

Formation:

Essays for Future Pastors



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The Ministry Is No Bunny Dance

Rev. Scott Stiegemeier

"To the devil with this position! I'm ready to chuck it. That's what it means to have an office. To be on top is no frolic or bunny dance. It entails work and stress, so that no one in his right mind would actively seek it" (Martin Luther).

If your eyes are viewing these words right now, then it is likely that you are at some level considering becoming a pastor. You may wish to reconsider. Loving Jesus and wanting to help people are excellent motivations for applying to the seminary, but they are not enough. There are many devout pious Christians who love Jesus and want to help people who are best situated in some other vocation. A man can use his gifts to the glory of God and for the benefit of his neighbor in many capacities besides pastoral ministry.

Does it seem odd that the Director of Admission for a seminary would appear to be dissuading men from applying to enroll? It is certainly not my aim to discourage you from inquiring and investigating the possibilities God may have in store for you. Nor would I ever wish to dampen someone's desire to be a worker in the Lord's vineyard. I just think that Martin Luther has a point. The pastoral ministry entails work and stress. It is no bunny dance.

Of course, every profession has work and stress. Every walk of life in this corrupted order of things is going to be painful and difficult. Luther's words are not true only of the pastoral office but of every office.

Let me change gears. Pastoral ministry is the most joyous calling imaginable. Nothing comes close to the delight of baptizing a sinner or seeing people's eyes light up when you are explaining some text of Scripture that they suddenly understand. There is nothing on earth to compare to serving at the Lord's table, distributing the medicine of immortality, the Lord's body and blood. The burden to pray for your flock and the world, the burden to study the holy texts until they seep from the cracks in your mind, the burden to accompany those who suffer and be a companion to the dying—that burden is a joy to carry.

But it hurts too. Sometimes it can hurt a lot. You need to realize that there are risks and dangers associated with becoming a steward of God's mysteries in the pastoral office. People will abandon you, disappoint you, even betray you. Your own sinful flesh will cause you to say and do stupid things, ugly things, things that can never be unsaid or undone. Satan will accuse you at every turn. You will become proficient at proclaiming God's mercy in Jesus Christ to your congregation but quite deficient at applying it to yourself. The obstacles are great, but God is greater. God is calling you to martyrdom, nothing less. As it is true of every believer, you must die to your own wants, your own goals, your own comforts. And frankly, so must your family. If you want an easy life, don't come to the seminary. Don't become a pastor.

If you can spend significant time praying through frank words such as those above, and if the impulse to lay down your life in service to others in this unique calling is still driving you, then phone me. If people whose opinions you value are telling you that you should go to the seminary, if your pastor goes to you for counsel and assistance, if your wife believes you'd make a good leader and caregiver of souls, then you need to come visit us. If God opens all the doors for you to become a pastor, then you will enter a life where the work you do, by His grace, will change lives in time and for eternity. To paraphrase Charles Dickens, the ministry is the best of callings, and it is the worst of callings. But speaking personally, there is nowhere I'd rather be than where God has placed me in service in His church, come what may.

This book is the result of hundreds of years of cumulative pastoral experience. The wisdom in these pages will hopefully inspire and inform as you consider whether to apply to the seminary or not. Between these covers is what lies in store for you. And in spite of all that I have written above, I am delighted that you are reading these pages. One of the characters in the novel *Hammer of God* by Swedish bishop Bo Giertz said, "Can anything be greater than to be a pastor in God's church?" And I respond with a hearty, "No." We live in a momentous time where the challenges of Gospel ministry are only outweighed by the opportunities. If you are planning to read this book, then it's probable that someone, somewhere, one of God's saints encouraged you to consider becoming a pastor. Someone is most likely praying for you that you will serve as a shepherd feeding Christ's lambs. I hope these chapters written by students, seminary wives, professors, pastors, and missionaries will educate, motivate, and illuminate you.

Rev. Scott Stiegemeier (CTS 1995), pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, in Elmhurst, Illinois, served as the Director of Admission 2006-2009.

Pastoral Care

Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe

Do you have a good family physician? I hope you do. Our family is blessed with a physician who exhibits remarkable care for his patients. His medical knowledge is exemplary and complemented by his readiness to refer to specialists if necessary. He not only provides a diagnosis but also communicates the reasons and rationale so the patient is fully informed. What is most impressive, however, is how he cares for the patient.

