

E-Newsletter
OCTOBER 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**

The Shalom Teaching Institute



Faculty/Staff News





October at Hood: A Season to Learn, Celebrate, and Serve

October at Hood: A Season of Learning, Reflection, and Service

October brings cooler mornings, changing leaves, and opportunities to reflect, celebrate, learn, and serve. At Hood Theological Seminary, the month reminds us that theological education extends beyond the classroom and into the communities we are called to serve.

World Communion Sunday (October 4) celebrates the unity and diversity of the global Church, while **Clergy Appreciation Month** offers an opportunity to honor pastors, chaplains, and ministry leaders for their faithful service.

At Hood, learning continues with the **Messinger-Williams Community Education Initiative**, beginning October 5. This free, five-week study of Sharon Dirckx's *Am I Just My Brain?* explores questions of identity, the mind, the soul, and what it means to be human. Discussions are available throughout the Salisbury community and online.

Indigenous Peoples Day (October 12) encourages reflection on Indigenous

Dr. Vergel L. Lattimore

Dr. Lattimore will be the keynote speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Western North Carolina Association of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ (WNCA-SOC-UCC), addressing "Prophetic Advocacy in a Fragmented Season." (10/3/26).

He will attend the Pastor's Appreciation Banquet sponsored by the Gideons Association, Rowan Conference Center (10/6/26).

Dr. Lattimore will preach for the Clergy Appreciation Sunday, Greenville Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Charlotte, NC (10/11/2026).

He will participate in the Artium System Professional Advisory Committee, Charlotte, NC (10/19/26).

Western North Carolina Association of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ (WNCA-SOC UCC) Annual Meeting.



Hood Theological Seminary took its commitment to bold, creative Christian

histories, cultures, and contributions, while **World Food Day (October 16)** reminds us of our Christian responsibility to address hunger, promote dignity, and serve our neighbors.

On **October 15–16**, Hood's Center for Justice, Love, and Belonging hosts the inaugural **Shalom Teaching Institute: Striving for Justice, Love, and Belonging**, bringing together faith leaders, scholars, seminarians, and community advocates for meaningful dialogue and action.

United Nations Day (October 24) invites reflection on global cooperation and compassion, while **Reformation Sunday (October 25)** encourages continued theological inquiry, faithful questioning, and renewal within the Church.

Throughout October, we are invited to notice opportunities to encourage others, serve our communities, and deepen our faith. These observances and events reflect Hood's commitment to preparing women and men for **bold and creative leadership in the Christian church and for a diverse world**.

So, Hood community, grab your calendar, bring your curiosity, and make room for a little October joy. **There's plenty happening at Hood!**



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

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

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leadership to Newton, North Carolina, on Saturday, October 3, 2026, for the Western North Carolina Association of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ (WNCA-SOC UCC) Annual Meeting.

Hood President Dr. Vergel Lattimore served as the keynote speaker, bringing a timely message entitled **"Prophetic Advocacy in a Fragmented Season."** His message invited participants to consider what it means to engage in prophetic advocacy during a season marked by fragmentation and division.

The gathering also provided an opportunity for Hood to strengthen connections within the wider faith community. A Hood recruitment and connection table offered a welcoming space to connect with alumni, including **Rev. Angela Robertson, Rev. Darek McCullen, and Rev. Charles Woody**.

From the pulpit to the table, Hood was there to connect, engage, and celebrate the continuing work of Christian leaders. These opportunities to build relationships beyond the seminary campus are an important part of Hood's mission to prepare women and men for bold and creative leadership in the Christian church and for a diverse world.

FaithLearnThrive News



Stronger Churches 2026: Built to Last — October 23–24

The Church is changing. How are we building for what comes next?



SHEPHERDS COLLECTIVE | OCTOBER 2026Growth Through Community ImpactMobilizing the Church Beyond the Walls

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Would your community notice if your church wasn't there?

Churches of every size have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in their communities. But lasting impact doesn't always require large budgets, major events, or extensive resources. Sometimes it begins with recognizing a need, building a relationship, and showing up consistently.

Join us for our October Shepherds Collective as we explore practical ways to move beyond the church walls and become a stronger presence in the communities we are called to serve.

We are delighted to welcome **Rev. Elizabeth Styron of the NC Rural Center's Faith in Rural Communities initiative** as our special guest. Rev. Styron works with churches to strengthen community engagement, recognize local assets, and develop strategies for meaningful impact.

Together, we'll consider how churches can identify community needs, build partnerships, discover their unique opportunities to serve, and measure impact beyond Sunday attendance.

Join **FaithLearnThrive at Hood Theological Seminary** for the 2026 **Stronger Churches Conference: Built to Last**, a two-day experience created for pastors, ministry leaders, church teams, and anyone committed to building stronger, sustainable congregations.

This year, we're excited to welcome **Dr. Bri Parker**, preacher, researcher, millennial engagement strategist, and founder of Black Millennial Café. Dr. Parker will lead the featured Saturday experience:

Faithful Looks Different Now: Rethinking Attendance, Engagement & Discipleship

What if people aren't necessarily less faithful—but are engaging faith and church differently? Dr. Parker will bring research and real-world insight to one of the most pressing questions facing congregations today: **How do we understand changing patterns of attendance, belonging, engagement, and discipleship—and respond faithfully?**

And there's much more: **ChurchTalk LIVE Friday night, practical learning labs Saturday, powerful leadership voices, worship, resources, meals, and opportunities to connect with leaders navigating many of the same challenges you are.**

October 23–24 | Hood Theological Seminary

Bring your team. Build your church. Build your future.

Explore the Conference + Register

Learning Community Applications are now open!

Applications are opening for the next **FaithLearnThrive Learning Community2027** at Hood Theological Seminary!

