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For the Life of the World

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

Cover image: Fourth-year student Anthony Keilani rings the Springfield Bell after completing his final class, a longstanding tradition on the CTSFW campus. Keilani has been called to serve Redeemer Lutheran Church in Sidney, Ohio.

FEATURES

4 Formed to Care: The Role of Lutheran Hymnody Kevin J. Hildebrand

In our life together at CTSFW, we rejoice and celebrate the great variety of hymnody that the church sings. We teach about hymns in the classroom, we live with them in chapel, and we share them with the church and the rest of the world. All the while, these hymns of the church form our students into servants who are equipped to live out the Seminary's motto: to teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.

7 Formed to Care: Confessional Theology as Framework Brian T. Stark

The essential role of confessional theology as the underlying framework for pastoral ministry, care, and practice in our churches cannot be overstated. Pastoral ministry never takes place in a theological vacuum—if confessional theology isn't supplying the framework, some other theological (or business!) method or model will. When we understand that the goal of pastoral ministry is to teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all, the necessity and practicality of having confessional theology at its center becomes clear.

10 Formed to Care: The Mentoring Community Todd A. Peperkorn

Part of my work as a professor at CTSFW has included serving as a mentor to some of the fine men who will be pastors in Christ's church someday. Each person's challenges are different. Some struggle with academics. Others with field education. Still others with balancing school and home. Regardless of the challenges, Christ is with them, and by demonstrating genuine care and mercy toward them, mentors can model how to be a pastor, and what that looks like through the good and the bad.

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Formed to Care: The Role of Luth

*Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle;
Sing the ending of the fray.
Now above the cross, the trophy,
Sound the loud triumphant lay;
Tell how Christ, the world's redeemer,
As a victim won the day.*

LSB 454; Text: Public domain



The students at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), learn about Lutheran hymnody in a variety of courses at CTSFW, but nowhere in our course descriptions or student learning outcomes do we include a statement such as, “By the end of the quarter, the student will demonstrate characteristics of a caring servant.” Perhaps we should, since that *is* one of our desired objectives of spending time with this subject matter.

erian Hymnody

Kevin J.
Hildebrand

Of course, hymns serve many and various purposes: they teach, they confess the faith, they praise God by proclaiming His Word, they rehearse the story of salvation, they give voice to our joy and lament, they retrace the themes in the seasons of the church year and in the weekly lectionary, they comfort us and sustain us in the faith.

In our life together at CTSFW, we rejoice and celebrate the great variety of hymnody that the church sings. We teach about hymns in the classroom, we live with them in chapel, and we share them with the church and the rest of the world. All the while, these hymns of the church form our students into servants who are equipped to live out the Seminary's motto: to teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.

Teaching Hymns in the Classroom

Hymns are meant to be sung and used in church, chapel, and home, but they are also a subject for classroom study, especially by pastoral and diaconal students. CTSFW has a celebrated history of teaching future pastors and deaconesses about hymns—their history and practice and significance, how to rediscover lost treasures, and introducing new expressions of the faith. Hymnody never stops and is never finite. Hymn writers continue to write new lyrics, and composers continue to write new tunes and settings. Hymn writing didn't end with the Reformation era, Paul Gerhardt, or Johann Sebastian Bach but is constantly flourishing as an ever-expanding tradition.

At one point in our recent history, an entire course in hymnology was offered as an elective; students spent an entire quarter on this expansive topic. That was a marvelously formative experience, but only for those students who elected

to enroll in the course. About fifteen years ago, when some modifications to the curriculum were introduced, not only was a second required course in liturgics added, but the hymnology elective course was absorbed into it. This provided all our students with exposure to the study of hymnody, which was an unprecedented improvement in seminary education. In the Liturgics 2 course, students cover a historical survey of hymnody and learn how to assess the theological content of hymns, analyze melodies, and make choices for their future congregations.

Living with Hymns in Kramer Chapel

We speak often of how residential seminary education forms pastors and deaconesses in ways that cannot be replicated. Among the experiences and benefits of residential seminary education is daily chapel. Our life together is formed as we pray, praise, and give thanks to God in the liturgy, rites, and song of the church. Day after day the rhythm of the services in Kramer Chapel—including excellent music—slowly, carefully, and methodically forms caring servants.

The hymns that we sing in Kramer Chapel are of primary consideration. We intentionally expose our students to the inherent variety of options in *Lutheran Service Book*. In fact, singing from the church's hymnal provides some of the widest varieties of musical genres, styles, ethnic origins, rhythms, and musical forms that the church can provide. Hymns aren't a one-size-fits-all musical style in themselves, nor are they all cut from the same cloth. They don't all hail from a particular era or ethnic background. Instead, they're a representation of the entire church in all



times and places. The hymnal provides music and texts that span millennia, come from every inhabited continent, every era and every age, by a wide variety of writers and composers.

As significant as this diversity is, we aren't singing the church's hymns only for the sake of variety. We are singing the faith—saying back to God what He has said to us—and confessing what we believe to each other within the walls of Kramer Chapel (and over the internet via livestream). Anyone who has experienced the reverberance of our singing in Kramer Chapel can attest to the boldness of our sung confession!

Sharing Hymns beyond the Seminary

The Seminary Kantorei, our auditioned men's choir, represents CTSFW to the church as we travel in annual tours. In March 2023 the choir visited Indiana, Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, singing the hymns of the church in various congregations. Most of the services we sang began with the choir processing into the sanctuary while singing "Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle" (LSB 454), the hymn stanza that introduced this article. This sixth-century text, coupled with Carl Schalk's twentieth-century tune, begins with our self-directed imperative to sing. Even more, the hymn provides the reason *why* we sing:

*Tell how Christ, the world's redeemer,
As a victim won the day.*

And as we traveled this spring through Appalachia, we purposely chose to include the hymn "What Wondrous Love Is This" (LSB 543), which has its origins in that region from the early nineteenth century. In fact, the choir sang stanza 3 of this hymn in its original musical setting with its rugged, angular harmonies. This stanza gave direction to the focus of our singing:

*To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb,
Who is the great I AM,
While millions join the theme, I will sing,
I will sing,
While millions join the theme,
I will sing.*

Text: Public domain

For decades, the Kantorei's signature song of the Christmas and Epiphany seasons has been "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (LSB 384). From the initial stanzas accompanied by randomly ringing handbells, to the final stanza roaring with organ and congregation, this ancient hymn has been sung hundreds of times by the Kantorei in churches across the nation. It is also probable that many congregations now regularly sing this hymn precisely because the CTSFW Kantorei introduced (or reintroduced) this tune and text to them.

*Of the Father's love begotten
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.*

Text: Public domain

This hymn rightly expresses that Christ, the Alpha and Omega, is without beginning and without end and expresses the truth that future generations will continue to sing to Him. How appropriate, then, that future servants who care for the church sing this hymn year after year.

The Church's Song

At CTSFW, we are privileged to form servants in Christ who care for the church with the church's song. What's more is that we all, in turn, are cared for by singing the church's song. In weekly worship at thousands of congregations, in devotions and chapel services in Lutheran schools, around the supper table and bedtime prayers in homes, and in hospitals and care facilities, hymns form and shape all of us as we sing the faith. The final stanza of "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" (LSB 709) concludes these thoughts appropriately:

*And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever! 🏰*

Text: Public domain

Mr. Kevin J. Hildebrand serves as Kantor and Co-Director of the Good Shepherd Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.



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