



Report to the ELCA Synod Assemblies 2020

Since 1874, St. Olaf College has challenged students to *excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition*. Our 3000 full-time undergraduates hail from 49 states and 91 countries, with 22% self-identifying as Lutheran and another 10% as members of denominations in full communion with the ELCA. 22% of the entering class are domestic students of color, 11% are international students, and 18% are first-generation college students. Among our Class of 2019 graduates, 92% participated in an internship, mentored research experience, practicum, or other vocation-related opportunity, and 73% studied off-campus. Within six months after graduation, 96% of Oles are employed, working in full-time service projects, or attending graduate school. St. Olaf continues to be among only a handful of U.S. colleges that meet the full demonstrated financial need of all admitted students. Its academic rigor, vibrant residential life and global reach are animated by Lutheran commitments to community, hospitality, love of neighbor, and public engagement.

St. Olaf has both an ELCA student congregation that gathers for Sunday worship, and morning chapel services Monday through Friday. All services are streamed live and then archived on the college website (stolaf.edu/multimedia/streams/archive/chapel). A new weekly chapel podcast series is also available on demand (spreaker.com/show/stolaf-chapel). The college continues its weekly *Sing For Joy* radio program (<https://www.stolaf.edu/singforjoy/>), bringing the best in sacred choral music for the church year to 150 stations in the U.S., the U.K., and throughout Africa, and streamed both live and on demand. The St. Olaf Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts (stolaf.edu/cwta) returns July 27-30, 2020, with “Scatter the Imagination of Our Hearts” as its theme, and featuring theologian Willie James Jennings (Yale University Divinity School) and Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics Eunjoo Mary Kim (Iliff School of Theology) as guest keynoters.

In Fall 2019, St. Olaf launched a new Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community (stolaf.edu/lutherancenter), whose mission is to engage people of all backgrounds and beliefs in deep exploration of core commitments and life choices in ways that foster inclusive community, both within and beyond St. Olaf College. The Lutheran Center aims to advance faculty, staff, and student understanding of what it means to be a college “nourished by Lutheran tradition;” foster the examination of faith and values; enhance inter-religious understanding and engagement; and deepen the discernment and pursuit of vocation. In keeping with the ELCA’s recent *Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment*, the Center has supported the expansion of the College Ministry team to include two new part-time staff in addition to our two full-time ELCA pastors: a rabbi, serving as Associate Chaplain for Jewish Life, and an Associate Chaplain for Muslim Life. The Center’s inaugural director, Dr. Deanna Thompson ’89, Martin E. Marty Regents Chair in Religion and the Academy, is a sought-after speaker in congregations, synods, and other colleges and universities on topics ranging from Martin Luther and feminism to being the church in the digital age. Her most recent book is *Glimpsing Resurrection: Cancer, Trauma, and Ministry*.

We look forward to welcoming you to St. Olaf, whether for concerts, lectures, conferences, or summer camps, and whether in person or via the live stream (<https://www.stolaf.edu/multimedia/>). We encourage you to send students to the college, we thank you for your prayers and support, and we offer you ours as well.

David R. Anderson ’74, President