



UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

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NEWSLETTER
September 2010

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Readers,

This newsletter comes with our best wishes for a few relaxing days before summer ends. Our faculty and staff have enjoyed time for rest and renewal and are ready for an invigorating year. The campus is being prepared for the return of our students. The classroom wing will have a sturdy new roof. Classrooms are being renovated. The prairie restoration site has been groomed and has bloomed beautifully throughout the summer.

We are delighted that this year's entering class will be slightly larger than last year's. We met and surpassed our goal of 38 new students and will enroll 41! Most are from the Upper Midwest; one-fourth are recent college graduates.

Both the Unitarian Universalist and Presbyterian General Assemblies were held here this summer. The Unitarians hosted many educational programs and concerts. The Presbyterians held long legislative sessions and quite a few events. Both offered wonderful worship experiences. We staffed a resource table at the UU Assembly and facilitated and led worship and educational programs at the Presbyterian Assembly.

Chaplain Martha Postlethwaite will rejoin us this fall. After a serious injury in a skiing accident last January, Martha missed the spring semester and was on sabbatical through the summer. She brings considerable warmth and wisdom to our seminary, qualities that help our students master the many challenges of attending school while working and caring for families.

We welcome this year with several new courses including an exciting travel course entitled "Celebrating Days of the Dead in Mexico: Theology, Art, & Ritual Mexico City, Cuernavaca, Nahuatl village of Amatlán" led by faculty member Chris Smith. Please watch for more announcements about public programs including one for new programming on religious leadership and social networking.

We are always ready to welcome you, our reader, to the campus. If you need assistance in making arrangements, please call Gretchen Milloy at 651.255.6162.

Mary E. McNamara

Fall Programming at United

United's fall programming offers a rich variety of educational experiences for clergy, laity, seekers, and more. Offerings are available in a variety of formats including evening, day, and multiple session classes.

Persons interested in digging deeper into their faith might consider one of the excellent classes in our Academy for Vital Christianity, taking the opportunity to explore contemporary religious issues as led by United's outstanding regular and adjunct faculty. The short classes, taught around the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota, include topics on the Bible, developing ministry skills such as effective caregiving or worship planning, and the future of the church. The Academy offers seminary-quality education in locations and formats that make it possible for individuals and clergy to pursue a deeper understanding of the Christian tradition in a short-term class. Linda Mack, United trustee, calls the Academy 'a seminary without walls.'

New Academy host churches this fall include St. Croix Valley United Methodist Church in Lakeland, where Neil Elliott will lead "What does the Bible have to do with Life Today," and Wayzata Community Church, which is hosting two classes: "Christianity's Enduring Life: Contemporary Stories of Diversity, Renewal, and Global Growth," led by Mary Farrell Bednarowski, and "Love Songs to Lament: Poetry and the Hebrew Bible," co-led by Carolyn Pressler and Pamela Wynn.

If you are a religious leader, you might want to take advantage of one of the following workshops: "New Church Planting," "Facilitating Difficult Discussions," "Narrative Resources for Pastoral Counseling," or "The Church of the Future." Workshops will be led by United faculty and experts in the field. In addition, a new collaboration with Rabbi Hayim Herring and Digital Wagon Train, well-honed in the areas of social technologies, marketing, and communications strategy for non-profit and religious groups, will explore opportunities

(continued on next page)

Outcome of the Annual Fund 2009-2010

Exceptional Donors + Generous Gifts = \$943,000 for the Annual Fund!

Nearly 800 donors made this gratifying outcome possible for the fiscal year that concluded June 30. It was a community effort by trustees, alumni/ae, staff, faculty, and friends, as well as churches, foundations, and CUE (the regional funding consortium of United Church of Christ churches for Chicago, United, and Eden seminaries), who made 'Giving to United' a high priority during a financially challenging year.

We greatly appreciate this amazing support and belief in the rigorous and stimulating education we offer our students who will go forth well prepared and committed to be the dynamic and creative leaders the church and society so badly need.

Thank you very much!



for leadership using social media.

