

We are grateful, Lord, for the educational activities of our denomination through its synods and conferences, its camps and retreats, its boards and agencies.

And we are grateful, Lord, for our church's seminary, and its 200 years of dedicated service, preparing women and men for Christian ministry in our world.

Thank you, God, for all who have shared their Christian faith through the teaching ministry of Moravian Theological Seminary, and particularly for generations of faculty whose legacy has shaped our denomination, its pastors, and its people throughout the years.

We affirm that all of us in the Moravian Church worldwide continue to be the beneficiary of the theological training offered there;

so, Lord, we ask you to bless Moravian Theological Seminary, especially in its bicentennial year.

May your Spirit inspire our seminary anew, so that it may continue to faithfully teach those who will teach others of Jesus' love,
and passionately serve those who will serve others in Christ's Name.
Amen.

Praise the God of mind and spirit,
God of book and touch and prayer.
God who guides with tender mercy,
fills the heart with loving care.
Alleluia! Choose disciples. Send your servants ev'rywhere.

God of church and God of his'try,
pour your blessings on our deeds.
Grant endurance for our ventures,
give us strength to serve and lead.
Alleluia! Our Creator, Christ and Spirit — this our creed.

(Text: Willard Harstine; Tune: John Goss [PRAISE MY SOUL])

Prepared by Rev. Dr. Glen Stoudt, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology at Moravian Theological Seminary in honor of the Seminary's Bicentennial.

A Liturgy Celebrating Moravian Education

[Standing]

We thank you, God — Source, Sustainer, and Savior of all creation;
and raise our voices to sing your praise!

Praise the source of faith and learning
who has sparked and stoked the mind
with a passion for discerning
how the world has been designed.
Let the sense of wonder flowing
from the wonders we survey
keep our faith forever growing
and renew our need to pray.

(Text: Thomas Troeger; Tune: Brian Henkelmann [LAKE MILLS]
Alt. Tune: Ludwig von Beethoven [HYMN TO JOY])

We gather our hearts and minds in prayer:

With gratitude, Lord, we acknowledge your wisdom and your work in the lives we live and the earth we inhabit.

In your creation we witness an orderliness that inspires our rational thought and a mysteriousness that invokes our prayerful wonder;

and from the very beginning of human reflection, Lord, you have invited your children to learn your ways and teach your truths.

Help us, O Lord, to learn
the truths your word imparts;
to study that your laws may be
inscribed upon our hearts.

Help us, O Lord, to teach
the beauty of your ways,
that all who seek may find the Christ,
and sing aloud his praise.

(Text: William W. Reid, Jr.; Tune: Lowell Mason [BOYLSTON])

[Sitting]

God, we appreciate that, throughout these 550 years of our Moravian history, this Spirit-bred passion for education has been central to the mission of the church.

We affirm in your presence, the origins of our faith tradition, including Czech reformer, John Hus, whose ministry at the University of Prague during the early 15th Century embraced both formal education and faithful Christian witness.

We thankfully remember before you the ministry of John Amos Comenius, the 17th Century Moravian bishop, whose Christian commitment and leadership forged such progressive educational theories that he is still known globally as the father of modern education.

We celebrate the 18th Century renewal of our denomination, especially the vision and determination of those Sisters and Brothers in that early Herrnhut community, whose passion for Christian nurture ensured that quality education was valued by and available to every member in Moravian communities as they spread throughout the world.

And because of the past faithfulness of many, Lord, today we joyfully give you thanks for the legacy they have passed on to us — all of our Moravian schools world-wide, and the continued faithfulness of those who lead, teach and learn in them.

Particularly, we pray your blessing on our North American educational institutions: Moravian Academy, Salem Academy and Salem College, Linden Hall, Moravian College and Moravian Theological Seminary. Lord, continue to guide them in Christ's Spirit. Amen.

Be present with your servants, Lord;
we look to you with one accord;
refresh and strengthen us anew,
and bless what in your name we do

O teach us all your perfect will
to understand and to fulfill:
when human insight fails, give light;
this will direct our steps aright.

(Text: Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf; Tune: C.Gregor *Choralbuch* [HUS])

In the Gospels Jesus taught disciples to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

And, to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Since that time, faithful followers of Christ have dedicated themselves to nurture a more holistic understanding of human development —
to educate and encourage one another emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, physically and relationally.

Saving God, we recognize the temptation to elevate rational thought at the expense of other qualities that contribute to well-rounded human life.

Forgive us, and restore in us that sense of balance revealed in Jesus' teaching.

Jesus, by your grace, free us from intellectual narrow-mindedness, and lead us to grow in Spirit and Truth.

Help our church, in its educational programs, to promote ways that lift up academic excellence along with the pursuit of healthy bodies, emotional well-being, integrity in relationships, and spiritual formation.

[Standing]

Lead us, Jesus, gently day by day.
Lead us, Jesus, show us each the way
to walk a different walk,
from fears and hungers freed,
O lead us, Jesus, lead us.

(Text & Tune: David Henkelmann [FEED US])

Let us thank God for all of the opportunities and encouragement to mature in faith and love through Christ.

We are grateful, Lord, for your Truth revealed in the Bible, and for the diligent, faithful study and interpretation offered by pastors, preachers, teachers and professors over the years.

We are grateful, Lord, for the teaching ministries of every local congregation — for Sunday Schools, Confirmation Classes, Bible Studies, Youth Groups, and Discipleship programs.