

# WHEATON

VOLUME 24 | ISSUE 1 | WINTER 2021



A Sacred Call to Artistic Lives

A Century of Commitment, Community,  
and Christ at the Center

Truth-Telling and Inquiry:  
Wheaton Alumni in Journalism



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“The arts offer opportunities that better enable us to understand and mitigate the immediate conditions before us. The arts commission a uniquely human creativity with which to explore alternatives and perspectives that would otherwise remain hidden and that are essential in wrestling with the challenges we face.”

**Dr. Michael Wilder, Dean of the Conservatory of Music and Division of Arts and Communication, p. 30**



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### On the Cover

Julia DiBiase '21, a Christian Formation and Ministry major and Psychology minor from Newburyport, Massachusetts hand-sculpts clay in the Adams Hall Ceramics Studio. *Photo by Josh and Alexa Adams*





PHOTO BY DAINI LIU '20



## Promises, Not Predictions

*Dr. Philip Graham Ryken '88  
President*

**A**t a recent board meeting for the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, author Andy Crouch reflected on the difference between promises and predictions.

What prompted this line of thought was an issue of *The Economist* that Crouch read in December 2019—an issue focusing on predictions for 2020. That magazine proved to be essentially useless, for it failed to predict the global pandemic that has affected us all so profoundly.

At the beginning of the school year, people asked me to make a variety of predictions: “When will campus be open again?” “How will COVID-19 affect enrollment?” “What will be the long-term economic fallout for the College?”

It’s hard to answer these or any other important questions about the future. Predictions are inherently unreliable. And despite the hope that making good predictions will help us reduce uncertainty, by creating a false sense of security they may actually make some challenges harder to overcome, not easier.

Writing this column in August—for a magazine that will be published in December—makes me especially aware of how hard it is to anticipate the future. Will what I write as

we finalize our preparations for one of the most unpredictable semesters ever still be relevant when you read these words around Christmastime?

Rather than making predictions, I prefer to trust in promises—specifically, the promises of God.

Trusting God does not take away most of our uncertainties about the future. Faith in Christ may in fact lead us to run greater risks for the kingdom of God, as we sometimes do at Wheaton College. But it does give us the absolute assurance that God will be with us, come what may.

What promises has God given us in Jesus Christ? That our sins are forgiven. That he will never leave us or forsake us. That his power is made perfect in our weakness. That people from all nations will be saved through the power of the gospel. That beyond the sickness and sorrow of this fallen world there is a heaven of health and joy for every one of his precious children.

These are not mere predictions; they are the sure and certain promises of our faithful God. Trusting them enables us to “leave futurity in God’s hands,” as C. S. Lewis once put it, and gives us the fearless hope we need to live for Christ in anxious, troubled times.

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# News & Profiles

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## A COVID-Safe, Thunder-Strong Semester

*Student events during fall semester were different than usual, but successful nonetheless*

Words  
Eliana Chow '21

Photo  
Ethan Edmunds '21

**W**ith timed ticketing, multiple entrances, and seating spaced six feet apart, student groups successfully reimaged fun events while maintaining campus safety.

For example, College Union was one of only three campus organizations—in addition to Residence Life and the Chaplain's Office—planning events for more than 50 students to attend while socially distanced. The group hosted monthly coffeehouses, Pixar Movie Night on Fischer Field, and Ultimate Yard Parties (a twist on Ultimate House Parties, where student houses decorate and plan games around a theme of their choice), among other events. Each event was limited to the Wheaton “bubble.” On a smaller scale, other successful events included an evening worship night organized by Koinonia and the Chinese Language and Culture Club. Unidad also distributed individually packaged guacamole kits to the student body.

“Living in this tense time of national unrest and illness, fear, and anxiety, we're really trying to provide a space where people can come and not escape from that reality but be able to find community in that reality together,” said Madison Cash '21, CU's public relations manager.

## Wheaton Ranks #13 in the Top 25 Universities According to Alumni Ratings

In a recent study based on data from the Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey, alumni around the country were asked to relate how they felt about their undergraduate experiences, including prompts such as, “You received a high-quality education” and “You learned important skills during college courses that you use in your day-to-day life.” Appealing to alumni satisfaction is a newer method of gauging the best colleges and universities. Wheaton was the only Christian institution in the Top 25, claiming a spot among Ivy Leagues like Princeton, Yale, Harvard, and Cornell.

## Vanguard Welcomes 25 New Students

Vanguard, Wheaton's “Christian Liberal Arts gap year” welcomed its largest cohort since its creation in 2015. The gap year prepares students for college through hands-on leadership, learning, and lived experience at HoneyRock, Wheaton's outdoor leadership center in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Students earn eight college credits during their time in the cohort, studying with Wheaton faculty, with courses centered around questions inspired from the liturgical calendar.

## “Lean In Conversations” Video Series Hosted by Captain David Iglesias '80

Leading up to the November election, Student Engagement sponsored a series of interviews with faculty, hosted by Captain David Iglesias '80. These “Lean In Conversations” promoted helpful ways for students to think about voting and engaging with one another and the world during a tense and often polarized

election season. The series featured conversations on prayer with Dr. Amy Black, grace with Interim Chaplain Greg Waybright, the kingship of Jesus with Dr. Vince Bacote, kindness and Christ-centered identity with Dr. Kristin Garrett, and more.

## Conservatory Students to Perform “Marriage of Figaro” Opera

Voice students studying opera at the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music will perform Mozart's “Marriage of Figaro” early in the spring 2021 semester. Their training and performance is one aspect of Opera Mainstage, a “meticulous year-long course that provides primary attention to the careful musical, vocal, and dramatic learning of a given role as students participate in the production of a classic operatic masterpiece,” according to the online course description.

## Conservatory Livestreams Artist Series

Wheaton continues to host musicians from around the world in the annual Artist Series performances, which are available via livestream. Notable fall semester performances included Black Oak Ensemble—comprising GRAMMY-nominated violinist Desirée Ruhstrat, cellist David Cunliffe from the Chicago-based Lincoln Trio, and violist Aurélien Fort Pederzoli. In January, the Joffrey Ballet Academy is scheduled to return to Edman Chapel's stage for the third time, accompanied by Camerata Chicago Orchestra. The program will include works by Antonio Vivaldi, culminating in a world-premiere choreography of “The Four Seasons.”

Register for upcoming Artist Series Livestreams at [wheaton.edu/artistseries](http://wheaton.edu/artistseries)

## International Missionary Book Mailing

This Christmas, 416 alumni missionary families serving in 71 countries outside the United States will receive the following gifts, thanks to publishers who donate books and the College's Board of Trustees, which gives funds for shipping costs.

*Wheaton* magazine: Volume 23—Issues 1, 2, 3

*Engaging Globalization: The Poor, Christian Mission, and Our Hyperconnected World*, by Bryant L. Myers (Baker, 2017)

*Weep With Me: How Lament Opens a Door for Racial Reconciliation* by Mark Vroegop (Crossway/Good News Publishers, 2020)

*You Found Me: New Research on How Unchurched Nones, Millennials, and Irreligious Are Surprisingly Open to Christian Faith* by Rick Richardson (InterVarsity Press, 2019)

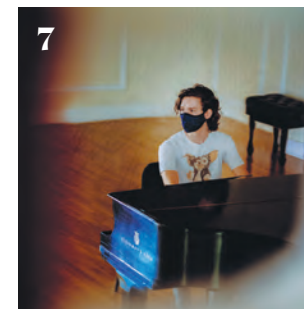
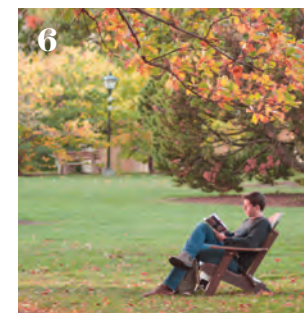
*All Together Different: Upholding the Church's Unity While Honoring Our Individual Identities* by J. Brian Tucker and John Koessler (Moody Publishers, 2018)

*Try Softer: A Fresh Approach to Move Us Out of Anxiety, Stress, and Survival Mode—and Into a Life of Connection and Joy* by Aundi Kolber (Tyndale House Publishers, 2020)

*Far From Home: A Story of Loss, Refuge, and Hope* by Sarah Parker Rubio '06 (Tyndale House Publishers, 2019)



# #MyWheaton



**1** A student stands with his backpack and college-gifted folding lawn chair, by Ada Yuan '22. **2** Student leaders prepare to welcome freshmen with free Chick-fil-A sandwiches before an event, by Ada Yuan '22. **3** Outdoor string quartet practice, by Joo Young Seo '21. **4** Students perform a bass and saxophone duet at an outdoor coffeehouse event, by Joo Young Seo '21.

**5** Members of Zoe's Feet dance ministry performed their fall show at Joe Bean Stadium, by Katie Scott '22. **6** Reading beneath autumn leaves, by Ethan Edmunds '21. **7** A student practices piano in Pierce Chapel, by Jed Edgar '24. **8** The bell tower of Blanchard Hall, by Katie Scott '22. **9** Antoine Bradford came to campus in October for an outdoor concert, by Ethan Edmunds '21.

 Want to see your photo here? Use the hashtag #MyWheaton and your photo may be published.





