

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Rev. Pfrimmer appointed head of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

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WATERLOO – A pastor with strong links to Waterloo Lutheran Seminary (WLS), a long history in religious and public administration as well as an abiding concern for social justice has been appointed the principal-dean of the seminary. Rev. David Pfrimmer officially assumes the post on May 1.

Pfrimmer was appointed, in part, because of his vision of the role a public seminary should play in contemporary society. He believes seminaries should equip lay people and clergy to lead, foster pastoral sensitivity to those in need, earn prophetic credibility by working for greater justice and inspire courageous leadership among those who would serve.

“Dr. Pfrimmer is well known throughout the wider church, and in the ecumenical community in Canada and abroad, as a man of vision and integrity,” said The Rev. Elizabeth Kuglin-Alyea, chairperson of the WLS board of governors. “We welcome his vision of a public theology in which Christians become a public church for others.”

Pfrimmer has long been a member of the WLS and Wilfrid Laurier University communities. He earned a bachelor of arts in economics from Waterloo Lutheran University (later renamed Wilfrid Laurier) in 1973, a master of divinity from WLS in 1997 and a master of arts in religion and culture from Laurier in 1980. He also completed a doctorate of ministry from Princeton Theological Seminary in 2000. He maintained his links to the Waterloo campus as a lecturer and as director of the Institute for Christian Ethics.

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“Waterloo Lutheran Seminary is a wonderful place to study,” said Pfrimmer. “With my experience in the wider church, the ecumenical movement and the public arena, I hope that I will be able make a useful contribution to the important work of the seminary and university communities.”

Pfrimmer serves as director of the Lutheran Office for Public Policy. He represents the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in a wide range of ecumenical and community organizations that address issues of human rights, corporate social responsibility, international trade and development, social policy, welfare reform, and economic and social justice.

He served on the executive of the Canadian Council of Churches, as chairperson for the council’s Commission for Justice and Peace, as a member of the Ontario Multifaith Council on Religious and Spiritual Care (Chaplaincy) and as a member of the Society for Christian Ethics. He was president of the Ontario Social Development Council and in 1995 was a member of its delegation to the United Nation’s World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark. He has also represented the church on numerous delegations and observer missions to the UN and in El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, Chile, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. He continues as a member of the Canadian Council of Churches Commission for Justice and Peace and the Lutheran World Federation Council.

Pfrimmer was ordained in 1978 and has served parishes in Kingston and New Hamburg, Ontario. He has written numerous articles and editorials, and regularly speaks to church and community groups.

Pfrimmer replaces the retiring Richard Crossman who has been principal-dean since 1984. Crossman began teaching with the seminary in 1970, prior to the sale of Waterloo Lutheran University to Wilfrid Laurier University, and is one of the few faculty members who has worked alongside every Laurier president. During his tenure the seminary opened its doors to women students, developed several new degree programs and has recently applied to begin a new PhD program in pastoral counselling.

The Waterloo Lutheran Seminary is supported by the Eastern Synod and is one of two theological schools of the 190,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada.