

Convention 2010: *Growing Healthier Congregations* 23rd Annual Convention to be held Saturday, April 17



Dr. Pat Taylor Ellison will bring the keynote address.

want to change can be transformational within a church.

Dr. Pat Taylor Ellison, managing director of research and development at the Church Innovations Institute, St. Paul, is the keynote speaker for this year's Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations convention. In her keynote address, "Building Agreement and Strategies for Spiritual Discernment in Community," she will lead us through discussion and exercises, exploring with us a tested process for developing habits for faith-based conversations and dealing with conflict, and will help us consider what God is calling Gustavus to be for the Church. After a time of dwelling in Scripture, we will learn effective processes for communal listening, speaking, and discernment that help to change the focus and redirect the energy in a faith-based community.

Although conflict resolution is a journey that involves more time in the congregational setting, the technique for doing it can be learned in a day. The morning discussion will tee up conversation for the afternoon when, in facilitated workshops, groups will practice these techniques as they wrestle with a key question. This process will teach us to share differences in a way that pushes us forward in energy instead of dividing. Based on Scripture, our experience, and listening, we will face discernment questions of what the Spirit is calling us to do. The model focuses on learning ways of connecting and building on Christian community.

In a final closing session, Ellison will return to Scripture, then bring it all together to summarize what we have learned. She will discuss the practical applications of this experience and using this process as a tool for congregations dealing with conflict. A toolkit package will be given as a door prize for one congregation to take home and use in their local setting.

The 23rd annual convention of the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations is scheduled for Saturday, April 17, 2009. The morning worship service in Christ Chapel will feature homilist Stanley Olson of the ELCA national office, and special music by the Gustavus Choir and the Chapel Bells. The Association Board has designated this year's convention offering to be used for the ministries of the Association of Congregations, specifically for building the Three Crowns Ambassadors program.

During the business meeting, Association delegates will elect members to the Gustavus Board of Trustees, the Association's Board of Directors, and the Nominating Committee. Following the keynote address, delegates (clergy and lay) and their guests will enjoy a luncheon held in Alumni Hall. The Covenant Award will be presented during this time, recognizing an individual who has made distinctive contributions to strengthen the partnership between the College and congregations of the Church.

See convention schedule on page 3.

Reminder: Association congregations are currently updating information about their staff and delegates. Pastors and delegates, please check with your church office to make sure we have correct information regarding who will be invited to represent your congregation on Saturday, April 17.

Association of Congregations Board of Directors 2009-10

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Ex-officio
Assistant Director of
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Trinity Lutheran Church
St. Peter, Minn.

From the Director...

"Guided by the star, they found Him whose praise the ages sound. We too have a star to guide us, which forever will provide us with the light to find our Lord." (LBW 75)

When the campus is covered, like it is, in a blanket of white, it looks beautiful to me and brings a sense of peace. For so many of us the spire of Christ Chapel is always a beacon of light and inspiration. Yet, I think it stands out especially bright during the winter days when the darkness comes early. Still lingering in my heart is the feeling of everyone gathered together worshipping at Christmas in Christ Chapel. What a bright light.

I hope you find the ministries Gustavus provides to the congregations through the Office of Church Relations to be a bright light for you. Thank you to the many who have taken advantage of the excellent ministry resources we make available to the church. This edition of *The Spire* is filled with details about our upcoming events this spring. We are a college of the church, and we count it a privilege to be your partner in faith and learning. May this coming year bring us opportunities to do even more together to strengthen the tie of faith in Jesus Christ that binds us!

Rev. Grady St. Dennis
Director of Church Relations

InSpire!



During the month of January our students are spread out, with some studying on campus and others studying away on study-abroad or internship opportunities. The second semester begins in February. Our hope with this column is that it might offer some helpful ideas on how you might make the students from your congregation feel loved and supported over the next couple of months.

