

# For the Life of the World

## Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

October 2007, Volume Eleven, Number Four



### Vocation: A Defining Point for Lutheran Campus Ministry

Prof. John Pless

### Real Time Campus Ministry

Rev. Derek Roberts

### The Beginning of Wisdom

Rev. Stuart Crown

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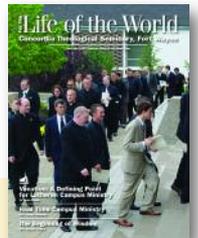
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In Mequon, Wisconsin, and at our sister schools around the country, Concordias start to live up to their names. That Latin word concordia implies a connection of faith, meaning something like “with one heart” or “with the same heart.” We who are privileged to serve on campus once again get a chance to live and forgive and grow and show Christ’s love to each other - to be Concordia.



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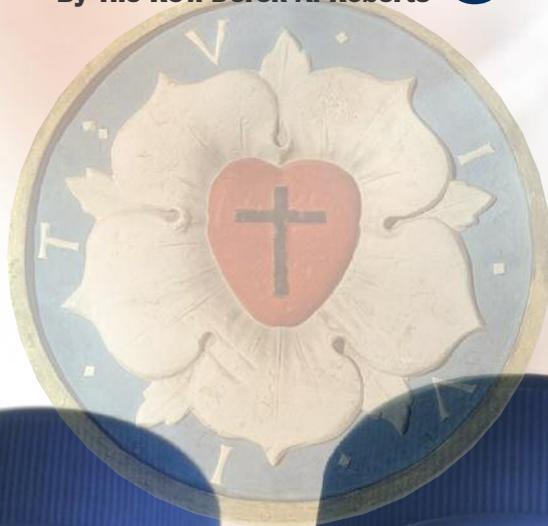
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# Real Time Campus Ministry

By The Rev. Derek A. Roberts

On a Sunday morning in mid-August, I'm looking forward to the start of Fall Semester at The University of Tennessee. I'll spend three days in the busiest place on campus, armed only with a sidewalk sign and several hundred bottles of water to hand out. It will likely be in the high 90s next week, but I survived last year and will do it again with the goal of reaching out to new students and telling them about Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCMS). Just like last year, I expect basic questions about when we meet, why there's more than one Lutheran group on campus, plus a surprise question or two like, "Why do Lutherans think that water baptism saves?" It's times like these that it's good to have the *Small Catechism* memorized.



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I scan the sanctuary, wondering which students will be in church. In the summer, you never know who's coming, since many students have moved back home or are away working at internships.

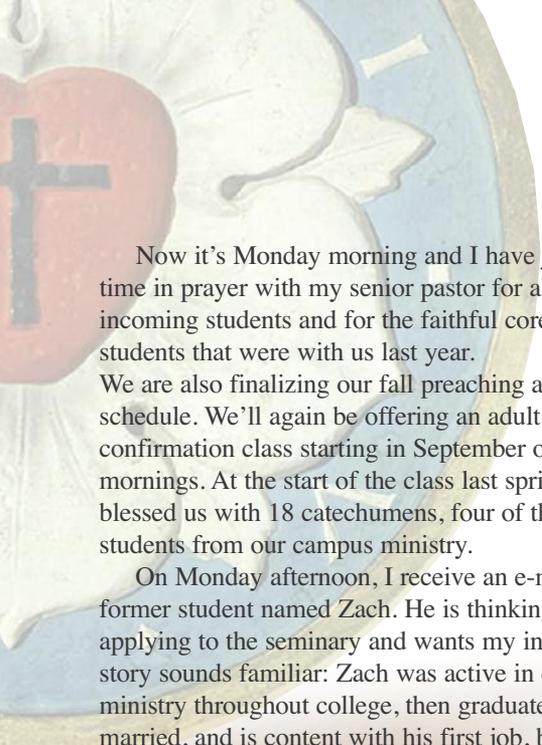
Samantha and Mark just walked in. They are far from home and family but in communion with Christ in the Divine Service, they are also united with their mothers and brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus every week. Some of the older members have become surrogate parents and grandparents to our students.

Clayton and his family have claimed their usual pew. I imagine we'll go out to lunch again soon and talk about his studies—whether or not he's studying the right things, a common concern among college students I've met since becoming a campus pastor. They worry that they're not serving God right now and whether their chosen path of classes will lead them to a God-pleasing career. I tell them God has made them His servant through the Word of Christ and Baptism. Through their studies right now, He is preparing them to serve others in the future. I get to see firsthand how the doctrine of vocation calms their conscience as they consider their future careers with respect and love for their Lord.

Kara is also here with her family. She's excited to move out of state to start college in the fall. I hate to see her go, but I'm grateful that she and her family

checked out LCMS churches during orientation. That's too often the last thing on parents' and students' minds as they worry about financial aid, housing, and class schedules. I will still contact the nearest LCMS campus pastor and let him know she's there. I'm sure he will want to give her a call and invite her to receive God's gifts at his church. I know that Kara goes forth with the blessing of the LORD. She's been baptized, confirmed, and has had a regular diet of Christ in Word and Sacrament. Kara will be a blessing to another church or campus ministry, even if not the one where I serve.

Later Sunday afternoon, I get a call from a pastor in North Carolina about a student from his congregation who will be a freshman at UT. I can tell by the fact that this man took the time to call that he cares very much for his flock and wants to entrust them to other safe pastures. In college, there are many inviting pastures that are attractive to the eye, but the grass is at best malnourished; at worst, the grass is poisonous. Above all, I pray that this student comes to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and encounters the one who gives forgiveness and life to her in His body and blood. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me," Jesus said. I'll do my best to invite her and welcome her to hear Jesus, but I can't force her to come. She'll be in college now. The old ways and days of high school and parents taking her to church have passed.



Now it's Monday morning and I have just spent time in prayer with my senior pastor for all the incoming students and for the faithful core of students that were with us last year. We are also finalizing our fall preaching and teaching schedule. We'll again be offering an adult confirmation class starting in September on Sunday mornings. At the start of the class last spring, God blessed us with 18 catechumens, four of them college students from our campus ministry.

On Monday afternoon, I receive an e-mail from a former student named Zach. He is thinking about applying to the seminary and wants my input. His story sounds familiar: Zach was active in campus ministry throughout college, then graduated, got married, and is content with his first job, but the Lord may be raising another shepherd to serve Him and His church by preaching and teaching and drawing the lost like a magnet to Jesus Christ. Campus ministries are places where many a pastor has been nurtured before seminary, just like I was. They are also places where not a few students have been brought into the kingdom, baptized, nurtured, and kept in the true faith

before their service in the working world. Praise be to God.

Before heading to campus Tuesday morning to hand out water, I pray to the Lord to bless our campus ministry this academic year. It's going to be hotter than I expected, but the water will help. Lutherans have a lot of confidence in water ... especially when it is included in God's mandate and combined with God's Word. 

*The Rev. Derek A. Roberts, a CTS alumnus, is a campus pastor at the University of Tennessee and Associate Pastor at First Lutheran Church and School in Knoxville.*

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