# THE CHELSEA SQUARE A PUBLICATION OF THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY





## THE CHELSEA SQUARE

..... New Life *Reflections on finding community* 

> page 5 Scriptural Sisters•••• Stories of biblical women

page 7 •••• Report of Gifts

page 12 Matriculation Covenant ••••



The Revs. Kathleen Killian '15 and John Allison '14, Co-

The Rev. Maryann D. Younger '20, Rector, St. Philip's

The ethos of General Seminary may be described in four words.

Benedictine | Anglican | Urban | Contextual

In this issue of the Quarterly, we reflect on what it means for us

both to *have* and to *nurture* a Benedictine ethos.

About the Name Change: Here at General, we believe this magazine is a

necessary resource, providing students, alumni/ae, and friends with regular

updates on the vision of this seminary. Beginning this school year, the name of this publication is now *The Chelsea Square*. With our renewed intention to

engage with the cultural, political, and spiritual fabric of this City, The Chelsea

Square both reflects our commitment to these grounds on the Close, and the

About the Back Cover: General celebrated Matriculation ceremonies in the

Hoffman Refectory. These festivities were the 199th signing of the Matriculation

Vicars, Christ Church Episcopal, Hudson, NY

Episcopal Church, Durham, NC

The Rev. Canon J. Fletcher Lowe '59

The Rev. Arthur John Rathbun, Jr. '62

The Rev. Percy Linwood Urban, Jr. '48

The Rev. Samuel Tomlinson III '61

Necrology

The Rev. Gerald A. Ash '73

Michael K. Hicks, '60

Stuart E. Money '79

The Rev. Beatrice Billups '92

17.

## — The Ethos at General –

There are four expressions of our ethos at General Seminary: Urban, Contextual, Anglican, and Benedictine. Over the next four editions of the Quarterly, we will focus on a single expression of the ethos, both to tell the story of how they reflect what it means to be General Seminary today and to reflect on how these will shape our character going into the future. If we are driven by our mission and oriented by our vision, the four expressions of General's ethos describe the character and qualities of how we fulfill our mission as directed by our vision. General at its best is when the presence of our ethos is strong and self-evident. Other times, these expressions in the daily life of the seminary appear dim. During these seasons, we must remind each other of these values — to reinvigorate our work and become the body Christ has called us to be.

## FROM THE ACTING DEAN AND PRESIDENT'S DESK **A BENEDICTINE ETHOS**

The Very Rev. Michael W. DeLashmutt, Ph.D Acting Dean and President

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd is common life of daily evidence for the notion history may not repeat, but it echoes. From Doctor Wachner's joyous leading of worship to our first year students sharing prayers repeated through the centuries, c o l l e g e s there is a sound that indeed still resonates, from seminarians and luminaries gathered here, established in the historic practices of our shared faith. When I describe General Seminary as 'Benedictine,' I draw from the deep tradition of Anglican theological education and make the aspirational statement about the kind of institution God is calling us to be. To call General Seminary 'Benedictine' is to both claim a set of gifts which are endemic to our DNA and make a hopeful statement about the nature of a community that we can more truly become. Our way forward is by committing to the disciplines that have produced individual and collective transformation.

A little history: Within the Anglican family of churches, ministry formation was originally set within the Scottish and English University systems. The first faculties of these four ancient English-speaking universities (Oxford, Cambridge, St. Andrews, Glasgow) all gave pride of place to the teaching of 'divinity'. These institutions rose from monasteries as the location for higher learning. The schools also subsequently displaced them. In so doing, they inherited a pattern of a common life shared among students and faculty which continues to this day.

A monastic ethos was characterized by a

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prayer, service and study. As Mark Chapman notes, these theological concerned themselves with "the assimilation of an ethos, the ownership of and the development of a way of life or pattern early theological schools, whether General of being" (Chapman, 2015, 493). The Seminary in New York City or Rippon styles of prayer may have varied among College on the outskirts of Oxford.

