



AN OUTREACH OF CHURCH RELATIONS

# THE SPIRE

Strengthening the presence of the Church in the College and the presence of the College in the Church.

Volume 14:2 | Winter 2013

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Kenneth Mtata

## Faith Conference at Gustavus: “Road to the Reformation: Deepening Our Lutheran Theological Roots”

MARILYN BEYER, Assistant Director for Church Relations

After 25 years of hosting an annual convention for the Association of Congregations, we are moving on to a brand new format in this 26th year of the Association’s history. All are invited and welcome to attend a day-long Faith Conference on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College on April 20, 2013.

The theme of the conference is *Road to the Reformation: Deepening Our Lutheran Theological Roots*. We promise a day of learning, inspiration, and deep connection with our Lutheran identity.

The conference will open with joyful worship and praise in Christ Chapel. College Chaplains will preside, and the Rev. Corinne Chilstrom will bring a message. College musicians will also be featured.

The Faith Conference will feature two keynote speakers. Dr. Martin E. Marty, Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Chicago Divinity School, will speak on the topic of “What Do Lutherans Have to Offer the 21st Century?” Following lunch, the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Mtata, Study Secretary for the Department of Theology and Public Witness in the Lutheran World Federation, will bring a second keynote, “Lutheranism in the 21st Century—African Perspectives.” Following the second presentation, there will be dialog by the speakers from their two perspectives, followed by a brief period for Q&A.

There is no cost to attend the Faith Conference. We encourage you to bring friends and family, your church council, women’s circles, men’s prayer breakfast groups, and others. There will be a \$10 charge for a box lunch and beverage; please pre-order for the lunch so that enough will be prepared, and be sure to mention any special dietary needs. See page 3 for the Faith Conference Schedule for the Day. For questions and lunch pre-orders, contact Church Relations in the Center for Servant Leadership at 507-933-7001, or church-relations@gustavus.edu.

For pastors and delegates of the Association of Congregations, the annual business meeting will be held over breakfast at 9:00 a.m., prior to the opening of the Faith Conference. Elections for the Board of Trustees, Association Board, and Nominating Committee will be the primary order of business, and the Covenant Award will be bestowed. We ask that delegates and pastors please pre-register for this business meeting.

*(Please see page 3 for more information.)*

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OF CONGREGATIONS  
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## From the Director

PASTOR GRADY ST. DENNIS, Director for Church Relations



*"As shoes for your feet, put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace."*  
Ephesians 6:15

Grace and peace to you from the Gustavus Center for Servant Leadership!

I have been reflecting lately about our relationship. I am not sure if people appreciate how rare such relationships are these days. The perspective that comes from working with the more than 540 member congregations of the Gustavus Association of Congregations is very unique and valuable. This is even more the case when one considers the insights gained from the many relationships that come from an established network of Gustavus alumni; ELCA partnerships; sister ELCA colleges and universities; community partners; and,

ecumenical and inter-faith friends.

In a time when in person community seems difficult to build, let alone sustain, I am especially thankful for these important ties of faith that bind us to one another. Relational bonds that link Gustavus to the Church and the Church to Gustavus.

May I share an insight we have realized from the unique perspective we have through the Church Relations outreach at Gustavus? This network of relationships is not only a blessing for us respectively, but the very efforts we all make to invest in these relationships of unity and purpose also serve as a bold witness that a broader definition of community is still possible.

The hymn "Christ, Be Our Light" is our Daily Chapel theme during the month of January. I conclude my words to you using the final verse:

*"Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.*

*Let us be servants to one another,  
signs of your kingdom come."*

## InSpire!

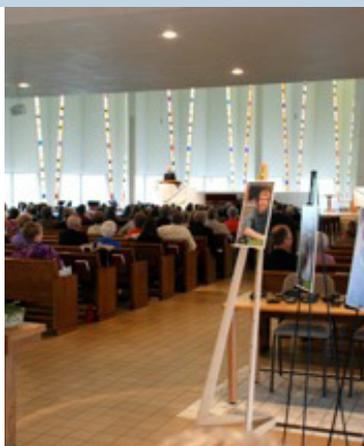
Thank you for the outreach efforts you make to the college students from your congregation. The big and little things you do for them truly are appreciated and are a clear message to them that they are loved and supported by their home congregation.

