



# EMPATHY IN EDUCATION

by Rev. Dr. Craig Atwood '87 MDiv  
Charles D. Couch Chair of Moravian Theology

**Greetings from the Seminary. I hope you are staying safe and healthy and continuing to learn. I know we have all had to make significant adjustments during this COVID-19 crisis, and it has been encouraging to see how our alumni have been innovative with worship, counseling, and other activities.**

My wife, Julie, and I participated in online Holy Week services, which included a virtual Maundy Thursday communion and Easter Sunrise Service with MTS alumni Ginny Tobiassen '12 and Andrew Heil '12. At the request of the Moravian Board of Cooperative Ministry, I recorded an 8-part series on the meaning of the Easter Morning Liturgy in the Moravian Church, which is available on YouTube. It hasn't been all work, of course. We also rewatched all of the Harry Potter movies. If you are curious, you can also find recordings of my talks on how the Harry Potter books teach Christian virtues on YouTube.

Like most schools in the United States, we had to make a sudden transition from traditional classes to online classes in March. Thankfully, many of our faculty at MTS have had some experience teaching online, and so we were able to make the transition without too much disruption. But, it is always a challenge to redesign a course midstream. We had to cancel three field trips in my World Religions class, but this allowed for some additional student-to-student education since we had more time in class for students to share their own faith traditions. For years we have taught students that they will need to be flexible and able to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, and this spring we faculty got the chance to model that flexibility as we found new ways to achieve learning objectives.



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# THANK YOU!

Thank you alumni and friends for your continued support of the students and programs of Moravian Seminary during this ever changing and uncertain time. We celebrate the generosity of individuals who gave financially during our Time of Caring Campaign, raising almost \$20,000. These funds support all aspects of our programs, and have had a powerful impact as our faculty and students continue to encounter the stresses of teaching and learning during a pandemic.



## MTS FACULTY & STAFF

Pictured here is the first MTS faculty and staff meeting after Moravian College and Theological Seminary began social distancing practices and all classes and meetings were held online. Many faculty and staff chose “virtual backgrounds.” The rest of the faculty and staff seemed satisfied to reveal that they all have the same taste in wall colors (or have never gotten around to painting because they are busy doing Seminary work).

From Top Left: Barbara Martell, Amy Silvoy, Rachel Starmer, Elizabeth Young Miller, Craig Atwood, Nelson Rivera, Jill Peters, Rob Szabo, Dave DeRemer, Jannette Saeger, Audrey West, Marcella Kraybill-Greggo, Jane Weber, Randy D’Angelo, Michelle Santiago, Riddick Weber, Beth Toler, Frank Crouch, and Josh Tonkay.

### Atwood Cont.

The bigger challenge is that everyone—faculty, staff, and students—have experienced so much change all at once. We have been holding faculty and staff meetings via Zoom, but we really miss the energy of having people together in Bahnsen Center. It seems strange for the lunch table to be empty and the hallways silent. The direct intervention and support that is such a central part of the classroom experience can be much harder to provide at a distance.

Even though we have been innovative and have approached this crisis with both faith and prudence, we are aware that our students are going through an experience without precedent in our lifetimes. We are very aware of the personal challenges all our students are facing:

- The student who works the night shift at a local hospital to keep hospitals running. She comes straight to work after her shift and then catches some sleep.
- The student from Africa who is graduating but cannot find a flight to return home to his family.
- The international students who are in isolation in a student apartment instead of getting to visit Washington, D.C. or New York City.
- The student whose mother-in-law passed away from COVID-19 without having her family near her.
- The student who had a brain injury a few years ago and is struggling with so much screen time in online classes.
- The students whose internships and field education were disrupted by the stay-at-home orders and had to quickly learn how to “do church” by Zoom and FaceBook.
- The students who do not want to have audio or video turned on when they log in to Zoom meetings because of the difficult family life they manage while continuing classes.
- The students whose little brothers and sisters, whose parents, whose children, are now under their care because of COVID-19 but still want to complete their courses.
- The student in Albania who is only allowed to travel once a day to care for her elderly parents in a different part of the city and that time is during our class time.
- The students studying from home with their spouses working from home all while homeschooling their children.

