“Go Ye Into All The World and Preach the Gospel”

Virginia Seminary is proud of the 57 graduates of its Masters level and doctoral programs who were honored last month at the 192nd Commencement held in the new Immanuel Chapel.

Recently named one of the 25 Seminaries that “change the world,” VTS continues its tradition of preparing leaders for the truly world-changing work of preaching the Gospel and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

These men and women, who represent the best in ordained and lay leadership in the Episcopal Church, will be an instructive and sustaining force for current and future generations of Christians.
News from the Hill

Top: (L-R), Alex Allain (‘15), the Rev. Maxine Barnett (‘15), the Rt. Rev Nathan Baxter, Dr. Louie Crew-Clay, and Broderick Greer (‘15). Dr. Louie Crew-Clay preached at the noon Eucharist on March 17 and that evening joined Bishop Baxter during his Evening School class – “Civil Rights, Justice and Inclusion.”

Photo: Kristen Pitts

Bottom: The Rev. David Crosby (‘12), assistant rector for Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill; the Rt. Rev. James “Bud” Shand, chair of the board of trustees; and the Rev. Melody Knowles, Ph.D., vice president for academic affairs, at the first service held inside the new Immanuel Chapel on Thursday, February 12, 2015. This service was attended by members of the VTS community as well as parishioners from Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill.

Photo: Curtis Prather

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On the Cover: Rachel Shows (’16), from the Diocese of Virginia, lights a candle during the first service in the Immanuel Chapel. Photo: Carol Kyber
The Gifts of Innovative Education

The sense of excitement as we live into the new Immanuel Chapel is palpable. The acoustics (especially for music) are sublime; the way the light comes indirectly into the space and is then reflected by the white walls creates a transcendent glow that surrounds each worshipper; the shared proximity to the altar creates an intimate feel; and the many possibilities for projection are amazing. This is a place that will be home to beautiful worship for many years to come.

Inevitably, the work on the Chapel over the last two years has dominated much of our institutional energy. As the Chapel is completed, other aspects of the Seminary can come out from the shadows. This issue highlights the Center for the Ministry of Teaching (CMT). Some of the most innovative work happening anywhere in the Episcopal Church is happening in our CMT. Under the capable leadership of Dr. Lisa Kimball, the focus of the CMT is the ways in which social media and digital technology can be used for Christian formation. Much of the work is creating imaginative options. Through our four websites, the best practice is then being disseminated.

It is amazing to discover what is happening. We have a Christian Educator who has turned the early teens group from a badly attended Sunday night session to a thriving monthly trip out and weekly conversations on a private Facebook page at 9:00 p.m. in the middle of the week. They all meet up and for one hour, these teenagers read Scripture and reflect on the challenge of their lives and their faith. Suddenly a struggling youth work is revived through this imaginative mix of trips out and social media.

The four websites carry countless ideas such as this. And the interest is considerable. Just to take one website, the Building Faith website now has more than 1,100 subscribers and significant traffic. In a typical week, it has more than 6,000 page views, and during Advent, Christmas, and Lent, it exceeded 30,000 page views a month.

Sometimes our friends and alums wonder why we need any additional resources given our considerable endowment. The answer is (among other things) the Center for the Ministry of Teaching. We do not use your gifts to help us survive, we use your gifts to create innovate programs that we pray and hope can make the Church stronger. Those 30,000 page views a month are made possible by your annual fund gift.

Enjoy this issue of News from the Hill. And please take some pleasure in the work that your gifts are making possible. Every gift (however small) helps. So thank you.

Yours in Christ,

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

Dorothy Linthicum, program coordinator and instructor for the CMT, with José Reyes ('15).
Faculty, staff, and students processed from the Lettie Pate Evans Interim Chapel across campus to Immanuel Chapel for the first community worship service.

The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins, Jr., Ph.D., the Rt. Rev. Frank Griswold, and Alan Cowart ('15) prepare for a service in the new chapel; the community comes together to unload the new organ into the chapel.

Class of 2015 retreat at Shrine Mont (Left to Right): Eric Mancil (Diocese of Central Gulf Coast), Kristin Saylor (Diocese of New York), Emily Guffey (Diocese of Virginia), Morris Thompson (Diocese of Mississippi), Jennifer Southall (Diocese of Mississippi), Chandler Whitman (Diocese of West Tennessee), Connor Gwin (Diocese of Virginia), Alan Cowart (Diocese of Atlanta).
Perhaps you’ve heard: The new Immanuel Chapel at VTS is mostly complete. It is a gorgeous space, smartly designed, and the community has begun living into it. The first service was held in February and the consecration will draw people from all around The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

But the sanctuary is not yet a finished product. Some tourists and pilgrims to particularly ancient worship spaces speak about how the very buildings themselves can feel as though saturated in centuries of prayer. As though the walls were painted with the supplications of all the people to use the space. As though their petitions had left a mark on the very character of the place.

At that first service in the Immanuel Chapel in February, the Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr., rector of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, urged us to paint the blank canvas of the chapel walls with prayer. This is a beautiful image, and one that really seems to have resonated with the community. By our beginning to worship there, the chapel’s white plaster is still soaking in the first coat of prayers, and God willing, will go on to soak in a great many more. We have the great opportunity and responsibility of making this sacred space rich in hues of prayer both light and dark. It is here where we will bring our laments and praises to God.

Yet even as our prayers transform this place, the space itself is shaping us. This worship space will be among the most formative in our development as church leaders. If our prayers are saturating the entirety of the chapel, then every time we sit or kneel in worship, we do so in the wet paint of the prayers of others in the community. We are colored by the pigment of the petitions and the thanksgivings offered here, in this space.

For most of the students, it is mere historical accident that we happen to be here at VTS when the Immanuel Chapel is completed and as we move into it. The chapel doesn’t belong to us any more than it belongs to the whole community and to all of the alumni and supporters of VTS who helped to bring it into being. However, we do have the great privilege of being the first artists to paint our prayers onto this blank canvas. May God work them into a masterpiece.
Making and Baking Communion Bread with Children from the Butterfly House

By Carol Kyber
Assistant Director of Communications

Combining the efforts of sustainability and greening along with a more intimate experience with the Eucharist, some seminarians have been growing and harvesting wheat to make communion bread for worship at the Seminary.

The project has even involved the children from The Butterfly House—they helped to sow the crop for the second year, and it is growing in a field next to the on-campus preschool and nursery.

