

Pray for Urbana Seminary!

The following is an outline of some significant ways you can pray for the ministry of the Seminary here. Keep this in your Bible or on your night-stand—wherever you will be reminded and pray for God’s Spirit to work in lives through equipping.

Thanks and praise for:

- Fall semester 2017—for new students entering programs
- For our faithful supporters who pray and/or give
- For the students God has given us and called us to serve
- For great public events—Spiritual Life Forum; Reformation celebrations; Taste of Seminary

Prayer for:

- Upcoming Spring semester—students, enrollments in classes, teachers, impact in lives and on the world beyond
- For next year’s incoming class of new program students—for contacts and for awareness of the Seminary and all it offers, for God to remove any barriers to attending
- For Founders Fund 2017—for generous Year End giving
- For the Land of Israel trip
- For the brand new Berean Institute—continued wisdom in how to implement a new ministry and for its growing reach
- For continued implementation of the Strategic Plan

Donate while you shop at Amazon!

Do you buy books or other items from Amazon.com? If so, you can now donate to Urbana Theological Seminary while shopping at Amazon! Go here for more information:
<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/37-1332634>

Students:

Don’t Forget to order your text books @
<http://www.urbanatheologicalseminary.org/bookstore/>

Looking for a Birthday present for your Urbana Seminary student or alumni?

Interested in items that show off your support of UTS? Then check this out:
<http://www.cafepress.com/urbanatheologicalseminarygiftstore>

Urbana Seminary has a new website!

Our old website was definitely getting dated and hard to use, so a few volunteers, working with Dr. Green, have completely redesigned the website. If you haven’t visited it for a while, check it out! <http://www.urbanatheologicalseminary.org/>

FOUNDERS FUND 2017

As Christmas and the end of a year draw near, we anticipate generous giving to cap off the year of 2017 for Urbana Seminary’s Founders Fund. On top of regular giving from faithful supporters, and the giving at Giving Tuesday to the Life Happens campaign to help students in need, each year a number of people in our circle of friends will make a financial gift to the Seminary in December. We, as most non-profit ministries, rely on this surge of year end giving to fund the work we do for Christ here.

Please join with so many of us to consider giving to the Seminary at Year End 2017! Your gift will be well-used, impact significant servants of our God, and be much appreciated.

New Online Bookstore

Since the summer of 2016, books for Urbana Seminary classes have been available through the online bookstore on our website. The address has changed and the store is in the process of being updated. Soon you will be able to find not only books for classes, but faculty publications as well as recommendations here.

The new address is <http://www.urbanatheologicalseminary.org/bookstore/>

Check us out!

“I have recently begun my MAR at UTS. I have found the classes not only challenging to my mental faculties, but I have been growing leaps and bounds spiritually as well. I am indebted to their service, and for being local here in Champaign/Urbana!”

– Josh Lang, MAR student

the hearth

URBANA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

www.urbanatheologicalseminary.org

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REFORMATION 500! A SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARY

Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg Germany, or October 31, 1517. This October 31st marked the 500th anniversary of the Reformation! This was memorably such a clear call for the church to return to its 1st century New Testament apostolic beliefs—that we are saved only by faith through grace alone, and that we base our beliefs only on the Word of God. It led to the rallying cry of the Reformation—*Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fides*. (Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone)

The Reformation itself took years to work out and its impact is still felt today in so many and varied churches. Urbana Seminary observed the 500th anniversary of this vital turning point in the history of our faith—e.g., presentations by professors in classes and a Reformation Bible Tour at the University's Rare Books Library. Notably to remember and honor this incredibly important juncture in the history of the church, the final session of this Fall's *Taste of Seminary* featured a special lecture by one of our adjunct instructors, Dr. Bob Smart (Pastor, Christ Church in Normal, IL). His

lecture addressed the topic of *Three Reformers of the Reformation: Luther, Calvin, and Knox*. Dr. Smart shared his passion for the Reformation in tracing the careers of these three key figures in the start and development of the Reformation, as well as why their daring stands matter so much for us today.



