



## 2015 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 55 students from six degree programs at the May 2014 Commencement. Half of our Master of Divinity graduates were in a call process or had a call in hand as of Commencement, and nearly all are now ordained and serving in congregations across the country.
- Launching a new curriculum to form leaders for a "public church" that offers a distinctive Christian witness in the world. The curriculum balances theological study with practical skills to build competencies in cultural context, spiritual formation, religious heritage, and ministerial leadership.
- Welcoming an incoming class of master's degree students that is 16% larger than last year's class. This is the third year in a row at LSTC that the entering class is larger than the previous year.
- Beginning the quiet phase of the seminary's second comprehensive campaign with a \$5 million unrestricted gift. In making this remarkable lead gift, the donors said they hope to encourage others to give generously to LSTC.
- Awarding 30 full-tuition scholarships to first-year and returning master of divinity students and providing 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 a third year in a row and is at its lowest level in over a decade.
- Beginning research to identify pathways to lower seminarian debt, a three-year study made possible through a \$250,000 Lilly Endowment grant.
- Hosting dozens of biblical scholars and theologians from around the world at the Lutheran World Federation International Hermeneutics Conference at LSTC in September 2014.

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

- Sending out 46 graduates of degree and certificate programs as valued leaders to serve in congregations and ministries throughout the country and world. As early as July more than 75% of students were transitioning to their first call. The rapid move into calls points not only to the quality of our graduates but also to the church's increasing need for pastors and other leaders.
- Offering a Distributed Learning program that continues to grow with 17% of Wartburg degree students participating in this program. By successfully combining online coursework and on-campus intensive courses, the DL program has opened formation for ministry to gifted people who previously could not consider beginning theological education.
- Launching a new "Learning for Life: Seminary for Everyone" program to meet the ever-changing needs of the church. "Learning for Life" is built on the core belief that theological education is for everyone. For more information about this exciting new learning initiative that includes online courses and learning events, visit our website at [www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu).
- 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.
- Launching the public phase of the \$22 million *Engaging God's Future* campaign which seeks to strengthen the church through the formation of future leaders at Wartburg Seminary.
- Renovating ten single-family housing units for to improve energy efficiency. This project was made possible through donations and contributed labor from members of Nazareth Lutheran Church (Cedar Falls, Iowa) and from other individuals and churches of the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

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](http://www.lstc.edu) and [www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://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