



the MESSENGER

NORTHWEST NAZARENE UNIVERSITY | SUMMER 2020

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ALUMNI TRANSFORM THEIR CORNERS OF THE WORLD

NEW MAJORS AND PROGRAMS FOR FALL 2020



The mission of Northwest Nazarene University is the transformation of the whole person.

This is how NNU's Mission Statement begins. As is evident, transformation is NNU's reason for existence. But in fairness, there are tens, if not hundreds, of other colleges and universities that also state that they seek to transform their students. So, it is a rational question to ask: "Isn't NNU just like all those other colleges and universities?" My answer is a resounding "no!" But, let me explain.

Transformation is defined by the Oxford Dictionary of English as "a marked change in form, nature or appearance." Since all education causes a "marked change" in most students, it is true that some degree of transformation—typically of one's mind and thinking—occurs on all college and university campuses. But here at NNU we seek more than simply impacting the minds of our students.

Notice that the first sentence of NNU's Mission Statement references transformation of a specific nature: "Transformation of the whole person." We at NNU believe that all humans are created as whole persons—we are each made up of a physical body, a soul, emotions and an intellect or mind. This is why the second sentence of NNU's Mission Statement goes on to state: "Centered in Jesus Christ, the NNU education instills habits of heart, soul, mind and strength to enable each student to become God's creative and redemptive agents in the world."

We at NNU do not believe that it is appropriate (or even possible) to educate, and thereby transform, only a person's mind because we believe people exist as whole persons as opposed to separate elements. At NNU, we believe that we must engage not just a student's mind or intellect but also the student's heart, soul, mind and strength in order to provide an NNU education—this is transformation of the whole person!



Throughout this issue of the Messenger you will see evidence of what this “transformation of the whole person” looks like in real life. For example, you will read of NNU alums who have been so impacted by their NNU education that they are now, in turn, transforming their world. They are leading conversations regarding how the church should be a place that includes those with disabilities, engaging with inmates at a women’s prison, and taking a neglected parking lot and changing it into a community garden that now serves a refugee and immigrant community. The articles in this issue inspire and, at times, convict me, and I commend them all to you.

One final note regarding transformation that occurs at NNU. None of it is for our own good. Said another way, our hope and prayer is that none of our graduates leave NNU with the notion that their NNU education was designed simply to make them better and smarter. Rather, our prayer is that all NNU graduates

understand that this education is a gift and that as we transform, we then have a responsibility to use the education to transform our communities. This is what our Mission Statement means as it concludes with the phrase “to enable each student to become God’s creative and redemptive agent in the world.” We actually believe that we are each called to be God’s agent—in creative and redemptive ways—in this world ... and that’s what it means to be truly transformed and to be transformational.

Joel Pearsall
President



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AT THIS YEAR'S CORNERSTONE EXHIBITION, TWO STUDENTS DISPLAY ARTIFACTS FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE PARTNERING WITH THE FAMILY COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER AT CENTRAL ELEMENTARY.

DURING THEIR FIRST SEMESTER AT NNU, ALL FRESHMEN PARTICIPATE IN A CORNERSTONE CLASS IN WHICH THEY EXPLORE THE UNIVERSITY VALUES AND WORK WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS TO LEARN ABOUT AND SERVE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

DANCING through a PANDEMIC

*NNU navigates an unprecedented semester
with an unchanging core mission*

BY DR. BRAD KURTZ-SHAW, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

NEVER WASTE A CRISIS.

Along with the words “mitigate the risk of infection” and “quick pivot to remote learning,” this leadership mantra has been a near constant in my email feed, podcasts, webinars and Zoom meetings this past spring.

Never waste a crisis has a noble management history. It is a refrain that calls leaders to innovative action in times of institutional or cultural disequilibrium. The core notion is familiar: If the organization can use the crisis as a catalyst for creative innovation, it will be more likely to thrive than other organizations that simply hunker-down in survival mode in hopes of returning to normal after the crisis passes.

Leaders who are anxious to be change agents in organizations that are entrenched and encrusted in the familiar ways of pursuing their missions see a crisis as an opportunity for institutional and behavioral transformation.

While my English professor bona fides don't give me the management creds to challenge the shared wisdom of this “never waste a crisis” mantra, I do want to suggest an alternative way of thinking about what's been happening at NNU the past several months and what will continue to happen in the coming months.

In brief, we're doing what good Christian liberal arts educators have always done—we're using integrative thinking across the disciplines to solve real world problems because we're called to be redemptive agents in a world God loves. The challenges we face in this pandemic are serious and we are discovering new ways to deliver NNU's mission, but our basic tools for doing this work have been part of our university's design and DNA for over a hundred years.

As other institutions talk about their high-flex models as they adapt to the new pedagogical demands of remote online learning, I take comfort in the fact NNU is first of all committed to excellent instruction—no matter the context or modality. Our

passion for transformative learning guides us whether we're in a remote Zoom classroom discussion or meeting in a one-on-one mentoring session in The Bean.

As our Director of Instruction Design & Technology Bethany Haglund Schultz ('13) is fond of saying, “Good teaching is good teaching, no matter what the modality is for instruction.”

Brooke Adamson ('97), a professor in our Department of Communication Arts and Sciences and coach of our Forensics team, modeled this with her Nonverbal Communication course last spring. In order to help her students understand a scholarly article assigned for their course reading, Adamson produced a video that illustrated some of the verbal and non-verbal cues that women use to convey interest in dating. When you're stuck in government-mandated isolation and your students are scattered across the Northwest, NNU professors like Adamson get creative with their limited resources—in this case your house-bound husband becomes your partner in teaching as he responds to your exaggerated dating-interest “cues.”

While other college students across the country were being bored to death online through endless narrated PowerPoint lectures, Adamson found ways to engage her students to help them learn and apply complex communication concepts. I doubt that the knowledge acquired through that online course module disappeared from her students' “little gray cells” after her final exam. I'm relatively certain that some of those students are going to return for their 30th Homecoming reunion and reminisce about the time they watched Prof. Adamson give non-verbal dating interest cues to her husband.

Adamson didn't waste her crisis, but I also believe that she did what NNU faculty have been doing for over a century. This semester Adamson's colleagues were shamelessly bringing their new puppies to remote learning sessions, taking their students on virtual tours of their favorite donut shops, and initiating countless other acts of creative pedagogy because they love

students, they love teaching and learning and they love Jesus.

We find creative ways to communicate our passion for our disciplines because we believe in the transformative power of learning. We are convinced that what happens in every one of our classes has the potential to help our students see reality more clearly. And we believe that the clarity of their vision is improved because of what students are discovering in our colleagues' classes. We know NNU's transformative education is not limited to the narrow confines of our singular disciplinary perspective.

If nothing else, our COVID-19 world has become the ultimate example for our students that real world problems always inherently demand an inter-disciplinary response. In order for us to effectively address the problems caused by the novel coronavirus, we of course need virologists. But we also need epidemiologists, first responders, nurses and physicians. But those folks would still be in deep trouble without public health practitioners and policy makers. And thank goodness for data visualization experts who create amazing graphics from big data

We know that this crisis will pass and another will come. As we dance our way through this pandemic, we will be changed. Transformation is an NNU core value. But we also have the confidence that our core mission is persistent, durable, sustainable and absolutely essential. We'll be "here for good." Our dancing shoes might be scuffed up a bit, but our muscles, bones and sinew will be stronger. And all of us are ready for a new cohort of students to arrive on campus this fall so that we can make something new again and again.

I asked Christina Smerick, our new philosophy professor, how her students responded to the challenges of our disrupted spring semester. While some were frustrated by hazards like the "unintentional baptism" of a laptop, her students were also sharing these kinds of discoveries:

"I believe the best moments in life are uncomfortable ones. I don't want to live my life driven by regret, but by courage."

"One of my favorite things about philosophy is its potential for creating positive change in the world."



Professor Brooke Adamson enlisted her husband to help her demonstrate interest cues in a video for her Nonverbal Communication course last spring.

that shape how senators and logistic specialists respond to the global health crisis. And what about the gifted journalists who are able to translate data, policy and events into stories that help better understand the world that seems to be spinning too fast, etc., etc., etc.

Earning an NNU degree is more than claiming a credential and a ticket to a first job. An NNU education asks our students to explore God's abundant creation, discern a vocational call that provides meaning and purpose in this beautiful but broken world, and prepare for a life of cruciformed service to culture that desperately needs graduates like them.

Why worry about never wasting a crisis when you already claim a worldview that allows you to dance through a pandemic? At NNU our educational goals are big—we are an aspirational institution and those aspirations always demand individual and institutional transformation. Chasing after the things that God loves is hard work that brings us joy, and we're here for the long game.