The Berean Institute: A New Ministry to Deepen Our Kingdom Impact

Urbana Seminary's Faculty and Board are excited to announce the beginning of the Berean Institute with Fall Semester 2017. The Berean Institute is a new way to use what we do—equipping God's people—in a new context—in local churches with people who may not have the space in life to sign up for a credit class at this moment, but still would value training of the type the Seminary makes available. The Berean Institute is named for the Bereans of Acts 17, who were commended because they went to Scripture and searched it to see what God was doing and saying to them. As we designed the Seminary's Strategic Plan, a consensus emerged in our discussions and prayers that God was calling us to equip more people in the local area in what might be described as lay training, or equipping church/ministry leadership. We ran a trial version during 2016-2017, with the public launch this Fall. This has seen expression as:

- Training programs tailored to the ministry of different local churches/ministries.
- The *Taste of Seminary* series advertised to the broad public—lectures and discussions, each of which stands alone to address a significant topic for today's culture and church.

From the President's Pen

As 2017 draws to a close, it is appropriate to look back and reflect on the hand of God in all that has happened over the last 12 months. Teaching classes completed with prayer for the personal impact on each student, continued transformation of lives on the long-term, and ongoing use of what was learned and the skills gained. Innovative new course offerings. A new Seminary website (www.urbanatheologicalseminary.org) and domain name. Our 2nd annual Veritas Forum. Another commencement and graduating class of new alums (May 19). The *Ancient Israel in Chicago* trip (June 10). Another Library Used Book Sale. Significant additions to the Library collection, especially through a remarkable series of donations. The 4th annual Spiritual Life Forum sponsored by our Provisions for Pastors. Two series of Taste of Seminary with its expanding sphere of impact in the broader community. Ongoing support in prayer and finances from our circle of friends--we hope that will include each and every one of you who receives this letter. And now with this issue of the Hearth--the launch of the Berean Institute, a new ministry arm of the Seminary to deepen impact in and better serve the local churches/parachurch ministries.

So it's been a good year, with good successes, and its share of challenges. We thank God for his evident hand in the ministry we pursue here! We need his Spirit to work in and through all we do, as well as to guide us for the future. We remain always grateful for you, who care about the future of the church through training, who give, who pray. A hearty "Thank you!" from all of us at Urbana Seminary.

Merry Christmas, and Thank you!

Ken

Kenneth Cuffey, President; Professor

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URBANA SEMINARY STUDY ABROAD: THE LAND OF ISRAEL

MARCH 14-24, 2018

THE COURSE: SPRING SEMESTER 2018

This coming March, Urbana Seminary will host its first ever study trip to Israel. The Land of Israel tour will leave Chicago on March 15th, 2018 and return on the 24th. The intention is to give participants a feel for the backdrop of the Bible—to see where it happened, how geography works into the exciting narratives and history of Scripture, and what we can observe and learn from the extensive archaeological work that has been carried out in Israel.

For any who might be interested the tour also has a credit option: a course titled *The Land of Israel: Geography, History, Archaeology, and Theology* in Spring 2018. You can enroll in the course even if you are not coming on the trip. And you can participate in the trip without the class. We welcome people from our whole list of friends to come on the trip. The teaching will be conducted by our own Dr. Ken Cuffey, with a particular discipleship emphasis to give you the tool of reading the Bible in its space and time context.

Spiritual Life Forum

On Monday, November 6, we held our annual *Spiritual Life Forum*. This year's speaker was Duane Otto, director of Ithaka Fellowship, a partner member of the Consortium of Christian Study Centers in Gridley, IL. Duane directed three sessions for pastors and ministry leaders on *Abiding in Christ*.