Designed for **pastors and their leadership teams**, the Learning

This is more than a presentation. It's an opportunity to exchange ideas, ask questions, and learn from one another. After all, **the wisdom is in the room!**

Our guiding thought:

Communities are transformed through consistent presence, not occasional events.

Monday, October 19, 2026 | 7:00 PM ET | Via Zoom

We invite Shepherds Collective members to join us and encourage another pastor or ministry leader to experience this important conversation.

The Shepherds Collective
Where pastors connect, collaborate, and grow together.

FaithLearnThrive | Hood Theological Seminary

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

Community provides practical learning, coaching, tools, and a community of peers to help congregations gain greater clarity around their **vision, leadership, strategy, and next steps for thriving ministry**.

This isn't a program you simply attend—it's a journey your team takes together to **learn, plan, implement, and build.**

Interested in joining the next cohort? Visit faithlearnthrive.org/learning-community & Watch for application details and take the next step toward helping your congregation thrive.

Coaching Opportunities

Ready to Help Your Congregation Thrive?

FaithLearnThrive at Hood Theological Seminary is preparing for its next season of congregational learning and support!

We'll soon be accepting applications for our next **Learning Community**, designed for pastors and leadership teams ready to gain greater clarity around their congregation's **vision, leadership, strategy, and next steps** through practical learning, coaching, and implementation.

We're also recruiting congregations interested in **Congregational Coaching**—personalized support to help your church work through challenges, identify opportunities, and move forward with greater clarity and intention.

Interested in either opportunity? Join the FaithLearnThrive waitlist to receive application details and be among the first to know when opportunities open.

Learn. Grow. Build. Thrive.

end when a life ends—it continues to live in the memories we cherish and the lives we carry forward.

Hood Theological Seminary
Theological Preparation for Effective Ministry in a Diverse Society



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.





Tribe of R.U.T.H. Retreat: The Tribe Will Gather Again!

The Center for Bold Leadership's **Tribe of R.U.T.H. Retreat** has been postponed, but plans are underway for the Tribe to gather again!

The retreat is **currently scheduled for March 12-13, 2027,** on the campus of Hood Theological Seminary.

The Tribe of R.U.T.H. was established as a space to **celebrate, support, educate, and renew women of color serving in ministerial and lay leadership**. The inaugural retreat, held at Hood in August 2024, brought together clergy and lay women for a day that included worship, panels, workshops, learning, networking, joy, and healing.

So, consider this your **"stay tuned" moment!** The Tribe is preparing to return, and Hood will share the official date, registration information, and other details as they become available.



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.

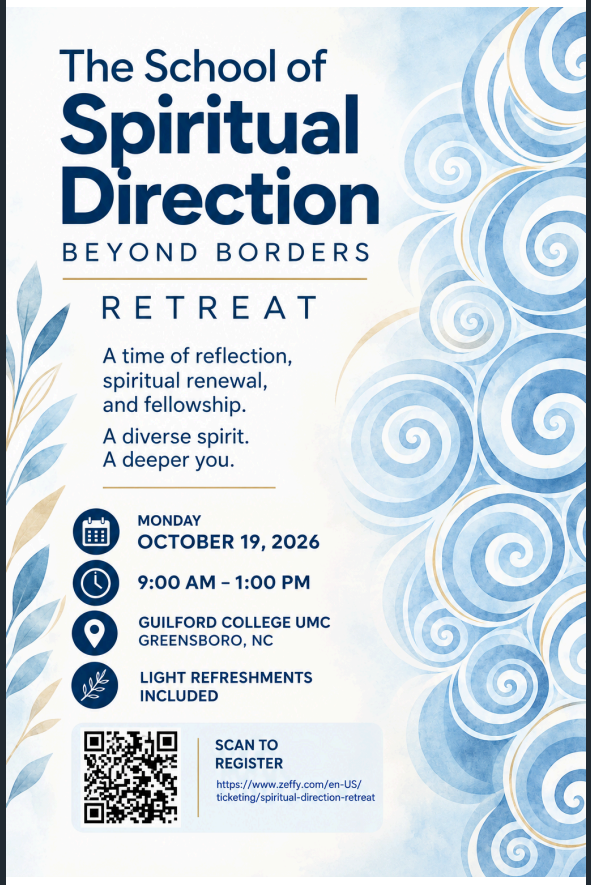
~ Do you have an IRA?
~ Are you at least 70 1/2 years of age?
~ Would you like to help HTS in its mission to prepare women and men for bold and creative leadership for the Christian church for a diverse world?

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.

Contact:

March 2027 is on the horizon. The Tribe will gather again!



The **School of Spiritual Direction Beyond Borders** invites participants to a morning of **reflection, spiritual renewal, and fellowship** on **Monday, October 19, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** at **Guilford College UMC in Greensboro, North Carolina**.

Registration is required. Scan the QR code on the event flyer to register.

HOODEMPOWERS
We Empower Rural and Small-Town Churches

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Join the Faithful Friends Partner Recurring Monthly Program!





Dr. Dora Rudo Mbuwayesango
George E. and Iris Battle Professor of Old Testament and Languages

Professor Dora Mbuwayesango attended an Episcopal Relief and Board meeting in San Antonio, Texas, September 1-October 3. The meeting included a visit on October 1 to residents of RVs and mobile homes who are recovering from the devastating flood of the Guadelupe river on July 4th last year. These residents are participating in the Episcopal Relief and Development's RV and manufactured home assistance program facilitated by the Episcopal Diocese Texas and funded by The Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country. The visit included a presentation at St Peter's Episcopal Church where board members heard directly from some of the recipients. Here is the link to the article in the

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Kerrville Daily Times. [Article in the Kerrsville Daily Times]

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