



2025 INSTITUTE OF LITURGICAL STUDIES

Theology, Music, Practice

Rites of Passage:

Engaging Occasional
Practitioners in a Secular Age

APRIL 28-30, 2025

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

VALPO.EDU/ILS

Rites of Passage:

Engaging Occasional Practitioners in a Secular Age



The American religious landscape is characterized by declining participation in religious institutions, increasing uncertainty about matters of faith, and a growing population identifying as nonreligious. Nevertheless, many people continue to turn to churches at some of the most significant moments in their lives — such as the birth of a child or the loss of a loved one — and many others show up to support them.

At last year's Institute, the Rev. Sarah Kathleen Johnson, Ph.D. introduced the idea of occasional religious practice to describe a way of relating to religion that is characterized by participation in religious practices occasionally rather than routinely, most often in connection with certain types of occasions, including holidays, life transitions, and times of crisis. She encouraged us not to rush to judge occasional practitioners' lack of involvement or to come to hasty conclusions about why they are seeking out these practices but instead to listen to and learn from them.

Most of our planning resources are directed at the Sunday assembly. Yet, baptisms, weddings, and funerals are liturgical events rich in their potential for service and outreach. How might we more fully consider the possibilities of these occasions to be better prepared to serve a decreasingly churched culture?

FROM THE DIRECTORS

Welcome to this year's gathering of the Institute of Liturgical Studies on the campus of Valparaiso University. Since its founding in 1949, the Institute has dedicated itself to liturgical renewal and scholarly reflection for the church's worship.

Valparaiso University is built on the traditional homelands of several indigenous peoples, most notably the Potawatomi (Bodéwadmik) Nation. The land was ceded by Potawatomi leaders to the United States federal authorities on October 26, 1832, as part of the Treaty of Tippecanoe. We meet in this place indebted to this forced generosity.

Some of the indigenous population successfully resisted removal. Members of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi (Pokégnek Bodéwadmik) established a sovereign government in Dowagiac, Michigan, and continue to live, work, and worship as our neighbors.

REV. JAMES WETZSTEIN, M.DIV.
SALLY MESSNER '02, MSM

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Digital Program and Worship Booklets

Scan the QR code to access digital versions of this year's program and worship booklets.



Schedule

Find the most up-to-date and detailed information by scanning the QR code or find the "Schedule" option under the "2025 Institute" tab at **valpo.edu/ils**.



Keep an eye on your email inbox for daily updates about potential room changes, schedule changes, and announcements. Emails will go out at 8 a.m. each morning of the conference.

MONDAY, APRIL 28

11 a.m. – 6 p.m. | Registration and Hospitality Desk Open
Harre Union, in front of the ballrooms

Noon | Exhibitor Tables Open
Harre Union, Ballroom A
Full exhibitor schedule is on page 32.

1:30 p.m. | Orientation and Welcome
Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C

2:30 p.m. | Plenary 1: Sarah Kathleen Johnson, Ph.D.
“Embracing Baptism as an Occasional Religious Practice”
Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C
Plenary descriptions start on page 15.

5 p.m. | Gathering Eucharist
Chapel of the Resurrection
Led by preacher Cody J. Sanders, M.Div., Ph.D., presider Liv Larson '02
Andrews, M.Div., and primary musician Carl Bear, Ph.D.

6:30 p.m. | Awards Dinner
Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C
This year's Awards Dinner is included in your registration. All ILS attendees are welcome. Your ILS name tag will act as your ticket to the dinner.

8:30 p.m. | Compline
Chapel of the Resurrection
Led by members of the ILS Advisory Council.

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TUESDAY, APRIL 29

8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. | Hospitality Desk Open
Harre Union, in front of the ballrooms

8:45 a.m. | Morning Prayer
Chapel of the Resurrection
Led by leader Marin Jacobson, DMA., musicians, Jim Marriott, M.Div., Ph.D., and Omaldo Perez.

9:15 a.m. | Break

9:30 a.m. | Plenary 2: Melinda A. Quivik, Ph.D. | “Honoring Death to Honor Life: Establishing a Liturgical Portrait of Mercy”

Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C

Plenary descriptions start on page 15.

10:30 a.m. | Break

10:45 a.m. | Workshop Session I

Workshop descriptions start on page 20.

- Melinda A. Quivik, Ph.D. | Plenary Follow-up Q&A
Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C
- Annemarie Hartner '03 Cook, M.Div. | “Children’s Sermons, Not Grimms’ Fairy Tales” | *Harre Union, Brown & Gold Room*
- Sarah Kathleen Johnson, Ph.D. | “Participate in Research on Ministry with Occasional Religious Practitioners” | *Harre Union, Alumni Room*
- MaryLynn Mennicke | “Through the Song, the Church Goes On” *Christopher Center Library, Room 205*
- Andrew Fields '93, M.Div., and Martin L. Moeller | “Comforting Those Who Mourn: Working with Funeral Directors for the Dead and the Living”
Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room
- Paul Soulek, M.M. | “Hymn Planning for Weddings/Funerals: Beyond Canon in D, Amazing Grace, and Borning Cry”
Helge Center, Music Room 122
- John Weit, M.A. | “Pastoral Care and Occasional Services Resources in the ELCA” | *Helge Center, Multipurpose Room*

11:45 a.m. | Lunch

Lunch is available for purchase on campus at Founders Table in the Harre Union.

11:45 a.m. | Seminarian Lunch

Harre Union, Hearth Room

Seminary students can purchase their lunch at Founders Table and join ILS Executive Director James Wetzstein and members of the Institute Advisory Council across the hall at the Hearth Room for a meet and greet. We're interested in hearing how the Institute can better serve you.

1 p.m. | Midday Prayer

Chapel of the Resurrection

Led by preacher Dominic J. Rivkin, M.Div., and primary musician Nate Crary.

2 p.m. | Practicum Session 1

Practicum descriptions start on page 17.

- Nate Crary | "Music: Developing Seasonal Liturgical Framework That Helps Expand Traditional vs. Contemporary Labels"
Harre Union, Brown & Gold Room
- Richard E. McCarron, Ph.D. | "Listening with a Hermeneutic of Charity"
Harre Union, Heritage Room
- Fred Niedner, Th.D. | "Preaching at Weddings and Funerals"
Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C
- April Parviz | "Engaging with People in Crisis Using Art, Creativity, and Awakeness" | *Harre Union, Alumni Room*
- Rabbi Steven Philp, M.St., M.Div., MSW | "Saying 'I Do' to Interfaith Marriages" | *Helge Center, Multipurpose Room*
- Cody J. Sanders, Ph.D. | "Corpse Care as Christian Pastoral Praxis"
Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room
- Jared R. Stahler, M.Div. | "We May Never Pass This Way Again: Welcoming the Visitor" | *Christopher Center Library, Room 205*

3:30 p.m. | Break

3:45 p.m. | Workshop Session II

Workshop descriptions start on page 20.

