

PIONEER

Luther Rice College & Seminary

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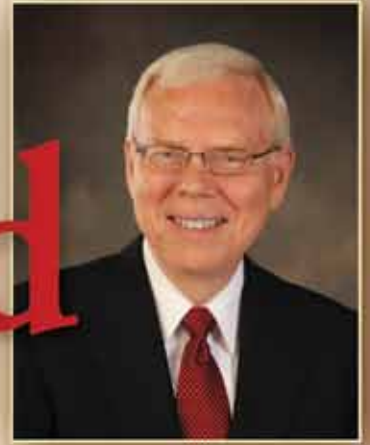
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... He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

A Personal Word



from **DR. FLANAGAN**

When I was a child, my church used to sing a song entitled “Farther Along.” Fifty years later, I find the song has more meaning than it did then and that I have a better understanding of past events than I did at the time they occurred. Still, there are some of life’s events that I will never understand this side of heaven. And, at this point in my life, that’s ok. I’m grateful to know that I can leave those concerns in the capable hands of an omniscient God.

This peace, though, does not mean that we stop moving forward in our faith. No matter our age, we must not become complacent—as long as we have breath, we can serve our heavenly Father. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

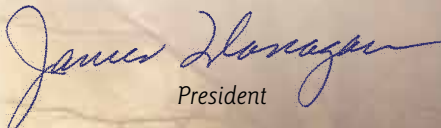
As I write this message, we are preparing for the reunion of Woodlawn Baptist Church (WBC) on the Luther Rice campus in Woodlawn Hall. When WBC disbanded and sold their campus, the mortgage was given to Luther Rice. Through the generosity of WBC, the institution was able to construct a new building, which we named Woodlawn Hall in their honor. The building houses the Smith library as well as classrooms for students on campus. Since it opened in 2004, thousands of students

have come through that building as they pursued their ministerial training. Thankfully, in Woodlawn Hall, the memory and legacy of Woodlawn Baptist Church continues.

But our gratitude for the generosity of others doesn’t end there. Recently, alumni Dr. Roe Nall, along with his daughters and grandson, donated a gift in memory of Dr. Nall’s wife, Mayfred, who went home to be with the Lord as he was speaking from the pulpit. That significant gift, the largest individual gift in Luther Rice history, will help provide biblical education to ministers around the globe to spread the gospel of Christ to the nations. The memory and legacy of Mayfred Nall will be felt for generations to come through the lives touched by those ministers who will study at Luther Rice.

Even though we will face trials in life that we cannot anticipate or attempt to mitigate, God can bring about good through those difficulties. He has been doing so since time began; the Bible is full of examples.

We are anticipating an excellent fall semester and look forward to providing a biblical education for Christian ministers and leaders around the world. Please keep us in your prayers.


President

2017

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR AWARD

DR. KERWIN B. LEE

Congratulations to Dr. Kerwin B. Lee for being named the Luther Rice Alumnus of the Year.

Dr. Kerwin B. Lee is the senior pastor and organizer of the Berean Christian Church in Stone Mountain, Georgia, a ministry that began in 1996 and has grown from 200 individuals to more than 8,000 active members. In 2006, he established a second location in Snellville, Georgia, which has also experienced rapid growth since its inception. His charismatic personality, contagious humor, and friendly attitude have attracted people to his ministry from all over the world.

Prior to founding Berean, Lee held positions as a youth pastor, minister of Christian education, and senior pastor, as well as a staff person for the parachurch organization Young Life. He also served as a counselor for the Billy Graham Crusade and as a student pastor in Kingston, Jamaica.

Lee was raised in Los Angeles, California, and attended Central Arizona Junior College in Coolidge, Arizona, on a basketball scholarship. There, he received an Associate of Arts in General Education. He continued his education and basketball career at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, where he earned a Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education. While in Alaska, he received and accepted the call to preach and prepared for full-time ministry. As a result, he relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, and enrolled in the Inter-Denominational Theological Center at the Morehouse School of Religion. At ITC, he earned his Master of Divinity in Christian Education. He also has a Doctor of Ministry from Luther Rice Seminary.

