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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.

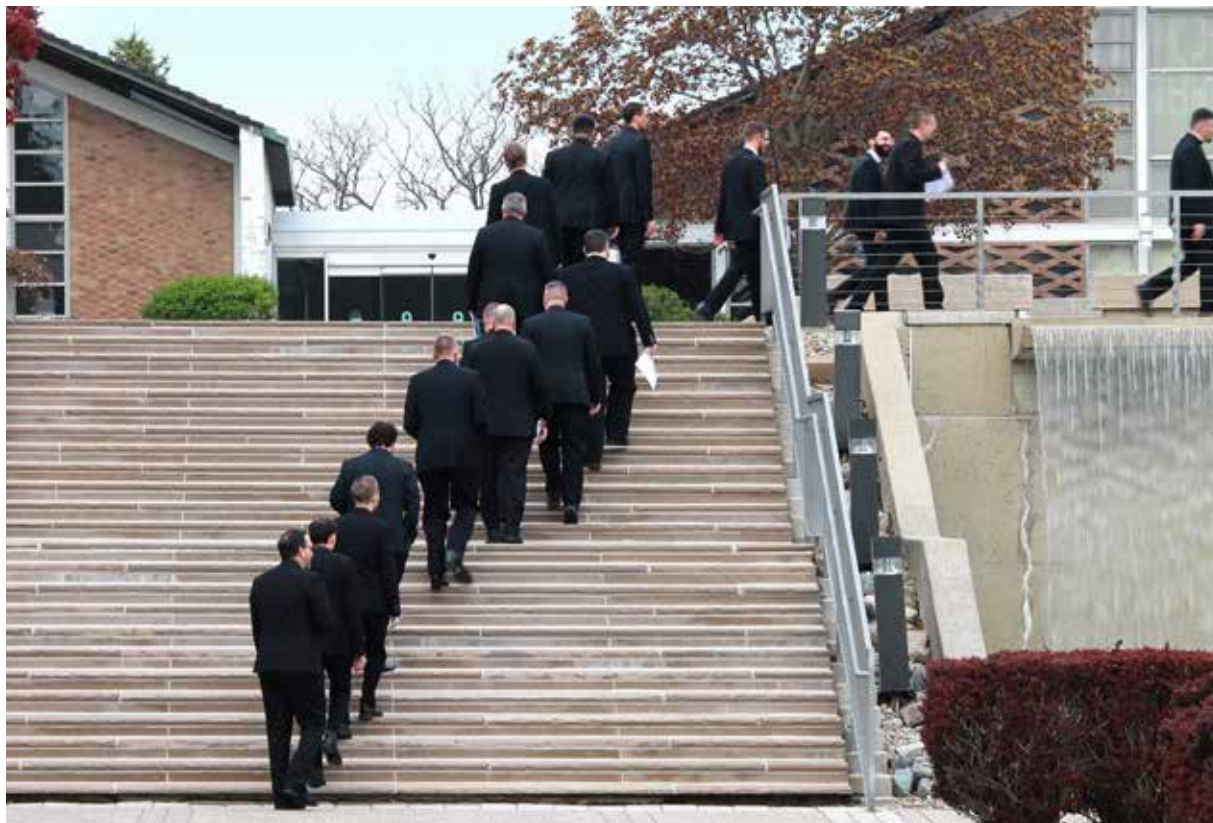
10 Formed to Care: The Mentoring Community Todd A. Peperkorn

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 Mentoring



Martin Luther once quipped (supposedly) that the ministry is “no bunny dance.” While there are joys that come every day, ministry is not a matter of going from triumph to triumph, from one great conversion story to the next. There are daily crosses to bear, challenges that perplex even the most experienced and wisest of pastors.

One challenge for those of us who help form pastors is what on the surface should seem simple and obvious: How do you teach men to care, to really and truly care for their people? It’s easy to think, “Why do you have to teach that? Surely men who want to be pastors already

care about people! Why would they be studying to be a pastor otherwise?”

Men study for the ministry for many reasons. Some come to seminary out of a love for the Word of God, for the sheer delight in studying the Scriptures and the great Confessions of the church.

g Community

Todd A. Peperkorn

Others come because they love to teach and realize that teaching and preaching the Gospel is perhaps the most important teaching of all. Still others come because of a love for people, a desire to reach out and be with them in their sufferings and hardships, their trials and tribulations.