A recent project of the Carnegie Foundation was devoted to reviewing the roles and the contributions of the professions to our society. In a word, it urged that it was important that doctors retain their focus on patients rather than procedures and that attorneys attend to justice for clients more than to billable hours.

After reviewing the various aspects of pastoral work—preaching, teaching, and counseling—it is noteworthy that the Carnegie study affirms the importance and centrality of interpreting God’s reality and presence: “This suggests that questions about God or ultimate meaning have everything to do with the capacity of persons and communities to foster and contribute to existentially coherent human life or to the greater common good in the face of fear, greed, chaos, uncertainty, and suffering of human existence. Interpreting God and God-language, in other words, matters” (Charles R. Foster, Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon, Barbara Wang Tolentino, *Educating Clergy* [Stanford, CA: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2006], 357–358).

To have a pastor who rightly describes the Triune God and faithfully interprets sacred Scripture is a great blessing and comfort, similar to having a good physician. Just as we treasure a physician who not only knows medicine but also truly cares for his patients, we similarly value a pastor whose right knowledge of God is joined to a compassionate and caring heart. Lutheran theology has especially valued Seelsorge, which is the care of souls.

If physicians devote themselves to the physical welfare of their patients, a faithful pastor guides and guards the souls under his care that they might enjoy God’s

grace and mercy in Christ now and enjoy the blessed and Holy Trinity forever in eternity. Christ, the great good Shepherd, established the office of pastor precisely for the care and nurture and salvation of His people.

This aspect of pastoral work is captured in a paragraph by John Watson in John W. Doberstein's *Minister's Prayer Book* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 211:

One's heart goes back from this eager, restless, ambitious age to the former days, and recalls with fond recollection the pastor of his youth, who had lived all his ministry in one place, and was buried where he was ordained—who had baptized a child, and admitted her to the sacrament, and married her and baptized her children—who knew all the ins and outs of his people's character, and carried family history for generations in his head—who was ever thinking of his people, watching over them, visiting their homes, till his familiar figure on the street linked together the past and the present, and heaven and earth, and opened a treasure house of sacred memories. He prayed with a lad before he went away—his mother could almost repeat the words; he was constantly inquiring about his welfare, so binding him to his faith and home by silken ties; he was in the house on the day of his return, to see how it had fared with him in the outer world. People turned to him as by an instinct in their joys and sorrows; men consulted him in the crises of life, and, as they lay a-dying, committed their wives and children to his care. He was a head to every widow, and a father to the orphans, and the friend of all lowly, discouraged, unsuccessful souls. Ten miles away people did not know his name, but his own congregation regarded no other, and in the Lord's presence it was well known, it was often mentioned; when he laid down his trust, and arrived on the other side, many whom he had fed and guided, and restored and comforted, till he saw them through the gates, were waiting to receive their shepherd-minister, and as they stood around him before the Lord, he, of all men, could say without shame, "Behold, Lord, thine under-shepherd, and the flock thou didst give me."

However long a pastor serves, it is this model of spiritual care that Concordia Theological Seminary cherishes. Rather than the trendy and manipulative, we embrace authenticity, integrity, and charity as the marks of faithful pastoral care.

We believe that our graduates—exhibiting such a life and such care—will give their congregations and the soul of each member wonderful assurance and comfort, assurance that their sins are forgiven and comfort that in Christ even death is no more.

Permeating such a faithful pastor's life is also a longing for the lost and a constant effort to reach them as our mission statement captures: "Concordia Theological Seminary forms students in Jesus Christ to teach the faithful, to reach the lost, and to care for all."

Enjoy this book of essays with its focus on pastoral care, and pray for us and support us as we continue to prepare such pastors.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe
President, Concordia Theological Seminary

Rev. Dr. Dean Wenthe (CSL 1971) has served as professor of Old Testament at Concordia Theological Seminary since 1971, as well as her president since 1996.

Discernment

What Is a Pastor For?

Rev. Philip Zielinski

You are contemplating enrolling in the seminary to become a pastor in Christ's Church. But why does the Church need another pastor? Why does the Church need you to answer God's call to be a shepherd of His sheep? What are pastors for, and why should that be your calling? The answers to your questions lie within our Lord Jesus' institution of the office of pastor and His continued care for His flock through His undershepherds.

