Letter From the Editor

You could say that all religion, all theology, all faith are built upon tradition—which is something handed down from generation to generation. In this community, we are all bound together by one common tradition—faith in God; creator redeemer, sustainer. There are other traditions that speak deeply to our lives and formation as Christian leaders some coming from scripture and the early church. Others are particular to a time and place. Lutefisk and a proliferation of Norwegian sweaters were particularly baffling to me my first Christmas season in Minnesota. After encountering subzero temperatures I understand the sweaters but the lutefisk is still a mystery. In this issue of the Concord, we celebrate, ponder, and meditate on some of the traditions that make Luther Seminary and other faith communities unique and how they bring us together.

—Liz Rossing, Layout Editor

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Instituted by Tradition

Dan Pennington
MDiv Middler

Early Friday morning I was on my way from the south parking lot to the OCC when I spotted a nice pair of mittens dropped among the leaves near the Gullixson lower entrance. Not only were the outer mitts retractable so that half-bared fingers could grab a doorknob with the mittens still worn, but the heavy, wheat-colored knitting promised warmth and comfort. Presuming someone would do the same for me another day, I grabbed them and tooted them to the OCC with me. I recalled that the folks at the Info Desk would take such items for a short period time in case someone would ask about them. This is a wonderful side benefit of the Info Desk that I believe was started by a tradition of need more than an original departmental responsibility.

So how does it work? Well, the good news is that the Info Desk personnel have a temporary place for lost stuff in need of its original owners. Just ask them about their inventory if you've lost something. They seem to know where everything else is located on this campus—why not the location of your stuff, too? The good AND bad news is that your stuff will disappear from this temporary holding location every two weeks or so. If you think your stuff may have passed through the Info Desk, you might have to make a repurchase from the Goodwill store. It's OK. Christ practices reclamation. So can you!

STUDENT GROUPS!
The Concord can be an outlet for you, too! Let us know what's going on, or what's new and exciting about your group, or even write an article about your group and how it's serving the Luther community.

Student Council Corner:
Revelation from your Representation

Student Council Meeting- November 13th

- Philip Nushann was elected to the vacant Junior MA representative position

- New procedures were presented by the Finance Committee for how student groups can request and use funds from the Student Council budget

- Student Life/Community Committee is hoping to host monthly events to promote community

- Communication Committee is looking to develop a Facebook page for Student Council to better connect with the larger student body

- As always any student is welcome to join any committee!

- For further information on these minutes and more, check out the Student Council page for the full minutes and notes: http://www.luthersem.edu/studentcouncil/blog.aspx?m=4610.

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Missionary Kid Experience:
Theology Learned at the Rain Forest, the Prairies, and the [Minnesotan] Tundra

Ihoby Rakotomalala
MA Senior

A missionary kid is a kid whose parents are missionaries (surprise, right?). My parents were missionaries from Madagascar to Cameroon, and because of how I grew up in this environment and its traditions, it affected my theology in multiple ways.

Tradition: gathering together. Influence on theology: the importance of relationality. Whether watching Dad play soccer with the local village team, having a potluck with other missionaries, or our high school dorm going on a vacation together, we learned that community is powerful in shaping our identities. You mattered not because people included you, but because God included you before they did. We learned that the “other,” whoever they are, is imbued with inherent value, as marked by the Creator. If we cannot recognize the person of Christ in each other, how then can we tend to our neighbor?

Tradition: adaptations to cultures is necessary, usually meaning you had to learn different languages. Influence on theology: diversity is a God-given gift. Mom and Dad learned to speak Gbaya and Fufulde, two Cameroonian tribal languages, in order to medically care for, minister with, and visit with their patients. When I lived on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, I did not learn the Lakota language, but I did learn that communication by humor was like a language in and of itself. So I learned to take myself even less seriously (ha!) by quipping Lakota jokes back and forth with new friends. God’s love transcends boundaries, as Romans 8:39 says “neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NIV) How beautiful it is when God’s people meet in their flurries of color.

Tradition: home is not a physical location—it is who you are with. Influence on theology: some of our heavenly home is present when we invite each other in. Hospitality means reaching for each other. If you see a small, rambunctious, curly-haired person laughing really loudly at stuff, come over and say hi. Let us gather in joy in how God has intersected our different paths, let us usher each other in with language of welcome, and let us recognize that Christ sits with us at that table, finishing by saying “...on earth, as it is in heaven...”

