

CORBAN CONNECTION

SPRING 2025

EDUCATING CHRISTIANS WHO WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD FOR JESUS CHRIST.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Count your blessings, name them one by one...”

I remember singing this song when I was a kid in church even though I don't think I ever fully understood the meaning behind it. It is only much later in life that you tend to recognize the pervasiveness of God's blessing on His people.

This spring, as we looked at Jesus' definition of blessing from the Beatitudes during chapel, our community connected with how much God has blessed Corban University! Our alumni, our donors and friends, our faculty, and our students all show aspects of God's blessing both now and well into the future.

In this edition of the Corban Connection, you will find some great stories of what God is doing on our campus and beyond as we experience His blessing in incredible ways.

Thanks for being part of that story of blessing!

Onward!



John Mark Yeats, Ph.D.
President

OUR DAILY BREAD MINISTRIES CEO MATT LUCAS NAMED 2025 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENT



“Corban has been pivotal to my development, both when I was a student and then a faculty member, and then as an administrator,” says Corban alumnus and recipient of this year's Distinguished Alumni Award, Dr. Matt Lucas ('94). “My time here taught me the importance of engaging with God's Word, questioning my cultural assumptions, and allowing His Word to shape me. That emphasis has taken me to places that surprise me even to this day.”

One of those places is Lucas' current role as CEO of Our Daily Bread Ministries (ODB), where that passion for God's Word sits at the forefront of his leadership. For 85 years, ODB has helped millions around the globe connect with Scripture and currently ministers to over 150 countries with resources in 58 languages and counting, helping roughly 30 million people connect to God's Word every day.

As CEO, Lucas is excited to see ODB expand, leveraging new strategies while staying true to their theological roots and mission. Recently, they acquired the Center for Biblical Engagement, giving ODB access to almost 20 years of research into biblical engagement practices, which is helping to shape new endeavors. “We've been able to see that people who receive, reflect, and respond to Scripture at least four times a week demonstrate greater spiritual growth and face less temptation than those who don't,” Lucas says. “That seems predictive, and the data holds firm across time and cultural boundaries.”

This has allowed Lucas and ODB to double down on their mission of making the Bible, and reflection on Scripture, more accessible to individuals throughout the world. They have also acquired the Immerse Bible, a reader-friendly version targeting new readers and those new to the faith, and are currently engaged in translating this edition into 10 target languages, with the hope of further expansion.

While Lucas is excited about ODB's new initiatives, leveraging research, expanding content and platforms, all while holding firm to their roots, he does not envision their growth as being solely for the health of ODB. “While we are known for our devotional globally, what we are really excited about is taking people on a Bible engagement journey that leads them deeper into God's Word,” he says. “We want to do that strategically to serve the church and help it to grow. So, while we haven't changed our mission and theology, we really do have some exciting things for the future that God has blessed us with.”

Even as he looks to the horizon and all that ODB has planned for the future, Lucas remains guided by his past and the many lessons that he first grasped as a student at Corban University. “Corban gave me room to grow, and a way of looking at the Bible that forced me to wrestle with the reality of God's Word,” he says. “Having been in the position where I've helped to identify and nominate people for this award, to now be a recipient is humbling. I believe, in a lot of ways, that the role I am in now is the culmination of my Corban education. It feels like a full-circle moment to be recognized.”

CORBAN NAMES TWO NEW MEMBERS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Dr. Michael Patterson

Dr. Mike Patterson joins the Corban Board of Trustees with an already extensive degree of familiarity with the University.

A graduate of Corban in 1974, Patterson went on to enjoy an extensive career in psychology, ministry,

and higher education. Most recently he served as Corban University provost from 2017 until 2022. During that time he also served as professor, department chair, and Dean of the School of Social Sciences.

“Mike's variety of expertise is an asset,” says Board Chair, Rod Hoff. “We are excited to have his academic expertise and passion for Corban back on the Board!”



Jenni Burke

Jenni Burke is the CEO of Illuminate Literary Agency, a premier literary agency specializing in developing emerging voices into key Christian thought leaders and helping bestselling authors thrive through a dedication to the highest level of author care.

A graduate of Corban University in 2004, Burke brings a passion for Christian leadership and service to the Board. “Along with her role as CEO, Jenni has held a variety of leadership roles in her church and in Christian education,” Board Chair Rod Hoff says. “Jenni's connections and business experience in communications and marketing, along with her passion for Corban, will be a valuable addition to our Board.”

