

VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SUMMER 2023



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VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

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Photo by Anna Meyer Photo.

Getting There Slowly



Was St. Paul right to argue that Gentiles can follow Christ without being circumcised? Was Philip right when he approached the Ethiopian eunuch to tell this person whose gender identity was deliberately complex that he could be baptized, despite the prohibition in Deuteronomy 23:1? If, as Christians, your answer to these questions is yes, then you can see why the journey of inclusion that dominated so much of the late 20th century is not a journey of political correctness or wokeness, but simply a journey of Gospel fidelity.

As we approach our Historic Bicentenary this October, we are pausing to honor the journey of inclusion. Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) participated in the sins of slavery and segregation. This was a heinous sin. Slowly, in a story that is still unfolding, we have reached out to our African American siblings and started the hard work of inclusion. This work was often imperfect, as the five student body presidents share with us in this issue. But the trajectory was set and continues.

This issue focuses on those who came first. We explore the pioneering women who led the way for other women to follow. We explore the experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community within the Seminary. The biblical witness is clear: we are called to “love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” (Romans 12:10) Showing honor is a Christian obligation.

Our grounding is the revelation of God in Christ. We are seeking to be faithful to “the Word became flesh and lived among us.” (John 1:14) We learn of God by seeking to model ourselves on the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth. We keep a creedal core at VTS. It is because we love the Lord Jesus that we do the work of inclusion.

In a country that is deeply divided and polarized, we do need to make sure that inclusion is not confined to liberals. We need to be in conversation with the Anglican Communion, as The Rt. Rev. Anthony Poggio reminded us, and listen carefully and attentively to their understanding of the world. We need to invite to the table those who want to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God.” (1 John 4:1) We strive at VTS to talk to anyone willing to talk to us. Authentic conversation that is willing to embrace disagreement is an important part of honoring the other.



PHOTOS: KARINA CARVALHO, SIX HALF DOZEN

The Dean with The Rt. Rev. Anthony Poggio during his visit to VTS.



(L-R) The Dean with Ebonee Davis, The Rev. Aaron Rogers '23 and The Rev. Joseph Thompson, Ph.D. '18 at the Descendant Gathering.

This historical work that tells the story of inclusion, is a work that is intended to have an impact on the present, so that the future can be different. We recently had our second Descendant Gathering Event on the campus (see page 22). Their ancestors had labored in this place: they were the ones who built the buildings, cooked the meals, washed the clothes, cared for the farm, and served the food. In 2019, the Seminary had just three names of people who worked while enslaved on the campus. The rest were forgotten and unknown. Now, at this Descendants Gathering, the brochure had three pages of names. And we all stood as the names were read out. Now these names are remembered. And the descendants are no longer strangers but friends.

Marking the moment of the Historic Bicentenary involves marking a significant moment of the journey. We all live in time. Institutions change and people come and

go. In this issue we celebrate the service of Dr. Hannah Matis and The Rev. Dr. Mark Jefferson. They have both left their mark on this place, not simply as teachers and scholars, but also as colleagues and friends. And we pause to give thanks for the gift of the life of Bishop Frank Griswold. Bishop Griswold was a dear friend of the Seminary.

This is an issue that explores the journey of an institution. The metaphor of journey has become a theme of our Bicentenary. We are conscious of the power of the reflective journey, a journey where one really lives deeply into the moment. Journey is a primary biblical theme. Abraham travels from Ur to Canaan. Ruth goes from Moab to Bethlehem. The captives of Judah make the journey back to Jerusalem. And the disciples of Jesus make countless journeys to share the Good News of the Gospel. In the Strategic Plan, we asked The Rev. Dr. Barney Hawkins to lead a set of pilgrimages that invited our friends and alumni to reflect deeply on their lives as a result of the journey. A pilgrimage is not tourism. It is an invitation to allow places to impact one and to grow into a deeper relationship with God as a result of the journey.

As VTS starts the next stage of its journey, we pause and seek to learn from the past and look ahead to the future. Part of that future is the affiliation with The General Theological Seminary. We are not yet sure of the shape of the future that God wants us to create; but we are ready to seize the moment and do our work to use different ways to “Go out into the world and preach the Gospel.”

Yours in Christ Jesus,

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President



PHOTO CREDIT: BARNEY HAWKINS

Remembering Bishop Griswold

By The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.
Director of the Historic Bicentenary

Bishop Griswold celebrating at Mount Tabor, Israel.

I hated getting the call, on March 5, 2023, about the death of the Rt. Rev. Frank Tracy Griswold III. The sad news reached me in Jerusalem, as I was leading a Lenten pilgrimage with The Rev. Dr. Russell J. Levenson '92 for St. Martin's, Houston. I could not have been in a better place. Frank and I enjoyed so many good times leading pilgrimages to the Holy Land and Jordan. I was sad in a place we both loved.

Instantly, I knew that Frank was in the presence of the Divine Mystery which he pondered for so long and with such grace. I miss him, but we will meet again.

I first knew of Frank when he was consecrated as the Bishop Coadjutor of The Diocese of Chicago in 1985. Of course, when he became our 25th Presiding Bishop, Chief Primate and Pastor, I became more and more aware of this gifted and faithful servant. His tenure as Presiding Bishop was historic. He consecrated our first openly gay bishop, The Rt. Rev. Gene V. Robinson - wearing a bullet proof vest because of tensions and the threat of schism. Living the mystery of communion, he enthusiastically ordained women as priests. He endorsed the Concordat of Agreement to achieve full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church. He engaged with delight the Orthodox East. With his wife, Phoebe, he continued his predecessor's recognition of the complexity of life in Jerusalem and the Middle East. Indeed, his era was consequential and richly textured.

In 2006, it would have been understandable if Frank had entered retirement with a resolve to enjoy life with his beloved family. More leisure time in New Hampshire would have been expected. He could have easily rested on the countless laurels of his primatial office.

No, this son of a race car driver had many more miles to go. In 2009, three years into his retirement, Morehouse published the Bishop's *Praying our Days: A Guide and Companion*. Just last year and as Mark McIntosh was dying, Eerdmans published their collaboration: *Harvest of Hope: A Contemplative Approach to Holy Scripture*.

In retirement, Frank led retreats and taught at several seminaries of The Episcopal Church. Thankfully, he spent considerable time at Virginia Theological Seminary. His courses were popular, and he loved his time with future church leaders. I had the joy of teaching one class with him, The Habit of Priesthood. I will never forget introducing him on the first day of class to a room full of seniors. I said: "We are blessed to have the former Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church as our mentor and teacher." After class and over a cup of coffee, Frank - in his inimically direct and graceful way - gently informed me: "I am not the former Presiding Bishop. I am the 25th Presiding Bishop." I was properly educated, as only Frank could teach.

When the Seminary's Immanuel Chapel burned in 2010, Frank agreed to be an honorary chair of the Chapel for the Ages Campaign with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Frank wrote the campaign prayer and never missed a meeting of the Campaign Executive Committee. With great joy, he participated in the dedication of our new Chapel in 2015, along with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the 26th Presiding Bishop and the soon-to-be consecrated 27th Presiding Bishop.

It was, however, on pilgrimages to the Holy Land and Jordan that the Bishop Griswold I long knew of became the Frank Griswold I loved dearly. I will always treasure leading pilgrimages with Frank. I remember well sharing with him the itinerary for the first pilgrimage we did together. He called me and said we must include the Holy Monastery of St. Gerasimos of the Jordan. What? Which monastery? Then and there, Frank introduced me to his friends, the Desert Fathers and Mothers. He was on a first name basis with these saints, east and west. The Holy Monastery of St. Gerasimos is one of the oldest monasteries in Israel/Palestine. The monastery is an oasis in the Judean Desert of the West Bank near Jericho, west of the Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea. Across the Jordan River from this oasis of green palm trees is the likely place of Jesus' baptism. According to the tradition, this monastery was also a waystation as the Holy Family fled Herod the Great on their flight to Egypt.

Instantly, I knew that Frank was in the presence of the Divine Mystery which he pondered for so long and with such grace. I miss him, but we will meet again.

He encountered our Church at a desert time of dissent and division. His was a voice which kept reminding us that truth is larger than any one perspective.

For Frank, the monastery, founded in the fifth century, was most important, because it represented the transition of monks from solitary caves to a monastic common life. The monastery became a place of hospitality and refreshment for pilgrims and is associated with four of Frank's ancient friends: St. Euthymius, St. Zosimus, St. Mary of Egypt, and St. Gerasimos.

As I learned of the four saints of this ancient monastery, I learned of this modern-day pilgrim, Frank Tracy Griswold III. Euthymius the Great was an abbot in Palestine. His lasting achievement may have been his visionary support of the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451CE), even as his fellow monks opposed them. Like St. Euthymius, Frank had a vision of God's mission in the world and was able to stand alone when necessary.

Zosimus was a Palestinian saint who lived in the region of the present-day monastery. He befriended

Mary of Egypt and became her biographer. Mary of Egypt lived a thoroughly dissolute life. She left Egypt on an 'anti-pilgrimage' to Jerusalem to satisfy her lust. She encountered Zosimus when he was on a Lenten retreat in the desert. Mary repented and asked for communion. We know of Mary because Zosimus wrote of her life and death, her pilgrimage from lust to love, from hell on earth to heaven above. Like Zosimus, Frank had much good cheer as he encouraged people in their faith. His 'big-tent' approach to God's Church came just when we needed it desperately. He encountered our Church at a desert time of dissent and division. His was a voice which kept reminding us that truth is larger than any one perspective. The obituary of Frank in *The New York Times* referred to him as a "Bridge-Building Bishop." This he was, as he was also a "Person-building Pastor."

The story of St. Gerisimos and his pet lion is a delightful story. He removed a thorn from the lion's foot and the lion became his pet for the rest of his earthly life. It is said that this founder of the Holy Monastery of St. Gerisimos of the Jordan often preached: "Children, live in peace and do not be arrogant." Like St. Gerasimos, Frank was a healer who was concerned with all of God's Creation. Frank, like the saints he knew so well, called out of us our better selves. His gentle, graceful presence made the world and our Church more inhabitable, more welcoming, more like heaven. He took to heart the wisdom of the saints.

I will always be grateful for Frank's love and friendship. He was a fellow pilgrim who longed for home, even as he made all of us feel at home and loved. I will miss his joy and presence; yet, I am ever grateful that he introduced me to his friends, so many new saints. For that, I will always live with riches. Thanks be to God for Frank, a child of God all his days.



(L-R): The Rt. Rev. Frank Tracy Griswold III and The Rev. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D. on a pilgrimage together.

Farewell to Faculty

As Hannah Matis, Ph.D., takes up a position at The University of the South, and The Rev. Mark Jefferson, Ph.D., pursues opportunities in Texas, two of their former students reflect on the impact they had on their studies.

Making History Real and Relevant

Every week in our introductory church history course, my fellow seminarians and I would enter Addison armed with laptops, pens, and many sheets of notepaper. The classroom would be filled with the sound of typing and writing, as we attempted to write down the narrative of the Church's history, from the earliest Christians to the riches of the medieval Church, to the changes of the Reformation and the gifts and challenges of modernity.

Dr. Hannah Matis taught us not just major events and dates, but also about the process of excavating larger narratives - about looking past the simplistic answers towards the complex array of voices (both present and absent) in the writing and rewriting of

these multi-layered histories. We would emerge from class, and inevitably one of my classmates would say something to the effect of "Dr. Matis has blown my mind again!"

The gift of Dr. Hannah Matis' teaching is in her ability to make history real and relevant, regardless of one's previous academic experience. However, her time at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) has given her students many other gifts - from her diligence and care as an academic advisor to her passion for music, creation care, and her love of films.

As an academic, her work on the Song of Songs and history of women in the Church reflects a commitment to



exploring the gaps in our historical narratives, as well as her dedication to interdisciplinary work. Her own commitment to ensure that the history of the Church is taught well has filtered into the lives and ministries of her students, leaving a rich legacy behind her as she embarks on new adventures.

The Rev. Amanda Bourne '20

Inspiring Students to Be Great Preachers



The Rev. Mark Jefferson, Ph.D., taught us to listen to sermons and ask the question: "What is this sermon leading us to do?"

Truly great preachers embody the sermon that is their lives lived in the

fullness of the movement of the Holy Spirit. Truly great teachers inspire their students to take into the world what they are being taught.

Dr. Jefferson made no secret that he wanted to change the culture of preaching at VTS, to encourage us to find greater depths, and to disrupt the patterns of perfectionist performance. One way he did this was by inspiring us to create Preacher Club.

Early in the semester in the middler Homiletics course, he challenged my classmate Mitchell Felton and me to think about how we approached learning. Knowing we had both been high school coaches and athletes, he asked: "How does Alabama get to be Alabama?" We knew the answer: they

practiced all the time. That week, we started the practice of meeting once a week in the chapel, after hours, to work on our preaching.

At first it was just the two of us, but as the weeks passed and we told people what we were doing, others started coming, and Preacher Club grew. The rules were simple: we began and ended with prayer, and everyone preached, even if it was a randomly selected collect.

People came, preached, heard, and prayed. Over time, we saw how our preaching pastorally responded to the needs of our little community. This is what Dr. Jefferson's example inspired us to do. We learned how to take risks, be vulnerable, and grow in the Word.

The Rev. Stephen Bragaw '23

COMMENCEMENT 2023

ALL PHOTOS: ANNA MEYER PHOTO.





Five African American Student Body Presidents at Virginia Theological Seminary

By Wendy A. Jordan

Over the past 200 years Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) has followed a path of shame as well as achievement in its interaction with African Americans. Early decades at VTS were tarnished by slavery and segregation. More recently the trajectory for VTS has changed significantly, reframing the community as one that not only welcomes students and professors of color but also has elected five African American students to serve as Student Body President.

The History

In its first four decades, VTS was governed by slave owners. Most support jobs at the Seminary were held by enslaved or freed African Americans. VTS hired contractors that used enslaved or low-paid Black people as laborers, and the Seminary itself employed enslaved and free Blacks to build the Aspinwall Complex.

In 1849-51, three Black students from Liberia studied at VTS at the request of The Rt. Rev. John Payne. They were the only students of African descent to attend the Seminary for a century. Bishop Payne Divinity School, for Black students, operated in Petersburg, Va., from 1878 until 1949, while VTS remained segregated.

Transformative change at VTS began in 1951, when John Thomas Walker enrolled as its first African American seminarian, later to become Bishop of Washington. Two years later, Bishop Payne Divinity School merged with VTS. In 1970, VTS made an official shift away from segregation by adopting the VTS Civil Rights Act, which set the goal of bringing Black faculty, students and studies to the Seminary. Many firsts ensued. Among them Pauli Murray entered VTS in 1976 as the first Black woman to study at the Seminary. She went on to be the first Black woman to be ordained in The Episcopal Church. The Rev. Lloyd Alexander Lewis, Jr., Ph.D., came in as the first full-time Black faculty member in 1978. And in 1991, VTS first observed the martyrdom of Martin Luther King, Jr., also launching diversity training as a standard component of student orientation.

It was in 2009 that the Dean of VTS, The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D., issued a formal apology for the Seminary's participation in slavery. A decade later, on September 9, 2019, VTS announced an initiative — the first of its kind in institutions of higher education — to issue reparations to descendants of enslaved persons and those who worked on campus during the Jim Crow years, and to recognize two local Black congregations with historical ties to the Seminary.

Community Strides

The number of African American faculty at VTS has been small over the past several decades, and the Seminary is working to change that. Professor of Old Testament, The Rev. Judy Fentress-Williams, Ph.D., says: “When I came to VTS in 2002 I was one of the few African American professors. Since then, VTS has added to that number.”

The Rev. Joseph Thompson, Ph.D., '18 associate dean of multicultural ministries, says: “I've seen a lot of change at VTS in the 11 years I've been here. The change is not swift and we have a ways to go,” but progress is being made. He points to the Seminary Covenant, a diversity statement endorsed by the faculty in 2019, as well as to the Reparations Project and to the Introduction to Intercultural Competency training led by his office that all students and employees must now complete.

The relatively small proportion of African American students at VTS is a galaxy that has produced many

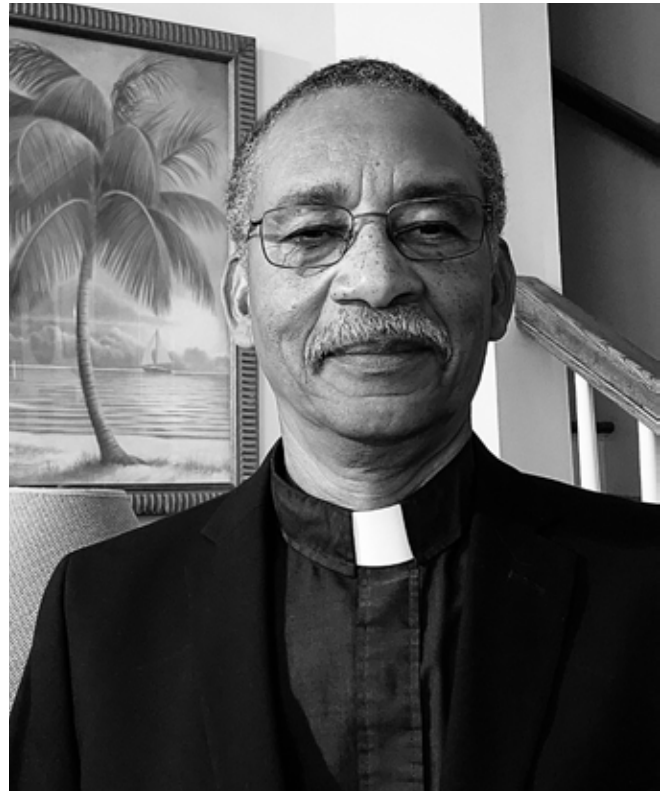
stars including the five African American Student Body Presidents. The Rev. Liston A. Garfield was first, serving as Student Body President in 1985. Twenty-three years later, in 2008, The Rev. Charles L. Fischer III was elected as the second African American to lead the student body. A decade after that, in 2018, The Rev. Kathleen D. Walker earned another distinction, becoming the first African American woman Student Body President. Three years later, in 2021, Baptist minister Donna Arrendell took the helm as Student Body President, making her leadership mark not only as an African American woman, but also as a non-Episcopalian. The next year a third African American woman, The Rev. Janettarose L. Greene, served as the 2022 VTS Student Body President.

What explains the recent acceleration in the selection of African American and women student body presidents? Thompson says: “All of these individuals are enormously skilled, gifted, and engaging. There is greater openness to their gifts in the dominant culture in society, at the institution and among seminarians coming in.” He adds that there is also greater recognition that these qualities can be found in people of color and women and a greater willingness to elect them to positions of leadership. In fact, all five ran for office after classmates suggested it.

Each of these leaders made important contributions to VTS. Through their dedication and service to the community, they helped shape its better path. Several have indicated that the experience of being Student Body President helped shape their own paths as well.

The Rev. Liston A Garfield

The Rev. Garfield is “grace personified, incredibly humble, and a real servant of the church and of the people of God,” according to Thompson. Born on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Garfield earned a bachelor’s degree and a master’s in education from



The Rev. Liston A Garfield '85

Tuskegee University. Active in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) as a Second Lieutenant and later in the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, Garfield says: “I was described by my superiors as shy, low-key, quiet, but competent and a team player.” He excelled in the military but experienced what he describes as “an upfront experience with ‘structural racism’.”

Thus, when at VTS in 1984, “a white classmate encouraged me to consider offering myself as a candidate for Student Body President, it was a ‘Road Not Taken’ moment, as described by Robert Frost,” Garfield remembers. “I wanted nothing to do with serving in any leadership position. It hurts to look inside yourself and wrestle with the notion that God might be

It hurts to look inside yourself and wrestle with the notion that God might be calling you to live out your baptismal vows down a path that rekindles past hurts.

The Rev. Liston A Garfield

calling you to live out your baptismal vows down a path that rekindles past hurts.”

After he was elected, he recalls: “I felt an affirmation that this was the road I was meant to be on.”

In his year as Student Body President, Garfield noted that many skills he learned in the military, such as understanding different roles and perspectives, assisted him in serving the VTS community. He says working with the then Dean, the Very Rev. Richard Reid, Th.D., and the trustees was a positive experience, noting: “It is a blessing to have taken part in the initial long-range planning and to see the fruits of that planning today.”

One of his main goals as Student Body President was ensuring that all voices were heard. He says: “I would be remiss if I did not mention having experienced insensitive comments and actions at VTS. But enabling me to serve was a tremendous gift that the Seminary gave me.” Garfield adds: “What helped me the most and put me at ease was that no one at the time was



The Rev. Charles L. Fischer III '09

I believe that seeing a Black man as leader of the VTS student body signaled that there were some who could envision leadership within the Church that was not white.

The Rev. Charles L. Fischer III

proclaiming that I was the first African American Student Body President. I did not have that weight on me. I hope that future African Americans in this role will not be burdened with what number they are.”

Garfield reflects that his ‘Road Not Taken’ moment has led to a fruitful ministry of service.

His 38-year career included stints as rector of St. George’s Episcopal Church in the British Virgin Islands, and Episcopal Chaplain to Tuskegee University, as well serving as a hospital chaplain in the military. Garfield was the first African American President of the Standing Committee since the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama was founded and was inducted into the ROTC Hall of Fame in 2017.

As Student Body President and later in his work ministering to what Garfield describes as so many different kinds of people, especially the Army recruits, he says: “I learned to be there, to listen, and not to judge. It was a ministry of presence.”

Charles L. Fischer III

VTS has always been a part of The Rev. Charles L. Fischer’s life. “My grandfather, The Rev. Canon Isaiah G. Bell, was an Episcopal priest and the first African American to be ordained in the VTS chapel that burned in 2010,” he says. “I have always known about VTS.”

Fischer grew up in Cranbury, N.J., where he was active in an Episcopal church that was not historically Black.

After earning a B.A. in finance at Morehouse College, Atlanta, he worked in global investment banking for JP Morgan Chase in New York City. Fischer went back to Morehouse in 2001 as Associate Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving Programs. It was there that he answered his call to ministry. “VTS was the place that made sense,” he says. Fischer received a grant from the Bishop Payne Scholarship Fund and arrived at VTS in 2006 with his wife, Rhonda. Their eldest son was born when Fischer was a seminarian.

After Fischer helped lead a prospective student event in 2008, a white classmate noted his leadership ability and suggested that he run for Student Body President. “When I won, I was shocked,” Fischer says. “I presented myself as a sort of unifier,” he adds, both as a candidate and as Student Body President.

Fischer’s year in office occurred during a politically vibrant time, in part because Barack Obama was elected president that November. He says: “The nation was not as visibly or vocally divisive as it is now, but Obama’s election was perceived as being ‘welcoming,’ as if the nation had entered a new season.” He adds: “I believe that seeing a Black man as leader of the VTS student body signaled that there were some who could envision leadership within the Church that was not white.”

The Great Recession of 2008 defined priorities at VTS. Financial challenges meant that hard decisions had to be made at the Seminary, Fischer remembers. Applying his financial services experience and having experienced a significant reorganization due to a merger in a previous role, Fischer was able to be an ally and support to Dean Markham, with whom he met regularly. In a related initiative, he worked with the development office on its annual fundraising phonathon, encouraging all seminarians and members of the Seminary community to call alumni and friends. “It was a helpful, bonding moment when relationships were built across generations of graduates and students,” he says.

Fischer stayed at VTS for two years after graduation, serving as a highly successful director of alumni, annual fund and church relations. He then ministered at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Atlanta, before becoming Vice President for Seminary Advancement at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 2019.

“Charles is an incredibly sharp person and one who



The Rev. Kathleen D. Walker '18

always has a vital perspective on the Church,” Thompson says. Fentress-Williams adds: “Charles is politically astute and a visionary about what The Episcopal Church can be.” Describing that vision, Fischer says: “I see the Church for what it can be and who it is. We are a denomination that is evolving and changing. The Rev. Harold T. Lewis, Ph.D., a mentor, often would say to me, ‘This is not your grandfather’s church.’ I envision local congregations becoming more in tune with the communities where they are located and ministers being more culturally attuned to those they minister to. The Episcopal Church has tools that would be great for evangelism if we used them for that purpose.”

Fischer’s many achievements include being a Canterbury Scholar at Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury, England, a member of the Board of Preachers of The Martin Luther King Jr. International College of Ministers and Laity at Morehouse College, and an inaugural member of the Martin Luther King Jr. International College of Pastoral Leadership.

The Rev. Kathleen D. Walker

When Florida native Kathy Walker first approached her bishop, The Right Rev. Leopoldo Frade, in 2004 about pursuing a call to the ministry, he said no. He explained that there was a moratorium on sending people to seminary. So, Walker went back to school, earning a master’s in public administration from her alma mater,

I heard some resident and minority students say that they weren't being heard and that their concerns were not taken seriously. So, I [said], 'I'm running. We'll see what happens.'"

Donna Arrendell

Barry University, Miami Shores, Fla., and moved up the ranks in Miami government, becoming Senior Human Resources Generalist in 2015. Within weeks of accepting that promotion, she resigned to enter seminary in Virginia.

On the day in 2014 when the bishop told her it was time for her to go, Walker was uncertain. She thought that after a decade the idea of becoming a priest was not meant to be. "I was the very last person to visit the campus for the 2015 school year," she says. "Judy Fentress-Williams interviewed me and allayed a lot of my fears." A chance encounter soon after with retired bishop The Rt. Rev. Nathan Baxter confirmed her decision to attend VTS. "Okay, God, you've answered my question. This is where I'm supposed to be," Walker remembers thinking.

She prayed about being Student Body President too. "I had no intention of running," she says. But a white student friend a year ahead of her had said: "Do me a favor and run for Student Body President." Walker conferred with an African American classmate about it, and she too encouraged Walker.

"I prayed much more after the election than before. I felt the weight of being the first African American woman Student Body President. I had been given a platform and I had to use it wisely, advancing something of importance."

Walker was at VTS during a time of political intensity, as Donald Trump was elected president in 2016. Also at the time, students of color were encountering discriminatory attitudes and treatment. Walker and others wanted to do something about that. At an open house during her junior year, a group of students of color raised the issue directly with Dean Markham, who followed up with faculty meetings, a student body

meeting, and other efforts to address the problem for the benefit of the entire community.

In her role as Student Body President, Walker met regularly with Dean Markham and was able to discuss with him any pressing issues so that they could be addressed quickly. As Thompson observes: "Kathy is really a mover and shaker. When she saw that there was a problem on campus, she dove right in to make an effort to change it." Her effectiveness might be due in part to what Fentress-Williams describes as her exceptional emotional intelligence. "Kathy is intellectually solid and puts everyone at ease."

Walker continued to stress the need for students to come together to "embody the mission of the Church, which is Becoming Beloved Community, with the truth-telling" that requires. She helped organize a series of conversations for that purpose, and was instrumental in organizing the Seminararians of Color Union on campus, which provided a safe space for students of color to express any difficulties, particularly along racial lines, they encountered. She hosted speakers, including The Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas, inaugural Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary and Canon Theologian at Washington National Cathedral, to speak to students about racial justice.

Walker's positive imprint on both the Seminary and the wider church culture during her VTS years and beyond has also included leadership roles in the Union of Black Episcopalians, and speaking engagements in other dioceses about racial healing and justice, particularly following the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

After graduating, Walker accepted the call to become associate rector at St. John's Episcopal Church, a large, mostly white church in Tallahassee. "I couldn't have

asked for a better experience,” she says. “The rector, David Killeen, and other members of the clergy team were tremendously supportive. Killeen encouraged me to speak my truth in the pulpit as the Holy Spirit led me.” When, in 2020, she accepted the newly created job of Missioner for Black Ministries in the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, parishioners sent notes expressing how grateful they were to have had a Black leader. Being able to support and revitalize struggling Black congregations is “the greatest Godsend of all,” she says. “It is a sacred space in which to celebrate the love of God and humanity in the richness of the African experience.”

Donna Arrendell

Now 60, Donna Arrendell describes herself as having “a lot of good God training behind me” when she came to VTS in 2018. A teacher, ministering parishioner at Alfred Street Baptist Church, Alexandria, Va., and divorced parent of young children, she was called to become a pastor in her mid-40s. She began at Howard University School of Divinity, but put her studies on hold for several years to help care for her terminally ill father and later her mother.

Arrendell had decided that the Howard program was no longer right for her when Fentress-Williams, both a professor at VTS and assistant pastor at Alfred Street Baptist Church, said VTS had opened up to Alfred Street as a cohort in order to be more ecumenical. She invited Arrendell to apply to the four-day Deep Calls to Deep (DC2D) program at VTS, designed to strengthen preaching.

During her DC2D program, Arrendell was relaxing under a tree on the VTS campus. She recalls: “I felt a breeze. I felt the Lord saying it was here that I was supposed to be.” Only afterward did she learn that VTS had opened to non-Episcopal seminarians and that financial aid was available. “I never looked back,” she says.

“VTS was the perfect place for me to be. God was able to grow my heart and develop my passion for what it means to be ecumenical. I felt love for brothers and sisters of all denominations, and I felt that the presence of seminarians of other denominations was a blessing and learning experience for my classmates.”



Donna Arrendell '22

Arrendell had demonstrated her leadership on campus but did not set out to be Student Body President. A white classmate, William, urged her to seek the position. Other friends also encouraged her to run. “I heard some resident and minority students say that they weren’t being heard and that their concerns were not taken seriously. So, I told William, ‘I’m running. We’ll see what happens.’”

The COVID pandemic defined many of the challenges of Arrendell’s year as leader of the student body. Several concerns involved campus housing. “Some single students living in the dorms did not have other housing to go to during the pandemic, yet felt that they were being asked to leave. It was also troubling to them to see that families in Seminary apartments were allowed to stay,” Arrendell says. “On the other hand, campus residents felt abandoned and on their own to navigate the pandemic. I did my best to invite courageous conversations between the administration and the students that encouraged better communication, respect, and mutual understanding.”

“I want my legacy to be the demonstration of what inclusivity looks like. As seminarians we’re not in competition. We all have paths to success.”

The Rev. Janettarose L. Greene

Another issue Arrendell encountered was that some of the students of color felt they were not being seen or heard in and around campus. “I and other leaders brought these concerns to leadership meetings as well and promoted mutual respect.

“During the pandemic there were a lot of people in need,” Arrendell recalls, with problems ranging from lost jobs to depression, isolation, and substance abuse. Though a commuter, she arranged to live in the dorm in order to be more accessible to students and act as a wellness minister.

Fentress-Williams observes: “Donna has exceptional emotional intelligence.” Thompson adds: “She was excellent at being fully present to the student body that she represented.”

All classes were virtual when Arrendell’s term began. She helped determine where and how to hold some in-person classes. In April 2021, the Seminary moved its Full Stop Friday dinners to an outdoor setting so the community could come together and socialize safely.

Recipient of the Ford Chair for demonstrated commitment to the VTS community, she earned a Master’s in Divinity in 2022 and continues to serve the faith community as an Associate Minister at Alfred Street Baptist Church.

The Rev. Janettarose L. Greene

Though raised as a Roman Catholic, The Rev. Janettarose Greene found her spiritual home as an adult in The Episcopal Church. “Everyone is welcome

at God’s Table in The Episcopal Church, and I can be myself here,” she says.

Greene explains that she has felt the call to priesthood her entire life. She acted on that call in 2020, pursuing her studies at VTS while continuing to work full-time in senior management at the U.S. Department of Transportation. In February 2021, she retired after 37 years of award-winning federal service to focus on her studies at VTS. She and her family transitioned to on-campus housing later that year so she could fully experience Seminary life.

“Janettarose brings that executive presence, that can-do spirit,” Thompson says. Perhaps that is why classmates asked her to run for Student Body President. “The day nominations were due I got over a dozen calls and emails asking me to run,” she recalls. “I couldn’t ignore it. People told me that it was something this community needed.” She still has not been able fully to explain the surge of support she received. Her good friend and classmate Hershel Wade ultimately nominated her. “I



The Rev. Janettarose L. Greene '23

was surprised when I was selected,” Greene says, but ready to serve the community.

Fentress-Williams characterizes Greene as being “the spirit of hospitality” combined with “fearlessness.” “Janettarose is an observer. When she speaks, she has already assessed the matter and is unafraid of speaking out for justice,” she says. Greene says her years of management experience helped her with patience. “I have a really good sense of how the world works, and that ability to just listen.”

As Student Body President, Greene says: “I see myself as a liaison. I want every seminarian, faculty, and staff member here to be confident in the fact that if they bring an issue to me, I’ll work it.” For example, she worked with the Director of Admissions to organize an inclusivity event in March 2022. Greene invited three additional students, Omar Rodriguez, Luis Hernandez-Rivas and Herschel Wade, to help organize and lead the event. It was so successful that VTS plans to repeat it.

“My big thing is inclusion,” Greene says. As such, she requested 15 seats at the spring Board of Trustees dinner so that she could invite “my cabinet and other students who were unsung leaders and doers on this campus. I wanted to acknowledge them, and will continue to do this going forward.”

In the spirit of inclusion, Greene assisted Fentress-Williams in organizing a womanist conference for spring 2023. “I want seminarians to have the opportunity to be in discussion with womanist theologians, exploring the experience of Black women in the Church,” she says. Greene’s work toward inclusion extends beyond the VTS campus. “I’ve also been working on developing relationships with seminarians at our affiliate The General Theological Seminary in New York,” she adds.

During her middler year, Greene worked with three churches serving in many different roles. “I had the great fortune to have a very robust first at Immanuel Church on the Hill, then at St. Phillips, Richmond and St. John’s, Georgetown. I have been exposed to church operations, finance, and pastoral care. As we say here on Holy Hill, ‘I have been exposed to all the things.’”

To share the insights she gained, Greene is hosting a series of workshops called the Working Pastor Series. The first event, in October 2022, was a Chaplains

Forum. She enlisted the support of fellow students Michele Causton, Casey Jones, Ryan Missel, and Aaron Ross to help seminarians explore the potential to be bivocational or obtain information and contacts to pursue a career in chaplaincy. The series also covers church operations, church finance, and self-care.

Summing up the impact she hopes to have had as Student Body President, Greene says: “I want my legacy to be the demonstration of what inclusivity looks like. As seminarians we’re not in competition. We all have paths to success. I want to affirm that.” Greene adds: “Any success I may have had as the Bicentennial Student Body President is due in large part to my cabinet: Vice President Paddy Cavanaugh, Treasurer Hayden Paul, Secretary Gavin Tomlin, and Chancellor Michael Alford.”

She concludes: “I am at peace with myself, and happier than I’ve been in my entire life. I feel like I am where I am supposed to be and doing what I’m supposed to be doing.”

Where We Stand

Self-examination and atonement are part of what characterizes VTS this Bicentennial year, as it continues to acknowledge poor treatment of African Americans in the past and, through the Reparations Program, to identify, compensate, and honor descendants of Black people who labored at the Seminary between the years of 1823 and 1951.

*There is a greater
openness in the
dominant culture in
society, at the institution
and among seminarians
coming in.*

The Rev. Joseph Thompson, Ph.D.

The Seminary's five African American Student Body Presidents view this historical juncture through the prism of their own experience as seminarians and as alumni. Almost 40 years ago, when he was the first student leader of color, Garfield recalls how some white seminarians were apprehensive when the few Black seminarians ate together in the refectory. He notes that they were less anxious when the Black seminarians were spread out in the refectory. Recently, in reading about the Seminary's history and the reparations initiative, he said he felt "a bit of sadness and a sense of gratitude and excitement as VTS laid out to the world its history, with all of its flaws. I thank God for using me to be part of a Seminary that is not broken, but simply unfinished."

Fischer observes of his time at VTS from 2006 to 2009: "I had to represent African American students as Student Body President, but I don't remember any racial tension in the student body." He adds that he stays connected to the campus, and is pleased with the progress that VTS has made in fostering 'the big Church' by taking a progressive stance, welcoming students of other denominations, diverse sexual orientation, and students of color.

Nevertheless, Fischer describes several remaining challenges for VTS and the church community at large. One, he says is that "bishops are not raising up enough people of color for orders." Another is that some seminarians do not see the need for diversity



Students, faculty, and guests at the Seminarians of Color Union (SOCU) dinner in 2021.

The leadership of Dean Markham in seeking to make reparations for past hurts is to be commended, but it does not absolve the Seminary of its sins.

The Rev. Charles L. Fischer III

in leadership. “If we can’t see a need for diversity of ideas among the leadership on campus, why would we see a need for it once we leave? Diversity can be used as a way to learn. We as an institution will be stronger for it,” Fischer says. A third issue is that students do not come to VTS with knowledge of the unique history of Black people in The Episcopal Church. “They don’t know of the tenacity of those who came before them. If they are not mindful of that, then they are not realizing how they are benefitting from their predecessors,” he says. Looking at the education seminarians receive, Fischer notes: “I believe our responsibility is to ensure that VTS is adequately preparing all of our students for an exciting future in ministry. The Seminary is equipping students for ministries that we all know and understand. Now it is poised to help students dream, imagine and be ready for a changing and evolving church.”

Finally, Fischer says: “As the Seminary continues to open up about its 200-year history, more stories of both good and bad will be revealed. The leadership of Dean Markham in seeking to make reparations for past hurts is to be commended, but it does not absolve the Seminary of its sins.”

Unlike Fischer, Walker and Arrendell did find racial tensions on campus. Walker took on these problems as student leader, and found it life-changing. “I’ve been greatly informed by being Student Body President,” she says. “It gave me the energy and maybe the courage to call

things out sooner, to work on lifting people up and being able to challenge” what needs to be challenged. “I’m grateful for the time spent at VTS. It was a win on both sides.”

Arrendell saw a sea change in awareness of racism during her 2020-2021 tenure at VTS. “After George Floyd, so many people were speaking up. Systemic racism got called out,” she says. She adds that this event, in tandem with the Seminary’s reparations initiative, raised awareness. “The Seminary saw and was honest about its past and did something about it. I am quite proud to have gone to VTS.”

Greene sees VTS and her experience there somewhat differently. Her focus on inclusion is all-encompassing. As for the reparations initiative, she says: “It is a good thing to acknowledge history. Even as we endeavor to make amends for past wrongs, we also need to look forward.” To Greene, this means VTS should have an emphasis on what she calls the three Rs: “Recruitment, to look more like the world we serve; Retention, with programs and opportunities that keep student quality and standards high; and Reclamation, bringing alumni back, some for healing, some for rejuvenation.”

She says: “We are acknowledging the past as we understand it through our research into VTS’ history and outreach to descendants, we also need to have our eyes on the horizon.”

2023 Descendant Gathering

More than 60 descendants, who are part of the VTS Reparations Program, gathered on the afternoon of Sunday, April 23, for a family reunion-style cook out.

The 2023 Descendant Gathering was the culminating event of a three-day program hosted by the Office of Multicultural Ministries.

The program began on Friday, April 21, with Lifting Every Voice: Commemorating the Living Legacy of Black Communities at VTS. This series of speakers and panels offered an opportunity to remember the Black contributions to VTS, including those of seminarians, staff, faculty, persons enslaved at VTS, and those who labored at the Seminary after slavery.

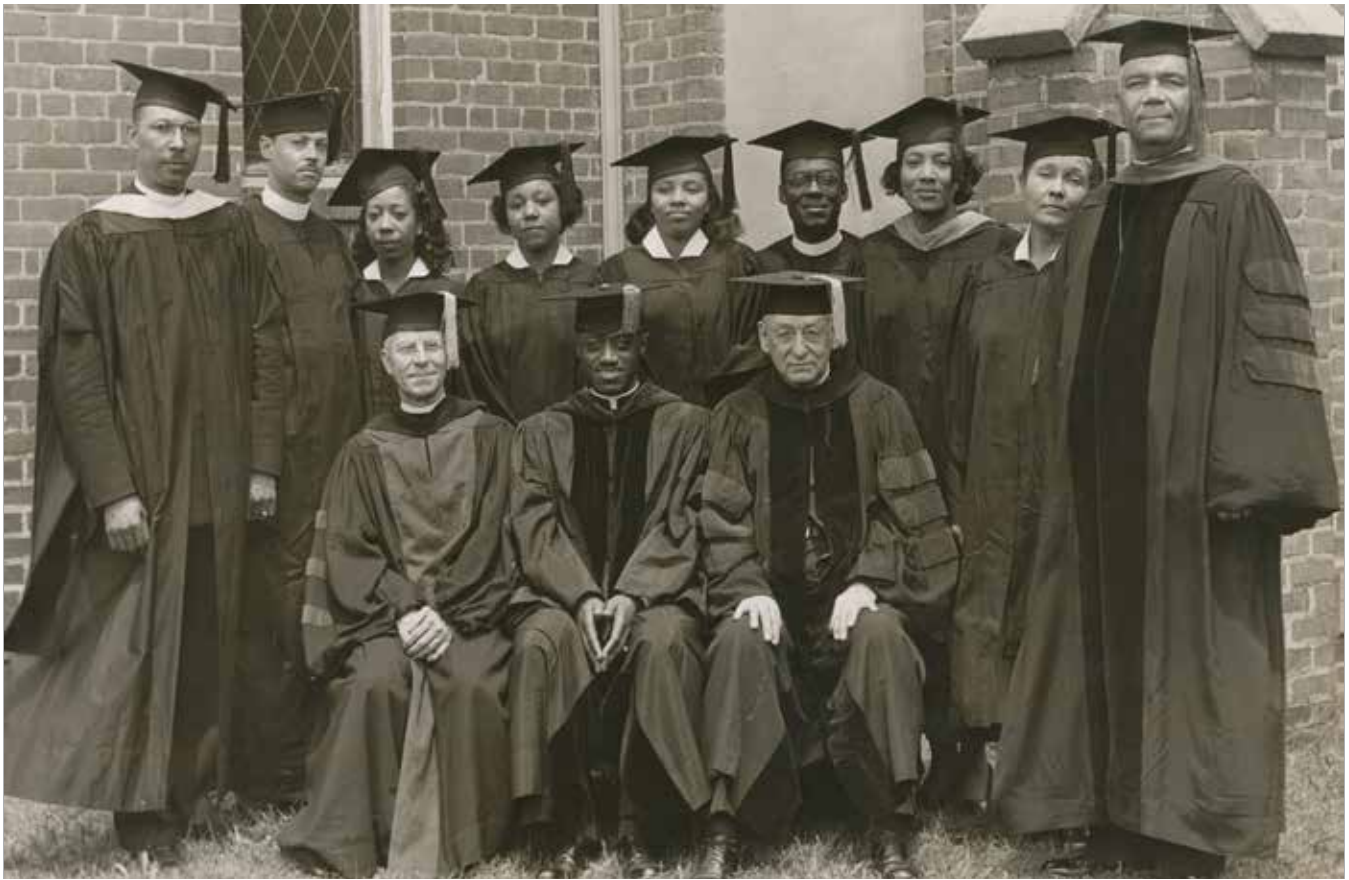
It was followed by Embracing Inclusivity: Bearing Witness to a Transforming Church, an event organized by Admissions, as a time of fellowship focusing on all communities of color that have been represented at the Seminary through the years. The special program was designed to celebrate and amplify diverse voices and stories at VTS and in The Episcopal Church.

In addition to the descendants, guests at the events included alumni, current students, faculty, and prospective students of color.

PHOTOS: KARINA CARVALHO, SIX HALF DOZEN.







Bishop Payne Divinity School Graduation 1949, courtesy of Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Bishop Payne Library.