HELP WANTED

Do you have control issues?
Do you feel like the last person on campus to know...
...where to place commas for lists, clauses and style?
...the difference between dependent and independent clauses?
...when it’s time to apostrophize “its” to avoid possessive pronoun trouble?
...what stays inside the quotation marks?
...how overused the em dash is?
Do you enjoy helping really intelligent people look as intelligent as they are?
Are you going to be on campus next fall?

If most of this applies, particularly the last item, then the Concord needs you!
Please email us at concord@luthersem.edu and get started today!

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One of my first memories from my first year here at Luther was grilling out on the Burntvedt Patio. The smell of charcoal and cooking food. Meat, vegetables, tofu, everything cooked out on the grill, basking in the joyous heat of the short Minnesota summer. Every Sunday evening, it seemed like almost everyone who lived in Burntvedt (and some from Sandgren and LDR as well) came out and spent time together in a potluck atmosphere. Often there was enough food that even people who did not have the time, energy, or means to cook were able to come and eat their fill. It is enough of a tradition that some of the larger grills are actually handed down from one generation of Luther students to the next, so that this tradition of communal grilling may continue.

Sadly, this tradition is in danger of fading away, as people are either unaware of it, or hesitant to come join a group of relative strangers for a meal. I assure you, we are friendly strangers, ready to help you learn how to grill if you never have before, and definitely willing to feed you if it’s been a long Sunday. And if you don’t own a grill, there’s always room for a little more on someone else’s grill that is already fired up and ready to go. So join us this spring, and let’s revitalize a community tradition that is also a tradition centered on building community. We all live down the hill together now, let’s all live down the hill TOGETHER.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Concord is printed at Luther Seminary Duplicating Services, a student-run and managed department here on campus. Check them out online or in BH 30.

LUTHER SEMINARY BOOKSTORE
Bag Sale
November 21st
5pm-7pm

Fill a paper grocery bag from the $1 section and pay only $12 for the whole bag! When you buy a bag of books, you will also get an additional 10% off your other purchases.

- The Lutheran Study Bible, ELW and LBW resources not available for discount.

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We Have A GOLDEN TICKET!

Hail, dear students of Luther Seminary and take hope, for your very own Luther Concord staff has procured an unprecedented opportunity! The library’s own referential whis, Bruce Eldevik, is opening the vaults and allowing five lucky students the opportunity to take a tour of the RARE BOOK ROOM!

Below you will find a coupon to fill out for your chance to get inside this magical place where it is rumoured that the ghosts of PhD students past and present wander in and out searching for texts in the original Greek or Theological German! Fill out the form below and deposit it in the Box of Opportunity that can be found at the Library front desk by the end of the month!

November Drawing
Name:
Email Address:
Phone Number:
Year of Study:

New Bookstore Traditions
Grace Pardun Alworth
Bookstore Employee

ew traditions are being formed at the Luther Seminary Bookstore with the retirement of Terry Boehlke and Roberta Shaw who served the bookstore for 40 and 22 years respectively. While respecting the bookstore’s legacy and commitment to providing the lowest possible price on church resources and books, the store is launching a social media initiative as its primary way of sharing news and promotions. Look for us on Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter for exclusive deals. In addition to providing books at 25% off of retail prices, the store offers Fun Fair Trade gift items, coffee from Serrv and hilarious Lutheran-themed items from Old Lutheran. The Luther Seminary Bookstore is more than just a bookstore. We are a place where you can find beautiful, funny and ethical gifts for all the fun and wonderful people in your lives!

After many years of sharing retail space with the Luther Seminary Bookstore, Augsburg Fortress (AF) left the partnership and is now sells exclusively online. The bookstore still carries AF products, including the Lutheran Study Bible and ELW resources. We are happy to order resources for you. However, items such as their curriculum is only available online.

Many changes have happened at the bookstore in the past few years, but we are still growing and adapting to the developments at the Seminary and the wider Christian community. Please, stop on down, tell us what you think, we’d love to hear what you hope the bookstore can be!

A traditional Norwegian sweater worn by a certain faculty member
Community Profiles: David Hanssen

Interview by Will Johnson
MDiv Senior

Why are Traditions so important for the church?
- First off I want to make a distinction of what I’m talking about when discussing tradition. Jaroslav Pelikan once said “Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.” That first part of the quote is why tradition is so important for the church. It connects us with the living faith of those who have gone before us. It connects us with the Apostles, with the Early Church, with the Reformers, with all the saints who have gone before us. Tradition is their living faith in Christ. Tradition unites us with Christ and with those saints.

