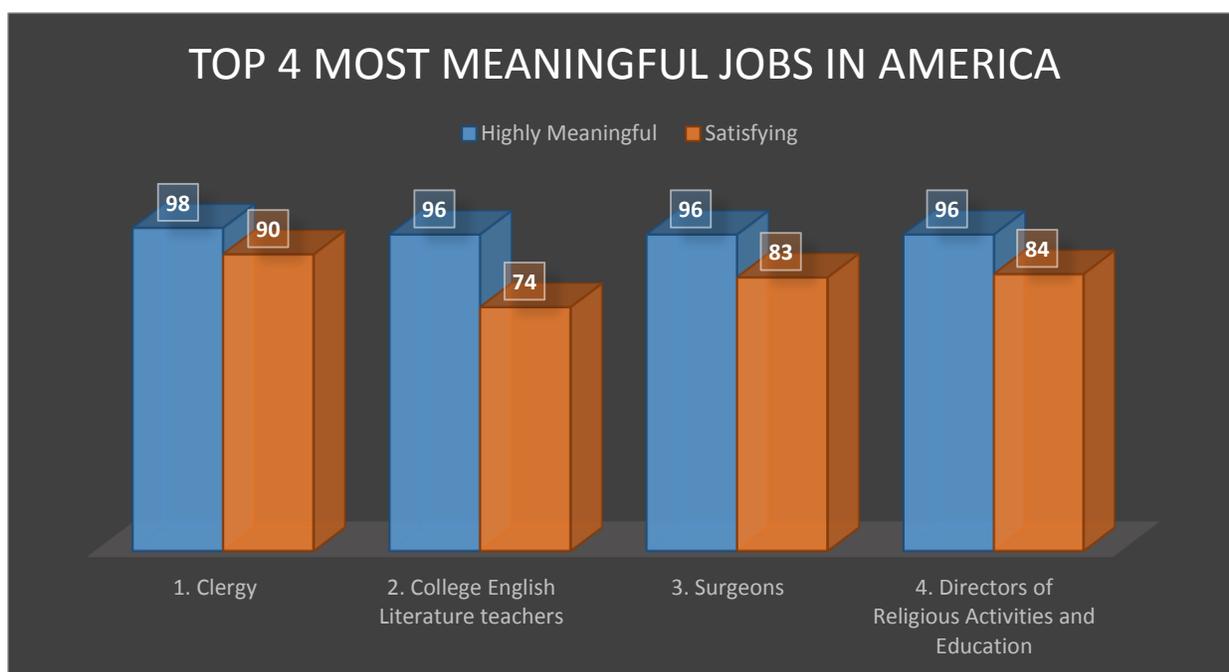


Pastors Matter

How often does a pastor matter? In the life of a congregation? In the life of a congregational member? How often each week does your pastor's preaching, or presence, or phone call, or prayer, or helping hand make a positive difference in someone's life.

On July 22, 2105 the web journal, *Business Insider*, posted a report on "The 13 Most Meaningful Jobs in America." **Number 1 on the list was Clergy (98% reporting their vocation as highly meaningful and 90% reporting it highly satisfying).** Number 2 on the list was College English Literature teachers (96% meaningful, 74% satisfying). Number 3 on the list was Surgeons (96% meaningful, 83% satisfying). Number 4 on the list was Directors of Religious Activities and Education (96% meaningful, 84% satisfying).



Juxtaposed against this encouraging information for our churches and those interested in pastoral leadership are some hard facts:

1. Every congregation in the ELCA faces a growing national shortage of trained pastors and church leaders, but our seminaries are struggling to enroll the necessary students.
2. This is largely because even with substantial scholarship assistance, **Master of Divinity (pastoral training) students in the ELCA (2014) graduate with an average debt of \$46,386 and face starting salaries which average in the range of \$32,928 – 61,814 based on geographical location of first call.**



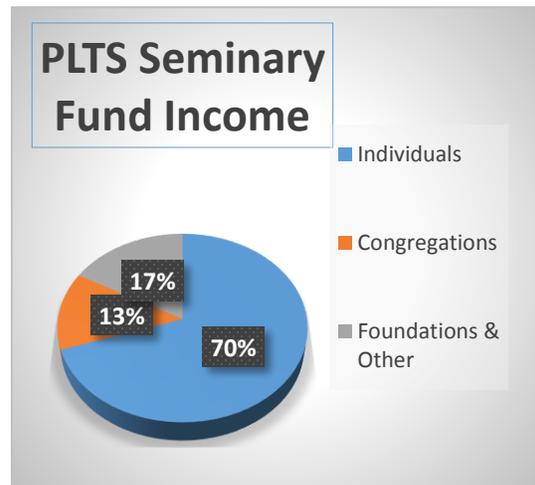
3. Through combined Synodical benevolences, 1,274 congregations in the 11 ELCA Synods west of the Great Plains (ELCA Regions 1 and 2) contributed \$430,226 to the support of our Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and its students in Berkeley in FY 2015. ELCA Churchwide support provided an additional \$299,207.



2015 PLTS Fund for Leaders Scholarship Recipients

4. Like the other seven ELCA seminaries in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and South Carolina, PLTS can't fulfill its mission of theological training and educational outreach without the additional assistance of individual donors, congregations and foundations. **In total, these gifts, to the PLTS Seminary Fund, amounted to \$499,817 in FY 2015.**

5. **83% of PLTS Seminary Fund gifts came from individuals and congregations.** With an eye to the future needs of our church and of our congregations, 589 individual donors contributed \$349,151 and 82 individual congregations contributed \$66,454 to PLTS in FY 2015 to help with annual institutional expenses that year.



6. We're now asking that attention to the leadership needs of our congregations and our Church be lifted higher among all the 1,274 ELCA congregations in the western United States (Regions 1 and 2), by challenging them to add or increase direct seminary support in their annual budgets.



PLTS Students have many opportunities for experiential learning in the PLTS Chapel of the Cross.

7. A group of our donors are issuing a challenge to congregations. Make a new or increased gift to PLTS and we will match it, up to \$1,000. We look forward to tracking and reporting substantial improvement in congregational partnership with PLTS – our only Western seminary – during the coming year and beyond.

8. In doing so we will be able to encourage, allow and assist more of our members to pursue the "Most Meaningful Job" in America. Meaningful for them, as well as for ourselves, our congregations and our communities.



Evered Cohen '15 is a TEEM graduate and now serves as pastor of Our Savior Lutheran, San Francisco. He is pictured with Bishop Steve Talmage (Grand Canyon Synod) who serves as the Chair of the PLTS Advisory Board, and also is a Cal Lutheran Regent. Dr. Moses Penumaka (Right) is the Director of Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM).

***To make a congregational gift to the PLTS Seminary Fund, kindly mail a check to:
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2770 Marin Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708
Contact Sara Wilson at swilson@plts.edu or 510-559-2717 with questions.***