"To call General Seminary 'Benedictine' is to both claim a set of gifts which are endemic to our DNA and make a hopeful statement about the nature of a community that we can more truly become."

the theological colleges and the syllabi, reflecting distinct partisan or theological orientations. However, the common pattern of life inherited through their monastic DNA remained surprisingly resilient among

book.

Anglican, Benedictine, Contextual, Urban

neighborhood we have gathered upon for nearly two centuries.

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Alumni News

- **Transitions**
- The Rev. Amy Cortright Chambers '04, Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Lexington
- The Rev. Joseph Chambers '06, Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Danville, KY
- The Rev. Alexander Martin '13, Rector, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Bay Village, Ohio
- The Rev. Shelley D. McDade '10, Rector, The Episcopal Parish of All Saints' Church & St. George's Chapel, Rehoboth Beach, DE
- The Rev. Christopher McNabb '17, Missioner for Neighbor to Neighbor, Episcopal Migration Ministries and Missioner for Contemplative Ministries, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Seattle, WA
- The Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields '82, Sub-Dean and Vicar, St. James Cathedral, Diocese of Toronto

## Writers & Contributors

Donna J. Ashley Melissa Chim Arian Wharff Galvas Flourish Klink The Rev. Canon Kevin Moroney The Rev. Dr. Julie Faith Parker The Rev. Ellen Tillotson

Acting Dean and President Head Editor Copy Editor, Layout

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The Very Rev. Michael W. DeLashmutt Joshua Bruner Matthew Puckett

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# tradition,

Over the course of the past 40 years or so, changes in the student body (a full inclusion recognizing sexual identity, race, denominational background, age, and their vocational trajectory) required necessary changes to theological schools and how they train. Still, Anglican schools have remained distinctively committed to a form of theological education which uniquely prizes some form of common life, expressed through study, prayer, and service. Indeed, even in programs which are 'non-residential,' Anglican schools have found ways to integrate this historic pattern of life, whether through small groups, retreats, 'intensive courses,' or other forms that reinforce this monastic tradition.

While 'Benedictine' may convey something about a community that is in prayer, or a community that ascribes to a shared rule of life, or a community that

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## NEW LIFE

Arian Wharff Galvas currently pursuing a diploma in Anglican Studies, Class of 2021

was excited about my upcoming meeting with Bishop William H. Stokes, but L also thinking about how important first impressions always are when you are getting to know someone and they are getting to know you. This is true at all levels from the personal to the institutional levels. My radar was active to detect any spoken or unspoken sign of being unwelcomed. That is normal. We all have our prejudices. The problem only lies in staying in our comfort zones and holding on to our misconceptions of the other. We prayed before we officially started our meeting. With that prayer, I felt like I was experiencing the opening of a new universe in front of me. It was a positive experience because we were talking about possibilities, which means hope.

Regardless of how confident a person son for the first time. As a Latino who was coming as an ordained clergy member from



ried that this fact alone could be an obstacle to being welcomed in the Episcopal Church. Another question that I had was, what did I have to offer to the Church? What gift could I bring to this Christian community?

The only possible answer that came to may be, it is normal to experience mixed my mind was that I could bring my faith feelings when you are about to meet a per- and my experience as a Christian believer. I knew I was ordained as a priest, but I also knew that the Episcopal Church has many a different Christian denomination, I wor- ordained women and men who are priests.

Did they need another? These other priests were already active and engaging with their communities. What new thing could I bring to them? But I was seated in front of the bishop not as a priest, but as a disciple, as Iesus's follower.

I may have been wearing my clerical collar, but what I really wanted to talk about was my faith and my relationship with the risen Lord. I was able to be myself, Continued on page 14

## PRAYER BOOK ANXIETY

#### Flourish Klink, M.Div. Candidate Class of 2024

e come to seminary young and old, rich and poor, of all nations and races and genders; we come from far and near, from churches high and low and broad, from every denomination and professing every theological position. We come with various intentions; we seek ordination, we don't seek ordination, we seek academic learning, we seek to improve our life-coaching business, we seek to improve our relationships with our mothersin-law, we seek a refuge from the outside world, we seek a cannon to shoot us at the world's problem like human ordinance.

