

Reports of the Annual Conference Agencies

1. Report of Bethany Theological Seminary

It is an exciting time at Bethany Theological Seminary. For six consecutive years, enrollment has grown, as we have launched new master's degree and certificate programs. Students from the Church of the Brethren — and many other denominations — have been drawn to Bethany by our innovative faculty, intriguing courses they cannot find elsewhere, our ability to provide robust learning opportunities in person and at a distance, and our commitment to provide a pathway to a graduate degree without additional debt. The Seminary has maintained a continuous commitment to the core values established by our founders, while also creating opportunities for new ideas to flourish.

As an innovative learning community grounded in an Anabaptist and Radical Pietist witness, Bethany Theological Seminary empowers every student to lead through spiritual engagement, faith-filled thought, and transformative practice — so that the world flourishes. The Seminary's attention, energy, and resources are focused on two primary goals. First, we remove any obstacles that might keep a qualified student who is answering God's call to ministry and service, by providing a pathway by which students can earn graduate degrees without taking on additional student or consumer debt. Second, we provide an exceptional biblical and theological education that prepares our students to minister and lead in a variety of contexts.

We endeavor to respond to the emerging interests and passions of students and support the needs of the Church by offering an evolving and dynamic set of master's degree and certificate programs and to make it possible for students to graduate from Bethany without taking on additional student or consumer debt.

Our aim is to provide an excellent seminary education to a diverse student body, preparing our graduates to minister wherever they are called. Many of our graduates continue to seek ordination in the Church of Brethren. Others serve and lead within non-profit organizations, as scholars and teachers, or as writers. We attract students from other denominations who are drawn to Bethany's distinctive mission and, in turn, enrich classroom conversations with their varied life experiences and perspectives.

LEADERSHIP

Board of Trustees

Dr. Eric Bishop (Pomona, Calif.) continues as chair of the Bethany Board of Trustees. **Cathy Huffman** (Rocky Mount, Va.) is concluding her service as secre-

1 tary. The newest trustees are **Darla Kay Deardorff** (Durham, N.C.), **Jonathan**
2 **Frye** (McPherson, Kan.), **Kent Miller** (Goshen, Ind.), and **Laura Stone** (North
3 Manchester, Ind.) who represents the Council of District Executives (CODE) on
4 the board.

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6 **Campus Leadership**

7 **Rev. Dr. Jeff Carter** is in his 11th year as president of Bethany. A leadership team
8 works closely with the president to guide decision-making and ensure proactive
9 pursuit of the Seminary's mission. This year Jeff has represented the Church of
10 the Brethren at meetings of the World Council of Churches, and he has been a
11 guest preacher for various CoB congregations. Jeff continues to be very involved
12 in the local community, serving as president of the Richmond Symphony Or-
13 chestra board and as chair of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce.

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15 **MAJOR INITIATIVES**
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17 **Introducing Bethany BOLD**

18 In order to recruit and support dynamic and accomplished students and to pre-
19 pare them to lead congregations through issues of diversity and division, we
20 have launched a new initiative known as Bethany BOLD. This rigorous and de-
21 manding program will challenge Bethany's best and brightest students to apply
22 their faith and education to address real-world problems, including poverty and
23 racial injustice. Students selected for Bethany BOLD will be required to engage
24 in service in the Wayne County community, participate in educational activities
25 (like lectures and training sessions) outside the seminary, and participate in pur-
26 poseful reflection about their experiences in the program. The word BOLD is
27 also an acronym for our aspirations for our students: Build, Organize, Love, and
28 Dare. We believe these four verbs articulate the actions that future ministers must
29 undertake — so the world flourishes! Participants in the program will receive
30 full tuition scholarships, free housing, and a monthly living stipend. This pro-
31 gram is funded, in part, by a \$1M grant from the Lilly Endowment.

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33 **Innovation and Creativity**

34 The recent retirement of **Dr. Scott Holland** and the impending retirement of
35 **Dr. Kendall Rogers** has provided us with an opportunity to celebrate their many
36 contributions to the Seminary and to imagine what new opportunities the future
37 may bring. We have hired new faculty members (**Dr. Maggie Elwell** and
38 **Dr. Tamisha Tyler**, both of whom are profiled later in this report) and we are
39 regularly adding new courses and revising existing ones in order to meet the
40 changing needs of our students, the church, and the world.