Twice in the Gospels Jesus is deeply moved because those who were coming out to Him were "as sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:34). Both times, what follows teaches us about the ministry of the Gospel and every Christian's need for a servant of Christ, a pastor.

In Matthew, Jesus declares that "the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37). Then he calls the twelve apostles and gives them authority over unclean spirits and diseases. Seeing the abundant harvest that was waiting, the Lord of the harvest sends out His laborers with His own authority. He gives shepherds to sheep who had none.

In Mark, Jesus begins to teach these sheep who had no shepherd. Then, as the hour grew late, the need for food grew urgent, Jesus tells His disciples, "You give them something to eat." Then He fills their empty hands from the five loaves and two fish so they have more than enough to give all something to eat. The Good Shepherd gives His servants all that they need to tend the flock and care for them. They were no longer without a shepherd.

Finally, in John 21, as Jesus sits and eats with some of His disciples, He takes a moment with Peter. Simon Peter had boldly promised to stay with his Lord, even suffer death rather than fall away, only to falter three times during the dark hours of Jesus' passion. Now, Jesus asks him three times, "Simon, do you love me?" Each time, Peter answers "yes" in stark contrast to his denials only days before. Three times Jesus directs Peter to care for the sheep of his fold: "Feed my lambs," "tend my sheep,"

“feed my sheep.” It is as though he says to Peter, “My death and resurrection cover your sins of denial. You are forgiven and so you love me. As you love me, love these to whom I send you. They are my beloved lambs, my precious ones. Feed them, protect them, and tend them as I would.”

Without a faithful pastor, every Christian and every soul is wandering, lost as a sheep without a shepherd. Beloved, do you love your Lord Jesus? Then feed His sheep, protect His sheep, and lead His sheep! Tend the flock to which God is calling you so that in His work, through you, His people will have a shepherd who will love them, tend them, lead them, protect them, and feed them.

Every Christian needs a shepherd. Every soul needs a pastor. There is a flock who needs you.

Rev. Philip Zielinski (CTS 2004), pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Van Wert, Ohio, served as an Admission Counselor 2007-2009.

A Noble Task

Rev. Prof. Harold L. Senkbeil

One thing about pastoral work: it's never dull. In the course of one day, you tag along with your parishioners on one of the wildest rides imaginable: the rollercoaster of life. Twists and turns, right side ups and upside downs, the peaks and pinnacles of joy and those precipitous downward plunges into darkness and despair—you'll find them all, most every day, somewhere among the sheep and lambs you are called to tend and nurture.

And you're the man; people are looking to their pastor to do and say something that will help them hang on during all that, to help them maintain stability in a chaotic and confusing world, to keep a grip on God when everything around them seems to be in flux.

Now who in his right mind would sign on for such a job? "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer (pastor), he desires a noble task," writes St. Paul (1 Timothy 3:1). Was he a glutton for punishment? Did he know what he was talking about?

I think so. No, I know so.

For thirty-six years now, I have held this office and I've observed the full gamut of human emotions in the people I have served—up close and personal. You get a front row seat on these things in the ministry. Actually, you get in on these things yourself. I have wept tears of joy with those who rejoiced, and I have wept other tears as well—tears of remorse, and fear, and grief—you find them all among the baptized. I have carried the tiny casket of a newborn to its burial, trailed by parents whose hearts were breaking. I have fed the dying with the living Bread from Heaven, and held their hands while they breathed their last.

And I can tell you there's nothing like it in the world. When every other resource dries up, the Gospel and the Sacraments keep on giving. When all earthly possibilities are set aside, the promises of God stay put. When physicians have done their best and it's not enough; after medical technicians turn off their machines and say: "I'm sorry," the pastor still has plenty to give. He's Christ's man, you see, and after

everything else in this world is set aside, Jesus Christ remains.

"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life," says He. And so He is. For those who've lost direction in a confusing, troubling world, He lights the path and leads the way. For those who have come to believe the seductive lies all around them, Jesus Christ gives courage to face the truth of His sure Word. For a world obsessed with death, Jesus Christ alone brings Life—for He Himself has burst the bonds of death and now lives forever in His own resurrected flesh to bring life and immortality to all who trust in Him.