A pastor has to have all three desires; one cannot properly function without the other two. It is, if you will, the trinity of pastoral care.

Most of what we do academically at Concordia Theological Seminary focuses on knowing, understanding, and then applying the Word of God and the Confessions of the church. It's essential knowledge, and most of our incoming students, understandably, have much to learn. In contrast, some might already be "apt to teach," as St. Paul says. It's also possible that they already love the flock, the people of God who will be entrusted to them by God's grace.

Even if that were true of *all* our students, translating that into the concrete, real care that pastors exhibit for their people is no small task. How do we both teach it AND model it as professors and as a community?

One of the ways we do this is through the mentoring program here at CTSFW, which was changed in significant ways for the 2022-23 academic year. Every incoming Master of Divinity and Alternate Route student at the Seminary is assigned a faculty member as their mentor. Faculty members have five to ten students in their mentoring group. The group meets at least five times a quarter, or fifteen times a year. This allows mentors and mentees to get to

know each other very well, to get beyond the simple "how is class going" sort of conversations and into the deeper questions about vocation, pastoral identity, and what it means to be a pastor in the twenty-first century.

A part of my work as a professor here has included serving as a mentor to some of these 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.

Beyond the mentor-mentee relationship, the mentoring program provides a ready-made network of peers. I can't stress enough how important a good network is for church workers. I know that from experience, and I see it when I travel the country, providing seminars and retreats for pastors.

Often these retreats focus on mental health for pastors, like the one I recently taught at in Michigan. In early 2022 I did a similar presentation for Pittsburgh-area pastors. Whether you are talking about the heartland of Lutheranism, the coasts, or anywhere in between, one of the common themes that comes up again and again is the danger of isolation. Pastors who are isolated are pastors who are vulnerable to attack. That attack may come by way of temptation to sin, but it can also come by way of an attack on the family or on a pastor's mental and



Men study for the ministry for many reasons. Some come to seminary out of a love for the Word of God, for the sheer delight in studying the Scriptures and the great Confessions of the church. Others come because they love to teach and realize that teaching and preaching the Gospel is perhaps the most important teaching of all. Still others come because of a love for people, a desire to reach out and be with them in their sufferings and hardships, their trials and tribulations.

emotional health. Isolation is never, ever good for a pastor.

It is my hope that as we learn more about how to integrate the mentoring process into pastoral formation here at CTSFW, it will serve as a way to renew our pastors in the field as well. Can you imagine the blessing it would be for every pastor to have a cohort of men who were looking out for him? Can you imagine what it would be like to have older pastors to serve as counselors and guides, and for younger pastors to have men they can look up to and learn from? There have been times in our church's history when we *have* had that. There

have been times when winkels have served that purpose. Frankly, we need it. We need it desperately. And anything we can do to foster that spirit of cooperation and care in our students will only serve to make things better for both the pastors and the people they serve. 🏡

Dr. Todd A. Peperkorn is Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions, Director of Vicarage, and Director of Residential Pastoral Formation Programs.



On May 23, Dr. Todd Peperkorn led a mental health retreat at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Harrison, Michigan.

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Mentoring at CTSFW

The training of pastors has always aimed at producing a well-rounded man whose knowledge of the Scriptures and Christian doctrine is matched by his love for the people of God and the desire to serve them. Because each student brings his own unique traits to that task, such preparation cannot simply be assumed. Whereas the academic component is carefully scripted through the curriculum and routinely measured through grading, the Seminary has come to see that the so-called "soft skills" require more intentionality. To that end, our mentoring of students aims to help them:

- ✦ Develop a deeper sense for their motivation to serve as a pastor
- ✦ Come to know themselves better, in terms of both strengths and weaknesses
- ✦ Develop a love of the Holy Scriptures apart from the academic study of them
- ✦ Learn to interact with peers over theology and the pastoral task
- ✦ Foster in themselves and others habits and desires that lead to ongoing theological study

Far from being an effort that concludes upon graduation, our student mentoring prepares future pastors whose entire ministry will benefit from continued introspection, devotion, study, and the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren. 🏡

Dr. Paul J. Grime, Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions; Vice President of Spiritual Formation; Dean of the Chapel

