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Union Now

The Magazine of Union Theological Seminary | Spring 2010

Finding Voice

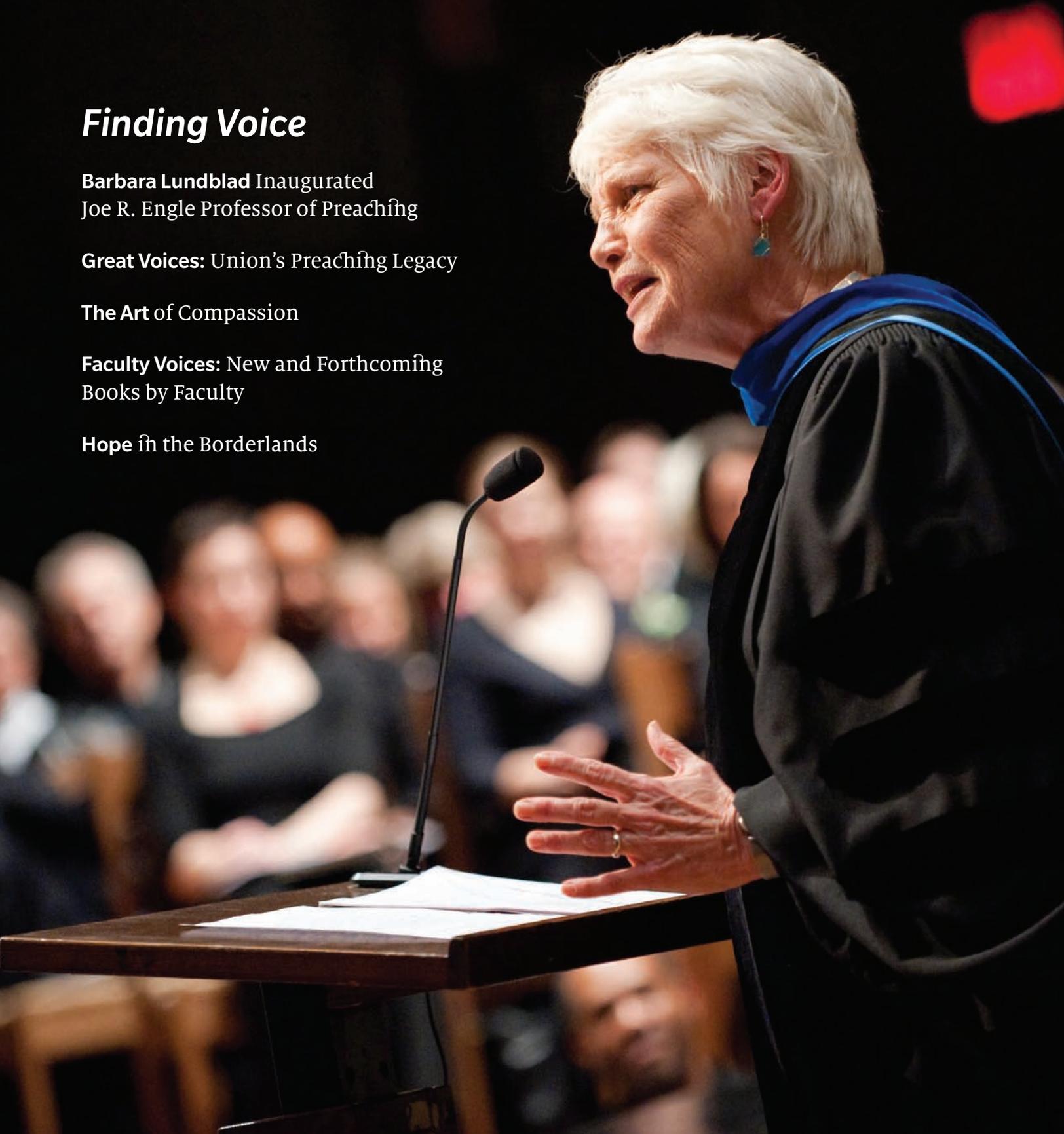
Barbara Lundblad Inaugurated
Joe R. Engle Professor of Preaching

Great Voices: Union's Preaching Legacy

The Art of Compassion

Faculty Voices: New and Forthcoming
Books by Faculty

Hope in the Borderlands



Dear Alumni/ae and Friends,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Union Now*. Playing on the name of our historic *Union News*, this new publication seeks to bring you both news of Union's current events and why they matter *now*.

As the theme of this first issue, we chose "Finding Voice" because of Union's longstanding commitment to speaking out on the pressing issues of the day. Now, as in the past, that voice is strong and takes many forms. On the music front, our Gospel and Seminary Choirs daily fill James Chapel. On the teaching front, iTunes University podcasts and web links now bring digitized sounds into the mix with the traditional voices of classroom lecturers and seminar discussions.

Among the students, the shouts of courtyard Frisbee-players can be heard alongside a chat about rooftop gardening or a strategy session on anti-poverty organizing. The chants of Orthodox liturgy fill the evening air, but by early morning, it is Yoga ohms and then at mid-day, a folk-sung communion service. Throughout the week, faith-communities ranging from Unitarian to Roman Catholic to Pentecostal bring their ritual sounds into play with those of Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists along with an ever-growing host of hearty spiritual seekers. Everywhere, the non-stop voices of Union's school life buzz.

