When and where do you find time for relaxation, reflection, and unhurried conversation? If you did not come up with a quick answer to that question, you are not alone. Many of us feel like life is moving at an accelerated pace with little time for conversation. One can imagine the pace on a college campus to be even faster among twenty-somethings who can easily reduce a phrase to a text-message such as “IDK G TR” for faster communication. Yet at Gustavus, there is a group of faculty and students who are working to slow down the pace on campus.

Twice in the past three years, the Center for Vocational Reflection has sponsored 3-day summer workshops on campus to engage faculty, administrators, and staff in discussions about what it means for Gustavus to be a mentoring community. As a result of the first workshop and the challenge to find ways to contribute to the “practices of a mentoring community here at Gustavus,” Professor Aaron Banks (health and exercise science) conceived the idea of a project intended to help build community on campus.

Aware that, years ago, Adirondack chairs used to be placed all across the campus grounds inviting camaraderie and dialog, Banks saw the opportunity to bring them back. Teaching a first-term seminar (FTS) course called Leisure Quest, he was inspired to include in the course a service-project component—bringing back Adirondack chairs to the campus mall—creating a place outdoors where people would tend to linger, and in so doing, inviting pause, reflection, and conversation.

A grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans provided $1,600 for the cost of eight chairs. In late fall 2006, Banks enlisted the help of his FTS students, working in pairs with a faculty/staff member, to build the Adirondack chairs that now adorn the campus mall. “The building of the chairs definitely has a place on my list of favorite Gustavus community moments” says junior John Bennett.

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Greetings from Pastor Grady St. Dennis

The new academic year at Gustavus Adolphus College is under way, and the energy level on campus is high! Many students have told us how much they appreciate the support and encouragement they receive from their home congregations during the school year. Thank you!

In August, the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was held in Chicago. The assembly unanimously adopted the ELCA’s ninth social statement, titled “Our Calling in Education,” reaffirming the church’s calling in education and our responsibility to work to provide education for all people. As someone concerned with the living connection of church and college, consider the two important questions from the fourth section of the statement: “Will our church have schools and colleges?” “Will our schools and colleges have a church?” That these are legitimate questions is sobering.

Working together, we are voicing an emphatic YES! to these questions. Church and college are different entities, yet our relationship is foundational in our identity. Our interdependent mission is to equip a new generation to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and carry out their vocation in society.

At Gustavus, we consider this bond between college and church and our emphasis on a liberal arts education to be not only an important part of our Lutheran heritage, but our vocation and the very foundation of our being. As a college of the church, we are intentional in our efforts to integrate faith and learning. These efforts are being strengthened by the newly established Faith and Vocation Project; a closer collaboration of the Chaplains’ Office, the Center for Vocational Reflection, the Community Service Center, and the Office of Church Relations.

We are blessed by you, and it is our intention to be a blessing to you. I hope this coming year that your congregation will make full use of the wonderful resources of Gustavus and the Office of Church Relations. Thank you for your commitment to Lutheran higher education. I look forward to working together with you this year as we enjoy our great Lutheran heritage and further strengthen the bond of church and college.

Pastor Grady St. Dennis
Director, Office of Church Relations

Plain Talk about Money and Credit
Nathan Dungan to Speak on Campus Sept. 29

How did you develop basic money management skills when you were young? Financial habits—and financial expectations—start early. Adults need to help young people understand what it will take, financially speaking, to live in the real world.

In a one-day seminar designed to help think, talk, and teach about money, Nathan Dungan, an expert on family finances and the effects of mass marketing on young people, will attempt to bring some sanity to developing and maintaining healthy financial habits. The intergenerational event is targeted at high school-age students, college-age young adults, pastors, mentors and youth leaders, parents, grandparents, and others who want to talk to others in forming them about money. But half of all parents rank their own money management skills from “OK” to “terrible.” In 2005, the after-tax personal savings rate in America went negative for the first time since 1933—we continue to spend more than we earn. And while 69 percent of American households own their home, families are increasingly using accrued equity to pay off credit cards and finance other consumer purchases.

