Happy New Year! I find it hard to believe that it is 2009. The ball has dropped over Times Square, the parties are finished, the confetti is being swept away, here in Pittsburgh the fireworks at the Point are over, and our minds are turning to the reality of the year that lies ahead of us.

If we could rewind out memories back to January 1, 2008, I don't think any of us could have imagined what we have experienced over the past year. Some of these things are exciting beyond our expectations, others cause concern and sadness. The United States has elected its first African-American president, which is certainly historic, and yet at the same time, we are in the midst of difficult economic and social times, causing great concern for many of us. Among our families and friends we have struggled alongside those who have been sick, we have welcomed new babies, we have said a final earthly farewell to some whom we loved... yes, it has been another year full of joy and sorrow, challenges and opportunities.

As we think ahead to 2009, I want to challenge you to consider especially the opening words of Seminary's vision statement: The question is not what are we doing on this 13 acre campus, but what is God doing out there in the world and how can we be a part of it. As we think about our hopes and plans for this year, may we be able to seek out those places where God is at work in the world; then, may we find our place in the mission and ministry of this great plan that God has for all of us. For some of us it may mean embarking on a mission experience halfway around the globe. For others, it may mean volunteering one day a week at the soup kitchen just down the street. For many of us, it may mean making financial sacrifices in order to support the work that God is doing both here and abroad. Whatever the method, may we all be bold enough and wise enough to find the place where God is calling us to join in a hopeful adventure in this new year.

Here at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, I can only imagine what God will be doing in our midst in the coming year. With God's guidance we are completing a master planning process for our campus, we will (God willing) be calling some new professors to further strengthen our exceptional faculty, new programs will be launched, and new students will respond to God's call to ministry by joining us for their studies. Thanks be to God for all of these exciting possibilities!

So Happy New Year! And may God's blessings be with you and yours today, and throughout the years.

William J. Carl III, President
Seminary Hosts Visit Event Jan. 10

The Seminary will host an Epiphany Event, a day of exploration for prospective students Sat., Jan. 10 beginning at 8:30 a.m. Throughout the day, participants will explore ministry and Pittsburgh Seminary’s unique resources in fieldwork, urban issues, archeology, dual degree programs, and more. This daylong event features faculty-led workshops, tours of campus, information from admissions and financial aid officers, and fellowship opportunities with current students. Reservations are required. Contact the Admissions Office at 1-800-451-4194, e-mail admissions@pts.edu or visit http://www.pts.edu/visit/ to reserve your spot at this free event. Overnight accommodations are available for those traveling from a distance.

SYI Class of 2006 Meets Again on Campus

Participants and interns from the 2006 Summer Youth Institute will meet on campus this month to reconnect after nearly two and a half years since first visiting PTS. The weekend is ideal for reuniting, catching up with faculty, and digging into theology more. Dr. Dale Allison, Errett M. Grable professor of New Testament exegesis and early Christianity, will give a lecture Friday afternoon. SYI alums can also attend a Greek or Hebrew class Friday morning. Afterward, they are invited to join prospective students and faculty during Epiphany Event workshops including the admissions and financial aid seminars. While on campus, the group also worships together.

"PTS is a place they can always come home to and that is important for these young leaders in the church to have reaffirmed," said Director of SYI Ellie Johns ’99. "For some alums, the reunion enables them to begin the seminary search process while for others it is simply a rich experience to connect with others who like to ask big questions of faith."

Three-Part Broadcast Lecture Explores Preaching

The Rev. Dr. M. Craig Barnes, Robert Meneilly Professor of Leadership and Ministry and pastor of Shadyside Presbyterian Church, will lead the four-part lectures in the series “Preaching as a Sacred Conversation,” Wed., Jan. 7, 14, and 21 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. With Internet technology at the Seminary, participants at three locations will receive live feed of the broadcast from PTS. Satellite locations include Vance Presbyterian Church, Wheeling, W.Va.; First Presbyterian Church, Bakerstown, Pa.; and Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, Fla. Interested laypersons and clergy of all denominations are invited to explore the sacred conversation—the sermon—as presented by the pastor and listened to by the congregation. Presentations will be made not only by a preacher, but also by veteran pew sitters who have become skilled at hearing the Word.

Registration fee is $45 on campus and $30 off campus. Continuing Education units are available and certificates upon request. Congregation members of the hosting churches should register at the church. All others should register with the Office of Continuing Education at PTS by calling 412-441-3304 ext. 2196 or e-mailing ConEd@pts.edu. Conference Brochure
Doctor of Ministry Students Meet Around the Globe

A number of Doctor of Ministry cohort groups meet throughout the month including two groups in Pittsburgh, one in Phoenix, and another in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Students in the Reformed Focus--six Scottish and 12 United States pastors from around the country--will meet at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland for two weeks. University faculty will lead discussions on World Christianities and Reformed Ecumenism. Those in the Parish Focus will study pastoral leadership with the Rev. Dr. Susan Kendall, director of the Doctor of Ministry Program while students in the Phoenix Parish Focus will meet with Kendall and new professor Dr. Edwin Ch. van Driel. The Reformed Christian Spirituality Focus will explore Christian spiritual traditions with PTS faculty the Rev. Dr. John Burgess and Reformed Understandings of Biblical Authority with the Rev. Dr. Jerome Creach.

To learn more about the programs or schedules of the focus groups, visit www.pts.edu/doctor-of-ministry.