Inside this Issue

- Does the Episcopal Church Need Virginia Theological Seminary? 4
- Anglican Women at Prayer Conference 13
- The Francis Scott Key Society 24
- A Season of “Truth-telling” 30
LIFETIME THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

2014 Continuing Education & Lifelong Learning Opportunities

THIS COMING YEAR, consider taking a course at Virginia Theological Seminary. Increase your knowledge. Deepen your faith. Lay or ordained, seeker or believer, leader or listener: Come learn with us!

Grant Writing Workshop
March 24 – 25, 2014

Finding God in Your Body
April 5, 2014

Dr. Martin Marty
April 25, 2014

Sparkling in the Darkness: The Spirituality of Pauli Murray
May 2, 2014

Study Refresher
April 28 – May 2, 2014

Prepare/Enrich: Training for Marriage Preparation for clergy & lay counselors
May 2 – 3, 2014

Evening School End-of-Year Celebration
May 7, 2014

Faith, Work & Vocation
May 7, 2014

e-Formation conference: faith for a digital, connected world
June 2 – 4, 2014

Spiritual, Leadership & Mission
June 16-20, 2014

Governance & Mission
June 16 – 20, 2014

Sacred Texts
June 23 – 27, 2014

Spirituality, Liturgy and the Arts
June 23 – 27, 2014

Weeklong Ministry Refresher
Scheduled individually

The Word, the World and the Whisper
Tues., 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM
Sept. 2 – Nov. 18, 2014

Theological Toolbox: Intro to Theological Education
Wed., 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Sept. 10 – Oct. 29, 2014

Life & Ministry in Retirement Conference
Oct. 2014

Prepare/Enrich: Training for Marriage Preparation for clergy & lay counselors
Oct. 25, 2014

Religion and the Civil War Lecture Series
Nov. 2014

Shepherds, Stable, Star and… Popcorn?: The Nativity of Jesus in the Movies
Dec. 12, 2014

*Calendar subject to change

For details, visit www.vts.edu/lte

CONTACT THE LIFETIME THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION OFFICE AT LTE@VTS.EDU
3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304
News from the Hill

OFFICERS
The Rt. Rev. James J. Shand
Chair of the Board
Ms. Sissy Poland (2017)
Vice-Chair of the Board
The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President
Ms. Kathryn A. Glover, M.P.A.
Vice President and Secretary
The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.
Vice President
The Rev. Melody Knowles, Ph.D.
Vice President
Ms. Heather Zdancewicz, M.B.A.
Vice President and Assistant Treasurer
Dr. David H. Charlton (2016)
Treasurer

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Auguste J. Bannard (2016)
Mr. David Booth Beers (2015)
Mr. Julian M. Bivins, Jr. (2017)
The Rev. Catherine M. Campbell (2014)
The Rev. Canon Thomas G. Clarke (2017)
The Rev. Dr. Harold J. Cobb, Jr. (2018)
Ms. Amy Curtis (2017)
Ms. Martha W. High (2014)
The Rev. Angela S. Ifill (2016)
Ms. Elizabeth Cabell Jennings (2014)
The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer
The Rev. Thomas M. Kryder-Reid (2017)
Mr. James R. Lowe, Jr. (2018)
The Rev. Dr. Andrew J. MacBeth (2017)
Mr. M. Lee Marston (2014)
Ms. Catherine McDonald (2018)
The Rev. Caroline Parkinson (2018)
The Rt. Rev. F. Neff Powell (2018)
The Rev. Dr. Stanley W. Sawyer (2014)
Dr. William G. Thomas III (2015)
The Rev. Christine R. Whittaker (2018)
The Rev. Dr. J. Douglas Wigner, Jr. (2014)

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
The Rev. Andrew T.P. Merrow
The Rt. Rev. Shannon S. Johnston

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES
Ms. Mitzi Jarrett Budde, D.Min.
The Rev. Judy Fentress-Williams, Ph.D.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE
Ms. Christine Hord (VTS ‘15)
Student Body President


On the Cover: Aspinwall tower by Kristen Pitts (’15), from the Diocese of Upper South Carolina.

News from the Hill is published three times per year, including a special year-end edition devoted to the Annual Report (April, October, and December) for alumni and friends by the Communications and Public Affairs Office, Virginia Theological Seminary, 3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304. Editorial comments should be directed to editor@vts.edu.

On the Cover: Aspinwall tower by Kristen Pitts (’15), from the Diocese of Upper South Carolina.
The policy of the VTS Board of Trustees is very clear. We are a Seminary that is here to serve the Episcopal Church. We are training a tradition; if you come to Virginia Theological Seminary, then you will know and understand our distinctive theological and liturgical worldview. This is what we do well.

As a result, in our residential Master of Arts and Master in Divinity degree programs, we are overwhelmingly Episcopalian. We welcome those few brave souls who come from other traditions; however they understand that they are in a community shaped by the tradition of Anglicanism and the beauty of the Book of Common Prayer.

We have an endowment dedicated for generous scholarship packages, although we do expect those who can afford to contribute to their education to do so. This money cannot be used for anything other than scholarships for study at VTS, and the Board of Trustees is clear: we would like our scholarship money used to educate the future men and women who will lead the Episcopal Church.

And yet, a problem looms. Dioceses are getting nervous. I hear all the time, “The traditional model of theological education is over,” or “We only raise up sufficient vocations for the likely openings in the future,” or “We are starting our own diocesan school,” or “We need courses online,” or “Student debt is a major problem.”

The irony in this is almost all our students get positions, (only those with significant mobility problems struggle). The traditional model of formation is effective in producing a priest and a lay leader familiar with the spectrum of the Church and accustomed to the appropriate discipline of prayer and worship. It is difficult to become a doctor or a Marine online, yet we are tempted to the view that the person responsible for the cure of souls can all be handled in a few online courses.

Over the last few years, retirements have outpaced ordinations by 43 percent. There will be a shortage. And we know from the data from the Church Pension Fund that an Episcopal Seminary-trained priest is more likely to get a job and more likely to earn more across their career. All the arguments should point to a strong applicant pool for the Seminary.

One challenge for the Seminary is how to communicate our message in this challenging age. And there are moments when I fear that we cannot. Bishops and Commissions on Ministry have made up their minds. There is no need for the residential experience … there is no need for VTS.

In the long run, Virginia Seminary will be fine. We can always go ecumenical, or even interfaith. There will always be men and women who want a rich theological education in residence with a generous scholarship package. My sadness is for the Episcopal Church. If she decides that there is no value for this rich opportunity, then, as a tradition, I really fear for our future.

I am asking every reader of the News from the Hill to help convey this message—Virginia Theological Seminary seeks to serve the Episcopal Church. We have spaces for students that we want to fill. We invite rectors and bishops to raise up those vocations and give us a chance to change our future.