If we come to General Seminary, for all our diversity, we are united in one ordeal. We must run the gauntlet of our first Solemn Mass in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

If we are Episcopalian—and most of us are, at General-we are lulled into complaisance by attending Morning and Evening

Then we are faced with the row of hymnals, prayer books, and laminated cards that we must navigate to complete a Solemn Mass. We try to remember how a hymn board is organized, if indeed we ever knew. We have a maximum of three minutes in which to search the tablets of our memory. however, before we are saying-no, before we are *chanting*—no, not that chant, the chant on the laminated card—no, not *that* laminated card, the other one-oh now it's time for the first bit of service music—no, not "We Three Kings of Orient Are," that's impossible—ah, it has an "S" in front of it—

## GENERAL IN THE EIGHTIES

The Rev. Ellen Tillotson, M.Div '83

the time I arrived on Chelsea dormant while the Church argued over our Episcopal Church had been answered, officially. I was standing on the shoulders not only of the Philadelphia Eleven and the women who had been waiting, preparing, helping the Church to discern its mind and heart about its call to a more robust, inclusive ministry. My class and the classes just ahead and behind were nearly forty percent female. The loneliness of Peggy Muncie and Page Bigelow was not something we shared, though many of us came from Dioceses in which we were a new and singular experience to the hierarchy. It was such a blessed relief to find ourselves in company, Mid-career and just out of college, later vocations and those that had lain necessarily

By the time I arrived on Chelsea Square in the fall of 1980, the "ques-tion" of women's ordination in the tion" of women's ordination in the and yet, over our time at General, found ourselves in common cause.

I had chosen General for three main reasons: as a postulant from the Diocese of Washington Four, but also of the scores of North Dakota, I wanted to immerse myself in a wider experience and expression of Anglicanism than the one the twenty-three parishes of that small diocese could provide. Indeed, over my years at General, some of the preeminent figures in worldwide Anglicanism at the time passed through our gates, were invited to preach in the chapel and to reveal the robust witness of this worldwide Church. I chose it, too, because of the visionary leadership of James Fenhagen, who envisioned the Church as different from one another though we were. a body in which all must play a part, each person's spirit be rekindled, each one's gifts honored and allowed to flourish. Finally, in

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those years, I chose General because of its stance accepting the ordination of women even while that was not the entire focus of its witness. It was neither full-throated in its stance on women's ordination, nor was it hostile. I thought that was probably going to reflect the church I would be headed into as a priest, a Body providing a mix of affirmation and struggle. Forty-one years later, that still proves true. Oh, and a fourth reason for General: New. York. City. Intoxicating, enervating, indifferent, glorious New York.

Those three years at General remain the richest repository of the sources of my priestly identity; that means, of course, one of the richest sources of my personal experience of myself and my understanding of the world. So, it is impossible to reflect on what those years meant to me in a short reflec-

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That do the women of the Bible have in common with women who have gone to General? Padding through the pages of Scripture or on the pathways of the Close, these women of faith explore their relationship with God through thought, word, and deed-just like the men. Yet the women in the Bible, like the women who have gone to General, are far fewer in number than the men. Rarity imparts value; women's scriptural stories are an all-too-often-buried treasure. Discovering these textual riches can alter one's My senior year as an undergraduate. I took a religion course called "Women and

Religion" in which we read God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality by Phyllis Trible. That book, a groundbreaking work in feminist biblical interpretation, led me to pursue my M.Div. at Union Theological Seminary. In Dr. Trible's Introduction to the Old Testament class, I came to appreciate the courage of mythical Eve, who dares to transmit the ethical foundation distinguishing good from evil from the divine to the human realm (Genesis 3). I read the ancestor

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life, as it did mine.

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Prayer. These are not so bad! They come (when we use the General rite) in a booklet not unlike our domestic bulletins, and while we must learn to say the psalms antiphonally, we need not concern ourselves with our musical talents or lack thereof. We let ourselves be convinced that we know how to do church.

(insert frantic page-flipping).

I do not believe that any new student has ever found their first Solemn Mass in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd to be a highly spiritual experience.

