



# UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

3000 FIFTH STREET NORTHWEST  
NEW BRIGHTON, MN 55112-2598  
651.633.4311  
WWW.UNITEDSEMINARY.EDU

NEWSLETTER  
May 2010

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Readers,

United has just concluded a peaceful, productive academic year with a wonderful commencement celebration! It was a privilege to watch our graduates receive their diplomas on Pentecost Sunday, no less. We wish the very best for all.

Our academic program continues over the summer, but at a slightly more leisurely pace. Summer plans include the Summer Institute in Spirituality and the Arts, June 15-18. Participants will be offered an opportunity to explore the intersections of art and religion in their personal lives and faith communities. Different tracks provide tools for spiritual growth, personal reflection, and congregational renewal. Our summer session features five courses – Theology and Music, Environmental Ethics, Black Women’s Spirituality and Christian Ethics, Global Encounters on Your Doorstep, and a study trip to Chiapas.

We hope to have a booth at the State Fair and are waiting word on our application. Faculty, staff, and students will be present throughout. Visitors will have opportunities to “stump the theologian” and learn about the seminary. We will invite everyone to sample the seminary by enrolling in or auditing a course, taking an Academy for Vital Christianity class, or attending events on campus. If you would like copies of our State Fair flyer, please call Gretchen Milloy, 651.255.6162.

Meanwhile, our staff and I will be present at several annual conferences (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota); I will be a keynote speaker in North Dakota. Other summer engagements include preaching at Carleton’s reunion celebration and then at House of Hope Presbyterian Church on June 27 and at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church on August 22.

It is a privilege to represent United on these important occasions. Glen Herrington-Hall, our director of admissions, has just completed interviews with first year students. They report that the school is small enough so they all get to know each other, the quality of instruction is excellent, and the community dialogue exceptional.

Sincerely,

Mary E. McNamara

## Joshua Society Honors New Members

At United’s annual Joshua Society Luncheon on May 13, President Mary E. McNamara welcomed Joshua members and honored Joanne and Glenn Wernecke ’57 ’73 as new Joshuas. Glenn and Joanne were unable to attend the event because they live in Arizona but were presented with the Joshua statue in Arizona this winter. A graduate of United and Mission House seminaries, Glenn served several United Church of Christ churches in the Midwest before his retirement. He wanted everyone to know how grateful he was for the outstanding education he received at seminary, and he wanted to ‘give back’ to United so others could receive this same kind of education.

The Joshua event brought many enthusiastic supporters of the seminary together. Highlighting the program was the Reverend Dr. David A. Van Dyke, senior pastor of House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, who spoke eloquently on stewardship, an essential ingredient to seminary education. In addition, Mary McNamara described Joshua as ‘United’s Hero’ and with deep gratitude recognized all of United’s Joshuas as extraordinary heroes.

*Joshua Society members provide outstanding financial leaderships and generous support to United by contributing cumulative gifts of \$50,000 or more. Each year new Joshuas are presented with a statuette of Joshua in gratitude for making a lasting impact on the life of United Theological Seminary.*



Joanne and Glenn Wernecke ’57 ’73

### Don’t Miss This Terrific Matching Gift Opportunity!

Multiply your gift to the Annual Fund: Two of United’s former trustees have generously offered to match new and increased gifts up to \$10,000. Contribute by June 30, 2010, to be eligible for the match.

*Your gift is vitally important: It will help us raise the remaining \$200,000 needed to make our end-of-the-year goal, and it will have a significant impact on the formation of future leaders in the church and society.*

You can make your gift online at [www.unitedseminary.edu](http://www.unitedseminary.edu), click “Give Now;” by phone: 651.255.6115; or by check: United Theological Seminary, 3000 Fifth Street Northwest, New Brighton, MN 55112-2598.

Thank you very much!

## Graduating MATA student bears witness to both the injustice and the beauty in the world

## Congratulations to Our 2010 United Graduates!

Douglas Abbott, Joseph Agpaoa, Steven Anderson, Leslie Ball, Frank Bennett, Robert Caruso, Kelli Clement, Kayla Daniels, Thomas Harries, John Howard, Amanda Hunter, Leslie Johnson, Ronald Kendzierski, Patricia Kennedy, Joseph Kimotho, Aaron Lauer, Shelley Lyksett, Jennifer Miles, Patricia Mogren, Emilie Moravec, Scott Morrison, Susan Mullin, Kimber Olson, Theodore Park, Herbert Perkins, Stephen Scott, Kayla Seavert, James Shoulak, Erica Sigauke, Bryan Simon, Kristin Stenson, Valerie Teppo, Bundy Trinz, Paul Van Antwerp, Linda Warner, William Webb, Christine Kliesen Wehrman



Kimber Olson's textile art project, created to complement her thesis, *Threads of Prophecy, The Art Quilt as Visual Theology*, hangs in the Classroom Gallery as part of the Master of Arts in Theology and the Arts Thesis Exhibition for United students graduating in May.