And guess who stands at all those crucial intersections of life? That's right—the pastor! It is every pastor's privilege to be an emissary of life amid death, to proclaim truth to those who've come to believe a lie, to show the way out to confused and hurting people who've lost their bearings—and lost their hearts as well.

But that Way, that Truth, and that Life is not of human origin: it's the work of Christ. He is the bridegroom of His Church on earth. He has gifts for His bride. And when He wants to shower His bride with gifts, He sends them by way of His best man—the pastor. He gives pastors His words to speak; He gives them His bath with which to wash and cleanse; He hands them His flesh and blood with which to feed and heal. Divine and royal gifts they are, each of them and all of them. Yet Christ condescends to give them from His free grace to His beloved bride. And these gifts are the very essence of pastoral ministry.

Best men, that's who pastors are, "best" not because of who they are in themselves, but because of the gifts they bring.

I think St. Paul was right; the ministry is a "noble task." Give it your prayerful consideration, will you?

Rev. Dr. Harold Senkbeil, (CTS 1971), Executive Director of Doxology, is former professor of pastoral theology at Concordia Theological Seminary.

Overcoming Obstacles

Rev. Thomas Zimmerman

Entering the seminary to study for the pastoral ministry can seem daunting at times. Each man's story and path is different. Logistically, there is so much to address: relocation, housing, employment, finances, and the like. Those who make the commitment to attend the seminary prayerfully address each of these concerns. If you have a spouse or family, sometimes the concerns are enhanced because of the number of people involved.

Many times, the logistics of relocating are the first concerns expressed. This is especially true if you have an established home, community, schools, doctors, friends, and so on. The mere thought of leaving all that is familiar can be overwhelming. We do enjoy being in our earthly comfort zones. But often we must leave those zones to grow and see new opportunities to serve our Lord. But after leaving what is comfortable, students and families often look at their time at the seminary and on vicarage as an adventure, an opportunity to meet new people and to experience different cultures, and it is likely that you will as well. You will change during your four years at the seminary. It is through these changes that the Lord is molding you into His servant.

How will I pay for seminary? Financial concerns are real, and as a faithful steward of what the Lord provides, you will need to seriously address this matter. Coming to the seminary in the best financial condition possible is the ideal. Some students work at entering the seminary with no outstanding credit card debt, selling certain possessions as they downsize or living the year prior to coming at a reduced rate to make the adjustment easier. Financial assistance is available. Most of our students have received the majority of their tuition as gift aid with other grants being available.

How will I be able to live? Housing is reasonable and affordable in the Fort Wayne area. The Food and Clothing Co-op will be of tremendous assistance with some of your basic needs. Most student families meet seventy to eighty percent of their family food needs at the Food Co-op.

What about my children's education? Fort Wayne is blessed with many Lutheran elementary schools and a Lutheran high school in addition to the public school system. There is also an active homeschooling association in the Fort Wayne area.

What about my wife's job? Employment is a concern for many of the wives, especially if they have been out of the job market for several years. God has and will provide for your needs. It may not always be in the area in which your wife was trained, but it is only temporary, and in some cases, the wives have learned a new skill and increased their marketability for future employment.

Can I handle seminary level studies? If you have not been in a classroom setting for some time, there may be some apprehension about doing the course work. Seminary is indeed a challenge. It is a rigorous course of study. Those who haven't been doing college work for some time might consider enrolling in some adult studies at your community college to refresh your study skills before you come to the seminary. Diligence makes a big difference. Yes, there is much to read, much to study, and much to learn. The student who dedicates himself thoroughly to his studies will accomplish his purpose.

The previous obstacles focused on the logistical challenges of coming to the seminary. There are also personal challenges to be addressed. As with all things, there are two sides to every position. The very reason some men cite for why they entered the ministry is the same reason others cite for why they did not enter full-time ministry.

Entering full-time ministry to fulfill a dream sounds noble if that dream was in fact the Lord calling you into ministry. If serving as a pastor fulfills the dream your grandmother, your parents, your pastor, and your spouse had for you, have you truly been called? Following God's plan for us may not be in concert with the dreams of our loved ones.

Many pastors are drawn into the ministry because they desire to make a difference—sharing the Gospel and God's forgiveness does make a difference in people's lives. But it is God who is making the difference not you. If you are convinced that your insights, your ideas, your messages, and your visions are going to be the driving force of your successful ministry, you have missed the reason for serving in His name.