We offer the following as suggestions of things you might consider doing for your young adults away at college:

- Take the initiative in connecting with them during holiday breaks and when school is not in session. Some congregations have a welcome home potluck for the returning students and invite them all to wear their college colors. Some have the college student gather for a picture to post in the narthex area, youth room, or other bulletin board area to remind all to keep these young leaders in prayer.

- For those who bring your youth groups to Gustavus for a retreat, contact your students at Gustavus to let them know that you will be on campus so they can join you. Invite them to meet your youth group during social time, free time or to have a meal with you when you are on campus.
- Be an active listener when in conversation with your college students. 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 us when we tell you that your efforts have a huge impact.



Breakfast business meeting of the GACAC will be held in Alumni Hall and followed by worship and the Faith Conference.

## Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations Business Meeting April 20, 2013

“The Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations, an association of partner ELCA congregations, serves to strengthen the presence of the Church in the College and the presence of the College in the Church.

“In partnership, the College and the Association strengthen and support each other’s mission—informing, challenging, and inspiring each other through continual dialog.” This is the mission statement of the Association of Congregations (GACAC).

The 26th annual business meeting of the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations will be held over breakfast in Alumni Hall at Gustavus at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2013. Clergy and lay delegates from Association member congregations meet to conduct this business. All current pastors and lay delegates are invited and encouraged to attend as their congregation’s representatives to assist in the important business of the day and be our guests for this breakfast meeting.

Voting delegates (all clergy and lay representatives from Association congregations) will hold elections for members nominated to serve on the Gustavus Board of Trustees, as well as the Association’s Board of Directors and Nominating Committee. During the business meeting, College President Jack R. Ohle will address the assembly, sharing news of the College and holding up the College’s core value of faith. He will also confer the 2013 Covenant

Award, recognizing significant contributions to encourage the partnership between Gustavus Adolphus College and member congregations of the Association.

Pre-registration is necessary for all clergy and delegates who plan to attend the breakfast business meeting. There is no cost to attend this meeting.

It is our hope that everyone will remain for the remainder of the day. We promise you a wonderful, thoughtful and inspiring day, and time for fellowship! Please encourage your friends, your family, people from your congregations, students at Gustavus from your congregation, and others to join you in attending the Faith Conference, which will include worship followed by two outstanding keynote speakers. Your presence is important.

The ways in which we share our faith, and the reason for the Faith Conference that will follow, is summed up in the vision statement for the GACAC: “The Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations is a valued and vital link in a life-giving dynamic partnership with each member congregation, the College, and the ELCA, and drawing on the unique gifts of each.”

### FAITH CONFERENCE SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY, APRIL 20, 2013

Following the Association business meeting, the SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY will be as follows:

**10:45 a.m.**

Morning Worship  
Christ Chapel

**11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.**

Keynote Address by Dr. Martin E. Marty: “What Do Lutherans Have to Offer the 21st Century?”

**12:45–1:30 p.m.**

Break for lunch. Bag lunches will be available for \$10 each.

*Please pre-register for lunch; payment welcome in advance or accepted at the door.*

**1:45–2:45 p.m.**

Keynote Address by Dr. Kenneth Mtata: “Lutheranism in the 21st Century: African Perspectives”

**2:45–3:15 p.m.**

Dialog and discussion from two perspectives, Q&A

**3:15–3:30 p.m.**

Sending reception

## THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF EXPLORING RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS (ERQ)

Topics selected for courses over the past five years have included:

**2008**

“Sorting Out Conflicting Approaches of Interpreting the Bible”

**2009**

“Hope in a Time of Anxiety and Crisis”

“The U.S. and the Abrahamic Faiths (Judaism, Christianity & Islam): The Public Role of Religion”

**2010**

“God vs. Atheism: Engaging Natural Science & Religion”

“The Dead Sea Scrolls, Jesus & Judaism”

**2011**

“God’s Purpose & Our Role in the World”

“Creeds, Beliefs, & Life Today”

**2012**

“Politics & Religion: Sorting Things Out”

“Christianity & Judaism after the Holocaust”

Dr. Jodock will coordinate the curriculum for winter 2013 ERQ, which is scheduled to begin February 4. The topic will be “The Changing Religious Landscape in the U.S.”