In March, the seminarians provided further joy when they took some time to make bread and share it with the children. Starting with a demonstration on how to grind wheat to make flour, seminarians Bryan Spoon ('15) and Nora Becker ('16) took the children through the process of making bread. The children and the teachers thoroughly enjoyed the experience, which gave the words “Give us this day our daily bread” a truly personal and significant meaning.
On Friday, February 20, VTS hosted the third installment of the Religion & Civil War Lecture Series. In presenting “African Americans and Theological Students on Seminary Hill: Segregation or Collaboration?” VTS called upon a faculty member and a local historian to provide the perspectives of the Seminary and the neighboring black community. The Rev. Robert W. Prichard, Ph.D., opened the lecture and spoke from the Seminary’s perspective. Ms. Adrienne Terrell Washington represented the African American communities of Fort Ward and Seminary Hill.

Dr. Prichard, the Arthur Lee Kinsolving Professor of Christianity in America and Instructor in Liturgy, explained that around 1850 the student body of VTS was almost equally split between northerners and southerners. Many of the northern students could not comprehend the atrocities slavery had brought to northern Virginia. At the same time, many of the southern students did not understand how horrific an institution slavery was until hearing the criticisms from their northern classmates. These tensions were exacerbated by the contradiction that was Alexandria: Not only was it a major market in the slave trade, but its population was one-fifth black; half of this population was free.

In spite of the threat of violence for even associating with African-Americans, some
VTS students still made an effort to provide religious education and preach to the local black community. Meanwhile, the debate on campus continued as the possibility of war increased. By May 1861, with war imminent in Alexandria, nearly half of the student body left campus. Not passive observers, nearly 60 VTS graduates and students would serve as chaplains in the war wearing both blue and grey.

Subsequent to the U.S. Army’s occupation of campus during the war, the involvement of the seminary within the black community increased again. In the late 1870s, a local Sunday school was started by student William Herbert Assheton, and the seminary partnered with St. Stephen’s Church, Petersburg, and the Diocese of Virginia to establish the Bishop Payne Divinity School (BPDS) specifically for educating and training black men for ordination. In this same period, the Chapel of the Good Shepherd was built on campus to provide the local African-American community, particularly those that worked at the seminary and Episcopal High School, with a house of worship; services were led by seminarians. Bishop Payne Divinity School would continue to develop black men and women for work in the church until 1949 and then was eventually incorporated into VTS in 1951. The Chapel of the Good Shepherd, also known locally as St. Cyprian’s, provided services on campus for roughly 40 years until moving to Fort Ward in the 1920s. It would close for good in 1943.

Ms. Adrienne Terrell Washington, local historian, journalist, and educator, followed Dr. Prichard and spoke from a more personal perspective. She explained that the values for the people of the Ft. Ward community centered on family, education, and church. Church began as informal gatherings for worship, usually in private houses. Eventually, seminarians started to go into the community to teach Sunday school, and this helped foster relations with the seminary, local Episcopal churches, and the local black community.

After the war, the initiatives of seminarians to teach Sunday school for the community and lead worship services at Good Shepherd provided the basis for strong, continual religious ties in the Seminary Hill/Fort Ward areas. Ms. Washington spoke of the African-American families that were original congregants of Good Shepherd, as well as Oakland Baptist Church, the other main congregation in the area. Ms. Washington described the families that are still active and present in Alexandria and how they had ties to both congregations. She spoke proudly of ancestors who were integral in building and sustaining those legacies. In particular, she relayed the poignant story from the early 1890s of certain members of the community who worked at VTS and EHS and would walk down the street everyday on their lunch hour to work on the building that became Oakland Baptist.

The legacy of Good Shepherd/St. Cyprian’s and its families, in particular, and the ministering role of VTS, can still be seen at Meade Memorial Episcopal Church here in Alexandria. As Meade Memorial became the religious home of many of the Good Shepherd families, it also became home to many future priests. Once Bishop Payne Divinity School started graduating priests, Meade Memorial was one on the main benefactors and would be led almost exclusively by BPDS graduates for roughly 100 years.

The speakers presented an insightful discussion of religion, race, and mission and the factors that affected the Fort and the Seminary as they prepared for war and faced its aftermath. It is a story that continues to shape both institutions to this very day.
New Resources from the Center for the Ministry of Teaching

Vacation Bible School Reviews

Each January the colorful boxes arrive at the CMT with the latest Vacation Bible School (VBS) kits from a variety of publishers and Christian denominations. We review them and post our findings online, along with our top four recommended VBS programs for 2015.

In reviewing the kits, we read through the materials, consider the message and theology, watch the videos, listen to the music, and even check the quality of the snack suggestions. This year, including our "perennial picks" of VBS programs that can be used year after year, we posted a total of 22 reviews online, in one easy-to-read packet.

Thousands of church leaders and volunteers throughout the country download these free reviews every year. To read the reviews, go to www.vts.edu/cmt and scroll to the bottom of the page.

Home Practices: Our Picks for Building Faithful Households

Building Faith, one of our formation websites, has launched a new feature called Home Practices: Our picks for building faithful households. This is a free online resource to help Christian households practice faith at home.

Building Faith (buildfaith.org) offers practical and seasonal ideas for faith formation for children, youth, and adults. The Home Practices page now features sound, effective, and doable faith practices for households of all types.

Research has shown that the home may be the most important context in which Christian faith is formed and nurtured. While the Church is vital in providing support, teaching, community, household life is where faith "sticks."

Home Practices offers concise, downloadable guides that all Christian households—families, singles, couples—can use to deepen their faith. Examples include praying before meals, studying the Bible at home, making seasonal decorations and offering morning blessings. Each guide is printable, easy to follow, theologically sound, and adaptable for all ages and households.

Matthew Kozlowski, Building Faith co-curator, explains, "We know that church leaders encourage parishioners to practice faith at home. Oftentimes, however, households come back and say, 'We need some help with what to do.' Home Practices from Building Faith meets that need directly."

Building Faith and this new feature are completely free.

Go to www.buildfaith.org/home-practices to check out Home Practices: Our picks for building faithful households.


Photo: Dr. Patricia M. Lyons
**Educational Technology**

Over the last year, the CMT and the Rev. Stacy Williams-Duncan, an Ed.D., student in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Virginia (UVA), began working with VTS faculty to effectively integrate education technology in their courses. With Melody Knowles, VTS’s Academic Dean, Stacy began this initiative by creating a course design institute for faculty last August.

Stacy is also working with Dr. Lisa Kimball, Rev. Kyle Oliver, and the Rev. Judy Fentress-Williams, professor of Old Testament, to evaluate technology-enhanced seminary courses and the effectiveness of digital storytelling in promoting students’ critical thinking and learning. In addition, she is investigating the role of self-authorship in the development of young adults who begin seminary before age 25. These projects, along with other faculty development offerings, allow the CMT to play a role in strengthening the educational endeavors on campus at VTS.

To learn about digital storytelling, visit the Center for Digital Storytelling at storycenter.org.

The Course Design institute that Stacy offered at VTS was based on the UVA model. Learn more at trc.virginia.edu/programs/course-design-institute.