Dungan cautions parents and youth leaders to pay attention to the financial development of children and the pressures they face—pressure to spend-spend-spend, to reach for an upscale lifestyle, to dream big without regard to cost. “If you default to the culture,” he says, “the outcome may not be pretty.” You are invited to come prepared to think and talk about this subject.

This event will be held in Jussi Bjorling Recital Hall at Gustavus on Saturday, Sept. 29, 2007, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration cost is $15 before September 20 or $18 at the door and includes lunch and materials; find the registration form online at www.swmmeuca.org. Each paid youth can bring one adult at no charge (register in advance, please).

The event is sponsored by the Southeastern and Southwestern Minnesota Synods together with the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA and Gustavus Adolphus College. Dungan has a website featuring information, links, and an e-column at www.sharesavespend.com. He is the author of Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to Be Your Child’s ATM.

Ask, Thank, Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry
Charles Lane to address a discipleship model for stewardship

Two stewardship workshops will be offered at no charge in St. Peter, Minn., on Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2007. These sessions are designed for exploring a biblically based primary relationship with Jesus that includes talk about money.

Charles “Chick” Lane, director for Stewardship Key Leader and a pastor of the ELCA, gives biblically grounded, practical advice that, if followed, would transform the Church. His message is not about maintenance, but about mission; and not membership, but discipleship. He will talk about the giver’s need to give, not the church’s need to receive. “Stewardship,” says Lane, “is an intensely spiritual matter that lies close to a disciple’s relationship with Jesus.”

One copy of Lane’s easy-to-read stewardship guide, Ask, Thank, Tell, will be given at no charge to all congregations with three or more persons attending one or both of the sessions. Sponsored by Trinity Lutheran Church of St. Peter, with the assistance of Thrivent Financial and Gustavus Adolphus College, the sessions will be offered at the times listed below:

2–4 p.m.  St. Peter Dining Room, Jackson Campus Center, Gustavus Adolphus College, for pastors and program staff

7–9 p.m.  Church of St. Peter, 1801 West Broadway, St. Peter, for pastors, stewardship leaders, and all the baptized

To register, e-mail office@trinitystpeter.org by Sept. 21, 2007.

Association Membership Handbook 2007–2010


The handbook, produced by the Office of Church Relations, will be sent to all member congregations of the Association and their delegates, and will be of special interest to members of the adult education committee. It contains descriptions of the resources available to congregations as well as a listing of the educational topics and College presenters available for Sunday morning forums and for other meetings. The presentations range from topics in the Lutheran tradition to understanding other faiths and religious movements, from care of the body to awareness of specific global issues, from being a Christian with integrity to Christian perspectives on war and peace—and many topics in between.

For more information or to receive a handbook, contact the Office of Church Relations at 507-933-7001. The handbook will also be available on the Church Relations website at gustavus.edu/churchrelations/resources.

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Selected Events at Gustavus during Fall 2007

From Gustavus to Seminary
Alumni Seymour Marion, Brian Ward, and Molly Peterson are currently attending Luther Seminary. The experiences, conversations, and endless possibilities that were offered at Gustavus challenged them to take the faith journey they are now embarked upon. “We will grow to new heights, knowing that some of those strong roots of encouragement, excellence, service, and community came from Gustavus,” says Peterson.

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Workshops will be held throughout the day, and students will have an opportunity to visit with school representatives as well as to enjoy colloquial conversations with students from other college and university campuses who share potential interest in a vocation in the church.

Gusties Play in New Stadium This Fall
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The sessions will be webcast live. The interweaving of small theological reflection groups with trained facilitators will be an important part of the conference, and supporting materials will be provided. The cost for the event is $10 per person for the printing of materials. Pre-registration is required, and space is limited. DVDs of pre-conference interviews may also be available for a minimal charge, and conference keynotes will be available to participants in March 2008.