For our alumni/ae readers, many of these voices should sound familiar, albeit cast in different temporal and cultural registers. Through our 174 years, our halls have crackled with unusual speech-forms and unusual speakers. Think of Charles Briggs, Eunice Jackson, Robert Seaver, James Cone, and Beverly Harrison, each of them speaking in tongues not heard before in theological education. Think of firebrands and scholars like Bonhoeffer, Niebuhr, Bennett, Tribble, and Forbes, their voices spilling into the world and changing it. Think, too, of our current faculty who, through their writing and interviews, regularly fill newspapers, television, Internet sites, and radio waves with the buzz of theologically rich opinions. Whether it's through a faculty longing to expand theology's boundaries or students reaching for an education that otherwise would have been off limits to them, we keep speaking... time and again.

Indeed, in the past as in the present, Union is home to voices as diverse as the city in which it lives, and, like the city, this diversity can also generate serious challenges. In our classrooms, voices sometimes clash, as the wounds and injustices of our collective lives find expression in language that is neither soothing nor beautiful. In our chapel, the blending of so many religious traditions often sounds more like a traffic jam than a symphonic orchestration. It falls harsh on the ear. Our politics, too, can sound discordant and coarse as our deepest passions and faith commitments pour forth in words not soft but restless and unyielding.

How do we manage it? Keep it functioning? And intelligible? As in ages past, the community is constantly learning how to find pleasure in the rough-and-tumble play of faith's messy, lived expressions. We listen for the interesting echoes in discordant sounds that others might quickly dismiss as noise—



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and to find beauty in an unexpected tone or an unruly rhythm. We try to cultivate a quality of spirit that is as open to love and mystery as it is to truth and goodness. As is so often the case in our ordinary lives, it is Union's quality of heart as much as its seasoned reason that holds our community together, time and again. Even the building itself, the body we inhabit, within its thick walls and open courtyard, keeps offering to all who enter a sense for both the carefully scored and the wildly improvisational sounds of God's voice in our midst.

With this first issue of *Union Now*, I hope you will enjoy reading about the many ways Union's community is finding and giving voice. Throughout the magazine, you will also find web addresses for more information and additional resources. I invite you spend time with the magazine and the additional media, to listen to the voices of Union now, and to add your voices to our full and growing speech-choir of faith.

Joyfully,

Serene Jones
President, Union Theological Seminary
www.utsnyc.edu/serenejones

Two New Board Members

At their February and April 2010 meetings, the Board of Trustees elected to add Marian M. (Mim) Warden '98, '04, and Catharine R. Stimpson as their newest members.

Catharine R. Stimpson



Catharine R. Stimpson is University Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Science at New York University. She has also served as Director of the Fellows Program at the MacArthur Foundation in Chicago, and as Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey-New Brunswick. She taught

at Barnard College, where she was the first director of its Women's Center.

Professor Stimpson, was the founding editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* from 1974-80. The author of a novel, *Class Notes*, and the editor of seven books, she has also published over 150 monographs, essays, stories, and reviews in *Transatlantic Review*, *Nation*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Critical Inquiry*, and *boundary 2*. A selection of essays on literature, culture, and education, *Where the Meanings Are*, appeared in 1988. She served as co-editor of the two-volume Library of America edition of the works of Gertrude Stein, and her own book on Stein is under contract to the University of Chicago Press.

Professor Stimpson has lectured at approximately 400 institutions and events in the United States and abroad. She has served as chair of the New York State Council for the Humanities, the National Council for Research on Women, and the *Ms. Magazine* Board of Scholars. She is the former President of the Modern Language Association and of the Association of Graduate Schools, as well as a former member of the board of PBS. She is currently chair of the board of Creative Capital, the innovative arts organization.

Born in Bellingham, Washington, she was educated at Bryn Mawr College, Cambridge University, and Columbia University. She holds honorary degrees from several colleges and universities, and was the recipient of Fulbright and Rockefeller Humanities Fellowships. ■

Marian M. (Mim) Warden



Marian M. (Mim) Warden moved to New York City from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1994 to study theology and the arts at Union Theological Seminary, where she received the M.Div. degree in 1998 and the STM in 2004. In Harrisburg, Mim had served in various community positions, including as an elementary school teacher, an announcer, interviewer, program director,

and ultimately station manager of a non-profit radio station. She was the founding director of MetroArts, a community arts agency providing services to artists and the wider South Central Pennsylvania community, with an emphasis on linking the arts and other segments of the community in a meaningful way. MetroArts developed a regional cultural plan, a united arts fundraising organization, and an initiative which resulted in the building of the Whitaker Center for Arts and Science—a theater and museum complex in the heart of Pennsylvania's Capital City. In Harrisburg Mim also served on the Board of Trustees of Market Square Presbyterian Church and was resident of the community chorus.

Mim's present volunteer activities include: Chair of the Friends of the Burke Library (Union and Columbia), Co-Chair of the Metropolitan Friends of Union, and coordinator of the Women's Schola of Union, which sings a weekly Gregorian chant Vesper service. She serves on the Inter-faith Committee and until recently on the Board of Trustees of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun. Her interfaith responsibilities have included organizing a three-year joint study of Early Christianity and the basics of Islam for the members of B'nai Jeshurun and the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew.

Mim's family includes five children and eight grandchildren. She serves on the board of directors of Warden Asphalt Company in Harrisburg, the company founded by her late husband, and also was recently elected to the board of Storahtelling in New York. ■

Read Mim's report on singing the Verdi Requiem at Terezin, on page 32 of this issue.

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