

PIONEER

April 2018

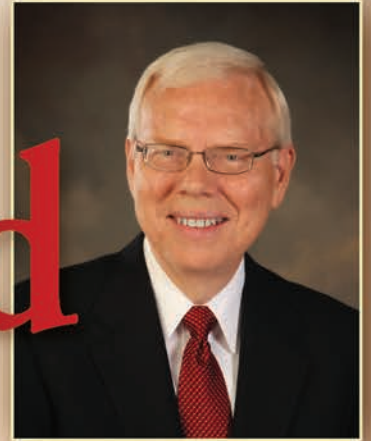
Luther Rice College & Seminary

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|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| 1 | A Personal Word from Dr. Flanagan | 5 | Service in Southeast Asia |
| 2 | The True Vine | 6 | Experiencing Mission |
| 3 | Archaeological Discoveries in Israel | 7 | New Tax Laws |
| 4 | A Life of Ministry | 8 | Israel Tour with Luther Rice |
| | | 10 | Recruiting Events |

"I am the Vine, you are the branches..."

JOHN 15:5

A Personal Word



from **DR. FLANAGAN**

When I remember Billy Graham, I think of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I recall my family watching the crusades on television and the crowds who came forward at the invitation as they sang the hymn “Just as I Am.” Those images will always remain with me. They elicit memories of my family coming to faith in Jesus Christ and the change that was wrought in our faith and practice.

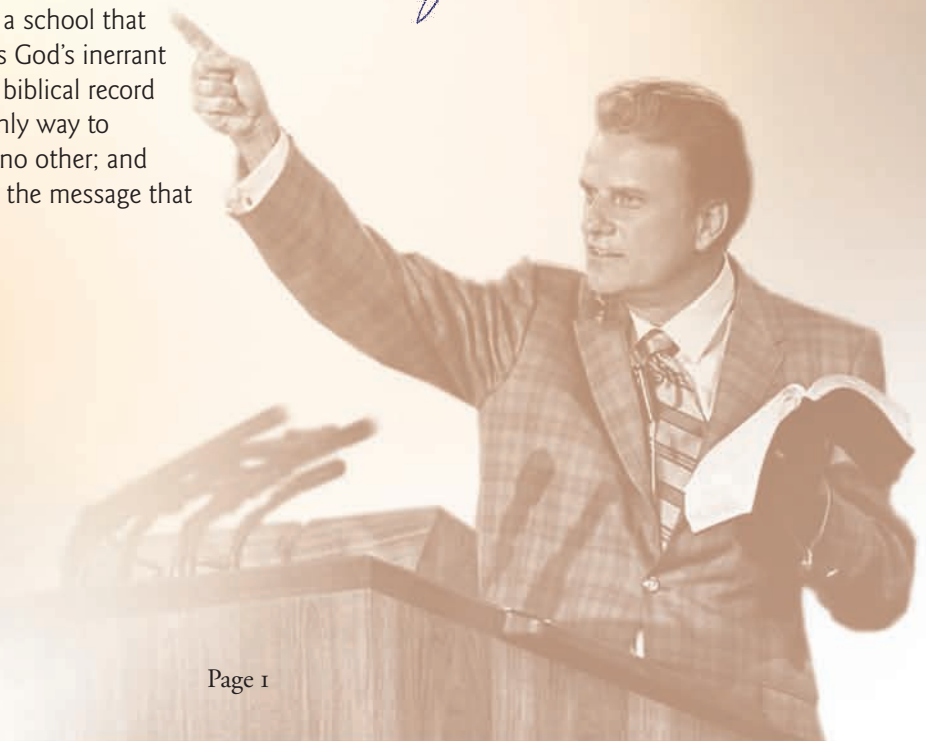
Today, the gospel seems to be harder to find. There is a lack of clarity of the message of the gospel. Oftentimes, the message today is aimed at success rather than salvation, at reformation rather than transformation, and at a higher moral good rather than repentance.

My hope is that, when people think of Luther Rice, there is nothing unclear about what we teach. I want them to have the image of a school that clearly proclaims that the Bible is God’s inerrant Word; that the historicity of the biblical record is true; that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and there is salvation in no other; and that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the message that people need and must hear.

Many do not realize that Billy Graham actually struggled with the veracity and authority of the Scriptures for a season in his early years of preaching. But through study and the power of prayer, he eventually settled his doubts and affirmed the Bible as truth. Once the issue was settled, he resolved to preach that Jesus Christ is the only hope for salvation based on the Word of God and through the power of the Holy Spirit.


As Luther Rice goes forward, I pray, as do all who serve with me, that we will do the same—believe and teach the Bible as God’s Word and proclaim the gospel that says Jesus Christ is the Savior and the only way of salvation.

James H. Flanagan
President



The True Vine and His Branches

by Dr. William Wilson



A bewildering sense of doom seeped into the disciples' hearts. Convinced Jesus was the King, the Messiah who would restore Israel's pride and lift her head above the nations, they had left everything to follow Him. Now, He was openly declaring His imminent death (John 12:27-36). How could this be? How could their long-awaited hopes now collapse into bitter disappointment? If He was not their hope, there was no hope at all. They could not yet see that Jesus' death was the means of securing unfailing hope and that He was preparing them to shine the light of this hope to the ends of the earth.

In his farewell message to His grieving disciples, Jesus reveals something about Himself and His people that empowers each of us for a lifetime of fruitful service: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser" (John 15:1). By explicitly characterizing Himself as the "true vine," He alerts us to the fact that His vine analogy is more than an agricultural image selected for its illustrative value. God once planted another "vine," and Jesus has come to fulfill its role in salvation history.

The psalmist sings of God's love for Israel, "You removed a vine from Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground before it, and it took deep root and filled the land" (Ps. 80:8-9). God appointed Israel to be a blessing for all nations (Gen. 12:3), to bear the fruit of righteousness and thus announce to the world the saving wonders of her glorious God (Isa. 49:6). But Israel failed, and judgment fell: the vine "is burned with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of your countenance" (Ps. 80:16). In His death, however, Jesus has triumphed over the sin that poisoned Israel's roots. By His resurrection, He remains the true vine, the source of life that Israel could only imperfectly symbolize. Jesus fulfills Israel's role as God's life-giving vine, planted in the world to bear the fruit of the Father's saving righteousness among the nations. In the death of Jesus, Israel's hopes did not die; they were fulfilled.

Jesus is the true vine, pulsating with resurrection life. God the Father, our sovereign "Vinedresser," has determined this life-giving power should bear fruit through the vine's "branches." The people of God, His ambassadors of salvation to the world, are now found not in tragic Israel, but in intimate abiding relationship with their True Vine. Jesus declares in John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." Like Israel, we are powerless on our own, suitable only for the fire. But if we walk in intimacy with Jesus, our souls saturated with His Word and our hearts earnest to seek His glory in prayer (v. 7), Jesus promises we will bear the fruit of life. Sin-deadened souls and wastelands of lifeless brush will live again by the True Vine's resurrecting power. The glory of the Lord will cover the earth, like a vine spreading salvation to the end of the age.

Recent Biblical Archaeological Discoveries in Israel



Over the past couple of years there have been some major archaeological discoveries in and around Israel that all point to a biblical reference. These discoveries provide physical evidence and support for some keystone events in the Bible. Every year, archeologists and students are making new discoveries in the Holy Land that verify the Bible's accuracy. Some of the most significant in recent years are discussed in this article.

This year, archaeologists announced the discovery of a sizable 1,500-year-old ornate fountain and pool complex at the site of what is thought to be an ancient church near Jerusalem. The pool is part of a system of waterways excavated at Ein Hanniya Park between 2012 and 2016. The pool system dates back to between the fourth and sixth centuries A.D., during the Byzantine era, according to the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Other items found at the site include a rare silver coin from the fourth century B.C. and an ancient capital, which is part of a pillar used as roof supports. Experts say that the capital is typical of royal structures found from the First Temple period between 960 B.C. and 586 B.C. The exact purpose of the pool system is unknown, but it could have been used for irrigation, washing, or baptismal ceremonies.

