

KNOX COLLEGE, CANADA | SPRING 2021

# VOCATIONS

*Receiving  
the gifts*

**OF COVID TIMES**

ALSO: DAILY, DOWN-TO-EARTH DISCIPLESHIP;  
FROM THESPIAN TO THERAPIST; & THE WORK OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



# A prayer for our students

FROM KNOX COLLEGE FACULTY

O Creator of bodies, minds, and hearts,  
Let your creative Word shape the minds of our students.  
Let your creative love caress their hearts;  
Let your creative beauty enfold their bodies.

O Jesus, our Healer and Friend,  
Let your healing touch grace each student.  
Let your healing words form their thoughts;  
Let your healing embrace return health to  
body, mind, and soul.

O Spirit, our Comforter, Advocate, and Guide,  
Let your presence walk with each student.  
Let your encouragement sustain each journey;  
Let your guidance make each path known.

Then in you, O Creator,  
Healer, and Comforter,  
We rest our prayers;  
We find our hope;  
We discover our  
meaning in life.

Let your  
kingdom come  
and let your will  
be done.  
Amen.



In these difficult times, we note that students are managing in special circumstances and are facing especially uncertain futures. We stand with them in prayer and hope, and we are grateful that they are responding to God's call. *Prayer written by the Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham, Professor of Systematic Theology at Knox College.*

## VOCATIONS

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Vocations is published three times per year for graduates, former residents, and other friends of Knox College. We welcome your news and suggestions.

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Editor: Stephanie Hanna

Special thanks to Helen Cheung, Wan-Kit Keng, and Nam Soon Song for translating the Principal's Message.

Page 2 photo by Polina Zimmerman from Pexels.



**ON THE COVER:** Gale Macdonald, minister at Clarkson Road Presbyterian Church, records a Sunday worship service in her home. See story on pages 6-7. Photo by Stuart Macdonald.

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Matthew Ruttan sees daily, down-to-earth discipleship as vital, moving people from knowing about God to knowing God.



#### The gifts of COVID times

The pandemic has been exhausting. But Gale Macdonald shows us that this time has also given gifts – shaping who we are and the way we live as a community of faith.



#### From thespian to therapist

After decades working in theatre, Bruce Dow has become a Master of Pastoral Studies student at Knox, learning a new way to serve and to explore who we are as God's people.



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KNOX COLLEGE



# DAILY, DOWN-TO-EARTH DISCIPLESHIP FOR Abundant life – not just a pulse

By Matthew Ruttan

AS I STUDIED MY POCKET-SIZED New Testament over lunch hour in high school, Jesus burst out of the pages in a way that made me feel excited – and a little bit scared. Standing tall and radiating integrity, Jesus was a power of incomparable magnetism. He summoned others to trust, repent, rejoice, learn, and follow. Not one day a week, but seven. Not just with the head, but also with the heart, hands, and feet. Abundant life, not just a pulse.

Fast-forward: I've been the pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Barrie, Ont., for twelve years. Daily, down-to-earth discipleship in the footsteps of a resurrected Redeemer – who is both exciting and a little bit scary – continues to motivate me. Not just for me personally, but for God's people collectively.

One evening after small group, a woman said to me, "You know, I have gone to church through different periods of my life, and I would have thought of myself as a Christian. But now I can tell you that I truly am one." Shabamo! Angels singing! Something had clicked. This was more than knowing *about* God, but knowing God. It was starting to make choices based

on faith – not occasionally, but consistently. This can be exciting – and also a little bit scary – as we find ourselves briskly following Jesus out of our comfort zone.

One person I know goes out of the way to make friends with people who are unpopular and otherwise lonely. This is a push-back against the thinking that you should only "surround yourself with people who make you happy," a philosophy that certainly doesn't come from Jesus and his example of love.

Another person is like an unofficial counselor for people in a stressful and often thankless work envi-



ronment. A thoughtful and disarming manner creates space for sharing and encouragement. "Do you have a minute? I'd love to talk about something..."

I know someone else who makes food for families going through grief and hardship at the local Hospice. They know what it's like to give all your time, attention, and energy to a loved one who is dying, and how nice it is to have food "magically" appear. They remember. And so they act. Presto.

I know someone else who, when they see someone sullen, approaches them to see if they want prayer right then and there. It doesn't matter if they're at the mall, rink, or playground. "Dear Lord, in your great power and love, reach out and help this child you have made..."

Another man doesn't schedule himself too heavily. As a result, he can offer practical help to people who are

not well enough to do odd jobs or errands on their own.

I was recently talking to a man who never misses an opportunity to share his faith in Jesus. He's not pushy – just honest, well-spoken, and confident. He has the ability to leave people with the impression that life with God is actually good news!

For most people I know, daily, down-to-earth discipleship is rooted in regular prayer, Bible-reading, worship, and intentional fellowship with other believers. It is propelled forward by the Holy Spirit as people humbly seek to glorify Jesus in their decisions, priorities, and relationships.

