

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

信義宗神學院

# ITS NEWS

HONG KONG, SUMMER 2011, N° 78



**SYMBOLS  
AMPLIFY  
MEANING**

# Symbols amplify meaning

Symbols amplify meaning. They help us understand, act, coordinate, meditate. Symbols assist us in all areas of life, be it at the traffic lights, be it in the universe of a smart phone, be it in personal relations, be it with academic achievements, be it in religious practices, be it in the contemplation of faith.

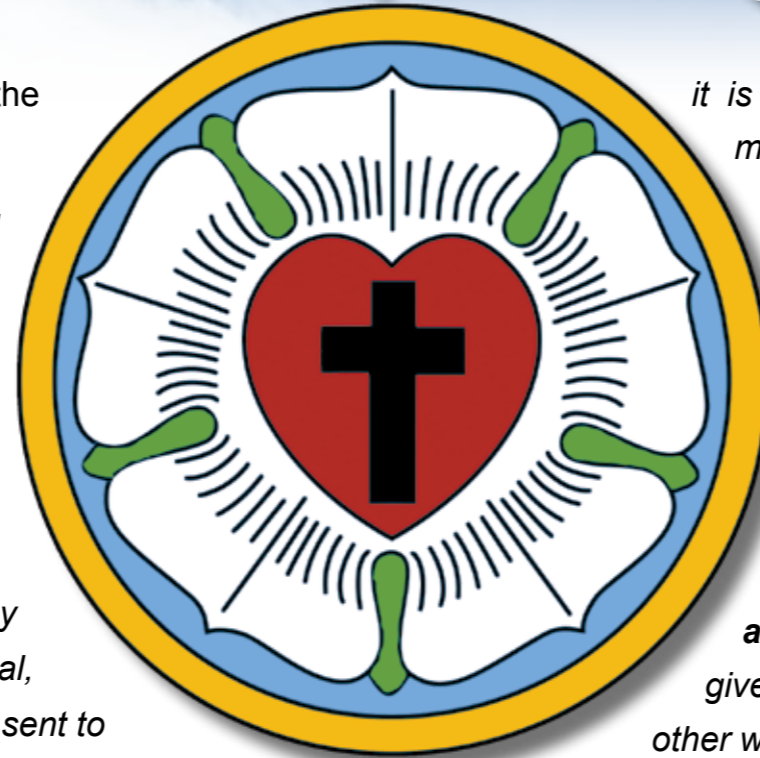
In this issue of LTS News our readers will find a focus on symbolic communication in different shapes and fashions. Our graduating students display their garments and academic signia, we are introduced to liturgical floral decoration, and to a meditation on the artistic presence of the love of Christ.

LTS News also introduces a new cover page layout that may speak to us symbolically, as the logo features the colors of the famous "Luther seal". This may be a convenient occasion to remind of the letter to Lazarus Spengler, dated July 8, 1530, where Martin Luther

interprets the seal.

*Grace and peace from the Lord. As you desire to know whether my painted seal, which you sent to me, has hit the mark, I shall answer most amiably and tell you my original thoughts and reason about why my seal is a symbol of my theology.*

*The first should be a **black cross in a heart, which retains its natural color**, so that I myself would be reminded that faith in the Crucified saves us. "For one who believes from the heart will be justified" (Rom. 10:10). Although*



*it is indeed a black cross, which mortifies and which should also cause pain, it leaves the heart in its natural color. It does not corrupt nature, that is, it does not kill but keeps alive. "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17) but by faith in the crucified. Such a heart should stand in the middle of a **white rose**, to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace. In other words, it places the believer into a white, joyous rose, for this faith does not give peace and joy like the world gives (John 14:27). That is why the rose should be white and not red, for white is the color of the spirits and the angels (cf. Matt. 28:3; John 20:12).*

*Such a rose should stand in a **sky-blue field**, symbolizing that such joy in spirit and faith is a beginning of the heavenly future joy, which begins already, but is grasped in hope, not yet revealed.*

