A quarterly publication of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

AWARE magazine

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The 158th Commencement of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

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Aware is published quarterly by the development office for alums and friends of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, a graduate school of theology related to The United Methodist Church.

Founded in 1853, the seminary serves more than 500 students from many denominations and various cultural backgrounds, fostering an atmosphere of ecumenical interaction. Garrett-Evangelical creates bold leaders through master of divinity, master of arts, master of theological studies, doctor of philosophy, and doctor of ministry degrees. Its 4,500 living alums serve church and society around the world.

Lallene J. Rector

Betty Campbell
Katharine Duke
David Heetland
April McGlothin-Eller
Krista McNeil
Shane Nichols
Tasha Sargent

Bill Burlingham of Burlingham Productions
Shane Nichols
“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair . . .” Penned in 1859 only six years after Garrett Biblical Institute was founded, these stunning opening lines from Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, constitute a compelling description of today’s world, the world into which we recently sent our 2015 graduates.

While still basking in the glow of our 158th commencement ceremony and the hope and inspiration annually renewed for us at this time, we continue to witness ongoing violence against our Black brothers and sisters. Most immediately, we live in the wake of those killed one evening while studying the Word of God at Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, at the hands of the stranger whom they had just welcomed among them. Yet, we were surprised with hope by the love and forgiveness mourners expressed.

We experience new hope for many in recent Supreme Court decisions, one that essentially supported the right of all persons to affordable health care and the other that recognized the dignity and right of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons to legally commit themselves to married partnership. Still, large numbers of people suffer with no health care coverage and violent discrimination continues against the LGBTQ community. Dickens’ words pertain and they echo something of the paradoxes of our Christian faith, a faith born of God become human, of Jesus’ ministry of healing, teaching, and preaching, but a faith also born of crucifixion and death, and then resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This issue of *AWARE* is dedicated to our 2015 commencement ceremony. It provides a moment to recognize the contribution Garrett-Evangelical is making to the world. I said to this year’s 77 graduates, “There are many opportunities for you to fulfill your call and to make a transformative impact in the world, opportunities inside and outside the church. I hope you will begin to think of yourselves as public theologians, leaders who bring your theological education to bear for the benefit of the broader community . . . I hope you will be leaders who will work with anyone else, Christian or not, to bring justice and well being to all . . . You enter now into a long legacy of Garrett-Evangelical graduates who have made their mark on the world by engaging the pressing concerns of the day.”

Speaking to the 2015 graduates, I noted three alums: Rev. Donte Hickman (G-ETS 1997) who emerged as a community leader in the midst of Baltimore’s riots over the police killing of Freddie Gray and who demonstrated resilience when his congregation’s new building for senior citizens was burned down; Ms. Ethel Payne, a 1934 graduate of the Chicago Training School and journalist who covered the Civil Rights Movement and one of only three African Americans at that time with White House press credentials; and Mr. David Ormesher (G-ETS 1985), a masters of theological studies graduate who was recently named president elect of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, an organization also dedicated to social service and the support of many non-profit endeavors.

In this issue, you will read about two more graduates who received distinguished alum awards, Rev. Franz Rigert and Rev. Sam Phillips. You will also read about our honorary doctorate recipient and commencement speaker, Mr. Alex Kotlowitz, an award-winning journalist whose acclaimed work frequently focuses on issues of poverty and race.

Garrett-Evangelical is entrusted to steward the call of God upon the lives of our students and to prepare them for meaningful, faithful, and effective leadership. We trust that as our graduates begin the next phase of their ministries, they will take with them not only some of the wisdom, belief, light, and hope of which Dickens speaks, but also more importantly that these qualities will be founded upon a deep relationship with God in Christ and that the Good News of the Gospel will imbue them and all those whom they touch with hope during seasons of darkness and winters of despair. We give thanks to God for you and for all the forms of support you offer to Garrett-Evangelical. We simply could not accomplish our mission without you!
Garrett-Evangelical celebrated its 158th commencement on Friday, May 15, at First United Methodist Church, Evanston. The seminary awarded 75 degrees, including 14 doctor of philosophy, nine doctor of ministry, six master of arts in Christian education, one master of arts in music ministry, five master of arts in pastoral care and counseling, two master of arts in spiritual formation and evangelism, four master of theological studies, and 34 master of divinity. Additionally, the seminary recognized one student who completed deacon studies coursework and one who completed advanced course of study.

