J. Duff, Ph.D. '88, has published *Making Faithful Decisions at the End of Life* (Westminster John Knox Press). The book helps readers use biblical and theological perspectives regarding death to inform end-of-life decisions, consider where they stand on withdrawing life support and supporting death with dignity laws, and take steps in planning for their own future. Duff is the Stephen Colwell Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Ian A. McFarland, M.Div. '89, has been tapped to be the Robert W. Woodruff Professor of Theology at Candler School of Theology, Emory University. The Woodruff professorships are the most prestigious of Emory's faculty chairs, made by presidential appointment and reserved for teacher-scholars of distinction who serve a broad constituency and provide a unifying force to graduate education. McFarland, who was on Candler's faculty from 2005–2015, will return in fall 2019. He is currently Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, England.

1990s

Gillian E. Weighton, S.T.M. '91, has been called to be pastor of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Suffolk, Va. Previously she served a church in Racine, Wis. Weighton holds a B.D. from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, her country of origin.

Stephen R. Harding, M.Div. '93, has accepted the call to be rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Vineyard Haven, Mass. Previously he was the five-year interim rector at St. Peter's Church in New York City. He also served as disaster coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese of New York and as Protestant Episcopal chaplain for the New York City fire department.

Kimberly "Kym" Lucas, M.Div. '95, has been elected the 11th bishop of Colorado's Episcopal diocese—the first African American woman bishop in its history. Pending consent of a majority of bishops, Lucas will be ordained and consecrated May 18 in Colorado by the nation's first African American presiding bishop, Michael Curry.

Rebecca Todd "Toddie" Peters, M.Div. '96, Ph.D. '01, received Auburn Seminary's 2018 Walter Wink Scholar-Activist Award at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion last November in Denver. Her new book, *Encountering the Sacred: Feminist Reflections of Women's Lives*, which she co-edited with Grace Yia-Hei Kao, was published in December. Peters is currently professor of religious studies at Elon University.

Dwight Lee Wolter, M.Div. '97, is the author of books on forgiveness; pastor of the Congregational Church of Patchogue, N.Y.; and a writer for numerous publications, among them *Patheos*, *Still Speaking Daily Devotionals*, and *Sojourners* magazine. He is often heard on NPR and television and cable networks.

2000s

Nancy Neal, M.Div. '04, has been named Director of Church Relations for Bread for the World, a Washington, D.C.-based Christian citizens' movement dedicated to ending hunger.

Karyn Carlo, M.Div. '05, Ph.D. '09, facilitated the Pwo Karen Theological Seminary's annual faculty retreat, "Teaching Critical and Independent Teaching for the Future," at the Myitta Resort in Bago, Myanmar. Carlo is currently a minister at Safe Haven United Church of Christ in Ridgewood, N.Y. A retired New York City police captain, Carlo also serves as adjunct faculty at New York Theological Seminary. She is founder and director of the Clergy, Community, Cops Project.

Dominique C. Atchison, M.Div. '06, has been appointed executive director of the Center for Faith and Community Partnerships in New York City, where she will liaise with Mayor Bill de Blasio. At the Abyssinian Baptist Church, she served under the pastoral leadership of the Rev. Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor and the **Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts III '75**. She has ministered at, among other places, Judson Memorial Church and Brown Memorial Baptist Church. Atchison also has a background in school administration, most recently at Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy. She was ordained to Christian ministry by the Metro Association of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC).

Colleen L. Birchett, M.Div. '07, has published *Family Ties: Restoring Unity in the African American Family*, a set of Bible studies that set real-life family stories in social, historical, and biblical context, with each chapter devoted to a different principle of family unity.

2010s

Emily M. Brown, M.Div. '10, was a contestant on *Jeopardy!* on September 18, 2018. She has been the pastor of First Reformed Church in Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y., since September 2017. She served prior to that as associate pastor of Broadway UCC in New York City. Stepmom to one child and mom to two more, she enjoys exploring great restaurants and bakeries, reading memoirs and graphic novels, choral singing, and playing in a competitive online trivia league.

