



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.

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28th Annual Meeting of the Association of Congregations

The 28th Annual Association of Congregations Business Meeting and Faith Conference will be held on Saturday, April 25. We will start with worship at 9:30 a.m. in Christ Chapel. After worship concludes, the first featured speaker, The Rev. Dr. Samuel Torvend, professor of religion and University Professor of Lutheran Studies at Pacific Lutheran University, will speak on the topic "Lutheran Convictions and Economic Justice: Biblical Themes, Current Realities, and Ethical Choices." The second featured speaker, Dr. Kathi Tunheim, Board of Trustees Chair in Management and Leadership at Gustavus Adolphus College, will speak on "Generosity as Response to a Culture of Greed."

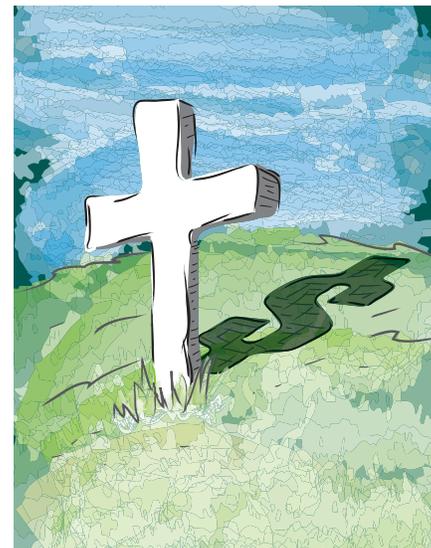
New For 2015!

This year, the GACAC Business Meeting for congregational voting delegates and pastors will take place at 12:30 p.m. on April 25 in Alumni Hall. During this luncheon, Association business will be conducted and the Covenant Award will be presented.

Association member congregations are currently updating information about their staff and delegates. We ask church offices to please make sure we have correct information regarding who should be invited to represent your congregation on Saturday, April 25.

The Faith Conference is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations, the Gustavus Center for

Servant Leadership, and Thrivent Financial. For more information and registration, please visit gustavus.edu/faithconference.



The Rev. Dr. Samuel Torvend



Dr. Kathi Tunheim

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Assistant Director for Church
Relations, Center for Servant
Leadership, Gustavus
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From the Director

PASTOR GRADY ST. DENNIS, Director for Church Relations



"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation

of the Spirit for the common good."
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Which type of person are you: a cup half-empty or cup half-full? No doubt you have been asked such a question before and may even know how you would respond without having to think very hard about it. We can easily make the categories for the mindset: pessimistic or optimistic; scarcity or abundance.

I want to suggest a third option for us to consider for our mindset outlook and identity: a cup overflowing type of person. As we consider the wonders of the cross of Jesus Christ and all that God has caused to be made manifest in the body of Christ for our lives and world, how could we see ourselves as anything but one whose cup is overflowing!

Greetings from Gustavus Adolphus College! It is inspiring, energizing, and the possibilities are endless when we see the big picture of what God has created in the vast web of relationships that include individuals, congregations, synods, national denominational structures, colleges and universities, and numerous other ministry partners.

We rejoice in the many ways we are partners in ministry with you. We are blessed by these relationships and, in fact, consider the common roots we share as Lutherans to be central to our identity and vocation as a church-related college. We take seriously the part we play in contributing to the common good.

In this issue of *The Spire* we highlight what will be yet another excellent opportunity to come together as Church and College in the Gustavus Faith Conference on April 25, 2015. The conference will feature two presentations, "Lutheran Convictions and Economic Justice: Biblical Themes, Current Realities, and Ethical Choices" and "Generosity as Response to a Culture of Greed." We encourage you to invite your church council and stewardship committee to attend.

We hope the resources Gustavus provides to the congregations through our church relations outreach are useful for you and your congregation. Thank you to the many who have taken advantage of these excellent ministry resources. May this coming year bring us opportunities to do even more to strengthen the tie of faith in Jesus Christ that binds us, and together may ours be "a-cup-overflowing" witness.



A PATH FROM GUSTAVUS TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

One of the paths of the Gustavus religion major is the road to ordained ministry. Because Gustavus is a college of the Church, we wanted to highlight a recent graduate of Gustavus who has gone on from Gustavus and is now an associate pastor of one of our Association congregations.

