

# The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church

The General Theological Seminary is the first seminary of The Episcopal Church and the only seminary founded by the General Convention, established by Resolution in 1817. Clement Clarke Moore, a parishioner at Trinity, Wall Street, gave a portion of his extensive Manhattan farm land as a site for the Seminary. In 1827, General moved there, essentially beginning the transition of Chelsea—the name Moore had given his land—from a farm into one of the most vibrant neighborhoods in New York. It was the express decision of the Convention that the Seminary be in New York City, and General's location remains an essential aspect of its character and mission.

During the past triennium, General has undergone a financial and architectural transformation that has left it more fiscally and physically solid than it has been in generations. Finding itself in 2009 in the midst of a potentially catastrophic financial crisis, General's Trustees divided the position of President and Dean, entrusting the financial future of the Seminary to the President, the Rev. Lang Lowrey of the Diocese of Atlanta; and its academic, spiritual, and community life to the Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee, retired Bishop of Virginia.

During 2010–2012, General embarked upon a radical restructuring, *The Program to Choose Life*. This effort required the Seminary to divest itself of three buildings, including an off-campus apartment building for partnered students. This necessitated the reordering of on-campus buildings to accommodate both the already-resident single students and the now displaced partnered ones. This re-allocation of space—also a radical remodeling—completely renewed the Seminary's 19th Century housing, not only ensuring the health of the infrastructure but also creating pristine and thoroughly modern apartments. In the process, General's available housing units decreased by only one.

The sale of the West Building, which housed administrative, faculty, and business offices, prompted the gutting, reordering, and complete modernization of Seabury Hall, making it an integrated campus hub. Seabury has become a carefully designed and gracious portal between the City and the Close, as the enclosed city block is commonly called.

Behind these efforts at architectural restructuring was an equally radical and equally successful financial restructuring. More than three-quarters of the Seminary's 2009 \$40,000,000 debt has been eliminated, the endowment has doubled, and the annual budget deficit has been reduced by more than half. By 2014, the deficit will drop to \$1,000,000, a remarkably low annual "gap," and one-seventh of what it was. Moreover, the Seminary now has in reserve sufficient funds to ensure operations for four years. The 2011 annual fund drive was the most successful in the Seminary's history, yielding \$1,100,000, suggesting the confidence of benefactors in General's future.

Also during the past triennium, General opened its new Keller Library, named for the Rt. Rev. Christoph Keller, Jr., the late Bishop of Arkansas, whose family substantially funded the building and outfitting of this state-of-the-art facility. Thanks to a partnership with the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, General's collection, widely acknowledged as the most extensive collection of Anglican material in the United States, has been augmented by the significant resources of Candler's Pitt Library—both its hard-copy and electronic resources. One of the most important features of the new library is its climate-controlled Special Collections room, which houses 30,000 rare volumes, with a primary focus in Anglican and Episcopal studies. Among these important books, for example, is a Coverdale Bible (1535), the first published edition of the Bible in English.

During the past three years—first of uncertainty and then of rapid change—General's enrollment has held steady. Housing on the Close is entirely occupied, and the number of commuter students—both those preparing for ordination and others—is constantly increasing. The Seminary has turned its attention to accommodating distance learners, now made possible in previously unimagined ways by the installation of video conferencing technology in many classrooms and seminar rooms. This technology has also allowed distant guest lecturers to teach classes as General, not only being able to see the class in New York and being seen, but also having full control over all the audio-visuals, including the virtual chalkboard.

In 2010, General's Center for Christian Spirituality became the sponsor of a certificate program in the Spiritual Guidance of Children. This highly successful program was designed with the help of the Rev. Jerome Barryman, the creator of

the popular Godly Play curriculum, who has now become an adjunct member of the faculty and a regular teacher at General. Both full-time students and others are earning the certificate, as well as other certifications offered by the Center, including one in Spiritual Direction.

Along with the development of new programs has come the development of the faculty. By the beginning of the 2012–2013 academic year, half of General’s faculty will have arrived in the past three years. This represents both the filling of positions opened by retirement, but also the re-establishment of the Pastoral Theology professorship, which was vacant for many years.

This summer, General is launching the first phase in what is projected to be a growing investment in foreign mission work. The new “FAR and Wide Scholarship” will make it possible for students to spend summers working in Anglican missions abroad. The acronym “FAR” refers to names of three bishops—Frade, Alexander, and Roskam—with a particular interest in foreign missions, and who are integral partners with General in this endeavor.

New technology, new faculty, and new programs are the components of the first wave of General renewing its curriculum—just as it has renewed its campus. By the end of the next triennium, General’s in-process visioning process launched by Trustees’ Chair, the Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk of New York, will have lead to a long-term strategic plan, focused on making the Seminary fully equipped to train leaders for the Church that is emerging in the 21st Century.

Respectfully submitted,

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Associate Dean  
The General Theological Seminary