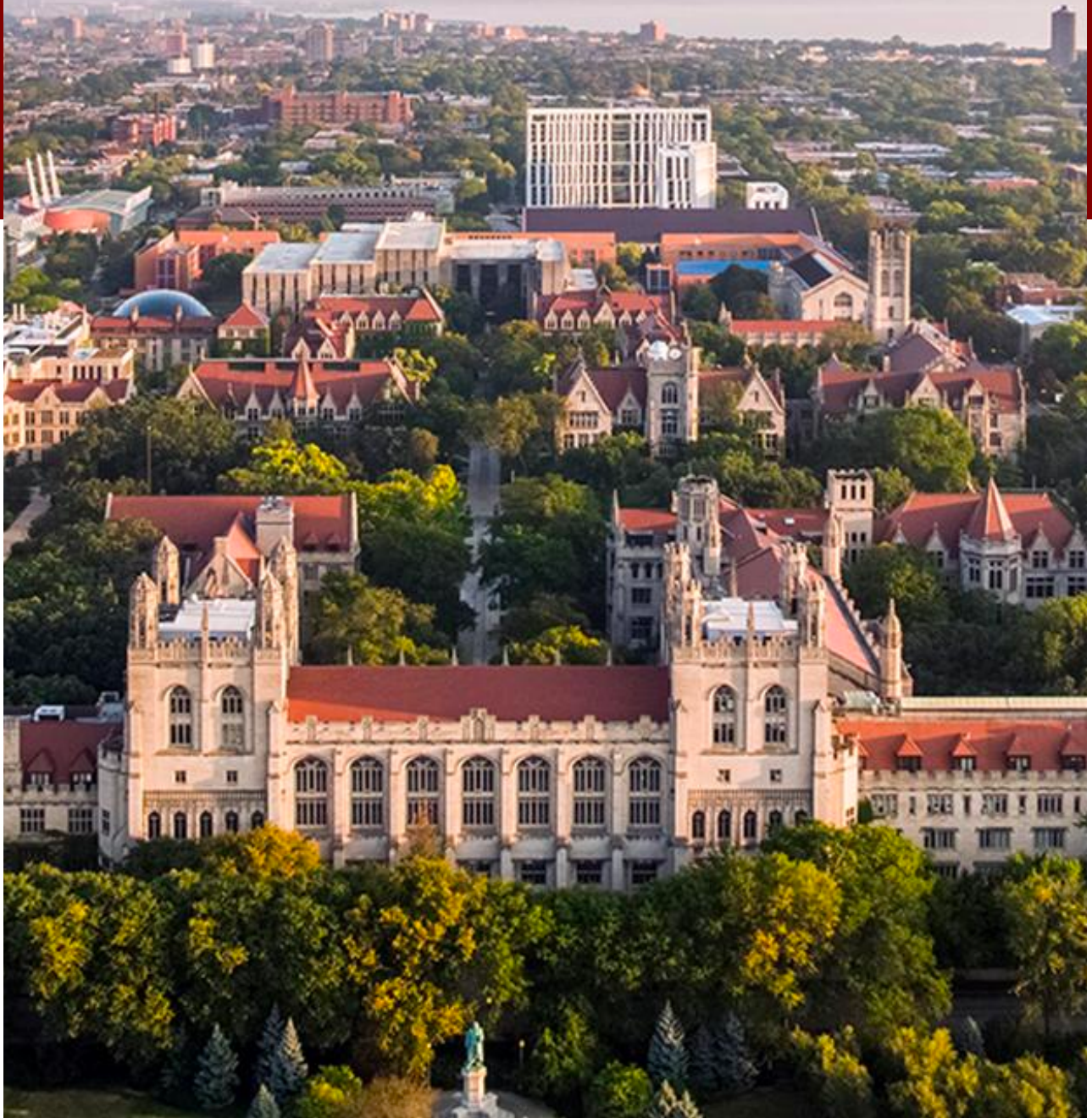


# The Program on Medicine and Religion



AT THE FOREFRONT  
**UChicago**  
**Medicine**

Annual Report  
*October 1, 2023*

# ALUMNI UPDATE

We wanted to share an update from an alumni of our Program, who also served as Assistant Program Director in 2022-2023. Dr. Bharat Ranganathan has successfully completed the the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics Fellowship program and is now serving as the Brooks Professor of Religion and Social Justice in the Religious Studies Program at the University of Nebraska Omaha. He was recently selected to serve as a Newbigin Fellow in the coming year. Bharat's research and teaching interests focus on how religious ethics and moral and political philosophy bear on problems in bioethics in both clinical and public health contexts, including shared decision-making under conditions of diversity and poverty as a barrier to care. Please see below for Dr. Ranganathan's recently published scholarship!



**Bharat Ranganathan, PhD**

*Assistant Professor of Religious Studies  
Brooks Professor of Religion and Social Justice  
University of Nebraska Omaha*

"CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING, LIBERALISM, AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE," JOURNAL OF MORAL THEOLOGY 11.2: 126-146.

"DEONTOLOGY." IN THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS ETHICS, EDS. WILLIAM SCHWEIKER, MARIA ANTONACCIO, ELIZBETH BUCAR, AND DAVID CLAIRMONT, 178-186.

FORTHCOMING ON HELPING ONE'S NEIGHBOR: RELIGIOUS ETHICS, OBLIGATIONS TO OTHERS, AND SEVERE POVERTY. NEW CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN RELIGION AND CRITICAL THOUGHT. CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

FORTHCOMING RELIGION AND SOCIAL CRITICISM: TRADITION, METHOD, AND VALUES (NEW YORK: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN). CO-EDITOR WITH CAROLINE ANGLIM.

FORTHCOMING SYMPOSIUM ON FARAZ SHEIKH'S FORGING IDEAL MUSLIM SUBJECTS: DISCURSIVE PRACTICES, SUBJECT FORMATION, AND MUSLIM ETHICS (LANHAM: LEXINGTON BOOKS, 2020), SYNDICATE.