Others are drawn into the ministry because they see it as a godly vocation. While it is true that it is a godly vocation, it is not the only vocation that is godly. We can serve the Lord as firefighters, nurses, auto mechanics, UPS drivers, and librarians. We serve God as we serve our fellow man. God desires us to be industrious and to use our talents for the good of His kingdom.

Helping people is often cited as a reason for entering the ministry. Being a pastor does indeed offer many opportunities to help others. One has to be honest and ask, "Do I love people?" As a pastor, you are asked to serve and aid others in many

different settings and circumstances. To really minister to them, you must have a real heart for people. Person-to-person ministry is carried out in face-to-face relationships whether that person is a premature infant or an elderly adult. You will encounter people from cradle to grave in the best of times and the lowest of times. You will be asked to respond pastorally to crises and sometimes at the most inopportune moments. Failure to respond to a person's need because it is your day off or because it is after hours is inexcusable.

Many pastors want to share the truth with others. As a pastor, you have the opportunity to share the wonderful news of salvation and God's grace. As a shepherd of a congregation, you also will need to lead your parishioners as they approach doctrinal issues, evangelism, stewardship, education, and outreach ministry. Will you be able to share the truth in love while showing patience, forbearance, and perseverance? As a pastor, you will need to gently and humbly lead your congregation. You were called to be their pastor, not their drill instructor.

Others want to become pastors because they desire to lead. How one leads and the demeanor with which one leads is crucial to ministry. True pastoral leadership requires multiple skills and insights. You must provide your congregation with support and guidance, especially in periods of crises. Your members will look to you to provide vision and direction. Discipline will be needed, but it must be done in love and with patience. Your members will look to you for motivation. You will serve as a role model for your members. They will look to you to see a disciplined life of prayer and personal devotion. The congregation will look to you to set the tone for harmony, handling of troublemakers, and averting and resolving problems.

Others may see the ministry as offering job security and stability as well as flexibility. Outside of scheduled worship times, pastors often experience an unstructured schedule. Each day has twenty-four hours. It takes a very disciplined and organized personality to utilize one's time wisely. Unexpected emergencies arise, and others in the congregation look to you to see and plan the bigger picture. Impromptu, last-minute ideas, and procrastination can cause your secretary, elders, organist, and other church staff much frustration. You may seem to survive and even thrive on such an approach to life, but others will find it stressful to say the least. It is easy to lose track of time, and suddenly find that you have failed to serve your members or properly prepare for your sermon because of the Internet or family activities or inattentiveness. Time management and accountability are also part of the ministry.

Still others say, "I've been told that I have the personality to be a pastor." There is no single personality that makes an ideal minister. Some of the qualities of a pastor are listed by St. Paul in Timothy, "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity

keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:1–7).

"Is the pastoral office for me?" Only you and God can answer that question. Seek His will. Seek His guidance. Go with God.

Rev. Thomas Zimmerman, (CSL 1984) has years of experience as a Lutheran teacher, parish pastor, and campus pastor. He serves as Director of Admission at Concordia Theological Seminary.

Tools of Discernment

Rev. Jason M. Braaten

Me, a pastor? This is the question that begins the process a man will undergo to decide whether he will attend the seminary to study for the pastoral ministry or not. This question tends to point a man inward—to his feelings, to his thoughts.

The Admission Department has developed two tools to aid in this discernment. It brings together both the internal discernment (feelings and thoughts) and the external (counsel from close friends, mentors, family, etc.). The first is the application and the second is the campus visit.

By filling out and sending in your application you are not signing your life away, nor are you making any obligations for matriculation. The application serves a dual purpose. First, it gives the Admission Department permission to begin contact with the applicant's district to help in setting up the district interview. That is really all we get out of it. The rest is for your benefit. Here is how.

First, the application asks you for a number of personal references and a pastoral reference. By asking your pastor and your friends to fill out these reference forms, you are allowing them to inquire into why you seek to be a pastor. Their external questions help to bring out what you think and feel internally. This serves as a way for you to help narrow down what you are thinking and feeling while you go forward with applying.