For a description of the next mini-course, and to register, please visit the website at [www.gustavus.edu/churchrelations/files/erq-flyer.pdf](http://www.gustavus.edu/churchrelations/files/erq-flyer.pdf).



Jodock instructs during an ERQ minicourse. On November 5, President Jack Ohle conferred a Sesquicentennial Award to Dr. Darrell Jodock. Above, Darrell Jodock celebrates the award with his wife, Jan. | Photos by Marilyn Beyer

## The Story Is Told—Making Five Full Years of Exploring Religious Questions

MARILYN BEYER, Assistant Director for Church Relations

As 2012 came to an end, I was struck by the fact that there are stories we have not told about Gustavus’s Exploring Religious Questions (ERQ) series, the mini-course which is held fall and winter over a five- to six-week period. We have promoted each individual series online, in *The Spire*, and through e-mail, and during the years, there have been many special moments.

The idea of ERQ was born as an idea of Grady St. Dennis (Director for Church Relations and College Chaplain) and Darrell Jodock (former Bernhardson Chair of Lutheran Studies 1998-2012), on a hunch that people in area churches wanted to “dig deeper” than their Sunday morning adult education programs allowed time for, and a chance to process and discuss how it relates to their faith and daily life. The collaboration was encouraged by a group of area pastors who met with us to help think about specific topics that might appeal to their parishioners.

Over the past 5 years, those conversations with pastors have continued. To this point, all the courses have been designed by Professor Darrell Jodock. The course topics have been varied and appealed to a great variety of interests. For all but one of the courses, additional instructors from Gustavus and from other regional colleges and universities have taught one or more sessions.

“I gained many new insights from the material presented—too many to elaborate on,” applauded one participant. [I have gained] “a much deeper understanding of God, of wrestling with God,” said another. The mini-courses are always open to new participants, and many tend to come back for the next course. “Each time the material is covered with clarity and thoroughly,” summarized a third participant. “With a faculty as gifted as Dr. Jodock, the seminars were wonderful—the time went very fast.”

The course has been meaningful to Jodock as well. He insists that no topic has been a favorite, but all have been areas of special interest to him. The core of people who attends ERQ has become very special to him, however. During the fall, he was the recipient of a Sesquicentennial Award, presented by College President Jack R. Ohle. Given a choice of where to receive the honor, instead of at a College awards dinner, Jodock elected to open an ERQ class session with the conferring of the award—to the delight of all.

For Dr. Darrell Jodock, for the courage of Gustavus and area pastors to collaborate to create this project, for the people who have experienced ERQ, and for the ways the Christian faith lives within us as a result of learning and reflection, we give thanks to God.



Heidi Vanderpan '15 felt called to create a new kind of daily chapel worship experience at Gustavus. With enthusiastic support from both the chaplains and the student faith community, new ideas for worship are giving students new ways to express their faith and participate in worship on campus.

Heidi Vanderpan '15 with Kate Knutson '13. | Photo by Marilyn Beyer

## A New Worship Experience During Daily Chapel at Gustavus—RE:VIVE!

KATE KNUTSON '13, religion major and student assistant, Center for Servant Leadership-Church Relations

Last spring, Heidi Vanderpan '15 was enrolled in the Public Discourse class in the Communication Studies Department, a class that encourages students to implement a change in the community—or on campus—going after big goals through a civic engagement project. Gustavus students use the course to effect a change, be it in public policy, in the lives of those around them, or in changing hearts and minds. Vanderpan felt as though the chapel experience at Gustavus needed something more—something that students are drawn to, something different from a traditional service. Chapel needed to become something that students would be excited about and a time that would fulfill their spiritual need.

As a first-year student, Vanderpan did not attend chapel as much as she had planned because it did not resonate with her. She decided to focus her project for Public Discourse on creating a contemporary chapel service at Gustavus. It was something that other students had tried before, but it had never succeeded. Vanderpan knew that a contemporary service was a “want” from the student body, and she had the drive to make it happen. She says she felt called to create this service.

