



# The Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago

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DDH Bulletin 125th Anniversary Edition

Summer 2019

## Celebrating 125 years



Over 250 alumni/ae, friends, and current students gathered May 24-26 to celebrate DDH's 125th anniversary. Alums spanning six decades and friends from near and far traveled to Chicago for the celebration.

The theme for the weekend, "Grateful for what is to come," was enunciated by Larry Bouchard in a keynote address. "We should be grateful for the Disciples House's inspiring history; but let our focus be the fu-

ture," he explained. "Yet what is coming is unknown.... Especially in days of such local and global crisis, anxiety, and suffering, how do we discern the future, not only with hope, but indeed with gratitude? How can we now be grateful for what is to come?" (His remarks are published in this *Bulletin*.)

Highlights of the weekend included a gala dinner at the Quadrangle Club, with Masters of Ceremony Gaylord Yu and Drew Powell, film and television actor (*Gotham*, *Ponderosa*, and *Malcolm in the Middle*). Chad Martin, Trustee Chair of the 125th Anniversary, Board of Trustees President April Lewton, and Dean Kris Culp spoke. Bringing greetings were Divinity Dean David Nirenberg, Disciples General Minister and President Teresa Hord Owens, Bill Blake-more and Jory B. Johnson, and Heike Springhart for the Theologisches Stu-

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## Grateful for what is to come: \$4M campaign for scholarships, internships, and accessibility

As the Disciples Divinity House celebrates an historic 125th anniversary, we give thanks for its remarkable legacy, and for the individuals, churches, and organizations who have made its legacy possible. In that spirit, we are also grateful for what is to come.

This is why the trustees have launched a \$4 million campaign to undergird scholarships, to create new immersive learning opportunities, and to enhance accessibility to our beloved "House."

"Plans for the 125th anniversary have been in the works for five years," explained Trustee Chad H. Martin, who is Chair of the 125th Anniversary. "And, believe it or not, the most difficult part of the entire planning process was determining our theme. Of course, we bask in the history of the House – and rightly so. DDH, for being a three-story building on the corner of 57th Street and University

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## Grateful

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Avenue, with a full-time staff that you can count on one hand, has had a relatively super-sized impact on the University, the community, the ministry, the denomination, the world. That is worth celebrating.”

“However, no one—not the trustees, alumni/ae, dean, staff, or students—wants to describe DDH only in terms of what has been done in the past. So, when Larry Bouchard offered the phrase, *grateful for what is to come*, we knew that captured the essence of our celebration.”

For 125 years, the Disciples Divinity House has fostered an atmosphere electric with possibilities for excellence in ministry, scholarship, and public leadership. Its singular residential scholarship program and intellectual community, offered in connection with the University of Chicago Divinity School, prepares men and women to be the creative thinkers and courageous leaders needed in the church and wider world today.

“As part of preparing the House for what is to come, we are raising funds to support and enhance its mission for the next 125 years,” Martin announced at the Anniversary Dinner on May 25.



Chad H. Martin is Chair of the 125th Anniversary. A member of the Board of Trustees since 1998, he served as its President from 2010-15. He is the Chief Financial Officer of MeridianLink. A lifelong Disciple, he is a graduate of Texas Christian University (BS) and of Stanford University (MBA). The Martin family lives in California.

“We started the silent phase a year ago – and the response has been overwhelmingly positive and generous. Much of this generosity is expressed through commitments that will fully endow at least six new scholarships at \$250,000 each. In fact, we were able as a Board yesterday to formally create the Dr. Geunhee and Mrs. Geunsoon Yu Scholarship. THAT is our mission in action, and evidence the campaign is already a success.”

“And to give a sense for the level of generosity that has already been expressed in the silent phase, over \$2.5 million is already pledged or committed. We have already raised over 60%

of our overall \$4 million goal, with another significant amount in the commitment process. But we still need to raise additional funds.”

