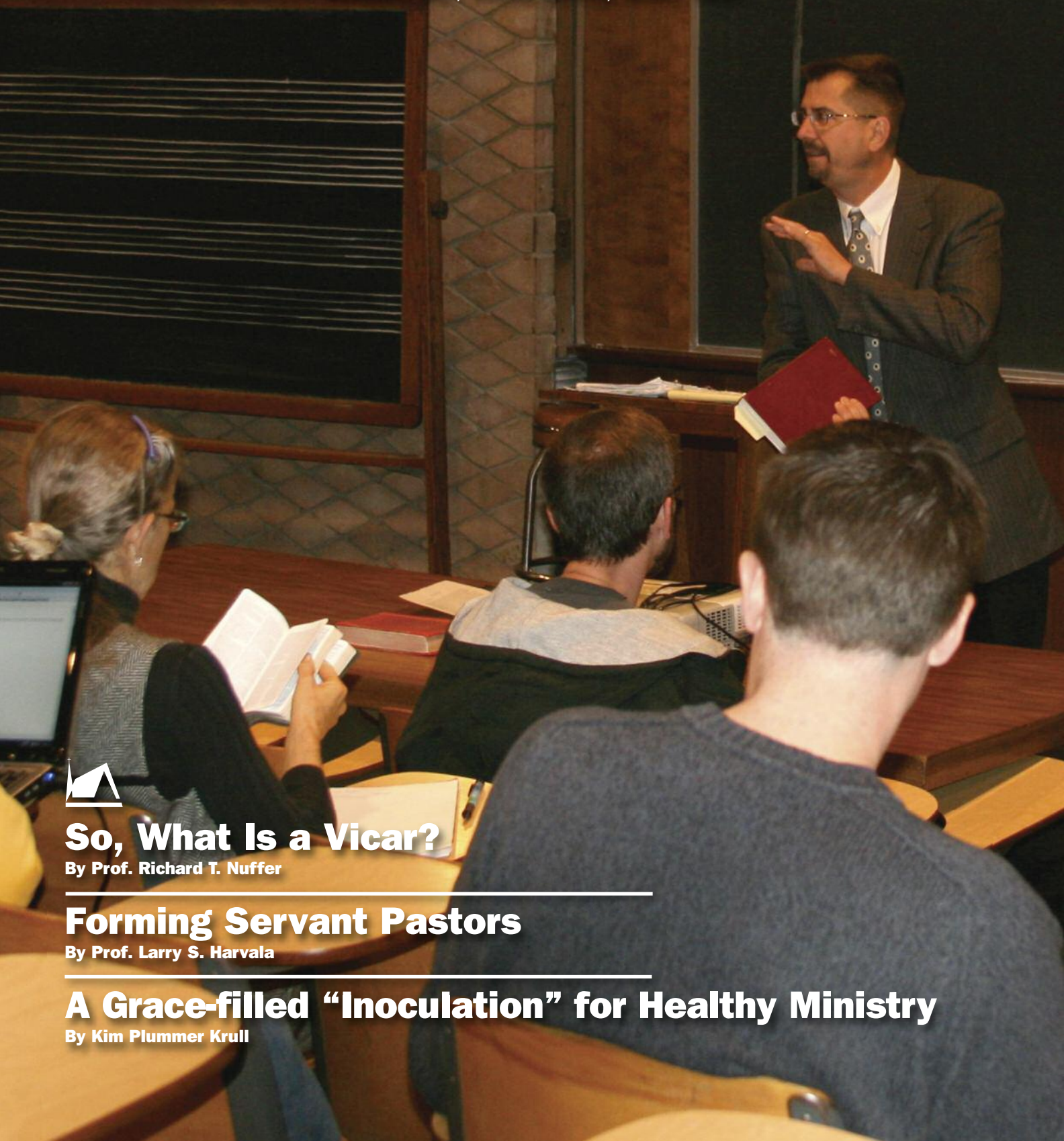


For the Life of the World

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

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By Kim Plummer Krull

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By Professor Richard T. Nuffer

Vicarage is a year of practical, hands-on training in which seminary students serve as interns under experienced pastors. They do so to “put legs on” all of their academic classroom training. And they begin to learn how to bring Christ to people who are hurting in a great variety of ways and to those who do not believe.