The Bible has a word for this: zeal. I see it in these people. It takes zeal to battle against the selfishness, apathy, and individualism that are so dominant in our day, and to battle against the pressure to fit into a society that often rejects the ways of God. Being a child of God today is not child's play. Fortunately, they – and we – are not alone.

I'll be honest. I fail. A lot. But this doesn't tarnish my desire for discipleship. Instead, it makes me value the gospel all the more, because I know that my status with God isn't based on what I have (or haven't) done, but on what Jesus has done on my behalf. He is renewing and renovating all things, including me!

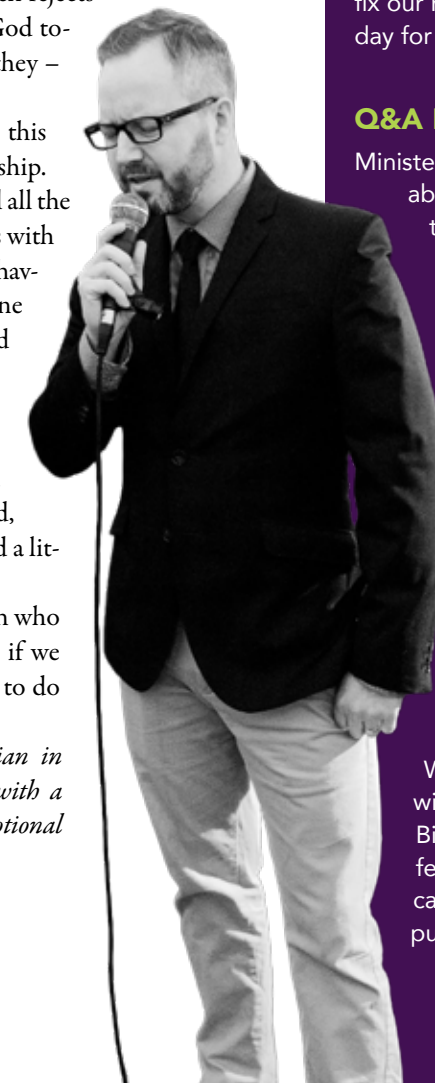
It's about knowing God and living differently as a result – consistently. Jesus summoned people to trust, repent, rejoice, learn, and follow. Not one day a week, but seven. Not just with the head, but also with the heart, hands, and feet. It's exciting, and a little bit scary. Abundant life, not just a pulse.

John Owen's epitaph says he was "a traveller on earth who grasped God like one in heaven." Wouldn't it be great if we could seize some simple, accessible, and practical ideas to do just that? ■

*Matthew Ruttan, pastor at Westminster Presbyterian in Barrie (Ont.), graduated from Knox College in 2008 with a Master of Divinity degree. He has published two devotional books; learn more at [MatthewRuttan.com](http://MatthewRuttan.com).*

Above: Ella and Eddy watch church online. Photo by Julie Cunha.

At right: Matthew Ruttan prays at a wedding reception.



## INSPIRATION FOR THE JOURNEY

Following are a few ideas that I've found contribute to daily, down-to-earth discipleship. None of them is original, expensive, or a silver bullet. But in their own way, especially in this strange and disorienting time, they can help us mature as apprentices of Jesus each day. —Matthew Ruttan



### DAILY DEVOTIONAL

From Monday to Friday I write a devotional called "Up!" It comes out on email, social media, and at [TheUpDevo.com](http://TheUpDevo.com). It's a succinct biblical thought with a practical application that you can read in under a minute. Spiritual espresso. It's a reminder – five mornings a week – to fix our minds on God and to live that specific day for his glory. Pause, pivot, act.

### Q&A FORUM

Ministers get a healthy number of questions about God, life, faith, and the Bible. Since the answer I share with one person might be helpful to more people, we at Westminster decided to create a mechanism for people to anonymously ask these questions. Then, once a month after worship, I respond. It's important for people to know that it's okay to have and ask serious questions. Questions have come forward about evil and suffering, persecution, evolution, the reliability of the Bible, forgiveness when it's hard, and COVID-19. Answers are also posted online ([westminsterpc.ca/qa-forum](http://westminsterpc.ca/qa-forum)).

### SMARTPHONE APP

Westminster launched a smartphone app with resources, videos, pictures, an online Bible, and a prayer wall (the most popular feature). No matter where you are, you can find faith-based encouragement at the push of a button.



# WHAT I DID – AND DIDN'T – LEARN IN SEMINARY: The gifts of COVID times

By Gale Macdonald

I REMEMBER FRIDAY, MARCH 13TH, 2020, very well. The news reports about the coronavirus were getting more serious, and some places were shutting down. By Saturday morning it had become clear that we shouldn't gather together, and we made the difficult decision to cancel Sunday's worship at Clarkson Road. Within the next week, we figured out how to have our first online service.

I follow a Facebook group called, "Things they didn't teach me in seminary"; much of what we've had to do since mid-March 2020 might fall into this category. Many of us couldn't have imagined all that we would do, learn, and experience in 2020. Some of it has been really challenging, emotionally draining, and exhausting. But there have also been many gifts in this time, and these gifts will shape who we are and the way we live as a community of faith from here on out.

