

President Philip A. Amerson

March 30, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

As a former pastor of Broadway United Methodist Church, I have been pleased with the development of the campaign for community called *The Miracle on 29th Street*. Rev. Mike Mather has sought my input and offered updates over the past two years as the *Miracle* campaign has evolved. I have been impressed by this innovative and ecumenical approach to urban ministry.

The challenges of ministry in low-income areas are many and varied. In my role as the president of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, I am responsible for training people for ministry in the 21st century, and I believe that the basis for success in ministry, now and in the future, is improvisation. That is, rather than seeking to repeat "what we've always done," vibrant communities of faith must seek to embrace their history as a launching pad and promote new ministry opportunities. Successful ministry leaders – lay and clergy – will embrace innovation and improvisation. *The Miracle on 29th Street* provides a vehicle for the many faith communities of Mapleton-Fall Creek to do just that.

When I recently returned to Broadway for a Lenten worship service, I was excited to see that the church has retained its role as a leader in uniting people of diverse faith perspectives to work in partnership with residents of the Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood. The creative, collaborative, asset-based community development efforts embraced provide a strong model which I would be proud to have students from Garrett learn and reproduce in their own ministries. As we train new clergy, we must remain mindful that we need more than good pastors and growing congregations – we need good pastors and congregations that make a difference in our world. What's happening at Broadway and in the surrounding neighborhood is making a difference now and will continue to make a difference in the future.

Because I believe in the witness to the Gospel being made at Broadway, I am currently working with Rev. Mather to explore ways for Broadway and Garrett to partner – to embrace Broadway as a teaching place for our seminarians, as it already has been for one Garrett seminarian and countless others from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. I am very supportive of what *The Miracle on 29th Street* aims to achieve in the Mapleton-Fall Creek community and beyond. I hold the people of Broadway Church, the other congregations in the area, and all residents of the neighborhood in prayer, and I am excited to see the results of this campaign in the immediate and long-term future. Please accept this letter as my enthusiastic endorsement of the campaign and its long-term goals.

Sincerely,



Dr. Philip A. Amerson
President