**e-Formation Community**

The CMT continues to support ministry in a digital world through e-Formation. The centerpiece of the e-Formation initiatives is the annual conference in June, which brings together church leaders from around the country for hands-on training and big-picture inspiration. But we also know there is a growing need for year-long support and resources for ministers using digital tools and approaches.

As the e-Formation network grows, the CMT continues to be a hub for networking, resources, and continued research and development. We are also available to take our show on the road, bringing our “e-Formation Bootcamp” to dioceses and other regional gatherings.

Learn more at eformationvts.org or contact cmt@vts.edu.
Hybrid Faith Formation Cohorts Connect Innovators in Christian Education

By the Rev. Kyle Oliver ('12)
Digital Missioner

Over the past two years, I’ve learned a lot about how new ministry models emerge: Collaboratively. In fits and starts. Through a creative combination of need and excitement. With more failures than successes. And by the power of the Spirit of God who never fails to make her presence known when we’re on the right track.

The story of hybrid faith formation began at the 2013 Forma Conference. My friend and colleague Day Smith Pritchartt had read an article that I had written about “faith formation networks,” reporting on work by John Roberto as part of the Faith Formation 2020 research project he helped lead.

I was excited because faith formation networks seemed to be a great answer to a question I get by phone, email, and social media inquiry every couple of weeks in my job in the faith formation resource center where I work:

What do we do with the people who say they want to learn but can’t come to a weekly Bible study, or even Sunday school?

Day was excited, too. But she wanted me to be more concrete about what a network could actually look like in her context.

The model: learn in person, learn at home

What we brainstormed there in the exhibit hall was something like a hybrid course (a class where online work supplements time in the classroom) and something like a classic small group ministry. We called it a “hybrid faith formation” network and listed what we thought would be essential components:

1. Connect interested individuals or families via a contextually appropriate “hub” (social networking group, shared blog, or email listserv).
2. Gather the group for monthly in-person meetings to build community and introduce important concepts and skills.
3. In the intervening time, learn “alone together” (we use the term in a positive light) by trying out leader-provided activities at home and discussing the experience online.

Six months later, we were launching what has become the Hybrid Faith Formation Cohort. We gathered seven leaders from different congregations and dioceses to try out a hybrid learning experience with each other while, simultaneously, each individual leader started experimenting in his or her own setting. Some worked, most didn’t. But we learned a lot.

This fall, Day and I co-led the second cohort. As I sat with the detailed and thoughtful feedback from our cohort participants, I was struck anew by the power of community to help us overcome our fear of change. One participant wrote what I think several others were thinking: “I would not have had the courage to try my online project without this group.” I know I would not have had the courage to advocate so widely for this new approach without the enthusiasm and support of this talented gang of action researchers.

Allow me to share two big lessons we learned from our time together.

Our learners aren’t students

For years now, churches have been noting that the classroom mentality of Sunday school has been both a blessing and a curse...
Life will happen; grace should abound

Heaven makes us free of using shame and guilt to try to coerce robust participation in our churches. Especially in informal congregational learning, we have to be realistic about how everyday pressures are affecting participants in our programs. One of the advantages of having leaders participate in a network at the same time that they were trying to launch one was the perspective that this experience gave. One participant described it like this:

How frustrating it can be to try and keep up with an online cohort when life is throwing curveballs at you and also, unfortunately, how easy it is to give up and drop out … Since I have had the experience of being “that kid” I can certainly more readily sympathize now, and that is still something learned from this experience.

Those who stuck with the experience and those who had to bow out agreed that the group’s whole-hearted support of their adult decisions about participation were important to the overall experience.

“Accountability” has become something of a buzzword in ministry, and surely that is a good thing. But let’s not send the message that anything less than full participation is a failure or some sort of betrayal. Our members are on a journey with God, and the Spirit will get them where they need to be if we create communities where grace can abound.

You’ll notice that these two big lessons don’t have much to do with technology. I could share with you some detailed feedback about the usefulness of weekly check-in posts, about helping participants configure their notifications, about asking good questions or establishing a rhythm of interaction and follow-up. But those are lessons best learned through doing. Or, better yet, doing in community with a little bit of experienced mentoring.

Our more important piece of learning—a reminder, really—is that the core skills and practices of ministry, including the ministry of faith formation, are the same as ever in this digital age: Love the people you serve, encourage them to love and support one another, and trust that God is present in the lives of all who seek transformation in the Spirit.

This article was adapted from Kyle’s blog about the hybrid faith formation cohort for the Episcopal Church Foundation at ecfvp.org and is used by permission.
Spirituality of older adults has important role in CMT’s future

By Dorothy Linthicum
Instructor/Program Coordinator

About four years ago, the Center for the Ministry of Teaching offered its first program in the field of aging. Personal experiences of our staff and awareness of the sheer numbers of people reaching retirement age pushed us to address the needs of older people in our churches and communities.

Our first workshop, entitled Spirituality Over 70, was targeted to people ministering to older people in congregations, retirement communities, nursing homes, and other institutions. The workshop leaders were Lisa Kimball, CMT Director, and myself. We envisioned an audience of chaplains, program directors, parish nurses, among others.

Registration before the event went well. Then we took a closer look at the people who had signed up to spend a Saturday with us. Except for two part-time educators from the District of Columbia, everyone was nearing or over 70 and looking for spirituality.

We made some quick adjustments to our plans: We added a chaplain to the team and began talking about “us” instead of “them.” That last change significantly affected the way we think and teach about aging today.

Since that workshop we have expanded our knowledge and offerings in the field of aging. We wrote a three-part series in Episcopal Teacher, made presentations at national and diocesan gatherings of Christian educators, and began offering regular courses, once with Practical Theologian Rev. Joyce Mercer, Ph.D., to seminarians and lay leaders in the community.

“Given the demographics of the U.S. population and the surge of Boomers moving into retirement, we believe understanding aging and the spirituality of older adults has an important role in the CMT’s future.”

A resource that helped form our thinking came from VTS Professor Emeritus G. Milton Crum, who wrote a monologue entitled “I’m Old.” Written when Crum was in his late 80s, the monologue has touched a chord with people of a similar age. They not only appreciate his unglamorous but
realistic view of growing older, but they also want younger people, especially their children, to read it for a better understanding of their lives.

**Going Forward**

Where is this topic taking us now? We have made aging and the church’s faithful response to it a priority. We continue to study the field of aging through an interdisciplinary lens. Organizations such as the Pew Research Center with its Religion & Public Life initiatives have on-going research to help all of us better understand aging and how it affects us personally, as a community, and as a nation. Did you know that the fastest growing age demographic in the world is 85+?

We are curating resources and promoting them. Community agencies on aging provide useful services and practical information for writing wills and making medical directives. We encourage churches to partner with these groups in providing programming for older people in their congregations.

