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**PUBLIC LEADER and
Healthcare Advocate
Marissa Harris, MDiv '08**

"The church has a role to play in public life." see new Public Leadership Concentration on page 4

THE
LUTHERAN
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Filling the Educational “Gap” with New **PUBLIC LEADERSHIP** Concentration

by THE REV. LOUISE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR of ADMISSIONS

A five-year-old Richard watched and chattered as I walked down to the fellowship hall, slithering out of my vestments. I reached for the tab collar in my clergy shirt, pulled it out and stuck it in my book.

“That’s not where that goes,” Richard said, eyeing me closely.

“What?” I responded.

“That’s not where that goes,” he continued. “It goes in your pocket.”

It took a minute to register. We had both observed our fathers’ ritual for years. In what seemed like one fluid motion, Richard’s dad would whisk the tab collar from the neckband of his shirt and tuck into his shirt pocket. My newly pressed women’s clergy shirt didn’t have such a pocket. I smiled, feigned the proverbial collar-in-the-pocket tuck and gave him my best “What do we do now?” look. I shook my head and mumbled, “It’s not our fathers’ church anymore.”

My father’s church, with deep and abiding faith, took care of its members and cemeteries, gladly assumed the communal tasks of baptizing and confirming, and operated under the auspices of councils and committees. We gathered together, we prayed, we worshiped. We wrote thoughtful and measured statements about current issues. We volunteered at the local soup kitchens and food banks. We held bazaars and suppers. We understood “evangelical” as a word to describe the denominations we were not and “evangelism” as an intrusion. And the notion of church intersecting with anything like business or government was not only a foreign concept, but also a terrifying one. Principles such as the separation of church and state

and Reformer Martin Luther’s understanding of the two kingdoms meant that the lines between what happened on Sunday morning and the rest of the week extended only to an individual’s moral formation.

While there is much about “my father’s church” to celebrate, it is a model of church struggling to meet the needs of a new generation and a rapidly changing world. Declining numbers tell only part of the story; the longing for genuine and integrated discipleship is palpable. Darken the doors of nearly any church institution these days and beneath the stories of success, you’ll hear the nervous rhetoric. “If the church doesn’t change (insert relevant concern here), it will die.”

In the circles where I live and move, the particular concern is for the quantity and quality of church leaders. And rightfully so. On top of an already demonstrable clergy shortage, in the next 10 years, more than one-half of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is eligible to retire. And not only are we facing a crisis among existing leaders, but demographic and cultural trends are seemingly to our disadvantage, as well. More and more, young leaders of faith are expressing the desire to see work as a direct extension of faith, but to find its expression outside of the framework of ordained pastoral ministry, outside the frame-

work of “my father’s church.” They are drawn to on-the-ground ways of communicating the gospel. They are articulate and serious about their faith commitments and eager to serve. This generation grew up participating in service learning and feeling their faith take root in the places where the church ventured out into the world.

They have been part of programs like Theological Education with Youth, Young Adults in Global Mission, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, and a whole host of others. They are eager to serve, but feel disconnected from traditional forms of ministry. They are searching for the land between ministry-in-daily-life and taking-up-residence-in-the-parsonage. Together these two trends spell disaster for a church dependent upon its clergy for leadership and committed to the community of faith within the four walls of the sanctuary. And, so, for church as we know it, these trends start to feel like the beginning (or middle) of the end.

As a theological seminary in the city, LTSP has long struggled in the gap between “my father’s church” and the need to train leaders for Germantown Avenue. On that avenue, 80 places of worship exist, along with poverty and wealth in their extremes, and people of every creed, race, and nation — all in an eight-mile stretch.

Our response has been to create a curricular emphasis, Public Theology, that intentionally blurs the lines between church and world. Public Theology means we live and learn, form and teach, lead and serve in the Spirit, following the example of God in Christ who crossed the boundaries between heaven and earth, between sinners and saints, between life and death. Public Theology prepares leaders who refuse to live as if the

Gospel were meant only for “us,” only for Sunday mornings, only for the four walls of a church building. Public Theology means we are, as our tagline says, both “of the Spirit” and “in the world.”