FORTHCOMING "NORMATIVITY AND SOLIDARITY." IN RELIGION AND SOCIAL CRITICISM: TRADITION, METHOD, AND VALUES, EDS. CAROLINE ANGLIM AND BHARAT RANGANATHAN (NEW YORK: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN).

FORTHCOMING "ON RELIGION AND SOCIAL CRITICISM." IN RELIGION AND SOCIAL CRITICISM: TRADITION, METHOD, AND VALUES, EDS. CAROLINE ANGLIM AND BHARAT RANGANATHAN (NEW YORK: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN). CO-AUTHORED WITH CAROLINE ANGLIM.



# SEMINAR SERIES

Throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, the Program on Medicine and Religion sponsored several seminars, discussing inquiries surrounding medicine, religion, and their intersection. These seminars were presented from a variety of scholarly and religious backgrounds.



Peggy Mason, PhD  
Professor of Neurobiology

## Empathy: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

The Faculty Roundtables on Science and Religion at the University of Chicago aim to foster open interdisciplinary discourse on the questions and shared concerns of science and religion. This year's Roundtable was held in November 2022 and led by Dr. Peggy Mason, a professor in the Department of Neurobiology. After a 25-year focus on the cellular mechanisms of pain modulation, Dr. Mason's laboratory research efforts are now focused on the biological basis of empathy and helping. The seminar's discussion explored the biology of empathy in conversation with broader questions about empathy's role in human communities, asking how science might help inform conceptions of empathy and its place in approaching society's biggest problems.

## Spiritual Care in Medicine: A Chaplain Panel Event

Held in January 2023, chaplains on staff at University of Chicago Medicine joined with religious leaders from the Hyde Park community to discuss their experience providing spiritual support to those in medical care. The panel was organized by the i2i Committee on Religious and Spiritual Diversity at the University of Chicago, and consisted of Chaplain Angela Parkinson, Father Michael Trail, Chaplain Muhammad Aslan, and Rabbi Yossi Brackman. Representing Muslim, Jewish, and Christian backgrounds, the chaplains described the roads that led them into the field, reflecting on memorable stories from their vocations.





