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News from the Hill

Virginia Theological Seminary

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Top: The Rev. David Gortner, Ph.D., director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, returned from his visit to the Episcopal Church in Brazil this summer with the new 2015 Brazilian BCP for Bishop Payne Library, which he delivered to Mitzi Jarrett Budde, D.Min., head librarian and professor.

Bottom: The VTS booth at General Convention 2015 gave faculty, staff, and students a home base to meet with alumni, friends, and perspective students in Salt Lake City this summer. Photos and reflections from General Convention begin on Page 13. (First row) Ann Roebuck, director of special events; Jackie Bray (’16); and Neil Norris, director of financial aid; (Second Row) Shelagh Casey Brown, director of alumni and church relations; and Rachel Holm, assistant director for admissions and financial aid.

News from the Hill is published three times per year (February, June, and October) 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.

During General Convention, my Center Aisle piece made the case that this General Convention would go down as highly significant in the annals of history. We elected our first African-American Presiding Bishop—a dynamic preacher and a remarkable, visionary leader. We moved past the battle scars from 2003 when the Episcopal Church was ahead of American culture on the full inclusion of our LGBT sisters and brothers (and we were paying a price in terms of popularity and attendance) to a situation now where much of the rest of America, and the millennials, in particular, find our inclusion agenda attractive. I then argued that everything that was working so well for us in the 1990s (when we were growing as a denomination) can work well for us again in this decade.

However, let me supplement this analysis a little. Seizing this opportunity depends on those of us in leadership positions in the Episcopal Church honoring, respecting, and listening to our more traditional sisters and brothers. There is a thoughtful critique that comes from our “conservative” friends that we need to hear.

First, we need to keep our focus on Christ. Our theology and our worship need to be grounded in the disclosure of God in the Eternal Word, and listening to those who have gone before.

Second, we need to attend to our relationship with the Global Anglican Communion. It is extraordinary, my ordination as a priest in the Episcopal Church of less than two million is currently recognized as valid by 90 million Anglicans worldwide. We share a liturgy. We share a set of dispositions that makes outreach a priority. We share an ethos. And perhaps most importantly, those of us who live in the wealthiest country in the world are connected in real and tangible ways to those who often live in the poorest countries in the world. To become indifferent to our brothers and sisters in the Global south is to become indifferent to Christ.

Third, we need to encourage vocations from those who are socially and politically conservative. Half of the Episcopalians attending Church on any given Sunday are now found in the South and Texas. There are plenty of congregations that have a majority of conservatives in the pews. Please give these conservatives enormous credit; they have stuck with the Episcopal Church despite successive “defeats” at a very unrepresentative General Convention. These congregations need sensitive, pastorally gentle, theologically conservative leadership that will honor and celebrate the rich witness that these conservatives provide the Episcopal Church.

The trajectory the Episcopal Church is on is hopeful. But as some of us celebrate the great strides the Church and the country have made on certain issues, we all need to pause. We need to reach out to our sisters and brothers in Christ who are very nervous about all of this change and just reassure them that they are loved and honored. We truly need their voice and witness.

Yours in Christ,

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President
Students and friends enjoying a beautiful afternoon before the groundbreaking of the new student housing project. Top row: Wesley Arning (’18); Kristen Pitts (’17). Middle photo: Corey Harrington, Peter Wanjiku (’17) and Veronika Travis (’18). Bottom photo: The Rev. Ernest Ndahani (’16).
The August term at Virginia Theological Seminary began with 52 new students representing 23 domestic dioceses from all but one of the eight domestic provinces.

This year’s class is comprised of 35 students entering the Master in Divinity (M.Div.) program and six students entering the Master of Arts (M.A.) program. Additionally, five are entering the Anglican Studies program, three new students have committed to receive a post-graduate diploma of theology, and four are part-time non-degree students. There are six students coming to VTS from other countries: Myanmar, Lebanon, Malawi, Liberia, Kenya, and the United Kingdom.

“It is always a thrill to welcome these eager and committed students to campus,” said Jan Sienkiewicz, director of admissions.

The recruitment of minority students has been a priority for VTS for several years. This year a record 23 percent of our incoming domestic degree seeking class is from a minority ethnic group.

“Being formed in community is at the heart of our mission and ministry here at the Seminary,” said the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D, dean and president of VTS. “These new students arrive as we commit to incorporating families into the heart of our campus life.”

Incoming students were welcomed with an afternoon gathering hosted by their fellow students followed by a groundbreaking service at the site for the new student housing. Four buildings, housing 38 one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, and one faculty residence, will be built in the northeast corner of the VTS campus. The buildings will be available for occupancy next year.

Markham continued, “Thirty-eight student family apartments are being built; and more than 50 students are arriving. And these two things happening together symbolize our continuing commitment to formation in community. As we live together so we are transformed by the Body of Christ into agents of the Kingdom.”
VTS Announces First Publication on Systematic Theology from Professor Katherine Sonderegger

In the 2015 summer Journal, VTS announced the publication of *Systematic Theology: The Doctrine of God, Volume 1* (Fortress Press, 2015), by the Rev. Katherine Sonderegger, Ph.D., the William Meade Chair in Systematic Theology.

The mystery of Almighty God is most properly an explication of the oneness of God, tying the faith of the church to the bedrock of Israel’s confession of the LORD of the covenant, the LORD of our Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine of divine attributes, then, is set out as a reflection on Holy Scripture: the One God as omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient, and all these as expressions of the Love who is God. Systematic theology must make bold claims about its knowledge and service of this One LORD: the Invisible God must be seen and known in the visible. In this way, God and God’s relation to creation are distinguished—but not separated—from Christology, the doctrine of perfections from redemption. The LORD God will be seen as compatible with creatures, and the divine perfections express formally distinct and unique relations to the world.

"Astonishing in scope and breadth, beautiful in language, profound in spiritual perception, this is a monumental work, comparable to Rowan Williams and T. F. Torrance at their best," said George Hunsinger from Princeton Theological Seminary. "I expect it to be a standard point of reference in Christian theology for years to come."

King-Mitchell Merit Scholarship Prize for Academic Excellence Awarded to Three Students

This year’s recipients of the 2015 King-Mitchell Merit Scholarship Prize for Academic Excellence are Anna Shine, Joshua Daniel, and David Michael Goldberg. They join returning recipients Robin Denney and Ragan Sutterfield.

