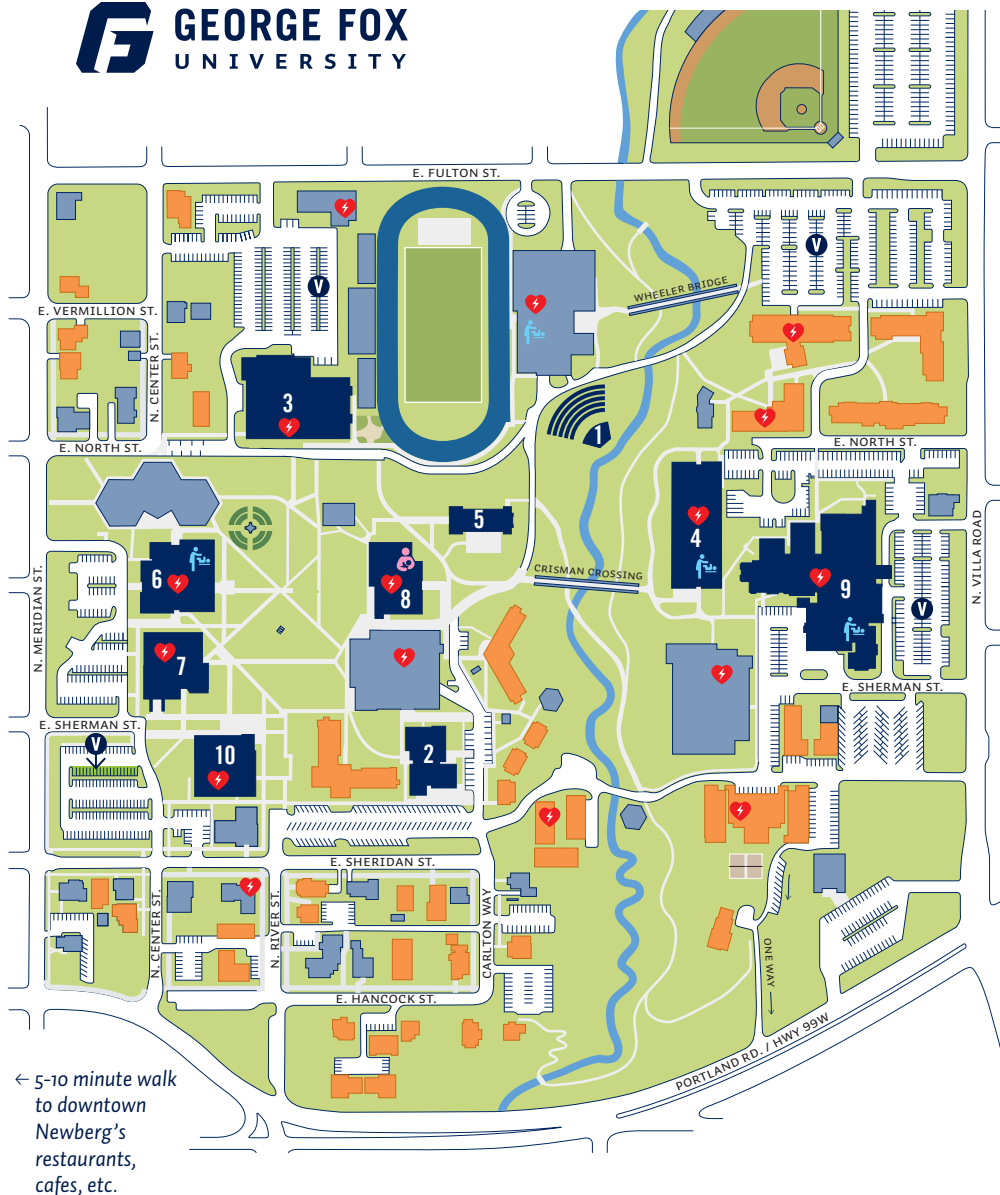




SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2026

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY



- 1 Amphitheater
- 2 Art & Cinematic Arts Building
- 3 Bauman Auditorium
- 4 Canyon Commons
- 5 Chapel
- 6 Edwards-Homan Science Center
- 7 Hoover Academic Building

- 8 Murdock Library
- 9 Roberts Center
- 10 Stevens Center
- V Visitor Parking
- 👶 Baby Changing Stations
- 👶 Mother's Room
- ❤️ AEDs

Welcome

The participant satisfaction rating for the inaugural Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference in 2024 was a 9.51 out of 10. It is safe to say we can only go downhill from here.

We have, however, tried our very best in 2026 to arrest or at least stall the downward spiral. Our six keynote speakers and their themes have been chosen carefully. Out of 190 paper proposals, including revisions, five leading international scholars on our anonymous review committee worked hundreds of hours pro bono to select the 100 most promising ones. We commissioned a brand-new play on T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis, recruited five experts to lead workshops, will offer a New Books Roundtable, a Rare Books Exhibit, and more. Whatever happens, we have put our best foot forward.

Our vision is for the Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference to become the leading recurring academic conference on the study of the life, works and influence of C.S. Lewis, while also dipping into the other Inklings and their wider circle. You will learn much about J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, Dorothy L. Sayers and others. The word “academic” does not mean you need to be a scholar – many of us are not. We are all equals here. Our keynote speakers, for example – though rightly famous for their important work – have not been helicoptered in to give hit-and-run lectures. They will get their hands dirty, working shoulder to shoulder with everyone at sessions and meals.

The word “academic,” then, signifies not status but the virtues of free inquiry, intellectual curiosity, and charitable disagreement. While we uphold mutual admiration, ours is not a mutual admiration society. We can – and sometimes should – disagree with the Inklings and with each other. Always with respect and charity, of course. On a completely separate note, I will be monitoring the rooms with a sword. Those who know, know.

Our planning team is extremely grateful to our donors, cosponsors and collaborators, whether local or external, individual or institutional, named or anonymous. Thank you for your continued support, often at great personal cost. Without it, we quite literally could not have made this happen. Your generosity of time, skills and funds helped us subsidize registration for all and waive registration fees for many students, international scholars, and independent scholars without institutional backing. Some of you have come from such places as Japan, Australia, Canada, England, Finland, France, and (again) even Ohio.

So, why do we believe so strongly in the promise of new scholarship on C.S. Lewis?

For one thing, it has been more than a century since Lewis was elected a Fellow and Tutor at Magdalen College, Oxford. His 20th-century life and writing must now be resituated for 21st-century readers. Not everything written about Lewis has been

accurate, so judicious reassessments are always in order. Comparative examinations of Lewis alongside thinkers and writers of our own day, his own time, and earlier periods are yielding fresh insights year after year. A new generation of scholars is discovering the value of his professional writing on English literature. Some of his work has been literally rediscovered, such as his sermon “All or Nothing” and his essay “A Christmas Sermon for Pagans.” And not everything Lewis wrote is yet in print. Another 19 items were added last year to the list of “uncollected” Lewis letters. I am told there is “no realistic prospect of the influx coming to an end anytime soon.”

And there is more. The vast quantity of private material that Lewis’s one-time secretary, friend, editor, and biographer Walter Hooper posthumously donated to the Bodleian Library at Oxford might, with your help, be catalogued for public release by then. Oxford’s cataloguing projects depend on funding, and many collections compete for the archivists’ attention. What shall we learn in the coming years about Hooper’s long stewardship of Lewis’s legacy – and, through it, about so many others?



We are already planning the next conference in 2028, and the possibilities of what this community will uncover between now and then are endless. We hope after everything you see, hear, think, and feel this week, you will continue to make this gathering a regular feature of your life and work.

With gratitude,

Jason Lepojärvi

Director, C.S. Lewis Initiative

The Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference planning and organization team:

Corey Abaira, Casey Brooks, Chenin Chappell, Joseph Clair, Alan Ghossein, Melissa Hooten, Bruce Johnson, Colton Kirby, Twila LaMar, Jason Lepojärvi, Lisa Leslie, Ralph Lindhart, Kirk Mannon, Alex Morales, Elspeth Murray, Jock Petersen, Gary Tandy, and Jacob Uren.

A special thank you also to Robin Baker, Steven Beebe, Darryl Brown, Peter Crackenberg, Andrew Del Rio, Brian Doak, Brandy Donovan, Norbert Feinendegen, Kimball Ferris, Steve Moore, John Nelson, William O’Flaherty, Sean Patterson, Pints with Jack, Annie Mae Platter, Emma Reinke, Joseph Ricke, Paul and Clara Stoltzfus, Ben Tissell, Jim and Linda Vogler, Sarah Waters, David and Patti Wessner, and many others who have supported this conference in ways large and small.

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Schedule at a Glance

Thursday, Sept. 24	Noon-2 p.m.	Registration	Stevens
	2-2:45 p.m.	Welcome	Canyon Commons
	2:45-4 p.m.	Keynote 1	Canyon Commons
	4:15-5:45 p.m.	Papers 1	Breakout Rooms
	5:45-7:30 p.m.	Dinner	Canyon Commons
	7:30-8:45 p.m.	Keynote 2	Canyon Commons
Friday, Sept. 25	7-7:35 a.m.	Morning Prayer (optional)	Chapel
	7-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Canyon Commons
	8:30-9 a.m.	Centering	Canyon Commons
	9-9:50 a.m.	Keynote 3	Canyon Commons
	9:50-10:15 a.m.	Panel Response	Canyon Commons
	10:30-11:15 a.m.	Workshops	Canyon Commons & Chapel
	11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Lunch	Canyon Commons
	12:30-1:15 p.m.	Rare Lewis Address	Canyon Commons
	1:30-3 p.m.	Papers 2	Breakout Rooms
	3:15-4:45 p.m.	Papers 3	Breakout Rooms
	5-6:15 p.m.	Keynote 4	Canyon Commons
	6:15-8 p.m.	Dinner	Canyon Commons
	8-9:30 p.m.	Leaf by Niggle	Bauman Auditorium

Saturday, Sept. 26	7-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Canyon Commons
	8:30-9 a.m.	Centering	Canyon Commons
	9-10:15 a.m.	Keynote 5	Canyon Commons
	10:30-11:15 a.m.	Workshops	Canyon Commons & Hoover 105
	11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Lunch	Canyon Commons
	12:30-2 p.m.	Papers 4	Breakout Rooms
	2:15-3:45 p.m.	Papers 5	Breakout Rooms
	4-4:45 p.m.	New Books "Tea & Teasers"	Canyon Commons
	5-6:15 p.m.	Keynote 6	Canyon Commons
	6:15-8 p.m.	Dinner	Canyon Commons
	8-9:30 p.m.	<i>The Fire and the Rose</i>	Amphitheater
Sunday, Sept. 27	7-9 a.m.	Breakfast	Canyon Commons
	7-8 a.m.	Mass Option	Chapel
	8-9 a.m.	Devotional Option	Chapel
	9:15-10:45 a.m.	Papers 6	Breakout Rooms
	11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	"New Horizons" Keynote Panel	Canyon Commons
	12:30 p.m.	Lunch/Send-off	Canyon Commons

Full Conference Schedule

Schedule subject to
change. Scan for online
schedule with the most
recent information.



Thursday, Sept. 24

- Noon-2 p.m.** Registration – Stevens (*registration after 2 p.m. – Canyon Commons*)
- 2-2:45 p.m.** Welcome – Canyon Commons
Dr. Jason Lepojärvi, Director's Welcome
Dr. Robin Baker, President's Welcome
Dr. Bruce Johnson, "The New Horizon"
- 2:45-4 p.m.** Keynote: Dr. Leslie Baynes, "The Trouble with the Trilemma: Lewis's 'Liar, Lunatic, or Lord' Argument" – Canyon Commons
- 4-4:15 p.m.** Break, move to paper sessions
- 4:15-5:45 p.m.** Concurrent Paper Sessions #1
- 1A: Rhetoric and Style – Edwards-Holman 102
"Dip, Write, Repeat: Escaping to C.S. Lewis's Analog World,"
Dr. Kent Kersey
"C.S. Lewis's Realistic Approach to Narrative Rhetorical
Criticism's Fantastic Problems," Dave Terpstra
"Imaginative and Pictorial Preaching: Lewis's 'Weight of Glory,'"
Dr. Greg Anderson
Chair: Dr. Gary Tandy
- 1B: The Cosmic Trilogy: Past and Present – Edwards-Holman 125
"'Since our Beloved Became a Man': The Narrative Significance
of the Incarnation in *Perelandra*," Mr. Simon Wipf
"Bergson vs. Boethius on *Perelandra*: Reassessing Sanford
Schwartz," Dr. Brian Roden
"*That Hideous Strength* from the Inside," Dr. Scot Headley
Chair: Mrs. Madeleine Teel
- 1C: The Making of Lewis – Stevens 109
"C.S. Lewis's Undiscovered Boyhood Bookshelf," Dr. Joyce
McPherson
"Lewis, Being, and The Whole," Mrs. Erin Seidel
"'That Was New': Speculations on the Content of C.S. Lewis's
'Hegemony of Moral Values,'" Dr. Matthew Jordan
Chair: Dr. Brenton Dickieson
- 1D: All Creatures Great and Cosmic – Stevens 207
"Creatures, Cousins, and Kings: An Exploration of Lewis's
Theology of Animals," Mr. Isaac Owen

“Angelic Aliens and Marvelous Monsters: Reimagining of Science Fiction Tropes in the Cosmic Trilogy,” Dr. Nathan Fayard
Chair: Mr. Josiah Peterson

1E: Desire – Stevens 208

“C.S. Lewis and the Kingdom of God,” Dr. Clayton Carver
“Desire and Conscience in A.E. Taylor’s *The Faith of a Moralist*,”
Prof. Aaron Rizzieri
“Lewis and Hegel on Sehnsucht and the Bad Infinite,”
Dr. Brian Gregor
Chair: Dr. Bruce Johnson

1F: Pedagogy and Education – Stevens 209

“Pedagogy of the Chest: Reviving the *Ordo Amoris* in the Classroom,” Mr. Josh Withrow
“Lewis on Pre-University Education: Unimaginative, Inconsistent, or Reasoned?,” Dr. Carrie Birmingham and Janice Park
“The Abolition of Man: Can C.S. Lewis Help Save My Comp 1 Class in the Age of Digital Necromancy?,” Dr. Benjamin Utter
Chair: Dr. Traver Carlson

5:45-7:30 p.m. Dinner – Canyon Commons

7:30-8:45 p.m. Keynote: Mr. John Garth, “The Undiscovered J.R.R. Tolkien”
– Canyon Commons

8:45-9 p.m. Closing Remarks – Canyon Commons

Friday, Sept. 25

7-7:35 a.m. Morning Prayer (optional) – Chapel

7-8:30 a.m. Breakfast – Canyon Commons

8:30-9 a.m. Centering – Canyon Commons

9-9:50 a.m. Keynote: Dr. Alister McGrath (remotely), “When Science Becomes Apologetics: Lewis’s Most Overlooked Strategy” – Canyon Commons

9:50-10:15 a.m. Panel Response moderated by Dr. Brian Doak, with Dr. Isaac Choi, Dr. Heidi Lindsley, Dr. Jim Slagle, and Dr. Piotr Bylica
– Canyon Commons

10:15-10:30 a.m. Break

10:30-11:15 a.m. Workshop 1A – Chapel

“Are the Inklings Reliable Guides for the Bible?” moderated by
Dr. Bruce Johnson, with Dr. Leslie Baynes, Dr. Jennifer McNutt,
Dr. Robert Garcia, and Dr. Michael Christensen

Workshop 1B – Canyon Commons

“Translating Fellowship to Comics: Visualizing the Story of
C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien,” Dr. John Hendrix

11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Lunch – Canyon Commons

12:30-1:15 p.m. Plenary: “Hearing C.S. Lewis’s Wartime Broadcast to Iceland:
‘The Norse Spirit in English Literature,’” Prof. Harry Lee Poe

1:15-1:30 p.m. Break

1:30-3 p.m. Concurrent Paper Sessions #2

2A: Lewis’s Influences – Canyon Commons

“Blue and Amber Castles: How Novalis is Reborn in the Works of
L.M. Montgomery and C.S. Lewis,” Ms. Avery-Claire Galloway

“‘The Biggest Shaking Up’: Jacob Boehme in the Works of
C.S. Lewis,” Mr. Scott Brown

“Samuel Johnson and C.S. Lewis: Admiration, Affinity, and
Influence,” Dr. Gary Tandy

Chair: Dr. Joseph Ricke

2B: Orual and Psyche – Hoover 105

“‘You Also Shall Be Psyche’: New Aspects of C.S. Lewis’s Classi-
cal Engagement in *Till We Have Faces*,” Mr. Michael Frost

“The Virginal and the Voluptuous: Lunar Imagery in *Till We Have
Faces*,” Mrs. Olivia Hofer Hancock

“Preparing the Bride: Psyche, Orual, and the Mikvah,”
Mrs. Christine Norvell

Chair: The Rev. Brian McGreevy

2C: Philosophy of Mind – Roberts Center 130

“C.S. Lewis and Religious Epistemology,” Mr. Josiah Peterson

“Undiscovered C.S. Lewis in Twentieth-Century Epistemology
and Philosophy of Science,” Dr. Piotr Bylica

“Lewis’s Prescience in Philosophy of Mind,” Dr. Jim Slagle

Chair: Dr. Matthew Jordan

2D: Lewis and Dante – MLR 025 (Library basement)

“Dante’s Ulysses and the Un-man,” Mr. Anthony Klein

“Nose to the Sunrise: Dantean Spirituality in *The Voyage of the
Dawn Treader*,” Dr. Michael Faletra

“No, It’s Not All In Plato: An Exploration of New Narnia through
a Dantean Lens,” Mr. Jonathan Selstad

Chair: Dr. Lindsey Scholl

2E: Inklings and Women – Stevens 208

“Discovering Comus in the Wardrobe: Lewis’s Miltonic Feminine
Spiritual Heroism in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*,”

Mr. Mark-Elliot Finley
"The Bachelor, the Nun and the Feminine Genius: C.S. Lewis's
and Edith Stein's Interwar Writings on Women,"
Mrs. Megan Mueller
"Is Mary Magdalene Human? Dorothy L. Sayers as Biblical
Interpreter of Jesus's Female Friends," Dr. Jennifer McNutt
Chair: Dr. Sarah O'Dell

3-3:15 p.m. Break

3:15-4:45 p.m. Concurrent Paper Sessions #3

3A: Literary Imagination – ART 105

"Narrow Escapes and Unexpected Recoveries: Divine Grace in
English Literature in the Sixteenth Century," Prof. Clark Moreland
"C.S. Lewis, the Modern Novel, and the Problem of Realism,"
Dr. Ryan Stark
"Lewis the Blurbologist: Engaging Justin Keena on *Screwtape
Letters*," Mr. William O'Flaherty
Chair: Dr. Jeffrey Barbeau

3B: Systematic Theology – Edwards-Holman 102

"Exitus et Reditus: A Master Motif in C.S. Lewis," Mr. Eric
Anderson
"Tolkien and the Turing Test: What Does It Mean to Be Human?,"
Mr. Jonathan Miller
"Reconsidering Lewis's Categories of 'Thick' and 'Clear'
Religion," Dr. Terry Cokenour
Chair: Dr. Josh Herring

3C: Problem of Pain and Pleasure – Edwards-Holman 125

"C.S. Lewis Beyond Mere Theodicy," Mr. Alexander Roth
"*The Great Divorce* and the Problem of Hell," Dr. Kristine Wolberg
"On the Book C.S. Lewis Never Wrote: The Problem of Pleasure,"
Dr. William Johnston
Chair: Dr. Jahdiel Perez

3D: Christian Stewardship – Stevens 207

"The Ecotheology of *Till We Have Faces*," Mrs. Madeleine Teel
"Mountains of Tin: Lewis and Sayers on Environmental
Stewardship," Dr. Lindsey Scholl
"Of Priests and Beasts: Lewis on a Sacramental World,"
Dr. Michael Muth
Chair: Dr. Greg Anderson

3E: Ethics of War – Stevens 208

"C.S. Lewis and the Ethics of War," Dr. James Chappel
"Hate With a Perfect Hatred," Mr. Brody Stewart

“A Lewis Stay with the YMCA: Difficulties in Reconstructing the
Forgotten Front Campaign,” Dr. Bruce Johnson
Casey LaMar (USMC, Ret.)

- 4:45-5 p.m. Break
- 5-6:15 p.m. Keynote: Dr. Landon Loftin, “Inklings on Abortion: Barfield vs. Lewis?” – Canyon Commons
- 6:15-8 p.m. Dinner – Canyon Commons
- 8-9:30 p.m. J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Leaf by Niggle* – Bauman Auditorium

Saturday, Sept. 26

- 7-8:30 a.m. Breakfast – Canyon Commons
- 8:30-9 a.m. Centering – Canyon Commons
- 9-10:15 a.m. Keynote: Dr. Anne-Frédérique Mochel-Caballero, “C.S. Lewis and France: The Untold Story” – Canyon Commons
- 10:15-10:30 a.m. Break
- 10:30-11:15 a.m. Workshop 2A – Canyon Commons
“Classical Literature in Narnia,” Dr. Austin Freeman
Workshop 2B – Hoover 105
“New Digital Tools for Lewis Scholars,” Justin Keena
- 11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Lunch – Canyon Commons
- 12:30-2 p.m. Concurrent Paper Sessions #4
- 4A: Narnia and Middle-earth – Edwards-Holman 102
“‘The Mythical Tollewis’: Tolkien and Lewis on Myth and Allegory,” Mr. Jonathan Rolfe
“Unlikely Father Figures in Narnia and Middle-earth,”
Mr. Joel Hawbaker
“‘Not Wholly Vain’: A Tolkienian Reading of Lewis’s *Narniad*,”
Mr. Daniel Hubin
Chair: Mr. John Garth
- 4B: Faith in Conversation – Edwards-Holman 125
“Unlikely Traveling Companions: C.S. Lewis and Jonathan Edwards,” Dr. Christian Cuthbert
“The Wound That Orients: Language, Desire, and the Split Subject in C.S. Lewis and Jacques Lacan,” Dr. Paul Hoard
“C.S. Lewis and Rudolf Bultmann – Theologians at Odds?,”
Dr. John Nelson
Chair: Dr. Leslie Baynes

- 4C: Beyond Mrs. Lewis – Stevens 109
 “Bloodstained Banners and Weeping Bays: An Undiscovered Influence on Joy Davidman’s Second Novel,” Mr. Gabriel Connor Salter
 “Joy Davidman’s French Connection,” Prof. Don King
 “The Problem of Joy: A Reexamination of C.S. Lewis’s Wife in the Context of #MeToo,” Kathleen Coffin
 Chair: Dr. Anne-Frédérique Mochel-Caballero
- 4D: Patristics and Metaphysics – Stevens 207
 “Augustinian Illumination and C.S. Lewis’s Theory of Imagination,” Mr. Colton Kirby
 “To Nothing They Shall Return: The Athanasian Influence on Lewis’s Metaphysics,” Mr. Austin Story
 “From Marginalia to Message: C.S. Lewis’s Sermons and Athanasius’s Understanding of the Incarnation,” Prof. Andy Shurson
 Chair: Dr. Landon Loftin
- 4E: Fellow Fantasists – ART 105
 “The Shire and the Hundred Acre Wood: Milne and Tolkien’s Post-War Pastoralism,” Miss Grace Jenott
 “Two Oxford Fantasists: Exploring the Connections between C.S. Lewis and Elizabeth Goudge,” Mr. Roy Wallen
 “Another Path Past Watchful Dragons: Virtue in Stephen R. Lawhead’s *The Song of Albion*,” Mrs. Monique Stam
 Chair: Prof. Harry Lee Poe
- 4F: Cinema+ – Stevens 209
 “The ‘Gentle Slope’ in Black and White: C.S. Lewis, Film Noir, and the Moral Crisis of the 1940s,” Dr. Bryan Mead
 “From Baker Street to Narnia,” Mr. J. Wesley Mullins
 “Screwtape, The Movie,” Dr. Joseph Ricke
 Chair: Dr. Michael Ward

2-2:15 p.m. Break

2:15-3:45 p.m. Concurrent Paper Sessions #5

- 5A: Poetry and Poetics – Edwards-Holman 102
 “What’s in a Name? Jadis, Narnia, and François Villon,” The Rev’d Brian McGreevy
 “Die and Come to Life: Matthew Arnold’s Influence on C.S. Lewis’s Conversion,” Dr. Jason Staples
 “On Failing to Finish *Bleheris*,” Dr. Brenton Dickieson
 Chair: Prof. Don King