The site has also been linked to the New Testament account of an Ethiopian eunuch's conversion to Christianity by the Apostle Philip described in Acts 8:26-40. "We believe that some early Christian commentators identified Ein Hanniya as the site where the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized,"

City gates of Dan, from Genesis 14:14, one of the oldest excavated gates known to exist.

reported Archaeologist Dr. Yuval Baruch. "The baptism of the eunuch by St. Philip was one of the central events involved in the spread of Christianity."

The site is one of a number of amazing archaeological locations in Israel, many of which shed light on early Christianity. In 2017, for example, archaeologists uncovered an exquisite 1,500-year-old Christian mosaic that was once the floor of a church or monastery. Experts found the mosaic during an excavation in the ancient Mediterranean coastal city of Ashdod-Yam, now part of the modern city of Ashdod.

An inscription written in Greek dedicated to the structure's builders offered archaeologists a vital clue to its construction. The inscription notes a date on the ancient Georgian calendar, enabling experts to date the building: "By the grace of God (or Christ), this work was done from the foundation under Procopius, our most saintly and most holy bishop, in the month Dios of the 3rd indiction, year 292." The year 292 corresponds to the year 539 A.D.

In addition, experts believe they have found the lost Roman city of Julias, formerly the village of Bethsaida, which was the home of the apostles Peter, Andrew, and Philip. The Roman city of Julias was founded on

the site of the Jewish fishing village of Bethsaida during the first century A.D., according to the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius. Jesus also healed a blind man at Bethsaida, according to Mark 8:22-26, while Luke 9:10-17 describes a nearby location for the feeding of the five thousand.

For more information on discoveries in the Holy Land, visit the Israel Antiquities Authority website.



The Madaba Mosaic Map section is the oldest surviving original cartographic depiction of Jerusalem, dated to the 6th century A.D.



Luther Rice Alumnus Honored *for* a Life of Ministry



Dr. Clark Hutchinson pastored Eastside Baptist Church in Marietta for 20 years, and the church experienced remarkable growth during that time. Hutchinson graduated from Luther Rice in 1977 with his Doctor of Ministry degree.

During his ministry, Hutchinson led his church to construct a state-of-the-art Christian activities center that became the benchmark for other churches to emulate. The center was completed in 1987 and it continues to serve the church, Eastside Christian School, and the community.

On Sunday October 8, 2017, the church had a recognition service in which they renamed the activities center “The Clark and Josephine Hutchinson Center.” There were approximately 350 people present for the renaming of the center, including current Eastside members who were also members during Hutchinson’s pastorate, former church members, former staff members, and members of the Hutchinson family.

Singer Jack Price stated that, during the Hutchinson era at Eastside, the music ministry, under the direction of Billy Jack Green, was one of the top three in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Current Eastside Pastor Dr. John Hull presided over the ceremony and noted that the Hutchinsons came to Eastside in 1973 when the church was only 12 years old with a membership of 1,300. Hull stated, “By the Hutchinson’s 15th anniversary, the church

had baptized 3,000 new converts. By the 1990’s, the church had become one of the model churches in the SBC and had grown to a membership of over 6,000.

“In 1981, Hutchinson helped launch Eastside Christian School,” added Hull. “The founding of the school was another indication of Hutchinson’s visionary and bold leadership. He was an incredible leader, and his legacy still lives on at Eastside, not only in the naming of the Hutchinson Center, but in the daily purpose of Eastside—to reach men and women with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Babbie Mason, a former Eastside member and Christian recording artist who was encouraged by Hutchinson to launch a professional singing career in the 1980’s, sang for the dedication.

In response to the dedication, Hutchinson stated, “We are very honored by this and thank Dr. Hull for his leadership in putting this together. Not too long ago I became quite ill. While I’ve recovered, I am so glad I got to experience this day. Our years of growth here were phenomenal. The Lord really blessed them.”

Hutchinson, along with his lovely wife Josephine, exemplify true servant-leadership for the glory of God’s Kingdom. Luther Rice is proud to call Hutchinson a supporter and alumnus.

