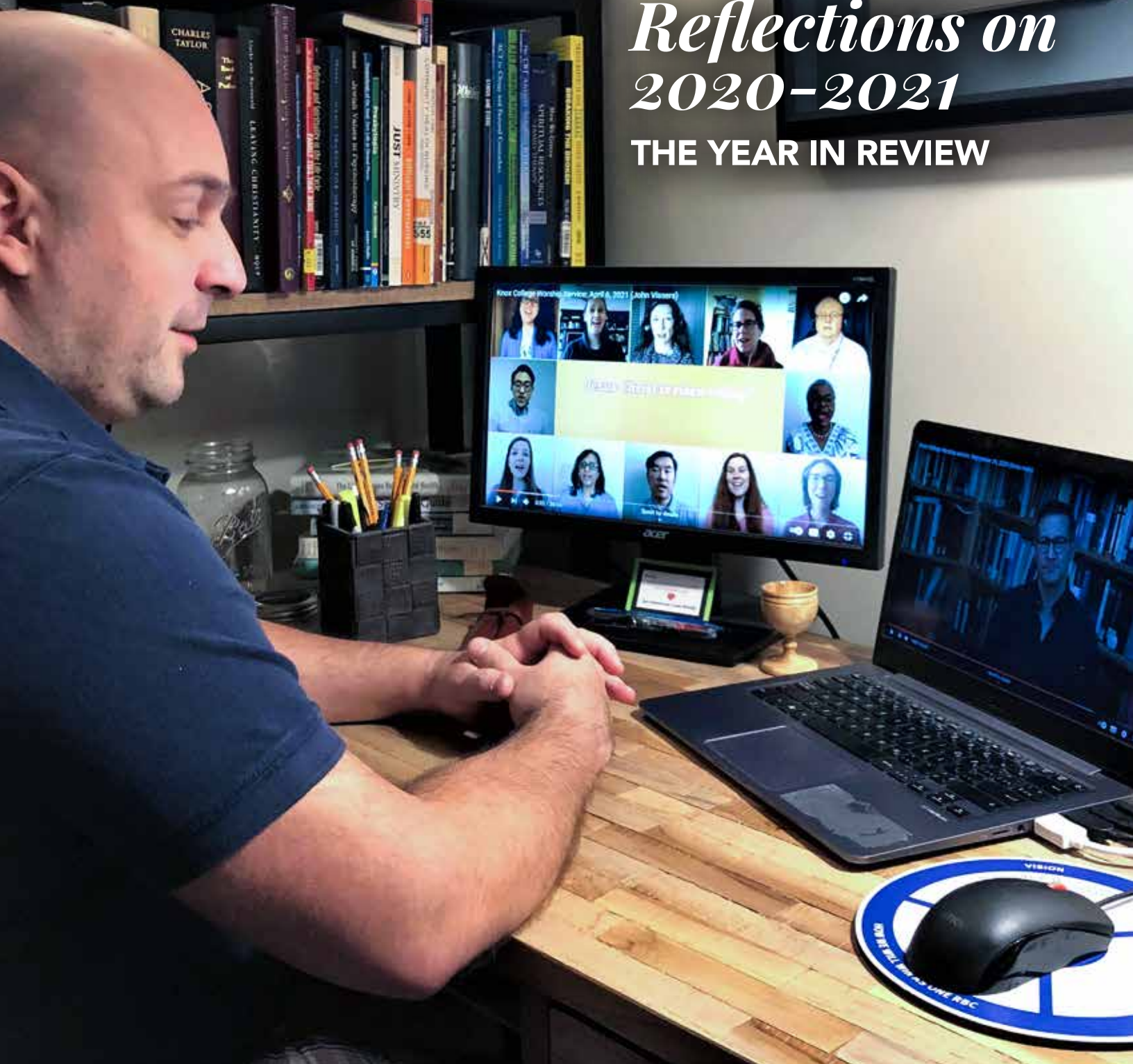


KNOX COLLEGE, CANADA | AUTUMN 2021

# VOCATIONS

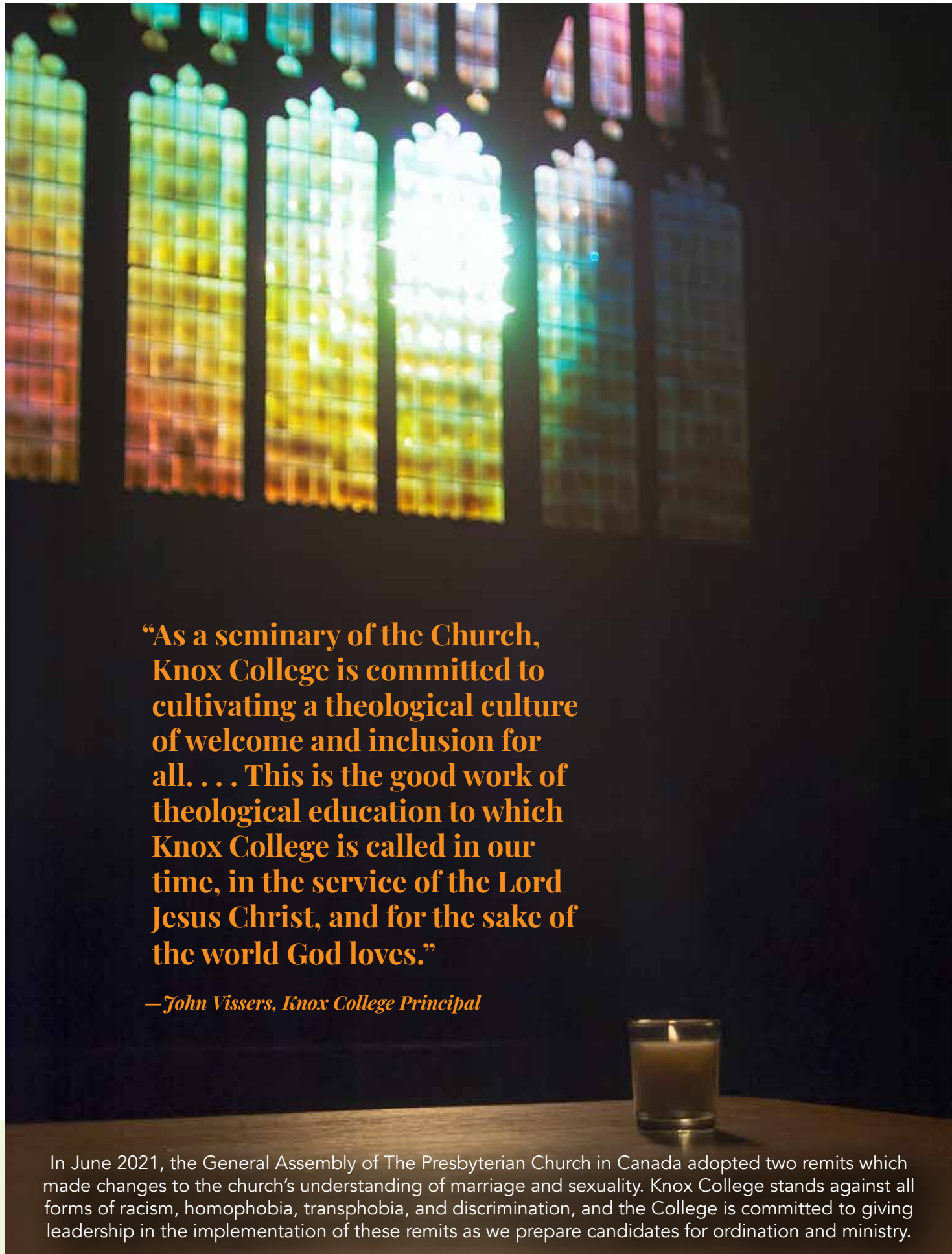
*Reflections on  
2020-2021*

**THE YEAR IN REVIEW**



ALSO: MINISTERING TO MINISTERS; THE POWER OF PICTURE BOOKS;  
A THEOLOGY OF HOPE; & CELEBRATING OUR DIFFERENCES





**“As a seminary of the Church, Knox College is committed to cultivating a theological culture of welcome and inclusion for all. . . . This is the good work of theological education to which Knox College is called in our time, in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the world God loves.”**