Yours in Christ,

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President
It was my first Sunday there and the beginning of my middler year. I had chosen Epiphany for its work with social and relational justice in Washington, D.C. Epiphany chose me, too, and opened her arms wide to me as she does to all who enter her doors. With zeal, I declared my intent to get to the heart of the Gospel. What is the Good News when we get past my polite, sanitary religion of my own privilege? What could I preach to a mix of those who have everything they need and those whose only dependable meal for the day was the breakfast following our 8 a.m. service?

It is foundational to our faith that we seek and serve Christ in one and all; the words of Jesus echo in my head when I meet the poor and the oppressed. In a mysterious way, I’m meeting Him. But some of the things I caught Jesus doing and saying in that church would make poor Mary blush. Meetings with my supervisor were full of questions like, “Do I tell Jesus to stop snoring in the pews for the fifth time? What do I do when He asks for my phone number after grabbing my left hand and exclaiming, ‘you’re single, me, too!’ When is the right time to call the cops if He starts to cause a riot when shouting – asking which horseman of the apocalypse is Obama?”

My relationship status with Jesus could have best been described as “it’s complicated.” There was the Jesus of the woman who has cooked breakfast for the Welcome Table outreach since it began 20 years ago. There is the Jesus of my lay committee, of my supervisor, of my fellow Epiphany seminarian, Nick Hull. All of whom love the Church and share in the joys and the darkest times together—who shed light with an unmatched endurance into the forgotten corners of both the world and the human heart. The same man who would tell me every week that he was God Incarnate would move me to tears when, during a session of Gospel Art, he said, “It is the mountains of our possessions that we must let go of—then we will see the words of the prophet Isaiah.”
“Never let go of the cup. For singing till his heaven fills, ’Tis love of earth that he instills, And ever winging up and up, Our valley is his golden cup, And he the wine which overflows To lift us with him as he goes.”

- George Meredith

fulfilled, that every mountain will be leveled and every valley filled. Then we will all sing the song of the vineyard.”

I learned why we never let go of the cup. It is not just because of the guy who will down the whole chalice if you let go. It’s because that is the ground of what we have in common. Every Sunday, no matter the great gulfs of experience between all of us who attend Epiphany, we would meet for a meal and take in that wine that is God, the cup that is the promise of that which fills both the valleys of our hearts and the valleys fixed between each other.

Some lessons take a lifetime to learn, but there are some that come on the very first day.

The purpose of Field Education at Virginia Seminary is to offer seminarians the resources needed to develop skills and practices for contextual ministry, including integrating the study of Christian tradition and the practice of Christian ministry; enhancing liturgical and leadership abilities; fostering personal and professional growth; and engage in ongoing theological reflection on the practice of ministry.

Our hope is that Field Education at VTS will help to form leaders whose lives and ministries are informed by the faithful practices of prayer, leadership development and theological reflection.

Investing in the future of the Church through the Seminary’s Annual Fund supports Field Education at VTS. For more information, please visit www.vts.edu/invest or contact William Campbell, director of the Annual Fund, at 703.461.1712 or wcampbell@vts.edu.
Student Body President

Christie Hord ('15)
Diocese of Central Gulf Coast

As the spring semester gets underway, student life at the Seminary awakens from its winter slumber. Senior students begin preparations for life after seminary; returning juniors and middlers are finalizing arrangements for the coming summer months. Others, meanwhile, are discerning their own call to ministry, perhaps enrolling to join us in the fall. For some of us, we find ourselves in the middle—the in-between. The challenge of imagining future life in seminary is in the past, but the difficulty of formulating life after seminary is beginning to unfold. We can rest, confident in knowing that no matter where God’s call may lead us in two years, in one year, or in just a few months, Virginia Theological Seminary will remain a space to reconnect and remind us of the abundance of grace we have been given.

Seminary training is a series of transitions and transformations. Nothing remains the same for very long. While the majority of these transitions and transformations are personal in nature, we experience them together as a community. We are blessed that God’s call has brought us to learn, study, and be formed in this community at Virginia Theological Seminary. The biggest gift of this place, the one thing that cannot be taken away and needs only for us to receive it, is the light that has been passed to us and given so freely—it is the gift of an abundance of grace.

While we may never match the divine grace given to us so lovingly from God, we can and should offer each other, and this broken world, an uncomplicated, simple and humble grace that we have been so blessed to witness and to receive.

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.”
(I Peter 4:10)

"A sublime and beautiful experience," said Dean Ian Markham. "From the arrangements of the Spirituals to the Prayer of John Donne, one takes a beautiful journey."

Recorded in the Washington National Cathedral with the Choir of St. John's Church, Lafayette Square in Washington, D.C., and conducted by both Roberts and Benjamin Hutto, director of ministry music at St. John's, the 16 tracks on this inaugural edition of the *New American Choral Music Series* demonstrate the full spectrum of Roberts' gifts.

"One marvels at the talent and one finds one's prayer life enhanced," Markham continued.

*New American Choral Music Series: William Bradley Roberts* is available through Amazon.com and iTunes.

---

**January Term**

For one week during the January term, at the onset of Epiphany, students were treated to an extraordinary opportunity: Bishop Frank Griswold, the 25th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, collaborated with a distinguished team of professors to teach "Art and the Theological Imagination."

His co-instructors included Dr. Mark Jordan from Harvard, Dr. Kathryn Turner from Yale, and Ms. Jacqueline B. Winter. Jordan is a gifted teacher and remarkable scholar, who has written on ethics, sexuality and history. Turner is one of the finest systematic theologians working in the United States today. Winter's editorship of the *Anglican Theological Review* has done more for raising the profile of Anglican scholarship in the United States than any other journal. It was truly a remarkable team and we were honored to have them with us on the campus.

---

**The Green Seminary Initiative**

In January 2014, Virginia Theological Seminary announced that it was joining more than 45 other seminaries already involved in the Green Seminary Initiative (GSI).

"If Virginia Theological Seminary can be institutionally green," said Dean Ian Markham. "Then it can become a model. And, slowly, others can see the possibilities."

According to GSI, the purpose encourages the education of seminarians and the "greening" of seminaries in five broad areas: education, worship, buildings and grounds, community life, and public ministry. To mark the Seminary's involvement, a profile of the school was featured on the organization’s website and in their newsletter.

This is the latest endeavor VTS is making in its commitment to involve faculty and staff toward a greener campus, and prepare its future leaders of the church in eco-justice issues in the congregations and communities that they will serve. More on VTS' continuing work, including the Seminary’s participation in the "Kreitler Cup," will be in the VTS Journal, which will be published this summer.
The start of 2014 commenced something brand new at Virginia Theological Seminary: the launch of the Christian Spirituality track of the Seminary’s Doctor of Ministry program under the able leadership of Kathy Brown and David Gortner. The 11 talented students comprising the first cohort were selected from a large pool of applicants and came to VTS from as far away as Mozambique and Taiwan and as close by as the District of Columbia. Their January term experience centered on the foundational questions that drive the study of Christian spirituality: Who is God? How is God known? How has faithful disciple-ship been imagined? How might it best be imagined now? They engaged in intensive study of the Scriptures, developing disciplined means of engaging the spirituality of biblical texts. Their time at VTS was all-consuming, encompassing worship, fellowship, guest lectures, case studies, and two doctoral seminars: Introduction to Christian Spiritual Traditions and Biblical Foundations of Christian Spirituality.

