



## **Chicago Theological Seminary Names the Rev. John H. Thomas to High-level Post** *Head of United Church of Christ to join CTS as senior advisor to the president and visiting professor in church ministries*

**CHICAGO – May 20, 2009** – Chicago Theological Seminary has named the Rev. John H. Thomas as senior advisor to the president and visiting professor in church ministries. Thomas' appointment will take effect January 1, 2010. He will conclude his term as general minister and president of the United Church of Christ on September 30.

In this newly created position, Thomas will play a strategic role in promoting and enhancing the national and global profile of CTS. Thomas also will cultivate relationships with key constituents and congregations, support strategic fund raising, foster student and faculty recruitment, provide leadership development opportunities for students, alumni, and other national religious leaders as well as teach courses.

"John's well-recognized accomplishments, his strong relationships throughout the religious community, and his wisdom will further CTS' efforts to provide a vibrant model for the rigorous education of religious leadership as we work toward greater justice and mercy," said Alice Hunt, president of Chicago Theological Seminary. "I look forward to working with John to meet the emerging challenges of theological education for our rapidly changing world."

"Chicago Theological Seminary offers students the opportunity to learn from outstanding scholars and accomplished religious practitioners. The addition of John Thomas reaffirms CTS' commitment to exceptional theological education and developing future generations of religious leadership," said Don Clark, chair of the seminary's board of trustees.

Elected general minister and president of the United Church of Christ in 1999, Thomas served for the next decade as the convener of the Collegium of Officers of the UCC as well as the church's principal spokesperson on theological and public issues and official representative in ecumenical and interfaith relations. From 1992 to 1999 he served as assistant to the president of the United Church of Christ for Ecumenical Concerns. In that role, he represented the UCC in theological dialogues, in conciliar bodies including the World and National Councils of Churches. In addition, he was the ecumenical representative to the general board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and was instrumental in developing the 1998 full communion agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and three reformed churches: the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the UCC.

"I am eager to begin working with the extraordinary leadership at CTS to strengthen and expand its institutional relationships and to being part of the positive experience of its students," said Thomas. "CTS excels at educating men and women of faith by fostering questioning and critical dialogue that promote the understanding and skills necessary for future leadership and ministry."



Following his 1975 ordination, Thomas served as associate minister of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Cheshire, Conn., through 1981 and as minister of the First United Church of Christ in Easton, Pa., until 1991.

Thomas graduated from Gettysburg (Pa.) College in 1972 and Yale University Divinity School in 1975. He studied at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, in 1988 and has written numerous articles on ecumenical issues. Over the years, he has received honorary doctor of divinity degrees from Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, Minn., Yankton College in Yankton, S.D., and Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Ill..

#### **About Chicago Theological Seminary**

Chicago Theological Seminary, founded in 1855, prepares women and men for religious leadership and ministry to individuals, churches and society. Students from more than 20 denominations and faith traditions attend CTS, based in Chicago's Hyde Park community. The institution is certified by the United Methodist Church and accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada as well as the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. More information is available at [www.ctschicago.edu](http://www.ctschicago.edu).