2023 PMR

## FELLOWS AND SCHOLARS PRESENTATIONS

Join us in recognizing the work that our fellows and scholars have accomplished this year!



HALLEY HARUTA

["Scrupulosity: A Collaborative Approach"](#)



ASHLEY AGUILAR

["Religion and Human Flourishing in the Southside of Chicago"](#)



SUNWOO LEE, PHD

["Medicine and Religion: A Perspective from Ancient Egypt"](#)



MARIANA CUCEU,  
MD PHD

["The Need For a Theological Approach to Empathy"](#)

In May 2023, our PMR Fellows and Scholars presented their research work with the community. Links to each scholar's presentation can be accessed by clicking the title of each project below:

Halley Haruta: ["Scrupulosity: A Collaborative Approach"](#)

Ashley Aguilar: ["Religion and Human Flourishing in the Southside of Chicago"](#)

Sunwoo Lee: ["Medicine and Religion: A Perspective from Ancient Egypt"](#)

Mariana Cuceu: ["The Need For a Theological Approach to Empathy"](#)



# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## Brenda's Story

Brenda Vasser-Taylor knows what it feels like to be "in the trenches." She spent seven years caring for both her husband and daughter with a chronic illness with no supports in place for herself. She often felt stressed, with no outlet to recharge from the demands of work and running a household, and promised herself and her husband that one day, if she had the opportunity, she would devote her time to help caregivers supporting loved ones with a chronic illness.

Brenda's husband, Eddie, was diagnosed with a chronic illness (end stage renal disease) when they had only been married a year. The doctors told the couple if they wanted kids, they did not have much time. Their daughter, Quin, was born one year later. It was when Quin turned 20 years old and started experiencing symptoms that they learned she, too, had the same chronic kidney disease. She had inherited Focal Segmental Glomerulosclerosis (FSGS) and faced dialysis, needing a transplant. During this time, Eddie's transplant failed, and both father and daughter were on dialysis.

Brenda says, "They did not have a manual for the caregivers for someone with a chronic illness." She desperately looked for resources and help. Brenda contributes her faith to playing a huge role in her longevity in caring for her loved ones. She confirms that faith can make a difference in everyday caring, and that Christian caregiving is a way of life. She adds that learning basic caregiving skills was essential for supporting herself through her journey. Learning how her faith made a difference in practicing true servanthood, using the tools of her faith to touch the deepest spiritual concerns of others, provided much needed perspective.



Brenda Taylor



After almost six years on dialysis, Quin received a kidney transplant. One month later, Eddie passed away and Brenda founded CaregiverRockstars, the non-profit that she and her husband had talked about many times to support caregivers.

Christian Care Partners are people who provide support and serve others diagnosed with a chronic illness by practicing Christian principles and values during their caring journey. For more information on her Care Partner Support Ministry, or to contact Brenda Vasser-Taylor, please visit the CaregiversRockstars website at [www.esdrrockstars.com](http://www.esdrrockstars.com).

*Brenda is a Certified Senior Advisor, Caregiving Consultant Educator and Facilitator. With over twenty years in educational training and patient support services related to a chronic illness, Brenda also serves as the Subject Matter Expert (SME) for QSource Network 10 as well as The Learning & Action Network (LAN) for The National Coordinating Center (NCC). She has facilitated support groups for caregivers at the University of Chicago as well as in online communities.*

# NEW SCHOLARS & FELLOWS BEHIND THE SCENES

For the upcoming 2023-24 year, the Program on Medicine and Religion welcomed a number of new teaching and research fellows. The fellows have individual projects that they will pursue this year, investigating the elements of health, wellness, and flourishing and how they are affected by a variety of factors.



**Michael Le Chevallier**

Visiting Scholar and Co-Director

Michael Le Chevallier, PhD, is the Senior Associate Director & Director of National Partnerships at the Lumen Christi Institute. In this role, he is Project Director for “In Lumine: Supporting the Catholic Intellectual Tradition Nationwide,” a John Templeton Foundation funded grant, which advances conversations around the intersection of science and religion at 6 top research universities. Michael received his PhD and M.Div from the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. A trained theological ethicist, his research focuses on institutions, how they shape us morally, and how they might advance or inhibit human flourishing.