Before COVID-19, we might have said the church is not about the building – but the restrictions have accelerated our learning; we truly became the church that left the building. Connecting with God, each other, and the community are the pillars we've used to make decisions about what we'll do and where we'll focus our energy and resources.

## Connecting with God

Faith is the one thing that we can count on. It gets many of us through challenging times. At Clarkson Road, we knew we needed to be able to worship together, and so we moved from having no online worship services to being 100% online within a week.

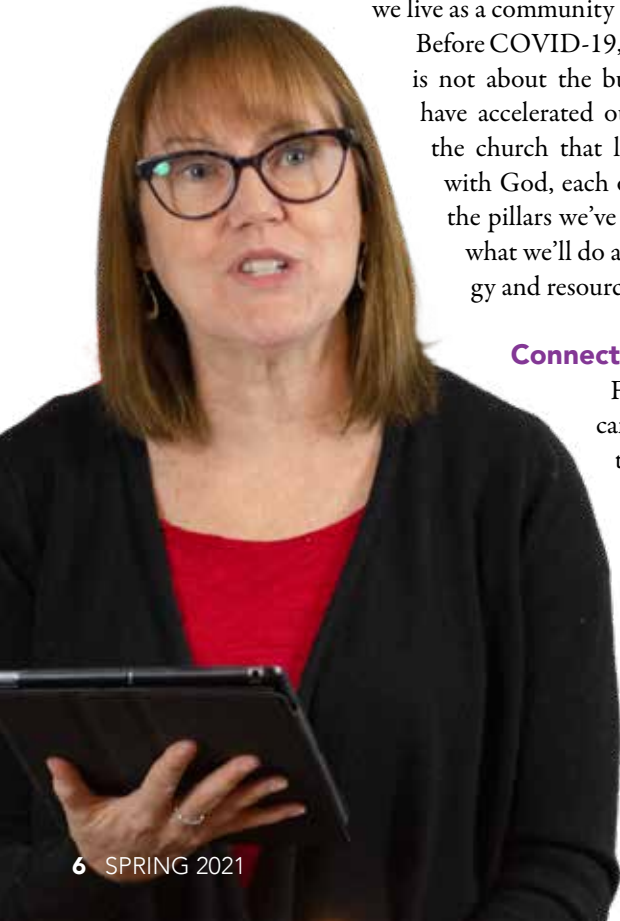
Unfortunately, worshipping online excludes people without internet access. For this group, we're getting tablet computers and will load them with the recorded services.

On the other hand, online services have also allowed some who hadn't been able to attend in person to suddenly feel like they're part of the community again. One family living with a chronic illness commented, "We're really enjoying the services and your messages. The music is so inspiring. We can't always be there Sunday morning at 10:30, but we watch them later and we feel like we're there."

A woman who is the primary caregiver for her spouse with Alzheimer's said, "We haven't been able to be at church for such a long time, and now I feel like I'm part of things again. It feels good. I've missed worship."

This fall we reintroduced a children's program, thanks to Natalie McLean, one of our university students. She makes a weekly video for the children with Bible stories, conversation about faith in daily life, and a hands-on activity.

Families (and others) are having a great time with these lessons. One mom said, "The kids had so much fun doing the



In her home, Gale Macdonald records an Advent worship service for Clarkson Road Presbyterian Church. Photo by Stuart Macdonald.



Left: Clarkson Road Presbyterian Church members advertise a drive-through toy drive for a local outreach centre. Photo provided by author.

Above: Natalie McLean leads the children's program via video on Clarkson Road's YouTube channel.

crafts. Your messages are awesome, and [my daughter] is completely mesmerized watching you." This new way of engaging with families is something we will figure out how to carry on post-COVID.

In September we introduced "Clarkson Connects," a Wednesday evening online gathering. We've connected with God and one another through discussions on a number of topics, including the Psalms and our Advent Bible study.

## Connecting with one another

Relationships have always been an important foundation for the Clarkson Road community of faith. COVID-19 has certainly made drastic changes to the usual rhythms of the community; I really miss seeing people on Sunday mornings, and I've come to realize how much pastoral care I did before and after worship.

However, like worship, we've learned how to tend relationships differently. Through videoconferencing, phone calls, and cards, people have been connecting beyond their usual circles. These connections have been a gift to all involved. One person said, "I went through my church directory yesterday and decided to call Mrs. [X]. I was a little nervous to call, because I don't really know her, but I know she lives alone and is likely lonely. We had a great chat. I'm going to make more calls after doing this one. It's good for me, too."

We've also made care packages for those who need a little extra care; we hope these gifts remind people how much they are loved and remembered.

## Connecting with the community

We found new ways to put our faith into action and continue our community involvement. We're a member church of The Compass Food Bank and Outreach Centre (Mississauga), and we knew it was important to find ways to continue to support them as they provide tangible and necessary supports to our most vulnerable neighbours. This fall we had a Drive

Thru Food Drive, and we just completed a Drive Thru Toy Drive for the Christmas Shop they open for clients. Each week during the worship service, I take a few moments to share how we've been stewarding the gifts given – to help people see how we're continuing to show Jesus' love to others.

