Public Church, Public Leaders: Women in Leadership
2016 LSTC Leadership Conference and Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards
October 11–13, 2016

Speakers and Preachers

Linda Hartke is president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). She began working on refugee and immigrant issues with the Southeast Asian refugee community in Massachusetts in the 1980s, when she was chief of staff to Rep. Chet Atkins (D, MA). Hartke worked with Cambodian refugees and then as director of programs and operations at Church World Service. She was executive director of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, a global network of churches and agencies engaged in advocacy on common concerns. She has also served on boards and advisory councils including the World AIDS Campaign, the Rose Marie Khoo Foundation and Amnesty International USA.

Rachel Kurtz is a Minneapolis–based songwriter, performer and recording artist with a beautiful voice and an amazing story. She has performed at the last three ELCA Youth Gatherings and has had the opportunity to travel to Africa, Germany and India with her music ministry. She has a strong desire to make a difference in the world through her music and a passion for global justice.

Mikka McCracken serves with ELCA World Hunger as Director for Planning and Engagement. A South Korean adoptee, she grew up in northern Minnesota and is a lifelong Lutheran. McCracken has worked with the ELCA Justice for Women program and the ELCA Washington Office on gender justice advocacy, and with ELCA Global Mission on “glocal” learning events. She currently serves on the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) international council, the Vorstand (board) of the ELCA Wittenberg Center in Germany and the statewide advisory board of Lutheran Advocacy– Illinois. She believes it is possible to end poverty and hunger and that the church has an important role to play so that all are fed.

Harvard Stephens Jr. is the Dean of the Chapel and Pastor to the Community at LSTC. He is the former senior pastor of Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church on the island of St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands. He also served for eight years as the first dean of Siebert Chapel at Carthage College. He is a published author and a talented saxophonist who performs jazz, classical, and other forms of sacred music. Stephens has studied tai chi chuan for many years, and this ancient martial art has become integral to his personal expression of contemplative spirituality. He wants the world to know: this is no time to live an uninspired life.

Rozella Haydeé White is the Houston City Director for Mission Year and the former ELCA Program Director for Young Adult Ministry. She is a trained and certified youth director and chaplain. White is also a disaster chaplain with the National Interfaith Disaster Network and was a 2014–2015 fellow with the Beatitudes Society, a national leadership development organization that connects young entrepreneurial faith leaders who are creating new models for vibrant church life and the pursuit of social justice. White blogs at www.embracingmyshadow.com and speaks about her experience with depression as a young black woman of faith with the hopes of encouraging others to seek radical self-love and embrace their whole selves.