*And around this field is a **golden ring**, symbolizing that such blessedness in Heaven lasts forever and has no end. Such blessedness is exquisite, beyond all joy and goods, just as gold is the most valuable, most precious and best metal.*

*This is my compendium theologiae [summary of theology]. I have wanted to show it to you in good friendship, hoping for your appreciation. May Christ, our beloved Lord, be with your spirit until the life hereafter. Amen.*

Editor

# Thorvaldsen's Christ figure

*Reverend Rolf Schanke Eikum and his wife Åshild have been senior volunteers at Tao Fong Shan for the fall semester of 2011. In a morning devotion, Rolf shared with the LTS community his thoughts and memories concerning the Danish artist Bertel Thorvaldsen's (1770-1844) Christ figure.*

By Rev. Rolf Schanke Eikum

**Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest"**

I want to share with you an image of Jesus Christ which has made a great impression on me. It is the famous Christ figure of the Danish artist Thorvaldsen, which is standing on many alters in churches all over Scandinavia. In fact,

I even have a little Thorvaldsen's Christ figure in my own home in Norway.

The founder of Tao Fong Shan, the Norwegian missionary and LTS-professor, Karl Ludvig Reichelt, placed a Thorvaldsen Christ figure on his travel altar when he travelled around in China and told the Buddhist monks about Christ. The same figure also stood on the altar in his mission center in Nanjing and on the altar in Christ temple here at Tao Fong Shan. What is it about this figure that fascinates people?

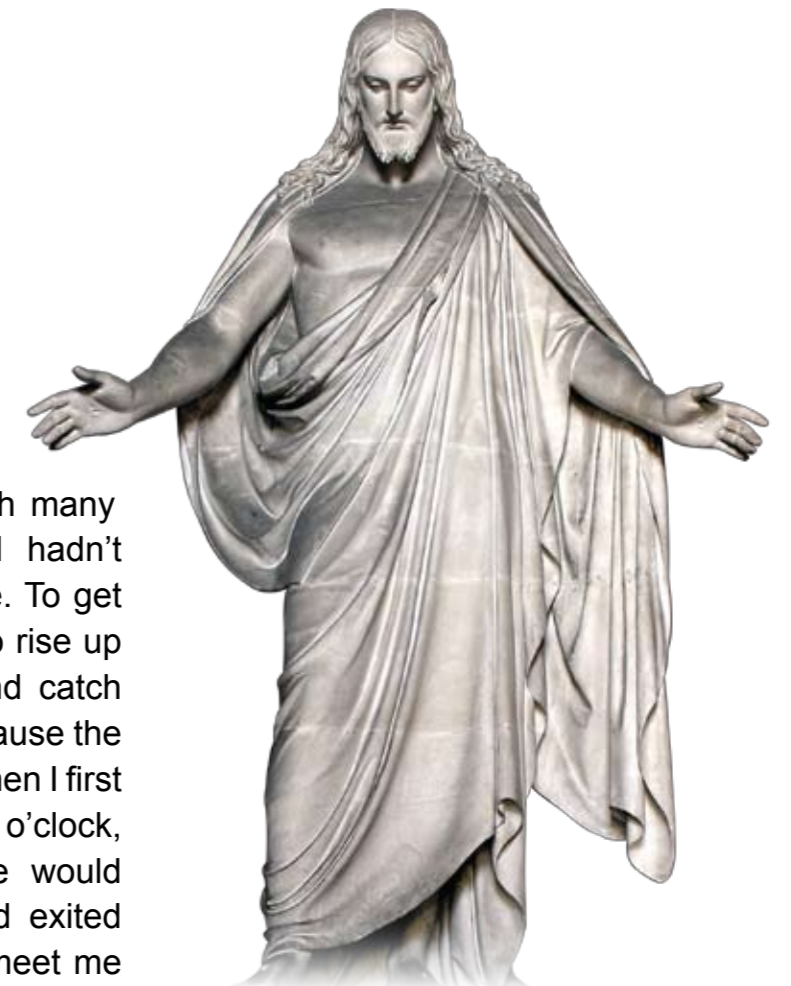
The story has been told many times that when Thorvaldsen made this Christ figure out of clay, he made a Christ with his arms and hands raised for blessing. He left the clay figure to dry over night and when he came to his shop the next morning, its arms and hands had glided down. The blessing Christ figure had become a Christ figure with open and welcoming arms towards everyone.

