



Joint report to synods from LSTC & Wartburg Theological Seminary

Dear Partners in Ministry in the Central / Southern Illinois Synod,

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) and Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS), the two seminaries that the Central / Southern Illinois Synod supports, stand united with a vision to form compassionate, ever-evolving leaders for a changing church.

Each seminary offers distinctive opportunities for student engagement, dependent largely on how the student feels called to contribute their unique gifts and passions and how they wish to experience seminary education.

Both LSTC and WTS continue to invest in preparing and honoring their diverse student body. A few examples of these efforts are highlighted below.

#### **Curating dynamic faculties to teach, advise and form students for ministry leadership**

- LSTC recently hired three energetic faculty with specialties in feminist and contextual hermeneutics, preaching and mass trauma, and racial reconciliation in U.S. churches.
- WTS has three open positions for new scholars to join its highly collaborative theological faculty with specialties in Latinx theology and ministry, systematics, and liturgics.

#### **Hosting on-campus and online activities to honor diverse communities**

- LSTC students, alongside faculty, staff and friends, partnered together to offer over 12 unique events to celebrate Black History Month and the role of black leaders in the church in February 2020. Student led efforts included offering documentary screenings, rich panel discussions, black art exhibits, special music concerts, and meaningful church services featuring black pastors, activists, and authors.
- Innovations in WTS' curriculum have increased the ability and capacity to prepare future ministry leaders from underrepresented communities. Students bring an ever-widening set of experiences and contexts to the seminary's classrooms that enrich the fullness of preparation for wise, compassionate and faithful ministry. In particular, the Collaborative Learning pathway (full-time student and serving part-time in ministry context) currently serves over 50 students in partnership with synods and congregations nationwide.

## **Providing opportunities for social activism across communities**

- LSTC is organizing students to join with the Poor People's Campaign for a Mass Poor People's Assembly & Moral March on Washington in June 2020. Students will stand alongside ELCA leaders and members to deeply engage with our social statements and take public action for the sake of our neighbors' welfare.
- WTS is hosting the Creation in Crisis: Science and Theology Respond Conference as a result of Wartburg's grant award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) to participate in the Science for Seminaries project of the AAAS Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion (DoSER) Program. It will be offered fully online and will focus on the urgent environmental crisis facing humanity and our planet.

Through these avenues and others, the seminaries proudly produce qualified, eager, and visionary leaders. Both seminaries are positioned to continue to do so, with over 400 students enrolled in coursework across both seminaries, representing over 50 synods.

You're welcome at our seminaries. Participate in upcoming educational opportunities. Join us for community events. Worship alongside our students in chapel. Bring someone you know with gifts for ministry. Consider rostered ministry in the ELCA. Come create a meaningful connection with the future leaders that you and your synod support through your gifts to Wartburg and LSTC.

Your partnership is essential for LSTC and Wartburg to continue our shared mission of providing effective theological education and developing leaders for the many ministries of your congregation, synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

To learn more about your seminaries and the innovative ways that we are forming leaders, please visit [www.lstc.edu](http://www.lstc.edu) and [www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu).

Yours in Christ,

James R. Neiman  
President  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Kristine Stache  
Interim President  
Wartburg Theological Seminary