Cash gifts may be made through pledges that will be fulfilled over the next three years. And any estate gift that evidences the House as a future beneficiary will be counted. Each and every gift conveys hope for and belief in a future where community, curiosity, and courage continue to shape the world.

That generosity will support three crucial purposes:

*Funding for critical ministry and scholarship* and, closely related, *funding for internships and immersive learning*. An expansion of scholarships, both in number and in innovative use of funds, will help ensure that students are ready to provide critical ministry and scholarship for our globalized and swiftly changing world.

The Barbara and Clark Williamson, Dr. Geunhee and Mrs. Geunsoon Yu, Jim and Peggy Powell, Amy A. Northcutt, Martin Family, and Kristine A. Culp Scholarships will honor beloved individuals and express commitment to future leaders. Thanks to the generosity of a trustee, gifts for the Powell and Culp scholarships will be matched.



Drew Powell, Master of Ceremonies, at the 125th Anniversary dinner

**THE DISCIPLES DIVINITY HOUSE**  
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Given the demand for relevant, compelling forms of religious and spiritual community, and the urgent need for public theological engagement, DDH is enriching its substantive scholarship program by ensuring funding for new immersive learning opportunities. Students have learned about interfaith cooperation by interning in a synagogue, honed the arts of congregational transformation, college chaplaincy, and nonprofit social entrepreneurship alongside skilled practitioners, and experienced international travel and study exchange.

“We have seen the benefit to our students, our House community and the wider church that comes from this immersive learning, and we want to be intentional about securing funds to enable these internships going forward,” Chad Martin explained.

Additionally, we want to raise funds to ensure the House is a welcoming



place. “One of the most unique things about the House is that it remains a ‘house’ – a physical place for students, staff, and community to intersect. We want the House to be a welcome place to all, and we think addressing first floor accessibility takes us in the right direction for the next 125 years.”

“Why am I supporting this campaign?” Martin asked and then answered: “I am not an alum or former resident. I came to the House through a connection my father Jerry, a Disciples minister who served in Illinois, had to the House and its students when he chaired the region’s Commission on Ministry. And I met Kris when we served on the Administrative Committee of the General Board of the Christian Church – back when I was a ‘young adult’ member of the board. I never stepped foot in the House until my first Board meeting. But I was hooked at that first meeting. You can see why Dean Culp has built an absolutely outstanding board and why she can recruit the most talented students of the denomination.”

“It is these House Scholars and the impact these Scholars had, have, and will have on the community and the church that keeps me invested in DDH. I have seen firsthand the impact of our graduates.”

“Now, I am CFO of a software company – and I speak MBA not

MDiv or PhD. But I understand return on investment. I know that my time spent on the Board, and my family’s commitment to the Martin Family Scholarship, will pay a dividend of future leaders and scholars, pastors and professors, that will sustain and enrich the work of the Church.”

“I am confident in our ability to achieve our campaign fundraising goal. In fact, I am highly confident we will exceed our goal. But while we may count the goal this year in dollars and pledges, the real goal is ensuring that the next 125 years are as fruitful and productive as the first 125 years have been. We are grateful – for what is to come.” ☰



April Lewton, President of the Board of Trustees

## Celebrating 125

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dienhaus at the University of Heidelberg, Germany.

Other highlights included worship in the Chapel of the Holy Grail, beautiful weather, a taco truck, Grail-themed temporary tattoos for kids, time to meet old and new friends, and much, much more.

JoAnne Kagiwada and Clark Williamson were the event's honorary co-chairs. Ms. Kagiwada, an attorney by training, advocate for civil liberties and justice, and nonprofit leader, and Mr. Williamson, an alumnus, pioneering post-Holocaust Christian theologian, and influential Disciples educator, have given exemplary service to the Disciples Divinity House as trustees.