The seminary also celebrated the class of 1965 and awarded distinguished alum awards to Franz S. Rigert, who received his master of divinity in 1992 from Garrett-Evangelical, and Samuel Phillips, who received his master of divinity in 1958 from Garrett Biblical Institute. (See more about these distinguished alums on page six.)

Alex Kotlowitz, an award-winning journalist and bestselling author, delivered the commencement address titled, “Tell Me a Story,” and received an honorary doctorate of humane letters. In presenting the degree, Anne Driscoll, a trustee of the seminary said, “Mr. Kotlowitz’s commitment to pursuing justice through his journalism, film making, and writing makes us extremely proud to have him as our commencement speaker and the recipient of an honorary doctorate of humane letters.”

In his address, Kotlowitz shared why he thinks storytelling is so important to society—particularly to those who don’t have their stories often told. “Stories are essential to understanding who we are,” he said. “Stories are how we make sense of the world, how we make sense of our own lives and those around us. We tell stories to bear witness, to be heard, to know we are not alone.”

Kotlowitz also cautioned the graduates not to make the mistake of thinking that people have a single narrative and emphasized the importance of active listening.

He finished by telling the graduates: “Go out into the world, with your ear to the ground and listen, listen closely. Remember, it’s not a passive exercise. Engage people, ask questions, seek answers to that which you don’t know and that which you think you know. Remember . . . not to define people by their circumstance, but rather come to know them for who they are as full, rich, nuanced, complicated individuals whose lives and stories don’t neatly fit into some predetermined slot.”

Kotlowitz has spent more than twenty years exploring race and poverty issues in the United States. His most recent documentary film, The Interrupters, examines urban violence, while also remaining “heroically life-affirming,” according to Time magazine. The Interrupters received an Emmy Award in 2013 for Outstanding Informational Programming—Long Form and the Independent Spirit Award in 2012 for Best Documentary.

Kotlowitz grew up in New York City and is a graduate of Wesleyan University. He has served as visiting professor at the University of Notre Dame, the University of Chicago, and as a Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College. He is currently a writer-in-residence at Northwestern University. He has given lectures on social work, education, social policy, urban affairs, and race at hundreds of colleges and universities across the nation and has received seven honorary degrees.

Among Kotlowitz’s many titles, There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America, was selected by The New York Public Library as one of the 150 Most Important Books of the 20th Century. Kotlowitz is a prolific journalist, having published articles in The Wall Street Journal, where he was a staff writer from 1984 to 1993, The New Yorker, The Washington Post, Rolling Stone, and others. His awards for writing include a George Foster Peabody Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, and the George Polk Award.

Kotlowitz is married to Maria Woltjen, director of the Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights. They live outside Chicago with their two children.
Inspiring Words from Graduation Celebrations

With the commencement celebration came opportunities for graduates and their families to hear speeches from faculty, students, and alums. This year, the speakers were truly inspirational. Here are some excerpts of their remarks.

Jacob Ohlemiller (G-ETS 2015) spoke at the Trustee/Alums Banquet on May 14, 2015.

“The Jesus I have found at Garrett-Evangelical is strong enough to heal us from the demonic madness of consumerism—part of which is mine—here in a society whose pillaging of God's Earth knows no bounds.

The Jesus I have found at Garrett-Evangelical is powerful enough to heal us from the crippling disease of patriarchy—part of which is mine—here in a society that continues to shame, subjugate, and silence women everywhere.

The Jesus I have found at Garrett-Evangelical is mighty enough to heal us from the scourge of White supremacy – part of which is mine – here in an America so astoundingly unrepentant of our history of slavery and genocide that we continue today to malign, marginalize, and murder our own Black, Brown, Rose, and Tan brothers and sisters!

And what does this Jesus say to me? Take up your cross and follow. My prayer tonight is that the class of 2015 will be faithful to this call, just like those who have gone before us.”

Samuel Phillips (GBI 1958) spoke at graduation as the recipient of the 2015 distinguished alum award.