Edward Mulrairie, S.T.M. '11, is celebrating his 15th year as pastor of Unity Baptist Tabernacle in Mount Vernon, N.Y. U.S. Congressman Eliot L. Engel of New York read a speech in the House of Representatives on October 26, 2018, to mark the occasion. Engel noted that Mulrairie has been active in the NAACP, has taught homiletics at New York Theological Seminary, and has lectured on African American religions and the political philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr. at Manhattanville College.

Rev. Sarah Cairatti, M.Div. '12, and her partner **Brian Carreira, M.Div. '10**, welcomed their daughter, Simone Ann Carreira on May 10, 2018. Sarah serves as the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Whippany, N.J. Brian is a chaplain at Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital in Morris Plains, N.J.

Jeffrey D. Grant, M.Div. '12, was ordained to the priesthood through the imposition of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit by the Right Reverend Edmund N. Cass, presiding bishop of the Progressive Catholic Church, on August 5,

2018, at St. Matthew's Church, Union City, N.J. In November he was appointed staff chaplain for the fire department of Woodbury, Conn. Grant is co-founder of Progressive Prison Ministries, Inc., and co-host of a criminal justice radio program. His wife, Lynn Springer, is a yoga instructor.

Matthew Arlyck, M.Div. '13, was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky on January 13.

Barbara Lea Rice Callaghan, M.Div. '13, and her wife, Katherine Munson Callaghan, welcomed their second child, Oliver Lewis Callaghan, on November 16, 2018. Eliza, their elder child, is now almost 3. Barbara is one of the ministers at Hancock United Church of Christ in Lexington, Mass.

Michael A. Roberson, M.Div. '13, served as a consulting producer on *Pose*, Ryan Murphy's groundbreaking FX series about New York's ballroom culture in the 1980s, which features five transgender women of color and an unprecedented number of LGBTQ actors and actresses as series regulars. *Pose* broke ground as the first TV series with a mostly trans cast when it was nominated for a Golden Globe for "Best Television Series, Drama."

Rix T. Thorsell, M.Div. '13, was ordained to the priesthood through the imposition of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit by the Right Reverend Edmund N. Cass, presiding bishop of the Progressive Catholic Church, on August 5, 2018, at St. Matthew's Church, Union City, N.J.

Bridget Kelso Anthony, M.Div. '15, was ordained on December 9, 2018, at Fort Washington Collegiate Church in New York City, where she is associate minister. In addition to her ministerial call, Kelso Anthony is an actor and playwright and has a B.A. in theater from Marymount College and an M.A. in playwriting and performance from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. She is an adjunct faculty member at the City University of New York.

Valerie Anne Ross, M.Div. '14, S.T.M. '15, was ordained at Judson Memorial Church, New York City, on November 10, 2018. She currently serves as senior community minister for social justice at Judson, addressing systemic issues faced locally, nationally, and worldwide: racism, poverty, immigration, education reform, and mass incarceration. Prior to this, she served for two years as intern minister for pastoral care and advocacy at the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York.

Jay Ronell "Jé Exodus" Hooper, M.A. '15, directed and produced *Humanitas: a Conscious Coloring of Kindness*, an independent film

In Memoriam

AS OF MARCH 19, 2019

Alumni/ae

Cedric H. Jaggard '41
Kiyoko Takeda Cho '42
John Deming Wolf '42
G. Richard Wheatcroft '43
Leroy W. Bowers '46
Richard Henry '46
Louise Higgins Shows Drake '48
Margaret Fiddler Gledhill '48
Mary Bell Thornburgh '50
Dolores A. Potts '51
David P. Munro '53
Robert C. Clark '54
Albert William Martin, Jr. '54
James A. Mason '54
H. Neill McFarland '54
Frank B. Dilley '55, '61
Ralph T. Lindemann '55
Richard J. Bailar '56
George Harvey Crowell '56, '66
Robert W. Howard '56