- Kimberly Hope Belcher, Ph.D. | "Exceptional: Eucharistic Hospitality at Roman Catholic Occasional Rites" | *Harre Union, Alumni Room*

- Jennifer Baker–Trinity '99, STM, and Nathan Baker–Trinity '00, M.Div.
“Comforting All in Their Sorrow: Funeral Rites in a Changing Culture”
Harre Union, Brown & Gold Room
- Liv Larson '02 Andrews, M.Div. | “Planning and Presiding at Weddings”
Harre Union, Heritage Room
- Max Johnson, M.Div., Ph.D. | “Celebrating the Lutheran Baptismal Rites in their Fullness” | *Helge Center, Multipurpose Room*
- Jim Marriott, M.Div., Ph.D. | “Popular + Sacred Mashups”
Chapel of the Resurrection, Gloria Christi Chapel
- Bradley E. Schmeling, M.Div. | “New Occasions Teach New Duties”
Christopher Center Library, Room 205
- Emily Smith '19 | “Stories from the Sacristy”
Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room
- Paul Soulek, M.M. | “Hymn Planning for Weddings/Funerals: Beyond Canon in D, Amazing Grace, and Borning Cry”
Helge Center, Music Room 122

5:30 p.m. | ALCM and LDA Reception

Lutheran Diaconal Association – 1304 Laporte Avenue

All are invited to attend a cocktails and hors d'oeuvres reception jointly hosted by the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM) and the Lutheran Diaconal Association (LDA) on the lawn of the Center for Diaconal Ministry, about a 10-minute walk from the Chapel.

6 p.m. | Dinner Break

Scan the QR code to see our recommendation list for local restaurants or find the “Local Restaurants” option under the “2025 Institute” tab at **valpo.edu/ils**.



7:30 p.m. | David G. Truemper Memorial Concert: Vespers Hymn Festival *Chapel of the Resurrection*

Led by leader Sally Messner '02, MSM., primary musician Paul Soulek, M.M., and narrator Josh Messner '02, M.A.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

8 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Hospitality Desk Open
Harre Union, in front of the ballrooms

8:30 a.m. | Practicum Session II
Practicum descriptions start on page 17.

- Nate Crary | “Music: Developing Seasonal Liturgical Framework That Helps Expand Traditional vs. Contemporary Labels” | *Harre Union, Brown & Gold Room*
- Richard E. McCarron, Ph.D. | “Listening with a Hermeneutic of Charity” | *Harre Union, Heritage Room*
- Fred Niedner, Th.D. | “Preaching at Weddings and Funerals” | *Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C*
- April Parviz | “Engaging with People in Crisis Using Art, Creativity, and Awakeness” | *Harre Union, Alumni Room*
- Rabbi Steven Philp, M.St., M.Div., MSW | “Saying ‘I Do’ to Interfaith Marriages” | *Helge Center, Multipurpose Room*
- Cody J. Sanders, Ph.D. | “Corpse Care as Christian Pastoral Praxis” | *Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room*
- Jared R. Stahler, M.Div. | “We May Never Pass This Way Again: Welcoming the Visitor” | *Christopher Center Library, Room 205*

10:10 a.m. | Matins Morning Prayer
Chapel of the Resurrection
Led by Valpo faculty, staff, and students.

10:45 a.m. | Plenary 3: Kimberly Hope Belcher, Ph.D. | “Proclaim a Fast, Call an Assembly: Crisis Rituals for Pluralistic Contexts”
Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C
Plenary descriptions start on page 15.

11:45 a.m. | Lunch
Lunch is available for purchase on campus at Founders Table in the Harre Union. Attendees are welcome to sit in the cafeteria or in the Hearth Room across the hall.

1:30 p.m. | Workshop Session III

Workshop descriptions start on page 20.

- Kimberly Hope Belcher, Ph.D. | Plenary Follow-up Q&A
Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C
- Sarah Kathleen Johnson, Ph.D. | “Qualitative Research for Congregational Leaders” | *Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room*
- Max Johnson, M.Div., Ph.D. | “Celebrating the Lutheran Baptismal Rites in their Fullness” | *Helge Center, Multipurpose Room*
- Melinda A. Quivik, Ph.D. | “How do Listeners Hear Sermons? Building the Third Room, the Real Sermon” | *Harre Union, Alumni Room*
- Dominic J. Rivkin, M.Div. | “Pilgrimage of Doubt: The Sacred Journey of Faith Transformation” | *Harre Union, Brown & Gold Room*
- John Weit, M.A. | “Pastoral Care and Occasional Services Resources in the ELCA” | *Harre Union, Heritage Room*

2:30 p.m. | Break

2:45 p.m. | Gallery Talk

Center for the Arts, The Brauer Museum of Art

Brauer Museum Curator, Gregg Hertzlieb, will lead us through highlights of the Brauer’s permanent collection.

2:45 p.m. | Festival Choir Rehearsal

Chapel of the Resurrection

Join the Institute's Schola Cantorum to learn music for today's sending Eucharist.

3:45 p.m. | Break

4:30 p.m. | Sending Eucharist

Chapel of the Resurrection

Led by preacher Laurie Kenyon '12 Woods, M.Div., presider Jared R. Stahler, M.Div., primary musician Jihye Choi, M.M., and the Valparaiso University Chamber Concert Band.

