

The Joseph A. Sittler Award for Excellence in Writing Lutheran Campus Ministry

Background

Dr. Joseph Sittler (1904–1987) was a Lutheran theologian who taught at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). He is widely credited with pioneering the links between Christian theology and ecological thought, having written about environmental matters as early as the 1950s (long before they were widely reported in the mainstream press). He continually insisted that care for the earth and its environment is a central concern of the Christian faith. He was deeply committed to ecumenism and well respected in ecumenical circles for his work on the environment and preaching.

Joseph Sittler was a friend of the Lutheran Student Movement and Lutheran Campus Ministry, and one of their strongest advocates in the church. He spoke on several occasions at LSM and campus ministry staff gatherings. He met with the staff at the Center for the Study of Campus Ministry at Valparaiso University for a week in 1977. His insights were published in *Running with the Hounds: Conversations with Campus*



Ministry, in the CSCM Yearbook 1977-1978, and later in a book by that name. In it he observed that those serving in campus ministry “live on the frontier of the church’s life in the culture.” “Your very exposure to the movements of life as they are most vivaciously exhibited and with the greatest candor expressed in the student generation puts you in a privileged position. . . . You are with the most flexible, varied, articulate and explosive aspects of our culture.” He challenged us to write, saying that, “I think that you do not speak back to the church enough, or clearly enough, out of your own extraordinary experience. . . . I trust that you

will become more articulate, perceptive, and ardent constructive critics within the church. . . . Each of you must do this in your own way, but I would suggest you do it.”

Spirit of the Award

The Joseph A. Sittler Award was established in 1981. It recognizes those who have written for the wider church and community from the perspective of campus ministry through printed or electronic media. In 1977 he challenged us to write, saying that, “I think that you do not speak back to the church enough, or clearly enough, out of your own extraordinary experience I trust that you will become more articulate, perceptive, and ardent constructive critics within the church.”

Recipients

1981 Hubert Beck
1982 Gilbert E. Doan, Jr.
1983 Wayne Saffen
1984 Jon Magnuson
1985 Gerald Knoche
1986 Galen and Kris Hora
1987 *(no award given)*
1988 Bill King
1989 Jeri Smith
1990 Galen Hora
1991 Jon Magnuson
1992 Fred Reisz
1993 Phil Knutson
1994 *(no award given)*
1995 *(no award given)*
1996 John B. Hougen
1997 *(no award given)*
1998 Jerry Robbins
1999 *(no award given)*
2000 *(no award given)*
2001 *(no award given)*
2002 *(no award given)*
2003 *(no award given)*
2004 George Koch
2005 John Lottes, St. Louis University
2006 Bruce Heggen, University of Delaware
2007 Jim Norlie, Oregon State University
2008 *(no award given)*
2009 *(no award given)*
2010 Ron Rude, University of Arizona
2011 Diane Dardon, University of Northern Iowa
2012 *(no award given)*
2013 *(no award given)*
2014 John Lund, University of Montana
2015 Jim Norlie, Oregon State University
2016 Chris Heavner, Clemson University
2017 *(no award given)*