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CLARENCE E. WRIGHT NAMED INAUGURAL FRED ROGERS FELLOW

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and the **Fred Rogers Institute at Saint Vincent College** are pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. Clarence E. Wright will serve as the inaugural **Fred Rogers Fellow in Theology and Ministry**, effective July 1. The Fellow is to serve a two-semester, postdoctoral appointment pursuing research within the Fred Rogers Archive and teaching at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. The Fellowship, offered in partnership between Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and the Fred Rogers Institute at Saint Vincent College, honors the ministry and legacy of “Mister” Fred Rogers, who graduated in 1962 from the Seminary and whose work is recognized at the Institute.



Dr. Wright’s research will entail a close study of Mister Rogers’ “neighborhood ethic of care” and identification of ways to apply the theology undergirding this ethic for 21st century children, especially in urban environments. This will include engaging contemporary media, as Fred Rogers did in the early days of television, developing policy recommendations to address the unique needs of digital-native children, and later publication of notable findings.

Fred Rogers once said, “When I was ordained, it was for a special ministry, that of serving children and families through television. I consider that what I do through Mister Rogers' Neighborhood is my ministry. A ministry doesn't have to be only through a church, or even through an ordination. And I think we all can minister to others in this world by being compassionate and caring. I hope you will feel good enough about yourselves that you will want to minister to others, and that you will find your own unique ways to do that.”

“Like Mister Rogers, I have devoted my life to the intersection of Christian ministry and community,” says Dr. Wright. “In ‘The Message’ Bible, John 1:14 exemplifies the God who lives within our communities and invites us to follow: ‘The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.’ No one better exemplified faith through the lens of ‘the neighborhood’ than Fred Rogers. Now, I hope to find new ways to expand his legacy for a new generation.”

Dr. Wright brings to this role extensive experience in community leadership, including service as managing director at Main Street Wilmington, as program manager at Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation, as president and professor of practical theology at Missio Seminary, as Pennsylvania State president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and as a member of several ecumenical and interfaith clergy alliances, as well as more than 20 years of pastoral ministry. Dr. Wright is the author of “The Sunday After: Preaching in Moments and Movements” and has published additional poems, chapters, academic papers, and journal articles on faith and community in contemporary America. He holds a doctor of ministry degree from Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School and additional degrees in divinity, religion, and missional theology.

“Dr. Wright’s energy, passion, and expertise make him an excellent fit; he brings with him the same ‘spirit’ of Fred Rogers seen across the Seminary,” says Lynne Napoleon Bassett, director of the Faith Forming Families (F3) Network at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. “The F3 Network will work closely with Dr. Wright as he undertakes deep research in the Fred Rogers Archive at Saint Vincent College, and he will be an important part of our mission to equip faith leaders and caregivers in the spiritual formation and moral development of the children they love.”

ABOUT PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Rooted in the Reformed tradition and in relationship with Christ-followers from other traditions, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary forms and equips people for ministries familiar and yet to unfold and communities present and yet to be gathered. Pittsburgh Seminary forms culturally-competent and contextually-agile Christian leaders for church and society.

ABOUT FRED ROGERS INSTITUTE AT SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE

The Fred Rogers Institute advances the legacy of Fred Rogers by investing in the strengths of families and caring adults to support the healthy development of children. He found a home for his archive and this vision at Saint Vincent College in his childhood hometown of Latrobe, Pa. Since 2003 their work has grown and deepened in the small town Fred called home, in the Western Pennsylvania region, and across the United States and world.

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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