Most recently I led a panel discussion about dementia with Anne Karoly, associate director for Lifetime Theological Education at VTS, for lay and clergy who minister to older people in churches, synagogues, institutions, and retirement centers. We talked about ways to bring people with dementia into our communities by respecting their relationship with God and honoring their feelings, which never appear to diminish even for those with severe Alzheimer’s.

Karoly talked about life as a caregiver while I suggested tools to help bridge the communication gap with people with dementia. Talking about this issue diminishes its power over us and restores the humanity of those with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia.

Too often older people tell us that vital spirituality is an elusive need that their churches aren’t satisfying. We have identified resources and practices to help them on their journeys. Such writers as Richard Rohr and Joan Chittister, and practices such as the writing of spiritual autobiographies challenge us with issues of faith and spiritual self-knowledge.

As he faces his own decline, Crum continues to inform us with reflections such as “I’m Frail.” In a recent correspondence, he told me that it is the dying process that most of us fear, even though death itself might be a friend.

Most of us live with the hope that we will remain active to the very end, he notes, and then die quietly in our sleep. (I’m Frail, 3) Regretfully, this is not the end most will experience. Sherwin Nuland in his best-selling book, How We Die, suggested that there were two options for facing death: “One is to battle death using all the weapons of ‘high-tech biomedicine.’ The other option is conscious acquiescence to death’s power.” (10)

Such existential issues are why older people seem to be so eager to come to terms with their own relationship to God. When I mentioned spirituality and aging in a single sentence out of a month of daily published meditations, I started getting letters and emails asking for resources and help. The hunger is real, and people want to know they are not alone.

We, at the CMT, do not presume expertise but instead view our role as one of privileged ethnographers, coming alongside lived experience and helping to make sense of what we see and hear. Given the demographics of the U.S. population and the surge of Boomers moving into retirement, we believe understanding aging and the spirituality of older adults has an important role in the CMT’s future. Growing older with grace is not just a catchy phrase; it describes a way of life filled with companionship, hope, and promise.

**References**

Crum, J. M. I’m Old, 2011.


Note: The two Crum monographs are available at the VTS Bishop Payne Library or digitally on the Key Resources webpage.
On the research and ecumenical fronts, Middler Kate Siberine (Diocese of Chicago) and I represent the Episcopal Church on a $1.1M Lilly Foundation confirmation research project to understand the state of youth confirmation and equivalent practices in five denominations that practice infant baptism. Our mixed methods research design includes surveys to clergy, lay leaders, parents, and youth from congregations preparing young people for confirmation, and in-depth site visits to carefully selected congregations and camps that have demonstrated substantive and effective confirmation preparation. Together these data sources will provide a national perspective on what people are actually doing when they “do confirmation.”

Moving beyond the anecdotal will allow the research team to make sturdy recommendations for developmentally and denominationally appropriate youth confirmation practices. As the Episcopal Church we have much to gain from, and much to contribute to, this study. For example, the findings have the potential to identify inconsistencies between assumed theological understanding and lived practices, while enriching the continuing discussion surrounding the relationship between confirmation and baptism. Why are bishops essential to the rite of Confirmation? If baptism is full initiation into the Body of Christ, what is the theological distinction between Confirmation and Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows? To what extent is youth confirmation serving as an adolescent rite of passage? Rightly or wrongly? Is the popular adage, “If you want to get rid of bats in your belfry, confirm them” a confession or an indictment?

The first round of surveys has just closed and preliminary data analysis already confirms that there is great diversity of practice when it comes to confirmation in the U.S., diversity both across and within denominations. The average confirmation program across denominations seems to be small, with six participants per year. Initial comparisons suggest youth confirmation programs in the Episcopal Church are longer in duration than many/most in other denominations. When the first round analyses are more complete, adult survey respondents will be invited to participate in a free webinar to learn more about our findings.
Until then, Kate and I are focusing on site visits—three to four days on the ground observing, interviewing, and experiencing youth confirmation programs in four settings across the Episcopal Church. Already, our experience demonstrates that confirmation preparation and liturgies provide a unique, valued opportunity for the church to engage in teenagers’ lives. Confirmation “done well” embraces a commitment to lifelong Christian formation, enlivens our ecclesiology, and equips confirmands for mission. As one diocesan leader said,

*Confirmation preparation should be the holistic formation of body and soul. Every confirmation service should be multi-cultural. Music from around the world shows people they are part of a church that is bigger than the people who are gathered. It should be a celebration of great joy, with a party afterwards, and an element of community service.*

I will be presenting a workshop on implications of our research for the Episcopal Church at the Kanuga Christian Education Conference (June 8-12), and will be joining several of my Confirmation Project faculty as a presenter for Luther Seminary’s "Rethinking Confirmation: Signs of Life in Times of Change" symposium (July 29-31). And these are just the beginning of what will become a steady roll-out of publications and new resources informed by our findings.

Our greatest hope is that the project findings, both broad statistics about national practices and the particularities of individual confirmation programs that are piloting innovative practices, will be able to inform the ways we equip youth for discipleship in all of our parishes.

To receive regular updates on the research and to engage in this important conversation, I invite you to visit the project website and join the mailing list: www.theconfirmationproject.com.
The opening of the Center for Liturgy and Music (CLM) was celebrated during Evensong on Tuesday, April 21, in the Immanuel Chapel. The Center exists to serve clergy and musicians by helping them to discover resources and to develop skills in liturgy, music, and preaching.

“The Episcopal Church is aware that the single most important factor in attracting and retaining members of congregations is effective liturgy and music,” said Dean Markham. “Whether it’s a big church or a small church, liturgy and music need to be done with care and attention. As a service to congregations, we are now offering a consultancy service and rich website resources to support liturgical and musical excellence.”

The premise for this new venture is that vibrant and engaging liturgical practices, including diverse, energetic music and passionate, effective preaching are the driving force of a vital parish.

“As I entered the church where leaders from congregations in southern Maryland had gathered, I heard something we can’t ever get enough of—joyful singing!” said the Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, bishop of Washington. “It was a transformative moment for the diocese. I commend the Center for Liturgy and Music to all churches and dioceses that long to hear their people sing.”

The Center will provide information, instruction, and inspiration that will create the desire in leaders to grow beyond their current capacity via:

- A website providing quick access to resources (www.liturgyandmusic.com)
- A “Dear Ambrose” column for questions
- An electronic newsletter
- Conferences and workshops in the field and on-site
- Consultations with parishes either in person or via Skype
- Links with other groups who seek to enhance music and liturgy, i.e. the Leadership Program for Musicians, North American Academy of Liturgy, the Mentoring Program of the Association of Anglican Musicians, Episcopal Preaching Foundation

Virginia Seminary Announces the Launch of the Center for Liturgy and Music

By Curtis Prather
Director of Communications

Photo: Curtis Prather
• Distance learning in partnership with the Leadership Program for Musicians
• Presentations at diocesan conventions or other diocesan gatherings
• Exposure to models of effective music and liturgy in diverse styles and languages
• Master classes in preaching

Markham continued: “I’m proud of this new initiative. The Episcopal Church needs it, and VTS stands ready to provide it.”

