



*"Blessed are those who trust in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.*

*They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.*

*It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit."*

Jeremiah 17:7–8



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“Rooted and Renewing:” Wartburg Theological Seminary’s Strategic Plan, 2024–2026

I am excited to introduce Wartburg Theological Seminary’s new strategic plan, ***Rooted and Renewing***.

Rooted and Renewing is the title of Professor Troy Troftgruben’s recent book, in which he looks back at models and practices described in the New Testament and invites us to see their potential for helping recreate and strengthen the church in the 21st century.

Rooted and Renewing: It is a vibrant, hopeful metaphor that describes well Wartburg Seminary’s understanding of our specific call in this moment to follow the Holy Spirit and participate in God’s mission in the world. ***Rooted and Renewing***: Wartburg is both rooted in our longstanding historical commitments, and also constantly renewing the strong theological formation that happens here.

There are three main areas of focus in this strategic plan: diversity, care, and communication.

By ***diversity***, we mean cultivating an inclusive sense of belonging for all of God’s children. ***Rooted*** in our historic commitments to the global church, cross-cultural engagement, and open questions, we are forming leaders who can nurture and accompany Christian communities and congregations as they become places of reconciliation, hope and bridge-building. The church’s very nature is counter-cultural, as it brings people together as the body of Christ based not on affinity, convenience, similarity or shared political beliefs. The church is a group that God has chosen and called together to proclaim the gospel and serve the neighbor and stranger. Therefore, today, Wartburg Seminary is ***renewing*** our RIC, anti-racist and Indigenous-affirming commitments, forming the next generation of public ministers who can invite congregations to live in the gray and create more purple, forging unusual friendships and fostering challenging conversations. As we reach toward God’s future, we will form resilient, adaptive leaders. Those leaders will be equipped well to serve in diverse and challenging contexts, respecting those contexts as they engage in dialogue that invites people into the liberating power of the gospel that empowers them to name and help dismantle structures of oppression. We will build on our work with Latine and rural ministries to broaden the pipeline of potential students to include and welcome those from many different communities and backgrounds.