After many hours of hard work, prayer, and dedication, RE:VIVE was created. RE:VIVE

is led by student volunteers who want to share their musical talent and faith with the Gustavus community. The hymns at the service are contemporary. RE:VIVE focuses on eight aspects of faith: reconnect, reaffirm, realign, rebirth, reawake, recommit, refuel, and redemption. Vanderpan decided on these aspects believing that every student has a different faith need that should be addressed. Some students know what they believe, some students are new to their faith, and some students simply need a place to go to be reminded of their faith. She chose Psalm 150:6 as the scripture for RE:VIVE—“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.”

RE:VIVE takes place every other Thursday, and happens during the regular chapel time at Gustavus. For the first RE:VIVE service, Vanderpan requested a printing of 75 bulletins, thinking that this would be plenty, but when every single bulletin was used with at least 200 people attending chapel that morning, she not only had tears of joy in her eyes but also knew that she had created something at Gustavus that students were longing for and that would make a difference. She had created something that not only changed *her* life but also introduced people to *their* faith.

As a senior, I believe that RE:VIVE has

impacted the faith community on campus. I am also a leader for Proclaim, which is a student-led contemporary Christian worship service that happens every Tuesday night. I do not always have a chance to worship at Proclaim because of all the leadership responsibilities that I hold. RE:VIVE has provided the opportunity for me to worship in a way in which I can thrive. RE:VIVE is a 20-minute break in the morning that allows me to focus on my faith in worship, forget about the stress in my life, challenge my faith, and truly feel God’s presence. Whenever I leave RE:VIVE, I feel refueled, refreshed, and truthfully “revived.” Even though RE:VIVE only happens twice a month, it is something that many students, myself included, hold close to their hearts.

Vanderpan, now a sophomore, hopes to see RE:VIVE continue throughout her next two years here and beyond. She already knows that this has impacted the lives of many in the Gustavus student body. “RE:VIVE is something that is new to our school. People are excited about it. It has a lot of potential and it has impacted our campus in a positive way.”

## FIFTH ANNUAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP DAY TO BE HELD AT GUSTAVUS APRIL 20, 2013

The Gustavus Center for Servant Leadership welcomes high school students and their leaders to come to campus for a Saturday to explore ways to make significant contributions to their congregations and ministries by exercising their God-given gifts for leadership.

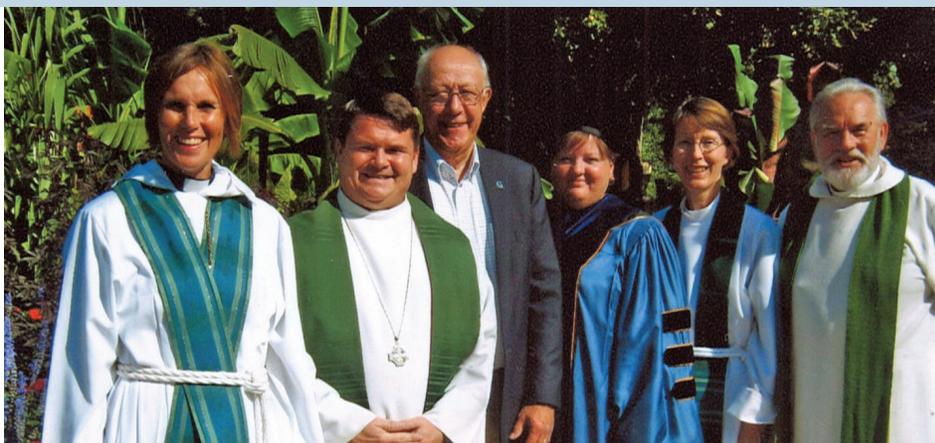
The day will feature presentations and small-group discussion to help your students consider the development of leadership that is both faith-centered and effective. Upbeat music will add to the enthusiasm of the day, and there will also be time for reflection.

The Reverend Dean Smith, Minister of Youth and Family at Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna, will guide the presentations. Gustavus student leaders will facilitate conversations with high school youth. The focus of the event will be to encourage students to consider how they can share their own leadership gifts with the ministry of their congregations.