The Rev. Jerod Freeberg, who graduated from Gustavus in 2010, finished his M.Div. at Luther Seminary this past spring. He was called to Messiah Lutheran Church in North Mankato on August 1.

The road to his current call started at Gustavus. During his first year, his friends were involved with Gustavus Youth Outreach (GYO). They asked him if he would like to help out with a retreat and he did. "It was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I loved every second of that retreat, and it ignited my passion for youth ministry," says Jerod. Because of this experience, he thought becoming a camp counselor at Green Lake Lutheran Ministries would be a good next step. Luther Seminary hosted a training session for camp counselors while he was with Green Lake, and because of that he applied to their M. Div. program. He says, "In a very real way, Gustavus campus ministries is the reason I realized my call to ordained ministry and is the reason I am a pastor today."

This newly ordained pastor just started his call at Messiah Lutheran a couple of months ago. He feels blessed to have been called back to this area, to a congregation in North Mankato. His associate pastor duties have him working on an intergenerational ministry program focused on helping parents and their elementary school children grow in their faith together. He truly is making his life count at Messiah.

Ambassadors for Christ

PASTOR ROD ANDERSON



We are Ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us...

- 2 Corinthians 5:20

For more than a year, I have been the program coordinator of the Three

Crowns Ambassador program for the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations. I said "yes" to this role because I was invited into it by Pastor Grady St. Dennis, whose persuasion is embedded in his passion for the College and the Church. His enthusiasm is contagious and inviting—the kind of energy people just want to be around, on campus and out in congregations! Retirement is a word that just hasn't settled into my vocabulary; encore feels more likable and relatable for me. And having served in a long-term pastorate, being useful to an institution of the Church was very appealing, especially if the role involved interfacing with congregations. What could be better than Gustavus and its wonderful history being birthed out of congregations and still serving missionally with them?

The role of Ambassador helps the College to complete the congregation/college connections, and until the College is connected to the congregation we don't have a complete picture of Lutheran Higher Education. Likewise, unless the congregation is connected to the College we don't have a

complete picture of the family of God we serve in the whole Church! Many studies report what we already know about young adults disconnecting from congregations.

At Gustavus, our Ambassador role is about sustaining church relations . . . maybe better called "church connections!"

I've really enjoyed visiting in many congregations for worship, meeting Gustic alums and parents wherever I go, and imagining new and creative opportunities that will mutually build up and bless congregations and the College. The Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations is a treasure and a tool for good, recognized by many as an exemplary partnership in a time when many are disengaging and disconnecting from their church roots.

We are on a mission to strengthen and grow the network of Ambassadors in our congregations, engaging and connecting by mending and casting the nets that reach a wider and wider circle of those who care about Lutheran Higher Education. "Networking" and "working the net" are inspiring metaphors for me after serving 34 years in a congregation named for Andrew, the one invited in scriptures to be "fisher of people."

RONALD S. AND KATHRYN K. CHRISTENSON LECTURE

Thursday, March 5, 2015

Prof. David Cole of Georgetown University, author of *Less Safe, Less Free: Why America is Losing the War on Terror*, will give the first Ronald S. and Kathryn K. Christenson Lecture in Politics and Law, Thursday, March 5, at 7:00 p.m. in the Wallenberg Auditorium. First of a series, it is sponsored by the Gustavus Political Science Department, through a gift from Kathryn Christenson honoring her late husband. Ronald Christenson was the 1997 winner of the GACAC Covenant Award. The lecture is free and open to the public.



Winter Exploring Religious Questions Series

February 23, March 2, 9, and 16

The winter topic of the Exploring Religious Questions Series is “Interfaith Understanding and Cooperation: Historical and Contemporary Approaches among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.”

Although we can find many examples of religious conflict across the centuries and around the world, people of diverse religious traditions today and in the past have also sought to understand and to work with people of other faiths. Recognizing the long history of positive interfaith relationships, some scholars of religion now claim that “religious literacy” must also include “interfaith literacy.” This series explores the subject of interfaith relationships by examining how and why Jews, Christians, and Muslims have sought interfaith understanding and cooperation.