A trio of teachers led the seminar “Introduction to Christian Spiritual Traditions.” VTS’ Donyelle McCray taught the segments on desert, medieval, and orthodox spirituality. Dr. Keith J. Egan, from Notre Dame, led the study of Carmelite spirituality, and Dr. Patricia Fosarelli, from St. Mary’s Ecumenical Institute in Baltimore, led the portion on Ignatian spirituality. Students spent their mornings examining primary source texts by key figures in the tradition, including desert solitaries like Mary of Egypt and St. John Climacus, the pilgrim-preacher Margery Kempe, and the anchoress Julian of Norwich. Musical compositions and paintings were studied in addition to writings, and regardless of the text or mystic in question, classroom dialogue was memorably rich. Each member of the cohort was able to draw from a treasury of ministerial experience to deepen engagement with the authors.

Stephen L. Cook, Ph.D., VTS Old Testament professor, led the new seminar on Biblical Foundations of Christian Spirituality. Our time together emphasized close exegetical work, including intensive engagement with the Psalms and the Song of Songs. We also studied Job, Ecclesiastes, and the appearance of Woman Wisdom in both Proverbs and Sirach. Biblical poetry was of special interest, because, as one student put it, “Poetry is often a voice of great depth that reveals what no other words or actions carry sufficient intensity to relay.” The course aimed to introduce the smoldering spiritual potential of the biblical texts and to inculcate hands-on competence with relevant hermeneutical tools for accessing this potential. A special highlight of the course was the select half-hours set aside for student presentations in creative spiritual appropriation of Scripture. From the playing of an extraordinary musical instrument, to a dramatic performance, to the sharing of personal photographs from the Middle East, from Africa, and from midair suspension below a zip-line, each presentation captivated the group and provoked the spiritual imagination. Engaging the head and the heart, our encounters with the Scriptures entailed touching a finger to the “hungry flame” of the canonical texts, which could not help but leave each person forever changed.
One new student in the program spoke of “so enjoying the stimulating course work.” Another conveyed thanks for a “wonderful experience.” Several readily connected their January term studies with their pastoral experience and with wisdom cultivated in ministry. The students had been away from the practice of careful exegesis, and found it a pleasure to return to the craft.

In preparing their term papers, students discovered, or rediscovered, multiple weighty spiritual truths. One describes her work with the Song of Songs as a “joining in with the life of God, of God’s love in and for the world.” Another, after ruminating on the Psalms, describes creation, and humankind’s place in it, as “not random,” but as “flowing out from the Lord and back, through all that God created (humankind, included), back to God.” The book of Job engaged more than a few students, one of whom concluded from her study that “a God of vastness awaits us in our finitude.” We must venture into the deep, “for it is in the depths that we finally meet God. Not on our terms, a witness in our court, but on God’s terms.”

The end of the January term is just the beginning for these students as they embark on a challenging two-year program that will include three additional terms on the VTS campus. In summer 2014, January 2015, and summer 2015, they will complete both core courses and thematic, capacity-building requirements. While at home in the intervening months, each student will develop case studies to bring back for group discussion, complete an intensive independent reading course entitled Visions of Transformation, conduct an institutional study, and submit a thesis prior to graduation. Our new doctoral students definitely have their work cut out for them! They each bring a rich breadth and depth of experience to the task, as well as great energy and vision for this work. We look forward to hearing about their journeys and developing insights and contributions to the field of Christian Spirituality over the coming months.
Claire Haymes Joins the Center for Anglican Communion Studies

The Rev. Robert Heaney, Ph.D., D.Phil.
Director of the Center for Anglican Communion Studies and Assistant Professor of Christian Mission

At the heart of what it means to be a community and communion of Episcopalians and Anglicans is to work towards deeper participation in the mission of God. It is to follow where God is already at work. It is to be sensitive to the movement of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. For that we need people with visionary skill and we need people with administrative skill. Virginia Theological Seminary is blessed to have an abundance of such people and I am delighted that we in the Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACS) have just added to their number with the appointment of Claire Haymes.

Claire is the new program coordinator for CACS and comes with a wealth of international and cross-cultural experience that makes her uniquely suited to the task of grounding the vision of the center.

Though originally from the United Kingdom, Claire became a naturalized U.S. citizen and is a resident of Alexandria. She has lived in Germany, Greece and Thailand, always worshipping and actively participating in Episcopalian and Anglican churches in each of those countries she has called home. Extensive travel in the Middle East, East Africa and the Far East in various capacities has led to rumors she has attempted to visit every diocese in the Anglican Communion!

Claire has been a professional freelance translator and interpreter for more than 20 years having studied at the University of Oxford and the University of Bath. She has a working knowledge of Greek, Thai, and Italian with strong French and near-native German.

Communication and reconciliation are urgent needs in the Anglican Communion right now. The Center for Anglican Communion Studies is determined to contribute to both. Claire’s gifts of cross-cultural communication and knowledge based on experience in the broader Anglican world put us in a strong position to do just that.

Reflecting on a recent inter-faith forum with Zeyneb Sayilgan (the CACS Visiting Luce Scholar), Claire writes, “The richness of conversation and possibility on that occasion resonated with me and recalled the many instances of interreligious encounter I have enjoyed previously in the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia, in particular. It will be a privilege to work to administer, expand and conceive interreligious programming at CACS.”

Already, she has made a significant contribution to the life of CACS and the wider seminary and continues to work on bringing people together through both traditional and new social media. As the Director of CACS, it has been a joy to work with Claire in these initial weeks and I look forward to seeing where God leads us as a result of leading Claire to Virginia Seminary and the Center for Anglican Communion Studies.
Anglican Women at Prayer: Weaving Our Bonds of Affection
CACS Co-Hosts Major Conference

The Rev. Ellie Sanderson, keynote speaker, with Mrs. Phoebe Griswold, chair of the Anglican Women at Prayer committee.

The Rev. Robert Heaney, Ph.D., D.Phil. 
Director of the Center for Anglican Communion Studies and Assistant Professor of Christian Mission

Anglican women praying. Anglican women weaving bonds of affection. Anglican women participating in God’s life and love for the world. Anglican women reflecting on how such spiritual practice emerges in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts. That, in small part, is the gift that came to the Seminary March 14-16, 2014 through a partnership between the Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACS) and the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross (SCHC).