CAMPUS INFORMATION

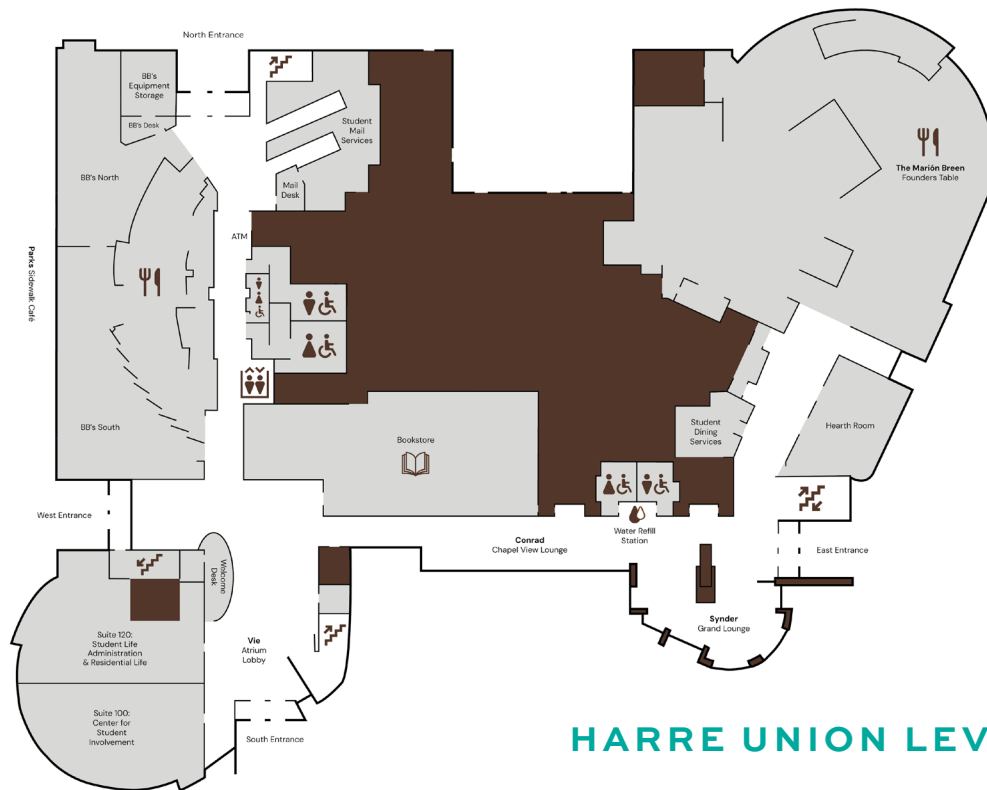
Campus Maps

Seminars, plenaries, workshops, receptions, and worship are located in the highlighted buildings.

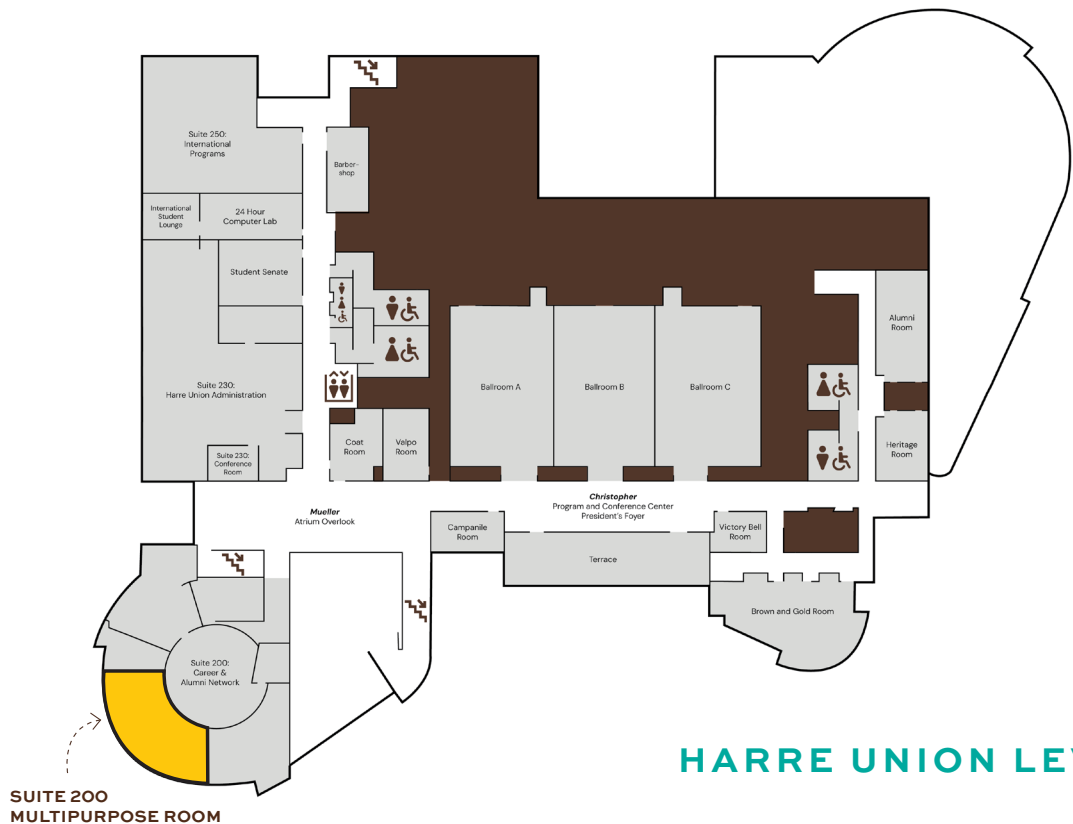


- 1. Center for the Arts
- 2. Chapel of the Resurrection
- 3. Christopher Center Library