David Neal Smith '56
N. Carlyle Spitz '56
Gilbert T. Gledhill '57
Toombs H. Kay, Jr. '57
E. Burton Davison '58
Mary Hotchkiss Miller '60
George Warren Busler '64
Hiroki Funamoto '64
John A. Pecoul, Jr. '64
Lawrence Hiroshi Mamiya '68, '75
John Montgomery Irvine, Jr. '69
David D. Hoefer '70
Robert Roy Williams '71
Phillip Lance Engle '76
Horace T. Allen '80
John D. Twina '83
William Eugene "Gene" Bolin '84
Roberta S. de Salle '85
Robina M. Winbush '87
Timothy Joseph Becker '12

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Lerone Bennett, Jr.
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Gladys S. Naylor
George E. Todd

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

CLASS NOTES

centering on W.E.B. DuBois, author of *The Souls of Black Folk*, and Felix Adler, founder of the Ethical Culture movement. The film was set to premiere February 23 at the New York Society for Ethical Culture. **Joseph I. Tolbert, M.Div. '18**, stars, along with Sekani Radellant and Richard Szoke.

Hannah W. Lyon Lovaglio, M.Div. '16, and her husband, Michael, welcomed son Jack Finn Lovaglio on Labor Day, September 3, 2018. They live in Cranbury, N.J., where she serves as associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church.

Robert T. Stephens, M.Div. '16, was ordained to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament November 11, 2018, at Middle Collegiate Church, New York City, where he serves as Minister for Organizing. Stephens joined the pastoral team at Middle in the spring of 2016 after graduating from Union. His new role at Middle Church includes working on national justice campaigns and the Revolutionary Love conference. When not at Middle, he is a trainer with the Racial Equity Institute.

André G. Daughtry, M.A. '17, is a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Workspace artist-in-residence.

Elizabeth Colmant Estes, M.Div. '17, was ordained to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament on January 6 by the Classis of New Brunswick of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) at the Reformed Church of Highland Park, N.J. She has been an elder in the Reformed Church of Highland Park since 2006 and has received a call to serve as pastor of the Readington (N.J.) Reformed Church.

Rachel Hayes, M.Div. '17, was "granted fellowship" on December 1, 2018, by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association—"which," she noted in a Facebook post, "makes me a really real minister. This moment is more than five years in the works (or a lifetime, depending how you count), and I could not have done it without the support of my family keeping my body and soul together and out of the weather, Andrew holding my hand in the most terrifying and exciting moments, friends loving me, and colleagues coaching me. Thank you to everyone who said a prayer, sang a song, fed me, lit a candle, or danced in the moonlight with your pajamas on backwards. We did it!"

Wesley J. Morris, M.Div. '17, was installed as pastor of Faith Community Church in Greensboro, N.C., on October 14, 2018. He is also director of the Beloved Organizing, Training, and Healing Institute (BOTH) at the Beloved Community Center. BOTH's mission is to provide training in community and coalition building; in creative engagement of flawed policies, institutions, and systems; and in the art of promoting healing and reconciliation.

Michael T.S. Vanacore, M.Div. '17, was ordained on December 9, 2018, at Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City.

Suzanne Campise, M.Div. '18, and **Gregory Simpson, M.Div. '16, S.T.M. '18**, were married on September 22, 2018.

Ian Carr McPherson, M.Div. '18, was ordained January 13 at West End Collegiate Church, New York City.

Joseph I. Tolbert, Jr., M.Div. '18, is currently an Arts and Culture Fellow with the Intercultural Leadership Institute. His goal is to help others live, dream, achieve, and inspire. He also works with communities to help them harness the power of art and culture through the building, implementation, and evaluation of cultural strategies. **U**

In Memoriam

Walter Burke

Former Board Chair and Library Benefactor

Walter Burke, who served on Union's Board of Trustees from 1970 to 1989 and as chair of the board from 1975 to 1982, died peacefully at home November 1, 2018. He was 96.

Following his graduation from Columbia Law School, he served as chief legal and financial advisor to inventor and businessman Sherman Fairchild and encouraged him to establish the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, which subsequently made significant contributions to improve education, science, and medicine. Burke dedicated his entire working life to the foundation, serving on its board for more than 50 years, including 35 years as president. He was a generous benefactor to the Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, which was named in his honor. He also served for many years on the boards of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Morgan Library and Museum, and Columbia University, among others.

In his almost century of life, Burke's deepest passions were his family, his charitable work, golf, and baseball. He leaves his wife of 76 years, Connie Morse Burke, and four children to cherish his memory. **Please send condolence cards to Connie Morse Burke, 33 Lismore Lane, Greenwich, CT 06831.**

John D. Maguire

Former Trustee and Freedom Rider

Dr. John D. Maguire, who served on Union's Board of Trustees from 2003 to 2013 and as interim chair for several months in 2012, died October 26, 2018. He was 86. His daughter, Catherine Maguire, said he died after a stroke.

Renowned for his social justice activism, Maguire was one of the original Freedom Riders. He enjoyed a 17-year friendship with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and after King's assassination he served on the board of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta.

The experience informed Maguire's vision when in 1970 he became president of the State University of New York's College at Old Westbury, on Long Island. Maguire was one of the first college educators in the United States to successfully use diversity as a guiding principle in student admissions, setting out to create a student population that was about 30 percent Caucasian, 30 percent African American, 30 percent Latino, and 10 percent other races and ethnicities. A year into his tenure, the *New York Times* reported that more than half of Old Westbury's 610 students were from minority groups.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts III, M.Div. '75, pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem and Old Westbury's president since 1999, told the *New York Times* that Maguire "laid a lasting foundation on which I stand today."

Maguire left Old Westbury in 1981 to become president of Claremont Graduate University in California. There he opened centers dedicated to the humanities, education, politics, economics, and organizational and behavior studies. He retired in 1998.

Maguire received a Lifetime Achievement Medal from the Fulbright Association and was senior director of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

In addition to his daughter Catherine, he is survived by his wife, Billie; two other daughters, Mary Maguire and Anne Turner; a sister, Martha Worsley; and four grandchildren.

The family has asked that condolences be sent to his daughter Anne Turner, 790 Santa Barbara Ave., Claremont, CA 91711.

Robert Wood Lynn, Ph.D. '62

Visionary Educator

Robert Wood Lynn, who was Auburn Professor of Religious Education at Union Theological Seminary and dean of Auburn Seminary from 1960 to 1974, died October 7, 2018, with his loving wife and companion of 66 years, Katharine Wuerth Lynn, by his side.

A teacher and scholar, Lynn was an early advocate of the historical study of how Christian faith and practice have been taught in America. Later, as Senior Vice President for Religion at Lilly Endowment, Inc., he developed grants programs addressed to understanding and renewing theological education, congregational life, and other areas of American religion.

Following his retirement from Lilly Endowment in 1989, Lynn focused his research on the fraught relationship between faith and money in American Protestantism, and at the request of Indiana University, he helped to organize and launch the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving. He also served as a member of the board of Yale University, where he led the search for Yale's 22nd president, Richard C. Levin, in 1993.

"Lynn was a visionary and strategic thinker who sensed earlier than most how the dynamic American environment of the late 20th century was challenging the nation's religious communities in ways that its leaders did not understand," wrote James P. Wind, former president of the Alban Institute, who was mentored by Lynn, in an email to the *Christian Century*. "He helped American denominational leaders, theological educators, and the clergy who led America's churches and synagogues get a clear sense of what they were dealing with and how they could respond."

The Portland Press Herald had this to say: "At 6 feet, 7 inches, Robert Lynn was a person of memorable height and character. Gracious, modest, and gently humorous, he combined a keen critical mind with persistent hopefulness. His kindness, wisdom, and generosity of spirit will live on in the lives he touched, the institutions he influenced, and the body of knowledge he fostered."

