

# PRESBYTERIAN LEADERSHIP FORUM

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

FALL 2015



OMAHA  
PRESBYTERIAN  
SEMINARY  
FOUNDATION

THE FOUNDATION FOR PRESBYTERIAN LEADERSHIP

## Southwest Iowa Internship Program... A Look at What an Apollos Program Grant Makes Possible

— A report from Rev. Timothy S. Maxa, who serves on the Foundation's Council of Advisors, and is pastor of the Lenox United Presbyterian Church and the Sharpsburg Presbyterian Church (both churches are located within the Presbytery of Des Moines).



From left: Mary O'Riley, intern; Rev. Tim Maxa, and Diane Ware, assistant at the Lenox, Iowa, United Presbyterian Church.

We are grateful to the Omaha Presbyterian Foundation for supporting our intern program. The program, a brainchild of Des Moines Presbytery's SW Regional Partnership, is designed to help equip teaching elders and/or commissioned ruling elders to serve in small churches. Our current intern, Mary O'Riley, is our 10th intern. She is a Hospice Chaplain and Social Worker for SW Iowa Hospice (half time). She is spending the other half of her time with the churches participating in the 2015 intern program. Over the course of 20 weeks (stretching from June to November) Mary is learning about how each participating church makes use of pastoral

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT...

*"Celebrating 125 Years of Vision, Mission and Ministry"*

In 1891 the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha opened in Nebraska for the training of pastors for churches on the frontier. The story of the Seminary and the many people who were involved in its efforts are retold in Charles Arthur Hawley's "Fifty Years on the Frontier". By the time the Seminary closed in 1943, over one thousand men and women had completed their studies and entered into Christian service. It's a remarkable story of vision, mission, and ministry.



Next year marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the seminary. The Foundation will be celebrating that occasion with you in 2016 through a combination of events and programs. In addition, the Summer Pastors' School marks its 60th Anniversary next June. We want to share that event and good news with you as well.

In this edition of our newsletter, you will find news and stories about women and men who are in preparation for ministry and their selection for Apollos scholarships from the Foundation. Their stories are heartening and a sign of how God is bringing the Church of the future into being. The variety of gifts and dedication of those whom God is calling to ministries as Teaching and Commissioned Ruling Elders is striking. I wish that you could hear all of their stories. We are delighted and privileged to assist them in their faith journeys. Many of them will soon follow in the footsteps of the former graduates of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha.

We invite you to read their stories. If you know or meet any of these called servants of Christ, then we encourage you to learn more about them and their call to ministry. We believe that you will find their stories inspirational and hopeful. Truly, God is still on the move among us.

Your support for the Foundation is always appreciated. We thank each of you and invite you to join us in preparing the next generation of God's servants.

Grace and peace,

The Rev. Dr. Gary S. Eller  
President

*Southwest Iowa Internship Program  
Continued from page 1*

leadership and the leadership of elders and/or governing board members.

Mary spent her first four weeks working with three different churches in the Creston area: Platte Center Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Church of Creston, and Creston Congregational (UCC) Church. She worked with Vacation Bible School and a variety of social justice programs, attended Session meetings and Board meetings, and preached at Platte Center Presbyterian Church. She also learned some of the history and theological emphases of the Presbyterian Church (since her background is Catholic and UCC) from two different pastors, one Presbyterian and one from the United Church of Christ (UCC) denomination. Mary spent the next three weeks working with three churches in the Lenox area: Lenox United Presbyterian Church, Lenox Christian Church, and the Sharpsburg Presbyterian Church. In the Lenox area, she focused on pastoral care (visiting a variety of nursing homes and making hospital visits) and on leading worship. She organized, led and preached a different worship service in each church.

Then Mary moved on to First Presbyterian Church in Corning, where she participated in new member classes, preached at nursing homes, and organized, led, and preached at a Sunday morning worship service. She also learned more about Presbyterian theology from the longest-serving pastor in Des Moines Presbytery, Ken Rummer.

Mary's fourth assignment was in Atlantic, Iowa, at the Presbyterian Church there. She filled in as an on-call pastor during a time of transition for that congregation, preaching and leading worship in addition to doing whatever she was assigned by the person designated by Session to supervise her work.

After a vacation, Mary will return to complete her internship. She is scheduled to work in Mount Ayr at the Baptist Presbyterian Church; in Clarinda at Trinity Presbyterian Church; in Bedford at the Christian Presbyterian Church and at the Villisca Presbyterian Church. By the end of her 20 week internship, she will have served in 12 different churches affiliated with five denominations.

## Meet the New Apollos Scholars— 27 Honored this Academic Year!

**Five seminarians were named Apollos scholarship recipients, each of which honors an early Foundation leader. Named awards provide \$3,000 per semester. Awards were given to these seminarians:**



***Madeleine S. Benishek, Middelr  
at Princeton Theological Seminary***

Madeleine made a year and a half long pilgrimage to Norway, Bethlehem and Scotland before entering seminary. "Everywhere, I saw God building beloved communities of transformed people, transforming the world...I found over and over that God was calling me to serve in the Church... because God longs to work uniquely through the Church to transform us and the world."



