

Advent Newsletter 2011

Seasonal Notes ...



Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 470 Glenridge Ave, St. Catharines, ON L2T 4C3
+1 (905) 688-2362 • concordia@brocku.ca • www.brocku.ca/concordiaseminary



Stir Up Thy Strength, O Lord, and Come

On the 2nd Sunday of Advent the seminary community gathered for the beloved service of Advent Lessons and Carols. Based on a college tradition from Cambridge, England, it gives the students a chance to celebrate a bit of Christmas together before leaving for home.

But it's only *a bit* of Christmas. The service opens with ancient prayer versicles for the first Sunday in Advent:

- ☑ I look from afar:
- ☑ **And lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth. ...**
- ☑ Stir up Thy strength, O Lord, and come. ...

This is the prayer of one who waits. Of course, it's easier not to wait. It's so easy to accept the secular rush into Christmas that begins in early November. This isn't just a symptom of an impatient society that wants everything *now*. It is the natural way for those "who have no hope" (I Thess. 4:13). Why wait if the solution to all your troubles lies only in the happiness that you can find here and now, if you alone are responsible for your own life?

But the message of Advent is different. We wait and pray because we know that only God's personal intervention into this world can sort our lives. We confess our rebellion, our selfishness, our helplessness. And we cry out, "*stir up Your might and come to save us!*" (Ps. 80:2).

As we wait, we watch, as Jesus bade the disciples do in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:38), as God told the Israelites on the shores of the Red Sea: "*Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent*" (Ex. 14:33-34). Yes, we stand and watch because it is the Lord's battle, and He has promised to

come with punishment for our enemies and with rescue for His children.

With this sure and certain outcome ahead of us, we can afford to wait, we can mature by waiting. And when the gift of the Christ-child comes for us at Christmas, and when the glorious Christ-man returns on the clouds, the wait will prove worth it.

Thomas M. Winger, Acting President.

'Tis the Season ... to Check on Vicars

Vicarages, like the vicars who fill them, come in all shapes and sizes. From rural Wisconsin to downtown Toronto, from Lutheran strongholds to being the only church in town that baptises babies. November is typically the time to check in on the vicars and see how they are fairing, and to make sure they are getting all the experience and exposure expected for the year. For this purpose Dr Mundt, as Vicarage Supervisor, has just completed the rounds for another year and will continue to monitor the students' progress during the remainder of the vicarages.



Vicar Wes Hromowyk (r) with Rev. James Keuch (l), in Union Grove, Wisc.

Although out-of-sight, the vicars are not out-of-mind. Vicars continue to receive copies of the weekly "Communicator". Facebook and e-mail keeps them updated on each other's activities as well. The Seminary Student Association prepares gift parcels for Christmas. And of course, we know that you will want to keep them in your prayers also. Thank-you for your ongoing support.



Children Everywhere!

God's blessing on our seminary families is unmistakable this year, as the Seminary Guild noticed on Harvest Day. At last count there were 31 seminary children. Of these, 29 are under the age of 20. And what gives excitement and vibrancy to every seminary event is the fact that there are 20 children under the age of 10!

At the seminary Christmas dinner a group of children transfixed the audience with a string ensemble playing Christmas carols. All children present were then thrilled to receive presents provided by a special gift from Mrs Celine Weitzel.

"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, ... blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!" (Ps 127)

How are Things Going?

In our Advent newsletter we traditionally take note of the seminary's financial health, and give thanks to all those who have made personal sacrifices to support our vital work.

In the fiscal year ending on 30 June 2011 we were blessed by (a) solid unrestricted gifts on par with the 10-year average; (b) above average bequest receipts; and (c) a substantial gift from the seminary's Foundation to reduce our debt. Thus, despite the fact that stock market woes have reduced our investment income, we were able to end the fiscal year with a healthy surplus (\$178 478). We can therefore announce with thanks that our long-term debt has been reduced from \$781 000 to \$602 500.

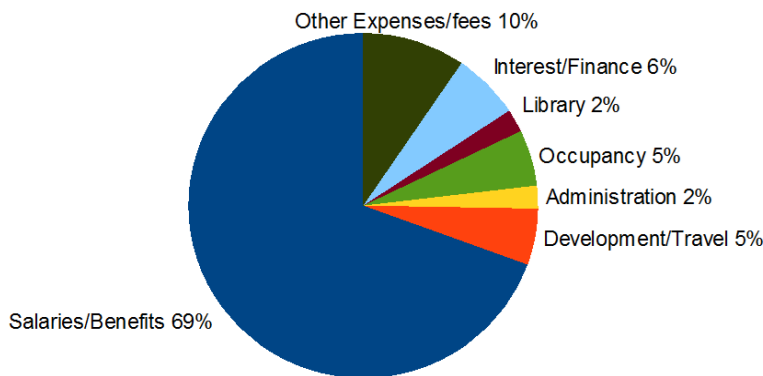
At the June 2011 LCC convention this seminary publicly entered into an agreement with our sister institution, Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton. Under the Memorandum of Understanding we pledge to reduce costs and foster closer relations through internet teaching and faculty exchanges. Though not trouble-free, our joint, online classes

have gone rather well this year, and have opened opportunities for off-site students.

A major tenet of the MOU is that the two seminaries agree to a cap on expenses for the 2012-13 fiscal year. The joint budget of \$1.45 million will ensure that we both work within our means and that the synod's seminary programme in two locations will be sustainable in the long run. For our part, we at CLTS have agreed to reduce our expenses enough to pay down our long-term debt within a decade.

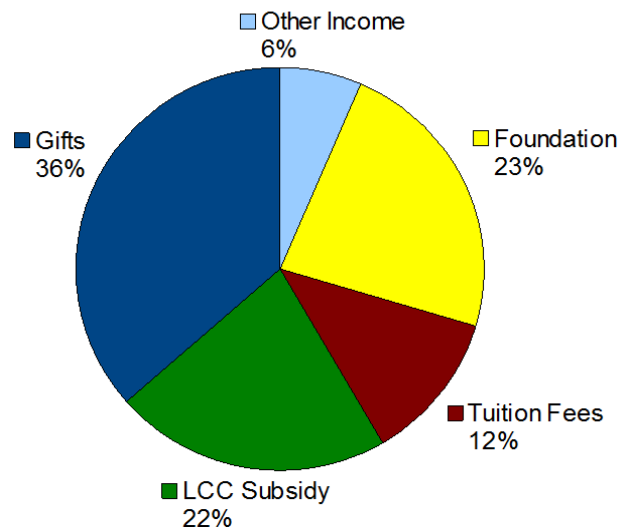
The members of LCC have already responded to this news with immense generosity. We give thanks to you and to God for your faithful support of the Gospel in this place, and pray God will care for you and bless you always.

CLTS Expenses 2010-11
\$745 216.00



CLTS Income 2010-11

\$923 694.00



Something to Pray About

Wondering what to get the seminary for Christmas? Donations to cover costs and offset deficits are always appropriate. But we also ask you to keep another aspect of seminary life in your prayers. While the seminary was still in its infancy, then Dean Roger Humann used to ask, "Would it not be good if our students could live in residence and develop community spirit?"

Once again we are looking at possibilities for accomplishing that by considering a CEF loan to develop and erect an apartment building suitable for families and single students to share. There are, of course, hurdles to be overcome, but this is a project which could be completed within a year. That is why we need your prayers. And of course, should

you want to make a special donation for this cause (realising we would re-allocate the gift to operating expenses if unable to proceed), both current and future students would be thankful.

To get the latest seminary news as soon as it is released visit our news blog at

ConcordiaStCatharines.wordpress.com

You may read stories online, sign up to have them e-mailed to you, or subscribe via RSS. More information about the seminary is always available at our website:

www.brocku.ca/concordiaseminary



Christmas CD

Tara Lyn Hart's Christmas CD, *Perfect Holiday*, is still available from the seminary, and makes a perfect last minute gift.

\$12.00 + \$2.99 S/H

To order:

www.taralynhart.com

Also available on iTunes.
Proceeds support the seminary.

Chocolate, Wine, and Roses

With Tara Lyn Hart joining her husband, Perry, on vicarage next year, this may be your last opportunity to hear her sing and entertain at the seminary's dinner theatre. A perfect Valentine's night out, at the picturesque Hernder winery, the dinner allows you to meet friends old and new, as well as show your support for the seminary and her students.

🍷 Friday, 10 February 2012, dinner at 6:00pm

🍷 Hernder Estate Wines,
1607 8th Ave, St. Catharines

🍷 Silent auction beginning at 5:00pm