For more information about the Center’s offerings, please visit www.liturgyandmusic.com. Contact Ellen Johnston, program coordinator for the Center of Liturgy and Music, by phone at 703-461-1792 or by email at clm@vts.edu.
Myanmar in the Anglican Communion: Resilience and Vision

By the Rev. Robert S. Heaney, Ph.D., D.Phil
Director, Center for the Anglican Communion Studies

The beauty of what once was Burma and is now Myanmar does not entirely veil its ancient fortunes nor its present misfortunes. Standing amidst a country dominated by military governance, conservative Buddhism, and overshadowed by past and present conflicts, is the church of Jesus Christ. Anglicanism may account for less than 70,000 of the Christian believers in Myanmar, and yet, there is resilience, hope, and vision amongst our brothers and sisters in this part of the Anglican Communion. This is what I met under the expert guidance of the Rev. Katherine Babson (’92) as we visited the Dioceses of Yangon, Myitkina, and Taungo in January 2015.

I was welcomed to the province by the Most Rev. Stephen Than Myint Oo, who is Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Myanmar. He received me carefully, graciously, and generously and wide-ranging and mostly constructive conversations ensued. A similar welcome was extended at Holy Cross Theological College, Yangon. The seminary serves as a provincial center for clergy training through the medium of Burmese with some English instruction. The Rev. Samuel San Myat Shew, Ph.D., is a thoughtful scholar and patient leader educated in Germany with an expertise in Systematic Theology who instills confidence in faculty, staff, and students as Principal (Dean) of the seminary. In meetings, presentations, and conversations with the community, the importance of the face-to-face meeting was once again reinforced to me as we engaged in energetic and robust conversations that dispelled misconceptions and false rumors about the Anglican Communion and our place within it.

For the peoples of Myanmar, disagreement and conflict is a reality that goes beyond debate. Bishop John Zauli is the young and resilient bishop of Myitkina in Kachin State. To travel there is to visit a diocese that lies in the foothills of the Himalayas in the "Golden Triangle" close to the Chinese border. It is a largely Christian area that continues to witness ongoing conflict and tension between government forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). Peace negotiations and negotiations about negotiations continue amid strongly held convictions. Christians are deeply invested in the struggle, and rumors of miracles protecting the KIA abound. Within this wider setting of conflict and agitation, Bishop John has a passion and a vision for the Anglican church to take its place more purposefully in society and especially in education.

The Bishop of Taungo is VTS alum John Wilme (’89) and it was my great pleasure to address their clergy and staff retreat. I learned much as together we grappled with the call of God’s mission and how that call is received, translated, and contextualized in their setting. Both Bishop John and his wife Elizabeth were exceedingly kind and hospitable to me. God’s grace is very evident in their daily ministry as they open their home to the community around them.

That VTS has global reach is neither a vain boast nor hope. It is a grounded reality in the meetings, sermons, conversations, consultations, and affection of alumni and alumnae that a visit to Myanmar reveals. God is at work in this place as brothers and sisters work out what it means to be peace-builders across the cultures and religions that make up Mynamar. We have much to learn. For without intercultural and interreligious exchange in our lives, our curriculum, and our theology, we impoverish our students and the church. Indeed, in the absence of partnership and solidarity with brothers and sisters across cultures we impoverish our vision of God.
The Power of Location for Belief

By Claire Haymes
Program Coordinator, Center for Anglican Communion Studies

Joining an intentional community of believers for a week in Jerusalem and other sites in Israel and Palestine was a privilege that I enjoyed this past spring. Under the title “Sharing Perspectives,” a diverse group of participants from the U.K. had been brought together by the Rt. Rev. Richard Cheedham¹ and Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra,² comprising prison and hospital chaplains, lay interfaith leaders, school and community activists, a mosque youth leader, a City of London employee and a human rights lawyer. Apart from myself from VTS, there was also a medieval art curator from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It was clear from the outset that there was no room for a naive assumption of one clear-cut Christian perspective encountering one Muslim perspective, but we would be sharing multiple perspectives in an already multifaceted context.

Indeed, on a daily basis, over meals, at site visits, at holy sites, in lectures, and conversations, layers and details were added to each participant’s prior knowledge and expectations, appropriately so in a country that defies the neat and clean-cut explanations and solutions that binary thinking might demand. Thanks to the rich programming put together by the Rev. Dr. Rodney Aist³ in collaboration with Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway,⁴ new information came to us hourly, layer upon layer, to challenge assumptions and refocus inquiry. Whether on a first visit to Jerusalem or a return visit, moving together as a group of diverse persons of faith in a city and land of such diversity and depth was going to prove enriching and challenging.

We observed one another in prayer, in cathedral and mosque, at a lakeside altar, and on the lake shore. We listened to readings from the Quran and the New Testament at Capernaum, at Nazareth, and at Bethany. We listened to presentations from local Muslims, Christians, and Jews. We ate together and traveled together. We shared insights into our home contexts and our hopes for our return. In relationship, we committed anew to the work of interfaith understanding, living, and advocacy.

So multifaceted is Jerusalem itself and the land we call “holy,” and so varied the perspectives from which inhabitants, worshippers, course participants, and residents come that it can feel less like sharing perspectives than a constant and urgent jostling for attention and claims. The intensity of life in contested spaces across the old city; the harsh reality of daily life lived in contested territories; the thirst of the pilgrim seeking the historical detail and location among the living stones of present day faith communities; the search for a resonant reality from our respective scriptures in a rare quiet Galilean silence before returning to the clamor of a squashed and squeezed status quo contained within the old ramparts; all of this in the space of a week surely turns one’s mind and resolve to the need for perpetual inquiry, pilgrimage, and reflection as a commitment and a way of life.

At the Center for Anglican Communion Studies, we are convinced that embarking on these experiences presents opportunities for our VTS community to enter into the complexities of contexts beyond our own and into the complexities of our often too simple assumptions or readings of other

(continued on page 22)

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¹ Bishop of Kingston and Anglican President of the Christian Muslim Forum
² Assistant Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, and Co-Chair of the Christian Muslim Forum
³ Course Director at St. George’s College Jerusalem
⁴ Professor of Philosophy and Islamic Studies at Al-Quds University, Jerusalem
Dear VTS Alumni,

If you’ve been following the Seminary news at all this year, you know what an amazing year it has been. The opening of the new Immanuel Chapel and plans for its Consecration; the decision to construct new housing on campus that will offer married students the opportunity to live on campus; continuing work on a strategic plan that will bring us into the Seminary’s third century of service to the church; several outstanding new publications and teaching by VTS faculty; record attendance of potential new seminarians at our spring visit weekend; and another year of amazing contributions to the life of the Church by the alumni of VTS!

