Dear Friends,

What a whirlwind the month of November has been! As we begin the season of Advent and turn our thoughts to the month of December, I want to share some of the highlights of this past month with you. On Nov. 11 our Board of Directors gathered for its semi-annual meeting. I am so grateful for this amazing group of people who give of themselves so freely in providing leadership for the Seminary. This meeting was very special in that it gave us an opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the consolidation of Pittsburgh-Xenia and Western Theological Seminaries to form Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. PTS Board Director Don McKim ’74 recently completed a well-written book, Ever a Vision, which outlines these 50 years of growth. Don gave a wonderful message during the morning worship and we look forward to sharing that with you in a future Panorama magazine. As part of the 50th year celebration, the Board gave its unanimous approval for a new official seal for the Seminary. The seal that has been used in the past will be retired permanently to the PTS archives for care and preservation.

In the new seal, the central image in the shield is a St. Andrew's cross, a link to our Presbyterian history and heritage. In the quadrants created by the cross there are four symbols: Alpha and Omega (God is the beginning and the end of all that we are and all that we do.); an open book (We study, preach, and share the Word.); a globe (We are active in the world to which God calls us to serve.); and the Lamp of Knowledge (We are an institution of higher education). Note also that the top of the crest is actually the image of a bridge, symbolic of the city of Pittsburgh itself, home to more bridges than any other city in the world. The inscription, Soli Deo Gloria, is Latin for "To God Alone be the Glory."

I hope that you like this new seal as much as I do! We will keep you posted about when you can purchase scarves and neckties that are being produced with this new seal.

Almost immediately after the Board meeting my wife Jane, Professor John Burgess, and I were on our way to Russia. We spent 12 days in St. Petersburg and Moscow visiting Presbyterian mission workers and beginning the process of developing a partnership with St. Tikhon's Orthodox University in Moscow. Professor Burgess and I lectured to the Faculties of Philology, Theology, and Missions. We also toured the icon production and restoration with the Faculty of Church Arts. I will share more information about this new relationship once we have made it more official.

Needless to say, we made many new friends in Russia and we hope to see some of them on campus in the years to come.
We got home just in time for Jane and me to travel to Washington DC to spend Thanksgiving with our sons and daughter-in-law. We are delighted to report that our son Jeremy and his wife, Melissa, are expecting their first child in late April, our first grandchild! Needless to say, this was a very special thanksgiving celebration for our family.

Now, we have returned to the Seminary where yesterday our students began their second term of study for this academic year. We pray that the term will be one of much growth in knowledge and faith for each of them. As we enter the month of December and the season of Advent, may we too find time to worship the Christ child and give thanks for God's love in our lives. I give thanks to God for you every day!

Gratefully,

Bill

The Rev. Dr. William J. Carl III
President

Advent Devotional Available Online

For the second year, the Seminary will be offering an online Advent devotional. This year, we will be updating the Seminary's website daily throughout the Advent season with student-read messages. These readings will be taken from faculty publications and all related to the theme "Prepare Your Heart!" To hear and read this year's devotionals, visit the Seminary's website at www.pts.edu and click on the rotating image that relates to Advent. You can also sign up to receive daily e-mails with the same content. To sign up, please scroll to the bottom of this e-mail. Click "preferences." A new page will open. In the upper right corner, click "Advent Devotional". You will now get the daily messages just as you get this monthly communiqué. If you received the devotional last year, no need to sign up again. We will automatically send it to you. Blessings to you and yours in this Advent season!

Three-Day Conference Explores Proclaiming the Gospel in the 21st Century

We invite you to the 2009 Shoemaker Conference "Proclamation & Presence: Learning from the Global Church 1910-2010" to be held Dec. 10-12, 2009. One hundred years after the important Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, we now look at the remarkable reversals that have taken place in global Christianity and during this three-day conference ask, "What does it mean to proclaim the Gospel in the 21st century?"

Keynote speakers include Jehu J. Hanciles, associate professor of history of Christianity and globalization and director of the Center for Missiological Research at Fuller Theological Seminary; David D. Daniels III, professor of church history at McCormick Theological Seminary and a member of the Steering Committee of the Afro-American History Group of the American Academy of Religion; Yolanda Pierce, Elmer G. Homrighausen Associate Professor of African American
Religion and Literature and Liaison, at Princeton Theological Seminary; Daniel Jeyaraj, professor of world Christianity and director of the Andrew F. Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity at Liverpool Hope University; and Moonjang Lee, associate professor of world Christianity, at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Events run Thurs., Dec. 10 from 5:30-8:30 p.m.; Fri., Dec. 11 from 9:00 a.m.- 8:45 p.m.; and Sat., Dec. 12 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. A special banquet will be held Friday evening at 5:30. Reservations are required for the dinner and the fee is $13 for person. Otherwise, the conference is free and open to the public. To make a reservation for the banquet, contact 412-924-1441. E-mail shoemaker@pts.edu to learn more about the conference.

The Shoemaker Conference is named in honor of wise donor and friend, G. Albert Shoemaker, a wonderful supporter of the Seminary's mission to provide Christian theological education of distinction to our region and beyond.

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Metro-Urban Institute Works to Enhance the Quality of Community Life

The Metro-Urban Institute will bring together members of the community--youth, parents, churches, and leaders--to explore congregation-based strategies being undertaken in various neighborhoods to enhance the quality of community life. This event, "Hope for the Future: Rebuilding our Communities", will be held Thurs., Dec. 12. "Hope for the Future" is the second in three of the Urban Church Network Events offered by MUI this year. The Urban Church Network is a working association of more than 60 organizations throughout the greater Pittsburgh area working to address, in holistic fashion, the social, environmental, and spiritual realities that can contribute to strengthening the quality of life in the city. To learn more about "Hope for the Future", contact MUI at 412-924-1393 or mui@pts.edu.

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Choir Holds Concert Dec. 15

The Seminary Choir will present "Joy to the World! The Music and Poetry of Christmas" Tues., Dec. 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hicks Memorial Chapel. The Rev. George E. Tutwiler, organist-choirmaster, will direct the Choir. This event is free and open to the public with a reception immediately following. The 35-voice choir will sing Christmas music by a variety of composers from America, England, and Russia. Along with the audience the Choir will join in traditional carols. Representatives from the Seminary community will read poetry appropriate to the season.

For more information about this event, contact the Office of Continuing Education at 412-924-1345 or ConEd@pts.edu.

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Charitable Giving to PTS

As the calendar year draws to a close, we know that many of you will be considering your end of the year charitable giving. We hope that you will include the Seminary on your list! Gifts of support to the Annual Fund make it possible for our seminary to continue the mission that God has called
us to: preparing leaders who proclaim with great joy God’s message of good news in both word and deed! Unrestricted gifts of support are used for a variety of purposes, and help the Seminary to:

- provide financial assistance to deserving and talented students,
- attract and retain outstanding faculty,
- maintain and improve campus facilities, and
- respond to the needs of the Church and world with creative and innovative programs.

We are grateful for partnerships with generous donors who are helping to make this work possible. May God continue to bless you as your generosity has blessed us.

Gifts may be made online using our secure transaction process.

Gift to the Annual Fund may be mailed to:
PTS Development Office
616 N. Highland Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

You may also call us at 412-924-1376 to arrange to make a gift with your Visa or MasterCard. Gifts of stock are also welcome and encouraged and may be helpful at tax time. The Seminary is sometimes able to work with donors to accept gifts of personal property, goods, or services that will benefit the Annual Fund. For more information about how to make a gift, contact Tom Pappalardo at tpappalardo@pts.edu.