



2013 Report to the Central/Southern Illinois Synod Assembly

Dear Friends,

We give thanks for the many gifts that you, the people of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, send to Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) and the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (LSTC). 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 our ELCA.
- the **people you send who may become seminary students**. By saying to someone, "Have you considered being a pastor or another church leader? I think you have the gifts," you plant the seed of discernment. Seminaries rely on you to identify those gifts of leadership among people in your congregations and in your families and friendship circles.
- 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.

During 2012-2013 Wartburg Theological Seminary continued to live out its mission of forming valued leaders for the church by:

- Sending out 46 graduates of degree and certificate programs as valued leaders to serve in congregations and ministries throughout the country and world. Graduates were placed in 5 of the 9 regions of the ELCA and are now serving in 21 synods and the Global Mission Unit.
- Offering a Distributed Learning program, now in its 2nd year with 19 students. The Distributed Learning program is available for the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts degrees. This program combines online coursework and required on-campus intensive courses.
- Meeting the needs of diverse ministry contexts by providing the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) on the Wartburg campus and at LSPS (Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest) in Austin, TX. Candidates for the TEEM program are nominated by their synods and prepared for leadership in specific emerging ministries identified by the synod. Wartburg Seminary's TEEM program is the largest of all the ELCA seminaries.
- Providing 100% of eligible students with seminary financial support for their education as a result of generous gifts from congregations, individuals, and other organizations that provide financial support for theological education at Wartburg Seminary.
- Renewing the mission statement and adopting a five-year strategic plan for fulfilling the Wartburg Theological Seminary mission and commitment to the church.

***Mission:** Wartburg Theological Seminary serves Christ's church through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by being a worship-centered community of critical theological reflection where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning.*

The community embodies God's mission by stewarding resources for engaging, equipping, and sending collaborative leaders who interpret, proclaim and live the gospel of Jesus Christ for a world created for communion with God and in need of personal and social healing.

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

- Sending out 73 students from six degree programs at the May 2012 Commencement – 39 of these were in the master of divinity (M.Div.) program alone, and most of those graduates are now ordained and serving in congregations across the U.S.
- Giving thanks for LSTC's 50 years of ministry as we celebrated the election and installation of Rev. Dr. James Nieman as the seventh president of LSTC. The inauguration weekend included a conference on ministerial wisdom. Anniversary events are being held all year with the theme, "Many Voices, One Story."
- Awarding merit- and need-based Visionary Leaders Scholarships to 22 master of divinity students whose gifts and goals make them a particularly good match for the type of formation LSTC provides. The scholarships, which cover three years of coursework, range from partial to full tuition awards.
- Receiving a grant of almost \$200,000 from the John Templeton Foundation to teach science and religion across the curriculum. This will be part of broader revisions to master's level curricula to better prepare leaders for the changing needs of our church.
- Welcoming Vance Blackfox as director of LSTC's Youth in Mission program, which marks its 10th year guiding high school students to a deeper connection with their life in Christ.
- Deepening relationships with Valparaiso University and other educational partners to create innovative programs that benefit both schools.

We invite you and members of your congregation to the seminaries to attend daily worship, to participate in a continuing education event, to discern a call to ministry, or to visit with some of the future leaders that you and your synod support through your gifts to the Lutheran School of Theology and Wartburg Theological Seminary. To learn more about the seminaries, their faculty, programs and upcoming events, visit www.wartburgseminary.edu and www.lstc.edu.

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

Yours in Christ,



President Stanley N. Olson
Wartburg Theological Seminary



President James Nieman
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago