

## **ITEM C.206** **FOR INFORMATION**

### **Introduction – Coordinator for Theological Education**

The Rev. Michelle J. Bartel, Ph.D., a theology professor and teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has been named the new coordinator for theological education for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

In her new role, Bartel will work closely with the Committee on Theological Education (COTE), the body entrusted with the General Assembly-mandated responsibility for developing and maintaining a comprehensive, denomination-wide plan for theological education.

“The selection team and I are thrilled to have Michelle Bartel come on board,” said the Rev. Charles B. “Chip” Hardwick, director of the Theology, Worship, and Education ministry area, which includes the Office of Theological Education. “She has a lively mind, and her experience teaching at a number of theological institutions gives her a unique perspective as she facilitates conversations about how to help our strong collection of seminaries face the challenges of the 21st century.”

Speaking on behalf of the selection team—which included COTE members José Irizarry, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Mary Elva Smith, Louisville, Kentucky; and Frank Yamada, Chicago, Illinois—Hardwick added, “Above all, we are grateful that Michelle’s commitment to and faith in Jesus Christ animates every interaction with her.”

Bartel, who is currently an adjunct professor of Theology at Bellarmine University in Louisville, holds a Ph.D. and an M.Div. in theology and ethics from Princeton Theological Seminary and a B.A. in psychology from Calvin College. In order for her to finish her teaching obligations at Bellarmine, Bartel will start her new position on a half-time basis effective March 9. She will begin her responsibilities full time on May 18.

“Excellent theological education is needed because God so loves the world and the world God loves is full of suffering, injustice, and those who do not know that they are beloved by God,” said Bartel. “What I already see in our seminaries and our living heritage is the beauty of Pentecost, that life-giving, divine act of hospitality. It’s this tonality, already present, that I hope to bring more vividly to the surface of our theological education in times such as these.”

In addition to her teaching experience—which includes positions at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana—she has also served as a supply pastor and college chaplain. Her publications include *Explorations in Christian Theology and Ethics: Essays in Conversation with Paul L. Lehmann*, for which she was a co-editor and essay author.

“Carrying the joy of the gospel in our hearts and minds can change the world abundantly, far more than all we can ask or imagine, because God is at work with the power within us,” Bartel said. “I am convinced of this and all we can do together as a church—congregations, presbyteries, leaders, seminaries—co-laboring as the PC(USA) for the sake of the world God so loves.”

*As reported by Emily Enders Odom for the Presbyterian News Service, 2/25/15*