Lee is also the founder of "A Word for the Times" Ministries and the author of three books: *Winning the Battle Over Negative Emotions*, *Finding Joy in the Word of God: 52 Old Testament Bible Study Outlines*,

and *Feeding Your Soul with the Word of God: 52 New Testament Bible Study Outlines*. His passion and commitment is to help others understand the Word of God in practical everyday language. He has a television and internet ministry that reaches people nationally and internationally. He is happily married to his wife Yolanda and they have two sons, Kerwin II and Kernard.

Lee epitomizes how Luther Rice graduates are reaching people all over the world with the love of Christ.





Alumnus Serving Foster Care Children in Georgia

The Story of Tom Covington

Tom Covington, a graduate of Luther Rice, is the bi-vocational pastor of North Rockdale Baptist Church, located in Rockdale County, Georgia. In addition, he is the executive director of Uniting Hope 4 Children (UH4C). Covington graduated from Luther Rice in 2010 with his master of arts in Christian studies.



Pastor Tom Covington

UH4C is a faith-based foster care agency that works directly with the state of Georgia to place children in two-parent homes. UH4C acts as a bridge between the state and local churches to do foster care ministry. In recent years, there has been a growing understanding of the value faith-based agencies can bring to the community. In 2016, there were 13,500 children in the foster care system in Georgia—now, the local church can be direct and intentional in helping meet those needs in an official capacity.

UH4C seeks to recruit the whole church in locating willing and able foster parents for Georgia's children. Not everyone can take a child into his or her home, but many people want to help. That's where UH4C steps in and trains church members to meet needs. There are multiple ways to assist in the care of foster children, and UH4C has organized and quantified those opportunities for the church. If a family can

care for a child in their home, UH4C has created a seamless path for that to take place legally through the foster care system in Georgia. It takes families about three months to be approved to be fostercare parents.

The Faith and Community Alliance in Georgia connects the state with faith-based organizations for assistance. This agency facilitates the working relationship between the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFACS)

and faith-based organizations like UH4C to meet the needs of the people in the community. Currently, there are 132 children being cared for through the efforts of Covington and UH4C.

Covington worked in the DFACS office in Newton County, Georgia, for fifteen years prior to accepting his position at UH4C. When he left DFACS to take his current position, he was managing all the caseworkers in the county. He has been the pastor at North Rockdale Baptist Church for three years.

Per Covington and recent TV news reports, children needing foster care services in Georgia will swell by nearly 20% in 2017. This increase is primarily caused by a growing drug addiction problem in the state. The need is great now and will only grow larger very soon. If you think your church may be interested in starting a foster care ministry, please visit the agency's website at **UH4C.org** for more details and to arrange an initial meeting.



Dr. Grant Ethridge and Liberty Baptist Church

Touching Hearts and Lives in Northern Virginia

Dr. Grant Ethridge is the senior pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Hampton Roads, Virginia. When Ethridge came to Liberty in 2006, the congregation responded enthusiastically to his straightforward message and powerful preaching style. He challenged the church family with a vision to “Gather the People” for a larger outreach in Hampton Roads and around the world. God has blessed Liberty under his leadership in miraculous ways.