After being raised atheist and converting to Christianity, I chose the Episcopal Church above all other denominations largely because I love the liturgical calendar so much. Knowing that I was at a disadvantage compared to cradle Episcopalians, I studied the Book of Common Prayer carefully—but I never touched a physical copy until the day Bishop Shin gave me one at my confirmation. Why would I? My home parish uses bulletins, and the BCP is readily available in digital form. Even after I began leading Morning Prayer six days a week, my habit was to read from one of the many useful online editions. When I first came to chapel, I was obviously in better shape Continued on page 14

## SCRIPTURAL SISTERS

The Rev. Dr. Julie Faith Parker Associate Professor of Biblical Studies



stories in awe of Hagar, the slave girl from Africa, who receives a promise of divine descendants and is the only person in the entire Bible who names God (Genesis 16:7-13). I noticed that the blessing of Rebecca, not Isaac, echoes the divine assurance

given to Abraham (Genesis 24:60; 22:17). I reveled in the bravery of young Miriam who helps save the life of infant Moses and later leads the celebration of the Israelites' liberation (Exodus 2:1-10; 15:20-21). I was

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Melissa Chim **Reference Librarian** 



s we celebrate 50 years of welcoming female students here at General Theological Seminary, I thought it was the perfect time to head into the special collections and share some of most fascinating items! An exhibit on Women at General is currently running at the Keller Library from now until November. This exhibit tells the story of women's contributions to the Episcopal Church starting with the first

CHAPEL

RESTORATION

**UPDATES** 

Donna J. Ashley M.A. '06

Vice President of Advancement

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd has

L long as I have known it. I want to

give a special acknowledgement to all the

alumni, friends and organizations listed be-

low. Your generous gifts have enabled us to

begin the restorative work that our beloved

Chapel of the Good Shepherd requires.

Through a matching grant from The New

York Landmarks Conservancy Sacred Sites

Program and your support, General Semi-

nary engaged Old Structures Engineering

to produce the plans and specifications for

the work to be done on the tower and the

roof. Once that was completed, we began

the work to repair the brick pointing at

been the heart of the seminary for as

female staff and faculty members, the fateful year of women's ordination, the first female matriculated students, and our most famous female Before alumni. women were welcomed as students through the General gates, they had the opportunity to take courses with General faculty at Windham House. Windham House trained women to work in Episcopal Churches as secretaries and Sunday school teachers, but closed its doors when women

were granted ordination rights in 1974. On display is a brochure for Windham House encouraging women to enroll. You can also find next to it a brochure for the NY School of Deaconesses from 1919.

Dora Chapin was the seminary's first female staff member, and she joined the faculty in the early 1950s. She was a pioneer in Christian Education and was integral in forming the Episcopal Church's approach General that was broadcast in March 2020.

the roofline of the chapel to address some damage to the guttering. We need to stop the leaks above the faculty stalls and ensure the leak to the east of the altar is repaired. Our next step is to repair the tower roof to prevent further water incursion and to install a barrier above the chiming console so that chiming can continue while the work proceeds.

More than mere bricks, boards, electrical wires, and skilled labor, the chapel is also meant to be a space sufficient for the spiritual tasks of seminarians in formation. We are committed to the centrality of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at General Seminary as a formative experience for the entire General Seminary community. And with your support we have hopeful assurance that this will continue.

If you are interested in being a part of this important restoration, please make a donation on our website at www.gts.edu/ giving and designate your gift to the Chapel Restoration or contact me at ashley@gts. edu or 646-717-9706.

I look forward to hearing from you!

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to teaching children. One photo displayed shows her sporting a pair of crutches at graduation! Thirty years before, the seminary had its first female librarian, Grace Amelia Littel. Unfortunately, our Board of Trustees minutes only refers to her as Acting Librarian and she was not permitted to submit the Library's Annual Report. Some of her letters to fellow librarians survive.