Conference participant, Chrissie Crosby, reflects, “Something wonderful happens when women gather to share in God’s many graces, almost as though a holy blanket wraps us tightly together. Whether we speak the same language in daily life, we speak the same language in prayer. We feel safe with each other.”

Such experiences of prayer are brought together under the theme of “Anglican Women at Prayer: Weaving our Bonds of Affection” facilitated by the keynote speaker the Rev. Dr. Ellie Sanderson. Sanderson is an Anglican priest-scholar of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia with experience and expertise in community theological reflection. Her ministry is shaped by the core emphases of nurturing Christian community as a deep family of Christ, of being disciples and making disciples, and of giving to the last, the lost, and the least. In her research she has explored theological reflection through the intercultural realities of Aotearoa New Zealand, especially as these are experienced and negotiated by women.

News of this historic conference reached the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rev. Justin Welby who remarked, “My wife Caroline joins me in sending you our fond greetings from Canterbury. As some of you may be aware, I have declared as first priority of my archiepiscopate a commitment to the renewal of prayer and religious Life. Thank you for helping fulfill this priority, one that I clearly cannot manage alone!”

The challenge for the Seminary and for the Anglican Communion is how the voices of women and the voice of God heard in this conference become an enduring testimony and an enduring resource for the continued weaving of our lives together as sisters and brothers. For that, we need to commit ourselves to further listening, further reflection on the Scriptures, and further openness to the Spirit’s work inviting us to deeper participation in God’s mission through the person and work of Jesus Christ. More coverage from the event will be shared this summer in the next edition of the VTS Journal.
Dorothy Linthicum, instructor and program coordinator at the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, recently returned from South Africa where she was a visiting lecturer in Christian education at The College of the Transfiguration in Grahamstown during the 2013 academic year. She and her husband Tom fully participated in the life of the college, attending chapel, teaching courses and leading a formation group. Linthicum also led workshops in Cape Town, presented a three-week program about aging at the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. George, and preached at the college chapel and at area churches. This is the third time she has worked with students and staff at COTT in the field of Christian education.

To my surprise, seminary life at The College of the Transfiguration (COTT) in Grahamstown, South Africa is not very different from Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS). The main differences are obvious: COTT offers an undergraduate diploma, while VTS has postgraduate degrees. Students at COTT arrive with less formal education, while many at VTS have earned several higher education degrees.

In conversations about our respective seminaries, the Rev. Dr. Barney Pityana, COTT rector—a position similar to our dean—always reminds me that both institutions are in the same business, which is preparing men and women for ministry. He’s right. The formation part of that preparation has explicit components, such as formation groups and regular chapel attendance, along with implicit events that revolve around our life together as a community.

At the end of February last year as the academic year was just beginning at COTT, we were entering our third week of
classes. Like schools everywhere there was a certain amount of confusion and false starts. Several students had clashes with overlapping classes or other scheduling issues. A few students visited my classes in Christian Education and Youth Ministry to see if they wanted to add them to their already full loads.

The college schedule was divided into weeks A and B, which I spent most of the year trying to figure out. So, if it was Thursday in Week B, I should have been in St. Peter’s classroom at 9:30 a.m. But if it was Week A, I was to be in the media room at 8:30 a.m. with another group. I promised new students (and myself) that life would all fall into place soon.

The community was still shaken by events affecting three of my faculty colleagues. The weekend before classes began thieves broke into a lecturer’s home, entering through her young daughter’s room after prying bars off the windows with a crow bar. Thankfully no one was home. Two computers and a bike were taken and several rooms ransacked. One computer had the lecturer’s course notes and chapters of her master’s thesis. Backup files were on flash drives, which were also stolen. We were all sobered by this theft; I felt especially vulnerable since the house was next door to our cottage.

Not long after, we learned that the college chaplain’s son, who had been ill for some time, died in Zimbabwe. After worshiping with the community in morning chapel, the friar began the two-day long bus ride to return home to be with his family and friends.

Later that same day, Rev. Pityana, and his wife Dimza boarded a small van to go to the airport in Port Elizabeth. They were headed to Johannesburg to meet with church bishops and officials to discuss, among other things, the year of theological education.

On the way, a truck sideswiped the van sending it tumbling into a ravine. Dr. Pityana emerged with minor injuries, but rescue workers spent over two hours cutting Dimza from the wreckage. She was airlifted to the hospital in Port Elizabeth with fractures in both legs and internal injuries. She faced a long, painful recovery.

These events cast a pall over the campus as we rearranged class and chapel schedules to fill slots for our missing colleagues. One student came to talk to me about the pervasive sadness that had settled on our community. Our main recourse was prayer and reliance on the presence of God that is promised to all of us.

The ups and downs of our first weeks together helped us bond as a community. We didn’t take anything for granted: we embraced joy when we found it and revelled in lighter moments of laughter.

As I rejoined the VTS community in January, my experiences in South Africa reminded me of the importance of life in community. Whether we are in Virginia or South Africa, we are all working toward the goal of preparing men and women for ministry through prayer, academic coursework, shared worship and our life together.
Virginia Seminary Resource Center to Continue ‘Building Faith’

The Rev. Kyle M. Oliver (’12)
Digital Missioner and Learning Lab Coordinator

The Center for the Ministry of Teaching (CMT) at Virginia Theological Seminary has acquired Building Faith, a popular resource blog created by Sharon Ely Pearson of Church Publishing, Inc. The Christian formation site has nearly 350,000 page views since Pearson’s first post on July 13, 2010, and is one of the most popular among educators and other faith formation leaders in the Episcopal Church and beyond.

“When we read that Sharon’s workload would not allow her to continue writing and editing Building Faith, we knew we wanted to help carry its mission forward,” said Dr. Lisa Kimball, VTS professor of Christian Formation and director of the CMT. “So many people depend on this trusted source for inspiration and resources, including us.”

The blog will be edited by the Rev. Matthew Kozlowski, CMT associate for Faith and Media, and Ms. Charlotte Greeson, a longtime Christian educator and recent CMT collaborator. The blog will feature new content every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, as well as a Sunday evening feature in which Christian formation practitioners reflect briefly on their Sunday morning experience.

“Curating and generating resources for Christian formation has always been part of our mission [in the CMT],” Kozlowski wrote, “and we were therefore excited to take on this new role.”

Readers of Building Faith seem particularly grateful at the continued availability of the site’s resource room, a repository of curriculum advice, must-read volumes, and links to other important tools and resources. In the days following Pearson’s announcement about the possible discontinuation of the site, “What will happen to the Resource Room?” was among the most frequently asked questions.

Some of the frequent contributors to Building Faith will continue writing for the site. Wednesday’s post, “Inquiring Minds Want to Know: A Recipe for Confirmation,” came from well-known author and Building Faith regular Jenifer Gamber.

