



Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago



2017 Report to the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Synod Assembly

Dear Friends in Christ,

We give thanks for you and for the many ways you support the work of theological education through the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (LSTC) and Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS). We couldn't carry out our mission without

- the ***financial support you offer*** as individuals, congregations, and synods. Your support is the foundation for the economy of leadership formation in the ELCA.
- the ***people you encourage who may become seminary students***. By saying to someone, "Have you considered a call to ministry? I think you have the gifts," you plant the seed of discernment. Seminaries rely on you to identify those gifts among people in your congregations and your family and friends.
- your ***prayers and care for your seminaries and their students***. You encourage and inspire us in the work of forming leaders who are well-prepared to inspire others in living out their faith.

The **Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago** continues to fulfill its mission of forming visionary leaders to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ by:

- Sending out 51 students from six degree programs at the May 2016 Commencement. Half of our Master of Divinity graduates were in a call process or had a call in hand as of Commencement, and nearly all are now ordained or consecrated and serving in ministries across the country.
- Continuing the trend of growing incoming classes of master of divinity and master of arts students and reduced student borrowing thanks to generous scholarships they receive
- Launching a rebranding of the seminary to communicate its longstanding commitment to bringing faith into the public sphere
- Welcoming the Rev. Matthew James as the new Director of Admissions
- Welcoming Dr. Keith T. Hampton as the Cantor to the Seminary Community
- Creating the Student Services Office and calling Dr. R. Scott Chalmers as Dean of Student Services to provide a centralized place to meet a wide array of student needs
- Naming 10 new Public Church Fellows to participate in a program that combines academics, community service in a Chicago area nonprofit organization, and spiritual reflection. These master of divinity students each receive a \$450 monthly stipend throughout the school year.
- Returning a rare 1100-year-old Greek New Testament manuscript known as GA-1424 to the Greek Orthodox Church in ceremonies at LSTC and in Drama, Greece that received press coverage around the world
- Hosting visitors from around the world including the archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia, the president and dean of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, the bishop of the Meru Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, principals of four Islamic schools in Indonesia, and the president of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo.

Wartburg Theological Seminary continues to live out its mission of forming valued leaders for God's mission by:

- Launching a new Master of Divinity curriculum. Students now have three tracks for completing a particular course: 1) MDiv – Residential Learners, who are present in the on-campus classroom, 2) MDiv – Collaborative Learners, serving concurrently in a congregational placement while completing their degree, who are present in the on-campus classroom synchronously through interactive video technology, and 3) MDiv – Distributed Learners, engaged in a variety of daily occupations, who participate in the same course by a combination of video recordings of the classroom sessions together with asynchronous learning methods.
- Sending out 37 graduates, from 3 degree programs, TEEM, and certificate programs to serve in congregations and ministries. 90% of 2016 assigned candidates were serving in first calls within 8 months of assignment. The remaining 10% are serving interim ministries in their synod of assignment waiting for calls close to their rostered spouses.
- Providing 100% of eligible students with seminary financial support for their education. Student educational debt levels continue to decrease on average.
- Partnering with 22 nonprofit agencies to serve as fieldwork sites for students, to gain insight into nonprofit leadership as they weave together congregational ministry with community partners.
- Continuing to meet the needs of diverse ministry contexts by providing a summer Spanish language intensive, a Hispanic Ministry Summer Term, a TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) and a certificate in Hispanic Ministry at LSPS (Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest) in Austin, TX.
- Anticipated completion of Phase 2 of the Engage God's People Campaign in June of 2017. The primary focus of this \$22 million campaign is to seek funding for mission *today* and mission *tomorrow*.
- Adoption of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan at the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees meeting in February of 2017.

We are your seminaries. Come join us for worship, participate in a continuing education event, explore a call to ministry, or visit with some of the future leaders that you and your synod support through your gifts to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and to Wartburg Theological Seminary. To learn more about the seminaries, their faculty, programs and upcoming events, visit www.lstc.edu and www.wartburgseminary.edu.

Your partnership is essential for LSTC and WTS to continue our shared mission of providing dynamic theological education for leaders of our congregations and ministries in your synod, for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to the glory of God.

Yours in Christ,



President James Nieman
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



President Louise N. Johnson
Wartburg Theological Seminary