- 5B: *Till We Have Faces*: Memory and Mapping – Edwards-Holman 125
 “Deserts into Oases: Baptized Memory in C.S. Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces*,” Miss Megan Rials
 “An Incarnational Cartography: Mapping Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces*,” Dr. Laura Van Dyke and Dr. Katharine Bubel
 “‘You Flashed and You Shone’: Echoes of Confessions Book X in *Till We Have Faces*,” Mr. Michael Oppizzi
 Chair: Dr. Michael Christensen
- 5C: Love and Moral Psychology – Stevens 109
 “Love vs. Trauma: The Making of an Icon,” Dr. Kali Miller
 “‘The First Rule in a Holy Game’: Lewis and Love in Contemporary Philosophy,” Mr. Aaron Milkie
 “Beyond Good and Evil? C.S. Lewis and Nietzsche on Moral Psychology,” Dr. Jahdiel Perez
 Chair: Dr. Joyce McPherson
- 5D: History and Political Thought – Stevens 207
 “C.S. Lewis as Philosopher of History in Relation to Herbert Butterfield,” Mr. Jack Nicholson
 “C.S. Lewis, Quentin Skinner, and the Cambridge School of Intellectual History,” Mr. Cody Mitchell
 “Medicine, Not Food: C.S. Lewis on the Purpose and Perils of Democracy,” Dr. Todd Wilson
 Chair: Dr. Jennifer Woodruff Tait
- 5E: Re-enchantment – Stevens 208
 “Bicycles, Shadows, and The Music of The Spheres: Philosophical Poetics of Re-Enchantment in Lewis and MacDonald,” Mr. Jonathan Mueller
 “The Proper Pleasure of Ritual: The Language of Liturgy in the Aesthetics of Lewis and His Contemporaries,” Mr. Sean Doyle
 “Recovery of Sight as a Task of Re-enchantment: Lewis in Conversation with Josef Pieper,” Ms. Lauren Revay
 Chair: Dr. Stephanie Midori Komashin
- 5F: Inklings and Friends – Stevens 209
 “New Light on C.S. Lewis and J.A.W. Bennett,” Dr. Joel Heck
 “Memoirs of a Medical Inkling,” Dr. Sarah O’Dell
 “A Circle of Friends: C.S. Lewis, Nicolas Zernov, and the Ecumenical Movement in Oxford 1947-1963,” Dr. Dwain Tissell
 Chair: Mr. Gabriel Connor Salter

3:45-4 p.m. Break

4-4:45 p.m. New Books “Tea & Teasers” hosted by Dr. Joseph Ricke – Canyon Commons

- 4:45-5 p.m. Break
- 5-6:15 p.m. Keynote: Dr. Michael Ward, “*Cursèd fate that gave thee to the Moore?* Mrs. Moore in Lewis’s Life and Works” – Canyon Commons
- 6:15-8 p.m. Dinner – Canyon Commons
- 8-9:30 p.m. “The Fire and the Rose: T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis in Conversation” – Amphitheater

Sunday, Sept. 27

- 7-9 a.m. Breakfast – Canyon Commons
- 7-8 a.m. Mass Option – Chapel
- 8-9 a.m. Devotional Option – Chapel
- 9-9:15 a.m. Break
- 9:15-10:45 a.m. Concurrent Paper Sessions #6
- 6A: Further Studies in Narnia – Edwards-Holman 102
- “Susan and Lasaraleen as Heroes,” Dr. Stephanie Midori Komashin
- “‘The Dwarfs are for the Dwarfs’: Race Anxiety in the Caspian Era,” Ms. Heidi Turner
- “What’s the Use of Eustace? The Redemption of Usefulness in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*,” Dr. Robert Garcia
- Chair: Dr. Gary Tandy
- 6B: Apologetics – Edwards-Holman 125
- “Stealing Past the Watchful Dragons: Imaginative Subversion and Spiritual Formation in C.S. Lewis,” Dr. Jeff Tacklind
- “The Argument from Morality and Phenomenology,” Dr. Regan Reitsma
- “*The Abolition of Man* Versus *The Green Book*: A New Verdict,” Dr. Gregory Bassham
- Chair: Dr. Austin Freeman
- 6C: Lewis and Barfield – Stevens 109
- “Why Lewis Ended the Great War Debate,” Dr. Lilian Lindén
- “Slithering from Poly to Pan: Barfield’s Criticism of *Miracles*: A Preliminary Study,” Dr. Landon Loftin
- “Was Owen Barfield Really an Inkling?,” Dr. Harry Lee Poe
- Chair: Dr. Bart Fowler
- 6D: Retracing Old Steps – Stevens 207
- “Walking with Dinosaurs: Following the Steps of the Cretaceous,” Dr. Michael Christensen
- “Variation(s) on a Date, or, When C.S. Lewis Read to the

Mermaids,” Dr. Sarah Waters
“A New Look: Correcting Chronologies and Characterizations of
Joy Davidman,” Rev’d Dr. Andrew Lazo
Chair: Dr. Scott Key

6E: Sex and Gender – Stevens 208
“Seven Genders in *That Hideous Strength* and Lewis’s
Epistemology,” Mrs. Willa Hoard
“Celebrating Gender in 1943: Gratitude for Gendered
Embodiment in *Perelandra*,” Dr. Josh Herring
Chair: Dr. Jennifer McNutt

6F: Surprised by Maths – Stevens 209
“The Business of Lewis: Private Matters with Public Impact,”
Miss Annie Mae Platter
“Good Reading and Good Mathematics: Comparing C.S. Lewis
and G.H. Hardy,” Dr. Josiah Reiswig
“Surprised by Maths: Dispelling the Cloaking Enchantment,”
Prof. Evan Hedlund
Chair: Mr. Roy Wallen

10:45-11 a.m. Break

11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. “New Horizons Revisited” Keynote Panel Discussion, hosted
by Dr. John Nelson – Canyon Commons

12:30 p.m. Lunch/Send-off – Canyon Commons

Keynote Speakers

Cursèd fate that gave thee to the Moore? Mrs. Moore in Lewis's Life and Works

Dr. Michael Ward (PhD, University of St. Andrews) is an associate member of the faculty of theology and religion at the University of Oxford and professor of apologetics at Houston Christian University. He is the author of the award-winning and best-selling *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis* (Oxford University Press) and of *After Humanity: A Guide to C.S. Lewis's The Abolition of Man* (Word on Fire Academic, 2021); he coedited *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis* (Cambridge University Press) and presented the BBC television documentary, *The Narnia Code*. He played the role of Vicar in the film *The Most Reluctant Convert: The Untold Story of C.S. Lewis*. In real life he is a Catholic priest, assisting at Holy Rood Church, Oxford, alongside his work as an academic.



The Undiscovered J.R.R. Tolkien

John Garth is the author of Mythopoeic Award winner *Tolkien and the Great War* as well as *Tolkien at Exeter College* and *The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien* (together published in 18 languages). He contributed to the *Blackwell Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*, the 2018 Bodleian exhibition book *Maker of Middle-earth*, and *The Great Tales Never End: Essays in Memory of Christopher Tolkien*. He has spoken on Tolkien at major museums, libraries, and universities in the U.S., United Kingdom, and across Europe, and his articles have appeared internationally in leading news and cultural media. He is writing *Tolkien's Mirror*, on the impact of major 20th-century crises on *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Silmarillion*.



When Science Becomes Apologetics: Lewis's Most Overlooked Strategy

Dr. Alister McGrath (DPhil, University of Oxford) was born in Belfast in 1953 and won a scholarship to Oxford University in 1971 to study the natural sciences. Although he was an atheist on his arrival in Oxford, he discovered Christianity and quickly realized the importance of C.S. Lewis as a travelling companion on the road of faith. McGrath served as professor of historical theology at Oxford, before becoming Oxford's Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion in 2014. He published an award-winning biography of Lewis in 2013 and a major monograph on Lewis's views on science and religion with Oxford University Press in March 2026. *Note: This lecture will be delivered via video recording.*



The Trouble with the Trilemma: Lewis's 'Liar, Lunatic, or Lord' Argument

Dr. Leslie Baynes (PhD, University of Notre Dame) is professor of New Testament and Second Temple Judaism at Missouri State University. Her *Between Interpretation and Imagination: C.S. Lewis and the Bible* has been lauded as “easily the best book yet written on Lewis and Scripture” (Michael Ward), “a marvelous study” (David Bentley Hart), and “a captivating read” (Mark Noll). The author of numerous scholarly works in her primary field of biblical studies, she has served as an Inklings Project Fellow with the University of Notre Dame’s McGrath Institute and as a translator for the *New American Bible Revised Edition*, the official translation of the Roman Catholic Church for liturgical use in the United States.



C.S. Lewis and France: The Untold Story

Dr. Anne-Frédérique Mochel-Caballero (PhD, University of Amiens) is an associate professor in English literature at the University of Picardie Jules Verne in Amiens, France. Her PhD explores gender relations in the works of C.S. Lewis. Her research focuses on fantasy literature, gender issues, and the intersection between literature and theology. She has published on C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald, Madeleine L'Engle, J.K. Rowling, and Margaret Atwood. Lately, she has been working on C.S. Lewis and his relationship with France. She is also the creator and a host of the first-ever podcast on C.S. Lewis in French, “Derrière la porte de l’armoire” (“Behind the Wardrobe Door”).



Inklings on Abortion: Barfield vs. Lewis?

Dr. Landon Loftin (PhD, Faulkner University) teaches for Gravitas: A Global Extension of the Stony Brook School. Before becoming a teacher, he served as a hospital chaplain and liaison to the hospital’s medical ethics committee. Earlier still, he and his wife assisted in the founding of a home for previously trafficked girls in Ghana. He has coauthored an introduction to the work of Owen Barfield called *What Barfield Thought*, for which he and Max Leyf won the Barfield Literary Estate’s Award of Excellence. He is the editor of a forthcoming volume of essays called *Chesterton and the Philosophers*. At present, he is conducting research for a book that is provisionally entitled *Owen Barfield: An Intellectual Biography*.



Theatrical Performances

World Premiere: *The Fire and The Rose: T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis in Conversation*

Saturday, Sept. 26, at 8 p.m., Amphitheater

**Literary giants. Philosophical opponents.
Brothers in Christ.**

From the creators of *Lewis & Tolkien: the Baptized Imagination* (premiered at the 2024 Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference) comes a new play, featuring actor Ben Tissell, about the relationship between two of the 20th century's greatest Christian writers. A medievalist and a modernist, they saw the world through vastly different lenses. Yet, Lewis and Eliot shared a hard-won faith, strikingly similar experiences, and perhaps even a late-blooming friendship. Exploring the letters, meetings and writings of these two seminal thinkers, this play brings C.S. Lewis and T.S. Eliot into profound, engaging and fruitful conversation.

A general public performance of *The Fire and the Rose: T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis in Conversation* will run on Friday, Sept. 25, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at boxoffice.georgefox.edu.



Exclusive Screening: *J.R.R. Tolkien's Leaf by Niggle*

Friday, Sept. 25, at 8 p.m., Bauman Auditorium

Performed by Richard Medrington, Puppet State Theatre Company (Edinburgh)

Puppet State's acclaimed solo adaptation of Tolkien's *Leaf by Niggle* brings the author's quietly profound meditation on art, mortality, community and grace to the stage with intimacy and depth. Performed by Richard Medrington and accompanied by an original score from award-winning songwriter Karine Polwart and composer Michael John McCarthy, the production frames Tolkien's text in full, with personal storytelling that illuminates the story's enduring significance for artists, scholars and communities. Running time: 75 minutes.



Workshops and Other Sessions

Special Sessions

“Science and Religion Panel” with Dr. Brian Doak (George Fox University): Friday, 9:50 a.m., Canyon Commons, directly after Alister McGrath’s keynote

Alister McGrath offers a specially prepared lecture exploring C.S. Lewis and science, examining Lewis’s thought in relation to questions at the intersection of science, philosophy, and Christian belief. Recorded specifically for this conference, the lecture will be presented to the audience and panelists together. Immediately following the lecture, Dr. Isaac Choi (George Fox University, Honors and Philosophy), Dr. Heidi Lindsley (George Fox University, Biology), Dr. Jim Slagle (University of Portland, Philosophy), and Dr. Piotr Bylica (University of Zielona Góra, Poland, and Prodoteo Foundation) will respond to McGrath’s presentation in a moderated discussion.



“Hearing C.S. Lewis’s Wartime Broadcast to Iceland: ‘The Norse Spirit in English Literature’” with Dr. Harry Lee Poe (Union University): Friday, 12:30–1:15 p.m., Canyon Commons

This workshop features a long-lost radio broadcast by C.S. Lewis, with participants following the transcript. Just months before his first BBC talks – the foundation of *Mere Christianity* – Lewis recorded a message to the people of Iceland on behalf of the Joint Broadcasting Committee, a shell operation of the Secret Intelligence Service, known popularly today as MI6. Discovered by Prof. Hal Poe in 2015, the broadcast was recorded on 78 rpm discs and flown to Iceland for transmission.

Poe will discuss its discovery and the significance of Lewis’s reflections on “The Norse Spirit in English Literature,” themes later echoed in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Till We Have Faces*, and *That Hideous Strength*.



New Books “Tea and Teasers” with Dr. Joseph Ricke: Saturday, 4–4:45 p.m., Canyon Commons

Have you published a book in the last year or so? Or are you working on a book project that will be published in the next year or so? This is your chance to share a little bit about your topic with a knowledgeable and engaged audience. Dr. Joseph Ricke (jsricke@outlook.com) will moderate this session, giving each presenter a time slot to describe their work. All conference attendees are welcome – whether you have a new book to talk about or not. Tea and pastries provided! (45 minutes)



“New Horizons Revisited” Keynote Panel with Dr. John Nelson: Sunday, 11-12:30 p.m., Canyon Commons

Our 2026 keynote speakers have presented their research, chaired and attended most paper sessions, and will take to the stage one final time to assess what’s interesting, new, surprising, and even groundbreaking about Lewis scholarship. Moderated by Dr. John Nelson of Premier Christian Media’s Unbelievable? Podcast, and creator of the “Behind the Gospels” Substack, which reaches more than 11,000 weekly subscribers.



Workshops

Two 45-minute sessions offered concurrently. Choose a topic you find intriguing and join the group for some in-depth and timely discussions.

1A: “Are the Inklings Reliable Guides for the Bible?” with Dr. Bruce Johnson (General Editor of *Sehnsucht: The C.S. Lewis Journal*): Friday, 10:30–11:15 a.m., University Chapel

C.S. Lewis’s well-known trilemma – Liar, Lunatic, or Lord – has recently been challenged in Dr. Leslie Baynes’s *Between Interpretation and Imagination: C.S. Lewis and the Bible*. The Inklings read Scripture devotionally and drew on it in their scholarly and popular writings, yet none (apart from George MacDonald) had formal training in biblical studies or theology. Are they reliable guides for Christian readers? What criteria should shape our use of their work? Using Baynes’s scholarship as a springboard, this session explores the broader question of the Inklings and the Bible through insights from scholars in multiple disciplines. The panelists for this session include Dr. Leslie Baynes (Missouri State), Dr. Jennifer McNutt (Wheaton College), Dr. Robert Garcia (Baylor University), and Dr. Michael Christensen (Northwind Seminary).



1B: “Translating Fellowship to Comics: Visualizing the Story of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien” with Dr. John Hendrix (Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts): Friday, 10:30–11:15 a.m., Canyon Commons

This visual workshop explores how graphic nonfiction reimagines the friendship of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Drawing on *The Mythmakers*, a 2024 long-form comic biography, John Hendrix examines how art and scholarship collaborate to illuminate myth, story, and creative community. Through images and video, the session considers how visual storytelling – from comics to animation – can make complex intellectual history more vivid and accessible.



2A: “Classical Literature in Narnia” with Dr. Austin Freeman (Houston Christian University): Saturday, 10:30–11:15 a.m., Canyon Commons

Classical literature shapes *The Chronicles of Narnia* far more deeply than is often recognized. This interactive workshop explores Lewis’s classical formation and highlights major themes and structures in the series – from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as “True Myth,” to the epic resonances of *Prince Caspian* and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. After a brief scholarly overview, participants will work in small groups to identify classical influences across all seven Chronicles, concluding with a discussion of their findings.



2B: “New Digital Tools for Lewis Scholars” with Justin Keena: Saturday, 10:30–11:15 a.m., Hoover 105

For the first time, the entire Lewis corpus has been collected and digitized. By a live demonstration of two tools built on top of that data – a search engine and an analytics suite – this session will highlight some of the verbal, literary, and stylistic features of Lewis’s total surviving output that are only now capable of being comprehensively examined. Researchers in particular will be shown how to quickly and efficiently sift through the over four million words in the corpus by means of the search engine. Participants are encouraged to steal as many ideas for new articles and books as possible, as the presenter can’t deal with them all.



Presenter Bios and Paper Abstracts

Alphabetical by Last Name

Mr. Eric Anderson – 3B

Paper: “Exitus et Reditus: A Master Motif in C.S. Lewis”

Exitus et reditus, “exit and return,” is a phrase that describes an original unity, a departure, and a return that is richer precisely because of the departure. In this paper, I undertake the first sketch of the role that “*exitus et reditus*” plays in the thought of C.S. Lewis. The pattern, once recognized, turns up all over the Lewisian corpus, including his doctrine of God, metaphysics, ethics, and even his literary theory. Given the important role “*exitus et reditus*” played in medieval thought, this is unsurprising and exploring the theme sheds light on the quasi-systematic unity of Lewis’s thought. The presentation will be supplemented by a non-exhaustive handout of passages where Lewis’s deployment of “*exitus et reditus*” is particularly clear.

Bio: A PhD student studying philosophy at Baylor University, Anderson has a master’s degree in theological studies from Princeton Theological Seminary and participated regularly in the Princeton Project in Philosophy of Religion. He’s also an adjunct philosophy professor at Whitworth University, his alma mater, where he graduated with a double major in philosophy and theology. His primary interest is the doctrine of God, particularly the Trinity, Christology, and the divine attributes.

Dr. Greg Anderson – 1A

Paper: “Imaginative and Pictorial Preaching: Lewis’s ‘Weight of Glory’”

“... to bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality” (*The Weight of Glory*). The haunting prose of Lewis’s *Weight of Glory* has made this sermon/essay a classic. Several grand themes were introduced in this work that were further developed in further writings. But there is one theme that has not been fully explored, remaining tantalizingly undiscovered. The concept of “Glory” is developed along the notions of “being noticed” (fame) and “luminosity.” But that notion of being noticed by God just might be the road to reality. Lewis claims that “a good deal of what I had been thinking all my life fell down like a house of cards.” He will urge his audience to notice and be noticed by divine reality. Lewis’s arguments from desire and the burden (weight) of our neighbor’s glory take on an eschatological and ethical imperative that is compelling. A close reading of the text, situating the demands of that 1941 setting, and the rhetorical moves he makes will be explored. Two case studies will demonstrate that, even after 85 years, Lewis still is providing a bracing glimpse of reality to those who have eyes to see.

Bio: Gregory M. Anderson is a Presbyterian pastor. He serves as graduate school chaplain and teaches in the Department of Christian Formation and Ministry at Wheaton College. He spent 40 years in pastoral ministry both in the U.S. and in England and Hong Kong. His PhD is from the University of Minnesota, and he has degrees from Wheaton, Princeton Seminary, and Yale. He has lectured on Lewis on three continents and has written book chapters and journal articles with a focus on his rhetoric and communication.

Dr. Gregory Bassham – 6B

Paper: “The Abolition of Man Versus The Green Book: A New Verdict”

Who were “Gaius” and “Titius,” the pseudonymous authors of the mysterious “Green Book” critiqued in the opening pages of Lewis’s *The Abolition of Man*? Lewis believed they were Australian schoolmasters who taught adolescents a dangerous, corrupting, and wholly indefensible form of moral and aesthetic “subjectivism.” In fact, as newly revealed sources,

personal communications from family members, and a close reading of their writings make clear, “Gaius” (Alec King) and “Titius” (Martin Ketley) were not subjectivists (or “relativists,” “emotivists” or “logical positivists”) but rather Christian romantics and lifelong Anglicans who held many of the same views on values, emotions, and education as Lewis himself. How could Lewis have been so wrong about King and Ketley, and what conclusions should be drawn from his misdirected attack?

Bio: Gregory Bassham is a former professor of philosophy at King’s College (Pennsylvania). A native of Oklahoma, Bassham received his BA and MA from the University of Oklahoma, and his PhD from the University of Notre Dame. Among his 12 books are *C.S. Lewis’s Christian Apologetics: Pro and Con* (2015); *The Chronicles of Narnia and Philosophy* (coedited with Jerry Walls, 2004); *Stoicism for Dummies* (co-written with Tom Morris, 2024); *Environmental Ethics: The Central Issues* (2020); *Critical Thinking* (8th ed., 2026), cowritten with William Irwin, James M. Wallace, and Henry Nardone; *The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy* (2010), and *The Lord of the Rings and Philosophy* (coedited with Eric Bronson, 2003).

Dr. Carrie Birmingham – 1F

Paper: “Lewis on Pre-University Education: Unimaginative, Inconsistent, or Reasoned?”

Thanks to *The Abolition of Man* and other works about the importance of an education based on objective truth, objective moral value, and classical texts, Lewis is known for his abstract and conceptual thoughts on pre-university education. His opinions on concrete trends and policies regarding pre-university education in 1940s and 1950s England are less studied and stand in contrast to his loftier values for education. In contemporary periodicals, Lewis argued for a “ruthlessly aristocratic, shamelessly ‘highbrow’” educational system that favors “the boy who wants to know and who can know” over “the stupid boy” in curriculum and in school structure. This presentation will examine letters, essays, and biographical writing to examine what Lewis means and piece together his motivation for what appears to be a dismissal of the students whom modern educators work so diligently to reach, and to solve what we call the “Stupid Boy Problem.”

Bio: Carrie Birmingham is a professor of teacher education at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, where she prepares undergraduates for careers in elementary and secondary education. She wandered into Lewis studies when she took seriously Lewis’s observation, “I never read an autobiography in which the parts devoted to the earlier years were not far the most interesting” (*Surprised by Joy*, Preface). Her recent publications are about Lewis’s schooling experience (in VII), the genre of *Surprised by Joy* (in *Journal of Inklings Studies*), and the experience of being a Christian teacher in public school (in the *IICTE Journal*). She is a wife, a mom, and a grannie. She is coauthoring this paper with Janice Park.

Mr. Scott Brown – 2A

Paper: “‘The Biggest Shaking Up’: Jacob Boehme in the Works of C.S. Lewis”

The influences upon C.S. Lewis are many and most are well known, except perhaps for the little-known Christian mystic Jacob Boehme. Lewis found Boehme’s works to be “like a Thunder-clap.” In Lewis’s letters it is clear he read Boehme’s works and found “something tremendously real.” This paper will examine the link between Jacob Boehme and C.S. Lewis. Lewis admits his struggle to understand Boehme and appears to have left the study of Boehme. Yet the influence lingered. Lewis refers to “my master” George MacDonald, William Law, Romantic writers like Coleridge, Blake, and Byron, Samuel Johnson, and Novalis, all who were influenced by Boehme. To what extent were Boehme’s ideas included into Lewis’s ideas and works, and how do these ideas become part of Lewis’s? Lewis expressed frustration at the complexity of

Boehme's work *The Signature of All Things*, stating he would "get some good commentator on this book." Did C.S. Lewis's work, either intentionally or through other Boehme influences upon Lewis, simplify some of the complexity of Boehme? To explore new links between Lewis and Boehme can help to inform Lewis scholarship and reveal the divergence and similarities between the ideas of the two writers.

Bio: Scott Brown has lectured at McGill University, Oxford University, the Netherlands, and Germany on Jacob Boehme. He is an independent scholar of theology of the early modern period and specifically the works of Jacob Boehme (1575-1624). Brown published the essay "How is Boehme Relevant Today? The Peculiar Case of Philip K. Dick." He has forthcoming works published by Brill, including *A Collection of First Editions of Jacob Böhme's Works: A Visual Essay*. This illustrated study documents a private research collection of early editions of Boehme's writings assembled over nearly 20 years. He is also collaborating on a forthcoming work by Oxford University Press, focusing on Boehme in 20th-century English and North American literature, with a focus on science fiction, Cormac McCarthy, and others.

Dr. Katharine Bubel – 5B

Paper: "An Incarnational Cartography: Mapping Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*"

We argue that the placial aspects of C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*, which have been critically understudied, are substantial to his "re-interpretation of an old story," the Psyche and Eros myth. In the book's opening pages, Lewis's protagonist Orual is careful to give the reader directions to Glome, conveying her emplacement in a particular world. Lewis clarified that his narrator writes from within "a little barbarous state on the borders of the Hellenistic world," which calls for attention to place in his writings, including his interest in literary cartography and the "discarded image" of the medieval mappaemundi. Following evidence from within and without the book, we show that, as a Christian medievalist scholar with a deep classical foundation and abiding regard for romance, Lewis had in mind a richly storied model for Glome: the ancient kingdom of Colchis in the Caucasus region. Best known as the site of Jason's legendary quest for the Golden Fleece and the region of Prometheus's enchainment – old stories that drew him as a young writer, along with the Psyche myth – this identification of his imaginative world opens multiple fronts of intertextual significance and deepens the incarnational import of the land in Orual's journey of spiritual metamorphosis.

Bio: Katharine Bubel, PhD, is an associate professor of English at Trinity Western University. Her areas of teaching include American Literature, 20th and 21st-century poetry, and literary criticism and theory. Her research focuses on the intersection of the religious and environmental imaginations. Her forthcoming monograph, *Edge Effects: Poetry, Place, and Spiritual Practices* (MQUP), attends to contemplative ecopoetics in selected West Coast poets. She is coeditor of the forthcoming *Learning Takes Place: Land-Responsive Knowledge and Praxis in Christian Higher Education* (Pickwick). She is coauthoring this paper with Laura Van Dyke.

Dr. Piotr Bylica – 2C

Paper: "Undiscovered C.S. Lewis in Twentieth-Century Epistemology and Philosophy of Science"

C.S. Lewis is rarely treated as an interlocutor in 20th-century epistemology and philosophy of science. This paper argues that his writings nevertheless offer a coherent and strikingly forward-looking account of scientific knowledge. Beginning with *The Discarded Image*, it examines Lewis's distinction between facts and theories and his description of a theory as a "supposal" that "saves the appearances." His view challenges naïve inductivism and anticipates later emphasis on the provisional, model-mediated character of scientific explanation. The paper then

considers Lewis's understanding of a scientific "Model" showing how it illuminates the role of imagination and conceptual frameworks in shaping what counts as a fact, an explanation, or an intelligible description of the world. Without attributing to Lewis the specific positions of Popper, Kuhn, or Feyerabend, the paper places him in critical dialogue with their challenges to theory-neutral observation. Finally, it connects these themes with Lewis's argument from reason: scientific inquiry presupposes the normative force of rational grounds, which cannot be reduced without remainder to physical causes. Lewis thus emerges as an original thinker on scientific models, theory-ladenness, and the irreducibility of rational normativity.