“. . . I want to tell you, the 2015 graduates, how honored I am to be with you on this your graduation day. Oh, how the world needs you, each of you. The world needs your message of love, your message of peace, your message of justice. But even more than your message, the world needs you and the way you share love, the way you bring peace, the way you do justice.

Wherever you minister, whatever your ministry may be, in the midst of the highs and the lows, the mountains and the valleys, the hurts and the joys, give the world and everyone you meet, your love, your peace, your justice in your unique and special way – in a way that no one else but you can give.”

Donald Bredthauer (ETS 1965) spoke at the Trustee/Alums Banquet on May 14, 2015.

“Seminary training must be more than learning how to articulate one’s theology, more than learning how to exegete a biblical text and how to prepare for preaching. As important as those things are, and they are important, they lead to nothing if they do not lead us and the people with whom we work into God’s dream and passion for the world, into God’s unconditional love for us and for all others, into God’s justice in the churches and communities we serve. I believe that’s what it means to be the compassionate presence of Christ.”

Franz Rigert (G-ETS 1992) spoke at graduation as the recipient of the 2015 distinguished alum award.

“. . . but honestly, graduates of 2015, if you want to flourish in pastoral ministry, it’s not all that complicated. You have the skill set. Now, give your heart the calling. Endear yourself to the people, listen to them compassionately, love them authentically, live with them genuinely, and in turn, they will invite you to lead them boldly!”
Each year, the seminary presents distinguished alum awards at commencement exercises to two alums who have rendered extraordinary service in their ministries. One award is given to an alum who graduated in the last 25 years and the other award is given to an alum who graduated more than 25 years ago. This year’s awards were given to Franz S. Rigert and Samuel Phillips.

Franz Rigert grew up the son of a United Church of Christ pastor. He earned a bachelor’s degree in 1989 from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, where he studied pre-law and religion. After receiving a master of divinity degree from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1992, Rigert served as associate pastor at Kingswood United Methodist Church in Buffalo Grove, Illinois. In 1995, he received a call to Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Grafton, Wisconsin, where he served until being called to be conference minister for the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ in January 2015.

The pastoral, spiritual, and relational gifts that Rigert brings to ministry empower laity to take seriously their call from God to be Christian leaders. He encourages members to take ownership and lead many ministries within the church. Under his leadership, the Pilgrim congregation grew from 300 to more than 700 active members. Rigert led Pilgrim through a capital fundraising initiative and a major building expansion, which increased the size of the sanctuary and church meeting areas, and implemented solar energy at the church. The members took 25 mission trips, participated in several Habitat for Humanity projects, and sponsored a refugee resettlement family. The congregation passed an “Open and Affirming” resolution stating that all people will be welcomed at Pilgrim. Rigert was instrumental in founding Common Ground, a group of 40,000 members dedicated to identifying pressing social problems and responding with creative solutions.

Rigert’s wife, Trinn, has taught early childhood special education for 19 years. They have two sons and a daughter: Mitchell, a college student in Colorado; Jordan, a high school senior; and Marianna, a high school freshman.

Samuel Phillips graduated in 1958 from Garrett Biblical Institute with a master of divinity degree and was ordained an elder in the Northwest Indiana Conference that same year. Prior to studying for ministry, he worked in business and industry and served in the U.S. Army during World War II.

Phillips served as a pastor to numerous congregations in Indiana and was among the first in the 1960s and 1970s to publicly endorse and support civil rights, gay rights, women’s rights, and the peace movement. He served as a district superintendent and director of missions and church extension for the South Indiana Conference. He has also been a board member on the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the General Board of Global Ministries, Committee on the Status and Role of Women, the United Methodist Children’s Home, and DePauw University Board of Trustees, among many others.

Phillips embodies the work of the church in his various mission and outreach efforts, which have taken place both at home and abroad. He organized a “Mission Motorcycle” tour group for motorcycle enthusiasts to tour regional United Methodist mission sites.
Internationally, Phillips has spent decades leading outreach and relief work in numerous countries including: Bolivia, Zimbabwe, Belize, the Soviet Union, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, Philippines, Nepal, Honduras, Vietnam, and Bosnia. Although Phillips retired from professional ministry in 1993, he never stopped his love of and commitment to missions, justice, and peace. After moving to San Francisco following the passing of his beloved wife Marie, in 1998, Phillips joined Glide Memorial United Methodist Church and became active in local causes.