**Sarah Kolar**

PMR Research Fellow 2023-24

Sarah is a second-year Master of Divinity student at the University of Chicago. She received her B.A. in Philosophy from Stanford University in 2017. Her current project investigates the unique spiritual needs of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at UChicago Medicine, particularly in conversation with Jewish bioethics. She is interested in outcome oriented chaplaincy as a means to address the theological, spiritual, and emotional tenor of medical spaces.





**Jordan Millholin**

PMR Research Fellow 2023-24

Jordan is a fourth-year medical student at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine currently applying for residency in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics. He received his B.S. in Biochemistry from Baylor University in 2019. He then spent a year as a Fellow in Theology, Medicine, and Culture at Duke Divinity School, graduating in 2020 with a Certificate in Theology and Healthcare. His current academic interests include researching practical wisdom in medicine and what it might mean to emphasize virtue ethics as a part of medical training.



**Elaine Liang**

PMR Research Fellow 2023-24

Elaine is the Student Office Assistant for the Program on Medicine and Religion and a fourth-year undergraduate at the University of Chicago, where she is a Philosophy and Allied Fields (Biological Sciences) major with a Chemistry minor. She is currently analyzing how physicians use practical wisdom in ethically complex clinical scenarios. She also has interests in religious medical ethics and will focus on Islamic medical ethics for her senior philosophy thesis. In medical school, she hopes to research on the intersection of medical ethics and health policy.



**Sarah Kim**

PMR Research Fellow 2023-24

Sarah is a research assistant for the Kern Project on the Good Physician, with a special interest in understanding the intersections of religion, narrative, and the vocation of medicine. She received her B.A. in Biology and Religious Studies from Brown University in 2022 and is currently applying to medical school. As an aspiring medical ethicist, she hopes to extend the work she started with her senior capstone in religious studies, making interfaith frameworks on end-of-life, disability, and healing more accessible.

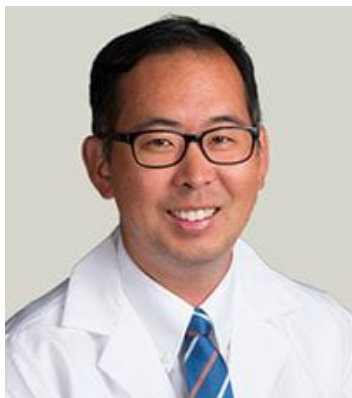


**Angel Garcia**

PMR Research Fellow 2023-24

Angel Garcia is a senior at Elmhurst University, where he is majoring in Philosophy and Psychology. He is currently analyzing how we can better understand practical wisdom in the context of disability positivism. He also has interests in race theory, philosophy of language, and bioethics. In graduate school, he plans to pursue research related to moral status and alternative ethics like entangled empathy.

Additionally, the Program exists through the work of its director and team.



**John Yoon, MD**

Program Director

John D. Yoon, MD is Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Chicago, and Visiting Kern Research Scholar for Physician Character Development and Professional Formation at the Kern Institute (Medical College of Wisconsin). Dr. Yoon has been with the Program on Medicine and Religion since its inception in 2009. He is an academic hospitalist, clinical ethicist, and medical educator with research interests in the fields of virtue ethics, moral psychology, and character development and professional formation in medical education. He was a co-investigator on the Project on the Good Physician, a longitudinal study of medical students funded by the New Science of Virtues Project at the University of Chicago. He maintains a faculty affiliation with the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics, Center for Health and the Social Sciences (CHeSS), and the Bucksbaum Insti-

-tute for Clinical Excellence. His area of scholarship has addressed professional identity formation of physicians, physician well-being, and the role of religion/spirituality in shaping the moral and professional formation of physicians-in-training. Dr. Yoon has been deeply involved in generating new educational initiatives at the University that promote the study of Religion, Ethics, and Medicine to Medical Students, Divinity Students, undergraduates in the College, and other residents and trainees in health care.

