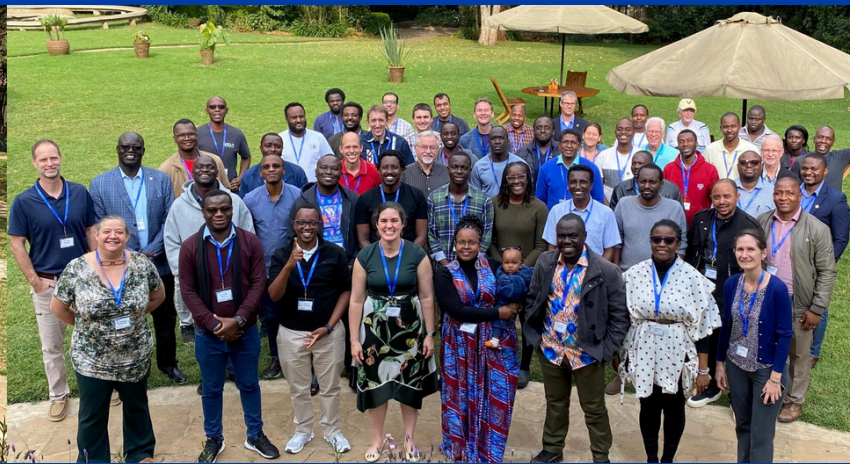




The PAACS Bulletin

Monthly Newsletter • Issue 254 • September 2025



OUR MISSION

PAACS' mission is to glorify God by training and discipling African surgeons and related specialists to become Christ-like leaders and servants providing excellent and compassionate care to those most in need.

OUR VISION

PAACS envisions a growing number of African surgeons and related specialists living out the Gospel and ministering to the sick.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

Susan Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer

For where two or three are gathered together in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.
Matthew 18:20 (KJV)

This promise has been beautifully evident across PAACS this past month. Each day, residents gather with faculty in the operating room and at the bedside with patients, and we don't take those moments lightly. When they come together in the name of Jesus, He is there. Beyond these daily encounters, some of the PAACS family united in Kenya for the Continuing Professional Development Conference, the Faculty Development Conference and in the United States for fundraising events. Though these are different settings, countries, and even different hemispheres of the world, they have the same assurance of Christ's presence.



In Kenya, PAACS graduates gathered for a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Conference from September 3-7. The following week, September 7-13, PAACS faculty came together for a Faculty Development Conference. Both gatherings sharpened skills, strengthened community, and deepened our shared mission. Looking ahead, our senior residents will meet next month, October 12-18, for their annual conference. We pray Matthew 18:20 over them, as they gather together, that their final steps of training will be marked by faithfulness to Christ as they prepare to serve.



In Georgia, multiple fundraising events brought together friends of PAACS, both new and old. One of our graduates, Dr. Philadelphie Dembele, joined us to share his story of PAACS training and his current service in Mali. Over the next few weeks, he will continue traveling across the U.S. gathering with supporters and testifying to what God is doing through him in Africa.

Next week, the PAACS family will gather again for the 2025 Fall Conference on October 2-4. More than a time of presentations, sharing, decision making, and planning, this is an opportunity to worship, fellowship, and celebrate what God has done through PAACS in the past year while preparing for the future. Soon after, we will host a reception at the ACS Clinical Congress on October 6. If you will be attending, we would love to see you there.



Whether in Africa or the United States, in classrooms, hospitals, fundraisers, or conferences, we see the truth of this verse lived out. Whenever the PAACS family gathers, Christ is present. Thank you for joining us in this mission through your prayers, encouragement, and support.

Blessings,

Susan A. Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer
PAACS



A MONTH FILLED WITH CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

**Keir Thelander, MD, FACS, FWACS, FCS (ECSA)
PAACS Executive Vice President**

On September 3rd over 50 PAACS graduates gathered at Brackenhurst Conference in Kenya. This first Continuing Professional Development Course was a wonderful success thanks in large part to PAACS Academic Dean Dr. Chris Moir, Dr. Drew Huang, Pastor Ed Searce, Pastor Robert Yanduya (PAACS new associate spiritual dean) and Rachel Huth. Please see the Academic Dean Report in this bulletin issue for more information. This CPD conference was immediately followed by a Train the Trainers program offered to both PAACS graduates (in thanks again for Mercy Ships' sponsorship) and Faculty members. Allowing mutual encouragement on an educational level and deepening the educational competence of over 50 attendees, not to mention the relationships that were rekindled and formed that will be used as springboards for high impact mentoring and discipleship across the continent of Africa.