In 1999, he mastered accounting and became, and still is, the chief financial officer at his son’s law firm. He also spearheads the firm’s zeal for public service, which includes funding minority scholarships at universities, funding veteran’s organizations, and providing scholarships for women in Africa, among others.

Amy and Robert, Marie and Samuel’s two children, were born in Evanston, Illinois, while Samuel attended Garrett Biblical Institute.

The Class of 1965 Celebrates 50 Years of Ministry

During commencement, the classes of 1965 from Evangelical and Garrett Theological Seminaries reunited in celebration of their golden anniversary of graduation from seminary. On Thursday, May 14, the 50-year alums joined together for a time of fellowship, worship, and dinner with President Lallene J. Rector, trustees, and faculty. They concluded the evening by anointing the class of 2015 as they prepared to graduate and embark on their vocational journey.

The next day, the class was recognized by President Rector at commencement for their decades of ministry. In addition to the formal reunion activities, the reunion guests had ample opportunities for storytelling, discussions with current students, and candid photos on the campus and lakefront.

The seminary will welcome members of the class of 1966 on May 12-13, 2016.
This year, 75 students received degrees from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Each year at graduation, we not only celebrate their accomplishments in seminary, but also look to the future. Seven of the graduates reflect on their time at Garrett-Evangelical and share their hopes and plans for their future ministries.

Ornella Omubyeyi
Master of Arts in Pastoral Care and Counseling

What is your hometown and educational background? My hometown is Kigali in Rwanda. I have a degree in religion and leadership from Ripon College in Wisconsin.

How has your time at Garrett-Evangelical shaped your ministry and calling? It allowed me to grow and be formed as a leader, as a theologian, and mostly as a Christian who wants to respond to injustice around the world. Garrett-Evangelical allowed me to get out of my comfort zone and to see the beauty of diversity in the gospel as I met people from all over the United States and the world.

What is your most memorable experience at Garrett-Evangelical? My most memorable experience is when I stopped by Dean Cynthia Wilson’s office and we ended up having a profound conversation. Her words have marked me so deeply that I will never forget them. They enlightened me in so many ways, and I am grateful for her wisdom and the wisdom of the seminary staff.

What are your plans or your hopes for your future ministry? My plans are to establish a school for street children and teenagers in Burundi. I know that God allowed me to study pastoral care and counseling for a purpose, and I know it will help me as I serve in the church and the community in Burundi.

Jeremy Westrick
Master of Divinity

What is your hometown and educational background? I grew up in Temperance, MI, but have called Chicago home for 13 years. My undergraduate degree and first career were in finance and accounting.
How has your time at Garrett-Evangelical shaped your ministry and calling? Garrett-Evangelical provided space for vocational discernment, challenged me to think and engage outside of my own social location, and really helped me work through the links between theology, practice, and vocation.

-Jeremy Westrick

What is your most memorable experience at Garrett-Evangelical? In the middle of my second year, I went on a two-week cross-cultural trip to Palestine with 20 Garrett-Evangelical students and two faculty. To walk where Jesus walked, to be immersed within the reality of Palestinian life in the West Bank, and to share the experience with my fellow classmates, particularly my classmates of color, created an amazing and life-altering journey which I will never forget.

What are your plans or your hopes for your future ministry? Through my field education experiences, I discovered ways to merge my financial and managerial background with my theological and practice of ministry education at Garrett-Evangelical, ways that often existed in the space between the church and the world. I am currently a candidate for deacon’s orders within The United Methodist Church and plan to live out my call to service, compassion, and justice through work with missional and advocacy-oriented nonprofit organizations. I currently serve on the finance team for the 30 healthcare, education, and social service ministries sponsored by the order of the Sisters of St. Felix.

