

Thanksgiving for College Presidents

He sat there next to his wife, strumming his guitar, recounting the legacy of Woody Guthrie, and leading in a homemade version of "So long, it's been good..."

William Frame was retiring from Augsburg College after serving as its president for the past 9 years. The gathering was held to honor him and his wife, Anne, but in typical fashion, he deflected the focus. He wanted to talk about a great God and the blessings he had received during these past years. When he came on campus, he had been a Lutheran for less than 5 years. Perhaps that is why he has embraced a Lutheran sense of calling and vocation with a

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vigor that many of us who have grown up as Lutherans have too easily taken for granted. And in the process, President Frame helped Augsburg solidify its ministry in the city...and to the city.

Chris Thomforde has spent these last days making visits for St. Olaf College in the morning and packing in the afternoon. The 10th president of St. Olaf College has accepted the presidency of Moravian College and Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. President Thomforde is a pastor in the ELCA, having served in a parish setting and campus ministry prior to colleges of the church. He has never forgotten that calling, and during his time at St. Olaf, continued to exhibit a pastoral heart among students and faculty...and congregations in our own synod. He is one who when standing besides you makes you feel 6 feet, 9 inches tall.

I have come to believe that there are few positions in this church that demand more than that of college president. Those who accept such a position literally give their lives away. The pressures in higher education today are immense and there simply is no down time. If one has a free evening, then students or faculty are invited to the house. If a vacation is involved, there will also be included visits to potential donors. Yet it is to the credit of such folks that our colleges continue to focus on mission, rediscovering their Lutheran roots and sense of vocation, and that the students, in a way like never before, leave with a sense of call to service.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them...it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant.
Matthew 20:25-26

Thank you Bill and Chris for how you have served our young people.

Shalom,



Harold Usgaard
Bishop



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