

## PROFESSOR'S RESEARCH FOCUSES ON CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH - AN INCREASINGLY CHALLENGING ISSUE IN OUR TIME

Ordained in the United Church of Christ, the Rev. Dr. **Leanna Fuller** brings a rich background of significant parish experience, superb teaching skills, and a doctorate in religion, psychology, and culture from Vanderbilt University to her important faculty position as assistant professor of pastoral care at Pittsburgh Seminary. Her specialized research focuses on conflict in the church—an increasingly challenging issue in our time.



Leanna's practical-theology approach to scholarship led her to write a dissertation titled, "When Christ's Body is Broken: Anxiety, Identity, and Conflict in Congregations." And her real-life practice of ministry has incorporated service as associate pastor of Oakland Christian Church in Suffolk, Va. (where she coordinated youth ministry and Christian education programming) and as chaplain resident at Riverside Regional Medical Center, in Newport News, Va., where she provided pastoral care for patients.

Leanna's ministry experience combined with her exceptional intellectual skills have made her a popular guest lecturer on topics such as family systems theory and death, dying, and bereavement. Her stellar academic work (she was valedictorian and made Phi Beta Kappa at Furman University and was selected as a Senior Graduate Teaching Fellow at the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching) bode well for her future as a scholar and a mentor to students and pastors alike.

By engaging the church and the academy through presentations such as, "In All Things Charity: Toward a Theology of Intra-Christian Dialogue," to the Society for Pastoral Theology's Church & Christian Formation study group, Leanna is providing leadership in preparing pastors who cultivate congregations that are effective in bridging the Word and the world today.

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