



Wartburg Theological Seminary
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wartburg Theological Seminary Receives Carpenter Foundation Grant

Dubuque, IA, August 2, 2023—Wartburg Theological Seminary was recently awarded \$20,000.00 of grant funding by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation to support the development of diaconal studies as a field of study in North American theological education.

Both church and academy urgently need a constructive diaconal theology to spark revitalization of mission amid contemporary crises. Leading edge ecumenical theology depicts diakonia as integral to discipleship, focused on service, justice, and advocacy for the marginalized. Worldwide, diaconal practice is no longer simply associated with alms and palliative ministries. While theological education in Scandinavia, Germany, and other contexts around the world claim a rich history of diaconal studies, churches and institutions of theological education in North America have been slow to recognize this advancement.

Project Director Rev. Dr. Craig Nesson states, "This project aims to deepen and expand commitment to the diaconal work of the church by founding diaconal studies as a distinctive field of research in dialogue with other academic disciplines. Across the world diakonia is taking root as the focus of the church's mission in this post-Christian era. Diaconal studies has been long established in some parts of the world, including Germany and Scandinavia, and is under development in many other contexts. Diakonia is crucial for the revitalization of the church to turn us inside out. Diaconal studies can support that transformation."

To accomplish their goals, the leadership team proposes to hold two virtual conferences in 2023. The leadership team will plan the conferences, issue invitations for panelists and participants, select contributors, and shape the final products, including an edited book prepared for use as an intermediate and advanced textbook in ATS-member schools and as an ecumenical resource for the broader church. Their book proposal has already been accepted by Regnum Books International.

The leadership team consists of:

- Craig L. Nesson, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA (Lutheran)
- Darryl W. Stephens, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, PA (Methodist)
- Lori Mills-Curran, Former Executive Director of the Association for Episcopal Deacons, Westborough, MA (Episcopal Church USA)
- Man-Hei Yip, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA (Lutheran)

About Wartburg Theological Seminary

Wartburg Theological Seminary is one of seven theological schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Wartburg is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and the Higher Learning Commission. Wartburg educates women and men to serve the church as ordained and lay leaders. Wartburg Theological Seminary was established in Dubuque, Iowa in 1854.

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