At NNU we strive to shape young men and women into courageous creatures, driven not by regret but by a hopeful

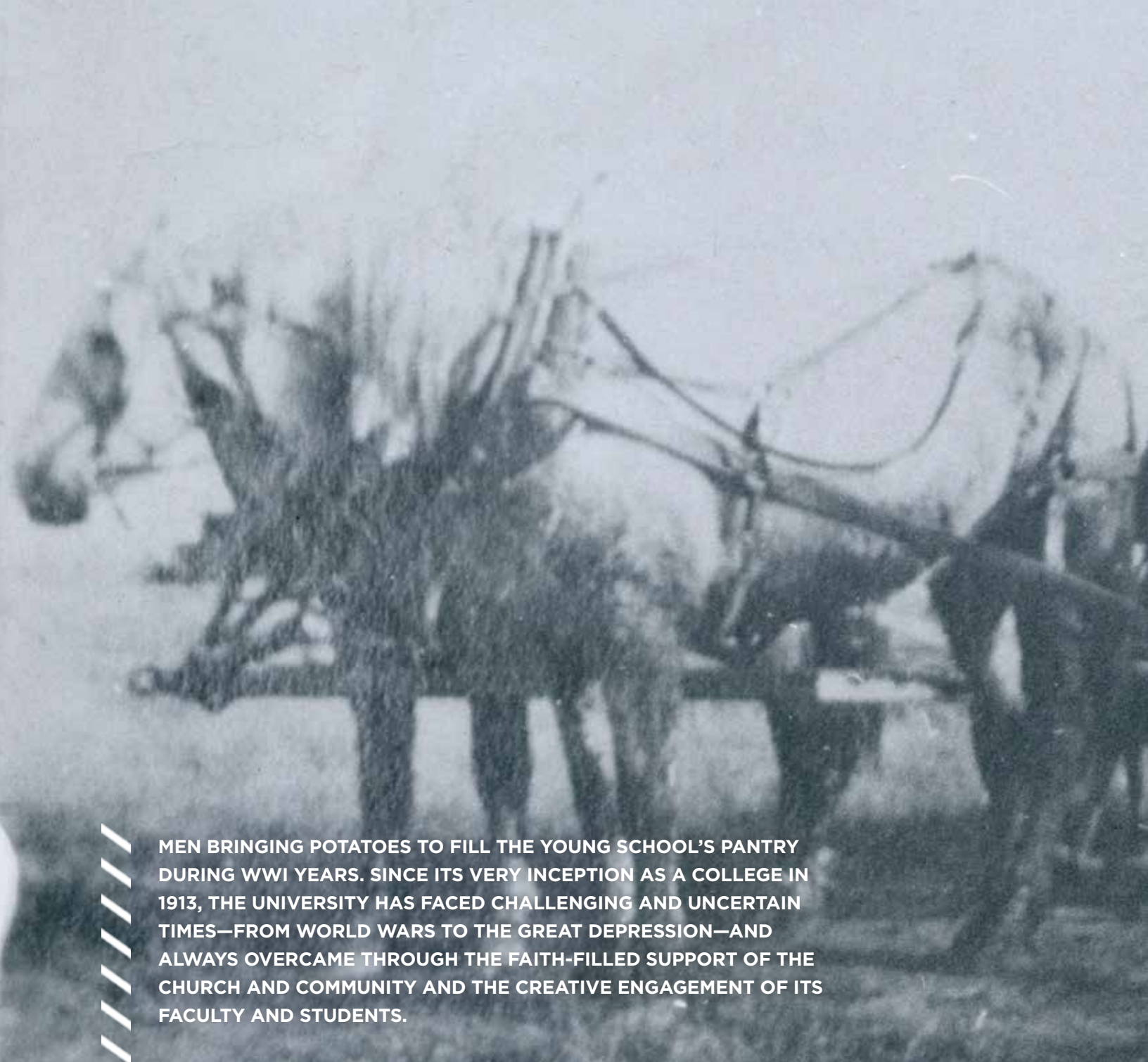
worldview that claims partnership with God in "making all things new."

We strive to help our students understand their place in a complicated world.

"AT NNU OUR EDUCATIONAL GOALS ARE BIG—WE ARE AN ASPIRATIONAL INSTITUTION AND THOSE ASPIRATIONS ALWAYS DEMAND INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION. CHASING AFTER THE THINGS THAT GOD LOVES IS HARD WORK THAT BRINGS US JOY, AND WE'RE HERE FOR THE LONG GAME."

The pandemic and difficult national conversations about race and justice that have erupted this summer have many of them wondering if they should even be in school right now—they wonder whether a university education makes sense in a world that, at times, seems to be spinning out of control. So in a recent email to them, I shared this brief section of a sermon that C.S. Lewis delivered at Oxford University just as Great Britain was entering what would become World War II:

I think it important to try to see the present calamity in a true perspective. The war creates no absolutely new situation: it simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it. Human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice. Human culture has always had to exist



MEN BRINGING POTATOES TO FILL THE YOUNG SCHOOL'S PANTRY DURING WWI YEARS. SINCE ITS VERY INCEPTION AS A COLLEGE IN 1913, THE UNIVERSITY HAS FACED CHALLENGING AND UNCERTAIN TIMES—FROM WORLD WARS TO THE GREAT DEPRESSION—AND ALWAYS OVERCAME THROUGH THE FAITH-FILLED SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY AND THE CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT OF ITS FACULTY AND STUDENTS.

under the shadow of something infinitely more important than itself. If men had postponed the search for knowledge and beauty until they were secure, the search would never have begun. We are mistaken when we compare war with "normal life". Life has never been normal. Even those periods which we think most tranquil, like the nineteenth century, turn out, on closer inspection, to be full of cries, alarms, difficulties, emergencies. Plausible reasons have never been lacking for putting off all merely cultural activities until some imminent danger has been averted or some crying injustice put right.

But humanity long ago chose to neglect those plausible reasons. They wanted knowledge and beauty now, and would not wait for the suitable moments that never come. Periclean

Athens leaves us not only the Parthenon but, significantly, the Funeral Oration. The insects have chosen a different line: they have sought first the material welfare and security of the hive, and presumably they have their reward. Humans are different. They propound mathematical theorems in beleaguered cities, conduct metaphysical arguments in condemned cells, make jokes on scaffold, discuss the last new poem while advancing to the walls of Quebec, and comb their hair at Thermopylae. This is not panache; it is our nature. — "Learning in Wartime," A sermon preached in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, Autumn 1939.

I thought of this C.S. Lewis quotation again when I received this report from Fred Burton, one of our part-time adjunct



instructors who works with our education students:

[This spring's] Math Structures class is one of the best I have worked with at NNU. Some don't like math, some struggle with the processes or topics, some have unique ways of approaching a problem, but all of them had great attitudes and made good use of both live and remote opportunities. I don't believe they understand how much impact they had on their own successes, both individually and as a class, and on how well we worked together. That understanding will come when they have their own students. The young people were a joy to work with and a blessing to me. Just thinking about them again brings some tears. Good tears."

Find me another university across the country that could

possibly generate that synthesis: Math Structures = Good Tears. Find me another university across the country where a meagerly paid part-time instructor can speak with such passion for his students' success.

You will have a hard time finding such a place. NNU is here for good, because we know "Humans are different." As creatures made in the image of God we long for "knowledge and beauty now." Even in the midst of our "beleaguered" world, we are dancing through a pandemic because we understand that "human culture has always had to exist under the shadow of something infinitely more important than itself." 🍷

CHANGING HEARTS, INSIDE *and* OUT

NNU theology course offered at local prison impacts both inmates and NNU students

BY VERONICA CRAKER, CLASS OF 2020

In the Fall of 2019, Northwest Nazarene University offered its first for-credit course inside the walls of the Idaho Department of Corrections. The idea to integrate NNU students and inmates into one classroom came when Rev. Olivia Metcalf ('00), one of the campus chaplains, started volunteering in the women's prison in Kuna, Idaho in the spring of 2017.

"I hoped that the passion I had for serving those incarcerated would somehow connect with my work at the university," Metcalf said.

Metcalf created a course entitled "Faith Formation in Diverse Spaces" that provided an elective theology credit for all students. Her goal was to create a course that could bring NNU students and inmates together to examine what Christian faith formation looks like in different places and times in a person's life. The mission is not only to reach the marginalized in the prison system but also to help NNU students live out the university values of service, community, truth and transformation.

"Teaching a course with nine campus students and seven incarcerated students inside the prison was transformational for me and everyone involved," Metcalf said. "It is exciting to see NNU catching this passion as we live into our mission to enable each student to become God's creative and redemptive agents in the world."

McKenna Cullen, a senior education major at NNU from Richland, Washington, was one of the campus students who participated in the inaugural

class. Cullen admits to never giving much thought to the prison system until she came across a book that sparked her curiosity.

"It was an unseen and unspoken about population that had never had any impact on my life," Cullen said. "It was far too easy for me to ignore the problems going on in our criminal justice system—I didn't have any family or friends in prison, I had never seen the consequences firsthand, I really was oblivious and ignorant."

During her sophomore year, Cullen picked up the book "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson. The book is a true story that recounts the efforts of the Equal Justice Initiative that ultimately exonerated an African-American man accused of murder. After reading it, Cullen said she felt "broken."

"I remember thinking 'I have to do something' and that is how I ended up spending my Tuesday nights in a women's prison," she said.


Cullen was joined by eight other NNU students—including Shelby Ott, a senior public relations student from Longview, Washington—and seven inmates.

"In class one day, a woman told us that our class was her favorite one that was offered in the prison because it was the only time that she felt people actually listened to her and cared about what she was saying," Ott said. "That's something that I still think about often. It's changed the way I interact with people."

The class takes place in a small, crowded room inside the prison. Students commute together leaving behind the



**"EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO
RESHAPING OUR CRIMINAL
JUSTICE SYSTEM AND SEEING
CHANGE COME ABOUT."**

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved top and black pants, stands on a green lawn in front of a red brick wall. She is smiling and holding a stack of books in her left hand.

**“TEACHING A COURSE WITH NINE
CAMPUS STUDENTS AND SEVEN
INCARCERATED STUDENTS INSIDE
THE PRISON WAS TRANSFORMATIONAL
FOR ME AND EVERYONE INVOLVED.”**

Rev. Olivia Metcalf teaches the Faith Formation in Diverse Spaces course, which is held at a women's prison in Kuna, Idaho. Left page: McKenna Cullen, an education major, shares her thoughts after taking the class.

NNU campus to learn at the correctional facility.

“I had never envisioned taking a college course in such an unexpected place, but it has been one of the greatest experiences in my life,” Cullen said. “It has been a blessing to get to know a small handful of the women serving time there. I love getting to discover all the ways in which we were similar in light of all of the different walks of life we have come from.”