The King-Mitchell Merit Scholarship Prizes were established by a bequest from the estates of Howard King and his sister Ruth King Mitchell. These scholarship prizes, valued at $5,000 each and awarded independently of our need-based aid program, are intended to encourage academic excellence and foster potential in the broadest expression of theological education.

"Over the years many alumni and friends of the Seminary have given money for scholarships in honor of family members or graduates and for specific purposes," said Dean Markham. "We remain grateful for their support of our formation of future graduates."

The King-Mitchell Merit Scholarship Prizes are awarded on a competitive basis to entering students who complete all admissions requirements and complete an additional entrance essay.

Dean Markham Delivers Presentations at FD Maurice Lectures

This summer, Dean Markham delivered three presentations at the prestigious FD Maurice Lectures at King’s College London.

Established in 1933 in honor of Frederick Denison Maurice, the FD Maurice Lectures take place over three consecutive evenings in the spring, with a common theme. The lectures have been given by some of the most eminent specialists in their field and are designed both for students and staff and for the informed public. Markham’s topic for the 2015 lectures is titled “The New Apologetic: a Defense of Dying Doctrines.”

"It is an honor to do the FD Maurice Lectures," said Markham. "It is an opportunity to develop an argument over three lectures. Hopefully they shall evolve into a book over time."

The establishment of the lectures testified to a later generation’s recognition of Maurice’s enormous contribution to education and to society.
The Consecration of Immanuel Chapel marks the end of one important chapter in the history of Virginia Theological Seminary and the beginning of another.

To commemorate this important time, VTS will share with our alumni and friends a yearlong series of diverse and exciting programming. Coordinated by the office of Lifetime Theological Education, the Immanuel Chapel Dedicatory Year will celebrate the work and commitment that went into the building of the new Immanuel Chapel. Music, lectures, classes, and special services will highlight the year.

Please visit www.vts.edu/chapel for the latest information.
2015

October

9 Icon Exhibition opens in the Welcome Center (through November 21, 2015)

13 Chapel Consecration

13 Sculpture and Photo Essay: Envisioning the Visitation – An Encounter with the Creative Arts (through December 18)

27 Community Sing, featuring Alice Parker, Marilyn Haskel, and Ysaye Barnwell

November

3 Evening School: Envisioning the Visitation – An Encounter with the Creative Arts with Peggy (Margaret Adams) Parker and Cayce Ramey

6 Fridays at the Seminary with Dr. Thomas G. Long

6 Dedictory Organ Recital with Scott Detra

10 Faculty Inaugural Lecture: The Rev. James Farwell, Ph.D.

15 Service at sculpture Mary as Prophet – “He has filled the hungry with good things,” by adjunct instructor Peggy (Margaret Adams) Parker

December

4 Fridays at the Seminary: Advent Pilgrimage: A Walk Through Sacred Space led by the Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D., and Heather Zdancewicz, MBA

6 Dean’s Cross with Lessons & Carols

13 Messiah Sing-a-long conducted by Dr. Mark Whitmire

OCTOBER 13
The Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, will preach at the Consecration for Immanuel Chapel.

NOVEMBER 10
Faculty Inaugural Lecture:
The Rev. James Farwell, Ph.D.

DECEMBER 6
Dean’s Cross with Lessons & Carols

DECEMBER 13
Messiah Sing-a-long conducted by Dr. Mark Whitmire
2016

January

10  Organ Recital with Janet Yieh
19–22  Storyteller Class led by Donald Davis

February

Evening School Course: Peace-making and Spiritual Discipline
led by the Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori

20  Illuminated Lives: Silent Retreat with activities led by the Rev. Dawna Wall, D.Min.

March–May

Degree and Enriched Evening School Course: Biblical Storytelling: Sacred Spaces led by the Rev. Ruthanna Hooke, Ph.D.

March

18  Organ Recital with Marilyn Keiser
27  Easter Egg Hunt hosted by Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
31  Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford

April

9  Chanticleer choral concert
22  Silent Movie with organ improvisation featuring Dorothy Papadokos

FEBRUARY

Evening School Course led by the Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, visiting professor and the 26th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

MARCH 27
Easter Egg Hunt hosted by Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
April
4–5 Martin Luther King Jr.
Commemoration led by the Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr.
9 Chanticleer choral concert
22 Silent Movie with organ improvisation featuring Dorothy Papadokos

May
6 Fridays at the Seminary with the Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, visiting professor

June
6–8 eformation 2016

September–November
Evening School Course: Sacred Space led by the Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.

October

MAY 12

JUNE 6–8
eformation 2016

Image of the Chapel by Peter Aaron/Otto for Robert A.M. Stern Architects.
The intensive three-week summer session for the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) Program here at Virginia Theological Seminary concluded on July 10. This summer marked the largest D.Min. Summer Session in VTS history: 46 students across our three doctoral program tracks, 20 candidates approved to begin work on their project theses, 10 intensive academic courses and three short personal development courses taught by 20 instructors as individuals or teams, and case study and institutional study sessions led by 16 instructors in pairs.

Students came from Canada, Zambia, Trinidad, the Virgin Islands, and the span of the United States—from Episcopal and worldwide Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, Adventist, Catholic, Baptist, UCC, and Presbyterian traditions—serving in diverse settings.

With more than 90 students enrolled, VTS’ Doctor of Ministry Program, with its three tracks—Ministry Development, Educational Leadership, and Christian Spirituality—is the largest and most robust D.Min. program among Episcopal seminaries and diverse Anglican seminaries, and is among the larger programs in the country. We are particularly proud of our graduates and candidates who, through their various thesis projects and other leadership efforts, are having a significant impact in their churches and faith communities, schools and universities, seminaries, dioceses and judicatories, hospitals, and branches of the military.

The program’s significant growth over the last seven years could not have been achieved without the solid support of VTS’ staff and faculty across all departments and areas of seminary life. Each doctoral residency has become smoother and smoother as we learn as a total seminary system how to create a rich environment of intensive learning for experienced religious leaders. Applications and financial matters are handled efficiently, course registration is running well, dorms and guestrooms are prepared, library support has been steady, food service has been tremendous, power outages and IT issues are handled quickly and with grace, and instruction has been exceptionally strong.

We are indeed a Seminary in full operation during much of the summer. Many thanks to all who have kept things flowing well.

Deadlines for Applying

“What are the ultimate aims of Christian ministry and leadership for transforming lives, communities and cultures?”

This is a guiding question undergirding our Doctor of Ministry programs at Virginia Theological Seminary. It points to what really matters wherever we are serving—in congregations, schools, colleges, the military, mission field, or the larger community.