## Skillful and Selfless

*How a team-first attitude leads Nyameye Adom '21 and the men's basketball team to victory.*

Words  
Abby Dorman '17

Photo  
Tony Hughes

“Nyameye is a winner,” says head men’s basketball coach Mike Schauer. Nyameye Adom ’21, a computer science major from Orlando, Florida, certainly earned the title after a game-winning half court shot over conference rival Illinois Wesleyan University last season. The highlight-worthy heroics weren’t a surprise to Adom’s teammates and coaches who had seen him rise from injured reserve to the team’s leading scorer.

Long before the buzzer beater, Adom experienced a significant setback to his basketball career. On his first day of practice in a Wheaton jersey, he went down with a knee injury that caused him to miss the rest of his freshman season. In spite of the disappointment, Adom worked hard to return to competition with his teammates.

One year later, Adom began practice again with the squad that would go on to compete in the NCAA Final Four game later that year. He credits the team dynamic for much of its success, saying, “When people just care about themselves,

it really shows on the court. On this team, everyone’s thinking what they can do to help the team win.”

On and off the court, the unanimous All-Conference selection and All-Region performer embodies the heart and soul of Wheaton’s men’s basketball program. Now a team captain, Adom carries on the same team-first attitude that drew him to Wheaton as a high school recruit.

Coach Schauer notes that Adom’s skill and selflessness are a rare combination. “His biggest influence on our team is probably off the floor. His teammates love him and love being around him. That isn’t always easy when you are a player as good as Nyameye has become.”

## 1.8

Time remaining in the 2nd half as the ball left Adom’s hands. His game-winning bank shot went through the basket at the buzzer of an 80-79 victory against Illinois Wesleyan in February 2020.

## 12

In 2019-20, Adom was the 12th Wheaton men’s basketball player to earn All-Region recognition from D3hoops.com. Wheaton has had 21 total All-Region selections since D3hoops.com started the award in 2001-02.

## 17

Adom scored 17 points against Ripon College on November 10, 2018 in his 1st game as a member of the Thunder men’s basketball team.



### Throwback

Bea Gorton ’68, during the 1967-68 undefeated season, led the women’s basketball team in scoring, with 182 points, and she had a personal best of 33 points against Concordia, setting a single-game record in that category which remained for 15 years. She was also the team’s leading free throw shooter, connecting on 68 percent of her attempts. Gorton also coached the Wheaton women’s basketball team in 1969-70, posting an 11-1 record, and went on to become the first head women’s basketball coach at Indiana University (1972-76). She was inducted into the IU Hall of Fame in 2014.





## A Declaration of Hope

*In “Two Black Churches,” Dr. Shawn Okpebholo portrays faith in the midst of racial injustice.*

*Words*  
Eliana Chow '21

*Photo*  
Dorian Warneck

“**Y**ou’re supposed to be safe at church,” Professor of Music Dr. Shawn Okpebholo reflected. “But the bombing happened there.”

“Two Black Churches,” a new composition by Okpebholo, was premiered this summer by baritone Will Liverman '10 and pianist Paul Sanchez, depicting two atrocities, 60 years apart, against Black churches at the hands of white supremacists.

The first movement is based on Dudley Randall’s poem, “The Ballad of Birmingham” (1965), a narrative account of the 1963 bombing at 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed four young girls. In the poem, a girl wants to participate in a freedom march, but her mother sends her to church instead. Paradoxically, a place of safety becomes a place of death. “It’s a heartbreaking poem,” Dr. Okpebholo said. “I believe that as soon as you add text to music, it becomes the most important part. So, I just sat with that text for a long time. And then I wrote the music.”

The second movement portrays the 2015 mass shooting at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, that killed nine parishioners. The movement centers around

the poem “The Rain,” written for the composition by Charleston Poet Laureate Marcus Amaker. In his program notes, Dr. Okpebholo says the poem “is a beautifully haunting metaphor on racism and the inability of Blacks in America to stay above water—a consequence of the flood of injustice and the weight of oppression.” Musically in the second movement, nine chords represent the nine people who died that day. The progression repeats several times during the movement, starting low and ascending. “This is symbolic of going to heaven,” Dr. Okpebholo said.

In describing the tone of the piece, Dr. Okpebholo said he draws on Baroque musical techniques in terms of ornaments. However, the melodies and harmonies are more similar to contemporary Black church music traditions. The composition features musical quotations of the Civil Rights anthem, “We Shall Overcome,” as well as the classic hymns, “Amazing Grace” and “’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus.” The latter was sung to conclude the first church service held at Mother Emanuel after the shooting occurred.

“To me, that represents the hope and faith that Black Americans and the Black church still hold onto in the face of tragedy,” Dr. Okpebholo said.



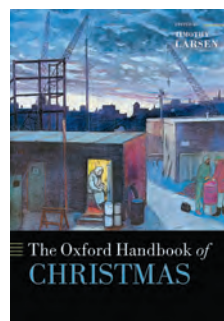


## Cherishing Christmas

*Dr. Timothy Larsen presents a multifaceted study of the holiday in a new, edited volume.*

Words  
Eliana Chow '21

Photo  
Tony Hughes



“I think of editing as throwing a dinner party,” said Dr. Timothy Larsen '89, M.A. '90, Carolyn and Fred McManis Professor of Christian Thought, about the recently published *The Oxford Handbook of Christmas*. “You’re trying to make the group as a whole interesting . . . You want to have different kinds

of people involved in writing,” he added. “I tried to think of every subject that somebody would want to read about in association with Christmas and make sure there was a chapter on that.”

These scholars’ works compose a 44-chapter, 656-page volume, covering topics from the theology of the virgin birth to Christmas traditions around the world. Dr. Larsen didn’t want the volume to have a “debunking” tone, in which scholars simply tried to break down others’ arguments. Rather, he wanted to emphasize how different people find meaning in different things.

As such, Dr. Larsen hopes the book’s content will challenge readers to think more deeply about their beliefs and those of others, which is evident in the cover art. “I wanted it to be something that was original enough that it’s a bit disorienting,” he said. An unconventional nativity scene, the painting places Jesus’ birth in a metal trailer shack in the middle of a city construction site. It’s a jolt, being unfamiliar, yet still manages to retain an element of the devotional.

“Part of the reason why I did this book is because culture has felt more and more divisive and angry and ideological,” Dr. Larsen said. He wanted the volume to be a “bridge to culture,” because that’s how he sees Christmas. In the midst of controversy and change, “I think cherishing Christmas is a good way to go,” he said with a chuckle.

“Change is an inevitable and necessary part of life,” Dr. Larsen added. “And yet for a lot of people, maybe most people, change can be hard, and how we navigate that is with continuity. I think Christmas is deeply reassuring, because things that are the same come around, even in the midst of change and difference.”

Yet, some traditions have been forgotten or neglected. Through part of his research, Dr. Larsen found that gift-giving in the name of St. Nicholas began in Christian churches. “A lot of Christians, particularly conservative evangelicals, are sometimes suspicious of Santa Claus, like he’s a rival to Jesus or secularizing the holiday,” Dr. Larsen said. “[But] Jesus told us that the best way to give is to give secretly . . . That way, you’re not trying to take credit. You’re not trying to show off. You’re just trying to help somebody.”

## Welcoming New Faculty

**Dr. Arielle Akines**, Guest Instructor, Language Resource Center Director

**Dr. Soh-Hyun Park Altino**, Associate Professor of Music (Violin)

**Captain Craig Billington**, Assistant Professor of Military Science

**Dr. Andrew Burlingame**, Assistant Professor of Hebrew

**Dr. Denise Daniels**, Hudson T. Harrison Professor of Entrepreneurship

**Dr. Olga Dietlin**, Assistant Professor of Higher Education and Student Development, Program Director of HESD

**Dr. Nancy Duarte-Gomez**, Visiting Associate Lecturer in Psychology

**Dr. Melissa Elliot**, Assistant Professor of German and German Studies

**Mr. Donté Ford, M.Div., M.M., M.S.M.**, Assistant Professor of Music and Associate Chaplain for Worship Arts

**Dr. Jamie Goodwin**, Assistant Professor of Humanitarian and Disaster Leadership

**Ms. Lindsey Hankins M.A. '09**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Theology

**Dr. Alex Haskins**, Assistant Professor of Politics and International Relations

**Dr. Peter Jantsch**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics

**Lieutenant Colonel Keith Katzenberger**, Professor of Military Science

**Dr. Steven L. Layne, Ed.D.**, Professor of Education

**Ms. Kaye Patton**, Assistant Professor of Art

**Ms. Lilianna Quiroa-Crowell**, Visiting Assistant Lecturer in Urban Studies and Anthropology

**Dr. Allison Ruark**, Assistant Professor of Applied Health Science

**Dr. Yousaf Sadiq**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology

**Dr. Wendy R. Smith**, Director of the Center for Family and Relational Health and Assistant Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy

**Dr. Halie Wenhold**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Communication

**Dr. Sean L. Young**, Associate Lecturer in Urban Studies and Faculty Director of Wheaton in Chicago

## Wheaton in the News

“ . . . voting can be an act of neighborly love. In a democratic republic, laws should be a manifestation of the will of the people. Therefore, the Christian who supports policies that do the most to assist in human flourishing is showing a deep concern for others. Voting is not a Christian requirement, but it can be a profoundly Christian act.”