Public theology was at the heart of Reformer Martin Luther’s work. Following his example, because we are confident in God’s saving grace, we risk direct action in the world. This action turns the typical “quietistic” interpretation of the “Two Kingdoms,” so familiar to my father’s church, on its head. In fact, the “Two Kingdoms” doctrine frees us precisely to engage in the world through diverse vocations available to us as citizens in a religiously pluralistic world.

Dr. Jon Pahl, Professor of the History of Christianity in North America at LTSP, had already rolled up his sleeves to work with our colleagues in the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries and representatives from several Lutheran social ministry organizations on a collaborative certificate program called Intersections Institute (“II”). Out of “II” has grown a new concentration in LTSP’s Master of Arts in Religion (MAR) program focusing on Public Leadership. (Eventually upon anticipated accreditation approval, this concentration will “graduate” into a new degree program called the Master of Arts in Public Leadership (MAPL).

The new concentration, which begins this fall, will be offered by LTSP in conjunction with the Fox School of Business at Temple University and the Temple School of Social Service Administration, among other partners. The first of its kind, this integrative, innovative concentration, expected to become a degree initiative, is a pilot for what we hope will be a long line of integrative degree programs that find their life at the intersections between such things as theology and law, and theology and medicine.

“... I’ve felt acutely the gaps that exist between what the church says about justice, what people in pews and social ministry organizations know about justice, and what actually gets

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done,” said Dr. Pahl. Our hope is to train leaders who will be in church buildings, yes, but also in office buildings. Our hope is to train leaders who are conversant in the languages of business and theology and savvy about how to weave theological and biblical principles into the world’s economic, political and social fabric. Our hope is that the blessings of community and care from “my father’s church” might take shape in justice and advocacy in streets and prison cells, in hospital rooms and court rooms and, indeed, in the lives of those for whom the gospel is but a distant notion. Our hope is to prepare leaders whose calling is to close the gap between what we know and say and what gets done. And we suspect that the Holy Spirit might just be at work among us, transforming the church into a vibrant community serving the needs of a world longing for healing, justice, mercy and life.

The Concentration

The new Public Leadership Concentration is an extension of the aforementioned and newly formed “II,” and is designed to meet the growing needs of social ministry organizations, numbering well over 300 across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The “II” will offer a certificate at the intersection between business and theology for those already working in social ministry. The idea is that those who have business training and acumen will have the opportunity to develop theological training and acumen, and vice versa. For both will be the opportunity to integrate the two subject areas

through a range of team-taught, praxis-oriented, integrative courses.

The Master of Arts in Religion Public Leadership Concentration will follow the same trajectory, but offer deeper engagement and significant opportunity for field experience and education. It will prepare students from the ground up for leadership in social ministry and advocacy ministries. The concentration might also be extended to meet the needs of a variety of vocations where the intersection of business and theology is critical. Vocations in outdoor ministry, community leadership, and ecclesiastical administration are among many.

“Many people in pews — and many pastors! — have no clue about what social ministry organizations do. Many people in social ministry organizations have no clue about the theological foundations that motivated Lutherans to found those organizations,” said Dr. Pahl, whose scholarship is in the field of American religious history and culture. “The new MAR Concentration — as we envision it — exists to fill these gaps, by raising up a new generation of leaders who want to work at the intersections of God’s yearning for justice, human need, and the structures of American society.” Dr. Pahl is the chief architect of the new concentration and has worked in collaboration with LTSP’s faculty and colleagues from a number of disciplines including business schools, social service administration, law, and healthcare, and with managers and executives of social ministry organizations.

“In our conversations, there is strong

agreement that with greater integration across professions, drawing on the deepest motivations in religious faith, many of the social problems that plague the United States — and the globe — can be solved. Illiteracy, crumbling families, drug abuse, hunger, environmental degradation, poverty, violence, and social conflict are not mysteries but systemic processes that require integrated solutions across policy and practice,” Pahl said. “Through a creative, flexible, and practical curriculum, the new initiative will help prepare leaders at the intersection of religious traditions and practical professions for the twenty-first century.”