Bio: Piotr Bylica is a philosopher at the University of Zielona Góra (Poland). Since the beginning of his academic career, he has worked in philosophy of science and philosophy of nature; his master's thesis examined the role of facts in the formation of scientific theories. His research on science and religion draws on 20th-century philosophy of science, from logical positivism through Popper to Kuhn, Feyerabend, and Lakatos. His doctoral dissertation analyzed Phillip E. Johnson's critique of naturalism, while his second doctorate applied his original levels-of-analysis model to naturalistic theism. In his work on C.S. Lewis, Bylica uses this background in philosophy of science and epistemology to clarify the originality of Lewis's approach to science and to human cognitive capacities.

Dr. Clayton Carver – 1E

Paper: "C.S. Lewis and the Kingdom of God"

This paper examines C.S. Lewis's account of spiritual longing, which he often called "Joy" or "Sehnsucht," and offers a theological interpretation of its object through the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. Lewis describes "Joy's" object in two recurring ways: as a place, using language such as Heaven, "another world," or "my true country," and as a person, who is ultimately God Himself. Rather than treating these descriptions as competing claims, this paper argues that they complement each other within Lewis's Christian vision of reality. In works such as *Surprised by Joy*, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, and *Early Prose Joy*, Lewis's longing is often awakened by dissatisfaction with the present world and by glimpses of beauty that suggest a better one. Yet his later Christian understanding identifies God as the one who finally satisfies that longing. The Kingdom of God provides a theological category that unites these dimensions. The paper argues, then, that "Joy" is the longing for life with God in the redeemed world God promises. Read this way, "Joy" functions as both an eschatological signpost and a catalyst for spiritual transformation.

Bio: Clayton Carver is an assistant professor of philosophy at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. He received his PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2025, where his doctoral research examined the theological implications of spiritual longing in Lewis's writing. In 2024, he was awarded the William George Shuster Research Grant for Young Scholars from the Marion E. Wade Center, and he continues to research the notion of spiritual longing in broader theological and philosophical contexts. He is currently working on a monograph examining the theological foundations of spiritual longing, coediting an essay collection on Lewis, and has an article forthcoming in *Sehnsucht* on spiritual longing and the *imago Dei*.

Dr. James Chappel – 3E

Paper: "C.S. Lewis and the Ethics of War"

This paper will argue that C.S. Lewis made a distinctive and influential contribution to the ethics of war between 1938 and 1940. In a series of debates in these years, he set himself squarely against both of the main traditions in Christian history: pacifism, on the one hand, and just war theory, on the other. Lewis was too much an apostle of "mere Christianity" to jettison just

war theory in its entirety, but he did argue that the theory was meant to be used by rulers, and not by citizens or soldiers. For the rest of us, he preferred a third approach, which he called “chivalry.” He defended that ideal in many of his most famous writings, including *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. This talk will explain Lewis’s critique of other Christian traditions, and his embrace of chivalry. It will also explore the potential limitations of chivalry as a Christian ideal. The “just war” tradition gave some Christians the ammunition to critique area bombing campaigns and other war crimes. Lewis was silent on those issues, and this talk will try to explain why.

Bio: James Chappel is the Gilhuly Family Associate Professor of History at Duke University. His first book, *Catholic Modern* (Harvard, 2018), was about the transformation of Catholic social and political thought between the 1920s and the 1960s. He is now working on a study of C.S. Lewis and the Second World War, to be published by Basic Books and tentatively entitled *Life Has Never Been Normal: C.S. Lewis and the Second World War*.

Dr. Michael J. Christensen – 6D

Paper: “Walking with Dinosaurs: Following the Steps of the Cretaceous”

Within the field of Inklings studies, this paper explores lesser-known material documenting C.S. Lewis’s annual walking tours through the English countryside with kindred spirits who called themselves the “Cretaceous Perambulators” (1927–1939). Drawing on correspondence and reflections preserved in letters between Lewis and Arthur Greeves, in exchanges with fellow walkers Owen Barfield, Cecil Harwood, and Walter Field, and in the diary of his brother Warren “Warnie” Lewis, the paper identifies seven elements of what it means to “walk and talk like an Inklings.” It then turns to physical enactment: our own company of four, adopting the four walkers’ personas and pausing along the way to read a recreated script of their probable conversations, as we retraced the historic 1930 walk of the Cretaceous Perambulators – an approximately 70-mile, six-day crossing through Exmoor National Park, from Dunster Castle to Exeter Cathedral in the summer of 2026. The paper closes by summarizing what four modern walkers experienced and learned from walking the same sevenfold rhythm a century later, and what we discovered about walking as a way of engagement and spiritual praxis – thinking, being, and believing together.

Bio: Michael J. Christensen (MA, Yale; PhD, Drew) is professor of theology and dean of external relations at Northwind Seminary. A noted C.S. Lewis scholar, he is the author of *C.S. Lewis on Scripture*, a contributor to *The C.S. Lewis Bible*, and has taught Inklings studies for many years. In 2017, the C.S. Lewis Foundation appointed him senior fellow in the Scholars-in-Residence Program at the C.S. Lewis Study Centre at The Kilns, Oxford, where he later served as resident scholar (2018, 2019) and Oxbridge C.S. Lewis Summer Institute faculty (2017, 2022). An expert on Henri J. M. Nouwen, he coedited *The Heart of Henri Nouwen* and coauthored the *Nouwen Trilogy*. An ordained United Methodist minister, he has published 11 books on theology, spirituality and leadership.

Kathleen Coffin – 4C

Paper: “The Problem of Joy: A Reexamination of C.S. Lewis’s Wife in the Context of #MeToo”

In 2015, the groundbreaking and exhaustively researched biography, *Joy: Poet, Seeker and the Woman Who Captivated C.S. Lewis* by Abigail Santamaria was released into publication. Santamaria’s work complicated a popular narrative in regard to Davidman; namely, her rationale for leaving her first husband, William Gresham. Santamaria raised questions towards the legitimacy of the accusations of domestic violence Davidman levied against Gresham and suggested she exaggerated in order to garner Lewis’s sympathy. She is not the first scholar to do

so – both Walter Hooper and Alister McGrath have suggested that Joy played on Lewis’s compassion for her own benefit. In a post #MeToo landscape, this is a particularly serious charge. In this paper, I will discuss the life of Joy Davidman, her previous “affairs” before her later marriages, and suggest that further context is needed when examining the power dynamics within these relationships. I will draw from scholars such as Dr. Don King and Dr. Andrew Lazo who take a more nuanced and sympathetic examination of Joy. Finally, I will address why this characterization of Joy is harmful to both her and Lewis’s literary legacy and argue for a more compassionate and nuanced reframe of a complicated and engaging woman.

Bio: Kat Coffin is a part-time serious academic and full-time writer/musician, currently residing in Brooklyn. Her debut fantasy novel, *Hell’s Heresies*, was released in October of 2025. She is also one of the few writers granted permission from the C.S. Lewis Company to stage her play *Lost and Found: The Meditations of Susan Pevensie*, which imagines the grief and emotions Susan Pevensie endures after the events of *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Dr. Terry Cokenour – 3B

Paper: “Reconsidering Lewis’s Categories of ‘Thick’ and ‘Clear’ Religion”

In 1945, Lewis gave a lecture wherein he categorized all religion as either “thick” or “clear.” A decade later he brought those categories to life in *Till We Have Faces*. This paper reconsiders Lewis’s expressions of thick and clear religion and explores the challenges and encouragement they may offer to modern apologetics. Present apologetic streams remain, from one direction, largely driven by analytic philosophy, and there are burgeoning imaginative approaches from another. Lewis’s thick and clear religion may serve as a compass and sexton for navigating those cross currents, suggesting a way forward by joining what is best in both and producing an amplified wave that may carry Christian apologetics much farther in today’s cultural seas.

Bio: Dr. Terry Scott Cokenour is an assistant professor of narrative arts at Houston Christian University. His PhD research was on C.S. Lewis’s use of ambiguity as an apologetic rhetorical device. Cokenour teaches video game design at HCU and was involved in the early days of virtual reality. He spent a decade in Budapest as pastor of a Hungarian church and helped start churches in Hungary and America.

Dr. Christian Cuthbert – 4B

Paper: “Unlikely Traveling Companions: C.S. Lewis and Jonathan Edwards”

C.S. Lewis and Jonathan Edwards have not only stimulated minds but touched people’s hearts as like-minded theological traveling companions: Lewis and Edwards present the Christian life as a form of hedonism, they both draw distinctions between enjoying and contemplating the world, they root metaphysics within a version of natural law, they advocate for a typological approach to the natural world, and they both articulate a faith that is based in the affections, that is, intellect moving the soul. There is no evidence that Lewis ever read Edwards and no possibility of Edwards enjoying the wit of Lewis. Despite glaring conflicts in their theological vision, both seem to share a fundamental piety that runs deeper than Lewis’s Anglicanism or Edwards’s Reformed thought. This paper analyzes the parallel themes binding their thought and explores possible explanations for their shared piety.

Bio: Dr. Christian Cuthbert holds master’s degrees in church history and theology from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and a PhD in historical and theological studies from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. His professional scholarship focuses on the thought of Jonathan Edwards. In addition to his articles on Edwards, Cuthbert edited and

transcribed a volume of Jonathan Edwards's Wartime sermons with the Edwards Center at Yale University and is an editor for the newly released *Jonathan Edwards Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson). While his professional work focuses on Edwards, his recreational curiosity enjoys the theological wit of Lewis exploring the intellectual sources of his writing. He currently serves as the senior pastor of Union Church in Vernon, Connecticut, and adjunct professor of church history at Gordon-Conwell.

Dr. Brenton Dickieson – 5A

Paper: “On Failing to Finish *Bleheris*”

When C.S. Lewis was preparing for Oxford in 1916, he wrote 16¾ chapters of a prose novel. *The Quest of Bleheris* is a chivalric tale of heart-longing for adventure in a world of fading wonders that Lewis mailed in weekly installments to his closest friend, Arthur Greeves. Arthur is implicated both within the tale and without the text and encouraged Lewis along the way. Still, Lewis failed to finish *Bleheris*. In a misadventurous century-long parallel, this author had an early corrected manuscript of *The Quest of Bleheris* ready for press. Yet, the available transcription was published by Don W. King in *Sehnsucht* (and generously made available to all readers). *The Quest of Bleheris* is an intertextually and autobiographically rich piece. Following the lead of the surviving 19,176-word text, relevant paratext, extratextual evidence, extant ephemera, and the autographic invitation within the whole, this paper places three figures side-by-side on their misbegotten journeys: Sir Bleheris (the failing hero), C.S. Lewis (the floundering writer), and the author of this proposal (the eclipsed scholar). With rigor, humor and a non-zero amount of personal pain, the paper aims to get to the heart of why *Bleheris*, Lewis, and I each failed to finish.

Bio: Brenton Dickieson, PhD, is the curator of A Pilgrim in Narnia, the host and founding producer of the *MaudCast: The Official Podcast of the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute*, and the author of *The Spiritual Imagination of C.S. Lewis* (OUP 2026). Brenton is an assistant professor of arts and university studies coordinator at the University of Prince Edward Island, a founding member of the Curiosity and Inquiry Research and Collaboration Lab (CIRCL), and a faculty coach, lecturer and preceptor at Signum University. In the near-fantastical land of Prince Edward Island, he shares his home with his wife Kerry, a superstar kindergarten teacher, and Nicolas, a songwriter and critic who uses the Spare Oom for his recording studio, while Brenton's office is in a damp corner in the basement.

Mr. Sean Doyle – 5E

Paper: “The Proper Pleasure of Ritual: The Language of Liturgy in the Aesthetics of Lewis and His Contemporaries”

What is literature, and what is its value to the person experiencing it? This paper explores Lewis's answer to this question, compared with the thought of his literary contemporaries. Lewis, T.S. Eliot, and W.H. Auden shared the view that the experience motivated by great literature is not merely an irrational reaction reflective of the reader, or an encounter with the author's personality, but a response to objective value that forms the reader into a more complete person. Further, it is in this sense that Lewis and his contemporaries identified a profound analogy between literature and liturgy. Both give the person experiencing them an encounter with objective value: A piece of literature places the reader in contact with its subject, whatever that may be, while liturgy places the participant in contact with the supreme value of divinity. This paper uses the categories of phenomenological realism, as expressed by Dietrich von Hildebrand's *Liturgy and Personality*, to describe how, to these authors, literature and the

liturgy were both structured ways of nourishing and expressing authentic affective responses, and both subsequently form the person in virtue and reverence through contact with these objective values.

Bio: Sean Patrick Doyle is a husband, father and independent academic writer, living in Greenville, Texas. He holds an MA in theology from the Augustine Institute in Denver, where his research focused on the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. His writing has been published by the *Antiphon Journal of Liturgical Studies* and the *New Polity Journal of Political Theology*. His primary areas of academic interest are liturgical development in the post-conciliar church and the phenomenology of St. John Paul II and Dietrich von Hildebrand. His areas of personal interest include poetry, gardening and sacred music.

Dr. Laura Van Dyke – 5B

Paper: “An Incarnational Cartography: Mapping Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces*”

We argue that the placial aspects of C.S. Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces*, which have been critically understudied, are substantial to his “re-interpretation of an old story,” the Psyche and Eros myth. In the book’s opening pages, Lewis’s protagonist Orual is careful to give the reader directions to Glome, conveying her emplacement in a particular world. Lewis clarified that his narrator writes from within “a little barbarous state on the borders of the Hellenistic world,” which calls for attention to place in his writings, including his interest in literary cartography and the “discarded image” of the medieval mappaemundi. Following evidence from within and without the book, we show that, as a Christian medievalist scholar with a deep classical foundation and abiding regard for romance, Lewis had in mind a richly storied model for Glome: the ancient kingdom of Colchis in the Caucasus region. Best known as the site of Jason’s legendary quest for the Golden Fleece and the region of Prometheus’s enchainment – old stories that drew him as a young writer, along with the Psyche myth – this identification of his imaginative world opens multiple fronts of intertextual significance and deepens the incarnational import of the land in Orual’s journey of spiritual metamorphosis.

Bio: Laura Van Dyke, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Trinity Western University, where she teaches 20th-century and contemporary British and Canadian literature as well as courses on literature and the environment. Her research interests are in the writing of the Inklings, the environmental humanities, and mythopoeic fiction. She is the co-director of the Inklings Institute of Canada (housed at TWU) and is a coeditor of *The Inklings and Culture* (2020) and *Learning Takes Place* (2027). She is coauthoring this paper with Katharine Bubel.

Dr. Michael Faletra – 2D

Paper: “Nose to the Sunrise: Dantean Spirituality in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*”

Marsha Daigle-Williamson and others have noted the resonance of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* with the *Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri. Building on such work, I show how, as much as the book is structured around the narrative framework of the medieval adventure tale, its meditation on the spiritual life in particular is essentially Dantean at its core. Its paradigmatic manifestation comes through the character of Reepicheep. My focus in exploring this dynamic lies in the fairly direct allusion to the Italian poet in Chapter XIV: The speech that Caspian delivers to his crew directly references the speech of the very problematic Ulysses in *Inferno* XXVI. I argue that Lewis leverages this allusion to limit and constrain a narrowly “Caspianic” (or chivalric or epic or Ulyssean) in favor of a more purely spiritual, even mystic, “Reepicheepian” vision. I shall close my paper by showing how the Dantean goal of spiritual union with God is taken up by, and seen through, Reepicheep. More than any other Narnian character,

Lewis suggests, Reepicheep alone possesses the requisite spiritual maturity and intensity necessary for the type of ultimate beatific vision gestured at by Dante at the end of *Paradiso*.

Bio: Michael A. Faletra is professor of English and humanities at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, where he teaches medieval British literatures, medieval women writers, early modern humanities, Dante, and the work of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. He is the editor and translator of *Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain*, the co-translator of *Unless She Beckons: The Poems of Dafydd ap Gwilym*, and the author of *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination*, and of numerous scholarly articles. He is currently working on a book entitled *A Primer of Medieval Christianity*.

Dr. Nathan Fayard – 1D

Paper: “Angelic Aliens and Marvelous Monsters: Reimagining of Science Fiction Tropes in the Cosmic Trilogy”

When the science fiction fans of 1938 picked up a pulp magazine or dropped by a movie theater to catch the latest space-spanning epic splashed across the screen, they were almost certain to come face to fang-filled face with monstrous and malevolent aliens, menacing and merciless. Yet, when Lewis set out to write his own entrants into the burgeoning genre, he offered his readers a very different vision of the alien other than the already-common image of the bug-eyed monsters that filled the newsstands and serial reels. It is in his portrayals of his aliens as unique, unfallen creatures that Lewis made one of his greatest and most intentional departures from the genre conventions of his day. The aliens that inhabit Lewis’s cosmos have much more in common with the beings that inhabited the pages of medieval stories than those of contemporary tales. Medieval depictions of the monstrous had their share of bloodthirsty beasts, but they also included a multitude of much milder “monsters” – creatures that were different in shape but not in spirit from humanity and actively identified as fellow creatures of God. This paper explores Lewis’s imagined aliens and the medieval sources he seems to adapt in their portrayal.

Bio: Dr. Nathan E.H. Fayard is an assistant professor of English at Indiana Wesleyan University. He hails originally from the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, and before he came to academia, he had a number of adventures, from running a small dock on the coast while haggling with shrimpers to working as a reporter and critic in London. He got his MA in Romantic literature from the University of Illinois and his PhD in British medieval literature from the University of Arkansas. When left to his own devices, he can usually be found on the trail, in the water, or settling in with a good book. He loves heroic stories of all shapes and sizes, whether they are about Achilles or Aquaman.

Mr. Mark-Elliot Finley – 2E

Paper: “Discovering Comus in the Wardrobe: Lewis’s Miltonic Feminine Spiritual Heroism in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*”

John Milton epitomizes 17th-century English literature’s redefinition of epic heroism, rejecting classical heroism in favor of the Christian heroic model. Similarly, C.S. Lewis infused into his Narnian heptalogy what Monika B. Hilder calls the “feminine ethos,” or Christian heroic virtues and actions which are culturally gendered feminine. This presentation suggests links between Lewis and Milton regarding their engagement with heroism and gender by interrogating Miltonic intertextual echoes within *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, a comparative reading informed by Milton’s *Comus*. Classical masculine and feminine spiritual heroism models within *Comus* inspire Edmund and Lucy’s characterizations in their juxtaposed temptation scenes by the White Witch and Mr. Tumnus. *Comus*’s narrative structure allows Lewis

to critique Edmund's classical heroic ethos, while Milton's Lady acts as a literary precursor for Lucy's embodiment of a feminine spiritual heroism. Lewis's feminine spiritual heroic model is influenced by the Miltonic imagination. This presentation adds to existing source and gender scholarship within Lewis studies by proposing a consideration of Milton's poetics as influences for Lewis's conception of a feminine spiritual heroism. Reading Milton within the wardrobe helps audiences read further up and further into Lewis's fiction.

Bio: Mark-Elliott Finley is a PhD candidate in English literature at the University of South Florida. He is specializing in the Early Modern era and fantasy studies, paying particular attention to intertextual Renaissance echoes chiming in C.S. Lewis's work. He has published in venues such as *Research in African Literatures* and *Mythlore*, wherein he has written on topics ranging from Miltonic reverberations in an African short story to Harry Potter and *Beowulf*. The red thread in his work is a connection between classical philosophy and early modern literature within modern British Christian fantasy narratives. His prospective dissertation examines the link between English Renaissance conceptions of moral education and how such ideas occur in Lewis's Narnian novels, Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, and Rowling's *Harry Potter* series.

Mr. Michael Frost – 2B

Paper: "'You Also Shall Be Psyche': New Aspects of C.S. Lewis's Classical Engagement in *Till We Have Faces*"

This paper examines the classical engagement of *Till We Have Faces*, focusing especially on the novel's historical religious background and its relationship to its source, Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*. Regarding the first, a crucial contrast in TWHF is between the two statues of Ungit: the shapeless black stone and the beautiful new Greek statue. These two images simultaneously reflect Lewis's understanding of the rationalizing development of Greek religion and also the historical fact that the most revered statues in ancient Greece were not the most beautifully crafted statues, but rather rudely hewn or even unshaped images with purported miraculous origins. Regarding Apuleius, a comparison of TWHF with the Latin text of the *Metamorphoses* reveals new details about its engagement with the original, including the transformations of the description of Psyche as "simple," of the threat of suicide as a manipulation tactic, and of a jealous mother-figure. Moreover, the paper examines the parallel with the end of Apuleius's main narrative, wherein the protagonist Lucius undergoes a profound religious conversion and sees the gods face to face. Thus Lewis reshapes various threads of ancient Greek history and characterization from Apuleius to add depth to his own masterpiece.

Bio: Michael Frost is a lifelong reader of C.S. Lewis as well as a scholar of Classics and early Christianity. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2025 with an MA in early Christian studies. His research focuses on the history of biblical interpretation and the interaction of Christian thought with the pagan classical world.

Ms. Avery-Claire Galloway – 2A

Paper: "Blue and Amber Castles: How Novalis is Reborn in the Works of L.M. Montgomery and C.S. Lewis"

Lucy Maud Montgomery's 1926 novel *The Blue Castle*, famously recognized as a Bluebeard retelling, can also credit its "Blue" to the image of the *Blue Flower* from Heinrich von Ofterdingen, a posthumously published, unfinished novel by the German Romantic poet Novalis. Like Novalis's *Blue Flower*, Montgomery's image of a *Blue Castle* acts within the narrative as a symbol of the particular experience of longing known as *Sehnsucht*. Montgomery is not alone in rethinking the *Blue Flower* as a castle. The Amber Castle in C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces* (1956) serves the same symbolic function. Recent critical discourse led by Brenton Dickieson

has connected Lewis's "Joy" and Montgomery's "the Flash" as instances of *Sehnsucht* in their nonfiction writings, and this paper expands that conversation to include their fiction. While both 20th-century novels contribute to the legacy of Novalis, further narrative similarities, including the prioritization of the female perspective, as well as the romantic journeys, physical traumas, and spiritual healing experienced by their heroines, reveal a unique understanding of the yearning behind the imagery of the *Blue Flower* as the means or experience of rebirth.

Bio: Avery-Claire Galloway is a graduate student and first-year composition instructor at Clemson University. Her research interests include The Inklings, early fantasy and Victorian children's literature, as well as modern mythopoetic stories that reinvent ancient truths for new audiences. Her work has been published in the *British Fantasy Society Journal*, and her current project is a thesis that explores how the metaphoric use of the vocabulary of fashion in the fiction of George MacDonald, C.S. Lewis, and Brandon Sanderson can illustrate a larger theory of spiritual storytelling.

Dr. Robert Garcia – 6A

Paper: "What's the Use of Eustace? The Redemption of Usefulness in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*"

This paper argues that the paradoxical significance of Eustace Scrubb's name illuminates a central theme of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*: the redemption of usefulness. "Eustace" derives from Greek roots suggesting good standing, stability and fruitfulness, qualities the boy initially lacks. Most importantly, I argue that Lewis likely alludes to Useless Eustace, Jack Greenall's popular *Daily Mirror* comic, launched in 1935, whose hapless protagonist repeatedly tries to be useful only to fail comically. This possible allusion appears to have gone unnoticed in Lewis scholarship, although Lewis later makes the phonetic joke explicit: "Not useless," said the Owl. "Eustace." The joke participates in a larger critique of usefulness. At the Lone Islands slave market, persons are reduced to economic uses and exchange values, while Eustace becomes "a sort of utility slave whom no one will buy": the instrumental standard by which he values things is turned upon him, and he proves worthless by it. His "dragoning" and "undragoning" transform this false usefulness into self-giving service. Finally, Lewis's opening – Eustace "almost deserved" his name – invites comparison with George MacDonald's "new name" theology: becoming the unique person God intends one to be. Eustace's voyage thus moves from comic uselessness to fruitful usefulness redeemed by grace.

Bio: Robert K. Garcia, PhD, is an associate professor of philosophy at Baylor University. His research lies primarily at the intersection of metaphysics and the philosophy of religion, with particular focus on the nature and value of human persons. He has published numerous articles and book chapters and has coedited several volumes, including "Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?" (with Nathan King) and "Watching *The Chosen*: History, Faith, and Interpretation" (with Paul Gondreau, Patrick Gray, and Douglas S. Huffman). He is currently at work on three books: *The Screentime Letters*, a technology-focused pastiche of *Screwtape*; a study of Søren Kierkegaard and C.S. Lewis (with C. Stephen Evans); and a monograph on Lewis's understanding of the uniqueness and value of each person. Learn more at robertkgarcia.com.