**—John Vissers, Knox College Principal**

In June 2021, the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted two remits which made changes to the church’s understanding of marriage and sexuality. Knox College stands against all forms of racism, homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination, and the College is committed to giving leadership in the implementation of these remits as we prepare candidates for ordination and ministry.

# VOCATIONS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3 | AUTUMN 2021

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

Please send comments, changes of address, or requests for mailing list removal to us at [knox.college@utoronto.ca](mailto:knox.college@utoronto.ca), 416-978-8738, or:

Knox College - Vocations  
59 St. George Street  
Toronto, ON M5S 2E6

Tel: 416.978.4500  
Fax: 416.971.2133  
Web: [knox.utoronto.ca](http://knox.utoronto.ca)

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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 Stephanie Hanna.



**ON THE COVER:** Antonio Siracusa, Knox 2021 MPS graduate and current MDiv student, joins in Knox's virtual Community Worship services from his home office. See story on page 12. Photo by Bruce Dow.

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### A theology of hope

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**KNOX COLLEGE**



# Ministering to ministers

## SERVING THE CHURCH THROUGH CLERGY CARE

By Kevin Steeper

**“I can’t do this anymore!” The words jumped off the computer screen, grabbing my attention. I was reading an email message from a colleague in ministry. She had been working hard through the pandemic, but found herself on the edge of burnout, her energy depleted.**

I reached out to her and we talked. I closed our time together with Psalm 121 and prayer – and she said that from then on, that psalm was a source of strength for her. I continued to support her as she put in place a medical leave from her community of faith, as well as the various psychological and spiritual supports she needed for healing.

This wasn’t the first message that I had received from a colleague looking for pastoral support during the pandemic. Some were discerning whether to leave their current ministry or retire from ministry altogether. Others were looking for spiritual resources drawn from the Christian tradition, or for help in spiritual direction. Each colleague was looking for someone to listen to them, to support them, and to offer guidance as they sought to be faithful to God in these very challenging times.

I currently serve on the regional staff of the United Church of Canada as the Minister of Pastoral Support for those in paid accountable ministry. The best way to describe my position is that I am a “chaplain” to the ministers. I’ve been in this position for four years. I’m part of a regional staff team, but my position is unique as I am the only one who holds such a position within the denomination. I am responsible for organizing regional and local clergy cluster groups that come together for mutual support. Faith formation and professional education are also part of my responsibilities, as well as providing pastoral/spiritual care to colleagues and their families in times of crisis. I have approximately 350 clergy under my care across the three regional councils in southwestern Ontario.

Prior to taking this position, I served for almost 25 years as a congregational minister in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and I then was officially received into the United Church in 2018. I’ve served in rural, small town, and urban ministry, and in multi-point and single-point charges. Despite the differences in locales, I’ve carried two deep interests throughout my years of ordained ministry. The first interest is in the contemplative dimension of the gospel that finds expression in the Christian mystical tradition; the second interest deals with “questions of the soul,” those deep questions of meaning that are intrinsic to the human condition.

These two interests are rooted in the theological education that I received as a Master of Divinity student at Knox College a number of years ago. They led me to go on and train as a spiritual director through the Haden Institute, with its focus on the Christian mysticism and Jungian psychology, and then to accept this position as regional pastoral support minister. I have wanted to engage with people in a common search for meaning and for what that looks like in the ordinary moments of life.

I hadn’t been in this regional role for long, however, before I realized that I needed more formation in order to serve my colleagues well. I started looking into academic programs that would give me a solid grounding in the discipline of psychotherapy. Ultimately, I decided to return to Knox College for the Master of Pastoral Studies program – both because of the excellent

theological grounding I received years prior, and because I appreciate the focus on integrating spiritual care and psychotherapy.

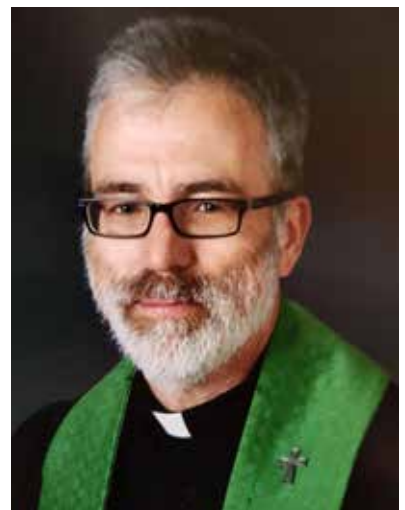
So now I find myself once more a student at Knox College. It has been a rich experience thus far, even with the limits of an online format. I have been able to incorporate very quickly learnings from the MPS program into my ministry for the sake of clergy wellness. These insights have played a role in my individual encounters with colleagues in ministry and collectively in the area of clergy education.

My ministry focuses directly on pastoral support for clergy, for the sake of clergy wellness. But it’s also easy to see the benefit to communities of faith, when denominational resources are invested in ensuring that clergy are supported both spiritually and pastorally. Ordained ministry is a challenging vocation at the best of times. In this current context that is marked by institutional decline, healthy clergy are especially needed to reflect theologically and to lead congregations. It is a privilege to support my colleagues as they serve God’s people in these times that are both challenging and exciting. ■

*Kevin Steeper (Knox MDiv ‘95) is a Master of Pastoral Studies student at Knox College and serves as Minister, Pastoral Support, for The United Church of Canada.*

*“I have wanted to engage with people in a common search for meaning and for what that looks like in the ordinary moments of life.”*

*Below: The Revs. Kate Ballagh-Steeper (K’91) and Kevin Steeper. Photos provided by the author. Facing page: Photo by Felipe Cespedes from Pexels.*





# Stretching our hearts & minds

## THE POWER OF PICTURE BOOKS

By Laura Alary

When I was very young, one of my most beloved books was a slightly tattered copy of *Four Puppies* by Anne Heathers. It told the story of a litter of collies who go outside for the first time to explore the great big world, only to discover that world is continually changing. Every time the puppies find some new source of delight – chasing butterflies, rolling in soft grass, splashing in puddles, frolicking in snowdrifts – it disappears, and they are left bereft and bewildered. By the end of the book, of course, they have grown into great big dogs who understand that the seasons change, the things we love come and go and come again, and contentment lies in accepting that this is the way things are.