The course sheds light on central beliefs and practices in these three religious traditions, introduces participants to important figures and events in their histories and to leaders of interfaith initiatives today, and invites participants (whether they hold religious convictions or not) to reflect on their own values and the significance of interfaith understanding and cooperation today.

The course will be taught on four consecutive Monday evenings. The cost is \$35. For more information or to register, contact Sara Masters in Church Relations at Gustavus, 507-933-7001, or email church-relations@gustavus.edu. This is a not-for-credit course organized and sponsored by Church Relations in the Center for Servant Leadership and the Bernhardson Chair.

Pastor-2-Pastor Group Welcomes Former Presiding Bishop

Last October, more than 25 pastors gathered at Gustavus as part of the Pastor-2-Pastor group that meets on campus three times a year. This fall’s speaker was Pastor Mark Hanson, former Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The overarching theme of his talks was “Lessons from a Season as Presiding Bishop.”

Pastor-2-Pastor is a supportive network of pastors for pastors and is designed to care for body, mind, and spirit of pastors. This program is cooperatively sponsored by the Southwestern and Southeastern Minnesota Synods of the ELCA and Gustavus Adolphus College.



DIRECTOR FOR CHURCH RELATIONS ENDOWMENT

The staff in Church Relations and the Director of Church Relations serve as critical links in building and nurturing relationships between people and between congregations and the College. For this reason, the Association of Congregations has launched a new effort to endow the position of the Director for Church Relations. The endowment recognizes the value of this role as a blessing to both the College and to congregations.

A donation to the Director for the Church Relations Endowment Fund is a gift that lasts beyond a lifetime. Every gift counts—by putting our gifts together we can establish and grow the endowment, helping secure the future of Church Relations at Gustavus Adolphus College.

For those who contribute to this endowment, it's a chance to affirm values, in this context the value of the Church-College partnership and the value of engaging in conversations about faith as part of the liberal arts experience.

For more information on the Director for Church Relations Endowment Fund and how to make a gift please contact Grady St. Dennis at stdennis@gustavus.edu, 507-933-7661; or Jim Rothschilder at jrothsch@gustavus.edu, 952-686-8255.

Being a Part of the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations

How can Gustavus resources help your congregation this year? We have a wealth of resources available to our Association member congregations, and we want to serve you!

Listed below are many of the signature programs from Church Relations in the Center for Servant Leadership. Some congregations use multiple resources every year; others use fewer, or as needed.

Confirmation Retreats held on campus may be day or overnight retreats during the academic year. Hostel space is available for overnight reservations. Please book at least 6 to 8 weeks in advance; space is limited for groups over 40. Classrooms and space for recreation are available to meet your programming needs.

Adult Retreats are welcomed in the Retreat Center on campus. Church councils, staffs, and men's and women's groups enjoy time to socialize and work together, build relationships, and enjoy the energy of a Lutheran campus.

Individual Clergy Sabbath Retreats are available to Association pastors, usually scheduled during the week.

Partners in Education—Over 30 faculty and staff are available to make presentations on a variety of topics during Sunday morning forums in Association congregations. Church Relations pays for one honorarium per year (until funds are depleted). The congregation pays mileage, also honoraria for subsequent presentations.

Partners in Music—Student vocal and instrumental musical ensembles may visit your congregation to assist in worship. Congregation pays honorarium and mileage.

Gustavus Youth Outreach—This student-led fellowship organization to serves the needs of congregational youth programs, assisting in programming with your youth for day or evening, lock-in or retreat settings. Congregation must cover mileage expenses, meals if applicable, cost of supplies or special materials, and housing if needed. A love offering to GYO is appreciated.

Scholarships—The Lutheran Leadership Award is for students from Association congregations attending Gustavus; Matching Scholarships are available for any students receiving congregational funds to attend Gustavus.

Since the above is not an exhaustive list, please review the full list of resources at any time in our Association Member Handbook, which can be found online at gustavus.edu/churchrelations. To request a booking of any of these programs, contact Sara Masters in Church Relations, Center for Servant Leadership, at 507-933-7001.



Center for Servant Leadership, Church Relations

507-933-7001 | Toll-free 800-726-6194 | 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

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College Chaplain
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Heidi Vanderpan, Intern

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church-relations@gustavus.edu

Fax 507-933-6337

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
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