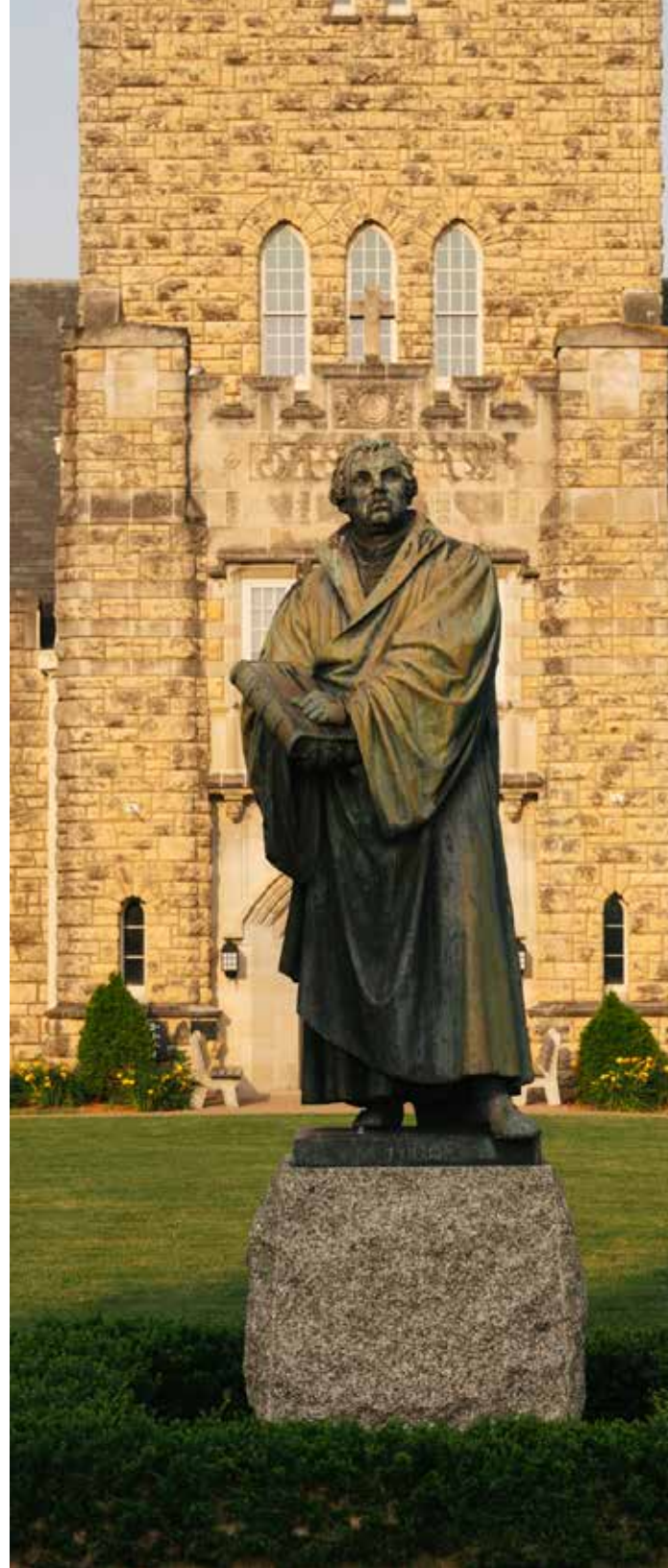
By **care**, we mean intentionally tending to our most valuable resources: first and foremost, our students, staff, and faculty; and second, the physical campus we call home. We are investing in our community now for the sake of the future needs of the church. For 150+ years, we have been **rooted** here in Dubuque, Iowa, with a beautiful campus that has had a recognizable profile for generations and also experienced many developments over the years, including our current renovation of Fritschel Hall. Now, we are **renewing** for the future from these roots, as we continue to work to integrate more green technologies in all aspects of our life together. At Wartburg, we cultivate a culture of gratitude and celebration, regularly taking time to thank and honor our faculty and staff. We continue to develop ways to implement enrichment events for faculty and staff, and provide opportunities for growth and development. The faculty plan to engage in further training in both diverse pedagogies and assessment tools that are meant to address particular student needs and further support student formation.

Finally, by **communication** we are pointing to our plans to strengthen the connective tissue that binds us all together as church around the world, deepening historic partnerships and forging new ones, and sharing with clarity and joy our own identity—our mission, vision, and values that guide our work. **Rooted** in our longstanding relationships with both ELCA synods, offices, and congregations, and also LWF partner churches and communities, we are **renewing** our commitment to reach out to new communities to listen actively and learn about them, their cultures, and our own participation in systems of oppression. In so doing, we will engage deeply with all constituencies and communities to share who we are, where we are going, and what we know and profess about the liberating hope and joy of the gospel with the world and its peoples.

We give thanks to God for you, and your partnership with us in God's mission in the world!



Kristin Johnston Lergen
President





Mission

Wartburg Theological Seminary serves Christ's church through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by being a worship-centered community of critical theological reflection where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning.

The community embodies God's mission by stewarding resources for engaging, equipping, and sending collaborative leaders who interpret, proclaim and live the gospel of Jesus Christ for a world created for communion with God and in need of personal and social healing.

Vision

Wartburg Theological Seminary—in partnership with the local and global church—seeks to form Christ-centered, resilient, and adaptive leaders for the thriving of congregations and the healing of the world. Wartburg graduates are called to be leaders with a passion for Christ and compassion for communities. They will faithfully embody the story of Jesus Christ and invite others into this transformative story with hope and joy.

Values

As a Christ-centered community of worship and learning, Wartburg Theological Seminary deepens and reimagines its historic commitments to theological education that is diverse, sustainable, and transformative, grounded in and bearing witness to the good news of Jesus Christ.