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SEEING SERVICE THROUGH THE LENS OF SCRIPTURE: CORBAN RECOGNIZES MARY LOUISE VANNATTA WITH OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD



This year's recipient of the Outstanding Service Award, Mary Louise VanNatta ('18), is a fixture of the Salem community. Whether it's through the many local

businesses she has a role in serving and supporting, through her involvement with the Salem Chamber of Commerce, or even in the middle of a dragon boat race on the Willamette (one of her favorite recreational activities), VanNatta exudes a heart for service and a love of her community to all she encounters.

A graduate of Corban's MBA program in 2018, VanNatta has cultivated a career of dedicated service to her city, both personally and professionally. As CEO of VanNatta Public Relations, Inc., she has worked with countless companies and organizations ranging from small local businesses to globally recognized brands such as the NFL, NBA, Cricket

Wireless, and more. She is also the co-owner of Spire Management and proudly serves as Executive Director of the Salem Fire Foundation, aiding those who work so hard to keep our community safe.

"I am so honored to receive this award," says VanNatta. "Corban's commitment to faith, service, and leadership has always been an inspiration. But this award isn't just a personal achievement. It reflects all the individuals and organizations I've had the privilege to work with—the professors, administrators, and fellow students I encountered during my time at Corban, and certainly all the Corban students I've had the privilege of mentoring."

Over the years, VanNatta has mentored over 100 Corban students through her company's internship program. A faithful supporter of the University, she consistently gives of her time to speak in classes and attend Corban Career Day, always finding moments to help to mentor, educate, and guide current students and graduates in their professional pursuits.

"It's funny, because my staff is comprised of almost all Corban graduates now," she says. "I've worked with over 100 Corban interns, so I've seen a lot of Corban students come through my doors. They bring a heart

for service, they understand how to show up on time, be gracious, thankful, and honest, and you can trust them. More importantly they take Jesus to work with them every day."

VanNatta looks forward to even more community initiatives on the horizon. Currently, in her role as Executive Director of Salem Fire Foundation, VanNatta and her team have been able to train thousands of local students in CPR, increase access to life-saving AEDs, and raise funds to support fire fighters and their families, including critical relief funds for families who have lost a loved one during the hazards of the profession. She is also deeply engaged in a new initiative, Fentanyl Free Oregon, in partnership with Salem Health Foundation, elevating the conversation concerning the fentanyl crisis and exploring new solutions.

"I'm always excited about my work," she says. "There are so many wonderful things that I have an opportunity to do. I've spent my career in public relations, and I'm proud of the opportunity I have to be able to serve so many local businesses and nonprofits. I'm grateful to Corban for giving me the framework to see my work through a faith lens and connect Scripture with service."

DISTINGUISHED YOUNG ALUM: COLLIN BOX



Collin Box ('10) serves as the executive director of Capital Futbol Club, a position he has held since 2011. Under his direction, CFC has experienced dramatic revitalization and growth, expanding to serve thousands of kids in the local community, using a love of the sport as a vehicle for more.

"It's great to receive the validation an award like this brings," says Box. "But, more importantly, I hope this visibility will allow us to do even more good for the kids we serve at CFC."

Since 2019, Capital FC has more than doubled its number of participants, serving over 5,000 Salem-area youth, and that number only continues to grow. The club awards over \$100,000 in scholarship support, year after year, and has launched programs such as GRASSP (GrassRoots After School Program) and TOPSoccer (a program designed specifically for athletes with special needs) to further their reach and impact on the community.

"In the work I've done around Salem, it's amazing to see how many leaders are from faith backgrounds, and how many of them are Corban grads," Box says. "Having a common language, a common faith, a common shared experience, being an alum of Corban means something in our community. The more work I'm able to do in Salem, the more I see the value of being a part of this network of Corban University alumni."

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AWARD: CRAIG & DEBBIE HARDINGER



When Craig and Debbie Hardinger first received the news that they had been named Corban University's Christian Ministry Award winners for 2025, their first reaction was surprise.

"It's always great to be recognized by your alma mater," Craig says. "We have loved Corban since we left, back in the early eighties. Corban has always had a special place in our hearts."

"We were very surprised," Debbie adds. "We've never been big names in Christian ministry.

We've served mainly in small churches. But we love the local church, and we love Corban."

The Hardingers have been immersed in church ministry for well over 40 years, seeing a wide spectrum of service from pastoral ministry, to counseling, to organizational leadership. Most recently, Craig fulfilled the role of Executive Director of Venture Church Network for the Northern California and Nevada area. Now, Craig focuses primarily on his role as lead pastor of Arcade Church in Sacramento, California, a position he has held since 2010. At Arcade, Craig has the privilege of serving alongside Debbie, his wife and lifelong partner in ministry, who works as Arcade's women's ministry director.