The first two female students to enter the seminary as students were Peggy Muncie and Paige Bigelow. Unfortunately, Paige Bigelow has since passed away, but Peggy Muncie is still an active reverend and was named a recipient of General Theological Seminary's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2014. Alongside class photos of both women, we displayed an article from Glamour Magazine containing a profile of Peggy Muncie and a photo of her holding her young daughter. Two years later, the lawyer and activist Pauli Murray also graduated from the seminary. The library is very fortunate to have a signed copy of her collection of poems entitled Dark Testament. The inscription contains a message to her bishop hoping that she will be ordained by him in the future.

The library welcomes you to come take a look at all of the beautiful photographs and artifacts associated with Women at General from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day! For more information, please also ask to see a video of my webinar on Women at



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## REPORT OF GIFTS FISCAL YEAR 2020-21

The General Theological Seminary is most grateful to each one of our individual, parish, and corporate donors for their generosity in the 2020-21 Academic Year. With your help, our mission grows and thrives! This list has been constructed with great care, but should an error or omission be found, kindly notify the Seminary's Office of Advancement.

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The Rev. Harry B. Whitley The Rt Rev. Arthur B. Williams, Jr. and Mrs. Lynette R. Williams The Rev. Harry Woggon and Mrs.

The Rev. Robert Wood and Mrs. Linda

Harriett Whitaker

Michele F. Sherburr

Genelda Woggor

The Rev Susan L. Wrathall

Wood The Rev Brinton W. Woodward, Jr

and Prof. Maureen O'Hara Ure

The Rev. Lewis W. Towler

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## **Desmond Tutu:** A Spiritual **Biography of South Africa's** Confessor

#### by the Rev. Dr. Michael Battle

The first biography of its kind about Desmond Tutu, this book introduces readers to Tutu's spiritual life and examines how it shaped his commitment to restorative justice and reconciliation.

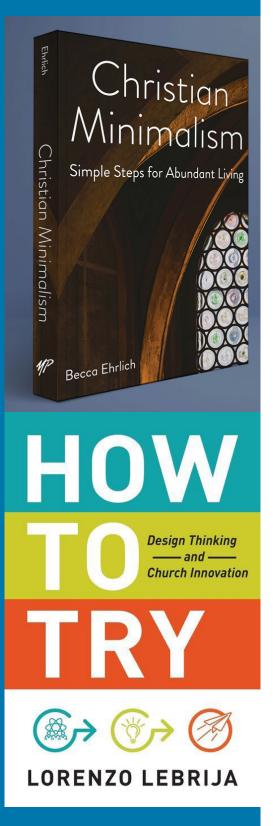
#### Christian Minimalism by the Rev. Dr. Becca Ehrlich

Inspiration to live the abundant life Jesus wants for us by focusing on the aspects of life that matter most and intentionally removing everything else.

#### How to Try by the Rev. Lorenzo Lebrija

Lorenzo Lebrija, director of TryTank, a lab for church growth and innovation, has developed this straightforward framework for experiments in new ministry based on research and interviews. With only three steps, this framework can have a lasting impact on any church that uses it. You can even start innovating today, using this specific and actionable process within your church community.

#### This Band of Sisterhood by Westina Matthews, Ph.D., **Adjunct Prof. of Christian Spirituality**



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# OUR COVENANT AT GENERAL

The Very Rev. Michael W. DeLashmutt, Ph.D Acting Dean and President

> (Adapted from the Matriculation Invocation delivered September 30, 2021)

**T**o matriculate into a school is to be claimed by that school as a child. The word matriculation comes from the Latin "ma-L trix" or "womb". It is commonplace to refer to a school as our "alma mater", which literally means our "our nourishing mother". Tonight, you formally join this community of learning, to which you, and all of us, have been called by Almighty God. When we matriculate, or when we call a school our "alma matter", we signal our adoption into a new family.

Adoption is one of the primary theological metaphors used by the Church to interpret the work of God's grace that is at play within the sacrament of baptism. In baptism, we respond to God's offer of love and affirmation with promises. These promises, made on or own or on our behalf, are ways that we acknowledge that by being adopted into the family of God we commit to live a life that is shaped by the character (the virtues, we might say) of this new family.

The promises made in baptisms, like the promises you make tonight, are theological promises. They are promises which rely not on your moral or spiritual capacities, but on God's generous grace.

