



Dear Northern Illinois Synod,

As we look back over the past year, we can't help but celebrate God's steadfast love and faithfulness with gratitude. We have been blessed by incredible leadership through students, faculty, and staff, encountered many holy and grace-filled moments, and we have witnessed God's work in our midst.

Throughout the year, we offered prayers of blessing for various athletic teams, music ensembles, touring groups and service trip participants. We worked closely with Student Life and Counseling Services to help meet the needs of our students, while offering pastoral care and presence to many. Gracious donations to the Human Needs Fund helped support students needing financial assistance. Our student ministers faithfully served, creating an invitational atmosphere for all. The pastors led various Bible studies, events, retreats, and in the Fall, Pastor Halcyon attended the NECU retreat in Arizona and connected with other pastors serving at ELCA colleges. The chapel also received a few upgrades, including the removal of two front pews, with the hopes of greater accessibility for those who use mobility devices, such as wheelchairs.

Throughout the year, various services were held. Some highlights include:

- Sermons were shared by over 22 faculty/staff members, as well as 22 senior students.
- Student-led Wednesday night Sanctuary gave opportunity for many to lead Bible studies, music, prayers, and serve communion.
- Music ensembles and individuals led music in chapel, including Dr. Karen Black, Cantor & College Organist, and a blessing was offered for those in Christmas with Wartburg.
- "Death and Desserts" gave us a platform to talk with the community about grief, loss, and hope.
- A "Healing of the Nations" service offered music and prayer for peace in Ukraine. Flowers were prayed over at the foot of the cross and later formed into a wreath, and a watercolor painting was done by student Ellie Nabholz, both of which are now on display in the Chapel Narthex.
- During Lent, the 5 senses were examined, with leadership by the Accelerated Ministry Program.
- The Graven Award was presented to Dr. Jacqueline Bussie, author, professor, and theologian.
- A blessing was offered for the Peace Garden. This was a created space made possible by Dave Carlson and the college's Maintenance and Operations team.
- Alliance partnered with SLCM to lead a Transgender Day of Remembrance, in which we lamented the deaths of many transgender persons and affirmed and celebrated the LGBTQIA+ community, as a part of our Reconciling in Christ (RIC) values and partnership.
- We celebrated May 2022 and December 2022 graduates, Homecoming Festival Worship, and the Inauguration of President Becky Neiduski.
- In May, SLCM supported the Muslim Student Association by providing food for Ramadan and accompanied students on a trip to the Mosque in Waterloo.

Pastor Halcyon will continue to serve as Interim Dean of Spiritual Life until after graduation. This spring Pastor Rebecca looks forward to welcoming twins with her husband, Tim. She will graduate from Wartburg Seminary in May 2023, while also saying farewell to the Wartburg College community after the completion of her 4-year internship.

In Christ,

Pastor Halcyon Bjornstad, *Interim Dean of Spiritual Life* & Pastor Rebecca Baird, *Pastoral Intern*