

December 2021
ELCA Wittenberg Center
The Rev. Dr. Robert G. Moore (Director)
and Kathy Moore, ELCA Missionaries

TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN:
The Magnificat

The ELCA Wittenberg Center invites you to a three-part webinar series to mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's commentary on the Magnificat and the continued significance of Mary's voice. Each hour-long session will take place at 12 pm Central time.

DECEMBER 15	My Soul Magnifies the Lord: The Gift of Mary's Voice
DECEMBER 16	Brought Down the Mighty From Their Thrones: The Strength of Mary's Voice
DECEMBER 17	From Generation to Generation: The Future of Mary's Voice



Register at <http://bit.ly/MagnificatWebinar>

*A blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas
from Wittenberg and Leipzig!*

*Einen gesegneten Advent und ein frohes
Weihnachtsfest aus Wittenberg und Leipzig!*

Our newsletter is directed to the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other friends whose support of the Church's work enables Kathy and me to serve in the "Cradle of the Reformation" under the auspices of ELCA Service and Justice unit. We are specifically grateful to our sponsoring congregations and individuals:

Thank you to our ELCA Wittenberg Sponsors

Steve and Katheryne Aufill of Lubbock, TX
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Len and Susan Teich of Houston, TX
Don and Rachel Trimble of St. Paul, MN
Tom and Shelia Moore of Dallas, TX

The Work of the ELCA Wittenberg Center

- To Assist and greet groups from the ELCA and ELCA partners who are planning to visit Wittenberg, Leipzig and other Reformation sites in the region
- To offer seminars and webinars in coordination with the LWF Center Wittenberg for leadership in Lutheran Churches around the globe.
- To assist pastors, scholars and other interested individuals in taking advantage of the resources in Wittenberg and the surrounding region. The Wittenberg Center has a guest apartment available for rent for long-term and short-term visits.
- To encourage congregations, schools and universities to consider Wittenberg as a conference center, for example, January semesters, summer terms, week-long conferences
- Represent the ELCA on various occasions, for example, organizational, educational, commemorative, and worship events
- To assist local leaders to make contacts within the ELCA for shared work in the global context
- To preach, teach, and share information with congregations in the accompanying Churches in the region

The ELCA Wittenberg Center presents:

The *Magnificat*: Turning the World Upside Down

Five-hundred years ago, Martin Luther published his Commentary on the “Magnificat” (Mary’s Song) from Luke 1:46-55. This text has been sung or read at every evening prayer for well over a thousand years. It also is a primary reading for worship in the season of Advent. The ELCA Wittenberg Center invites you to a **three-part** webinar entitled “The Magnificat: Turning the World Upside Down.”

This webinar series—in English with Spanish interpretation—is a collaborative effort across the Service and Justice unit of the ELCA led by the Europe Desk through the ELCA Wittenberg Center. As Director of the Center, I will host each one-hour session two guest speakers. Each of the featured speakers will bring a unique perspective to both the biblical text and Luther’s commentary. A Q&A period will follow the speakers’ presentations.

Session 1: “My Soul Magnifies the Lord: The Gift of Mary’s Voice”

- Wednesday Dec 15, 12:00 – 1:00 pm Central Standard Time (Chicago)
- Listening to the Lukan text of Mary’s song
- Speakers: The Rev. Dr. Wanda Deifelt (Luther College) & the Rev. Heidi Neumark (Trinity Lutheran, Manhattan)

Session 2: “Brought Down the Mighty from Their Thrones: The Strength of Mary’s Voice”

- Thursday Dec 16, 12:00 – 1:00 pm Central Standard Time (Chicago)
- Responding with the church to Mary’s song: Luther’s Commentary on the *Magnificat*
- Speakers: The Rev. Dr. Mary Lowe (Augsburg College) & the Rev. Angela Trejo Haager (Women’s Network for Gender Justice in Latin America and the Caribbean)

Session 3: “From Generation to Generation: The Future of Mary’s Voice”

- Friday Dec 17, 12:00--1:00 pm Central Standard Time (Chicago)
- Opening our eyes and ears to God’s future for humanity and all creation
- Speakers: The Rev. Dr. Guy Erwin (United Lutheran Seminary) & the Rev. Dr. Mercedes García Bachmann (Institute for Pastoral Contextual Studies of the Lutheran Church in Argentina and Uruguay (IELU))

Please join us during the Advent season for what will surely be a great event. Here is the registration link. Go to: <http://bit.ly/MagnificatWebinar>

We will send a reminder to all registrants! Also, each registrant will receive a free copy of the text of Luther’s Commentary on the “Magnificat” courtesy of Fortress Press.

