



E-Newsletter AUGUST 2026

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Did You Know?

You can audit a class at HTS! Learning is a lifelong process; continue the journey with us. For clergy, church professionals, and laypersons. All denominations welcome! Read more [HERE](#)

Donor Recognition Update

We sincerely apologize for inadvertently omitting **Rev. Dr.**



Faculty/Staff News

Dr. Vergel L. Lattimore

the *Hood's Herald* Honor Roll of Donors under the W.J. Walls Club.

We are grateful for Rev. Dr. Blue's faithful support of Hood Theological Seminary and are honored to recognize and thank him for his generosity and commitment to our mission.



Shalom Teaching Institute: Striving for Love, Justice, and Belonging

October 15-16, 2026
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church Conference Center
3400 Beatties Ford Rd., Charlotte, North Carolina 28216

What does *shalom* really mean?

Far more than the absence of conflict, *shalom* is God's vision of wholeness, justice, right relationships, human dignity, peace, and the flourishing of all creation. It calls us to love more deeply, pursue justice more courageously, and cultivate communities where every person is seen, valued, heard, and welcomed.

Join Hood Theological Seminary for The Shalom Teaching Institute: Striving for Love, Justice, and Belonging - the culminating event of the Seminary's five-year Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, generously funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Birthed through the vision and work of Hood's Center for Love, Justice, and Belonging, this dynamic in-person gathering celebrates the impact of the Pathways initiative while launching the next chapter of preparing faithful leaders for the Church and society.

Over two inspiring days, nationally recognized theologians, clergy, scholars, practitioners, authors, and public leaders will engage participants through thought-provoking presentations, meaningful dialogue, and practical learning experiences centered on the urgent themes of **love, justice, and belonging**. Together, we will explore how the Church can faithfully respond to the moral, spiritual, and social challenges of our time while equipping leaders to serve with wisdom, courage, and hope.

The Institute is designed for students, clergy, lay leaders, educators, nonprofit professionals, community leaders, and all people of goodwill who are committed to making a difference in their congregations, communities, and the world.

Your \$99 registration fee includes conference materials, designated meals, and full access to all plenary sessions, presentations, and learning experiences. Participants traveling from outside the Charlotte area are responsible for their own lodging.

Come ready to learn. Come ready to be challenged. Come ready to be inspired and join us in Charlotte on October 15-16, 2026, as together we pursue God's vision of *shalom* through lives of *love, justice, and belonging*.

You may register by visiting:

www.hoodseminary.edu or [Shalom Teaching Institute Conference Registration](#)

The Pathways For Tomorrow / Shalom Teaching Institute Team

August Is Back-to-School Month: Embracing New Beginnings at Hood Theological Seminary

August marks **National Back-to-School Month**, a time when students, educators, and communities across the nation prepare for a new season of learning, growth, and opportunity. At **Hood Theological Seminary**, this season carries a special significance as we welcome new and returning students who are answering the call to deepen their knowledge, strengthen their faith, and prepare for lives of service and leadership.



Dr. Vergel Lattimore, President and Professor of Hood Theological Seminary, will engage with the community in the following activities:

Attended Quarterly Conference at Greenville Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Charlotte, NC (8/7/26)

Attend the Retirement Celebration for Elaine Spaulding from the Chamber of Commerce (8/10/26)

Visit Clemente Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Charlotte, NC (8/16/26)

Offer the Invocation for the 55th Class Reunion for North Mecklenburg High, Huntersville, NC (8/21/26)

FaithLearnThrive News

The beginning of a new academic year is more than a return to classrooms; it is a renewed commitment to transformation. Each course, conversation, research project, and ministry experience provides an opportunity for students to expand their understanding of Scripture, engage theological reflection, and develop the tools needed to serve the Church and the broader community.

As a historically Black seminary committed to academic excellence, spiritual formation, and social responsibility, Hood Theological Seminary recognizes education as a powerful instrument for transformation. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and ministry contexts, bringing unique experiences and perspectives that enrich our learning community. Together, we continue the tradition of preparing leaders who are equipped to proclaim the Gospel, advocate for justice, and serve with compassion.