"From day one, our love for the local church has not diminished. If anything, it's increased," Craig says. "We've had difficult times, but we look back and see nothing but the conspicuous trace of the faithfulness of God."



Alumni Weekend JUNE 20-21, 2025

Celebrate Corban's legacy at our 90th Anniversary Alumni Weekend, June 20-21! It's a great opportunity to visit your alma mater, reconnect with classmates and faculty, and explore some of your favorite Salem attractions.

Get ready for a fun-filled weekend! Some things to look forward to include:

- Gatherings by Decade
- Q&A with President John Mark Yeats & Cabinet
- Breakout Sessions
- Affinity Group Gatherings, i.e. musical groups, fellowships, athletics, and theatre
- 5-, 10-, 20-, 25- and 35-year Class Reunion Gatherings

Your involvement makes a difference! Here are four important ways you can get involved:

- Coordinate a reunion gathering for the class of 2020, 2015, 2005, 1995, or 1990
- Organize an affinity group gathering
- Volunteer at the event
- Financially sponsor the event (help reduce the cost of the event for attendees by giving a tax-deductible gift)

GET INVOLVED: <https://engage.corban.edu/register/AnniversaryAlumniInterest>

MORE INFO: <https://www.corban.edu/events/alumni-weekend/>

GOLDEN GRAD: CLASS OF 1975



April 24-26, 2025

If you consider yourself a part of the class of 1975, you're invited to this event held in your honor.

Reconnect with classmates, faculty, and staff and enjoy:

- Reunion Dinner
- Coffee Reception
- Chapel
- Lunch and Campus Tour
- Spring Choir Concert
- Golden Grad Brunch

Registration closes April 1.

EVENT DETAILS: <https://connect.corban.edu/goldengraduates/>

SCHOLARSHIP DINNER RAISES \$130,000 IN VITAL STUDENT SUPPORT



Corban senior Alea Tyquiengco shares her story.

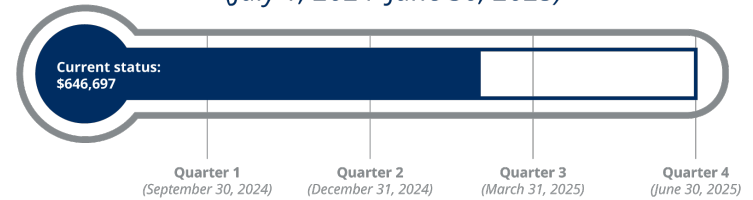
On February 24th, one of the stormiest nights of the year, nearly 200 guests braved the elements to gather at the Reed Opera House Ballroom in downtown Salem for Corban's annual Scholarship Dinner. This special evening celebrated the transformative work God is doing through Corban University and the students whose lives are being shaped for His glory.

Throughout the night, faculty and students shared

how Corban students are being equipped to make a difference for Jesus Christ. Corban University President Dr. John Mark Yeats highlighted one such story, recounting a conversation with a father whose daughter was ministered to and prayed over by Corban's beach volleyball team. Their encouragement helped her stay strong in her faith during a difficult time—a powerful example of students already making an impact.

Keynote speaker Cornelius Williams Jr., a Corban alum ('89) and trustee, connected Corban's mission to its deeper purpose. Drawing from John 17, he reminded the audience that when Jesus prayed for His followers, He didn't ask God to remove them from the world but to protect them as they served as agents of His love. That mission is at the heart of Corban: preparing Christ-centered leaders to bring His love to a world in need. Williams spoke passionately about faith-driven education and its lasting impact on individuals and communities.

FY2024 GOAL: \$1 MILLION
(July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025)



Inspired by this vision, guests responded with overwhelming generosity, contributing \$130,000 to support Corban students. Every gift to the Corban Fund provides students with a Christ-centered education and directly impacts scholarships, faculty resources, and programs that equip students to pursue God's calling.

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our community and those who invest in Corban students year-round. Your partnership makes this work possible—thank you for being part of this incredible mission!

CORBAN EXPANDS DUAL CREDIT PARTNERSHIPS

This year, Corban University has expanded the reach of its dual credit program and partnerships, making it possible for even more high school seniors (and juniors in special circumstances) to be challenged in a rigorous, faith-focused academic environment with courses offered in Bible, theology, humanities, history, math, and science. "It's been really fun to see this program grow," says Partner Development Coordinator, Susan Bos. "Our dual-credit program is a really efficient way to earn college credits at a reasonable price. And uniquely, these students have the opportunity to do it through a University that shares their beliefs and values."

Currently, Corban partners with nine regional Christian high schools and is making in-roads into expanding those partnerships to schools across the Northwest and Northern California. As a part of this initiative, the University is also offering a scholarship that guarantees 50% off tuition to students who enroll in the University directly from a dual credit partner school.