Documenting the Experiences of Persons of African Descent at the Seminary

By The Rev. Joseph Thompson, Ph.D. '18

Associate Dean of Multicultural Ministries

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
 incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
 2 I will open my mouth in a parable;
 I will utter dark sayings from of old,
 3 things that we have heard and known,
 that our ancestors have told us.
 4 We will not hide them from their children;
 we will tell to the coming generation
 the glorious deeds of the Lord and his might
 and the wonders that he has done.
 5 He established a decree in Jacob

and appointed a law in Israel,
 which he commanded our ancestors
 to teach to their children,
 6 that the next generation might know them,
 the children yet unborn,
 and rise up and tell them to their children,
 7 so that they should set their hope in God,
 and not forget the works of God,
 but keep his commandments;

Psalm 78:1-7 NRSVUE

Psalm 78 adeptly connects the present, the past, and the future. The speaker of the psalm calls the listener to see, in the present, the importance of remembering the past as a means of grounding our hope for ourselves and for future generations. As we observe the VTS Bicentenary, it therefore seems worthwhile to take stock of what has been done to document and honor the stories of people of African descent throughout the Seminary's history. These stories offer many rich moments of achievement and distinction. Those same stories are also deeply intertwined with the realities of white supremacy, as manifested in the institutions of slavery and enforced segregation and their long-term oppressive effects.

Turning again to Psalm 78, one gets the feeling that the psalmist is encouraging us to seek the most comprehensive and multifaceted view of the past that we can faithfully achieve. Thus, even while accomplishments of the Black community at VTS must be celebrated, we dare not forget the injustices associated with that history. If we do not have a complex idea of where our communities have been, can we appreciate where we currently stand or have a good compass to help us get where God wishes us to go?

Over the years, several members of the community have dedicated themselves to ensuring that the history of Black people at VTS has not been forgotten. This brief essay serves to highlight those contributions. For those who have been associated with the Seminary for many years, the resources mentioned in this piece may be very familiar. However, for those newer to the community, or for longer-term community members who have not previously considered these historical themes in any depth, this overview provides various entry points to learn more about the history of people of African descent at VTS. It is provided in faithfulness to the call of holy scripture to help current and future generations learn from, and be guided by, the lessons of the past.

A key moment in the documentation of this history is The Rev. Joseph M. Constant's important 2009 book *No Turning Back: The Black Presence at Virginia Theological Seminary*. Constant takes a long and wide view of his subject matter. Among the most impactful features of *No Turning Back* are the 25 interviews with Black VTS

These stories offer many rich moments of achievement and distinction. Those same stories are also deeply intertwined with the realities of white supremacy, as manifested in the institutions of slavery and enforced segregation and their long-term oppressive effects.

alums who graduated between 1961 and 2008. From the first-person accounts, the reader gets a sense of what it was like to be a Black student at the Seminary over the course of those 47 years. The interviewees offer stories that represent both the rewards and the challenges for seminarians of African descent from the middle of the 20th century to the early 21st century.

In addition to the interviews, Constant presents a carefully researched narrative that explains how the Seminary's treatment of persons of African descent changed through the years, including the issues of recruitment, the stance towards the Civil Rights Movement, and the hiring of Black faculty. For additional perspectives on this history, one could also consult *Hail! Holy Hill!: A Pictorial History of the Virginia Theological Seminary* by The Rev. Dr. Robert W. Prichard, with Julia E. Randle. At various points along the way, *Hail! Holy Hill!* discusses the presence of persons of African descent in the broad context of the Seminary's institutional history.

The stories of Black seminarians and faculty are essential to VTS' history, but the Seminary's enslavement of Blacks is also a crucial dimension of understanding the Seminary's past.

For those who are inclined to delve into primary sources, the Seminary Archives in the Bishop Payne Library is an invaluable asset when considering the ministries and legacies of Black alums. The papers of several alums can be found there. For example, the Archives contain the papers of the Rt. Rev. John Thomas Walker, the first African American seminarian at VTS who went on to become the first African American bishop of the Diocese of Washington.

The stories of Black seminarians and faculty are essential to VTS' history, but the Seminary's enslavement of Blacks is also a crucial dimension of understanding the Seminary's past. Early on, Constant's *No Turning Back* discusses the presence of Black people on campus as enslaved persons, as well as explaining the prevailing practices and attitudes towards the institution of slavery found among the institution's leaders. The book also recounts the Seminary's involvement in the establishment of the Bishop Payne Divinity School (BPDS) in Petersburg, Virginia in the 1870s for the theological education and formation of Black Episcopalians, in order to keep theological education segregated. From there, Constant devotes attention to examining the myriad legacies of BPDS and to explaining the eventual merger of BPDS with VTS. Alongside the interviews with Black VTS graduates, *No Turning Back* also includes an important interview with 1942 BPDS graduate, The Rt. Rev. Richard B. Martin.

If seeking an additional perspective on the history of BPDS, one could turn to The Rev. Odell Greenleaf Harris's *The Bishop Payne Divinity School: Petersburg, VA, 1878-1949*. The Rev. Harris was Warden and Professor of New Testament at BPDS in the 1930s and 1940s, and in that capacity, touched the lives and ministries of many faithful servants of God. Because of his position, his memories of the institution and the merger with VTS are a unique and insightful treasure. After the merger, the legacy of BPDS was acknowledged in the naming of the Bishop Payne Library.

While not fitting into the category of an historical source, visitors to the Seminary grounds should note the fact that St. Cyprian's labyrinth, which can be found near the cemetery behind the St. Martin's Deanery, serves as a memorial to the chapel of the same name. VTS built St. Cyprian's Chapel—also known in some records as the Chapel of the Good Shepherd—in the early 1880s as a worship space for African Americans who lived nearby in the Fort Ward area and worked at the Seminary or at Episcopal High School, which were the principal employers of residents in the neighborhood. Again, St. Cyprian's was the product of racial segregation, but the community that worshipped



The Rev. Joseph Thompson at the 2018 dedication of St. Cyprian's Labyrinth.

there was vibrant and strong for many decades, until the chapel's decline, closure, and sale in the early 1940s. With deep familial ties to the Fort Ward and Seminary neighborhood, historian Adrienne Terrell-Washington has conducted a great deal of research on community institutions such as St. Cyprian's.



The Rt. Rev. John Thomas Walker, the first African American seminarian at VTS, courtesy of Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Bishop Payne Library.

The most recent development in the historiography of the Black presence at VTS is the creation of the Seminary's reparations program in 2019. As an integral component of the program's implementation, historical and genealogical experts Char McCargo Bah, Maddy McCoy, Chris Milko, and Elizabeth Drembus have conducted extensive research to identify the names of individuals who labored at the Seminary during slavery and segregation and

to gain a clearer picture of the various kinds of labor that they were engaged in and under what terms. Bah in particular has worked with Black families whose ancestors worked at VTS during segregation, in order to collect oral histories and other documentation of their experiences. With this research, the Seminary is helping to create a strong record of what it was like for Black persons to labor at the Seminary, as a complement to information about the experience of Black students and faculty.

It is clear that there are many more remaining avenues to explore the history of Black people at VTS. It is equally clear that prior generations have bequeathed significant historical resources so that those of us who are associated with VTS today can help the next generation seek God's presence as manifested in the multifaceted history of VTS. May this comprehensive orientation towards the past provide VTS community members with a resource that spurs us to ever more faithful discipleship.

May this comprehensive orientation towards the past provide VTS community members with a resource that spurs us to ever more faithful discipleship.



(L-R): The Rev. Caroline S. Parkinson '84, The Rt. Rev. Phoebe A. Roaf '08 (H) '20, and The Rev. Canon Dr. Michele V. Hagans at the 2022 Commencement. All three were members of the VTS board at the time.

Female Firsts at Virginia Theological Seminary

The Rev. Melody Knowles, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Old Testament

“What’s it like to be a woman at VTS?” I posed this question to several of my female faculty colleagues while writing this article and their reply consistently went something like this: “Um ... normal?”

Anyone visiting the campus would surely recognize the presence of women as normal. For the past decade, the student body is consistently almost half women. This past academic year, 14 out of 24 faculty members are women, and Dean Markham is the only man on the senior administrative leadership team. Anywhere you look, in the classroom or the boardroom or at the altar, women are present not as solitary tokens but as a numerically robust company of partners and leaders.

As normal as it might often feel to be a woman at VTS, it’s salutary to remember that this situation is statistically rare. Within The Association of Theological Schools, women currently make up only 34% of the entire body of students. The average faculty counts only 26% of female members, and the percentage of women on senior leadership teams is dramatically lower. When the Center for Anglican Communion Studies hosted a presentation on women’s ordination in

Ghana, it soon became clear that women in ecclesiastical leadership is a minority witness in the communion. What we have become used to as normal at VTS is actually quite special and unique.

This situation has not always been the case, of course. It was 60 years ago that the first woman joined the faculty when Marion Macdonald Kelleran was appointed as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Christian Education in 1962. Thirty-two years later, The Very Rev. Martha J. Horne '83 was appointed Dean and President, thus becoming the first woman in this role at VTS and at any Episcopal seminary. The list of VTS' many firsts is long: the first woman student to graduate, the first to be ordained or consecrated Bishop, the first out member of the LGBTQAI+ community appointed to the faculty, the first African American woman elected to the Board of Trustees, and on and on. I'm grateful for the women who bravely broke



Marion Macdonald Kelleran was the first female member of faculty at VTS

*Anywhere you look,
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through the many stained glass ceilings at VTS. I know that feeling normal here today is a state achieved only by predecessors with courage and faith, often alongside personal loss.

Being a woman at VTS doesn't mean that one never encounters sexism. I've been part of many conversations in which assumptions surfaced that were never in play when my male predecessor was the academic dean. I've seen women subconsciously enact patriarchal attitudes towards themselves and others. I've also come to understand that the experience of sexism can blind one to other experiences of discrimination. As one of my colleagues put it: "Why is it when we start to talk about racism, white women immediately talk about sexism?"

In her book *Grace in Motion: The Intersection of Women's Ordination and Virginia Theology Seminary* (2011), The Rev. Judith McDaniel, Ph.D., wrote about the participation of both men and women in bringing about a change in attitudes. I found this to be a helpful perspective as it made clear the role that we all have to play in achieving and maintaining the normality of women on the VTS campus. And, with God's grace, may we continue to work for the full inclusion of all at VTS and throughout the world.

Inclusion: Expanding the Narrative

By Joshua Waits

Archivist

Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) has a long, complicated, and at times painful history when it comes to its treatment of LGBTQIA+ individuals. In many ways, VTS has mirrored the language and policies of the larger church in ways that have harmed and liberated people outside the heteronormative lens. The journey VTS has taken to become a more welcoming and affirming community has been winding and (like most human actions) produced moments of exclusion and moments of grace.

The 1979 General Convention of The Episcopal Church saw the passage of Resolution A053, which stated that homosexuality should be “no barrier to ordination,” provided that celibacy be practiced. The Seminary, reflecting this resolution, began to make the distinction between orientation and behavior in 1981. A person could be a homosexual under the new

admission policy, but could not be a partnered or practicing homosexual.