For more information or to pre-register, contact the Office of Church Relations at 907-933-7001.

Koinonia Lectionary Study in 15th Year
Gustavus Adolphus College and the Reverend Doctor David Mesner are pleased to invite area clergy to participate in the 2007–08 Koinonia lectionary workshop, titled “God With Us: Living and Preaching Matthew.” Extensive exegnetical notes are provided at each of the six sessions.

This series has developed a reputation for congregationally relevant biblical scholarship, attentiveness to the impact of biblical text in the life of the pastor, and a spirit of fellowship. Mesner is an active parish pastor and also a trained spiritual director with special interest in lectio divina.

The six session dates for this year are October 15, December 10, January 21, February 11, March 10, and April 28. Tuition for the series is $275. To register or request more information, contact the Gustavus Office of Church Relations at 800-726-6194 or church-relations@gustavus.edu. Space is limited.

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John Haught to Lecture at Gustavus in September
"Evolution and Faith: What Is at Stake?" is the title of a free, public lecture John Haught will deliver at Gustavus on September 26, at 7:30 p.m. in Alumni Hall. All are welcome.

Haught is the Laneganger Distinguished Professor of Theology at Georgetown University. This will be his third visit to campus. In 2003 he spoke at the Nobel Conference on "God After Darwin: Evolution and Divine Providence." He was invited back in 2005 to speak on "Einstein and Religion." So many people came in 2005 that some were unable to get into the lecture hall. His popularity stems from two qualities: his insightful way of re-framing the relationship between science and theology and the clarity of his presentations.

Professor Haught is the author of several books, including Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect for Religion in the Age of Evolution (Westview, 2004); God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution (Westview, 2000; revised ed. 2007); Responses to 101 Questions on God and Evolution (Paulist, 2001); Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation (Paulist, 1995); and The Promise of Nature: Ecology and Cosmic Purpose (Paulist, 1993). He and his wife live in Arlington, Virginia, and are the parents of two sons.
Confirmation and Youth Retreats

Program 2007–08

Claude Brew Ears
2007 Edgar M. Carlson Award

“Good teaching, when it happens, requires good students, supportive colleagues, and an understanding family. I have been blessed by all three,” said Claude Brew, Gustavus Adolphus College professor of English, as he accepted the 2007 Edgar M. Carlson Award for Distinguished Teaching during the College’s commencement exercises on Sunday, May 27.

Brew, who joined the Gustavus faculty in 1969, received his bachelor’s degree in English and German from Ohio University and his master’s degree and Ph.D. from Ohio State University.

Professor of English
Claude Brew has an enthusiasm that permeates the class. During his 38-year career at Gustavus, Brew has taught courses on a wide range of topics, including Shakespeare, the Victorian Age, Romanticism, the Soviet period, and modern African fiction. One student described him as having “an enthusiasm that permeates the class,” and a colleague praised him for being “deeply self-reflective about teaching.”

Eddie M. Carlson Award was established by the Gustavus Board of Trustees in 1971 to honor former president Edgar Carlson for his years of distinguished leadership and in recognition of his commitment to academic excellence. Gustavus faculty, staff, and administrators, and students nominate professors for this award, and each year at commencement a faculty member, selected by previous Carlson recipients, is honored for his or her exceptional skill and effectiveness as a teacher.

Gustavus Youth Outreach

Gustavus Youth Outreach, a student-led campus fellowship group, seeks to serve the needs of congregational youth programs. Teams of 8–10 students share fun, fellowship, and God’s love with youth from area congregations. They work with the adult leaders of your congregation’s youth program in a youth-to-youth relational ministry, in a lock-in or retreat setting, a family night, or other format exploring faith and life issues.

The requesting congregation is asked to cover expenses of the team: mileage at 60 cents per round-trip mile for van transportation, meals (if necessary), cost of special materials required, and housing while the team is visiting. To defray miscellaneous expenses and the cost of their ministry, an offering is appreciated. If your church is more than 150 miles away, GYO will work with your youth in an on-campus retreat.