Our Doctor of Ministry programs are unparalleled in their integration of interdisciplinary academic rigor, unflinching challenge for personal growth, and demanding expansion of skills and habits for the sake of transformational leadership.

You bring knowledge, wisdom, and skill from your ministry. You know your own challenges, strengths, and areas for growth. We honor what you bring to this program. You are treated as an adult professional learner. You contribute to the learning of your cohort through intensive reflections on real situations you have faced.

The deadline for applying for the program beginning in summer 2016:
- Jan. 15 – D.Min. in Educational Leadership

The deadline for applying for the program beginning in January 2017:
- Sept. 15 – D.Min. in Ministry Development
- Sept. 15 – D.Min. in Christian Spirituality

For more information, please visit www.vts.edu/doctor.
VTS alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends connecting at the VTS booth. Top right: Duanne Foster, the Rev. Willis Foster (’10), the Rev. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D. (’83), and the Rev. Ramelle McCall (’11). Middle row, left to right: Brian Rallison (’18), Roberta Kraft (’18), Kayleigh Kraft, Bishop Matthew Gunter (’96) and his wife Leslie; VTS alumni, faculty and staff speak with prospective students at the VTS booth. Bottom row: Ellen Johnston of VTS’ Center for Liturgy and Music; the Rev. Carlos de la Torre and the Rev. Broderick Greer, both newly graduated members of the Class of 2015.
Please allow me to start by acknowledging our debt to everyone here. We are strong because of this circle of women and men who care about Virginia Theological Seminary. We have come through a crippling recession of 2008; we have come through the loss of our 1881 Chapel to fire. And now in 2015, I am pleased to report the following.

The new Immanuel Chapel is completed. It is extraordinary. It has an exterior that looks like it has always been there; and it has an interior which is flexible and contemporary. The space is a gathering around the table, an aumbry is on the wall, the Icon of the Incarnation has a spectacular votive candle stand underneath, and the Taylor & Boody organ fits and plays perfectly in the space.

Our programs are strong. We continue to attract gifted students who seek to serve the church; and we continue to have a high placement rate. We also have our Lifetime Theological Education, where in a typical year 600 students are taught. We now add to our impact our various websites, especially out of the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, where we have in a typical month more than 30,000 hits. It truly is remarkable the work that the Seminary is doing.

The news for this fall is good. A total class of 52 (of which 46 are full-time). This is the most diverse class ever, with 23 percent of our domestic students from a minority ethnic group, and 31 percent if you include the international students. Then we have some surprises—more men than women (67 percent to 33 percent), more single students than married/partnered (54 percent to 46 percent), and for the first time in many years the median age has tracked up to 35.
The Center for the Anglican Communion Studies continues to keep us connected to our global family (and a major highlight there was the remarkable Christian-Muslim dialogue conference organized in Tanzania); and we are proud and excited about the launch of our new Center—the Center for Liturgy and Music—which seeks to provide consultancy and expertise to congregations around the country.

We have just finished a Strategic Planning process. The key words are Episcopal—we seek to serve this remarkable tradition, Global—we seek to stay connected with the worldwide Anglican family, Residential—we believe in the power of proximity and community, and Masters—we are proud of our high quality accredited programming. Our goal in this strategic plan is to make the Episcopal Church even stronger and more connected.

Thanks to the generosity of Bishop Carolyn Tanner Irish we are able to contribute the proceeds of this dinner to the campaign for the Rebuilding of the Cathedral in Haiti. As we celebrate the opening of our chapel, we are conscious that it was in 2010 that Haiti lost its Cathedral in the earthquake. We want to play our part in making sure that Cathedral is built.

Finally, I invite the Bishop of Texas to step forward and reflect on the achievement of his remarkable book, Church: A Generous Community Amplified for the Future. Finding time to read a book of this size would be hard for many busy people in the Church; so we are proud to celebrate the achievement of writing a book of this size. And we appreciate the wisdom and hopefulness embedded in this text.

I conclude where I started: We are strong because of you. Your care, your love, your support, your advocacy, your giving—this is what makes the difference. So thank you so very much.

James Stambaugh ('17) and Bishop Michael Vono ('76).

The Rev. Melody Knowles, Ph.D., VTS Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The Rev. Glenda McQueen ('03), Partnership Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean for The Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Douglas Scharf ('04), the Rev. Andrew O'Connor ('05), and Jan Sienkiewicz, Director of Admissions.

The Rev. Melody Knowles, Ph.D., VTS Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Jon Musser ('17) represented the African American Episcopal Historical Collection at General Convention.

The Rev. Glenda McQueen ('03), Partnership Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean for The Episcopal Church.

Dr. Lisa Kimball, Anthony Guillen, Mancy Frausto, Miguelina Howell, the Rev. David Gortner, and Uriel Lopez, after a lively conversation about the VTS D.Min. program.

Shelagh Casey Brown and Rachel Holm, Assistant Director of Admissions and Financial Aid.
VTS alumni and friends enjoyed a magical evening at O.C. Tanner Jewelers during General Convention 2015 in Salt Lake City. Photos (left to right, from top down): Bishop Carolyn Irish ('83, '97) and Dean Ian Markham; Duanne Foster and the Rev. Willis Foster ('10). Clockwise beginning upper left corner: The Rev. Dr. Rosemarie Duncan ('05, '13), the Rev. Lynn Burns ('06), the Rev. Canon Jose McLoughlin ('05), the Rev. Caron Gwynn ('06), the Rev. Sarabeth Goodwin ('05), the Rev. Kathleen Gannon ('05), the Rev. Carlye Hughes ('05); the Rev. Curtis Farr ('13), the Rev. Eileen O'Brien ('14) and the Rev. Dorota Pruski ('13); the Rt. Rev. Gladstone (Skip) Adams ('80); David Goldberg ('18), the Rev. Patrick Greene ('10) and the Rev. Christine Faulstich ('10).
Photos on this page: VTS alumni and friends enjoying a time of reunion with classmates and friends, with delicious food in beautiful surroundings; Bishop Dean Wolfe (’92), the Rev. Priscilla Grant (’92), the Rev. Dr. James E. Taylor (DMin ’14), the Rev. David Read (’92), the Rev. Theodora Brooks (’92), and the Rev. Canon Scott Slater (’92); Bishop C. Andrew (Andy) Doyle (’95); the Rev. Alexander (Sandy) Webb (’10) greets Dorothy Powell and VTS trustee Bishop Neff Powell.
It’s Time to Reframe the Conversation

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

As part of Virginia Theological Seminary’s presence at General Convention, the Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACS) hosted, along with the Compass Rose Society, a packed event reflecting on “The Mission of God and The Future of the Anglican Communion.”

