

PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SYNODS AND
CONGREGATIONS OF REGION 1 | 2016

A MESSAGE FROM DR. THOMAS W. KRISE PRESIDENT OF PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

As we look forward to the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017, I'd like to share with you some thoughts on how I believe PLU and our congregations are "rooted together."

A strong sense of vocation, service to neighbor and the common good, curiosity and intellectual rigor, a sense that God is present throughout the entire creation, the freedom to ask questions and challenge authority, and all the other things that make up the great gift of Lutheran higher education are important "fruits" of the Reformation. They pervade our campus in so many ways. But I often hear from alumni and parents who wonder if PLU is still connected to the "roots" that give life to these things.

Tending to the roots requires the presence of a vital Campus Ministry, worship life including Morning Prayer and Sunday Eucharist, learning and service opportunities connected to Campus Ministry, a vibrant student-led University Congregation, and strong congregation partners in our surrounding community. This is exactly the work we've been focused on this year in rebuilding and re-visioning Campus Ministry under the invaluable leadership of Interim University Pastor John

Rosenberg. This project, led by the search for a new full-time pastor, is the first significant review of the program in more than 20 years.

We are helped in this endeavor by a strong relationship with the Synod in our collaborative review of Campus Ministry and Congregation Relations; by a number of PLU alumni who, encouraged by their growth and learning at PLU, have entered the Lutheran Volunteer Corps; by recent graduates who have entered into public ministry and credit PLU professors who offered them encouragement; and by current students eager to create a Campus Ministry that reflects contemporary realities.

Because only 17.5 percent of our student body self-identifies as Lutheran, it is the responsibility of leadership across the university to nurture a clear Lutheran center that is, at the same time, hospitably open to other traditions. That is why we offer an interfaith program that supports students from all religious backgrounds, even those who have no faith identity. The reason a person with no religious tradition would feel welcome at PLU is precisely because it is Lutheran;

that is, because of the Lutheran emphasis on intellectual humility that is open to conversation with persons who come from other and no faith traditions, to say nothing of the biblical mandate to welcome others with hospitality. We believe that students will have a richer experience in a diverse community, and will be better able to choose a life path that makes a difference – in their careers, in their personal and civic lives, and in the world they inhabit.

As I meet Lutes around the world, I am struck by their similarities: curious, adventurous problem solvers and community-minded global citizens. I invite you to help us as we seek the best minds among us who care about their communities. I invite you to help us renew and reform our Campus Ministry to keep our connection to faith strong. But most of all, I invite you to visit campus and take advantage of the many lectures, retreat series, and performances that provide rich and meaningful opportunities to stay rooted with your university.



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COMING UP AT PLU

More Than Bible Study?

Animating worship, learning and service with and through Scripture.
June 6-8, 2016

The PLU Summer Conference on Pastoral Theology features Dr. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Dr. Gordon Lathrop, Dr. Barbara Rossing, Dr. Gail Ramshaw, Bishop Richard Jaech and Dr. Samuel Torvend.

For more information and to register:
plu.edu/summertheology