Recent Faculty Speaking Engagements:

Ken Cuffey

- Jan 12 - Gridley, IL | *Missional God in the OT*
- Jan 23 - Koinonia House/Stratford House joint retreat, Mahomet, IL | *Colossians 3:12-14*
- Jan 22-Mar 12 - Twin City Bible Church, Adult Ed, Urbana, IL | *Genesis 1-11 and Origins*
- Feb 21 - Taste of Seminary, Champaign, IL
God in the Old Testament: Is he a maniacal, genocidal, malevolent being?
- Feb 25, March 11, April 1, 8 - Lay Training, Covenant Fellowship Church, Champaign, IL
Panorama of the Bible
- Feb 26 - U of I Gospel of John Challenge for Lent, Navigators and TCBC Lincoln (Urbana) and TCBC Midtown (Champaign)
Gospel of John: Background & Overview
- Apr 2 - Conversations Seminar, Windsor Road Christian Church, Champaign, IL | *The People of God*
- Apr 11 - Graduate Christian Fellowship with Dr. Joshua Swamidass, discussion of *Adam and the Genome*
- May 14 - First Christian Church | Newman, IL
- Jun 4 - Crossroads Church | Monticello, IL | *Book of Jonah*
- Jun 11 - Twin City Bible Church | Urbana-Champaign, IL
- Jun 18 - Twin City Bible Church | Urbana-Champaign, IL
- Jun 25 - First Christian Church | Newman, IL
- Jul 9 - Cornerstone Fellowship | Urbana, IL
- Jul 16 & 23 - Evangelical Free Church | Bloomington, IL
Series on Haggai
- Sep 10 - Twin City Bible Church | Urbana-Champaign, IL
- Sep 17 - Twin City Bible Church | Urbana-Champaign, IL
- Oct 10 - Taste of Seminary
How Should We Read Genesis 1-2?
- Oct 29 - Hessel Park Christian Reformed Church, Champaign, IL

Todd Daly

- Feb 28 - Taste of Seminary, Champaign, IL
The Problem of Evil
- Mar 12 - Windsor Road Christian Church, Champaign, IL
Jesus Died for Judas Iscariot
- Apr 9 - Windsor Road Christian Church, Champaign, IL
Jesus Died for Barabbas
- Apr 13 - Parkland Community College, Champaign, IL
Perennial Issues in Bioethics
- Jan 29 - Conversations Seminars: Windsor Road Christian Church, Champaign, IL | *Religious Freedom*

Melody Green

- Mar 9 - Religious Workers Association, U of I
Matthew 5:3-9
- Jun 29 - Audiofeed Christian Music Festival
What is Celtic Christianity?
- Jun 30 - Audiofeed Christian Music Festival
George MacDonald and Stephen Lawhead as Celtic Christian Authors
 - Jul 28-31 - Chair, Mythcon 48, the fiftieth anniversary conference of the Mythopoeic Society
- Oct 17 - Taste of Seminary | *Why Does Story Matter?*
- Oct 28 - Ithaka Fellowship | *Not Appropriate for Children?: Looking Closer at Children's Bible Storybooks*

Mike McQueen

- Dec 4, 2016 - Chinese Bible Church of Springfield
- Dec 18, 2016 - Peoria Chinese Christian Church
- Jan 1 - Champaign Chinese Christian Church
- Jan 22 - Stratford Park Bible Chapel
- Feb 5 - Chinese Bible Church of Springfield
- Feb 26 - First Christian Church of Newman
- Mar 5 - Stratford Park Bible Chapel
- Mar 6 - Taste of Seminary, Champaign, IL
Do Christians and Muslims Worship the Same God?
- Mar 16-18 - Illini Chinese Christian Fellowship
Spring Retreat
- Mar 19 - Peoria Chinese Christian Church
- Apr 2 - Chinese Bible Church of Springfield

Peter Spychalla

- Feb 5-Mar 12 - East White Oak Bible Church, Carlock, IL
Embracing Our Everyday Callings
- Mar 14 - Taste of Seminary, Champaign, IL
Lectio Divina: For Spiritual Development, or Prayer, or Mysticism?