PAACS dedicated discipleship focused Faculty Development followed. With over 40 in attendance, this was the largest course hosted by PAACS. As PAACS Spiritual Development Committee under the leadership of Pastor Ed Searce finalizes the newly required Spiritual Discipleship Program for Program Directors, current faculty members gave a taste of the profound spiritual content. We look forward to seeing the in coming years and decades lasting impact on training and discipleship throughout PAACS and beyond. Much thanks to all who made these events possible, Mercy Ships, PAACS' Deans and other admin staff. Pray with us that the Lord will multiply these efforts for the advancement of His kingdom and glory.





FIRST CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE FOR PAACS ALUMNI

Christopher Moir, MD
PAACS Academic Dean

Recently we heard the president of a surgical robot foundation say brilliance is equally distributed worldwide. We also heard Tarp say you can shovel snow all morning and never clear a path to the street. PAACS is making sure the surgical brilliance present in sub-Saharan Africa isn't lost in buried effort but finds its path to every road, town, and hospital where the need is greatest.

The results are impressive. Our programs are highly respected and competitive. Each year, over 500 candidates apply for just over 50 training positions. Graduates are similarly valued and trusted in their hospitals; achieving surgical excellence with integrity and spiritual maturity. Mercy Ships specifically recruits our grads for their work. This month, 55 PAACS graduates came together for our first ever Continuing Professional Development conference. From that group, over 35 have either committed or expressed strong interest in short-term missions on the Ships. The conference was designed to refine and enhance graduate growth in surgery and communities. One could almost breathe in the joy and love of learning and each other that our grads felt. It was a deeply moving time together.

PAACS has become a family of courageous, committed professionals working to lift the burdens of body and spirit where they live. It is our ongoing commitment to equip them with the very best of our tools, skills, and loving fellowship. As Academic Dean I can assure you we're making great progress.





SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Ed Searce, DMin, ThM
PAACS Spiritual Dean

Discipleship is highly valued throughout the PAACS organization. It is a determination to fulfill the mission Christ has given to us in Mt. 28:19 "...go make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I commanded you." It is our desire to not only prepare excellent surgeons but to prepare a group of committed Christians who wish to use their surgical skills to advance the Kingdom of God.

For the past several years the PAACS Spiritual Development Committee has been hard at work preparing Spiritual Leadership training materials. We are indebted to the mission organization, Serge, who has given permission to edit their spiritual leadership material to fit the needs of PAACS. By the end of 2025 this material will be ready for wide distribution to all PAACS faculty.

The Spiritual Leadership Course aims to enhance mentorship effectiveness and strengthen the spiritual impact of those discipling and mentoring residents across all training sites. These spiritual investments are building a foundation for long-term impact through servant leaders across Africa. The material covers the following topics of discipleship.

1. The Gospel foundations of Leadership
2. Leading Missionally
3. Vision
4. Empowering Others
5. Reflection and Integration
6. Hard Conversations
7. Leadership Style and Adaptability
8. Leadership Posture
9. Deep Wells
10. Risk-Taking and Resilient Faith



At the recent Faculty Development Conference in September, this material was introduced to the faculty. Three of our PAACS faculty presented an overview of three of the modules designed to equip the faculty in the art of discipling those under their tutelage.



Dr. Zach O'Connor - Hard Conversations



Dr. Matt Kynes - Leading Missionally



Dr. Ted John - Leadership Posture



EXPANDING OUR CAPACITY TO TRAIN SERVANT LEADERS

Andrea Parker, MD
Faculty, General Surgery
Tenwek Hospital

We are delighted to share a significant milestone in Tenwek Hospital's journey as a PAACS training site. This month, we officially dedicated and opened the Dr. Paul Brady Resident Housing Complex. This new facility represents an answered prayer and a major step forward in our shared mission of being "a Christian community dedicated to excellence in compassionate healthcare, spiritual ministry, and training for service."