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42 **Our Nigeria Connection**

43 As enrollment at our Technology Centre in Jos continues to grow, we are invest-
44 ing in new office space that will be used by our onsite employees, **Sharon Flaten**
45 and **Rev. Joshua Sati**. This new building will provide a professional and accom-
46 modating location for staff to serve the needs of our students. The Certificate in

Biblical Peacemaking continues to thrive, with many talented students enrolling in the program and bringing a wonderful diversity of viewpoints and perspectives to classroom discussions. President Jeff Carter and other members of the Seminary's leadership are hoping to travel to Nigeria this year to join in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the EYN denomination. As of this writing, however, a financial crisis in Nigeria has led the U.S. Department of State to warn against traveling to the country, so those plans are in flux.

Welcome and Hospitality

This year we received \$100,000 from First Bank Richmond, a leading financial institution in our community. This generous gift supports the Bethany Neighborhood — the group of houses near campus where students live — as well as our community engagement efforts. We are fortunate to have generous community partners that recognize our contributions to the community and lend their support to our educational mission.

It is a constant joy to have our community gather regularly this year for shared meals and worship. Our weekly chapel services alternate between in-person and Zoom gatherings. Teaching faculty typically preach during Fall Semester chapel services, while students take the pulpit in the Spring. Common Meal remains an important event for students, faculty, and staff, and we have enjoyed doing business with local restaurants to provide food for our community.

ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Valuable partnerships

Bethany makes it a priority to collaborate with other institutions to offer great learning opportunities for students. We partnered with Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren (Santa Ana, Calif.) and City of Refuge (Atlanta, Ga.) during innovative January Intensives that focused on intercultural education. In California, **Dr. Dan Ulrich** taught an intensive focused on James which culminated in a bilingual (English and Spanish) Bible study that was open to community members. In Atlanta, **Dr. Dan Poole** led a course, attended by students from both Bethany and New Brunswick seminaries, that gave students opportunities to learn about a variety of ministries that are attempting to address economic inequality.

Bethany maintains important partnerships with such organizations as Eastern Mennonite University, Oasis Ministries, and Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center. Earlham School of Religion remains Bethany's closest partner with students from both institutions benefiting from the course offerings and community offered by both schools.

Scholar-in-Residence

Dr. Dauda Gava returned to Bethany in the Fall Semester to complete his service as International Scholar-in-Residence. Dr. Gava, who was recently named

provost of West Africa Theological Seminary, was in residence for several months, writing a commentary on Titus, teaching, participating in community life, and preaching in our weekly Chapel. He also traveled extensively on behalf of the Seminary. In the fall, he delivered public lectures at Elizabethtown, Juniata, and McPherson colleges, and preached and gave presentations at churches and retirement homes in those communities.

New Faculty Member in Peace Studies

This fall, Bethany welcomed **Dr. Margaret (Maggie) Elwell** as assistant professor of peace studies. Dr. Elwell earned a bachelor's degree at Swarthmore College, a master's degree in teaching at Johns Hopkins University, and both her MDiv and PhD degrees at Princeton Seminary. Prior to her arrival at Bethany, she taught at the University of Maryland. In addition to teaching Peace Studies, she will contribute courses to the Theopoetics program and serve as director of Bethany BOLD, a competitive, service-based program for exceptional residential students.

Louisville Institute Visiting Scholar

Dr. Tamisha Tyler has joined the Bethany faculty as visiting assistant professor of theology and culture and theopoetics. She will be at the Seminary for two years thanks to a postdoctoral fellowship from Louisville Institute. Tyler, who lives in Pasadena, Calif., will spend several months a year on Bethany's campus and teach courses on such varied subjects as Afrofuturism, the novels of Octavia Butler, and theopoetic methods. She earned her bachelor's degree from California State University, Long Beach, and both a MDiv and PhD from Fuller Theological Seminary.

