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*Whole Leaders for the Whole Church*

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## **Rev. Dr. Laird Stuart elected interim president of SFTS**

**SAN ANSELMO, Calif., Dec. 23** – The Board of Trustees of San Francisco Theological Seminary has elected the Reverend Dr. Laird J. Stuart to serve as interim president effective March 1, 2010. Stuart succeeds Reverend Dr. Philip W. Butin, who served as president from 2002-10.

Stuart is well known by the Seminary and its alumni/ae having served as a member of the SFTS Board of Trustees from 1997-2006, the final two years as board chair. His ministry has spanned 41 years, including pastorates in Presbyterian churches in Milford, Conn., Bergenfield, N.J., Grand Haven, Mich., and St. Clair, Pa., and many local and national leadership positions in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Most recently, he has served as pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church of San Francisco (1993-2010). Stuart is the third pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church to lead SFTS. The founder of Calvary Presbyterian Church, William Anderson Scott, was one of the three co-founders of the Seminary when it was established in 1871. More recently, Reverend Dr. James Emerson, former pastor of Calvary and a former SFTS board member, served as interim president from 2000-02.

“The Interim President Search Committee was seeking a leader for the Seminary with proven leadership abilities, significant knowledge and experience in theological education, and respect for and knowledge of the historical values of the Reformed Christian tradition. We felt Laird Stuart possessed these qualities and exceeded our expectations in each of these key areas. We welcome his creative and collaborative leadership style as we prepare new leaders for the church,” said Reverend Julie Richwine, trustee and chair of the Interim President Search Committee.

Upon hearing the board’s decision, Dr. Elizabeth Liebert, dean of the Seminary, responded, “I am delighted to welcome Dr. Stuart to SFTS as interim president. His long service to the local and national church, his breadth of experience with ecumenical and interfaith partners, his

commitment to theological education, and his working knowledge of SFTS make him uniquely suited to this call. I look forward to working with him during this important time in SFTS' history."

Peter van Bever, current chair of the SFTS Board of Trustees, added "The board is very pleased to welcome Laird Stuart back to SFTS to serve as interim president. In addition to being a veteran pastor, Laird is also a national leader in the Presbyterian Church (USA). He understands the challenges facing theological education, not just at SFTS, but throughout the United States and the critical role it plays in furthering God's mission."

Stuart's service to the Presbyterian Church includes being moderator of Palisades Presbytery in New Jersey, moderator of Pittsburgh Presbytery, and Dean of the "First Call and Newly Ordained Pastors' Conference" for San Francisco Presbytery.

At the national level, Stuart has been a commissioner to four General Assemblies. In 1986, he was vice chair of the General Assembly Committee on Mission Design and in 1997 he chaired the General Assembly Committee on the Book of Order. In 1997, he also served for two years as a member of the Medical Benevolence Foundation's Board of Trustees. In 1999-2001, he served as co-moderator of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, and in 2002, he was a candidate for Moderator of the General Assembly.

Internationally, Stuart has participated on two mission trips to India and two pulpit exchanges to Scotland.

Since 2004, he has been an active member of the Board of Pension's Board of Trustees, serving on its Personnel, Board Development and Governance, and Executive Committees and chairing its Assistance Committee.

No stranger to serving theological seminaries, Stuart was a member of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Board of Directors from 1985-95 and Board Chair from 1994-95. He also served Pittsburgh Theological Seminary as Adjunct Faculty from 1985-93 teaching a course on Parish Administration and Leadership.

During the years 2003 to 2005, he participated in a colloquy at the Institute for Reformed Theology, an associated program of Union Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Va., entitled, The Church: Recent Theological, Sociological and Practical Perspectives.

Stuart holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Amherst College in

Massachusetts, a Master of Divinity degree and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, a Doctor of Divinity degree from Waynesburg University in Waynesburg, Pa., and a Doctor of Divinity degree from Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pa.

In accepting this call to serve SFTS as interim president, Stuart stated, "I look forward to sharing with prospective students, friends and alumni of the seminary, and the larger church my respect and appreciation for the distinctive role of SFTS within the larger community of the seminaries in our denomination. I also value very highly the reformed tradition SFTS represents, examines, teaches and proclaims."

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**San Francisco Theological Seminary**, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) graduate school, has prepared whole leaders for the whole church since 1871. One of the founding members of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, it offers theological degrees at two campuses, in San Anselmo and Pasadena. Its innovative Program in Christian Spirituality is open to clergy and non-ordained individuals. For more information please call SFTS at 1-800-447-8820 in San Anselmo or 1-800-473-8772 in Pasadena. Also find information on our Web site: [www.sfts.edu](http://www.sfts.edu).