Dr. Brian Gregor – 1E

Paper: "Lewis and Hegel on *Sehnsucht* and the Bad Infinite"

Recent scholarship has documented Lewis's journey through different versions of idealism during his early philosophical formation, but there is more to say about his perspective on G.W.F. Hegel. Although Lewis is highly critical of Hegel's historicism, pantheism, and immanentism, the two thinkers offer comparable critiques of Romantic *Sehnsucht*, as a longing

which seeks the infinite in the finite in a way that results in an endless deferral rather than fullness of presence. This Sehnsucht remains a merely negative moment, an endlessly frustrated desire which Hegel calls the “bad infinite.” By contrast, Lewis and Hegel both present a “dialectic of desire” in which Sehnsucht points to real fulfillment. They disagree, however, regarding the nature of that fulfillment. Where Hegel describes an immanent reconciliation of divinity and humanity in the Spirit of community, Lewis argues that desire points to enjoyment that cannot be fully given “in our present mode of subjective and spatio-temporal experience.” For Hegel, this sounds like a prime example of the bad infinite, but for Lewis this enjoyment – Joy – includes both desire and fulfillment and allows the Christian to encounter God as a genuine Thou in a way that Hegel’s abstract, immanent Spirit cannot.

Bio: Brian Gregor (PhD, Boston College) is professor and chair of philosophy at California State University, Dominguez Hills. His research concerns the relation between Christian faith and human subjectivity. This interest motivates his research in post-Kantian Continental philosophy (especially Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, and Ricoeur) as well as the practice of philosophy as a way of life. He teaches a course called *The Good Life* and is finishing a short history of philosophical life in ancient Greece and Rome. Brian is a long-time reader of C.S. Lewis but has only recently mixed work with pleasure by writing about him. He is particularly interested in Lewis’s Christian engagement with pagan myth and philosophy and is excited to be back at the Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference.

Mrs. Olivia Hofer Hancock – 2B

Paper: “The Virginal and the Voluptuous: Lunar Imagery in *Till We Have Faces*”

Following Michael Ward’s work in *Planet Narnia*, surprisingly little scholarship has explored planetary themes in the book Lewis considered his best. This paper considers *Till We Have Faces* in light of the nearest “planet” in ancient and medieval cosmology, the moon. Traditionally associated with wandering, madness, silver, the feminine, and the border between doubt and certainty and the fallen and unfallen, Luna is rich in symbolism pertinent to this story. This paper traces these and other lunar themes throughout the book, with consideration for Lewis’s treatment of Luna in his other writings. Finally, drawing on Lewis’s portrayal of the moon in *That Hideous Strength*, we explore the characters of Orual and Psyche as respectively representing the “virginal” and “voluptuous” aspects of the moon.

Bio: Olivia Hofer Hancock is a writer, speaker and independent researcher. Her introduction to Lewis was a staged performance of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* during childhood, but her fascination with his work began in earnest when she read *Till We Have Faces* years later. Lewis served as her gateway drug to classic literature, especially Greek tragedy. She is indebted to Andrew Snyder’s music selections for the inspiration for her present paper. A native Floridian and former New Hampshireite, she lived in Georgia for nearly two decades before moving to British Columbia, Canada, where she resides with her husband, Ian, and esteemed colleague, Sydney the cockatiel.

Mr. Joel Hawbaker – 4A

Paper: “Unlikely Father Figures in Narnia and Middle-earth”

According to C.S. Lewis, affection “is indeed the least discriminating of loves ... almost anyone can become an object of Affection ... It ignores the barriers of age, sex, class, and education...” Puddleglum the Marshwiggle is a father figure to two school-age children in Eustace and Jill who have been sent on a specific mission by Aslan. Treebeard the Ent, on the other hand, is a father figure to Merry and Pippin, who are both effectively “young adults” in the world of Middle-earth and the culture of the hobbits. The two hobbits, rather than being sent on a mission

of rescue, are caught up in a war for Middle-earth. Despite these two different situations and some major differences between a Marshwiggles and an Ent, we also see overlap in the father figure relationships they develop even as they allow the young ones room to grow (literally in the case of Merry and Pippin), ultimately ending as friends. From these situations we can also grow by examining some of the interactions, discussions, and life lessons taught by Puddleglum and Treebeard. In doing so, we will see that Lewis was correct when he wrote that affection “ignores even the barriers of species.”

Bio: Joel W. Hawbaker was a history and Bible teacher for 16 years, and many of those Bible classes used C.S. Lewis books as texts. He became a fan of Tolkien while a student at Covenant College and Oxford University, and he has been reading and studying Lewis and Tolkien for over 25 years. In addition to having been a teacher and soccer coach, Joel is a professional speaker and has also been a firefighter, insurance salesman, bartender, construction worker, shipping clerk, and two-time Amazon #1 best-selling author. He also works as a blended/stepfamily coach and consultant and is in the process of publishing a book on that topic. Rest assured, it will have lots of quotes from Tolkien and Lewis.

Dr. Scot Headley – 1B

Paper: “*That Hideous Strength* from the Inside”

As I end my 45-year career as a professor and academic dean in both Christian and state institutions, I have come to understand Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength* as both a fascinating and engaging story, as well as the presentation of a diagnostic vocabulary for analyzing the institutions I have spent my career inside of. This presentation will review American higher education using a framework with terminology developed by Lewis in the mid-20th century. I am not a scholar of C.S. Lewis, though I appreciate his clear view of the landscape of teaching and learning presented in his non-fiction works, most notably *The Abolition of Man*, and illustrated through story in *That Hideous Strength*. Lewis foresaw the bureaucratization of our institutions and their replacement of human formation by credentialing. The story is about what happens to people, and to the institutions charged with educating them, when objective value is replaced by subjectivism, and when knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue give way to willpower, technological control, and the alteration of nature to suit our convenience. From an insider’s perspective as both administrator and professor, this is quite representative of our institutions today.

Bio: Scot Headley is professor emeritus from George Fox University, recently retired from a 45-year career as a professor and administrator in higher education. His background is in technical education, and he spent many years in professional education, preparing teachers, and leading professional development programs for teachers and leaders in both PK-12 and higher education. His recent scholarly work focuses on empathy in education and the ethic of care as a framework for leading and teaching.

Dr. Joel Heck – 5F

Paper: “New Light on C.S. Lewis and J.A.W. Bennett”

Two friends and colleagues bookend the academic career of C.S. Lewis, beginning from his undergraduate studies in English and concluding with the end of his career. F.P. Wilson was Lewis’s tutor for English literature and later editor of the Oxford History of English Literature, while J.A.W. Bennett succeeded Lewis at Cambridge as the chair of Medieval and Renaissance English and dedicated his inaugural lecture to Lewis. The study of these two men led to the discovery of the previously undiscovered letter that Lewis wrote to Bennett about Bennett’s forthcoming study of Chaucer’s *The Parlement of Foules*, later published in 1957.

Bio: Dr. Joel Heck holds the Doctor of Theology in exegetical theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He is the author or editor of 16 books, including five books on C.S. Lewis, among them *Irrigating Deserts: C.S. Lewis on Education* (2005), *From Atheism to Christianity: The Story of C.S. Lewis* (2017), *No Ordinary People: Twenty-One Friendships of C.S. Lewis* (2021), and *The Lion that Roared*, a children's story in the tradition of Narnia. He has also written 47 articles on C.S. Lewis. He and his wife Cheryl own a home in Cincinnati in retirement.

Prof. Evan Hedlund – 6F

Paper: “Surprised by Maths: Dispelling the Cloaking Enchantment”

Within the body of scholarship dedicated to C.S. Lewis studies, the propositions addressing his mathematical capacity and appreciation are discordant. One might say there is a cloaking enchantment obfuscating the truth. Claims range from declaring Lewis's math skills as “abysmal” and Lewis having a “lifelong aversion to mathematics” to a positive recognition of Lewis's affinity to mathematical reasoning and his insight into, and appreciation for, higher mathematics. My aim is threefold: 1) to contextualize the inconsistency of these propositions through an overview of the relevant scholarship and original sources, 2) to elucidate Lewis's struggles with the 1917 Trinity Term Responsions of Oxford by surveying the actual exam sourced from the Bodleian Library, and 3) to clarify Lewis's sentiments regarding, and capacity in, mathematics and mathematical reasoning by bringing to light new insights. My ultimate hope is to dispel the current misunderstandings of Lewis's attitude toward mathematics and replace them with ideas which are more true, fitting, and beautiful.

Bio: Evan J.D. Hedlund serves as an associate professor of mathematics and the director of the mathematics and honors programs at Corban University in Salem, Oregon. He is passionate about the liberal arts and classics because of the richness and beauty they bring. Naturally, the work of the Inklings provides a reliable well of inspiration.

Dr. Joshua Herring – 6E

Paper: “Celebrating Gender in 1943: Gratitude for Gendered Embodiment in *Perelandra*”

In *Perelandra*, Lewis develops a neo-Platonic theory of gender where “men and women” participate in “the masculine” and “the feminine.” Lewis understands masculinity as the outward desire to protect the threshold of the home, symbolized through Malacandra's outward orientation and eyes that scan the horizon “as for an ancient foe.” *Perelandra*'s eyes go inward, thrumming with life. As an incarnation of “the feminine,” she creates conditions conducive to life. Read in isolation, this passage offers a clear vision of what pertains to each gender. Read in the broader context of *Perelandra*, gender becomes a gift each creature receives. A Lewisian framing of gender sees gender dysphoria as the wrong response to the gift of the body. Learning the right response to one's given nature becomes a twin task of discipleship and education; those who wrestle with gender dysphoria need to celebrate the gift that it is to be made “male and female” in the divine image. Gender allows Lewis to illustrate our human need to see the goodness of God's creational order.

Bio: Dr. Joshua Herring is the director of the Logres Institute for Classical Liberal Studies, author of *Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve: C.S. Lewis's Images of Gender*, and curriculum program manager for the Rafiki Foundation. He holds degrees from Hillsdale College, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Faulkner University. While working on his dissertation, Josh became enamored with Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and tracing the connections between Lewis and Spenser. He loves the power poetic images have to help us understand reality. Josh and his wife Jennifer live in Wendell, North Carolina.

Dr. Paul Hoard – 4B**Paper: “The Wound That Orients: Language, Desire, and the Split Subject in C.S. Lewis and Jacques Lacan”**

Both C.S. Lewis and Jacques Lacan attend closely to language’s limits. For Lacan, entry into language constitutively wounds the subject, splitting consciousness around a loss that, structurally, never was. Lewis approaches similar terrain independently, writing to Rhona Bodle in 1949 that the most concrete realities elude language not from vagueness but from language’s own nature. This paper takes up what a Lacanian reading brings into focus in the Blue Room scene of *That Hideous Strength*, where the angels Mercury and Venus descend on Ransom and Merlin. Mercury, lord of Meaning, shatters and reconstitutes the subject through essential speech, an encounter this paper reads through Lacan’s account of the split subject and the traumatic irruption of the Real into the Imaginary-Symbolic registers. Where Lacan’s framework tends to circle this void, Lewis’s eschatology, glimpsed in *The Last Battle*, takes the same structure in a different direction: not toward resolution but toward inexhaustible abundance and an infinite deepening of desire. The paper argues that the difference between the two thinkers lies not in whether the wound is real, but in what it orients us toward.

Bio: Paul Hoard, PhD, LMHC, is a licensed counselor, psychoanalytic psychotherapist, and associate professor of counseling psychology at The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology, and a board member for the Center for Christianity and Psychoanalysis. His scholarship focuses on Lacanian theory, sexuality, white-body supremacy, perpetration-induced traumatic stress, and the theological logic of disgust, with publications and international talks on purity culture, trauma, eucontamination, and theology’s intersections with psychoanalysis. He is coauthor, with Billie Hoard, of *Eucontamination: Disgust Theology and the Christian Life*, and cofounder and chief strategy officer of Praxplay, a clinical roleplay simulation platform.

Willa Hoard – 6E**Paper: “Seven Genders in *That Hideous Strength* and Lewis’s Epistemology”**

In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis claims that Mercury, Venus, and Mars represent “those two of the Seven Genders which bear a certain analogy to the biological sexes and can therefore be in some measure understood by men.” Three planets, two legible genders, seven total, and Lewis lets the arithmetic stand unexplained. This paper takes that throwaway line as a starting point for a fuller account of Lewis’s metaphysics of gender and the epistemology by which such a reality could be known at all. Drawing on Lewis’s theory of transposition, his scholarly exploration of classical and medieval cosmology, and the “looking along” epistemology of “Meditation in a Toolshed,” together with the planetary material in his poetry, *The Discarded Image*, and the *Cosmic Trilogy*, this paper traces Lewis’s cosmology to its medieval sources and forward through Michael Ward’s *Planet Narnia* and ultimately proposes a more fully developed vision of Lewis’s understanding of gender.

Bio: Billie Hoard is a teacher, an author, and something of an Anabaptist radical. A consummate generalist, she holds an MA in liberal arts from St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland, and writes on topics ranging from fairy tales and C.S. Lewis to theology and philosophy. She and her brother, Paul Hoard, are the authors of *Eucontamination: Disgust Theology and the Christian Life*.

Mr. Daniel Hubin – 4A**Paper: “‘Not Wholly Vain’: A Tolkienian Reading of Lewis’s *Narniad*”**

C.S. Lewis wrote to J.R.R. Tolkien, “I know one can at best only wound, not kill, the dragon.

All my philosophy of history hangs upon a sentence of your own ‘Deeds were done which were not wholly in vain’” (Lewis to Tolkien, 24 December 1962). This concept of evil (represented as “the dragon” in Lewis’s letter) being incapable of final defeat by humanity, while leaving room within time for echoes of a final victory of the good outside it, served as a fundamental element in Tolkien’s mythopoetic works which he referenced as the “long defeat.” This paper demonstrates that, while contrasting with the historicism Lewis opposed, this vision of the long defeat also served a central role as historiographic framework in Lewis’s *Narniad*. In dialogue with K. Alan Snyder and Jamin Metcalf on Lewis’s valuation of history, Michael and Adam Peterson on Lewis’s treatment of time in the *Narniad*, and Michael Ward on the cosmological structure of the *Narniad* and the dual nature of evil, this paper explores the ways in which Lewis’s plots and mythopoetic elements echo Tolkien’s long defeat within Lewis’s particular literary atmospheres.

Bio: Daniel Hubin is a developing historian specializing in the theological and intellectual history of British Romanticism, with particular attention to the long 19th century. He is presently studying for an MTh in Scottish church history and theology from the University of Glasgow through the faculty at Edinburgh Theological Seminary. He has an MEd from Dordt University and a BS in history and theological studies from Welch College, and is a member of the British Association for Romantic Studies (BARS) and the British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS). He has presented on Tolkien’s concept of the long defeat to the Oxford University C.S. Lewis Society and has been published in *North Wind: A Journal of George MacDonald Studies*.

Miss Grace Jenott – 4E

Paper: “The Shire and the Hundred Acre Wood: Milne and Tolkien’s Post-War Pastoralism”

This paper focuses on the similarities between J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* and A.A. Milne’s *Winnie the Pooh*, specifically through how the pastoral environments of the Shire and The Hundred Acre Wood were shaped by both authors’ experiences of the war. WWI affected both authors not only directly on the battlefield, but also through the industrialization of Britain, which had a significant impact on the land, of which much of their culture took pride. Tolkien creates the Shire in stark opposition to the rest of Middle-earth by giving it an anti-industrial feel with little to no machines, being untouched by war, and with hobbits living in harmony with the land around them. This is also seen in The Hundred Acre Wood. Reclaimed by nature, the arcadian setting provides safety to anxious stuffed animals and offers an escape to readers during a time when much of nature has been forgotten, encouraging them to venture into it once again. Through these worlds both authors shine a light on how pastoralism affects livelihood as seen through characters like Sam and Pooh, advocating against the industrialism that destroys it.

Bio: Grace Jenott is an English literature student who is entering her second year at George Fox University. Her writing interests include poetry and short fictional prose. After graduating in 2027, she hopes to begin her career as a high school English teacher while pursuing her MAT.

Dr. Bruce Johnson – 3E

Paper: “A Lewis Stay with the YMCA: Difficulties in Reconstructing the Forgotten Front Campaign”

C.S. Lewis’s participation in a YMCA Christian Campaign for the Forces in September 1942 had an enduring impact on his life in at least three ways. Here he first turned away from attempting live evangelistic appeals, adjusted his apologetic method with non-academic audiences, and learned of a modern miracle (involving animals and the great Christian mystic Sadhu Sundar Singh) which he imaginatively retold in *That Hideous Strength*. However, accurately reconstruct-

ing the Forgotten Front Campaign is difficult. Extant sources are contradictory, were created over a span of 50 years, and are now from 50 to 100 years old. Because of this, the Forgotten Front Campaign can serve as a test case for the limits of expanding the known C.S. Lewis biography. How much can be said with certainty about his week in Cornwall, which details are likely inaccurate, and which others remain intriguing but speculative? This paper will survey the historical sources, note inconsistencies, and suggest how each source contributes to our understanding of the three ways the Forgotten Front impacted Lewis.

Bio: Bruce R. Johnson is the general editor of *Sehnsucht: The C.S. Lewis Journal* and manager of the *C.S. Lewis Correspondence Project*. After four decades of work as a Presbyterian pastor, his time is now focused on writing, editing, and nonprofit collaboration. He edited the memorial volume *The Undiscovered C.S. Lewis: Essays in Memory of Christopher W. Mitchell* (Winged Lion Press, 2021) and continues to write on Lewis for various academic journals. His new book, *From Airmen to Aslan with C.S. Lewis: How His Work with the RAF Influenced His Life and Writing* (SPCK), is due to be published in the UK on Oct. 1. A limited number of copies will be available for purchase at this conference.

Dr. William Johnston – 3C

Paper: “On the Book C.S. Lewis Never Wrote: The Problem of Pleasure”

Replying to a question posed by a reader of *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis confessed, “I have more than once thought of writing on the ‘Problem of Pleasure’” (*Collected Letters*, 3.146). He never wrote that book, but he wrote enough on the topic, in multiple genres, to allow us to sketch the main lines of his thought. What was his aim in such writings? What had he come to see? What should we think about pleasure? After a brief definition of terms (with a nod to the Greeks), this presentation will propose a threefold aim: that Lewis sought to help his readers a) to appreciate and enjoy the God-given goodness of pleasure, b) recognize and resist its negative forms, and c) situate it rightly in the overall shape of a well-lived human and Christian life (e.g., as gift and prompt to prayer, or as foretaste and pathway to “the fruition of God”). We will conclude by addressing a few questions these positive views on pleasure may prompt, such as whether Lewis was a hedonist, and how this all looks in light of “let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily” (Lk 9:23). What might Lewis say?

Bio: William H. Johnston is professor emeritus in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Dayton, a Catholic and Marianist university in southwest Ohio. He taught courses on the liturgy, sacraments, ministry, and Vatican II. From 2019 until his retirement in 2025, he regularly offered two C.S. Lewis-based courses, one on the seven *Chronicles of Narnia*, another covering a range of Lewis’s works, including seven or eight books (chronologically from *Out of the Silent Planet* to *A Grief Observed*) and a sampling of essays and sermons. His article on “The Conversions of C.S. Lewis” appeared in *Journal of Inklings Studies* in 2023.

Dr. Matthew Jordan – 1C

Paper: “‘That Was New’: Speculations on the Content of C.S. Lewis’s ‘Hegemony of Moral Values’”

In 1922, C.S. Lewis applied for a fellowship in philosophy at Magdalen College, Oxford. In addition to a formal examination, his application included a writing sample: “a ‘dissertation’ on the hegemony of the moral value.” We know from his diary and other sources that this theme figured prominently in his thinking for at least two years, and that he submitted a version of the core argument for publication in the philosophy journal *Mind*. Unfortunately, the essay itself has been lost. What, precisely, might it have contained? Did any of its contents find their way into Lewis’s later writings? Any proposed answers to these questions are necessarily

speculative, but enough information is available that plausible claims can be made. On the basis of what we know about the lost essay and the lectures Lewis gave on “The Moral Good” in 1924–25, it is reasonable to conclude that the main idea of Lewis’s “Hegemony” essay is one he continued to endorse for many years. Indeed, it can be argued that this idea is found near the center of *The Abolition of Man*: viz. that the moral good – the Tao, as Lewis would later call it – is inescapable in moral reflection.

Bio: Matthew Carey Jordan holds bachelor’s (Ohio U, 1999), master’s (Biola, 2003), and doctoral (Ohio State, 2009) degrees in philosophy. He is an award-winning teacher and accomplished scholar whose work has appeared in *Faith & Philosophy* and *Religious Studies* as well as other venues. Presently, he serves as vice president of academic affairs for Borromeo Seminary and Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology, the seminaries of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. A longtime student and teacher of the works of C.S. Lewis, he has led eight Lewis-themed study trips to Oxford, England. Jordan lives in his childhood home in Hudson, Ohio, and has been happily married to his wife, Jen, for 27 years. They have seven children and one grandson.

Dr. Kent Kersey – 1A

Paper: “Dip, Write, Repeat: Escaping to C.S. Lewis’s Analog World”

If you want to write like C.S. Lewis, you should try to write like C.S. Lewis. In other words, adjusting your writing practice might produce deeper, more insightful prose. This paper examines the implications of Lewis’s preference for the ploddingly slow dip pen over faster alternatives like the typewriter. Moving beyond practical and historical implications, it engages in a bit of creative extrapolation to advocate for intentionally adopting slower tools in our writing today. In addition to exploring the practical benefits of low-tech methods, this study draws on Lewis’s philosophical critique of modernity’s many unmet promises for scientific advancement. Lewis’s suspicion of “progress” and “magical solutions” provides a reasoned theological basis for favoring analog technologies that honor human limitations. This paper attempts to use Lewis’s technological practices and his ideas about technology to bolster a robust “Theology of Technology.”

Bio: Kent Kersey is an instructor for George Fox Digital. His PhD in theology is from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. (He can show you how giant Texas diplomas dwarf the puny diplomas from other states.) He has taught undergraduate and graduate students for over 20 years. His favorite class to teach is The Theology of Narnia, and his favorite Narnian book is The Silver Chair. Kent is a professional techie who is attracted to the analog lifestyle. He wants to slow down and opt out of digital technology’s endless tracking and notifying. If you gave Kent a million dollars, he would take his wife to a few F1 races and buy season tickets to the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville.

Prof. Don King – 4C

Paper: “Joy Davidman’s French Connection”

Recently I was working on collecting Joy Davidman’s unpublished letters with an eye to revising and expanding *Out of My Bone: The Letters of Joy Davidman* (2009) into *The Collected Letters of Joy Davidman*. One unpublished letter in particular caught my attention. The letter was written to the editor of *Poetry* on Jan. 18, 1935, and mentions that her translations of several French poems were about to be published in the January 1935 issue of *The Literary World: A Monthly Survey of International Letters*. In Davidman’s autobiographical essay, “The Longest Way Round,” she describes her younger self as “a girl with vague eyes, who scribbled verses.” I believe these “scribbled verses” – including 19 French translations – illustrate a poet in training. In my talk I

discuss her translations of poems by Charles d'Orléans, François Villon, Francis Jammes, Paul Verlaine, and Henri de Regnier and indicate several ways this French connection may have influenced Davidman's own poetry.

Bio: On the faculty of Montreat College from 1974 to 2025, Don W. King is emeritus professor of English. From 1999 to 2015 he served as editor of the *Christian Scholar's Review*. He has published over 100 essays and reviews. His 11 books include *C.S. Lewis, Poet: The Legacy of His Poetic Impulse*; *Out of My Bone: The Letters of Joy Davidman*; *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis: A Critical Edition*; *A Naked Tree: Joy Davidman's Love Sonnets to C.S. Lewis and Other Poems*; *Yet One More Spring: A Critical Study of Joy Davidman*. His *Inkling, Historian, Soldier, and Brother: A Life of Warren Hamilton Lewis*, was awarded a bronze medal in the category of World History by the Independent Book Publishers.

Mr. Colton Kirby – 4D

Paper: "Augustinian Illumination and C.S. Lewis's Theory of Imagination"

Recognition of Platonic themes and concepts in C.S. Lewis's thought is commonly noted. This so-called "Christian-Platonism" is said to be present throughout all of Lewis's mature work: from fiction writing to philosophical reasoning to theological reflection and even to apologetic defenses. Nonetheless, to my knowledge, no published studies exist that compare Lewis to another famous Christian-Platonist: Augustine of Hippo. This presentation seeks to begin filling this gap. Namely, I will argue that where Augustine replaces Platonic Reminiscence with Divine Illumination, Lewis replaces Reminiscence with Imagination. That is, Augustine believes that the way to access the eternal forms is not through pre-mortem existence, but through the Illumination of the human mind by God. So too, Lewis also rejects pre-mortem existence, though instead posits that humans access the eternal forms through the faculty of Imagination. It is, then, in the realm of fictional stories that we encounter eternal truths. I will not claim that Lewis was directly influenced by Augustine in this direction. After all, Lewis essentially became a Platonist when he became a Christian – and this was only after years of loyalty to idealism. Despite the lack of influence, the strong correlation of Lewis and Augustine will be of interest to anyone invested in Lewis's philosophical positions.

Bio: Colton Kirby is an undergraduate philosophy and theology major in his fourth year of pursuing a BA at George Fox University, where he is also part of the university's honors program. His research interests lie at the intersection of epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of mind (particularly cognition, perception, self-knowledge) during the late medieval period and leading into early modernity. He has presented at a number of academic conferences, including the 2024 Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference and the Regional PNW AAR, where he won the essay competition for best undergraduate paper prize twice. He is applying to graduate programs in philosophy this year and hopes to attend a program in the fall.

Mr. Anthony Klein – 2D

Paper: "Dante's Ulysses and the Un-man"

During the early 1940s, Dante loomed large among the writings of the Inklings. In 1942, Tolkien wrote his "purgatorial" short story, "Leaf by Niggle." In 1943, Charles Williams published *The Figure of Beatrice* (which inspired Dorothy L. Sayers' translation of *The Divine Comedy*). From 1943 to 1944, C.S. Lewis wrote *The Great Divorce*. And by 1945, all three men were members of the Oxford Dante Society. Despite Dante's prevalence among the Inklings at this time, only Marsha Daigle-Williamson and David C. Downing have examined Dantean resonances in Lewis's 1943 *Perelandra* in depth, specifically arguing for the story's similarity with Purgatorio.

Other scholars, notably Gisbert Kranz, Louis Markos, Joseph Pearce, Michael Ward, and Nikolay Epplée, have made arguments which address one or two Dantean resonances in *Perelandra* (often comparing the great dance with Paradiso). But no one has yet addressed Weston's similarity to Dante's Ulysses. In this paper, I argue that in *Perelandra*, Lewis models Weston/the Un-man's dramatic action after Dante's account of Ulysses in *Inferno*, and that this Dantean resonance sheds light on Weston's sin. From Weston, I turn to Lewis's depiction of Caspian in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* as another instantiation of Lewis's reception of Dante's Ulysses.

Bio: Anthony Klein is a PhD student at Baylor University, where he primarily researches the influence of Catholicism and the medieval age on 20th-century Irish literature, the Catholic fiction of the American South, and the works of the Inklings. He hails from Winterset, Iowa.

Dr. Stephanie Midori Komashin – 6A

Paper: “Susan and Lasaraleen as Heroes”

C.S. Lewis already solved the so-called “Susan Problem” himself, in canon. Readers should give precedence to the primary source for grown-up Susan outside of the *Chronicles* to Lewis's letters: grown-up Susan herself, at her best in *The Horse and His Boy*. Lewis also trusts readers not to uncritically accept unreliable narrators in *The Last Battle*. This paper features interpretations by Japanese readers and draws upon Asian family values as further insights. Jill's perspective of Susan as superficial and Aravis' perspective of Lasaraleen as silly deserve discerning evaluation just as much as Digory's and Corin's descriptions of Polly as “girls never want to know anything but gossip and rot about people getting engaged” and Lucy as “at any rate as good as a boy.” Instead of viewing Susan through Polly's comments, regard Hwin as a vehicle for her rider's development, and filter Lasaraleen through Aravis' lens, careful examination reveals that Susan's courtship letter-writing prowess, Hwin's common-sense mothering, and Lasaraleen's high-society special interests and social intelligence make up the precise toolkit of Aslan's logistics. *The Horse and His Boy* is brimming with couture that endorses a reading of this-world Susan as equipped to live out the virtuous happily-ever-after life that many readers desire their own daughters will mature into.

Bio: Stephanie Midori Komashin teaches Narnia courses at a Japanese national teacher training university. Her publications have explored the Inklings' Japanese Christian academic contemporaries' views of women, health, grief and nature. As the world's expert on Asian Quakers, she has authored “Asia-Pacific” in *The Cambridge Companion to Quakerism* and “Missionary Methods of Asian Evangelical Friends” in *The New History of Quakerism*. With a BA in biblical studies and history, an MDiv and PhD in religious studies, she is writing a deep-dive into *The Horse and His Boy*; offers miscarriage grief coaching online; and would love to connect with those who are interested in *HBB*, Japanese interpretations of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, anime/manga's fantasy sub-genres, theology of the family, Japan's falling marriage/birth rate, Japan's pro-life movement, and/or squirrels.

Rev'd Dr. Andrew Lazo – 6D

Paper: “A New Look: Correcting Chronologies and Characterizations of Joy Davidman”

In 2024, Holly Ordway captivated conferencegoers by correcting what many had thought they knew about what Tolkien thought about Narnia; in so doing, she opened a door to a fresh examination of other often mischaracterized and misunderstood figures from Lewis's life. And perhaps no one stands in greater need of such reexamination and correction than Joy Davidman. Davidman's early relationship with Lewis remains clouded by crucial inaccuracies and confused chronologies almost everywhere. After reviewing every edition of nearly every biographical account, a number of errors, some of them deliberate, have festered into fact,

leading to a serious misunderstanding and mischaracterization of Davidman. Instances of deliberate biographical dishonesty from some of the most trusted early sources, as well as a disturbing tendency towards antisemitism, also emerge from some sources. This paper therefore seeks to correct crucial factual errors about their initial relationship in September–December of 1952, which included six meetings and as many as three stays at The Kilns. Second, it interrogates mischaracterizations about Joy’s intentions and shows how their deep and abiding Philia began then, continued for the rest of their lives, and soon turned to Eros. Davidman deserves a better, clearer look; this paper opens doors in that direction.

Bio: Andrew Lazo (BA, MA, MDiv, DThM) is an internationally recognized C.S. Lewis scholar, speaker and writer. He holds a doctorate from Northwind Seminary, where he serves as distinguished lecturer. A prolific contributor to Lewis scholarship, Andrew has contributed to and edited a number of books on the Inklings, including *Mere Christians*, *Rediscovering Lewis*, and has a forthcoming collection on Joy Davidman. Andrew has spoken in Oxford, Cambridge, Belfast, Romania, and all across the United States, including at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. He hosts the annual *Mere Christians* conference and co-hosts *Pints With Jack*, the popular weekly Lewis podcast now in its 10th season. His long-awaited definitive critical study of *Till We Have Faces* is nearly halfway completed.

Dr. Lilian Lindén – 6C

Paper: “Why Lewis Ended the Great War Debate”

The presentation reexamines why C.S. Lewis ended the philosophical debate he later called the “Great War” with his friend Owen Barfield. Scholars have struggled to explain why Lewis refused to revisit its central themes after his conversion to Christianity. Drawing on a close reading of approximately 30 surviving letters and essays exchanged between 1926 and 1931, called the Great War documents, this paper argues that two factors best explain Lewis’s decision. First, Lewis became increasingly frustrated by Barfield’s repeated misunderstandings of his philosophical arguments. Second, he grew reluctant to continue discussing anthroposophy since it consumed a disproportionate amount of time and energy. After his conversion to Christianity, he wanted to focus on other things. These conclusions help explain not only the abrupt end of the “Great War” but also Lewis’s emotional refusal to resume the conversation after his conversion, an episode that Barfield himself never fully understood. In doing so, the paper challenges interpretations that locate the debate primarily in broader questions of imagination and instead argues that anthroposophy played a decisive role, not only as the reason for the debate, but also in bringing the exchange to an end.

Bio: Dr. Lilian Lindén graduated from Åbo Akademi, the Swedish University of Turku, Finland, in 2024, and her PhD on C.S. Lewis and Idealism has recently been published by Wipf and Stock. Dr. Lindén is the director of the Swedish work of IFES Finland, and among other things, she imported the Veritas Forum concept to Finland. She lives with her husband and daughter in Helsinki.

Dr. Landon Loftin – 6C

Paper: “Slithering from Poly to Pan: Barfield’s Criticism of *Miracles*: A Preliminary Study”

Owen Barfield was often exuberant in his praise of books by his friend C.S. Lewis, but his evaluation of Lewis’s books was not uniformly positive. While he greatly admired books like *The Abolition of Man* and *Till We Have Faces*, he was much more critical of Lewis’s most explicitly apologetic works, especially *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. Through an examination of the extensive annotations in Barfield’s copy of the book (housed at The Wade Center, Wheaton College), I propose to shed light on Barfield’s discomfort with *Miracles*, which is representative

of more general criticisms that Barfield made of Lewis's work. The annotations that will be examined include, among other things, a light-hearted but reproving poem called "Slithering from Poly to Pan" that Barfield penned in the back of his personal copy.

Bio: Landon Loftin teaches for Gravitas: A Global Extension of The Stony Brook School and The University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne. He is coauthor of *What Barfield Thought: An Introduction to the Work of Owen Barfield* and editor of *Chesterton and the Philosophers*.

The Rev'd Brian McGreevy – 5A

Paper: "What's in a Name? Jadis, Narnia, and François Villon"

A remarkable characteristic of C.S. Lewis's fiction is the layering of meaning he accomplishes through use of words and names laden with connotations. In this paper, a theory on the origins of the name "Jadis" for the White Witch will be presented, as well as a supporting theory on inspiration for some of the characteristics of Narnia in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where it is "...always winter but never Christmas." Given Lewis's fluency in French and expertise in medieval poetry, he would have known François Villon's work, including his 1461 poem "Ballade des dames du temps jadis" ("Ballad of the Dead Ladies") and its rich imagery and refrain "Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?". Lewis was so taken with Villon's poem that he wrote a parody called "Ballad of the Dead Gentlemen" (with a French refrain "Mais où sont messieurs les maris?"), published in *Punch* (CCXX, March 1951), shortly after the publication of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. This paper will explore the imagery of Villon's poem, including the word/name "Jadis," the idea of the White Queen, and the snows of yesteryear, and how this imagery may have impacted Lewis's writing.

Bio: The Rev'd Brian K. McGreevy, JD, is a clergyman at historic St. Philip's Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Previously, he served as head chaplain and religion department chair at Porter-Gaud School. He attended Duke University, holds a BA magna cum laude from Furman University, and a JD from Emory University Law School. He also completed the 2025 Summer School in Theology at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and has researched and taught on Lewis for over two decades. His podcasts on Lewis's works are followed by thousands of listeners worldwide. He was co-organizer of the 2023 Mere Anglicanism Conference "Telling a More Beautiful Story: Lessons from C.S. Lewis on Reaching a Fractured World," the largest Lewis conference ever held, selling out with some 900 attendees.

Dr. Jennifer McNutt – 2E

Paper: "Is Mary Magdalene Human? Dorothy L. Sayers as Biblical Interpreter of Jesus's Female Friends"

Dorothy L. Sayers' popular BBC radio drama, *The Man Born to Be King*, aired from December 1941 until October 1942. In the writing of the play, she faced challenges pertaining to how she might effectively portray the women who supported Jesus' ministry to a broad audience, and according to Sayers' correspondence, particular concern was raised over Mary Magdalene especially. This paper explores the complexities that Sayers navigated in her presentation of the biblical Mary Magdalene and the hermeneutical solution that she employed to relay Mary's part in the story for a popular and diverse radio audience. Like bookends to her contribution, Sayers was also navigating her own place in the feminist movement and response to the "Woman Question" from delivering her address, "Are Women Human?" (1938) to writing the essay, "The Human-Not-Quite-Human" (1947). This paper will feature the tensions that Sayers drew attention to as a woman at this critical time in women's social history and the way in which her presentation of Mary Magdalene mirrored those tensions even when her reading of Mary Magdalene did not.

Bio: Dr. Jennifer Powell McNutt (PhD, St. Andrews) holds the Franklin S. Dyrness Chair of Biblical and Theological Studies and is a professor of theology and history of Christianity at Wheaton College's Litfin Divinity School. Dr. McNutt is an elected Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and an award-winning professor and writer. She is the author of *The Mary We Forgot* (Brazos, 2024), an ECPA Book of the Year finalist, and the coeditor of *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible and the Reformation* (OUP, 2025), awarded the 2025 Tedeschi Prize for the Best Reference Book by the SCSC. Her recent research explores the history of Bible and its reception, and she is delivering the 2027 Hansen Lectureship for the Wade Center on "The Bible and the Christian Imagination."

Dr. Joyce McPherson – 1C

Paper: "C.S. Lewis's Undiscovered Boyhood Bookshelf"

This presentation is a feast of illustrations and bindings from editions contemporaneous with Lewis's boyhood, offering insight into the aesthetic qualities that fired his early imagination. A semiotic approach is used to query why Lewis considered some books primary to his development and others as not important. Drawing on *Surprised by Joy* alongside family letters and Lewis's later literary essays, this project reconstructs some of the children's literature Lewis encountered before the age of 13, as well as books he later recommended to readers under that age. Lewis did not merely consume books; he invested them with symbolic meaning. Texts, illustrations, and even bindings became signs that pointed beyond themselves toward experiences of beauty, longing, and the transcendent – what Lewis would later describe as "Joy." Examining children's books as semiotic artifacts helps explain how Lewis used children's literature as an emblematic language through which he interpreted the world and articulated his inner life. In addition, identifying the books Lewis dismissed upon rereading, further presents a candid and complete portrait of his early literary formation.

Bio: Joyce McPherson teaches English at Covenant College and holds an MFA in writing for children and a PhD in education. She has written biographies for young people, including biographies of C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald, and Jane Austen, and has contributed to research in Inklings studies through *The North Wind Journal*, *The British Fantasy Society Journal*, the *Oxford Glass*, and *Linguaculture*. She has spoken at Lewis and MacDonald conferences in Belfast, St. Andrews, Iasi (Romania), Oxford, Wheaton, Amiens (France), and the English L'Abri.

Dr. Bryan Mead – 4F

Paper: "The 'Gentle Slope' in Black and White: C.S. Lewis, Film Noir, and the Moral Crisis of the 1940s"

In *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), C.S. Lewis constructs Hell as a universe governed by the axiom "consume or be consumed." Humans are "primarily food," demonic relationships are organized entirely around absorption and extraction, and the bureaucratic hierarchy of Hell devours its own servants as readily as its intended victims. This consuming culture that Lewis sets up is not merely a theological proposition. Instead, it is a precise diagnosis of the same historical and social conditions that produced British film noir. British noir emerged from the same bombed cities, wartime intellectual atmosphere, and reckoning with institutional corruption and systematic destruction of human subjecthood as that of Lewis's book. Reading Lewis alongside Carol Reed's *Odd Man Out* (1947) and *The Third Man* (1949), John Boulting's *Brighton Rock* (1948), and the British intellectual tradition of Orwell, Priestly, and Laski, this paper establishes *The Screwtape Letters* as the theological limit case of British noir. The text inhabits the consuming world with the same formal precision as the films. However, *The*

Screwtape Letters ultimately argues that the consuming world, for all its ontological aggression, cannot reach everything. Its darkness cannot consume the light.

Bio: Bryan Mead (PhD, Northern Illinois University) is an assistant provost for adult and graduate studies and an assistant professor of English at East Texas Baptist University. He recently edited *Going to the Movies with C.S. Lewis: Exploring Theology, Christian Imagination, and the Art of Cinema* (Integratio Press), a book collection connecting the life and writings of C.S. Lewis with film studies. He is also the author of *Writing in Film Studies: From Professional Practice to Practical Pedagogy* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). Bryan's articles and reviews have appeared in journals such as *The Journal of Religion & Film*, *Christian Scholars Review*, *Film & History*, and *Journal of European Popular Culture*.

Mr. Aaron Milkie – 5C

Paper: “‘The First Rule in a Holy Game’: Lewis and Love in Contemporary Philosophy”

My aim in this paper is to bring Lewis's view of love – particularly his understanding of *Zoë*, the divine source and center of all love – into a mutually illuminating synthesis with recent work in the philosophy of interpersonal relations. I begin by posing a classic puzzle about love, self-interest, and altruism: What exactly does it mean to “act in love” for another person? After sketching the leading solutions to this puzzle debated by contemporary philosophers, I turn to Lewis's notion of *Zoë*: the inner life of the Trinity, consisting in the perfect, holy, and glad activity of eternally self-giving love. Then, drawing on standard resources in the philosophy of action, as well as recent work on the structure of second-personal relations, I construct a new, Lewis-inspired model of our reasons for action in love. This Lewisian model, I argue, is uniquely positioned to provide a satisfying account of what it is we're up to when we act out of love for others.

Bio: Aaron Milkie is a third-year PhD student in the philosophy program at Baylor University. Before arriving at Baylor in 2024, he earned a bachelor's degree in English and interdisciplinary studies, and an MA in interdisciplinary studies, from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Most of his academic interests have to do with metaphysics, ethics, and the philosophy of religion, though he also has a special interest in the Inklings, especially the work of C.S. Lewis and Owen Barfield.

Dr. Kali Miller – 5C

Paper: “Love vs. Trauma: The Making of an Icon”

C.S. Lewis, or “Jacksie,” as he was known as a boy, endured enormous stressors as a child. These include his mother's death when he was 9, and his father subsequently sending him to a bizarre and abusive boarding school. These, and later traumas as a young adult, are amongst the experiences which impacted Lewis's journey to Christianity. We will look at the general long-term impact of childhood trauma on mental and physical health and how childhood trauma, unresolved, may lead to PTSD. Through Lewis's writing we will explore how Lewis would score on the Adverse Childhood Experiences questionnaire (ACE) which measures childhood stressors and the symptoms he exhibited that are consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. We will also look at the protective factors that prevailed in Lewis's life and how both trauma and secure attachment are predictive, though not determinative, for us all.

Bio: Dr. Kali Miller received her PhD in clinical psychology in 1990 from the University of Kansas. After internship, being the only psychologist assigned to a day treatment program that treated 120 of the most severely disturbed children in three counties only made her more passionate about pursuing her goal. Dr. Miller continued her calling in private practice and

teaching graduate classes at Western Seminary in Portland. She also loved teaching continuing education around the country addressing childhood trauma, attachment, and animal-assisted therapy. During her years of practice, she was accompanied to the office by her beloved therapy dogs and cats and a miniature horse who was not a very good listener but could definitely make people laugh.

Mr. Jonathan Miller – 3B

Paper: “Tolkien and the Turing Test: What Does It Mean to Be Human?”

The Ring finds a foothold in anyone who wants to shape the world to their will. This paper begins with the one being in Middle-earth on whom it has no purchase and argues that his immunity bears on the anxiety surrounding artificial intelligence today. That anxiety runs deeper than its most cited cause. Fears of a disrupted labor market are not unfounded, but the more serious trouble is not how capable our machines have become. It is that their development has exposed an impoverished anthropology in which human value is confused with computation and human excellence shrinks to calculational speed. The recent empirical passage of the Turing Test reveals less about the nature of machines than about the condition of 21st century humanity. Reading Tolkien alongside the theology of Maximus the Confessor, this paper finds an unexpected but not accidental convergence between the Byzantine monk and the Oxford Catholic, one that suggests that before we can say what separates man from machine, we must first recover an account of what it truly means to be human.

Bio: Jonathan Miller is an independent scholar with a background in software design and development. He studied computer science at Seattle Pacific University and pursued graduate work in human-centered design at the University of Washington. Professionally, he works in digital accessibility across educational and technology contexts, ensuring that content and online experiences are crafted to allow people with disabilities to participate fully. This work has persuaded him that questions of technological purpose are inseparable from questions of anthropology. A longtime reader of the Inklings, he has written on Lewis and Tolkien, particularly on questions of philosophy and love.

Mr. Cody Mitchell – 5D

Paper: “C.S. Lewis, Quentin Skinner, and the Cambridge School of Intellectual History”

While C.S. Lewis is widely celebrated as a literary scholar and apologist, his academic work as an intellectual historian remains under-explored. This paper builds on seminal preliminary work, especially by Dennis Danielson, in seeking to fill that gap. It suggests that Lewis can be situated in relation to the influential “Cambridge School” of intellectual history associated particularly with Quentin Skinner. Specifically, it submits that Lewis’s own approach to the history of ideas resonates remarkably, although not completely, with the core methodology and theoretical assumptions of Cambridge School “contextualism.” Drawing on a range of Lewis’s scholarly work, this paper proposes that Lewis’s commitment to understanding past thought on its own terms, without projecting contemporary distinctions onto historical situations, in many ways prefigures Skinner’s determination to “see things their way.” Moreover, the embryonic theory of language Lewis articulates in *Studies in Words* maps onto key insights from linguistic contextualism regarding the historically conditioned nature of words and the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary force. Although his theory of history remains unsystematic and underdeveloped, Lewis articulates a distinctive approach to the study of past human ideas that exhibits remarkable affinity to the Skinnerian contextualism that emerged in the 1960s.

Bio: Cody Mitchell is a master's student at the University of New England, Australia, where he majors in medieval and modern European studies. His current dissertation research explores Lewis as a wartime thinker, situating his defense of objective value and critique of scientism within the context of mid-century British intellectual life and discourse. Cody holds a Bachelor of Arts with specializations in history, ancient history, and political and international studies, graduating in 2021 as a Vice Chancellor's Scholar. His other interests include philosophy, theology and public policy, and he served as the media adviser for an Australian federal senator during the 47th Parliament.

Prof. Clark Moreland – 3A

Paper: "Narrow Escapes and Unexpected Recoveries: Divine Grace in *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*"

English Literature in the Sixteenth Century remains one of C.S. Lewis's least-discovered works. Often treated as a biographical footnote, the book Lewis referred to as "O-HELL" tends to discourage readers due to its scale and density. While Lewis characteristically resists reductive literary historiography, he nevertheless offers in his Epilogue a prevailing impression of the century's literature: that of "narrow escapes and unexpected recoveries." Lewis marvels at how some of the greatest works in English literature were produced during a period of immense turmoil, illustrating that while "men often throw away irreplaceable wealth, they not infrequently escape what seemed inevitable dangers, not knowing that they have done either nor how they did it." It is a profound contemplation on the operations of divine Grace. This paper considers three other passages in *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* where Lewis meditates on Grace: the development of the English Bible, where translations converged as if "'this rich thing' (like the Grail)" moved about "of its own will"; the "robust tranquility" of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; and the "unsurpassed grace and majesty" of Richard Hooker's ecclesiology. Lewis's book is a masterpiece, offering a transcendent model that illuminates the mysteries of Grace in English literature.

Bio: Clark Moreland is lecturer of English and director of The Heimmermann Center for Engaged Teaching at The University of Texas Permian Basin. For over two decades, he has introduced the Inklings to first-year college students. In 2023, he was elected as a Fellow of the UTS Academy of Distinguished Teachers, the highest teaching honor in the University of Texas System. Moreland has published on the wartime writings of C.S. Lewis in *VII: Journal of the Marion E. Wade Center*, as well as presenting at numerous conferences. He is currently writing a book about Lewis's correspondence during the Second World War. He is the author of *Will: Parenting at the Crossroads of Disability and Joy*, a memoir about raising a son with Down syndrome.

Mr. Jonathan Mueller – 5E

Paper: "Bicycles, Shadows, and The Music of The Spheres: Philosophical Poetics of Re-Enchantment in Lewis and MacDonald"

In his dialogic essay "Talking About Bicycles," Lewis presents a coherent, if underdeveloped, framework for appropriately understanding the idea of re-enchantment as it relates to experience, literature and the imagination. This framework of four stages attends to the dynamic relations between each stage, as well as the experience of the individual in each stage. It is no wonder that Lewis's hermeneutic of re-enchantment is an echo of the journey into Fairy Land taken by Anodos in George MacDonald's *Phantastes*, the work which Lewis identified as having "baptized" his imagination. MacDonald's use of musical themes to parallel the moral and imaginative trajectory of Anodos resonates with the four stages of enchantment proposed by Lewis, which in turn prompts fruitful etymological and aesthetic considerations. With "Talking

About Bicycles” as its starting point, this paper provides a limited analysis of *Phantastes* to develop a philosophical poetics of re-enchantment, as well as considering sources that influenced Lewis’s own understanding of this concept. With these literary and philosophical analyses adding nuance to the categories proposed by Lewis, in particular with the depth of narrative exploration of the same provided by MacDonald, this paper ultimately evaluates Lewis’s contribution to the concept of re-enchantment.

Bio: Jonathan Mueller is a doctoral researcher in classics with the University of Birmingham, with a focus on the relation between poetry and philosophy in the dialogues of Plato. He previously completed an MA in liberal arts at Houston Christian University and graduated from Biola University as a perpetual member of Torrey Honors College with a BA in English Literature. Jonathan is the superintendent of Aristoi Classical Academy, a classical charter school network in the Greater Houston area. Before assuming this role at ACA, he was a founding member of the executive team at Saint Constantine College and The Saint Constantine School, serving as vice president for faculty affairs.

Mrs. Megan Mueller – 2E

Paper: “The Bachelor, the Nun and the Feminine Genius: C.S. Lewis’s and Edith Stein’s Interwar Writings on Women”

Edith Stein, or St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, is a towering figure in both German phenomenology and Catholic metaphysics. Like Lewis, Stein served in World War I and converted to Christianity in the midst of her academic vocation in her early 30s. She and Lewis were also both serious academics in 20th-century Europe who have since emerged as significant 21st-century global spiritual influences, leaving behind academic work, devotional writings, lectures, and personal correspondence studied by Christians and non-Christians alike. Stein and Lewis both also wrote piercing examinations of the feminine psyche in wifehood and motherhood, though as a longtime bachelor and a nun, neither had any firsthand experience in these topics. This paper compares and contrasts several of Stein’s key concepts from her philosophical and religious writings, including the zero point of orientation and the feminine genius, with Lewis’s imaginative work. It also examines both authors’ attitudes toward female vocation, female nature, and female virtue and vice. Particular attention is paid to Lewis’s female characters in *That Hideous Strength* and *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis’s essay “On Priestesses,” Stein’s phenomenological masterwork *On the Problem of Empathy*, and Volume Two of Stein’s collected works, “Essays on Woman.”

Bio: Megan Mueller is a career nonprofit executive who has served in both secondary and higher education institutions. She was a founder of Saint Constantine College and Saint Constantine Schools, where she was a vice president in marketing, communications, and strategy for 10 years. Previously, she was the founding director of the Academic Success Center at Houston Christian University. She now consults with Arcadia Education, where she guides academic institutions through the CEO/president search process. Megan holds a bachelor’s degree from the Torrey Honors College at Biola University, where she studied English Literature. Her academic interests are 19th- and 20th-century literature, Plato, and Edith Stein.

Mr. J. Wesley Mullins – 4F

Paper: “From Baker Street to Narnia”

It is universally acknowledged that Lewis neither held the detective-fiction genre in high regard nor considered Conan Doyle to be a notable influence, except for the character of Sherlock Holmes. To this point, I propose that the character and stories of Sherlock Holmes had a greater influence on his life and works than previously discovered. My talk will rest on four

points: 1. Direct/Indirect Influence of Doyle/Sherlock; 2. Parallels in Behaviors and Methodologies; 3. Secondary Sources that echo or allude to this proposal; 4. Sherlockian References and Allusions in Lewis's Life and Writings. This investigation, upon conclusion, will reveal a new Sherlockian/Detective lens from which to view Lewis and his works afresh.