This has been an intense period of change as all of the church staff roles have adapted to our new circumstances. Sometimes it has felt overwhelming to be the calm presence casting a vision of hope – while also trying to figure out a way forward and deal with my own reactions and emotions. I'm grateful to work with a Session who are spiritually grounded, visionary, and willing to make difficult decisions. For me personally, prioritizing my relationship with God and spending time in prayer and reflection have made all the difference. I have been very aware of God's presence, and God reminds me that it isn't all up to me.

While my time at Knox College didn't teach me how to be a televangelist or do video editing, Knox did teach me about the importance of knowing my community and planning worship services that would engage the community. The pandemic drastically changed our context, but it's been fun and life-giving to create online worship and faith formation opportunities.

I am confident that God is doing a new thing, and this is really exciting. We will not be the same community of faith when we emerge from COVID-19 – and that's great. I don't know what we'll look like, but I know that God is going to continue to lead us – just as God has faithfully inspired us in the past. ■

*Gale Macdonald, minister at Clarkson Road Presbyterian Church, Mississauga (Ont.), graduated from Knox College in 2012 with a Master of Divinity degree.*

*"While my time at Knox College didn't teach me how to be a televangelist or do video editing, Knox did teach me about the importance of knowing my community and planning worship services that would engage the community."*



# LEARNING TO WRESTLE WITH GOD AND GOD'S PEOPLE: From thespian to therapist

By Bruce Dow

*“What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” Then the man said, “You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans...” – Genesis 32:27-28*

Since before the written word, the theatre has proved a secular platform on which we “wrestle with God and humans.” There, we wrestle with both the grandest and basest aspects of our human condition. Prehistoric images show man dancing out the story of his battles to survive. In the Western theatre, the Greeks transformed the religious rite into a theatrical one when Thespis first inhabited a character, turned from the altar, and spoke directly to the gods. Shakespeare continued the conversation by elevating our understanding of, and our appreciation for, our own human frailty. Contemporary drama (musical theatre, opera, dance, television, and film), whether serious or frivolous, continues to ask the question: “Who are we in relation to each other, and in relation to what we hold to be true?”

I chose a career in theatre because I wanted to explore who I am in relation to the universe. The theatre has been my life for the last 34 years. I have been an award-winning actor, a director, composer/librettist/lyricist, and theatre educator since before I graduated with my first Master’s degree in Theatre.

I also chose theatre because I sought the approval it offered. I know – now – that God loves me. But for a long time, I could find no place that would offer me public affirmation of and access to God’s love. I am LGBTQ+. When I discovered I was rejected by the church, the theatre became my option for love and approval.

The theatre was a good home. I found validation and recognition, and I know that the work I do in the theatre also helps others; it is a kind of secular ministry; a vicarious therapy session for the audience. Humans have always found comfort in seeing their stories as reflected from a stage. They find hope in seeing others, often kings and princesses, face the challenges they experience in their daily lives.

However, more recently, I have found less satisfaction in the work. I still believe in the purpose and power of the theatre, but I no longer personally need to partake in that purpose. I still desire to explore, share, and give of myself – and yet I now want to serve the world in more direct, tangible ways.

Therefore, I chose to change the direction of my life – to see if I can offer something more, something different, to the world. Who changes their whole direction in the last part of life? (I’m 57. I’m not quite in the “last part” of life, but I can sure see it coming!)

So, here I am. I am a first-year Master of Pastoral Studies student (Psychotherapy and Spiritual Care emphasis) at Knox College. What I have found here has exceeded all my expectations. I am working harder, thinking more deeply, and widening my heart and mind in ways I didn’t know possible. The academic standards at Knox are very high – definitely not for the faint of heart. Pass or fail, I find great satisfaction in accomplishing studies which challenge me more than they may reassure me.



The student body and faculty are representative of the full range of cultural and spiritual diversity for which Toronto is world-renowned – and so I feel at home. Though of Scots/Swiss descent, my comfort food is Asian (I was born in Vancouver), and my music is jazz and hip-hop (African American in source – I discovered jazz through my parents, and hip-hop through my friends while

living in New York City). I am in awe of my many fellow students who are being as challenged as I am – and yet are doing their studies in their second – or even third – language!

At Knox, my exploration is welcomed, my participation expected, and my options questioned – and so my personhood grows. I have been open with my fellow students about my LGBTQ+ness. I have been met with some generous and loving support... as well as with the usual, expected silence. I hope my presence will enlighten those who may need it.

I believe, strongly, that one may encourage change simply through the act of being present.

The theatre was wonderful to me – challenging, exciting, a real journey. It is still a beautiful realm where all God’s creatures are welcome to explore their human-ness. Now I need to explore more, and to give more deeply. Perhaps I feel the need to speak less – in a performative way – and to listen more with my heart (though you wouldn’t know that from my presence in class!). I have explored what I can in the secular realm, and, so, now, “I now see that the hands that forgive, console, heal, and offer a festive meal must become my own” (Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Return of the Prodigal Son*).