Promotional information is available at: [Facebook/ELCAWittenbergCenter](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAWittenbergCenter)

Here is a little more about the speakers:

The Rev. Dr. Wanda Deifelt is a Brazilian theologian serving as professor of religion at Luther College in Decorah, IA. She is an ordained Lutheran pastor and has served as theological advisor to many ecumenical organizations (World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Latin American Council of Churches, etc.). Her publications are on embodiment, feminist and liberation theologies, ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue, religious pluralism in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the encounter of religion with literature and art.



The Rev. Heidi Neumark's strong passion for social justice kept her in the South Bronx where she served



congregations for twenty years. Her first book, the award-winning *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx* tells that story. For the past eighteen years she has continued her passion as pastor of the multicultural, bilingual, Trinity Lutheran Church on Manhattan's Upper West Side. She initiated support groups for Latino members, and programs for low-income, immigrant children and homeless LGBT youth. Her latest book is *Sanctuary: Being Christian in the Wake of Trump*.

Dr. Mary Elise Lowe is Professor of Religion at Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her



teaching and research focus on contemporary theologies, LGBTQIA+ theologies, Martin Luther's theology, and disability theologies. Her most recent chapters and articles include "A Lutheran View of Conscience: Bound and Free, Constrained and Embodied" and "The Queer Body-Mind in Martin Luther's Theology: From Subaltern Sodomite to Embodied Imago Dei." In her work and teaching, Lowe generates scholarship that is both academic for scholars and accessible for students and

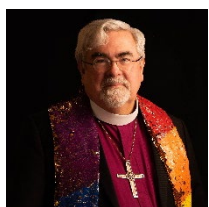
laypersons. Prof. Lowe was recently named as Augsburg University's next Batalden Faculty Scholar in Applied Ethics.

The Rev. Angela Trejo Haager was born in St. Paul, Minnesota and is a pastor in the Mexican Lutheran



Church. As a historian, theologian, and biblical scholar, she works as coordinator of Augsburg Lutheran Seminary in Mexico City and collaborates as one of the Coordinators of the Women and Gender Justice Network for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Lutheran World Federation. She is a professor in Church History, Bible, and Gender.

The Rev. Dr. Guy Erwin has been president of United Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, since August 2020. From 2013 to 2020, Erwin served as bishop of the Southwest California Synod of the ELCA. His first love, however, is teaching and research, and from 2000 to 2013 held an



endowed professorship in Lutheran studies at California Lutheran University. Before that, he taught at the Yale Divinity School for seven years. Erwin studied at Harvard and Yale (where he earned his PhD) and at the universities in Tübingen and Leipzig. He was one of the first LGBT persons ordained after the ELCA dropped its ban on LGBT clergy, and his election as bishop of the Southwest California Synod (which encompasses most of the Los Angeles metropolitan area) in 2013 made Erwin not only the first openly gay man to serve as a bishop in any of the churches of the LWF,

but also the first Indigenous person to serve as a bishop in the ELCA. He is a member of the Osage Nation in Oklahoma.

The Rev. Dr. Mercedes L. García Bachmann is Director of the Instituto para la Pastoral Contextual (Institute for Pastoral Contextual Studies) of the United Evangelical Lutheran church in Argentina and



Uruguay (IELU). From 1999 to 2016 she was Professor of Old Testament at the Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos (ISEDET) in Buenos Aires, Argentina; she has been a visiting scholar around the world, e.g., in Mexico City, Chicago, and Münster. Her research interests are feminist hermeneutics and gender studies. Dr. García Bachmann's latest books are *Women at Work in the Deuteronomistic History* (Atlanta: SBL, 2013), the *Judges* volume in the feminist series

Wisdom (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2018) and, with Virginia R. Azcuy and Nancy E. Bedford, *Teología feminista a tres voces* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2016).

Easter: Vaccinations, Variants, and Lockdown

Dear members of our sponsoring congregations, ELCA members, our family, and friends, After a few months of respite from the Corona virus, Europe finds itself in the throes of another wave of infections, the worst yet. Areas of Germany have 7-day incidents levels at 2000 per 100,000. Even Leipzig which has fared well through almost two years of epidemic is now over 600. Fortunately, in Germany 70% of the population has been vaccinated. Unfortunately, that is far too low to prevent outbreaks like we are experiencing now. 85% or more of those hospitalized are unvaccinated, making the hospitals filled to capacity. The vaccinated are also affected by the outbreak but fortunately not a large part of the hospitalized population. Deaths are far below last year's levels because the medical community has learned how to treat the disease more effectively. Still over three hundred deaths per day leave families bereft of loved ones. And that is just Germany. All of Europe is affected.

