

March 15, 2022

Dear YDS 1971 Classmates,

It's a great pleasure to reach out to you 50+ years after we shared so many bright days (and more than few overcast and rainy ones) together in YDS classrooms, the Refectory, the Common Room, the Marquand Chapel, the Day Missions Library, the Divinity School Quad and/or one or more dorms rooms.

For any of you who have ever longed to revisit those memories, there's good news: **our Covid-delayed 50<sup>th</sup> Yale Divinity School reunion will go forward in person in New Haven during this fall's YDS Convocation and Bicentennial, October 12-15, 2022.** We're contacting you now to explain the various ways in which you can take part in all the activities surrounding this event, so that you can mark your calendars.

- We will get our reunion underway in just over a month with a **virtual “Common Room”** gathering hosted by David Wheeler and members of the '71 reunion committee on the evening of **Thursday, April 21st at 8:00 p.m. EDT**. This will consist of a 90-minute Zoom session in which all who participate can meet – many of us, probably, for the first time since the spring of 1971 – to hear brief initial remarks and greet each other informally, to be followed by two break-out sessions into smaller groups where we can share accounts of our personal journeys over the past half century. If you would like to be part of this event, you are encouraged to **register by Friday, April 8th**, at **<https://tinyurl.com/YDS1971April21>**. (While registrations will continue to be accepted after the 8<sup>th</sup>, having a good idea early on of the number of participants will enable us to do a better job of organizing the small-group breakout sessions.) Finally, depending on the level of interest expressed in this initial virtual conversation and the themes that may emerge from it, we may hold a second such session later in the spring or early summer.

- Meanwhile, we will be soliciting your contributions for a **50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Memory Book**, both hard-cover and digital copies of which will be sent to every member of our class. We urge each of you – even if you don’t plan to take part in any other reunion activity – to update your story for this book by **completing the online form** at **<https://tinyurl.com/YDS1971MemoryBook>**. On this form you will be invited to provide your current contact information, a photo, and your special memories and reflections about your YDS experiences and subsequent life. To enable the Office of Alumni Engagement & Development to circulate the memory book prior to our in-person October gathering, we ask that you submit the booklet questionnaire form **no later than April 25**.
- As noted above, our October in-person reunion will be integrated into the wider YDS Convocation, which this year will be a very special one, coinciding as it does with the celebration of the School’s 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This Convocation will also be distinctive for being scheduled while regular classes are in session, allowing alumni the opportunity to interact with current YDS students. The program will include a host of guest and faculty lectures, daily worship in Marquand Chapel, and tours of the campus and New Haven. Special gatherings for the Class of ‘71 will include a memorial service for our departed classmates, several panel discussions tailored to our particular interests and experiences, and a festive Class Dinner on Thursday evening, short on formality and long on good food, conviviality (and possibly musical entertainment provided by some of our classmates).

Details on registration for this in-person Convocation/50th Reunion gathering will be sent to everyone in August by the YDS Office of Alumni Engagement & Development.

Meanwhile, the Office has reserved blocks of hotel rooms for those who plan to attend. To secure one of these rooms now, go to **<https://tinyurl.com/YDS1971Hotels>**

- Finally, the reunion will afford us an opportunity to learn more about the ways in which the Class of 1971 has been demonstrating its gratitude for the gifts which our YDS education gave us, through support for financial aid to current and future students. As we’ve already heard Class Agent Wes Poling in the December 2021 mailing, these tangible acts of stewardship include gifts to both the YDS Annual Fund and to endow a new Class of 1971 Scholarship. More information on how to become a part of these initiatives will be forthcoming from Wes and the Alumni Office staff. To make a gift now, you may also visit: **<https://tinyurl.com/YDS1971Gift>**

The Alumni Office has set up a webpage where we will be posting updates and additions to the information above: **<https://tinyurl.com/YDS1971Reunion>**. We invite you to check this page periodically over the next several months. If you think of any information you would like to see included or have any questions about the reunion you’d like answered, please let us know.

As our theological training and our own experience have taught us, there is infinite value in each and every life. We hope you will be willing and eager to share some portion of yours with us, whether via Zoom next month, in person in New Haven next October, or both.

Until then, our very best wishes,

The YDS Class of 1971 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Committee:

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