

# Solidifying the call

For as long as he could remember, Benjamin Hogue had an interest in church. “I always loved going and discovering why we believe what we believe,” he recalled.

But it wasn't until he was a student at California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, Calif., that he “connected the pieces,” realizing he could pursue a vocation in ministry, Benjamin said.

As Benjamin discerned his call, he served two summers at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp. “I loved sharing stories of faith with younger kids who were so eager to learn,” Benjamin said. “Working with kids and with congregations definitely influenced my call.”

Conducting a summer internship and serving nearly three years in the Peace Corps teaching English in Ukraine also strengthened Benjamin's call and resolve to attend seminary. And as excited as he was to go, he had some apprehension, especially as he considered the cost to attend, he said.

Benjamin's uneasiness quickly subsided, though, once he learned he was one of 16 first-year seminarians to receive full-tuition scholarships through the ELCA Fund for Leaders. He is the inaugural recipient of the Portico Benefit Services Seminary Scholarship, an endowment that was established within the ELCA Fund for Leaders by Portico employees and trustees.

## ELCA FUND *for* LEADERS

“The scholarship provides that little extra something – that vote of confidence and push – that other people validate and recognize my gifts,” he said.

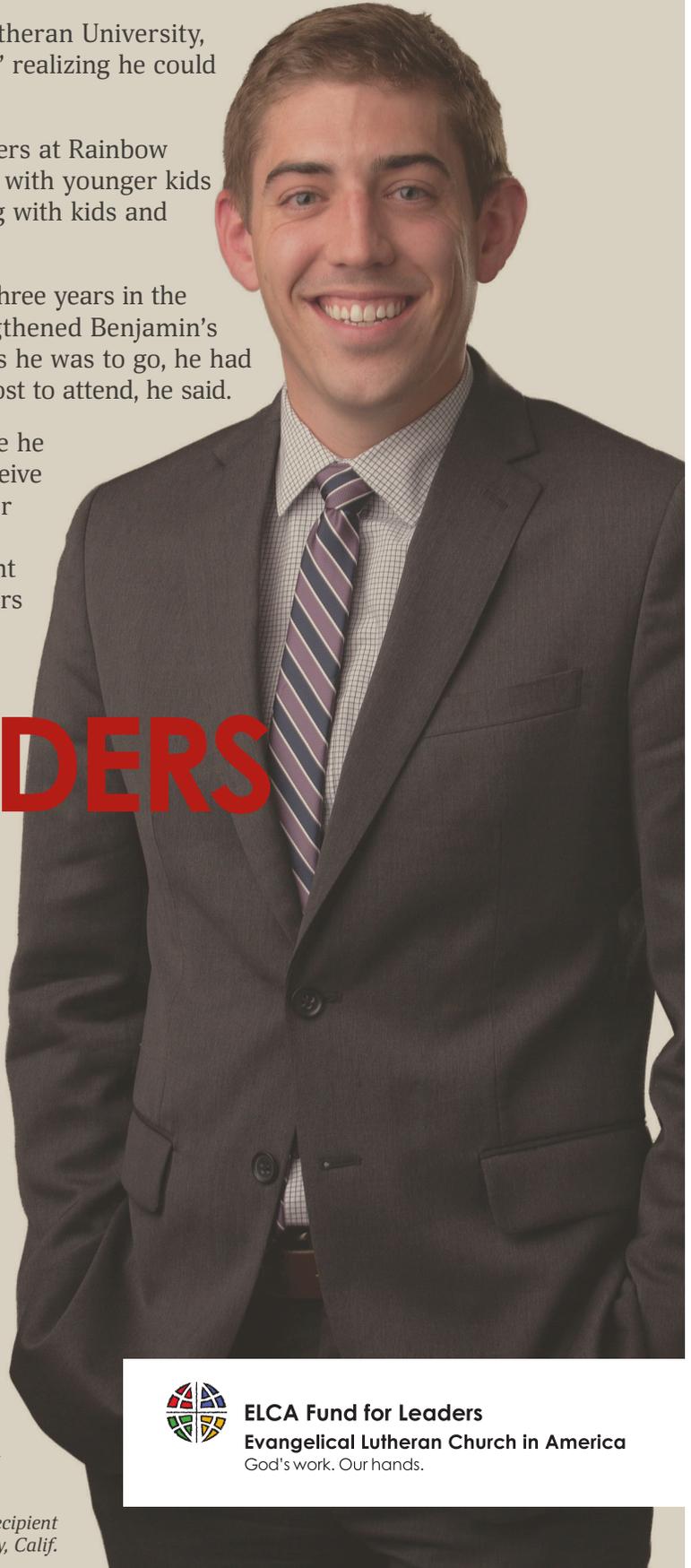
The scholarship means Benjamin can consider a wide range of ministry options as he graduates from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif., and enters his first call. “I will be able to walk away from seminary without an overwhelming burden of debt,” he said. “That opens up a lot of doors of possibility, and that's a huge blessing.”

“This scholarship is an extra something that reassures me that this is the right direction to go and the right decision to make at this point in my life,” Benjamin added. “I certainly am grateful. A lot of people will tell you that you have a gift for ministry, and you still are going to think, ‘What does that look like, how does that happen?’ And then a gift like this helps solidify those answers and makes attending seminary a possibility.”

*Benjamin Hogue, scholarship recipient  
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.*



**ELCA Fund for Leaders**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



# Honoring the 2015-2016 scholarship recipients



## Back row, left to right:

- Sergio Amaya, *Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, Austin, Texas*
- Brenda Greenwald, *Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.*
- Leonard Duncan, *Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia*
- Emily Ebert, *Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio\**
- Ian McMichael, *Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio*
- Amy Asendorf, *Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago*
- Matthew Seegert, *Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa\**
- Kelly Sherman-Conroy (Mato Waste Winyan), *Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.*
- Andrew Baumgartner, *Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago*
- Frances Le Bas, *Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.*
- Matthew Canniff-Kesecker, *Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S.C.*
- Elisa Berndt, *Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.*

## Front row, left to right:

- Tara Fleck, *Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Columbia, S.C.*
- Charlene Guiliani, *Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa*
- Tawanda Murinda, *Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa*
- Sara Bishop, *Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.\**
- Kimberly Peterson, *Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio*
- Kathryn Plasek, *Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa*
- Kristen Wall, *Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (Pa.)*
- Hayden Kvamme, *Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia*
- Laura Dunklin, *Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (Pa.)*
- Caroline Keenan, *Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.*

\*Students receiving mission developer/redeveloper scholarships

The ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship program enables us to attract men and women of tremendous promise to study at an ELCA seminary. The ELCA Fund for Leaders serves as the ongoing promise of this church, that those who are called to serve our congregations have the opportunity to pursue a path that leads to informed faith and passionate discipleship.

## Did you know?

The ELCA Fund for Leaders is part of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, our church's first comprehensive campaign. Thanks to the generous support of many, the fund is a quarter of the way to its overall goal of raising \$15 million by the end of 2018.



## How to give

Each of us has a unique role to play in realizing our commitment, as Lutherans, to "always being made new." Your gift to the ELCA Fund for Leaders ensures that individuals who would excel in any field will be able to follow their true calling.

Make your gift:  
Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
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P.O. Box 1806  
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Donate online:  
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Give by phone:  
800-638-3522

Questions?  
Email: [Rachel.Wind@elca.org](mailto:Rachel.Wind@elca.org)  
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