Bio: Wes Mullins is an aspiring C.S. Lewis scholar who has an affinity for all things Sherlock Holmes. He lives on a 30-acre Kentucky farm, Whipsnade Farm, with his amazing wife, 16-year-old twins, and loyal hound Sherlock. Wes is currently a humanities instructor and academic dean at Veritas Christian Academy in Lexington, Kentucky. His courses include Christian Apologetics, Greek Literature, British Literature, Ethics & Debate, and Senior Thesis. He holds a BA in English literature from the University of South Carolina, a CTS in theology from the University of Oxford, and a Certificate of Apologetics from Biola University and from The Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics. He also oversees an unofficial Lewis and Tolkien Society, Verum Fabula Fellowship; this marks its seventh year.

Dr. Michael Muth – 3D

Paper: "Of Priests and Beasts: Lewis on a Sacramental World"

In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis claims that "man was made to be the priest and even, in one sense, the Christ, of the animals – the mediator through whom they apprehend so much of the Divine splendour as their irrational nature allows," a claim that pushes against modern, scientific, secularized conceptions of humanity and nature and their relationship. As an expression of his desire to "baptize the imagination," this claim repositions creation from the objective, neutral and abstract space of modern science to a liturgical and sacramental context. Though Lewis himself did not explicitly develop this suggestion in later works, this paper will explore the idea by connecting Lewis's suggestion to other Christian thinkers who did, including Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysius the Areopagite, Eric Mascall, and Alexander Schmemmann. The concept of human beings as priests of creation moves the human task from the use of creation for human ends to the mediating task of reconciling the spiritual and material aspects of creation, as well as reenvisioning the rest of creation as theophanic and sacramental. The paper will look at how these themes play out in Lewis's later writings and present a defense of this sacramental ontology from a materialist critique.

Bio: Dr. Michael Muth's scholarship has focused on the shifting views of "nature" from the Middle Ages to the modern world, especially as expressed in the image of the "book of nature" and the rise of modern science; the renewed interest for ethics and metaphysics (in scholars such as MacIntyre, Hart, Milbank) in the thought of church fathers and medieval thinkers; and how Lewis both illuminates and helps us navigate through the issues raised by the dominance of secular, naturalistic modernity. Dr. Muth received his BA in philosophy from the University of the South and PhD in philosophy from Duke University, specializing in ancient and medieval philosophy, under the guidance of Ed Mahoney and Alasdair MacIntyre. Though now retired, he continues as an adjunct at Mercer University.

Dr. John Nelson – 4B

Paper: "C.S. Lewis and Rudolf Bultmann – Theologians at Odds?"

The German biblical scholar Rudolf Bultmann is often presented as the theological foil of C.S. Lewis. This reputation is owed in part to Lewis's satirical paper, "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism" (1959), which launched a series of assaults on Bultmann's methods of biblical criticism; as well as to a simplistic (mis)reading of Bultmann's project of "de-mythologization." This paper calls for a more nuanced approach to the similarities and differences in the theological projects of Lewis and Bultmann, by attending to a wider selection of Lewis's religious

writings. In this paper, I set out a number of ways in which Lewis may be seen as a theological ally, rather than foe, of Bultmann, including his focus on the kerygma as essential for faith; his interpretation of the apocalyptic eschatology of the historical Jesus; and his attempt to re-invigorate Christianity as an intellectually attractive option to a skeptical milieu. Ultimately, while Lewis critiqued Bultmann for seeing the “fern-seeds and missing the elephant,” Lewis’s readers have often seen the elephant in their comparison of the two thinkers, missing the fern-seeds, which share a common root.

Bio: John Nelson is a New Testament scholar and associate lecturer at the London School of Theology. He earned a master’s degree in theology (New Testament) at Magdalen College, Oxford, and a PhD at the University of Edinburgh. He is the producer and researcher of the podcast *Biblical Time Machine*, hosts the discussion show, *Unbelievable?*, and writes the substack *Behind the Gospels*. While studying and training as a teacher in Oxford, John was a tour guide of the Kilns and secretary of the Oxford C.S. Lewis Society. Currently, he is writing a trade book on the historical Jesus, following the publication of an academic monograph, *Jesus’ Physical Appearance: Biography, Christology, Philosophy* (T&T Clark, 2025).

Mr. Jack Nicholson – 5D

Paper: “C.S. Lewis as Philosopher of History in Relation to Herbert Butterfield”

Not long after C.S. Lewis delivered his BBC radio talks on *Mere Christianity* (1941–44), his contemporary, Herbert Butterfield, delivered six broadcast lectures on *Christianity and History* (1949) that were likewise a resounding success. Lewis enthusiastically annotated his copy of the resultant book and wrote to the Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge to affirm that he likewise “loathed historicism,” which is the belief that the historian can, by his own efforts, uncover history’s inner meaning. By contrast, he took “great delight” in Butterfield’s theologically informed view of history, drawing as it did on a Christian view of history centered on the Fall and Incarnation, which this paper will endeavor to look at in some depth as it appears in Lewis’s own work. In turn, the aim of this paper is to contribute to a rediscovery of C.S. Lewis’s own views on the value of history, rightly conceived, and especially during what has been called “an age of catastrophe” when Christianity and history became prominent in contemporary thought.

Bio: Jack Nicholson is a graduate of Peterhouse, University of Cambridge and Blackfriars, University of Oxford, where he studied history. He formerly served as lay pastoral assistant to the Pusey House, the Anglo-Catholic chaplaincy to the University of Oxford, and as tour guide to The Kilns, C.S. Lewis’s former home. Jack was on the UK’s Centre for Cultural Witness’ Emerging Leaders Programme in 2024–25. His writing has appeared in *Seen and Unseen*, *The Critic*, *Plough Quarterly*, and *Providence* magazine.

Mrs. Christine Norvell – 2B

Paper: “Preparing the Bride: Psyche, Orual, and the Mikvah”

In his letter to American academic Corbin Scott Carnell, Lewis describes the mythology of the Hebrews as one chosen by God “to be the vehicle of the earliest sacred truths.” Since his wife, Joy Davidman, worked closely with him on *Till We Have Faces*, could it be possible that Lewis included Jewish ritual or its image in the novel? Could we see Orual as being prepared like a Jewish bride entering her mikvah? The mikvah bath was both an inward and outward cleansing that prepared the worshipper for a transition. For the bride, these steps of preparation are about becoming beautiful for her groom through three immersions. For Orual, the self-reflection present in both mirror scenes and in the work of “the divine Surgeons” in Part II help Orual see that she is becoming inwardly clean. The image of the Jewish mikvah also allows us

to see Psyche and Orual in a different light. Margaret Hannay writes, “As Orual bears Psyche’s anguish, so Psyche does that for Orual which she cannot do for herself – she brings her beauty of body and soul.” Orual recognizes this unearned gift, saying, “I knew that all this had been only a preparation.”

Bio: Christine Norvell holds an MA in humanities from Faulkner University’s Great Books program and has served as a tutor, teacher and administrator in classical Christian schools. She often speaks on Lewis’s lesser-known essays and on what we can glean about teaching from his fiction and nonfiction. Christine writes for *The Imaginative Conservative*, *Front Porch Republic*, *Public Discourse*, and *Mere Orthodoxy*, among others, and is the author of *Till We Have Faces: A Reading Companion* and *The Sycamore Fig Tree: Biblical Botany and Scriptural Truth*.

Dr. Sarah O’Dell – 5F

Paper: “Memoirs of a Medical Inkling”

Physician and writer R.E. Havard (1901–1985), often referred to as the “Medical Inkling,” was the only scientifically trained member of the Inklings. While Lewis frequently described Havard as one of his best friends, Havard remains relatively “undiscovered” by Lewis scholars and aficionados alike. Recovering Havard’s writings – and the stories they tell about Lewis, Havard and their circle – provides the focus of my upcoming book, *The Medical Inkling* (under contract with The Kent State University Press). This paper focuses on Havard’s recollections of fellow Inklings and his own autobiographical writings. Havard contributed a memoir of Lewis, “Philia: Jack at Ease,” to *C.S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences* (ed. James T. Como); in revisiting “Philia,” I contextualize this memoir within Lewis’s and Havard’s decades-long friendship as well as resolve some chronological difficulties posed by Havard’s account. In exploring Havard’s travel writings, I focus on stories prepared to be read aloud at meetings of the Inklings, including an account of mountain climbing that made Lewis’s “hair stand on end” (CL II: 405) and the late-night WWII misadventure of “Medical Guard Ship.” In remembering Havard, my research not only expands our understanding of Lewis, but recovers a physician deeply invested in literature, theology, and the arts.

Bio: Sarah O’Dell, MD, PhD, is a literary scholar and resident psychiatrist at the University of California, Irvine. She is passionate about how the activity of the imagination – as shaped by literature, belief and the arts – helps heal the mind. Her dissertation research presents the first combined study of the literary Gothic, Religious Studies, and the History of Psychiatry. She is a noted Inklings scholar as well as the leading expert on Lewis’s friend, physician and fellow Inkling R.E. Havard. Her book on Havard, *The Medical Inkling*, is under contract with The Kent State University Press. Her research has previously appeared in *Mythlore*, VII: *Journal of the Marion E. Wade Center*, and the *Journal of Medical Humanities*.

Mr. William O’Flaherty – 3A

Paper: “Lewis the Blurbologist: Engaging Justin Keena on Screwtape Letters”

This paper examines part of Justin Keena’s “C.S. Lewis, Blurbologist” (2025), which argues that nearly 2,000 words in dust-jacket blurbs associated with C.S. Lewis have been overlooked by most scholars and may represent a previously unrecognized category of Lewisian writing. Focusing on Keena’s method of combining internal linguistic evidence with external publishing correspondence, the study evaluates whether his approach provides a reliable standard for attributing authorship to previously neglected texts. To test the methodology, the paper replicates Keena’s analysis of the blurbs appearing on the English and American first editions of *The Screwtape Letters*. Particular attention is given to his conclusion that Lewis contributed substantially to one blurb while having minimal involvement in the other, and to whether these

findings can be reproduced. The paper also assesses Keena's interpretation of Lewis's views on effective blurbs and the role those principles play in authorship attribution. It concludes by considering the strengths, limitations, and future research implications of this emerging area of Lewis studies.

Bio: William O'Flaherty is a mental health counselor who does outpatient therapy in the public-school setting. In his spare time, he is an independent C.S. Lewis scholar, author, speaker and podcast host known for making Lewis's life and writings accessible to a wide audience. He is the creator of EssentialCSLewis.com and his podcast, *All About Jack*, resides on his YouTube channel, @EssentialCSLewis. He has written three books: *The Screwtape Letters Handbook*, *The Misquotable C.S. Lewis*, and *C.S. Lewis Goes to Hell*. He is also an autistic advocate, focusing on late-diagnosed adults on YouTube, via @AdultAutismWithWilliam.

Mr. Michael Oppizzi – 5B

Paper: “‘You Flashed and You Shone’: Echoes of Confessions Book X in *Till We Have Faces*”

This paper observes various parallels between *Confessions* Book X and the final pages of *Till We Have Faces*, which might inform our essential understanding of the book and provide a method for ascertaining those final, hidden words of Orual's pen. Powerfully sensory language associated with salvation in *Confessions* resounds strongly in the final lines of Orual's account as she approaches God, implying her own salvation. Augustine calls God, “Beauty, so ancient and so new,” and Orual calls God, “The only dread and beauty there is.” As Augustine writes that God was “radiant and resplendent, and put to flight [his] blindness,” so Orual writes that “the air grew brighter and brighter about us, as if something had set it on fire.” Augustine writes that God “breathed [his] fragrance on [him],” and Orual writes, “Each breath I drew let into me new terror, joy, overpowering sweetness.” Augustine famously writes, “Late have I loved you,” and Orual pens, “Long did I fear you. Long did I hate you. I might –”. Might those obscured words also echo Augustine's, as the previous pages have? Might this imply the genre, although hidden at first, is spiritual memoir?

Bio: Michael Oppizzi is an independent educator, entrepreneur and writer living with his wife and sons just outside of the Great Smoky Mountains. He is the academic co-director of the annual Mere Christians C.S. Lewis Conference and an instructor for the Logres Institute's Certification in C.S. Lewis Studies. His major research interests include the theological imagination of C.S. Lewis, theological symbolism, and the use of small-scale, organic farming for pedagogy and profit in private Christian schools. His current research focuses on symbolism in *Till We Have Faces*. He took his MA in cultural apologetics from Houston Christian University, writing his thesis on *Till We Have Faces* under Michael Ward.

Mr. Isaac Owen – 1D

Paper: “Creatures, Cousins, and Kings: An Exploration of Lewis's Theology of Animals”

Throughout *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Talking Beasts and humanity interact as peers, with Sons and Daughters of Adam and Eve living alongside Talking Beasts as co-inheritors of Aslan's creation. However, there is one key distinction, as established by Trufflehunter the badger: “Narnia was never right except when a son of Adam was King.” A survey of C.S. Lewis's general view on the theology of animals, especially in *The Problem of Pain*, and an exploration into the roles of humans and beasts in Narnia provide insight into his decision to expand human stewardship into Narnia. By drawing from Lewis's broader work, tracing the influence of Hebrew and Franciscan theology, and comparing it to contemporary ecotheology, this paper explores how a Christocentric view of the kinship of all creatures and restorative dominion sheds light on why it is right and proper for Adam's race to sit on Cair Paravel's throne.

Bio: Isaac Owen is an independent scholar and recent graduate of Biola University, having studied biological science in the Stewart Science Honors Program and classical literature and theology with the Torrey Honors College. He presented his paper, “The Marshwiggle’s Wager: An Analysis of Epistemology in Lewis’s *The Silver Chair*,” at the 2024 inaugural Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference. As a lay scholar, his current research interests include biblical animal studies, missiology, and Old Testament literature – especially when paired with a good cup of tea. Isaac is preparing to move to East Africa, where he will partner with a local nonprofit in their conservation work and discipleship ministries.

Janice Park – 1F

Paper: “Lewis on Pre-University Education: Unimaginative, Inconsistent, or Reasoned?”

Thanks to *The Abolition of Man* and other works about the importance of an education based on objective truth, objective moral value, and classical texts, Lewis is known for his abstract and conceptual thoughts on pre-university education. His opinions on concrete trends and policies regarding pre-university education in 1940s and 1950s England are less studied and stand in contrast to his loftier values for education. In contemporary periodicals, Lewis argued for a “ruthlessly aristocratic, shamelessly ‘highbrow’” educational system that favors “the boy who wants to know and who can know” over “the stupid boy” in curriculum and in school structure. This presentation will examine letters, essays, and biographical writing to examine what Lewis means and piece together his motivation for what appears to be a dismissal of the students modern educators work so diligently to reach, and to solve what we call the “Stupid Boy Problem.”

Bio: Janice Park is a senior at Pepperdine University majoring in liberal studies for education, minoring in great books, and pursuing a California elementary teaching credential. Reading *Surprised by Joy* pulled her into C.S. Lewis’s world and was the initial source for a research paper she wrote over this past summer as part of Pepperdine’s summer undergraduate research program. Citing Lewis alongside thinkers such as John Dewey and Dorothy Sayers, she advocated for the importance of a liberal arts education especially in a technology-centered culture. Her background in great books, passion for teaching, and Christian upbringing aligns with Lewis’s perennialist and Christian perspective. She is coauthoring this paper with Dr. Carrie Birmingham.

Dr. Jahdiel Perez – 5C

Paper: “Beyond Good and Evil? C.S. Lewis and Nietzsche on Moral Psychology”

This paper explores what may be the most decisive factor in shaping the radically opposing worldviews of C.S. Lewis and Friedrich Nietzsche: moral psychology. Specifically, I focus on how both approached the relationship between desire, pleasure and power in the formation of moral sentiments. First, I cover the textual evidence that Lewis did in fact read Nietzsche. Then I enter the debate between Stewart Goetz and David Horner over whether Lewis is best described as a hedonist or eudaimonist, suggesting that the dispute raises a deeper question about his account of human desire and its ultimate object. I bring Nietzsche’s moral psychology into conversation with this debate, focusing on his rejection of pleasure as the fundamental aim of human action and his account of the drives underlying moral valuation. I argue that the contrast between Lewis and Nietzsche is ultimately not reducible to competing meta-ethical stances but reflects opposing accounts of what human beings most fundamentally desire.

Bio: Jahdiel Perez (DPhil, University of Oxford) is an assistant professor of humanities and sciences at Villanova University in Philadelphia. At Oxford, he wrote the first dissertation on

C.S. Lewis for the Faculty of Theology and Religion and served as president for the Oxford C.S. Lewis Society. His publications cover modern theology – specifically the works of C.S. Lewis and Nietzsche – and the psychology of theodicy.

Mr. Josiah Peterson – 2C

Paper: “C.S. Lewis and Religious Epistemology”

This talk explores the origins of the titular metaphors from Lewis’s lesser explored essay, “Bluspels and Flalansferes: A Semantic Nightmare.” Best known for “imagination is the organ of meaning,” Lewis’s essay concludes with the cliffhanger “admittedly, the view I have taken has metaphysical implications.” This paper contends that the titular metaphors, far from being arbitrary, illuminate the metaphysical implications. “Blue spectacles” is a metaphor for Immanuel Kant’s epistemological system in which human experiences are mediated through mental categories we bring to them. Lewis summarizes, “How do I know that whatever comes round the corner will be blue?...I am wearing blue spectacles.” Lewis did not originate this metaphor, but likely got it either from Sir James Jeans’ *The Mysterious Universe* (1930), or else C.E.M. Joad’s *The Mind and Its Workings* (1927) or his *Guide to Philosophy* (1936). Lewis is sympathetic to the epistemological challenges facing finite creatures. His “solution” relies on the notion of “Transposition,” which in turn relies heavily on the metaphor of the Flatlander’s sphere, which Lewis got from Edwin Abbott’s *Flatland*. “The result of such a metaphor on my mind would be – in fact, has been – that something which before was sheerly meaningless, acquires at least a faint hint of meaning.”

Bio: Josiah Peterson teaches Humane Letters at Chandler Preparatory Academy in Chandler, Arizona. He previously coached debate and taught rhetoric at The King’s College in New York City. He earned an MA in apologetics through Houston Christian University, where he wrote a thesis on C.S. Lewis’s rhetoric under the supervision of Holly Ordway and Michael Ward. He has written for *The Journal of Inklings Studies*, *The Lamppost*, VII, *Mythlore*, *Touchstone*, and *Sehnsucht: The C.S. Lewis Journal*, for which he serves as reviews editor. Josiah leads the Arizona C.S. Lewis Society and has spoken on multiple occasions to the New York C.S. Lewis Society. He lives in Mesa, Arizona, with his wife and three children. His works and current reading can be found at josiahdpeterson.wordpress.com.

Miss Annie Mae Platter – 6F

Paper: “The Business of Lewis: Private Matters with Public Impact”

Nearly every aspect of C.S. Lewis’s life has been analyzed and often used as fuel for moral and theological debate and inspiration. Can we do the same with his business dealings? He lived frugally and simply, then gave away most of the profits from his books. Facts and figures tell a story of their own, and with a combination of historical data analyses and biographical exploration we can understand more about Lewis’s business choices and what drove him to be a man of generosity. We will be able to better understand Lewis’s relationship with money by comparing his moral and theological writings on business and stewardship alongside available records regarding his financial choices and situations. This paper will compare Lewis’s business history to frameworks in financial management and leadership theory. We will be able to see the practical application of generosity and stewardship through Lewis’s life which can then be applied in contemporary organizational contexts.

Bio: Annie Mae Platter has received certificates from Capernwray Bible School in Canada and the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics in England. She is a fellow of the C.S. Lewis Institute. She acquired her undergraduate degree in economics with a minor in Bible from Seattle

Pacific University. By day she works in technology for Disney and by night she is pursuing her MBA from George Fox University. When she is not working or studying, she is gardening with her parents, roller skating, or chasing her rambunctious nephews.

Prof. Harry Lee Poe – 6C

Paper: “Was Owen Barfield Really an Inklings?”

A tradition has grown up over the years that Owen Barfield was one of the Inklings. His membership has been assumed since the mid-1970s. By one account, Barfield was the first and founding Inklings. Barfield’s own earlier accounts, and the accounts of those Inklings who wrote about such things, tend to differ. Early wartime correspondence between the Lewis brothers, on the other hand, can be read to support the idea that Barfield was an Inklings. This paper will examine the primary evidence for and against including Barfield as a member of the Inklings, rather than as an occasional welcome visitor, like Roy Campbell, E. R. Eddison, and Warfield Firor. Though Barfield was proud that he never changed his mind about anything, unlike his friend Lewis, he appears to have changed his mind about his relationship to the Inklings as he aged after the death of Tolkien and Warnie Lewis in 1973. Attention will be given to Lewis’s stated criteria for membership in the small group which would have excluded Barfield.

Bio: Harry Lee Poe is the Charles Colson Professor of Faith and Culture, emeritus at Union University. He is the author of 22 books, 30 chapters contributed to edited volumes, and over 300 articles and reviews which focus on the intersection of the gospel and culture. His award-winning books include *C.S. Lewis Remembered*, *The Inklings of Oxford*, *Becoming C.S. Lewis*, *The Making of C.S. Lewis*, and *The Completion of C.S. Lewis*. He is the founding president of the Inklings Fellowship and has been program director for the C.S. Lewis Summer Institute in Oxford and Cambridge, president of the American Scientific Affiliation, president of the Edgar Allan Poe Museum, and president of the Academy for Evangelism in Higher Education.

Dr. Josiah Reischig – 6F

Paper: “Good Reading and Good Mathematics: Comparing C.S. Lewis and G.H. Hardy”

In *An Experiment in Criticism*, C.S. Lewis challenges the approach to literary criticism which begins by defining the set of books that compose “good literature” and then identifies “the literary” as those readers who appreciate those books described as good literature. Instead, Lewis proposes that criticism should start with the qualities of the “literary person” and define good literature as whatever invites and sustains that kind of “good reading.” Somewhat surprisingly, a similar inversion appears in the work of Lewis’s contemporary G.H. Hardy, an Oxbridge mathematician and stringent atheist. In *A Mathematician’s Apology*, Hardy argues that “good mathematics” is not determined by usefulness or technical difficulty, but by whether its ideas and arguments require and promote the engagement which is characteristic of good mathematical reading. We will establish the connection between Lewis and Hardy’s reader-centered methods of criticism and briefly examine Lewis’s use of mathematics through the lens of Hardy’s mathematical criticism.

Bio: Josiah Reischig is an associate professor of mathematics at Anderson University in South Carolina. He was named a 2024–25 Inklings Project Fellow and teaches a course focused on the essays and shorter works of C.S. Lewis as part of the Anderson University Honors College. Additionally, he serves as mathematics department chair and actuarial science coordinator. These last two activities place him somewhere between Deputy Director Wither and Eustace Scrubb.

Dr. Regan Lance Reitsma – 6B

Paper: “The Argument from Morality and Phenomenology”

Does Lewis’s moral argument for God rely upon a questionable anthropological claim about the phenomenology of normative experience? In his argument, Lewis first identifies what he calls “the law of human nature.” In moral debates, people commonly assume that a rule of fairness exists and has legitimate normative authority. Lewis subsequently contends that our shared consciousness of an authoritative moral law supports the conclusion that a supreme lawmaker is its ultimate source. Recent debates focus upon whether consciousness of the moral law is a strong indicator of a divine lawmaker. But what to think of this purported law itself? Is this law truly built into human nature? Or could Lewis reasonably be accused of cherry-picking from the historical record? Is the most compelling explanation for Lewis’s readers’ shared moral imaginary not anthropological, but historical? His 20th-century readers belonged to a culture seismically molded by Christianity. This presentation attempts to frame a debate about whether Lewis’s “law” is accurate, whether the incarnation (“our dear Savior’s birth”) re-shaped human moral consciousness (leading “the soul” to first “feel its worth”), and to what degree these two ideas – about the “ubiquity” and the “uniqueness” of human moral consciousness – can be squared.

Bio: Regan Lance Reitsma is the chair of the philosophy department at King’s College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. He is also interim director of the McGowan Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility and associate editor of *Zeal: A Journal for the Liberal Arts*. His areas of expertise are metaethics, practical reasoning, and virtue ethics.

Ms. Lauren Revay – 5E

Paper: “Recovery of Sight as a Task of Re-enchantment: Lewis in Conversation with Josef Pieper”

For this paper, I will be specifically looking at C.S. Lewis on the themes of sight, transposition, and his distinction between “looking at” and “looking along” in “Meditations in a Toolshed.” I will compare Lewis’s framework to the theme of sight through his work on “The Man Born Blind,” and “The Seeing Eye,” before turning to “Meditations in a Toolshed” in dialogue with “Transposition.” The paper will also briefly consider Charlie Starr’s work on this topic. I then turn to Josef Pieper and his own views of sight contrasted with his view of contemplation through his work “Only the Lover Sings” and “Happiness and Contemplation.” The main argument I will be advancing is that there is “transposition of sight” that emerges throughout both their works. Pieper writes in a different idiom, but he too argues for a kind of transposition of the world. This paper addresses how his account of contemplative sight becomes a shared view of a “transposition of sight” that then can shape how we approach the world around us.