***Joseph R. Chapman, Junior  
at San Francisco Theological Seminary***

Joe comes to seminary from a background in creative writing and with experience as an instructor, lecturer, and guest faculty at a college and two universities. "If my call begins anywhere, it begins in language...I see my call as two-fold: to both acknowledge the very human and real isolation (and lack of meaning) we can feel from God and from each other and to remind us through the power of language and ritual that isolation and meaninglessness are not the final word."



***Colin R. Kerr, second-year Distance Education student  
at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary***

Colin has planted a "new worshipping community" on a college campus. "I believe God has called me to preach the Gospel to intellectuals, skeptics, and those who don't see value in 'institutional' Christianity—as well as to be part of the spiritual renewal of the Presbyterian Church (USA). For years I believed I could do this without ordination [as a Director of Christian Education and then as a church planter]...

However, at some point I realized I had hit a ceiling of limitations, awkwardly calling in outside ministers to baptize college students I had led to Christ...So to be fully faithful to this calling, I needed to be obedient to pursuing seminary and ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament."



***Sharon L. Rees, a first-year Distance Education student  
at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary***

Sharon is Director of Nursing in a health care facility and is trained as a mediator. "After graduation from college, I had several jobs that included a heavy dose of works and a touch of proclamation of faith. For the last nine years, I have had a job that includes a heavy dose of works and a bit more proclamation of faith. I am ready to launch a career in ministry that will include an emphasis on works and proclamation of faith in equally large portions."



*Mary Nickel, Senior,  
Princeton Theological Seminary*

Mary has been a tutor, teacher, volunteer coordinator, chaplain assistant, and ministry intern. “Pilgrimage’ has become a really meaningful word to me since the time I walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain in 2013,” says Mary.

“The Camino is a 550 mile walk from the border between France and Spain in the Pyrenees to the Atlantic Ocean in West Spain. It follows a path that has been used for spiritual pilgrimages since the ninth century...Along the Camino, there are few maps, [so] I learned to trust in God. Sometimes, I would worry that I had taken a wrong turn...but then a hiking marker would appear [to assure] me that I was exactly where I needed to be.” Mary is shown on a visit to San Basilio Magno Seminary in Cuba.



*Stephanie Bishop Lofin, Middler,  
Columbia Theological Seminary*



*Benjamin P. Masters,  
Middler, Austin  
Presbyterian Theological Seminary*



*Garrett R. Mostowski,  
Middler, Princeton  
Theological Seminary*

**The second level of Apollos Scholarships offers recipients \$1,500 while they are enrolled in the Master of Divinity degree program. Twenty-two seminarians were awarded these scholarships for 2015-2016. These recipients received awards:**



*Brandon Beau Dansizen, a third-year  
Distance Education  
student at the  
University of Dubuque  
Theological Seminary*



*Garam Han, Middler,  
Columbia Theological  
Seminary*



*Roderic G. Nash, a  
fourth-year Distance  
Education student  
at the University of  
Dubuque Theological  
Seminary*



*Christine A. Dempsey,  
a first year Distance  
Education student at the  
University of Dubuque  
Theological Seminary*



*Ainsley Elizabeth  
Herrick, Middler,  
Louisville Presbyterian  
Seminary*



*Daekeun Park, Senior,  
Columbia Theological  
Seminary*



*Landon A. Dillard,  
Senior, Columbia  
Theological Seminary*



*Laura Ann Kelly,  
Senior, Union  
Presbyterian Seminary*



*Lauren M. Patrus,  
Middler, Columbia  
Theological Seminary*



*Megan P. Findeiss,  
Middler, Austin  
Presbyterian  
Theological Seminary*



*Jessie Anne Light,  
Middler, Austin  
Presbyterian  
Theological Seminary*



*Barrett A. Payne,  
Middler, Columbia  
Theological Seminary*



*Charles M. Pittman,  
Senior, Columbia  
Theological Seminary*



*Edmond D. Sackett,  
Middler, Austin  
Presbyterian Theological  
Seminary*



*Katina D. Sharp, a  
third-year Distance  
Education student  
at the University of  
Dubuque Theological  
Seminary*



*Julius K. Sheppard,  
Senior, University of  
Dubuque Theological  
Seminary*



*Jennifer "Kate" Watkins,  
Middler, Columbia  
Theological Seminary*



*Christina A. Westbury,  
Senior, Louisville  
Presbyterian  
Theological Seminary*

No photo available

*Glenda C. Wickstrom,  
Middler, Columbia  
Theological Seminary*

## Apollos Scholar Accepts Call to Fellowship Position

Dear Board Members, Donors and Staff of the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation,

Greetings and Grace to you in the name of our Father.