The CMT will also continue to publish Key Resources, a blog that reviews many types of faith formation media, profiles innovative ministry from around the Church, and reports on current research and initiatives of the center.

Those wishing to contribute to Building Faith or otherwise support this ministry may contact Matthew Kozlowski at mkozlowski@vts.edu.
We have asked each of you to be ‘in’ the Annual Fund this fiscal year. Going into the spring phonathon, more than 1,180 donors contributed $534,243.70 towards the Annual Fund. Having nearly 80 percent of our Annual Fund goal before we begin the spring push to close our fiscal year is a blessing.

To continue growing the Annual Fund, many of us are visiting churches, alumni, and friends to ask them to give. Dean Markham and Barney Hawkins have traveled to several Dean’s Roundtables, parish events, and to Atlanta for the Consortium for Endowed Episcopal Parishes (CEEP) conference. Director of Alumni and Church Relations, Shelagh Casey Brown; Director of Development, Linda Dienno; and I have visited with other friends and alums. Our donors’ stories are energizing and we believe we have the committed and enthusiastic supporters in the Church.

The spring phonathon was a great success. Not only did we connect with friends and alumni to ask for their support, we also contacted most of our donors to thank them.

This spring phonathon was especially successful due to the outstanding generosity of the Rev. Doug Hiza (’63) and Joan Hiza. Their matching gift of $25,000 in honor of their 35th wedding anniversary gave this phonathon an amazing amount of energy and momentum. We are thankful for their generosity and all those whose gifts allowed us to make the $25,000 match. Look for more information about the Hizas in the summer VTS Journal.

We greatly appreciate everyone who has supported the Annual Fund at VTS.

If you have not yet given, please join the Hizas and over 1,180 others by making a gift before the end of our fiscal year on June 30, 2014.

William Campbell
Director of the Annual Fund
wcampbell@vts.edu
703.461.1712
Return to the Holy Hill

The Rev. Patricia Phaneuf Alexander ('01)
Chaplain and Head of the Religion
Department, St. Andrew’s Episcopal School

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

~ T.S. Eliot, “The Four Quartets”

I graduated from VTS on a glorious spring day in 2001, very pregnant with our first son. For the record, I was not the only graduate great with child that year. Classmate Laura White bravely crossed the stage that morning in the midst of active labor, cheered on by thunderous applause as all the while we prayed that her daughter would wait just a little bit longer to arrive. Happily, she did—barely. Three weeks later, our son William Stirling Alexander was born in Alexandria Hospital, and soon thereafter our little family packed up our belongings from our Braddock-Lee apartment and headed north to Westchester County, NY, where my husband — the Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr. was rector of Christ Church, Pelham. My plan was to take the summer off and begin my own ordained ministry that fall as assistant in a neighboring parish. Comfortably settled in a diocese in which we had deep roots, Randy and I did not expect to see much of Alexandria again, apart from occasional trips back for convocation and other alumni events.

Clearly, God had other ideas.

Twelve years, two more sons, a dog, and many more possessions later, the Alexander family returned to Alexandria this past August, as Randy became the eleventh rector of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill (ICOH). Perhaps nobody was more surprised by this call than Randy himself. Although a native Virginian—he had yet to serve in the Diocese of Virginia. His ministry up until that point had taken him first to New York, then to Baltimore, later to London, and back to New York, but not to a cure in the Commonwealth. What’s more, as a proud graduate of the General Theological Seminary, the thought of ministering in the parish founded by VTS seemed, while not exactly anathema, at the very least unlikely.

To be honest, I also was surprised to find myself living on the other side of Seminary Road. In my three years at VTS, I had not once set foot in Zabriskie Chapel. I long had admired it as the “Pumpkin Church” across the way, but I never had occasion to venture through the doors behind the pumpkins. Nevertheless, the Church on the Holy Hill unquestionably contributed to my formation for priesthood. Day by day and week by week, I worshipped in Immanuel Chapel—standing on the shoulders of so many saints, from both the seminary and the ICOH parish, who had
gone before me into the world to preach the Gospel.

And then, without warning, that sacred space—where my classmates and I preached our Senior sermons; where we learned to baptize, and preside at the Eucharist, and pause at the asterisk; where we prayed even when we had no words—was gone. Like so many, I wept recklessly on that Friday afternoon in October 2010, as I watched the footage of flames maliciously tearing down a building, realizing I was so very attached. More than three years later, a brick from the 1881 Chapel sits defiantly on my desk at work, a symbol of resurrection and new life arising from the ashes. It is a touchstone that reminds me daily of whence I’ve come—and of where my family and I are going.

This past September, on a glorious Holy Cross Day, my three sons and I watched proudly as Randy, GTS ’94 and now rector of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, helped break ground for the Chapel for the Ages. As we joined the throng singing “We’re Marching to Zion,” I sat in awe of the new land to which, even now, God is bringing all of us—seminary and parish family alike. And, on another glorious day, in January 2014, as crucifer William Stirling Alexander solemnly led the procession out of his father’s Installation service—again singing “We’re Marching to Zion,” Randy and I knew that we had come home. Full circle. We could not imagine or predict any of this when we pulled out of the Braddock-Lee parking lot with our newborn in 2001. But we are grateful beyond words to have been led to this place, with these remarkable people, at this moment in time—pregnant, as it is, with so very much potential.
Blessings to all for a glorious Eastertide.

As we near the end of this academic year, it’s worth noting what a remarkable year it has been for VTS alumni and the entire Seminary community. This is the year that we broke ground for the new Immanuel Chapel—the Chapel for the Ages made possible by the generosity of VTS alums and friends. The ruins of the 1881 Chapel were transformed into a beautiful Chapel Garden that was dedicated in a moving service attended by alumni spanning six decades. This sacred space includes an outdoor altar—a gift from the Class of 2012—and a place for the interment of ashes. It always will remain a hallowed space for our alumni.

This year has also seen the continued growth of our Regional Chapters across the country, resulting in an ever increasing number of alumni able to enjoy regional programming offered by our faculty and opportunities to connect with colleague alums and the Seminary. The Institutional Advancement (IA) team has been on the road visiting more alumni and partner parishes than ever before. What a joy to witness the ministry of our amazing alumni across the country and internationally. It’s a privilege for us all to be in conversation with you. This has been a year of increased connection and community.

A priority for us in the months ahead is Theological Education Sunday (TES) and increased partnerships with our parishes has been around a long time but in recent years has not received the attention it should. We’re working to change that. You’ll be hearing more in the months to come, but for now, please take note: TES 2015 will find VTS faculty, seminarians and staff in parishes across the country. Join us in lifting up this occasion of prayer and celebration for theological education. Let us know if you would like to have a VTS representative at your parish on February 1, 2015. Together we will remind the Church of the privilege and responsibility we all share in educating not only those who lead our congregations but all the baptized.