Diversity

Diversity points to both the recognition and celebration of the full array of individual differences we all have regarding ability, age, country of origin, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, veteran status and other ways we may be unique but also similar to one another. Diversity includes facilitating the expansion of a welcoming and nurturing environment for discovery, inquiry, and learning.

Cuidado

El cuidado se refiere a las acciones específicas y compromisos por los cuales creamos una comunidad que explícitamente atiende al mejoramiento a largo plazo de nuestro más preciado recurso: las personas y las relaciones, el terreno y el edificio, y la estabilidad financiera.

Communication

We value and make a priority the practice of clear, authentic story-sharing as a way to make known to our internal and external constituents Wartburg's unique and particular identity as a dynamic community of Christ-centered student formation, for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Iglesia

Mientras que la palabra "Iglesia" indica una iglesia específica, como por ejemplo en Iglesia Luterana Santa Trinidad, y el término "esta iglesia" ó "nuestra iglesia" indica la ELCA, el uso de "iglesia" in letra minúscula indica la iglesia (universal) católica.

Community

Wartburg Seminary is a diverse gathering of children of God, joined together across time and space by the love and grace of Jesus Christ. We embody our identity as the body of Christ in the spirit of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life together—an imperfect community of sinners who are also forgiven and freed for mutual consolation and care, and a life of service in the world. You belong here, because you belong to God.

Evangélica

Del griego que significa "buenas noticias," usamos la palabra evangélica en solidaridad con el espíritu de las iglesias de la era de la Reforma, quienes se auto llamaron evangélicas para enfatizar la libertad del evangelio de Jesucristo. Somos testigos del amor incondicional de Dios para todos los pueblos y celebramos la belleza de la diversidad humana.

Latine

Latine (pronounced la-`ti-ne) is a gender-neutral form of the word Latino, created by LGBTQIA2S+, gender non-binary, and feminist communities in Spanish speaking countries. The objective of the term Latine is to remove gender from the Spanish word Latino, by replacing it with the gender-neutral Spanish letter E. At the same time, we recognize that those in the Latine community use a variety of words to define themselves, and we affirm that diversity.

Hospitalidad Radical

Hospitalidad Radical sigue las prácticas de Jesucristo de dar la bienvenida y de ser bienvenido por personas allegadas y extrañas, por los privilegiados sociales ó por los despreciados, por los ricos y los pobres, por aquellos con estatuto o sin ello. En todos los casos, se le da especial atención el crear espacios libres de juicio ó condenación y al contrario se trata de alimentar una comunidad donde el amor incondicional de Dios es libremente compartido y vivido.

Diversidad

Diversidad significa el reconocer y celebrar la gran variedad de diferencias individuales que todos tenemos sin importar habilidad, edad, país de origen, estatus socio-económico, etnicidad, identidad de género, estatus migratorio, afiliación política, orientación sexual, estatus militar u otras formas que nos hacen únicos pero similares los unos a los otros. Diversidad incluye la facilitación para crear una atmósfera de bienvenida y apoyo para el descubrimiento, la investigación, y el aprendizaje.

Care

Care refers to the specific actions and commitments by which we create a community that explicitly attends to the long-term flourishing of our most cherished resources: people and relationships, land and campus, and financial stability.

Comunicación

Valuamos y es nuestra prioridad la práctica de compartir nuestra historia de una manera clara y auténtica, como una forma de hacer conocer a nuestros constituyentes internos y externos la identidad única y particular de Wartburg, como una comunidad dinámica en la cual la formación del estudiante es Cristo-céntrica, para el bien de la misión de Dios en el mundo.

Church

While "Church" indicates a specific church, such as Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, and the term "this church" or "our church" indicates the ELCA, the use of "church" in all lowercase indicates the catholic (universal) church, the Body of Christ.