A Critical Need Met

For many years, the lack of adequate housing has been one of the greatest barriers to expanding our residency programs. Since 2017–2018, we have discussed the urgent need for additional space, and in recent years, several of our 40 post-graduate trainees have had to live off campus due to limited housing. This shortage not only constrained our ability to grow our programs but also limited our capacity to host visiting trainees who could benefit from time at Tenwek.

A Home for Training, Ministry, and Service

The Dr. Paul Brady Resident Housing Complex provides 29 new units, a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments, allowing us to welcome more trainees and their families into the Tenwek community. By addressing this critical need, we can now expand the number of medical and surgical residents we train, which in turn strengthens both compassionate healthcare and spiritual ministry. Training for service enables these two vital aspects of our mission to flourish.

Looking Forward Together

This new housing complex is more than just a building; it is an investment in the future of Christian physicians and surgeons across Africa. As we send out graduates to serve in Kenya and beyond, they embody the motto of Tenwek Hospital: "We treat, Jesus heals." We are deeply grateful for PAACS' partnership, and we look forward to welcoming new residents into these homes as we continue equipping servant leaders for transformational impact.





GUARDING THE HEART: PUTTING ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Rev. Robert Yanduya
PAACS Associate Spiritual Dean

The Christian life is not without battles. The Bible speaks of a real spiritual battle, making spiritual warfare a daily experience for every believer. In Ephesians, Paul encourages us to stand firm against the schemes of the devil by putting on the full armor of God (Eph 6:10–20).

Among the armor, the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation stand out. They protect the heart and head. This article focuses on the protection of the heart which is central to our spiritual life. Like a Roman soldier wouldn't go without a breastplate, Christians shouldn't live without righteousness. This is not our own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ. Without Christ's righteousness, believers are exposed to satanic attacks and become easy targets for his flaming arrows.

Paul's use of military imagery made perfect sense to his audience. The Roman soldier's breastplate covered the body from the neck down to the waist. It protected vital organs like the heart and lungs. Without it, even a minor strike could become deadly to the soldier. In the same way, righteousness is not optional for the believer, it is essential for our spiritual survival.

The heart is so critical to our physical well-being. The heart pumps blood throughout the body. If it fails, everything else suffers. Spiritually, the heart is the center of emotions, thoughts, desires, and decisions. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Paul's language in Ephesians 6:14 draws from Isaiah 59:17, where YHWH puts on the breastplate of righteousness to deliver his people and punish enemies.

Because of its importance, the enemy always targets it. Despite this, believers are protected against his lies, temptations, accusations, guilt, and condemnation through righteousness. This righteousness is not about our own perfection. It's first the righteousness we receive through faith in Jesus Christ, giving us right standing before God. It also calls us to live rightly daily, choosing obedience, purity, and truth in a world filled with spiritual darkness.

Believers are surrounded by spiritual challenges (Eph 6:12), but God's righteousness strengthens us to walk in holiness in a hostile world. We should not neglect this protection. The breastplate of righteousness protects our hearts in spiritual battles. Without it, we're vulnerable to Satan's tactics like accusation (Rev 12:10), temptation, and deception. But Christ's righteousness assures us of no condemnation (Rom 8:1). Pursuing righteousness keeps us strong.

Jesus covers us with His righteousness but also calls us to walk in the same manner. John says: "Whoever claims he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." (1 John 2:6). The early church understood this well. Their holy lives served as both spiritual protection and public witness in the face of persecution. This is what our righteousness does, it protects us spiritually and offers a strong public witness in the face of persecution.

Today, we are called to guard our hearts, resist sin, live a life of integrity, and refuse the temptation to compromise. In societies where dishonesty and corruption are common, righteousness becomes a powerful testimony to our community. Righteousness strengthens our prayer life, gives us boldness before God, and keeps us spiritually alert (Eph 6:18b). When we stumble, righteousness reminds us of Christ's finished work on the cross and calls us back to repentance.

To wear this armor daily, we must trust in Christ's righteousness, be obedient, repent quickly, live with integrity, and stay connected to the Church. The breastplate is both God's gift and our responsibility. In a world of temptation and deception, only those who guard their hearts with righteousness will stand firm.

GOOD NEWS TO SHARE



PAACS ACS Reception - Register Today

Register today to attend the PAACS Reception at the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress on Monday, October 6, 2025. The ACS is in Chicago this year and will follow the PAACS Fall Conference. Please register TODAY and join us at the reception from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM. It will be held on the second floor in the Regency C room. When you register be sure to include guests that you will bring to the event!