Dr. Esau McCulley, Assistant Professor of New Testament, from “Black Christians have lived out their faith by fighting for voting access,” *The Washington Post*, August 20, 2020.

“ One of the ways we partnered with other groups to secure corporate sponsorships that support our COVID-19 online summits was by finding creative ways to add value for our partners. For example, be willing to go that extra mile to find out why a particular sponsor may be interested in collaborating. Find creative ways to go above and beyond their expectations to help meet this need.”

Jamie Aten, Blanchard Chair of Humanitarian Disaster Leadership, Executive Director of Humanitarian Disaster Institute, and Associate Professor of Humanitarian Disaster Leadership, from “14 Effective Ways for Nonprofits to Approach Corporate Sponsorships,” *Forbes*, September 8, 2020.

“ I don’t think parents can turn kids into our clones, and when it comes to nonessential matters, I try to hold very lightly any hope that they would perfectly agree with me. If they become adults who live with and for Jesus, my prayers would be answered, and I would do my very best not to obsess about whether they go to a different kind of church than I do or have different beliefs about what baptism means.”

Dr. Beth Felker Jones, Professor of Theology, from “Train Up a Teen: Young Evangelicals Mostly Keep Their Parents’ Faith,” *Christianity Today*, September 10, 2020.



## Tito Rapley '21

*Undergraduate Student*

**G**rowing up, Tito Rapley '21 listened to hip hop music. Today, he makes his own.

In his early years, Tito said, he let the content of the music he listened to negatively influence how he lived his life. But when he was 12 years old, Tito attended a youth worship night at the Salvation Army Corps in Waukegan, Illinois, and heard "I'm Good" by Trip Lee, featuring Lecrae. It radically changed his mindset toward rap and life. Tito discovered a whole world of Christian hip hop on iTunes and started to listen to music by rappers who were unashamed of the gospel. He began to use his own musical talents to glorify God like the artists reverberating through his headphones.

Tito's first piece was a remix of "Zone Out" by KB, and he has since released two EPs and a mixtape under the moniker RAPLEE.

In addition to his music, Tito spent the last year teaching hip hop and spoken word workshops for youth groups in Salvation Army churches throughout Chicago. The Salvation Army played a significant role in his family and upbringing—his grandparents were Salvation Army officers in Panama, and he grew up attending churches, music camps, and youth conferences sponsored by the organization.

During his time leading workshops, Tito realized there was an abundance of untapped creative potential in the Black youth he was teaching, but few who could show them how to pursue it.

"There needed to be a space for creativity to fly in the Black community," Tito said. "We needed to have a place to cultivate our talents for the glory of God."

Tito reached out to other Black creatives, gathering ten people over

two weeks' time. He launched Young, Black, & Saved—a collective that uplifts Black creative artists to do kingdom work. There are now 25 creatives in the growing collective. Tito's vision is that his hip hop music, workshops, and Young, Black, & Saved—just like the concert that radically changed his direction—will inspire young people to use their God-given creative talents to glorify their Creator.

*Words*  
Ashley Rydberg Bright '10

*Photo*  
Greg Halvorsen Schreck





## Heather Zimmerman Ph.D. '22

*Graduate Student*

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When Heather Joy Zimmerman Ph.D. '22 was 17, her best friend died and her father was diagnosed with cancer within the same week. These personal experiences—and working with others who are suffering in YouthWorks, a summer program connecting teens to missions opportunities—have fueled Heather's intention to augment the church's theology of lament and suffering.

As a doctoral student in Wheaton's program for biblical and theological studies, Heather integrates this goal with her gift for faithfully preaching Scripture. Her dissertation contends that individual psalms, particularly lament psalms such as Psalm 89, mean more when preached in the context of the entire psalter. The psalms, Heather said, model individual and communal lament, adding that lament is something white

Christians in particular can learn to practice better.

"[White Christians] often feel very uncomfortable with pain and suffering, but then we don't actually get to experience the healing work that comes through lament," she said.

As Heather has pushed through her doctoral coursework, her extroverted nature has made her grateful for the support of Wheaton's tight-knit, cross-disciplinary Ph.D. community, and the personal investment of her supervisor, Dr. Richard Schultz. Though she is a preacher in a male-dominated sphere, Heather can recall several key moments when a male colleague has affirmed her gifts. For instance, one night during a particularly difficult season, she wrote in her journal, "God, why have you given me these gifts and passions and made me a woman? It seems cruel." Three years to the date, she received

a text from a friend inviting her to serve on the board of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, an academic society supporting biblical preaching. Observing how God prompted her friend to recommend her for such an influential role, Heather notes that God is "a God of great reversals."

"I have an academic mind, but a practitioner's heart," Heather said. She hopes to teach Old Testament and homiletics at a Bible college or seminary while also giving pastoral aid to those who work on the front lines of ministry.

"I hope to work in academia as a means of equipping leaders throughout the global church," Heather said.

*Words*

Liuan Chen Huska '09

*Photo*

Greg Halvorsen Schreck





## Dr. Darren Craig

*Professor of Physics*

**D**r. Darren Craig's journey to Wheaton started with an either/or dilemma.

As a young high school senior preparing to go to college, he was wrestling with whether to be a pastor or to go into the sciences.

"I felt called to do ministry in some way, and the main way to do that as a high-schooler was to be a pastor," he said.

He remembered a conversation with his then-pastor, who helped him arrive at a both/and solution: "He gave me some wise counsel. He told me that God needs ministers in physics too. And from early on I was thinking about how to do that, and while I was still an undergraduate I really felt like God was calling me to be a professor at a Christian college someday."

If you ask him about one of the things he loves about his experience

at Wheaton, it's that at Wheaton he can more easily be his "whole self." Especially in the sciences, people can feel pressure to compartmentalize their faith. Not so at Wheaton, where faculty must write a paper on the integration of faith and learning as part of the process for earning tenure.

Dr. Craig also mentors student researchers at Wheaton every summer and helps them think through questions that enable them to integrate their faith with what they're learning. Last summer, Dr. Craig and a student read through a book together that explored the question of whether "getting into science leads people toward a secular worldview and away from faith."

The false faith-science dichotomy comes up with students every semester, according to Dr. Craig. Although it is a complex issue, he said (echoing passages in the Psalms) he has found

through his study of science that "the reliable patterns you see in nature are a testimony to God's faithfulness."

It is professors like Dr. Craig who help coach emergent Christian scientists to work out such questions in their own lives as they look forward to careers as multi-faceted, Christ-centered people.

*Words*  
Margaret McKenzie '18

*Photo*  
Greg Halvorsen Schreck





## Beth Maas Walsh '95

*Director of Student Health Services*

**B**eth Walsh '96 vividly recalls the challenges of containing outbreaks of mumps and swine flu at Wheaton in the late 2000s. More than a decade later, the global outbreak of COVID-19 has dwarfed every other health crisis the Wheaton community has faced. "What we are experiencing now is on a whole new level," she said.

A nurse practitioner by training, Beth savors the opportunity to practice in a Christian setting. "At Wheaton, I can treat the whole person," she said. "It's incredibly rewarding to be able to go deeper with students and learn about what's happening in their lives. I can address not only their physical health but also the emotional and spiritual needs that are so intertwined with physical health."

With her warm and empathetic nature, Beth has always related easily to students and colleagues alike, but

she actualized her leadership potential when she became the Director of Student Health Services in 2019.

"As a nurse practitioner, I was in a more siloed role as I focused on treating individual patients," she shared. "When I took on a leadership role, I discovered a talent for seeing the bigger picture and devising solutions to difficult problems."

Never has Beth's problem-solving ability been tested so dramatically. As COVID-19 began to spread rapidly throughout the United States in March 2020, she played a central role in helping students transition out of campus housing.

"There was a lot of fear at that time," she remembered. "We had to act quickly to help students get home safely."

Over the summer, she spearheaded the development of policies to prevent an outbreak on campus.

"It's like nailing Jell-O to the wall," she admitted. "There are no easy solutions."

With twins who started at Wheaton in the fall 2020 semester, Beth will continue to make decisions that have an impact on her own family as well as thousands of others.

"COVID-19 is the most daunting challenge I've faced in my career, and it may be the most daunting challenge that any healthcare professional faces in our lifetime," she acknowledged. "We will continue to seek the Lord's wisdom in forging the best path forward."

*Words*  
Ashley Mosteller Rabinovitch '10

*Photo*  
Greg Halvorsen Schreck





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# Features

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## A Sacred Call to Artistic Lives

*Words /* Dr. Michael Wilder, Dean of the Conservatory  
of Music and Division of Arts and Communication

*Photos /* Tony Hughes, Josh and Alexa Adams



Who would argue against the fact that these are challenging times? Racism, corruption, the pandemic, trafficking, drugs, fires, murder, and violence, all swirling to create a staggering set of world conditions. In the midst of these difficulties, many in our world are experiencing an acute drought when it comes to hope and a future. The conditions are severe and the problems are pervasive. How do we even begin to grapple with the summary of news events as we are assailed each day?

And what does all this awful world news have to do with the arts, higher education, and Wheaton College's music and arts offerings? If we are brutally honest, might we ask ourselves, "In the midst of these world challenges, how are the arts anything but a self-indulgent denial of the conditions around us?"

How do dancing, acting, painting, and music-making have anything to do with these world events and this terrible drought?