We have much to be proud of at Moravian Theological Seminary, but right now I am most proud of the resilience of our students and the way they are supporting each other during this crisis. I am writing this just after having taught my World Religions class with 15 wonderful students from widely varied backgrounds whose comments on discussion boards have been supportive and loving. Since we had to cancel our field trip to the mosque, one of the students volunteered to share his personal experience of growing up as a Muslim in the United States in the midst of 9/11 and its aftermath. I am also proud of my colleagues who have put in countless hours of work to make the sudden transition to online teaching. It has not always gone smoothly, and none of us are experts at digital technology, but we are learning with the students: learning new skills, and learning how to be gracious and forgiving of mistakes. Never before has empathy been more important in education. This year is unlike any other in the history of MTS, but we continue our mission to educate our students and prepare them to beacons of hope in a difficult world. Δ

# COMMUNION DURING A PANDEMIC

by Rev. Mandy Mastros '17 MDiv-MSW  
Pastor of Lancaster Moravian Church



One of the things I have found most intriguing during this time of coronavirus is the ways in which people have transformed practices, purposes, and even industry for the sake of meeting a need in the community. A Ford plant is retooling their automobile-making facility to make ventilators. Clothing manufacturers have begun making PPE equipment. Distilleries have started making hand sanitizer. One local distillery in the Lancaster area reached out to LanCo MyHome to offer a donation to folks who were out on the street. That sanitizer was dropped off for us to use and pass out at our food distribution—80 small clear bottles with simple labels that say “Hand Sanitizer; Blessings of Good Health to you; Know that you are Loved!”

The plan was for one volunteer to squeeze some onto the hands of food recipients before they took their items and to give a bottle of sanitizer to anyone who requested it. One volunteer mentioned that this felt like Holy Communion to her. Communion during a pandemic: this image resonated deeply within me. It is indeed communion during a pandemic, and the experience of sharing this life-sustaining liquid has been sacred. The cup we share during communion is often referred to as the cup of salvation poured out for all of us, just as the sanitizer poured out of the bottle onto the hands of individuals receiving it. There was no way to pour the sanitizer without some of it splashing onto my hands and even onto the ground. It was lavish and a little messy and beautiful. I could not give this gift without receiving its benefits.

There were two scents you smelled as you open the bottle: alcohol and essential oils. As folks rubbed it into their skin, the air was filled with the smell of lavender, lemongrass, patouli, and other pleasing aromas. I couldn't help but think of Mary and the others taking spices to Jesus' tomb. I couldn't help but think of the costly nard poured on Jesus' feet. I couldn't help but think of the oil dripping down Aaron's beard. All of these beautiful scents lingering in the air as a reminder of the sacredness of this moment.

The responses to receiving this pouring out were varied. Some, feeling shame, acknowledged how dirty their hands were as they put them out in front of me. Some laughed as the cold liquid hit their hands and splashed all over. Some apologized for the way it splashed back on me. Some thanked me multiple times. Some shook the excess off their hands while others rubbed every last bit of it in until their hands were completely dry. Others refused, skeptical about hand sanitizer, a few even calling it poison. I marveled at the beauty of God's people even in these responses that so closely mirror our responses to being offered the gifts of salvation and grace that Christ has prepared for us.

This, from start to finish, is indeed what Communion looks like during a pandemic. Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Divine Parent, and from the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen, thanks be to God! Δ



Top Row L-R: Dan Miller '16 MDiv, Prof Riddick Weber, James Lavoy '14 MDiv.  
Middle Row Left: Katie Van Der Linden '06 MDiv.

## HOLY WEEK ONLINE

During Holy Week, several MTS professors, students, and alumni assisted in the leadership of an online version of the “traditional Moravian Passion Week Readings.” Coordinated by the Moravian Church Without Walls, Moravian Interprovincial Board of Communications, and the Southern Province Board of Cooperative Ministries, the services were offered through Zoom. Members of the MTS community served as readers or in the production and broadcast of the readings. Each night roughly 250 devices were logged into the service. Recordings of the readings are available on the Moravian Church Without Walls Facebook page.



