



# Inter-Lutheran Theological Seminary

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Dear Friends,

*“Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; <sup>36</sup> And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! <sup>37</sup> And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? <sup>39</sup> He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup> One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. <sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. <sup>43</sup> The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. <sup>46</sup> And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. <sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! <sup>48</sup> Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. <sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. <sup>51</sup> And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” John 1:35-51*

The season of Epiphany is the celebration of how God has manifested His Son Jesus to the whole world. The season begins with the Visitation of the wise men, in which God leads the wise men to the Christ-Child by way of the Word of prophecy and a miraculous star that moves in the sky. Epiphany continues with the celebration of the Baptism of Jesus, in which the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus like a dove, and God the Father speaks from heaven declaring *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

However, on a few Sundays in the season of Epiphany, the appointed readings speak of how Christ is made known, by what appears to be much less spectacular means, such as the calling of the disciples. In the above passage from John's Gospel, John the Baptist simply calls the disciples' attention to Jesus and declares *“Behold the Lamb of God!”*, and they begin to follow Jesus. Andrew goes and finds his brother Simon, *“and he brought him to Jesus.”* Jesus bids Philip to follow Him and Philip does so. Philip finds Nathaniel and simply tells him to *“Come and see”* the Messiah, and Nathaniel came and saw Jesus. God uses what appears to be ordinary means to accomplish something *extra-ordinary*. God uses seemingly ordinary words to direct people to His Son. Of course, we know better. Those “ordinary” words are not ordinary at all, because they are God's Words. And God's extraordinary Word brings hearers to repentance and faith in Christ. His Word does not return void but instead convicts us of sin and points us to the Saviour of sinners, Jesus Christ. This is the ministry of the Seminary, to faithfully teach the Word of God which directs us evermore to the person and finished work of Jesus Christ. As always, thank you for your fellowship in the Gospel. The Lord continue to bless you.

*“Behold, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the World.” John 1:29*

Yours in Christ,  
Chuck Bylkas



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## GET TO KNOW OUR STUDENTS

**Travis Fredrickson** lives in Calumet, MI with his wife Gwendolyn Fredrickson and their two sons Leon (3 years) and Hans (9 months). Travis serves as the Interim Pastor of the Laurium Shining Light Church in Laurium, MI and has been doing so since July of last summer. He is beginning his 3rd year of seminary classes and is amazed at how fast things have gone so far. Travis very much enjoys being trained in all areas of theology especially in the subjects of the Greek language, the ancient church writings, and the exegesis of God's Word. He is so thankful to be learning here and has enjoyed the time with his classmates as well!

**Tyler Johnson** is attending the seminary full time in a remote capacity. He currently lives in Travelers Rest, SC with his wife Jodi, and their four boys Saelor (12), Atlas (10), Porter (6), and Fletcher (3). They are members at Eastside Apostolic Lutheran Church in Greer, SC. Tyler currently works as the manager at River Rock Tire Pros in Inman, SC. Tyler and Jodi desire to serve and honor God in whatever capacity He has prepared for them. Attending the seminary has really served to develop his confidence in sharing the good news by emphasizing that God truly has made peace with humanity, and that the love of God is plainly revealed to us through His Word. God has freely given His grace, and so we freely proclaim it to a world that desperately needs it.

**Ken Helmes** lives in Espoo Finland and is a member of the Etelä-Suomen Rauhan Sana / Fridsföreningen i Södra Finland congregation. He is married to the former Marianne Ventin. They have four adult children and one new grand-daughter. Ken was brought up in a solid, Christian home, but his teenage years were especially somewhat tumultuous. During his late teen and young adult years God needed to draw Ken from unbelief and reveal to him more deeply His righteousness by

faith in Jesus Christ. Ken wants to share the message of God's peace and forgiveness with the gifts and capacity that God has given to him. Ken has been a lay-preacher since 1997 - initially in the Hockinson congregation and later in Finland. In addition to God's Word, Ken first became interested in early Christian Church history, and started taking classes at the seminary several years ago. The classes applied toward the Kelto seminary in Russia, and he was ordained as a Pastor-Deacon in the Russian Ingria Church in 2020. In this capacity, Ken visits Western Russia and Estonia regularly.

**Gwen Fredrickson** resides in Laurium, MI and attends Laurium Shining Light Church. Gwen is the Secretary at the church while her husband Travis is also attending seminary and working as the Interim Pastor at the Laurium church. Travis and Gwen have two boys; Leon (3) and Hans (9 months). Gwen has been working as the church secretary since 2018 and started taking Deaconess classes in 2024 by Zoom along with raising two busy boys. Gwen has appreciated the Deaconess course and classes she has taken at the Seminary, getting a better understanding of the grace of God. The classes have helped so much with serving in areas of the church such as Sunday School, etc. She is very thankful for the opportunity to take classes at the Inter-Lutheran Seminary in Hancock and thankful for the availability to Zoom!

**Cindy Koivu-Bermudez** lives in the Los Angeles area of California. She and her husband Joey Bermudez attend Immanuel Lutheran Brethren Church in Pasadena, CA. Cindy is retired from 50 years of office work; Joey and his family were part of the Tile industry for generations. They both worked as facilitators in a Bereavement Ministry for seven years. When Cindy found out that a Deaconess Studies curriculum was available at the Seminary she felt led to enroll after her retirement, so that she would be better equipped to work with the church, especially the elderly. Reading the Bible with the Ears to Hear translation has strengthened her in grace, mercy and peace in this end-of-life ministry.

**Michael Mattinen** is completing his internship at the Esko Apostolic Lutheran Church. Under the excellent mentorship of Pastor Nathan Juntunen, he is gaining valuable experience in the world of pastoral ministry. Michael is married to Heidi and has four wonderful children. Their boys are Miles (11) and Luke (8). They love sports and spending time in the woods and on the water. Their girls, Phoebe (5) and Mabel (3), love playing with their toy horses and dressing up like princesses. In June, his internship will come to a conclusion and what happens after that remains a mystery. They pray for God's guidance as He leads and guides them into uncharted waters. Michael is extremely appreciative of the seminary and will forever be grateful for all the supporters, staff, and students that the Lord has used for the furtherance of His kingdom through this institution. He thanks you all the prayers and support!

**Caleb Maunu** with his wife Sheri and five children Greta (12), Anders (9), Silas (7), Freya (4) and Armas (1) are living in Greer SC. Caleb is serving his 1-year internship at the Eastside Apostolic Lutheran Church under Pastor Dan Hoard. In addition, he recently has been hired there as Associate Pastor. Caleb is currently teaching 8th grade Sunday school, directing youth group and preaching every other Sunday. The family is looking forward to many visitors this summer as Eastside ALC is hosting the ALC Annual Convention.

In addition to these students, we appreciate the many students who participate in the Monday night class in person and online from around the country.

Please continue to keep our students in your prayers!

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We would love to grow our endowment into a major source of ongoing seminary support. Although the seminary still needs the financial ongoing regular contributions of our supporters, please consider the endowment fund for your planned giving needs. For more additional information, please contact Kirk Otto, Jr. at (715) 821-8574 or Cheryl Hendrickson at (906) 482-3337.

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