Students and their youth leaders should register in advance for the event. The charge is \$10 per person, which will include lunch and all the materials that you will need for the day.

### SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY:

- 8:30 a.m.** Registration in The Dive, Johnson Student Union
- 9:00 a.m.** Opening, welcome, and music
- 9:30 a.m.** Presentation #1
- 10:45 a.m.** Small-group reflection time
- 11:45 a.m.** Bag lunch and social time
- 12:15 p.m.** Walk around campus
- 1:00 p.m.** Presentation #2
- 2:00 p.m.** Small-group reflection time
- 2:45 p.m.** Closing session



The ministry team at Gustavus Adolphus College: (L-R: Sabina Koj, Grady St. Dennis, Darrell Jodock, JoNes Van Hecke, Rachel Larson, and Rod Anderson)

## Search for a New Chaplain Underway

Chaplains at Gustavus serve a number of very important functions. They are pastors to 2,500 students and some 650 faculty and staff. They are responsible during the school year for daily chapel and Sunday morning worship services, for leading small-group discussions about faith, for connecting with student-led religious groups on campus, for organizing Christmas in Christ Chapel, for participating in the College's public events (such as the Nobel Conference and graduation), for cooperating with other departments and other offices on campus, and for mentoring Chapel assistants, Chapel speakers, and the like. They need to profess and interpret the faith in a way that is appropriate in an academic community and respectful of community members with differing religious commitments. They need to understand the Lutheran tradition in a deep and resilient way, so that they can interpret it persuasively and be flexible in its expression. With the possible exception of the President, no one on campus has a broader range of constituents and responsibilities.

A Chaplain Search/Call Committee has recently been formed at Gustavus with Darrell Jodock as committee chair. The committee has held three "open conversations" with members of the College community about what is needed, has met with the Chapel staff, and has formulated a "position description" which will serve as the basis for nominations and applications.

In addition to Dr. Jodock, the committee includes two students, Heidi Vanderpan '15 and Ben Whalen '13; three staff members, JoNes VanHecke, Vice President for Student Life, Darrin Good, Associate Provost, and Amy Pehrson from the Center for Servant Leadership; and four faculty members, Mimi

Gerstbauer (Political Science and Peace Studies), Doug Nimmo (Music), Will Friert (Emeritus, Classics), and Mark Kruger (Psychological Science). The President-elect of the Association of Congregations, Pastor Heather Wigdahl, and Bishop Jon Anderson fill out the committee.

A year and a half ago Chaplain Brian Johnson accepted a position at Valparaiso University. Rod Anderson was appointed interim Chaplain. The vacancy arises now because Anderson's two-year term will end in 2013. Chaplain Rachel Larson remains on the staff. In addition to his primary role as Director of Church Relations, Grady St. Dennis also serves as Chaplain. And this year and next the College enjoys the presence of Sabina Koj, a pastor from Sweden who is serving as a visiting Chaplain.

The title of this particular position is "Chaplain of the College and Chair of College Ministries." The latter part of that title indicates that the person in this position will both participate in the team of Chaplains and report to the President on behalf of the Chaplains. A fuller description of the position is available from Ms. Jolene Christensen ([jolene@gustavus.edu](mailto:jolene@gustavus.edu)).

Nominations are welcome. From now through January 31, they can be sent to Jolene's e-mail address. Self-nominations and applications are due February 13, 2013, and can also be sent to the same address. Applications are to be submitted electronically and should include a letter which identifies experiences and commitments that qualify the applicant for this position, a professional resumé, and the names and contact information of three references. Nominations will be treated in confidence and references will not be contacted until the candidate is notified and gives permission.



80% of Americans want more out of work. Are you one of them? Find the dream job and career you crave! | Artwork by Neely Prenzlow

Catherine Byers Breet is a life-skills coach for job seekers, helping them to turn a dream job into reality. | Submitted photo

## Pastor-2-Pastor Begins Second Decade

In 2002, a program was begun by the Southwestern Minnesota Synod and Gustavus Adolphus College as a pilot project to help pastors partner for pastoral excellence. The program was designed as a network to support pastors, and designed to care for body, mind, and spirit of the pastors who care for their congregations 24/7/365. An advisory board was formed, and that fall, the program was launched.