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By Professor Larry S. Harvala

The important things are that the faithful are faithfully taught, the lost are vigorously reached and all are cared for by the Word and Sacraments with which Christ has marked His beloved Bride.

10 A Grace-filled “Inoculation” for Healthy Ministry

By Kim Plummer Krull

In 1999, Dr. John Eckrich, a physician and lifelong Lutheran, founded Grace Place Lutheran Retreats. After years of treating church workers and seeing how their vocational challenges led to health problems and a pulpit exodus, he started Grace Place to help clergy who “were burning themselves out while they cared for others but did not take care of themselves.”



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Extending His

The identity of the deaconess is shaped by the incarnation and the gifts Christ gives us through His holy Word, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. As servants of Christ and His Church, we live out this life by extending His hands of mercy to those in need.

Hands of Mercy

By Dr. Cynthia E. Lumley

New Distance Learning Deaconess Program Launched at Concordia Theological Seminary

Women for whom full-time study at a post-graduate institution is not an option now have access to theological training at the graduate level and potential certification as a deaconess in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through Concordia Theological Seminary's (CTS) new MA in Deaconess Studies Program. The program, which received preliminary approval from the Association of Theological Schools and was launched in September 2009, is delivered through a combination of electronic, distance-learning and on-campus intensives.

One of the founding pastors of CTS, Rev. Wilhelm Loehle, was committed to the training of deaconesses for service in the church through acts of mercy and charity. The CTS Deaconess Program continues Rev. Loehle's longstanding tradition.

"Many women serve in roles involving diakonal work and aspects of spiritual care without having had formal theological training at the graduate level. Concordia Theological Seminary is delighted to be able to honor their diakonal work by providing an opportunity for these women to study theology at an advanced level and gain an MA so that they can be certified as deaconesses," said Dr. Arthur A. Just Jr., Director of Deaconess Studies at the seminary.

Even though the role of deaconess has existed since the days of the early church, many people are not aware of how deaconesses are trained to work within a congregation. The new CTS degree includes a rigorous program of theological study, together with training in practical, diakonal skills. Students interact with faculty and fellow students and take part in campus activities during two-week intensives held on campus twice a year. All students also participate in fieldwork.


The full-time degree can be completed in 2.5 years, but students may opt to take courses on a part-time basis. The curriculum is structured to take into account the experience and workload of the students; nearly one-third of the credit hours are based upon activities relating to the student's current job. The director of the online program works with the students to provide advice and ensure that their workload is manageable.

The role of deaconess includes teaching the faith and assisting the pastor, especially in areas of human care such as shut-in visitation and ministering to women in need. This is an excellent outlet for women to use their gifts of caring to demonstrate the mercy of Christ. Whether in a congregation, in an institution or on the mission field, the deaconess perceives and responds to need with gentle helpfulness, expressing the

compassion of Christ in a tender, nurturing way.

"My studies thus far have helped me see that the life I live in Christ is not my own. The identity of the deaconess is shaped by the incarnation and the gifts Christ gives us through His holy Word, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. As servants of Christ and His Church, we live out this life by extending His hands of mercy to those in need. During our visitation of the sick, the poor, the lonely and the suffering, we bring Christ's light through our presence, devotions and prayer," said Pamela Boehle-Silva, parish nurse and student in the MA in Deaconess Studies Program. "The in-depth studies of this program have given me a deeper theological understanding of the Word and Sacraments, which enables me to articulate even better the hope that lies inside me."

In delivering the new program, CTS is drawing upon a wealth of experience gained in carrying out distance learning pastoral training programs since the mid-1990s. "The approved online MA in Deaconess Studies demonstrates the commitment of the seminary to providing creative ways to teach deaconess students the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need for diakonal work in their specific context," said Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr., CTS Academic Dean.

We invite you to find out more about the MA in Deaconess Studies by visiting the CTS Web site at www.ctsfw.edu; e-mailing us at Deaconess@ctsfw.edu; or calling Dr. Cynthia Lumley, Associate Director of Deaconess Studies, 260-452-2225; or Deaconess Melissa DeGroot, Deaconess Program Admission Counselor, 260-452-2178; or Dr. Arthur Just Jr., Director of Deaconess Studies, 260-452-2138. 

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