



## 2022 Report to the Synod Assemblies of Region 9

### Drafting New Mission & Vision Statements

“Seeking Jesus together  
in worship, study and service.”

The new LTSS mission statement, above, is still in draft form, but already it is helping us tell our story and focus our work. It points to the way LTSS is moving into a future where vocations in ministry are as varied as the places where God’s Spirit is at work in the world. LTSS will still offer superbly well-trained pastors and deacons to the church; it will also welcome those who are drawn to theological study even as they are still seeking vocational direction.

### Hybrid Learning at LTSS

We are currently recruiting for the 2022 fall class, which will feature two paths for our degree programs. **M.Div. Columbia** is for students who live within driving distance of our campus, or in student apartments or dormitory housing. **M.Div. Connect** is for students who need to study most of the time online. All students will take the same classes and will be together for a few days at the start of each semester. Our MA in Christian Ministry will also be available to Connect students. The MA in Religious Leadership is a fully online master’s program, taught by seminary faculty as well as the leadership faculty of the LRU graduate school.

### Curriculum Revision

This spring, we announced a new M.Div. curriculum and made similar changes to our MA programs. The M.Div. curriculum includes these changes:

- Requirement of 3 semester hours of biblical languages (the student’s choice of Greek or Hebrew) rather than 9 hours.
- New requirements: 3 semester hours in leadership, and 3 semester hours in exploring theology across contexts and cultures.
- Credit hours have been reduced from 92 hours to 84, while the number of electives has increased.
- Concentrations in disciplines within the university graduate school, such as leadership, counseling, and others.
- A six-year “Bridges to Dreams” BA/M.Div. in cooperation with Lenoir-Rhyne University.

### Strategic Planning

Throughout this academic year we have been creating a seminary-specific strategic plan. Our three areas of focus are:

- improving student experience—the curriculum revision is part of that, but so also are upgrades to classroom technology, better internet across campus, a refurbished student gym, and more;
- communicating who we are across integrated marketing and communications efforts, and
- expanding our reach to serve more degree-seeking students and to offer a growing program of non-degree education.

### Expanding Partnerships

LTSS Lifelong Learning continues to expand its reach. Most recently, a group of faculty, staff, and students traveled to Charleston, SC, for a hard hat tour of the International African American Museum, which will open in December of 2022. Already we are planning together an event for high school youth next summer. The event will take place on the LTSS campus and at the museum.

### Thank You

The synods of Region 9 each provide funds directly to LTSS, offering a combined total of more than 10% of our budget. Thank you! Equally important for the life of the church and the seminary, about half of our students are from congregations in Region 9. We are grateful for your support and the trust you have placed in us.

Grace and peace,

Mary Hinkle Shore  
Rector & Dean