

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne For the Life of the World

December 2014, Volume Eighteen, Number Four



The Gift of Vicars

By John D. Reynolds

The Re-gifting of God's Gifts

By Amy C. Rast

Good and Gracious Gifts from God

By Jeffrey H. Pulse

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By John D. Reynolds

Preaching, teaching and calling on the homebound or hospitalized were certainly something I expected to do with frequency. But what I was unable to foresee was how being immersed in God's Word to prepare for these tasks of a vicar prepared me to confess the Gospel in not only these situations but also in every other aspect of my day.

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By Amy C. Rast

Eventually the deaconesses who are formed here at Concordia Theological Seminary leave this place to serve in congregations, human care ministries and missions, sharing the mercy and compassion they have first received through Christ from their church family and practiced here with us. They re-gift what God and His people have given to them by teaching the faithful, reaching the lost and caring for all.

10 Good and Gracious Gifts from God

By Jeffrey H. Pulse

Good and gracious gifts from God. They come in many sizes and shapes, they surprise us with gasps of delight and sighs of contentment, they spring up and overwhelm us at the most opportune and most unexpected moments. And, sometimes, often times they are people—and sometimes, often times they are church workers—and sometimes, often times they come from Concordia Theological Seminary!

For the Life of the World

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For the Life of the World is published by Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the consent of the Managing Editor of *For the Life of the World* by email at SeminaryRelations@ctsfw.edu or 260-452-2250. Copyright 2014. Printed in the United States. Postage paid at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

For the Life of the World is mailed to all pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the United States and Canada and to anyone interested in the work of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture verses are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

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A photograph of a woman with glasses and a dark blazer, kneeling and looking out a large window. Two children, a girl in a striped sweater and pink pants, and a boy in a red and white striped shirt, stand with her, looking out the window. The window shows a street with trees and a blue car. The title 'The Re-gifting of God's Gifts' is overlaid on the top half of the image.

The Re-gifting of God's Gifts

By Amy C. Rast

Through her family, the Church, the deaconess has learned how God meets the needs of His people through His Son, Christ Jesus, and how in their joyful response they share these gifts with one another, they re-gift. In the midst of His people the Church, in the daily life of community, the deaconess has learned to love by being loved, to forgive by being forgiven, to help by being helped. We love because He first loved us.

The little girl smiles and places her gifts beneath the boughs of the Christmas tree. She spent the afternoon in her bedroom, wrestling with festive roles of wrapping paper taller than she, struggling with safety scissors and tape, lovingly fashioning the paper to fit each item. She thought long and hard about what they each needed, Dad, Mom and siblings, and chose a gift for each of them from her own possessions. Her brother will receive the tattered, stuffed dog that brings comfort at bedtime; her sister the CD of music that always cheers her. For Mom she chose the box of tissues from her bedside table, perfect for wiping runny noses and tears. Dad's gift was a small cardboard heart that she has decorated with a photo of herself. It will remind him of how much she loves him when he is away at work.

Deaconess Faith Swenson (CTS 2014) serves at St. John Lutheran Church, Hillsboro, North Dakota.



Michelle Domin is serving her deaconess internship at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Haslet, Texas.

The deaconesses who are formed here at Concordia Theological Seminary leave this place to serve in congregations, human care ministries and missions, sharing the mercy and compassion they have first received through Christ from their church family and practiced here with us. They re-gift what God and His people have given to them by teaching the faithful, reaching the lost and caring for all.

Re-gifting frequently occurs at family gatherings and office Christmas parties. For many it is an opportunity to dispose of an unwanted item they've received or no longer need, that singing fish plaque, the chia pet or the tacky looking sweater. Giving what we have, not out of the receiver's need but the giver's.

The child's re-gifting is distinct. These are things dear to her—things of her very own that she chose to meet her loved one's needs, humble gifts, not shiny and new, but cherished and useful. She has responded in love and compassion to those who have shown her love and

compassion, re-gifting what has first been gifted to her.

Her parents are re-gifters too, passing on the gifts that they have received from God and shared with one another. This is a reflection of the gift of love that they each have received, father, mother, daughter, from their Heavenly Father, specifically that long awaited gift of a Savior, God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Made one with Christ in baptism, our Heavenly Father calls us His own as He places us into His family, the Church, where we are nurtured by Him and by the family of faith. In our

congregational life we devote ourselves, as has the Church throughout the ages, to the apostles' teaching (*kerygma* and *didache*) and the fellowship (*koinonia*), to the breaking of bread and the prayers (*leiturgia*). As God's family we have all things in common and share them as any have need (*dikonia*). Together in Christ we live and breathe and have our meaning.


Through her family, the Church, the deaconess has learned how God meets the needs of His people through His Son, Christ Jesus, and how in their joyful response they share these gifts with one another, they re-gift. In the midst of His people the Church, in the daily life of community, the deaconess has learned to love by being loved, to forgive by being forgiven, to help by being helped. We love because He first loved us.

The deaconess, like the little girl, received love from God and family and returns, re-gifts, that love to those who love her. She re-gifts spiritual care to those who care, teaches the Christian faith to those who teach, forgives the forgiving, shows mercy to the merciful. All because God has been merciful to her. The gift passes from generation to generation. She is familiar with this life, the life of the Church, and she receives from it and gives to it. She learns to take that love of Christ out to the suffering and the needy, to bring light and life to the world.

She re-gifts the very same gifts that Christians have received from Christ Jesus and have been re-gifting from generation to generation. Visits to the sick and lonely, Sunday School lessons to fourth graders, transportation to the doctor's office for refugees, food for the hungry at the food bank, tutoring in an after school program for low-income children, leading a Bible study for women inmates at the county jail, serving Thanksgiving dinner to the poor,

staying up all night with the youth at a lock-in, presenting on mercy at the LWML Zone Rally, playing the organ for worship, washing dishes after a funeral dinner, calling on inactive members, comforting a grieving widower, reading Bible stories to the preschoolers, organizing Vacation Bible School, leading seniors in hymn-sings, educating the congregation on the sanctity of life. She is carrying out our Lord's admonition to "Love one another as I have loved you."

Eventually the deaconesses who are formed here at Concordia Theological Seminary leave this place to serve in congregations, human care ministries and missions, sharing the mercy and compassion they have first received through Christ from their church family and practiced here with us. They re-gift what God and His people have given to them by teaching the faithful, reaching the lost and caring for all. With joy we at Concordia Theological Seminary re-gift these faithful women to you so that they may share God's gift of mercy with you and help you re-gift the precious gift given to us from God Himself, His only-begotten Son, with the world.

For more information on how a deaconess can be a gift to your congregation or to prepare for service as deaconess of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, please contact Deaconess Amy Rast at Amy.Rast@ctsfw.edu or 260-452-2225. Additional information on Deaconess Studies is also available at www.ctsfw.edu/Admission. 

*Deaconess Amy C. Rast
(Amy.Rast@ctsfw.edu)
serves as associate
director of Deaconess
Studies at Concordia
Theological Seminary,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.*



*The Rev. Kyle Krueger blesses
Deaconess Jennette Heller (CTS 2014)
during her commissioning service at
Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Soest),
Fort Wayne, Indiana.*



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