

# THEOLOGICAL HORIZONS

**When evil darkens our world, give us light.  
When despair numbs our souls, give us hope.  
When we stumble and fall, lift us up.  
When doubts assail us, give us faith.  
When nothing seems sure, give us trust.  
When ideals fade, give us vision.  
When we lose our way, be our guide!  
That we may find peace in Your presence,  
and purpose in doing Your will.**

Students cling to this prayer like a lifeboat, tossed by the storms of insecurity, numbing despair, and fading ideals. Here at the University of Virginia, many feel isolated; they attend most classes virtually from the seclusion of a dorm room or apartment, constrained by University social restrictions, afraid of becoming ill far from home.

The latest statistics cause concern: 58% of college students have felt “overwhelming anxiety” in the past year. A prolonged experience of loneliness, an early indicator of depression, plagues 61% of American undergrads. Levels of depression have gone up since the pandemic took hold.

**As the director of Theological Horizons, I want you to know that we stand in the gap.** We are gatekeepers, comforters and companions to students who have lost most daily interactions with peers, faculty, coaches and student life staff. We are present – the staff, mentors and friends of Theological Horizons – offering physical, emotional, spiritual grounding.

It has always been the mission of Theological Horizons to serve at the intersection of faith, thought and life. These days, we pursue this mission in particularly personal ways.

**FAITH sustains us.** Whether on a Bible study hike up Observatory Hill or engaged in a theological discussion, we point to Christ as the Source of our strength and stability. As we lean into stories of God’s past faithfulness, we envision the promise of days to come.

**THOUGHT challenges us.** The pandemic has shaken our false assumptions of security and control. Through courageous conversations, we surface the questions: What might the future bring? How can we face it with resilience? Where is God in all of this?

**LIFE invites us.** We seek to live in creative ways – together. This is what community looks like at the moment: campouts in a flowering field with a view of the Blue Ridge mountains, hosted by our associate director Christy Yates; safely distanced Vintage Lunches around the blazing firepit; afternoon times of prayer and meditation under the shelter of the gingko tree; one-on-one conversations across the porch of the Bonhoeffer House; open study hours in our sunny garden; walks with Ginger the dog.

And even when we are physically apart, community life happens virtually. Zoom meet-ups, spontaneous phone calls, workshops, webinars, lectures reach Theological Horizons friends around the world.



So here we are: still offering a welcoming community for students and community members. Engaging in conversations at the intersection of faith, thought, and life. Relying on Christian tradition to guide our conversations as we navigate together life’s deeper questions. And most of all, relying upon God to lead us, each and every day.

Friends, you continue to inspire and fuel our ministry. We rely upon your trust, your prayers, and your financial generosity, especially during these precarious times.

We are grateful and hopeful, always believing. Now more than ever, the world needs us.

As you consider joining our community of believers to make a difference, hear the words of Teresa of Avila: “Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world.”

Together, as a vast community of seekers and believers, we will move forward to a brighter day, casting hope and light into the future.

**We stand,**

Karen Wright Marsh, Executive Director