The celebration began with an open house. Afternoon tea was sponsored by Ann W. Burns, with fond remembrance of past anniversaries and anticipation of anniversaries to come. Current students led worship in the Chapel of the Holy Grail with reflections on gratitude. The service ended with communion and a joyful call to the courtyard where DDH's anniversary taco truck was ready for service.

Rebecca Anderson and Yvonne Gilmore co-hosted a StoryHour in which "Quest: Stories of what we're after" were told by Erica Brown, Kristin Dow, Marshall Dunn, Judith Guy, Dennis Landon, and Colton Lott. Hannah Fitch and Michael Crusen provided soulful music.

Saturday featured lectures and discussion under the auspices of DDH's William Henry Hoover Lectures. Board Vice President Pamela James Jones opened the day's sessions and introduced Mr. Bouchard. A panel of scholars responded to Mr. Bouchard's remarks by exploring "gratefulness and timefulness." Citing Teresa of Avila's exhortation, "Come, let us press together through the needle's eye," biblical scholar Patricia



Dolores Highbaugh, Chelsea Cornelius, and Ellie Leech

Duncan explored the resources of the hortatory mode of discourse for this moment on history's precipice. W. Clark Gilpin discussed the historical and theological task of identifying decisive "pleroma" moments for change and action. Invoking Unamuno's "angel of nothingness," TCU professor Santiago Piñón considered the importance of memory and change when confronting the abyss of history.

Two additional panels considered what is to come, with the first focusing on teaching and learning. Vanderbilt practical theologian Bonnie Miller-McLemore spoke about "epistemological insurgency" and "ecological unrest" in narratives as ways of unsettling boundaries in the face of peril. Harvard professor Steph-

anie Paulsell asked, "How are we going to remain human while these changes overtake us?" Taking a cue from Virginia Woolf, she invited us to consider DDH as an experimental space in teaching and learning and to invite others from beyond the boundaries of denomination, religion, and university to join in that space. Emory professor and Morehouse College President Emeritus Robert Franklin warned of modernity's impatience with history and with ambiguity: "We must ensure that teachers and learners reckon with the full past."

The second panel featured innovative practitioners Sandhya Jha of the Oakland Peace Center, Ayanna Johnson Watkins of MICAHA, a religious  
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Yvonne Gilmore and Rebecca Anderson co-host the StoryHour

## 125 Years and Counting



**APRIL 1893** Herbert Lockwood Willett, a doctoral student, and W.D. MacClintock, a newly appointed English professor, discuss the idea of establishing a Disciples of Christ institution in connection with the new University of Chicago.

**SEPTEMBER 1893** “Dr. W.R. Harper, President of Chicago University...explained what attitude the University would hold toward any theological school that might be established adjacent to it. He favored such a plan, and believed that the Disciples should undertake such an enterprise, that other religious bodies would speedily follow our example.” (*The Christian Evangelist*)

**MAY 1894** At 9:30 in the morning of Saturday, May 26, in Parlor 23 at Chicago’s Grand Pacific Hotel, a resolution constituted fifteen men as trustees for the purposes of incorporating a Disciples of Christ institution in connection with the new University of Chicago. Willett is appointed dean.

**JUNE 9, 1894** DDH is chartered in the state of Illinois.

**OCTOBER 1894** A memorandum of agreement is signed by the officers of the University and DDH.

**AUTUMN 1894** Disciples Divinity House begins operation. Future deans W.E. Garrison and E.S. Ames are among the first students.

**1896** The Trustees purchase the corner lot at 57th Street and Lexington (now University) Avenue from the Marshall Field estate for \$8,500.

**1916** Eight students including Opal Daniels, Mary Roberts, S.C. Kincheloe, and Herbert L. Willett Jr, receive the first DDH scholarships of \$100 each.

**1921** Winfred Ernest Garrison is appointed dean. He serves until 1927, while plans for the building are developed.

**1922-23** The church purchases half of DDH’s property and erects its building.



**1927** Edward Scribner Ames is appointed dean, serving until 1945.



**OCTOBER 1928** The building is opened without indebtedness. They report that more than 500 students have been connected with the Divinity House since its organization.