Tonight, you will promise to live a life that is in keeping with the statues and rules of this seminary, to engage in studies and to perform duties that cultivate a life that reflects the ministry of the Gospel.

But as with any theological covenant, the seminary is also making a promise to you tonight, though one that has often gone unsaid in past years. As your alma mater, General commits to offer you a place for nourishment and growth. General places you alongside siblings who will be your biggest supporters, defenders, and guides. General invites you into an ever growing family of fellow students, faculty and alumni, and she calls you to a future where you will one day serve as a mentor and a friend to future generations of matriculants who are yet to come.

Below, Dean and President Michael DeLashmutt, Rev. Peggy Muncie, and Page E. Bigelow, with Vice President of Advancement and 50 Years of Women at General organizer Donna Ashley.



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## NEW SACRED ART IN THE CHAPEL OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

hope you share the same love I have the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Still, many of us have wondered and praved and L brainstormed over the years about the need to balance the male domination of the symbolism in the Chapel. In 1992, the etchings of Mary and Elizabeth were dedicated in the windows on either side of the doors (and I was at that ceremony as a student!), but in nearly thirty years since, not much else has been done.

This summer I remembered that the origins of a Rood Screen are as liturgical space. All watched over by our new icons! in the Iconostasis of Eastern Orthodoxy. I realized that we have a I see this as a beginning. I invite you to consider donating an fair amount of shelf space on our Rood Screen and so, with a budicon of a marginalized person. Once we fill the Rood Screen we get approved by Dean DeLashmutt, I began a program of ordering have the shelves over the faculty stalls, and that is a lot of space! icons of women and other marginalized people as a way to begin to If interested, please check with me at moroney@gts.edu in order balance the symbolism. So far, I have stayed pretty biblical, with to make sure that we don't get more than one of the same icon. icons of Ruth and Naomi, the Visitation, Mary Magdalene, and a Let us make sure that all people are included in the imagery of our Virgin and Child. But I also ordered Julian of Norwich and Abbeloved Chapel.



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## Providing Some Balance to Our Symbols

The Rev. Canon Kevin Moroney, Ph.D H. Boone Porter Chair of Liturgics Director of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd

> solom Jones. In selecting icons, I was careful to look at the ethnic accuracy of the depiction. Semitic women should not look English! The Virgin and Child icon sits over a permanent installation of votive candles, and our outdoor altar from last year now sits on the other side of the Rood Screen and is used for our daily Eucharists. We also pray Evening Prayer around the font four times each week, so the old Court of the Gentiles is now used eight times every week

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#### EIGHTIES, from page 4

tion. The influence of our common life, the generosity of the faculty in helping to form us as ministers and leaders, the important colleagues and friends whose presence in my life over the years will have to be served with this small sentence. What I finally want to talk about here is the sisterhood I met at General.

At every level of our common life there were women who walked along side each other, witnessing, encouraging, challenging, nurturing the particular charism of women's leadership and the variety of its expressions. Edson Hall and the top two floors of Eigenbrodt became refuges we could return to each evening and trade stories of what now might be called micro-aggressions but were a common part of the Church leaning into the implications of accepting women in formerly forbidden positions of leadership. Some of those friendships sustain me deeply to this very day. There were the married women students with whom we worked and talked at meals and around classes, working in the student Co-op program, in the library. There were talented and committed spouses who brought their energy and insights to the Christian walk. All these, our peers, helped to foment a deep conversation

about what it meant to lead as women, as feminists (well, some of us), as followers of Jesus in our respective arenas. It helped us push at the easy clericalism of the church in those years, to push away at the notion that the privilege of the hegemony was all that faithful.

Then there were the women just in the generation ahead of us: women in curacies in and around New York, sometimes preaching in the Chapel, pursuing S.T.M. degrees, just walking around and wearing collars and engaging us in conversation. (Occasionally, for a weekday Eucharist, we might see one of them at the altar, but never as Celebrant at one of the two weekly Community Eucharists. That position was reserved only for faculty, and no ordained woman was among that body.) There was the indefatigable Barbara Crafton (my field education supervisor!) and the inexhaustible Minka Shura Sprague, dancing and thinking and daring us to go deeper, further. There were other women who appeared on the Close, engaging us in conversation, kindling our imaginations of a more whole Church emerging. I met the Rev. Pauli Murray by chance in the lobby one day.

