

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Asbury Theological Seminary celebrated its 90th anniversary last year and now we look joyously toward our centennial in 2023. We are working through our Strategic Plan 2023; its ten core values can be distilled into three major emphases: Asbury Seminary will be *faithful to its heritage, transformative in its impact, and global in its reach*.

A new master's degree in Aging and Spirituality was launched last fall. The purpose of this degree is to equip professional leaders, such as clergy, educators, social workers, counselors, health care workers, and congregational lay ministers, to respond effectively to the vast needs of our rapidly expanding elder population. Asbury Seminary is one of just two theological schools in the nation offering this degree.

On the Florida campus, Latino/a Studies Program (LLSP) moved through a self-study this spring as part of the process of being a certified pathway for admission into any Seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (tATS). This process is part of an initiative spearheaded by the Association for Hispanic Theological Education (AETH) to allow Biblical Institutes offering training in Spanish to gain recognition for the significant work being done among the Latino/a leaders. Based on conversations with AETH leaders, we anticipate receiving certification early in the fall semester. This will provide a great opportunity to better serve the Latino/a communities and create a direct feeder relationship between LLSP and the future bilingual MA degree.

In addition, the Florida Dunnam campus will host a Latino/Latina Leaders D.Min. cohort of students providing renowned faculty and an environment conducive to achieving the established goals of the D.Min. program. The dynamic of the community and delivery of the courses will be shaped to prepare Latino/Latina leaders for ministry in their context. The faculty members and guest lecturers are predominantly bilingual and have significant life and ministry experience in Hispanic Communities. The classroom dynamic will allow for dialogue in Spanish and/or English. Texts will be chosen based on their availability in Spanish and English. Some of the written work may be done in Spanish, but the dissertation and other key assignments will be written in English.

The measure of a leader (*quienes dirigen o lideran*) is not rank, title or fame, but the quality of community the leader has cultivated. For Christian ministry communities, such as congregations and ministry organizations, their leaders need growing expertise in the practices that shape communities to be vibrant in Christian witness and discipleship. This cohort invites career ministry leaders to deepen three primary skill sets: spiritual formation, biblical preaching and missional leadership (*liderazgo misiona contextual*). In this conversation, participants will focus on deepening their spirituality and of those they serve, expanding their capacity as preachers, and sharpening their organizational intelligence to better mobilize their communities toward witness within and beyond the walls of the church or institutions.

Participants in this cohort will:

- Revisit ministry foundations in spiritual formation, preaching and leadership to and with Latino/Latina communities.
- Examine the intersection between the leader's formation (internal) and the leader's ministry expressions of leadership and preaching (external), especially the ways in which these inform the shaping of ministry communities.
- Receive practical, contextual, faculty-mentor, peer and community feedback on preaching

1 and leadership practices in ministry throughout the program.

- 2 • Produce both a Leadership Formation Portfolio and a Ministry Transformation Research
3 Project.

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5 On the Kentucky campus, our married student-housing complex of 150 townhouses is now
6 complete and fully occupied. Kalas Village is a global community, as the majority of our
7 international families live there. The Family Life Center in Kalas Village, currently under
8 construction, will be completed this year, and funds have been raised for a large children's
9 playground to be built adjacent to the center.

10
11 Renovations and physical changes continue on the Wilmore campus. A statue of Charles
12 Wesley will be erected this fall in front of Estes Chapel. The basements of the Administration
13 Building and of Estes Chapel have been renovated to house offices for the Advanced Research
14 Programs (PhD, D.Min., and Th.M.) and beautiful study space for students in these programs.
15 Over 70 individual technologically state-of-the-art study carrels, common spaces, and key-card
16 access all make for a secure and comfortable study space for our students.

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18 Beginning in June, the Reverend Jessica LaGrone will become Asbury Seminary's Dean of the
19 Chapel on the Kentucky Campus. She is currently an Associate Pastor of the 10,000-member
20 The Woodlands United Methodist Church near Houston, Texas, where her key responsibilities
21 include oversight of the weekly worship services, including liturgical, blended, and contemporary
22 services. Rev. LaGrone is a 2002 M.Div. graduate of the Seminary and was awarded the 2002
23 Stanger Preaching Award.

24
25 Asbury Seminary is committed to unleash new networks of church planting movements across
26 the world, including here in the United States. Our commitment is to train 800 new church
27 planters over the next twenty years. A non-degree certificate program is being developed to help
28 current pastors learn how to start fresh expressions of the Church in their own facilities and/or
29 the homes of their members, and the degree of Master of Arts in Church Planting has been
30 launched. International leaders will be brought to campus for training through our new church
31 planting degree.

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33 Effective church planters around the USA and the world are being identified so their churches
34 can serve as field training sites for new church planters to be mentored and networked. And a
35 Global Advisory Board is being developed to help identify where churches need to be planted,
36 which groups need to be targeted, and what emerging young leaders need to receive
37 scholarships. Asbury Seminary has received a \$5 million gift to launch the church-planting
38 program.

39
40 United Methodist students make up the largest denominational segment of our student body,
41 which now numbers over 1,400. We are mindful of the privilege we have of preparing large
42 numbers of United Methodist students for ministry.

43
44 Sheila Lovell, Special Assistant to the President