Selected Faculty Activities

Dr. Jeff Carter, president, published a chapter in *Strengthening Christian Perspectives on Human Dignity and Human Rights: Perspectives from an International Consultative Process*, published by the World Council of Churches.

Dr. Joelle Hathaway, assistant professor of theological studies, has enjoyed teaching new courses such as *Spirituality and Ecology: The Sabbath Poetry of Wendell Berry* and *Christian Themes in the Gallery, Contemporary Images in the Church*. She recently published "Mountains: Visual Arts" in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, vol. 19.

During the summer Professor Emeritus **Dr. Scott Holland** gave a number of sermons and conference presentations based on a new publication, "A Theopoetic Atheism for a Post-ecclesial, Post-secular Age?" *CrossCurrents Journal*, Volume 22, Number 2 (June 2022).

Dr. Denise Kettering-Lane, associate professor of Brethren Studies and director of the MA program, made several presentations during the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in July. She also gave a talk on the Brethren tradi-

tion at Manchester University this fall. An article, "Jesus Began to Weep," is forthcoming in <i>Brethren Life and Thought</i> .	1
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In July, Dr. Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm , Brightbill professor of preaching and worship, presented the Wardlaw Lecture in Preaching at The University of Chicago, as part of the Association of Chicago Theological Seminaries doctoral program. She also traveled to Budapest for a biannual gathering of Societas Homeletica, serving as a member of the International Board. Other notable speaking engagements included presentations for the Central Pennsylvania and Missouri Arkansas districts of the Church of the Brethren.	4
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Dr. Dan Poole , assistant professor of ministry formation, was a recent guest preacher at York Center Church of the Brethren and Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren. He also gave presentations about technology and the church for the Mid-Atlantic District and Brethren Academy.	12
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Academic Dean Dr. Steve Schweitzer delivered a paper at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in November 2022, titled "Utopia and Dystopia from Jotham to Josiah in Chronicles: Questions and Possibilities," in a Joint Session of the Utopian Studies Consultation and the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah Section.	17
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Schweitzer also co-taught an equipping Bible study session for the Northern Plains District (Church of the Brethren) with Dr. Dan Ulrich , Wieand professor of New Testament. The theme was "The Messiah's Birth in Matthew." He also made a presentation to the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board on the topic, "New Testament Models of Giving."	23
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ENROLLMENT	29
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2023 Total Enrollment	31
Master of Divinity: 28	32
Master of Arts: 9	33
Master of Arts in Spiritual and Social Transformation: 11	34
Master of Arts: Theopoetics and Writing: 26	35
Certificate of Achievement in Theological Studies: 4	36
Certificate in Biblical Peacemaking: 18	37
Certificate in Just Peace and Conflict Transformation: 2	38
Certificate in Theopoetics and Theological Imagination: 13	39
Occasional: 3	40
New Students: 19	41
Total Headcount: 114	42
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FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

	FY21	FY22	Change
Assets	64,058,663	57,581,339	-10.11%
Endowment	49,402,148	43,617,909	-11.71%
Surplus/Deficit	292,336	5,754	-98.03%

FUNDRAISING

As the table below illustrates, Bethany experienced a large increase in total giving, largely fueled by grantmaking and a robust year of realized bequests and planned gifts. The position of Executive Director of Institutional Advancement was vacant for the majority of the Fiscal Year, so it is not surprising that we were down in total number of gifts to the annual fund as the total dollar amount contributed to the fund. The organization put significant effort into an application that resulted in a million-dollar grant from Lilly Endowment during 2022. We also received a \$100,000 gift from First Bank Richmond — a significant show of support from a local partner. With **Sam Locke** in place as Executive Director and the hiring of **Laura Kelley** in the new role of director of annual and leadership giving, we expect to expand our fundraising efforts significantly in the future.

Total Giving	FY22	FY21	Change
Donations	\$4,217,207.78	\$1,333,250.11	+\$2,883,957.67
Number of Gifts	794	856	-62

We thank you for your attention to this report, and for all you do to support our educational mission.

Blessings,
Jeff Carter, President
Eric Bishop, Chair, Board of Trustees