**1929** Community meals are organized for every Thursday.

**1930** The Disciples Chapel is dedicated. Architect Henry K. Holsman collaborates with Elizabeth T. Holsman and their two sons on the chapel. Connick Studios of Boston creates the Arthurian motif stained glass. It will come to be known as the Chapel of the Holy Grail.

**1931** Gertrude Gary Sutcliffe responds to Dean Ames’s challenge to “endow students to learn” by giving her first \$25,000 to the endowment. By 1953, her total contributions will exceed \$1 million.

**1943** William K. Fox becomes the first African American Disciples House Scholar.

**1945** William Barnett Blakemore is appointed Dean in 1945. He serves until his death in 1975.



**1953** Thursday night dinners become Monday night dinners.

**1956** The “Association and Council of Alumni” is formed.

**1965** An efficiency kitchen and laundry facilities are provided for student use.

**1966** A group of non-Disciple students enrolled in the new DMin degree program become renting residents, thus inaugurating a new dimension of ecumenism at DDH.

**1970** A celebration marks the 75th anniversary. Dean Blakemore’s history, *Quest for Intelligence in Ministry*, takes its name from the event.

**1972** A 45-year hiatus in scholarship awards to women is broken.

**1975** DDH gains its first women residents, including two Disciples Scholars, Marilyn Baker Robie and Ana Karen Dale.

**1977** Divinity School faculty member Don Spencer Browning is appointed dean.



**1979** Arthur A. Azlein is the first recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award.

**1984** W. Clark Gilpin is appointed dean. In 1990 he is named Dean of the Divinity School.

**1985** The Divinity School establishes the Master of Divinity degree.

**1991** Kristine A. Culp is appointed dean, becoming the first woman to lead a Disciples of Christ graduate theological institution.



**MAY 27-29, 1994** The Centennial celebration is launched.

**1995** A complete renovation of the kitchen and dining room is dedicated.

**2005** A “Celebration of the Arts” marks the 75th anniversary of the chapel. *Winged Words*, a collection of prayers, is published.



**2015-18** All 161 leaded glass windows are removed and restored, including the signal Holy Grail chancel window.

**2017** Alumna Teresa Hord Owen is elected General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).



**MAY 24-26, 2019** The 125th Anniversary Celebration is held.



Sunday worship at University Church.



Teresa Hord Owens

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based community coalition in Memphis, and Holly McKissick, founding pastor of Peace Church in Kansas City. They envisioned ministry and transformative engagement from the grass roots, calling for creative coalitions of action and reflection.

Focused conversations were offered by Lee Hull Moses, Chief of Staff for the Office of General Minister and President of the Christian Church; Vy Nguyen, Executive Director of the Week of Compassion; Garry Sparks, professor at George Mason University; Heike Springhart and Dagmar Zobel from TSH; Harvard musicologist Braxton Shelley; and preservation architect Paul Steinbrecher.

Alumni/ae Council president Thandiwe Dale-Ferguson led morn-

ing prayer in the Chapel of the Holy Grail. Third-year MDiv Ellie Leech led activities for older children, including a field trip to the DuSable Museum, origami, temporary tattoos, and more.

The 125th celebration concluded on Sunday morning with worship at University Church. With Senior Minister Julian DeShazier presiding, Teresa Hord Owens preached a compelling message titled, “God Is Not Finished.” Braxton Shelley, Walter Owens, and Ragina Bunton offered special music.

The celebration was immediately preceded by a Divinity School and DDH Ministry Alumni/ae gathering, featuring reflections by Cynthia Lindner, Director of the Divinity School’s Ministry Program, on “Multireligious formation as a perspective on ‘public

ministry,’” with responses by emerging leaders from diverse religious traditions.