- 4. Harre Union
- 5. Helge Center
- 6. Lutheran Diaconal Association



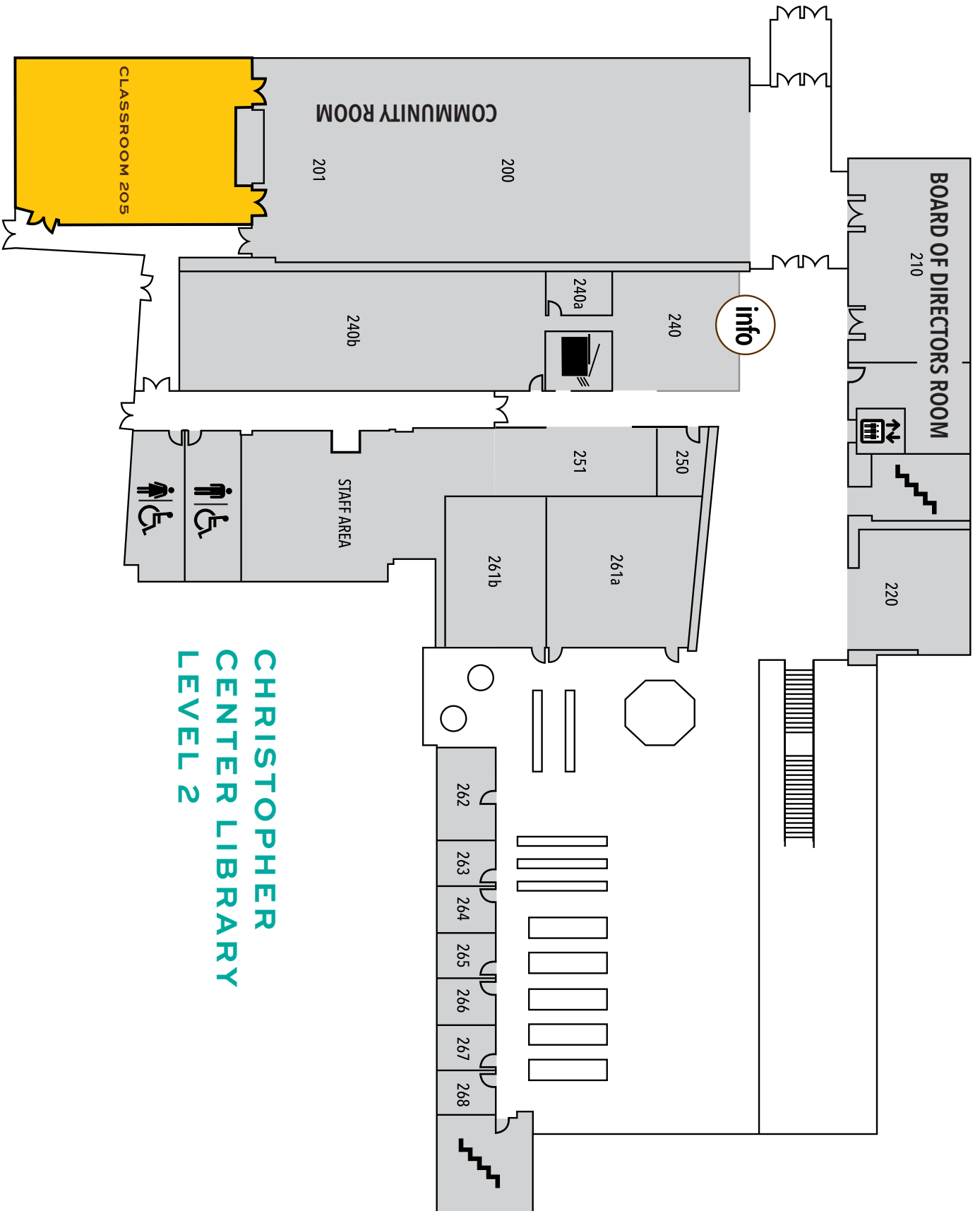
HARRE UNION LEVEL 1



HARRE UNION LEVEL 2

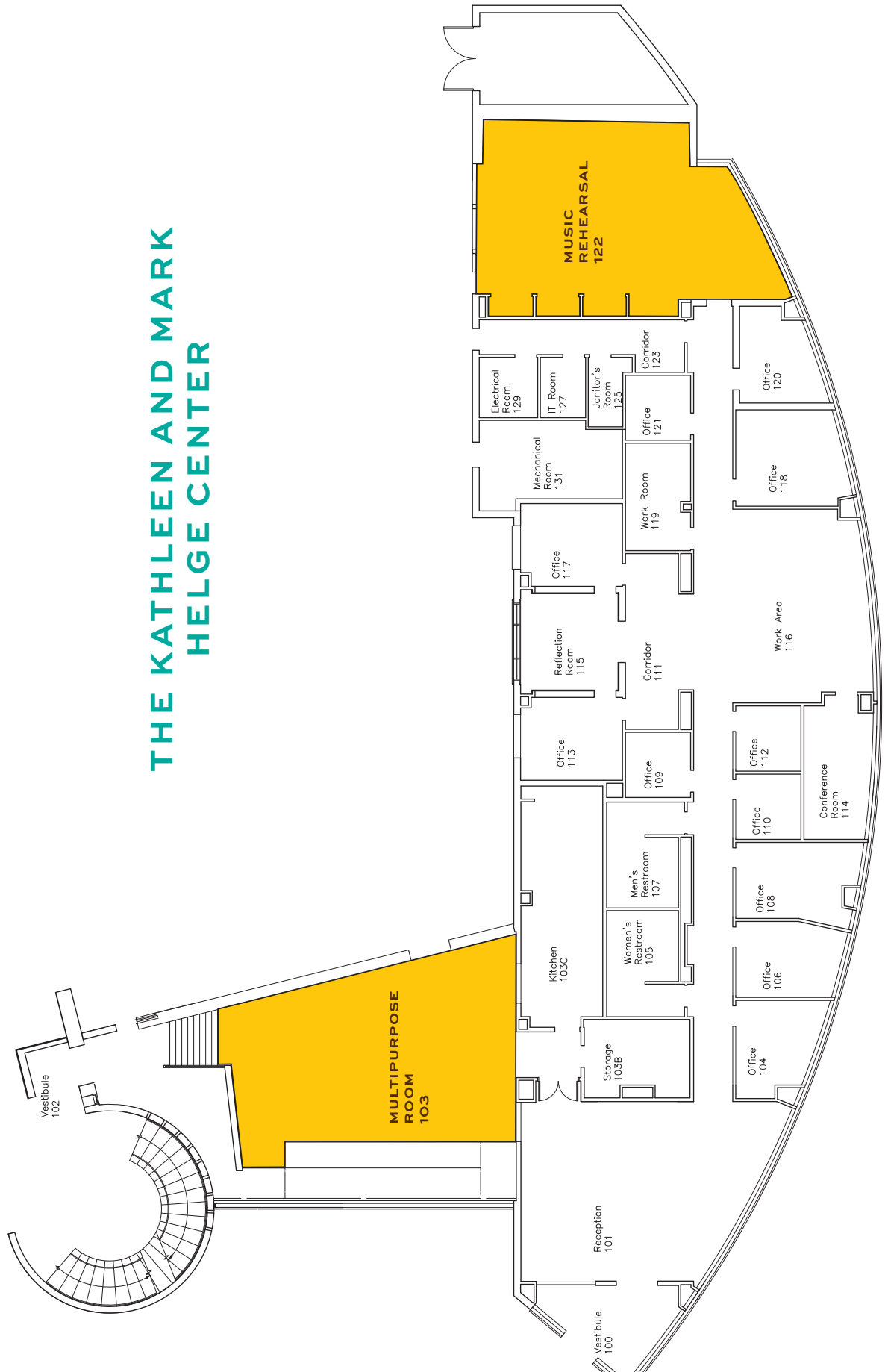
To view this map in a digital, detail-rich format, please scan the QR code to the right.





CHRISTOPHER
CENTER LIBRARY
LEVEL 2

THE KATHLEEN AND MARK HELGE CENTER





WIFI

The following network and password information can be used in campus buildings by Institute participants:

Network: valpo-guest

Password: forevervalpo

SEVERE WEATHER

In the event of severe weather, follow posted signs for shelter locations in campus buildings. The Chicago forecast office of the National Weather Service serves the City of Valparaiso.

POLICE

The Valparaiso University Police Department is a professional, full-service department providing law enforcement services and protection on campus at all hours. For non-emergency situations, call 219.464.5430. For emergencies, dial 911.



SARAH KATHLEEN JOHNSON, PH.D.

“Embracing Baptism as an Occasional Religious Practice”

Monday, April 28, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C

Following the birth of a child, family members may reach out to a congregation for the first time — or the first time in a long time — with a request for baptism. Drawing on qualitative research with both clergy and occasional religious practitioners, this presentation explores the tensions associated with the occasional practice of baptism. Is baptism giving the child a choice, or making a choice on behalf of the child? Is being a godparent a spiritual role, or a family responsibility? Does baptism locate the child at the threshold or the center of the church community? Is this sacrament covenantal or kenotic?