Married and the mother of three children, Kimber's resume includes a former position as vice-president of production at a marketing agency; while working full-time, she earned a degree in written communication from St. Catherine University's weekend college.

Kimber found her way to United by accepting an invitation from Dawn Carlson Conn '97 to attend an open house where students in the Theology of the Arts program shared their experiences. Kimber said, "The exposure to like-minded people whose art had led them to a deeper understanding of faith convinced me United was the place for me."

She signed up for two classes that fall.

Now poised to graduate, Kimber said, "My studies at United have helped me connect human creativity with theology and to discern how that connection relates to my art."

Understanding God as the non-dictatorial source of creativity in the universe, Kimber said, "All of life is a creative process in which the trajectory of each individual life unfolds."

"In that context," she said, "The artist bears witness to both the injustice and the beauty in the world."

Kimber's creative process is consistent with the above theological perspective: "Rather than imposing a concept," she said, "I apply color, texture, and pattern to the fabric and allow stories to emerge."

Following the interview, Kim acted as tour guide in the Classroom Gallery. We paused at her installation, *Sole Intent: Patterns of Resistance*. The accompanying text reads: "The installation is intended as protest, a call for reform and as a somber remembrance of the 218 victims of femicide in Minnesota since the year 2000. These women were murdered by current or former husbands and boyfriends, or by another male member of the household."

The complex installation is a moving portrayal of injustice; adjacent examples of Kimber's work featured in the exhibit emphatically proclaim the beauty in the world. The public gets it: several people interrupted us that afternoon to praise her art.

After graduation, Kimber will continue her textile arts practice. She also envisions presenting workshops to facilitate spiritual and faith development and possibly a prison arts ministry.

She's open to wherever her life's trajectory unfolds.

## 2010 Summer Events

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| June 10    | Lunch and Book Discussion with <b>Clyde Steckel</b>  |
| June 15-18 | Summer Institute in Spirituality and the Arts – <b>Chuck and Peg Carlson-Hoffman, Theresa Mason, Pamela Wynn</b> |
| June 16    | Evenings at the Bigelow: Art and Soul – <b>Peter Mayer</b>   |

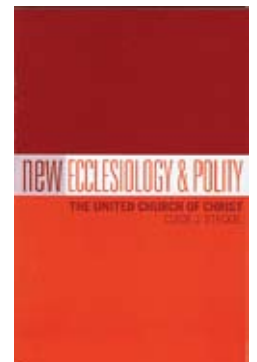
For more information, check our Web site at [www.unitedseminary.edu](http://www.unitedseminary.edu).

## "New Ecclesiology & Polity: The United Church of Christ"

In this helpful book Clyde Steckel, emeritus professor of theology at United, takes on the question of how polity affects the health of the church. He rightly challenges the glib use of the concept of "covenant" to describe the relationships among local churches and other ministry communities within the United Church of Christ and makes the case for increased accountability with consequences. To address the hold of modernity on the UCC, Clyde recommends the following four principles for its future ecclesiology: "the church constituted by those answering the call of Jesus Christ to follow him; the gathered church ordered by Jesus Christ at the font, the pulpit, and the table; the scattered church in the world engaged in Jesus Christ's mission of compassionate love and justice action; and the pastoral oversight of associations and conference ministers." (see page 92)

For UCC pastors and lay leaders and for those in other Reformed churches, this thoughtful book will be illuminating. Consider the sentence, "Ideological passion and purity running roughshod over an identity of getting along by avoiding conflict—these are sure signs of the unraveling of the dominant social contract as well as ecclesiastical covenants in postmodernity." For our many readers who have endured prolonged conflict in judicatory meetings, the context provided here will be extraordinarily helpful.