Dates are limited, so early booking is encouraged. Excluded dates are those already booked or when students are not on campus due to holiday and term breaks, finals, or other special events. To book a GYO team, an online registration form is available on the Church Relations website, or you may contact the group at youthoutreach@gustavus.edu. Upon receipt of the request, your requested date will be confirmed a month prior to your event, you will be contacted by a GYO team leader about specific programming needs.

Confirmation last year in the confirmation and student retreats program sponsored by the Office of Church Relations. We are currently taking reservations for confirmation and student retreats for the 2007-08 academic year. We welcome Lutheran congregations to hold a one-day and overnight retreats on campus.

All retreat groups are met and given a brief campus tour by a student coordinator when they arrive on campus. Groups arrange their own programming but can have access to on-campus classrooms as their meeting spaces, as well as use of athletic facilities. Plan to dine in our student cafeteria, and your group will be billed for meals following the retreat.

The Southwest Hostel is a terrific resource for those wishing to stay overnight in our college and has accomplished a great Board of Trustees, said, “Dr. Peterson has been an outstanding leader of the College, and has done a great deal since assuming office in July 1999. Peterson said. “I am so grateful that Jim is giving the College the opportunity to undertake a thorough self-examination.”

Gale indicated that he will ask the Board immediately to initiate a nation-wide presidential search. “We are grateful that Jim is giving the College enough time to undertake a thorough search process and will assist in a smooth transition to new leadership.”

In 2007, Jodock accepted the responsibility of developing a mission, vision and strategic plan for the new Faith and Vocations Project on campus, an initiative intended to create a center for collaborative work between the Office of Pastoral Care, Chaplains, Office of Church Relations, and the Center for Vocational Reflection.

The Covenant Award, bestowed annually, celebrates the efforts of individuals who have made distinctive contributions that strengthen the partnership between Gustavus Adolphus College and member congregations of the Association.

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On behalf of the Association of Congregations of Gustavus Adolphus College, President Jim Peterson will recognize two individuals for their distinctive commitments and contributions to the service of others with the bestowing of the Service Award on October 30, 2007, during daily chapel at 10 a.m. The homily during worship will be presented by recipient Ellen Ruiter ‘97. We welcome you to join us for worship and the presentation!

Donn H. Escher ‘50

Donn Escher, deceased 2006, is remembered for his readiness to be a witness to the love of God in all that he did, serving in various organizations, committees, and church groups for many years and in many capacities. He was mentor and friend to seminary students in progressive stages of their seminary preparation, often hosting them for dinner in his home, praying for them, and taking time to visit them at seminary and in their congregations. He is called by friends and colleagues as “a second-mile person”—an example of one who has gone above and beyond in making connections and in the work he was asked to do.

Ellen Higgsbom Ruiter ‘97

Ellen Ruiter is founder and executive director of Africa Jam, a Christian youth empowerment organization serving high school youth in Cape Town, South Africa. In 1999, Ellen began as a volunteer in Cape Town, leading a small after-school group at a high school in one of the poorest townships in the city. The program grew from 50 students to nearly 1,000 in one year’s time, and Ellen knew the youth were hungering for more. This organization serves more than 10,000 youth annually through after-school programs in 22 high schools in Cape Town, with multiple weeks of summer bible camps making a measurable difference in Cape Town.
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Retreats are booked first-come, first served, and a deposit is required. Arrangements should be made six to eight weeks in advance, and more lead time may be needed for groups larger than 40. Students should be in grade 7 or above. To book a retreat or for details and answers to specific questions, phone the Office of Church Relations at 507-933-7001.