MELINDA A. QUIVIK, PH.D.

“Honoring Death to Honor Life: Establishing a Liturgical Portrait of Mercy”

Tuesday, April 29, 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C

Long uncomfortable with death, our society – and our churches – have been moving away from funerals and toward an event around death that is often called a “celebration of life.” Despite the fact that funerals are a celebration of life, in a culture that is increasingly unfamiliar with the biblical narratives, imagery, and poetry that tell about God’s unfailing compassion and mercy, many people have a hard time seeing the point of what the church has to say about endings. We grab onto the image of passing on to avoid speaking of death. The reluctance to baptize or to be baptized, and the pressure to commune those who haven’t been baptized, and the increase in thinking of the virtual as real enough all contribute to greater distance from the church’s profound witness. We need not panic about diminished numbers. An expansive theology of death and of life, giving heft to the symbols treasured by the church, is possible. Honoring death can lead to new life.



KIMBERLY HOPE BELCHER, PH.D.

“Proclaim a Fast, Call an Assembly: Crisis Rituals for Pluralistic Contexts”

Wednesday, April 30, 10:45–11:45 a.m.

Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C

In moments of crisis, we often discover that we need to pray together and that we don’t know how to pray together. Rituals during or following a crisis often call together an assembly with a wide variety of religious beliefs. This presentation will uncover some of the reasons people seek out rituals in moments of crisis, outline some features of crisis rituals that set them apart from ordinary Sunday worship, and discuss examples of rituals that are evolving to meet crises in North America and beyond.



*Scan here to read the
plenary speaker bios.*

PRACTICUMS

ILS registration now includes two 90-minute practicum sessions in lieu of the pre-conference seminars.

All practicums will be presented twice:

- Practicum Session I on Tuesday, April 29, at 2 p.m.
- Practicum Session II on Wednesday, April 30, at 8:30 a.m.



NATE CRARY

“Music: Developing Seasonal Liturgical Framework That Helps Expand Traditional vs. Contemporary Labels”

Harre Union, Brown & Gold Room

What’s your favorite style of worship? Does your church do traditional or contemporary worship? Why don’t we sing any familiar hymns anymore? Why do we only sing contemporary songs from the 1990s? Asking cringy questions like these can lead to a limited understanding of the essential role the assembly plays during liturgy. When lines are drawn or blurred between worship times and predictable styles, labels become unhelpful and impossible to expand, causing harmful division among the body of Christ. Let’s get a little cringy together and explore how to breathe new life into a tired dichotomy.



RICHARD E. MCCARRON, PH.D.

“Listening with a Hermeneutic of Charity”

Harre Union, Heritage Room

Death is personalized in contemporary Western societies, and this also affects the way people ritualize it. How do we listen to the occasional practitioner in liturgy and take their perspective seriously without succumbing to the perceived need to direct or correct them to our perspective? The approach of intercultural hermeneutics can provide a path to guide both our listening and our speaking in these moments of critical interaction. How might this approach bless our conversation partner? How might it bless our ministry with them?



FRED NIEDNER, TH.D.

“Preaching at Weddings and Funerals”

Harre Union, Ballrooms B & C

Weddings and funerals may have provided the first signs that our culture was entering what we now recognize as a secular age. For as long as many of us can remember, families have wanted their weddings and funerals held in church settings, but they have also wanted as little as possible said about God, Jesus, or the role of faith in living and dying. Nevertheless, weddings and funerals, whether of active members or occasional practitioners, and whether conducted in park gazebos or funeral homes, remain occasions for winsome, faithful hospitality, witness to the gospel, and a renewed welcome into the family of faith. Participants in this practicum will examine and discuss best practices in the ministries of marrying and burying.



APRIL PARVIZ

“Engaging with People in Crisis Using Art, Creativity, and Awakeness”

Harre Union, Alumni Room

Based on my own personal life experience and deep, close examination of human nature, I believe that when a person is going through a crisis, they become more awake to the world. I’m talking about the world we can see and the one that we can’t. You and I are familiar with this invisible world, but a lot of people are not. And that’s why we’re all here at this Institute: to talk about how to show it to the people who can’t see. I have a lot of creative ideas about this, and I’m excited to share them.



***Scan here to read the
practicum speaker bios.***



RABBI STEVEN PHILP, M.ST., M.DIV., MSW

“Saying ‘I Do’ to Interfaith Marriages”

Helge Center, Multipurpose Room

Increasingly, people are finding partnerships across lines of culture and religion. How do we build ceremonies that honor everyone involved (including you as the officiant)?

This workshop will not only explore the how of interfaith ceremonies, but also the what — as in, what exactly is happening when people of different backgrounds with different relationships to the idea of marriage say “I do.”



CODY J. SANDERS, PH.D.

“Corpse Care as Christian Pastoral Praxis”

Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room

Ministers are accustomed to the pastoral role in the time approaching death, the rites and rituals of funerals, and care for the grieving. But much of our pastoral work amid death and dying has ignored the most palpable and embodied reality

of death: the dead body. This practicum will center the corpse as a matter of theological significance, as well as pastoral and liturgical praxis, looking at the rise of the home funeral movement and the movement toward green, or natural, burial, and the many ways the dead body invites our ritual response.



JARED R. STAHLER, M.DIV.

“Embodying Hospitality in the Occasional Liturgical Assembly”

Christopher Center Library, Room 205

“You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Deuteronomy 10:19

Today’s occasional participants can be different from the “Christmas and Easter Christian” participants of previous generations. Using the biblical imperative to love and embrace, especially when responding to the wide array of backgrounds, this practicum explores how to move beyond words of welcome to becoming an assembly of welcome. Examples from Saint Peter’s Church, an urban, bilingual, and liturgically diverse congregation, will serve as a starting point to explore and experiment new approaches and consider how to apply them in various settings.

WORKSHOPS



ANNEMARIE HARTNER '03 COOK, M.DIV.

“Children’s Sermons, Not ‘Grimms’ Fairy Tales”

Tuesday, April 29, 10:45 a.m.

Harre Union Brown & Gold Room

Children’s sermons can be one of the most stressful aspects of worship planning. In this workshop we will hear encouragement, learn practical ways to engage young people in the Word of God, and receive resources to keep aiding in this practice in local contexts. Come to learn and play!



SARAH KATHLEEN JOHNSON, PH.D.

“Plenary Follow-Up: Participate in Research on Ministry with Occasional Religious Practitioners”

Tuesday, April 29, 10:45 a.m.

Harre Union, Alumni Room

You are invited to contribute to research on ministry with occasional religious practitioners. Switching up the standard Q&A format, the presenter will ask questions and participants will respond by sharing personal experiences about ministries to occasional practitioners, as well as reflect on the most pressing questions related to occasional practice. The format will include small group discussion, written responses, and plenary sharing. The session will begin with a process of informed consent, and anonymized insights that may be incorporated into a book on ministry with occasional practitioners.