Comunidad

El Seminario Wartburg is una comunidad diversa de los hijos de Dios, conéctados a través del tiempo y espacio por el amor y la gracia de Jesucristo. Encarnamos nuestra identidad como el cuerpo de Cristo en el espíritu de "vida en comunidad" de Dietrich Bonhoeffer — una comunidad imperfecta de pecadores quienes también han sido perdonados y liberados para la consolación y cuidado mutuo, y una vida de servicio en el mundo. Tú perteneces aquí, porque tú le perteneces a Dios.

Evangelical

From the Greek meaning "good news," we use evangelical in the spirit of the Reformation-era churches, who called themselves evangelical to emphasize the freedom of the gospel in Jesus Christ. We bear witness to the unconditional love of God for all people and celebrate the beauty of human diversity.

Latine

Latine (pronunciado la-`ti-ne) es una forma género neutro de la palabra latino, creada por las comunidades LGBTQIA2S+, las de género no binario y feministas en los países donde se habla Español. El objetivo del término Latine es el de remover el género de la palabra en Español Latino, al reemplazarse por la letra E en Español que denota neutralidad de género. Al mismo tiempo, reconocemos que aquellos en la comunidad Latine usan una variedad de palabras para definirse a ellos mismos, y afirmamos esa diversidad.

Radical Hospitality

Radical hospitality follows Jesus Christ's own practices of both welcoming and being welcomed by insiders and outsiders, the social elite and the social outcasts, the rich and the poor, those with status and those without. In all cases, particular attention is given to creating a space free of judgment and condemnation and fostering a community where the unconditional love of God is freely shared and experienced.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Called by Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God, who is love and whose call to love expands beyond any boundaries we might place upon it, the DEI Task Force facilitates the work of the Wartburg Theological Seminary faculty, students, staff, and board members to attend more intentionally to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our life together, such that church and community leaders become people who:

1. Uplift and center voices that have been historically marginalized/oppresed/disadvantaged in the United States and around the world.
2. Nurture and sustain a deeper sense of belonging for all people in diverse contexts.
3. Develop greater individual intercultural competencies.
4. Inspire and catalyze mutual transformation in public ministries and across the country and the world.

This work ultimately is not simply for Wartburg Seminary alone but serves the church in the world, as it flows from the call of Jesus Christ to faithful discipleship and the vision the ELCA has set for itself.



The Triune God commands that we love our neighbor and the sojourner among us as ourselves (Lev 19:18b, 34). When asked which commandment was the greatest commandment of the Torah (Mt 22:36–40), Jesus responded that it is to love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all our mind (Deut 6:5), and a second, he said, is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself (Lev 19:18b). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus adds precision to the interpretation of neighbor by clarifying how expansive this call to love is: “You have heard it said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Mt 5:43–44). The call to love neighbor is the call to love all, extending so far to even include the person we consider an enemy.

Therefore, we acknowledge our call from God to honor the dignity of each person, to advocate for their full inclusion in the life and work of the Seminary, and to inspire leaders to speak up and out in proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the service of justice for all people. This work, done well, answers the call of Jesus to “love one another as I have loved you,” and will draw all of us more deeply into the beautiful, loving, unbiased kingdom of God for which Jesus taught us to pray.

Land Acknowledgment Statement

We at Wartburg Theological Seminary acknowledge our campus occupies ancestral lands stolen by the U.S. Government and white colonizers from the Sauk, Meskwaki, Miami, Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Kickapoo peoples. The Wartburg Seminary diaspora community continues to occupy these and other stolen lands first given to Native nations by the Creator.

You are welcome here.

As a Reconciling in Christ seminary, WTS seeks to offer hospitality and welcome to all who enter our academic programs. Following Jesus Christ, whose reconciling love bridged barriers and made strangers friends, we seek to welcome and learn from one another's particularity—including but not limited to one another's race, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical ability, social status, and theological diversity.