Our readers are invited to a lunch with Clyde Steckel to discuss his new book and how we might best address important issues facing the church today. Bring your own lunch, or stop by the Context Café. We'll gather in Strobel Room 209 at 12:00 PM on Thursday, June 10, and be finished by 1:30 PM. Clyde's book is available in Cokesbury bookstore if you are interested in purchasing a copy.



by Clyde J. Steckel



### A graduating senior reflects on his seminary experience

Graduating from the Master of Divinity program this May, Steve Scott took a break from his demanding schedule to reflect on his holistic experience at United.

The seminary's major strength, Steve suggested, is the diversity of backgrounds the student body brings to the classroom, a diversity welcomed by the agility of faculty members in meeting students wherever they happen to be on their faith journeys.

The former writer and religion editor for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* was eager to explore theology academically when he arrived on campus. He said, "Journalism is described as 'history written in a hurry,' after two decades as a journalist, I craved the intellectual challenges available at United."

However, United has not only contributed to Steve's intellectual growth, it has stretched him in other ways. "I'm a predominantly left-brained, word person," he said. "Several of my classmates are more right-brained; an instructor introduces a concept, and an artistic student asks how to express it in a drawing.

"Now when I'm preparing a sermon," Steve said, "I might write it out on one page while attempting to capture it visually on the

opposite page.

"Not that I would allow anyone to see those doodles," he added.

Steve said his classes have also encouraged him, despite some initial resistance, to integrate new learnings both intellectually and viscerally. He recalled a telling question asked by Christine Smith, professor of preaching: "Where's the human face in this sermon?"

Steve also spoke of completing a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) unit this semester at Walker Methodist Health Care Center. "United helped me find my place in the Christian story," he said, "now I can help others, regardless of their circumstances, locate themselves in that story."

It seems a natural progression from Steve's successful career in journalism, culminating with his position as religion editor at the *Pioneer Press*, that he has subsequently responded to a call to ministry. He emerges from a family of ministers that includes his late father and three older half-brothers.

In addition, Steve's wife Ann currently serves Zion United Methodist Church in Chippewa Falls, Wis. Following graduation, Steve will assume responsibilities as pastor of a three-point Methodist charge near Chippewa Falls.

Steve anticipates that serving three churches may prove less daunting than fulfilling his current obligations as part-time student supply pastor at two churches while completing his CPE unit, meeting coursework requirements, and commuting from Wisconsin.



### United Shines at the Family Place

The Family Place, a day center for the homeless, lives up to its name. Families gather three times a day at tables set formally for sharing nutritious food from the well-equipped kitchen. Furniture in both the "quiet room" and the family room is arranged to bring adults and children together, not to separate them.

Attached to the First Baptist Church in St. Paul, the spacious center also boasts a computer room for online job searches; the several computers were all in use during my recent tour.

Escorted by intake supervisor Barbara Hunt, I marveled at the non-hierarchical relationship between staff and clientele. At one point, Barbara scooped up a toddler who chatted amiably while being gently transported to another location.

Interviewed later that day, United alum Margaret Lovejoy '00, founder and executive director of the Family Place, confirmed the facility's egalitarian atmosphere was intentional.

Margaret said: "I observed a meeting one day between a staff member and a client at a rectangular table. The staff member's chair could be raised and lowered; the height of the client's chair was not adjustable."

Noting the implied power differential, Margaret said, "The next day, I bought a round table with identical chairs for staff and clients. The government provides charity," Margaret continued. "We offer love to our clients, and they understand the difference."

The Family Place expresses love in multiple ways. In "talking circles" and in other conversations, Margaret said, clients receive information that empowers them not only to dream, but also to realize their dreams.

Clients are bused to the Family Place from overnight stays at participating churches in Project Home, a program offered by the St. Paul Area Council of Churches. They are moved to the Family Services Center, sponsored by Catholic Charities, whenever the larger facility can accommodate them.

Before launching the Family Place in 2001, Margaret served as director of Project Home while earning her MA degree at United. She said, "My theological studies complemented my work perfectly; I could readily apply the concepts I was learning."

The Family Place claims additional ties to United. The center originally occupied a space at Central Park United Methodist Church, where the Rev. Dr. Jo Campe '79 then served as pastor.

In 2005, the center moved to its present site through a chance conversation with the Rev. William Englund '83, pastor of the First Baptist Church. Joining Margaret and Bill in their collaborative effort, yet another United alum, Bob Fallat '03, now serves as volunteer coordinator at the Family Place.

It seems only fitting that Mary Farrell Bednarowski, emerita professor of religious studies at United, is a member of the center's board of directors.

As Margaret put it, "United shines!"