This August, we celebrate our students who are beginning new journeys, continuing their studies, and pursuing their callings through theological education. We also honor our dedicated faculty and staff who create environments where students can learn, grow, and thrive. Their commitment to teaching, mentoring, and supporting our students reflects the mission and legacy of Hood Theological Seminary.

As we enter this new academic year, we are reminded of the words found in Proverbs 1:5: “Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.” Learning is a lifelong journey, and every new semester offers an opportunity to gain wisdom, discover purpose, and prepare for greater impact.

To our students: welcome back to Hood Theological Seminary. May this academic year be filled with discovery, growth, perseverance, and purpose. May your studies strengthen your faith, expand your vision, and equip you for the work to



Stronger Churches 2026: Built to Last

 **Early Bird Registration Is Now Open!**

Built to Last || Built to Last is more than sustainability—it is about constructing ministries that endure across generations through strong identity, strategic structure, and a culture of generosity.

Churches that last are not accidental—they are intentionally built through clarity, stewardship, and community engagement.

Early Bird Registration is now available for the **2026 Stronger Churches Conference!**

Experience the **complete conference** with our **\$99 Early Bird Bundle**, which includes both of our signature events:

Friday | ChurchTalk LIVE

An engaging evening of leadership conversations, networking, and inspiration.

Saturday | Stronger Churches Conference

A full day of keynote speakers, practical leadership labs, and strategies you can put into action immediately.

Two Great Events. One Great

Here's to a new year of learning, leadership, and ministry. Welcome to the journey!

Scoop Up Some Summer Joy: Celebrating National Ice Cream Month

July is one of the warmest months of the year, bringing bright sunshine, family vacations, neighborhood cookouts, and long summer evenings. It's no surprise that July is also recognized as **National Ice Cream Month**, the perfect time to enjoy a cool, sweet treat while making lasting memories with the people we love.

Whether your favorite flavor is classic vanilla, delicious chocolate, fruity strawberry, or something with lots of toppings and surprises, ice cream has a unique way of bringing people together. It reminds us that joy is often found in life's simplest moments, a shared cone with a grandchild, laughter over melting sundaes, or an evening stroll with family after dinner.

As followers of Christ, these moments of simple joy can also remind us of God's goodness. **James 1:17** tells us, *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights."* While ice cream may seem like a small pleasure, it can serve as a gentle reminder that God delights in blessing us—not only through life's major milestones but also through the everyday moments that refresh our bodies, lift our spirits, and strengthen our relationships.

Summer is often a busy season filled with activities and commitments. National Ice Cream Month offers us an invitation to slow down, savor the present, and spend meaningful time with those God has placed in our lives. Consider gathering friends, family, or neighbors for an ice cream social. Create a toppings bar with fresh fruit, nuts, chocolate syrup, whipped cream, and colorful sprinkles, and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship and laughter. Sometimes ministry happens around a kitchen table just as beautifully as it does in a sanctuary.

As you enjoy the sweetness of July, remember that the greatest refreshment comes from the One who renews our hearts. Just as a cool scoop of ice cream provides relief from the summer heat, God's grace refreshes our souls every day. May this season encourage you to pause, give thanks

Don't miss your opportunity to secure the best registration rate before **Early Bird pricing ends August 31**.

👉 **Register**

Today: https://bit.ly/SCC2026_BTL

Shepherds Collective rescheduled their topic from last month for this month on August 17th @7pm. Please update the date. All other info remains the same.

FLT Learning Community 2026 Pilot-Vision Casting Events are coming up. We are excited that they cast renewed vision & hope for their congregation's future!