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―Heating Up the Energy Debate‖
Nobel Conference 43
Harnessing and using energy has played a key role in both the development and the decline of civilizations since the dawn of human existence. The rapid technological advances and prosperity enjoyed in the 20th century were driven by the use of fossil fuels—namely, coal and oil. In the 21st century, however, energy demand and prices are soaring, conflicts threaten political stability in the most oil-rich region of the world, and we are realizing the effects of a rapidly warming planet. In the United States, oil production has been declining since the early 1970s, and dependence on foreign oil continues to increase amid the threat of terrorism arising from the oil-rich Middle East. What will be the energy sources of the future? Several new and exciting technologies are on the horizon, including hydrogen, solar and wind power, biofuels, and advanced nuclear power.

On October 2–3, 2007, Gustavus will host the 43rd annual Nobel Conference. Problems of global warming and declining oil reserves will be considered. World-renowned energy and resource experts will attempt to put our current energy dilemma into perspective and examine new and advancing technologies.

Conference presenters include Steven Chu, 1997 Nobel laureate in physics and director, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, California; Kenneth S. Deffeyes, professor of geosciences emeritus, Princeton University; James E. Hansen, lead scientist and director, NASA Goddard Institute for space Studies, New York; Paul L. Joskow, director, Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Lee Roybeck Lynd, professor of engineering, Thayer School of Engineering, Dartmouth College; Joan M. Ogden, co-director, Hydrogen Pathways Program, Institute of Transportation Studies, University of California at Davis; and Will Steger, polar explorer, conservationist, educator, and photographer.

Also scheduled for Tuesday evening during the conference is the Minnesota Technology Forum, concurrent lecture/discussions at two venues on topics relating to energy use, alternative energy sources, and ethical dimensions of the energy debate. One of the announced speakers is Bishop Craig Johnson ’69, bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA, who will address “Faith and Energy Issues” at the forum. Go to gustavus.edu/events/nobelconference/2007 for information and a complete schedule.

The Nobel Conference at Gustavus is the first ongoing educational conference in the United States to have the official authorization of the Nobel Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden.

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Nathan Dungan to Speak on Campus Sept. 29

How did you develop basic money management skills when you were young? Financial habits—and financial expectations—start early. Adults need to help young people understand what it will take, financially speaking, to live in the real world.

In a one-day seminar designed to help think, talk, and teach about money, Nathan Dungan, an expert on family finances and the effects of mass marketing on young people, will attempt to bring some sanity to developing and maintaining healthy financial habits. The intergenerational event is targeted at high school-age students, college-age young adults, pastors, mentors and youth leaders, parents, grandparents, and others who want to develop talking points with youth in our materialistic world.

Hyper-consumerism has taken deep root in America. “Unhealthy financial habits of teens are the welcome mat to financial difficulty in adulthood,” Dungan says. By their senior year, the average college student has four credit cards and $3,000 in credit-card debt. And young adults are one of the fastest-growing groups in our culture filing for bankruptcy.

According to a recent survey, 86 percent of teens say their parents are more helpful than any other sources in teaching them about money. But half of all parents rank their own money management skills from “OK” to “terrible.” In 2005, the after-tax personal savings rate in America went negative for the first time since 1933—we continue to spend more than we earn. And while 69 percent of American households own their home, families are increasingly using accrued equity to pay off credit cards and finance other consumer purchases.

Dungan cautions parents and youth leaders to pay attention to the financial development of children and the pressures they face—pressure to spend-spend-spend, to reach for an upscale lifestyle, to dream big without regard to cost. “If you default to the culture,” he says, “the outcome may not be pretty.” You are invited to come prepared to think and talk about this subject.

This event will be held in Jussi Björling Recital Hall at Gustavus on Saturday, Sept. 29, 2007, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration cost is $15 before September 20 or $18 at the door and includes lunch and materials; find the registration form online at www.swmnecia.org. Each paid youth can bring one adult at no charge (register in advance, please).

The event is sponsored by the Southeastern and Southwestern Minnesota Synod together with the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA and Gustavus Adolphus College. Dungan has a website featuring information, links, and an e-column at www.sharesavescend.com. He is the author of Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to Be Your Child’s ATM.