Joe Thomas

- Jan 29 - Conversations Seminars: *Religious Freedom*
Windsor Road Christian Church, Champaign, IL
- Oct 15 - Reformation Talk
Prince of Peach Lutheran Church,
- Oct 24 - A special event celebrating 500th anniversary of the Reformation | *Beer, Brats and Luther*
- Oct 26 - Reformation Interview - 1400AM Radio, WDWS
- Nov 9 - Reformation Podcast - Living Word Church
- Nov 14 - Reformation Bible Tour at the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at the University of Illinois

Faculty Publications and news:

Todd Daly - "Towards a Christian Perspective on Gender Dysphoria." *Everyday Bioethics*. January 11, 2017
<http://everydaybioethics.org/intersections/towards-christian-perspective-gender-dysphoria>

Congratulations to **Joe Thomas**, for making the list of 50 notable alumni for Parkland community college. More info here:
<http://www.parkland.edu/50years/alumbios.aspx#thomas>

“Weekly readings in NT Greek with Dr. Spychalla has been as much as a devotional exercise as an academic one. It’s par for the course in regard to my entire MDiv experience.”

– Steven Whited, M.Div. student

Urbana Theological Seminary

Spring 2018 Courses | Classes start January 16, 2018

BIBLICAL STUDIES

BI 502 - 100 3 Hrs

New Testament Survey

Dr. Kenneth Cuffey
Thursday 6:00PM - 9:00PM
Twin City Bible Church

BI 605 - 155 3 Hrs

The Book of First Peter

Dr. Peter Spychalla
Tuesday 6:00PM - 8:30PM
Grace Community Church

BI 740 - 400 2 or 3 Hrs

The Land of Israel: Geography, History, Archaeology, and Theology

Dr. Kenneth Cuffey
Wednesday 6:00PM - 8:00PM
Location: TBA

BL 552 - 100 3 Hrs

Classical Hebrew II

Dr. Kenneth Cuffey
Time: TBA
Location: TBA

BL 611 - 120 3 Hrs

Greek Exegetical Study: First Peter

Dr. Peter Spychalla
Tuesday 5:00PM - 8:30PM
Grace Community Church

CHRISTIAN HISTORY & THOUGHT

CH 502 - 100 3 Hrs

History of World Christianity II

Dr. Joseph Thomas
Thursday 2:00PM - 5:00PM
Location: TBA

CT 502 - 100 3 Hrs

Theology II

Dr. Todd Daly
Monday 6:00PM - 9:00PM
Stratford Park Church

CT 520 - 100 3 Hrs

Apologetics

Dr. Todd Daly
Friday 6:00PM - 9:00PM | Saturday 9:00AM - 4:00PM
Dates: Jan. 26-27, Feb. 23-24, April 6-7, and May 4-5
University Baptist Church

CT 740 - 330 3 Hrs

G.K. Chesterton: An Introduction

Dr. Melody Green
Tuesday 6:00PM - 9:00PM
Location: TBA

PRACTICAL MINISTRY

PM 505 - 100 2 Hrs

Introduction to Christian Counseling

David Monreal and Lisa Thomas
Wednesday 7:00PM - 9:00PM
Location: TBA

PM 555 - 100 2 Hrs

World Religion: Christian Mission and Evangelism

Dr. Michael McQueen
Monday 6:00PM - 8:00PM
Location: Twin City Bible Church

PM 605 - 200 2 Hrs

Advanced Heart Motives Counseling

Dr. Min Chung
Monday 6:30PM - 9:00PM
Twin City Bible Church

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

GN 700 - 100 3 Hrs

Integrative Senior Seminar

Dr. Brett Smith
Time: TBD
University Baptist Church

UNDERGRADUATE

REL 105 3 Hrs

The New Testament

Dr. Kenneth Cuffey
Thursday 6:00PM - 9:00PM
Twin City Bible Church
Transfers into the University of Illinois.

Ancient Israel In Chicago: Again!