Finally, there were three women members of the faculty: Dr. Barbara Hall, Dr.

tually, the Rev. Dr. Patricia Wilson-Kastner. Barbara pushed us to open up the New Testament, to de-sentimentalize our notions of how it carried its truths, to hear the first-century voices more clearly, and to find congruence with our own faith honestly. Her presence was also a refuge not only for us as women, but for those still so vulnerable in the Church's slowly emerging understanding of human sexuality. Fredrica, while serving as the Director of the Board for Theological Education, lived on the Close and taught occasionally. Her seminar on Feminist Methodology gathered M.Div. students, Th.D. candidates and S.T.M. students in a rich exploration of how we might deepen the Church's scholarship. Pat Wilson-Kastner arrived for my senior year, to teach preaching. As the first ordained woman on the faculty, she finally took her place at the altar, ending a long formational and emotional drought for us all.

Fredrica Thompsett (adjunct) and, even-

There is so much more to tell, so many stories, so much struggle, so much gratitude and tears and laughter. What stories do you have to tell? How have they shaped the disciple and leader you are, I wonder?

#### NEW LIFE, from page 4

to talk of personal things with freedom. After 45 minutes of conversation, I went back home with a feeling of having been truly welcomed. I was open and ready for a second encounter.

After our meeting, we agreed that it would be good if I participated as a lay person in a local parish. I was able to gather and worship at St. Peter's Parish in Freehold, NJ, which gave me the opportunity to be a part of a community despite the limitations on gatherings and social distance at the time because of the pandemic. I have been blessed that they have made me feel welcomed and one of them.

I have seen in this process of transition the trust of people who know me and the trust of others who have just started to get to know me. I can say that because of our common faith, because we believe in Christ, I have been welcomed and accepted into a new community of believers. I am realistic in understanding that there are still challenges of unresolved prejudices everywhere, but we do the best we can to continue our iourney of building God's kingdom here on earth with our gifts, with our talents, and with our faith.

#### ANXIETY, from page 5

than students from other denominations, those who had never led a prayer service, or those who speak English as a second language! But I was still unused to finding my place page-by-page between multiple paper books, to the point of getting lost multiple times throughout the service.

Being unused to something is not, in itself, bad. The first time we do anything, we are naturally unskilled. And it is certainly necessary for General students to be capable of juggling as many prayer books and hymnals as required. The future leaders of the church must not be daunted by even the most ornamented and atonal hymns, whether they are familiar or not. If we engage in any ecumenical worship-indeed, if we ever venture outside the cozy embrace of our home parishes-we will find ourselves in circumstances where we have no idea what is going on, liturgically speaking, and be required to fly on a wing and a prayer. Far be it from me to suggest that chapel be watered down, so that we would not be prepared for all eventualities!

"If we come to General Seminary, for all our diversity, we are united in one ordeal. We must run the gauntlet of our first Solemn Mass in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd."

For the sake of us poor juniors, however, I beg mercy. Give us something to cling to

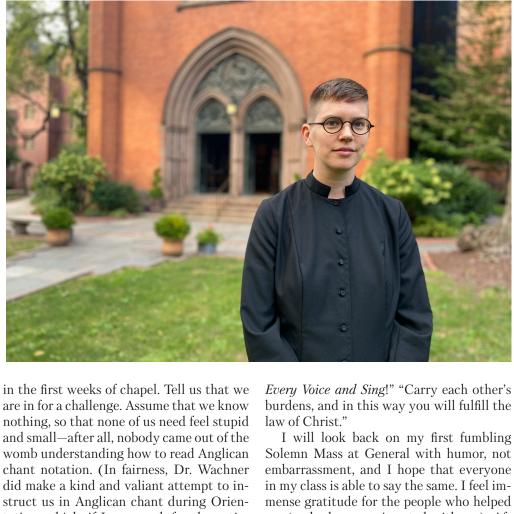
#### ETHOS, from page 3

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occasionally wears unusual clothing (all of which is true about General, by the way), it also conveys something about the movement within our common life. While we might think of Benedictines (or any monastic community) as one that is rooted and grounded within a particular place, the Rule of St. Benedict spends a great deal of time describing the motion of monastic life, a life that ebbs and flows between welcoming the stranger and then sending them out again; a life that inhales deeply the spirit of God in worship and prayer, and then exhales out a spirit of service to neighbor and world.

