Wartburg
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Forming Valued Leaders for God's Mission

The Rev. Dr. Kristin Johnston Largen

Dear Partners in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod,

Greetings from your siblings in Christ at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. I am excited to share with you some of the ways Wartburg is fulfilling its mission, with your partnership and support.

Last year marked the completion of the first year of The CaSTLE Project, funded by a $7.4 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., to instantiate a new *baptismal ecclesiology,* focusing not on pastors and programming, but on the formation of Christian discipleship in daily life. To date, we have launched a new website (https://thecastleproject.org/), awarded sub-grants to 26 synods, and curated dozens of resources that support leadership formation and thriving congregational life in rural and small town contexts.

This year, we launched *FLOURISH*, a holistic network of support for students and staff in all aspects of life. This program includes coaching, counseling, meditation tools, and financial coaching, all without cost to our community members. We are forming leaders for the long haul, and as a part of their formation at Wartburg Seminary, we seek to include practices that support long-term health and wellness.

Wartburg Seminary is a leader in competency-based education, and our CBE TEEM program, available fully in both English and Spanish, is growing rapidly. Students appreciate the go-at-your-own-pace approach, with a team of advisors and mentors that supports student formation in doing, knowing, and being, a hallmark of the competency-based approach. In fact, this distinct pedagogical model has been so successful that this year, we have launched a pilot SAMs (Synodically Authorized Ministers) formation program. This is a one-year experiment to see how this model might support the distinctive call of a SAM to foster Christian discipleship in daily life, with the congregation as the locus for this transformation.

Let me conclude my report with a genuine expression of gratitude for your prayers, for your crucial financial support, and especially for your partnership in raising up leaders for service to the church and the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Wartburg Seminary forms leaders in intentional Christian community, including in a vibrant residential community, with daily worship as our center. We are a special place, and you are warmly invited to come and see! For more information about Wartburg Seminary, please visit us at www.wartburgseminary.edu.

Yours in Christ,

Kristin Johnston Largen

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