In fact, the arts have everything to do with responding to these conditions. The arts offer opportunities that better enable us to understand and mitigate the immediate conditions before us. The arts commission a uniquely human creativity with which to explore alternatives and perspectives that would otherwise remain hidden and that are essential in wrestling with the challenges we face. In and through the arts, people are invited to engage with others, to taste excellence, and to slip past strictly logocentric boundaries. The arts also allow for the pressing of the pause button, while we directly engage with endless materials and embodied self-expression.

And why is this so important? The best place to start in understanding just who we are may be at the very beginning of the Bible. Among the most precious of God's gifts is the placing of a creative capacity in each person. The fifth word of Genesis 1:1 establishes this framework, as it reveals God as Creator. We learn later (Genesis 1:27) that in God's creator-ness, he has embedded his *imago dei* into each one of us. The result is that every individual, in deeply personal ways, is offered the precious, God-breathed creativity that reflects the very same inventiveness that ignited all of creation. Creativity is woven throughout the fabric of each person, resulting in endless variation and possibility. To create and to be creative lies at the heart of human flourishing.

There are innumerable opportunities to employ this creative capacity in addressing the challenges that surround us. In this article, let us reflect on just a few of those ways: nurturing creativity, muting cacophony, exploring complexity, and collaborating as community, as well as our invitation to love our Creator and our neighbors.

PHOTO BY TONY HUGHES







### NURTURING CREATIVITY

Consider our tendency toward dichotomous, either/or thinking, even when addressing complex conditions. We are often tempted toward simplistic analysis and generalized knee-jerk responses. Artistic endeavor invites multiple alternatives, welcomes the

perspectives of others, and nurtures creativity. In fact, arts pedagogy often sets up a frame with limitations and then explores possible solutions—lots of them. In visual art, a stage is often set with a “problem” where the painting instructor might limit

an assignment to just one color; let’s say red. The student quickly realizes that the color limitation is anything but dictatorial in that she is able to consider not just one or two shades of red, but she also faces a palette of an infinite number of reds!

PHOTO BY JOSH AND ALEXA ADAMS

### MUTING CACOPHONY

In the midst of the constant barrage of the world around us, the arts offer respite and the opportunity to lessen the noise. The frenetic pace in our culture, which is filled to overflowing with concern and busyness, is temporarily slowed as we are invited into

what can be a deep level of focus and concentration. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi referred to this intense mental state as “flow” and observed that people are capable of complete absorption in a focused mental and creative state. During this

season, people desperately need to be nurtured by the expressive beauty and power that is waiting in these havens of sound and sight, as they are set aside from all that concerns us.





Arena Theater rehearsing *JENGA*, a devised theater project of 20 short pieces created by students.

COLLABORATING AS COMMUNITY

Artistic engagement is often rooted in community, with collaboration ranked among the most rewarding and significant of human activities. People join together, striving for that which is beautiful, celebratory, powerful, and inspiring. Consider the activities throughout the world that involve bands, murals, festivals, feasts, choirs, comedy, food, sculpture, and so much more. Working in community builds wisdom and unity, as the collective artistic voice offers evidence of our shared conviction and strength.

LOVING OTHERS

The second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself, and among our most compelling gifts to others are those that are musical. In facing ill health and death, music can minister, heal, and offer deep comfort. Where words and actions may have failed, music offers a new path that can be deeply reflective and encouraging. It is no surprise that in the most poignant moments of life, we often reach to musical means of lament and celebration as we strive to love one another well.

EXPLORING COMPLEXITY

The arts also offer profound opportunities to engage in aesthetically rich activity—attempting to produce something multifaceted and lasting, while also deeply and powerfully communicative. Where life is often filled with mundane tasks, the arts offer an

oasis for the exploration and expression of the intricate and complex. As scientists are invited to explore wondrous worlds—as seen through the lens of a microscope or telescope—the arts invite people into worlds of sound and sight that provide an

experiential perspective of infinite dimension and possibility. The imagination is unleashed as ideas and creative expression take hold.

PHOTO BY TONY HUGHES

PHOTO BY JOSH AND ALEXA ADAMS







## LOVING THE CREATOR

Our highest calling is contained in God's command to love him above all else. He intends for us to employ our musical and artistic capacities in this endeavor. Surely it is the highest and ultimate purpose for the arts. Could our instructions be any clearer than those offered in Psalm 98?


<sup>4</sup>Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,  
burst into jubilant song with music;

<sup>5</sup>make music to the LORD with the harp,  
with the harp and the sound of singing,

<sup>6</sup>with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—  
shout for joy before the LORD, the King. (NIV)

Why make music? Why make art? Why host these very special endeavors in which we listen, sing, dance, and sculpt, all the while being energized and united? In these interactions, each of us is invited toward that which is true, holy, and redeemed. Every single person is given artistic means and a message that the world desperately needs. We earnestly listen, as we long to hear the very voice of our Maker through each of his children. This is serious work and is needed by each of us and a world that is experiencing an acute drought. You are the cool drink. You are the rain.

This year—a year of great challenge, but also one in which we celebrate all that God is doing in and through us—we pledge ourselves anew to our enduring commitment to serve, love, and challenge each person who is touched by this dear institution. May every Wheaton College student—from the infant enrolled in our Community School of the Arts to the graduate student who has returned to school after her grandchildren are all grown—be gripped by the singular opportunity that God invites us to in faith, imagination, and artistic engagement. May all who might hear—locally and around the globe, from every tribe and tongue—be swept up in the creative capacity of humankind. Francis A. Schaeffer said that “the Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars.” May God cause our imaginations to envision a world quite different than the one we see—a world that includes all of his children and offers generous opportunity for creativity and artistic flourishing.

 **Read the full series of articles from a variety of Wheaton faculty members on arts, faith, and imagination at [wheaton.edu/afi](https://wheaton.edu/afi).**

Members of Zoe's Feet Dance Ministry practice on the tennis courts.

Photo by Tony Hughes





## A Century of Commitment, Community, and Christ at the Center

*Explored through the eyes of a fourth-generation student and her great-grandparents, the Wheaton of 1921 is vastly different from the Wheaton of 2021. Still, the most important things remain the same.*

Words Katherine Braden '16  
Photos Buswell Library Special Collections and  
the Family of Kathleen Sears Sawyer '21

A century ago, 729 W. Irving Avenue was a large, red brick house on a three-acre farm. The farm—with its chickens, gardens, and orchards—belonged to the Sears family.

It was there that Kathleen Sears Sawyer 1921 lived while attending Wheaton College. And it was there, at 729 W. Irving Avenue, that she met her husband, John Sawyer 1921.

Now, Allie Schraeder '21, John and Kathleen's great-granddaughter, often walks by 729 W. Irving Avenue. The red brick house has been demolished, and in its place stands the Hollatz House Duplex, campus housing for 12 students. In place of the Sears' gardens are tennis courts.

"It's surreal to be in the same place my ancestors walked, slept, studied, and ate," said Allie, a fourth-generation Wheaton student. "There's something about Wheaton that people keep coming back to."

She's right. Wheaton has myriad legacy families, some spanning seven generations. Allie will graduate exactly a century after her great-grandparents, and though many physical spaces remain the same, her experience of campus is markedly different.

In 1921, Blanchard Hall, Wheaton's iconic building, had stood proudly atop its hill for 68 years. Also in that year, Charles Blanchard, Wheaton's second president and son of founder Jonathan Blanchard, led the student body of 300. The Sawyers attended most of their classes in the "Main Building," as it was called, and they were also summoned to chapel by the sound of the chiming tower bell.

Like most students, John rented a room at a private residence nearby—he stayed in the home of Trumble Howard, who was the grandfather of David '49, M.A. '52, Tom '57, and Elizabeth Howard Elliot '48. Kathleen visited friends in the women's dorm, Williston Hall, nicknamed "The Red Castle," with its luxury electric lights and steam heat, while John exercised in the state-of-the-art gymnasium—financed by and later named for Wheaton resident John Quincy Adams (a cousin of the second and sixth presidents of the United States)—with its indoor tracks and bowling alleys. The new Industrial Building, later known as Schell Hall, housed laboratories where the students attended classes on botany and zoology.

On Blanchard lawn sat the bright yellow, 16-foot domed observatory, known as the "Lemon." The Sawyers may have used its 800-pound telescope to gaze at the stars. Perhaps they sat on the original concrete "Bench," in front of Blanchard Hall, or sneaked away for some privacy in the long arborvitae hedge surrounding the campus, a favorite of courting couples.

Built in 1895 and referred to as Women's Building, Ladie's Hall, or Red Castle by students, Williston Hall (pictured here c. 1921) was renamed in 1933 in honor of John Payson Williston, inventor of indelible ink and early benefactor of the College.

Now, six presidents later, the Wheaton of 2021 boasts 2,400 undergraduates, 500 graduate students, and 75 campus-owned buildings. While the ratio of male to female students remains similar, present-day Wheaton sees a more equal balance of male to female professors. With the passing of the 19th amendment in 1920, one can only imagine how Wheaton's female professors might have celebrated the historic moment.

One of the main ways Wheaton has changed is in the racial and ethnic diversity of its student body. The Sawyers may have interacted with one or two students of color during their time at Wheaton. The Wheaton Allie attends is more racially and ethnically diverse, with one in four students identifying as a person of color. Initiatives like the Office of Multicultural Development, the Office of Intercultural Engagement, and the Shalom Community empower her to deepen her understanding of kingdom diversity.

