

John Nunes, LSTC Ph.D. candidate, named president of Lutheran World Relief

by John Brooks, ELCA News Service

The Rev. John Arthur Nunes, 44, will become the fourth president of Lutheran World Relief (LWR) on July 1. LWR is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), individuals and parish groups in international relief, development, advocacy and social responsibility. LWR's board of directors elected Nunes on May 21.

"We are thrilled to announce the presidency of (the) Rev. John Nunes. His passion for the mission and ministry of Lutheran World Relief combined with his incredible ability to engage others in our quest to create a world where each person and every generation can live in justice, dignity and peace will serve our partners, friends and supporters well," said Kirk Betts, vice chair of the LWR board and chair of LWR's presidential search committee.

Born in Montego Bay, Jamaica, Nunes is assistant professor of theology at Concordia University, River Forest, Ill., pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church (LCMS), Chicago, and staff associate for urban ministry research at Wheat Ridge Ministries, Itasca, Ill.

Nunes also writes and presents on topics ranging from social theology to ministry among youth.

Nunes served as director for church resource development at Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, and he was a Research Fellow for the Acton Institute, Grand Rapids, Mich. Nunes earned a bachelor's degree from Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Mich. He earned a Th.M. degree from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and an M.Div. from Concordia Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario. He received an honorary doctorate from Concordia University and is a Ph.D. candidate at LSTC.

Author of the book, *Voices from the City*, Nunes is a contributing scholar for *Modern Reformation* magazine and a member of the American Academy of Religion. Nunes and his wife Monique, principal at St. John Lutheran School, Forest Park, Ill., have four daughters and one son. They are members of Bethany Lutheran Church.

Information about Lutheran World Relief is available at <http://www.lwr.org>.

Lea F. Schweitz appointed assistant professor systematic theology, religion and science

LSTC's board of directors appointed Lea F. Schweitz as assistant professor of systematic theology and associate director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, effective July 1, 2007. Her appointment concludes a year-long search.

Schweitz will receive her Ph.D. in philosophy of religion from the University of Chicago Divinity School in December 2007. She holds degrees from the University of Chicago Divinity School and Luther College. She was a resident dissertation fellow at the Center for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame in 2005-06. Her fellowships and grants include the Wilson teaching Fellowship, a Martin Marty Center Dissertation Fellowship, a grant for advanced theological studies from the ELCA, and the Wabash Fellowship—

Chicago Forum on Pedagogy and the Study of Religion.

Schweitz has a commitment to teaching that is "personal and practical" and favors a teaching style that allows students to develop their leadership skills. She is already familiar with the work of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, having served as executive coordinator for the center for a year.

In addition to religion and science, Schweitz is interested in early modern philosophy of religion/philosophical theology, the history of systematic theology, theological anthropology, faith and reason, and religious pluralism.

Schweitz is an active member of Augustana Lutheran Church in Chicago.

Billman elected as dean and vice president for academic affairs

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago board of directors elected the Rev. Dr. Kathleen D. “Kadi” Billman to a two-year term as dean and vice president for academic affairs effective July 1, 2007. Billman has served as dean of academic affairs at LSTC since July 1999.

At the May 2006 board of directors meeting, Billman announced her intention to return to full-time teaching at the conclusion of the academic year. In February 2007, she agreed to serve an additional two years at the request of President James Kenneth Echols and with the affirmation of the faculty.

Dr. Billman joined the LSTC faculty in 1992. She holds degrees from Muskingum College and Princeton Theological Seminary. She spent 10 years serving as pastor or assistant pastor in two multicultural urban congregations.

Billman teaches pastoral theology at LSTC and is the author of several articles and book chapters. She co-authored, *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope* (United Church Press) with Daniel L. Migliore. She is currently collaborating on a handbook for chief academic officers for the Association of Theological Schools.

Shelley and Swanson to direct A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice

The Rev. Dr. Michael T. Shelley is the new director of A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice (CCME), with the Rev. Dr. Mark N. Swanson appointed as associate director. Both are appointed to five-year renewable terms which begin July 1, 2007.

From 1979 – 2003, Dr. Shelley and his wife, Joanne, were missionaries in Cairo, Egypt. There Shelley served as pastor of two congregations and for the last five years in Egypt was director of graduate studies and taught church history and Christian-Muslim relations at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo. He has also taught at the Dar Comboni Center for Arabic and Islamic Studies, Cairo; the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England; and Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. He earned an M.Div. at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, a Th.M. from LSTC, and a Ph.D. in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations from the University of Birmingham, England. Shelley succeeds Dr. Harold S. Vogelaar, the first director of CCME.

Shelley is also visiting professor of Christian-Muslim relations and associate director for advanced studies at LSTC.

The Rev. Dr. Mark N. Swanson joined LSTC's

faculty in July 2006 as the first Harold S. Vogelaar Professor of Christian-Muslim Studies and Interfaith Relations. Swanson holds a doctorate from the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Rome. He earned an M.A. in religious studies (Islamic studies) from Hartford Seminary in Connecticut and an M.Div. from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. From 1984–1998, Swanson taught Greek, New Testament exegesis, and Arabic Christian theology at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt. He joined the faculty of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. in 1998, where he was director of the Islamic Studies Program. With his spouse, the Rev. Rosanne Swanson, he has served parishes in Cairo, Egypt and Rome, Italy.

A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice at LSTC, inaugurated in September 2006, provides cultural and educational opportunities in which Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths come together for mutual enrichment, understanding, healing and wholeness. It is the outgrowth of LSTC building relationships with the Muslim community in Chicago for over two decades.