

2021 Hein-Fry Challenge

Presenter Biographies and Project Summaries

Kaylie H. Ines, Master of Divinity Graduate

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.

Kaylie is a lover of all the good things in life: coffee, green tea, craft beer, sunshine, the bees, caring for creation, flipping the table of oppression—ya know, the simple stuff! Since graduating from PLTS, she now resides back home in Wichita, Kan., awaiting her first call. When she is not reading an academic book or working on a church project, you can find her outdoors (in the mountains or nearest body of water); hanging with her dog, Lilo; being an aunt to her five nieces and nephews; or at someone's house, honing her craft of cooking and baking.

Hope Remains: A Creation Care Faith Study

Emmaus Campus Ministry at the University of Montana, Missoula, Mont. (project site)

“Why should we continue to teach the future of the world when the world is quite literally burning?” Those words fueled this internship project. This project, seeks to help congregations explore the very reality of our world in the face of the climate crisis. It seeks to help congregations realize how much the world needs united people (like the church!) to care for creation. This four-week series walks through four ways the church is called to care for creation. In doing so, we build a common foundation on creation care and Lutheran theology, practice grieving, look at what it means to be called disciples, and consider the earth as a sacrament. Through a lens of hope, compassion and bold love, we learn, share and explore our faith in action for the sake of ourselves, our neighbor and the world.

The Rev. Katrina Steingraeber, Master of Divinity Graduate

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

Katrina was born into Zion Lutheran Church in Rockford, Ill., where she maintained her membership until her call to serve as the associate pastor of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Rockford in June 2021. While at Zion Katrina served as the children's ministry coordinator for five years. During her seminary education she served at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Rockford as a Ministry in Context student, at Mercyhealth (Rockford Memorial) Hospital as a chaplain intern, and at Christ Lutheran Church in Belvidere, Ill., as vicar. She is involved in the Antiracism Transformation Team at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, the “Around the Chairs” discussion group at Zion Lutheran Church and outreach at St. Mark Lutheran Church, and she serves on the Northern Illinois Synod's worship planning team. Katrina and her spouse, Scott, have three boys, Nolan, Aiden and Soren. They are an active family involved in scouting, music, swimming, soccer and tennis; they also enjoy canoeing and kayaking.

Looking at Today's World Through the Psalms

Zion Lutheran Church, Rockford, Ill. (project site)

This project looked at what was happening locally, nationally and globally through the lens of the Psalms. Over the four-week study we used the Psalms to lament, to celebrate and to look for and hold on to hope. The Bible study was a hybrid study with some folks in person and some joining via Zoom. It covered hard topics such as racism and the climate crisis. Participants examined their anger and how life can be amazing and then awful, and then amazing. We looked at quotes from authors such as Joan Chittister, Walter Brueggemann, Maya Angelou and L.R. Knost. At times the conversation was heavy and deep, and sometimes difficult and uncomfortable; others times there was hope and grace. Each session concluded by identifying the word or image that stuck out as we read and talked about the Psalms.

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**Aneel Trivedi, Master of Divinity, Final Year
Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa**

Aneel grew up in a mixed-race and mixed-faith family in Sunnyvale, Calif. His diverse experiences with faith traditions from a young age inspired a curiosity about God that exists to this day. Aneel is a second-career seminarian with 18 years of experience in the corporate world. Aneel is a distance-learning student at Wartburg Theological Seminary and lives in Park Ridge, Ill., with his wife Sara; his kids Noah and Kai; and his cats Cheddar and Mose.

***Return to Baptism, Return to a New Normal*
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Hinsdale, Ill. (project site)**

The release and approval of several COVID-19 vaccines in December of 2020 stirred hope for a “return to normal,” to reenter life as it was before the disruption and trauma of the pandemic. But could a Lutheran understanding of rebirth in baptism help us imagine a way forward that doesn’t just go back to what we knew before but instead includes ongoing transformation through the cycle of death and rebirth—dying to the old and rising into new life as children of God? This five-week study engaged scriptural stories of exile and return, life after trauma, and other stories of return to a new normal alongside both a catechumenate-style focus on Baptism and an exploration of God’s gift of new life in one’s own life. Participants were encouraged to reflect on how the challenges of the pandemic have impacted their faith and the way they engage with Scripture. They were also encouraged to reflect on and share their own stories of rebirth and even create new “statements of faith” that focus on rebirth into new life in Christ rather than a return to “normal.”

**Melissa J. Harris, Master of Sacred Theology candidate, second year
United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg and Philadelphia, Pa.**

Melissa is a rare-book librarian for a special collection of books specializing in materials relating to horticulture, botany, natural history and voyages of exploration. She has made Cicero’s quote “If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need” her manifesto. Her studies at ULS center on reconsidering the impact of environmental stewardship on racial inequality.

***Environmental Stewardship: Reconsidering the Creation Narratives in the 21st Century*
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Haymarket, Va. (project site)**

Have humans always treated each other and the planet merely as raw materials for monetization? The motivation for this project began with feeling helpless about the rapid deforestation of the Amazon; the repeated forced migrations due to environmental catastrophes, greed, and violence; and the transactional relationship both governments and multinational corporations seem to have with everything and everyone. Is this what God meant by having “dominion”? Is humanity to rule by fiat, even though our God does not? This project set out to reread, and reimagine, the two creation narratives in Genesis 1:1–3:24 and reconsider the implications and directives of the texts on environmental stewardship and racial equality for Christians in the 21st century.