Wheaton's athletics have also expanded. In 1921, collegiate sports, still relatively new to Wheaton College, were only available to men. The three tennis clubs played on six courts where Pierce Chapel now stands. The Sawyers might have cheered on Wheaton men's football, basketball, baseball, track, or cross-country teams. Students traveled by train to play against local teams like Loyola and the Chicago Y.M.C.A.

Now, Allie can cheer for Wheaton women and men, and she can also watch wrestling, golf, volleyball, softball, soccer, and swimming.

Beyond sports, Wheaton's focus on rigorous, Christ-centered academics and a strong liberal arts education remains a consistent theme. For both Jonathan and Charles Blanchard, intellectual training wasn't the end; it was a means to an end—building up students' solid Christian character in preparation for life-long service to Christ.

Today, Wheaton academics echo that sentiment with the new *Christ at the Core* curriculum. Students can choose from over 40 majors while receiving a Christian liberal arts education designed to address 21st-century challenges.

Although they were limited to 12 majors, the Sawyers were required to take a variety of subjects—English, languages, and mathematics—and were allowed multiple electives. The flexible, diverse curriculum and biblically based classes prepared students to think and live well as servants of Christ in an emerging industrial society.

John, a Greek major, took courses in argumentation, Bible, and international law, as well as war aims and military drill. The latter two were a product of the Student Army Training Corps—an early version of the present-day Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps—instituted to prepare college-going men for enlistment in World War I, if necessary.

A Latin, mathematics, and music major, Kathleen was an accomplished pianist who accompanied Men's Glee Club and the choir that sang during chapel. In the spring, she opened the windows of 729 W. Irving Avenue, and faculty and students gathered to hear her play Beethoven or Chopin. Now Allie, a voice and theater major, can practice



*“Underlying it all is Wheaton’s commitment to Christ, which has remained firm through the decades.”*

jazz piano or prepare for her next opera in Wheaton’s new Armerding Center for Music and the Arts.

“Music and Wheaton are in my blood,” said Allie, who won the 2018 Wheaton Talent Show with an original comedic song, “Our Saga.”

Although opportunities like Homecoming or Improv weren’t yet available to the Sawyers, they participated in other social activities. John was on the Student Government cabinet and worked for *The Record*. On Annual Campus Day, students had a day off from class and helped landscape the campus, stopping for a hot dog lunch. Students could also attend the Washington Banquet, now known as the President’s Ball, for a formal dinner.

“We can dance at that now,” laughed Allie. She stated a few more changes, like the addition of the Counseling Center and opportunities to study abroad. One crucial Wheaton principle hasn’t changed, though: intentional community.

In 1921, most Wheaton students belonged to one of six literary societies, or “Lits,” which were social groups more academically focused than Greek life. John was a member of the Beltonians, which attracted future preachers. Others included the Excelsiors, a favorite of the athletic men, the Aeolians for scholarly women, and the Boethalian Literary Society.

Though the “Lits” no longer exist, Allie found a similar Christian community among the members of Workout (Arena Theatre) and Concert Choir, as well as the women on her dorm floor. The focus on cultivating purposeful, God-honoring relationships among students and professors, and serving the surrounding community, is a highlight of her Wheaton experience.

Underlying it all is Wheaton’s commitment to Christ, which has remained firm through the decades.

The Sawyers’ classes and athletic events started with prayer and Scripture reading. They attended prayer meetings, daily chapel, and campus revivals. Christian social clubs and local, short-term mission trips were popular. Many classmates became missionaries. Inscribed into the cornerstone of Blanchard Hall, the campus motto, “For Christ and His Kingdom,” reminded them of their current and future focus.

“Students read Scriptures daily, prayed fervently, witnessed openly, and attended church regularly out of love and devotion to Christ and his Word,” said John Sawyer Jr. ’54, recalling his parents’ time at Wheaton.

The Wheaton of 1921 did not yet have a doctrinal statement, and it aligned basically with the fundamentalists of the day, a fact that was codified in 1924 when its first Statement of Faith was written. Today, the doctrinal statement, which is reaffirmed annually by Wheaton’s Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff, is a summary of biblical doctrine in the evangelical tradition.

“Wheaton has always aimed to do all for the glory of God,” Allie’s mother, Nancy Sawyer Schraeder ’85, said. “The commitment to Christ and his kingdom—to serving the Lord—that’s remained unchanged.”

Allie has seen her relationship with God mature at Wheaton. Though her summer plans to work at a comedy club in Chicago and attend Wheaton’s Arts in London program were upended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she knows “God is using this time to build my character and make my faith stronger.”

Perhaps the Sawyers echoed Allie’s sentiment during Chicago’s deadly influenza pandemic in 1918, as they watched many of their fellow students fall ill and saw two classmates die. They also lived through a state-wide shutdown, and were ordered to isolate and wear face masks in public to stop the virus’s spread.

A century later, although much has changed since her great-grandparents attended Wheaton, Allie noted that the important things—academic excellence, a focus on community, and Christ at the core of life—remain the same.

Opposite, clockwise starting top left: Engagement of Kathleen Sears 1921 and John Sawyer 1921; Williston Hall; President Charles Blanchard c. 1921; Adams Hall pictured c. 1921. Adams Hall was built in 1899, was first used as a gymnasium, once included a basement bowling alley for students, was used during World War II for one year as an army barracks, and, ever since a 2009 renovation, has housed the Department of Art.







# Truth-Telling and Inquiry

How Wheaton alumni are paving the way toward responsible journalism in a polarized society

Words  
Bethany Peterson '20

Photo  
Eskay Lim / Getty Images

Earlier this year, Ruth Graham '02 traveled over 1,000 miles from her home in New Hampshire to a small town in Georgia to see a Bible in a Tupperware container. At the heart of a charismatic Christian community, a man claimed to have witnessed an ongoing miracle from God—his Bible overflowing with oil.

Graham, now a national religion correspondent for *The New York Times*, had been sent by *Slate* to the community's Tuesday morning worship service attended by hundreds of people to write up a story about the man, the miracle, and the question that's impossible not to ask: Was it true? Later, she recalled people praying, crying, speaking in tongues, singing, and dancing. Graham, who does not come from a charismatic background, found herself moved by the sight.

Although credible accusations soon came to light that the man purchased an excessive amount of oil from a nearby Tractor Supply store, Graham reflected, "I get it. I get why

a person would be drawn to this and why it's encouraging and hopeful to believe this way." She hopes that the story she wrote about the experience, "The Bible That Oozed Oil," captured as much a sense of faith as it did doubt.

Around the same time as Graham was traveling cross-country, Lee Powell '98 was covering the chaotic aftermath of the Iowa Caucus in February, at the start of what would be almost six months on the campaign trail, lugging heavy equipment into every plane, rental car, and hotel along the way. As a video reporter for *The Washington Post*, Powell covers almost every subject in any location. He then takes his footage back to the D.C. newsroom to do his own writing, producing, and editing.

"[News] doesn't take breaks and it doesn't go to sleep at night," he said. "If it didn't happen or take place in front of my camera while I'm rolling, it may not have happened at all."

Meanwhile, in New York City, Whitney Bauck '15 was considering

whether a fashion show could ever be environmentally justifiable. In the midst of fashion month, Bauck, a senior sustainability reporter for *Fashionista*, wrote an article highlighting the ethical dilemma for influential global companies between the financial and cultural benefits of hosting these events and the potential negative impacts of carbon emissions from international flights and resources required for runway show construction.

It is no secret that journalists face a unique crisis in the 21st century. From the stress of rising polarization in U.S. society to the technological revolution that introduced social media as a major source of immediate and expressive information, the future, purpose, and ethics of journalism have come into question over and over again—with some even going so far as to proclaim that the age of the professional journalist has ended entirely.

But if this is true, Graham, Powell, and Bauck haven't gotten the memo. They embody the tug-of-war between



a newfound need to process an incessant influx of information and a marked thoughtfulness about deeper issues.

In the *New Yorker* article “Does Journalism Have a Future?” Harvard history professor Jill Lepore remarks, “There’s no shortage of amazing journalists at work, clear-eyed and courageous, broad-minded and brilliant, and no end of fascinating innovation in matters of form.” She concludes, “Still, journalism, as a field, is as addled as an addict, gaunt, wasted, and twitchy, its pockets as empty as its nights are sleepless. It’s faster than it used to be, so fast. It’s also edgier, and needier, and angrier. It wants and it wants and it wants. But what does it need?”

Wheaton alumni in journalism seem particularly poised to answer this question.

Although Wheaton has never had a journalism major—a journalism certificate was introduced in the communication department in 2011—the College has turned out an extensive list of influential voices in newsrooms across the globe.

Wheaton alumni currently hold top reporting, editing, and videography positions at organizations widely considered the best in the business, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the Associated Press. Other alumni influence the journalism field at prestigious journalism schools around the country, serving as deans and professors, or conducting research as Ph.D. candidates.

Their positions, work, and attitudes are shaping the journalistic field and opening new paths toward responsible journalism even amid change and, at times, distrust.