WTS Belonging Statement

Wartburg Theological Seminary is a worship-centered, learning community gathered into one by God's love and grace in Christ. The Holy Spirit calls you here. You belong in this community. In the name of Christ, the members of the Wartburg community embrace you as beloved. In imitation of God the Creator, we celebrate the beauty of human diversity.

The WTS community affirms the value and worth of people of all ages, races, cultures, languages, traditions, socioeconomic status, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and bodies of all shapes, sizes, and abilities. We cherish people of faith traditions other than our own. We hear and have committed ourselves to answer the call of Jesus to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Diversity

WE WILL REFLECT THE **WONDERFUL DIVERSITY**
OF GOD'S HUMAN CREATION.

Diversidad

REFLEJAREMOS LA **MARAVILLOSA DIVERSIDAD**
DE LA CREACIÓN HUMANA DE DIOS.

*After this I looked, and there was a great
multitude that no one could count, from
every nation, from all tribes and peoples and
languages, standing before the throne and
before the Lamb. Revelation 7:9*



We will

Commit to an attitude of mission-driven innovation and relational, radical hospitality, so students, faculty, staff, and constituents experience the diverse and beloved community of Christ in life at Wartburg Seminary, wherever they are.

- Build into Wartburg's culture regular comprehensive anti-racism training sessions for all constituents, and create an environment where such training is expected and welcome.
- Reduce the financial burden of seminary for diverse candidates.
- Staff and faculty members will demonstrate intercultural competencies in all aspects of their work.
- Revitalized chapel practices will best serve our mission-driven, worship-centered, radically hospitable identity.
- Demonstrate institutional commitments to hiring practices that reflect DEI best practices.

Recruit resilient, adaptive leaders and form and equip them to serve well in diverse and challenging contexts, respecting those contexts as they engage in dialogue that invites people into the liberating power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to name and help dismantle structures of oppression.

- Diversify our grass-roots level of recruitment for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) students.
- Increase the number of international students.
- Create a culture of mentorship as part of student formation at Wartburg Seminary.

We will

Build on our work with Latine and rural ministries to broaden the pipeline of potential students to include and welcome those from many different communities and backgrounds.

- Diversify the student body such that it better reflects the diversity of the United States population, specifically related to the Latine community.
- Develop Centro Teológico Luterano Multicultural (CTLM) into a thriving source of education and connection for intercultural (particularly with Latine communities) ministries and Latine leaders.
- Recreate a Rural Ministry Concentration that is more diverse and inclusive.

Build deeper, broader, and more creative partnerships with communities in Iowa and beyond, in our supporting Synods, in congregations, with young adults, and with people around the world.

- Cultivate a more visible and active presence in the local Dubuque community to benefit all students in all places.
- Propose new initiatives with synodical partners.
- Deepen our networks in Regions 4 & 5 with organizations/communities that support student formation.
- Strategically renew global partnerships and connections, and develop new ones.



Cuidado
CUIDAREMOS DE LOS RECURSOS QUE POSEEMOS.

Care
WE WILL CARE FOR THE RESOURCES WE HAVE.

*Bear with one another and, if anyone has
a complaint against another, forgive each
other; just as the Lord has forgiven you,
so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe
yourselves with love, which binds everything
together in perfect harmony.*
Colossians 3:13-14



We will

Exercise good stewardship of our existing financial resources and expand and increase our funding sources to support the Seminary's mission.

- Curate an updated, well-categorized donor base that reflects our institutional priorities.
- Use financial aid protocols that are flexible and equitable.
- Reconnect with global alumni.
- Create new donor pipelines with expanded avenues of support.

Care for our staff, faculty, and students.

- Cultivate a sense of security and confidence on the part of the staff.
- Actively attend to institutional structures and policies that support a healthy work/life balance.
- Cultivate a culture of support and play among the faculty and staff.
- Develop practices and policies that accompany and support a thriving student body in their individual and collective formation.
- Develop practices and policies that accompany and support a thriving residential student community.

We will

Ensure continuity, capacity, and competent leadership in key functions.