As the newly appointed Mission Theologian in the Anglican Communion, Bishop Graham Kings was the keynote speaker. The position of Mission Theologian comes as a result of a partnership between the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Church Mission Society, and Durham University. Kings officially took up the post in mid-July. He summarizes his role as promoting a World Christianity that is not only “self-supporting, self-governing, and self-extending, but also self-theologising.”

At the CACS event he reminded those present that mission begins with God and “We are drawn into this astonishing movement from God and towards God” which, at the same time, propels us outward to share God’s Gospel. Given such a missiological frame, the Communion’s future is “in the hands of God” who calls us to be “Catholic, Evangelical, and Ecumenical.” That calling is, by theological definition and necessity, inter-cultural.

Kings’ priorities for the new post include convening a network of theologians as Doctors of the Church, making inter-cultural reflection available online (www.MissionTheologyAngCom.org) and coordinating a new series of published resources from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

This was an important moment at General Convention hosted by VTS. The event was oversubscribed and those who did register in time had the opportunity to hear voices from the international community. Positive feedback from participants underline the ongoing significance of such events as grounded. Visible signs of the importance of the Anglican Communion and recognition that relationships, experiences, debates and partnerships are key means in discerning priorities for Christian ministry in today’s world.

Responding to Bishop Kings were the Primates of Korea, Pakistan, and Brazil. For Bishop Kim of Korea, numbers are not important to the mission of God. What is important in Episcopal traditions is that we depend upon and make manifest the grace of God in the world. Bishop Da Silva of Brazil called for an incarnational and not a confessional understanding of Anglicanism. Such an understanding, he argued, prioritizes the grounding of the Gospel socially, economically, and politically. In the context of a persecuted church, Bishop Azariah of Pakistan simply stated, “The mission of God is the cross of Christ.”

After chairing the event, the Director of CACS, Rev. Robert S. Heaney, Ph.D, D.Phil, said, “It is time to reframe conversations we are having in the Communion missiologically. The Episcopal Church is striving to do just that as we talk more about the mission of God and how we participate in it. However, much more work theologically, practically, and cross-culturally needs to be done. I believe VTS will continue to be crucial in resourcing and nourishing that work for the Church and Communion.”

The Rev. Robert Heaney, director of the Center for Anglican Communion Studies, with Rev. Dr. William L. Sachs, fellow for World Anglicanism at CACS.

Bishop Graham Kings, Ph.D., Mission Theologian in the Anglican Communion, with Claire Haymes, program coordinator and interreligious officer.
By Role, by Location, or by Calling?

Honoring the African Mission

By Claire Haymes
Program Coordinator and Interreligious Officer

Priest, tutor, radiologist, assistant professor, chaplain, communications director, mother, wife, grandmother, VTS alum. Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Kenya, New York, Georgia, Virginia, Tanzania. What is the best way to encapsulate and celebrate the diverse life and ministry of the Rev. Sandra McCann?

Sandy McCann ('03) and her husband Martin have lived and worked for the past 12 years in Dodoma, Tanzania, where Sandy has served as Communications Director at Msalato Theological College as well as fulfilling other roles there and at St. Philip’s Theological College in Maseno, Kenya. They are Appointed Missionaries of The Episcopal Church. They are retiring from this service, but many would be understandably skeptical, given that Sandy and Martin have already retired once—from full-time careers in radiology and pathology, respectively, here in the US prior to serving in Kenya and Tanzania.

“When I worried that I was too old to begin Seminary at age 56, Gordon [Cosby]¹ (then into his 80s) seriously said, ’But you are so young!’ I think of that now that I have finished Seminary and have been in Africa for 12 years—and on most days I still feel young!’ says McCann.

She was indeed called to Virginia Theological Seminary, subsequently ordained a deacon in Columbus, GA, and to the priesthood in Dodoma, Tanzania, in both instances by Bishop Alexander, then bishop of the Diocese of Atlanta. We asked Sandy about significant individuals or milestones on her own journey, and Sandy cited her mother. “It was through the example of her life that I learned the discipline of faithful worship and the joy of sharing. Although having few resources, she received contagious joy from sharing what she had with other people.” She also cited her long-time parish priest at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Columbus, Ga., the retired Rev. Cn. Charles Roper (a VTS alum), “a faithful and gifted teacher and preacher, who led Martin and me into a much deeper understanding of the Christian faith,” and the founder and members of a house-church movement in D.C. “Gordon introduced us to the myriad missions of the Church of the Saviour, including one called the Ministry of Money that was very helpful with our relationship to money.”

In my first six months with the Center for Anglican Communion Studies, I learned to appreciate first-hand the commitment and vibrancy of Sandy McCann’s life and ministry as we worked together to coordinate hospitality details for the Christian-Muslim conference in the summer of 2014. It was clear from that interaction that there was depth, breadth, and insight to all that Sandy took on in the various roles she has fulfilled as an appointed missionary of The Church.

Sandy shared with us how serving God beyond the geographic boundaries of her own country had shaped her and her ministry:

¹ The late Rev. Gordon Cosby, founder of the Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., a house-church movement committed to radical discipleship through small mission groups (now a network of nine independent faith communities). http://inwardoutward.org/the-church-of-the-saviour
“Serving here [in Tanzania] has certainly opened my eyes to the difference between a first world problem and a problem of the developing nations. Serving here has also opened me to the joy of the Lord in all circumstances. The late Bishop Mhogolo wrote that even when the people are hungry in the villages they are still singing and dancing and praising the Lord. And this is absolutely true. They do not wait for God to solve their problems before enjoying Him; rather they rejoice that He is their strength in their sufferings and difficulties (Neh 8:10.). It’s a powerful and beautiful thing to behold. This, perhaps more than anything, has made the road worth traveling.

Recently we were without water for a month on the campus. Prior to this I thought that I was sympathetic to those who must fetch water every single day of their lives for every drop that they need. Experience revealed that my heart was really still hardened to the daily struggle for water. I was embarrassed at how much I wanted to complain. Incidents such as these have opened me up to who I really am and not who I think I am or who I wish to be. These experiences are helping me to be more authentic.”