Student Serving Challenging People Group in South Asia

Editor's Note: This missionary is a current Luther Rice student working in South Asia and other remote areas of that region. He sent us this report from the field.

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" — Matthew 28: 18-20

Greetings! I would like to give a brief history of when God began His work and His calling in my life to be an ambassador for Him in South Asia.

It was March of 2015, and I had just landed in Asia before going to do some pastoral training in South Asia. I was absolutely devastated when I saw all of the burkas and thobes, the clothing of Muslims. I was moaning like a child and praying to God, asking Him to please show me that He had people there. I got on the plane headed for my destination with my Bible in my lap, praying and seeking the Lord for some kind of comfort.

All of a sudden, one of the flight attendants walked by me and ecstatically said, "Is that the Bible?" Just as ecstatically, I replied "yes." Then she said, "What is your favorite Bible verse?" And before I could say anything she said, "Mine is John 14:6, 'I am the way the truth and the life no one can come to the Father but by me!' I'm a soul winner. God has me on this plane for a reason!" Thus, God had heard my cry and I was able to manage through the flight, as I talked to her every chance I got, and as she was able to sit right in front of me for the landing as we prayed with each other!

In my destination for the first time (undisclosed for security reasons), I cried and prayed every day as we drove off to villages to teach. There are idols up and down the streets with altars, and as you pass by,

people are offering sacrifices and praying to them. It was one of the most emotionally painful things I have ever experienced. But the first time I taught, a non-believer, brought by one of the pastors, accepted Christ's beautiful salvation as described Revelation 21. After this, I was so happy to see the receptiveness of these people to the gospel, especially when I went to hang out with the youth. It is difficult for them; they get beaten and kicked out of their houses for accepting Christ.

On my second trip, I was able to stay with the indigenous people and build stronger relationships, evangelize, and teach about discipleship. God specifically, clearly, and unquestionably put me about six hours away from my host, living in a native pastor's orphanage. Here, the children were oppressed, and I was able to encourage all the youth in nightly group sessions with a program that God gave me that night to teach them foundational things throughout the week. One of them started a Bible study with the youth that continues to this day. Also, it was while I was staying in this place that I got the burden to go to an unreached people called "the Dolpo," about which my missions professor at Luther Rice Seminary had been praying for since the 1990's. This people group is one of many that have zero churches within the area where they live, remote in the Himalayas. They are shamanistic and live about ten days travel from any city since there are no roads.

When I came back from South Asia, I went to Clarkston, Georgia, to evangelize. God put me with an animistic tribal people from Burma to disciple. As such, I have been practicing 2 Timothy 2:2 with them and have had an amazing chance to see the grace of God work in these people and myself. I plan to go to this region on a medical mission and meet with many teams to see what God is doing and to learn how he wants us to be a part of His plan there. I want to go see the Dolpo and hear how God wants to bring the Gospel to these people.





Luther Rice Alumnus Experiences Missions

by Brian Henderson

I have learned many things through my involvement with Luther Rice, (especially considering I have been a student here since 2010), but the one thing that stands out the most is how Luther Rice has a heart for missions. My name is Brian Henderson, and I am pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Fairfax, South Carolina. I have been at Bethel for over five years and have seen God do some amazing things through missions in our church. God desires for His Church to be involved in missions, and I would like to share with you a little about what God showed me on my most recent trip.

Nine years ago, I became involved with Dr. Ron Long and his mission trips to Jamaica. I met Brother Dean Dawson on the first trip. He was running the camp that coordinated the trips. Since then, I knew I needed to be involved in missions and that it had the power to change the lives of not only the people we were ministering to, but also those who went on the trip. It was through my relationships with Long and Dawson that I was able to get the people of Bethel Baptist Church active and engaged in missions.

A few years after beginning my work at Bethel, the church took its first trip to Jamaica. Since then, we have been to Haiti and several places in the southeastern United States. Most recently, the congregation at Bethel helped send me to the Ukraine with Brother Dawson and a small group of other pastors. In the Ukraine, God showed me some amazing things! I had never been on a "vision" trip before. We had always gone to do a specific project or task. This was different. I was there to simply see where God was at work and how we could join in His work there. Dawson works with Operation Mobilization (OM) and coordinates with churches in the United States to work with and support all of OM's missions in over 110 countries.