On Sunday evening, the Second Annual Amy A. Northcutt Lecture was hosted by Craig Middlebrook and given by the Honorable Betty Sutton, the former Congresswoman and gubernatorial candidate from Ohio. A panel, “Vision and Grace: Perspectives on Leadership,” was moderated by Verity Jones, and featured distinguished professionals Constance Battle, Ronne Hartfield, and JoAnne Kagiwada.

Disciples Divinity House marked the beginning of its 125th year by convoking gratitude, thought, and action at this grand celebration and with a luncheon at the Disciples General Assembly in Des Moines. Special events will continue throughout the coming year. ☒



Betty Sutton



At the Amy A. Northcutt Lecture: Verity Jones, Constance Battle, Lei Lei Middlebrook, Ronne Hartfield, and JoAnne Kagiwada

# Grateful for What Is to Come: The House with the Future as Thou

Keynote for DDH's 125th Anniversary by Larry D. Bouchard  
Given in the University of Chicago Divinity School, 25 May 2019

The old *New English Bible* translates Hebrews 11:13 this way: *All these persons died in faith. They were not yet in possession of the things promised but had seen them far ahead and hailed them, and confessed themselves no more than strangers or passing travellers on earth.*

I like the shape of these phrases—their shape, their rhythm, their pattern of thought and feeling. The ancient ones greeted a future they would not see, already in relationship with what is to come. They could be grateful for a future unknown in its particulars, whose promises they would not realize—except as future, as “on the way.” They hailed promises not yet arrived but coming toward them, as if the future were also hailing them in their strange earthly wanderings.

Such a pattern or shape of language can be strange to us. Rarely do we speak of the future as “promise”—as in Martin Marty’s 1973 book, *You Are Promise*—more often as “promising.” To say the future is “promising” is to recognize contingent possibilities that warrant, at best, some optimism. I may say to a student, your paper idea is, well, promising.

Yet to speak of the future as sheer “promise” is rather incredible, for we often see the future as sheer threat. And to be grateful for the unknown future—that is even more incredible. How can we realistically and not sentimentally be grateful for what is to come, for what cannot be seen?

This question came up as we searched for the theme of this celebration. Imagine posters advertising the dates 1894-2019. What would they evoke? Nostalgia? Ending more than beginning, past more than future? Or, at worst, would those dates suggest a



Patricia Duncan, Clark Gilpin, Santiago Pinon, and Larry Bouchard

memorial: “DDH, 1894-2019, R.I.P.”

We thought, yes, we should be grateful for the Disciples House’s inspiring history; but let our focus be the future. Hence the theme, *Grateful for what is to come*. Yet what is coming is unknown, not yet, radically uncertain. Especially in days of such local and global crisis, anxiety, and suffering, how do we discern the future, not only with hope, but indeed with gratitude? How can we now be grateful for what is to come?

#### Four clues

My first clue is from something learned in these halls from Brian Gerrish about Calvin. To Prof. Gerrish, the essence of Calvin is not the Calvinist acronym, TULIP: “total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.” No, Gerrish taught me that for Calvin the essence of religion, or “piety,” is gratitude.

I find glimpses of piety as grati-

tude in Marilynne Robinson’s novel *Gilead*. At one point, the Rev. John Ames speculates that God also is gratitude. Ames, in his long ministry in Iowa, has been challenged to understand how the love of God and the love of prodigal, wayward persons are loves that are fundamentally inseparable. He thinks God sees and “might even enjoy us.” He says, “I remember in those days loving God for the existence of love and being grateful to God for the existence of gratitude, right down to the depths of my misery.”

Another clue to gratitude toward the future comes in the form of questions. How are we *now* in relations of responsibility to the future, when those future people and creatures *do not now exist*?

When we speak of obligations to future generations—to endow new practices of care, justice, and peace; to sustain the flourishing of the en-

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vironment; and to create works of culture and science that enlarge joy, meaning, and value—to whom are we actually obligated?<sup>1</sup> To futures existing only in our minds? Are we conjuring up consoling illusions of enlightened self-concern?