"I think our automatic 50% off tuition shows that we are serious about partnering with area Christian schools," Bos says. "We want to get to know them, help them get

to know us, and see how we can support them moving forward, because we believe it is crucial to support schools that share our core faith values in our current educational climate."

In addition to cost savings, Corban's dual credit program allows students more flexibility in their college degrees, credit space to pursue double majors or other opportunities, or to graduate early, and gives them a head start in preparing for the jump to university-level academic rigor. And Corban's dual credit partnership doesn't solely benefit students. For partnering dual credit teachers, Corban professors are also on hand to serve as mentors, overseeing curriculum development, providing timely feedback, and, for local schools, even guest lecturing in classes.

"We've had many schools express that they are attracted to our shared mission in educating Christians who will make a difference in the world for Jesus Christ," Bos says. "We want to be approachable to these schools and their students, to embrace them with open arms and become a resource for them. We want their teachers, students, and parents to know that we are here to help."



We partner with the Giving Crowd to help you maximize the impact of your charitable giving, minimize your tax-burden, and plan your estate in a tax-efficient manner. Email advancement@corban.edu if you would like to have a free consultation with their team.

BRIDGING THE GAP: HOW JILL NELSON STEPPED UP FOR HER COMMUNITY DURING CRISIS



When looming teacher strikes threatened the stability of her community, Corban alumna Jill Nelson (Steiner '04) was ready to step into the gap.

Nelson, the children's pastor at The Grove Church in Albany, Oregon, had spent the past few years becoming slowly and more deeply connected with her community, her service now intertwining with nearly every aspect of her life. Feeling a calling toward the most impoverished in her community, Nelson decided it wasn't enough just to serve. She bought a home and moved her family directly into that community, placing her children into a school many others told her to avoid. Soon she became president of the school's PTA, and when the principal reached out to her about their need for teachers, she began substitute teaching in her spare time to help with the shortages. When the rumors of a teacher strike became a reality in November 2024, Nelson

knew it was time to act, mobilizing her church to set up emergency childcare for affected families. "Our big concern was for the families who would be more adversely impacted by the strike," she says. "We knew many in our community couldn't afford to pay for childcare or to take time off work."

She made a plan to provide that care, free of charge, starting small, unsure if they would even have any volunteers willing to step in. She leveraged her connection with the principal of her children's school—a school with the highest number of students living in extreme poverty in the district—to petition the superintendent to recognize The Grove as an official community partner. This allowed them to advertise their new resource, become a district meal site, and recruit more volunteers from the community. "It was kind of like building the plane as we flew it," she recalls. They began with ten children, needing two volunteers for every 10. The next day, they took 20. As the strike continued, during their busiest day, Nelson and her volunteers cared for 38 children with nowhere else to go.

Every morning, Jill would walk into the church knowing she had just enough volunteers for the day. When 5:00 p.m. rolled around, as she planned for the next day, she would have just enough for tomorrow. Volunteers were gathered from all walks of life—members of Jill's church, bus drivers and instructional assistants from the district, members sent by other local churches in town, and many community members, some of whom had never set foot inside a church. "It became a space where people who would not normally feel comfortable in church came to volunteer," Nelson says. "It was beautiful. God was working beyond what most people even realized. The credibility of our church

in town is something that we hold very dearly. Even though outreach was not our goal, I believe people were able to see the love of Jesus through the work we were doing together."

As the strike concluded, Jill returned to yet another role in her already busy schedule, that of president of Albany Student Advocacy Project (ASAP), a newly reconstructed nonprofit aiming to continue service to students in the community most affected by educational disparity due to the effects of poverty. Officially launched in January, ASAP has already begun setting up "resource closets" in local schools, equipping them to respond when a student has a practical need. Nelson and ASAP are actively looking to expand their funding and pool of volunteers, hoping to develop even more initiatives, making things like field trips possible for students, many of whom have never left the town of Albany. "We're trying to help expand their worlds, allowing them to see new opportunities for themselves," she says. "We need to bridge that gap and help them overcome what they need to overcome."

It's a gap that Jill believes many in her community, and communities across the US, are still too willing to overlook. It's a gap she has witnessed firsthand, having planted her life directly into the community she felt called to serve. "Whether it's children's ministry or emergency childcare, substitute teaching or ASAP or just caring about my kids' friends—the ones they share life with every day—it's all because God called me to love His creation and His people," Nelson says. "He has been pushing me to walk deeper into that conviction with every step."