## **Why am I so fond of this image of Christ?**

When I first started as a 27 years old

pastor, I came to a parish with many islands and four churches. I hadn't been in these churches before. To get to any of the churches I had to rise up early on Sunday mornings and catch the ferry that left 7 o'clock, because the ferries went very seldom. So when I first arrived at my new church at 9 o'clock, two hours before the service would start, I was a bit anxious and exited about what and who I would meet me in this church. The church door was open, and I went inside. Nobody was there. My eyes searched up the aisle and stopped at the altar: What did I see? A two-meter high Christ figure of Thorvaldsen! I just stood in awe and looked at Christ stretching out his open arms towards me. I went slowly towards the statue, and when I came to the alter ring I fell on my knees and prayed.

When I looked up again, I saw the marks in his hands and feet: The marks after having been nailed to the cross because of MY sins. I had a kind of a vision this morning in my new church - at the start of my life as a pastor - just before my first worship service in this



church: Christ spoke to me with the open arms, saying:

*Come to me and lay down your burden, your sins, because I have carried it all for you, I have atoned for your sins, because I love you so much!*

I felt that Christ blessed me and encouraged me.

When I rose from the alter ring and looked down the aisle towards the open church door I thought: Christ welcomes me to this church with open arms. And as his servant I shall welcome everyone with open arms like Christ. The parents who bring their babies to church for baptism,



Professor  
Karl Ludvig Reichelt

all the young boys and girls who come to confirmation classes, all the couples who visit the church for weddings, all those who bring their dead for funeral services – about 90% in Norway!- to all of them Jesus Christ reaches out with open arms. I decided that I would show them Jesus Christ, our savior both for this life and the coming life!

As a pastor I must not hinder people to come to Jesus with his open arms. Instead I shall point to Jesus and say like John the Baptist: *Look: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! (1.29).* And when they for worship and service, Jesus Christ is standing there with his open arms saying: *Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest (Mat.11.28).* I also learned that I must not gather people for myself, but for Jesus., that I need to say like John the Baptist: *He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease (3.30).*

When our children were small, they liked to play with my Thorvaldsen Christ figure. At one time, they dropped it on the floor and Christ lost his open arms. I was a bit sad, but then another biblical thought came to me: You Rolf, and every Christian shall be my arms, my feet, my mouth! You are my body in this world. I will use you and send you to make disciples!



And my hope and prayer for you is: May these years at LTS prepare you to come with your burden to Christ who stands with his open arms towards you. And he will equip you with his gifts so you can be his hands and feet and mouths speaking and living out the gospel for the people!

Karl Ludvig Reichelt is still well remembered in Norway for the mission hymn that he wrote after he had been a missionary in China for nine years. It is hymn nr 302 in our hymnal here at LTS. May God bless us all so that we all can sing from our hearts:

*Your kingdom's cause, dear Lord, shall be my only life and joy.*

# Floral

## arrangement for the liturgical year

Author: Ruth Suen  
Translated by Angela Gee



mankind to see and appreciate.

2. **Displaying a beauty favored by God.** Chapter one of the Book of Genesis tells us that the Lord our God is the creator of the universe and that everything he made is “very good”. Contemplating things created, we can find out how intricate and original God’s creation is. This illustrates that the Lord our God is a perfect and intelligent artist who appreciates fine things.
3. **Matching floral seasons with liturgical seasons in order to amplify the liturgical meaning.** The core of the Christian Liturgical Year is the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. We call it the mystery of God’s redemption. This wondrous and most precious salvation was accomplished by the incarnate Jesus Christ.
4. **Symbolizing life by using fresh flowers.** The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ paved a new path for man to reach God and be granted a new and continuously

The weather turns warm but still on the cool side. Jade tender shoots and spring flowers begin to blossom. A tour to the countryside can be really refreshing and sets my mind at peace. What a beautiful manifestation of Creation! Wish I could blend with the scenery, be all flower, all part of the scene!