To explore religious questions in creative ways, consider one of our special evening programs on the arts, theology, and justice. Poet Sam King performs a reading from her new book, "Bog Orchid," in October; Wilson Yates, emeritus professor of religious studies, and United's Religion and the Arts Program will be celebrated on September 23, marking Wilson's foundational work and the work of United in the area of theology and the arts; and, as we approach the 30th anniversary of the AIDS virus, an exhibition by Kim Vrudny, United alum and associate professor of systematic theology at the University of St. Thomas, will help us better understand this crisis and the socio-economic issues that contribute to this deadly disease. The exhibition, "30 Years/30 Lives: Documenting a Pandemic," opens at United on November 30.

For more information about these offerings and other educational programs and experiences at United, see our Web site at www.unitedseminary.edu.

Indiana Church Leaves a Legacy Gift for United



St. Luke's United Church of Christ (UCC) in Speedway, Ind., recently notified United that they closed their doors in 2008 and were disbursing their assets. They wanted to make a gift to United that would have a lasting impact on the seminary and the future ministry of our students.

With a portion of the proceeds from the sale of their beautiful church, the St. Luke's congregation contributed \$50,000 to establish the St. Luke's United Church of Christ Scholarship Fund to support a UCC student. According to Lois Miller, a longtime member of the church, "While we are saddened at the fact that our 'little church' is no longer, we are very happy to know that St. Luke's spirit will live on with our donation."

St. Luke's was founded about 1958 as an Evangelical and Reformed church that became a UCC church. Howard Beer '48, a graduate of Mission House Seminary, was the church's founding pastor, and John Maki '71 was a longtime pastor there. At its peak, the congregation totaled 120 members. Out of this modest size church, two of its members attended a seminary. St. Luke's was a mission-driven congregation involved in projects that included Habitat for Humanity and the Haiti disaster.

We are deeply grateful to the St. Luke's congregation and to Duane Yegerlehner '56, the minister of music and the 'pastoral presence' following the dissolution of the church, for their foresight and generous commitment to theological education at United.

A Peek at Our Incoming Students



The admissions staff is pleased to announce 41 newly admitted students as of August 12, 2010. It is still possible that we will have a few more. The impact of more focused admission efforts and an economy that has encouraged men and women to seek new educational and career opportunities seems to have served us well.

Once these students have registered for classes, the registrar will be able to provide a more accurate report of the make-up of the incoming class and the student body as a whole. The admissions office, however, collects its own data as students apply and are admitted. Based on our notes and observations, the new students for this fall include:

- 15 men and 26 women. 22% are under the age of 30.
- All come from either Minnesota or Wisconsin except for one each from South Dakota (Beresford), North Dakota (Fargo), and Michigan (Charlevoix).
- Only 7 come from beyond 100 miles of New Brighton.
- 35 are in the Master of Divinity program and 1 in the Master of Arts in Religious Leadership program; the remaining 5 are in various MA concentrations.
- 9 identify as United Church of Christ, 5 as United Methodist, 4 as Unitarian Universalist, 4 as United Presbyterian, 4 as ELCA Lutherans, and 3 as Catholic. Others identify as Old Catholic, Baptist, Covenant, Unity, Metropolitan Community Church, or "none of the above."

This is just a statistical glance, an incomplete one at best. But it is the sense of call, a hunger for God, a desire to learn and serve, that cannot be measured or coded, that make every entering class a community that will be challenged and nurtured by their time together at United.

Four New Fall Courses

The core of the Christian faith has remained the same across the centuries, and so the core of a theological education today still includes subjects that have been part of the education of church leaders for a long time. Yet the world is changing rapidly as our globe becomes more and more an interconnected "village." New subjects become an important part of the education of church leaders; old subjects need to be taught in new ways. Four new courses in United's fall offerings illustrate this reality. Consider taking or auditing one as a way to deepen your faith journey.

Our century continues to see massive movements of people due to global market forces, political and religious conflicts, ecological crisis, etc. An elective by Prof. Eleazar Fernandez, TR514 **New Encounters: Hospitality, Security, and Peace in a Mobile World**, explores the impact of these flows of migrants and refugees and the role and responsibility of the church and other faith communities in responding to the resultant challenges.