Lynn is survived by his wife, Katharine; their two daughters, Elizabeth and Sarah; eight grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his brothers, Greg and John Lynn; his sister, Margaret Lynn Brinkley; his and Katharine's daughter, Janet Lynn Kerr; and their son, Thomas Taylor Lynn. ▮

Building a Legacy

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. —1 PETER 4:10

We at Union Theological Seminary take the requirement of faithful stewardship very seriously. And it is upon this cornerstone of fidelity that Union is asking alumni/ae and friends for their vision and their help.

Hundreds of Union alumni/ae are reaching stations in life where legacy building is no longer a faraway concern. For some, building a legacy means making a tangible commitment to mentoring their children and grandchildren to pass down family values, wisdom, and traditions. For others, it means writing a memoir, volunteering, becoming an advocate, or teaching part-time in a field of expertise. Yet for all, legacy building also means wisely preparing a plan to transfer material possessions from one generation to the next.

Did you know that you can establish plans *now* for an endowed scholarship, program, or professorship at Union to be funded *later* through your will, estate, retirement plan, or life insurance policy? Or did you know that Union welcomes your innovative ideas to strengthen our faculty, facilities, and students—ideas that can be memorialized and celebrated *now* but implemented *later*? Or did you know that maximizing current income *for yourself* and charitable giving *for Union* are not divergent strategies? In fact, a number of individuals and families are surprised to learn about opportunities that provide both income and tax relief for themselves now and a charitable gift for Union later. Naming Union as a beneficiary in your will or adding Union as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy are constructive ways to link your personal legacy with your vision, plans, and values. And for those who have retirement assets or other investments, giving a portion of these to Union could have substantial tax benefits.

Each of these ideas is an aspect of *charitable gift* planning—often called planned giving—and is implemented via an intentional act of legacy planning before a person crosses the ultimate threshold of life. The gifts and visionary written statements left by those who have crossed that threshold represent the givers' deepest aspirations for the future sustainability of the nonprofits they love, such as Union Theological Seminary.

No gift is too small when every dollar is precious. Remember the biblical story about the widow's two mites, valued more than all the rest. This is wisdom, and a standard for us. It would be our joy to guide you through the gift-planning process and to become a beneficiary of your generosity. Please, won't you reach out to share your vision for Union's future? 🙏

For questions or to relay your expectations about how your future gift is to be administered, please contact Emily Odom at eodom@uts.columbia.edu or 212-280-1419.

“Union is a bastion of justice, love, and acceptance. I want to support that!” —**Susan Sgarlat '07**



Union Alumna Explains Why the Seminary Is in Her Will

Susan Sgarlat, M. Div. '07, has degrees from several prestigious institutions, but Union Theological Seminary is the only one she has put in her will.

“I’ve attended a lot of different schools—a prep school, Barnard College, and Vanderbilt University Law School. I have designated Union as a beneficiary of my estate—the only gift to a school in my will,” Susan says. “The reason? None of the other schools needs the money as much as Union does.”

Sgarlat, who worked for years as associate general counsel for Columbia University, says that studying at Union was a dream come true. “I had known about Union for 20 years or more, but I thought it was out of my reach to attend seminary,” she says. “But I would read the Union catalog and fantasize about studying there.”

She was ordained by the Reformed Church in America in 2009 and now works as a hospice chaplain. She is married to Episcopal priest Charles Fels, who also left the legal profession to enter the ministry. They live in Knoxville, Tenn.

Sgarlat says her gift to Union is unrestricted because “I totally trust Union to use my gift where it’s most needed.

“Giving to Union is about having a strong relationship with God and then wanting to give others an opportunity to have a Union theological education and go out into the world and make life better for others,” Sgarlat says. “Union is a bastion of justice, love, and acceptance. I want to support that! 🙏



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