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Recently we were without water for a month on the campus. Prior to this I thought that I was sympathetic to those who must fetch water every single day of their lives for every drop that they need. Experience revealed that my heart was really still hardened to the daily struggle for water. I was embarrassed at how much I wanted to complain. Incidents such as these have opened me up to who I really am and not who I think I am or who I wish to be. These experiences are helping me to be more authentic.”

We are all Missionaries” buttons were being passed out and proudly worn across General Convention this year. We asked Sandy what that means to her as someone with missionary in her job title:

“It’s a catchy line to remind everyone that we all are sent to serve the Lord, whether in one’s daily place of work or in another country. I think it is very important for all Christians to cross cultural boundaries, but this does not have to be in a different country. Crossing boundaries into the land of illegal immigrants, prisoners, the mentally ill, or the addicted need not take you far from your home. And today to serve God in many communities and schools in the US requires crossing language and cultural barriers.”

From a childhood as the middle child with four brothers in the hills of western PA on a small non-working farm, to ministry in the Diocese of Central Tanganyika, with a career as a medical profession in between, we asked Sandy for advice for those wanting to ensure that crossing boundaries or cultures is an integral part of their life of faith:

“Cultural differences are very deep and very real and often very hard for outsiders to comprehend. In addition to the continuing influence of traditional religion and customs, the way we approach problems, the authority in the community and the lens through which we read scripture may be very different. The way others understand and do things will often
be perplexing and frustrating. It will take a lot of time, patience, and prayer to not be judgmental and cynical. For this reason it is important that the reason for crossing the barrier is to be transformed by the other as much as to transform. I think another helpful hint is to speak to others who have lived in another culture.”

In the Center for Anglican Communion Studies, we are committed to helping seminarians explore the implications of our membership in a world church; to helping members of The Church see their own faith and vision of God as crucially dependent on knowing the wider church and the wider world, and expanding their vision of God. We seek to provide space and opportunity for diverse people to reflect together, and for diverse stories to be told and heard.
Fall brings the long anticipated Consecration of Immanuel Chapel. We look forward to welcoming hundreds of alumni for this historic occasion. If you cannot be here in person, please watch online. Both the October 13, 10:00 a.m. Consecration service and the 4:00 p.m. Choral Evensong will be live streamed and available for viewing afterward.

Please welcome the new Alumni Association Executive Committee (AAEC) officers for the 2015-2016 academic year:

President: The Rev. Phoebe Roaf ('08)
Vice President: The Rt. Rev. Gary Lillibridge ('82)
Secretary: The Rev. Canon Blake Rider ('04)

The newly elected AAEC Class of 2018 includes:
The Rev. Michael Angell ('11)
Dr. Serena Beeks (DMin '09)
The Rev. Canon Jose McLoughlin ('05)
The Rev. Bingham Powell ('07)

A key role of the AAEC is to keep lines of communication open and strong between our alumni and the Seminary. Class Stewards also help keep their classmates connected with one another and with VTS. Our Regional Chapters provide yet another way to stay connected, through chapter programs featuring VTS faculty and other gatherings. More information can be found on the VTS website under Alumni.

Please mark your calendars now for Theological Education Sunday which will be held on February 7, 2016. If you are interested in having a VTS faculty, staff or student preach at your parish, let me know at scbrown@vts.edu.

The Alumni and Church Relations Office also handles placement activities, particularly for our graduating seniors. Please let me know if you have a position opening that is appropriate for one of our graduating students.

We need your email address! If you are NOT receiving the Alumni eNews that goes out on the first of every month, it means we do not have a current email address for you. Help the Seminary reduce its amount of paper communications. Please send your email address to mpotin@vts.edu.

With thanks and blessings for your prayers and support of Virginia Theological Seminary!

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

Please share your news with us!

Write:
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Alexandria, VA 22304

E-mail: alumni@vts.edu
Call: 703-461-1736
Fax: 703-370-0138

E-mail address changes to:
mpotin@vts.edu

‘06
The Rev. Dr. Melchiorre Del Nagro, Parish Associate, Poland Presbyterian Church, Poland, OH
The Rev. Dr. Cynthia J. Rogers, Director of Chaplaincy Services, Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute, Falls Church, VA

‘07
The Rev. Betty M. Glover, Interim Rector, St. David’s Episcopal Church, Topeka, KS
The Rev. Erin S. Hensley, Rector, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church Austin, Manchaca, TX

‘08
The Rev. Scott H. Souders, Rector, Holy Spirit Anglican Church,Akron, OH

‘09
The Rev. Patrick R. Perkins, Rector, St. Francis’ Episcopal Church, Holden, MA

‘10
The Rev. Christopher M. Streeter, Rector, The Church of the Incarnation, Penfield, NY

‘11
The Rev. T. Grant Ambrose, Rector, Ware Episcopal Church, Gloucester, VA
The Rev. Michael R. Angell, Rector, Church of the Holy Communion,University City, MO

‘12
The Rev. Benjamin R. Badgett, Associate Rector, Church of the Holy Communion,Memphis, TN
The Rev. Audrey L. O’Brien, Interim Rector, St. Dunstan’s Episcopal Church,Dover, MA

‘13
The Rev. Dr. William L. Stomski, Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Reno, NV

‘14
The Rev. Christen H. Mills, Assistant Rector for Christian Formation, St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Weston, MA

‘15
The Rev. Alex Allain, Chaplain, University of Alabama Birmingham Hospital,Birmingham, AL

The Rev. Bernard Anderson, Minister-in-Residence, St. John’s Episcopal Church,Ellicott City, MD
Ms. Nina Bacas, Associate for Parish Life and Families, The Falls Church Episcopal,Falls Church, VA
The Rev. Steven M. Balke, Curate, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Waco, TX
The Rev. Maxine Barnett, Curate, St. Jude’s Episcopal Church, Wantagh, NY
The Rev. William H. Compton, Curate, Chapel of the Cross,Madison, MS
The Rev. Alan B. Cowart, Associate Rector, Grace Episcopal Church,Gainesville, GA
The Rev. Cortney H. Dale, Associate Rector, Christ Episcopal Church, New Bern, NC
The Rev. Carlos de la Torre, Missional Curate, Diocese of Connecticut, Meriden, CT
The Rev. Kimberly Glenn, Assistant Rector, St. John’s Episcopal Church, Lynchburg, VA
The Rev. Broderick L. Greer, Curate, Grace-St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Memphis, TN
The Rev. Paula Griffin, Interim Curate, St. James, Wilmington, Wilmington, NC
The Rev. Emily W. Guffey, Associate Rector, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Chicago, IL
The Rev. Canon Connor B. Gwin, Canon Missioner, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, VA
The Rev. Chris Hamby, Minister-in-Residence, Christ Church, Alexandria, VA
The Rev. Zachary C. Harmon, Curate, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Salem, OR
The Rev. Christine D. Hord, Curate, Christ Episcopal Church, Pensacola, FL