For a long time, especially in my theatre work, I identified with the biblical Jacob, who wrestled with God and with humans (Gen. 32:27-28). I still do wrestle with both and continue to explore who we are in relation to each other, and in relation to what we hold to be true. But at this time in life, another image also comes to mind. I think about the Ethiopian eunuch who encounters Philip the Evangelist while reading the Book of Isaiah (Acts 8:26-40). During this time at Knox, I am looking for someone to offer guidance, so that I may better serve others. ■

*Bruce Dow is a Master of Pastoral Studies student at Knox College.*

*Bruce’s previous involvements: Broadway: Diana, a new musical (on Netflix in Spring 2021); Jesus Christ Superstar; The Music Man; Anything Goes; Jane Eyre. Stratford Festival: 12 seasons of leading roles in musicals and Shakespeare, including The Tempest (starring Christopher Plummer). Toronto: 2 Dora Awards as Best Actor and Best Actor Musical for his work at Buddies in Bad Times Theatres; 2 Dora Award nominations for his work with Canadian Stage and the Musical Stage Company. Helen Hayes Nomination for his work with the Tony Award® winning Shakespeare Theatre Company, Washington, DC. TV: Rick Mercer Reports, Murdoch Mysteries, Anne with an “E”, The Strain. Solo jazz recordings available on iTunes & Spotify. And, strangely enough, perhaps best known as the voice of “Max” in the Total Drama Island animated series. Bruce says, “If you have teenagers around the house, they’ll have heard of it!”*

*At right: Bruce Dow as the Baker in The Stratford Festival of Canada’s Into the Woods, 2005. Photo by David Hou, property of Stratford Festival of Canada; used with permission. Above: Photo by Ian Brown Photography. Facing page: Photo by Marcelo Jaboo from Pexels.*

*“I know that the work I do in the theatre also helps others; it is a kind of secular ministry; a vicarious therapy session for the audience. Humans have always found comfort in seeing their stories as reflected from a stage.”*







## THE WORK OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Guiding us to life change

By Nam Soon Song

IN THE YEAR 2000, one brave soul – along with her husband and children – flew across the Pacific Ocean toward an unknown world. Everything was new and strange in Canada, particularly for my family. My children had just turned ages 10 and 11.

Coming to Knox College from Korea is one of the mysteries of God in my life. Or, I can say as a Calvinist, that it was God's providence. Before I talked with then-Principal Dr. Dorcas Gordon on the phone, I had never heard of Knox College.

However, after conversation with Principal Gordon and reviewing the Knox College brochure, I was moved by the history of Ewart College and the need to renew a Christian Education focus at Knox. Ewart College was a school for Christian education and lay education, initially training women for diaconal ministry. In 1991 it amalgamated with Knox College, and the Ewart legacy had been fading.

My heart has been deeply rooted in Christian education and lay education, and I have been passionate about Christian education in the church throughout my life. I was eager to bring back Christian education to Knox College – and indeed, during my time at Knox, we developed a lay education program, added a Master of Religious Education program, and had many doctoral students in Christian education.

### Practical and integrated

During my high school years, I had decided that I would go to seminary to study theology. Once there, I liked all of the subjects taught in theological school – systematic theology, church history, and Bible. I was

particularly interested in Christian education, however, because of its integrative character.

For Christian education, one needs to study not only all areas of theology, Bible, and church history, but also the social sciences (psychology, human development, and sociology) and general educational philosophy and theories – even statistics! Studying various areas broadly and integrating all these areas in teaching was the most enjoyable part of studying Christian education. It is like the hands and feet of the human body: a very practical integrative academic area that guides us to life change. Without Christian education, the church can't grow – either in numbers or in maturity.

*“Without Christian education, the church can't grow – either in numbers or in maturity.”*

### A holistic teaching approach

How we understand ourselves as human beings deeply affects the way we educate. As I teach, I focus on humans as communal, relational, and connected beings; and I draw attention to harmony between heaven and earth, based on Eastern philosophy. Human beings, as a part of the larger universe, need to work to bring harmony to all things in this world. I also do not ignore the importance of understanding of

*At right: Professor Nam Soon Song (centre) with Soyon (Esther) Park and Dawit Kim at Knox College's 2019 Convocation. Photo by Terry Ting.*

*Above: Professor Nam Soon Song presents the degree Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) to Dr. Stephanie Ling at Knox College's Founding Day Convocation, November 5, 2019. Photo by Stephanie Hanna.*

humans as active agents – both individually and communally.

In the early days of my teaching I used Eastern methods such as meditation along with deep breathing as a way to empty ourselves. Recently I added *madangnori* (a traditional musical performing art) and Eastern musical instruments in my sessions on teaching the Bible. I have always tried to help students see Christian education in the whole community surrounding the church, not only inside of the church.

### Career highlights

Through my whole life I taught at two theological schools: Hanil University and Theological Seminary in Korea, and Knox College in Toronto. Looking back at my career, one of my highlights has been guiding doctoral students, as they helped me to learn and kept my academic energy growing. Another highlight was receiving a Louisville Project grant and publishing the book, *People of Faith, People of Jeong (Qing)*, with other research team members.