Caitlyn Butler
Master of Divinity

How has your time at Garrett-Evangelical shaped your ministry and calling? Witnessing the women leaders who have been called during their time at Garrett-Evangelical or called to work with students at Garrett-Evangelical has nourished my call to do God’s work in the world. These women have been examples of what it means to be strong and compassionate as they lead boldly in their communities.

What is your most memorable experience at Garrett-Evangelical? My most memorable experiences have been the times that I spent in Loder lounge with the student community. Through the community formed here, I found a place of support and camaraderie when the call into ministry felt too overwhelming. A good laugh reminded me of the joy in life in the midst of papers and reading.

What are your plans or your hopes for your future ministry? I plan to become an elder in the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church. I hope to be a part of a community as I learn to live out God’s call that honors love for God and neighbor.

Pamela Pirtle
Master of Divinity

What is your hometown and educational background? I am originally from Champaign, IL. I hold a bachelor of science degree from National-Louis University in sociology and music education, a master of arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana in educational policy studies, and now a master of divinity from Garrett-Evangelical.

(Continued on page 10)
How has your time at Garrett-Evangelical shaped your ministry and calling? My time at Garrett-Evangelical has affirmed my ministerial calling and given me the space to become who I am in ministry. When I accepted my calling into the ministry after many years of avoiding it, I knew immediately that I did not have the skills or knowledge to be a leader among God’s people. The experiences I had at Garrett-Evangelical, both in and out of the classroom, identified ministry gifts I did not know I had. It seemed as if all my previous life experiences made more sense as I had many “aha” moments. This is where I came to understand how I show up in the world and how to be the best I can be. Through reflection and study, I am becoming a better person. Seminary education was absolutely necessary for me to fulfill the responsibilities of a clergy leader in the 21st century. It has helped me learn the balance between theology and spiritual development.

What is your most memorable experience at Garrett-Evangelical? My first year at Garrett-Evangelical was a whirlwind. However, in the midst of transitions and life changes, the vocational formation and church leadership class was the most amazing experience for me. It was in the readings for the course and discussions that I came to know that my calling into ministry was affirmed, and I gained a sense of peace knowing that my new life was going to be okay.

What are your plans or your hopes for your future ministry? I have currently been appointed pastor for Gorham United Methodist Church in Chicago’s Washington Park community. I am excited about this area because there is so much work for us to do. I am not interested in winning any ministry marathons or gaining public accolades. I simply want to be effective wherever God calls me in ministry.

Kyle Reynolds
Master of Divinity

What is your hometown and educational background? I grew up in the Kansas City area and studied personal financial planning and economics at Kansas State University.

How has your time at Garrett-Evangelical shaped your ministry and calling? Garrett-Evangelical has helped me take matters of my faith and apply them to areas of everyday living. When I began, Christianity was something that was important, and that shaped who I was, but I do not think I could honestly say I understood my identity in Christ as primary to shaping my political, social, and analytical view of the world. Garrett-Evangelical has helped me to see that matters of theology and faith are always forming us, and the practical implications of what we really believe provide the shape to much of how we construct and interact in the world. This kind of practical faith is critical to how I now understand my call as it provides new meaning to a life in full-time ministry.

What is your most memorable experience at Garrett-Evangelical? Seminary has left me with memories I will carry for a lifetime. There are so many lighthearted memories—breakfast with professors at Walker Bros. Pancake House and of exploring Chicago with classmates from around the world. There are powerful memories from participating in a protest to praying with friends in crisis and the one-on-one conversations with President Lallene Rector.

Still other memories from seminary, however, have taken place far away from Evanston. I have many memories from a semester in Washington, D.C., studying the intersection of religion and politics. My summer field placement in South Africa challenged and encouraged me a hundred times over. Taking a trip to the Holy Land to visit historic sites gave way to a genuine perspective on the present conflict between Israel and Palestine that left an indelible mark on me. All of these experiences were formative and memorable—and would not have been possible without support from the seminary community.

What are your plans or your hopes for your future ministry? I have been accepted into the Transitions into Ministry (TiM) program, which is a Lilly-funded program of the Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church. As a TiM participant, I will be serving two years at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Wichita, KS, as an associate pastor and will focus on small group and young adult ministries. I am excited for the next two years and then to continue on in the TiM program as a solo pastor for the following three years.
Brian Smith, Sr.
Master of Divinity

**What is your hometown and educational background?** I am from the Englewood community on the South Side of Chicago. I received a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Grinnell College in Grinnell, IA, and a master of arts degree in human services administration from Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago.