We left at the beginning of October. My church rallied, paying for my entire trip through some fund-raisers and good, old-fashioned giving. I only knew Dawson and one other pastor, Dale Reeves (another Luther Rice graduate). But God used the other two pastors to bless me in a mighty way as well. God showed me, through our team and all of the missionaries and local pastors that we met, what a truly awesome God He is. Furthermore, He showed me that our ministry at home can often be too one dimensional.

*Follow Me,
and I will make
you fishers
of men.*

MATTHEW 4:19

We visited several different types of Christian ministries while in the Ukraine, all working hard to share the love of God with their

communities. God showed me that there are so many different approaches to missions. He also showed me that a few godly men can have a huge impact on each other, as well as brothers and sisters in Christ that don't even know one another. The situation in the Ukraine is complicated, they are fairly new at being independent and the people are not sure that democracy is better than communism. The Eastern Orthodox Church has corrupted the gospel, and people are in real need of hope. While we may not be able to improve their lifestyle (and I am not sure that should even be the objective), we can still give them hope in Jesus Christ. This applies to our ministries in the U.S. as well.

This trip has really made me examine what we are doing at home with all of our programs and even our worship services. Are we keeping God the goal of all things? Are we reaching out to the lost like we should? It is so easy to get caught up in doing stuff at the church but accomplishing little for the furtherance of the Kingdom. Mission work is perhaps the single most important thing we can do as a church and as individuals. It has the ability to change us dramatically. So, how are you involved in missions?



New Tax Law Expands Charitable Gift Options

According to the Sharpe Group, in December 2017, Congress passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the most comprehensive tax law revisions package in more than 30 years. The provisions of the new law will affect every American in some way beginning now. The objective of the legislation was to reduce taxes for most people while simplifying the tax code through a combination of lower rates and the repeal or reduction of long-standing deductions. The great news for non-profit agencies, including Luther Rice College and Seminary, is that charitable deductions passed through the process essentially unchanged—and even somewhat improved. The final version of the law not only upheld the charitable deduction, but it also expanded its benefits for many donors. Below are listed some of the ways to make the most beneficial charitable gifts in light of the new legislation.

The new tax law expands the gift amount limit you can make as a charitable donation. Prior to the new law, gifts of cash could eliminate tax on up to 50% of one's adjusted gross income (AGI) each year. Under the new law, this percentage amount was increased to 60%. In addition, any amounts not deductible in one year can be used to reduce your income taxes in up to five additional years. Another significant tax change with the new law was the repeal of the provision that required some higher income taxpayers to reduce their itemized deductions by a certain percentage of their income. Depending on one's financial situation, this provision caused some donors to lose up to 80% of the value of their deductions. Going

forward, the removal of this provision will allow those donors to enjoy the full value of their deductions.

The new law retained the special tax benefits that come with giving gifts of appreciated assets including securities such as stocks and mutual funds. If you have owned the securities more than one year, you may still claim a deduction for their full market value, not just the original market value when purchased. In addition, you do not have to pay capital gains tax if the security is donated directly to a charity. Gifts of appreciated securities may be deducted and eliminate tax on up to 30% of one AGI. As with cash gifts, you can claim any excess deduction for up to five future years.

One may also make charitable gifts that will be received in the future as part of your will and estate plans. The new legislation allows for even fewer estates to be subject to estate tax. The amount that can be left to heirs free of federal estate and gift taxes has been increased to approximately \$11.2 million for single individuals and \$22.4 million for married couples. This means it may now be more practical to use all or a portion of one's tax savings to fund charitable gifts as part of your will and estate plans, because your heirs will receive the same amount of money, or more than they would after paying taxes under the prior law.

As always, consult a tax advisor to learn more about how to maximize your charitable gifts and for professional estate and will planning. For more information on how to donate gifts to Luther Rice please contact Mr. Louis Hardcastle at 770-484-1204 ext. 5287.