As an education major, Cullen adds that she is an advocate for education in the criminal justice system as it can help lower rates of recidivism and increases the chances of people finding a stable job after incarceration.

“Not only are we transforming lives and seeing restoration take place, but we are saving taxpayer dollars,” she said. “Education is the key to reshaping our criminal justice system and seeing change come about.”


Both Ott and Cullen agree that the class has changed the way they see the world, especially when it comes to the prison system

and those who filter through it.

“Since I’ve walked away from this class I find myself believing that nobody is past the point of redemption and everyone has something to offer that is unique and important,” Ott said. “I had these thoughts before the class, but it wasn’t until after the class that I think I truly believed them.”

The coronavirus pandemic has brought with it certain unknowns for the class’ future. At the moment, NNU plans to continue expanding its educational offerings in partnership with the Idaho Department of Corrections, providing classes for campus students and incarcerated students to learn together.

“At NNU, we believe that education goes beyond the iron fence and beyond who can afford to go to college here,” Metcalf said. “We believe students should be redemptive agents in the world and this class is an outworking of that belief—which you can’t get on campus.” 🌹



Tahmina Martelly works with refugees organizing and tending the Paradise Parking Plots Community Garden. Photos courtesy of Hannah Letinich.

TRANSFORMING

MY CORNER of the WORLD

An alumna uses her experience to empower resettled refugees

BY TAHMINA MARTELLY, CLASS OF 1988

My country was changing identities when I was growing up. It went from being part of India to East and West Pakistan to becoming Bangladesh. I can tell you the night it became real. My grandparents and one of my aunts were visiting. I have two elder sisters and a younger brother. We were all laughing and eating dinner when suddenly our apartment shook as jets flew overhead, and we heard huge explosions as bombs began dropping. Some of our windows shattered and glass shards fell everywhere. Within minutes, life as we knew it had changed. War had started. The next few years brought huge changes in our lives. We moved to Yemen, learned new languages and cultures, and, eventually, I moved to Idaho to live with an American family and attend NNU.

Being uprooted and displaced is challenging. It brings sorrow and loss and a feeling of being completely disconnected in a new place. Millions of refugees face this challenge globally each year. Out of over 70.8 million refugees in the world, less than 1 percent will ever be resettled in a new country. I have been working on programs that build resilience for the last 26 years. This work is important to me because it honors the capacity of the human spirit to overcome tremendous obstacles and still thrive.

Three and a half years ago, the parking lot at Hillside Church in Kent, Washington was just that—a parking lot. Today, the neglected one-acre of cracked asphalt, peppered with weeds and consistent flooding, has been replaced with a thriving community garden, home to 50 plots, cisterns and rain gardens. All of this was a result of listening to the refugee and immigrant community.

Kent is the 10th most diverse city in the United States. In my work at World Relief Seattle, a refugee resettlement and services organization, I began to ask community members what they wished and longed for. The answers were interesting. Women, primarily Afghan women—who were pre-literate in their own language—struggled with learning English. Many felt isolated and alone and requested sewing classes and places to gather with other women. Other families were being fined \$250 by apartment complexes when their children were playing in the parking lot. Families wanted a safe place for their kids to play, to grow food they missed from home and to get their hands in soil because they were so disconnected from the land living in apartment buildings with no green space nearby.

Hillside Church, an international church of the Nazarene, is located right in the heart of town and on a six-acre parcel. This is where I attend church. The partnership seemed inevitable. The building sported a 30,000 square foot roof and had additional classroom space in the basement that was being used for storage. Over the next three years, partnering with and using the amazing

space available at Hillside Church, I learned how to put together a skills-based, English-as-a-second-language sewing program, working with amazing volunteers who helped shape and create an iterative sewing curriculum. This one-of-a-kind sewing program has successfully graduated 10 cohorts of women. Many of the graduates are now making masks from home as a source of income.

Then came the garden. By leveraging many partnerships and resources, we de-paved over 50,000 square feet of asphalt. We are providing 80 percent of the garden's irrigation needs by capturing water from that enormous roof. We built five rain gardens that capture, filter and infiltrate 1.1 million gallons of polluted stormwater annually.

We are training cohorts of refugee and immigrant youth interns as Equity and Sustainability Ambassadors to reach the community on sustainability and conservation issues—that

disproportionately affect communities of color—by leading tours, creating educational videos and teaching children and other young people. We have partnered with the local school district to use the garden for a field investigation site. Each year, over 450 seventh graders use the garden as a living classroom as part of their problem design lab science curriculum. This coming year we will build a sustainable food forest and a bioswale to mitigate flooding while providing year-round food to the community.

The Paradise Parking Plots Community Garden offers a chance for gardeners from 23 different countries to build community and to learn from each other. What was once a neglected space is now a premier green stormwater infrastructure site and a thriving community.

Food access, especially healthy food access, is often an issue in the best of

times for families who find themselves in vulnerable positions. This fact has been very evident during the coronavirus pandemic. The need for immediate food assistance became clear by early March, and I was able to coordinate home delivery of food to 125 families in need who did not own vehicles and provide drive-through grocery access for over 1,000 families each week. The very same church parking lot that boasts a thriving community garden is now also a place—along with the church building—where thousands of families receive groceries, diapers, hygiene and laundry products to tide them over for one more week.

The transformation has been fast, yet timely. It's been incredible to be part of this journey and to know that my skills and resources and experience can be used to change my community. I haven't changed the world after leaving NNU, but I do get to influence and change for good my small corner of it. 🌱



“IT’S INCREDIBLE TO KNOW MY SKILLS AND RESOURCES AND EXPERIENCE CAN BE USED TO CHANGE MY COMMUNITY.”

CHALLENGING THE CHURCH

*2020 NNU Wesley Center Conference
offers space at the table for people with disabilities*

BY DR. JAY RICHARD AKKERMAN, DEAN OF GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
AND PROFESSOR OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Someone once described NNU's annual Wesley Center Conference as "Where the Church comes to think." While the phrase originates with Catholic University of America, I believe it's an apt descriptor for us, too. For more than 20 years, our conferences have stretched and inspired thousands of clergy, scholars, students and laypersons through interactive engagement with leading-edge voices around a wide variety of theological topics.

In February, NNU welcomed nearly 200 participants to NNU's Conrad Student Commons to discuss issues related to disability and the Church through a conference titled "A Body of Belonging." Plenary session speakers included Dieter Zander, Jeff and Bekah Hall, and Dr. Diane Leclerc. Together with more than 20 other presenters, this year's

conference explored how the Church is incomplete without everyone present at the table, including those with disabilities.

"Hosting this conversation about disability was somewhat of a burdensome honor," observed my co-director and NNU colleague, Dr. Mike Kipp. "We're clearly not experts, but we approached this topic as learners with a genuine desire to learn, become more sensitive and grow as members of the body of Christ."

Many of this year's presenters shared from their own experiences with disabilities. Others framed their content as the parent, spouse or friend of someone with a physical, cognitive or emotional disability. The impact of their collective message was transformative.

For years, Zander was heralded as a megachurch pastor, dynamic church



**A BODY OF
BELONGING**
Disability & the Church

**"THE IMPACT OF THEIR COLLECTIVE MESSAGE
WAS TRANSFORMATIVE."**



Bekah Hall, clinical psychologist and parent of a child with special needs, addresses 2020 Wesley Center Conference attendees.

planter, musician and author. But in February 2008, he awoke in an ICU bed to discover that he'd slept through the most significant event in his life: He had suffered a debilitating stroke six days earlier. From that moment, Zander's brilliant and creative mind was masked by aphasia as he slowly learned to speak again while also overcoming the physical and emotional hurdles that often sealed him off from the world.

In his photobook titled "A Stroke of Grace," Zander recounts how "all those thoughts, those fears, those jokes that I couldn't bring to life outside my head, God heard them. I felt his comfort, his peace, and even his laughter." Together with his friend Mike Davis, they discussed what Zander now calls his "Kingdom of Cardboard and Spoils" and how he's learning to live a simpler, more grace-full way of loving his neighbors for Jesus' sake.

Jeff and Bekah (Ponsford) Hall ('01) are clinical psychologists in the Boise valley. In addition to running pediatric autism and diagnostic clinics, Jeff is also an ordained Nazarene elder serving as the inclusion pastor at Nampa College Church. The Halls have three children, the youngest of whom was born with congenital CMV, which causes severe lifelong disabilities. In addition to their rich plenary and Master Class sessions, the Halls served as our first-ever conference pastors who made themselves available to listen and support those with personal and ministry questions, as well as related challenges.

My NNU colleague Leclerc's compelling plenary session underscored the transformative role a community of unconditional love can play, both for those with disabilities as well as their families. Leclerc spoke theologically from her own "hard and wonderful" experience of loving her son Ethan "just as he is," despite the challenges of Asperger syndrome.

Personally, taking in Leclerc's message after Ethan ('18) shared his morning devotional was a personal highlight, not to mention our final commissioning where all participants shared the Lord's Supper together.

Again this year, our 2020 conference reached across the map and around the world. Participants gathered on our Nampa campus from a variety of traditions as far as Alaska and Maryland. Additionally, more than 800 participated via our closed-captioned livestream or continue to access select content from NNU's online Vimeo archive. Other video links and transcripts from this year's sessions are also available on our website at nnu.edu/wesleyconf2020.

Next February, NNU will think alongside the Church about "The Economics of Vocational Ministry: Living at the Crossroads of Affordability and Calling." We hope you'll join us! 🔥

SUPPORTING A COMMUNITY

Counseling student finds fulfillment amidst a pandemic

BY VERONICA CRAKER, CLASS OF 2020

Like many in the world of education, Emmie Wright's life changed in an instant when the Glenns Ferry School District in Idaho moved to remote learning in mid-April. The 2020 Master of Science in Counseling graduate received the unique opportunity of trading her internship as a school counselor for a full-time job—all in the midst of a global pandemic. Wright expressed sadness that she was just beginning to make strides with the students when the school closed, forcing her to figure out how to reach her students remotely. Fortunately, Wright had taken a distance counseling class at NNU.