**How has your time at Garrett-Evangelical shaped your ministry and calling?** I was challenged to understand both my embedded theology as well as new ways to imagine and understand the nature of God and God’s people. I also developed an even greater appreciation of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and its relevance to my life as a minister of the gospel.

Amy Valdez Barker
Doctor of Philosophy

**What is your hometown and educational background?** Currently, I live in Evanston, IL. I am a pastor’s kid and a military kid; therefore, home is where I am currently residing. I have a bachelor’s degree from the University of Iowa and a master of divinity degree from Garrett-Evangelical.

**How has your time at Garrett-Evangelical shaped your ministry and calling?** My master’s program at Garrett-Evangelical fanned the flame of love for research and teaching. I love learning, thinking, and finding ways to put theory into practice. Garrett-Evangelical professors have nurtured this love and encouraged me as I journeyed through two degree programs.

**What is your most memorable experience at Garrett-Evangelical?** I often turn back to the memory of a course taken with then Academic Dean Lallene J. Rector and Rosemary Skinner Keller. The course was called *History of Christian Thought: The Vocation of Kinship in American Religious Women*. There were fewer than a dozen women in this course, and the journey I personally traveled as a woman in leadership was challenging and beautiful. This course took me from a chrysalis to a butterfly. I discovered my voice and accepted my own story as valuable for mission and ministry in the church today. I will always be grateful to both the professors and my classmates who planted the seeds for the foundation of my faith in leadership for mission and ministry in The United Methodist Church today.

**What are your plans or your hopes for your future ministry?** I hope that I can serve God faithfully wherever God needs me. With my theological training, I feel equipped to serve God in the places where I am most passionate. Therefore, I will go wherever God sends me.
Wendell Ankeny Keeps a Historic Church from Closing

Right from the start, Charles Wendell Ankeny (GTS 1971) knew that going into the ministry was going to require hard work and a lot of it.

After being accepted to Garrett Theological Seminary at 33, he found a part-time job as a radio announcer and rented an apartment in Evanston for himself, his wife, and his four children. Then, his plans changed. He received a call from the United Methodist district superintendent in Milwaukee, who asked him to consider a student appointment at two churches in Wisconsin—Palmyra and Little Prairie United Methodist Churches—while he obtained his master of divinity degree.

“It was tough to do it all, but that is what you had to do in those days to get a seminary education,” said Ankeny, who ended up commuting the 100 miles back and forth.

Ankeny said he remembers that Garrett had a “friendly, affirming atmosphere.” As an older student who was embarking on a second career, he appreciated that Garrett enrolled many older students who were also changing careers.

Prior to coming to seminary, Ankeny had several careers. He worked at the bowling alley, skating rink, and café that his parents built and ran in Blue Earth, Minnesota. He also worked for Green Giant, a gas company, a radio station, and served four years in the Navy. He started college at Mankato State University in Minnesota at age 29 and went right onto seminary after graduation.

“I got a great seminary education,” said Ankeny, who graduated from Garrett Theological Seminary in 1971 with a master of divinity degree. He went back to Minnesota, where he served the Riverview and Champlin United Methodist Churches.

After serving those two churches for nine years, Ankeny spent a year in Belize as a missionary appointed by the Board of Global Ministries. He then went to Sunrise United Methodist Church in Mounds View, Minnesota, where he served for four years. He left parish ministry for a time, worked as a carpenter, and remarried. He later returned to Belize to build a new church building with the Ebenezer Methodist Church that he had served.

A year later, he was appointed camp director, to Ocean Park United Methodist Camp and Retreat Center, an ocean-front facility in Washington State where he directed the camp and worked for 13 years. While he was there, he oversaw the remodeling of several buildings and the construction of three new cabins. He also increased business dramatically and turned the camp into a retreat center employing up to 30 people in peak summer months.