The desire to bring nature’s eternal beauty to our homes gives rise to garden arrangements, potted designs and floral arts. Likewise fresh flowers are displayed in churches at Sunday services. So, what is the meaning of altar floral arrangement?

1. **Worship, remembrance and appreciation of the God of creation.** God has designed a dazzling and exceedingly fascinating world for

growing life for every one who believes in Him.

Floral art is an affectionate and representative magnification of beauty. The artistic florist conceives three-dimensional arrangements of natural beauty and challenges the viewer to recognize the creative intent. Displaying floral art in the church according to the liturgical year is a kind of Christian education since the floral display is created on the basis of God's designated art structure: truth, kindness and beauty. Through floral designs for different church seasons with corresponding theological reflections, the life of Christ is visualized. Believers are invited to meditate and remember Jesus' salvation in the beauty of floral art.

Floral arrangement is a profound art that integrates technique, knowledge, experience, performance, imagery, concept, feeling and thought. The florist considers the choice of floral material, composition, momentum, elegance, harmony in colors, space dimension, choice of vase, and so on. Long time of practice, observation, apprehension, and arts cultivation are required. The florist's accumulation of experience, wisdom and aesthetics is required. Some floral art may even lead to mystical perception where words no longer suffice

as means of expression.

Seasonal floral arts in the church year  
(Floral arrangements displayed in Ming Chieh(?) Chapel, Lutheran Theological Seminary)

### 1. The Season of Growing

Floral concept: Death and Life; with reference to Jeremiah 1:10.

Floral material: dried banana leaf and three to four anthurium flowers

Arrangement: Fully immerse the dried banana leaf into bleach water for one or two days, till the yellow leaf color turns to mild yellow or pale white. Leave it to sun-dry and reserve for use. To begin with, fold the banana leaf into a triangle and secure it to the pin stand. (If the branch leaf is too soft for fixation, pin a wire at the reverse side for support). Then fix the anthurium flowers one by one (arrangement has to be in harmony with colors, height, front and rear).



### 2. The Season of Growing

Floral concept: Beauty of Character; with reference to Galatians 5:22-23, 25, Psalm 90:12

Floral material: Sansevieria 7, Cymbidium 6

Arrangement: Depending on the length of Sansevieria and natural posture,

plug leaves out of the main form and rearrange them one by one. Then add the Cymbidium orchid branches and compose a rhythm of beauty and temperament.

### 3. The Season of Lent (Ash Day,

Floral concept: Grain Offering; with reference to Joel 2:2-18, Matthew 6: 5-6, 16-18.

Floral material: Several branch stems of wild taro and 10 white Dendrobium.

Arrangement: Bend the wild taro stems in semi-circular shape, to imitate the formation of multiple prayer chambers.



Then insert the white Dendrobium. The overall design envisions the grain offering. Include the candlesticks into the composition by extending a wild taro stem to the candlestick, thus combining floral and candle holders.

### 4. The Season of Lent

Floral concept: The love of the Cross; rose flowers symbolizing the blood and love of Christ, with reference to Luke 23:26~43.

Floral material: A bundle of willow branches and three dark red roses.

Arrangement: Pour water into the glass vase until it is 80 percent full. The water symbolizes the force of life. Filling the vase with water also enhances the stability of the arrangement. Bend and arrange the willow branches to desired shapes (e.g. as the Cross, or as indicating a human shape) around and above the mouth of the vase. If unable to fix the willow branches, try to bundle with wires. Cut the stems of the rose flowers short. Dip the rose flower stems slightly into the vase and fit in with willow branches.