In the United States, decades of immigration have produced what may be the most religiously diverse society in the world. The role of spiritual guides in a greater variety of institutional contexts is creating an increased need for chaplains, who must be able to respond to persons from a tremendous range of spiritual backgrounds. To help address this need, Prof. Robert Albers and Chaplain Russell Myers are team-teaching the elective course CL625 **Chaplaincy in a Pluralistic Age**.

As we become more aware of how inter-related our world is, it becomes more important to understand the life and wisdom of other peoples with whom we share the planet and to comprehend the ways our lives interconnect and our fates intertwine. The immersion course by Prof. Chris Smith, CS753 **Celebrating Days of the Dead in Mexico: Theology, Art, & Ritual – Mexico City, Cuernavaca, Nahuatl village of Amatlán**, offers an opportunity for in-depth learning about, and from, another culture and thus the opportunity to see our own culture from a new angle.

The fourth new fall course is a revised version of a traditional core course of seminary education, Prof. Carolyn Pressler's CH161 **Orientation to the Older Testament**. One section of the course will be taught in traditional face-to-face format; the other will be taught as a hybrid online course including face-to-face weekend sessions and sessions working together as an online learning community. This will be United's first required course to go online. This makes the course accessible to students who could not otherwise take it, and at the same time models the importance of taking the Good News into today's online world.

Recent Alumni/ae Achievements and More!

United alumni/ae serve the church and society in diverse and amazing ways: as pastors, denominational and lay leaders, chaplains, missionaries, and spiritual directors; as artists, writers, and teachers, and in many other professions throughout the world. They are leaders of deep faith, committed to a lifelong call to the common good. We congratulate these alumni/ae and others for their extraordinary work and achievements.

Amy Blumenshine '09, co-author of the book *Welcome Them Home Help Them Heal: Pastoral care and ministry with service members returning from war*, won first place with her colleagues in the religion category of the Independent Book Publishers Association and was awarded the prestigious Ben Franklin Award.



Sarah Campbell '89, pastor of Mayflower Community Congregational Church in Minneapolis, received the 2010 Leysath Award from the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. The award is given annually to a person who lifts up the role of women in ministry, provides new life in the church and community, and continues to grow through further education.



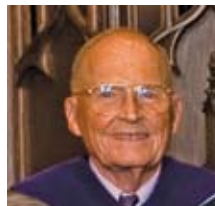
Gary Reierson '78 '86, director of the Minneapolis Council of Churches and a United trustee, has had several articles published this year including, "To Lent or Not to Lent" in *The Oblate* and "Pastoral Perspective on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday" in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary; Lent through Eastertide, year A, vol. 2*, ed. David L. Bartlett (former United adjunct faculty member) and Barbara Brown Taylor.



Vincent Carroll '68 finished his third book of poetry. This book was written with his 90-year-old mother. Vincent is in his 42nd year of ministry and has spent the last seven summers serving Little Stone Church on Mackinac Island, Mich.



James B. Nelson, emeritus professor of Christian ethics at United, was the subject of a Ph.D. dissertation by William B. Youngmark, approved this past spring by the faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., entitled *James B. Nelson's Sexual Theology: A Critique of Selected Salient Elements from an Evangelical Perspective*.



CONGREGATIONAL PARTNER

"First Church" Celebrates Summer Sabbath

Over its 159 years, the historic First Congregational of Minnesota (Minneapolis) has grown deep roots in southeast Minneapolis. Grounded in Congregationalist traditions, "First Church" is also opening to new ways of doing and being church. After hearing that "not much happens" at First Church during the summers, pastors Jane McBride and Abby Henderson decided to plumb the spiritual and community-building resources within the tradition of Sabbath.

These two young pastors invited the congregation into a "Sabbath Summer," centered on the ancient tradition that affirms rest as a spiritual practice. Instead of worrying about people staying away from church over the summer, they developed a blog. The First Church blog allows members and friends to check in over the summer from wherever they find themselves. Abby and Jane post regularly. Sometimes they share their own experiences with Sabbath practice. They have also reflected on Dorothy Bass' book, *Receiving the Day*.