Whether your students are on campus or away studying somewhere in the world, here are three suggestions to consider:

- Write often with news from home—and an occasional dollar or two will not go unappreciated. If your student has taught Sunday school or served in a mentor role for the youth, perhaps one of the young adults could be encouraged to send a personal “thinking of you” note to their mentor off at college.
- If they are not too far away, send a care-package. Baking cookies or gathering goodies for a care-package could be an excellent project in the congregation to help send the message to your students that they are remembered and loved. I have seen some opening a package of goodies and, trust me, it is a huge deal.
- Keep them in your personal prayers and put them on the church prayer list. In some ways, I think it is hard to be a young person today. Your love and support goes a long way.
- If your congregation is planning a retreat at Gustavus, make sure you let your students know that you will be on campus so they can join you. Invite them to meet your youth group during social time or free time, or to have a meal with you when you are on campus.
- Be an active listener when in conversation. Ask about their learning experiences. Encourage them in their faith walk.

Thank you for holding your students in prayer and for the ways you seek to personally reach out to them while they are away at college. Believe me—your efforts not only help lift your student's spirits, but they feed their spirits as well, reminding them that their faith community continues to care for them during this formative time in their lives.

Meet Jerod Freeberg Church Relations Student Intern



Jerod Freeberg of Maple Grove, Minn., joins the staff of the Office of Church Relations for one semester as a student intern in February 2010. He will be in charge of coordinating the Student Leadership Day on April 17.

Internships at Gustavus are intended to give upperclassmen new perspectives on possibilities for the professional world following their undergraduate experience. These are meant to be intriguing, challenging, and instructional, and interns contribute meaningfully in hands-on experiences that cannot be learned in the

classroom or from textbooks. Over 60 percent of Gustavus students participate in an internship while they are enrolled at the College.

Jerod, a senior religion major, is preparing for seminary and hopes to make ministry his career. Previously, he has worked at Green Lake Bible Camp, and during high school as a leader with FCA. On campus, for two years he has been a team leader for Gustavus Youth Outreach. He plans to attend Luther Seminary next year and to work part time in youth ministry while there. Regarding outcomes for this internship experience, he said, "I look forward to the chance to work with youth who, like myself, are excited and involved in their communities of faith, and to sharing stories with them about being a leader in their faith."

The Three Crowns Ambassador Program

Church relatedness is a key aspect of the foundation of Gustavus Adolphus College. We are intentional in working to strengthen our relationships with congregations. The purpose of the Three Crowns Ambassador Program is to give every member congregation of the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations (GACAC) a designated representative to shepherd the congregation's relationship with the College.

The mission of Gustavus (as well as other Lutheran colleges) complements congregational ministry. Gustavus makes numerous resources available to congregations because we consider this College a partner in ministry. One challenge we face is communicating the availability of these resources. Our Three Crowns Ambassador volunteers inform their congregations and help Gustavus maintain a living connection to the Lutheran Church. Ambassadors are encouraged to serve as congregational delegates.

Three Crowns Ambassadors

- **Advocate** for Lutheran higher education in general, and Gustavus in particular;
- **Maintain** the clergy and delegate information list for your congregation and ENCOURAGE attendance at the annual Association of Congregations Convention; and
- **Promote** participation of other key Gustavus community events.

Area representatives serve as leaders of Ambassador teams within this program. Congregational delegates serve as goodwill ambassadors in the congregation and promote Lutheran higher education.

If you would like to serve as a Three Crowns Ambassador in your congregation, please sign up by calling the Office of Church Relations at 800-726-6194.

23rd Annual GACAC Convention, Saturday, April 17, 2010

Practical Tools for Moral Deliberation in Congregations

Schedule for the Day

8:30 a.m.

Registration opens

Jackson Campus Center, lower level
Coffee and rolls in the Courtyard Café

9:30 a.m.

Worship with the Rev. Stanley Olson
Christ Chapel

10:10 a.m.

Welcome, Business Meeting
in Christ Chapel

**Elections for Board of Trustees and
Association Board**

Address by President Jack Ohle

11 a.m.

Keynote address – Christ Chapel
Dr. Pat Taylor Ellison: "Building
Agreement and Strategies for Spiritual
Discernment in Community"

12 p.m.

Luncheon – Alumni Hall
Student Faith Reflections
Covenant Award Presentation

1–2:30 p.m.

Discussion Groups and "An
Experience of Spiritual Discernment
in Community" – Jackson Campus
Center & Johnson Hall

2:45–3 p.m.

