

## **Gettysburg Seminary Report 2017**

### **Imagine a Stronger Seminary & Unprecedented Seminarian Support**

Imagine one Lutheran seminary in Pennsylvania that is stronger than its combined separate predecessors in Gettysburg and Philadelphia. Imagine an unprecedented level of student support. Imagine a seminary educating across two campuses, in hybrid and online formats as well, with a faculty filled with unparalleled expert pedagogues. Imagine a state of the art school that provides a leading edge curriculum with the deepest, classical roots on the continent. Imagine United Lutheran Seminary, opening July 1<sup>st</sup> 2017!

#### **Full Scholarships Signal Students First**

For more than a decade there has been growing concern about the financial burdens incurred by seminarians in this era when “church support” has continued to decline as a percentage of budget. But in a bold and dramatic move, both PA seminaries announced full tuition scholarships for all full-time ELCA students. The budget for United Lutheran Seminary gives priority to what we’ve called a “Students First” approach to planning. This can be sustained only with continuing strong support from synods, congregations and individual donors. To all who are making possible this bold and unique offer, we say a hearty word of thanks!

#### **New Curriculum Integrates Classroom and Context**

Perhaps the newest feature of ULS is an emerging curriculum fully designed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Rather than simply passing courses, students will be expected to demonstrate having mastered a high level of competence in all critical ministry leadership areas. Virtually every course will include professors from more than one discipline working collegially to bring to bear insights from their fields of expertise.

#### **Continuity Assured**

In the midst of newness is a reminder of the richness of the two seminaries’ distinctive and complementary heritages. Even as we bid farewell to faculty and staff members who are retiring or moving to new callings, we celebrate that almost the entire initial United Lutheran faculty will be comprised of current members of the Philadelphia and Gettysburg teaching theologians. Certificate study and Lifelong Learning opportunities continue on both campuses. Both Town and Country Church Institute and the Urban Theological Institute carry forward, as well as beloved traditional annual events like Advent Vespers and Music Gettysburg! concerts. Also to be sustained are recent new initiatives that better equip students to integrate faith and science, ministry with those in prison, and ecological “greening” endeavors to enhance environmental care.

#### **Faculty Tapped**

In addition to their classroom teaching, speaking in multiple church settings and other arenas, faculty members fulfill responsibilities as scholars with increasing national and international recognition. This past year, several faculty members have been asked to teach courses in other institutions, including Lancaster and Pittsburgh Seminaries. In recognition of his expertise in rural ministry, ethnographic studies and multiple point ministries, Dr. Gil Waldkoenig has accepted a half-time position as ELCA Director of Evangelical Mission for the West Virginia/Western Maryland Synod. And beginning this summer, Dean Kristin Lagen will serve half-time as Gettysburg College’s Chaplain and Associate Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life.

#### **New Leadership**

A presidential search is underway in light of the consolidation of the two seminaries. As of print deadlines for assemblies, the search is on track for the election of a new president before synod assemblies begin. Watch for an update at the assembly. And receive our profound gratitude for the synod’s unwavering support!

Michael L. Cooper-White, President

J. Elise Brown, Chair of the Board