



## “Moving Theological Education Closer to Home”

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Institute of Lutheran Theology

## Contact Us:

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**NEW** Email:  
admin@ilt.org

## Growth Spurt

by Julie Smith

The second semester of pastoral preparation courses is up and running at ILT. Last fall we had eleven students in our programs. This spring we have jumped to twenty-one! This increase in our enrollment is an exciting indication of the need for and interest in precisely the educational opportunities ILT is providing.

We are finding similar levels of interest in the two schools: the ILT Academy and Christ School of Theology. Nine of our students are enrolled in programs through the Academy and twelve are enrolled in Christ School of Theology. Our students come from all over the country with diverse backgrounds and vocational interests. Here at ILT those backgrounds and interests are brought into deep conversation with the Lutheran theological tradition and we look forward to the

day in the not-too-distant future when our first graduates will be called to service in the church.

Applications for the summer and fall terms have already started coming in. If you, or someone you know, is interested in exploring theological education through the Institute of Lutheran Theology please contact the Office of Admissions at: [admin@ilt.org](mailto:admin@ilt.org). We would love to hear from you!

### Word at Work Series

(formerly the Christian Life Series)

**Upcoming Course:**

**“Six Myths of Religion in America”**

**Mark Granquist**

**Tuesdays, 7 pm - CST**

**April 6 - May 11**

**Tuition: Individuals \$55 - Group \$250**

**Designated Teaching Center \*Free\***

**Contact [admin@ilt.org](mailto:admin@ilt.org)**

**to register**

**Visit our website for more info**



## “Deaning” a Second Semester

By Greg Peterson

I'm not sure that "Dean" can be made into a verb, but I am now inclined to think that it can be done. ILT began its second semester in February, 2010, and it is already clear that the seeds that have been planted are now bearing fruit. ILT has seven faculty (including myself) in as many courses, instructing almost twenty students. We welcome in particular the addition of James Nestingen, who once taught at Luther Seminary, and is now involved in teaching two courses on the Lutheran Confessions.

In addition, Jon Sorum and Tim Swenson are doing

excellent work teaching our Certificate level courses.

Since last fall, ILT has also implemented some changes in structure and curriculum. Our graduate programs are housed in the Christ School of Theology, which includes the M.Div. program and a Lutheran Theology Graduate Certificate for those at non-Lutheran Seminaries seeking a "Lutheran year." The undergraduate certificate programs (the Pastoral Ministry Certificate and the Associate in Ministry Certificate), as well as our congregational education programs, are now housed in the ILT Academy.

These changes also coincide with a revision of our curriculum at the M.Div. level, just in time for the issuing of our 2010-11 Academic Catalog. Already we are planning for fall, and these changes will pave the way for better student experiences and preparation in the years ahead. All of this has required much "deaning," and I have quickly learned that "deaning" is not something one can do alone. ILT is blessed with an excellent staff and faculty, not to mention some high quality and pioneering students. It is with great excitement that I look forward to the unfolding of the current semester as well as the semesters to come.

### Institute staff

Dr. Dennis Bielfeldt, President  
Dr. Doug Dillner, Executive Assistant, Instructional Technology  
Dr. Charles Manske, Presidential Consultant  
Dr. Gregory Peterson, Academic Dean  
Julie Smith, Dean of Students, Director of Admissions/Registration  
and Director of Church Relations and Institutional Growth  
Dan Bielfeldt, Accounting and Bookkeeping  
Dan Tvedt, Director of Development and Institutional Growth  
Rev. Doug Morton, Director of Library  
Nikki Berreth, Director of Marketing and Institutional Growth  
Marsha Schmit, Communications Assistant

**"God's grace, so sure  
and certain  
that a man could stake  
his life on it a  
thousand times."**

**--Rev. Dr. Martin Luther**

# “Moving Theological Education Closer to Home”

## Coming to a Church Near You

The most effective way to keep tuition costs affordable for our students is for the Institute of Lutheran Theology to develop and maintain a strong donor base. Individual, congregational, and corporate donors are the backbone of a strong institution. Our ability to hire strong faculty and staff, offer scholarships and financial aid, and improve our delivery mechanisms are profoundly affected by the financial support we get from our friends.

When we tell the story of the Institute of Lutheran Theology, time and time again we find that those hearing the story for the first time get excited about this endeavor. As the Lutheran church continues to cast about on a stormy sea, the story of a school that is intentionally and deeply committed to the Lutheran theological tradition is a story that brings some light into a dark time.

When we tell this story we find friends who share our theological convictions and want to support this mission. The development efforts of ILT are under the wise and prudent leadership of Dan Tvedt. Dan brings a wealth of wisdom and experience to this task. Dan has been working in financial services for more than fifteen years and has served on many boards and committees for Lutheran churches and camps. We are blessed by his steady leadership. Dennis Bielfeldt, Nikki Berreth, and Julie Smith complete the development team.