Click here to RSVP:

<https://form.jotform.com/252226027849157>

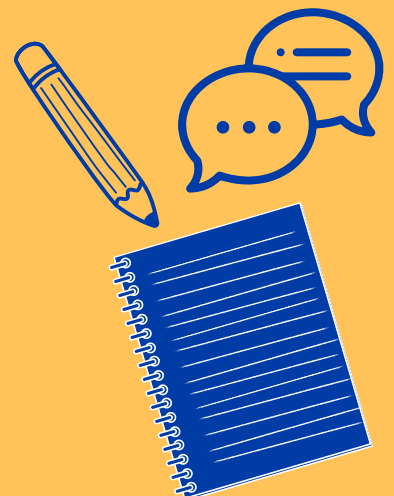
VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED: USE YOUR GIFTS TO TELL THE PAACS STORY

Join the Bulletin Team!

Do you love to write, edit, or connect with people? We are looking for volunteers to help us tell the powerful stories of what God is doing through PAACS.

Whether you enjoy conducting interviews, writing articles, proofreading, or brainstorming new ideas, we would love to have you on our Bulletin team.

If you are interested, please contact our Communications Manager, Julie Hayden, julie.hayden@paacs.net.



LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY

School of Medicine

The Loma Linda University Department of Surgery in Loma Linda, California has a one-year non-ACGME accredited clinically focused Global Surgery Fellowship (GSF) and is looking to find its next fellow to start August 1, 2026. The goal of the Global Surgery Fellowship is to prepare American-trained general surgeons to be competent and capable of performing the needed surgeries in rural, low-resource environments, and low- and middle-income countries (LMIC).

Applicants must have completed an ACGME approved general surgery residency by June 30, 2026 and be American Board of Surgery certified or eligible. If interested, applicants must provide the following documents via e-mail to Alana Symons, program coordinator at asymons@llu.edu

- A letter of reference from the department chairman
- A letter of reference from the program director
- A personal statement about surgical global health
- Current CV

Fellowship Timeline for 2026

Interviews November 2025

Type of Interview: Virtual – Teams

Begin Fellowship 08/01/2026

PRAYER & PRAISE

- Pray for God's favor over all PAACS training programs, that they will glorify God and be used to impact Africa for His Kingdom.
- Pray for the upcoming PAACS Conference October 2-4, 2025. Pray for travelling mercies for attendees and for meaningful fellowship and prayer time as we gather together.
- Pray for God's wisdom and guidance for the Board of Directors, leadership, and administrative staff as they seek to faithfully lead the PAACS ministry.
- Pray for the Senior Trainee Conference in Kenya from October 12-18.

Each month, we pray for residents by name. Please join us this month by covering these residents in prayer:

- Amani Boniface
- Michael Baraka
- John Blasto Ngili
- Peter Paul Opiro
- Nadine Ndechu
- Veronica Kungu
- Peter Ouma Opondo



ARTICLES ON SURGERY, OB/GYN, AND ANESTHESIA

Compiled by Margaret Tarpley

- [Global anaesthesia practice using inguinal hernia surgery as a tracer condition: a secondary analysis of an international prospective cohort study](#)
- [Advancing open-access education for the surgical team worldwide: the development and rollout of the United Nations Global Surgery Learning Hub \(SURGhub\)](#)
- [Integrating sustainable global engagement into your academic pediatric surgical practice](#)
- [Spirituality and neurosurgery: A salutogenic current perspective](#)
- [My Thoughts: On Surgical Personalities, Stereotypes, and Leadership](#)
- [Advance care planning in the perioperative setting: a mixed methods study of anaesthetists' knowledge, attitudes and practice](#)
- [Microplastic abundance in placental chorionic villi detected by pyrolysis-gas chromatography/mass spectrometry in cases of spontaneous miscarriage during early pregnancy](#)
- [Strengthening Research Ethics Capacity in West Africa, 2015-2024](#)
- [Current Landscape of Children's Surgery in Africa: A Multicenter Analysis of 16,000 Cases](#)

[Read more articles compiled by Margaret Tarpley by clicking here!](#)

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