## The Integrative Notebook and Indicators of Integration

One area of United's curriculum that is particularly strong is the intentional ways that students are encouraged and assisted to integrate what they learn and experience. For example, all Masters students are required to develop an Integrative Notebook. This requirement is intended to provide students an ongoing process for reflection and evaluation on how the different subjects they study come together into an integrated whole.

At the end of each course, students complete a form that assists them in reflecting upon what they learned, what questions they still have, and how the course material connects with other course material and experiences. Once a year, each student reads through these course reflections and writes a 2-3 page reflective statement. These materials, as well as any course material the student wishes to include (such as grade sheets and course papers), are compiled into the Integrative Notebook, which is then shared with the student's advisor. Drawing upon these materials, the student and advisor have a conversation designed to help the student reflect upon the past year, as well as discover any areas of study that may emerge from the conversation. This both assists in course planning and ongoing integration of studies at United. The Notebook becomes a portfolio of learning through the student's time at United.

The frame of reference for the yearly conversation is provided by the "Indicators of Integration" appropriate to the student's degree program. These Indicators look at personal development, integration of curricular areas, and (for M.Div. and MARL students) the practice of ministry. At the conclusion of the meeting, the advisor and student complete an assessment sheet reporting the degree of consistency the student displays in meeting the Indicators of Integration. These assessment sheets will be returned by the advisor to the registrar. Neither the Notebook nor the conversation will be graded, but completion of all annual reviews of the Notebook is a program requirement.

In addition to providing ongoing indicators of the integration of the student's learning, this process also provides another way for a student to discern vocational direction and specific gifts for ministry.

## Welcoming General Assemblies!

The General Assemblies of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Presbyterian Church (USA) will meet at the Convention Center this summer. Unitarian Universalists will be here from June 23 through June 27 and Presbyterians from July 2 through July 10. United Theological Seminary will have a presence at both gatherings. Both denominations now have extensive Web sites with information about their offerings.

Two UUA General Assembly worship services are open to the public (registration not required). The Service of the Living Tradition on Thursday evening from 7:30-9:00 PM and the Sunday morning worship from 9:00-10:15 AM are open to all. On Sunday only, non-registrants may visit the Exhibit Hall after picking up a pass at the GA/Volunteer Office, Room 102C of the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Those registered for the UUA General Assembly will have a wide array of programs to choose from. Winona LaDuke, a Native American activist, environmentalist, economist, and writer, will give the Ware lecture Saturday evening at 8:00 PM. An enrolled member of the Mississippi Band Anishinaabeg, LaDuke lives and works on the White Earth Reservation in northwestern Minnesota.

Another Minnesota native, singer/songwriter Peter Mayer, will perform on Thursday evening at the Hilton Minneapolis from 9:30-11:30 PM. Those not attending the UUA General Assembly will have another opportunity to hear Mayer here in United's Bigelow Chapel on Wednesday evening, June 16 (*for more information, see [www.unitedseminary.edu/CommunityPrograms/index.asp#PMayer](http://www.unitedseminary.edu/CommunityPrograms/index.asp#PMayer)*).

The Presbyterian General Assembly convenes over the holiday weekend with informal discussions of key legislative topics and a special Fourth of July picnic. Half of the commissioners will be Ministers of Word and Sacrament, half will be elders. Few will ever have been commissioners to the General Assembly, but most will have served on other governing bodies within the denomination.

One of the candidates for moderator is Jin Kim, pastor of Church of All Nations, located in Fridley. The election will be held the evening of July 2, a great time to be there to (silently) root for the home team. You may wish to attend the opening communion service at 10:00 AM on Sunday, July 3.

Once a moderator is elected, the assembly breaks up into assembly committees to consider particular kinds of business. Each committee is responsible for considering a number of items and reporting back to the General Assembly on completed actions or their recommendations. The combined insights of all those on assembly committees become the recommendations to the whole assembly. If they are approved, they guide the church in the years to come. Reports from a Comprehensive Study Focused on Israel/Palestine and a study on Civil Union and Christian Marriage are expected to receive a lot of attention this year.

# NEWSLETTER

DEEPENING KNOWLEDGE.  
DEEPENING FAITH.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
OF THE TWIN CITIES

United Theological Seminary is an ecumenical seminary  
of the United Church of Christ.



UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
OF THE TWIN CITIES

3000 FIFTH STREET NORTHWEST  
NEW BRIGHTON, MN 55112-2598  
651.633.4311  
WWW.UNITEDSEMINARY.EDU