Dr. Yoon's long-term vision for the Program is to establish a new field of Medical Education Chaplaincy ultimately through the development of a Chaplain Scholars Training Program. These "medical education" chaplains would be trained to provide spiritual care and cultivate the whole-person flourishing of clinicians in health care who are training to care for others, particularly in light of the existential challenges of clinician burnout and moral distress in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. He is in the process of being ordained as a minister and Spiritual Director to practicing clinicians, students, and resident trainees in health care. Toward that end, Dr. Yoon has completed a four-year certificate program of study and Internship in Spiritual Direction in the Ignatian Tradition (Society of Jesus, Jesuits Midwest Province).

For those in health care who are interested in exploring sessions of Spiritual Direction on matters related to vocational discernment, medicine-as-a-calling, well-being and human flourishing in the practice of medicine, Dr. Yoon may be contacted for an initial consultation at: [jdyoon@uchicago.edu](mailto:jdyoon@uchicago.edu).





# SCHOLARSHIP & PUBLICATIONS

Research conducted by those involved in the Program on Medicine and Religion have led to a number of recent publications—citations below. Clicking on the underlined citations will redirect to their respective PubMed pages.

[Kim J, Shen E, Kim J, Yoon JD. Sustaining the intrinsic motivations of the “good physician”: A content analysis of medical students’ and physicians’ responses from two national surveys. Southern Medical Journal. 2022;115\(10\): 727-733.](#)

[Quinn K, Kim J, Yoon JD. The Emmaus Project: Aging, Illness, and Dying among Christian Seniors—A Mixed Methods Study. Linacre Quarterly. 2023;0\(0\). doi:10.1177/00243639231156700](#)

[Thomas, Guenter, Bigger S, Kim J, Kim M, Yoon JD, and Schweiker W. "The Enhancing Life Research Laboratory: Tools for Addressing Orientational Distress in the Medical Profession." Academic Medicine. 2023; e005193-e005193.](#)

[Kaldjian, LC, Yoon, JD, Ark, TK, Shinkunas, L, Jotterand, F. Practical wisdom in medicine through the eyes of medical students and physicians. Med Educ. 2023;1-11. doi:10.1111/medu.15108](#)

[Kim, Daniel T., Megan K. Applewhite, and Wayne Shelton. "Professional identity formation in medical education: some virtue-based insights." Teaching and Learning in Medicine \(2023\): 1-11.](#)

[Anglim, Caroline. "Intersectionality as a Critical Framework for Medical Ethics Education." Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics \(2023\).](#)

## 2024 CONFERENCE ON MEDICINE AND RELIGION

The **Call for Abstracts** can now be found on the [Conference on Medicine and Religion's website](#). Abstracts will be accepted through [Wednesday November 1, 2023](#), and the conference will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana from April 14-16, 2024.

**“In Pursuit of the Great Coherence: Healing in the Spaces Between”**  
*Seeking restoration and wholeness through medicine and religion*

CONFERENCE ON  
**Medicine**  
& Religion

The theme of this year’s conference is an invitation to consider the spaces in which medicine and religion pursue or sustain coherence and can themselves cohere together. We welcome a range of interests from accounts of practical, clinical practices to theological and philosophical reflections in the humanities, and more.



# SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

## The Program on Medicine and Religion Fund

The Program on Medicine and Religion at the University of Chicago is a leading forum for scholarship and discourse at the intersection of medicine and religion. It fosters rigorous empirical, historical, theological, ethical, and legal scholarship to enrich our understanding of the meaning of illness and the myriad ways in which religion and medicine both respond to the human predicaments of illness, injury, disability, suffering, and death.

We hope that you will consider partnering with us. Your unrestricted gift would help fund the Program on Medicine and Religion's many efforts to promote teaching and scholarship regarding the moral and spiritual dimensions of medicine, a subject which receives inadequate academic attention despite strong public and professional interest in the topic.

## Donate

Please click [here](#) to make an online donation. (Note: Please specify the Program on Medicine and Religion.) You may also email us at [medicinereligion@uchicago.edu](mailto:medicinereligion@uchicago.edu) with any other comments, questions, or suggestions.