However, the greatest joy of my teaching career has been teaching and being in classrooms, asking questions and having dialogue with students. Although I am an introverted person, I got energy back from my students

and was enriched by being and teaching in classrooms.

Another joy of teaching has been hearing from graduates – particularly graduates from long ago who I didn't expect to hear from – about how their learning of Christian education has been useful and helpful for their ministry, which they did not anticipate when they were students.

Our students are participating in God's mission in a very difficult time. Therefore, they are all the more precious and valuable. They carry a very important mission for the church and society. I hope they keep their “beginner's mind,” which they had at the start of each significant moment in their faith life and calling: when they became Christians; when they responded to God's call; when they first began to study theology; and when they first were called to a church. And I hope they go into ministry with an eschatological hope, faith, and spirit. ■

*Nam Soon Song has been Ewart Professor of Christian Education & Youth Ministry at Knox College since 2000. After 21 years at Knox, she will be retiring on June 30, 2021.*

*“The greatest joy of my teaching career has been teaching and being in classrooms, asking questions and having dialogue with students.”*





## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: KOREAN TRANSLATION

### 탄력성을 위한 교육

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Find the complete translation online at [knox.utoronto.ca/korean](http://knox.utoronto.ca/korean).

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: MANDARIN TRANSLATION

### 學習鏗而不捨、堅持不懈

「我們既然蒙憐憫，受了這職分，就不喪膽。」 哥林多後書4:1

好幾年之前，我曾講授一門有關咱們長老教會傳統，如何認識蒙召的課；當中我強調，在逆境中保持堅毅的重要性。我意思是勉勵同學們，在侍奉生涯中，縱使面對困難甚至灰心，但仍要堅守不屈不撓的心志。有一位同學很有禮貌的問道，在我侍奉生涯中，有多經常興起放棄作牧職的念頭？我不假思索的回應這位同學：「每個禮拜一的早上。」

我們要知道，縱然在平日無風無浪的日子裡，侍奉生涯都是充滿困難的。作上主的僕人，侍奉教會，從來不是輕而易舉的事。當下在全球冠狀病毒肺炎肆虐下，我們更深刻體會到推行聖工的艱辛和費勁；據我所知，有好些牧者和教會領袖們，也蠻生放棄的念頭。

至於我們的學生、教授群和行政隊伍，過去這些年來，也面對重重考驗。學生們的學習、我們的教學和行政工作，已轉到家中網上進行；可以想像，既要應付學習，又要面對家中鎖事，有些甚至有財政壓力，令大家境況更捉襟見肘；在疫情下，我們彼此隔離，獨自承擔憂慮，精神健康的惡化不容樂觀。

疫情下，我們神學院的首要任務，是保護每位教職員、學生，在教研、學習的過程中，為上主在祂鍾愛的這片土地上，繼續卓越地實踐牧職，侍奉子民。凡此種種，均需要我們在各自崗位上，堅持不懈、不屈不撓、持之以恆的比從前幹得更卓越。故這一年的教學重點，便是讓每一位學生，毋論畢業後在那方面侍奉，都學有專精，有韌力，堅毅地沉著應戰，愈戰愈勇。作為教會領袖的我們，在疫情下，要更有創意，要有更強的適應能力和柔韌度；這即是說，在傳遞、教育上主的信息和輔導時，要更有深度、更具批判性的闡述信仰跟生活的關係。...

Find the complete translation online at [knox.utoronto.ca/mandarin](http://knox.utoronto.ca/mandarin).

## DUSTY TREASURE DISCOVERED IN KNOX BASEMENT

By Anne McGillivray

Dim lights flickered as I stepped into the room. The smell of 18,000 dusty tomes hit my nostrils. Plastic sheeting fluttered above industrial shelving, and I heard the drone of an old dehumidifier struggling against the effects of ancient leaky pipes. I noticed peeling paint as I walked down the narrow aisles of the Caven Library storage room, deep in the basement of Knox College.

Against the east wall were scores of old magazine files holding sagging pamphlets, magazines, books, filmstrips, records, and pictures. This was the “curriculum collection” from the former Ewart College, shoved into this dismal space when the diaconal college amalgamated with Knox. The Ewart library books had become the McKay Educational Resource Centre (now part of Caven Library) – but this curriculum collection seemed to have been forgotten by the time I entered the basement that day. *After all, what good were all those outdated Sunday school quarterlies and obsolete audio-visu-als?*

Yesterday’s treasure is often today’s trash. But in archeology, history, and archival work, yesterday’s trash can become today’s treasure. Pottery shards illuminate civilizations, William Shakespeare’s shopping list is prized, the doodles of a prime minister in a dull meeting can speak volumes. What stories might these old curricula tell?

My first encounter with the curriculum collection happened when I was teaching Christian history to a Sunday school class of tweens. Finding visual aids was a challenge. There wasn’t a lot out there for that age group, and I had no budget. “How about these?” suggested Susan Sheridan, my then-coworker in the library, pulling some large posters out of a map cabinet. They were perfect – pictures of what early churches might have looked like, maps of how Christianity spread, charts of the timeline of Christianity. I wouldn’t have guessed that they were at least fifty years old.