Note: All rights reserved by the author.



# 34<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony

A total of 91 students graduated during the 34th Graduation Ceremony of our School held in Shum Shui Po Church of Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong on 5 June.

Sermon by Dr. Gabriele Hoerschelmann,  
professor for Christian Education,  
Systematic Theology, Pastoral Theology



Dr Hoerschelmann delivering the graduation sermon

Dear Graduating Students,  
dear Colleagues,  
dear Families and Friends

You made it! Today is the day you were waiting for - for a long time. You have worked hard to be able to sit here and to receive your certificates. But it was not only hard work. When you look back at your times of studies at LTS it was also a time of intense studying the Word of God, of learning about new ideas and old traditions, of enjoying the community and new friendships and of times of reflection and meditation in and outside of our chapel. It has been a time that has been rich in experiences with other people and with God.

This period of time – of your life - ends today. And when you walk out of LTS, you will be a different person as when you walked in. You have changed, you have grown and matured. And you take with you a whole backpack full of tools and knowledge. When you will be leaving us and going to your congregations,

organizations and schools, you will try to apply and see whether this all works what you have learned here at LTS. We as your teachers of course hope that we gave you enough useful tools and knowledge for your ministry. So that you really will be well equipped for the challenges to come.

1. “Morning by morning he wakens my ear” - Be lifelong learners!

But I am sure that quite soon you will experience that what you have learned at our seminary can not cover every demand and will not be able to help you

in every situation that you will face. The life of God’s Church in this World (and that is all our experience) is much more than what you can learn and prepare for in one, two or four years.

So it is today my task to give you some words that hopefully may nurture you in your coming ministry. I have chosen the words of the Third Servant Song in the book of Isaiah (50, 4-9), because here the prophet offers us words full of wisdom, comfort and encouragement, some of the elements that may help you in your future ministry.

Isaiah states: Morning by morning he wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. You are those who are taught! You have learned. Here it means also listening as a disciple, as somebody who is instructed and wants to follow God. But this word of Isaiah teaches us something more that goes beyond the fact that you are those disciples, beyond being “those who are taught”:

Every morning anew we need an open ear for God, be ready to let God talk to us, to touch us and to teach us. Some of you might think now this will be covered by your quiet time of reading the bible every morning. Yes, I am sure that this will be a good exercise. But I think this word means even more than this. This image that Isaiah uses here catches



President Simon Chow (left),  
Lo Lai-ying of TEE Programs (right)



President Simon Chow (left),  
Johnathan Lee of Day School (right)

the very first moment before we can do anything. Before we even open our eyes, before we get up, before we say the first words, before we start our daily business, before we are able to open a bible at all. At this very moment God is already with us and opens our ear to talk to us. It describes an inner openness that is stimulated by God, a readiness to hear his word and the trust that God is with me whatever this day may demand.

This daily new openness for God means that we remain to be lifelong learners. This journey of Learning with God is never finished. We need to remain open for new situations and find new answers.

The world is changing every day. And with it the questions of our people and our own questions are changing. I hope so much for you that you remain open for those new questions of life and faith, that you keep asking, that you are not satisfied with ready-made given answers, that you remain seeking, remain listening to God and finding new ways for God's people and his Church.

2. "... that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word": You are God's servant!

This is the service you are called to and you are educated for: To serve God's people in his Church and in God's and our world. This world is our place where we give witness to God's unconditional love. This love shall be a comfort for all those who are weary. And it is our task as God's servants to provide this word. "morning by morning he wakens my ear that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word".

You will meet "the weary" in many different ways. It might be at the bedside of the sick or the dying, which needs a word of prayer or a song of comfort. It might be the desperate ones who don't know any further, who will need a word of encouragement. It might be the children, the teenagers, the adults and the elderly, each one of them in their special circumstances of life.

Sustaining them, nurturing them, and encouraging them might sometimes not be easy. You might find it hard to find the right words, because you are left speechless as well. In these moments I hope you can become still before God and let him open your ear and to listen to him as a disciple.