“Workshop: Qualitative Research for Congregational Leaders”

Wednesday, April 30, 1:30 p.m.

Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room

Qualitative research methods that facilitate deep listening can help leaders hear the theologies their communities are expressing and enacting in new ways. Weaving these stories together and reflecting them back to the community can stimulate more honest theological reflection and build relationships of trust. Ethnography as a pastoral practice can contribute to leading social and spiritual transformation within and beyond a faith community. This practical workshop draws on

insights from Mary Clark Moschella's "Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice" and the experience of teaching a master of divinity course in which each student undertakes a small-scale ethnography in a local community.



MARYLYNN MENNICKE

"Through the Song, the Church Goes On"

Tuesday, April 29, 10:45 a.m.

Christopher Center Library, Room 205

Music is a powerful form of ministry and mode of worship. Lutheran Summer Music is a four-week music program for high school students that specializes in music education and the combining of music, community, and faith. It caters to young people from various backgrounds including Christian, no church background, and those who have had negative experiences in the church. The singers of Voices of Hope, a prison choir, live in incarceration. Singing allows them moments to feel free. Hear about the success of these programs, and how music can bring high impact and deep meaning to occasional religious practices.



**ANDREW FIELDS '93, M.DIV., &
MARTIN L. MOELLER**

"Comforting Those Who Mourn: Working with Funeral Directors for the Dead and the Living"

Tuesday, April 29, 10:45 a.m.

Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room



This team-led workshop will suggest best practices for cooperating with funeral directors to plan and conduct funerals and memorial services, including advance planning, visitations, and interments. Session leaders will draw from their own extensive experience working together and invite participants to share their own ideas including best practices, roles and responsibilities, boundaries, guidance, and more,

ensuring that Christian burials and memorials are faithful, meaningful, comforting, and hopeful for those who mourn.



PAUL SOULEK, M.M.

“Hymn Planning for Weddings/Funerals: Beyond ‘Canon in D,’ ‘Amazing Grace,’ and ‘Borning Cry’”

Tuesday, April 29, 10:45 a.m.

Helge Center, Music Room 122

Tuesday, April 29, 3:45 p.m.

Helge Center, Music Room 122

This workshop equips participants with tools to discern meaningful hymn choices, offer compassionate pastoral care, and foster creativity. It will explore how to honor individual preferences while broadening the creative process to best serve individuals and families with the Gospel.



JOHN WEIT, M.A.

“Pastoral Care and Occasional Services Resources in the ELCA”

Tuesday, April 29, 10:45 a.m.

Helge Center, Multipurpose Room

Wednesday, April 30, 1:30 p.m.

Harre Union, Heritage Room

Regular gatherings around word and sacrament worship extend to other occasions and settings in the life of the church and the body of Christ. This workshop will explore the expansive library of pastoral care and occasional services resources available within the ELCA, including recent work as the ELCA looks ahead to future expansion of these resources.



KIMBERLY HOPE BELCHER, PH.D.

“Exceptional: Eucharistic Hospitality at Roman Catholic Occasional Rites”

Tuesday, April 29, 3:45 p.m.

Harre Union, Alumni Room

During crisis situations, such as when Christians are near death, liturgical norms regarding worship participation are often broken. Using cases in which Protestant or Orthodox Christians have been permitted to receive Roman Catholic communion, Belcher argues that there are eschatological exceptions. Christians in crisis experience the presence of the parousia and

express their confidence in a liberty from norms they ordinarily follow. Explore how eschatology can guide in discerning a broader application of exceptions to the rules.



**JENNIFER BAKER-TRINITY '99, STM, &
NATHAN BAKER-TRINITY '00, M.DIV.**

**"Comforting All in Their Sorrow: Funeral Rites in a
Changing Culture"**

Tuesday, April 29, 3:45 p.m.

Harre Union, Brown & Gold Room



How do our funeral liturgies make space for individuals or families with little or no connection to the church? This workshop will offer pastoral strategies that contextualize current funeral rites as well as alternative prayers, scriptural metaphors, and ritual symbols. The presenters will reflect on their process of crafting the commissioned liturgical texts for this year's institute while seeking engagement and feedback from attendees.

***Scan here to read the
workshop speaker bios.***





LIV LARSON '02 ANDREWS, M.DIV.

"Over the Threshold: Presiding at Weddings"

Tuesday, April 29, 3:45 p.m.

Harre Union, Heritage Room

The role of presider at weddings can be beset by competing expectations. We too often feel like we're herding stressed-out, overdressed cats. We know we are called to anchor the day in God's love, but the many details can get under our skin, and we're often paid less than the photographer. Join me to discuss how we faithfully navigate these demands and return to the sacred sense of presiding as we guide couples over the threshold into the chapter of life called marriage.



MAX JOHNSON, M.DIV., PH.D.

"Celebrating the Lutheran Baptismal Rites in Their Fullness"

Tuesday, April 29, 3:45 p.m.

Helge Center, Multipurpose Room

Wednesday, April 30, 1:30 p.m.

Helge Center, Multipurpose Room

This workshop will look at the rites of baptism in the Lutheran Book of Worship, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, and Lutheran Service Book and provide insights on how to preside at these rites, and, perhaps more importantly, what not to do in presiding.



JIM MARRIOTT, M.DIV., PH.D.

"Popular and Sacred Mashups"

Tuesday, April 29, 3:45 p.m.

Chapel of the Resurrection, Gloria Christi Chapel

From "Canon in D" to "Con Te Partiro," church musicians are frequently asked to incorporate popular music into the service music for weddings, funerals, and other observances. This workshop will model creative ways to pair these melodies with hymn melodies, creating an intersection of church in the world.



BRADLEY E. SCHMELING, M.DIV.

“New Occasions Teach New Duties”

Tuesday, April 29, 3:45 p.m.

Christopher Center Library, Room 205

Queer people have painfully and playfully crafted rites at the margins, claiming a freedom to embody the church’s tradition in liberating and healing ways. They take seriously both the real lives of the participants and the power of ritual to embody divine presence that was itself a new witness. In this workshop, we’ll look at some rites, discuss their development, and consider what it means for us to be a church that meets people who arrive at our doors, yearning for depth, mystery, and the power of God.



EMILY SMITH '19

“Stories from the Sacristy”

Tuesday, April 29, 3:45 p.m.

Harre Union, Suite 200, Multipurpose Room

This session pulls back the curtain on the life and work of a full-time, professional sacristan both living in and serving a parish in New York City. In this candid discussion, Smith will elaborate upon her unique career path and share experiences from her work in various sacristies, from managing a columbarium to hosting mass weddings and baptism services.