As we browsed the collection, we started to realize what a valuable primary source it could be for the study of twentieth-century church history. These piles of maps, charts, and workbooks were tools created for the essential task of passing on the faith. They reflected both *what* the church thought was most important to teach its members, and *how* it was taught. *If you only have one hour every Sunday to teach children about Christianity, what do you choose?*

The curricula also reflected the values and attitudes of the times in which they were published. What did the church think about racism in the 1960s? How was Jesus portrayed in pictures? How were families depicted? What did the materials, design, production, and



From left: Choose! Christian Ethics Today (1970) by Theodore Pitt, Covenant Life Curriculum for youth. Victory magazine (1965), a Christian study resource. God's World and Johnny (1948) by Dorothy Westlake Andrews, primary reader, Christian Faith and Life Curriculum.

teaching methods reveal about the philosophy of education within the church?

Thanks to donors and a 2016 grant from the Ewart College Endowment Fund, the library was able to turn the curriculum collection from trash into treasure. Staff sorted through the items and rehoused them, and students were hired to create a finding aid for the collection. Today the historical curriculum collection is still in the Knox basement, but it’s in clean, neatly labelled boxes on mobile shelving in a brightly lit room, accessible to scholars through the Caven Library.

As I’ve pursued my Master of Theological Studies degree at Knox, I’ve found many ways to use the curriculum collection in my assignments. A research paper for The Presbyterian Tradition in Canada showed me how this curriculum was used by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In a course on Women Interpreters of the Bible, I studied a 1949 textbook for junior high students written by Hulda Niebuhr, older sister of Richard and Reinhold. When I studied James Fowler’s work on faith development in a course on Psychology and Religion, I examined *Seasons of the Spirit* curriculum (2002) to see how it fit in with the theory. My current project is a research paper on how eschatology was taught in the curriculum of the 1960s. I am interested to know how, as baby boomers age, their Sunday school years prepared them for their death and the hereafter.

Treasure isn’t always obvious; sometimes it’s overlooked or hidden. The Ewart College Curriculum Collection was certainly worth finding. ■

Anne McGillivray is a Master of Theological Studies student and the Technical Services Coordinator for Caven Library at Knox College.

The Ewart College Curriculum Collection is available for research through the Caven Library of Knox College. For access, contact Knox Reader Services at [knox.readerservices@utoronto.ca](mailto:knox.readerservices@utoronto.ca).





## Claire Lemiski receives George Black Scholarship

Congratulations to Claire Lemiski, who has been named by The Hymn Society as a recipient of the George Black Membership Scholarship for 2021! Claire is in the Master of Theological Studies program at Knox, and she leads the Knox College Choir.

Each year, The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada awards scholarships to students attending a Canadian college, university, or seminary who show potential in the field of congregational song, through leadership as an accompanist, singer, conductor, worship planner or animator, or hymn text or tune writer.

The scholarship is named after George Black, who has been described as a consummate teacher who mentored clergy, lay readers, and musicians for his entire life. A former President of The Hymn Society, he chaired the Anglican Church's Hymn Book Task Force which prepared Common Praise in 1998.

The Hymn Society brings together people with a passion for congregational song in all its aspects. The recipients of this Scholarship are introduced to the work of leading practitioners in this field of study, this area of ministry, as well as host of other valuable resources available through The Hymn Society.

Two scholarships were awarded for 2021. The Knox College Faculty is proud of Claire for this achievement!



Claire Lemiski



## INVEST IN the future of faith

Talk with us about including Knox College in your will. Begin at [knox.utoronto.ca/legacy](http://knox.utoronto.ca/legacy) or 416-978-4503.



## Knox Residence Christmas Social, pandemic style

In the Dining Hall on December 15, 2020, a small group of Knox residents gathered to decorate a Christmas tree beside a crackling “fire” (laptop video), listen to Christmas music, and play games. It’s been a very different year in the Knox Residence, but students and staff have worked hard to keep residence life fun and supportive – as well as safe.

*Photos by Sukanya Sharma.*

### THE ROBERT LAIDLAW MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS



## Constructing World Fellowship

*Christian Practices & Insights from a Century Ago*

Dr. Dana Robert  
*Truman Collins Professor of World Christianity and History of Mission at Boston University*

March 3, 2021, 4pm EST  
Live online event, including Q&A

Register by February 26 at [knox.utoronto.ca/2021aidlaw](http://knox.utoronto.ca/2021aidlaw).