"I'm so glad I did take that class," she said. "It really helped me have an edge ... as soon as this started happening I thought, 'well I know I can fall back on my notes and textbook.'"

Assistant Clinical Professor for the Department of Counselor Education Chandra Salisbury said the telemental health training Wright received is exciting because the community she works with is rural and the community does not have adequate local accessible counseling. The training focused on meeting the needs of "some of the most isolated and vulnerable populations."

"This training familiarized the participant with the needs of the rural and hard to reach community members in order to provide the most effective, evidence-based, ethical services," Salisbury said. "Having accomplished this all before even crossing the graduation stage, shows her dedication to all she serves. We could not be more proud to have Emmie be a graduate of NNU's Counselor Education Department."

The experience Wright received in the classroom is something she is also sharing with other counselors. During a virtual meeting with her peers, she was able to share how she was adapting to the change.

"My first move was I sent out a power announcement to all teachers in the district and students in fourth to 12th grade urging them to reach out to me by email or to call the (school)."

Wright says her kids were already comfortable communicating with her by email so the switch wasn't too different, but she wanted them to know that even though she wasn't in her office she was still there for them.

"I tell them if they are struggling, they can email me and I will get back right away," she said. "Even on the weekends."

This consistent communication flow was especially important since Wright is currently the only school counselor in the town. When Wright first inquired about the position in Glenns Ferry she was working as a habilitative intervention therapist in Boise, and, while the work was fulfilling, she knew she wanted to work inside a school. Despite being nervous to take on such an important role while still a student herself, Wright said she jumped at the chance to take the position and make the move to a smaller city.

"I knew I was going to say 'yes' if they offered it to me," Wright said. "I really do like the small-town community."

Wright has worked hard to connect with her kids and to earn their trust, especially during her first month in January. Without a consistent counselor at the school, she found it difficult, at first,

to get the students to open up to her.

"That was tough—it was a lot of triage because they had gone a month without a counselor. I knew it would be challenging," she said.

Eventually, the students began opening up to her and started to encourage one another to talk to her.

"It's been really good," Wright said. "I've never been bored, and I always leave work feeling fulfilled."

And while the school was closed and students were learning at home, Wright did her best to comfort the students and remind them that it is okay to be weary during these stressful times.

"Every single minute all of our lives is different than it was before ... it's okay to ebb and flow in this time and taking care of yourself is the most important thing."

In her short time as a school counselor, Wright has already helped to advance the school district by writing a grant application that awarded them the "Healthy Minds Partnership" award from the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation.

"In our elementary school, we have implemented a caring classroom community, which is where teachers have morning meetings with students to build relationships and teach them resiliency and how to develop positive coping skills," Wright

////////////////////
**"I'M JUST SO LUCKY TO GET TO
DO THIS JOB AND THIS WORK."**



Emmie Wright graduated with her MS in Counseling in May while also taking on the job of school counselor during a pandemic.

said in a news release distributed by Blue Cross of Idaho. “In high school, we have our PILOT Committee designed to build relationships between staff and students. We are doing mood-check Mondays in all high school classrooms to follow up with students, and we have a PILOT Day where students and staff work collaboratively on tasks that better our building and the learning environment for our students.”

The school year ended without Wright returning to campus to see her students in a normal setting, but she is excited about returning in the fall.

“There’s a lot that is rewarding about my job, I’m just so lucky to get to do this job and this work,” Wright said. “I definitely feel like I am where I’m supposed to be and doing what I’m supposed to be doing.” 🌹



The stage lighting and set up for the 2019 Youth in Christ program tour. Top right: Annaliese and Braedon on their first tour. Middle: The 2017 NNU Jazz Renaissance ensemble in which the couple participated as students. Bottom: Band and crew members for the 2018 Plumb and Unspoken tour.

Alumni couple make their way in the Nashville music scene

NNU aims to build a community that stays connected wherever people go,” said Braedon Gerdes (’17), and he and his wife Annaliese (Fereday, ’17), have embodied that goal. The couple has traveled widely in the three years since leaving NNU, building their careers in the music industry as freelance production contractors based out of Nashville, Tennessee.

Both graduated from NNU with degrees in Music Industry and a calling to represent Christ from behind the scenes—together. Braedon is a

“WE ARE HERE FOR GOOD BECAUSE WE KNOW
OUR GOALS AND WHAT WE STAND FOR.”

The couple took a risk to follow their dreams to work in the competitive music scene and transplanted from Nampa to Nashville shortly after finishing up at NNU. Despite having connections in the area due to their semester studying at the Contemporary Music Center while students at NNU, work was scarce, especially because they were committed to only taking tours in which they both would have a role.

Touring with popular bands and working behind the scenes is an unique lifestyle that quickly became routine for the Gerdeses. The exhausting schedule of long days testing, managing minute details, working with volunteers to put on and then tear down a show that often lasts into the early morning hours and then going “home” to catch a little sleep in cramped communal living quarters on a bus doesn’t necessarily sound like a dream job. Yet seeing an

Braedon said that the most rewarding part of the job is “building a concert for people who are just excited to come see what’s happening. What we do is cool. It’s fun to have a job where people come and are really excited to see what you’ve done. They don’t know you did it, but they are so excited to just have an experience.”

The Gerdeses attribute some of their success to the patience and grace learned and shown in the NNU community. “The way community is built at NNU does teach you how to grow as a team and with people instead of just as an

individual,” said Braedon. In addition to being skilled technicians, their professionalism and Christ-like attitudes amidst the chaos and many moving parts of the concert staging process have made the Gerdeses stand out as desirable teammates.

Growing where you are planted becomes difficult when storms come as the Gerdes know intimately. But their roots go deep and they are confident they can weather the storms—both literal and figurative—that hit Nashville and their industry this past spring.

Both a serious tornado and COVID-19 have hit Nashville especially hard and have effectively halted nearly all aspects of the music industry. Thankfully, the Gerdeses have learned to be wise and strategic in their lives knowing that freelance work can be feast or famine. Because of their thoughtful planning and preparation for possible challenges, Braedon said, “We can be a rock in the storm for people who are willing to say, ‘Hey, I can’t do this by myself right now.’”

From transforming their lives with a step of faith in moving to Nashville to adapting their skills to whatever was needed to make their careers work to leaning into their hurting new community in challenging times, the Gerdesees are not just growing but thriving. Braedon said, “We are here for good because we know our goals and we know what we stand for.”

Annaliese explained that during her time at NNU, “I realized that Christianity wasn’t just some life preserver to get to heaven, that it was more of a lifestyle that was a beautiful thing to live out.” The Gerdeses are truly living a lifestyle of faith and excellence where they have been planted. Regardless of the challenges in the future, these up-and-comers will continue to transform themselves and their community for good. 🔥





PRESIDENT PEARSALL, ALONG WITH MANY FACULTY AND STAFF, GREETED GRADUATING STUDENTS TO HAND OUT REGALIA AND WELL-WISHES AT A UNIQUE DRIVE THROUGH EVENT ON MAY 13. COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN TENTATIVELY RESCHEDULED FOR LABOR DAY WEEKEND.

► *FOR UPDATES ON EVENTS LIKE COMMENCEMENT AND FALL RETURN PLANS, VISIT [NNU.EDU/FALL2020](https://www.nnu.edu/fall2020)*

ALUMNI NEWS

Catch up on classmate updates and recent additions

1990s

Todd Gill -92- was named president and COO at United Heritage Insurance. He succeeds 1976 alumnus **Dennis Johnson**.

Daryl R. Ireland -95- explores the formation of modern Chinese Christianity in his new book "John Song: Chinese Christianity and the Making of a New Man" (Baylor University Press).

2000s

Matt Hawley -MA 00- has been named 2020 Administrator of the Year by the Oregon Small Schools Association. Hawley earned his MA in Educational Leadership.

David McFadyen -MBA 04- was named president of St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho.

Matt Chitwood -04- recently completed a two-year fellowship with the Institute of Current World Affairs researching economic development while living in a remote village in China. He has published extensively online and a book is forthcoming.

Aaron Williamson -MBA 07- has been named senior vice president and relationship manager for Key Private Bank. In this role, Williamson will serve as the primary advisor to Key Private Bank clients in Idaho.

2010s

David Starkey -10-M.Ed. 14- accepted the position of principal at Columbia Elementary School in Woodland, Washington for the upcoming 2020-21 school year.

Marriages

1 Bri (King) -12- and **Tyler Williamson** on Oct. 8, 2016 in Nampa, Idaho.



Jim Zimbelman -76- is the 2020 recipient of the G.K. Gilbert Award, the highest award given by the Planetary Geology Division of the Geological Society of America. He was recognized for his outstanding contributions to the interdisciplinary field of planetary geology. In addition to his many other accomplishments, the committee noted Zimbelman's commitment to integrity and promise to adhere to the ethical standard in GSA's Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct as the basis for his selection.