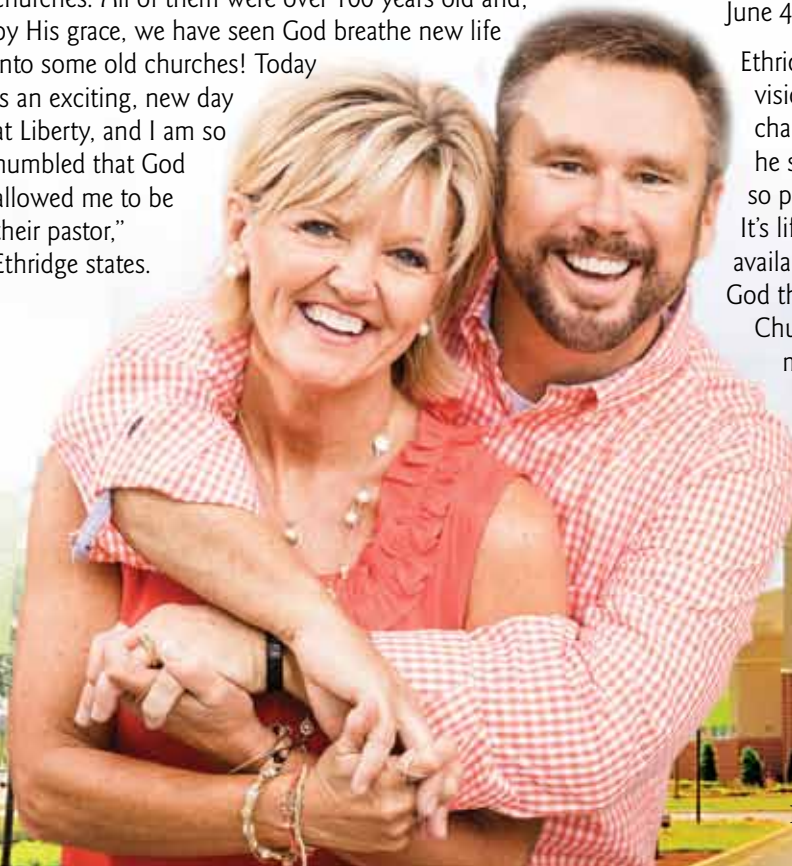
Since 2006, the church has baptized more than 4,770 people and has been frequently recognized in the Top 100 Fastest Growing Churches in the United States, with over 9,800 members. Liberty is a multiethnic, multi-generational, multi-site church, with locations in Hampton, Suffolk, Chesapeake, and Williamsburg. This year, Liberty launched LibertyLive.Online, a new streaming worship experience. Liberty’s average worship attendance for 2017 is 5,890, and they saw 17,011 people attend one of the many services offered this past Easter. But most importantly, the people are experiencing God’s presence at Liberty and lives are being transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit. “God’s call on my life, personally, has been to ‘replant’ churches, or to facilitate church revitalizations. I have been in the ministry over 33 years and only pastored 3 churches. All of them were over 100 years old and, by His grace, we have seen God breathe new life into some old churches! Today is an exciting, new day at Liberty, and I am so humbled that God allowed me to be their pastor,” Ethridge states.



Ethridge was ordained to the ministry in 1984. His various speaking engagements include denominational services and events at universities and conventions. His preaching ministry has not been limited to the local church, but has extended to television, conferences, revivals, and international mission fields. Ethridge holds six academic degrees, including a Doctor of Ministry from Luther Rice and a Doctor of Divinity. He served as president of the National Southern Baptist Convention Pastors’ Conference, as president of the Arkansas Baptist Convention, as president of the Southern Baptist Convention of Virginia, and on many other state and national boards and agencies.

Ethridge and his wife Tammy are both natives of Georgia. They met at his first church, Bowman Baptist Church in Bowman, Georgia, and were married in 1985. He and Tammy have four children and seven grandchildren. They also have a son, Christian, who went to be with the Lord June 4, 1992.

Ethridge enjoys preaching, leading, and casting vision. “There is nothing like seeing Jesus change lives, communities, and the world!” he says. As Liberty Baptist Church’s website so powerfully proclaims, “It’s not just church. It’s life.” Living in the fullness of life is only available by maintaining a relationship with God through Christ. Ethridge and Liberty Baptist Church serve as a guidepost, a directional marker, a beacon to those seeking that fullness of life, leading them to the Almighty God.



ALUMNI MIN

Send your updates to

Jason Robbins, '14 Robbins accepted a call as pastor to Cockeysville Baptist Church in Cockeysville, Maryland, north of Baltimore.

Loucille Hollis, '13 Hollis founded Kairos Connection, a non-profit outreach ministry focused on inspiring and equipping women to embrace and walk in their divine purpose. The ministries mission is to support young women and help them build competencies needed to empower and promote a path to successful and productive adulthood. Hollis recently published a book of devotions entitled "Meditation Moment Volume I."