#### JOURNALISTS AS TRUTH-TELLERS

Wes Pippert M.A. ’66 did not intend to get a degree from Wheaton. With a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Iowa, Pippert started work at United Press International (UPI), a wire service, just a few days after graduation. When he

transferred to the Chicago bureau after several years, he visited the Billy Graham Center one day to see if there were any available graduate courses in political science.

When the front office secretary explained that the graduate school at Wheaton was primarily for biblical and theological studies, Pippert opted to take some Old Testament courses. Over the next few years, he managed to complete a master’s in Old Testament while working full time in the Loop with UPI, taking only one leave of absence to spend time in Israel where he eventually requested to transfer professionally. During his career, Pippert has written books and covered presidential campaigns, the Carter White House, Watergate, and the Lebanese war from Jerusalem.

Pippert credits his time at Wheaton with helping him develop his idea about the role of the journalist.

“I came to the conclusion that the job of the journalist was to pursue truth,” he said. “The definition I decided on was that truth was really the core of the story. When Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life,’ what he was saying was ‘I am the core of the story.’”

By the “core” of the story, Pippert means moving beyond just accurate reporting—though rigorous fact-checking is essential—to putting the facts in a context that draws a complete picture of events. For example, Pippert remembers reporting on a fatal car accident while he lived in Israel. It would have been accurate, he said, to say that one person died on that day, but after doing more research, the more truthful story was that there had been eight to ten car accidents at that very same intersection.

Similarly, Walter Ratliff M.A. ’94, an award-winning religion reporter at the Associated Press, considers John 8, where Jesus discusses his identity and source of authority with the Pharisees, the basis for his definition of journalistic truth. He said, “Getting at the truth of a story, regardless of party, religious group, or individual, is essential.”

Ratliff, who has won awards for his books and documentary films on religious movements, received an M.A. in Communication from Wheaton, as well as an M.A. in Islam & Muslim Christian Relations and an interdisciplinary doctorate in social religious movements from Georgetown. This experience informs his insistence that “everyone, regardless of their beliefs or political outlook, should expect fair and accurate coverage, and an appropriate professional distance between journalists and the groups they cover.”

However, in a digitally saturated society, this commitment to “distance” from an issue or a group can become challenging, especially as people involved in the story have the ability to directly share their personal experiences and opinions through the internet and social media. Audiences may increasingly feel that reading a Twitter thread from someone on the inside of an issue is preferable to a longer article from a professional journalist. While “citizen journalism,” when the general public shares and analyzes news typically through the internet, can add to one’s understanding, it can also be a biased, incomplete, or even inaccurate portrayal of a story.

Dr. Will Norton ’63, who recently retired as Dean of the Meek School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi, believes we are facing a “world crisis” in media.

He attributes this decline to the rise of cellphones and social media, where everyone has “their own printing press and television station and radio station,” but isn’t prepared for the difficulties of sorting fact from fiction and understanding a range of ideological perspectives.

In addition, online sites looking to make a high profit without the same journalistic standards as traditional publications can easily gain viewers with sensational headlines and emotionally charged content without regard for fact-checking procedures and reporting ethics.

Jeremy Weber ’05 feels a pressure to compete with “clickbait” in the “raw numbers game” of analytics

“I came to the conclusion that the job of the journalist was to pursue truth.”



in his position at *Christianity Today* (*CT*). As *CT*'s award-winning former news editor and current global news director, Weber says, "we will get out-circulated by groups who don't have our history or our level of quality and who I would argue haven't been as careful with the facts or as neutral with the framing just because a lot of people aren't looking for that."

"There is this impulse that you want to follow suit," he said. "If that's what gets eyeballs and shares, then you want to lean toward, of the possible framings, the more aggressive one, or of the possible headlines, the more hyperbolic one."

However, he says a journalist always has to ask, "Are you fulfilling the legacy and purpose of your publication and your own calling as a Christian?"

Overall, the "goal is always to be faithful to the story you uncovered and your commitment to truth and love of neighbor," he said.

These two skills—the ability to contextualize facts in a way that uncovers a core truth and the commitment to be fair to those who are directly involved in or impacted by a certain story—are the key contributions from professional, responsible journalists who would be sorely missed if their roles were to disappear entirely.

#### JOURNALISTS AS INTERMEDIARIES

Graham has reported on a variety of religious topics throughout her career and makes fairness a central concern of her reporting.

"I try to tell the truth but also in a way that lets readers make up their own minds," she explained. "I think it's possible to be very clear about the impact of certain beliefs, certain behaviors, certain movements—the impact of those kinds of things out in the world and on people's lives—without mocking the real people who believe."

She also expressed a viewpoint not often heard in modern discourse: that media coverage of evangelicals has actually gotten better, not worse, in

recent years despite the increase in skepticism from many in evangelical circles.

"I think a lot of the people I interview and want to write about are very skeptical of the mainstream media. . . . That has become even more challenging to me over the course of my career, even though I actually do think that mainstream media religion reporting, even specifically on evangelicals, has gotten a lot better."

Even within the realm of Wheaton alumni, Graham points out, there are highly influential reporters at major outlets reporting on religious topics, not least of which include her fellow alumnae Elizabeth Dias '08 at *The New York Times* and Sarah Pulliam Bailey '08 at *The Washington Post*. After graduating from Wheaton with a theology degree, Dias received a Master's in Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and went on to work at *TIME Magazine* before her current position covering faith and politics from the Washington bureau with *The New York Times*.

Pulliam Bailey, now a full-time religion reporter for *The Washington Post*, has covered many influential stories and won several Religion Newswriters Association (RNA) awards throughout her career at outlets including *CT* and Religion News Service. She has interviewed major political figures including President Barack Obama, Marco Rubio, and Michele Bachmann.

One misconception for religion reporters is that they only cover their own faith or even pursue sources with a religious agenda to proselytize or persuade; Pulliam Bailey actually covers a much larger spectrum than just evangelical issues. Although she does not always report specifically on evangelicals, she explained that since this group makes up a quarter of the voting electorate, there is a lot of interest in them in the media, especially during an election season like this year.

Because she interacts with a large variety of religious people with unique backgrounds and beliefs, Pulliam Bailey feels that applying the "golden rule" is the best guidance for fair reporting in her work. While many

people would interpret the golden rule to mean that they always receive positive coverage, Pulliam Bailey takes its meaning to a deeper and more substantive level.

"I want the truth," she told me. "I want someone to write a piece about the good, the bad, and the ugly about how we're living life. That's how I approach . . . how to do truth-telling in a way that would be reflective of my own values and belief system as well."

To do so, Pulliam Bailey emphasizes understanding the core motivations at work in the people she writes about.

"There is a misconception that when you write about religion, it's

**“I think a lot of the people I interview and want to write about are very skeptical of the mainstream media. . . . That has become even more challenging to me over the course of my career, even though I actually do think that mainstream media religion reporting, even specifically on evangelicals, has gotten a lot better.”**

about institutions like the Catholic Church or religious figures like Pope Francis," she said. "That's important and we do cover that, but we're really writing about how people live their lives—about motivations and how people think and why they live their lives a certain way," she said.

Powell, who spends roughly 50 percent of his time traveling for stories, understands that respect for the people he interviews or writes about is an important aspect of his job as a journalist. He admits that this can be a "tough balancing act" in some cases. He explained, "You're trying to be respectful of people, of their stories,

of their time, of their situations, but you're also needing to serve a much larger, wider audience that has needs of its own. So, in a way, you're an intermediary—a message carrier, if you will—between those two groups."

Bauck similarly feels a responsibility to her audience to "dig for the truth." She said, "I do ask really hard questions, and it's not that I'm out to get anyone or make anyone look bad, but I also know when I've been lied to."

She described one situation when a powerful person lied to her during a meeting.

"In that case, I would say my job, my responsibility as a journalist, is to

push back on that and to make sure I find out the truth because my readers are trusting me," Bauck explained. She is committed to holding herself to high standards for fact-checking, even beyond what is typically expected of her. She feels her readers depend on her to be knowledgeable in her field and to only publish information she knows to be accurate, rather than simply repeating what different individuals have said.

Journalists, in their pursuit of truth, often have to have a deep knowledge of events, policies, or conversations without direct, personal involvement. Journalists have to have



**“That was what Wheaton gave me . . . a toolkit for understanding the world, which is what journalism is. It is trying to understand the world and communicate it in stories to people.”**

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an unusual ability and responsibility to understand and communicate diverse perspectives across typically hard lines of division. It takes a certain kind of intensely curious person to take on this role well.

#### JOURNALISTS AS INQUIRERS

Allison Althoff Steinke '11 is a current Ph.D. candidate at the University of Minnesota and former *Wheaton* magazine editor. She studies “solutions journalism,” a type of writing similar to investigative journalism that analyzes causes and possible solutions to social problems, specifically examining human trafficking reporting as her main passion. In investigating painful and complex issues, a willingness to challenge perspectives and sort through different viewpoints is essential.

“Truth is kind of like a prism since there are so many sides to every issue,” she said. “It’s our task and our obligation to try to inform people the best that we can. And so that also means getting uncomfortable sometimes and asking the tough questions and hearing tough answers in hopes that would be edifying for audiences and the public at large.”

For Steinke, this ability to ask hard questions came from her Wheaton education, where she felt her mentors and professors encouraged her to appreciate inquiry and accept unexpected answers. Later, she would apply these same techniques as the coordinator of the Journalism Certificate program at Wheaton.

Steinke, along with a majority of these Wheaton alumni, also had the opportunity to practice journalism as a student through her work at *The Record*, the student-run newspaper on campus. Pulliam Bailey, who was Editor-in-Chief of *The Record* her senior year, started dating her husband Jason Bailey '07 while they were on staff together. He is also a journalist and currently works as a senior staff editor at *The New York Times*. Pulliam Bailey remembers her time working at the student paper as “one of the most stressful things I have

done ever,” and says it was a “training ground” and a “micro example” of her work today. Powell was also an editor for *The Record* his senior year, and Graham worked as *Kodon* editor during her time at Wheaton.

Overall, these Wheaton alumni journalists recommend gaining hard skills in writing and reporting through school papers and outside internships for interested students; they also recommend getting a liberal arts degree.

Mark Coddington '06, a journalism professor at Washington and Lee University, explained the rationale behind this advice.

“We [journalists] try to learn about and understand and communicate science and politics and philosophy and health and economics and everything,” he said. “It’s basically about trying to understand those things in context and communicate them in really thoughtful, engaging, and true ways to your audience.”

In fact, Coddington views journalism as the “applied liberal arts,” because “the realm we cover is just everything.” For him, this understanding began at Wheaton with the integration of faith and learning, which he applied as a self-professed “really bad” sports reporter and then a much better Managing Editor at the *Record*.

“That was what Wheaton gave me,” Coddington reflected, “a toolkit for understanding the world, which is what journalism is. It is trying to understand the world and communicate it in stories to people.”

Pulliam Bailey similarly points out: “Journalism thrives really well in liberal arts education because we have to dive into so many topics, and having an education that integrated, that showed how the disciplines intertwined, was really important in how I think about things.”

No story, Pulliam Bailey remarked, ever involves just one discipline. A liberal arts education reflects a complex world where stories are never easily classified into just one field of expertise.

#### THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

So, as Lepore asked, “Does journalism have a future?” Throughout my college career, and in phone calls with alumni, I was subconsciously seeking the answer to Lepore’s question, as well as asking, “Is it still possible to do journalism well?” Like most challenging questions (clearly, Wheaties can credit their liberal arts education for their asking), there is no one satisfactory answer and no one individual who has it all figured out.

Through my quest, I discovered that the way journalists, especially those who consider themselves Christians, conceptualize their roles and responsibilities in a rapidly changing media environment—whether it be pursuing truth as the core of the story, mediating between the subjects of the story and the readers, investigating complex issues and asking hard questions, or all of the above—is more complex and insightful than I once thought. This, in itself, is certainly worth knowing.

Powell says he is often asked if he is discouraged or offended when sources refuse to talk to him or even, on some occasions, slam a door in his face. His answer is no.

“Part of my job is to not get distracted by all the other noise that’s happening. Just keep your head down and do the work,” Powell said. “We’re not at war with anyone; we’re at work.”

And Wheaton alumni, as always, are hard at work.



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# Alumni News

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## One Step Away: Developing a Vaccine for COVID-19

Renata Dennis '81 works in the trenches as a clinical research nurse at Emory Vaccine Center in Atlanta

Words  
Adrianna Wright '01

Photo  
Amber Zurii

When the vaccine for COVID-19 is at last available, it's possible that at least one Wheatie will have had a hand in it. One such person might be Renata Dennis '81 at the Hope Clinic of the Emory Vaccine Center in Atlanta, a site chosen by a pharmaceutical company to participate in a Phase III evaluation of a new COVID-19 vaccine.

At the clinic, Renata's title is Clinical Research Nurse III, which means she could serve as a supervisor if she desired. But Renata prefers to be part of the team.

"I want to be one of the troops," she said.

Each day, Renata dons personal protective equipment—an N95 mask, face shield, and goggles—and sets out to enroll people in Phase III of the vaccine trial, a phase that will eventually include 30,000 participants worldwide. The enrollment process can take up to four hours, during which time Renata assesses risk factors, takes a medical history, and helps participants navigate a 22-page consent form. She also takes each participant's height, weight, and vital signs.

After they receive a physical exam, Renata enters participants into a proprietary data system so they can be randomized—that is, selected to receive either a placebo or the vaccine. Then a vaccine nurse administers one or the other, and Renata waits with participants for 30 minutes before they are permitted to leave. After 28 days, participants return for a second dose. Then, they will be monitored for two years to see if they develop neutralizing antibodies to COVID-19.

"As stressful as this is, it's kind of the dream job," Renata said of her work.

Serving others is nothing new to Renata. From 2012 to 2015, Renata was a part of Wheaton's Leadership Council, and she has mentored Christian students interested in

public health. She even got to teach some lessons in Wheaton's biology department.

Renata was a missionary with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) as well, serving two stints in Germany and Austria evangelizing and discipling students. In fact, Renata continues to volunteer with IVCF on Emory's campus. She also led a mission trip to Austria last year and currently chairs the missions committee at her church.

With both a nursing degree and a master's degree in public health from Emory University, Renata has held a number of jobs over the years, including a supervisory role at Emory working with mothers, teens, and children with HIV. She then spent eight years providing continuing education on HIV in the Southeastern United States before landing at her current position, where she has worked for five years. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, Renata conducted HIV prevention vaccine work under the National Institute of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Throughout her various roles, Renata has felt called to live out Romans 12:12—being joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. During the current pandemic, Renata's faith does not waver.

"God asks us to have hope and keep praying, despite the affliction," she said.





## Advancing Cochlear Technology

How Richard Miyamoto '66 pioneered the field of cochlear implants with innovation and ambition

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“Wheaton is one of those places that, the longer you’re away from it, the more grateful you are for it.” So reflects Richard Miyamoto '66, who, since his four years at Wheaton, has achieved monumental advancements in the field of cochlear technology research.

A chemistry and pre-med student at Wheaton, Richard went on to attend the University of Michigan Medical School on a scholarship. It was there that he first encountered “microsurgery” of the middle ear. At that time and throughout his residency in otolaryngology (the medical study of the ear, nose, and throat), there was no treatment for profound inner ear deafness.

That all changed when he was asked to be a co-investigator with his previous fellowship director, Dr. William House, on the first ever FDA-approved clinical trial of cochlear implants as a treatment for profound deafness.

Richard became a pioneer in the field. In 1979, he performed Indiana’s first cochlear implant procedure. The technology Richard worked with was revolutionary for young children and infants with hearing impairments, but for Richard, the most amazing aspect of these trials was the brain’s adaptability to the implants.

“The implant itself is pretty simple,” he said. “The brain has an astounding ability to adjust and do the rest of the work.”

Although the FDA initially approved the implants only for children ages three and up, Richard worked to make the implants available for infants, arguing that the earlier children are able to hear, the more normal their language learning and speech will be.

Richard served as a director of the American Board of Otolaryngology for over ten years and was the chair of the Department of Otolaryngology at Indiana University from 1987

to 2014. He was also the President of the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery from 2006 to 2007. Currently, Richard is Professor Emeritus of Otolaryngology at the Indiana University School of Medicine and serves as a member of the National Academy of Medicine.

Wheaton was a great stepping stone for Richard’s life work. As a student-athlete, Richard’s baseball coach, Lee Pfund '49, encouraged him and his teammates to thrive in their academics and life beyond baseball. His organic chemistry professor, Bernard Nelson '31, also influenced and encouraged Richard during his time at Wheaton. Besides his teaching, Nelson would always go to the team’s baseball games, reflecting the care he had for his students’ entire lives.

“There were a lot of people at Wheaton who taught me what a good liberal arts education should look like,” Richard said. “Athletics was a big part of it. But it was only a part.”

Richard was a resident assistant at Wheaton for two years and served on Student Council his senior year. More than anything, he said, “Wheaton really taught me to think.” Encountering a diversity of opinions and perspectives on such a small campus prepared him for work in the medical field, where he encounters people from practically every kind of background. “You have to have a worldview to hold it all together, and that’s one thing Wheaton really emphasized,” he said.

Words  
Peter Biles '20

Photo  
Ann Powell Denton



# Wheaton College Alumni Association Board of Directors

*Meet your new board members*



**Barbara Bates Alexander '77, Annandale, Virginia**

Barbara is a Senior Advisor of Homeland Security and Intelligence at General Dynamics Information Technology, one of the world's foremost defense and intelligence government contractors. She lives in Annandale, Virginia, and is married to Jim '76. As a student, Barbara majored in political science, sang in the Concert Choir, and worked as a student assistant. She served on the Wheaton College Leadership Council from 2014 to 2017 with other alumni leaders who advised the College on better preparing students for work life after graduation. Barbara enjoys singing in church choirs, a symphonic masterworks chorale, and as a soloist; reading (especially military history and books on leadership); and watching Washington Capitals hockey. The Alexanders have two children, Scott (Amanda) and Ian (Elena), and two grandchildren.



**Mary Ashley Miller '69, Wheaton, Illinois**

Before her retirement, Mary was a language teacher (German, English, Spanish) and also taught grades 3-4 at a missionary boarding school in the Congo for two years. She received her master's in computers in education from National Louis University. While at Wheaton, Mary was involved in urban tutoring at the Elm LaSalle Church (Chicago) and the Concert Band. She and her husband, Marr, have two children: Jed '03 (Lindsay Vowels Miller '03) and Nate (Crystal Molenhouse Miller '05), and six grandchildren. In her spare time, Mary likes to read, go on walks with Marr, and travel.



