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Press Release
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MILITARY CHAPLAINCY: GUIDING THE FAITH OF OUR MILITARY

Southern Seminary to Offer a New Program to Strengthen and Grow Military Chaplaincy at Fort Jackson

Columbia, SC –Military chaplains experience the entirety of war and its consequences, from providing pastoral care to men and women anguished by combat and the loss of comrades, to comforting the wounded and their loved ones, and even caring for the families left behind during long deployments. To serve our Nation’s sailors, soldiers, Marines, airmen and their families, military chaplains will have access to the new Military Chaplaincy Program offered by Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. The program will be offered to the new Armed Forces Chaplaincy Center at Fort Jackson in Columbia.

“The Army Chaplaincy is pleased and proud to partner with the Navy and Air Force Chaplaincies to form the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Center ,” says Chaplain (COL) Clarke McGriff, Commandant of the US Army Chaplain Center and School at Fort Jackson. “The co-location of the three Chaplaincy schools at Fort Jackson has the potential to create a synergistic effect with Columbia and the region. Although military ministry is largely a hands-on ministry, the best-equipped Chaplains are those that continue to develop professionally and educationally.”

Funded by a generous grant in excess of \$55,000 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation to start the new program, offerings for current chaplains and students are slated to begin by the fall semester in 2009. “The announcement of this program is an exciting day in the history of Southern Seminary. Our strengthened relationship with the United States Armed Forces through this Military Chaplaincy Program ensures that our military spiritual leaders will have access to exceptional education close to their home base,” says seminary President Marcus Miller.

The program will offer the chaplains of the United States Armed Forces both advance-degree and non-degree coursework while they are stationed at Fort Jackson in Columbia, SC. In addition to providing

military chaplains with courses and learning opportunities, the program will allow seminary students to work with the Fort Jackson chaplaincy units as part of their contextual education requirement at Southern Seminary, helping seminarians who are discerning a potential call to the vocation of military chaplaincy.

Dr. Michael Root, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean at Southern Seminary, remarks, “Our Military Chaplaincy Program will enable future ministers to learn first-hand what it means to be a military chaplain. They will earn course credits by experiencing chaplaincy through interacting with military personnel in a military setting. This experience will allow them to further consider chaplaincy as an option as they discern God’s call to ministry. “

The grant will act as seed money to fund the planning and curriculum of the Military Chaplaincy Program. “This Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation grant has been awarded to Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary to build an innovative program that supports and grows our nation’s military chaplains,” states Karen Coonen, Executive Director of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation.

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary is one of eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. In addition to Lutheran students, Southern Seminary also prepares women and men of other Christian denominations for a faithful life in public ministry. Currently, two military chaplains are enrolled in advanced degree work with the seminary, which has an enrolled student body of 155.

Fort Jackson is most notable for its Basic Combat Training mission, training more than 50 percent of the Soldiers entering the Army each year, but recently it has taken on several educational missions. During the past 15 years, the fort’s landscape has broadened to include the Soldier Support Institute, Defense Academy for Credibility Assessment and the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, which will eventually become the center of training for chaplains and chaplain assistants for all branches of service.

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For more information regarding the Military Chaplaincy Program, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Fort Jackson, or the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation, please contact Andrew Boozer at (803) 461-3296 or AndrewBoozer@ltss.edu.