The Rev. Jeffrey C. Hual, Assistant Priest, St. Paul’s Parish K Street, Washington, DC

The Rev. Benjamin B. Maddison, Curate, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Waco, TX

The Rev. Eric N. Mancil, Curate, Church of the Heavenly Rest, Abilene, TX

The Rev. Nicholas S. Mather, Curate, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Spokane, WA

The Rev. Christopher H. Miller, Assistant Upper School Chaplain, St. Stephen’s & St. Agnes School, Alexandria, VA

The Rev. Gregory L. Millikin, Minister-in-Residence, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA

The Rev. Amanda Molina-Moore, Curate, Christ Church Christiana Hundred, Wilmington, DE

The Rev. Fares Naoum, Redeemer Church, Associate for Youth and Families, Jabal Amman, Amman, Jordan

The Rev. Jacob E. Pierce, Curate, Church of the Holy Comforter, Charlotte, NC

The Rev. Grace A. Pratt, Assistant Rector, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA

The Rev. Shannon E. Preston, London Member, The Community of St. Anselm

The Rev. Daniel J. Reeves, Curate, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Durham, NC

The Rev. José R. Reyes Pérez, Curate, All Saints Episcopal Church, Worcester, MA

The Rev. Kristin L. Saylor, Priest Associate, St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Bronx, NY

The Rev. Elisabeth Sinclair, Associate Rector, Church of the Redeemer, Kansas City, MO

The Rev. Jennifer L. Southall, Curate, St. James’ Episcopal Church, Jackson, MS

The Rev. Bryan W. Spoon, Hospital Chaplain, Mercy Hospital Springfield, Springfield, MO

Mrs. Suzanne M. Stierwalt, Vicar, St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, Springfield, VA

The Rev. Sarah H. Taylor, Curate, St. John’s Church, Lafayette Square, Washington, DC

The Rev. Morris K. Thompson III, Curate, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Columbus, MS

The Rev. Chandler Whitman, Curate, St. George’s Episcopal Church, Germantown, TN

The Rev. Bernard Anderson (’15) is joined by Bishop Eugene Sutton and other clergy and friends at his ordination to the priesthood at St. John’s Episcopal Church, Olney, MD, on July 9, 2015. Fr. Anderson is to the Bishop’s right in the photo above. To the Bishop’s left is St. John’s Rector, the Rev. Dr. Carol Pinkham-Oak. Next to her is VTS alum the Rev. Jennifer Overstone-Smith (’03), also on staff at St. John’s. Many VTS alumni were present for the ordination.

Save the Date!
Alumni Convocation 2016
October 4-5, 2016
Class Reunions, Reception, and Dinner
October 3, 2016
Annual Fund Update

By Bill Campbell
Director of the Annual Fund

Commencement in May was an amazing experience. VTS sent out 54 graduates to serve in churches and faith communities all over the world. If you look beyond our residential students, you will see that our Lifetime Theological Education program enriched the lives of more than 600 faith leaders. Our Center for the Ministry of Teaching (CMT) websites generated over 30,000 hits in one month.

The Seminary opened the 2015-2016 residential school year by welcoming 52 new incoming students from 32 dioceses, representing 16 states and six countries. VTS is shaping leaders here and beyond.

It is important to know that the Annual Fund supports not only every one of our seminarians here, but also every program and class we offer. The Annual Fund is the driving factor for every single activity at VTS. Your support allows VTS to grow beyond its campus and reach into the world.

As you look through this issue, you will see most the ways Virginia Seminary nurtures the leaders of the Episcopal Church. We hope that you will join us by making a gift to support our efforts. Please go online and make your gift at www.vts.edu/give. We appreciate your support.

Politics and Faith

Where would you expect to find a conversation between a British government minister and a congressman from the US House of Representatives? Virginia Seminary might not have been at the top of your list, but on August 2, we were honored to host Dan Rogerson of the UK and Rep. Don Beyer of Virginia for a conversation on faith, diplomacy, economic policy, environmental issues, and education.

Mr. Rogerson was a Liberal-Democrat member of parliament for North Cornwall from 2005 to 2015. In 2013 he served as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for water, forestry, rural affairs, and resource management. Rep. Beyer’s 8th district covers the heart of Northern Virginia. Beyer has a long resume of service to our country as a diplomat, a congressman, and a local businessman.

This was an impressive and historic conversation—VTS became a place for people to gather and share their faith story as well as engage in their civic interests. Rogerson kindly returned for a second conversation on August 6. Neighbors, students, faculty, and local political leaders were included in both conversations. As VTS continues to connect with the communities we serve, civic engagement will be an important tool for our work. We look forward to hosting more events like these in the future.
Metro Theology
“En” the City

By Adrienne R. Hymes ('14)

The prefix *en* means, in or within. It can also mean “to cause to be in” or “to restrict on all sides, completely.” Metro Theology is much like the prefix “en” which caused the pastoral-sized parish of Trinity Episcopal Church in Huntington, WV, to be in active relationship with its city from all sides—and therefore explode in growth and vitality. Metro Theology is neither a program nor product. It is a concept that names the participation of the church in God's unceasing, vibrant, relational mission already at work in a city.

The Very Rev. Dr. Chip Graves ('07, '12) is the rector of Trinity Episcopal, and is a passionate advocate for and practitioner of Metro Theology as it has manifested in and through his church and city. As a second-career priest with an M.B.A. in International Business, Graves' depth of business management experience uniquely enables him to see possibilities for serving God's people in existing resources, including Trinity. Graves, who coined the term “Metro Theology,” can be best described as an en-visionary.

While visionaries create broad concepts and programming intending to bring about a new reality, Graves as an en-visionary seeks the already-existing reality. Stepping into the now-ness of the existing reality allows him to creatively move with the divine activity of co-creating with God and neighbor. “I didn't dream up Metro Theology and go and do it. It was an extrapolation of asset-based community development used to engage local challenges. We were already doing it organically at Trinity. Now, there's a name for it,” says Graves.