Bio: Lauren Revay is a doctoral student in philosophy at Baylor University. She graduated from the University of Notre Dame with an MA in theology and from The Catholic University of America with a BA in philosophy, pre-law. Her research interests center on the relationship between aesthetics, virtue ethics, and political philosophy, particularly in the thought of Plato, Plotinus, Aquinas and Jacques Maritain. She has a budding scholarly interest in Lewis and is especially interested in questions on social imaginaries: what shapes and informs the ways in which we approach the world and how we can experience the richness of it. She came to know and love the Inklings primarily through leading trips to Oxford for high school students.

Miss Megan Rials – 5B

Paper: “Deserts into Oases: Baptized Memory in C.S. Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces*”

Lewis scholarship has long studied his famous concept of *Sehnsucht*, but scholars have largely overlooked how intimately Lewis connects it to memory. In his work, Lewis repeatedly portrays the saved as being able to see their past and God’s hand in it more clearly once their faculty of memory has been “baptized” through salvation. In Lewis’s last published novel, *Till We Have Faces*, he most clearly expresses his beliefs about memory and *Sehnsucht* in spiritual development. Lewis scholarship has consistently recognized that Lewis intended the main character, Orual, and her half-sister, Psyche, to be two sides of the same coin, as expressed in the prophecy that Orual will “also be Psyche,” insofar as Orual represents the rational mind and Psyche the soul. I propose a new interpretation: that Orual embodies memory and Psyche embodies *Sehnsucht*. Together, they present what is for Lewis a complete salvation story, as they demonstrate memory and *Sehnsucht* working in tandem to effect spiritual change through a proper understanding of the Christ-haunted past. Their story depicts the baptized memory working to drive salvation, sanctification, and even glorification, as it equips Orual to comprehend *Sehnsucht* as a signpost to the divine and truly “become Psyche.”

Bio: Megan Rials is a writer, literary scholar and poet. She holds a JD from the Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center and a master’s degree in cultural apologetics from Houston Christian University. She is also founding editor-in-chief of *Shadowlands Dispatch*, a cultural apologetics magazine, where she regularly contributes. Her work has appeared in *Christ and Pop Culture*, *Dappled Things*, *VoegelinView*, *Mere Orthodoxy*, *Fare Forward*, *An Unexpected Journal*, *The Worldview Bulletin*, and *Perichoresis*. Her research primarily focuses on memory in spiritual development and legal/political theory issues that should concern believers. Her own recently launched Substack is *Be Like the Fox*, featuring cultural commentary, reviews of literature (especially fantasy), and musings on dating as a Christian. Visit her website, meganrials.com, for more information.

Dr. Joseph Ricke – 4F

Paper: “Screwtape, The Movie”

On Oct. 10, 1947, a brief note in *The New York Times* announced that a former congresswoman had been signed to write a screenplay of *The Screwtape Letters* (described as “a story about hell”) for Twentieth Century-Fox. Two weeks later, she received a letter from Lewis himself who flattered her that “those in the know had told him he was lucky to have her” working on the project. She and the studio were not the only ones interested in *Screwtape*, however. In fact, two studios, two publishers, two would-be producers, and two screen-writers, both significant figures in post-war America, were involved. Although the attempts to bring *Screwtape* to the screen failed, the story itself is fascinating, absurd, moving, and perhaps cautionary for those who might attempt to do the same. It is also largely “undiscovered.” My paper will identify the persons involved, the nature of their communication with Lewis and his publishers, and suggest the reasons why different players – producers, writers, publishers and Lewis himself – were interested in the project to begin with. It will also uncover the (rejected) script for one project and the “treatment” (Hollywood-ese for a detailed, scene by scene, narrative summary) for the other.

Bio: Joe Ricke (PhD from Rice University) is a literary scholar with special interests in Chaucer, early English drama, Shakespeare, Lewis, Tolkien, Auden, World War Two, and mid-20th-century literary criticism. His many publications include “An Unlikely Preacher” (*Sehnsucht*), “Screwtape in Wartime” (*ibid*), “‘Textual Corruptions’ Corrupted” (*Journal of Inklings Studies*),

“The Genuine Text Controversy” (ibid), George MacDonald, Shakespeare Scholar (VII), “Dig This: Hamlet in the Graveyard” (*Medieval Renaissance Drama in England*), and “The Framing of the Shrew” (MLA). He was formerly the director of the C.S. Lewis Center at Taylor University and has edited four previous volumes of Inkling or Shakespeare-related essays. He is the founder and director of the Inkling Folk Fellowship, a published poet, and a singer-songwriter (joemartynrickemusic.com).

Prof. Aaron Rizzieri – 1E

Paper: “Desire and Conscience in A.E. Taylor’s *The Faith of a Moralist*”

A.E. Taylor was a fellow of Merton College. In 1930, he published *The Faith of a Moralist*, a monograph that is based on his Gifford lectures of the same name. Taylor contends that the morally serious individual craves a transformation of personality; a conquering of humanity’s present and lowly state. The key point is that this desire has no potential to be fulfilled completely on Earth and hence involves a desire that is at home in a radically different post-mortem environment. One point of interest that Taylor’s argument has for the Lewis scholar is theoretical. Taylor explores the use of the desire for distinctly moral goods, such as the deep moral transformation of the person, as the focal point of an argument that is similar in structure to Lewis’s argument from desire as it is asserted in *Mere Christianity*, book III, part 10. Hence, we have a type of argument from desire that is also properly classified as a moral argument. A second point of interest is historical as Taylor’s work reveals that discussions of arguments from desire were common in British philosophy.

Bio: Aaron Rizzieri has a PhD in philosophy and is an instructor at Coconino Community College in Flagstaff, Arizona. He has published a book entitled *Pragmatic Encroachment, Religious Belief and Practice* (Palgrave MacMillan) and his articles have appeared in journals such as *Religious Studies*, *The International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, *Philosophical Studies*, the *European Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, and others. His interest in Lewis is that of an analytic philosopher exploring the force of Lewis’s arguments such as the argument from desire.

Dr. Brian Roden – 1B

Paper: “Bergson vs. Boethius on *Perelandra*: Reassessing Sanford Schwartz”

In his 2009 book *C.S. Lewis and the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy*, Dr. Sanford Schwartz makes the case that C.S. Lewis’s Ransom Trilogy does not stand against, but actually “takes up” popular 20th-century evolutionary models as sanctified versions in which to explore the true insights those models possess. On the contrary, this paper argues that while Lewis does incorporate evolutionary models in the trilogy, he remained consistent with and committed to the classical and medieval qualities that shape the interplanetary tales. In particular, Schwartz contests that the emphasis on time and mutability in *Perelandra* are positive appropriations of the *elan vitale* philosophy of Henri Bergson. However, the classical Christian philosopher Boethius, whom Lewis highly esteemed, arguably shaped Lewis’s philosophy of time much more than Bergson and is a better ground for the ideas behind the contours of time, loss, and change which form the landscape and plot of *Perelandra*. The presence of the various evolutionary models in the Ransom Trilogy stands, contrary to Dr. Schwartz, as opposing philosophies to the vision of reality better supported by the works of Augustine, Boethius, and Dante.

Bio: Brian C. Roden (DThM, Northwind Seminary) is an independent researcher and professional engineer based in Huntsville, Alabama. His academic work explores the nature of time and eternity across the writings of C.S. Lewis and the other Inklings. Alongside his scholarly pursuits, he provides pro bono engineering and infrastructure design for churches and inter-

national ministries across Africa, Asia and the Americas, and is a co-inventor on a U.S. patent developed for rapid-response relief during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Jonathan Rolfe – 4A

Paper: “‘The Mythical Tollewis’: Tolkien and Lewis on Myth and Allegory”

Both Tolkien and Lewis distinguish allegory and myth by the relationship of the author to his work: an allegory consists of intended correspondences “of the sort ‘five wizards=five senses’” (Tolkien, Letter 203), whereas myth suggests many allegorical readings unintended by the author. Though this point is already well-studied, several points require further elucidation. First, both authors explicitly extend the allegory-generating property of myths to stories in general: the fantastical and universal aspects of myth are especially fruitful but not ultimately necessary for allegory. Second, these authors’ understanding of allegory in the strict sense is so narrow that it requires some explanation: Why is the term reserved for stories wholly planned as allegory and peopled only with abstractions? This narrow definition finds its source in the Inklings’ study of the medieval genre of allegory. For interpreting the Inklings’ own works, however, the broader category of allegorical meaning offers a more fruitful approach than the narrow, medieval idea of allegory. This clarification of Tolkien’s and Lewis’s understanding of allegory suggests further steps in the intersection of Inklings studies and biblical studies, especially in understanding how their use of “allegory” differs from a patristic use of the term.

Bio: Jonathan Rolfe is a PhD student in Classics at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He holds a BA from Hillsdale College, where he double majored in Greek and Latin and founded an Old English reading group. He loves dead languages and the history of ideas.

Mr. Alexander Roth – 3C

Paper: “C.S. Lewis Beyond Mere Theodicy”

This paper examines Lewis’s engagement with the problem of evil through a comparative analysis of *The Problem of Pain*, *A Grief Observed*, the “Five Sonnets” and *The Last Battle*. Though these works appear to offer conflicting claims, I argue they reveal not contradiction but progression, shaped by lived experience and imaginative flexibility. Rather than presenting a single, unified theodicy, Lewis speaks in four distinct voices, each responding to suffering from a different existential perspective: the theologian, who addresses the logical compatibility of God and evil; the widow, who confronts suffering from within after the death of Joy Davidman; the poet, who dwells in the problem without demanding resolution; and the storyteller, who situates suffering within an eschatological horizon of redemption. Read in conversation, these texts suggest that Lewis ultimately moves beyond classical theodicy toward honest, faithful endurance. Lewis emerges not as a mere theist but as a thinker who acknowledges that suffering cannot always be explained, offering instead a faithfulness that values reflection, imagination, and even silence over explanation.

Bio: Alexander Roth is a senior at Villanova University majoring in humanities, philosophy, and theology, with a minor in creative writing. He has just completed a visiting year at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford, where he studied under Michael Ward. His research centers on C.S. Lewis and the Christian imaginative tradition, with interests in theodicy and Russian literature. His work has appeared in *Stance: The International Undergraduate Philosophy Journal*, and he has presented in Oxford and various colleges in the Northeast of America. At Villanova, he founded the Debate and Public Speaking Club and organized the “Great Debates” series that brings students and faculty together for public debates on questions of God’s existence and other theological concepts. He aspires to a career as an author, debater and professor of the humanities.

Mr. Gabriel Connor Salter – 4C

Paper: “Bloodstained Banners and Weeping Bays: An Undiscovered Influence on Joy Davidman’s Second Novel”

Little scholarship has explored William Lindsay Gresham’s writing beyond discussing his crime novel *Nightmare Alley* and “Last Kilometer,” a Spanish Civil War poem his future wife Joy Davidman published in *War Poems of the United Nations*. Gresham’s archives show this is only part of his poetic output during the 1930s, a period when he aspired to be a folk musician and composed many poems about his Spanish Civil War medic experiences. One archival find, a transcript of the folk song “Feed My Sheep” as performed by Lee Hays, offers clues to famous Greenwich Village musicians Gresham met during this period, showing how he left his fingerprints on American Left protest music long after he left the Communist Party of the United States. The poem’s appearance in Davidman’s novel *Weeping Bay*, in which her pro-union characters quote “Feed My Sheep” while debating the true meaning of Christ’s call to feed his sheep, further demonstrates how she drew on her communist past (supporting working classes) while critiquing its methods as a post-communist Christian. The poem’s usage demonstrates how Gresham and Davidman, both practicing Christians in the 1940s, sought to synthesize their secular left-wing pasts with their new religious beliefs.

Bio: G. Connor Salter is a writer and editor who has contributed to many publications, including the *Journal of Inklings Studies*, *Mythlore*, *Sehnsucht*, the *Journal for the Fantastic in the Arts*, and the *Journal of Tolkien Research*. He has a Master of Letters in analytic and exegetical theology from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland (2025) and a bachelor’s degree in professional writing from Taylor University in Indiana (2019). He specializes in exploring understudied sections of the Inklings’ lives and their understudied associates.

Dr. Lindsey Scholl – 3D

Paper: “Mountains of Tin: Lewis and Sayers on Environmental Stewardship”

Dorothy L. Sayers was concerned about the problem of waste, both its effects on the earth and on the humans who produced and consumed it. In her view, waste was a form of gluttony, mixed with greed and sloth, and she feared the days after World War II, when “instead of the wasteful consumption of trucks and tanks, metal and explosives, we shall have back the wasteful consumption of wireless sets and silk stockings, drugs and paper, cheap pottery and cosmetics...” (“The Other Six Deadly Sins”). Her condemnation of planned obsolescence was strident, and it stemmed from her belief that quality workmanship was a sacred responsibility. C.S. Lewis shared her condemnation and her belief, both of which he expressed pointedly in his essay, “Good Work and Good Works.” The aim of this paper is to synthesize their vision of quality workmanship, then to explore how their vision speaks to the problem of waste in our current ecological situation.

Bio: Lindsey Scholl is the host of the Dorothy L. Sayers podcast and founder of The Sayers Guild. She has written and spoken on Sayers in several venues, including her regular column entitled “A Good Work Well Done” at The CiRCE Institute. She has a PhD in Roman history and an MA in medieval history; her graduate studies included intellectual history, art and theology. She is an instructor at Trinity Classical School in Houston, Texas, where she teaches 10th-grade humanities, including Sayers’s translation of *The Divine Comedy*, as well as advanced Latin courses.

Mrs. Erin Seidel – 1C

Paper: “Lewis, Being, and The Whole”

C.S. Lewis is beginning to be recognized for the philosophical scholarship and insight he acquired before becoming a fellow in literature at Magdalen College. One piece of evidence was an essay referenced in his diary, which he called “The Whole.” While searching in the Lewis archives at the Wade, I discovered this previously uncatalogued essay that did match his 1924 diary entry. It was written while Lewis was presenting at the Philosophical Society of Oxford and being considered for fellowships in philosophy. The essay formulates Lewis’s perspective on essence and existence and provides another source for understanding his idealist notions. Although this essay was written before his Christian conversion, it provides perspective historically and philosophically, as these themes would carry into his later writings. The essay, though unfinished, will be analyzed for the first time, and annotated to shed more light on the nature of his philosophic thought. This presentation will touch on the contrast between Lewis in this essay, as compared to Aristotle, Kant, and other thinkers. It also provides a backdrop for humility regarding a “Lewis discovery” in general.

Bio: Erin Seidel is a student of the philosophical undercurrents grounding the writings of C.S. Lewis. She has written and spoken on this work at academic conferences in the U.S. and abroad. Erin received her BA and MA in philosophy at the Institute for Philosophy at KU Leuven, in Belgium. She transfers her analytical and logical background applied in the software industry to her work on Lewis. She also organizes the “Professor Como Collegiate Essay Contest” for the New York C.S. Lewis Society and has served on the Eldila for the Society. The mother of two grown children, she and her husband spend their summers in the Northwest, while residing in Arizona where they can extend their hobby of hiking year-round.

Mr. Jonathan Selstad – 2D

Paper: “No, It’s not all in Plato: An Exploration of New Narnia through a Dantean Lens”

In *The Last Battle*, Digory explains that New Narnia is more real than Old Narnia, saying, “It’s all in Plato, All in Plato.” However, there is more to New Narnia’s reality than Platonic reference. Building on Michael Ward’s theories in *Planet Narnia*, this essay argues that New Narnia can be better understood in light of Dante’s conception of Saturn in *Paradiso*. Lewis may draw from Plato’s theory of forms in works such as *The Republic*. But Lewis’s analogy of the mirror in *The Last Battle* suggests a reality that places a higher role of art than Plato admits. On Saturn, Dante witnesses contemplatives descending from the Empyrean on a ladder. New Narnia can be seen as a similar ladder, where contemplatives ascend through multiple stages into a fuller reality. Through this similarity and more, Lewis imagines an eternal reality like Dante, where the particulars of art and creation do not get lost in contemplating God. These connections lend weight to the possibility that Lewis was actively drawing inspiration from Dante’s Saturn when creating New Narnia.

Bio: Jonathan Selstad is a writer and teacher of classical literature and history at Great Hearts Online. He received an MLitt in theology and the arts at St. Andrews University and a BA in biblical studies at Biola University, where he was a member of the Torrey Honors College. Besides reading great books and enjoying good conversations, Jonathan Selstad enjoys creating fictional worlds inspired by the Inklings and other classical literature.

Prof. Andy Shurson – 4D

Paper: “From Marginalia to Message: C.S. Lewis’s Sermons and Athanasius’s Understanding of the Incarnation”

C.S. Lewis invited people to consider the heart of Christianity, Jesus Christ. From Narnia to the BBC to his sermons, Lewis saw Jesus as the key to making sense of life in the world. Lewis found in Christ’s incarnation the missing portion of the symphony or story that completes the rest of the work. The emphasis on the incarnation and its apologetic value furthers Athanasius’s work, which Lewis carefully read and then introduced in a new translation. The paper will explore Lewis’s engagement with Athanasius by examining his marginalia in his personal copy of *On the Incarnation* located at UNC Chapel Hill. Lewis annotates every page of *On the Incarnation* through at least two readings of the work in its original Greek. Lewis annotates the volume in a manner fuller than that of most books available in collections today. The marginalia annotations, paired with Athanasius’s writing, portray the incarnation as the fullness of Jesus Christ’s person and work. Lewis saw the incarnation as the myth that became fact. He saw the incarnation as concrete truth rather than a doctrinal abstraction. Lewis’s sermons further show how the incarnation gives Lewis the true myth that engages his audience’s imagination and explains reality.

Bio: Andy Shurson is the content editor and grants administrator for the Center for Faith and Culture. He is an adjunct professor of New Testament and historical theology at Judson College at Southeastern. Andy holds a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary and is nearing completion of a PhD in preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, with a focus on C.S. Lewis and preaching. He pastored for 10 years and now resides in Wake Forest, North Carolina, with his wife and three sons.

Dr. Jim Slagle – 2C

Paper: “Lewis’s Prescience in Philosophy of Mind”

A large part of C.S. Lewis’s campaign against naturalism involved the nature of mind and its irreducibility to the material, physical brain. Some of the issues he raised have since come to the fore in analytic philosophy of mind, with some of the most important philosophers arguing almost exactly along the same lines as Lewis. The relationship between the first- and third-person perspective is one example. Lewis’s point is that the first person is irreducible to third person – there is a difference between looking at something and looking along it. This point foreshadows similar sentiments expressed by Thomas Nagel 50 years later. Another case is how mental content – where this is defined as propositional content or “aboutness” – is inexplicable on materialist terms, which has become a much bigger issue in the philosophy of mind over the last several decades. A third example is how Lewis’s argument that the reason for a belief must function, in some sense, as its cause for the belief to be rational – something Donald Davidson later argued in his groundbreaking *Essays on Actions and Events*. Finally, Lewis’s *Argument from Reason* has found expression by many other philosophers, such as J.R. Lucas, Karl Popper and Alvin Plantinga.

Bio: After earning an MA in exegetical theology, Jim Slagle traveled to Belgium to attend the Institute of Philosophy in Leuven (Louvain). He completed his licentiate there, with his thesis being on C.S. Lewis’s *Argument from Reason*, then went on to earn an MPhil with a thesis on “Islamic Philosophy of Mind.” He was awarded a PhD in 2012 with a dissertation on what he calls the “Epistemological Skyhook,” which refers to arguments that naturalism, determinism,

or both are self-defeating. He has since taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Portland. Thus far, he's published several articles along with three books: *The Epistemological Skyhook: Determinism, Naturalism, and Self-Defeat* (2016); *The Evolutionary Argument against Naturalism: Context, Exposition, and Repercussions* (2021); and *Myth-Busting in Science and Religion: An Introduction for Ignorant Intellectuals* (2025).

Mrs. Monique Stam – 4E

Paper: “Another Path Past Watchful Dragons: Virtue in Stephen R. Lawhead’s *The Song of Albion*”

What happens when an author steeped in the imaginative world of C.S. Lewis creates his own myth? Lewis argued that a Christian story grows from soil already fertilized by the author's beliefs. In *The Abolition of Man*, the rightly formed “Chest” allows reason to rule appetite and makes virtuous action possible. In the Ransom Trilogy, Lewis fictionally illustrates this. Stephen R. Lawhead's *Song of Albion* provides an opportunity to explore what happens when these ideas take root in another storyteller. Ransom and Lewis Gillies begin as unremarkable academics who enter other worlds, encounter beauty, goodness, and objective truth progressively remake them. Reading the trilogies together suggests that Lawhead does more than echo Lewis: He offers another path past the watchful dragons.

Bio: Monique Stam is a graduate of Wheaton College and holds a Master of Science in Ministry from Northwind Seminary. Her thesis, *Equipping Christian Homeschool Educators to Teach from Internalized Objective Truth: A Transformational Framework for Authentic Christian Education*, reflects her interest in theology and education. A homeschool educator for 30 years, she has also taught in homeschool cooperatives and worked as a private tutor. After leaving home, one of her daughters remarked that she had not realized how deeply C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien had shaped their family culture. That legacy continues in Stam's interest in how imaginative literature shapes moral and spiritual understanding. Her Substack, *Inhabiting Reality*, premieres in September.

Dr. Jason Staples – 5A

Paper: “Die and Come to Life: Matthew Arnold's Influence on C.S. Lewis's Conversion”

In a letter to Arthur Greeves (and later in *Mere Christianity*), C.S. Lewis explains that misgivings about “the whole doctrine of redemption” had long kept him from being a Christian, but those misgivings were eventually overcome by understanding redemption differently than he had been taught as a child. This paper argues that although George MacDonald and others also deserve significant credit for this shift, the influence of Matthew Arnold on Lewis's conversion has been underappreciated. Through an examination of Lewis's extensive annotations in his copy of Arnold's *St. Paul and Protestantism* (dated by handwriting analysis to around 1930) and his copy of the Moffatt New Testament, this paper argues that Arnold's critique of Puritan readings of Paul and his identification of what he calls “the doctrine of the necrosis” as “Paul's central doctrine” provided a breakthrough in Lewis's understanding of the atonement and opened the door for Lewis to proceed from a theist to a Christian.

Bio: Jason A. Staples (PhD, UNC-Chapel Hill) is an assistant teaching professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at North Carolina State University. He is the author of *Paul and the Resurrection of Israel: Jews, Former Gentiles, Israelites* (Cambridge, 2024) and *The Idea of Israel in Second Temple Judaism* (Cambridge, 2021), and a variety of articles. He is presently writing a commentary on Romans and an as-yet untitled book on C.S. Lewis and Scripture.

Dr. Ryan Stark – 3A**Paper: “C.S. Lewis, the Modern Novel, and the Problem of Realism”**

What, for Lewis, constitutes a realistic story? As straightforward as the question seems, the answer proves remarkably elusive insofar as Lewis never says. He tries to say in 1961, with *An Experiment in Criticism*, but makes very little progress on the topic, if any. Nor does Lewis offer a positive definition elsewhere, which is itself a kind of thesis statement in reverse, a quasi-apophatic gesture that posits “literary realism” as a perennially contested idea. At the same time, his reluctance to offer a positive definition in no way impedes his critiques of the modern secular realists, who are all too happy to tell the world what is real and what is not, often with bravado and overconfidence. If Lewis makes a substantial contribution to the topic, then it is here, against the modern critics, where he challenges impoverished concepts of realistic literature.

Bio: Ryan Stark is professor of humanities at Corban University. He has written three books: *A Guidebook to Monsters* (2024), *Biblical Sterne* (2021), and *Rhetoric, Science, and Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (2009), and coedited, with Tina Skouen, a collection titled *Rhetoric and the Early Royal Society* (2015). His essays have appeared in various journals, among them *Literature and Theology*, *Christianity and Literature*, and *The Journal of the History of Ideas*.

Mr. Brody Stewart – 3E**Paper: “Hate With a Perfect Hatred”**

Love of one’s enemies – according to C.S. Lewis and Christ alike – is a *sine qua non* of Christian discipleship. One might thus suppose that hatred, diametrically opposed to love, is antithetical to Christianity. Lewis, however, shocks his unsuspecting readers with a lengthy paean to “perfect hatred” within the climactic scene of *Perelandra*. In several other of his works – most notably *Reflections on the Psalms* and *Mere Christianity* – Lewis articulates the positive necessity for hatred when it is properly directed against evil, particularly within one’s own heart. Hatred for one’s neighbors remains inconsistent with Christianity, but so does passive acceptance of one’s own sinful inclinations. Such an understanding of hatred is not original to Lewis, but springs from both Sacred Scripture – especially the Psalms – and Plato, going on to find full expression in the early monastic authors who synthesized these traditions and thus laid the foundation for medieval spirituality. By attending to Lewis’s careful contextualization and clear intertextual parallels between *Perelandra* and his theological and apologetic works, readers are better equipped to interpret and internalize the “perfect hatred” on display in *Perelandra*.

Bio: Brody Stewart earned his MA in theology from Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon, where he spent several years discerning priesthood and community life as a Benedictine monk. Now married, he teaches theology, philosophy, Latin, literature, and art at Chesterton Academy of the Willamette Valley, a private Catholic high school in Mount Angel, Oregon. Brody’s scholarly interests include early Christian biblical interpretation, monastic spirituality, and – of course – the works of C.S. Lewis. He and his wife regularly attend meetings of the C.S. Lewis Society in Salem, where many of the ideas underpinning the present conference paper were sharpened by the insights of his peers.