- Develop clear, documented processes and procedures in all departments.
- Develop staff cross-training plans.
- Develop a culture of both providing and using professional development opportunities.
- Implement effective human resource management practices to attract, retain, and develop top talent in key personnel areas.
- Develop a culture of cross-departmental partnerships and communications.
- Establish procedures and processes for maintaining a healthy institutional equilibrium even in times of fluctuation and change.

Care for our physical facilities and creation, the world God loves so much.

- Strategically manage the buildings and larger campus for long-term thriving and health.
- Incorporate eco-friendly practices in our facilities and purchasing.
- Incorporate considerations of eco-justice into our policies and programming.
- Develop a culture of learning from and exhibiting best ecological practices in institutional operations.



Communication

WE WILL **COMMUNICATE** OUR MISSION,
VALUES, AND IDENTITY **CLEARLY.**

Comunicación

COMUNICAREMOS NUESTRA MISIÓN,
VALORES, E IDENTIDAD CON **CLARIDAD.**

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who
announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'*
Isaiah 52:7



We will

Be in intentional conversation with different communities and people and listen actively to learn about them, their cultures, and our own participation in systems of oppression.

- Create safe and inclusive spaces for dialogue and exchange of ideas, where individuals can express their perspectives and be heard without fear of judgment or retaliation.
- Manifest a culture of hospitality and welcome with diverse guests.
- Create new and deepen existing partnerships with diverse ELCA congregations, communities, and leaders.

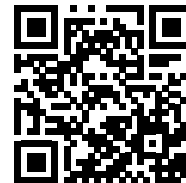
Engage deeply with all constituencies and communities to share who we are, where we are going, and what we hope to share about the liberating hope and joy of the gospel with the world and its peoples.

- Launch a new “brand,” including an updated website and social media presence.
- Utilize faculty, staff, and board members when they are traveling as valuable resources to assist admissions and development colleagues in building relational capacity with key constituents.

We will

Share the educational offerings and values of the Seminary community in language that is readily available, easily understandable, and welcoming in tone, including our residential offerings.

- Develop up-to-date, relevant, and inviting materials describing our mission and vision, educational offerings, institutional priorities and goals.
- Cultivate strong synodical partners who know our programming and actively engage in our student formation.



Visit our website to learn
more about Wartburg!





"Savior, hanging on the cross declaring God's love to us,
you are forgiveness.

Beside you hangs a thief,
beneath you waits Mary the forgiven,
and all around watch those many people
to whom you give new life and hope.
To us you give new life and hope.
Forgiven sinners become your body and your Church;
may the reconciliation we share
bring your gospel to all the world.

God,
you call us to serve you with all the strength we have:
you are faithful to those you call;
may Jesus' resurrection raise us if we stumble,
the Christlight beckon us if we lose our way,
and we shall have strength once more
to walk with you to the cross."

From A New Zealand Prayer Book

"Nuestro Salvador, colgado en la cruz, declaras el amor de Dios por nosotros,
Tú eres el perdón.

A tu lado cuelga un ladrón,
A tus pies espera Maria la que perdonaste,
Y a tu entorno miras a aquellas personas
A quien les diste nueva vida y esperanza.
Pecadores perdonados se convierten en tu cuerpo y en tu Iglesia;
Que la reconciliación que compartimos
Lleve el evangelio a todo el mundo.

Dios,
Nos llamas a servirte con toda nuestra fuerza:
Tu eres fiel con aquellos que llamas;
que la resurrección de Jesús nos levante cuando tropezamos,
que la luz de Cristo sea nuestro faro luminoso si en caso perdemos el camino,
para que tener fuerza nuevamente
para caminar contigo hacia la cruz."

From A New Zealand Prayer Book

Notes

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**FOUNDED IN 1854, WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IS
A SEMINARY OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA.**

Wartburg Theological Seminary serves Christ's church through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by being a worship-centered community of critical theological reflection where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning.

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