

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg Report to ELCA Region 8 Synods

In 2009, Gettysburg Seminary weathered a perfect economic storm that affected all educational institutions, by engaging in serious “belt-tightening” to cope with effects of the global economic downturn, which caused a reduction in the endowment and church support. In order to plan for a sustainable long-term future, the Board of Directors’ chair appointed a Seminary Futures task force, which is hard at work seeking ways to enhance our robust educational offerings even as we balance expenditures with anticipated income in the years ahead. Prudent investment strategies employed by the endowment foundation contained losses at lower than average level. Yet the full recovery of endowment losses remains years away. Thanks to the steadfastness of unrestricted support from Region 8 synods, the Seminary plans to keep its scholarship offering to students at least on par with last year, if not increased in the year ahead. We will also maintain tuition and other student costs on the lower end of the scale.

Redoubled commitment to churchly service and academic freedom: As some began to ask, “where does the Seminary stand?” following historic decisions to permit ordination of openly gay and lesbian candidates by the ELCA, the board chair and seminary president issued a statement reiterating Gettysburg Seminary’s intent to honor churchly decisions and processes. We also underscored our commitment to ensure a campus climate permeated by academic freedom wherein unfettered holy conversations about important matters are encouraged.

New Certificate program in Leadership of Faith-based Organizations: Gettysburg’s program is part of a new shared endeavor called *Intersections Institute*, which in partnership with Philadelphia Seminary, will provide degree and certificate programs for leaders in social ministry organizations and other vocations that mix theology and management skills in their

ministries. Dr. Mary Christine (Christy) Lohr directs the new program at both schools. (See www.intersectionsinstitute.org)

Faculty news: The Seminary honored a beloved late president by conferring the Herman G. Stuempfle Chair of the Proclamation of the Word upon the Rev. Dr. Susan Hedahl. As of July 1st, several faculty members will be advanced to the rank of full professor. Already serving as registrar and Old Testament instructor, Dr. Marty Stevens also became the Seminary’s chief financial officer during the year. The faculty’s senior professor, Dr. William Avery, officially retired during the fall and is serving as the primary coordinator of the Seminary’s major reaccreditation self-study. Faculty publications multiplied, including: *What Christians Can Learn from Buddhism* (Kristin Largen); *No Greater Jewel: Thinking about Baptism with Luther* (Kirsi Stjerna); *The Comeback God* (Michael Cooper-White); *No Mere Dialogue: Engaging World Religions* (Lawrence Folkemer) among many other contributions.

Rounding out the newsworthy year: Forty new leaders for service in the church and world received diplomas; a Green Task force began its work to help the campus community become better stewards; and student-led fund raising assisted local service agencies stressed by a Pennsylvania budget crisis. Theological Education with Youth (TEY) and Project Connect (both programs shared with Eastern Cluster partners) received sustaining grants totaling a combined \$1.9 million from the Lilly Endowment. The Seminary extends its deep thanksgiving for the faithful support, for the students, and for the elected directors who come from among the synods and people of Region 8.

*The Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White, President
The Rev. Glenn E. Ludwig, Chair of the Board*