Kathy and I are doing well and being careful even though we have received our booster shot which can give us a sufficient level of antibodies to fend off Covid-19 or at least moderate its severity. We are grateful for this gift from the science community and pray that ultimately Europeans will finally drop their uninformed views of the vaccines now available and bring us to a level of immunity that disarms the virus. We'll see!

We are now in lockdown with unvaccinated persons restricted from most activities, but there is not a lot to do other than going to the grocery store and apothecary. Vaccinated persons are allowed to go to restaurants with restricted hours. How long this will last is anyone's guess. Right now, the priority is on safety. That's important because new variants are on their way, and we need the whole human community to work together to mitigate their effects.

Meanwhile ELCA Intern Hannah Koby and I work with our European and Latin American team on a webinar on the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-56) in order to strengthen our trust in God's grace and our hope in God's care for the world and for the weak and the lowly.

We wish you a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas in which we welcome God's own presence in the world God created, redeemed, and continually renews.

Grace to you,

Robert and Kathy

Our Visit to the U.S.



Taddi visits the farm

Kathy and I were delighted to visit the United States in August and September. Our goal was to get a checkup with our physicians and to see friends and family. We were vaccinated, so that it felt safe. Besides we were aware that Taddi was barking with a German accent. So, we thought we should show him our home territory and work on his pronunciation! It was a fun five weeks.



Preaching at Christ the King Lutheran Church Houston

We were most happy to be back in our former congregation of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Houston after a five-year absence. It was invited by the interim pastor, Mandy Derr, to preach. The liturgy at Christ the King Church is still a marvelous experience of the gospel.

We drove throughout Texas and north to Denver, Colorado through Nebraska and to Milwaukee on Lake Michigan. Our final week was in Door County, a peninsula which juts out into Lake Michigan.



Downtown Houston

It was great to be back in the U.S! Our hope is that the world can grow and learn how to live with one another caring for creation and for each other.

Other Events and Persons



Welcome, Hannah Koby! Hannah is currently serving as Intern with the ELCA Wittenberg Center in partnership with the LWF Center Wittenberg. Hannah hails originally from Ohio. She is a church musician and deaconess student with the Lutheran Diaconal Association. Hannah earned a Master of Music degree in Organ Performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music and graduated summa cum laude from Valparaiso University with a Bachelor of Music in Church Music/Organ and a German minor. She has served as musician in many churches, most recently as Interim Co-Director of Children's and Youth Choirs/Organist at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. During her time abroad, one can often find Hannah making music at the Wittenberg Castle

Church. Welcome, Hannah!

Also, Hannah played the organ for the English Reformation Day service of Holy Communion in the Castle Church on the Eve of Reformation Day. Together with our colleagues from the Lutheran World Federation offices, we enjoyed a good turn out in spite of the pandemic. From left to right is Sámuel Nánási, Director of Studies for the LWF Center Wittenberg; Robert Moore, Director of the ELCA Wittenberg Center; Inken Woehlbrand, Director of the LWF Center Wittenberg; and Viking Dietrich, Area Representative for the Europe Desk in the Service and Justice unit.





I was delighted to be invited to preach at the American Church Berlin on November 7. It was a great experience having been with a large group from the congregation visiting Wittenberg on October 30. I preached and my colleague Viking Dietrich presided over the service. It was a somewhat poignant since it was my last time to work with Viking whose service ends at the end of the year. But Kathy and I are delighted that Viking and Marissa will remain in Berlin, not far away!

We have suffered a dearth of visitors during the years of the pandemic. So much of the time originally was spent greeting our ELCA brothers and sisters as well as friends and partners of the ELCA. A few visitors managed to get through and visit in Leipzig. Pictured here are George and Debra Detweiler from Pennsylvania. Debra is a nurse, and George is an intentional interim pastor in the ELCA. Most important George and Debra love Bach! George served as interim pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan. They visited at just the right time before the lockdown. We enjoy all our visitors, and we especially enjoyed getting acquainted with George and Debra! I suspect we will see them again.



Thank you for your support! Stay vaccinated, wear your mask, wash your hands, and keep the faith!

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The VERY BEST WAY to support us is, of course, to give to ELCA Global Mission! We couldn’t do what we do without your help! To give to ELCA Global Mission online in our name, go to <https://community.elca.org/MissionaryGiving> and be sure to choose “Robert & Kathryn Moore” in the drop-down box.