Over the years I have read many works of theology and moral philosophy on the topic of happiness and human flourishing. I have taken courses on mindfulness and meditated on impermanence. But when I feel anxious, what comes to mind first are not the words of philosophers, but a picture of tearful puppies trying in vain to hold onto blowing leaves or a melting pile of snow. Whatever I have learned since about being present, letting go, welcoming change, and finding

equanimity has its roots deep in my childhood. In that Little Golden Book I recognized my own fear, but I also found a way of thinking and being that helped me live with it.

This is what good picture books do. They make us think. They help us feel less alone. They open new possibilities. Like all stories, the best picture books provoke questions and stretch our hearts and minds. Some are like windows, allowing readers to glimpse other times and places, or to see through the eyes of those whose lives and experiences are very different from ours. Other are mirrors, making us feel recognized and understood, reassuring us that we are not alone. Picture books can offer both challenge and consolation, explanation and inspiration.

Unlike most other types of books, picture books are also *communal*. Reading them is an experience we share with others, whether you have one child on

your lap or a few snuggled around you, or a story circle outside, in a classroom, or on the floor of your church sanctuary. When we read picture books we listen and wonder *together*. We also get to join in a conversation already begun between the author and illustrator, each of whom brings something different to a story. Noticing how the words and pictures work with each other can be a powerful lesson in cooperation and how different perspectives complement and enrich one another.

Since the days of those four little puppies, I have read and written many things – and I’ve learned that picture books bring the most joy and satisfaction. Not only do I now write them, I also read them voraciously, share them with children in a variety of settings, and collect them for the McKay Educational Resource Centre at Caven Library, because I am convinced that picture books can be an integral part of faith formation.

The other day I asked my own children (now teenagers) which picture books they remembered best and why. Some, like *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss, they recalled because of how clearly they related to the different emotions and moods portrayed. Other books, like *Pancakes! Pancakes!* by Eric Carle, they loved because they could apply them to their own meals, asking where each element came from. My youngest daughter named one of my own books, *How Do I Pray for Grandpa?* I thought she was going to say she liked it because the main character is named after her. But she explained that the book, written while her own grandpa was very sick, made her feel *seen*. Her own worries and fears were not peculiar or wrong or insurmountable. The book made her feel hopeful, she said, and helped her grasp that no matter what happens, there are many ways we can send and show love.

Picture books can encourage conversation and reflection, stir awe and wonder, raise big questions, or simply inspire joy in sharing a story together. Find ideas and see the McKay Educational Resource Centre’s collections of picture books by topic at [knox.utoronto.ca/picturebooks](http://knox.utoronto.ca/picturebooks). ■

*Laura Alary (K’96) has published nine books for children and serves as Library Assistant at Knox College.*

*“This is what good picture books do. They make us think. They help us feel less alone. They open new possibilities.”*

Background image from *What grew in Larry’s garden* (Kids Can Press) by Laura Alary, illustrated by Kass Reich. Used with permission.

# A theology of hope

## RESHAPING OUR PERSPECTIVE & MOTIVATING US TO ACT

GRACE JI-SUN KIM (Knox MDiv 1995, PhD 2001) is Professor of Theology at Earlham School of Religion and an ordained minister in the PC (USA). The author or editor of 20 books, she is known for her work in feminist, post-colonial, and Asian American theology. The following text introduces her theology of hope and the motivation behind her recent book, *Hope in Disarray: Piecing Our Lives Together in Faith*, published in December 2020.

**“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 15:13**

Early Christians depicted hope as an anchor to the very presence of God, the inner place in which we can be confident of stability. Let’s stop and consider, then: to what are we currently anchored? Is it the artifice of schedules, ambitions, or rules we have made for ourselves? Or is it to God’s presence?

When we become aware that God is present in all of life, in all our difficulties, we begin to live with hope. That anchor helps us look past the disorder and pain of the present moment; it reshapes our perspective.

Hope is a confidence that has altered my own worldview: it’s moved me from a worldview dictated by fear, to one that acknowledges peril as necessary for justice. It grows day by day. I live with an enduring devotion to this sentiment, that the longer I live, the more adversity I face and the more patience I cultivate for a growing hope.

In difficult times, we can only run on hope. When our world seems as “hopeless” and broken as it is, hope gives us the purpose to go seek out the meaning and the necessity of pain in our plight for justice. Faith and hope work together to remind us of our shared humanity and to strengthen us as one in our fight for social justice. Hope reminds us that God is working and present in our world and in our lives.

It’s what keeps me going, especially when times are hard. Because I grew up in a time and place of less social awareness, nearly all my early experiences were wrought with

explicit prejudice. I continue to bear the internal wounds of this experience, and whatever labels or titles you bear have likely also brought you trouble. But our theology always emerges from our life experience and context. This is how we each come to know God.

And so I know that hope saves us – and that hope isn’t just optimistic thinking. It’s a biblical understanding that motivates us to take action, to do something about the situation where we find ourselves. Hope motivates us to work for justice.

As a result, I write books and speak to try to give a voice to those who are marginalized, in this case, particularly Asian American women. At the end of the day, hope carries me through and keeps me working for justice and fighting against racism, sexism, and other forms of marginalization.

Living with hope is challenging. It begs you, despite your suffering, to confront life with all the dimensions of its complicated truth – to confront the truth that life does not end in vain. Living with hope is to uphold expectations for goodness and the ultimate revelation of the Son of God. In the end, hope is what saves us.

Over the years I’ve written about many overlapping

topics, including the work of the Spirit, antiracism, and antisexism. In my latest book, *Hope in Disarray*, I reflect on seeking God in the midst of turbulence, inequality, and suffering – as well as when experiencing happiness and love. I hope that this book helps people, particularly when they’re struggling with hopelessness, to reflect on their experiences and see God’s presence in their lives. ■

*Grace Ji-Sun Kim (Knox MDiv 1995, PhD 2001) is the author or editor of 20 books. She hosts the Madang podcast ([www.christiancentury.org/madang](http://www.christiancentury.org/madang)) on Christianity, religion, and culture. Her most recent book, Invisible: Theology and the Experience of Asian American Women, will be released in November 2021.*

*“I know that hope saves us – and that hope isn’t just optimistic thinking.”*



Photo provided by Grace Ji-Sun Kim.



# Celebrating our differences

## A BIBLICAL VISION FOR INTERCULTURALITY

*“I was losing trust and hope in the work of intercultural ministry and in the church. I was disillusioned with how racism was institutionalized in Canada, including in the church I was proud of. So I went to the workshop with little expectation. What I experienced, however, was far beyond what I could ask for. All of us agreed that there was a transformation in the group. Each of us encountered the other, the holy, through honest and genuine sharing.”*

—Rev. Min-Goo Kang on his 2016 *Engage Difference!* experience

IN MAY 2021, JONATHAN SCHMIDT graduated from Knox College with Doctor of Ministry degree. A staff member at The Canadian Council of Churches, Jonathan specializes in intercultural learning and ministry. His doctoral work focused on the history and impact of *Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry*, a five-day program that helps people to nurture cultural relevance, understanding, and awareness in their churches and communities. *Vocations* interviewed Jonathan to better understand interculturality and why it’s important to us as a church.