Second, the application also asks that you answer several questions. These needn't be long expositions, but short, coherent, and articulate statements of your beliefs. This helps you to take all those thoughts and feelings out of your head and put them on paper. Once they're on paper, you can see if what you've written expresses what you're really thinking and feeling. It allows you to look at and deal with something that is internal as if it were external. Now this won't be completely objective, but it is slightly more objective than if it were simply to stay in your head or in your heart. This aids in discerning where you see yourself in the future, and how important it is to you.

Third, the application asks you to write an autobiography. Again, this does not need to be too detailed. This is simply here to give a history, a certain humanness to the paper file. It should discuss your influences and why they were influential. It should discuss things that you have a real passion for. This helps you, again, to look at yourself with a little objectivity. It allows you the opportunity to sum up your life in a five-paragraph essay. This is a humbling task, but, in so doing, you learn those things that matter most in your life and what goals you haven't attained yet, and why.

So that's how the application helps in discernment, but what about the campus visit? When you visit CTSFW's campus, you live in, indeed become a part of, our community for your stay. You aren't an outsider but one of us—a brother. You will be brought into the rhythm of our days, weeks, and years. You will, for that time, be formed as a servant in Christ Jesus. You will sit in class with learned faculty who consider you not only students but also future colleagues, future brothers in the office. You will see that what is taught in class comes alive and is put into action in the chapel where Christ himself has promised to meet his people and feed them. You will engage in robust theological discourse with faculty, staff, and students over lunch, after chapel over coffee, and at *Gemütlichkeit* over some barley sodas. And through this you learn if this place can truly be home. But much more, you learn if studying to be a pastor, coming to the seminary to be formed as a pastor of Christ's flock, is for you.

The application and the campus visit are touchstones of sorts—they help you to discern this question: Me, a pastor? You don't have to figure this all out on your own, in fact, we wouldn't suggest that. Let the process help you figure out what you want to do and how you want to serve.

So what do you say? Come visit. Fill out and send in your application. You won't regret it because it will give you the certainty you're looking for in discernment.

Rev. Jason Braaten (CTS 2006) is a graduate student and Advancement Officer at Concordia Theological Seminary.

So You Want to Be a Pastor

Rev. Charles St. Onge

So you want to be a pastor. Not just any pastor, but a Lutheran pastor in twenty-first-century North America. To quote St. Paul, you desire a noble task. Not an easy one, mind you, but a noble one. Speaking as one who has been engaged in this vocation for four years, I can say that leading a congregation to Christ and His cross is as challenging here and now as it has ever been. It will require all your talent, all your knowledge, and all the formation a good seminary can provide.

You will be caring for older members who are in the Church but may not be of it. They attend worship, lead committees and councils, and participate in every congregational activity. But ask them to define their faith, and they will be at a loss. As you define for them in your preaching and teaching the faith delivered once and for all to the saints, they will struggle with you and with their own spiritual life. You will learn you are not their corrector. Seminary will train you to be their shepherd.

You will be caring for hurt and angry people. Some will claim to have been hurt by you or your predecessors. In some cases, this will be true. In some cases, it is the Law of the Lord that has done the hurting. You will learn you are not their counselor. Seminary will train you to be their confessor and speak the Lord's commands or His Absolution as the Spirit leads.

You will be caring for sick and dying people. Many will not fear death, believing falsely that after death they will become angels living with all their loved ones and all the good people of world history. Some will dread it, fearing the judgment of a God who despises wrongdoing. You will learn you are not their consoler. Seminary will train you to bring the consolation of the One who has died for them and risen again to bring new and eternal life in His name.

You will be approached by people with an alien morality and theology, such as people fleeing the Catholic Church because of the pope's "unchristian" stand against abortion and women's ordination, and seeking shelter in your congregation; people fleeing that Baptist Church because they asked them to change their immoral lifestyle; people fleeing the Episcopal Church because their worship was not "uplifting and

passion-filled;" the woman at the grocery store who claims to be a member of your church, even though you've never met her; the man who asks you to bury his mom, who "never had no use for org'nized religion" but was a Christian woman who believed in the "good man upstairs;" those who claim to love Jesus but despise his Church and its servants as having nothing relevant to offer them. You will learn you didn't learn everything at seminary. Yet surprisingly seminary will have prepared you for what they did not have time to teach.

