



*From the Office of the Interim President  
Dr. Kristine M. Stache*

## **RESPONDING TO COVID-19: UPDATE AS OF MAY 5, 2020**

In our ongoing efforts to care for one another and our neighbors, Wartburg Theological Seminary has put into place temporary policies that will remain effective through Tuesday, June 30th—with a possibility to be extended or rescinded before that time—to help us steward our shared life together. Since implementing these policies, we have transitioned all classes to fully digital delivery and are planning to do the same for our June and July intensive courses. Most of our employees have transitioned to remote work.

We now find ourselves in a time where our federal, state, and local governments are beginning to reopen various areas, businesses, and public gatherings. Here in Iowa, our governor has set a May 15th date for select businesses and organizations, including worshipping communities, to begin reopening in Dubuque County. The Wartburg COVID-19 Task Force has decided that Wartburg Seminary will not be opening that quickly. Out of our own Christian witness and deep love and care for one another, we will continue with our modified operations at least through the end of June, if not longer. We continue to rely on the wisdom of our public health agencies and medical science to guide us in our discernment and decision-making process.

Wartburg is not alone in arriving at this decision. We support the reasoning of denominational judicatories in advising congregations to be informed by public health considerations in any decision to reopen, encouraging them to do so only when it is deemed safe. Several of our local partners have created language and criteria to assist congregations in this endeavor. The Northeastern Iowa Synod, on whose territory we are located, as well as other area bishops and ecumenical leaders have called on their congregations to be prudent in delaying congregational gatherings until medical science indicates the safety of doing so. As a seminary, we support the statements of these leaders and the wise guidance they are providing.

We intend to continue doing what we can to preserve health, minimize the spread of the virus, and decrease anxiety where possible. *Care for one another during this time continues to be our top priority!*

### **Temporary Policies in Place for Wartburg Seminary:**

1. All courses (including June and July intensive courses) have or will move exclusively to online delivery through distance education and we have created opportunities for the staff and faculty that are able to work remotely.
2. We have moved forward as a worship-centered community, gathering daily for worship via Zoom through the end of the academic year.



3. The Wartburg Campus will be closed to the public but remain open with modified library and food pantry hours for students, faculty, and staff.
4. All events previously scheduled on campus through the end of the summer have been canceled or moved to a distance format via Zoom. Please visit our website for details on specific events.
5. All students are expected to follow the policies set forth by the governments, organizations, and synods where they are serving.
6. Please practice care and consideration for yourself and others. If you are symptomatic, stay home. If you have questions or need assistance, ask for help. Consult with medical staff if symptoms persist.

The COVID-19 Taskforce is also focusing on creating reopening protocols and plans for Wartburg Theological Seminary when it is deemed safe to do so. The WTS COVID-19 task force continues to monitor the situation carefully and will do our best to keep you updated as things change.

We continue to pray for all who are ill, for the most vulnerable, for healthcare workers, public health officials, for local, regional, state, national and international policy makers, and all who are fearful about this virus. Wartburg Theological Seminary is committed to praying for pastors, deacons, and all congregational leaders in navigating wisely and deliberately during these difficult times.

Our prayers for your well-being abound.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristine M Stache". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Kristine Stache  
*Interim President*