

## NEWS RELEASE: Lutheran Seminary, Levensteins to Receive Peacemaker Awards

The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and Joseph and Maria Levenstein will receive the ICPJ's Peacemaker Awards this year. The Seminary will receive the Lifetime of Peacemaking Award, while the Levensteins will receive the Peacemaker of the Year Award. Each award consists of a plaque and donation of \$250 worth of materials to the Adams County Library in honor of the recipient. The ceremony will be held on Monday, April 24, at 7 p.m., in the Valentine Hall Auditorium at the Lutheran Seminary. The ceremony is free and open to the public, and light refreshments will be served.

Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary will be the longest-lived awardee in the history of the Lifetime of Peacemaking Award. Founded in 1826, the seminary will go out of existence on June 30 of this year, but rather than die at 191, it will be transformed on July 1 by merging with Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary to become United Lutheran Seminary.

The Seminary's involvement in the promotion of peace and justice extends throughout its history. In 1837 the Seminary welcomed Daniel Alexander Payne as the first African American to study in a Lutheran seminary. During the Battle of Gettysburg, the Seminary's main building (now the Seminary Ridge Museum) became the largest field hospital in the battle theater. Its western portico was named the Peace Portico in 1913, when, after most venues in the area refused to lodge southerners, the Seminary welcomed veterans from both sides for the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. Members of the Seminary community were prominent in founding the Lutheran Peace Fellowship in 1941 and took an active role in the civil rights movement and the opposition to the Vietnam War. More recently, the Seminary has offered its grounds to the Adams Unity Coalition and other groups for "counter-rallies" to events sponsored by the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups. In the past several years, the Seminary has offered the ICPJ space for its board meetings and Peacemaker Awards ceremonies, as well as the Let It Begin with Me programs, organized under the leadership of Seminary administrator and ICPJ board member Wendy Mizenko.

Maria and Joseph Levenstein will receive the Peacemaker of the Year award for their work promoting interfaith understanding. Together, they have helped foster interfaith communication by doing presentations on basic concepts of Judaism at the YWCA's Brown Bag Lunch Programs and at various churches in Adams County. They have also participated in interfaith prayer services supporting peace and on alleviating gun violence. Joseph, a psychologist in Gettysburg, has led religious services for the Adams County Jewish Community since 2011. He has also done invocations and benedictions at various interfaith events. Maria is a former Benedictine nun and presently a Benedictine Oblate with the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh. She is a Stephen Minister and Stephen Leader at Gettysburg Presbyterian Church.

ICPJ welcomes nominations for the 2018 Peacemaker Awards.