### Why do you use the term ‘intercultural’?

In Canada, you’ve likely heard the term “multicultural,” indicating that many cultures are present; or “cross-cultural,” recognizing that the different cultures are interacting. But “intercultural” goes further: it recognizes different cultures are interacting, and that power dynamics are at work and need to be addressed. **To be truly intercultural means that every person is able to be fully present as they are created by God, fully able to shape and be shaped by the other.**

Interculturality goes beyond what we typically think of as “culture” – it’s about all the ways there’s diversity in the room: gender, migration history, sexuality, ableness, and all the other ways we differ from each other. It celebrates our differences instead of seeing them as a problem to solve. **This is a vision of shalom and right relationship with all of creation, with each other, and with God.**

### What is the value of interculturality? Why should we care about becoming intercultural communities?

A situation where we have a dominant culture with others on the margins is behind many of the significant mistakes – like residential schools – that we as

churches have made. We had assumed that we needed to bring others into our way of being, that our way was best. Colonization itself relies on people thinking their culture, their civilization, is superior to others. Christianity has done all kinds of harm because of those attitudes. **Caring about interculturality is crucial to ensure we’re not repeating the same kinds of mistakes that we did in the past.**

Within the church, Canada has people who have all kinds of different ways of knowing and experiencing God and being church together. This wisdom is a resource to the Canadian church, to help us know how we can change and respond to our rapidly changing context. **If the church in Canada is going to survive, it needs to learn and adapt.**

Further, being in relationship with people from other cultures who know and experience God differently, who have other ways of being Christian, **broadens our own experience of God.** Our faith is changed radically when it’s able to be shaped by other people’s experiences of God.

We also need to care about interculturality because this is **what God calls us to, as the church:** to be intercultural, to live out the blessing and also the command of shalom, and to be in right relationship with each other – with all of creation and with God.



Above: Participants in an *Engage Difference!* program, with Jonathan Schmidt at far left. Photo provided by Jonathan Schmidt.

### How do we move toward this vision?

This isn’t simple work – just a program to attend, or a statement to make. Some of it will take generations. But the first step is the humility to recognize that we’re called to this, and – particularly those of us in the dominant culture – to be able to sit and listen.

It’s going to take the church’s deep commitment to being intercultural, to doing the hard, good, and joyful work toward interculturality. A big part of the long-term commitment is taking the time and energy to deliberately be in relationship with others who might be different than us.

Currently we may say (and believe) that all are welcome in our churches, but we’re not really interested in being changed by others. We have certain ways of conducting meetings, worshipping, and interacting. We have all kinds of conscious and unconscious ways of marginalizing others or keeping others out. To become intercultural, we’ll have to have honest relationships, really listen to how others experience our churches, and be willing to learn and change in response.

**What the church needs is not a set formula to become intercultural, but an understanding of how to be faithful in these new contexts.** We need tools and ways of being so that each community can figure out how they need to do this in their context.

A church that is intercultural would allow everyone to be fully who they are. People would want to be

in this place and would be drawn to this community because they are valued as people, their culture is valued, and their ways of thinking are valued. Everyone would be valued as children of God.

One of the things that keeps me in this work, and one of the high points of my career and ministry, is that I actually get to experience *what the church could be*. I’ve had the privilege of holding *Engage Difference!* sessions across the country in many different contexts.

I get to have glimpses of this intercultural community that God calls us to, “encountering the other, the holy” as Rev. Kang says.

I’ve seen participants learn how to listen to others who are different from themselves. They say that they’re better able to tolerate feelings of discomfort and allow themselves to be vulnerable. Many describe profound experiences of community at the program: “a real experience of being able to be who you were created to be.” The experience becomes a “celebration of difference.”

This is the vision for true intercultural community, where every person is able to be fully present and valued as they are created by God. ■

*Learn more about intercultural leadership and learning, Jonathan’s doctoral thesis, and the Engage Difference! program at [interculturalleadership.ca](http://interculturalleadership.ca).*

***“What the church needs is not a set formula to become intercultural, but an understanding of how to be faithful in these new contexts.”***



## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: KOREAN TRANSLATION

6월에, 총회는 결혼과 성에 대한 교회의 이해를 변화시킨 두 회부된 안건을 채택했습니다. 캐나다의 장로교는 현재 결혼에 대한 두 가지의 유사한 정의를 가지고 있으며 기독교 신앙의 신실한 사람들이 결혼을 남자와 여자 사이의 언약 관계 또는 두 성인 사이의 언약 관계로 이해할 수 있다는 것을 인정합니다. 회중, 당회, 목사, 장로들은 결혼에 대해 양심의 자유를 부여받았습니다.


동시에, 장로교회는 "회중과 노회는 목사와 장로들에게 안수, 위임과 취임에 참여에 관한 양심과 행동의 자유를 부여한다는 조항으로 LGBTQI (결혼했거나 독신이나) 사람들을 청빙하여 안수할 수 있다는 것을 확인했습니다.

이러한 결정은 교회의 삶에 성적 소수자를 완전히 포함시키기 위한 중요한 단계를 의미합니다. 또한 이러한 변화가 교회의 삶과 증거에 무엇을 의미하는지를 교회가 충만하게 살아가기 위해 그들은 인내와 대화, 그리고 계속되는 영적 분별을 필요로 하는 혼합 경계를 창조합니다.

장로교회의 신학교로서 낙스칼리지는 모두를 위한 긍정과 포용의 신학 문화를 배양하는 데 전념하고 있습니다. 우리가 환영하는 대로 회부안 B와 C의 완전한 이행에 리더십을 부여하고 교회 전체의 안수 및 사역을 위한 후보들을 준비하는 것은 우리의 책임입니다. 우리는 영적 형성과 신학적 연구를 위한 안전한 공간을 만들기 위해 전념하고 있습니다.

장로교회는 또 LGBTQI사람들의 이야기와 경험, 그리고 "교회 내에서와 교회가 그들에게 가한 해악"에 발언을 하고, 또 "기독교 사역에서 성소수자들이 경험한 하나님의 은혜에 대한 이야기를 공유하기"의 '무지개 성찬식'(LGBTQI 특별청취위원회)의 보고를 받았습니다.

교회 내의 동성애 공포증, 성전환 공포증, 이성애에 대처하기 위해 채택된 많은 권고안들 중에서, 신학 대학들은 "해악이 지속되지 않고 LGBTQI 사람들이 완전히 교회 안에 포함된다는 교회의 위임을 반영하기 위해 학교의 교수과목, 예배, 공동체 건설 활동을 계속 갱신할 것"을 요청했습니다. 이 일은 본 대학의 교수들의 교수, 연구 및 리더십에 있어 우리 교수들이 계속 해 왔고 또 계속되어질 것입니다...