As VTS entered the 1990s, faculty began to debate the theology and policies related to homosexuality. Dean Richard Reid and six other VTS faculty members contributed to *A Wholesome Example: Sexuality Morality and the Episcopal Church*, edited by



PHOTOS: KARINA CARVALHO, SIX HALF DOZEN

Joshua Waits interviews Jeffri Harre '19.

Professor of Church History The Rev. Dr. Robert Prichard. The volume was a caution against change, stating that “immediate and uncritical acceptance of current American popular moral standards would be premature and unwise.” At the same time, Dr. Charles Price released his 1995 argument *Sin, Homosexuality, and Ordination*, in which he argued that homosexuality could be viewed as a disability rather than a moral failing.

Significant change came to the Hill, regarding inclusion, in 1996. Faculty members Barbara Hall and Tim Sedgwick wrote chapters for *Our Selves, Our Souls, and Bodies: Sexuality and the House of God*, with Hall arguing that homosexuality expands the Church’s understanding of the new creation. Under the guidance of Dean Martha Horne, the board and faculty agreed to re-examine the 1981 admissions policy. This led to a study of theology, canon law, and alumni opinions. The effort resulted in the “Call to a Holy Life” statement, which allowed open homosexuals and lesbians to attend VTS. The Rev. Ruthanna Hooke, Ph.D., joined the faculty in 2003, becoming the first openly gay and partnered member of the faculty.

When The Very Rev. Ian Markham, Ph.D., became the Dean and President in 2007, he advocated for a “generous orthodoxy” in maintaining relationships with those who dissented from the Seminary’s inclusive policy. VTS’ inclusivity was eventually codified in the 2019 Seminary Covenant, which committed to promote community and value the life of every member of VTS “whatever our race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, primary language, denomination, physical ability, intellectual ability, nation or region of origin, age, family configuration, or religion, including no religion at all.”

The Journey Continues...

Though VTS has come a long way to recognizing the call and holiness of LGBTQIA+ individuals, the story is not complete. The full narrative of LGBTQIA+ individuals and their experiences on the Holy Hill needs to be heard. Our archives staff have taken up this task by launching the Called and Holy: The Virginia Theological Seminary LGBTQIA+ Oral History Project. It is the purpose of this project to give voice to those that have experienced the love and grace of God, as well as pain and harm regarding their sexuality and gender identity, and record the thoughts of those who lived, struggled, and debated the theology and pastoral concerns that shaped the Seminary’s LGBTQIA+ history. Those who have agreed to share their story include the first openly gay priest in the Diocese of Washington, The Rev. Jerry Anderson, faculty like Dean Martha Horne, The Rev. Ruthanna Hooke, alumni, including Jeffri Harre ’19, and many more. The time has come to shed more light on the unique gifts that LGBTQIA+ individuals have brought to VTS, The Episcopal Church, and the world. Participants of this project help to ensure that the entire story is told.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Observances

Virginia Theological Seminary joins people around the nation every January to pause and commemorate the life of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. VTS also observes Dr. King's martyrdom over two days annually, near the anniversary of his April 4, 1968, assassination.

As part of this year's observances, VTS held a Eucharist honoring Dr. King, at which The Very Rev. Kim Coleman, '01, president of the Union of Black Episcopalians and rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Arlington, VA, preached.

We also heard lectures on Dr. King from Lerone A. Martin, Ph.D., Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute and Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Stanford University, and The Rev. Hak Joon Lee, Ph.D., Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics, Fuller Theological Seminary.

The two days of observance served as a time of reflection and action in the furtherance of the justice and equality for which Dr. King stood.

PHOTOS: KARINA CARVALHO, SIX HALF DOZEN.





Great Blessings Create Great Obligations

By David Charlton

Chair of the Board of Trustees of The General Theological Seminary and Virginia Theological Seminary

In her final board meeting as Dean of Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) in 2007, Martha Horne spoke of the Seminary's many blessings and, therefore, our great obligations. She noted that while VTS could do almost anything, it could not do everything. Dean Horne cautioned us in this wise and prescient admonition to be thoughtful and to think not only of what would benefit VTS, but what VTS – perhaps uniquely – could do to benefit the Church.

It is now a year since the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church granted authority to The General Theological Seminary (GTS) to modify its constitution, making affiliation with VTS possible. Throughout the past 12 months, I have often thought about Dean Horne's words.

Many opportunities have presented themselves to VTS over the years, and the possibility of enhancing, enlarging, and improving theological education through some form of collaboration and cooperation with other seminaries was always before us. Talk of joint strategic ventures with GTS has shaped my 30 years of involvement with VTS' Board of Trustees, in spite of church lore of contrast and friendly competition surrounding the relationship between the two seminaries.

GTS is the high church seminary, where liturgy is the priority and incense is used. VTS is the 'snake belly low' seminary, where preaching is the priority and incense is rarely used. Additionally, a significant flag football rivalry existed between Central Park and Trotter Bowl. Notwithstanding these differences, both seminaries have produced fine priests and, between them, provided almost half of the Episcopal clergy.



Increasingly, the seminaries recognized they had a shared mission. They were both creedal in outlook and simultaneously inclusive of LGBTQAI+ persons. They were both in the center of The Episcopal Church.

There was discussion of a merger in 2011. The boards of GTS and VTS renewed conversations that would permit closer collaboration and cooperation in December 2020. We knew that GTS faced difficult decisions in its drive to pursue financial sustainability. Much time and care

were taken to study and assess possible models. In March 2022, the attorneys, and the working party, comprised of volunteer and professional leaders of both seminaries, settled on the model of an ‘affiliation’ that would allow efficiencies and a combination of program offerings to serve the Church and the Communion best.

The reality of affiliation took time as execution required action, among others, by the General Convention and the New York State Board of Education. For several months, both parties operated under the Affiliation Implementation Agreement. Until a few weeks before the meeting of the two boards - the first such occasion in our respective 200-year histories - scheduled for November 7 and 8, we were not confident of the design of the meeting. The affiliation had yet to close, but therein was a blessing. The circumstance provided an opportunity for both boards to marvel at their journey and to express our shared confidence that together, led by the Holy Spirit, we would achieve our aspirations to maintain a presence in New York City and more broadly serve the Church.

We began with a plenary session for all members of both boards, during which my fellow board chair, The Rt. Rev. Rob Wright, and I, followed by Deans Ian Markham and Michael DeLashmutt, expressed our enthusiasm for the affiliation and outlined some preliminary thinking about it. Evening Prayer followed the plenary. We displayed the GTS and VTS banners and sang the General Seminary hymn, “King of glory, King of peace.” Dinner followed, with an extended evening of informal conversation around the 1823 patio fire pit.

The Boards of Trustees of VTS and GTS passed contingent resolutions at their meetings that would be triggered once the affiliation was executed. Board membership would become identical. The seminaries would be affiliated, not merged. The affiliation structure would provide common governance and administrative leadership but preserve individual identities.

On November 28, 2022, VTS and GTS completed their Affiliation Agreement with a landmark signing. When the VTS and GTS Boards of Trustees, now with identical memberships, met on November 29, essential board and administrative elections were held and appointments made. Priority was placed on effecting economies by sharing common services, making strategic program choices, as well as leveraging technology and faculty talent. We had a shared aspiration that together, we would be more than the sum of the parts and able to extend the reach and increase the impact of theological education.

Throughout the process, we were thoughtful and careful. Both parties cooperated rather than competed. Both boards were courageous in their convictions and strategic in their thinking. Both are to be commended, as a decision by two venerable institutions to affiliate is not easy. Both boards were guided by Deans whose shared vision and hard work were exemplary. This affiliation became a reality with their leadership.

When Presiding Bishop Michael Curry affirmed the affiliation at the 80th General Convention, he said: “This new relationship between these two great seminaries of the Church represents a truly creative possibility for faithfully, effectively, and strategically forming leaders for the movement of Jesus Christ through the Church and for the sake of our 21st-century world.”

The Board of GTS has set three core aims for the affiliation: creating a strong, innovative hybrid Master of Divinity program, carrying out much needed building repairs, and placing GTS on a secure financial footing.

After more than two years of careful study and conversation, we are confident that the affiliation with GTS is true to Dean Horne’s words of wisdom.



(L-R): Yaa Addison '23, Katie Delacenserie, St. Mary's Arlington, Mark Witte '25, Michele Causton '23, Jackie Ly, St. Mary's Arlington, Sarah Spurlock Biggs '23, Ryan Missel '23, Maria DiPasquantonio, St. Mary's Arlington, Catherine Gilbert Mourner's Path instructor, and Janettarose Greene '23.

Walking the Mourner's Path

By Wendy A. Jordan

Grieving is hard, personal, and painful, but it does not have to be experienced alone. That's the concept that shapes Walking the Mourner's Path, an eight-week program offered nationwide that gathers people who have suffered loss and moves them toward joy.

The faith-based program, which started 28 years ago and is owned by Saint Anthony on the Desert, Scottsdale, Ariz., provides a confidential space for small groups to express their feelings and learn how to grieve and heal under the guidance of trained facilitators. This March, Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) hosted a facilitator training school for Walking the Mourner's Path.

Catherine Gilbert, Mourner's Path program director for 12 years, conducted the three-day training. She remembers that when she first became involved with Mourner's Path: "I was most surprised at how poorly we grieve as a culture." She adds that once we get beyond the immediate rituals, there is little to help mourners. COVID has made the isolation and lack of support even worse.

Now, after the peak of the pandemic, she says: "The world is starting over. There is a real need for the Mourner's Path." Each eight-week program includes up to 10 mourners, with two lay facilitators, and a member of the clergy who can observe and provide additional insight regarding individual needs. The program augments but does not replace any necessary pastoral or mental health support. Gilbert says the program is best suited for "people at least six months down the road after loss so that they are ready to find a way to embrace joy again."

The Rev. Janettarose Greene, a senior at VTS at the time of the seminary's facilitator training and immediate past Student Body President, met with Dean Markham and the Associate Dean of Students to propose sponsoring

a facilitator training on campus. Both, she says, were supportive.

Greene had participated in the first Mourner's Path program offered at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Arlington, Va., in 2018. "I was grieving my parents and I was pushing my grief down. I am much better for having taken Mourner's Path. Before going through the program, the sense of loss was just under the surface. Now it's not. I've learned to live with it. I feel less raw, less easily hurt. I will be forever changed," she says.

As a seminarian, Greene served at two parishes last summer - St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Richmond and St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. - and supported a funeral at each of them. Having been through the Mourner's Path program, she says: "I felt very strong. I was able to be a pastoral presence to two very different grieving families. I had my own grief in check and was able to be present for them and with them."

Four St. Mary's parishioners who had just been trained as facilitators were guides for the 2018 group and subsequent St. Mary's Mourner's Path programs. The 11 participants in this year's VTS facilitator training included Greene and three other St. Mary's members who completed that 2018 program.

One of those newly trained facilitators is Jackie Ly, now Family Formation Minister at St. Mary's. "In 2017 I lost my husband suddenly when he was 38," she says. "It was a complete shock and a difficult loss." Ly had joined a widows' support group online, but it lacked the diversity of losses and the structure of the in-person Mourner's Path program. Each weekly, 90-minute meeting has preparatory homework and a pre-selected topic, such as understanding grief, looking at the truth, and examining change, which Ly says helps to maintain focus and to move the group through the thinking and work of mourning.

In the facilitator training, she learned that a Mourner's Path facilitator is not a leader but "much more of a guide from the side," assisting with communication, enabling everyone to share, and "pulling back from tangents." As Gilbert notes: "Facilitators are not the fixers, but are there to open doors and keep people progressing using the program workbook. We're not the sage on the stage. Christ is the fixer."

With its weekly steps, its workbook and the help of facilitators, Ly says the program "encourages everyone to be aware of their own relationship with Christ and how it helps in the path of mourning and healing."

Gilbert explains that the founding principle of the program is: "Where is God in my pain?" She says participants explore this in a way that's safe. "As they make progress, one of the great things is to see the light of the Holy Spirit in our participants. They find a way to enjoy life, to find happiness, and to enter into a new relationship with their loved one." She adds: "Facilitator skills are tools that can be used again and again, by clergy as well as lay people."

VTS Student Body President Hayden Paul agrees. He took the Mourner's Path facilitator training this March and said it offered great skills for future clergy persons. "We learned the skill of sitting with a person whatever the need may be."

Continuing the practitioner training symposiums initiated by Greene as Student Body President, Paul would like to offer Mourner's Path facilitator training at VTS again, along with other programs that cover managerial and pastoral care practices.

For more information about Walking the Mourner's Path and upcoming facilitator training programs around the country, visit mournerspath.com.

"They find a way to enjoy life, to find happiness, and to enter into a new relationship with their loved one."

Catherine Gilbert

The 2023 Albert T. Mollegen Forum Address

VTS was delighted to welcome The Rt. Rev. Anthony Poggo, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, to deliver a Mollegen Forum Address on the topic of migration. His address, *Bringing Hospitality to a Hostile World*, was followed by a panel discussion. Panelists included: The Rev. Canon David Ulloa Chavez, Canon for Border Ministries, The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, and Ms. Lindsey Warburton, Policy Advisor, Office of Government Relations, The Episcopal Church. The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D., VTS Dean and President, moderated the discussion.

Bishop Poggo was also the guest speaker at the annual dinner for the Companions of the Center for Anglican Communion Studies.

PHOTOS: KARINA CARVALHO, SIX HALF DOZEN.





A Pilgrimage Is Not Just Another Trip

By The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.
Director of the Historic Bicentenary

*“This is the day to leave the dark behind you
Take the adventure, step beyond the hearth,
Shake off at last the shackles that confined you,
And find the courage for the forward path.
You yearned for freedom through the long night
watches,*

*The day has come and you are free to choose,
Now is your time and season.
Companioned still by your familiar crutches,
And leaning on the props you hope to lose,
You step outside and widen your horizon.”*

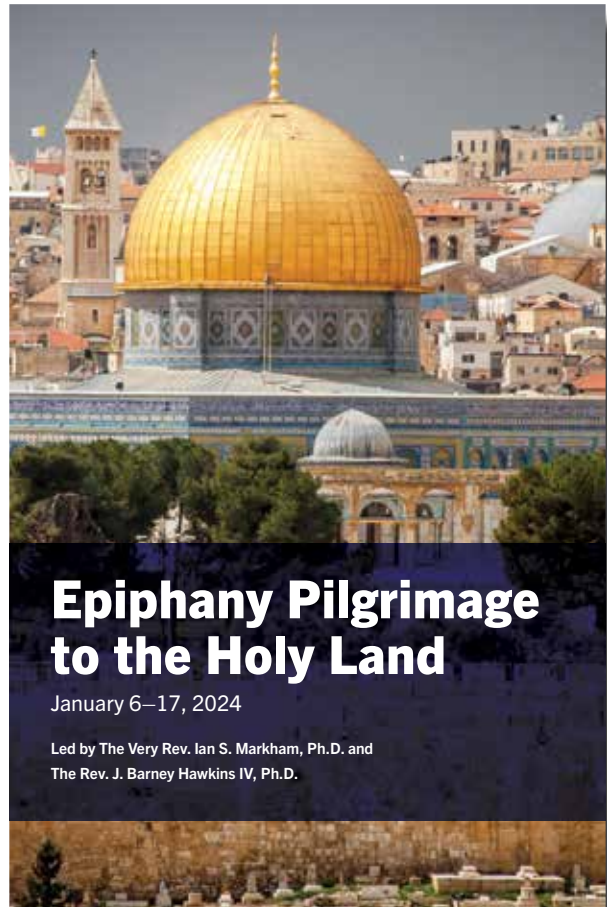
The Rev. Malcolm Guide’s poem captures the spirit of the pilgrimages which are sponsored by Virginia Theological Seminary and The General Theological Seminary. Pilgrims leave the familiar and “take the adventure.”

When we “find the courage for the forward path,” big questions arise: Who am I? Do I really know myself? What can I really know about God? How can my faith be strengthened? What will I do with “my one wild and precious life?” to paraphrase Mary Oliver.

A pilgrimage is not a vacation or trip. A pilgrimage is leaving home to find home. Bishop Frank Griswold once said: “To go on pilgrimage does not mean you must wear a hair shirt.” To be sure, he meant that we journey forth not as ascetical penitents but as joyful pilgrims; pilgrimages are to be enjoyed rather than endured.

“In mid-January this year, our pilgrimage group gathered at the site, in the cave, where Jesus was born. So many of my old understandings of biblical stories were upended. Through our guide Ossama’s explanation, we understood why the cave and not the stable. Here, at this site, we prayed and then sang Silent Night, Holy Night. I felt Christ’s presence and was at peace.”

Dianne Smith, Pilgrimage to the Holy Land,
January 2023



Alumni on the Move

1975

The Rev. F. Allan Weatherholt, Jr.
Interim Rector for Church of the Ascension, Westminster, MD

1978

The Rev. Anne O. Weatherholt
Interim Rector for Epiphany Episcopal Church, Odenton, MD

1979

The Rev C. Christopher Thompson
Interim Rector for St. John's Episcopal Church, Charleston, WV

1981

The Rev. Dr. Robert S. Dannals
Interim Rector for Church of the Heavenly Rest, New York, NY

1984

The Rev. Jane M. Hague
Interim Rector for All Saints Church, Princeton, NJ

The Rev. Dr. John D. Stonesifer
Interim Rector for St. John's Episcopal Church, Reisterstown, MD

1985

The Rev. John T. Sorensen, D.Min.
Vicar for Episcopal Church of the Messiah, Myrtle Beach, SC

1987

The Rev. Jo-Ann R. Murphy, D.Min.
Priest-in-Charge for St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Woodbridge, VA

The Rev. John R. Pitts
Priest Associate for Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, Houston, TX

The Rev. Daniel D. Robayo-Hidalgo
Vicar for St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church, Manor, TX

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Walker
Rector for St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, White Sulphur Springs, WV

1988

The Rev. Mary C. Sulerud
Interim Rector for St. John's Episcopal Church, Ellicott City, MD

1990

The Rev. Gwen J. Fry
Priest-in-Charge for St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Waterville, ME

1994

The Rev. William L. Queen, Jr.
Vicar for St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA

1995

The Rev. Thomas F. Sramek, Jr.
Rector for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Hillsboro, OR

The Rev. Dr. Dan Krutz
Interim Rector for St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, Zachery, LA

1996

The Rev. Christopher Tang
Rector for St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Highland, MD

1997

The Rev. Rachel Endicott
Interim Rector for St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Seattle, WA

1998

The Rev. Julie Blake Fisher
Priest-in-Charge for Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Oxford, OH

2000

The Very Rev. Raymond Dale Custer
Rector for St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Powhatan, VA

The Rev. Vinnie Lainson
Priest-in-Charge for Christ Episcopal Church, Brandy Station, VA

The Rev. Catherine M. Thompson
Priest-in-Charge for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Frederick, MD

2001

The Rev. Mark R. Feather
Interim Rector for St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Anchorage, KY

2002

The Rev. Shirley E. Smith Graham
Transition Minister for the Diocese of Virginia, Richmond, VA

2003

The Rev. Josh T. Condon
Rector for St. Bartholomew's Church, Nashville, TN

The Rev. Benjamin G. Robertson IV
Rector for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA

Alumni on the Move

The Rev. Canon Dr. Carrie K. Schofield-Broadbent
Bishop Coadjutor-elect for the Diocese of Maryland, Baltimore, MD

2004

The Rev. Mary H. T. Davisson
Co-Vicar for Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Street, MD

The Rev. Canon Wm. Blake Rider
Interim Rector for St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Huntsville, TX

The Rt. Rev. Paula E. Clark
Diocesan Bishop for the Diocese of Chicago, Chicago, IL

The Rt. Rev. Douglas F. Scharf
Diocesan Bishop for the Diocese of Southwest Florida, Parrish, FL

The Rt. Rev. Phyllis Spiegel
Diocese of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

2006

The Rev. Dr. Debra M. Brewin-Wilson
Priest-in-Charge for St. Mary's-by-The-Sea, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ

The Rt. Rev. Matthew D. Cowden
Bishop for the Diocese of West Virginia, Charleston, WV

2007

The Rev. J. Todd Bruce
Rector for St. David's Episcopal Church, Baltimore, MD

The Rev. Jill B. Williams
Priest-in-Charge for St. Simon & St. Jude Episcopal Church, Irmo, SC

2008

The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Gibson Catania
Co-Director for the Limina Renewal Center, Searsport, ME

The Rev. Dr. Robert K. Leopold
Priest-in-Charge for St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Colchester, VT

The Rev. Canon Morgan M. MacIntire
Canon to the Ordinary for the Diocese of Louisiana, New Orleans, LA

2009

The Rev. Timothy W. Backus
Vicar for St. Brigit Episcopal Church, Frederick, CO

2010

The Rev. Matthew R. Hanisian
Rector for Christ Episcopal Church, Winnetka, IL

2011

The Rev. Anne Dale
Associate Rector for Pastoral Care and Parish Life for Christ Church, Elizabeth City, NC

The Rev. Evan G. Clendenin
Interim for Church of the Holy Spirit, Vashon, WA

The Rev. Tracey E. Kelly
Priest in Charge for Church of the Holy Family, Mills River, NC

The Rev. Dorothea M. Littlepage
Rector for Trinity Episcopal Church, Hartford, CT

The Rev. Meghan C. Ryan
Rector for St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Creve Coeur, MO

2012

The Rev. Benjamin R. Badgett
Rector for St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA

The Rev. Dr. Barbara Anne Fisher
Rector for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond, IN

The Rt. Rev. Canon Dr. Sally J. French
Bishop for the Diocese of New Jersey, Trenton, NJ

The Rev. Virginia K. Hesse
Vicar and Co-Director for Cathedral Ridge Camp and Retreat Center, Woodland Park, CO

2013

The Rev. Dr. William L. Stomski
Interim Rector for St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church, Chico, CA

PLEASE SHARE YOUR NEWS!

