CTSFW WELCOMES LARGEST CLASS SINCE 2009

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, opened its 181st academic year September 8 on a celebratory note, welcoming its largest incoming residential formation class since 2009. The class includes fifty-seven pastoral ministry students and six residential deaconess studies students, along with seventeen distance formation students, new international students, and students in advanced graduate programs.

The residential students joined the procession with the faculty at the annual opening service, held this year in Sihler Auditorium rather than the usual Kramer Chapel, which is out of commission while its windows are being restored.

"Not one of these students found their way here alone," said the Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, assistant vice president of Admission. "Behind each one is a pastor who asked the question, a congregation that prayed, and in many cases, a family willing to be uprooted for the sake of the call."

Dr. Jon S. Bruss, president of CTSFW and preacher at the opening service, gave a sermon on the appointed Gospel reading, John 20:19–23, which includes Christ's words to his disciples on the evening of his resurrection: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." Bruss advised the future pastors in front of him to stay focused on these words throughout their seminary years.

"Already this morning you've started on your seminary studies. You'll have Gospels I, Dogmatics I, Liturgics I, Homiletics I, Church History I. For those of you a year in or three years in already, you know how it is. The classes heap up, and you can barely remember what you had when, even if you know you had it.

"Along the way you can miss the forest for the trees. But keep your eyes downrange, and keep this Gospel lesson in focus," said Bruss. "Everything you're studying here has to do with this 'special authority Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners and to retain the sins of the unrepentant as long as they do not repent'—the gift to the Church exercised by the called ministers of Christ—by you, four years, three years, one year down the road."

Installations *(pictured below)*

Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch, president of the LCMS Indiana District, presided over two installations at the opening service, installing the Rev. Jeffrey Proctor as an advancement officer and the Rev. Roger Peters as assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions at the opening service.

Proctor, who started working in the Office of Advancement in July, earned his Master of Divinity from CTSFW in 2015. He then served two congregations in the Pacific Southwest District: St. Paul Lutheran Church in Phoenix, Arizona, and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Hacienda Heights, California.

Peters has served at the Seminary since 2014, first as assistant to the director of Library and Information Services, then as assistant director. He has also served part-time as pastor of St. Thomas Lutheran Church in Ohio City, Ohio, since 2015. He earned a Master of Divinity (2013) and Master of Sacred Theology (2019) from CTSFW and a Master of Library and Information Science from Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis in 2023.

You can find a recording of the opening service on CTSFW's YouTube channel youtube.com/@ctsfw.


Stuckwisch


Proctor Peters















