2014 Report to the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly

Dear Friends,

We give thanks for the many gifts that you, the people of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, send to the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (LSTC) and Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS). 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.

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

- Sending out 51 students from six degree programs at the May 2013 Commencement. Half of our Master of Divinity graduates were in a call process or had a call in hand as of Commencement, and the majority are now ordained and serving in congregations across the country.
- Developing a new curriculum to form leaders for a "public church" that offers a distinctive Christian witness in the world. Beginning in Fall 2014, the curriculum emphasizes competencies in cultural context, spiritual formation, religious heritage, and ministerial leadership to.
- Installing Dr. Esther Menn, the Ralph W. and Marilyn R. Klein Professor of Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible, to a five-year term as Academic Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Awarding 13 full-tuition scholarships to first-year master of divinity students and scores of other partial-tuition scholarships to students in every year of their studies. Over 90% of LSTC master's degree students receive a scholarship from LSTC. Thanks to this financial assistance, total student borrowing has fallen 15% each of the last two years.
- Receiving a $250,000 Lilly Endowment grant to fund a three-year study of pathways to lower seminarian debt.
- Receiving a $500,000 gift to establish the Lyn C. and Stewart W. Herman Jr. Fund for Innovation to provide grants for faculty projects to enrich the seminary curriculum through new educational ideas and directions for preparing leaders for ministry.
- Making LSTC's buildings more energy efficient with grants and gifts of nearly $200,000. New insulation in LSTC housing and more efficient lighting in the main building will reduce annual utility costs by about $6,250. The lower carbon emissions are equivalent to planting 6,065 trees.

Wartburg Theological Seminary continues to live out its mission of forming valued leaders for the God's mission by:

- Sending out 35 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.
- Offering a Distributed Learning program, now in its third year with 25 students. The Distributed Learning program is available for the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Diaconal Ministry 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 a summer Spanish language intensive, a Master of Divinity Hispanic Ministry Summer Term, TEEM programming (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) as well as a certificate in Hispanic Ministry at LSPS (Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest) in Austin, TX. LSPS is a program of Wartburg Seminary and Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
- 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.
- Receiving a $250,000 Lilly Endowment grant which creates academic, co-curricular, and congregational programs to explore approaches to reducing seminary student debt and enhancing financial and stewardship understanding
- Receiving a three-year grant from the Siebert Foundation to assist in providing students with additional scholarships for the January cross-cultural courses offered both domestically and abroad. These experiences are a valued component of Wartburg's formation process.
- Sending student ambassadors to 19 area congregations to provide opportunities for learning about theological education and establishing new partners in mission.

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

Your partnership is essential for LSTC and Wartburg 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 James Nieman
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

President Stanley N. Olson
Wartburg Theological Seminary