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PRESS RELEASE

North American Lutheran Seminary Calls New Full-time Faculty Member and Adds Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to Its Network

AMBRIDGE, PA, May 10, 2023 — The Executive Council of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) is pleased to announce the call of the Rev. Dr. Nathan Howard Yoder STS as a full-time faculty member of the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS), alongside the addition of the Charlotte campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) to the NALS Network. The NALS Board of Regents made these recommendations to the Executive Council in a joint meeting in May.



Pastor Yoder will join the NALS faculty as a full-time teaching theologian as well as serve as director of Lutheran Studies at the GCTS Charlotte campus. Yoder previously served as an adjunct faculty member for the NALS, most recently teaching a course entitled “Congregationally Focused for Congregational Renewal” in summer 2022 with the Rev. Dr. Andrew Weisner STS. He will continue to serve as pastor of St. Martin’s Lutheran Church in Maiden, North Carolina.

The addition of GCTS to the NALS Network will benefit the NALC greatly. Its Charlotte campus brings a southeastern seminary into a network that stretches across the United States and Canada, providing opportunities for regional theological and pastoral formation across the entire NALC. GCTS will especially serve the Carolinas Mission Region of the NALC, as the Charlotte campus of GCTS sits within the district.

Yoder graduated with his Ph.D. degree from the University of Regensburg (Germany) in 2011, and his dissertation, “Ordnung in Gemeinschaft: A Critical Appraisal of the Erlangen Contribution to the Orders of Creation,” evaluated the variant orders of creation models of the Lutheran “Erlangen theologians” (specifically Paul Althaus, Werner Elert, and Walter Künneth) of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yoder also holds the S.T.M. degree from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (2009) and the M.Div. degree from the Wake Forest University School of Divinity (2002).

Yoder has been heavily involved in the NALC since 2011. He currently serves on the Commission on Theology and Doctrine, as a member of the Lutheran Theologians for the Church (formerly called the “Younger Theologians Colloquium”), and is the outgoing dean of the Catawba Valley Mission District. He has also been involved as the coordinator of the Braaten-Benne Theological Lectures and as a member of the NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship team.

The announcement also marks the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Mary Havens as director of Lutheran Studies at GCTS. Pastor Havens will continue to teach as an adjunct professor in Charlotte.



This new partnership between the NALS and GCTS is unique as this will be the first Network school — other than at the Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry — where the NALS will have a full-time faculty member serving and teaching.

The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, president of the NALS, expressed his excitement about the partnership with GCTS and Yoder’s call. “We are focused on forming pastors for the NALC, and Gordon-Conwell is a great fit and a great seminary,” said Riesen. “To have one of our own NALS teaching theologians as the director of the Lutheran Studies program is a tremendous asset. We’re so happy to have Nathan in this role. We in the NALS have known Nathan for a long time, and he is a gifted theologian. This is a great moment for the NALC and the NALS.”

Yoder expressed his commitment to the NALC and the vision for theological education and pastoral formation shared by the NALS and GCTS: “The partnership between the NALS and Gordon-Conwell is a blessing for the formation of faithful pastors for the NALC and the broader Church.”

The North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) is committed to forming pastors and leaders for faithful ministry today. As a network of seminaries centered in Ambridge, Pennsylvania — with additional schools in six states and provinces across the United States and Canada — the NALS exists to form pastors and leaders for the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) through robust spiritual formation, rigorous and distinctive theological education, and intentional pastoral mentorship. Learn more at www.thenals.org.

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