



United Lutheran Seminary Synod Assembly Report 2025

Dear Partners in Ministry,

Grace and peace be with you as you gather for your Synod Assembly. It is a joy to greet you on behalf of United Lutheran Seminary and to thank you for your ongoing partnership with ULS in forming the future leaders of Christ's Church.

At a time when many congregations are searching for pastors and deacons, ULS remains steadfast in our urgent mission: **to prepare, equip, and send out faithful, well-formed leaders who can serve the church and proclaim the Gospel in a changing world.**

This commitment guides our work in four ways:

1. **Raising new leaders**—Our recently revamped curriculum emphasizes hands-on pastoral formation so that students are fully prepared to serve congregations and ministries upon graduation. We continue to welcome students from across the country and beyond, forming them through rigorous theological education and practical ministry experiences.
2. **Making seminary accessible**—We are deeply committed to removing financial barriers that prevent people from answering the call to ministry. Through generous scholarships for qualified students and new pathways for theological education, we are working to ensure that students can pursue their vocation without the burden of debt.
3. **Equipping and sustaining leaders for the long haul**—Learning for ministry doesn't end at graduation. Through our Kindling Faith continuing education programs, we provide pastors, deacons, and lay leaders with ongoing formation, spiritual renewal, and leadership training for the challenges of today's church.
4. **Strengthening our partnership with you**—The church cannot raise up leaders alone, and neither can the seminary. We need your help in identifying, encouraging, and supporting those whom God is calling into ministry. Working together, we can raise Gospel-centered leaders for generations to come.

Signs of Hope

ULS is thriving, with strong enrollment across our degree and certificate programs. We currently have more than 350 students, including over 100 future pastors and deacons. Our varied learning platforms include in person and hybrid classes as well as distance, or what we refer to as

“distributed learning.” Our faculty continue to develop new ways of preparing leaders for both traditional congregational ministry and emerging ministry contexts. This fall we are welcoming our second cohort of PhD students, ensuring that the church continues to have strong theological voices shaping its future.

Our mission is clear: **the church needs leaders, and we are here to prepare them.** We ask for your prayers, your support, and your encouragement of those who may be discerning a call to ministry. Who in your congregation or community might be called to serve? How can you walk alongside them on that journey?

Looking Ahead

As we stand on the threshold of our 200th anniversary in 2026, we are not just celebrating the past—we are looking to the future. We invite you to celebrate with us, as we cross the threshold into a new century, recognizing the continuing need for strong, adaptable leaders in our challenging world. We invite you to join us in this journey, as we explore new ways to form leaders who will serve God’s people for coming generations.

Thank you for your faithful support. Thank you for lifting up future leaders. And thank you for being partners with us in this vital mission. May God bless you, your bishop, and the congregations represented here in this Assembly, and strengthen and preserve you for the journey ahead.

Rev. R. Guy Erwin, Ph.D.

President, United Lutheran Seminary