Holsey CME (Statesville, NC) –
Saturday, **August 15, 2026 at 10:00 AM**
Pastor: Rev. Barbara McCullom
Coach: Apostle Myra Bellinger

Brooklyn CME (Chesnee, SC) –
Saturday, **August 15, 2026 at 2:00 PM**
Pastor: Rev. Thomas Miles
Coach: Coach Elizabeth Stryon

New Gethsemane Baptist Church (Gastonia, NC)–
Sunday, **August 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM**
Pastor: Rev. Richard Reed |
Coach: Nicole Johnson

Pastor's Coach: Bishop John A. McCullough

Highlight: Join the 2027 Learning Community Waitlist Now!

Link: <https://forms.gle/Y78XTSnSVqwhsmpi9>

Add

video: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/192zf8D6M8/>



HOODEMPOWERS
We Empower Rural and Small-Town Churches

through simple acts of kindness and hospitality.

So, whether you enjoy your ice cream in a cone, a cup, or piled high in a sundae, take a moment to thank God for His abundant goodness. May your July be filled with refreshing treats, joyful fellowship, and the sweet reminder that God's blessings are all around us.

Happy National Ice Cream Month—and don't forget the sprinkles!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

To all our Faculty, Staff, Alumni & Donors , we wish you an AWESOME August Birthday with many more to come!

National Sandwich Month



August may be known as Back-to-School Month, but it also gives us another reason to celebrate: **National Sandwich Month!** From classic combinations to creative creations, sandwiches remind us that sometimes the best things come together when different ingredients are brought into one place.

At Hood Theological Seminary, we know a little something about bringing things together. Just as a great sandwich needs the right balance of bread and filling, a

Building Momentum – Driving Participation – Sustaining the Foundation

The Institute for Rural & Small-Town Ministry & Leadership is excited to share with you what we've been up to!

We held our second quarterly workshop on Saturday, July 18th, 2026, in the Aymer center on the campus of Hood Theological Seminary.

The turnout was phenomenal! We had 125 attendees and we gave out 40 grants for 2026. The exciting thing is that many of the attendees weren't even grant recipients but returning guests.

Based on the evaluations, the attendees were very impressed with the workshop and took away a lot of valuable information that they will be able to implement immediately to help them improve their congregations.

We are excited about the feedback, and we are excited about the growth of our program!

We will have our next coaches meeting on September 18th, here on the Hood Theological Seminary campus. This is always an exciting time because we are matching the coaches with the churches so that they can begin the journey of growth and sustainability.

Our third quarter workshop will take place on September 12th, 2026. This one will be a virtual workshop. We'll give you more details as they become available.

community is strengthened by the unique gifts, experiences, and perspectives of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.

Whether you prefer a simple peanut butter and jelly, a classic turkey and cheese, or a sandwich piled high with all the extras, there is something comforting about a meal that brings people to the table. In many ways, sandwiches reflect community, different elements working together to create something greater than the individual parts.

So, as we celebrate National Sandwich Month, take a moment to enjoy your favorite sandwich, share a meal with someone else, and remember: life is always better when we come together.

And if your sandwich happens to be missing something... don't worry. There is always room for a little more "filling"—just like there is always room for more learning, fellowship, and growth at Hood Theological Seminary!

Happy National Sandwich Month!

Choosing Love and Unity in Challenging Times

In a season marked by economic uncertainty, social tensions, and deep divisions across our nation, Hood Theological Seminary remains committed to being a community that reflects the transformative power of faith, love, and unity. While we may not always agree on every issue, we are called to remember that our shared humanity and our commitment to Christ are stronger than the differences that seek to divide us.

As a seminary community, we have the opportunity to model a different way—one rooted in compassion, understanding, and hope. We can be intentional about creating spaces where people feel heard, valued, and



SAVE THE DATE

TRIBE OF RUTH Retreat

FRIDAY AUGUST 28-29

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION
\$125 Two Day Ticket
\$75 One Day Ticket

GENERAL ADMISSION
\$150 Two Day Ticket
\$85 One Day Ticket

VENDORS WILL PAY \$100 FEE

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The Tribe of R.U.T.H. Retreat is Returning!