2 Kayla (Hard) -15- and **James Smith** on May 31, 2019 in Boise, Idaho.

3 Karen (Pierce) -18- and **Aaron Hancock** on June 22, 2019 in Nampa, Idaho.

4 Vanessa (Shaw) -09- and **Nathan Hassler** on June 22, 2019 in Evansville, Indiana.

5 Carrie (Hays) -04- and **Albert Pittman** on Oct. 12, 2019 in Houston, Texas.

6 Jennifer (Vanderpool) -04- and **Christian Ayala** on April 25, 2020 in Nampa, Idaho.

7 Kelsey (Nails) -16- and **Ryan Winningham** on June 13, 2020 in Boise, Idaho.

8 Lydia (Steiner) -19- and **Daniel Binkley** -19- on June 14, 2020 in Boise, Idaho.

Births and Adoptions

9 Jackson Mark Williamson on Dec. 8, 2017 to **Bri (King)** -12- and **Tyler Williamson**, joining Nolan and Lorian.

10 Remington Anthony Shippy on April 12, 2019 to **Tiara (Early)** -15- and **Ty Shippy**.

11 Trenton Mills Keeler on July 17, 2019 to **Kaylan O'Malley** -12- and **Jesse Keeler** -13-, joining Grayson.

12 Vivienne Hope Ellis on Sept. 19, 2019 to **Amy (Mattei)** -08- and **Eric Ellis**.

13 Rebekah May Kling on Dec. 12, 2019 to **Molly (Mull)** -06- and **Daniel Kling** -16-, joining Silas and Jebediah.

14 Blakely Jo Trygg on Jan. 1, 2020 to **Stephanie (Rotter)** -14- and **Jared Trygg** -13-, joining Mason.

15 Daniel Gregory Black on Jan. 6, 2020 to **Joanna (Vanderpool)** -07- and **Jeremy Black**, joining Elizabeth and Emma.

16 Kaden Wesley Caldwell on June 28, 2020 to **Kendra (Day)** -15- and **Wes Caldwell** -13-.

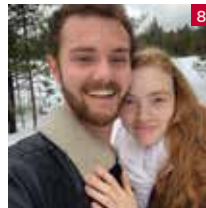
In Memory

Thelma (Waller) Thompson -49- on February 14, 2020 in Nampa, Idaho.

Charles "Chuck" Wilkes Sr. -53- on June 7, 2020 in Nampa, Idaho.

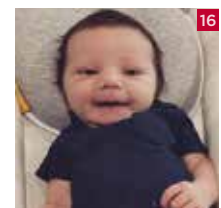
Bob Cantonwine -56- on March 14, 2020 in Salem, Oregon.

Leland Carter -61- on January 30, 2020 in Keizer, Oregon.



Janet (Kiemel) Ream (63) on January 20, 2020 in Olathe, Kansas.

Kerri (Locke) Van de Wetering -90- on May 29, 2020 in Idaho



-year- indicates graduation year
(year) indicates matriculation year

Brenda Johnson

-MBA 12- on May 7, 2020, in Nampa, Idaho.

Northwest Nazarene



University mourns the passing of Dr. Brenda Johnson, associate professor of business administration and MBA program director. Johnson earned her Master of Business Administration at NNU in 2012 and went on to earn a Doctorate of Business Administration from the Anderson University Falls School of Business in Anderson, Indiana. She specialized in business ethics, marketing and distance learning. She was innovative in the classroom and passionate about her students.

Johnson grew up Brenda Lou Greek of Indiana. She married Daryl Johnson in 1973. They were both graduates of Olivet Nazarene in 1974. The couple had three sons: Bryan ('06), Chad ('04) (Stephanie Pape, '04), Dustin (Amanda).

In the fall of 2000, they moved to Nampa to serve as pastors of College Church of the Nazarene. She assisted with the senior adults of the church and was a member of the Grace Notes Choir. Johnson started at NNU in 2002 as an assistant in the Center for Professional Development office. During her early years at the university she worked as the MBA Program director and Online Programs administrator before taking her long time education career in a new direction earning her MBA and doctorate degrees and joining the NNU faculty.

"The extraordinary thing about Brenda was that she so loved her students and it showed in her teaching, advising and interaction with students," Bill Russell, dean of the College of Business, said. "She was committed to the College of Business in a wonderful way. We all miss her."

Outside of her work at NNU, Johnson had a heart for the mission field. She and her husband Daryl spent five months teaching at Africa Nazarene University (ANU). She returned to Kenya a couple more times on international business trips with her NNU students. While in Kenya, she established a nonprofit called Mama Brenda's Ministry to assist a girl's home in personal and educational supplies. As a memorial to Johnson, you may contribute to that fund by contacting her husband at daryljohnson@nnu.edu.



HOMECOMING & FAMILY WEEKEND 2020 **CANCELED**

*Stay home and stay healthy until
we can welcome you to NNU again!*



After much deliberation, we have made the difficult decision to cancel NNU's 2020 **HOMECOMING & FAMILY WEEKEND** for the first time in NNC/NNU's history. Every November, bringing our NNU alumni and friends "home" to our beautiful campus to reminisce and celebrate the community we share is the highlight of our fall.

However, it is in this same spirit of community that the Office of Alumni Relations—with input from our Alumni Board—feels it is necessary for us to take this action. To preserve the health and safety of our current students, faculty and staff during the current pandemic, NNU has had to put protocols in place that limit access to campus and restrict visitation for off-campus groups. As much as we hate the thought of not being able to gather with you, we know we must put our personal feelings aside for

the good of the community we all love.

If 2020 was YOUR YEAR to celebrate a reunion—have no fear! **YOUR REUNIONS HAVE NOT BEEN CANCELED—JUST POSTPONED.** We will be celebrating the classes of 2015, 2010, 2005, 2000, 1995, 1990, 1985, 1980 and 1975 next November along with those reunions that were slated to take place. With any luck, it will be a social-distancing-free party like we haven't seen since 2019!

If you have questions, contact Darl Bruner or Zach Marble at (208) 467-8841 or at alumni@nnu.edu.

You can also follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/nnualumni), LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/groups/72660) or on Instagram (@nnualumni) to stay up-to-date on alumni news & events.

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU FALL 2021!

SPORTS ALUMNI MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR UNIQUE ROLES DURING COVID-19

BOB LUHN misses face-to-face meetings.

RACHEL ROBERTS misses the highs and lows of competition.

MATT GUTHRIE misses providing support for students.

These three Northwest Nazarene University graduates have faced massive upheaval in their lives similar to what many in America and the world are experiencing because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

HERE ARE THEIR STORIES.

BY CRAIG CRAKER, ATHLETICS
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR,
CLASS OF 2002



THE PASTOR

Ask Bob Luhn what his best attribute is when it comes to pastoring and it won't be his preaching or his administrative abilities.

Rather, much like on the basketball court, it is meeting congregants face-to-face and providing encouragement, hugs, high fives or advice.

With social distancing, though, all of that went out the window.

"I've always been one to enjoy visiting people in their homes or meeting for a cup of coffee," he said. "Not being able to do that feels like it handicaps the strongest part of my ministry. I love people and to not be able to physically meet with them, it feels like I don't have the best tool in my ministry."

Luhn, who is the interim pastor at Connell (Washington) Church of the Nazarene, has tried to combat the lack of physical presence through twice-weekly devotional videos, hand-written letters, emails and phone calls.

"In the videos, I try really hard not to 'preach to the thousands out there in cyberspace,'" he said, "but to talk to the one person who is listening on her phone or peering into his laptop. If I picture just one person and try to talk to just that one, I think it is as close to the personal touch as I can give."

Luhn, who played basketball at Northwest Nazarene for legendary coach Orrin Hills from 1966-70, graduated with a degree in Philosophy and Religion. He went on to Nazarene

Theological Seminary, graduating from there in 1973, and then headed to South Dakota to be a pastor.

“That was the most difficult 22 months of my life,” he said. “I was such a lousy pastor that I decided I had misunderstood God’s call.”

He decided he would leave ministry and move to Spokane, Washington to work at his dad’s engineering firm. He became an associate pastor at Spokane Valley Church of the Nazarene and eventually realized that ministry was, in fact, his true calling.

In 1980, Luhn moved to Othello, Washington where he pastored a Nazarene church for 34 years. He was retired for three weeks when he got a call from the Northwest District superintendent to be an interim pastor, which he has been doing for the past six years.

He’s been in Connell since August of 2019 and handed the pulpit off to a new pastor on June 7.

Part of that handing off involved Luhn and the church board setting up church services in the parking lot. Parishioners tune into a radio station and Luhn preaches while standing in the back of a truck. While this is out of Luhn’s comfort zone, he draws on his long experience in the ministry and his basketball-playing days to help push through.

“You think of all the times you put in practice and work hard,” he said. “It just takes discipline. You can’t get discouraged. If you miss your last shot you have to forget it and go run your next play.

“I feel like that has built into me a feeling like, this is an obstacle, but we can work through it. We don’t have to be fearful. God is still God. Christ is still the head of the church.”

THE JOURNALIST

Rachel Roberts was working on coverage for the Boise State women’s basketball team’s trip to the NCAA Division I national tournament on March 12 when her life was turned upside down.

The Boise State basketball reporter for the Idaho Statesman quickly found herself switching from reporting on sports to reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I was at the Mountain West tournament and had just covered the Boise State women winning their fourth straight title,” she said. “Suddenly it was just over. People’s opportunities and the most exciting times of the year just evaporated. It was sad. It was shocking. And it makes you nervous because you have no experience with that.”

Roberts played on the Northwest Nazarene volleyball team from 1998-2002 and was on the team that advanced to the NAIA Division II national championship match in 1998. She also graduated with a degree in English Literature in 2002.

Nearly a year after graduating, she was encouraged by a former classmate to apply for an open sports writer position at the Idaho Press-Tribune in Nampa. Two years later she was hired by the Boise paper and, after covering high school sports, eventually moved up to the Boise State beat. In her 17 years in the newspaper business, she has only written news stories a handful of times, mainly covering breaking news shifts when co-workers were on vacation.

Now, though, she writes updates five days a week on the number of coronavirus cases, deaths and tests in the state of Idaho.

“There are some challenges to it because I’m not as familiar with sources, so I don’t have those relationships I can build on,” she said. “But the writing, in some ways, seems more simplified because you are stating the facts rather than recreating a game.”