DOMINIC J. RIVKIN, M.DIV.

“Pilgrimage of Doubt: The Sacred Journey of Faith Transformation”

Wednesday, April 30, 1:30 p.m.

Harre Union, Brown & Gold Room

As many young adults experience a so-called deconstruction of faith, they often question and challenge inherited beliefs while seeking a deeper understanding of identity and purpose. When undertaken without intentional spiritual guidance, this journey can leave them vulnerable to confusion and disillusionment. Approached as a sacred journey, the pilgrimage of doubt offers unique opportunities for deep spiritual growth. This session delves into ancient liturgical practices that can guide young adults as they leave behind former certainties, face new questions and insights, and rebuild a more resilient faith in Christ. Learn how to equip the next generation of believers with tools for navigating this sacred journey of faith transformation.



MELINDA A. QUIVIK, PH.D.

“How Do Listeners Hear Sermons? Building the Third Room, the Real Sermon”

Wednesday, April 30, 1:30 p.m.

Harre Union, Alumni Room

This session was inspired years ago at the North American Academy of Liturgy, where Quivik heard Danish homiletician and bishop Marianne Gaarden defend her doctoral dissertation on what to explore and how. Gaarden’s research led to a study she conducted in varied churches in Denmark (large, small, urban, rural), asking questions about the sermon. What she learned is the substance of “The Third Room of Preaching: A New Empirical Approach,” which Quivik will examine and discuss how the preacher and the listener work together.

OUR STAFF

On behalf of our dedicated staff and advisory council colleagues listed below, thank you for joining us for these days of worship, conversation, engagement, and renewal.

REV. JAMES WETZSTEIN, M.DIV.

ILS Executive Director and University Pastor, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.

SALLY MESSNER '02, MSM

ILS Director of Worship, and Director of Worship and Music, Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, Minneapolis

RACHEL WEBB '08

Director of Operations, Division for Calling and Spiritual Life, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.

BETSY SEARLE

Events and Communication Coordinator, Division of Calling and Spiritual Life, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

ANNEMARIE HARTNER '03 COOK, M.DIV.

Program Director for Faith Alive Initiative in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia

KATHARINE HARMON '04, PH.D.

Project Director of Obsculta Preaching Initiative, St. John's School of Theology and Seminary, Collegeville, Minn.

REV. JOSHUA HOLLMANN '99, M.DIV., PH.D.

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn.

REV. JAMES MARRIOTT, M.DIV., PH.D.

Associate Professor of Theology and Music, Chair of the Theology Department, University Organist, Concordia University Texas, Austin, Texas

REV. CRAIG MUELLER, M.DIV., D.MIN.

Lead Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Adjunct Faculty, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago

OMALDO PEREZ

Director for Music and Worship Arts, Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison, Wis.

DCS. RHODA SCHULER '77, M.A., TH.D.

Professor Emerita, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn.

EMILY SMITH '19

Assistant Head Sacristan, Trinity Church Wall Street, New York

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LITURGIES

Worship at the Institute begins and ends with the celebration of the Eucharist, and ancient patterns of the daily office mark morning, midday, and evening prayer services. Scan the QR to the right for the digital worship booklets for this year's liturgies and a comprehensive list of sources, acknowledgments, and permissions, or find the "Digital Program and Worship Booklets" option available through the 2025 Institute tab at valpo.edu/ils.



Scan here to see a full list of this year's worship leaders and their bios, or find the Worship Leaders option under the 2025 Institute tab at valpo.edu/ils.



EUCCHARIST TABLE FELLOWSHIP

The celebrations of the Eucharist at the Institute are public worship services. All baptized are welcome to communion. Trusting in the forgiveness God gives us in baptism, we come to the Eucharistic table where the crucified and risen Christ is truly present in bread and wine, giving us his body and blood as food and drink.

If your church tradition or personal conviction prevents you from receiving the bread and wine, you may come forward for words of blessing or remain in your chair and join in the singing in the spirit of the Kyrie: "for the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all."

OFFERINGS

The offerings collected at the Institute support the annual World Relief Campaign of the Social Action Leadership Team (SALT), the social justice ministry of the Chapel of the Resurrection at Valparaiso University. Compass International Family Center has been selected for the 2025 World Relief Campaign, organized annually by SALT. Compass serves immigrants, refugees, international students, and visitors in the Valparaiso area by offering free adult English classes (ESL), citizenship classes, K-12 student tutoring, and childcare for all adult participants.

Compass is an open community of participants who come from a variety of cultural, language, and faith backgrounds. As a program that was founded by Christians and continues to be led by Christians, it is their deepest desire to extend mercy and care to our new neighbors on their long, difficult journey. All donations will go toward making sure their classes and programming stay free and available to everyone.

To give electronically, scan the code provided in the gathering Eucharist bulletins or visit **worldreliefcampaign.org**. Baskets will be placed in the Chapel of the Resurrection to collect offerings made with cash or by checks payable to the Porter County Community Foundation (PCCF) with “SALT WRC” in the memo line.

THE DAVID G. TRUEMPER MEMORIAL CONCERT

The annual David G. Truemper Memorial Concert honors the life and work of Reverend David G. Truemper, Ph.D., (1939–2004), professor of theology at Valparaiso University who served for 20 years as director (1984–2004) of the Institute. Now a centerpiece of the Institute’s conference, each concert — through performances of choral and chamber music, assembly song, spoken reflections, art, and combinations thereof — engages in dialogue with the year’s theme. On Tuesday evening, join us for a candlelit Vespers Hymn Festival as we lift up the 100th anniversary of Valparaiso University’s Lutheran heritage. Hymn settings that encourage hearty assembly singing will be woven into the order of evening prayer, with original narration inviting us to expand our understanding of the daily office.

AWARDS

CHRISTUS REX AWARD

The Christus Rex Award is presented each year to someone who has significantly contributed to worship renewal and liturgical scholarship.



Max Johnson, M.Div., Ph.D., a longtime friend of the Institute, is this year's recipient of the Christus Rex Award.

An ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and professor emeritus at the University of Notre Dame, Johnson is an internationally recognized scholar of the origins and development of early Christian liturgy, with a special focus on the rites of Christian initiation, liturgy of the Eucharist, and the feasts and seasons of the liturgical year. The author or editor of 25 books and more than 90 articles and essays, he is past president of the North American Academy of Liturgy and served for 25 years as an editorial consultant for worship at Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. Johnson is also a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for "Ecclesia Orans" at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute in Sant'Anselmo, Rome. He was awarded the North American Academy of Liturgy's Berakah Award in 2022.

Johnson has spoken in plenary sessions and workshops at the Institute in past years and returns this year to offer a workshop session entitled "Celebrating the Lutheran Baptismal Rites in their Fullness."