As we go to press with this issue, election results are not yet in for the next class of Alumni Association Executive Committee (AAEC) members. I do want to take the opportunity to extend our grateful thanks to those AAEC members whose terms end on June 30, 2015: The Rev. Kim Jackson, who served as AAEC President this year; the Rev. Katharine (Kitty) Babson; the Rev. Neal Goldsborough; Dr. Marianne Ryan; the Rev. Shawn Strout; and the Rt. Rev. Cabell Tennis. Each of these alumni has given generously of their time and energy over the last three years to serve the VTS alumni body. Thank you to each and every one!

We look forward to seeing many VTS alumni at the upcoming General Convention in Salt Lake City. Stop by the VTS booth and join us for our VTS Dinner on Tuesday, June 30.

As always, with blessings and thanks for your prayers and support of Virginia Theological Seminary!  

Shelagh Casey Brown  
Director of Alumni and Church Relations  
703-461-1711; scbrown@vts.edu

The Power of Location for Belief (continued from page 21)

St. George’s College Jerusalem is a unique Anglican/Episcopal institution offering an excellent base for explorations of this kind, whether individual or as a group. Co-located with the Diocesan offices and the Cathedral, it afforded this VTS representative a wonderful opportunity to connect with the Archbishop and the Dean of the Cathedral, both alumni of VTS. Dean Hosam Naoum gave generously of his time to explain the context in which the priests and lay people of the Diocese work and worship.

It was clear on many fronts that the Anglican/Episcopal voice is a trusted one and the ministries of the church play key roles in the lives of many across the region, regardless of faith.  

context. Location, to a great degree, shapes belief. We are called by God to deeper relationship and deeper faith and that gift often comes by stepping into and learning from the complexities and locations of other communities.
Palm Sunday at St. Paul’s Selma

A special service of reconciliation to commemorate 50 years since the integration of the parish

By the Rev. Jack Alvey (’09)
Rector, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church

On March 14, 1965—one week after Bloody Sunday had shaken the city of Selma, Alabama—a group of about 19 demonstrators gathered in front of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. These demonstrators didn’t carry signs. Instead, they came armed with the Book of Common Prayer. After St. Paul’s ushers turned them away, the small group knelt at the steps of the church and said the General Confession.

So began the highly charged two-week process that would involve the Bishop Charles C.J. Carpenter of Alabama; Jonathan Daniels, an Episcopal seminarian, now commemorated for his martyrdom in the church’s calendar of saints, the Rev. Franklin T. Mathews, rector of St. Paul’s, and a host of others who worked through struggle to accomplish God’s vision on earth as it is in heaven when an integrated service was held on March 28, 1965.

On Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015, the people of St. Paul’s joined with the people of St. Mark’s Birmingham to hold a service of reconciliation, to commemorate that Sunday 50 years ago when black and white people worshipped together at St. Paul’s, and to celebrate a God who uses ordinary women and men to fulfil his plan for justice and peace among all people.

When I started planning this service, I was somewhat reluctant because I wondered how digging up history that is 50 years old would help healing and reconciliation. But every time I hesitated, God kept on telling me not to be afraid as God said to so many in scripture. God kept on reminding me, “you are not defined by what you have done or left undone; you are defined by Jesus Christ, the one who has already done it all for us.” This gospel truth was helpful to remember as I read some of the first-hand accounts of what happened at the church I now serve.

On March 11, 1965 with thousands of people in Selma, St. Paul’s vestry met to review its policy on segregation. Mathews reminded the vestry “according to canon law, no communicant or baptized member of ECUSA should be excluded from the church services.” But 12 of the 14 vestry members would only agree that “the admission of any other visitors be left up to the discretion of the ushers.” Mathews told the vestry its amendment was not consistent with the canon, but he honored the vote, and thus, on March 14, the delegation attempting to integrate the church was turned away. Twenty-five leaders from St. Paul’s, including the two vestry members who voted against the resolution, stood in solidarity with those who were not permitted to enter the church.

Worship leaders including the Rev. Carolyn Foster and the Rev. Jayne Pool, both from St. Mark’s Birmingham, and the Rev. Jack Alvey (’09), from St. Paul’s Selma, lead the Procession of the Palms to the front door, as Miller Childers, from St. Paul’s, and Lou Willie, III, from St. Mark’s, wait to welcome the congregation in the name of Jesus Christ. Childers and Willie were present 50 years ago.
One member of the visiting delegation later said, “What I remember most about the church visit was the presence of a local lady, elegant and ramrod straight, a member of that parish...She took on the men with crossed arms and let them know that, if we were forbidden to enter, then she would stand outside with us.”

On March 18, Bishop Carpenter received a letter from one who had been turned away from St. Paul’s, calling on him to respond to the issue. Bishop Carpenter then wrote to St. Paul’s, urging it to honor the canon.

On March 19, the vestry convened again but—in a tie vote—failed to change its policy. Mathews’ vote could have broken the tie, but he was visiting his brother, the Rev. Lex Mathews, in Tallahassee. Lex Mathews’ was the chaplain at Florida State University and had helped to integrate the student center there.

Mathews called another vestry meeting for March 22. This time a motion to obey the canon of the church passed 8-3 with one abstention. Sensing defeat, two vestry members had stayed away. After the vote, two more vestrymen announced their resignations. These men and other parishioners left the parish, taking with them their sizeable pledges. Financial struggle and parish conflict, however, were small prices to pay for witnessing to God’s truth.

On March 28, an integrated worship service was held at St. Paul’s and the parish saw a gradual increase in black membership over the decades. Today, black members are active in parish life and serve on the vestry. We look forward to a day when no distinction has to be made between races. Members of St. Paul’s are still committed to a community that works together which was on display at a Unity Walk earlier this month.

When we gathered on Palm Sunday 2015, Lou Willie, III, a member of St. Mark’s who as a nine-year-old was turned away from our doors, and Miller Childers, a member of St. Paul’s who as a vestry member disagreed with the parish’s policy on segregation, helped call us to worship.

Before we were called to worship, we said the General Confession just as worshippers did 50 years ago. We knelt in the knowledge that not only did the church fail to live up to its calling 50 years ago but also in the knowledge that the church will continue to fail in its mission—even 50 years from now. But we also knelt in a faith that believes that we are called to be faithful to the one who makes us perfect through a love that was willing to go to the cross for us.

Even today, we live in a country that struggles to be a part of Dr. King’s dream where people are judged based not on the color of their skin but based on the content of their character. However, the church gets to proclaim another dream. The church gets to tell people about the dream of
a God. And God’s dream says that all his children from every race and nation can live in harmony now in a life lived through his Son Jesus Christ. Some of this dream came true on Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015. Thanks be to God!

A recording of the worship service and more is available at Sighs too Deep for Words (http://jackalvey.blogspot.com/2015/03/what-to-do-with-our-failure.html).

“Before we were called to worship, we said the General Confession just as worshippers did 50 years ago.”

Worshippers, including St. Paul’s retired priest associate, the Rev. Joe Knight (center), gather around church doors in a faith that believes that only by the grace of God in Christ are we worthy to enter the household of God. Photos courtesy of the Rev. Jack Alvey.
Class Notes

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

’01
The Venerable Matthias Ehilegbu Onyendi, Dean of the Cathedral, and of the Diocese of Isiala Ngwa South, of Aba Province of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion

’02
The Rev. Joshua A. Hoover, Priest-in-Charge for St. James’ Episcopal Church, Birmingham, MI

’03
The Rev. Deborah D. Apolado, Associate Rector for Christian Formation for Church of the Advent, Spartanburg, SC

’04
The Rev. Kate E. Kelderman, Chaplain and Dean for Kent School, Kent, CT

The Rev. Anne S. MacNabb, Rector for Trinity Episcopal Church, Elkridge, MD

’07
The Rev. Joseph H. Hensley, Jr., Rector for St. George’s Episcopal Church, Fredericksburg, VA

’09
The Rev. John T. Alvey, Jr., Rector for St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Selma, AL

The Rev. Timothy W. Backus, Priest-in-Charge for St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church, Gulf Breeze, FL

The Rev. Brian G. Palmer, Priest-in-Charge for St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Cambria, CA

The Rev. Mary B. Thorpe, Director of Transition Ministry for Diocese of Virginia, Richmond, VA

’10
The Rev. Dr. Susan M. Prinz, Priest Associate for St. Martin’s-in-the-Field, Columbia, SC

’12
The Rev. Daniel M. Cenci, Rector for St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Clinton, NC

The Rev. Caleb J. Lee, Associate Priest for Grace Episcopal Church, Charleston, SC

’13
The Rev. Michael T. Sie, Rector for St. Augustine Episcopal Church, Gardnersville, Monrovia, Liberia

’14
The Rev. Jean Beniste, Priest-in-Charge for Holy Redeemer Episcopal Church, Lake Worth, FL

The Rev. Sarah Saxe, Priest-in-Charge, Zion Episcopal Church, Washington, NC

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News from the Hill  ·  Spring 2015

www.vts.edu

The official website for Virginia Theological Seminary.

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 February, June, and October.

The Annual Report
The Seminary’s annual report is published once per year for alumni and friends.

Once per year, in December.

The eNews
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

Online Resources
➢ www.keyhallonline.com
➢ www.buildfaith.org
➢ www.eformationvts.org

You can also find us on:

Facebook
Twitter
YouTube

General Convention 2015: Salt Lake City, Utah
June 23 - July 3, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Please visit us in “Seminary Row” at Booth 329. Alumni Dinner at O.C. Tanner Jewelers on Tuesday, June 30.

More information, including dinner registration, can be found:

www.vts.edu/generalconvention

General Convention 2015
Salt Lake City, Utah
June 23 - July 3, 2015
7:30 p.m.
Preparations for the Third Century

VTS Board Approves Strategic Plan

By Kathryn Glover, MPA
Vice President for Human Resources and
Institutional Effectiveness
Secretary of the Corporation

In February 2014, the Board of Trustees began a strategic planning process that would focus on the years leading up to our 200th anniversary celebration in 2023. The Board and faculty worked with a consultant from InTrust to consider questions around process, involvement of stakeholders, and institutional priorities, and to reflect on how our institutional history would influence our plans for the future. The following May, the Board worked with the faculty in small groups to consider further what the Seminary would look like in 2023; what VTS would be doing to serve the church; and what VTS graduates would look like. The responses to these questions formed the foundation for a vision statement which the Board approved at the May 2014 meeting.

Between May and December 2014, various constituency groups, including Trustees, Faculty, Staff, Students, Alumni and Friends, were invited to submit ideas and initiatives within the parameters set by the vision statement. In January 2015, the Executive Committee of the Board worked with the Administration to review each of the 287 suggestions and determine the priorities for the plan. A preliminary draft of the strategic plan was submitted to the Board in February, further revisions were made, and a final draft was submitted and approved in May 2015.

The vision statement approved in May 2014 outlined four themes around which to build the 2015 Strategic Plan. Our center of gravity will remain Episcopal, serving the tradition of Anglicanism as expressed in the broad range of the ministry and mission of the Episcopal Church; we will continue to be a Residential seminary living and learning in community; our perspective will remain Global, celebrating our historic connections in the Anglican Communion; and our programming will continue to be Graduate, focusing on our accredited Masters and Doctoral programs.

VTS’ primary mission is to provide capable graduates for the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion who are globally and culturally aware. We have been fulfilling this mission since 1823 for changing and evolving ministry settings in an ever-changing world. As we consider our history while looking to the future we see a Seminary that is open to both affecting and being affected by change. Seven windows provide a means of seeing the details of those themes and help map our course to 2023.

Through Window One we see a church in which educating God’s people is a priority. The M.Div. degree will offer students an opportunity to focus on chaplaincy,
spirituality, and theologies of mission and congregational spirituality, and will be more open to students from historically disadvantaged communities. The D.Min. Program will enhance its online and hybrid curricula while attracting and graduating the finest Christian leaders and reflective practitioners. Courses in our degree programs will be more widely available to students, prospective students and guests through digital forms and classes available on Friday evenings and Saturdays. The Center for Anglican Communion Studies will continue to develop the Cross-Cultural Educational Programs (CCEP) to ensure a more globally and culturally aware student body. In order to achieve these goals we will concentrate on recruiting, supporting and graduating candidates the church needs and dedicate support for enhanced use of educational technologies. Our faculty will be instrumental in bringing these goals to fruition, enhanced by additional appointments in new areas such as Theology and Sustainable Ecology, and Educational Technology. We will increase awareness and ease of access to library services, expand electronic resources so that the library is an intellectual center able to support research and writing both within the VTS community and the wider Anglican Communion.

Through Window Two we see exciting non-degree programming that feeds the people of God. Non-credit courses for lay leaders and the congregations and institutions they serve will focus on Bible and Theology, while recognizing the multicultural nature of our church and society. Clergy will find courses that will feed and train them in congregational dynamics and cultures and working with lay volunteers or help them better manage the demands of being bi-vocational. Our Center for the Ministry of Teaching will take a lead in transitioning from Christian formation focused on programs and static resources to dynamic networks and content curation. We will work with VTS Chapters of Alumni and non-Alumni and Episcopal groups such as diocesan chancellors, standing committees, commissions on ministry and the House of Bishops to strengthen the current and future leadership of the Church.

