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THE SPIRE

OFFICE OF CHURCH RELATIONS



GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

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ELCA Youth Gathering Challenges for Service



Every three years, the ELCA National Youth Gathering brings thousands of Lutheran high school youth together from across the nation. New Orleans will be the host site of the 2009 gathering with the theme “Jesus, Justice, Jazz,” to be held July 23–26.

A team of 10 individuals from Gustavus Adolphus College will join the 36,000 Lutheran youth in the Louisiana Superdome. Attending from Gustavus will be the Rev. Grady St. Dennis '92, director of church relations; the Rev. Rachel Larson, chaplain; Richard Leitch, associate professor of political science; Lynn Boehne, director of admission services; Elizabeth Winslow '10; Lillia Benson '11; Peter Michaletz '12; Phoebe Breed '12; Jonathan Monk '11; and Nicole Niles '12. A variety of opportunities are planned, including worship, Bible study, service, learning, play and prayer.

Each evening, participants will gather for worship featuring the Rev. Mark Hanson, presiding bishop of the ELCA, and Liz McCartney, founder of the St. Bernard Project in New Orleans, and praise will be led by contemporary Christian artists. Daily activities will focus on ServantLife, the Learning Mall, and the Interaction Center.

St. Dennis and Boehne have both had key roles as part of the planning team for an Interaction Center, a place where youth will engage in conversations about how faith interacts with health and wellness, arts and culture, the environment, poverty, literacy, and housing. “These issues that have been identified are some of our world’s key issues today,” said St. Dennis. This is a place where the exhibitors create activities to develop talking points with the young people.

There will be a much stronger focus on service than in previous youth gatherings, helping New Orleans continue to recover from Hurricane Katrina. “There is an ongoing need for recovery. The number of students who will be serving in the communities is a new element. A third of the participants (12,000 people) will be out in the community serving each day,” said St. Dennis. “Gustavus needs to be part of this particular event, because we are a part of the solution and the conversation for these issues now. We are powerful, and we have a purpose. We have been called to something.”

“I am eager to try to assist the rebuilding efforts following the devastation from Hurricane Katrina,” said Michaletz.

For youth who may not have considered attending a Lutheran college, this is “a perfect opportunity to present them with the option to continue to grow in their faith at Gustavus,” added Breed.

“It’s not just a ‘now’ thing,” said St. Dennis. “The students will be challenged to take a next step” after they leave New Orleans, continuing to find ways to engage their faith in their lives, and for their faith to interact with their lives in their communities.

“Jesus, Justice, Jazz: The Tour”

The spirit for changing the world ignited by the Gathering will continue after the 36,000 participants leave New Orleans. On Saturday, November 7, 2009, Gustavus will be a regional site for a “next step” experience, Jesus, Justice, Jazz: The Tour. This follow-up event is being held to re-inspire the spirit and challenges of the Gathering. Christian artists David Scherer '99 (aka “Agapé”), “Lost and Found,” and Rachel Kurtz will perform at this on-campus youth event this fall, and a service project for change in the world will be held. Call the Office of Church Relations at 507-933-7001 for more information. Visit gustavus.edu/churchrelations to see the schedule.

Association of Congregations Board of Directors 2009–10

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Chilstrom to Head Linnaeus Arboretum for 2009–10

The Rev. Dr. Herbert Chilstrom has been named interim director of the Linnaeus Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College for the 2009–10 year.

Chilstrom, an active member of the Friends of Linnaeus Arboretum since retiring to St. Peter, is a graduate of Augsburg College, where he majored in sociology. He earned an Ed.D. degree from New York University in 1976. From 1976 to 1987, he served as bishop of the LCA's Minnesota Synod, and following the LCA's merger into the ELCA, he was presiding bishop until his retirement in 1995. He was a member of the Gustavus Board of Trustees from 1998 to 2001 and holds an honorary degree from the College awarded in 1987.

Cindy Johnson-Groh, professor of biology and executive director of the Arboretum, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant to lecture and conduct research in Tanzania during the coming academic year.

InSpire!



Warm summer greetings to you from Gustavus Adolphus College and the Office of Church Relations! We pray that over these summer days, your spirit will be refreshed and strengthened for the good ministry work you do!

In the Gustavus Association of Congregations, Gustavus has a highly relational structure for our formal governing connection with the ELCA. Our Association is proud to be more than 540 congregations strong. We believe that the connection between church and college is strongest when it is a “living connection” of actual personal relationships and events through which we share our ministry resources.