As always, please know how very much your prayers and support mean to us. Our alumni are the heart of the Seminary. Please stay in touch to let us know what is going on in your life and ministry, and know that you are always in our prayers.

Blessings,
Shelagh Casey Brown
Director of Alumni and Church Relations
scbrown@vts.edu
703.461.1711

Alumni and Church Relations Director, Shelagh Casey Brown (center) with the Rev. Carlye Hughes ’05, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Rev. Allan Johnson-Taylor ’93, rector of St. Paul’s Rock Creek in Washington, D.C.
Please share your news with us!

Write:
3737 Seminary Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22304

E-mail: alumni@vts.edu
Call: 703.461.1736
Fax: 703.370.0138

E-mail Address Changes to: mpotin@vts.edu

The Journal
The Seminary’s annual review of the previous academic year for alumni and friends.
Once per year, in July

News from the Hill
The Seminary’s newsletter for supporters of VTS.
Three times a year, in April, October and December.

The Annual Report
The Seminary’s annual report is published in a special issue of News from the Hill for alumni and friends.
Once a year, in December.

The eNews
E-mail 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

Alumni Convocation
Annual Conference for VTS graduates.
October 7-8, 2014.

Class Reunions & Class Stewards
October 6, 2014

You can also find us on:

Virginia Theological Seminary congratulates the Rev. Fanny Sohet Belanger (’13), who was ordained into the Sacred Order of Priests in the Episcopal Church of the United States (ECUSA) on Saturday, February 1, 2014 in a service led by the Rt. Rev. Pierre Welté Whalon (’85), bishop-in-charge of Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. She is the first Frenchwoman ordained as an Episcopal priest.
The Dean’s Cross

During a special service of Advent Lessons and Carols on December 8, 2013, the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D. conferred the Dean’s Cross for Servant Leadership in Church and Society Award to Dr. Eben Alexander III and the Rev. Dr. Canon Michele V. Hagans.

Established in 2008, the Dean’s Cross Award recognizes outstanding leaders who embody their baptismal vows to “strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.” Selected annually by VTS’ dean in consultation with the chair of the Board of Trustees, the honorees receive a handmade silver cross, modeled after the Seminary chapel cross, and a certificate.

Dr. Eben Alexander III, a member of St. John’s Episcopal Church, Lynchburg, Va., is an academic neurosurgeon, who spent three decades honing his scientific worldview, including 15 years at Harvard Medical School. His book, Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon’s Journey into the Afterlife, has remained in the top three on the New York Times Bestseller List, since shortly after its publication.

The Rev. Dr. Canon Michele V. Hagans is the associate rector of Grace Episcopal Church, Silver Spring, Md., where she has served since 2010. She is also chaplain for Grace Episcopal School.

In Memoriam

Rowan LeCompte

It was announced in February the death of Mr. Rowan Keith LeCompte, recipient of the 2011 Dean’s Cross. A renowned stained glass artisan, LeCompte is best remembered for his 45 windows and six mosaics for Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., in addition to his work in over 50 churches and public buildings around the country. Three of his early windows were in a cherished part of the 1881 Chapel.

The three windows in the Seminary’s collection designed by LeCompte and his wife Irene Matz LeCompte, depict scenes from the Passion of Christ and are titled: Peter’s Denial, The Crucifixion, and Jesus Carries His Cross. Using pieces of brilliantly colored glass in “jewel like” hues to depict these tragic scenes, these three windows were given to the Seminary by the class of 1929 in 1954, in memory of a classmate (Archie M. Quarrier) who had died during his middler year.

All three windows survived the 2010 fire which destroyed the 1881 Chapel. In early 2011, prior to receiving the Dean’s Cross, LeCompte returned to the VTS campus to inspect his work. The windows will be placed in the oratory of the new Immanuel Chapel, now under construction and slated for completion in 2015.
Locke Bowman

Locke Bowman was professor of Christian education and pastoral theology from 1983 to 1994 and director and founder of the Center for the Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary from 1987 to 1994. He died on Thursday, November 14, 2013.

“Locke's passion for equipping clergy and lay leaders to teach the faith continues to inspire me every day,” said Dr. Lisa Kimball, director of the CMT. His friend and former colleague, Dr. Amy Geary Dyer, wrote, “Locke believed that learning should be interactive and should involve students directly in the experience, a concept just beginning to emerge in education theory in general and well ahead of its time in church education.”

The Locke E. Bowman, Jr. Scholarship Fund was established in 1994 in honor of Dr. Bowman, for students pursuing a Master of Arts in Christian Education degree at Virginia Theological Seminary. His funeral was Saturday, November 30, 2013, at the Church of the Atonement in Chicago, Il.

Ted Gleason (VTS ’60, ’00)

Ted Gleason served on the faculty and as director of development at the Seminary from 1987 to 1995. He died on October 31, 2013. Following his tenure at VTS, he served as director of Forward Movement Publications in Cincinnati, Oh. Earlier in his ministry he served as rector of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Arlington, Va., as headmaster of Noble and Greenough School in Massachusetts, and school minister of The Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. He was awarded an honorary degree from Virginia Seminary in 2000.

In the prologue of his book, New Life, Gleason wrote, “Life is driven by renewal, the persistent energy of rebirth that makes all things new. Pain and loss and death are inevitable, but each and every time they happen, there was new life. Death happens, but it is never the final answer. Everything that begins ends, and every ending contains the promise of a new beginning.” A memorial service for Ted was held on December 28, 2013, at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.
The Francis Scott Key Society

The Rev. Canon James M. L. Grace ('05)
Canon for Christian Formation at Christ Church Cathedral in Houston, Texas

True story #1: Margaret Beverley Taylor (1904–1988) was born on a farm in Jefferson County, West Virginia. She was a great-great-great granddaughter of Thomas Jefferson. Her uncle, Paca Kennedy, served as professor of Greek at VTS for 23 years. Miss Taylor was a life-long member of Zion Church, Charles Town, where for many years she conducted services and taught Sunday school at two local missions: Millville and St. Andrews-on-the-Mount. Here is how dedicated a teacher she was: to reach St. Andrews (six miles away from her farm) she rode her horse to the banks of the Shenandoah River where a parishioner rowed her across. She then walked several miles up the mountain to the mission. At her death, Beverly Taylor left over a million dollars to the Seminary.

True story #2: Evelyn Fitts Thomas, the daughter and wife of debtors, lived with extreme, if not eccentric, frugality. She was well known in Roanoke for her penuous habits. It was a surprise to everyone after her death in February of 1990, she left an $8 million estate, in which VTS was generously remembered. The mystery is greater because there is no known connection between her and the Seminary. She left no heirs, nor was she a member of an Episcopal Church in Roanoke. According to an article in the Roanoke Times dated March 31, 1990, she also left a large portion of her estate to The Medical College of Virginia. The article also said she did not view herself as an owner of her wealth, but rather a caretaker.