Ankeny retired from parish ministry while at the camp but continued to work there for a few more years. In 2000, he and his wife moved to Port Townsend, Washington, where he worked part-time with Elderhostel. While there, he realized his work in the ministry wasn’t done. Trinity United Methodist Church in Port Townsend was scheduled to close because the membership dropped to fewer than 12 active members, the building needed repair, and the congregation was in debt.

“I just thought this beautiful little Victorian church, whose congregation had a 150-year Methodist presence in Port Townsend, deserved saving,” he said. “So I asked for it.”

The bishop offered him the job for one year at quartertime pay. Ankeny knew that revitalizing the church, fixing the building that needed repair, and paying apportionments would take a colossal effort, but he thought, with God’s help, he had the energy and skill set necessary and accepted the appointment.

After that year, the church building that was constructed in 1871 was still in jeopardy. Two church members put together a petition with 50 signatures and took it to the bishop, who extended Ankeny’s appointment for one more year at half-time pay.
became known to the community after joining several boards, including Habitat for Humanity, and got to know the people in the community.

Slowly, the church began to thrive and grow, and Ankeny continued to be reappointed. With the energy and commitment of new and old parishioners who rolled up their sleeves, Ankeny and the congregation kept fixing up the building and adding membership. Ankeny was a hands-on pastor who worked side by side during renovation, using his life skills of carpentry and fixing things. This approach created relationships with the men of the church and attracted those on the fringes. Out of need, Work Wednesdays evolved and continues to this day with dedicated people who have done everything from refinishing pews and building two pipe organs to undertaking major construction.

The congregation received a $30,000 loan from the United Methodist Foundation to help fund critically needed repairs. In addition, the church administration decided to raise money by holding Candlelight Concerts in the sanctuary that had wonderful acoustics. The musicians, who wanted a place to play, played for free, and the audience members paid $5 to enjoy performances. “There were a lot of musicians in town,” he said. “It was win-win.”

Ultimately, the church raised enough money for the renovations, built the pipe organs, and were gifted a grand piano. With concert funds, the church also continues to donate money to the local food bank, tsunami relief, and other causes.

When Ankeny retired in June 2012, the church had almost 150 members, the building was in excellent shape, the church was debt-free and contemplating a capital campaign to accommodate growing needs.

“The remarkable turnaround was a group effort,” Ankeny said. “My wife, the church, and the community all helped. The congregation is warm, friendly, and accepting. We just kept on inviting people to join us, and they did.”

In recognition of his selfless sharing of time, talent, and treasure, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary named Jim Blue the Volunteer of the Year for 2015. During his 36 years on the board of trustees, Blue has chaired the trustee development committee, hosted informal gatherings and planned giving seminars for members of his church, introduced potential friends to the seminary, and hosted two virtual town hall meetings to introduce President Lallene J. Rector to thousands of alums and friends.

Blue has also supported the seminary financially as one of his most significant charitable interests with annual gifts to support current operations, with significant commitments to each of Garrett-Evangelical’s three endowment campaigns, and with a pace-setting planned gift commitment.

“You have given unstintingly of your time, attending nearly every board meeting for 36 years in a row, and serving faithfully on the development committee the entire time,” said David Heetland, vice president of development for Garrett-Evangelical. Blue received his award at the trustee development committee meeting on May 14.

Additionally, Blue was named a life trustee, along with Bonnie Draeger and Harriet McCabe, at the board of trustees meeting also held on May 14.
“...the God for whom BLACK. LIVES. MATTER.”

So rang out the voices of Garrett-Evangelical 2015 graduates Carmen C. Manalac-Scheuerman and Jacob M. Ohlemiller in the closing prayer of our commencement exercise. The phrase was doubly emphasized: the graduates’ two voices alternated for most of the prayer, but spoke these words slowly and firmly in unison. At this moment, the two graduates emulated the Bible in a particular way, speaking simultaneously to those “inside” and “outside.”

