



October 10, 2018

On behalf of the four Western Synod Bishops, the following announcement from the President of Lutheran Theological Seminary is shared for your information:

Lutheran Theological Seminary is the official leadership preparation school for the four Western synods of the ELCIC. We are pleased to say that we are in a very exciting time. Our Challenge program (generous scholarships and a new way of thinking about theological education), flexible course delivery model, and strengthened recruiting efforts are inviting people to consider studies that had previously seemed impossible. We are developing new educational options, including diaconal programs, the Master of Theological Studies in Health Care and Parish Nursing, and Authorized Lay Ministry training through the Lay Academy.

We have a strong and enthusiastic faculty, staff, and student body. We are currently able to meet our financial commitments and sustain our operations.

We are now in the right position to make significant and much-needed changes. Our buildings are too large for our needs; rental income from our tenants, while helpful, does not fully compensate for our maintenance costs, anticipated renovation costs, and human resources costs. Our residence is no longer necessary for LTS purposes and is expensive to operate. The buildings were constructed 50 years ago; despite ongoing care and upgrading, they are due for renewal. Even with the generous support of donors (Thank you!), our finances are likely not sustainable over the longer term; funds from our capital campaign are reaching their end and synods are unable to maintain their support at historical levels.

Moreover, theological education has changed significantly since we moved into this property in 1968. Now we do more online training and work with smaller class sizes. Laypeople interested in learning about Christianity study alongside those preparing for rostered ministry.

In order to sustain our mission of preparing leaders for the ELCIC in Western Canada, to take up the challenge of today and tomorrow, we are looking for ways to enrich educational possibilities and strengthen recruiting efforts. We also hope to situate ourselves in a location more suited to contemporary educational needs.

Consequently, we are assessing new options for the Seminary. We considered some form of co-operation with our sister ELCIC seminary in Waterloo. However, recognizing the significant difficulties of inter-provincial partnership, we are currently examining other options, with Saskatoon still a possibility. At this time, we are exploring the option of moving to the campus of Luther College at the University of Regina. Moving there might offer us improved educational and recruiting capacities, along with financial efficiencies. Our conversations at this time are investigative; we do not know what the outcome will be.

Because members of the ELCIC in Western Canada have a stake in the future of LTS, and because you have been clear with us that you care about our work, we commit to sharing our decision-making process with you. We thank God for all of you and appreciate your prayers and support as we engage in this time of discernment.

Yours in Christ,

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