Write 3737 Seminary Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22304
Email alumni@vts.edu
Call (703) 461-1711

Send address changes to:
Meredith Wied, mwied@vts.edu

Alumni on the Move

The Rev. Henry “Caleb” Tabor
Young Adult Missioner, Episcopal
Campus Ministry-Raleigh, and Co-
chair, COM-D for the Diocese of
North Carolina, Raleigh, NC

The Rev. Stephen Trever
Priest-in-Charge for St. John’s
Church, Tuckahoe, Yonkers, NY

2014

The Rev. Sarah M. Colvin, M.D.
Priest-in-Charge for All Saints’
Episcopal Church – Sharon Chapel,
Alexandria, VA

The Rev. John Hogg
Long-Term Supply for Christ
Episcopal Church, Gordonsville, VA

The Rev. Nicholas Hull
Rector for St. Luke’s Episcopal
Church, Alexandria, VA

The Rev. Steven J. King
Rector for St. Paul’s Episcopal
Church, Kansas City, MO

The Rev. Katlin McCallister
Rector for Church of the Holy
Apostles, Hilo, HI

The Rev. Amy A. Slater
Senior Associate Rector for Christ
Episcopal Church, Ponte Vedra
Beach, FL

The Rev. Cameron J. Soulis
Associate Rector for Calvary
Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, PA

The Rev. George C. Wong
Priest-in-Charge for St. John’s
Episcopal Church, Kula, HI

2015

The Rev. Thomas Alexander Allain
Hospice Chaplain for The Medical
Team, Reston, VA

The Rev. Nina L. Bacas
Rector for St. Bartholomew’s
Episcopal Church, Poway, CA

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Outreach for St. James Cathedral,
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Cross, Madison, MS

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Rector for St. Mary’s Episcopal
Church, Andalusia, AL

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Rector for St. Mark’s Episcopal
Church, Evanston, IL

The Rev. Ernesto C. Pasalo, Jr.
Priest-in-Charge for St. Matthew’s
Episcopal Church, Waimanalo, HI

2016

The Rev. Sarah L. Akers-Cardwell
Associate for Children and Family
Ministries, St. John’s Church,
Lafayette Square, Washington, DC

The Rev. Marna Franson
Missioner for the Diocese of
Northern Michigan, Marquette, MI

The Rev. Dr. Wesley S. Williams, Jr.
Senior Minister for St. Mary’s
Episcopal Church, Foggy Bottom,
Washington, DC

The Rev. Kyle T. Martindale
Priest-in-Charge for St. Mark’s
Episcopal Church, Mount Kisco,
NY

The Rev. Timothy M. Meyers
Rector for St. Matthew’s Episcopal
Church, Snellville, GA

The Rev. Mary E. Rosendale
Priest-in-Charge for St. Stephen’s
Episcopal Church, Westborough,
MA, and Priest-in-Charge for
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church,
Hopkinton, MA

The Rev. Jessica E. Sexton
Rector for Trinity Episcopal
Church, Glen Arm, MD

The Rev. Margaret Sullivan
Rector for St. Francis Episcopal
Church, Denham Springs, AL

2017

The Rev. Elizabeth Bingham
Priest Associate for St. John’s
Episcopal Church, McLean, VA

The Rev. Janice Hicks, Ph.D.
Deacon for St. Anne’s Episcopal
Church, Damascus, MD

The Rev. Kevin R. Laskowski
Priest-in-Charge for St. John’s
Episcopal Church, Centreville, VA



PHOTO BY ANNA MEYER PHOTO

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Virginia Theological Seminary Magazine

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The Seminary's annual report is published once per year for alumni and friends. *Published each December.*

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Monthly updates about happenings at VTS. *The first day of each month.*

The Dean's Commentary

Daily updates from Dean Markham and/or guest contributors. *Daily, Monday–Friday.*

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The Rev. Pilar Padrón
Rector for St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Heathsville, VA

The Rev. Serena Sides
Associate Rector for St. Bartholomew's Church, Nashville, TN

The Rev. Teresa F. Terry
Staff Chaplain for VA North Texas Health Care System, Dallas, TX

The Rev. Joanne Tetrault
Priest Associate for Church of the Holy Comforter, Lutherville-Timonium, MD

The Rev. Naomi Tutu
Priest Associate for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Atlanta, GA

2018
The Rev. Lisa Bornt
Interim Rector for Church of the Holy Comforter, Lutherville-Timonium, MD

The Rev. Jenifer C. Gamber
Rector for St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Arlington, VA

2019
The Rev. Brit Bjurstrom-Frazier
Rector for St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Sister Bay, WI

The Rev. Gus Chrysson
Rector for the Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Advance, NC

The Rev. Elizabeth Henry-McKeever
Rector for St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Little Rock, AR

The Rev. AnnaMarie G. Hoos
Associate Rector for Church of the Epiphany, San Carlos, CA

The Rev. Kendrah McDonald
Associate Rector for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Austin, TX

The Rev. Michael Palmisano
Middle School Chaplain for The Episcopal Academy, Newtown Square, PA

Dr. Julianne Wallace
Vice President for Mission for Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN

2020
The Rev. Paul A. Bennett
Rector for St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Abington, MD

The Rev. William R. Boyles
Associate Rector for St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Birmingham, AL

The Rev. Emily Collette
Associate Rector for Church of the Ascension, Vestavia Hills, AL

The Rev. Carey D. Connors
Rector for St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Springfield, VA

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Associate Rector for Christ & St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Norfolk, VA

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Rector for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Seattle, WA

The Rev. Samuel Sheridan

Priest-in-Charge for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Petersburg, VA

The Rev. Philene M. Ware Dunn

Supply Priest for St. John's Episcopal Church, Centreville, VA

The Rev. Jill Williams

Priest-in-Charge for St. Paul's by-the-Sea, Ocean City, MD

The Rev. Mary Margaret Winn

Priest-in-Charge for St. John's Episcopal Church, Chester, VA

The Rev. Douglas S. Worthington

Rector for All Souls' Episcopal Church, San Diego, CA

2021

The Rev. Denise C. Bennett

Priest-in-Charge for St. Asaph Episcopal Church, Bowling Green, VA

The Rev. Sarah B. Cowan

Associate Rector for Church of the Holy Communion, Memphis, TN

The Rev. Pedro Cuevas

Priest-in-Charge for St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Jackson Heights, NY

The Rev. Dillon Green

Associate Rector for St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Madison, AL

The Rev. Beth Hendrix

Vicar for St. Christopher's Church, Spartanburg, SC

The Rev. Kevin Newell

Priest-in-Charge for Emmanuel Church at Brook Hill, Richmond, VA

The Rev. David Rodrick

Rector for St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Boiling Springs, SC

Ms. Rebecca B. Troutman

Youth Education Coordinator and Pastoral Assistant for St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA

2022

The Rev. Eliza Aryeequaye-Davies

Priest Associate for St. James the Less, Scarsdale, NY

The Rev. Garrett Ayers

Assistant Rector for St. John's Episcopal Church, Columbia, SC

The Rev. Lara Case

Director for Children, Youth, and Families for Grace Episcopal Church, Bainbridge Island, WA

The Rev. Keith C. Esposito

Curate for The Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill, NC

The Rev. Stacy Carlson Kelly

Assistant Rector for Outreach Ministry for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA

The Rev. Susan Leight

Priest for Christ Episcopal Church, Cambridge, MD

The Rev. Jean Mackay-Vinson

Priest-in-Charge for Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Franklin, VA

The Rev. Fernando Paiva III

Priest-in-Charge for Trinity Church, Woodbridge, NJ, and Priest-in-Charge for St. James' Church, Edison, NJ

The Rev. Dr. Robert A. Renix

Chaplain and Clinical Pastoral Educator for North Texas VA Health Care System, Dallas, TX

Ms. Donna K. Sweeting

Project Director, Faith-Filled Families: for Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA

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October 13, 2022

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(H) '64
March 11, 2023

The Rt. Rev. George N. Hunt III
'56, (H) '81
October 23, 2022

The Rev. Gardner W. Van Scoyoc
'58
August 9, 2022

The Rev. Robert H. Armstrong '63
February 29, 2020

The Rt. Rev. Edward C. Chalfant
'63, (H) '85
January 24, 2023

The Rt. Rev. John P. Croneberger
'63, (H) '99
February 23, 2023

The Rev. Robert L. Haden '64
April 17, 2023

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July 18, 2021

The Rev. Charles C. McNeer '63
May 18, 2021

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Peabody '63
October 19, 2022

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March 29, 2013

The Rev. Robert L. Haden, Jr. '64
April 17, 2023

The Rev. Hugh C. White III '66
February 6, 2020

The Rev. James Hugh Magers '68
November 3, 2022

The Rev. James W. H. Sell '69
September 29, 2022

The Rev. Robert O. Johnston '70
April 13, 2023

The Rev. Dr. Glenn E. Busch '71
January 22, 2023

The Rev. Robert B. Appleyard, Jr.
'72
July 3, 2022

The Rev. Forrest E. Anderson '77
June 11, 2021

The Rev. Douglas S. Cadwallader
'77
July 9, 2021

The Rev. Thomas C. Seitz, Jr. '77
March 3, 2023

The Rev. Gary L. Cline '78
January 31, 2020

Mrs. Peg Cheadle '80
March 18, 2013

The Rev. Josephine A. Taylor '82
March 8, 2023

The Rev. Dr. Charles Moore Stuart
II '83
September 28, 2022

The Rev. David H. Teschner '86
June 15, 2023

Mrs. Judith S. Woodburn '86
September 14, 2019

The Hon. Rev. Dr. Joseph N. Green,
Jr. (H) '88
January 13, 2023

The Rev. Louise J. Lusignan '88
September 28, 2022

The Ven. Victor G. Richer '92
November 18, 2021

The Rev. Isabel F. Steilberg '92
February 11, 2023

The Rev. Jeffrey O. Cerar '93
November 29, 2017

The Rev. Patricia S. Kempster '96
May 5, 2022

The Rt. Rev. Frank T. Griswold III
(H) '99
March 5, 2023

The Rev. Dr. Carol J. Jablonski '06
June 19, 2023

The Rev. Marlee R. Norton '06
April 30, 2023

The Rev. Christopher "Topher"
Rodgers '18
December 23, 2022

These lists above reflect notifications VTS has received as of July 2, 2023. Those received since then will be published in the Winter 2023 Magazine. The monthly eNews also includes a necrology listing in each issue. If you are not currently receiving the monthly Alumni and Friends eNews but would like to, please contact alumni@vts.edu.



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VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

3737 Seminary Road
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Marking the Moment

October 11–14, 2023

Join us for our Historic Bicentenary from Wednesday, October 11, to Saturday, October 14. We will mark the moment with worship, programs, and activities that help express our history, identity, and vision.

On Wednesday, we celebrate the African American Episcopal Historical Collection. Thursday has an alum focus, and Friday features art at VTS. On Saturday at 9:00 a.m., we conclude with a Festive Eucharist with our presiding bishop, The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry.

We sent invitations electronically in July. Please respond and register for the events you wish to attend. If you have questions, please get in touch with us at RSVP@vts.edu.