



HEATHER VACEK NAMED ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY



Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Board of Directors has named Heather Hartung

Vacek as assistant professor of church history. She will begin June 1, 2012. Prior to coming to PTS, Vacek will complete a doctor of theology at Duke University, Duke Divinity School. She was awarded the Louisville Institute Dissertation Fellowship in 2011-2012.

Seminary President the Rev. Dr. William J. Carl III said, "Heather Vacek brings to this position the rare combination of meaningful scholarship for the church, outstanding teaching, wisdom, and a collegial spirit. She will make a great model and mentor for our students and future leaders."

Search committee chair the Rev. Dr. Andrew Purves, professor of Reformed theology said, "Heather Vacek is a scholar with outstanding potential to publish for both the academy and the church. She also brings a breadth of administrative experience from 12 years working for various corporations before attending seminary. She has a passion for ministry that will be a tremendous encouragement to our students."

Vacek earned her bachelor of science in industrial engineering and bachelor of arts in economics from Northwestern University; master in engineering and master of business administration from Northwestern University, J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management; and master of divinity from Duke University, Duke Divinity School. She is an approved candidate for ordained ministry in the Moravian Church in America.

Her ministry experience includes serving Raleigh Moravian Church in various positions since 2005, most recently as pastoral assistant. Vacek has also served the Moravian Church in America, Southern Province (appointed commission member, chaplain, guest preacher) and John Umstead Hospital (volunteer chaplain).

Vacek is a trustee at Moravian Theological Seminary and has served on various committees at Duke Divinity School. Her research interests include American religious history, church history, history of mental illness in America, practical theology, and theologies of disability and suffering. Vacek's most recent publication is "Opening Heart and Hand to Them in Need": An Account of Mental Illness, Stigma, and the Church which will appear in *The Hinge: International Theological Dialogue for the Moravian Church*. She is a member of American Academy of Religion, American Historical Association, American Society of Church History, Association of Practical Theology, Moravian Historical Society, and Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

Board member the Rev. Nancy Lowmaster '11 said, "Not only will Heather Vacek enrich the PTS community with her fine scholarship and outstanding teaching, she provides a pastoral perspective on the application of the lessons of church history to ministry. I am pleased that PTS continues to attract such strong faculty members committed to the institution's mission of preparing leaders who proclaim God's good news in word and deed."

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is a graduate professional institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A). Founded in 1794, the Seminary is located in Pittsburgh, Pa. and approximately 310 students are enrolled yearly in the degree programs. The Seminary prepares leaders who proclaim with great joy God's message of good news in both word and deed. PTS is rooted in the Reformed history of faithfulness to Scripture and commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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