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

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: MANDARIN TRANSLATION

在 本 年 六 月，長 老 教 會 全 國 總 議 會 通 過 兩 項 免 責 議 案，這 將 會 改 變 長 老 宗 教 會 就 婚 姻 及 性 傾 向 這 議 題 的 理 解；就 婚 姻 定 義 而 言，除 承 認 婚 姻 關 係，被 理 解 為 一 男 一 女，彼 此 在 對 信 仰 真 誠 的 基 礎 上 而 契 合 婚 盟；而 目 前 平 衡 地，同 樣 被 承 認 的 婚 姻 關 係，是 任 何 兩 名 成 年 人 仕，在 真 誠 的 面 對 信 仰 的 基 礎 上 而 契 合 一 起，也 是 被 認 許 的 婚 姻 關 係。在 此 認 知 上，會 眾 們、堂 議 會、教 牧 及 長 老 們，可 按 各 人 的 良 知，而 決 定 採 納 何 種 婚 姻 定 義。

與 此 同 時，加 拿 大 長 老 教 會 亦 認 可 以 下 條 款：「會 眾 們 及 長 老，在 沒 有 違 背 良 知 下，可 以 宣 召 及 按 立 性 小 眾 人 士（這 包 括 已 婚 或 單 身 之 男 同 性 戀 者、女 同 性 戀 者、雙 性 戀 者、變 性 者、性 別 性 傾 向 模 糊 者 和 先 天 性 別 模 糊 者）成 為 牧 者 及 就 任 長 老 職 事」。

以 上 所 通 過 的 議 案，無 疑 標 誌 著 教 會 全 面 開 放 予 性 小 眾 人 仕 加 入 教 會 群 體 生 活 中 重 要 的 一 步。亦 正 因 如 此，教 會 有 需 要 營 造 一 個 氛 圍，表 達 更 多 包 容、溝 通 和 作 出 具 有 屬 靈 眼 光 判 斷 的 舉 措；這 在 在 影 響 肢 體 間 的 相 交 生 活 和 彼 此 的 見 證。

諾 克 斯 神 學 院 作 為 長 老 宗 的 一 間 培 育 聖 職 人 員 學 府，我 們 致 力 在 神 學 上，按 正 意 固 守 真 理 的 詮 釋；亦 同 時 鼓 勵 包 容 接 納。我 們 責 無 旁 貸，在 培 育 訓 練 未 來 被 按 立 的 聖 職 人 員 上，能 夠 全 面 執 行 以 上 兩 項 議 決，知 所 行 止。作 為 神 學 機 構，我 們 竭 盡 所 能，令 這 學 習 場 所，成 為 一 處 靈 命 被 塑 造 的 安 全 地 方，和 獲 得 神 學 訓 練 的 理 想 學 府。

加 拿 大 長 老 宗 教 會 亦 收 到「彩 虹 契 合」（The Rainbow Communion 即 聆 聽 性 小 眾 人 士 特 別 委 員 會）的 報 告，內 中 披 露 這 些 性 小 眾 人 士，從 前 曾「在 教 會 內 或 有 時 是 教 會 直 接 對 他 們 的 傷 害 的 陳 述」；部 分 性 小 眾 人 士 也 分 享 他 們 在 與 信 仰 群 體 交 往 中，如 何 體 驗 到 上 主 的 恩 慈，活 現 在 他 們 當 中。

該 報 告 中 亦 列 舉 出 多 項 建 議，幫 助 教 會 如 何 克 服 對 同 性 戀 者 及 對 變 性 者 的 恐 懼；也 建 議 避 免 標 榜 異 性 戀 者 是 唯 一 合 理 的 兩 性 關 係。報 告 書 中 要 求 各 神 學 機 構「在 所 開 辦 的 課 程、崇 拜 的 設 計 編 排 和 社 區 建 設 的 諸 多 活 動 中，要 能 反 映 教 會 不 再 傷 害 這 些 群 體，讓 性 小 眾 人 士，可 以 全 然 融 入 教 會 生 活 當 中」。以 上 這 些 提 點，其 實 我 們 早 已 實 施；在 未 來，也 會 體 現 於 我 們 的 教 學、研 究 和 方 向 釐 定 的 政 策 方 針 上。。。

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



PHOTOS: A few of the behind-the-scenes staff who have kept Knox running on-site during COVID-19. From top left: 1) Chief Librarian Joan Pries at her desk. 2) Daniela D'Aniello, who oversees the Residence, at her desk. 3) Assistant Registrar Kaitlyn Lubniewski gives greetings from her office window. 4) Anne McGillivray (right), Technical Services Coordinator for Caven Library, provides curbside book pickup and return service in the College's parking lot. Near left: Library Assistant Laura Alary creates social media posts on new acquisitions in Caven Library. Photos provided by staff.

## AS KNOX COLLEGE ENTERED THE 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR AND THE PANDEMIC CONTINUED, PRINCIPAL JOHN VISSERS

was focused on three main concerns: 1) continuing our mission with excellence; 2) keeping our community healthy and safe; and 3) maintaining ourselves financially.

Now looking back at the year, he said, "We've had an excellent year academically with a robust graduating class; we've continued to fulfill our mission. We've been able to maintain the health and safety of our community through the pandemic. Everyone has worked hard to support each other and keep each other as healthy as possible, both physically and mentally. And our financial year has finished much better than we had anticipated. We've maintained equilibrium during a difficult time – thanks to the continued care of donors, as well as government support and reduced expenses. We continue to face longer-term financial challenges, particularly the costs associated with an aging building. But we've managed to come through the year well. I'm grateful to our donors for continuing to build 'a world where people of faith build vibrant communities of God's love and hope.'"

**2020  
2021**  
**IN REVIEW**



# Windows on worship

## REFLECTIONS ON KNOX'S VIRTUAL CHAPELS

By Antonio Siracusa

Before the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, I always looked forward to attending Chapel and seeing friends while awaiting the beginning of worship. There I found community, yet simultaneously, private time. I would sit down and pray, or take in the grand, neo-gothic architecture – especially when the sunlight would shine through the orange, golden-brown stained-glass windows. Once worship began, I knew I would be affirmed in steadfast faith, encouraged, and challenged to delve even deeper into my understanding of the Christian faith.

That particular kind of worship experience was to change, however, as we began to feel the ramifications of COVID-19 and needed to shift our interaction to an online format. The inaugural COVID-age Knox College Worship Committee was comprised of Dr. Brian Irwin, James Park (MDiv), and me, Antonio Siracusa (MPS/MDiv).

Knox College Principal John Vissers offered spiritual book-ends for our Knox Chapel virtual series by leading the first worship service in the Fall and, as per tradition, concluded the academic year in worship in April 2021. In between, heard from preachers representing the rich and Spirit-filled span of leaders both in The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Church beyond Canada's borders – including from Egypt, Cuba, and Trinidad & Tobago.

The online worship services also facilitated a unique opportunity for the Knox College Chapel Choir. Claire Lemiski (MTS) spearheaded the Choir's virtual engagement. Her YouTube Channel, Sing-A-Part, was inspired by the preparations for working with the Knox College Virtual Choir in the fall. Claire said, "It started off as a simple way to post some video tutorials for the group. But it occurred to me that many other communities were also trying to figure out how to sing together online, and perhaps these resources would be appreciated by other groups."

This past academic year, I have dearly missed walking into the grand neo-gothic Chapel at Knox College, seeing my friends, and worshipping as our beloved Christian community. Yet we were grateful to be able to worship together online this year. As my classmate Christine Samuel (MDiv) said: "Worshipping together allowed us to feel the presence of community, connectivity, and continuity at Knox."