There is something extraordinary that happens when women answer God's call—and something even more powerful when they gather to encourage one another along the journey.

The **Center for Bold Leadership** is excited to announce the return of the **Tribe of R.U.T.H. Retreat**, an inspiring experience designed to nurture, equip, and empower women faithfully serving in ministry and leadership. More than a retreat, Tribe of R.U.T.H. is a sacred space where women can pause, be renewed, and reconnect with both their calling and one another.

We can spread a message of love and unity by:

Listening before responding and seeking to understand the experiences of others.

Extending grace and kindness in our conversations, both in person and online.

Serving our communities through acts of compassion and care.

Building relationships across differences and recognizing the dignity in every person.

Praying and working together for healing, justice, and peace.

During challenging times, our witness matters. May Hood Theological Seminary continue to be a place where faith is strengthened, hope is renewed, and love remains at the center of all we do.



Your gift is essential in promoting the mission of the Seminary. Every gift, small and large, is greatly appreciated and stewarded responsibly!

It's so easy to [donate securely online](#) or mail your check directly to the Seminary at 1810 Lutheran Synod Dr., Salisbury, NC 28144.

Inspired by the biblical story of Ruth, whose courage, faithfulness, and unwavering trust in God changed the course of history, this retreat celebrates women who continue to answer God's call with boldness and grace. Like Ruth, today's women in ministry often navigate unique challenges while remaining committed to serving God's people. This retreat reminds us that we were never meant to walk that journey alone.

Participants can look forward to a day filled with meaningful worship, engaging conversations, practical leadership development, spiritual encouragement, and authentic fellowship. Whether you are clergy or laity, a seasoned leader or just beginning to discern God's call on your life, the Tribe of R.U.T.H. offers opportunities to grow, be refreshed, and build lasting relationships with women who understand the joys and realities of ministry.

As Scripture reminds us, **"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay...your God will be my God" (Ruth 1:16)**. Ruth's words continue to inspire a community of women committed to walking alongside one another in faith, purpose, and service.

Mark your calendars now and watch for additional details, including registration information, speakers, and the full retreat schedule. We invite you to come expecting renewal, encouragement, and a fresh reminder that God continues to call, strengthen, and equip women to lead with courage and compassion.

The journey is always richer when we travel together. We hope to see you at the **Tribe of R.U.T.H. Retreat!**

For more information, readers can visit [The Center for Bold Leadership](#).

The Dates for the Tribe of RUTH Retreat are August 28 and 29th. To purchase tickets, the link is:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/tribe-of-ruth-august-2026>



Planned Giving

Create your legacy through a planned gift by remembering Hood Theological Seminary in a bequest or will with gifts of stocks and bonds, gifts of real estate or personal property, life insurance, charitable trust, retirement funds/IRA or life income gifts. By making a planned gift, you will become a member of the [Hood Legacy Society](#).

- ~ Do you have an IRA?
- ~ Are you at least 70 1/2 years of age?
- ~ Would you like to help HTS in its mission to prepare women and men for bold and creative leadership for the Christian church for a diverse world?

If you answered "Yes" to all three questions, please consider an IRA Charitable Rollover.

In an IRA Charitable Rollover, the distribution of up to \$100,000 annually made directly from the IRA custodian to a qualifying public charity, such as HTS, is excluded from gross income and counts toward the required minimum distribution.

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For More Information on Monthly Giving

Contact:
Tyesia Walker
Director,
Annual Giving & Donor Relations
704.636.6926
twalker@hoodseminary.edu



In Memoriam

To those among us who are grieving, please remember that you do not have to rush through your grief or carry it alone. Some days may feel heavier than others, and that is okay. Give yourself permission to remember, to cry, to rest, and even to smile when a joyful memory finds its way through the sorrow. May you find comfort in God's presence, strength in community, and grace for each day. In this season, may you be reminded that love does not end when a life ends—it continues to live in the memories we cherish and the lives we carry forward.

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