Since 2012, Trinity has partnered ecumenically with other faith communities, non-profits, local businesses and top city and state officials, including Huntington's mayor, Steve Williams, to address the city's greatest social challenges. The ministries, all of which are hosted at Trinity, address drug addiction, homelessness, and unemployment, and provide support for youth education and fine arts. The church's commitment to partnerships enables it to offer these ministries, providing pastoral counseling, educational tutoring, medical and dental care through Marshall University, and several food ministries feeding more than 14,000 each year.

Trinity's focus on community has re-invigorated existing ministries at the church. For example, the parish's 30-year-old Cridlin food pantry is open three days per week and is an ecumenical partnership with six local churches providing 60,000 meals per year. Trinity also holds a weekly Rite III Wednesday evening worship that serves a full dinner to an average of 110 attendees, primarily non-Episcopalian. Seventy-five percent are homeless. Graves enthusiastically says, “We are feeding people with the Gospel as well as tangible food.”

Graves provides the image of Metro Theology as the fabric into which the various ministries and resources in the network are woven. Metro Theology’s vibrant presence in Huntington is a result of what happens when a church community is led, heart first, into wrestling with the city’s most challenging needs. Trinity makes the church building accessible and its resources available. Three years ago, Trinity had a near empty multi-level dinosaur for a building. But now it is bursting at the seams with several new renters and ministries including an advocacy group for women, a yoga class, a dance studio, a Head Start preschool, an art studio, a seniors' bridge club, an Alcoholics Anonymous group, a Narcotics Anonymous group, an Overeaters Anonymous group, a Veterans group and...
three feeding programs for the homeless. Empty parking spaces cannot be found.

Trinity has become a church without walls inviting all to get involved in outreach. The ripple effect has been amazing. Graves says, “We did not set out to double our church in size, but we did. We didn’t open ourselves up to this movement to increase income through pledges, but it has increased—over 40 percent!” However, the true and inherent gift of Metro Theology is its contextual nature—the gifts and assets of churches and communities in which it evolves are unique.

Graves envisions a national Metro Theology consortium where think-tank activity can occur, given the concept’s ability to be shared and franchised for creating greater good in any city. “Metro Theology is an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace; it is a sacramental ministry,” says Graves. “The sacramental work we do as a faith community, within a larger metropolitan community, doesn’t show up in ASA in the same way, but I am confident that it will some day.”

**Call-to-Action: Engage Metro Theology En Your City**

The Very Rev. Dr. Chip Graves invites fellow and future en-visionaries to use him as a resource for seeking, finding and engaging Metro Theology across the Episcopal Church. Call 304-615-2106 or email him at therevchipgraves@gmail.com. To learn more about Metro Theology in Huntington, WV, visit www.MetroTheology.com.
In 1992 Queen Elizabeth II gave a speech at Guildhall to mark the 40th anniversary of her accession to the throne. She referred to the recent year as part of an *annus horribilis*, a reference to a fire at Windsor Castle.

This past winter, as events unfolded, I remembered the Queen’s description of her year. In January while shaving I noticed a slightly enlarged lymph node on the right side of my neck. (Note: Watch and listen attentively to your body, mind, and spirit.) I saw my internist. He referred me to an ear, nose, and throat specialist. A needle biopsy was done. Negative. The lymph node continued to enlarge. I had a series of other diagnostic tests with a biopsy report on April 14. Results: squamous cell carcinoma. Cancer.

The lymph node was a metastasis of the cancer. Where was the source? That was the moment when I thought: Is this my *annus horribilis*? Very quickly, thanks to a timely call from my wife Linda, I had an appointment at Johns Hopkins Hospital (JHH) in Baltimore for a second opinion. (Second opinions are always important. Remember, it is more a medical practice than a science!) We had researched our options. Of course, Duke (five-time national champions in basketball) was on our list as it should have been. M.D. Anderson was also highly recommended. For many reasons we thought JHH was right, primarily because 15 years ago Linda’s breast cancer surgery was at JHH. At the time she loved her primary doctor—and as it turned out (no accidents in this story!) he was part of my team.

At JHH it became clear that I was facing oropharyngeal cancer (base of tongue and tonsils, which were removed). Such a cancer rarely manifests itself until a lymph node or such sends a warning signal. (I do not have a medical degree, so take what I write with a grain of salt. Also, remember that visiting the internet to diagnose yourself is a curse straight from the Devil.)

Very soon there was a convening of the doctors. Linda and I met with the surgical oncologist, the medical oncologist, the radiation oncologist, and about six others. These world-class physicians were deciding with us what to do. The decision was made for seven weeks of radiation daily with chemotherapy weekly. The physician with whom I worked most closely was Dr. Ana Kiess (M.D./Ph.D, Duke). She is one of God’s angels.

I was told that the treatment would be rugged but that the prognosis was excellent, if you live through the treatment! My greatest concern entering my *annus horribilis* was the mask required for the radiation. During the simulation for the mask on May 15, my claustrophobia took over. Would I ever be able to get through the treatment? Could I endure having a mask which is bolted to the radiation machine slab?

On May 18 the seven-week journey began. It was with fear and trembling. Would the mask do me in? How would I tolerate the chemo? Countless concerns consumed my troubled spirit.

One day, very soon into the treatment, I went to the restroom before radiation. As I looked above the toilet, I saw a container of toilet seat covers. The name of the product was “REST ASSURED.” Suddenly, I was alright with the dreaded mask. In due course, the mask became the healing hands of Jesus, and I was at peace as the technicians bolted me to the table for radiation.

Chemotherapy and radiation are cumulative. Each week I found myself wearing the toll of my treatment in body, mind, and spirit. The radiation of my oropharynx, including larynx, and the tumor on the right side meant that increasingly eating was a chore. I was told to expect weight loss—which I needed! (This treatment is not a good diet, however.) In the end I lost about 52 pounds. (Of course, most of that is muscle which has affected my balance. Physical therapy is helping. I want to build more muscle, but I will not likely turn into an ironman.)

The treatment was to end on July 2. On July 1, I developed a fever after a blood transfusion. I was hospitalized and remained at JHH until July 11. That was a low point. As I write this on August 3, my recovery goes well. It is not a sprint. Healing is palpable but slow. I have lots of ideas (even with my chemo brain!) but little energy. Being at our mountain place in the Blue Ridge Mountains of the Southern Appalachians is my “balm in Gilead.”
The cooler days and nights with sweaters are so restorative. Sleeping is one of my favorite pastimes.