What are some examples of traditional clergy attire, and is it important to wear “special” clothes as a clergy member? If so, why?
- I’ll answer the second part of the question first. Yes, it is important to wear clerical attire as a pastor. Would you want a firefighter, a police officer or a doctor to not wear the clothes of their job? So why then is it okay for a pastor to not? Your parishioners want you to be their pastor, not their friend, not some ordinary person off the street. You wear it because it is a sign of the office. On to the first part, there is a whole rich history of vestments and clerical attire that have been lost, or are dying out, because of one nefarious invention about 50 years ago. The casock-alb. Because of the cassock-alb, casocks, traditional albs and amices and the surplice have for the most part gone completely out of use. Once restricted to only Eucharistic celebrations, the alb is now worn at both the Eucharist and Services of the Word. Also because of the cassock-alb we’ve lost how beautiful traditional albs can be. We’ve lost albs with lace, with embroidery, with a beauty befitting presiding at the Eucharist. We’ve also lost the distinction between the Eucharist and a service of the word because we do not vest differently then anymore.

What is the importance of liturgy in worship, and where does it come from?
- It comes from God. If liturgy and how we worship were not important to God, God would not have spent chapters of the Torah telling Israel how they were to worship him in explicit detail. If the liturgy were not important to God, Jesus Christ would not have instituted Baptism or the Eucharist. Liturgy is important because it comes from God and it is where we come before God. There is an account of St. Vladimír’s emissary to the Greek church in Constantinople that goes: “Then we went on to Greece, and the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty. Every man, after tasting something sweet, is afterward unwilling to accept that which is bitter, and therefore we cannot dwell longer here.” Liturgy should be transcendent. It should represent the beauty and majesty that await us in Zion, so that we feel like we are there if only for a moment.

Do traditions stifle creativity?
- Is stifling creativity necessarily a bad thing? There was a cartoon by the website Adam4d a few months ago where the gist was “I have these new theological ideas” means “I subscribe to some old heresies.”

What if we want to do/try something new? All the traditions we have now were once new - can we try something different?
- This is not to say you cannot try something new. Heck if the Vatican and Roman Catholicism can try new things with Vatican II, then yes we can. BUT it cannot be a “Hey, let’s try this and see if it works this week” thing. The Second Vatican Council was three years long and took over a decade to prepare for. If you are going to try something new, there needs to be serious thought and serious theological support.

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for your idea. Don't just find something cool on the internet and put it in randomly on Sunday. Don't go messing with the words of the service. The words of the service for the most part come from the Bible. If you look at some service books, such as The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's Lutheran Service Book, they will tell you where in the Scriptures certain phrases or parts of the service can be found. So yes, you can try something new, but think long and hard before you do it.

What is the most misunderstood tradition of the church?
- The word adiaphora. These days adiaphora gets thrown about whenever there is something we don't like. Don't like how we worship? Well it's adiaphora so it doesn't matter, let's change it. It is a reductionist and, really, just a poor understanding of the word. Just because something is adiaphora does not mean that it is not incredibly important to the life of the church. Worship might not be what saves us but that doesn't make it any less important to God. Worship is adiaphora, but that gives us the freedom to, as Melanchthon says in Article XII of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession "we do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it." We do it out of faith, not out of rote. Even though Melanchthon was the one who defined and defended adiaphora, and worship as adiaphora, here he is stridently defending the Mass, and the traditional Mass too, not a new reformation invention.

What is the most important tradition in the church - what can we not live without?
- We cannot live without the Sacraments. The Sacraments are what give us our faith. The bread and wine are physical things our faith can cling to, it is where Christ gives himself for us. We cannot live without the cleansing water of Baptism, our initiation into the Body of Christ. We cannot live without the Gospel proclaimed from the pulpit, the saving grace from God in the forgiveness of our sins and the promise of the resurrection. We cannot live without the sacraments because the sacraments come from God and give us God.