**Leigh Naraine Pylman '08, Chicago, Illinois**

Leigh received her master's in public policy from the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy Studies in 2011 and subsequently worked in the consulting field for six years. She served as a deacon at Lincoln Square Presbyterian Church and often volunteers at the Lincoln Square Friendship Center. Leigh is currently a stay-at-home-parent and a licensed foster parent in Illinois. While at Wheaton, she participated in intramural crew and the Wheaton in the Holy Lands summer program, served as the class secretary in 2005-06, and was the India Culture Club's secretary. In her free time she likes to read, play tennis, bike along the lakefront, and explore the Chicago restaurant scene. Leigh and her husband, Daniel '06, currently live in Chicago with their two young children, Mary and Anne.



**Manette Galván Turner '92, M.A. '98, Wheaton, Illinois**

Manette received her undergraduate degree from Wheaton in 1992, a master's in clinical psychology in 1998, and has since served as a therapist and group lab leader for the Wheaton College Graduate School's Clinical and Mental Health Counseling program. She is currently a bilingual psychotherapist and Registered Play Therapist supervisor at Maudlin & Associates. She serves as a small group leader for the youth group at Wheaton Bible Church and is also a board member at the Amable Foundation. While at Wheaton, she served on the Christian Service Council, was a drill team member, and tutored elementary school children in Chicago. Manette and her husband, Scott, have three children: Simeon, Milcah, and Levi. In her spare time, she enjoys exercising, reading, and spending time with her children.



**Jim Wilkes '79, Oak Park, Illinois**

After graduating from Wheaton, Jim received his master's in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary and a master's in social work from the University of Chicago. Jim is the principal of Cornerstone Academy in Chicago and also serves as a lay catechist and church council member at Cornerstone Anglican Church. While at Wheaton, he served in youth ministries at the Church of the Open Road on Jewell Road. During his spare time, he enjoys playing the guitar, mandolin, and piano; swimming; and participating in a book club, where he enjoys reading literature and theology. He and his wife, Cheryl, have three adult children: Katie, Lauren '18, and Emily.



**Jerard Woods '12, Bolingbrook, Illinois**

Jerard lives in Bolingbrook, Illinois, with his wife, Kaitana Allen Woods '12, and is a Compliance Officer at Brookstone Capital Management, LLC. He also plays piano professionally and serves as the Youth Minister and Musical Director at Christian Heritage Training Center in Chicago. While a student at Wheaton, he was active in a variety of extracurricular activities, including Gospel Choir, Phonathon, Chapel Band, the William Osbourne Society, the B.R.I.D.G.E. program, and playing on intramural basketball and softball teams. In his spare time, Jerard enjoys spending time with his family, immersing himself in music, exercising, and watching and participating in sports.

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Jeffrey Shafer '96



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PHOTO BY MIKE HUDSON '89



# A Wheaton College Heritage: Sons and Daughters of Alumni

*Photos of second-, third-, fourth-, fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-generation Wheaties.*



**1** Ellie Shafer is pictured here with her parents, Jeff and Shelly Shafer '96; her great-great grandmother was Corinne Smith '37, after whom Smith-Traber is named, Wheaton's first Dean of Women; grandparents John McGill '32 and Sue Smith '33 are alumni. **2** Josiah Hsu on move-in day with parents Ellen Hsu and Al Hsu M.A. '96. **3** Mary Bonnell is pictured with her grandparents, Neal Whitecotton '63 and Judi Hamer Whitecotton '64. **4** Jacob Elsen, a sixth-generation Wheaton student, pictured here with four living generations.

**5** Justin Smith, a second-generation Wheaton student, with parents Andrew Smith '91 and Renae Schauer Smith '91. **6** Isabella Valdes with her mother Sujey Valdes '98. **7** Kathryn Ryken, daughter of Elisabeth Maxwell Ryken '88 and President Philip G. Ryken '88; granddaughter of Elaine Arison Maxwell '51, James Howard Maxwell '52, Mary Graham Ryken M.A. '88, and Leland Ryken, Professor of English Emeritus. **8** Crystelle VanWingerden with parents Nick '98 and Annie '99 VanWingerden. **9** Taylor Chiles with mother Nancy Carlson Chiles '88. **10** Bethany Peterson '20, Debbie Garver Peterson '93, and Chris Peterson '93 with Caleb Peterson.





## A Word with Alumni

*Dr. Beverly Liefeld Hancock '84, President,  
Wheaton College Alumni Association Board of Directors*

It is a typical fall Sunday afternoon, and I'm watching a football game with my family. We are cheering along with the fans at the stadium. Except it is *this* fall. The fans are digital and the crowd noise is pre-recorded. The game has stirred me to think about the imagination and creativity we have witnessed during the pandemic.

Although the campus is closed to visitors, Instagram and Facebook have given me glimpses into some of the ingenuity at Wheaton: stadium chairs for incoming students to allow social distancing during orientation at McCully Stadium, bonfires around campus with unlimited s'mores, and virtual Homecoming. Most significantly, faculty demonstrated collaboration, flexibility, and creativity as they quickly pivoted to all-remote learning in the spring and hybrid classes in the fall. They have found effective ways to teach and care for students, both online and in the classroom, with appropriate social distancing.

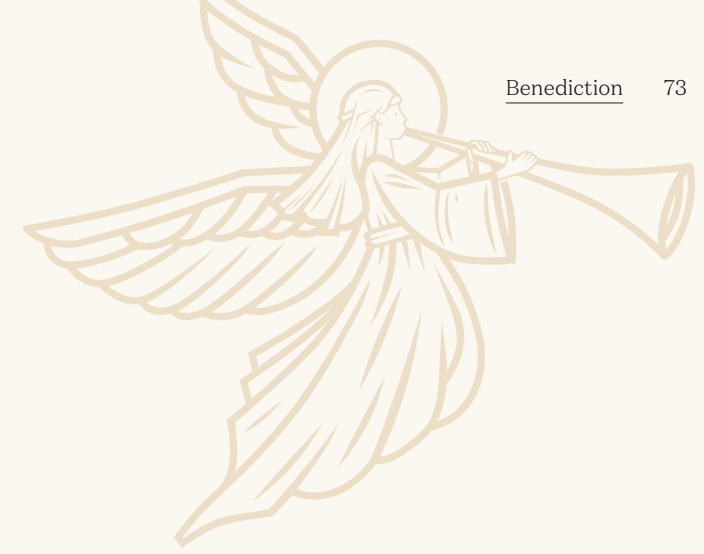
Beyond the Instagram lens, as President of the Alumni Association, I have an inside view of what is happening on campus. I also have a non-voting seat on the

Wheaton College Board of Trustees. With 46,000+ alumni spanning over 100 years, I cannot represent all perspectives, but I am able to speak to common alumni interests and concerns. Some of these concerns were the impetus for the initial establishment of the Alumni Association: advocating for faculty, academic excellence, stewardship of finances and financial gifts, and the culture of Wheaton, from theology to diversity.

President Ryken wrote earlier in this issue that these times are unpredictable. In the face of challenges, Wheaton has focused on areas that are also of vital interest to alumni. By responding with ingenuity partnered with prayer and deep reliance on God, they have upheld academic excellence, spiritual growth, and community.

In light of these great efforts, I invite you to join the College in praying for God's guidance and provision in the face of the many uncertainties. Join alumni around the world praying daily using the alumni prayer card available online or receive a hard copy by contacting the alumni office.

**Vice President for Advancement, Vocation, and Alumni Engagement** Dr. Kirk D. Farney M.A. '98 **Senior Director for Vocation and Alumni Engagement** Cindra Stackhouse Taetzsch '82 **Alumni Association** Dr. Beverly Liefeld Hancock '84 **President-Elect** Eric B. Fowler '81 **Past President** Renae Schauer Smith '91 **Executive Director** Cindra Stackhouse Taetzsch '82 **Alumni Trustee Representatives** Dr. Beverly Liefeld Hancock '84, Eric B. Fowler '81, Renae Schauer Smith '91 **Board of Directors Serving through 2021** Austin Chu '18, Bruce Gin '83, Jeffrey Golz '89 **Board of Directors Serving through 2022** Bryan Eklund '89, M.A. '14, Manette Galván Turner '92, M.A. '98, Christopher Peterson '93 **Board of Directors Serving through 2023** Kari Shook Anderson '91, Dr. Elisabeth Versepunt Jones '08, Rebecca Gray Jordan '88, Jeffrey Shafer '96 **Board of Directors Serving through 2024** Barbara Bates Alexander '77, Mary Ashley Miller '69, Leigh Naraine Pylman '08, James Wilkes '79, Jerard Woods '12



*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!*

Hail the Son of Righteousness!

Light and life to all he brings,

*risen with healing in his wings.*

*"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," first published in 1739, features lyrical contributions from Charles Wesley and George Whitefield and music by Felix Mendelssohn. Wheaton's devotional—titled "Risen with Healing in His Wings: God's Tender Compassion for a Hurting World"—includes lessons from the Gospel of Luke for the 2020-2021 Advent, Christmas, and New Year season. [wheaton.edu/Christmas](http://wheaton.edu/Christmas)*







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