These two vignettes are only a few of many more which illustrate the profound ways that Virginia Seminary engages in Gospel ministry throughout the world. Fully steeped in the Episcopal/Anglican tradition, the Seminary, since 1823, has prepared women and men to be servants of Christ’s church, proclaimers of the Gospel, and faithful ministers of the sacraments.

There is in our Book of Common Prayer a rubric found on p. 445 at the very end of the service of Thanksgiving for a Child. The rubric reads, in part: “The Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the people, from time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make provision for the well-being of their families, and of all persons to make wills, while they are in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting, if they are able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses.” This rubric is an imperative for all of us to consider those resources with which we have been blessed, and where we intend those resources to go.

Since the founding of the Seminary in 1823, a tradition of generous giving has enabled VTS to prepare the hearts and minds of those who bring the good news of Christ to the world. Francis Scott Key was one such donor, giving one tenth of his estate to charity, including VTS. Formed in 2000, the Francis Scott Key Society honors all who have designated the Seminary as a beneficiary in their estate planning.

Currently there are 283 members of the Francis Scott Key Society (FSK), and the FSK generated more than $1 million through bequests for the Seminary last year alone. By including the Seminary in your estate planning, you are ensuring VTS’ financial future and its lasting good health.

On September 13, 2014, all members of the Francis Scott Key Society will be invited to a special event hosted by Dean Markham to mark the 200th anniversary of the day Francis Scott Key penned the poem that became our National Anthem. It will be an occasion to mark this celebrated moment in history of our nation, and also honor all those who have provided to the Seminary by naming it in their estate. Mary Hix, former vice president for Administration and Finance at Virginia Theological Seminary from 1988 to 2007, and I are both humbled and honored to serve as co-chairs of the Francis Scott Key Society, following the venerable work of former co-chairs Bishop Eastman and Marnie Trotter. We look forward to honoring the tradition of Key’s generosity by providing the best in theological education for the generations ahead of us.

It is our hope that you will join us in assuring the Seminary’s future by including the Seminary in your estate planning. Should you wish to join the Francis Scott Key Society, please contact Linda Dienno, Director of Development, at 703.461.1717 or ldienno@vts.edu.
As part of our continuing series of profiles on members of the Board of Trustees, we recently talked with board member and parishioner of St. John’s Church in McLean, Va., Ms. Martha High, Chair of the Institutional Advancement Committee who has been a key figure in all of the significant chapel committees, including the 1981 Chapel Task Force, the Chapel Building Committee and the Chapel for the Ages Campaign Executive Committee (Board of Trustees Division Co-Chair). After 10 years, Martha retires from the VTS Board of Trustees this May.

How long have you been a VTS Trustee?

I have been a VTS trustee for 10 years. Bishop Peter Lee appointed me because he thought my experience from having served on a college board would be beneficial as a VTS trustee. I remember particularly that he indicated I would be expected to give financially, as well! Also, I remember Lee Marston approached me at my first VTS board meeting to ask me to serve on the Development Committee, now the Institutional Advancement (IA) Committee. It has been a joy to be a part of the growth in IA, to work with the entire staff in that department, all of whom are outstanding.

Tell us about your professional life.

My professional life is all about volunteering! Though my family owns a lumber business in which I am involved, and years ago, I worked in a bank reviewing trust accounts; my life has been primarily one of being a wife, a mother, and a volunteer. I have been blessed in so many ways and especially by the fact that my husband, Jack, was very understanding and supportive of my working outside the home, volunteering in the community and with the church.
What is the one thing that you wish parishes would learn from VTS?

The most important thing that parishes can learn from VTS is that it has an abundance of resources available for each parish's use. From courses and programs being offered, its outstanding library, the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, the willingness of faculty to visit—the faculty, the staff, the students—will willing to help in any way possible—VTS offers a plethora of easily accessible resources to support a parish's activities, curriculum and overall spiritual journey.

What are you most proud of about your tenure with the board?

What a privilege it has been to serve with such dedicated people! Three things immediately come to mind, all of which I am extremely pleased. One, the hiring of The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D. to be our dean and president. The Search Committee did an incredible job! Two, the funds raised for The Chapel for the Ages has surpassed anything we could have imagined! In response to the tragic fire of the 1881 Chapel, Dean Markham and The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D., vice president for IA, took their love for and the needs of VTS to people far and near via countless visits to individuals, parishes, roundtables, parties and any other way you can conceive. Three, the Board, with the leadership of The Rev. Canon Tom Clarke and the Trustees Committee, has approved a new structure for itself. A smaller governance board with membership consisting of people who bring specific skills and experience will benefit VTS immeasurably.

It has been my privilege to serve as a trustee. Such a joy! And with God's help and The Rt. Rev. James J. Shand at the helm as Chairman, only positive things lie ahead for the VTS Board of Trustees!
2014 Association of Anglican Musicians Conference

Invites You to Participate in

CLERGY DAY

at

VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WED., JUNE 18, 2014 • 8:30 A.M.-6:00 P.M.
3737 SEMINARY RD., ALEXANDRIA, VA

CLERGY AND MUSICIANS:
A SHARED MINISTRY
A Panel Discussion Moderated by
The Very Reverend Ian Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President of VTS

MUSICIANS AND CLERGY
IN COMMON CAUSE
A Plenary Session Leading into the Panel Discussion
The Reverend Dr. Francis Wade

COUNCIL OF JAMNIA REDUX:
WHAT DO WE TAKE INTO THE FUTURE?
a Break-Out Session for Interested Clergy

• Morning Prayer at Episcopal High School

• Concert with Youth Choir
  conducted by Julian Wachner, director of music and
  the arts at Trinity Wall Street

• Buffet lunch in the VTS Refectory

• Specialized tours of the VTS Library

• Learn about chanting the liturgy
  VTS Professor of Music William Bradley Roberts

• Evensong at Christ Church

Give yourself a day to listen and learn,
together with musicians,
from some of the finest teachers in the
Episcopal Church

Registration Fee: $125
($75 for seminarians)

Online registration
http://conference.anglicanmusicians.org/

For more information contact:
Sonya Sutton
SonyaS@stalbansdc.org

Association of Anglican Musicians
Representing musicians in Episcopal churches throughout
the United States and the Anglican Communion
Chapel Updates

On January 6, 2014, Virginia Theological Seminary learned of the death of Mr. Tom Moore (’71), who served on the task force for the new chapel. Moore’s commitment and passion for the Seminary, and new Immanuel Chapel, was key in VTS surpassing our campaign goals and he is missed.

“He had a gentle and gracious manner,” said Dean Markham. “He was thoughtful with a quiet sense of humor; he was kind with a deep commitment to family.”

