

# For the Life of the World

## Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

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It was this theologically and liturgically rich life at seminary that impacted my ministry in Philadelphia. While it would be foolish to attempt a replication of the CTS campus, there is a lot that can be adapted. Much of my work in Philadelphia centers around care for, and evangelism of, the homeless population. I took this three-fold benefit of seminary life and applied it to the lives of those on the streets.

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# Preparing to Share His Story

By Douglas D. Bauman

*Rev. Douglas Bauman  
from young child of  
God to undershepherd  
of His flock.*



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**When one is ordained and installed as pastor, the pastor's story and the congregation's story merge. The pastor and his family gather with the congregation around Word and Sacrament to receive the Lord's gifts. They worship together, pray together, serve together and fellowship together. They rejoice together and they weep together. As a pastor, you are present at the most important chapters of your congregants' lives—the births and baptisms of children, confirmations and weddings, and in their final hours on this earth and for their families as they grieve.**

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## Every Seminarian Has a Story

This is a truth you realize immediately as a new student at the seminary. Some seminarians are single; others are married. Some are early 20-somethings who have just graduated from college; for others this is their second (or third or fourth!) career. Some are preachers' kids; others have parents who are unbelievers. Some knew they wanted to serve as pastor when they were young; for others, it wasn't until later in life. And some know for a good while that the seminary is where they should be but avoid this calling for a number of years.

As for my wife Michelle and me, we were the married, 20-somethings at the seminary. I grew up in Nebraska, not the son of a pastor but the son of a butcher. Michelle was born in Iowa. We met at Concordia College (now University) in Seward, Neb. I was in the pre-seminary program; Michelle majored in Lutheran education. We were married the January before we moved to Fort Wayne.

At new student orientation we met seminarians and their families

who had stories much like ours. We also met others whose stories were radically different. Despite our various stories, our greatest friendships were made at the seminary. We studied and learned together, and we worshiped together daily in chapel. Our families fellowshiped and had fun together. In the chapel, classrooms, dining hall, fieldwork and vicarage congregations the Good Shepherd prepared and formed my classmates and me to be faithful

undershepherds of His flock. We were taught by a world class faculty, with stories of their own, who not only engaged us in the classroom, but also over coffee after chapel, over lunch in the dining hall or in their office if we had questions.

For most seminarians, the decision to enroll is not an easy one. To aspire to the Office of the Ministry involves sacrifice—sacrifice for the seminarian, for the seminarian’s wife and children, and for the seminarian’s home congregation and other individuals who provide financial support. Although never easy, this sacrifice is necessary. Today men are called to serve in a postmodern world that is increasingly hostile to Christ and His Church. Our Lord taught His apostles for three years before sending them out to teach, baptize and absolve. To serve God’s people faithfully and to confess clearly the truth in a land that is sliding into the abyss of paganism require tremendous study of and formation by the Word of God. It requires the sacrifice of individuals, congregations and our Synod to prepare and train properly those who are sent into the Lord’s harvest field.

### Every Congregation Has a Story

Just like every seminarian has a story, so too every congregation has a story. Some are young and some are old; some are small and some are large; some are urban and some are rural; some are growing and some are in decline. When one is ordained and installed as pastor, the pastor’s story and the congregation’s story merge. The pastor and his family gather with the congregation around Word and Sacrament to receive the Lord’s gifts. They worship together, pray together, serve together and fellowship together. They rejoice together and they weep together. As a pastor, you are present at the most important chapters of your congregants’ lives—the births and baptisms of children, confirmations and weddings, and in their final hours on this earth and for their families as they grieve. Not only does the congregation become

part of your story, but as a pastor you are part of your people’s stories as well.


For us, this was a call to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ind. Now in my eleventh year of serving as pastor, I have been blessed in so many ways. People’s stories continue to be written and I have had the privilege of being part of those stories. For example, I’m about to begin confirmation instruction with children I baptized when I first arrived. I have married those I confirmed as youth. It is a joy to witness those from our congregation who entered the seminary and now serve as faithful pastors in the Lord’s Church. It is also a joy to serve God’s saints even as their earthly pilgrimage draws to a close and they are welcomed into eternal paradise.

### The Story Is God’s Story

Whatever the seminarian’s story is before he enrolls at the seminary, whatever the congregation’s story is where he is sent to serve, in the end it’s all God’s story, His story. The vocation of pastor is not easy. The work is often demanding and the devil’s temptations are many and great, but there is no greater joy than serving the people of God with the gifts of God and bringing the Gospel of Christ to those who are in the darkness of sin and unbelief.

If you are considering the pastoral office, especially if fellow believers are encouraging you to serve as a pastor, my advice is, “Do it!” Enroll at the seminary, be trained and formed by the Word of God and be sent out to serve.

If you are reading this, God is also using you to be part of His story. Jesus commands all believers to pray to the Lord of harvest to raise up more workers for His harvest field (Matt. 9:38). Pray often that many would aspire to the Office of the Holy Ministry. Pray for pastors, missionaries and all church workers who are already in the Lord’s harvest field that they would serve faithfully. Likewise, identify those you believe have the gifts that would make a good pastor and encourage them to consider the pastoral office.

Whatever our callings are, we all have a story. But in the end, it’s God’s story, for He calls us to faith, strengthens us in the faith and works through us to further His kingdom. 

*The Rev. Douglas D. Bauman (CTS 2002) serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church (stpaulcolumbus.org), Columbus, Ind.*



*Rev. Bauman has experienced the joy of seeing the members of St. Paul’s grow in Christ.*