Many students are impressed to learn of the various ministries their “home congregation” is involved with through Gustavus. Faith Lutheran Church in Waconia offers a nice example of what a congregation might do to make sure their young adults know they have the encouragement of the church as they begin their college journey. In August, the pastors and some leaders at Faith are hosting a sending barbecue for their seven students who will be starting at Gustavus in the fall. I look forward to attending the event and know these students will feel supported by their congregation as they embark on their college adventure.

I would love to hear what your congregation is doing or has done to connect with your college-bound young adults. Thank you for the role you play in building up the church-college connection!

Rev. Grady St. Dennis
Director of Church Relations

Developing/Discovering Dimensions of Leadership

Youth Leadership Day 2009 at Gustavus, April 25

On the same day that delegates from the Association of Congregations gathered at Gustavus for the annual meeting, emerging leaders from congregational youth programs engaged in an event designed to develop insights to nurture their influence as future leaders. Pastors and youth directors selected the most promising individuals from their youth groups to come to campus for a one-day event where they focused on what it means to be a leader, defined leadership, and identified qualities and skills that are important for leadership in their congregations as well as the larger community.

The day included lively Christian music and worship led by Agapé (David Scherer '99). In the words of one participant: "His music is inspirational and so heartfelt! He really is talented and entertaining!" Another chimed in, "I really liked how modern he was, and funny and outgoing and just out there making his message known!"

Pastor Dean E. Smith, youth pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Owatonna, gave the keynote address, and discussions in large and small groups added to the richness of the day. Gustavus students volunteered to facilitate discussions, team building, and activities. Comments by youth at the end of the day included: "[I learned] that there are many steps to doing something. It

takes a lot of planning, and you can't stop at just one idea." "The process of becoming a leader was broken down well . . . *everyone* needs guiding by people." And, "You can be a good leader by having a plan and being prepared—you have to believe in yourself and be confident."

The day was coordinated as a project of Church Relations student intern Abby Norlin-Weaver '09. The theme passage she selected for the day was I Timothy 4:12–15. Youth Leadership of St. Paul partnered with Gustavus for this event, with Beth Wojahn '05 of Prince of Peace Lutheran in Burnsville as their spokesperson.



Save the Date!

On Saturday, April 17, 2010, Gustavus will partner again with Youth Leadership for another meeting of youth leaders at Gustavus. We encourage pastors and youth directors to make plans now to bring your most promising youth leaders to campus for a day of intentional leadership development.

Ben Hilding Awarded National Leadership Development Fellowship

Benjamin C. Hilding '09 is one of 16 graduate and seminary students of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) recognized by the Fund for Theological Education (FTE) as "2009 Fellows." He is one of seven first-year ELCA seminary students awarded a Congregational Fellowship, which matches a congregational donation to the Fellow's education between \$2,000 and \$5,000. Hilding will attend Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

The Fund for Theological Education, based in Atlanta, is an ecumenical body dedicated to promoting and advocating diversity in Christian ministry and theological scholarship. Recipients will also attend leadership development events at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Va., and at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville, Tenn.

The Vicar's Project 2009: Pre-Seminary Reflection Groups



Vicar Peter Bauck '04, in an effort to help Gusties explore possibilities for the future, brought together two groups of students to ponder what it means to be in ministry and to discuss options for post-graduate theological education at a seminary or divinity school. Seven students participated in the first group, which was a group for exploring interests; and another seven in the second, a group of students leaning more strongly in this direction.

Through a series of meetings during the spring semester, students were encouraged to gain a better understanding of who they are, to achieve a clearer sense of purpose, and to see more clearly if they are being called in this direction.

The first meeting was a get-acquainted time. Students told about their faith journey. Then the students discussed what it means to be a spiritual leader and to carry themselves in ministry. By the third meeting, some had already reached a time of discernment. The diversity within the group helped some to measure their own level of commitment. Individual meetings with each student helped to deal with issues that aren't valuable in group settings. Many had questions about available degree programs specific to their interests, for example.

"This group is seen as being a time to reflect on the student's sense of call and purpose in their life and how seminary might contribute to that," said Bauck. The intent was not to convince anyone to go to seminary, but to consider how theological education can contribute to some people's calling, and how God might use that.

Bauck found that, in a broad sense, the students all had a deep desire to serve others. A management major, for example, expressed that faith drives a desire to work for non-profit organizations in the future. Another concluded that an interest in medicine will help to be available to others in times of crisis. Across the spectrum, students discussed a driving need to be there for others in different contexts—caring, serving, loving in any time of need, directly through ministry within the church or filling another need in the community.

