

SEMINARY NAMES CHRIS BROWN TO LEAD NEW CHURCH PLANTING INITIATIVE

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary has named the Rev. Christopher Brown as church planting emphasis coordinator. In this position he will oversee the newly created Church Planting Initiative.

A \$200,000 grant from The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations has enabled Pittsburgh Seminary to expand its Church Planting Emphasis within the master of divinity program into the Church Planting Initiative. This Initiative recognizes that theological education historically has focused on preparing students to lead already established churches. However, today's seminary graduates face a world that also needs entrepreneurial, mission-minded pastors who are equipped to take the gospel to people in a wide variety of non-traditional settings.



“Chris brings passion, experience, and vision to the position—a passion for mission-shaped churches formed in our neighborhoods among those who are not walking through the doors of established churches anymore; the experience of being a church planter himself who knows what it takes to form a new Christian community; a vision for what is at stake in the formation of leaders to be the next generation of church planters,” said the Rev. Dr. Johannes Swart, associate professor of world mission and evangelism.

Brown is the organizing co-pastor of The Upper Room Presbyterian Church, a church plant of the PC(U.S.A.) in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood. Additionally he serves as a New Worshipping Communities Coach, providing support to a church plant in New York. He is currently pursuing his master's in sacred theology at Pittsburgh Seminary and earned his M.Div. from PTS in 2008 and B.A. from the University of Colorado-Boulder in 2004.

His volunteer service to the church includes serving as the young adult program co-coordinator and staff member at the New Wilmington Mission Conference and as co-chair of the nominating committee of the Seminary's Alumnae/i Council. Additionally, he will co-lead an education trip focusing on church-planting to Brazil this spring and has participated in cross-cultural mission opportunities on three other occasions. Brown has also lead church planting and evangelism workshops at various events through the Seminary, PC(U.S.A.) and the church community.

“As a number of our more recent, church-planter graduates have discovered, non-traditional congregations are important for the future of the Church because they provide laboratories in which to explore the effectiveness of new models—part-time co-pastoring on a small church budget; holding worship services in nontraditional spaces, such as living rooms and storefronts; and reaching new groups of people with the gospel through different styles of music and liturgy, for example. Supporting church planters with resources and the permission to try ‘new things’ brings life and energy to the broader Church,” said Thomas Pappalardo, vice president for advancement.

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