Hello from Kitwe, Zambia. I wanted to write you today to update you and offer my sincere thanks for your very generous support of my seminary education at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. Thank you!

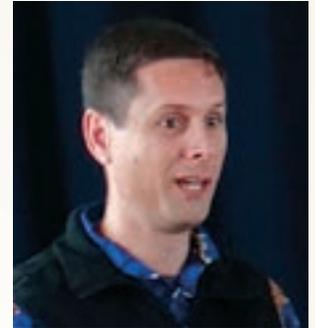
Upon graduation from seminary in May 2014, I was called into a fellowship program with Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church (mapc.com) in New York City. In this two-year program, I serve about nine months in New York, one year in Zambia, and 2.5 months visiting ministries in the global south. I'm now finishing a year in Zambia touring the country to teach lay people to lead congregations when the pastor is unavailable. Pastors here often have 5-80+ congregations at one time in our nine partner denominations. It has been a wonderful experience! I've also been coordinating the building of a duplex, which will house future fellows and provide a revenue source for the ministry: Theological Education by Extension (TEEZ) in Zambia.

In less than a month, I will begin my journey back to the USA through Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, South Sudan, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Singapore, Indonesia, and other parts of the Middle East.

While Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church has been a true blessing in supporting my needs while here, the Apollos Scholarship and other sources enabled me to accept the fellowship without seminary debt. This has been a true blessing. Thank you!

Grace and peace,

Rev. Andrew D. Smothers



Andy received the Howard B. Dooley Scholarship, named for a former leader of the Foundation, in 2012.

Dr. Dooley graduated in 1942, one of the last classes of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha. The Seminary closed in 1943. He became a Board member in 1969, Vice President in 1977, and President in 1988. Both a lawyer and a minister, he was well prepared to lead the corporation through the transition period from a seminary to a charitable foundation. Upon his retirement in 1994 the Board designated an Apollos Scholarship to bear his name in recognition of his outstanding service.

### Coming Soon... on a computer near you...

An action-packed website rich with outstanding imagery, enlightening videos, intuitive menus, and blogging capability is coming soon! Don't miss our new and highly enhanced Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation website preparing us for the 125th Anniversary Celebration of the Seminary!



# “Comments from the 59th Summer Pastors’ School...”



...to gain from the younger perspective,



...to take a dip in solid theology and come away with practical insights,

Time to reflect and learn,



...to visit with and learn from colleagues as well as presenters,



...to experience preaching and worship that-energizes and invigorates.

## OTHER COMMENTS SHARED BY PARTICIPANTS:

“The Gospel is still something to rave and shout about!”

“Loved the sense of community.”

“I enjoyed the exposure to our Presbyterian scholars.”

“It was good to have the time to re-think ‘congregation’—does it require a church building?”

“My little church needs the best I can give them with the help of Almighty God.”

“Believe it or not, I left feeling closer to Christ and to colleagues.”

Looking back at what has been causes us to leap forward, anticipating even greater things to come. The Summer Pastors’ School in 2016 will mark the 60th year Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation has hosted this “mini-seminary” event.

Reserve June 6 to June 11 for rest, reflection, and renewal at the 60th Summer Pastors School.

OPSF invites all Teaching Elders, Honorably Retired pastors, chaplains, and CREs in the 13 states served by the Foundation to attend.

Watch for email reminders and check the website for announcements of speakers and topics, special events during the School and registration information.

Early Bird Registration opens in late October and closes in mid-May.



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## SAVE THESE DATES

Please check online for more information: [www.omahapresbyterianseminaryfoundation.org](http://www.omahapresbyterianseminaryfoundation.org)

**APOLLOS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS** are accepted between January 15th and April 1st.  
Transcripts and references are due by April 15th each year. Awards are given directly to a seminarian.

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### WINTER PASTORS' SCHOOL – HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS, HASTINGS, NEBRASKA

Monday, February 1 to Thursday, February 4, 2016

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### THE 60TH ANNUAL SUMMER PASTORS' SCHOOL – HASTINGS COLLEGE, HASTINGS

Monday's registration on June 6th to Saturday's closing, June 11th.

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**OTHER EVENTS** – The Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation supports these events through Lifelong Learning Program Grants\*.

Many dates and locations are pending. Please check the OPSF website for updates. \*Program Grant Applications are due on August 15th.

Synod of Mid-America Pastors' Event – April 13-15 -- Colorado  
The Church Growth Leadership Summit – April (2 days) – Nebraska  
“Selah – A Pastoral Retreat” – April 10-13 – Kansas  
Great Plains Wee Kirk – May (2 days) – Nebraska  
Synod School – July 26-31 – Iowa

“Theoacademy for Commissioned Ruling Elder Training” – Summer -- Missouri  
“Courage: A Retreat for Congregational Leaders” – November 11-12 – Colorado  
“2016 Minister's Retreat – Healthy Boundaries” – Fall 2016 – Oklahoma  
Western National Leadership Training (WNLTI) – October (3 days) -- Colorado