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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Episcopal Divinity School Announces Appointment of Two New Faculty Members

February 23, 2010, CAMBRIDGE, MA – The Trustees of [Episcopal Divinity School](http://www.eds.edu) are pleased to announce the appointment of The Rev. Dr. Patrick S. Cheng and The Rev. Dr. Susanna J. Snyder as junior members of the EDS faculty with initial three-year contracts commencing July 1, 2010. In advancing this recommendation to the trustees at their February 19, 2010 meeting, the faculty search committee noted “The combined qualifications of these two theologians, who are globally engaged and theologically grounded, who are appreciative of the scope and history of Episcopal Divinity School as they are eager to contribute to its legacy, offer immense potential to the growth and development of the EDS faculty as a whole, the curriculum at large, and the institutional future of the school.”

The selection of Cheng and Snyder marks the end of a months long search process, which included extensive interviews, the submission of a pedagogical essay, and for the finalists, a series of on campus interviews as well as a teaching presentation to the EDS community. Throughout the process, EDS has been intentional in seeking candidates whose areas of expertise and skills includes the use of technology as a teaching tool in keeping with the seminary’s commitment to extend theological education beyond the geographical boundary of its Cambridge campus.

"The appointments of the Rev. Dr. Patrick S. Cheng and the Rev. Dr. Susanna J. Snyder to the EDS faculty have been greeted enthusiastically by the current faculty," said EDS academic dean, Dr. Angela Bauer-Levesque, "We look forward to welcoming two gifted colleagues, who have shown their passion for teaching, their breadth and depth of knowledge, and whose pastoral presence will enrich the EDS community. In terms of [academic areas](#), they will cover courses spanning the arc from Development of Doctrine to Systematics to Queer Theologies and from Ethics to Congregational Studies to Ecologies of Encounters and Migration Studies. What a blessing!"

During the discussion at the trustee’s meeting, faculty member Dr. Kwok Pui Lan, president-elect of the American Academy of Religion noted that EDS was one of only a few theological schools adding faculty at this time. Following the vote, EDS’ president

and dean, The Very Rev. Dr. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale remarked, “EDS is very fortunate to be in a position to expand our faculty and even more fortunate to have such highly qualified candidates. We are very excited at the energy, experience, and skills that Pat and Susie will bring to our School.”

The Rev. Dr. Patrick S. Cheng has a long affiliation with the Episcopal Church, working as an in house lawyer at the Church Pension Group since 2000. In May, he will graduate from Union Theological Seminary in New York, having successfully defended his dissertation “Rethinking Sin and Grace for LGBT People Today: Four Christological Models” under the direction of Dr. James H. Cone in December 2009. Currently on the adjunct faculty of Marymount Manhattan College, New York, Cheng has also taught at Union Theological Seminary, and the Harvard and Rutgers Law Schools in the areas of systemic theology surveys, to religion and sexuality, to biblical jurisprudence, law and theology, as well as development of doctrine. His expertise in Episcopal polity and canon law has served the Episcopal Chancellor’s Network and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church.

His theological writing for publication has covered a wide theological terrain from traditional doctrinal to post-colonial and queer materials. Cheng has shown versatility in methodological discourses and a breadth of topics for an emerging scholar. His essays have appeared in several anthologies and some journals.

In addition to his theological and legal work, Cheng has served as a minister in the Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC), for a decade, pastoring an online congregation, QueerAsianSpirit. EDS and the MCC have been working together on a denominational level to welcome students from the MCC tradition as they prepare for ministry.

When asked about his interest in joining the EDS faculty, Cheng said, “EDS offers space for both academic excellence and social justice which I am eager to be part of. I’ve been impressed with how the community comes together around these two areas. As a minister with an online ministry, I welcome the opportunity to use technology as a tool for both evangelism and education. And, as a part-time PhD student, with a full-time job, I understand the challenges students face as they balance their work and academic lives. This duality provides a real sense of how the ‘real world’ and theology intersect.”

The Rev. Dr. Susanna J. Snyder is a post-doctoral fellow at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology. Ordained deacon in June 2005 and priest in June 2006 in the Diocese of London, Snyder served as Curate at St. Mary, Stoke Newington, London, and St. John’s, Brownswood Park, London from 2005-2008. These Anglican churches provided experience in pastoral care to both a small and a large parish, in contexts of relative poverty and relative wealth, and homogenous and multi-ethnic congregations.

Snyder completed her PhD at the University of Birmingham, England, with a dissertation titled “Ecologies of Encounter: A Practical Theological Exploration of Church Engagement with People Seeking Asylum in the UK.” Her work on forced migration in

contemporary contexts has yielded invitations to national and international conferences both within the Anglican Communion and wider ecumenical contexts. She has considerable global and development experience, having lived and volunteered in Swaziland, the Philippines, Mozambique, and since August 2009, the United States. Her work with migrants led to her selection as one of five Church of England delegates to the “Towards Effective Anglican Mission” conference in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2007 and most recently to the U.S./Mexican border in December 2009.

While at the beginning of an academic career, her fellowship at Candler has provided the opportunity to teach at the graduate level. In her teaching presentation at EDS, Snyder was sharp and articulate in her exploration of both theoretical aspects of the emerging field of study in Migration Studies and the practical theological implications. Bauer-Levesque noted that “Susanna’s acumen in critical assessment based on observations on the ground, pastoral responses, and a combination of liberation theologies and ethics with theories of migration studies offers a promising new area in contemporary studies at EDS grounded in realities throughout the Anglican Communion and the world at large.”

Snyder’s nascent publication record is impressive with a couple of peer reviewed articles, a book contract offer for her dissertation, and several reviews. Offering courses in the area of Contemporary Society, Constructive Theology, and Ethics, Snyder will add a new depth to an underserved aspect of the current EDS curriculum. Her experience and trajectory of growth as an Anglican priest in an Episcopal setting will add another dimension to worship in St. John’s Chapel and the formation of EDS students.

In learning of her appointment to the EDS faculty Snyder said, “I am delighted to be coming to EDS. I very much look forward to being part of a theological community committed to transformative justice and reconciliation, and at such an exciting time in its development.”

Episcopal Divinity School is a respected center of study and spiritual formation for lay and ordained leaders with a strong commitment to justice, compassion, and reconciliation. EDS, formed in 1974 with the merger of Philadelphia Divinity School (founded in 1857) and the Episcopal Theological School (founded in 1867), offers doctor of ministry and master’s degrees, as well as certificates in theological studies. Located on an eight-acre campus just a few blocks from Harvard Yard, EDS is a member of the Boston Theological Institute, a consortium of nine eminent theological schools, seminaries, and departments of religion.

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