Now in its eleventh year, Pastor-2-Pastor is a unique opportunity for pastors to enhance their ministry through learning and supportive collegiality. It has expanded to include pastors of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod and interested pastors from other denominations in common mission.

Pastors pay a nominal annual membership fee. They meet together monthly in colleague teams, led by a trained facilitator, sharing concerns and issues and having mutual accountability; building friendships and collegiality; and enjoying meaningful study, prayer, and worship. Three times a year, all meet at Gustavus for a 24-hour Gathering, with continuing education offered by professionals from a variety of disciplines on topics related to ministry, with time for conversation and mutual support.

Financial support is needed in order to maintain the quality of this program and bring it to a self-sustaining level. Please consider this opportunity to Partner for Pastoral Excellence. To give a gift, or if you have any questions, please contact Grady St. Dennis at 507-933-7661 or e-mail church-relations@gustavus.edu.

## “Dream Job Workshop”

The Gustavus Center for Servant Leadership offers a seminar course, “Dream Job Workshop,” a four-part classroom series led by Catherine Byers Breet (Arbez.com). It is held in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area but is also available in webinar format. The workshop is, in fact, not exclusively for alumni but is designed for anyone who is unemployed, underemployed, or unhappily employed.

Considering your own personal gifts, passions and talents, you will discover how to turn those strengths into possibilities for meaningful work. Critical skills and new strategies will give you new confidence in looking for new career opportunities. You will learn about networking done right, and about barriers to your success and how to break through them. You’ll learn how to execute a smart and effective job transition. You will learn secrets to help you break through the challenges of the hidden job market (less than 20% of open positions are posted online); how to navigate communication barriers (every company has its own language, and the challenge is to figure out how to speak it); and how to name and break through the personal barriers that are holding you back.

Catherine Byers Breet, the workshop’s job hunt coach, opened ARBEZ in 2006 and created the Online Job Hunt Coaching System. She delivers honest advice, and since 2009 has helped over 25,000 job seekers “change their stripes.” (The name of her company is zebra spelled backward. Read about Change Your Stripes at [arbez.com/meet-joe](http://arbez.com/meet-joe)).

Alumni and others who enrolled in the pilot program offered last spring found the workshop to be of great value. This year, value was added in making the program available online.

The workshop classes are held on four Tuesdays from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the University Center of Saint Mary’s University, located at 2540 Park Avenue South. The series is offered at a bargain rate of \$199. A winter series will be offered in February and March, and a spring series in April and May. Seats are limited. To register, visit: [gustavus.edu/servantleadership/careerexplorationandtransitioncourse.php](http://gustavus.edu/servantleadership/careerexplorationandtransitioncourse.php) or phone the Center for Servant Leadership at 507-933-7272.



## Center for Servant Leadership, Church Relations

507-933-7001 | Toll-free 800-726-6194 | [gustavus.edu/churchrelations](http://gustavus.edu/churchrelations)

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

### BECOME A MEMBER!

Is your ELCA congregation not a member of the Association of Congregations but interested in joining? Contact the Center for Servant Leadership-Church Relations.

#### The Rev. Grady St. Dennis '92

Director for Church Relations and  
College Chaplain  
507-933-7661 | [stdennis@gustavus.edu](mailto:stdennis@gustavus.edu)

#### Marilyn Beyer

Assistant Director for Church Relations  
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#### Student Intern

507-933-7073  
[church-relations@gustavus.edu](mailto:church-relations@gustavus.edu)

Fax 507-933-6337

#### Confirmation Retreats Program

507-933-7023  
[confirmation-retreats@gustavus.edu](mailto:confirmation-retreats@gustavus.edu)

#### Gustavus Youth Outreach (GYO)

507-933-7585  
[youthoutreach@gustavus.edu](mailto:youthoutreach@gustavus.edu)

#### Adult Retreat Programs

507-933-7001  
[retreat-center@gustavus.edu](mailto:retreat-center@gustavus.edu)

#### Partners Programs

507-933-7001  
[church-relations@gustavus.edu](mailto:church-relations@gustavus.edu)

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