This winter the Seminary published From Ashes to Action: A Chapel Burns and a Seminary Rebuilds. Edited by the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D., the Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D., vice president for Institutional Advancement and Mr. Curtis W. Prather, director of communications, From Ashes to Action is a 150-page account of the past three historic years.

With hundreds of photographs and text, From Ashes to Action captures the history and trauma of losing the 129 year old chapel to fire in 2010, up through the bold decisions that led VTS towards raising more than $14 million for a new home of worship. A narrative filled with grace emerges, thanks to contributors that include faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends. From Ashes to Action: A Chapel Burns and a Seminary Rebuilds is being mailed to all donors to the Chapel for the Ages capital campaign. Additional copies are available in the Seminary’s Welcome Center.

The interior of our new Immanuel Chapel will feature four transepts which define what VTS holds true and right in the world. There will be a transept honoring congregational and diocesan leadership, a transept celebrating arrival and baptism, a transept honoring music and a transept honoring the Seminary’s commitment to mission and diversity. They will stand as sentinels of belief within the sacred space of worship and prayer.

The Seminary has called itself to action by combining mission and diversity on one transept. This call includes recognizing that in the Seminary’s history, not all were treated equally. The Seminary strives for justice and peace that comes when all feel welcome. Please add your voice to the Seminary’s in making mission and diversity each of equal importance. Join the others whose names will appear on the mission and diversity transept plaque and you will be forever known as a person who strives for justice and peace for all. No exceptions.

To learn more, please call Debbie Townsend in the Office of Institutional Advancement at 703-461-1714.

Despite the elements, construction on the new Immanuel Chapel is progressing on schedule. There is much to celebrate as the hard work of so many comes into focus. Documenting this work has been a priority for VTS.

Construction progress can be monitored through the Seminary’s website “24/7” at www.vts.edu.
A Season of “Truth-telling”

For almost 35 years Linda and I have included a letter to family and friends with our Christmas card. The letters have always been glowing—and rarely have we shared anything unpleasant or the harder truths of life. The same can be said of the letters we receive and cherish. I suppose I would like to live long enough to receive a holiday letter which weaves together the good, the bad and the ugly.

Let us imagine a letter which begins: “Well the three children are not doing so well. The oldest is going through a nasty divorce; the middle child is in drug rehab; the youngest is facing shoplifting charges. Our marriage is not what it used to be, the roof is leaking and we have stopped saving for the future.” Such brutal truth-telling can be messy. Would the perfect Christmas letter be a mixture of glowing achievements with the harder truths of life? Perhaps, yet some truth is actually best hidden. None of us could bear telling the whole story of our lives—nor could we hear it from those we love.

Recently our Board of Trustees met. Part of our rich time together was devoted to strategic planning for the next 10 years. Strategic planning is best when it is an exercise in truth-telling which includes the glowing truth as well as the harder truths.

So, what should VTS be thinking about as it envisions the time between now and our 200th birthday in 2023? Is it business as usual? Do we do something new and “out of the box”? Or, do we do better what we have been doing?

What sort of letter might VTS write to the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion? Will it be the perfect letter which tells the whole truth about the complexity of being a 21st century theological institution, serving a changing Episcopal Church and a diverse Anglican Communion?

VTS is blessed with resources. We are in a season of amazing physical improvements to our beautiful campus. VTS’ endowment is robust and is well complemented by the Seminary’s share of the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation. You could say that VTS could do anything the institution feels God is calling it to do—but it cannot do everything.

Theological education in mainline American Christianity faces an uncertain future. Some schools will remain strong; some will close; and others will develop survival strategies which may work. Our sister Episcopal seminaries are no exception. How does VTS stay in productive conversation with other Episcopal seminaries as well as with the new “platforms” for theological education which are cropping up in all the provinces of the Episcopal Church?

VTS has much in common with university divinity schools. Should VTS’ conversation partners about theological education also include Duke, Emory, Princeton, Harvard and Fuller? Who should be our “dance partners?”

The Episcopal Church is coming out of a decade of turmoil and division. Perhaps the cultural wars are behind us. What must VTS do to add strength and courage to the Episcopal Church’s mission and ministry? How can VTS serve the center and the whole of the Episcopal Church?

VTS has great convening authority. We see ourselves as one of the crossroads of the Anglican Communion. Can VTS remain committed to serving the Anglican Communion when the gap is so wide between the Episcopal Church and the rest of the Communion?

VTS believes that residential education is the best way to deliver formation for leadership in the 21st century Episcopal Church. More and more people may be disagreeing with the validity of a three-year stint of residential formation. How does VTS make its case?

There is a black and white photo of the VTS faculty in the late nineteenth century which hangs in the Meade Room of the Deanery at VTS. The Episcopalian faculty members are male with facial hair. Presently, VTS has a diverse, ecumenical
faculty with depth in a number of disciplines. What should a 21st century VTS faculty look like?

VTS is increasingly a national, if not international, seminary. How can we be better at being national in our scope and influence?

Leadership in our Church is shared by those called to be ordained and those called to be lay. Is VTS preparing for new models for God’s mission and our shared ministry? Physical construction begets programmatic construction.

VTS can claim outstanding alumni/ae. We are proud to call John Hines, John Walker and Verna Dozier our own. Should VTS seek the brightest and best as students? In what ways is VTS enhancing the intellectual capital of the Episcopal Church?

VTS is five miles from the largest public square in the world. Are we training men and women to lead in communities as well as in parishes?

VTS has just completed a capital campaign. Should the next 10 years include a bold fund-raising campaign to equip us well for our third century of service to the Church and the academy?

I think VTS is in a season of truth-telling as it crafts its job description as an institution for the next 10 years. There is no way to account for all the variables. The winds of change are just that. But VTS, with Dean Markham and the Board of Trustees leading the way, is thinking about how well it will lead in the coming years. We are focused on now and the future. We are seeking clarity. We will be alert to what God has in mind for Virginia Theological Seminary, the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

The Rev. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D., Frances E. Lodder, Demetrius R. Donseroux, Ph.D., licensed professional counselor, San Antonio, Texas and the Rev. Herbert K. Lodder (‘58) at the Faith, Work and Vocation breakfast lecture given by Dr. Donseroux on November 9, 2013.
What: An ecumenical conference on faith formation in the digital age, with sessions in English and in Spanish

Who: Sarah Lefton, founder of G-dcast; Meredith Gould, author of Social Media Gospel; Scott Gunn, director of Forward Movement; Sharon Pearson, editor at Church Publishing; John Roberto of Lifelong Faith Associates; Randall Curtis, aka “The Holy Geek”; Robbin Whittington, director of the Center for Spiritual Resources; Julie Lytle, author of Faith Formation 4.0; Colin Chapman, digital missioner at General Seminary; the CMT’s Lisa Kimball, Dorothy Linthicum, and Kyle Oliver—and hopefully you!

When: June 2-4, 2014

Where: Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, VA

www.eformationvts.org