In the coming year the team will visit communities around the region to tell the story of ILT and to listen to the stories of individuals and congregations that share our passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the stories we'd like to share is the plan to build an ILT

Endowment Fund and how you can participate. If you would like to host the ILT team in your community, please contact Dan Tvedt at [dtvedt@ilt.org](mailto:dtvedt@ilt.org)



**Save the Dates**  
**for our**  
**annual**  
**ILT Banquet**  
**and**  
**Theological Conference!**

**June 6-9, 2010**  
**Mount Carmel**  
**Alexandria MN**

**Watch for more information**  
**to come!**



the Word at Work  
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## ILT Board Members

G. Barry Anderson, Associate Justice, Minnesota Supreme Court, St. Paul, MN

Dennis Bielfeldt, President, Institute of Lutheran Theology, Brookings, SD

Paul Erickson, Entrepreneur/Investor, Sioux Falls, SD

Randy Freund, Pastor, Faith Lutheran, Hutchinson, MN (Chair)

Hans J. Hillerbrand, Professor of Religion, Duke University Durham, NC

Fred Schickedanz, Real Estate Developer, Alberta, Canada

Uwe Siemon-Netto, Director, Concordia Seminary Institute on Lay Vocation, St. Louis, MO

Kip Tyler, Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Master, Omaha, NE



### Thrivent ends GivingPlus Program

On December 31, 2009 Thrivent Financial for Lutherans ended its GivingPlus Program which matched funds donated by members to qualifying organizations. There is now a new program taking its place. This new program will begin in spring 2010 and is called "Thrivent Choice".

Thrivent Choice is a program that allows members to help choose where dollars are donated to. Members may participate by voting. According to the Thrivent website, "All benefit and associate members will be eligible to "vote" to distribute a portion of Thrivent Financials charitable funds among a short list of national charities (Lutheran and non-Lutheran), one to two times per year." Some members may also be eligible to participation Choice Dollars. This portion of the Thrivent Choice program allows for approximately 30% of benefit members to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars to Lutheran nonprofit organizations including their own congregations. Eligibility for Choice Dollars is based upon the account values of the members, their leadership, and amount of their insurance premiums held with Thrivent. Eligible benefit members will be able to direct between \$25 and \$100. Some members can be eligible to direct up to \$500. There are other Terms and Conditions that also apply so it is best to direct any questions you may have to your Thrivent representative.

Two more boxes of books arrived today. A pastor in Illinois sent us a gift of love from his theological library. As I was going through the boxes I began to think about how this all began. About one year ago, ILT started sending out requests for books in order that it might build a library for its faculty and students. We were starting basically at 'ground zero.' Requests were sent to Lutheran pastors, publishing companies, and to the majority of theological libraries in both the U.S. and Canada. The response has been gratifying and greatly appreciated. We've even had pastors and lay people from other denominations send us books from their libraries!

At the moment these books are stored in two places: at the Institute office in Brookings, SD and in my congregation's church building in Marengo, IA – all of them just waiting to touch the lives of future readers. Now begins the sorting and the cataloging of these donated books so they can be placed on shelves to be used by our faculty and students. After all, what good is a book if it can't be used?

For any questions concerning the library or to donate books, please contact me at [dmorton@ilt.org](mailto:dmorton@ilt.org) or by mail to Rev. Douglas V. Morton, 780 Court Ave, Marengo, Iowa 52301. Thank you for all of your support. With your help, our library will become a great resource in Biblically and Confessionally grounded theological education for pastors, future pastors, and lay leaders in our churches.



## Moving Forward Theologically

Dr. Dennis Bielfeldt

In my first semester of college teaching, a famous philosopher came to town. William Alston, then Professor of Philosophy at Syracuse University, visited tiny Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, in the fall of 1987 and spoke to us about parallels between perceptual and Christian doxastic practices. I remember that the students, and most of the faculty, had no idea what the issue was to which his paper was a response. I remember the Professor Alston happily admitted he had had no contact with undergraduate students for many years. I also remember wishing that I knew as much philosophy as he did. Perhaps my most vivid memory of the visit, however, was his statement that believing theologians nowadays congregated more in philosophy departments than in departments of religious studies. Having just completed a Ph.D. in "Contemporary Theology and Religious Reflection," I knew what he was saying. While most of my philosophy professors in graduate school were not believers, they had thought deeply enough about things to know what it might be for Christian belief to be true. Unfortunately, I did not always find this in my reading of Barth, Tracy, Tillich and Rahner.

The Institute of Lutheran Theology wants to think deeply enough about things to bring into focus what must be the case for Lutheran theology to be true. This means that our curriculum is perhaps a bit more philosophically-oriented than our seminary competitors. In conformity with the classical Christian tradition, we assume that confusion abounds in theology when epistemic, semantic and metaphysical issues are not clarified. It is important to grasp what it is that our words mean, and whether we speak of our experience of reality or reality itself when speaking them. Sometimes people think this philosophical edge to our curriculum is somehow beside the point. However, make no mistake: The assertions that 'Jesus is the Christ' and 'Christ saves us from sin' are at the heart of everything we do. The Institute steadfastly teaches justification by grace through faith in Christ Jesus; it holds that "I by my own reason or strength cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ or come to Him." But it recognizes that these statements can be given multiple interpretations, and that what the statements mean are a function of these interpretations. One can with two sentences say one thing, or with one sentence claim two or more things. With Luther, the Institute holds that it is not "the words," but "the thing," that is at issue in theology.