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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Innovative Theological Education Program Receives \$225,000 Grant** Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation Supports Formation of Church Leaders

*Berkeley, CA July 16, 2008* – Celebration was in the air as faculty, staff, and board members gathered during lunch at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) to receive a check for \$225,000 from the Thrivent

Financial for Lutherans Foundation. Greg Jahnke, Senior Financial Consultant with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, and Judith Dancer, Financial Associate, were on hand to present the check.

The grant is part of the foundation's Lutheran grant program and will support the growth and development of the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM)

program, providing funding for additional training of mentors; website development and online program support. Semi-annual Learning Clusters will also be held to engage students, mentors, faculty, site supervisors, and synodical leadership to coordinate the educational effort.



Pictured from left are: Judith Dancer, Financial Associate, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans; Rev. Dr. Edmond Yee, former Director, TEEM; Gregory Jahnke, Senior Financial Consultant, Thrivent; Dr. Judy Larsen, PLTS Board of Directors; Rev. Dr. Moses Penumaka, Director, WMC-TEEM.

The TEEM program of the Western Mission Cluster is jointly administered by PLTS and Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. More than 50 candidates for ministry are enrolled in the Western Mission Cluster TEEM program, making it the largest program of TEEM in any ELCA seminary.

The Rev. Dr. Moses Penumaka, TEEM Program Director, expressed his deep gratitude to Thrivent Financial for this program-sustaining gift. He also recognized his predecessors, the Rev. Dr. Ed Yee of PLTS, and the Rev. Rod Maeker, Associate Director of TEEM at Luther Seminary, for submitting the proposal just before they retired from their positions. The Rev. Dr. Phyllis Anderson, PLTS President remarked, “We are grateful for this amazing partnership with Thrivent Financial, and for gifts like this that help critical programs thrive at PLTS.”

TEEM is an educational program that prepares women and men for ordained ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Beginning in 1989, PLTS has provided innovative, contextual, non-residential programs to meet the educational needs of exceptional candidates to



serve in multi-cultural, urban, rural, and deaf communities. Since its inception, the TEEM program has graduated some 91 persons from across the country to become pastors, chaplains, mission developers, outreach specialists, and members of synodical and

churchwide staffs. In the fall of 2007, the PLTS and Luther Seminary TEEM programs officially became a joint Western Mission Cluster program.

The Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation is a private foundation funded by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. As a 501(c)(3) organization with its own board of trustees, the foundation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, religious, scientific, literary and educational purposes and makes grants and gifts to 501(c)(3) exempt organizations. Last year, the grant program distributed approximately \$5 million through 100 separate grants.

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary was founded in 1952 in Berkeley, California, and is one of eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. For more information, visit <http://www.plts.edu>.

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