



VOLUME 2, ISSUE #1 - SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

# ABUNDANCE & GRACE

President Aloyo's Weekly Expressions

## Rediscovering our Blessedness

REV. DR. VICTOR ALOYO, JR.

Much of our world is dark and tasteless. Too many people live a bland existence amongst the shadows. The world and its people need flavor. They need light. They need you and me to make a difference. How are we being salt, flavoring the life of another? Where is our light dispersing darkness?

Some of us will hear Jesus' words and think that we need to become something we are not or that we need to get something we do not yet have. That is not, however, what Jesus says in the text found in Matthew 5:13-20. He does not say we should become salt. He says we already are salt. He does not say we are to become light. He says we are already light. We already are what we need to be. We already have all that we need. Now we must go live the life of ones who have been blessed, the life of salt and light – we need to Reclaim our Blessedness!

We can say our prayers and sing our praises to God, but if they do not govern and guide our actions in this world, they are only self-serving words that fall deaf on God's ears. Perhaps we should spend less time speaking the truth about God and more time doing the truth of God. What is that truth? How do we do that truth? We are called in such a time to explore and live into this truth! May it be so as we learn in the lecture halls, build community of becoming and belonging, and embody, through our actions, the presence of the One who has called us into being!

## In Gratitude

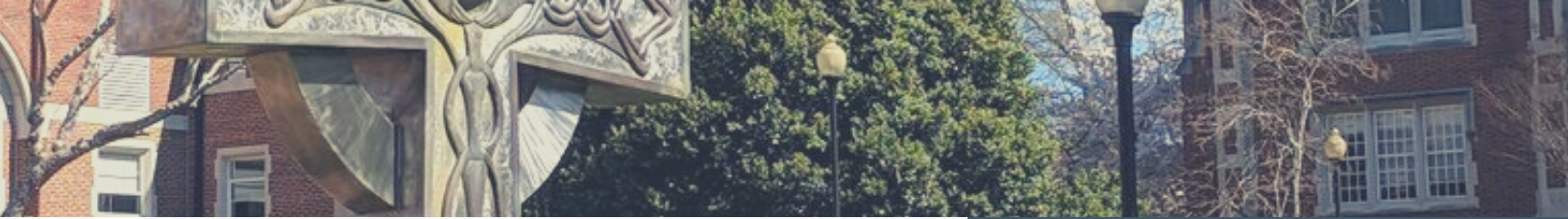
### A Grand Convocation

We are grateful for Dr. Rebecca Spurrier, Rylan Harris, Dr. Tony McNeill, the Worship Life Staff, and all participants providing leadership for the 196th Session of the Convocation on Friday, September 8 at the Columbia Presbyterian Church. Our esteemed guest speaker was The Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey, Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs and Associate Professor of Constructive Theology at the Meadville Lombard Theological School.

### Our Incoming Class

In gratitude for our newly formed Enrollment Management & Vocational Outreach team, we admitted 69 applicants – of the 69 admitted applicants, 40% were international. Our entering class consists of 43 students from 15 countries, 16 denominations, and of whom 35% are PCUSA. On September 1 CTS alum the Rev. Bobby Lee Graham, Jr. began his tenure as the Associate Director of Vocational Outreach. Info: Rev. Ann-Henley Nicholson at [Nicholsona@ctsnet.edu](mailto:Nicholsona@ctsnet.edu)





## Student Formation & Campus Culture is set!!!

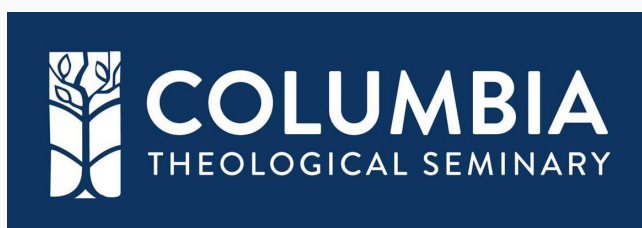
### A NEW TEAM WITH DETERMINATION

After multiple search processes led tirelessly by Dean Kathryn Threadgill, the SFCC team is constituted. Over the past couple of months, we have experienced the work of cross-sectional search teams in hiring Dr. Ria Martin, the Director of Intercultural & Global Services, and the Rev. Lindsay Geist, Campus Minister. Recently, Dean Threadgill forwarded an email to the Seminary community sharing information regarding their roles in addition to Dean Natasha Patterson and Fayth Bond. This team successfully developed the orientation programs for international and domestic students recently and navigated the collaboration of the Seminary community. Information: [threadgillk@ctsnet.edu](mailto:threadgillk@ctsnet.edu).



## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS - A RE-IMAGINED STRUCTURE

Dr. Jenn Carlier has been appointed as Associate Dean for Academic Programs. She joined the staff of the Office of Academic Affairs on September 1. In this role, Dr. Carlier will provide administrative leadership and support to faculty, staff, and students to ensure the quality of Columbia's degree and credit-bearing certificate programs. Her office will be CH114. Information: [yoderc@ctsnet.edu](mailto:yoderc@ctsnet.edu)



## CELEBRATIONS

On **July 30-August 1**, the President's Council, due to a generous benefactor, attended a retreat with the theme: Rhythms, Rest, and Remembering. Facilitated by The Rev. Maureen Gerald, a clinician, social worker, and spiritual director, we explored spiritual disciplines that offer opportunities for God's grace and overwhelming love, helping us find new rest and rhythms in our work and mission. Information: [bauml@ctsnet.edu](mailto:bauml@ctsnet.edu)

On **August 27-29**, the Faculty, due to a generous benefactor, attended a retreat entitled The Sacred Self-Care Journey. Facilitated by Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes, we explored tools for Sacred Self-Care, Life-Planning rules, and boundaries recognition. We were inspired by Dr. Walker-Barnes' personal experiences and ground-breaking research. Congratulations to Dean Yoder, Karen Wishart-Christian, and the AA Team for coordinating this event. Information: [yoderc@ctsnet.edu](mailto:yoderc@ctsnet.edu).







## Sowing Seeds - Representing Columbia Seminary

### FRIENDRAISING & PROCLAMATION

During the summer months, I had the honor of representing the Seminary and proclaiming the Gospel at several locations, including Montreat Conference Center, Massaneta Springs, Plainfield, NJ, Casa Brasil, and On The Way Churches in Johns Creek, GA, and at Shallowford Presbyterian Church as the worship speaker at the called Presbytery meeting. I also met with fourteen Latinx pastors representing six denominations at the President's Residence, cultivating partnerships.

Throughout these experiences, members of the Seminary staff have accompanied me, and what a joy to meet alums who are impassioned about ministry in various settings.

Joining faculty and staff engaging with congregations and conferences nationwide is a privilege. Reconnecting with alums, trustees, donors, and Seminary partners is a joy because I hear of their faith journey and life experiences.

For the month of September, I will be preaching on campus at our chapel worship on **Friday, September 15**; at Alpharetta Presbyterian Church on **Sunday, September 24**, and will serve as a keynote speaker at the Stewardship Kaleidoscope Conference in Minneapolis, MN, from **September 25-27**.

From **September 18-20**, I will be meeting with the Presidents of the PCUSA seminaries at the University of Dubuque.



## ON-CAMPUS

The Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency will be on campus from **September 14-16, 2023**, developing an Atlanta Consultation for congregations without pastors or are being maintained by leadership that is either a lay leader or a commissioned ruling elder. More information: Janelle Baker at [Janelle.Baker@pcusa.org](mailto:Janelle.Baker@pcusa.org).

The Office of Contextual Education & International Partnership at CTS is organizing a screening event on Thursday, **September 28, at 5:00 p.m.** at the Harrington Center Auditorium. The documentary 'Chosen' explores the lives of five Korean-Americans who ran for Congress in 2020. This film goes beyond the story of Korean immigrants; instead, it delves into the narrative of their identity. Information: Sam Kim at [kimS@ctsnet.edu](mailto:kimS@ctsnet.edu)

We were honored to host the **Interfaith Atlanta 2023 Fall Festival** this past Sunday. We had over a hundred community residents representing numerous faith traditions on campus. We are grateful for Ann Clay Adams who bridged this connection with Interfaith Atlanta. We may very well be the venue for this annual gathering as the participants were grateful for our hospitality and beautiful campus.