BRUGH EMERGING LEADER AWARD

Established in recognition of Lorraine (1952–2025) and Gary Brugh, the Brugh Emerging Leader Award honors individuals who are early in their vocations and acknowledges the significant gifts they have made for the good of the whole church.



We are delighted to name Nate Crary as the Brugh Emerging Leader for 2025. Nate has served as a church musician in many settings that include suburban churches, campus ministries, and camps, utilizing his voice and various instruments. He has also composed settings of the liturgy and other music for worship, led past liturgies at ILS, and has sung in the schola.

His nominator wrote, “Nate leads the song of the church confidently and with flexibility. He can adjust his approach to support the assembly he is leading while still using his own voice. Nate’s faithful leadership and creativity in creating new music for worship helps transform the church and foster community. Nate is experienced in a variety of forms of liturgical expression, yet he remains connected to the great tradition. He will encourage and help future church musicians approach their work with similar curiosity and thoughtfulness so that assemblies continue to sing boldly.”

Nate’s workshop presentation at this year’s Institute, titled “Music: Developing Seasonal Liturgical Framework That Helps Expand Traditional vs. Contemporary Labels,” is emblematic of his commitment to the continuous development of the liturgical tradition.



RESOURCES

More than 100 plenary presentations from past Institutes are available in a digital archive at ValpoScholar, which annually sees around 10,000 individual downloads of past Institute materials. Learn more at **scholar.valpo.edu/ils**.



EXHIBITORS

Valparaiso University warmly welcomes the following exhibitors to this year's Institute of Liturgical Studies:

- Association of Consultants for Liturgical Space
- Association of Lutheran Church Musicians
- Augsburg Fortress Publishers
- Bilingual Ministry Resource Center
- Journey to Baptismal Living
- Luther Seminary
- Lutheran Diaconal Association
- Lutheran Summer Music
- Ministry Scheduler Pro
- The Center for Church Music
- Tree of Life Imports
- Wartburg Theological Seminary

Exhibitor tables are located in Ballroom A on the second floor of the Harre Union. Not all exhibitors may be present at all times.

EXHIBITOR HOURS

Monday, April 28

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

3:30–5 p.m.

Tuesday, April 29

8–9:30 a.m.

10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

3:30–6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 30

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

2:30–4:30 p.m.

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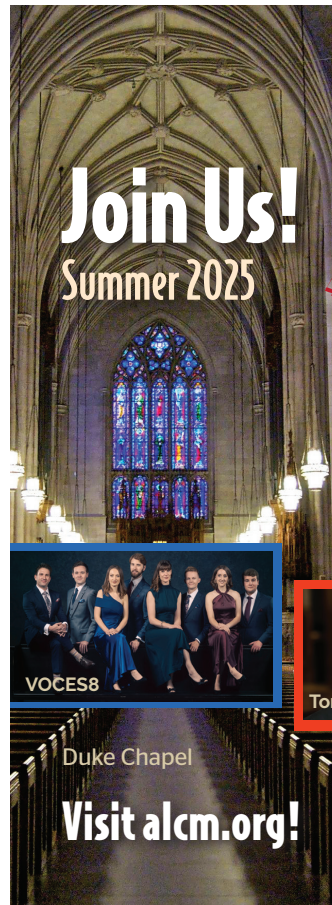




Association of Consultants for Liturgical Space

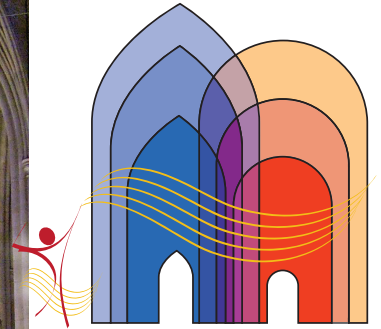


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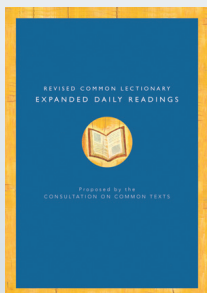


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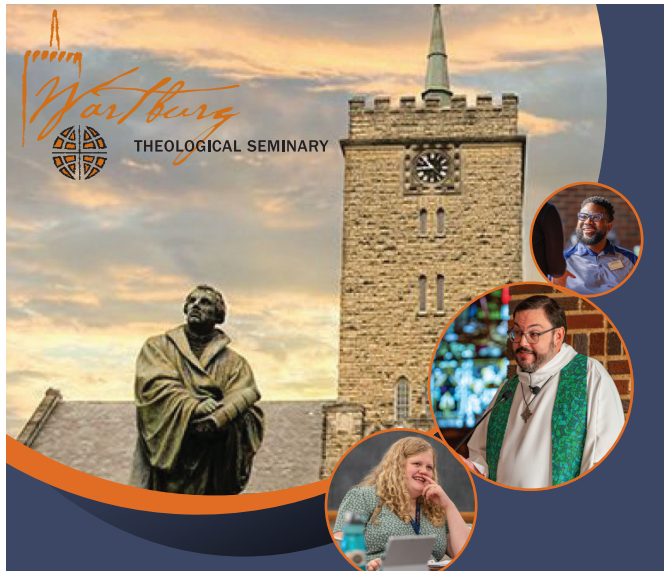
NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE CATECHUMENATE

FREE RESOURCES

JOURNEYTOBAPTISM.ORG

According to the recently released 2023-24 Religious Landscape Study from the Pew Research Center, "large majorities of Americans [are reporting] a spiritual, supernatural outlook." The study also found that the religious decline of the past years might be stabilizing.

Journey to Baptismal Living has resources for churches and clergy who are inviting these spiritual seekers into deeper life with Christ. Visit our website to find **FREE RESOURCES** to help you start a catechumenal process in this growing climate of religious curiosity.



Are you or is someone you know considering seminary?

Attend an upcoming Wartburg Theological Seminary Online Open House, Consider Your Call Weekend, or start a conversation with the Wartburg Seminary Admissions team! We can't wait to meet and walk with you in your discernment journey.

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Sunday, June 1, 4pm

In the tradition of the Festschrift (festival writing), a volume of writings by various authors presented as a tribute to an influential scholar and mentor, this Festgesang (festival singing), in the year of his 75th birthday, celebrates Cantor Robert Buckley Farlee's many contributions to Christian liturgical life. Sing, listen, and worship as a festival choir, nationally renowned musicians, and the assembly come together to lift up the joy of making music in community. Free and open to the public. Reception to follow.

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The Institute of Liturgical Studies is grateful for the support of its donors. At this time, we are encouraging gifts to the Institute's Endowment, which will help to make ILS self-sustaining.

Your gift to the Institute of Liturgical Studies Endowment will help to make ILS self-sustaining. Scan the QR code below for information on how to give.



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