



# 2+2= READY TO SERVE

As students' lives have become more complex, Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University has created a program of study that makes the path to pastoral ministry more experiential and purposeful.

First offered in fall 2014, Trinity's 2+2 Program for completing the Master of Divinity degree is unique, allowing for flexibility in life, study and work balance.

During the first two years of full-time study, students take classes on campus and work at their contextual education sites. During the second two years, students live and work at their internship sites in a variety of settings, earning a monthly stipend and living in church-provided housing.

Anne Marshall, director of Contextual and Experiential Formation, refers to the 2+2 Program as a "bridge" before students step into their first call. They have the theological, biblical foundation from their first two years in the classroom, two years of hands-on ministry at their internship, and continuous learning with faculty and fellow students.

"As students' lives have become more complex, we have tried to tailor the 2+2 Program so there is less disruption in the flow of their studies and more meaningful, contextual learning," she says. "We're combining their two-year internship experiences with relevant, online coursework, and four or five weeklong, intensive, on-campus experiences with their Trinity cohort."

Many seminaries require only a one-year internship for pastoral candidates.

The benefit of a two-year internship is to give students a chance to grow in spirituality, experience and confidence, Marshall says.

"The first year, they're just trying to figure it all out. The second year, they know the congregation, they understand the church calendar and their learning is much deeper.

"That second year of internship, they are able to take on bigger projects and leadership roles. They feel more confident in their preaching, more confident in their teaching and more successful in their overall ministry."

With societal shifts in demographics, diversity, culture, mobility and work schedules, many churches are recognizing the need to reinvent themselves to be more adaptive and welcoming.

Marshall says Trinity is at the forefront of teaching its students to be leaders in that change. By embracing contextual learning and taking it to a new level, students and faculty are better able to discern what effective ministry looks like and how it can be applied in today's church.

"Contextual learning gives our students the ability to rethink what church and religion can and should be today. Two years of an internship gives Trinity students the experience and the confidence to effect change because they understand how to relate to their congregation and their community." ■