WINTER SPORTS UPDATE

Wrestling: The Warriors finished the regular season with a 10-4 dual meet record, setting program bests for total wins and win percentage. The team finished third at the CCC Championships, their highest finish in program history, and sent nine wrestlers to the NAIA national tournament. On the national stage, the Warriors saw their first national champion crowned in redshirt senior, David Rubio. Along with Rubio, two other Warriors, Isaiah Twait and Antonio Garcia, were named NAIA All-Americans, and the team secured a record eighth place finish.

Men's Basketball: The Warriors finished the season at 15-14 overall, including a 13-9 finish in conference play, good enough for their eleventh-consecutive postseason berth. The squad was eventually eliminated at the quarterfinal stage. Individually, Spivey Word and Luc Krystkowiak garnered All-Conference nods and five Warriors were named NAIA Scholar-Athletes.

Women's Basketball: Under first-year coach, Kylie Frizell, the Warriors finished 11-18 overall, qualifying for the conference tournament. Led by All-Conference guard, Lizzy Bennett, the team also secured ten Academic All-Conference honorees and seven NAIA Scholar-Athletes to lead all winter sports.

Indoor Track and Field: Two student athletes qualified for the NAIA National Indoor Track & Field Championships, with sophomore Braydon Lee falling just short in qualification for the 1,000m final, and redshirt junior Kayla Moore finishing fourth in women's high-jump, becoming the first female All-American in program history with a school-record jump of 1.71m.



Spivey Word shoots over a defender.



Sevannah Van De Riet drives to the basket.



David Rubio celebrates a win with his team.



Kayla Morgan competes in the hurdles.

BEYOND THE COURT: MCLAIN SHARES WARRIORS' SECRET TO SUSTAINED SUCCESS



When Corban University head volleyball coach, Kim McLain, was first approached about becoming the Warriors' coach, she said no—three times.

She was happy in her role at Santiam Christian, coaching volleyball and teaching fifth and sixth grade. But Greg Eide, Corban's athletic director at the time, had one final request. "Greg said to me, 'Just come out to campus before you say no for the last time,'" McLain remembers. "I was sold by the people. There's a family feel at Corban that I just fell in love with."

It's the same environment that coach McLain now showcases to her recruits. Many of her peers and fans of the sport would consider Corban's size and faith commitment as a unique challenge to overcome, but McLain views it as an asset. "My pool of recruits is very specific," she admits. "It may be smaller, but I think it is a blessing because, in the end we share a common purpose together."

Building purpose beyond the court is the foundation of McLain's program—a program she took from three straight seasons of only three wins in conference to a playoff appearance in her first year, followed by nine consecutive NAIA national championship final site appearances (reserved for the top 16 tournament teams). McLain credits her team's commitment to Christ, to each other, and to goals beyond the court for the invaluable chemistry that has helped the Warriors realize historic

program success—a success McLain emphasizes is built on far more than talent alone. "You can teach skills and the x's and o's all you want," she says, "but if you can empower someone to be confident and feel great about who they are as a person, they will rally and play for one another. Many of these girls come in as stars from their high school or club teams. They have to learn to play for the team—that the team is the ultimate champion, not the individual."

In one of the NAIA's most competitive conferences, a conference that saw a record six teams head to the opening round of the national tournament this past year, sustained success is hard to come by. But the Warriors view conference play as an extension of their preparation. "I'm thankful we're in the CCC," McLain says. "I believe it helps prepare us for the national stage. We commit to practicing harder than we will have to play so that we will be ready to play at an elite level."

Currently ranked as the NAIA's fourth best team, the Warriors have certainly carved out their place among the NAIA elite. How have the Warriors remained a fixture on the national stage for so long? McLain's eyes shift to a space no volleyball player is seeking during a match, the space outside the lines. "It's about so much more than volleyball," she says. "When they graduate, I want them to leave with a strong faith and a sense of purpose. Even in this off-season I'm so excited to see our girls explore their goals and passions off the court. We have girls pursuing ministry. We have a group launching a podcast to support the struggles of young women. I've never seen them so excited. And it's not me. It's all self-driven. That shows up during the season."

McLain may have begun her Corban tenure by saying no three times. But since she first said yes, she hasn't looked back. She's as ready as ever to take on the new season following another national semifinal appearance. "We had a young team this year," she says. "We are going to be young next year, too, but I can't wait to build on what we've started. Culture isn't something you set once—it has to be nurtured and improved every year. That's how we approach our seasons. We never talk about wins and losses. We are trying to do our best to win each day, on and off the court."

After 10 years as head coach, this focus is what keeps McLain energized. She doesn't view it as her tenth year. It's simply the next year—a year she and her team plan to win, one day at a time.