Closing Session by Dr. Pat Taylor
Ellison – Jackson Campus Center

3 p.m.

Closing Reception
Jackson Campus Center

*Invitations will be sent to all pastors
and delegates of Association
Congregations to attend this event
and the luncheon without charge.
Guests are welcome. RSVP;
pre-registration is due by April 9.*

Student Leadership Day!!



What: A one-day event for high school student leaders! Bring your high school youth group leadership prospects for a day of leadership development that will help them to see themselves more as leaders.

When: Saturday, April 17, 2010
9:30am – 3:30pm
(Registration 8:30-9:30am)



Where: Gustavus Adolphus College
800 West College Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082

Age: Youth in Grades 8th-11th

Cost: \$10 per person (Including Adult Leaders)



The day will include:

- Worship and teaching by Tiger McLuen from Youth Leadership
- Practical ideas for youth directors on growing a vibrant youth ministry
- Reflection small groups on application of teaching points, facilitated by Gustavus students

To register E-MAIL group leader name, student(s) name and school year to Jerod Freeberg

E-mail: jfreeber@gustavus.edu or Phone: (507) 933-7073

REGISTRATION DEADLINE and GROUP PAYMENT DUE: April 12, 2010

Student Leadership Day Returns to Gustavus on April 17, 2010

The Office of Church Relations is proud to offer congregations a special event for building leadership among high school students who have been identified by their pastors or youth directors as having potential and interest in developing the skills needed for leadership—in the congregational setting and beyond. The event will be held on Saturday, April 17, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. For the second consecutive year, we are offering this day of leadership training for high school students. The goal of the day is to help students define what it means to be a leader, and to equip and encourage young people to see the possibilities of what they can do within their communities (in the congregation, in and outside the school setting, and more).

The event will include a keynote presentation by Tiger McLuen, president of Youth Leadership. Programming will also include upbeat Christian music and worship; discussion, and activities. There will also be a session for youth directors, with practical ideas for growing a vibrant youth ministry. The cost of the day per person attending will be \$10 and will include lunch. To register students from your congregation, call Jerod at 507-933-7073 in the Office of Church Relations.



“God vs. Atheism: Engaging Natural Science and Religion” **Exploring Religious Questions Series, Winter 2010**



Are natural science and religion in conflict? Many Americans assume they are, and this impression is heightened when some Christians reject evolution—and when a scientist, such as Englishman Richard Dawkins, can be heard giving speeches to claim that Darwinian evolution denies the existence of God.

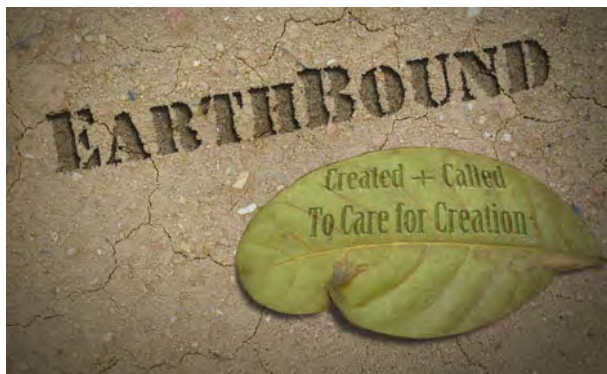
How can believers respond to those who make such (anti-) religious claims in the name of science? Is there anything believers can learn from them? What role do regularity, chance, and purpose play in the world and in the Bible? How can we understand Genesis, evolution, and theology? Are there dangers of giving too much or too little authority

to science? How is the life of the Christians in the world affected by science? Is it possible to move from a conflict model through a recognition of difference to a new engagement of science and theology?

Working with 20 partner congregations, the Office of Church Relations at Gustavus has developed the fourth in a series of in-depth mini-courses for anyone who seeks a deeper understanding of the Bible. The course will be taught by the Rev. Dr. Darrell Jodock with help from faculty in the religion and natural science departments on five consecutive Mondays, beginning February 1 (with a snow date of March 8), from 7 to 9 p.m. The fee for the mini-course is \$30; no other curriculum materials are needed. Registration deadline is January 27. For more information or to register, call Marilyn at 507-933-7001. (A registration flyer can be found online at www.gustavus.edu/churchrelations/files/erq10.pdf).