It was especially meaningful to have former students participate in worship, as this gave us an opportunity to see and experience the richness of culture and diversity of students who attended Knox College. Student participation also increased, as they were able to pre-record and send in their parts. It was definitely worthwhile for Knox to put this effort forward, as it became a staple and something to look forward to every week."

This academic year, the windows at Chapel were different, but still meaningful. The window panels on the computer screen showed people from the Knox Community shining their own light, enthusiasm, and reverence for Christian worship. In again seeing those from my cherished Christian Community I have encountered at Knox College, I found God's grace at work, continuing to bring us together in these strange times. I discovered comfort and countless blessings in seeing people I respect, look up to, learn from, appreciate, and value. And I was strengthened in knowing that Knox College's Christian Community is held firm in belief and faith of Jesus Christ.

COVID-19 may have put a temporary stop to in person worship gatherings, but it certainly has not halted Knox's vision of people of faith building vibrant communities of God's love and hope. We continue to grow, thrive, and move forward in deeper Christian faith and community. □

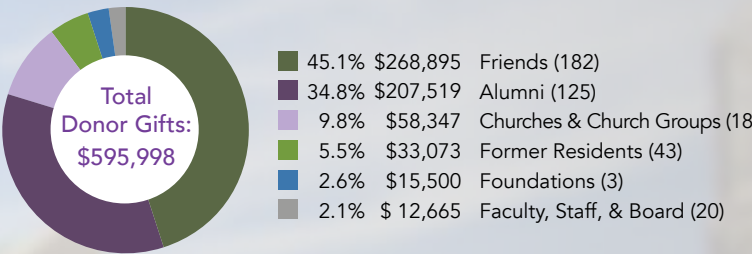
*Antonio Siracusa graduated from Knox in May 2021 with a Master of Pastoral Studies degree, and he is now a Master of Divinity student. Find Antonio's full article at [knox.utoronto.ca/2020virtualchapel](https://knox.utoronto.ca/2020virtualchapel). This article first appeared in the Summer 2021 issue of the Presbyterian Connection.*

*View 2020-2021 chapel services on Knox's YouTube Channel: [youtube.com/KnoxCollegeCA](https://youtube.com/KnoxCollegeCA).*



### DONOR GIFTS

Thank you, donors, for your strong support of Knox College, especially in these uncertain times. Thank you for helping to build vibrant communities of God's love and hope. You're increasing the number of well-equipped pastors, counsellors, and care-givers in our world. Your generous gifts of nearly \$600,000 have assisted students and residents through bursaries, scholarships, program development, campus upgrades, and more. **Thank you.**



## 2020-2021 Financial statements

### REVENUE & EXPENSE

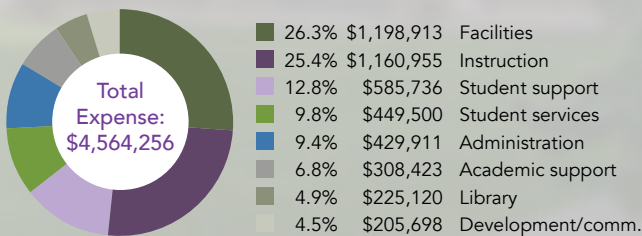
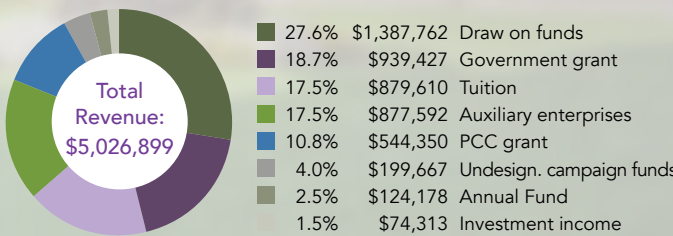
The 2020-2021 year was very challenging as we tried to stay on top of COVID-19 government requirements, our facilities remaining closed to the public, and restrictions didn't allow us to open for weddings and photography rentals.

Yet we also had financial news to celebrate: We did not see a decline in student registration or tuition revenue, as faculty were able to deliver all classes remotely. We did not have any layoffs as a result of reduced revenue and facility closure. Government funding through CEWS Grants

helped to offset some of our lost revenue. Our Investment Funds recovered strongly. Operating expenses were reduced with less use of the facilities and staff/faculty working remotely. And most of all, donors continued to support the College through the pandemic. We are grateful.

These 2020-2021 Revenue & Expense statements have been audited by independent auditors and have been approved by the Knox College Board of Governors.

—Bob Adams, Director of Finance & Administration



ALSO  
IN  
2020-  
2021:

Profs. Nam Soon Song & Dong-Ha Kim published book, *People of Faith, People of Jeong (Qing)*

Prof. Esther Acolatse promoted to full professor

Prof. Nam Soon Song retired in June 2021, after 21 years at Knox

Patrons picked up 882 items (during 417 visits) through Caven Library's curbside service



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE: What does Knox College mean to you?

... transformation —Anthea Lai, MPS

... an institution I feel I belong to, that is rooted in history and people of faith

—Antonio Siracusa, MDiv

... one of my spiritual communities of belonging – where the doors are now open for the next phase in my training for spiritual service —Bianca Mathews, MPS

... where the spirit may grow in context with the real world —Bruce Dow, MPS

... warmth and community —Christine Samuel, MDiv

... where I can dig deeper into my faith, ask questions, and explore what it means to live authentically as a Christian in the world today —Claire Lemiski, MTS

... a place to grow —David Parker, MDiv

... a precious space for me to learn from excellent faculty members and broaden my perspective on theology and life —Dongwon Jung, MDiv

... my home, physically and spiritually

—Gord Brown, PhD

... a community of mentors and friends, where I go to learn what I didn't know I didn't know

—Jim MacDonald, MDiv

... a community of learning and growth —Jinhwi Kim, MDiv

... a home away from home

—Leonidas Tampacopoulos, MPS

... a place that has nourished my personal and interpersonal growth, as well as professional and scholastic development

—Megan Mootoo, MPS

... shaping my faith and theology in joy and love —Paul Ko, PhD

... encountering a variety of understandings of God as we all seek to know God better

—Steve Boose, MPS

... a place of learning and reflection

—Yo Sep Heo, PhD

*“I appreciate the integration of Reformed theology with real-world concerns and perspective.”*

—Hannah Smele, Master of Pastoral Studies student

*“I love the no-nonsense approach to faith, understanding, and community care.”*

—Bruce Dow, Master of Pastoral Studies student

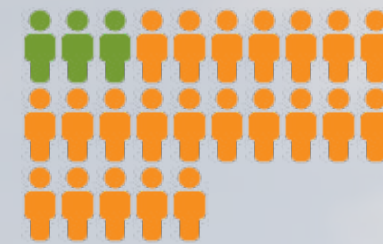
43%

of students' first language is not English; other languages include Cantonese, Ibo,

Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, & Twi. This year, just 16% were international students (from Jamaica, Korea, Nigeria, & USA). Differing time zones made it a challenge for international students to study remotely during the pandemic; many have taken leaves of absence until in-person learning resumes.