Isaiah says "God has given me the tongue of a teacher". Being God's servant also means to give our voice for those who become voiceless. Voiceless in the face of injustice, of deep sorrow and pain, voiceless in helplessness and need. If we let God open our ear we will become aware of the needs of others. We may hear their cry and this will not leave us untouched. God has given you the tongue of a teacher! So speak out for those who can't.

"God has given you the tongue of a teacher". When you leave this seminary then there will be many who expect you to know now everything about God. After all you have studied. And you will be a teacher. You have to give answers.

But beware to think that you know all the answers! Let God open your ear first and listen. Listen to God, listen to your students and those who are entrusted to you. Being a good teacher means to be a good listener.

3. "The Lord God helps me, (...) therefore I have set my face like flint" – Care for

your own soul and body!

While we spent now many words on how you should be and what you should do when you serve God's Church, I would like to focus on your own needs.

It touches me when I read Isaiah's words "I have set my face like flint". From these words I hear a lot of vulnerability and wounding. By making himself strong like stone Isaiah tries to avoid pain. He knows it hurts, when he experiences in his special case insult, disgrace and attacks.

These words of Isaiah are known as the Third servant song. And many of these words are understood later as words

that point to Jesus' suffering as God's servant and son. Jesus life and mission is a very extraordinary one, and can be hardly compared with ours.

But also the service in the ministry brings days when we are exhausted, disappointed or maybe even disillusioned. What are we doing then? How far can we get with all our education?

For these days, I hope for you that the first part of the sentence becomes meaningful to you: "the Lord God helps me."

I want to encourage you to accept God's help in that way that you make sure that



TEE Programs graduating students of 2011, faculty and board members

you also care for your soul and your body. Allow yourself the time to scoop out of sources that are enriching for you, where you can fill up your batteries. Take time to rest and relax and care for your own spiritual life. Don't fall into the temptation and in the trap to give and give and be at the end of the day completely burned out.

The Church has seen already too many pastors who are chasing their tails by continuously trying to fulfill their own demands and those of others: Pastors and co-workers who were burned out and left without energy and spirit. Do not let it get this far. Have the courage to create your spaces where you receive, where you find your green pastures, where God can fill up your cup and take time to be with those who are entrusted to you as well: Your family, your wife or husband, your children and your friends.

On a regular basis allow yourself to have days when you take off your watch (!), and let your hair down (!) If you don't care for yourself, if you don't allow God to care for your needs, how can you encourage others?

### Conclusion

Isaiah is confident. Even in the face of all kinds of troubles and difficulties, he confesses: "It is the Lord God who helps me."

God will be there for you. Already in the morning, he will waken your ear and he will make sure, that you may experience yourself God's love and God's grace and peace. Never, whatever may happen, you can fall deeper than in God's hands.

God blesses you and because of that you will be a blessing to others. Amen!

*(For graduation details, please visit [http://www.lts.edu/e\\_main.htm](http://www.lts.edu/e_main.htm))*



Day school graduating students of 2011, faculty and board members



## Lutheran Theological Seminary (Day School)

2011-2012 Enrollment  
Full-time & Part-time Programs

### 1) Ministerial Leadership Programs

#### Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.)

Requirement for admission : secondary school Form 6

#### Bachelor of Christian Education (B.C.E.)

Requirement for admission : secondary school Form 6

#### Three-year Master of Divinity (M.Div.3-yr)

Requirement for admission : a baccalaureate degree or equivalent

#### Two-year Master of Divinity (M.Div.2-yr)

Requirement for admission : a B.Th. or B.C.E. degree or their equivalent

#### Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.)