For that matter, when we speak of our debts to the past, to whom now do we pay such debts of gratitude? And what of our obligations to the suffering of the past, whose collective magnitude and particularity is beyond measure and can paralyze our moral imaginations—yet which still remain the suffering of the past, seemingly of less weight, less realness?

These ethical questions bear on how we experience time. Augustine taught that past, present, and future are simultaneously present to God and thus are in actual relation to us through our actual relation to God. He thought the experience of time and eternity is a lot like how it feels to recite a poem, psalm, or song from memory—it seems to come from the expectant future, passing through the present, to return to memory (see *Confessions*, XI).

Augustine spoke as if the future and past were actually and simultaneously present to divine eternity, which to modern minds can sound like either soft mysticism or hard determinism. We tend to think of the past as context and the future as possibility, not as actuality. Even so, an implication of Augustine would be to discern that we are already, even now, in a real ethical relationship with futures unknown.

So far, we have taken clues from piety as gratitude and from time as ethical relations with past and future in the present. I take a third clue from the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber.

Many know of Buber's distinction between I-It and I-Thou relations. I-it relations are with discrete matters remembered from the past, anticipated of the future, which are definable, objectively or subjectively.

We have I-It relations with things, persons, memories, ideas, feelings, desires, dreams—with anything we can sense, talk about, or analyze. I-It relations are one-directional, moving from me to an object or from an object to me and are not inherently mutual.

I-Thou or I-You (*Ich und Du*) relations are inherently mutual. They encounter us in the present moment, in meeting and departing, in dialogue and conversation, and in mutual, shared silences between strangers.

Many assume I-Thou relations only happen between people. Yet Buber thought we enter into mutual relations with words, songs, artistic and literary expressions, and with natural phenomena like trees, cats, even glittering crystals when they catch us up in their particular immediacy—as they meet us and address us.<sup>2</sup> For Buber, the ethical realm is most real in the relations of I and Thou, and of the “Eternal Thou” with every Thou.

The clue I take from Buber is that to be grateful for what is to come is to meet the future not first as a collective object, idea, anticipation, nor even primarily as possibilities, but to meet the future as a Thou meeting the present. We encounter the future as it arrives and addresses us, much as we

are addressed by persons.

Yet it is not always pleasant to be met by the future—so again, how can we realistically greet the future with the openness of gratitude?

My last clue comes from imagination. There is a moment in Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved*, when the unchurched preacher, Baby Suggs, speaks to African Americans in a wooded clearing outside Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1859. The sermon itself is incredible, telling us to love ourselves when we are otherwise unloved. We are told especially to love our unloved bodies, even our body parts. “The dark, dark liver—love it, love it,” she says.

Morrison prefaces this sermon in the clearing with comments on Baby Suggs's style of preaching:

*She did not tell them to clean up their lives and go and sin no more. She did not tell them they were the blessed of the earth, its inheriting meek or its glorybound pure.*

*She told them the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. If they could not see it, they would not have it.*

Morrison does some remarkable things here: that she connects imagination with grace is the most noticeable. She does not mean grace is



Stephanie Paulsell, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, and Robert Franklin



Holly McKissick, Ayanna Johnson Watkins, and Sandhya Jha

merely imaginary; rather, imagination is part of the reception of grace. Baby Suggs believes that the imagination is one mode of *receiving* gracious love. To imagine grace is already to be receiving it.

A more subtle thing she does in the passage is to link imagination to perception, to *seeing*: “. . . the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. If they could not see it, they would not have it.” To imagine is not just to invent images in the mind but to perceive, more attentively and thoughtfully, what images, colors, sounds, and expressions the

world offers us.

