

**Report of Susquehanna University**  
**The Rev. Scott M. Kershner, Chaplain to the University**

**Life of the University**

The 2016-2017 academic year marks the 159<sup>th</sup> for Susquehanna University. The University continues to serve a religiously diverse student body, about ten percent of whom self-identify as Lutheran, who hail from 35 states and 22 countries. This June 30 will mark the end of L. Jay Lemons's service as president. He has served the University faithfully and well for 17 years, for which we are deeply grateful. The University will welcome Dr. Jonathan Green as its 15<sup>th</sup> president.

**Campus Religious Activities**

Religious Life continues to help members of the academic community integrate faith, life, and learning. Many religious life organizations and various ministries and programs offered by the Chaplain's Office help students grow spiritually as they grow intellectually.

Sunday worship services are held in Weber Chapel when classes are in session. The student deacon program allows select students to explore Christian service through formal servant-leadership roles.

Last April, the annual "Lutheran Youth Day" once again brought middle and high school students, pastors and youth ministers into contact and conversation with college students for whom the Christian faith is vibrant and alive.

In January, for the second consecutive year Chaplain Scott Kershner co-directed (with Rabbi Nina Mandel, an adjunct professor at Susquehanna) and interfaith student travel seminar to the Holy Land called GO Jerusalem: Interfaith Encounters. The program studies the ways in which the three Abrahamic faiths regard Jerusalem as a holy city and work together to seek peace, justice, and mutual understanding.

Interfaith engagement continues to be a strong commitment of ELCA institutions of higher education generally, and Susquehanna in particular. Ours is a religiously diverse campus, a reality which we embrace not in spite of but because of our Lutheran tradition, which teaches that the other is to be welcomed as Christ and that education serves the common good.

In our world where religious conflicts are routinely in the headlines, the work of building bridges of understanding and cooperation across lines of religious and philosophical difference is an essential civic and spiritual task. Such work has been an important part of religious life at Susquehanna in the past year.

**In Conclusion**

Susquehanna University deeply appreciates the ongoing support and encouragement that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Upper Susquehanna Synod give to its efforts to be a strong and successful college of the Church. We express particular appreciation for the service of Pastor Lois Martin, who is a member of the Board of Trustees.