Roberts and her sports writing brethren have all switched to reporting news since there have been few sports to cover. She has drawn on her athletics history to help her navigate these uncertain times.

“Being a part of a team and having a common goal makes you more comfortable with sacrificing for a greater good,” she said. “It’s easier to think about staying in my home because I don’t want my mom to get sick or someone else’s mom to get sick. I think that makes it easier to understand the sacrifices we have to make.”

That type of thinking has helped on a personal and professional level. The Statesman’s newsroom has shrunk



Roberts (left) interviews a coach.
Photo courtesy of the Idaho Statesman.

considerably from layoffs over the years, but the camaraderie has never been higher.

“The Statesman was always close-knit, but now everyone is willing to kick in and help out,” she said. “For example, when the earthquake happened, everyone was moving quickly to post something and to post something accurate.”

Earthquakes, pandemics, deaths, test results and more have become a daily part of Roberts’ job, and while it is easy to get depressed over the state of the world right now, she has found one key takeaway from everything.

“On a personal level, reporting on the pandemic has only increased my appreciation for people who show empathy and kindness,” she said. “We can respond to this situation with anger or we can respond with compassion.

“Only one of those responses leaves room for happiness.”



THE TEACHER

Matt Guthrie’s school day pre-pandemic typically began at 6 a.m.

He would get his two sons, Luke and Paul, ready for school with his wife, Janel, before she left to teach at a local middle school.

Guthrie would grab a light breakfast of cereal, muffins or yogurt and then drop his boys off at a before school program offered by the city of Sparks, Nevada.

He’d walk into the bustling halls of Spanish Springs High School in Sparks, ready to teach World History to a class full of sophomores by 8 a.m.

These days, though, he does a lot less teaching and a lot more comforting.

“The biggest part of teaching and coaching is the relationships with kids, and not having that now is tough,” said Guthrie, who is a pitching coach for the school’s baseball team. “I know the majority of kids are doing just fine throughout all of this, but I also know some kids are really struggling.

“Schools provide many supports for kids and families that are not just related to learning. For a lot of students, school is their safe place, and it’s been taken away.”

Guthrie, who played baseball for three seasons at NNU, graduated with a degree in general studies in 2003. He eventually earned his Master’s degree and teaching credentials from the University of Nevada at Reno and has been a teacher in the Reno area for 15 years.

His time on the baseball diamond both in high school and college taught him that you have to be flexible and be able to adapt to different challenges that arise, which has certainly helped him during these uncertain times.

Teachers at Guthrie’s school are the first point of contact with their first period classes. He has 34 students that he checks in with weekly by phone and daily through a phone messaging app.

His primary concern is their well-being, with learning being secondary.

“Not all students are able to meet for online meetings or even access materials,” he said. “If students have questions they can’t always get timely feedback. Many of my students are babysitting their younger siblings all day while their parents are working, so their own assignments get neglected.

“There are all sorts of challenges.”

The Washoe County School District has more than 60,000 students from varying socio-economic backgrounds, which has made virtual learning even more difficult.

Since not every student has access to the internet, the district is offering assignments in packet forms as well. The district also created lessons that are the same for all schools, so teachers can spend their time maintaining contact with students.

“This is killing me,” he said. “I’d much rather be in the classroom and just seeing the kids every day. I’ve learned to not take for granted the time with students in the classroom.

“School is the highlight of some students’ days. There is always a population at every school that this is the best six hours of their day, where they feel the most safe. When you take that away from kids—that is tough.”

Despite the challenges, Guthrie is rising to the occasion to keep educating—and comforting—every student. 🙌

NNU ATHLETICS RECONIZED *for* OUTSTANDING WRITING



NNU Athletics Communication Director Craig Craker—a 2002 English Literature graduate—has a special ability for seeing stories in the everyday. He can turn a simple anecdote about a cookie hidden in a coach's pocket into an analogy of how a serious coach used humor to motivate and bond with his team. He has the innate ability to get his subjects to open up about their triumphs and tragedies. And despite being a sports writer, he seems to flourish when he is sharing the stories happening off the playing field. It's for these reasons that Craker has been nationally recognized by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) in the Fred Stabley Sr. Writing Contest.

"Being nationally recognized is incredibly exciting because it showcases how NNU is one of the best NCAA Division II institutions in the country," Kelli Lindley, NNU athletic director, said. "Over and over, Craig has written unique stories that set NNU apart and highlight the exceptional student-athletes, coaches and staff that makeup NNU Athletics. Craig is clearly one of them."

Craker's entry, "Faith and Love: Rushes Ready to Celebrate First Christmas as a Family," won in the Coach/Administrator Profile category and featured NNU's men's basketball coach Paul Rush and family.

"I would like to thank Paul and his wife Kylie for opening up to me and allowing me to tell their story," Craker said. "I appreciate them sharing with me a painful time in their lives and being so raw and authentic in telling their story."

In the 18 years the GNAC has been in existence, this is only the third time a GNAC SID has won a national award and the

first time for NNU. Each year, winners are recognized in seven different categories. Other honorees this year included SID's from Stanford University, Indiana University East, University of Montana, Princeton University and Lehigh University.

"The GNAC is blessed to have many talented athletic communications professionals that are also talented writers. Craig's national award in the Fred Stabley, Sr. Writing Contest is a testament to that talent," said GNAC Assistant Commissioner for Communication Blake Timm. "Craig painted a great word picture with his story on Coach Rush and his family and we congratulate him on a well-deserved award."

A total of 337 entries were submitted for this year's contest. Twenty-nine were submitted for the Coach/Administrator profile category in which Craker won.

"Craig is a very gifted, hard-working writer who does an exceptional job of telling the NNU story," Lindley said. "Like the experience of Coach Rush's family, there are many meaningful events and relationships that develop within our NNU community. Craig has a remarkable knack of finding those stories and sharing it in such a way that readers can feel and understand the impact that NNU is having on the lives of our student-athletes and those that are part of the NNU family."

Prior to his role at NNU, Craker spent 15 years as a sports reporter, copy editor and page designer having worked at daily newspapers in Nampa; Odessa, Texas; Grants Pass, Oregon; and Kennewick and Tacoma, Washington.

"The best part of my job is getting to tell the stories of the amazing coaches and student-athletes at Northwest Nazarene University," Craker said. "I have made it my mission to be kind of an internal newspaper to help promote the school, the student-athletes and our mission."

Some of Craker's most popular pieces include his "Letter to My Freshman Self" which encourages the student-athletes to tell their stories and his "Behind-the-Scenes" series he produces while traveling with teams. It's a writing method he picked up while working as a sports reporter in West Texas and often had to travel for games. His behind-the-scenes piece on the NNU Cross Country team also earned him a district award from CoSIDA for the blog/interview category. It was in that write-up that Craker shared the team's first NCAA Division II Cross Country Championships appearance—and a story about a coach and his cookie. 🍪

NIGHTHAWKS SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Nighthawks advanced to the GNAC tournament for the second consecutive year, finishing 15-11 overall and 12-8 in league. Senior Jayden Bezzant was named to the all-GNAC first team, while junior Ezekiel Alley was named to the second team and senior Olamilekan Adetunji received honorable mention. Bezzant became the 38th player in program history to cross the 1,000-point plateau in a career. 🏀



WOMEN'S INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

Sophomore Madi VonBrethorst finished fourth in the high jump at the GNAC Indoor Track and Field Championships, clearing a national provisional mark of 5 feet, 5.75 inches. Sophomore McKenna Emerson was seventh in the 800, graduate student Lauren Wuertz was seventh in the 400 and senior Bethany Danner was eighth in the mile. 🏃‍♀️



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FALL SPORTS SUSPENDED

Citing the health and safety of student-athletes as the overriding concern, the GNAC CEO Board announced it is suspending all intercollegiate athletics competition through Nov. 30 because of COVID-19.

The suspension affects men's and women's soccer, volleyball and men's and women's cross country, as well as the start of men's and women's basketball. Baseball, softball and men's and women's golf will all not be allowed to hold exhibitions or scrimmages in that time period as well.

The CEO Board will continue to monitor developments related to the pandemic and make a decision by Oct. 15 regarding the status of competition after Nov. 30.



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Nighthawks advanced to a third consecutive NCAA national tournament, entering as the No. 6 seed in the West. The tournament was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They finished 22-7 overall and 17-3 in the GNAC. Senior Avery Albrecht was named the GNAC Player of the Year and was a unanimous first-team selection. Senior Marina Valles made the second team. Both players crossed the 1,000-point plateau for their careers while leading the Nighthawks to a fifth consecutive GNAC tournament. 🏀



MEN'S INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

Senior Logan Blake won the 400-meter title (48.52 seconds) and was third in the 200 (22.2) at the GNAC Indoor Track and Field Championships. He was named the Male Track Athlete of the Meet. Junior Dakota Tidwell won the GNAC title in the heptathlon, finishing with 4,914 points. 🏃‍♂️



SUMMER TRAVEL GROUP MEMBERS ENJOY SOME DOWNTIME DURING THE MOST UNIQUE SUMMER IN THE LONG HISTORY OF NNU STUDENT MINISTRY TEAMS. INSTEAD OF MINISTERING AT CHURCHES AND CAMPS AROUND THE NORTHWEST, COVENANT AND WITNESS HAVE BEEN INSTEAD SERVING ON CAMPUS BY CLEANING BUILDINGS AND MAINTENANCING THE GROUNDS.

WITNESS MEMBER PAIGE DEROSSETT, A JUNIOR YOUTH MINISTRY MAJOR FROM ALASKA, HAS A POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON THE UNEXPECTED CHANGE TO THE GROUPS' ROLES: "WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO HELP THE SCHOOL AND MINISTER TO THE STUDENTS THAT GO HERE WITH US IN A NEW AND UNIQUE WAY. GOD IS SHOWING ME THAT MINISTRY IS ABOUT DOING THE THINGS THAT AREN'T IN YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION BECAUSE IT'S THE BEST WAY TO SHOW LOVE TO THOSE AROUND YOU."