### Master of Divinity (MDiv)



76% studying full time

Avg age: 38

25 students: 16 Diploma of the College and 1 General Assembly Certificate; 1 Christian Reformed Church; 1 Korean Evangelical Holiness Church; 5 Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad; and 1 Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

### Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

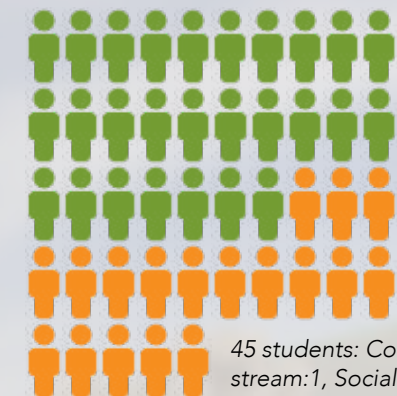


23% studying full time

Avg age: 43

13 students, including 2 with a Religious Education focus

### Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS)



36% studying full time

Avg age: 44

45 students: Congregational Leadership stream: 1, Social Services stream: 1, and Spiritual Care stream: 43 (9 pursuing the Spiritual Care & Psychotherapy Certificate)

### Certificate in Theological Studies (CTS)

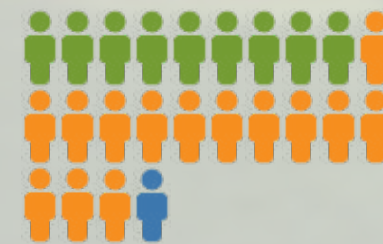


Avg age: 51

60% studying full time

1 student in Theological Foundations stream; 4 students in Presbyterian Leadership stream

### Doctor of Philosophy in Theology (PhD)



100% studying full time

Avg age: 40

24 students; 23 in conjoint University of Toronto degree program

### Doctor of Ministry (DMin)



Avg age: 61

100% studying full time

### Doctor of Theology (ThD)



Avg age: 46

100% studying full time

Program discontinued; now amalgamated with the PhD

### Master of Theology (ThM)



100% studying full time

identifies as female

identifies as male

identifies as other



# Centred and encouraged

## RESIDENCE LIFE BEFORE & DURING COVID-19

**“Living in the Knox Residence, one of the things that really struck me is that we weren’t a residence just for engineering or just for theological students, but for students from all kinds of disciplines – humanities, sciences, medicine, law, as well as music like myself,”** said Hanné Becker.

She lived in the Knox Residence during the four years she was in doctoral studies at the University of Toronto. Hanné graduated in June with Doctor of Musical Arts in Organ Performance.

“The exchanges that happen are very rich,” she said. “They help you to see new perspectives, and you get into really interesting conversations.” Hanné is from Namibia in south-western Africa. She first came to Canada in 2007 for her undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto, and then returned here for doctoral work in 2017 after spending two years in Switzerland for her master’s degree.

“When the pandemic hit,” she said, “the isolation was really challenging. But we found creative ways to support and encourage each other.”

For example, she said, “I couldn’t have a graduation ceremony, so some friends had an outdoor socially distanced celebration and photo session. The support from my friends made up for a lack of an in-person ceremony.”

“The KCA has also encouraged us throughout the pandemic. On Valentine’s Day, for example, we each found chocolate gifts outside our doors. It was very cold during February, and that gift really brightened my day. They also changed the Reading Room into an Exercise Room with a sanitizing station to help us stay active during the pandemic.”

Hanné said that before the pandemic, there was a great sense of coming together for

events. “I have very fond memories of a hiking outing at the Evergreen Brickworks – my first winter hike,” she said. “For those of us not from Toronto, these kinds of events helped us explore the city a bit with friends, as we got to share the day and the activity. We also enjoyed Christmas dinners and the spring formals, with the chance to dress up and enjoy music and food. Movie nights were a lot of fun as well. Everyone got a chance to pick the movie, so often you got to learn about that person’s background or culture, and to see different genres of movies and widen your horizons.”

“Knox has so many intersecting aspects – the academic, with professors and students at the theological school; the library with its wider scholarly influence and serving as a faith-based hub; the residence that’s a meeting place for so many disciplines; and the building and space, which is inspiring and attractive to so many visitors.”

One lesser-known piece of Knox is the chapel’s Hellmuth Wolff organ, which Hanné describes as integral to her degree. “It’s a very unusual instrument, unique in Toronto and even Ontario,” she said, “with a very special timbre and action.” The Wolff organ is modelled after an organ in Sweden from the 1700s, tuned to a *modified fifth comma meantone temperament*. That is, it’s *not* tuned like a modern piano. Hanné said, “The distances between notes are slightly different, so there’s a particular flavour and a particular key. You have to choose your music appropriately, because not all music works with the tuning.”

“The period of music I specialized in for my doctorate, the 17th century early Baroque era just before Bach, fit perfectly with this instrument. I loved exploring all of the nuances and tonalities. The instrument is such a gem!”

She said, “The organ was the backbone of my connection to Knox, but I believe God brought me here. I feel very centred at Knox. I’ve gotten to learn a lot from my peers, and it was a wonderful experience for me. Knox is a unique graduate residence that offers a fantastic foundation for students of all kinds of backgrounds.” □

### RESIDENT CARE DURING COVID-19

The Knox College Association (KCA), the residents’ student council, works to create a welcoming home-away-from-home for those living in the Knox Residence. During the pandemic, the KCA has been particularly concerned with residents’ mental and physical wellness, and so they have:

- changed the reading room into an exercise room with a sanitizing station (because all gyms were closed due to the pandemic)
- purchased new pool cues, a dart board, ping pong paddles, and video games for the Games Room
- adapted the Dining Hall to be used for extra study space (while maintaining physical distancing), as all libraries were closed
- subscribed to various streaming services; residents had (physically distant) movie nights and meal events
- distributed swag bags for residents with essentials, energy bars, hand sanitizer, snacks, etc.

**“The exchanges that happen are very rich. They help you to see new perspectives, and you get into really interesting conversations.”**



At right: Hanné Becker in the Knox College Chapel, with the Wolff organ in the background. Far right: Hanné tosses her mortarboard in front of the Knox Residence. Photos provided by Hanné Becker.



## CLASS NOTES

### 1940s

**Richard Gillanders (K'48)** passed away July 17, 2021. He was the last remaining member of the Knox College class of 1948.



### 1950s

**Gerald Rennie (K'59)** passed away on May 21, 2021.

### 1960s

**Robert C. Spencer (K'64)** passed away on June 28, 2021.



### 1970s

**James D. Skinner (K'75)** passed away on May 1, 2021.



**Marty Molengraaf (E'79, K'83)** was inducted at St. Andrew's PC, Kitchener (Ont.), on August 1, 2021.



### 1980s

**Hugh Jack (K'80)** retired on July 1, 2021.

**Janice MacInnes (E'81, K'95)** retired on July 5, 2021.

**Cheryl MacFadyen (E'82, K'99)** retired on July 1, 2021.

**Charles R. McNeil (K'83)** retired on August 31, 2021.



**Mary Dianne Ollerenshaw (K'83)** passed away on July 1, 2021.

**Peter Coutts (K'87)** retired on February 1, 2021.

### 1990s

**Andrew Human (K'92)** retired on June 30, 2021.

**Grace Ji-Sun Kim (E'92, K'95, K'01)** has published *Invisible: Theology and the Experience of Asian American Women* and is the host of *Madang* podcast ([christiancentury.org/madang](http://christiancentury.org/madang)).



**Barry Van Dusen (K'92)** retired on June 1, 2021.

**Scott Sinclair (K'93)** retired on July 1, 2021.

**Elias Morales (K'94)** retired on April 1, 2021.

**Virginia Head (K'97)** retired on September 1, 2021.

### 2000s

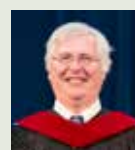
**Wes Chang (K'02)** retired on May 1, 2021.

**Barbara Fotheringham (K'03)** retired on June 1, 2021, and has moved to Pictou County, Nova Scotia, near where she received her first call to ordained ministry.

### 2010s

**Richard Warne (K'12)** was inducted at Knox PC, Tiverton (Ont.), on September 1, 2021.

**Gord Brown (K'13 and current doctoral student)** was ordained for service at St. James PC (Central Elgin, Ont.) on September 19, 2021.



K: Knox; E: Ewart; R: Resident



**Tim Reddish (K'15)** has published *The Jesus I Didn't Know I Didn't Know: Reflections on the Identity of Jesus* (Wipf & Stock). He has also co-edited *Partnering With God: Exploring Collaboration in Open and Relational Theology* (SacraSage), which includes essays from three Knox alumni: **Neil Ellis (K'14)**, **Shalini Rajack Sankarlal (K'13)**, and **Tim Reddish**.

**Greg Smith (K'15)** was inducted at Varsity Acres PC (Calgary, Alta.) on June 27, 2021.



### 2020s

**Mary Pik Chun Lee (K'20)** was ordained and inducted at Toronto (Ont.) Chinese PC on May 30, 2021.



**Candice Bahadoor (K'21)** was ordained and inducted at Heart Lake Community Church (Brampton, Ont.) on May 30, 2021.



Many Knox alumni will remember **Richard N. Longenecker**, who taught at Wycliffe ('72-94) and University of St. Michael's ('76-78). He passed away June 7, 2021: see [eerdword.com/richard-longenecker](http://eerdword.com/richard-longenecker).

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: ACADEMIC DEAN

Knox College seeks Academic Dean to administer the academic programs of the College, ensuring academic excellence, professional competency, and spiritual growth.

Apply by November 15. Learn more at [knox.utoronto.ca/dean](http://knox.utoronto.ca/dean).



## Knox Community Kickoff begins 2021-2022 academic year

Nearly 80 students, faculty, and staff gathered online for the Knox College Kickoff event on September 8, 2021. Designed as a light-hearted way to introduce or reacquaint participants, the event included musical performances and interactive group games, as well as introductions to the Mission & Theology student association. Academic orientations followed on Thursday and Friday. Enrolment for 2021-2022 is strong, with 94 students in basic degree programs and 34 in graduate degree programs.

## NOMINATIONS OPEN for the degree of Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) as awarded by the Knox College Board of Governors

To honour persons exemplifying critical aspects of Knox College's mission, including through:

- Creative leadership at any level of church life
- Scholarly contribution to the church or academic community
- Effective and faithful pastoral leadership
- Creative leadership in mission
- Outstanding faith-based contribution to public life

Submissions due November 15. Details at [knox.utoronto.ca/hdd](http://knox.utoronto.ca/hdd).

## Prof. Esther Acolatse Promoted

Knox College is pleased to announce the promotion of the Rev. Dr. Esther Acolatse to the rank of Full Professor. She joined Knox College in 2017 as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Intercultural Studies. She also serves as Director of Graduate Studies.

Before joining Knox, Dr. Acolatse taught Pastoral Theology and World Christianity at Duke Divinity School. She is a graduate of the University of Ghana (BA Hons), Harvard Divinity School (MTS), and Princeton Theological Seminary (PhD).

Professor Acolatse's book *Principalities, Powers, and the Spirit: Biblical Realism in Africa and the West* (Eerdmans, 2018) has been widely acclaimed as groundbreaking for its emphasis on the continuing significance of a biblically configured spirituality for Christian and human flourishing. Her teaching, research, and service are helping Knox College cultivate an intercultural community with a truly global Christian consciousness.



## SEND US YOUR NEWS

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





**John Vissers**  
Principal of  
Knox College

## THE GOOD WORK OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: Cultivating a culture of inclusion

In June, the General Assembly adopted two remits which made changes to the church's understanding of marriage and sexuality. The Presbyterian Church in Canada now holds two parallel definitions of marriage and recognizes that sincere people of Christian faith may understand marriage as a covenant relationship between a man and a woman or as a covenant relationship between two adult persons. Congregations, sessions, ministers, and elders were granted liberty of conscience on marriage.

At the same time, The Presbyterian Church also affirmed that "congregations and presbyteries may call and ordain LGBTQI persons (married or single) with the provision that liberty of conscience and action regarding participation in ordinations, inductions and installations be granted to ministers and ruling elders."

These decisions signal a significant step towards the full inclusion of sexual minorities in the life of the church. They also create a mixed economy which will require forbearance, conversation, and ongoing spiritual discernment as the church lives into the fullness of what these changes mean for its life and witness.

As a seminary of The Presbyterian Church, Knox College is committed to cultivating a theological culture of affirmation and inclusion for all. It is our responsibility to give leadership in the full implementation of Remits B and C as we welcome and prepare candidates for ordination and ministry from across the whole church. We are committed to being a safe space for spiritual formation and theological study.

The Presbyterian Church also received the report of The Rainbow Communion (The Special LGBTQI Listening Committee) which gave voice to the stories and experiences of LGBTQI people and "the harm done to

them within and by the Church" and to "share stories of God's grace experienced by them in Christian ministry."

Among the many recommendations adopted to address homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism within the church, the theological colleges were asked "to continue to update their courses, worship, and community-building activities to ensure they reflect the church's commitment that harm does not continue and that LGBTQI people are fully included in the church." This work has been – and continues to be – before our Faculty in their teaching, research, and leadership at the College.

The 2021 General Assembly also appointed a special committee to listen to the concerns identified by two petitions sent from the Presbyteries of Eastern Han-Ca and Western Han-Ca. The petitions raise serious questions about systemic racism and the marginalization of ethnic churches within the dominant culture of the denomination. For many years, Knox College has been home to a diverse group of students, faculty, staff, and residents from across the church and around the world. We will continue to stand against all forms of racism and discrimination.

Serving the church in these important ways is the good work of theological education to which Knox College is called in our time, in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the world God loves.

In this issue of *Vocations*, we report on the year 2020-2021. Enrolment was robust, and the financial results were stronger than expected. We were able to advance our academic mission in theological education with excellence while maintaining the health and safety of all in our community. For this we give thanks to God – and to all of you who support us.

*Korean and Mandarin translations of the Principal's Message begin on page 10.*

*"We are committed to being a safe space for spiritual formation and theological study."*

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Knox College  
59 St. George Street  
Toronto, ON M5S 2E6