Earthbound: Created and Called to Care for Creation

Gustavus co-sponsors new film series



No matter where you stand politically, there is no arguing that the earth is being damaged by the humans who live on it. “Creation is groaning under the weight of our careless behavior,” says David Rhoads, host of the series *Earthbound: Created and Called to Care for Creation*. This 6-session DVD series, filmed during 2009, is new and available to congregations.

Earth matters deeply to the God who created it. As beings created by God to be here, we and *all* of creation, not just humans, are bound to each other. Creation is dynamic and ongoing. It is our calling from God, in whose image we were created, to care for and heal the earth, and to live in right relationship with the earth and with each other. Genesis 1–3 gives us this charge and tells us how to do it.

The six-session series explores the complex relationship that Christians have with God’s creation. In trying to be God-focused, Christians have become heaven-focused at the expense of our earthly home. Is salvation limited to life after death? What is enough, and how much is too much in how we live? The series uses our religious traditions, including Martin Luther’s understanding of justification and vocation, to help rethink concepts, misconceptions, and relationships. *Earthbound* is a journey and a challenge to God’s people throughout the church to individually and in community live out that call.

Gustavus’s vocation and environmental programs are featured in the series, as well as innovative biochemical research at Augsburg College, Lutheran camping, direct farming and associated risks, and applications of the other concepts under discussion. Representing Gustavus and appearing throughout the series are Darrell Jodock (religion), Mark Bjelland (geography), Jim Dontje (Johnson Center for Environmental Innovation), and Chris Johnson ’85 (Center for Vocational Reflection). Also featured are theologians and scholars: Walter Brueggemann, Larry Rasmussen, Terence E. Fretheim, Mark Tranvik, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Diane L. Jacobson, and many others. Megan Torgerson, associate pastor of Augustana Lutheran Church in West St. Paul, co-hosts the series.

The six episodes of the series take us beyond rhetoric in the following discussions:

- Episode 1. Created/Called (justified and free to serve the world)
- Episode 2. Here/There (creation is earthly, material and good)
- Episode 3. Domination/Dominion (above creation, or part of it?)
- Episode 4. Me/We (identity is social context)
- Episode 5. Now/Forever (short-term benefit, or eternal creation)
- Episode 6. Enough/Too Much (scarcity and abundance)

The series emphasizes that we are not alone—we live in a web of community in our earthbound calling. *Shalom* is the peace that comes from right relationship and being in harmony with the earth and with each other. *Shalom* is a rich concept for social justice. God provided abundantly for us on this earth, and only by living in ways designed for the mutual benefit of others and the earth around us do we achieve *shalom*.

Kevin Dragseth ’96, with his father, Hal Dragseth, filmed and directed the series for Seraphim Communications. Major funding was provided from Gustavus Adolphus College by the Office of Church Relations, the Center for Vocational Reflection, and the Johnson Center for Environmental Innovation.

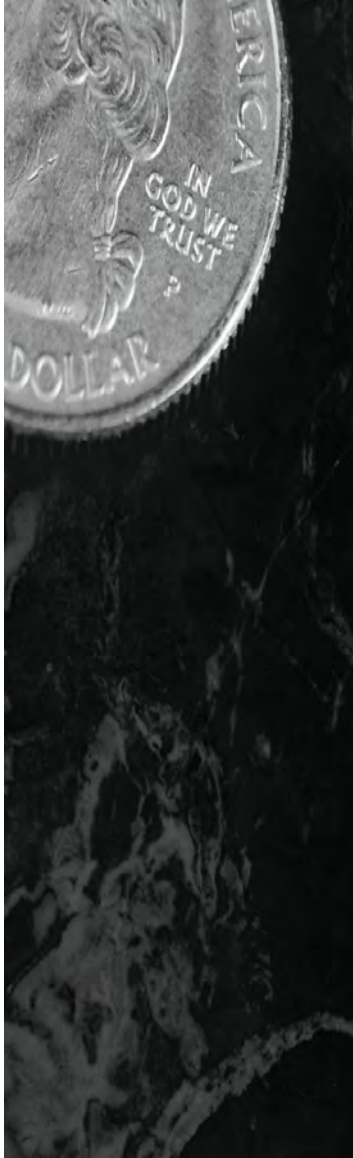
Earthbound, filmed in high definition, is available to congregations through Seraphim Communications, Inc. (seracomm.com). The package includes two DVDs and a study guide in PDF format.

