



Synod Assembly Letter 2023
Pastor Kara Baylor

It is hard to believe that another year has gone by. COVID is still a bit of an issue on campus, but overall things are back to normal. Students are again able to take part in long-term study abroad programs, and our shorter J-Term study tours recently returned from overseas. Classes are mainly in person, and it is nice to be able to sing again in Chapel/Mass without having to worry. There is a lot to highlight this year, between what has happened on campus and specifically in the Center for Faith and Spirituality. Let's get to it.

We celebrated 175 years of Carthage, which was founded in 1847. The Winter and Summer 2022 issues of our magazine, *The Carthaginian*, highlighted common themes between then and now.

New academic programs are emerging in high-interest areas for students coming into college age. Hires include a dean for the new School of Business and Economics and a director for our Engineering Program.

The men's volleyball team did it again, repeating as national champs in NCAA Division III. This is something to be very proud of. Go, Firebirds!

One of the things that marks Generation Z is a strong focus on mental health. With a generous gift, we were able to expand our Health and Counseling Center and add another counselor. This is a great way to put students first here on campus.

Last but not least, we welcomed a new food service vendor, Parkhurst Dining, to campus. This has been a great improvement for everyone on campus.

In the Center for Faith and Spirituality, there have been good changes as well.

We are now part of the Office of Equity and Inclusion. This spotlights the interfaith work we have been doing, which is very popular with the student body.

This is the second academic year that we have had a joint staff person with the Aspire Center (our career office) who brings a strong focus on vocation. Intentional reflection at all parts of the college journey is important, and the Purposeful Life and Leadership Coordinator is helping our students to do just that.

Our student staff continues to help plan service events, Mass for our Catholic students, and – new this year – an opportunity for students with no faith background (the fastest-growing group on campus) to come together and ask questions.

I sure hope you will consider bringing your youth members on a visit to Carthage to see how we can help educate them for the 21st century and their sense of call. I would love to have more students rooted deeply in the Lutheran tradition.