I have called my diagnosis, treatment, and aftermath “my journey with Jesus and his friends.” My annum horribilis has been a spiritual odyssey. “REST ASSURED” has been in my heart as I called on God and felt the healing hands of Jesus in my sickness. There were days, however, when I could not pray, days when depression crawled over me. Somehow I kept remembering that when I was weak others were being strong for me. I was overwhelmed by the calls, cards, emails, text messages, gifts, flowers, and loving support. Jesus’s friends were my friends, and my journey was no solitary trek. I can never say thank you to all who joined me. There are some, however, who must be named.

My loving mentor for this journey was Dr. Lisa Kimball, fellow faculty member at VTS. Five years ago she took a similar journey. She carried me through this ordeal. She called the treatment and its impact right. When I hear from her or see her, my heart is full and glad. I love you, Lisa.

With all of my heart I want to thank the people of St. Barnabas Church, where Linda is Rector, and Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, where I am an honorary associate. Parish family really does mean something!

Our VTS Vice President for Administration and Finance and neighbor asked: “What can I do?” She retrieved our mail every day and hand-delivered it, often with a pastoral visit. Heather Zdancewicz is a saint.

Dean Ian Markham called, emailed, or texted daily. I was granted a four-month leave or sabbatical by VTS. What a gift! I will always be grateful for Ian’s friendship and sensitive leadership of VTS. We are blessed.

I am President of the North American Committee (NAC) of St. George’s College, Jerusalem. Lesley Markham is part-time Executive Director of NAC. In January, as we were entering a search for a new dean, I realized that someone needed to pick up my duties. Our NAC Board concluded that Lesley was the leader we needed. In 12 weeks this past summer, she made 21 flights, eight trans-Atlantic ones. Much of that exhausting travel was to Jerusalem.

Quickly, she learned how to navigate the complex world of the Holy City with its ever-competing voices. She is gracious and unflappable. I am eternally in her debt, as is St. George’s.

My team in Institutional Advancement (IA) is amazing. The Dean took up my workload in IA on top of his massive work when I got the diagnosis. He took daily “walkabouts” through Sparrow where IA lives. He attended staff meetings. Like me, he soon knew that VTS has a very dedicated development team. (As IA worked hard and kept the fires glowing, our Board of Trustees representative, David Booth Beers, Esq., left encouraging messages weekly on my home phone.) I was not functioning, and IA over functioned, delivering a bountiful year of total giving of more than $3.7 million. I have missed this team and our ministry together to advance VTS.

Dave Mutscheller, director of Physical Plant, and his incredible maintenance crew took on the renovation of Oakwood, next to the new Chapel. That gracious house, circa 1790, is now our new residence on campus. The work of Dave et al. has made it worthy of Architectural Digest.

Sam Gottleb (‘17), a rising middler, who spent the summer on campus, completing academic work because of the untimely death of her mother during the academic year. She would often call: Do you need a smoothie from Wendy’s? Any errands today? Her emails and text messages were so encouraging. She is one of the reasons we should be optimistic about our Church and its future.

When we decided that Baltimore was the locale for my treatment, we wrestled with the logistics. Do we drive daily from Alexandria? No. Do we rent an apartment or utilize the housing provided by JHH? Possibly. We called dear friends from our time in Baltimore from 1995 to 2000 when I was rector of the Church of the Redeemer. Both calls came with offers: You will stay with us or use our place for your time in Baltimore. We accepted the offers of Christian hospitality. Susanne Farnham, a lay theologian and writer who preached at my installation as rector, offered her beautiful apartment at Harbor East while she was away at her beloved home in the Adirondacks. Brandon and Richard Berkeley gave us part of their home for ours. The Berkeleys were a port in the storm, always present yet never asking anything of Linda and me. The Berkeleys will always be a “small good thing” for us. Dearest of souls.

Enough cannot be said of the doctors and staff at JHH. These dedicated servants go about their art and craft with expertise, deep sensitivity, and care. I will be seeing them as I continue to be checked—and I look forward to the relationships which have begun.

Oakwood, circa 1900.
My children are the crown of my life. Ellen has been brave, steadfast with her texting, and full of hugs. She knows that cancer is serious. She gets what is important in life. She missed no tricks.

Crawford is the best of Linda. He has been with us every step of the way. On the day of my simulation for the mask we had planned to go to New York for his MBA graduation from Columbia. The Amtrak train accident in Philadelphia forced us to cancel those plans. Crawford took over and arranged for Linda, Ellen and me to be at the festive occasion with Julia and him. On Sunday, May 17, he drove us to Baltimore and accompanied us on Monday as the treatment began. He made other visits to Baltimore and Alexandria. Their prayers and love have been like daylight in what has sometimes seemed like darkness.

Linda’s sister, Donna, paid us a visit mid-point in my treatment. She was “Nurse Ratched” with love. Her visit was a tonic of joy and healing. Linda’s four sisters enlisted their prayer warriors and we heard from so many of their friends.

Friends become family, too. We are blessed to have in our lives the Barbers from our time at Duke; Nancy and John Beane in Atlanta, Ellen’s godparents for 35 years; Yvonne and Mack Day from the first years of my ordained ministry in Asheville; and Carol and Stan Hubbard, friends for so many years that we have stopped counting. Infinite riches.

And then there is Linda. St. Barnabas’ Church, where she has served as rector for 14 years, allowed her to take her accumulated sick leave with vacation to be with me. On May 24 in the midst of this annus horribilis was our 40th wedding anniversary. We took those vows “for better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death.” Together in 1980 we experienced the uncertainty of the birth of a child with Down Syndrome. Linda’s cancer in 1999 was a shock which rocked our world. So, the story of a marriage.

Linda has been there every step of the way, a gift of pure gold. She is the strongest person I know. She has somehow transformed the “worse” into “better,” the “sickness” into “health.” She can be frank and outspoken—but most of all she lives with a heart full of Jesus’s healing love. And, miraculously, she can love me.

So, what next? I return to VTS and my ministry on September 1. My doctor gives me permission to start doing what I love. Following the Dean’s request, I will not keep the fullest of schedules. It will be an exciting fall, and I will love every minute of the Consecration of the new chapel, the new class, and the daily “stuff” of IA and VTS. The future of VTS is bright and young. I look forward to being part of it.

Recently, I found myself wishing for my old, pre-cancer self. To be honest, in my recovery and healing, I long for a “new self,” a self who will continue on this blessed “journey with Jesus and his friends.” Thank you, friends, for being part of my life, part of our journey.
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