Update on Wind Turbines at Gustavus

For several years, Gustavus has aspired to construct a wind turbine on campus. Many have supported this effort, which would afford an important learning opportunity as well as making clear our collective commitment to renewable energy.

This effort suffered a setback in December 2009 when the Nicollet County Board of Adjustment and Appeals turned down the College’s request for a variance to the recently passed county ordinance prohibiting wind turbine construction within half a mile of residential property.

According to President Ohle, “Despite this [decision not made in our favor], we will continue to explore opportunities to further manifest our commitment to environmental sustainability here on campus.”



Gustavus Adolphus College
Partner site for Trinity Institute's
40th National Theological Conference
January 27-29, 2010

Does theology have a role in shaping a new economy?

Whatever happens in the world economy in the coming months, one thing is certain: advocating for an ethical economy—one that works toward the biblical idea of sufficiency for all and is resistant to exploitation—will be a priority, especially for clergy and lay leaders.

Join us as we explore the relationship between economics and Christian belief and action. Each speaker will address in detail the following questions:

- Theology & Economics: Two Different Worlds?
- Is Capitalism a Belief System?
- What is Wealth?
- What Do We Owe the Future?

Cost: \$25 per person. Printed materials and refreshments are included; meals not included. Limited space is available for overnight accommodations at \$20 per night per night per person.

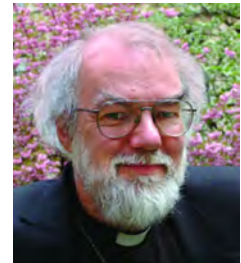
Advanced registration is necessary.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: January 22, 2010

REGISTRATION: Contact Office of Church Relations
Marilyn Beyer 507-933-7001 mbeyer@gustavus.edu

This project, as a partner site of the Trinity Institute, Wall Street, is a collaboration of the Office of Church Relations and the Department of Economics and Management.

Trinity Institute® 40th National Theological Conference



Rowan Williams



Partha Dasgupta



Kathryn Tanner



Bernard Ntahoturi

REGISTRATION for "Building an Ethical Economy: Theology & the Marketplace"
January 27-29, 2009 at Gustavus Adolphus College

Name(s) _____ Mailing address: _____

City _____ State, ZIP _____

Daytime Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Religious affiliation _____ (Info used to create balance in small groups)

_____ \$25 per person registration fee enclosed Mail to: **Gustavus Adolphus College**
Office of Church Relations

800 West College Avenue, St. Peter, Minnesota 56082

Office of Church Relations Information

Our mission is to strengthen the presence of the College in congregations of the ELCA and to strengthen the presence of the Church in the College. If your congregation is not now a member of the Association of Congregations but is interested in becoming a member, contact the Office of Church Relations. The Association of Congregations is one of the key resources in helping to ensure that Gustavus remains a college of the Church.

The Rev. Grady St. Dennis '92
Director of Church Relations
507-933-7661
stdennis@gustavus.edu

Marilyn Beyer
Assistant Director of Church Relations
507-933-7001
mbeyer@gustavus.edu

Student Intern
507-933-7073
church-relations@gustavus.edu

Toll-free: 800-726-6194
Fax: 507-933-6337
gustavus.edu/oncampus/churchrelations

Confirmation Retreats Program
507-933-7023
confirmation-retreats@gustavus.edu

Gustavus Youth Outreach (GYO)
507-933-7585
youthoutreach@gustavus.edu

Adult Retreat Programs
507-933-7001
retreat-center@gustavus.edu

Partners Programs
507-933-7001
church-relations@gustavus.edu

Office hours: 8 a.m.–4:45 p.m. M–F
(unavailable during Chapel 10–10:30 a.m.)

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