Owen Heath works on his swing.

says head coach, Charlie Marshall. "There's always someone in here, whether it's practicing their swing or even working on class assignments.

The idea for an on-campus training facility originated from the team's need for a dedicated indoor space to escape the ubiquitous Oregon rain. Thanks to generous donor support, the vision became a reality. "Having that donor support has been incredible," Marshall says. "Not only does this benefit our current athletes, but recruits are coming in and saying, 'this is awesome,' and visualizing their growth as a part of our program."

Looking ahead, Marshall hopes to continue to raise funds to further refine and expand the facility, redesigning the interior space, updating the building's exterior, and even looking ahead to adding a second hitting bay. "This space is already making us stronger and more competitive," Marshall says. "It's a great resource for our team to improve, and we are seeing the results already."

If you'd like to contribute to the Performance Center improvements, visit <http://go.corban.edu/golfcenter>

CORBAN GOLF ADDS NEW INDOOR PERFORMANCE CENTER

Corban University's golf program has taken a major step forward with the addition of its new Golf Performance Center, an indoor facility designed to enhance player development and provide year-round training opportunities. Equipped with a state-of-the-art simulator and a newly installed putting surfaces, the space has quickly become a hub for athletes looking to refine their skills. "Utilization is off the charts,"



NO FRILLS GOLF SCRAMBLE

April 26, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.
Santiam Golf Club

Support Warrior golf and enjoy a day on the course. Sign up as an individual or a foursome.

SIGN UP:

go.corban.edu/nofrillsgolf2025

STUDENTS JOIN REBUILDING EFFORTS AFTER HURRICANE HELENE'S DESTRUCTION

In the wake of the widespread devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in late 2024, Corban University students decided it was their turn to step out of their comfort zones and make a difference. Giving up time during their winter break, a small team of three Corban students, two Corban staff, and two friends of the University partnered with local organizations Praying Pelican Missions and First Methodist Church of Valdosta to help rebuild, clear debris, and provide relief to those displaced by the hurricane.

"We were stretched from the moment we got there," said Corban University Area Coordinator Zach Fuller, one of the trip's leaders. "Our students rose to the challenge. In this way, I truly saw them begin to thrive in embodying the mission of our university."

Corban senior Tiana Williams was surprised by the growth she experienced in such a short amount of time. "I went into this trip knowing that I was going to get to help others, but didn't think about how much the Lord would use it to change me," she said. "The trip was very moment-to-moment, need-to-need, so I had to take a step back and recognize that the Lord was asking me to lean on Him and serve in whatever way He asked."

Although their days were mainly filled with clearing the physical destruction left by the rending winds of Hurricane Helene, with little time dedicated to human interaction in comparison, it was still the moments of personal connection with the people they were serving that resonated most as they helped to clear the way for new life in Valdosta.



Corban's hurricane relief team during a clean-up day.

"I think it's important for all of our Corban students to know that service can be done anywhere, locally, domestically, or internationally," Fuller said. "On this trip, we all realized that, even while missions work may not be for everyone, service absolutely is."

NEVER GIVE UP: HOW LIZETTE DUARTE SAW GOD TURN AN IMPOSSIBILITY INTO REALITY



"College had always been a dream for me," Lizette Duarte says. "A dream I could not reach." Lizette's earliest memories of school pan through her mind like an album of disappointments, laid out neatly in rows, one after the next. Learning disabilities led to struggles in her classes, which led to an IEP (individual educational plan), which led to a label she felt like she could not escape.

Lizette struggled through elementary and middle school, constantly trying to shed her label but unable to do so. She came to the point where any dream of being what others called "normal," let alone going to college, became an impossibility in her mind. Even so, she never gave up. "Sometimes you just have to work twice as hard as everyone," she says. Lizette credits her faith, her family, and a few important teachers along the way for seeing her through. High school was not easy, and she continued to struggle. But slowly, Lizette began to prove to herself that she was more than the label she had been given.

"To put yourself in God's hands is to acknowledge that He will guide you and can do the unthinkable,"

she says. "I could have given up early on in school. Instead, I started working harder and began to trust God." Lizette's effort saw her through to high school graduation and eventually to enrollment in Chemeketa Community College where, despite her successes, her dream of attending a university, let alone a private Christian institution, somehow felt even further from her reach than before. Even if she could manage the grades, she knew there was no way her family could afford any university, no matter the cost.