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Concord Staff Needed

Do you want to be involved in producing this paper? Come be a part of helping students voices be heard on campus! We need layout and copy editors and are willing to teach you what you need to know. We particularly need Juniors to sign up to insure that there will still be a Concord next year. Email your interest to concord@luthersem.edu and be an active part of the conversation on campus, and more importantly be an active part of making sure there are conversations on campus. Also remember, that we always accept submissions of articles, pictures, open letters, and letters to the editor.
Attachment to Tradition

Mark Granquist
Associate Professor of Church History

Traditions are the communal counterpart of habits. Many of us have deep-seated habits that organize our lives and give meaning. Some habits are good and useful, while some are things from which we must be broken. It is same thing on a communal level with traditions. For some, traditions are comforting, for others they seem outdated. Some complain about congregations that seem stuck in the past, and never want to try anything new, and this can be a legitimate complaint. But when it comes to traditions in congregations, be wary of wholesale change; recognize that traditions are a very important component of our common life together.

If you observe young children, you will notice that they almost instinctively form their own traditions to organize their lives. These traditions might include bedtime rituals, or daily routines, or the ways that they play. As people grow, traditions provide stability and continuity, especially in times of change. Teenagers can be very attached to traditions, as long as those traditions seem genuine to them. Traditions especially come into power at times of meaning and stress, such as weddings and funerals; those without clear traditions often flounder and grasp at other people's traditions to tide them over.

When in congregations, be very aware of traditions. Use their power and their communal worth where it makes sense. Be careful of changing or discarding traditions, especially if the only reason to do so is change itself. If you are going to have a change, understand the downsides of such an action, and make sure the change is worth the cost. And cultivate new traditions, and attempt to plant them in your congregations. Though they don't always "take," those that do will enrich the communal and worship life of the congregation. Their power can be an effective part of your ministry.

Cribbage Culture

Michael Buller
MDiv Senior

You may have noticed that some seniors seem to really enjoy playing the game of Cribbage. You may have noticed this at the Common's Café or other places on campus, or heard the odd phrase "15 for 2, 15 for 4, and a run of 3 makes 7". One of my classmates even makes the outlandish claim that he never sees me studying; only playing Cribbage. Why do I love Cribbage so much and how did this Cribbage tradition at Luther come about?

My history with Cribbage began 3 years ago when I was taught how to play by my now father-in-law, Gene. The first time I played was confusing and irritating; there were so many rules and the learning curve appeared steep. Gene helped me count and walked me through those first awkward steps. The second game flowed better. I still needed help counting, but I ended up double skunking my opponent; meaning, in one game I beat Gene three times. Needless to say, I was hooked.

Returning to campus with my new found obsession, I began seeking out others who shared my affinity for Cribbage. Turns out, there already was a "Cribbage underground" on campus, who were excited to take me in. In this community of Cribbage enthusiasts I have learned the relevance of collaborative play and began to see Cribbage as much more than just a game, but a lifestyle. Cribbage creates such moments where, to name a few: busyness can be set aside, teamwork can be experienced, and trust is forged. How the Cribbage tradition came to be at Luther happened well before me. What I can tell you is that from this tradition I have enjoyed multiple hours of play, good laughs, and many enjoyable games. Very rarely am I without a Cribbage board and if you are interested to learn or play, it's game on.

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The Gift of Community

Diana Linden
Affiliated MDiv

I am what is known as a "Lutheran Year" student at Luther. Having graduated from a non-ELCA seminary in 2005, I am attending Luther as part of my journey towards ordination in the ELCA. When I first considered returning to seminary, I visited several other ELCA seminaries, but was encouraged by my pastor to consider Luther, which he felt could provide me the academic foundation, leadership skills and exposure to a diversity of theological perspectives that I will need to be a leader in our church.

With my pastor's encouragement, my family and I visited Luther in March 2012. While the staff, professors and students with whom we met all did their best to convey a sense of hospitality and warmth, the fact that the weather was cold, the skies were gray, and the community was struggling with profound grief over the financial crisis and resulting cuts, left us with an impression of coldness. Despite this feeling, Luther continued to be the place where we felt called, in large part because of Luther's strong academics and online curriculum.

My experience during these past 6 months on campus has been quite different than what I expected based on my March visit. I have experienced the outstanding academics and diversity of theological perspectives that I anticipated, but I have been surprised by opportunities for growth, learning and community that I never expected. First, I have been delighted by the many and rich spiritual formation opportunities available through daily worship, retreats, spiritual care groups and group spiritual direction. In addition to learning the practical and theoretical information for ministry, I have been delighted to encounter professors and peers who have also encouraged creativity, innovation, leadership skills and spiritual practice. In addition, while I had no idea what to expect in terms of community life, I have found friends and sources of support here that I never anticipated, including people who welcome my kids into their homes and hearts and baby-sit at a moment's notice. In short, it has not been at all what I was expecting - in all of the best ways possible.