Ask, Thank, Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry
Charles Lane to address a discipleship model for stewardship

Two stewardship workshops will be offered at no charge in St. Peter, Minn., on Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2007. These sessions are designed for exploring a biblically based primary relationship with Jesus that includes talk about money.

Charles “Chuck” Lane, director for Stewardship Key Leader and a pastor of the ELCA, gives biblically grounded, practical advice that, if followed, would transform the Church. His message is not about maintenance, but about mission; and not membership, but discipleship. He will talk about the giver’s need to give, not the church’s need to receive. “Stewardship,” says Lane, “is an intensely spiritual matter that lies close to a disciple’s relationship with Jesus.”

One copy of Lane’s easy-to-read stewardship guide, Ask, Thank, Tell, will be given at no charge to all congregations with three or more persons attending one or both of the sessions. Sponsored by Trinity Lutheran Church of St. Peter, with the assistance of Thrivent Financial and Gustavus Adolphus College, the sessions will be offered at the times listed below:

2–4 p.m. St. Peter Dining Room, Jackson Campus Center, Gustavus Adolphus College, for pastors and program staff

7–9 p.m. Church of St. Peter, 1801 West Broadway, St. Peter, for pastors, stewardship leaders, and all the baptized

To register, e-mail office@trinitystpeter.org by Sept. 21, 2007.
When and where do you find time for relaxation, reflection, and unhurried conversation? If you did not come up with a quick answer to that question, you are not alone. Many of us feel like life is moving at an accelerated pace with little time for conversation. One can imagine the pace on a college campus to be even faster among twenty-somethings who can easily reduce a phrase to a text-message such as "IDK G TR" for faster communication. Yet at Gustavus, there is a group of faculty and students who are working to slow down the pace on campus.

Twice in the past three years, the Center for Vocational Reflection has sponsored 3-day summer workshops on campus to engage faculty, administrators, and staff in discussions about what it means for Gustavus to be a mentoring community. As a result of the first workshop and the challenge to find ways to contribute to the “practices of a mentoring community here at Gustavus,” Professor Aaron Banks (health and exercise science) conceived the idea of a project intended to help build community on campus.

Aware that, years ago, Adirondack chairs used to be placed all across the campus grounds inviting camaraderie and dialog, Banks saw the opportunity to bring them back. Teaching a first-term seminar (FTS) course called Leisure Quest, he was inspired to include in the course a service-project component—bringing back Adirondack chairs to the campus mall—creating a place outdoors where people would tend to linger, and in so doing, inviting pause, reflection and conversation. A grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans provided $1,600 for the cost of eight chairs. In late fall 2006, Banks enlisted the help of his FTS students, working in pairs with a faculty/staff member, to build the Adirondack chairs that now adorn the campus mall. “The building of the chairs definitely has a place on my list of favorite Gustavus community moments” says junior John Bennett.

The chairs, as they are called, are extremely popular on the campus mall—so much so that sometimes it’s hard to find an open chair on a sunny afternoon! They are portable and can be moved into the sun, or into the shade, and they can be clustered into groups of two or more for conversation. Sophomore Chelsey Cook remains enthusiastic about her involvement in the project. “To see so many students enjoying these chairs we built is unbelievable! Our work is now a part of the Gustavus campus and will hopefully remain there for years come.”

In September, Banks plans to have his FTS class and members of the 2007 workshop group work shoulder-to-shoulder on doubling the number of chairs previously built—16 additional chairs in this second-round effort. He looks forward to locating the Adirondack chairs more widely across campus grounds, especially on the south mall area.

As he prepares to teach Leisure Quest again this fall, Banks hopes to continue to focus on “the most precious commodity we have: Time.” He continues, “The chairs are a symbol for us, a reminder that we need to slow down, take a deep breath, enjoy the day, and reflect on life and what is good.”