For the 4th year in a row, on the afternoon of June 10th Urbana Seminary sponsored the *Ancient Israel in Chicago* tour of the Oriental Institute Museum on the campus of the University of Chicago. Little known to many in downstate Illinois and other locales outside of Chicago, the Oriental Institute houses one of the premier world-class collections of Ancient Near Eastern artifacts. A surprising number of these archaeological finds and displays have direct and vivid correlations to the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. Each year Dr. Ken Cuffey (Biblical Studies: Old Testament) has conducted a tour of the collection to give a sense of the real world in which the Bible took place. All participants received a specially designed packet of materials that help to piece together the flow of Israel's history in order to see where each artifact fits in historically and theologically.



Intro To Christian Counseling Faculty

This Spring, Urbana Seminary will be offering our *Intro to Counseling* with a different approach than we have tried before! The class will be team taught by two counselors who have been trained in different types of counseling: David Monreal has a background in pastoral counseling, while Lisa Thomas's training and experience is in clinical counseling. According to Thomas, together they will "provide students with a Christian-clinical approach;" that is, a broader grounding in counseling than we have offered in this class before. David Monreal earned his undergraduate degree from Toccoa Falls College in Biblical Studies, and his Master of Divinity from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling from Westminster Theological Seminary. Lisa Thomas earned her masters degree in counseling from Geneva College in 2010, and explains her reason for doing so this way: "I started off my career as a teacher which led me to start a degree in school counseling. While in school, I felt God leading me to switch my focus to mental health counseling. I feel it allows me to use my skills at a greater level." Together these two will be team-teaching a fascinating *Intro to Counseling* class!

Graduation

Urbana Seminary's 13th graduation was celebrated at the Chapel of St. John the Divine on Friday, May 19. Ray Guire, Margaret Shrock, and Rhonda Davis all three graduated with their Master of Arts in Religion. Ray is to be particularly congratulated because he worked hard to earn his degree one year after earning a Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies here. All three were excellent students who worked hard and were enjoyable students to have in class—we trust that God will use them mightily in his kingdom. Graduate Certificate student Josh Yacko played the organ for the evening, and Seth Kerlin, local pastor of Cornerstone Community Church, delivered a stirring commencement address.



A Taste of Seminary: Christian Perspectives on Contemporary Issues

Starting fall of 2016, Urbana Seminary has been hosting a lecture series in which our faculty address various issues relating to their area of expertise. The series occurs once a semester, and lasts for four weeks. Here is a review from someone who faithfully attended these:

by Elizabeth Giger, blogger at <http://madesacred.com>

In a world that demands an avoidance of controversial subjects and determines to pick a fight if such avoidance is disdained, it is revitalizing to discover a space in which it is safe to explore such topics. I have found just such a space in Urbana Theological Seminary's *Taste of Seminary* series. The instructors at UTS have created an environment where difficult issues can be explored deeply, a place where people of different backgrounds and opinions can gather to seek God's viewpoint on matters that have vexed theologians for centuries. Answers are not promised, but for me, a deeper and more coherent understanding has often been found on topics such as God's election, evolution, reconciling the God of the Old Testament to the God of the New, even on issues of gender and transgender identity.



If Christ is before all things and in Him all things hold together, if God has made everything to be sacred, then part of loving God with all of our minds means that we are to explore all the pieces of our lives, from events in the world around us to the commonplace occurrences of our own days, in an attempt to view all of life from the viewpoint of our Christian faith. *Taste of Seminary* has become one of the main places for me to do this, a place for a community of people to seek God together under the tutelage of those who have spent decades of their lives studying such matters. It is a safe space to pursue the sacredness of all things, to seek to love God with all of our minds as we seek to live out His mission in our world. It is a place for anyone who desires a deeper understanding of life around them from a Biblical viewpoint. I am grateful to Urbana Theological Seminary for providing such a space. It is truly a gift.