Window Three provides a view of a Seminary connected with the community and congregations. Bringing the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, Lifetime Theological Education, and the Center for Anglican Communion Studies will develop the Cross-Cultural Educational Programs (CCEP) to ensure a more globally and culturally aware student body. In order to achieve these goals we will concentrate on recruiting, supporting and graduating candidates the church needs and dedicate support for enhanced use of educational technologies. Our faculty will be instrumental in bringing these goals to fruition, enhanced by additional appointments in new areas such as Theology and Sustainable Ecology, and Educational Technology. We will increase awareness and ease of access to library services, expand electronic resources so that the library is an intellectual center able to support research and writing both within the VTS community and the wider Anglican Communion.

VTS sacristans during the first Eucharist service: Bernard Anderson ('15) from the Diocese of Maryland, Wadie Far ('17) from the Diocese of Jerusalem, Winston Arthur ('16) from the Diocese of the Virgin Islands, Michael Sahdev ('17) from the Diocese of Southeast Florida, and Tyler Doherty ('15) from the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Photo: Curtis Prather.

Visit Weekend Co-chairs: Cortney Dale ('15), from the Diocese of Kentucky, José Reyes ('15), from the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. Photo: Kristen Pitts ('16).
for Liturgy and Music under one unified center will allow us not only to learn more holistically from congregations the best ways to serve, but also to stay informed of current and best practices. Planting churches is part of our history, and as we prepare for our bicentennial in 2023 we are looking to found and revitalize worshipping communities and congregations to enhance the wider church and the Seminary curriculum. We will work with congregations and dioceses to assist young people in exploring the vocation of ministry. Seminarians will learn and be formed in a culture enriched by the finest theological, religious and pastoral minds through a partnership with the Scholar Priests Initiative. VTS will be recognized for its work for social justice in the surrounding community through partnerships with local advocacy groups. We will work to bring the community to campus for lectures, performances, consultations and musical offerings that celebrate the diversity of our church and the world. Our commitment to increasing the number of students of color is ongoing as we strive to foster an environment where all students—both domestic and international—are affirmed and integrated into our community life.

Window Four allows us to see the centrality of worship as we live into the new chapel and explore new worship opportunities in a new worship space. The worship life at VTS will honor its daily rhythm while recognizing its place in the wider community. A wide range of liturgical practices, making use of all liturgical resources approved by General Convention, will allow for liturgical renewal in celebrating and participating in the full range of the Church Year and seasons. There will be ecumenically and interfaith-sensitive worship experiences in the Chapel. An evaluation and review of worship planning will result in a system with clearer aims and goals that teaches students how to plan and lead the services of the Book of Common Prayer more effectively and with greater innovation. Worship will be enhanced by increased incorporation of the full range of musical traditions of the Episcopal and Anglican traditions. The VTS community will continue to value personal prayer and devotions through formation and advising groups that foster spiritual growth and a spiritual direction program. A new Lilly-funded program will enhance the effectiveness of Episcopal clergy through intensive training in the art of preaching and through peer groups that nurture and support thoughtful and able preaching.

Windows One through Four allow us to see the next eight years sketched out in broad strokes. Windows Five, Six and Seven give us a glimpse of the emerging structure and environment in which these strokes take on greater form and function through an enhanced and strengthened infrastructure.
This infrastructure includes effective governance in which a nimble and engaged board and consultative groups support and enhance the Seminary’s mission. Strong communication that is focused, timely and responsive will bring VTS into the community and the community to VTS while keeping our alumni and friends engaged and involved. A developed and sustained culture of employee excellence and wellness are necessary for achieving these goals, and the combination of our institutional commitment to professional development and continuing education, an increased focus on effectiveness and efficiency, and enhanced institutional and educational technology will make this a reality. Effective budgeting and financial planning will safeguard the future of the Seminary, and a safe, well-maintained and hospitable campus will ensure our place as a landmark of formation for the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Initiatives such as these depend on and demand financial support from all our constituencies. We count on the continued generosity of our many friends and alumni. As we embark on this path towards our 200th birthday celebration in 2023 we will launch a third-century capital campaign to support our continued and growing impact in the next two hundred years.

Top: MA student, Annie Hall, works in one of the gardens on campus. Photo: Kristen Pitts.
Bottom: The west entrance into Immanuel Chapel opens to Seminary Road, creating a Welcome and Worship quad. Photo: Curtis Prather.
Alumni and friends alike are excited by the wonderful work of the Centers at Virginia Seminary. VTS forms men and women for leadership in tomorrow’s church, and that involves leading the way in curriculum development, relationship building, and liturgical practices.

The Center for the Ministry of Teaching (CMT) has a far reach into the digital world and allows churches to feel connected to a resource that cares for them. As a former Director of Christian Education, I can attest to the wonderful knowledge the CMT so freely shares with the larger Church. Just go to their podcast, or visit their VBS website and you will experience that care and expertise for yourself.

The Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACS) is a bridge-building organization. They are the hub of a large wheel fostering relationships with people from across the Anglican Communion. Visitors come to VTS from around the world. CACS welcomes these guests and creates opportunities for our students, faculty, and friends to learn from them.

The recently formed Center for Liturgy and Music (CLM) is tasked with creating the liturgical practices and musical pieces that will shape our future worship. The CLM will also help bring people together and share resources with the larger Church. It will not be long before their good work is being sung in your pews or being prayed together in your services.

Your support for the Annual Fund allows these centers to continue their work. Every podcast that brings fresh ideas to a Christian Educator, every guest that shares their knowledge and experience with others, and every liturgical practice that will shape our relationship with God is enabled by a gift to the Annual Fund. Please support our good work with a gift to the Annual Fund today.

The Annual Fund supports:
1. Subsidies for our students and their children at the Butterfly House
2. Allowing our seminarians to graduate without any new educational debt
3. The Center for Anglican Communion Studies
4. The Lifetime Theological Education program
5. Spiritual Direction for seminarians
6. Field Education for seminarians
7. The Bishop Payne Scholarship for black seminarians
8. The Second Three Years program for recent graduates
9. The Center for the Ministry of Teaching
10. The Center for Liturgy and Music

Additional Student Housing

VTS is building additional student housing on campus. These new apartments will be ready for occupancy in August 2016. They are a sound investment and will provide better community opportunities for our students. For information on naming opportunities, please contact director of development Linda Dienno at ldienno@vts.edu or 703-461-1717. For this fiscal year, we are adding the total amount of Student Housing gifts to the Annual Fund. Please support both as they are connected to the mission and ministry of the Seminary.
Save the Date

Consecration of the new Immanuel Chapel

Tues., Oct. 13, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding

The Most Reverend Justin Welby
Preaching

For updated information, including hotels, schedules, and class reunions, please visit www.vts.edu/chapel