Randy Reese, '96, '98, '00, '09 Reese celebrated 25 years as pastor of New Rocky Creek Baptist Church in Mansfield, Georgia, in October 2016. He completed his first book, *Tomorrow's Revelation Calls for Today's Purification* in September of last year. The "Until That Day" radio ministry began airing in June. Reese's preaching can now be heard every Sunday at 1:00 p.m. on 92.1 FM, WJGA out of Jackson, Georgia.

Steve Johnson, '13 Johnson just completed a five-year term in Wyoming serving as a missionary church planter and lead pastor with the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Commission (NAMB). He is moving back to Texas to take care of elderly parents and is seeking a new pastorate position.

Naphtali Foster, '15 Foster is working at AIC CURE International Hospital, an orthopedic Children's hospital in Kenya, started by the

non-profit CURE International. Foster works as the media coordinator, helping gather content like stories, photos, and videos that CURE then distributes to its donors.

Rita Vehon, current student Vehon has a new book published entitled *Radiant Faces*. The book was written to bring hope to Christ followers who have difficulties receiving and believing the truth that they are forgiven. The book is available through Amazon.

Michael Gaddy, '05, '11 Gaddy was recently accepted into the Doctor of Education program at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Christine Thomas, '15 Thomas was called to a pastorate position at Great Hope A.M.E. Church in Midway, Alabama.

Jack Thomas, '16 Thomas became the Senior Pastor at the Statham First Baptist Church in Statham, Georgia.

Vic Fordham, '16 Fordham was elected pastor of Morningside Baptist Church in Soperton, Georgia on June 4, 2017.

Gary Smoot, '12 Smoot recently published a book entitled *When the Stars Stop Shining*, which provides an in-depth look at the fall of Lucifer and what could have influenced him to make his decision. The book also is about Smoot's personal encounters with angels and demons. The book is available through Amazon.

MINISTRY NEWS

Alumni@LutherRice.edu

Brad Hall, '13 In May, Hall moved from Kentucky to Florida to be the senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Palatka, Florida.

Shawna Brooks, '15 and current student Brooks started a ministry focused on enhancing the quality of life of those affected by breast cancer. The organization promotes awareness and provides health education programs, as well as ensures access to quality healthcare, resources, and support. Information about the ministry can be found at abidinglovefoundation.org.

Craig White, current student White started as pastor of Pisgah Baptist Church this past April.

William Wayne Gardner, '85 Gardner retired from the presidency of Toccoa Falls College and enjoys working with TeachBeyond and the Boys and Girls Club as a volunteer.

Kamran Husain, current student one year ago, Husain, along with his wife, started a full-time ministry school in Morelia, Mexico. The brand-new school is designed to train students to serve in their churches, plant new churches, or go to the mission field. The program lasts one year, is intensive, and trains students to become leaders in order to make a difference in the world.

Mark Riser, '10 Riser just returned from a mission trip to Haiti where the team conducted a Good News Club with 200 children and 90

professions of faith. The team also built new restroom facilities and a pad for an outdoor kitchen.

DeFrance Gurley, current student Gurley preached his initial sermon this past May.

Alex Dulay, '10 Dulay is pastoring the Chosen Vessel Christian Family Church, which works with first generation Filipino people in National City, California.

David Gardner, '10, '11 Gardner was named senior vice president and chief nursing officer at Wyoming Medical Center in Casper, Wyoming.

Ann Kerlin, '05, '06 and current faculty member Kerlin had two professional articles published this year, one in the journal *SAGE OPEN* and another in the *Journal of Mental Health and Spirituality*. She will also be presenting at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference in Nashville in September.

Peggy Hale, current student Hale traveled to Africa in July to provide medical help and instruction to people living in the slums of Kawangware in Nairobi, Kenya. She also taught students at the Chosen Children of Promise (CCP) ministry how to swim. Children sponsored by CCP get a Christian education, medicine, and food supplements. HIV positive children get needed life-saving medicine along with their parents.