Information for the spring 2018 series is as follows:

Dates: Tuesdays, February 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th (4 weeks)

Time: 7-8:30 PM

Location: Stratford Park Bible Chapel, 2801 W. Kirby Ave., Champaign

Cost: Free. Coffee & Dessert will be provided

February 6: Physician-Assisted Suicide and the Limits of Self-Determination, Dr. Todd Daly

A consideration of euthanasia and Assisted suicide from a Christian perspective.

February 13: C.S. Lewis's Main Ideas, Dr. Melody Green

C. S. Lewis is quite possibly the most frequently quoted Christian writer today--many seem to think that quoting him gives validity to what they are saying. But individual quotes taken out of context can sometimes lead to some misunderstanding. This presentation will look at the main ideas that shape Lewis's writing.

February 20: Strategic Pause: Soul Rest according to the Psalms. Dr. Peter Sychala

The demands of our 24-7, always-on, frenetic world can unsettle the soul. The Psalms invite us to quiet rest in YHWH that we may thrive and flourish.

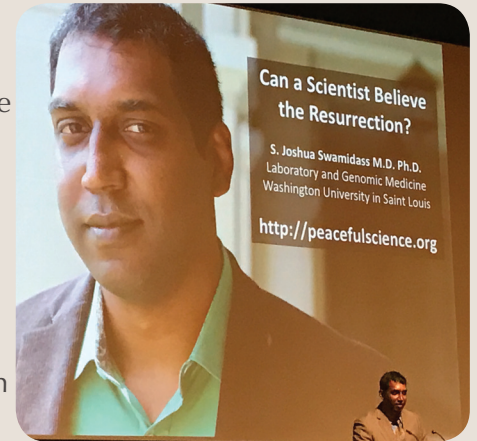
February 27: A Genocidal God?, Dr. Todd Daly

An investigation into the Old Testament passages where the Israelites are commanded to 'wipe out' a people group—men, women, children, animals. How do we reconcile the violence perpetrated by God with the 'gentle Jesus' who renounces violence in the name of the Kingdom?

Veritas Forum

“Can a Scientist Believe in the Resurrection?” was the topic of Urbana Seminary’s second Veritas Forum, which was held on April 12, in the Lincoln Hall Theater on the campus of The University of Illinois. Veritas Forum is a nationwide organization with chapters on university campuses that host events designed to challenge faculty and students to ask life’s hardest questions. At this event, 169 people listened to Dr. Josh Swamidass from Washington University (St. Louis) explain why he believes in the resurrection. The talk was followed by a short question and answer session with our Dr. Todd Daly, then the floor opened for questions.

The Tuesday evening before this, Dr. Swamidass and Dr. Cuffey held a discussion at Twin City Bible Church about Scott McKnight’s most recent book, *Adam and the Genome*. Roughly the same number attended this event, as well. For more information on Dr. Swamidass, check out his website: <http://peacefulscience.org/>



Josh Swamidass, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor in the Department of Immunology and Pathology Division of Laboratory and Genomic Science, Washington University



Some of the people who came to Veritas Forum

Provisions for Pastors’ Sixth Preaching Forum

“Preaching the Sinews of Scripture: Jonathan Edwards and the Preaching of the Word”

Dr. Doug Sweeney, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

On Monday, February 26th Urbana Seminary’s *Provisions for Pastors* will host its 6th annual Forum on Preaching. This year we welcome Dr Doug Sweeney to lead this practical seminar to help pastors– and anyone else in ministry– refine and improve their skills in preaching. Dr Sweeney will guide us in considering what we can learn for preaching the Word of God in pulpits today from one of America’s most well-known preachers, the venerable Jonathan Edwards. Did you know that Edwards provided us with numerous pointers that can sharpen our proclamation in today’s culture?

Date: Monday, February 26, 2018

Time: 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM

Location: Windsor Road Christian Church in Champaign.

The Forum costs \$25, and includes lunch.

To register, go to: <http://www.urbanatheologicalseminary.org/event/preaching-forum/>