# Columbia Theological Seminary

## QUICK NOTES

### **SHEPHERDING COMMITTEE (Campus Master Planning Process)**

The Columbia Theological Seminary **campus master plan** is the framework to guide decision-making around the Seminary's campus in Decatur, GA. Through the Seminary's master plan, we seek to establish the "lifestyle" through which the Seminary can apply consistent principles and relevant available data by optimizing capital investments and making challenging resource-allocation decisions that seek to reinforce the Seminary's strategic goals, support student flourishing, enrich the Seminary's research mission, and partner with our local communities. We aim to have a first draft of the Campus Master Plan by December 2023 or January 2024. To proceed, we have created a Shepherding Committee composed of an intersection of partners: Mel Walker, Co-Chair; Marty Sadler, Co-Chair; John Oglesby, David Huffine, Christine R. Yoder, Kathryn Threadgill, Felicia Thimis, Rebecca Spurrier, and Victor Aloyo. Small group listening sessions with the Seminary community will be scheduled for the fall semester. Information: [sadlerm@ctsnet.edu](mailto:sadlerm@ctsnet.edu) and [mwwjr1958@gmail.com](mailto:mwwjr1958@gmail.com)

### **Student Information System**

The new SIS scheduled to roll out at the end of January 2024 will replace CAMS and effectively integrate with other campus systems. We have been partnering with Learning Forte to facilitate the selection of Campus Cafe. Through the able leadership of a committee led by Dean Yoder and Marty Sadler, the project manager, Sheena Mayrant, is steadfastly moving us forward. We will continue to update the Seminary community as to our progress. Information: [mayrants@ctsnet.edu](mailto:mayrants@ctsnet.edu).

### **Student Associates**

Student Associate positions have been posted to the student job board for hiring. Other categories: Supervised Ministry, Clinical Pastoral Education, Internships, Teaching and Assistantships, Preceptors, and Practicum opportunities are distinct from Student Associates and are administered separately. Specific policies regarding these designations will be forthcoming. Information: [bauml@ctsnet.edu](mailto:bauml@ctsnet.edu)  
Kathryn Threadgill - [threadgillk@ctsnet.edu](mailto:threadgillk@ctsnet.edu).

### **International Students**

To provide needed services about student visas, the Seminary requested the following individuals to serve as designated school officers with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Matt Rich, Director of Admissions and Enrollment Services, will serve as the Primary Designated School officer. His role will include acquiring information when international students have been admitted. Upon reception of all required and approved information, Matt will issue the Form I-20. Upon arrival on campus, all enrolled students will have as a resource regarding their visa matters Ann Clay Adams, Lucy Baum, and Ann-Henley Nicholson serving as the Designated School Officers. Throughout the course of the year, these colleagues will continue to engage in professional development activities and provide necessary information to and with all our international students. Dr. Ria Martin will be working with the SFCC team, the International Students Association, and Seminary partners to create community building initiatives. Currently, we are working with Seminary offices and international students regarding health insurance options and provisions. Information: [threadgillk@ctsnet.edu](mailto:threadgillk@ctsnet.edu).

### **Lunch - Food Services at The Refectory**

Starting September 6, The Refectory will be open for free lunch for all enrolled students. Staff and faculty can enjoy the daily menus at \$10.00. If departments are organizing events and wish to take advantage of this lunch option, please advise Ms. Felicia Thimis at least two weeks in advance for proper coordination and preparations. The cost would be \$10.00 per person. Felicia will be forwarding an inter-departmental email shortly in this regard. Information: [thimisf@ctsnet.edu](mailto:thimisf@ctsnet.edu) on the process and delivery will be forthcoming from Ms. Lucy Baum.