Continued on page 7

ALUMNI MINISTRY NEWS

Continued from page 6

Tom Parrott, '10, '13 Parrott is presenting his doctoral dissertation in September at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri.

Johnson Varkey, '10 Varkey started a radio ministry in San Antonio, Texas, and can be heard on AM 630 as well as online at kslr.com and am630theword.com. The program is entitled *Rehoboth Voice*.

Clara Stephens, '12 Stephens started the Women for Christ International Foundation, Inc. The organization supports the advancement of women's spiritual and basic needs, helps women realize their full potential, and provides pastoral care counseling to empower women. The foundation can be found at wfcif.org.

Thomas Schwartz, '03 and current student Schwartz was called to serve as pastor of the non-denominational Collinsville Community Church in Collinsville, Oklahoma, in July. His book, *The Key That Unlocks the Bible*, was recently published by Brentwood Christian Press.

Karen Ross, '15 and current student Ross was appointed the new Director of Christian Education at St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church in East Point, Georgia.

John Donahue, '16 and current student Donahue proposed an extensive evangelism program for his Baptist church in Gulfport, Mississippi. His proposal was accepted and he has begun the program by teaching a 10-week summer Sunday School course on personal evangelism.

Bryan Kowal, '14 Kowal became the full-time student pastor at the First Baptist Church of Elfers in New Port Richey, Florida.

Terry Jacobs, '13 Jacobs received his Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. He continues to pastor the River Evangelical Church in Clarion, Pennsylvania, and is also working as an adjunct professor for Lancaster Bible College.

Christopher Keefer, '08 Keefer graduated from Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention with his Doctor of Ministry degree. He serves as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Poolville, Texas.

David Ashley, '17 Ashley was asked to write a chapter in an upcoming book entitled *How to Disciple Men*. He and his wife will also present their Christ-centered domestic violence counselor training program entitled "R3" at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference this September. Their ministry is entitled Cross Strength Ministries.

Scott Harrell, '96, '06, '08 Harrell was awarded his Doctor of Ministry degree in Leadership from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, in 2016. He teaches Old and New Testament Survey courses at Alabama Southern Community College and developed an online New Testament course for the institution.

William McLeod, '10 McLeod is the youth pastor at Chapel by the Sea Baptist Church in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and was promoted in the police department where he works to the community service officer.

Justin Meyer, '06 Meyer was appointed as the director of the El Paso chapter of the Juvenile Justice Ministries for Youth for Christ. They minister weekly to juveniles in the El Paso County Juvenile Detention Facility.



Not-Your-Parents Sunday School Lesson

Back in the 1800s, Sunday School lessons were often supported by visual aids. Children walking into a Sunday School classroom might find Scripture hanging on the walls, a table and chairs, and other decorations to aid in spiritual learning.

Now, fast-forward over 150 years and these basic elements of learning have not changed. Children sit in small chairs, look at maps of Israel, and take home coloring sheets given to them by their teachers. It's time to find a better way to effectively reach and teach children living in a digital age.

Dr. Wesley Miller, a recent graduate of Luther Rice College and Seminary, reevaluated this basic learning template in his Spring 2017 doctoral project.

The purpose of the ministry project was to address the problem of low retention and engagement in the lessons being taught in the children's ministry at a local church. Instead of traditional media, they introduced a holographic-style teaching system called "The Leia Display" for presenting Bible stories



Dr. Wesley Miller

to children. Their retention levels were measured against those who received traditional instruction. Not only were the children more excited to learn about God, but they were also able to comprehend twenty-five percent more of the material when interacting with the content in holographic form.

The Leia Display creates a holographic-style image in fog (using air and water vapor), much like the message carried by R2-D2 in the original Star Wars

movie and played on the droid's holographic projector. Although not an actual hologram with 3D projection, this unique technology makes it possible to walk through the image, touch it, and interact with it. Streams of barely visible fog become an image carrier and their laminar structure allows the display of high resolution content. It is like projecting a high-resolution image onto a flat screen but the "screen" is actually fog vapor.