### CLASS NOTES

#### 1950s

**Richard Mawdsley (R'50-52)** passed away May 17, 2020.

**Margaret Ellen May Nutt (E'57)** passed away on October 14, 2020.

#### 1960s

**Jessie Horne (E'69)** passed away on November 18, 2020.

**Christine Shaw (E'61)** passed away on October 17, 2020.

#### 1970s

**Brooke Ashfield (K'79)** retired on September 30, 2020.

**Linda Ashfield (K'79)** retired on September 30, 2020.

**Iris Ford (K'78)** passed away on September 28, 2020.

**David Kettle (K'77, HDD'09)** retired on October 1, 2020.

#### 1980s

**William “Graham” MacDonald (K'85)** passed away on November 20, 2020.


**Lorne A. MacLeod (K'88)** retired on November 1, 2020.

#### 1990s

**Marion R. Barclay MacKay (K'97)** retired on November 1, 2020.

**Victoria Eldridge (K'98)** retired on December 1, 2020.

**Kenrick Keshwah (K'90)** passed away on September 26, 2020.


 **Grace Ji-Sun Kim (E'92, K'95, K'01)** has written *Hope in Disarray: Piecing Our Lives Together in Faith* (Pilgrim Press), her 19th book as author or editor. She is Professor of Theology at Earlham School of Religion (Indiana).

K: Knox; E: Ewart; R: Resident

**Thomas G. Vais (K'90)** passed away on September 19, 2020.



#### 2000s

 **Courtney Crawford (K'08)** was inducted at Knox, Waterloo (Ont.) on November 8, 2020.

**Connie Lee (K'01)** passed away on November 29, 2020.

**Matthew Ruttan (K'08)** has published his second book, *Turbulence: Devotionals to steady you through the storms of life* (Thicket Books). He is pastor at Westminster, Barrie (Ont.).

 **Jonathan Tait (K'06)** was inducted at Living Faith Community, Baxter (Ont.), on October 4, 2020.

**In Seob David Won (K'07)** became a chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces.



 **Daniel L. Wong (K'07)** has published *Finding Our Voice: A Vision for Asian North American Preaching* (Lexham Press), co-written with Matthew D. Kim. He is Associate Professor of Christian Ministries at Tyndale University (Toronto).


#### 2010s

**Angelica Atkins (K'19, K'20)** was ordained and inducted at St. John's, Port Perry (Ont.), on December 13, 2020.



**James Clark (K'16)** was inducted at North Bramalea, Brampton (Ont.), on December 5, 2020.



 **Albertha Henry-Carmichael (K'10)** was ordained as a chaplain at Mackenzie Health (Richmond Hill, Ont.) on October 25, 2020.

**Bokyoung Kim (K'17)** has published *Models of Authority and Debate in the Gospel of Mary* (Peter Lang).

**Shalini Rajack-Sankarlal (K'13)** was inducted at University Community, Windsor (Ont.), on October 4, 2020.



### SEND US YOUR NEWS

Have you published a book? Gotten married? Been called to a congregation? Had a baby? Send your news to us at [knox.communications@utoronto.ca](mailto:knox.communications@utoronto.ca).





**John Vissers**  
Principal of  
Knox College

## TO PERSEVERE AND FLOURISH: Educating for resilience

**A** FEW YEARS AGO I was giving a lecture on the meaning of *call* in the Presbyterian tradition, and I focused on the importance of perseverance – that is, the continuing commitment that is required in ministry, despite difficulty and discouragement. One student politely asked how often I had thought about quitting when I was a pastor. Without even thinking, I responded, “Every Monday morning.”

Even at the best of times, Christian ministry is tough. Following Jesus as a servant of the church has never been for the faint of heart. But under the conditions of a global pandemic, we’ve begun to understand in new ways the toll that Christian service often exacts.

Many pastors and church leaders think often about quitting.

These have also been difficult months for our students, faculty, and staff. Studying, teaching, and working from home, and managing the needs of a family, often under financial stress, can be wearisome. Some face isolation, anxiety,

and mental health challenges caused by or exacerbated by the pandemic.

Our priority as a college this last year has been to promote the health and safety of everyone in the Knox community as we pursue theological education with excellence in the service of the church and the world God loves. It has required perseverance and resilience, the capacity to recover from challenges which have

upended us, the ability to get up and show up, and to meet new challenges, stronger than before. As they prepare for various forms of Christian ministry, our students are thereby learning the skills they will need to persevere and flourish.

Church leaders will need to be more creative, adaptive, and resilient for a post-pandemic world. They will need to think deeply about God and think critically about matters of faith as they preach, teach, and counsel – because facile answers to serious questions about the credibility and plausibility of the Christian faith in the face of so much suffering and anguish will not do.

They will need the psychological tools to look after themselves and the people entrusted to their care; they will need to be grounded in the spiritual disciplines, what the Reformed faith calls the ordinary means of grace – the Word, sacraments, and prayer; they will need friends, mentors, colleagues, therapists, coaches, advisers, and spiritual directors to support and sustain them. It takes a community to help a church leader persevere through periods of disruption and discouragement.

Importantly, like all of us, those who lead and minister in the name of Jesus need to know that they are loved both by God and by the people of God.

Knox College exists to educate faithful, creative, and resilient leaders for the church of Jesus Christ. Thank you for helping us do this during a time unlike any other.

*Korean and Mandarin translations of the Principal's Message begin on page 12.*

*“Since it is by God’s mercy  
that we are engaged in this  
ministry, we do not lose heart.”  
–2 Corinthians 4:1*

➔ To receive *Vocations* electronically instead of in print, contact us at [knox.communications@utoronto.ca](mailto:knox.communications@utoronto.ca).

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