Their most popular blog posts are copies of their weekly sermons. People who are out of town are delighted to read the sermons and share in the week's reflections, while folks who attended church that Sunday often appreciate being able to re-visit the sermon content.

Improvising on the Sabbath theme, Jane and Abby have planned a couple of Sabbath-style gatherings for community members to come together for play, contemplation, and renewal. They've also taken advantage of the more informal, flexible summer schedule by exploring a few new worship practices.

They've introduced *lectio divina* into the Sunday morning service, inviting the congregation to listen more deeply to scripture texts. Different "stations" encourage worshippers to move freely around the sanctuary and engage their senses through watercolor or clay. A healing prayer circle has been offered, and anointing with oil is available for those who wish it. Although many congregants are unfamiliar with practices like anointing, Jane encourages them to claim these concrete, sensory experiences as part of their own faith tradition.

The best part of this Sabbath Summer, for Pastor Jane, is that "we've not only talked or thought about getting some Sabbath, but we have actually done it. Together."

Be a Matchmaker!

The Katherine B. Andersen Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation has generously offered United a \$30,000 'challenge grant' that will match new and increased gifts.

For first-time donors or donors who didn't make a gift last fiscal year, your gift will double; for current donors, your increase will be matched.

This terrific opportunity expires December 31, 2010, so become a Matchmaker and multiply your giving!

To make a gift online, visit www.unitedseminary.edu and click Give Now! To make a credit card gift, call 651.255.6115, or send a check to United Theological Seminary, 3000 Fifth St NW, New Brighton, MN 55112.

Fall 2010 Upcoming Events

Sept 17-18	New Church Planter Discernment Workshop with Paul Nickerson & Kim Saal
September 23	Evenings at the Bigelow: Art and Soul, Festschrift honoring Wilson Yates
October 19	Narrative Resources for Pastoral Counseling with Christie Cozad Neuger*
October 19	Evenings at the Bigelow: Art and Soul with Sam King
October 26	"From Divine Revelation to Media Revolution" with Rabbi Hayim Herring & Digital Wagon Train
Oct 26- Nov 3	Celebrating the Days of the Dead in Mexico: Theology, Art, and Ritual with Christine Smith
Oct 29-Dec 3	"First Divinity" with Sam King (5 sessions)
November 2	What's Next? – a seminary exploration event
November 9	"Facilitating Difficult Discussions" with Rabbi Amy Eilberg*
November 13	What's Next? – a seminary exploration event
November 29	Advanced Narrative Resources for Pastoral Counseling with Christie Cozad Neuger*
November 30	"30 Years/ 30 Lives: Documenting a Pandemic"- an art exhibit

Also on our Web site, please see the Academy for Vital Christianity fall classes offered across the metro area and in Alexandria, Duluth, Mankato, and Rochester.

**This course is part of the Institute for the Support of Pastoral Ministries.*

For more information, check our Web site at www.unitedseminary.edu.

United on Social Networks

Do you want to connect with United friends and alums? Want to know more about what's happening at United? Do you think e-mail is old-fashioned? Then find United on Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube!

United's Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter pages feature upcoming events, faculty news, photo albums, and more. These social networks are also great ways to connect with old classmates, friends, staff, and faculty from United.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UnitedTheologicalSeminaryTC
MySpace: www.myspace.com/unitedseminary
Twitter: www.twitter.com/unitedtheologic

United's LinkedIn page is run by Gail Anderson, the president of the Alum Council. This is a great place to connect with alums for career and social purposes, as well as finding out about upcoming alum events.

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=1909699

United's YouTube channel features video slideshows of student events, including art exhibits, graduate interviews, and more.

YouTube: www.youtube.com/UnitedTheological

Watch upcoming newsletters for more in-depth information on United's social networking sites. Have questions? Contact Kayla at klarson002@unitedseminary.edu.

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of the United Church of Christ.



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