These four gifts of a Benedictine ethos



(Welcome & Sending / Worship & Service) are already part of the General Seminary community. Three times every day, we gather for worship and prayer as a community. So far this year, our students have met together in volunteering, in contemplation, in establishing a rule of life for spiritual discipline. We do this out of our love for God and also so that we can be equipped by God for service, either in our current vocations or for the future to which God has called us. General is and has been Benedictine. What excites me the most is to think about how we will reinvigorate these gifts in our future. I am not shy about describing our current situation. Publicly available ATS data points to a 10-year decline in our res-

sels kings (2 Kings 22:8-20), plus so many more muliebral passages that shone like biblical gems. But as much as I loved these stories of the Old Testament, I did not learn Hebrew in seminary. I found it too intimidating.

SISTERS, from page 5

I have since learned Hebrew, which I teach, along with the Old Testament here at General. In the past, I have also taught Aramaic and Ugaritic (a northwest Semitic cuneiform language) and I have studied Akkadian, Syriac, Greek, and Latin, along with modern Hebrew, French, German, and Spanish. Like feminist biblical interpretation, my story has expanded over time.

Feminist biblical studies today not only delve into the stories of biblical women, but also probe how they are represented. We call this process deconstruction, asking questions about why something or someone is perceived or portrayed a certain way. For example, many women in the Bible appear desperate for sons, but did this desire come from the women who lived on Israel's highlands in the Iron Age or do these concerns stem from the minds of elite men who wrote with attention to male legacies? Of course,

surprised to find Deborah who commands it is impossible to have definitive answers armies (Judges 4:4-10), Huldah who coun- to these questions but even raising them opens new possibilities for understanding Scripture.

My students at General learn to deconstruct the text as we together read with a hermeneutic of suspicion. Whose interests are served in a particular text? Who benefits from a given interpretation? At whose expense? How do we recognize and claim our own roles in making meaning from the Bible's words? Our job as those who share sacred stories is to interpret biblical passages in ways that contribute to creating God's realm that honors every person equally formed in God's image (Genesis 1:27).

I tell my students that I was Phyllis Trible's student, so they are her grandstudents. Like my Old Testament professor, I do not designate the stories of women in the Bible to be taught only to women. I urge you, in your own roles as teachers, preachers, and interpreters of Scripture, to share widely the moving and inspirational stories of women in Bible. You never know whose life you may change.

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tation, which, if I can speak for the entire incoming class, was much appreciated. Unfortunately, amidst all the other things we were trying to keep track of, it sailed right over our heads.) Teach us how to understand a hymn board and give us an introduction to the use of the Book of Common Prayer. Encourage us to bring bookmarks to chapel and, when we seem lost, lean over and show us the page we need. When we are desperately combing through the wrong hymnal, whisper in our ear, "You need Lift

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me (and who commiserated with me). After only a week, I can already tell that I am becoming more comfortable with the practices at Solemn Mass. But I also hope that next year's juniors receive a little more scaffolding, a little more instruction, and the valuable information that *everybody* suffers prayer book anxiety their first semester at General, and that *nobody* will judge them for it.

idential program. We no longer have the privilege of ignoring it. Still, we can now begin to thoughtfully rebuild the seminary into the one God is calling us to become by inviting our world into the practices that have sustained our faith for generations.

Boldly living into our new future, we must acknowledge that none of us knows precisely what it may look like on the other side. We may not know what the future looks like, but we know what we'll be doing when it arrives: welcoming and sending, worshipping and serving.

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