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LutherRice.edu/israel2019



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Tuesday, June 12, 2018 • 12:00 - 1:00 pm

Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas • Room C145

- A State of the Institution Address by Dr. James Flanagan, President
- A Supurb Meal Presented by Centerplate Catering
- A Time of Fellowship with Alumni and Friends.
- And a special gift for all attendees

For Tickets and Details Visit:
LutherRice.edu/luncheon



Luther Rice Family,

I have been given permission from Whitney to share a recent prayer request she wrote to her professor. Like many of our students, Whitney has been called to Luther Rice to further her education amidst the everyday responsibilities of ministry, family, and work. She now faces health related issues, but she's determined to finish her schooling. Please pray for our sister in Christ, and the other students like her, who find themselves in need of prayer today.

"I was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2013. While on my 4th cycle of chemo, I decided to stop. Through months of prayer, my family and I decided that I would move to Arizona from Atlanta for alternative treatments. The outpouring of love, prayers, and support for me has been an absolute miracle. I had to leave all of my family, including my two girls (11 and 15) and my husband. It has been a heart-breaking time for all of us. However, I know without a doubt that this is what I am supposed to do. I trust in Jesus Christ, He who strengthens me, and that I will have an amazing testimony when I get back. This was a decision we made quickly, so I have been stressed getting everything together. I will continue to still go to school at Luther Rice. Thank God it's online!"

Serving Him,
Steve Steinhilber
Execute Vice President

Luther Rice Recruiting Events Schedule for 2018



To spread the word about the degree programs offered at Luther Rice, we will have a representative on site at each of these religious-based events. If you are attending any of the events below, please stop by the Luther Rice booth and visit with us.

- January 18-20, G3 Conference, Atlanta, GA
- January 29-30, Georgia Baptist Mission Board Evangelism Conference, Warner Robins, GA
- January 25-27, First Baptist Church Jacksonville Pastors Conference, Jacksonville, FL
- February 2-3, Johnny Hunt's Men's Conference, Woodstock, GA
- February 26, Feed My Sheep, Sandy Springs, GA
- April 13-14, Firms-Berea School of Ministry, Atlanta, GA
- April 27, Luther Rice on Campus Preview Day, Stonecrest (formerly Lithonia), GA
- June 11-13, Southern Baptist Convention Pastor's Conference and Annual Meeting, Dallas, TX
- June 12, Annual Alumni & Friends Luncheon, Dallas, TX
- June 18-22, National Baptist Convention Congress on Christian Education, Oklahoma City, OK
- August 17-18, Georgia Baptist Mission Board Go Georgia Conference, Macon, GA
- August 25, New Student Welcome & Orientation on Campus, Stonecrest, GA
- September 3-7, National Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN
- September 10-12, Getty Sing! 2018, Nashville, TN
- September 18-20, H.B. Charles Jr. Cutting It Straight Conference, Jacksonville, FL
- September 27-29, American Association of Christian Counselors National Conference, Dallas, TX
- October 22-23, Missouri Baptist Annual Meeting, Springfield, MO
- November 5-6, North Carolina Baptist Annual Meeting, Greensboro, NC
- November 11-13, Florida Baptist Annual Meeting, Miami, FL
- November 11-13, Georgia Baptist Mission Board Annual Meeting, Warner Robins, GA
- November 12-14, Tennessee Baptist Annual Meeting, Jackson, TN

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The Pioneer (USPS 052-470) is published bi-annually
by Luther Rice College and Seminary.

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Luther Rice is accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) and the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE).

Luther Rice is an Equal Opportunity higher education institution open to any qualified individual without regard to race, religion, sex, age, color, national or ethnic origin, or disability, except where required by specific religious tenets held by the institution.

PLEASE REFER PEOPLE LOOKING FOR A DEGREE TO LUTHER RICE

Now Accepting Applications for Fall Enrollment

If you know anyone who is looking for a college or seminary degree please tell them about Luther Rice. Over 50% of our new students come from personal referrals. If you need any materials to give to people or for you church, please email us at **enroll@LutherRice.edu**.



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