To learn more about this technology go to:
www.theleiproject.com.

Congratulations Dr. Miller, for making James 4:14 come alive and advancing the teaching methods available to reach people for Christ!

Can a Saved Person Be Lost Again?

By Dr. David Mapes, Professor of Theology

The question is often asked, “Can a person lose his salvation?” The first principle of the method of biblical interpretation called “hermeneutics” is to examine the clearest verses concerning the issue. Two passages fulfil this principle: Ephesians 1 and Romans 8. In Ephesians 1, God the Father wills that, through Jesus, the believer “has redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (v. 7). Though the saved are bought and paid for by this atonement, God chooses to leave the believers on the earth for a time. He seals them with the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit, signifying that they are His purchased possession (vss. 13- 14). This sealing is good until the day of redemption, the day God takes all believers to their eternal home. Until that day, the Holy Spirit is God’s good faith promise that He will come for every believer and bring them to their eternal inheritance (v. 14). Can a saved person be lost again? This could only happen if the believer could change the will of God.

In Romans 8, Paul told the Romans that they are in the Spirit because the Holy Spirit indwells them (v. 9). If the Holy Spirit does not indwell a person, then that person is not saved. Since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, every believer becomes an adopted child of God and a joint-heir with Christ (vss. 16-17). In addition, every adopted child has been called, justified, and, in the mind of God, glorified (vss. 28-30). [Glorification, though still in

the believer’s future, is settled in the omniscience of God.] Therefore, Paul asked who can bring any charge against the believer? Because Christ has paid the penalty of the believer’s sins, the believer can never again stand guilty before God. Can a saved person be lost again? Clearly, he cannot.



Dr. David Mapes

Well, what about Matthew 7:21-23? Jesus says that only those who do the will of the Father can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Another principle of hermeneutics is to understand the difficult passages in light of the clearer passages. In Scripture, “saved people” equals “those who do the will of the Father” (See John 8, Romans 2, and James 2). Why is this so? A saved person is one who is indwelt by the

Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9), and a person who does the will of the Father is one who is caused “both to will and to do His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13) by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Therefore, a Christian may be described either as “one who is saved” or as “one who does the will of the Father.” This verse has nothing to do with how to stay in the Kingdom but rather who can enter the Kingdom. After being saved by grace, a person does not keep his position in heaven by works. Eternal life is, after all, eternal.



Woodlawn Baptist Church Holds Reunion on Campus

On July 29, over 100 former Woodlawn Baptist Church (WBC) members gathered on campus in Woodlawn Hall for a long-overdue reunion. The reunion was a special time for old friends to catch up with one another and enjoy an old-fashioned, dinner-on-the-grounds Sunday dinner. Before the meal, the group sang a song and “raised the roof” with their sweet melodies. Everyone in attendance seemed to enjoy connecting with past members and friends—sitting and talking in person instead of via Facebook pictures or posts.

WBC thrived in Decatur, Georgia, from the 1950s to the 2000s. In its heyday, the church had thousands of members serving in many different organizations. Of the many special ministries at WBC, they had a booming bus ministry that brought in about 200 children from the community for Sunday School and children’s church. WBC had multiple graded

choirs, RAs and GAs, Sunday night training union, a large Sunday school program, a weekly preschool program (open to the community long before it was available in public schools), a vibrant youth group and youth choir, and much more.

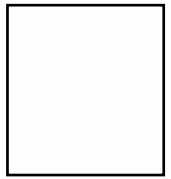
With the congregation dwindling in the 2000s, WBC sold the buildings and grounds to a Latino church group so the legacy of that land would continue on for God. WBC was able to give their mortgage as a generous gift to Luther Rice. This provided the resources we needed to build a classroom and library building on campus. That building is now called Woodlawn Hall and is a place where thousands of Luther Rice students have acquired biblical and ministry education. We are thankful that the legacy of Woodlawn Baptist Church continues on in the lives of Luther Rice students—students who are ministering all over the world.

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Now Accepting Applications for Spring 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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