Peter found the groups to be open to exploring in ways that are a change from the previous generation. Their searching was open-ended; many students today felt uncertain about denominational identity, or a commitment to one theology. "Where do students get the idea that pastors are so stuck in their denominations?" he wondered. He has not found that to be the case. "It's necessary to talk about openness to ecumenical and interdenominational dialogue. Being tied to a denomination does not mean that you're tied to everything about it, that you can't think, talk and be open," he said.

The project helped Peter with his own discernment. He enjoyed the opportunity to talk with students about their own calling. He has decided he would like to move toward a position in chaplaincy.

Discernment for Vicar Peter was "a slow process, not a lightning bolt." His grandmother, who was always very supportive in his life, gave him his grandpa's Bible after he died. Peter found that to be very meaningful. His great-grandmother, who was Swedish Lutheran, was delighted when he decided to attend Gustavus. It was during the spring semester of his sophomore year that he decided to go on to seminary. Bauck graduated from Gustavus in 2004 with majors in religion and the classics and a management minor. He graduated with his M.Div. from Yale Divinity School in 2007; his work in the Chaplains' Office in 2008-09 has been a post-M.Div. candidacy internship, which is part of the process toward ordination. Peter is married to Marissa Wold '05, who is a project manager at Augsburg Fortress Publishers, Minneapolis. They live in Eden Prairie.

Välkommen! Midsommar Dag in Scandia

A celebration of Swedish immigrant heritage was held on Saturday, June 27, 2009, at the annual Midsommar Dag festival at the Gammelgården Museum on the campus of the Elim Lutheran Church in Scandia, Minnesota.

The first Swedish settlement in Minnesota was on the site of Gammelgården, which means “Old Farm” in Swedish. Five of the buildings built between 1850 and 1868 are still standing, and inside these buildings, visitors get a rare glimpse of artifacts from the daily lives of the immigrant settlers. The Gammelgården Museum offers exhibits, a Scandinavian *butik* (shop), and a room that can be reserved for gatherings and Swedish coffee.

This year, the descendants of 1901 Gustavus graduate Henry Anton Johnson enjoyed the celebration as a feature of their family reunion. Gustavus Adolphus College is tightly woven into the fabric of this family, with over 30 descendants (or family members of descendants) of Henry Johnson having attended Gustavus. Honored family members attending the 2009 festivities were his two youngest children, Edsel Johnson '42, and Carrel Wensman.

Gustavus Director of Church Relations Grady St. Dennis '92 gave the invocation as the afternoon program began. President Jack Ohle was a special guest and brought greetings from the College, remarking on the influence of the Swedish Lutheran tradition in the legacy of Gustavus and the importance of reaffirming connections as we near the College's sesquicentennial celebrations.

The celebration featured a Swedish pig roast *smörgåsbord*, followed by the raising of the *majstången* (maypole) and singing and dancing enjoyed by all ages. In addition to crafts, activities, and contests, the archive records from the congregation were made available for genealogical research.



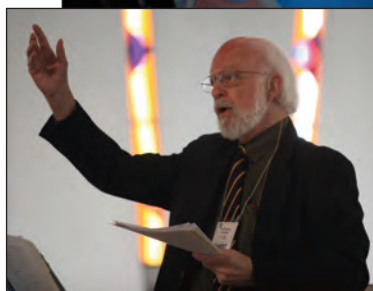
Hear the Word - Live the Word!

2009 Association of Congregations Convention Recap

Delegates of the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations gathered on campus on Saturday, April 25, under the theme “Hear the Word—Live the Word!” This theme was introduced in the morning worship and developed throughout the day with the keynote and workshops that followed. The Rev. Terry Morehouse, homilist for the worship service, brought the message about the Word and the conviction of our faith helping to keep our spiritual center.



The keynote address, “Implications of a God in Relationship,” was delivered by Dr. Terence E. Fretheim, Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary. The afternoon sessions were intended to use ideas presented during the morning and then dig deeper, exploring ways to use the Word to focus on three separate aspects of our Relationship with God: “Self Transformation” and how change and constancy are at work with God and our ongoing personal relationship with Him; “Loving Our Neighbor,” relating social justice and congregational care issues in our local communities to our ongoing relationship with God; and “Caring for the Whole World” and issues of global justice, economic issues, and service as we work to mend the world. These sessions were led by Dr. Mark Throntveit, Dr. Mary Sue D. Dreier, and Dr. Terence Fretheim, respectively.