Situate the new educational approach between two institutions with strong commitments to serving the public, namely LTSP and Temple University — founded as a seminary in 1884 by American Baptist minister, lawyer, and orator Russell Conwell, which grew into an egalitarian school for the working classes, and home to one of the most diverse student bodies in the world — and you have what is not only an innovative, interesting and relevant program, but also what just may be the work of the Holy Spirit bidden by “my father’s church.”✝

More information at www.Ltsp.edu/publicleadership

Join us on the LTSP campus Thursday, April 23, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm for an Informational Session for the Public Leadership concentration. For further information and to register: www.Ltsp.edu/publicleadership

Pittsburgh's Sara Jane Luley: Focus on PUBLIC LEADERSHIP a Chance to Live Her Passion

FOR PROSPECTIVE SEMINARIAN **Sara Jane Luley**, the seminary's new Master of Arts in Religion Concentration in Public Leadership is becoming a key to serving God in a special way.

"I always knew quite certainly that I am not being called to ordained ministry, but I see a lot of places in the world, especially where the church doesn't reach, where God is calling people to work," Luley said. "That's what excited me about LTSP's new MAR program and their general interest in promoting other kinds of professional ministry besides ordained ministry. I think there are a lot of people out there like me who don't think seminary is for them because they don't find themselves cut out to be a pastor."

These days the Pittsburgh, PA native is "staying connected" to her faith by volunteering for the Academy of Hope in Washington, DC, as an adult education instructor for a diverse group of adult students. The Academy is part of the Americorps-connected Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC). She lives in the Dietrich Bonhoeffer house with five other LVC members. Americorps is a federally funded endeavor that encourages young adults to serve others in a wide variety of ways.

"When the teacher is younger than the students and from a completely different background, it becomes more of an environment where everybody has something to teach everyone else, and I really enjoy teaching in that kind of environment," Luley said.

She first became interested in LVC while doing a week-long program about homelessness called Faith Active in Love at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA. "While in the Bay area we visited a house of LVC-ers, and I really liked how they were living out what they stood for at their volunteer placements," Luley said. "After working for social justice all day, they weren't coming home to sit in front of the TV and eat a steak dinner. In this way LVC struck me more as a movement toward solidarity than charity. I would definitely say my faith was a motivating factor in deciding to do LVC."

Luley's faith was forged in large measure at Faith Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, where she was active in her youth group and served as youth representative on the congregation council. But she explained a lot of her church involvement stemmed from activities at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA, where she belonged to the campus chapter of the Lutheran Student Movement and served as student assistant to the chaplain.

"My job in the chaplain's office was part of a university scholarship initiative where a few students are chosen from each incoming class to work four years with a university professor," she explained. "One of the most rewarding parts of that job was

to help plan yearly service-learning trips to Central America. I also started a Fair Trade Festival at the school as a socially responsible option for Christmas shopping in our community." The festival sold fair trade chocolate, coffee, tea, and hand-crafts, and promoted the Heifer Project and the Church World Service *Best Gift* catalog." It was a venue too for our Student Advocacy Team, which I belonged to, for educating shoppers about social justice issues." (She worked closely with co-founder Alina Gayeuski, another prospective LTSP seminarian.)

Luley majored in International Economics and Spanish in college (with what she calls a fun but unrelated minor in Music Performance/Cello). "My big passions for living out my faith are social justice, fair trade and international service," she noted. She spent a semester during her junior year living in Cordoba, Argentina.

What of the future does she anticipate after hopefully completing her work at LTSP?

"I suppose it depends on what is available at the time and what God is calling me to do," Luley said. "I would really enjoy working with social ministry of some kind or another, especially if it would involve international travel." Of the new LTSP initiative, Luley suggested, "I hope more programs like this one are created that remind us that the church and our faith are connected with everything else in the world."

Adds Louise Johnson, the seminary's Director of Admissions, "A primary mission of ours remains to prepare future leaders for ordained ministry in the church, but as I and others visit college campuses and congregations throughout the U.S., we increasingly hear a plea for educational alternatives like our new concentration. I think it reflects a rapidly changing global context that challenges the church to explore its relevance in a really exciting time."