WINTER AWAKENING

NNU's annual Winter Awakening was held February 18-21 in the Conrad Commons on campus. This event was an intentional time to come together as a community and reflect on God's work in the lives of students and on campus as a whole. It included times for worship and hearing from guest speakers.

This year, SGA Campus Ministries Coordinator Chris Cruz Osorio brought Russel Leonce and his worship team from Hillside Church of the Nazarene from Kent, Washington, and Norberto "Tito" Rivera from the Metro-New York area to lead the sessions.

Rivera explored what it looks like to gain traction and persevere in our faith and relationship with God and challenged students to reimagine how they perceive God to be at work. He reminded the group that they are dependent on the very breath of God to go about their daily activities, whether it's in the science lab, on the field or even when engaging with difficult texts. Because of that, they are given the opportunity to use the breath and life that God has given them to glorify God.

According to Cruz Osorio, "I believe that God is doing new and great things on our campus, and Winter Awakening was just a piece of that." 🔥



M.ED. EXCEPTIONAL CHILD PROGRAM RETURNS

The NNU College of Education is pleased to announce a Master of Education in Exceptional Child will once again be offered through the Graduate Education Department beginning in August. The program is designed for classroom teachers who hold elementary, secondary or special education certification and wish to gain further expertise and/or become certified to teach exceptional children.

Designed to fit the schedule of a working professional, NNU's M.Ed. in Exceptional Child allows the educator to complete a Master's degree while teaching full time. The online program utilizes set courses to help students plan their schedules ahead of time. Degree completion takes approximately 18-22 months, including the nine-month internship teaching children with special needs.

Program Director Dr. Lisa Amundson says, "We designed NNU's new Exceptional Child Program to incorporate the latest research in special education with a fresh practical classroom approach. Each course focuses on specific strategies that will empower you to educate God's exceptional children." 🔥



PEARSALL CONTRACT EXTENDS

In March, the NNU Board of Trustees unanimously voted to extend the contract for NNU President Joel Pearsall for four more years.

Extensive evaluations were conducted Fall 2019 by faculty, staff, students, trustees and other relevant constituencies.

Mike Zahare ('81), chairman of NNU's Board of Trustees, praised the outstanding leadership and work that Pearsall has provided during his current term.

"In our recent presidential evaluation, all NNU constituency groups enthusiastically affirmed our president's leadership skills, the positive direction in which he is moving NNU, and the Christ-like manner in which he represents the university both internally and externally," Zahare stated.

Pearsall began his tenure as president in March 2016 and is the university's 13th president. During his tenure, a new master plan has been adopted to guide the physical development of campus and a new student center (the Conrad Commons) opened in 2019. In a time when private colleges and universities face immense challenges, NNU looks forward to continued growth and a successful future under President Pearsall's proven leadership. 🔥



WEBER RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

Dr. Konya Weber, associate dean for the College of Business, has been named the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Award recipient for the Region 7 2020 ACBSP Teaching Excellence Award. Each year the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) recognizes educators who exemplify teaching excellence in the classroom. Region 7 is composed of ACBSP colleges and universities on the east side of the region in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and then across the Western United States including Hawaii and Alaska.

Weber was honored during the ACBSP Virtual Conference in June 2020. Dr. Weber has served as the associate dean of the Northwest Nazarene University College of Business since 2018.

“For me, this award is about celebrating my students’ accomplishments and fulfilling the mission of NNU,” Weber said.

Professor of Business Sam Dunn and Dean of the College of Business Bill Russell nominated Weber for the award. “Nobody more fully represents the quality and stature of our faculty than Konya Weber. She blesses our students every day of their stays here at NNU and beyond into their careers,” Russell said.

This is the second award an NNU College of Business faculty member has received in the last 10 years. 🍷



NNU RELAUNCHES RN-BSN PROGRAM

NNU’s College of Nursing has announced the relaunch of its RN-BSN program. This program is designed to help current registered nurses (RN) earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree.

According to Rebekkah Hulén, former RN-BSN program director and current interim chair of the undergraduate nursing department, “In the current climate of healthcare change, there is a new and growing need for the registered nurse to expand their vision, scope, and sphere of influence to the community.”

The relaunch of the program focuses on helping RN’s meet this need while working within the constraints and demands of working full-time and caring for families as they return to school. Key aspects of the program include increased flexibility and accessibility with enrollment opportunities three times per year (Fall, Spring and Summer semesters) and plans of study that are personalized for each student. The program can be completed in as few as 15 months. 🍷



NEW M.ACC. PROGRAM

The College of Business is excited to announce the new Master of Accountancy (M.Acc.) program. This fully-online program is designed for the working professional and provides a strong accounting core with the ability to specialize through either a management accounting track or professional accounting/CPA track.

“The NNU M.Acc. is unique because it offers two different tracks or paths for accountants,” Dr. Mollie Sweet, NNU professor and Accounting Club advisor, said. “We believe this flexibility, along with the relevant content of the program, is just what the market needs.”

The program is designed to enhance student’s managerial and professional accounting skills through relevant and meaningful education delivered by experienced faculty with real-world experience.

The new M.Acc. program will be offered beginning Fall 2020. 🍷

THE MAKING OF A MAJOR

Wildlife Biology and Ecology offered Fall 2020

BY CARLY (RECH) GILMORE, CLASS OF 2017 AND 2019

After years of equipping students to enter careers in wildlife biology, Northwest Nazarene University now has the official degree program to accompany it. This fall NNU is introducing a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and a minor in Wildlife Biology and Ecology.

“The Wildlife Biology program has been at NNU for nearly 50 years,” commented David Hille, biology faculty and alumnus (’03). “It progressed from an impressive wildlife program without a name to a concentration to a degree program. The degree program is the next step in a long tradition.” This tradition, and the foundation of NNU’s wildlife program, began informally in 1974 with the courses and research of former professor Dr. Leon Powers (’64).

When asked how he set the foundation for this degree program, Powers replied, “I simply followed the dictates of a heart-felt passion for studying wildlife and ecology in the field. I was lucky enough to have a long array of great students to work with and had a rich, largely unexplored natural environment in which to study.”

While Powers did offer many wildlife biology courses, the education was greatly enhanced by the research opportunities available in Idaho. Powers’ lab investigated a wide range of topics that involved various species—mostly of the feathered sort. Over the duration of his career, students in his research lab co-authored more than 50 articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals and non-fiction books.

“A vital and long-standing element of the NNU Biology Department that has successfully nudged our graduates closer to the wildlife ecology professions has been our strong senior

research requirement,” explained Powers. “It was probably more through these scientific publications that the wildlife and ecology professionals—wildlife agencies employees and graduate school professors—first heard of NNU and our students’ legitimate endeavors in science. In those days, it was extremely uncommon

for biology undergraduates to conduct research at all, much less of publishable caliber.”

The unique educational opportunities Powers created were exemplified by his obvious passion for the subjects he taught. When talking about how Powers influenced his career, Jeremy Hodges (’04) said, “He had a love and appreciation for birds, which rubbed off on me and was one of the reasons I applied for the job that I ended up obtaining.”

Hodges landed a job as a research fellow with the San Diego Zoo in their Hawaii Endangered Bird Conservation Program directly upon graduation. This opportunity led to a research coordinator position, followed by his current job as senior hospital zookeeper at San Diego Zoo Global.

“I’ve had the privilege of working for, managing, and even starting avian conservation projects around the world while working for the San Diego Zoo,” added Hodges. “The base of knowledge, as well as the work ethic, that NNU taught me enabled me to excel in my chosen career.”

The wildlife faculty grew in 1999 with the addition of Dr. John Cossel, allowing more wildlife coursework and undergraduate research opportunities: students now had ornithological and herpetological research with Powers and Cossel, respectively. Powers retired in 2006, passing the torch to



“THE DEGREE PROGRAM IS THE NEXT STEP IN A LONG TRADITION.” THIS TRADITION, AND THE FOUNDATION OF NNU’S WILDLIFE PROGRAM, BEGAN INFORMALLY IN 1974 WITH THE COURSES AND RESEARCH OF DR. LEON POWERS.



TO SUPPORT SUMMER FIELD RESEARCH FOR THE NEW WILDLIFE BIOLOGY AND ECOLOGY MAJOR, CONTACT MARK WHEELER (MJWHEELER@NNU.EDU) AND ASK ABOUT GROWING THE LEON AND WILLA POWERS STUDENT RESEARCH FUND.





Students in Dr. Powers' popular Birds of Prey course take a bird watching field trip.

Cossel. Cossel continued to provide wildlife courses and research, building off of the foundational informal program to develop the wildlife ecology/biodiversity concentration in 2006.

Rangeland Scientist Dr. Andrew Olsen ('12) said of his NNU education, "Two things have been particularly valuable: breadth and inspiration. My current position with The Nature Conservancy is multi-faceted ... My liberal arts education provided the foundation to work on all of these topics and to be a well-rounded scientist.

"A Christ-centered science education was critical to my career. My science professors at NNU exhibited worshipful joy at the wonders of God's creation. A love for creation, and ultimately the Creator, is my daily inspiration. I am so blessed to work in a field where I get to see the fingerprints of the Creator on a daily basis, and I am often filled with adoration even while I work!"

The importance of an interdisciplinary education with mentorship and high caliber research was also voiced by alumna Heather (Craig) McFarland ('10), science communications lead at International Arctic Research Center. She found her international research experiences through NNU to be particularly valuable.

"Those expeditions gave me excellent perspective into a different aspect of biology and into the scientific writing process as we later worked to publish our findings," McFarland noted. "These trips also provided extensive time for personal mentorship. I was able to observe and learn from professors, such as Dr. Cossel, who I respected as people as well as scientists."