Perhaps the most subtle thing Morrison does is to liken imagination to a moral and religious imperative to love. Imagine your bodies, love your bodies. Likewise, to be grateful for what is to come would be to imagine the unknown future attentively, openly, lovingly and without nostalgia or false sentiment.

#### The future as Thou?

I imagine two large objections to my thesis about encountering the future as Thou. The first is that “the future” is a falsely concrete idea, a generality without the real particularity of any kind of relationship, I-Thou or otherwise. My answer must be that the future always arrives in particular meetings or encounters that have the character of surprise, partly expected yet partly unexpected.

A door opens, an email appears, a text or context speaks anew, and makes unexpected claims upon us. Futures yet to come, which we should be imagining, are first of all the fu-

tures of persons and creatures, not of probabilities or predictions.

A more serious objection to our being grateful for what is to come is the sheer magnitude of tragic suffering—whether it be interpersonal or political, culpable or contingent—suffering that is always on the way. To this objection, I reply that with DDH what we imagine coming are persons who through intelligent pastoring, counseling, teaching, and scholarship will be ministering to tragic suffering and challenging suffering with new forms of resistance, love, mercy, and joy.

Even now, we hear their inviting voices. They meet us in doorways and hallways, neighborhoods and wildernesses, face to face and through various media. Future persons on the way are already filling our present with relationships and ministries, as yet unknown but coming, always coming.

Now, it remains true that to meet unknown futures with gratitude you must plan for them; and when you plan, your orientation may shift between time and space. In planning this celebration, we imagined converging spaces: the House, University, denomination, nation, globe.

All these spaces can suffer the anxieties of uncertainty. With the globe and nation, anxiety is terribly apparent: the survival and flourishing of the living environment and the future of governments of public honesty and responsibility are deeply in question. And that the globe and the nations have always been vulnerable, precarious spaces cannot give us much comfort today.

Nevertheless, gratitude would invite us to imagine global realities in their particularities, not just as fateful totalities. In macro and micro places, there will be people and communities striving to resist and reconcile, to mend worlds and facilitate joys and justice, in ways we both can and cannot yet imagine. Among these agents of caring in the midst



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of tragedy will be persons seeking to transform ministry and education. Some of these persons of the future are already finding their ways to the House and University.

We also considered the spaces of the Disciples of Christ and Stone-Campbell movement. During the decades of the House, the Disciples changed institutionally: from movement to denomination, to partnerships with other denominations; to links with places like the Disciples of Christ in the Congo, the Roman Catholic Church with whom we have enriching official conversations, the Churches of Christ whose interested members have often nourished the House; to individuals who find Disciples through campus ministries, through NAPAD, the Disciples Peace Fellowship, the Disciples LGBTQ Alliance. In such spaces, the House meets the church to come.

I am actually not so anxious about the denomination's future—yet who knows what forms the future will bring. Sometimes I think the Disciples of Christ will return to being a diverse, less structured movement. Sometimes I think our present forms of life have more life than we realize. Perhaps the Disciples idea will reemerge in other communities and communions. In any case, the House imagines new ways to seek out and welcome Disciples. While manifestations change, our imperatives will endure: to renew the church in gratitude, to follow the ecumenical spirit, to reasonably interpret new life in Christ.

And with the principle of reasonable interpretation, we return to the space of the House and the University. It would be useful sometime to reflect on how relationships between the House and the Divinity School, and between the Divinity School and the University



of Chicago have been both resilient and contingent. Suffice it to say that with every new dean of either institution, and with every generation of faculty, the form of our partnership transforms.

Transformation will always be cause for anxiety and anticipation. Even so, the House and the School are a living, independent, and mutual relationship, always emerging, always in process—a bit like the old Chicago school's idea of God! And I don't wish to predict what the House, the School, or ideas of God will look like in a hundred and twenty-five years! Except to say . . .

We do meet the future of the House and Divinity School in the faces and voices of students, teachers, and ministers. In the future, they will be faces of hope and voices of healing, contextualized by great tragic suffer-

ing and by promises of care, justice, and joy. We know this is true because we have seen, and heard, and imagined future voices already addressing us. They are, and will be, persons also greeting what is to come, as they listen for ethical relations of love with their futures. Some of these faces and voices have even now arrived; some are just beyond our doors; perhaps

most have not been born—we cannot quite be certain of that. And yet . . .

We are already grateful; their promises enrich and inspire us; we hail them and greet them on the way. ☞

1. Svend Andersen cites Derik Parfit and others who observe that our actions dramatically shape what future "others" there may be. He concludes that regardless of who they are—which remains utterly uncertain—religious believers (at least in Abrahamic faiths) are to "love their future neighbors as themselves." In *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, ed. William Schweiker (Blackwell, 2005), 518.

2. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (Scribner's, 1970), 56-7. The "spiritual beings" with which we may enter relations are *geistige Wesenheiten*, better approximated as "forms of spirit" or expressive forms and works, including art. See Steven Kepnes, *The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology* (Indiana University Press, 1992), 23.



Neal Kentch and Larry Bouchard

## News briefs

These stories and more, coming in the next *Bulletin*



### Vargas and Gilpin honored

Historian and former DDH and Divinity School Dean W. Clark Gilpin and David A. Vargas, President Emeritus of the Division of Overseas Ministries, received the Distinguished Alumnus Award on July 23 at the DDH Luncheon at the General Assembly. Mr. Gilpin reflected on the anniversary theme, *Grateful for what is to come*, commenting: “Living toward the future is a collaborative act of moral imagination.”



### Convocation 2019

On June 14, Disciples Divinity House marked the conclusion of its 124th academic year and celebrated its graduates. Among them were Disciples MDiv graduates Jack Veatch and Ellie Leech, AMRS graduate Devon Crawford, and ecumenical resident Noriko Kanahara, who earned her PhD in the Department of History. Veatch was ordained on July 14 at the First Christian Church in Stow, Ohio, on July 14, and will study at the Ecumenical Institute of the WCC in Bossey, Switzerland, next year. Leech, a member of Chicago Christian Church, will continue to serve children and youth there while she completes CPE and other ordination requirements. Look for the inspiring Convocation address by Allen V. Harris, DDH trustee and Regional Minister of the Christian Church in the Capital Area, entitled, “Reviving Our Passion for Faith Seeking Understanding: The Wilderness Imperative for Now.”



### Seven new Disciples House Scholars for fall 2019

Seven individuals have been selected as new Disciples Divinity House Scholars for fall 2019. Four MDiv students hail from Kansas, California, Chicago, and Maine: Ross Allen, Aneesah Ettress, Danny Sanchez, and Benny VanDerburgh. Three come from Disciples-related colleges to enter the MA program: Emily Griffith (Bethany), Paige Spencer (TCU), and Landon Wilcox (Lynchburg).



### An invitation to commitment and action

Extend the welcome of the House by ensuring accessibility to the first floor. Help to support creative leaders and critical ministry into the future with scholarships and immersive learning opportunities. Every gift makes a difference. In addition, gifts to the Jim and Peggy Powell Scholarship or the Kristine A. Culp Scholarship will be matched thanks to the generosity of a trustee. And, all documented estate gift commitments can be counted toward the 125th anniversary goal. For more information, please contact Associate Dean Yvonne Gilmore (gilmorey@uchicago.edu) or Dean Kris Culp (kculp@uchicago.edu) or telephone 773-643-4411.

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Our gratitude we here proclaim ... for old friends and new ones, for speakers and singers and storytellers, for taco trucks and tattoos, for the quiet of the Chapel of the Holy Grail, for ideas and imagination, for a future to plan for, for meals and worship to share, for the generations before and the ones to come. Thank you to all who helped to mark, think toward and about, and celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Disciples Divinity House on May 24-26. Photo credits: Adam Frieberg