Although there is still a sense of uncertainty about Luther's future, I hope that students, staff, faculty and administration here remember and embrace the many gifts that you offer to those of us preparing for leadership here, as well as the communities, church and world that we will serve. As I prepare to return home at the end of the fall semester, I want to say, "Thank you, Luther!" Please remember that you are a gift!

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The Grill of Grace
Grace Gravelle
MDiv Senior

There's no denying it- I'm old school when it comes to most things. I learned how to type on an electric typewriter. I worked as a young adult as a Youth Staffer before the 1988 merger, after which the program went global in contrast to my my assignment to South Carolina. (which I believe was just as foreign to me as any other country in the world). AND I like to use a charcoal grill.

When I went to Target to purchase my humble Weber Kettle Grill, I had no idea how this little grill would strengthen my community and be a tool to building friendships, but she has done just that. In the summer of 2011 I wanted to invite my neighbors out onto the patio to share a meal together, we started with random days and soon it became a weekly gathering that included anyone who wanted to come. I had my grill going and all were invited to bring whatever they wanted to grill and a dish to share if they so desired. This little weekly gathering grew over 2 summers and continued with random evenings spent gathering with friends, old and new. We built community and lasting friendships. However, this last summer, as I was homebound after foot surgery, my little grill became something more, something greater in her service to this Burntvedt community. I didn't make it out to the patio at all this summer, I bought a brand new grill rack for the Weber, but never got to use it.....but it got used. You see, the little Weber that I marked with my name on the handle "Grace" soon began to live into her name. Facebook, email, personal texts and messages can flooding in from this community asking if they could use my grill, or if I had a grill. "Yep, and it's the one that says "Grace" on the handle." Many gatherings were fed and warmed by my grill even when I couldn't use it. My grill was a blessing in my life, because when I too, would see posts on Facebook asking if there was a grill, or seeing someone looking for one, I responded graciously with my trusted little Weber: "you'll need charcoal, but go ahead and use mine." I'll be leaving the Grill of Grace behind this year as I go off to internship in a few weeks. Take good care of her, buy her a new rack each year and build community around her. Food and Fellowship brings people together to nourish the body, but friends in Christ nourish our soul. Blessed to be a blessing.

Prayer Concerns
Hannah Björnström de Leon
MDiv Senior

Let us pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mother of glory, may give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation as we come to know her, so that, with the eyes and ears of our hearts enlightened, we may know what is the hope, what is the joy to which she has called us and what are the riches of her glorious legacy among the saints.

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Guess Who?
Coming in December...To introduce next month’s topic we asked a professor and a student to share an interesting story from their childhood. Send us articles about how your place of origin, family, faith tradition, etc. have shaped you for leadership in communities of faith. Does it matter where we come from? Articles are due 12/2. concord@usherem.edu.

When I was a child, my mother would go for a monthly massage at a local beauty parlor as her personal treat for herself. While she was having her massage, I would hang out in the back room with the beauticians who were waiting there in between customers. On one of those days, I watched a male beautician transform himself from looking like a male in a t-shirt and blue jeans to looking like a woman in a mini-skirt with silver platform shoes and plastic triangle earrings. Although he actually changed his clothes in yet another backroom, I remember vividly watching him put on make-up, large dangling earrings, and a wig with long hair. This person was preparing to go out dancing that evening in a club.

When I was growing up, my aunt and uncle lived right next door to us, and one time around New Year’s Eve, they had some friends over to shoot off a bag full of fireworks. I was six years old and I loved me some fireworks! I went next door with Bill, my future stepfather, and had a lot of fun watching all these adults setting them off. Then they began lighting some that they called by a racist name, which were basically bottle rockets without the stick. The first couple did exactly what they expected: they shot straight up in the air before whizzing around. But the last one shot straight at my chest and began spinning. I remember the blinding multicolored light, the loud buzzing sound, and my screaming. Bill tried smothering it with the coat I was wearing, unsuccessfully. So my uncle ripped the coat open, and I saw the light fly right back off my chest and skip along the ground. The chest injury was such that I eventually had a skin graft taken from my leg. I don’t like fireworks anymore.