Many of NNU's biology alumni have excelled in wildlife biology careers. This program boasts alumni who have gone on to work for organizations such as the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Idaho Fish and Game, and the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge just to name a few. With the introduction of the new degrees, the wildlife biology program will continue the tradition of equipping their students to thrive in this profession.

A wildlife degree program had been long anticipated. The addition of ornithologist David Hille to the Biology Faculty in 2018 was the last piece the department needed to have their goal brought to fruition. This program now has the foundation and the faculty to create an education catering to students with a passion—in whatever capacity and facet—for wildlife biology.

This degree program has something for every student with an interest in wildlife biology. For those pursuing a traditional career in wildlife biology, there is the BS, which continues to emphasize valuable field research experience and now boasts more courses. The BA is for those interested in the nontraditional vocations within conservation biology that focus on the use of communication and media, marketing and business, political and social sciences, outdoor education, etc.—hence the required minor in one of these fields. The minor supports students' primary degree program, providing an interdisciplinary focus in the broad topics of wildlife conservation.

"In the world's current condition, this major is extremely timely," commented Cossel. "With the declining populations of various taxa, continuing climate change, and on and on, it's more and more important to have quality people coming from a faith perspective to help try to make a difference."

With its alignment with NNU's mission, the faculty believes the degree program's influence will reach beyond their majors. "This degree program is another way students can learn and appreciate the relationship they have with God and also become a practitioner, professionally caring for creation," explained Hille. "This program helps bring that identity to the whole campus: the identity of recognizing, as a community in relationship with the Creator, we ought to give time and resources towards creation—this includes caring for wildlife and preparing students to embark on the work of conserving creation." 🙌

Honoring a **THEOLOGICAL LEGACY**

A new essay collection recognizes the contributions of Dr. George Lyons

BY VERONICA CRAKER, CLASS OF 2020

A collection of essays are being published in a new book titled “Listening Again to the Text: New Testament Studies in Honor of George Lyons.” The book, edited by Dr. Richard P. Thompson, honors the impact Lyons has had on the theology of the Church of the Nazarene.

Lyons served as professor of New Testament at Northwest Nazarene University from 1991 to 2013.

“George is one of the first, in biblical circles in the Church of the Nazarene, who had his Ph.D. and in many ways started us to think carefully and to listen carefully to the biblical text,” Professor of New Testament and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion Dr. Richard Thompson, said. “That doesn’t ignore the spiritual side at all, but it brings the spiritual and mind together. He brought a dimension to the church that, in many respects, we didn’t have before.”

Lyons is a past president of the Wesleyan Theological Society and a member of the Society of Biblical Literature. He holds degrees from Olivet Nazarene University and Nazarene Theological Seminary as well as a Ph.D. from Emory University.

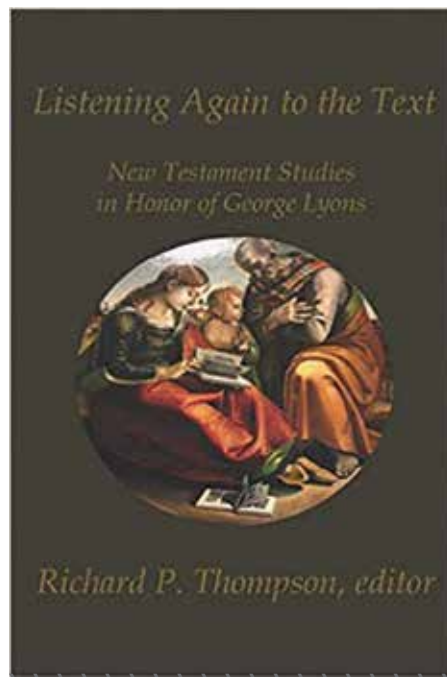
“He’s made a mark in the terms of the numbers of pastors and district superintendents that he’s touched,” Thompson said. “They look to him and credit him to opening up the Bible in new ways.”

The book includes essays from individuals who have either worked alongside Lyons or been a student of his. The works call for scholars and preachers to reconsider their modes and methods for interpreting New Testament texts and provide new and insightful ways of reading the New Testament Gospels,

letters and Apocalypse. It also includes a dedication written by Tat-Siong Benny Liew, a New Testament scholar, and his wife Pamela. Lyons played a major role in the development of their relationship when they were students at Olivet Nazarene University.

An excerpt from their dedication states: “Departing from what was standard in many of our other classes, Dr. Lyons didn’t try to teach his students what to think about the Bible. Rather, he taught us that we had to think about the Bible. With this confident approach, he transmitted the idea that the Bible is important enough to require serious and thoughtful engagement. Rather than discouraging us from asking questions of the text, Dr. Lyons taught us that the Bible matters enough to be wrestled with.”

A virtual gathering was hosted to present the book to Lyons. Many of the essay writers were in attendance. The book can be purchased through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other bookstores. 📖



“HE BROUGHT A DIMENSION TO THE CHURCH THAT, IN MANY RESPECTS, WE DIDN’T HAVE BEFORE.”

CARRYING ON *in* COMMUNITY

*SGA president shares her perspective
on the campus closure due to coronavirus*

BY PARKER AKKERMAN, CLASS OF 2020



“STUDENTS ARE NOT TRANSFORMED BY SIMPLY ATTENDING NNU, BUT BY ENGAGING IN THE REAL EXPERIENCES OF LIFE WHILE IN COMMUNITY WITH OTHERS.”

When the news finally came, we were all expecting it. We could have never anticipated, however, just how much that one change would uproot our lives in the months to come.

March 13 was the last normal day. It was the night of the beloved campus event, Mr. NNU. Campus was buzzing with talk of closure, creating a blanket of confusion and fear. Despite the uncertainty, Mr. NNU was permitted to occur. Minutes before the event, an email was sent to campus explaining the start of an early spring break and a possible permanent shift to online learning.

As I looked around the auditorium, I could see the hearts breaking in real time. The room was eerily quiet yet also incredibly loud. Before the show, we were encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to laugh and be together while still on campus. And we definitely did.

That night, I was reminded of why NNU is such a special place. NNU is a venue for joy and celebration, but it also experiences mourning and loss. Students are not transformed by simply attending NNU, but by engaging in the real experiences of life while in community with others.

We all cried that night. My roommates and I cried. My fellow senior friends cried as we packed up our cars to head home. I even cried in front of a large group of faculty members. I also laughed a lot, too. We all were sore from laughing at Mr. NNU. I laughed with my classmates in a Facetime call as we found ourselves focused more on our household pets instead of our assignment. As hard as it was, I felt strangely grateful for all of the moments I had been given. I cried, but only because I was losing something so good.

Over the last two months of the semester, I felt the NNU community at home. My friends continuously checked in on me. Classmates and staff members wrote me handwritten notes. Professors personally emailed me about how I was doing and how we could be praying for each other. It was not the same, but it proved to me that the community at NNU does not happen by accident.

During this time, I found myself struck by something my dad told me as a kid. Growing up, I would worry so much I would give myself a stomach ache. Whatever was worrying me, my dad would always tell me the same thing, that we really can trust God with all of our lives.

The world has literally felt that it is spinning out of control. Leaving the house often feels paralyzing and the hopelessness in uncertainty is exhausting. But, we are not meant to carry the weight alone. God holds me in my anxiety, in my fear, and in my mourning. We have no idea what tomorrow looks like, and we never do. But now more than ever, I am reminded to practice deep, wholehearted trust in God.

If you would've told me in January that I would spend my last few months of college at home in quarantine, I would have called you crazy. Yet, despite all of the uncertainty and anxiety, I have watched a group of believers practice their faith. The way you respond to the bad says a lot more about your character than the good times. And NNU proved to me that nothing, not even a global pandemic could change that. 🙌

2020 GRADS READY *to* TRANSFORM *the* WORLD



“The conjunction of service, knowledge, and love is epitomized at NNU. This idea is a way of life made known through Christ, and NNU has been the mechanism that has delivered this meaning into my life. It has eternally changed me. I’ve found myself motivated and concerned with now leading a life centered around service. To help those who are in need, those who experience material and spiritual despair—those are the people who my life will be geared towards serving thanks to NNU.” — JACOB BOOKER, BACHELOR OF

ARTS IN PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE, FINANCIAL ECONOMICS AND
GLOBAL BUSINESS



“There were times when I thought, ‘I don’t think I can do this, it is too hard,’ but I’m glad my professors challenged me and pushed me to do my best. Now that I’ve been through it, I feel like I can do anything.”

— DIANA HERNANDEZ, MASTER OF EDUCATION IN CURRICULUM,
INSTRUCTION & INNOVATION



“NNU has shaped me to think critically, care for others, and put Jesus at the center of all that I do. NNU does a fantastic job of challenging it’s students academically while also challenging them spiritually. Our responsibility isn’t just to study for tests and earn a degree, it’s to transform our lives in a way that achieves that goal but remembering to center it in Jesus. This has developed a new attitude and outlook on life for me and it’s been so much more meaningful because of it.” — KYLE JAMES, BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN

FINANCIAL ECONOMICS AND ACCOUNTING



“Graduation is honestly one of the last things on my checklist I had for my younger self. I have multiple job offers already and I am excited to see where my future takes me.” — AMBER WORTHINGTON,

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



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You are more than potential.
You are the fulfillment of a promise.
Your very existence
is a great gift brought forth
by divine love and wisdom.
You are here to make the most
of that gift.



**You are HERE FOR
GO D**

This is more than an education.
It is a transformation.
So, rise and shine.
Answer the call.
Live, learn, and lead.
Be a beacon and share
the great redeeming force
of compassionate service.
The world is waiting for you
because there is only one you.
And you are the reason we are here.