Requirement for admission: 1) a M.Div. degree or equivalent; and  
2) three years of ministerial experience

#### One-Year Master of Arts (M.A.1-yr)

- Master of Arts in Lutheran Studies (M.A.1-yr)
- Master of Arts in Spirituality (M.A.1-yr)
- Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling (M.A.1-yr)
- Master of Arts in Mission (M.A.1-yr)
- Master of Arts in Diakonia (M.A.1-yr)
- Master of Arts in Theological Librarianship (M.A.1-yr)

Requirement for admission : a B.Th. or B.C.E. degree or their equivalent

#### Entrance Exam and Interview Dates:

- for local application; enrollment of 2011 Fall semester (September)  
June 11, 2011 (Saturday)

Entrance Exam: 9:00am-12:30pm

Interview: 1:30pm-4:00pm

Application Deadline: May 27, 2011 (Friday)

Or

August 6, 2011 (Saturday)

Entrance Exam: 9:00am-12:30pm

Interview: 1:30pm-4:00pm

Application Deadline: July 22, 2011 (Friday)

### 2) Academic Theological Leadership Programs

#### Master of Theology (M.Th.)

Requirement for admission : a M.Div. degree or equivalent

#### Doctor of Theology (D.Th.)

Requirement for admission : a M.Th. or S.T.M. degree or equivalent

### 3) Lay and Special Ministry Leadership Programs

#### Diploma in Theological Studies (Dip.T.S.)

Requirement for admission : secondary school Form 6

#### Diploma in Theological Librarianship (Dip.T.L.)

Requirement for admission : secondary school Form 6

#### Two-Year Master of Arts in Theology (M.A.2-yr)

Requirement for admission : a baccalaureate degree or equivalent

#### One-Year Master of Arts in Diakonia (M.A.1-yr)

Requirement for admission : a degree related to diakonia (for instance, healthcare, social work, education) or a degree related to administration and management or equivalent

#### Graduate Diploma (Grad.Dip.)

Requirement for admission : a baccalaureate degree or equivalent

#### Entrance Exam and Interview Dates:

- for local application; enrollment of 2011 Spring semester (January)  
December 3, 2011 (Saturday)

Entrance Exam: 9:00am-12:30pm

Interview: 1:30pm-4:00pm

Application Deadline: November 18, 2011 (Friday)

Any enquiry, please contact the Registrar Ms. Wong at 2691 1520.  
Training God's Servants for Asia and Beyond



## 2011 Coming Up...

### September

2	School Opening Ceremony Orientation for New Students (except advanced studies program students)
5	Classes begin
10	TEE School Opening Ceremony

### October

14&16	Theological Public Lecture
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### November

14	Seminary Outing
14-18	Reading Week
25	Founder's Day Worship & Family Celebration

## Looking Back...

Some recent visits to our school



- ↘ Representatives of East China Theological Seminary visited Hong Kong and LTS for cultural and theological exchange. Dr Patrick Chan and Rev. Angus Wu hosted the group at LTS.  
12 July 2011
- ↑ Members of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia visited LTS and other seminaries to acquaint themselves with theological education in Hong Kong. The Picture shows Dr Patrick Chan addressing the board.  
7 July 2011
- ↙ 2011 Summer Intensive Course arranged in cooperation with the China Christian Council Seminary. 21 seminary teachers from 10 different theological seminaries in China spent two weeks at LTS for intensive training in Biblical Studies. The picture shows President Simon Chow (left) sharing a sermon with the course participants at the commissioning service.  
28 June 2011

## Let us pray for ...

Reverend Sandy Mak Mei-lin whose father passed away on 24 June 2011. May God comfort Sandy and her family.

Our student Aye Maw whose mother passed away on 13 July. May God comfort her and her family.

Our Professor Emeritus Rev. Donald Nelson passed away on 30 July at the age of 94. His memorial service was held on 5 Aug. at Christ Lutheran Church in Reedley CA. May God comfort his family and friends.

## News of alumni...

Reverend Jenny Chan Kin-lai was promoted as Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Hong Kong (ELCHK).

Reverend Ben Chang Chun-wa was promoted as Vice Bishop of the ELCHK.

Dr. Stephen Ip Tai-cheong was appointed as the President of Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod Concordia Theological Seminary.

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