President Jack Ohle welcomed the delegates and talked about his first year at the helm of the College. Business was addressed with elections for the College’s Board of Trustees and the Association Board of Directors. During the luncheon, the Rev. Gary F. Anderson was recognized with the 2009 Covenant Award for his work strengthening the partnership between Gustavus and the Church. Senior students Emily Nelson and Amy Knutson also shared ways their faith has grown during their years at Gustavus.



Confirmation Retreats Thrive at Gustavus

Confirmation retreats at Gustavus continue to appeal to pastors and youth directors interested in a unique retreat experience for their confirmation classes while at the same time providing a chance to spend time on a Lutheran college campus, where they might envision themselves as a future college student, either at a private or public college. Confirmation and student retreats, a program still growing and the one most in demand, brought over 1,500 participants to campus in 2008-09!

Retreats are booked first-come, first served, and a nonrefundable deposit is required to hold a booking date. Costs are minimal, including a booking fee and charges for meals. Arrangements should be made 6 to 8 weeks in advance; more lead time is needed for larger groups. Space is limited for groups larger than 40. Day retreats are also popular.

Upon arrival, each group is met and greeted by a student coordinator from the Office of Church Relations who has given special attention to planning the retreat. A brief campus tour is always conducted as soon after arrival as possible to help ensure that youth will feel comfortable and get the most enjoyment from their visit.

To book a retreat*, or for details and answers to specific questions, phone Marilyn in the Office of Church Relations at 507-933-7001.

*Please note that student activities and services always take priority on campus. On weekends when the campus is extremely busy or athletic events are scheduled, areas such as the pool and the gym may not be readily available. Classrooms are made available, and we work with you to find a classroom best suited to your needs. No retreats are held during homecoming weekend, student breaks, or when the campus is closed.

Gusties Share Fun and Faith with Kids



Gustavus Youth Outreach (GYO) is a student-run organization that works to bring the message of Christ to church youth in a fun and energetic way, visiting congregations to lead youth activities and overnight lock-ins. GYO can also offer

activities during on-campus retreats. Their activities choices include worship, songs, games, skits, and small-group Bible studies.

All GYO bookings happen during the academic year, primarily scheduled on weekends. Since every member is a team volunteer, studying must be done before and after their GYO booking. For that reason, each team usually takes on only one booking assignment per month.

It is necessary to request a date 6 to 8 weeks in advance, for purposes of team planning and members to try to clear their calendars. Congregations are not charged a specific fee, but there are costs to training, to the work of this ministry, and often meals enroute, so in addition to round-trip mileage, GYO appreciates your support through love gifts and prayer. Please call the Office of Church Relations if you have specific questions.

Tips for a successful GYO booking:

- In writing, **request a booking 6 to 8 weeks in advance.** (Request form is on line at gustavus.edu/churchrelations/GYOTeamRequestForm. A second date option is very helpful.
- Make plans for **adequate facilities** for your event.
- If you are booking help for an **on-campus retreat**, you must *first book your retreat with the Office of Church Relations to make sure space is available.* All communication should thereafter be copied to **both** your retreat coordinator and the GYO team leader.
- **Communicate well** what your expectations of GYO are.
- You must arrange for **chaperones** to work throughout your event, at least 1 per 8 students. Chaperones are responsible for all issues of discipline and must be able to deal with other issues (a youth who becomes ill, for example). (1:6 required for on-campus retreats)
- **Limit request of time from GYO** to 20 hours or less. For overnight bookings, the courtesy of meals for the team and a place for the driver to grab a few hours of sleep are also appreciated.
- **Stay in contact with your team leader** to ensure a well-planned event.
- Congregation is responsible for **cost** of round-trip mileage at \$.62/mile; a donation to GYO is also appreciated.

Note: It is very disappointing for teams to have last-minute cancellations after work and planning have been done. This may leave a team with no booking for a month, and it is hard to rebuild the energy when that happens. Please make every effort to follow through with your requested booking. GYO continues to avoid requiring non-refundable deposits, so please do not book unless you fully expect to follow through with your event.

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

Toll-free: 800-726-6194

Fax: 507-933-6337

gustavus.edu/oncampus/churchrelations

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

Confirmation Retreats Program

507-933-7023

confirmation-retreats@gustavus.edu

Gustavus Youth Outreach (GYO)

youthoutreach@gustavus.edu

Adult Retreat Programs

507-933-7001

retreat-center@gustavus.edu

Partners Programs

507-933-7001

church-relations@gustavus.edu

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Gustavus Adolphus College
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