But Lizette kept working. After finishing her first year at Chemeketa, she decided to visit Corban University, her dream school, in a step of faith. It tore her up walking the campus, experiencing the classes, knowing that attending would be impossible, but she was there because she felt God calling her to take small, active steps of faith. After hearing from one of her hosts about a special scholarship called the Mosaic Scholarship, a generous need-based scholarship and leadership program designed to help make the dream of a private Christian education possible for students who would otherwise be unable to attend, Lizette decided to take another step of faith and send in her essay.

She was not awarded a scholarship—another moment to add to her mental album of disappointments. Devastated, her mind told her it was time to fully shut the book on her dream. But she felt God continuing to push her. So, again, she did not give up. After a second year at Chemeketa, Lizette traded steps of faith for a leap. "I sent in my full application to Corban, knowing full well we could never afford it," she remembers. "My parents said, 'Don't worry about it. Get the loans. We'll help you. God is in control.'"

The summer before she was set to attend, Lizette did something bold. She walked into the office of Dr.

Mechelle Garrett, who oversaw the interview panel and application process for the Mosaic Scholars Program. She explained everything she had gone through, laying all of her labels and all the memories of disappointment she carried with her bare on Dr. Garrett's office desk. It was enough to secure a second interview, set for that same afternoon. Two hours after it ended, she received an email. A decision that normally takes a week at minimum had arrived in her inbox. Lizette was a Mosaic Scholar. More importantly, she was a Corban Warrior—a dream made real. "I called my parents right away," she says.

Now, as a junior forensic psychology major, Lizette has finally found her dream academic community and begun to cover over the past negative memories that plagued her educational journey with new positive ones. And not only is she shedding old labels, but she is also gaining new ones. "I'm finding my identity here," she says. "As a student, as a person, but most importantly, I've found my identity in Christ."

As she reflects on her journey, a series of impossibilities she fully believes were made possible only by faith and the power of Jesus Christ, Lizette hopes to encourage others to, like her, never give up. "There is no excuse for you not to be where God is calling you to be," she says. "I had about every excuse I could think of between my learning disability, my IEP label, the difficulties of my past. I did not have the income. I did not have the resources. All I had were excuses and reasons to give up. But I decided to trust God instead. There is no excuse for you not to be where He needs you to be. Trust Him. He can make the impossible happen."

EYES ON TRADITION: CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CORBAN'S ANNUAL HYMN FESTIVAL

One of the University's most beloved traditions, Corban's annual Hymn Festival has been bringing the community together to worship through the singing of hymns for 25 years.

Every year, Corban's choirs, band, and orchestra join together, presenting a unique repertoire that prioritizes communal worship, the singing of hymns, and the reading of Scripture. More than just a night of musical performance, the event serves as an important touchstone during the year for believers to gather and lift their voices in praise, celebrating the timeless truths found in many of the beloved hymns and sacred music that have helped to shape generations of faith.

"It's a rare opportunity to sing in four-part harmony accompanied by a full orchestra," says Music Program Director, Mark Stanek. "The hymn arrangements and orchestrations are newly created each year by John Bartsch, retired Professor of Music Theory and Composition, which makes every year a unique event."

An event that draws on the significance of a heritage of communal worship and liturgy, Hymn Fest has now created a fond and enduring history of its own that audiences will be able to enjoy for years to come.





CORBAN ACADEMY

Help your high school student excel with Corban Academy tutoring, offering academic support and enrichment with a Christian worldview for homeschool, private school, and public school students.

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- Instruction from vetted and qualified tutors.

MORE INFO: <https://corbanacademy.com/>



COFFEE CLUB

Join the Coffee Club by June 31, becoming a monthly supporter, and receive our new 90th anniversary edition mug as your first annual gift along with a taste of our Corban Coffee blend, crafted by alumni roasters Timm and Lori Taff of Conversatio Coffee. You can pick your mug up at the 90th Anniversary Alumni Weekend in June or our fall Coffee Club Reception.

JOIN THE CLUB: <https://engage.corban.edu/register/CorbanCoffeeClub>

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO SEE GOD REWRITE YOUR STORY



“I gave up on my education. I gave up on myself,” says Sondelyn Laughlin. “But God never did.”

Years ago, as a young college student, Sondelyn gave up on her dream of becoming

a college graduate. “I had a lot of guilt and shame and regret. But I also had a lot of fear,” she says. Years later, Sondelyn didn’t believe she would be able to continue her education, that the decisions she made in her past were too much to overcome. “I was afraid of coming back. I didn’t think I could. All I could think was, ‘I’m not smart enough. Too much has changed. I can’t fit in.’”

Despite these prevailing feelings, Sondelyn decided to at least make a call to Corban University to see what continuing with her degree might look like. She was surprised to find that her credits were far more transferable than she thought, and that she could complete her degree fully online in a program

that prioritized going at her pace and fitting into her busy schedule.