For those “inside,” the phrase was a familiar and fitting punctuation to the academic year of #FergusonSyllabus. The 2014-15 academic year began with protests in Ferguson, Missouri, against the police killing of Michael Brown and the preposterously militarized police response to local protests. It continued with the police killings of Eric Garner, 12-year-old Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Eric Harris, and others. It concluded with the protests in Baltimore, Maryland, against the police killing of Freddie Gray. Throughout the year, educators nationwide collaborated urgently to keep the fact of our nation’s systemic, violent racism at the front of our course work in biblical studies, theology, history, literature, civics, science, mathematics. The phrase “Black Lives Matter” insists that this country’s original sin not get lost in the academic inertia of mixture-as-before syllabus planning.

For those on the “outside”—those who are not active in African-American churches, communities or schools; who don’t follow “Black Twitter” or attend faculty forums; who aren’t on any given day overhearing conversations about Whiteness and white privilege—for these, the phrase “Black Lives Matter” provokes questions. “Who doesn’t think that Black lives matter?” “Don’t all lives matter?” “What does the speaker want from me?”

The Bible speaks to those “inside” and “outside” by several means. Just as our graduates alluded to conversations that their audience would also know (or wouldn’t), biblical authors frequently allude to other biblical texts that they expected their audience also to know (or not).

The book of Daniel alludes frequently to Isaiah. Most of all, Daniel takes phrases that Isaiah once used to describe the nation of Assyria and uses those phrases to describe the Big Bad of its own day: the Greek king Antiochus IV, who had been brutally suppressing Judaism in Jerusalem for four gruesome years. To the reader recognizing the allusion, it becomes clear that, just as the God of Israel had eventually destroyed Assyria while preserving the people Israel, so it would be with Daniel’s own Villain of the Week. The reader confounded by the alluding phrases would be prompted to read (or re-read) Isaiah, in order to get into the conversation.

Paul alludes constantly to his scriptures, the Hebrew Bible. In Romans 15, Paul seeks to persuade his fellow Jewish followers of Jesus that his unique mission is to the Gentiles. To that end, he evokes Isaiah’s “suffering servant,” best known to Christians as a kind of prefiguring of Christ, but understood in Isaiah as the people Israel languishing in Babylonian Exile. From their exilic “death,” God would raise Israel to exulted status in a re-established Jerusalem. The Gentile nations, having previously spurned and abused the unglamorous backwater people Israel, would learn to their astonishment that the God of Israel is in fact God of the cosmos. Paul’s Jewish readers, knowing Isaiah, would see that God is acting for the Gentiles in Jesus just as previously in the “suffering servant,” exilic Israel. Paul’s Gentile readers, not knowing Isaiah, would seek to correct their bewilderment through catechesis.

The outside is painful. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently assured a Black church in Missouri that “all lives matter”...a phrase not untrue, but (unknown to Clinton) a phrase already used in the media to derail and dismiss any particular attention to Black lives here in the year of #FergusonSyllabus. The resulting backlash is an invitation to Clinton, and to all confounded by “Black Lives Matter”...an invitation to listening, to catechesis, to inclusion.
In Memoriam: Barbara W. Milnor, Life Trustee

Garrett-Evangelical Life Trustee Barbara W. Milnor, of Winnetka, Illinois, and North Palm Beach, Florida, died on June 6. Milnor was elected to the board of trustees of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in December 1977 and served faithfully for many years. Milnor’s father and grandfather were also trustees of Garrett-Evangelical.

A lifelong resident of the Chicago area, Milnor served as a trustee of the Hadley School of the Blind, a member of the Evanston Junior League, a board member of Evanston Hospital, and president of the Kenilworth Garden Club. Milnor was a member of the Kenilworth Union Church for many years.

Milnor was married to the late Frank R. Milnor and had two children, Beth Gorr and Robert Wheeler.

In Memoriam

Our Christian sympathy is extended to the family and friends of the following alums who have died in Christ.

1940s
Fred R. Jensen, GBI 1948, Augusta, Georgia, died December 18, 2005.

1950s
Ralph G. Hollingsworth, GBI 1953, New Cornerstown, Ohio, died April 1, 2015.
Shirleyann Rice, GBI 1950, Aurora, Ohio, died April 24, 2015.

1960s

1970s
Mervin A. Kunkle, GTS 1968, Richwood, Ohio, died March 14, 2015.
David F. Renshaw, GTS 1964, Coldwater, Michigan, died April 19, 2015.

1980s

1990s

2000s

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