Mr. Austin Story – 4D**Paper: “To Nothing They Shall Return: The Athanasian Influence on Lewis’s Metaphysics”**

This paper argues that a careful study of St. Athanasius’s *De Incarnatione* can help illuminate the rich metaphysics found in the work of C.S. Lewis. Two metaphysical theses are especially relevant for exploring their shared metaphysical vision. The first is the shared conviction that

reality comes in degrees, and that creatures exist only to the extent that they preserve their designated place in the created order: If a creature were to reject its proper place in creation, it would then return to the nothingness from which it came. The second contention explored in this paper is the position that creation *ex nihilo* is inseparable from redemption because theosis and demonosis are metaphysical processes by which the individual becomes more (or less) real based on their respective degrees of participation in God through Christ. In addition to *De Incarnatione*, the exegetical portion of this paper is based largely on *The Great Divorce* and *Miracles*, where Lewis articulates the admittedly unconventional view that creatures exist in an inchoate and ultimately precarious state of existence relative to the concreteness of the divine life.

Bio: Austin Story is a philosophy PhD student at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Prior to this, Story studied theology at Duke Divinity School, where he developed a love for the church fathers, especially Augustine. In addition, Story has academic interests in ancient and medieval philosophy, philosophical and systematic theology, and political philosophy and ethics. Outside of his studies, he enjoys such things as hiking, campfires, playing new sports, and rooting for Appalachian State University!

Dr. Jeff Tacklind – 6B

Paper: “Stealing Past the Watchful Dragons: Imaginative Subversion and Spiritual Formation in C.S. Lewis”

Lewis famously described the fairy tale as a means of “stealing past those watchful dragons” that prevent us from hearing the gospel with fresh ears. This paper argues that Lewis’s imaginative method is not merely an apologetic strategy but a lifelong pedagogy of spiritual formation. Throughout his fiction and essays, Lewis repeatedly invites readers beyond the false security of certainty into deeper participation in reality through wonder, desire, paradox, and beauty. Drawing upon Lewis’s own writings alongside insights from James Fowler’s stages of faith, Michael Polanyi’s account of personal knowledge, and contemporary theories of spiritual formation, this paper suggests that every stage of faith develops its own “watchful dragons” – protective assumptions that eventually become obstacles to further growth. Rather than confronting these defenses directly, Lewis’s stories awaken longing, enlarge the imagination, and cultivate the humility necessary for transformation. In an age increasingly shaped by polarization and certainty, Lewis offers a vision of formation in which imagination becomes not an escape from truth but one of God’s primary means of leading believers further up and further in.

Bio: Dr. Jeffrey Tacklind is senior pastor of Little Church by the Sea in Laguna Beach, California, and serves as an adjunct professor at Portland Seminary (George Fox University), where he teaches leadership and spiritual formation. His ministry and writing draw deeply from C.S. Lewis, Henri Nouwen, Dallas Willard, Thomas Merton, and the Christian contemplative tradition. His research interests include epistemology, spiritual formation, and the ways beauty and wonder cultivate lifelong discipleship.

Dr. Gary Tandy – 2A

Paper: “Samuel Johnson and C.S. Lewis: Admiration, Affinity, and Influence”

My presentation explores the multiple connections between C.S. Lewis and Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), the 18th-century poet, critic, editor, lexicographer, biographer, and essayist under three categories: Admiration, Affinity, and Influence. It is clear from numerous references to Johnson in Lewis’s published writing and letters that Lewis admired Johnson’s thought and writing. I will share select passages from Lewis where he expresses his admiration, identifying

several characteristics of Johnson's life and work that Lewis most appreciated. In the affinity section, I'll consider some of the similarities between Lewis and Johnson: their talents, characters, beliefs, attitudes, and practices, shedding light on why more than a few of Lewis's former students and friends have called Lewis Johnsonian. Finally, the third section will ask – and attempt to answer – whether the Lewis and Johnson connection is simply a matter of admiration and affinity or whether it rises to the level of influence.

Bio: Dr. Gary L. Tandy is professor of English, emeritus, at George Fox University, where he taught courses in British Literature, Shakespeare, and C.S. Lewis and the Inklings. He is the author of *The Rhetoric of Certitude: C.S. Lewis's Nonfiction Prose* and numerous articles and reviews about Lewis, Dorothy L. Sayers, and the Inklings. He is an associate editor of *Sehnsucht: The C.S. Lewis Journal* and serves on the planning team for the Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference. His current project is tracing the influence of Samuel Johnson on Lewis's thought and writing.

Mrs. Madeleine Teel – 3D

Paper: "The Ecotheology of *Till We Have Faces*"

In recent decades, there has been a rising scholarly interest in the ecological Christian vision that can be found throughout C.S. Lewis's corpus, although thorough explorations of Lewis's ecology or ecotheology have been limited to either the Cosmic Trilogy and the *Narniad*, his apologetic works or his poetry. This paper explores the ecotheological vision that undergirds *Till We Have Faces*, considering the role of the land and nature in Orual's journey throughout the text. I will suggest that part of Orual's journey back toward Psyche involves the importance of right relations between nature and the numinous, suggesting that, as a part of this myth retold, Lewis explores some of his own thoughts on an "integral ecology," and in particular, the relationship between religion and the environment. This paper contributes to the discourse surrounding Lewis and ecotheology, as well as the relationship between mythopoeic literature and nature.

Bio: Madeleine Teel is a second-year DPhil student at the University of Oxford who is working on C.S. Lewis, Ecotheology and Medieval Cosmology under the supervision of Michael Ward and Tim Middleton. She holds an MPhil in philosophy of religion from the University of Cambridge, and a BA in theology and theatre from George Fox University. While at Fox, she was a member of the university's honors program, where she met her husband. Madeleine is a member of Christians in Academia at Oxford, and she is the current president of the Oxford University C.S. Lewis Society. She would be happy to chat about any interest in speaking or visiting the latter society.

Dave Terpstra – 1A

Paper: "C.S. Lewis's Realistic Approach to Narrative Rhetorical Criticism's Fantastic Problems"

This paper compares the rhetorical theories of C.S. Lewis and Walter Fisher to argue that Lewis anticipated key elements of Fisher's Narrative Paradigm and, in doing so, offers insights that address several criticisms of Fisher's model. Fisher's Narrative Paradigm, introduced in 1984, proposes that humans are innate storytellers who rely on narrative reasoning when making decisions, evaluating stories according to narrative probability and narrative fidelity. Although influential, the paradigm has been criticized for its difficulty in accounting for improbable narratives, such as fairy tales, science fiction, and allegory, and for potentially limiting audiences to stories that confirm their existing beliefs. This paper demonstrates that Lewis, decades before Fisher, articulated functional equivalents of both narrative probability

and fidelity. Through his discussions of allegory, realism, and the relationship between new and established stories, Lewis provides a broader account of how narratives achieve rhetorical effectiveness. His emphasis on internal coherence and realism allows fantastic stories to persuade, while his understanding of how stories engage existing mental frameworks permits narratives to introduce new ideas. Lewis's work therefore provides an earlier and potentially more comprehensive framework for understanding narrative rhetoric.

Bio: Dave Terpstra is finishing his PhD at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, where he is researching Lewis's rhetoric of conversion. After spending 16 years on the mission field in Mozambique, he has recently returned to church ministry in the U.S. and is the lead pastor at Forefront Church in Denver.

Dr. Dwain Tissell – 5F

Paper: "A Circle of Friends: C.S. Lewis, Nicolas Zernov, and the Ecumenical Movement in Oxford 1947–1963"

This paper is a follow-up to a 2024 Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference paper and *Sehnsucht* article, exploring in more detail C.S. Lewis's lesser-known but "fairly close personal friendship with an Orthodox couple, Nicolas and Militza Zernov" (Ware). Russian Orthodox theologian and Oxford professor Nicolas Zernov called Lewis a friend and told him he was "inspired" by him. The relationship was clearly mutual. Zernov and Militza were present at significant moments in Jack and Joy's later lives. Lewis interacted with and to some extent was involved with Zernov's ecumenical focus. They dialogued about it around at least one of Nicolas Zernov's books. Their friendship was deepened by this unity of purpose. Through this lens one can see that, though Lewis was a man of his time, he did not disregard women or people of other denominations. He befriended women, and supported women in their scholarship and art. Further, he was what we would call today an ecumenical Anglican. He almost certainly worshipped at least once in an Orthodox church and fellowshiped with many Catholics, clearly finding those experiences and associations genuine and edifying.

Bio: Dwain Tissell (DMin, GCTS; ThM, Regent College) is an adjunct seminary professor and has taught a DMin course in "C.S. Lewis and Friends on Mere Discipleship in a Post-Christian Age." He has book notes in the journal *VII*, an article on "C.S. Lewis's Most Important Message" in the 2024 *Sehnsucht*, and a 2017 Wade Center oral history interview with James M. Houston, colleague of Lewis in Oxford from 1947 to 1954. Dwain delivered a paper, "C.S. Lewis, James Houston, and the 'Zernov Circle'" at the 2024 Undiscovered C.S. Lewis Conference, and a workshop, "On the Road with Jack and Warnie: Walking the Wye River Valley," with his son Ben Tissell. They currently host the *Holy History* podcast where Jack shows up regularly.

Ms. Heidi Turner – 6A

Paper: "'The Dwarfs are for the Dwarfs': Race Anxiety in the Caspian Era"

Published in 1951, *Prince Caspian* explores the anxieties of a marginalized group after attempted genocide and the particular concern of finding or creating a secure place in the wider society while maintaining their unique identity. The dwarfish push against Telmarine occupation and willingness to cooperate with other, even more dangerous powers due to the trauma of threatened annihilation carries strong parallels to the concerns of our own marginalized races – Armenians, Romani, Jews, Slavs, and others – in the wake of World War II and the negotiations with survival, cultural identity, and assimilation-as-resistance. The sympathy Lewis shows and the warning Lewis issues against racial isolationism in both *Prince Caspian* and *The Last Battle* provides an unexpectedly sophisticated, age-appropriate distillation of post-war

racial conversations. This reading, in which the arc of Lewis's dwarfs is racially as well as spiritually resonant, offers a new and deeper understanding of the climate around survival and restoration in the wake of destruction. In addition, it explores a specific and prescient characterization of the effects of marginalization on identity, even before the full extent of Nazi atrocities were common knowledge.

Bio: Heidi Turner is a writer and musician from Maui, Hawai'i whose work centers on redemptive hope. She earned a Master of Arts in English at Azusa Pacific University and holds a Master of Fine Arts in Writing from the University of New Hampshire. She is currently a PhD candidate in English at the University of New Hampshire. Her dissertation work focuses on placing the fiction of C.S. Lewis into conversations around both the Modernist Movement and the first half of the 20th century, introducing a framework of hope into readings of the Modern era (1899–1965). Outside of her scholarship, Heidi is a songwriter, poet, and author of fiction.

Dr. Benjamin Utter – 1F

Paper: "The A.I. bolition of Man: Can C.S. Lewis Help Save My Comp 1 Class in the Age of Digital Necromancy?"

My paper will focus on Lewis's allusions in *The Abolition of Man* to Dr. Faustus, and how I have recently begun using them, along with other select Lewis texts, in my own college classroom to try to frame an ethical conversation around student use and (mostly) abuse of generative AI as a perilous "magician's bargain": "That process whereby man surrenders object after object, and finally himself . . . in return for power." Whether or not my students catch a whiff of sulfur when they consult a (Mephistophelian?) chatbot, I want them to think about who or what they are inviting to help sire their brainchildren. To that end, assigned readings and discussions of Lewis and the cautionary story of Dr. Faustus that he repeatedly references, are helping my young writers consider what is potentially at stake when they agree to share intellectual custody of those creative offspring with technologies that do not appear to have any meaningful relationship with or obligation to reality or virtue, but which, like the Unman's hideous smile, "[do] not defy goodness, [but ignore] it to the point of annihilation."

Bio: Ben Utter is an associate professor of English at Ouachita Baptist University, in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. He has published on the Arthurian poetry of Charles Williams and medieval iconography in modern American gun culture, among other things, and written an illustrated children's book, *Gladys the Grayish-Green Dragon*, which his mother praised as "very clever," even if his children rated it "not as good as Harry Potter." Some of his poetic and polemical odds and ends have appeared recently in places like *McSweeney's*, *Good Faith Media*, and *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Mr. Roy Wallen – 4E

Paper: "Two Oxford Fantasists: Exploring the Connections between C.S. Lewis and Elizabeth Goudge"

In Oxford in the period from 1923 to 1939, there were two young people who became Christians and were associated with Oxford University, and who both went on to write magical and highly successful children's fantasies with some striking similarities. Much has been written to compare C.S. Lewis with J.R.R. Tolkien and their fantasy writings, Lewis and Dorothy L. Sayers and their apologetic writing, and Lewis and others in Oxford who were emerging writers at this time. However, almost no mention has been made of the possible connections between Lewis and Elizabeth Goudge. This paper addresses the connections one can make between the writings of Lewis and Goudge. We will explore the parallels in the authors' use of animal characters who interact with human protagonists, the display of magic, the presentation of moral

themes, and the timing of their publications. Allusions to third-party connections between the authors are also addressed. Finally, we will discover whether their paths ever crossed.

Bio: Roy Wallen is a native New Englander currently living in New Hampshire. By day, he is a healthcare technology executive, as well as a leadership coach and mentor. Outside of the working world, Roy is a reader and writer, as well as one who enjoys walking and peak bagging to clear his head. He serves as a leader in his local church, on the board of trustees and executive in residence for the C.S. Lewis Study Center in Northfield, Massachusetts, and as an administrator to the Inking Folk Fellowship. Roy has published 13 peer-reviewed papers and more than 25 abstracts and short papers, as well as numerous reviews. He has contributed to six books and is a regular conference presenter.

Dr. Sarah Waters – 6D

Paper: “*Variation(s) on a Date, or, When C.S. Lewis Read to the Mermaids*”

C.S. Lewis’s essay “Variation in Shakespeare and Others” was first published in *Rehabilitations* in 1939. The only context he offers is that it was previously “read to the Mermaid Club.” However, no indication is given of when this took place, who the Mermaid Club were, or why Lewis would have given a paper to the Mermaid Club in the first place. In the absence of that “read” paper (prior to any edits made before its publication in *Rehabilitations*), or a precise record of a date when it was “read,” conflicting dates and tentative suggestions have followed in critical and biographical accounts in Lewis scholarship, and assumptions about this paper and the Mermaid Club have been made without further archival research to support these claims. This raises a series of questions to which this paper will respond. Drawing on substantial archive research, this paper will reveal, for the first time, with clear evidence, the context in which Lewis gave this paper and the precise date for when Lewis gave the talk that became “Variation in Shakespeare and Others.”

Bio: Dr. Sarah Waters is an assistant professor of language and literature at Sterling College in Kansas, where she also serves as the inaugural director of the Sterling College C.S. Lewis Center. Recent publications include “Remember Me” (*MaRDiE*), “Shakespeare on (and in) the Margins: C.S. Lewis’s Engagement with Shakespeare” (*VII*), “Hamlet in Narnia” (*Mythlore*), “Tripping into the Light Fantastic: Seeing (through) MacDonald” (*North Wind*), “‘A Critic Who Makes No Claim’: Disrupting Lewis’s (In)Expert Rhetorical Flourishes” (*Linguaculture*), “‘De Arca Noe’: An Early Lewis/Barfield Collaboration” [with A.T. Reyes] (*Journal of Inklings Studies*), and she has articles forthcoming in *Sehnsucht, Linguaculture*, and a book chapter in *Lewis in the Real World* (eds. Rod Miller and Clayton Carver). Her book on Shakespeare and Lewis is under contract with KSUP.

Dr. Todd Wilson – 5D

Paper: “*Medicine, Not Food: C.S. Lewis on the Purpose and Perils of Democracy*”

C.S. Lewis famously declared, “I am a democrat because I believe in the Fall of man.” This paper explores Lewis’s distinctive and surprisingly timely account of democracy – its purpose, its limits, and its perils. For Lewis, democracy is not a moral ideal or an expression of confidence in human wisdom and virtue. It is, rather, a necessary restraint upon fallen human beings and their perennial temptation toward pride, domination, and the abuse of power. Democracy, in other words, is “medicine, not food”: essential for preserving a healthy political order, but incapable of providing the deeper goods that nourish human life. Lewis therefore warns against romanticizing democracy or expanding its reach into every sphere of human existence. When democracy becomes an all-encompassing social ideal, or when the state assumes responsibility for making citizens “good,” democratic impulses can paradoxically become instruments of

conformity, manipulation, and even tyranny. Lewis instead points toward a more modest politics – one that limits power, protects ordinary human flourishing, and recognizes the incomparable and eternal worth of the individual person. His vision offers a compelling framework for recovering a humbler, more humane democratic politics.

Bio: Todd A. Wilson (PhD, University of Cambridge) is senior fellow for Scripture, ministry, and leadership and assistant professor of leadership at Wheaton College's Litfin Divinity School. A New Testament scholar by training, he previously served for 10 years as senior pastor of Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, Illinois. He is cofounder of the Center for Pastor Theologians and has authored or edited more than 15 books spanning biblical studies, theology, spiritual formation, leadership, and cultural engagement. Wilson also founded Integrated Leaders, through which he coaches and advises leaders and organizations across nonprofit, ministry, education, and business contexts. His work reflects a longstanding interest in bringing Christian theology into conversation with questions of leadership, culture, institutions, and public life – an interdisciplinary perspective that shapes his engagement with C.S. Lewis's reflections on democracy.

Mr. Simon Wipf – 1B

Paper: "‘Since our Beloved Became a Man’: The Narrative Significance of the Incarnation in *Perelandra*"

Throughout his novel *Perelandra*, C.S. Lewis narratively explores many theological concepts. Not least among these is the Incarnation of Christ, which has not been thoroughly treated by critics of the novel. This paper argues that the Incarnation is of central significance to both the narrative development as well as the moral claims of *Perelandra*. A close reading of the novel will show that from the first chapters, the issue of abstract and concrete responses to the forces of evil is considered both implicitly in the novel's plot and explicitly in narration and dialogue. The exploration of this theme culminates in the novel's narrative turning point: Ransom's decision to physically attack his nemesis, a choice which he makes in light of the Incarnation. Not only does an Incarnational reading of *Perelandra* help in making sense of some of the novel's most significant and controversial features, but in the contrasting choices and fates of Dr. Ransom and Dr. Weston, Lewis offers a corrective to the hubristic ambition to cast aside the limitations of embodied existence – a timely issue considering the ascendancy of disembodied digital identities, virtual "reality," and generative artificial intelligence, technologies which encourage disassociation from the physical.

Bio: Simon Wipf (BA, University of Lethbridge) is completing his MA in interdisciplinary humanities at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C., with a specialization in English. His scholarly interests are mid-20th-century literature, Christian paradigms, and intersections between theology and literature.

Mr. Josh Withrow – 1F

Paper: "Pedagogy of the Chest: Reviving the *Ordo Amoris* in the Classroom"

In *The Abolition of Man*, C.S. Lewis diagnosed a quiet crisis in modern education: the systematic debunking of objective value, creating hollowed-out "men without chests." Today, this "soft subjectivism" has mutated into a digital-age emotivism where truth is equated with mere personal sincerity. Drawing on 24 years of classroom experience, this paper explores the urgent contemporary relevance of Lewis's argument. As illuminated in Michael Ward's *After Humanity*, Lewis's critique anticipates G.E.M. Anscombe's landmark essay "Modern Moral Philosophy" and Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*. Together, they demonstrate how abandoning classical moral teleology leaves adolescents intellectually adrift. The remedy lies in restoring the *ordo*

amoris (the order of love) and training the “Chest” to cultivate ordinate affections for the Good, True, and Beautiful. This paper frames the high school classroom as a laboratory where *The Abolition of Man* serves as a compelling tool for moral formation and pre-evangelism. By moving beyond abstract logic and raw appetite, reviving Lewis’s pedagogy becomes an act of “irrigation in the desert,” offering a vital roadmap to form young people capable of justified emotion and reasoned faith.

Bio: Josh Withrow is a veteran educator with 24 years of secondary teaching experience in English and the humanities. He is the founder and writer behind The Wise Imagination, a literary platform dedicated to exploring story, virtue, and education. Josh earned his master’s degree in interdisciplinary humanities from Trinity Western University, where he studied under Monika Hilder, PhD. His graduate research focused on Victorian author George MacDonald and his understanding of the moral imagination (work he was invited to present at a George MacDonald conference at Oxford University). Combining academic scholarship with extensive classroom wisdom, Josh writes and speaks on classical virtue, C.S. Lewis, and cultivating a baptized imagination in the modern age.

Dr. Kristine Wolberg – 3C

Paper: “The Great Divorce and the Problem of Hell”

C.S. Lewis’s *The Great Divorce* addresses a specialized topic within the philosophical Problem of Evil: The Problem of Hell. This paper will begin with a definition of the problem, present a brief overview of relevant criticism, and finally suggest a reassessment of *The Great Divorce* as a focused response to the Problem of Hell. It will further suggest that *The Great Divorce* provides an imaginative portrayal and extension of Lewis’s arguments from his chapter “Hell” within his *The Problem of Pain*.

Bio: Kristine A. Wolberg (PhD, University of Notre Dame) has taught at several colleges and universities, including the University of Notre Dame, Wheaton College, and Colorado Christian University. She is the author of articles in *The John Donne Journal*, *The George Herbert Journal*, *Christianity and Literature*, *VII: Journal of the Marion E. Wade Center*, and a book-length study, *All Possible Art: George Herbert’s The Country Parson*. She coauthored a chapter on George Herbert and John Calvin in *Edward and George Herbert in the European Republic of Letters*. Her chapter on *The Country Parson* is forthcoming in *The Oxford Handbook on George Herbert*. Kristine currently enjoys teaching talented young scholars at Valor Christian High School in Highlands Ranch, Colorado.

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One of the many benefits of attending an academic conference is the opportunity to connect with others who share your interests and can offer opportunities for growth. In that spirit of camaraderie, you are invited to connect with the presenters and attendees. Please feel free to get better acquainted, ask questions, offer charitable feedback on one another’s work, or coordinate ride-shares.

Scan the QR code at right to find presenters and attendees listed in alphabetical order according to last name.



The Quotable Lewis: Both, Neither, or Only One?

Correct answers can be found on the next page

- 1 a) "Perfect humility dispenses with modesty. If God is satisfied with the work, the work may be satisfied with itself..."
b) "Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny."
- 2 a) "A myth is a lie that conveys a truth."
b) "There are only 24 hours in a day!"
- 3 a) "It is hard, when difficulties arise, to know whether one is meant to overcome them or whether they are signs that one is on the wrong track."
b) "The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation."
- 4 a) "Be weird. Be random. Be who you are. Because you never know who would love the person you hide."
b) "Life with God is not immunity from difficulties, but peace in difficulties."
- 5 a) "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching."
b) "For, above all other spheres of human life, the Devil claims politics for his own, as almost the citadel of his power."
- 6 a) "You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body."
b) "Children are not a distraction from more important work. They are the most important work."
- 7 a) "Truth and falsehood are opposed; but truth is the norm not of truth only but of falsehood also."
b) "My prayer is that when I die, all of hell rejoices that I am out of the fight."
- 8 a) "Love is never wasted, for its value does not rest upon reciprocity."
b) "Besides being complicated, reality, in my experience, is usually odd."
- 9 a) "If you don't read good books you will read bad ones."
b) "Those who read poetry to improve their minds will never improve their minds by reading poetry."
- 10 a) "Simply to say prayers is not to pray: otherwise a team of properly trained parrots would serve as well as men..."
b) "Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil."
- 11 a) "It's not the load that breaks you down. It's the way you carry it."
b) "When the whole world is running towards a cliff, he who is running in the opposite direction appears to have lost his mind."
- 12 a) "It is a happy moment when our desire crosses with the will of Heavenly Father."
b) "No good work is done anywhere without aid from the Father of Lights."
- 13 a) "One is given strength to bear what happens to one, but not the one hundred and one different things that might happen."
b) "We no more become bad by thinking of badness than we become triangular by thinking about triangles."
- 14 a) "The only imperative that nature utters is, 'Look. Listen. Attend.'"
b) "A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words."
- 15 a) "Failures, repeated failures, are finger posts on the road to achievement. One fails forward toward success."
b) "Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?"

The Quotable Lewis: Both, Neither, or Only One? – Answers

- 1 a. Yes, “Weight of Glory” sermon
b. No (see QR code)
- 2 a. No (see QR code)
b. Yes, *Collected Letters*: Feb. 2, 1959
- 3 a. Yes, *Collected Letters*: Oct. 3, 1953
b. Yes, *Surprised by Joy*, Ch. 14
- 4 a. No (see QR code)
b. No (see QR code)
- 5 a. No (see QR code)
b. Yes, *Collected Letters*: Aug. 10, 1953
- 6 a. No (see QR code)
b. No (see QR code)
- 7 a. Yes, *The Allegory of Love*, ch. 7, sec. 2
b. No (see QR code)
- 8 a. No (see QR code)
b. Yes, *Mere Christianity*, bk 2, ch. 2
- 9 a. Yes, “Learning in War-Time” in *The Weight of Glory*
b. Yes, “Lilies That Fester” in *The World’s Last Night*
- 10 a. Yes, “The Efficacy of Prayer” in *The World’s Last Night*
b. No (see QR code)
- 11 a. No (see QR code)
b. No (see QR code)
- 12 a. No (see QR code)
b. Yes, *Reflections on the Psalms*, ch. 11
- 13 a. Yes, *Collected Letters*: March 8, 1956
b. Yes, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, ch. 12
- 14 a. Yes, *The Four Loves*, ch. 2
b. No (see QR code)
- 15 a. No (see QR code)
b. Yes, *Collected Letters*: December 21, 1941

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