

Presenter: Darrell Jodock

Drell and Adeline Bernhardson Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Gustavus Adolphus College

Special Interest Session: Luther and Public Policy

Description: For Luther, humans are called to serve the neighbor and the wider community. In his own life, Luther responded to this call by helping a wide array of individuals, arbitrating disputes, urging city councils to provide schooling for all young men and young women, and creating community chests to provide for those without means.

Today our society is marked by a deep polarization. Competing political and economic ideologies often stifle constructive action. Immigration reform is but one example where this occurs. What can we learn from Luther about dealing with polarization, and what role can congregations play in overcoming it?

Bio: The Reverend Doctor Darrell Jodock is Professor Emeritus at Gustavus Adolphus College, where he served from 1999 to 2012 as the Drell and Adeline Bernhardson Distinguished Professor of Lutheran Studies. From 2013 to 2015 he held the Martin E. Mary Regents Chair in Religion and the Academy at St. Olaf College. Prior to 1999, he taught at Muhlenberg College and at Luther Seminary. He continues to speak, write, and serve the ELCA in various ways. He is a member of the ELCA Task Force on Inter-religious Relations, serves on the planning committee for the annual Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference, chairs the ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations, represents the ELCA on a national dialogue of Jews and Christians which considers pastoral issues, and is one of several ELCA representatives to the National Council of Churches. He also chairs the Board of the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, which is located on the campus of St. John's University. He has degrees from St. Olaf College, Luther Seminary, and Yale University and honorary degrees from Concordia College and Carthage College.

Panel Discussion: Marcia Bunge, Darrell Jodock, Fuad Naeem

Title: Whose Neighbor Are We?

Description: "Whose neighbor are we?" is, of course, an inversion of the question which prompted Jesus to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan. His parable is less a story about a nice man than it is about relationships between enemies. But the questions "Who is my neighbor?" and "Whose neighbor are we?" have renewed relevance today since we now have more neighbors of increasingly different cultures and religions—which makes us increasingly different from our neighbors, too. The members of this panel will address, from a variety of perspectives, what this means for intercultural and interreligious encounters in the present.