Now Sondelyn is a graduate of Corban’s nontraditional learning program, a fully-online program leading to a bachelor’s degree. Within her program, she discovered the structure she needed to succeed. She became immersed in biblically-integrated courses that challenged her to think deeply, was a part of a cohort that cared and collaborated, all guided by professors who were committed to seeing her succeed. Now, she holds an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science degree that focuses on theology and education and is looking forward to putting it to good use.

Years ago, Sondelyn closed the book on her education, believing that chapter in her life had been played out. Now she looks forward to a new chapter, a richer story, and a brighter future. “I think my story is probably similar to a lot of others, and I want to encourage them that it’s not over,” she says. “No matter how old you are, no matter your life circumstances, you can do it. Now I get excited about thinking about the future. It’s not scary. I get to have an adventure and see God continue to write my story.”

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR



As the end to another school year is on the horizon, we need prayer warriors to commit to consistently and continually praying for Corban University.

Please join us in praying for the following:

Pray for our upcoming graduates:

Please pray for our students who will be graduating this May, that they will have the strength and peace to finish strong, and that they will continue to rely on God and His Word as He leads them into their futures.

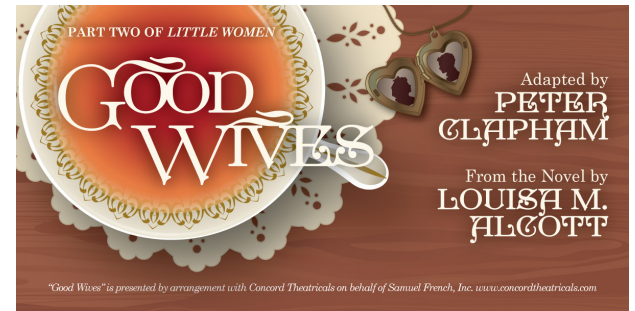
Pray for our leaders:

Please pray for wisdom for our leadership and for God’s protection and provision as the University navigates challenging changes in government regulations and restructuring.

Pray for expanded connections:

Please pray that God will continue to bring new connections and friends of the University into our network, expanding the reach of Corban’s mission and our educational opportunities.

EVENTS



SPRING PLAY

March 6-16, 2025

Based on part two of Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, *Good Wives* picks up the story of the March sisters as they face the challenges, choices, heartaches, and opportunities of becoming adults.

GET TICKETS: <https://our.show/goodwives2025>

GOLDEN WARRIOR AWARDS

April 14, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Celebrate the top performances and moments of the 2024-2025 Corban athletic season at this formal event! For tickets (\$15 each), email athletics@corban.edu.

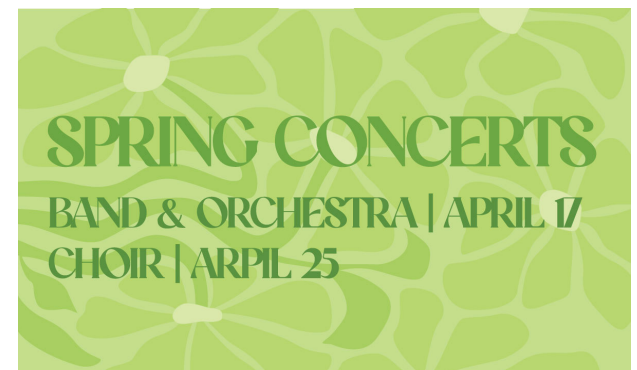
REFRESHER CONFERENCE

“Fueling Disciple Making of the Next Generation”

April 17, 2025

Join fellow ministry leaders and keynote speaker Dr. Clare Jewell for a time of fellowship and refreshment on core ministry topics.

MORE INFO: <https://www.corban.edu/events/refresher-conferencel>



SPRING CONCERTS

Corban University’s music ensembles present a variety from their spring repertoires. These events, held in the Psalm Center, are free and open to the public.

Band and Orchestra Concert

Thursday, April 17, 2025 | 7:00 p.m.

Choir Concert

Friday, April 25, 2025 | 7:00 p.m.

FAITHFUL LEADERS CONFERENCE

May 9, 2025

The Hoff School of Business invites you to this one-day conference offering inspiration and practical tools for leaders in any industry to embrace their roles with confidence.

REGISTER: <https://www.corban.edu/events/faithful-leaders-conferencel>



Give Today

SUPPORT CORBAN

Our students and their commitment to Christ make us who we are, but our donors drive what we do. Join the cause with a gift today!

REACH OUT TO US

Do you have something you would like to see featured in an upcoming issue? Let us know by email at advancement@corban.edu, or by mail.