# HOLDING IN THE LIGHT

by Angela York Crane '20 MACC



I have always taught and experienced that spiritual disciplines/practices build our capacity to “live under the cross,” as Quakers name it, and connect with ourselves and others in non-usurious ways.

This morning, I was holding in the Light the concept of capacity. I feel a lack of capacity to hold all that is happening in my internal world and the external world. (As a Jungian-oriented person, my sense is they are the same.) I wonder if my capacity is being ripped and shredded even as it enlarges to meet my need and the needs of the world.

It is my sense that very few of us have the ability to hold what is happening right now. For most of us, it is a time of holding-as-able and experiencing the ripping and shredding of solitude, uncertainty, and groundlessness. My usual “go to” spiritual practices are not working. Instead, I need a body-based discipline, I need written prayers, the *Angelus*, the daily prayers of the Corrymeela community, the *Seven Sacred Pauses* of Macrina Wiederkehr. Lately I have been lighting a wick on a rock, an oil lamp one of my spiritual direction students gave me, and simply naming categories and individuals I am praying for/holding in the Light until the wick burns out. I’ve replaced the kerosene based oil with olive oil, so the flame burns out at varying speeds. I simply pray until the flame expires, and then I close.



I am reminded of the times I have felt isolated with a less extensive ripping and shredding than now: the move to Australia, the boys quickly finding their way in school, Mr. Angela busy in work while I adjusted to the loss of work as well as the ability to work out of the home, my strong support system far away. These times helped me to transmute loneliness and loss of impact into solitude and being. There is a sense of that process happening again.

I am holding myself with very tender care during this time. I know that this is an opportunity for deeper healing. I also know that it is an immersion experience that requires deep care and feels collective and generational as well as personal. Δ

Angela and her husband live in Philadelphia where she works as a Spiritual Director. Angela shared that her masks were made by a group that is sewing them for people with chronic illness or who are serving as essential workers.

# ENROLLMENT KEEPS ROLLING

by Rev. Randy D'Angelo '16 MDiv  
Director of Enrollment



Though the response to COVID-19 has significantly impacted the way we do things day-to-day, I continue to forge ahead with the Seminary's Fall 2020 enrollment drive. We've already begun admitting applicants for the Fall, and as much as I treasure hosting prospects for on-campus visits and personal meetings with me, we're making the best of the situation in other ways.

With the help of video conferencing, 100% of applicant enrollment interviews we've conducted so far for the Fall term have occurred virtually. Online advertising has not let up, and if one compares year-over-year the cumulative number of newly accepted students, we're even ahead of where we were this time last year! Also, to somewhat make up for the lack of in-person connections, we hosted a Virtual Information Session on Saturday, April 25. Faculty, staff, and students gathered online to share with prospects about their programs of study and their assorted experiences and perspectives within the larger Moravian Seminary community.

So who do you know that is discerning a vocational call to help others? Maybe that person is you! Whether it's ministry, chaplaincy, clinical counseling, spiritual direction, or advanced theological study, today is the day to reach out and take that next step. Request more information or arrange to meet with me via our website: [go.moravian.edu/seminary](http://go.moravian.edu/seminary). Δ

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# COMPANIONSHIP IN COMMUNITY

International Students Living Half a World Away From Their Families



Pictured (l-r), Ezekiel, Paul, and Jackson gather around their kitchen table during Holy Week and sing hymns, take turns reading the Passion Week texts, pray, and reflect on the texts that are read.

