



December 9, 2014

To our alumni, donors, partners and friends,

It is with profound sadness and regret that the Bethany College Board of Directors announces that the conclusion of the 2014-2015 year will mark the end of the ministry of Bethany College in its current iteration.

The reasons for this decision are numerous and complex but the most significant factor in the board's deliberations was the persistent trend of declining enrollment and the lack of clarity regarding how to reverse it. This trend has unfolded over the last decade but the impact was most severe over the past year as the school struggled to absorb a further 40% drop in first year applications. Bethany has always depended heavily on tuition revenues and the size of the school is such that its vulnerability to these losses was immediate and acute. As well, there remains a significant need for capital investment and any wholesale change to Bethany's present model would require even greater investment.

The Board of Directors would like to express its sincere desire that this decision will not mark the end of the conversation around discipleship and theological formation among young adults among our churches and partners. As one of the stewards of the mission of nurturing disciples and training leaders, the Board invites focused conversation and input from any who are interested in investigating future possibilities for this vital ministry going forward. The Board is committed to engaging in and contributing to these conversations in whatever ways it can in the weeks and months ahead.

We also acknowledge our continued reliance on your financial support, even during this time of closure. Not only do we have obligations for the current year, we will also need support for the activities related to bringing this ministry to a close over the course of the 2015-2016 year. Our annual year-end appeal and newsletter - the Connection - will be in your mailboxes shortly, if not already, and your consideration of these needs is greatly appreciated.

Finally, the Board would like to express its profound gratitude to the Bethany College leadership team, faculty, staff and students who have lived, worked and studied in a context of uncertainty for a considerable period of time. The faculty and staff have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to Bethany's mission along with a gracious acknowledgement of the significant challenges facing the college. The impact of this decision in the lives of these dear people will be significant and we appeal to our wider community of friends and supporters to uphold them in prayer in the days and months ahead.

In the gospel of John, after a stop at Bethany to visit his friend Lazarus, Jesus spoke these memorable words, *"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."* Our confidence, even in the midst of deep sorrow, is in the God who brings new life and promises that none of the seeds that we plant are ever wasted.

In His service,

Brian Heinrichs,
Chair, Board of Directors