For the past two months most families have spent more time together than ever. In stark contrast, our international students are living half a world away from their families as the pandemic has taken hold. Gratefully, they share a Seminary-owned residence on Main Street and have been able to shelter-in-place in community. MATS students, Paul Silwamba from Zambia and Ezekiel Kassanga from Tanzania, along with Jackson Mlimuka, a Moravian College MBA student from Tanzania, have been grateful for their companionship as housemates. Each of them is in touch daily with their families by video chat through the app, WhatsApp, and encouragement comes from both sides of the phone to wear masks, wash hands, and obey the rules of social distancing. All three men are Moravians by faith and during Holy Week shared the Passion Week readings in their Zambian and Tanzanian traditions. Δ



# SHARING FAR & WIDE



Dewey Mullis '18 MACC-MSW shared, "My biggest challenge with teletherapy is that it can be quite difficult to connect emotionally to a person on a screen. You miss out on their body language, their un-digitized voice, and the power of being physically present in times of struggle."



When not in class, Grace Hochella MACH serves as a Visiting Nurse for Lehigh Valley Home Care. She tells us that much of the protective equipment she uses—essential items like masks, gloves, goggles, booties—is rationed. Heading the need for more facemasks for patients and caregivers, Grace sews masks during her off hours to add to the supply for her agency. She is sporting a facemask that is the fruit of her labor!



As pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Hokendauqua Rev. Christy Potter-Kass '19 MDiv is known for her humorous and creative church signs. She continues this tradition even while social distancing from her home.



Feeling the deep need for connection and grounding within the community, Marcella Kraybill-Greggo offered her last Wisdom Way of Knowing Gathering online. Thirty-six participants gathered together via Zoom to participate in Lectio, body movement, chanting, and reflection.



As part of the Moravian Board of Cooperative Ministries, Rev. Adam Goodrich '17 MDiv, Rev. Zach Dease '12 MDiv, Sarah Durham, and Rev. John G. Rights '95 MDiv share via YouTube a few songs, a prayer, and the Moravian Daily Text as an expression of encouragement and light.



You heard about One World Together at Home, the massive on-line concert with huge headlining names—but did you hear about QuarintUNES? On Wednesday, March 25th via Zoom, Associate Professor Beth Toler and her partner, Kayla, led a live sing-along for MTS faculty, students, and staff.



Assistant Professor Michelle Santiago has been volunteered every Tuesday, since the PA schools have been closed, at a local elementary school handing out bagged breakfast and lunches for those children in the underserved/ under-resourced population. She will continue volunteering through the “end” of the school year.



Jane Weber and many others change their Zoom background to different image/location every day. Most of our meetings begin with the question, “where are you today?” The photos typically spark conversations about memorable vacations, natural beauty, and gratitude for traveling with others.



# SAVE THE DATE

## MAY 20-JUL. 8 FOUNDATIONAL PERSPECTIVES FOR MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPY (8 CLASSES)

This multi-week course introduces the foundational framework for the ethical practice of relationship, marriage, and family counseling in a multicultural society.

Wednesdays, 2:00-5:00 pm, via Zoom Video Conference  
Presenter: Mary Elizabeth Toler, MDiv, ThD, LMFT

Full Course (8 classes, 26 NBCC-approved CEs): \$680  
Or Make-Your-Own Short Course: \$100 per Class  
CE Certificate: \$15  
Contact Hours: 3-26

**Additional information and registration details** can be found at [moravianseminary.edu/continuing-ed](http://moravianseminary.edu/continuing-ed) or by contacting [starmerr@moravian.edu](mailto:starmerr@moravian.edu).

# DATE CHANGE

## AUG 29 2020 COMMENCEMENT

Saturday, 11:00am, College Hill Moravian Church  
Reception to follow in the Saal, Bahnson Center

# SUPPORT THE SEMINARY ANNUAL FUND

Please consider making a gift to the Seminary Annual Fund before June 30, 2020. Your ongoing and generous support ensures Moravian Seminary remains a source of strength, peace, and community no matter what the future may hold.

Your gift can also be made to the Seminary Seeds of Hope Fund which enables us to upgrade our technology, support our students, and allocate money when and where needs arise. The Seeds of Hope Fund will remain open until June 30, 2020.

### Ways to Give

Check: 1200 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018  
Online: [moravianseminary.edu/makeagift](http://moravianseminary.edu/makeagift)  
Text to Give: Text MTS to 41444 for options



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