You will be living among confused people who, to paraphrase Satchel Paige, know an abundance of things that just aren't true: that all religions are the same; that God only punishes those who are truly evil, none of whom we know personally; that Oprah Winfrey is as much a preacher as Joel Osteen; that Jesus was married and had kids; that the only thing we can know for sure about God is that whatever the Church says about Him is a lie; that all behaviors and lifestyles are acceptable to God, especially those in which our children and grandchildren are engaged, except those we know are wrong, and those things change yearly. You will learn you are not their judge. There is already one, our enemy, who fills that role. You are not their accuser. There is already one who fills that role quite well, one from whom we pray to be delivered. Seminary will train you to be what God has called all Christians to be. It will train you to be His witnesses, even to the ends of the earth.

Most importantly, you will be serving alongside a sinner who will be constantly tempted to be the leader of the Church, the savior of the congregation. He will always know how to improve things, why so-and-so is wrong, how to make the parish a more perfect place. He will be tempted to trust that God helps those who help themselves. He will act spiritual and seem full of faith, but he secretly believes Christ Jesus is no longer head of the Church but rather a distant observer who has handed the reigns over to him. This man will call himself a pastor. Seminary will train you to kill that man each and every day so that a new shepherd may daily arise to live before God and His people in righteousness and purity forever.

As a pastor, you will sometimes find yourself correcting, counseling, and consoling. You will find yourself sometimes accusing, sometimes defending, and sometimes even judging. You will find yourself leading. But those activities are not what a pastor is. A pastor is a shepherd, a confessor, a teacher, and a witness. He is an undershepherd of the one and only Good Shepherd: Jesus. You desire to be a pastor. You desire a noble vocation. Seminary will prepare you not just for the tasks but the whole challenging vocation that may lie ahead of you.

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But I Have A.D.D.

Rev. Dustin Anderson

“So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being to elated” (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Walking through the woods, whether hiking for enjoyment or searching for a bounty of blackberries, often entails buck brush and berry bushes scratching and burning the skin and drawing from the vein the bright red blood of pain and suffering. The thorns of these plants are painful when you step on them, when they get just under the hard callous of your heel. Each step you take is more painful than the last as the briar works deeper into the flesh.

Suffering, except for the occasional masochist, isn't something a person looks forward to in this life. The life of ease is preferred, one of peace and happiness. We don't even like to think about the possibility of suffering. We run away from it in fear. But when suffering does fall upon a person, the pity parties usually begin. “Woe is me,” we cry. We want people to feel sorry for us because of everything we endure in this so-called God-forsaken world.

This is the cry of the pagan, the unbeliever, the non-Christian, but it is the lament of the Christian who is weak in faith too. It is the Christian's cry because in this world we are not alone. The old evil foe is darting through the arid wilderness of our lives, seeking to torment and devour us. He takes aim with his venomous arrows and buries them into our lives, trying to destroy us by causing us to doubt God, and His presence, care, and love for us, His children.

“Woe is me” is a declaration that expresses a great deal of anguish. Its source can be seen as coming from two unequal places, yet both sources of suffering are real for the Christian and heathen alike. It is the source of suffering in our lives and its purpose is to show what man believes. The devil certainly has his sights on you, but he is not in ultimate control. To think that he is is to be in grave error. To think that he is in control is to destroy what Christ has done for you in His suffering, death, and

resurrection. No, the devil is not in control. He is not the final word, for he was made to eat the dust of the earth. He was cast down from heaven. It was his head that was crushed in final defeat at Calvary. All that remains is the dark angel in his final death throes as the dark gives way to Light.

There is another source of suffering, which in Christian circles is hard to swallow, but true nevertheless. God Himself subjects His beloved to pain and suffering. This is not without purpose. He is not a God who dangles us like spiders over an open flame to watch us squirm. He is a God of love. But as this sinful flesh remains in this sinful world, it needs to be disciplined and put in submission. This is the place where we are condemned: in the flesh. The flesh, the old man in us all, must die, because the old man wants the forbidden fruit. It craves its sweet nectar. It craves to be God. "Look at what I did!" But then, for our good, a thorn is given to us.

The thorn slices deep; it cuts and drives you to despair. Good. That is why it's there: to destroy you, to bring you to your knees, and to cause you to cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" Yet, the thorn remains, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" Again, it says, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" And He does, but the thorn remains.

To be a seminarian is no small endeavor. To seek the Office of the Holy Ministry is certainly a noble desire, a desire given to you by God. It is a fruit of the Word and Sacraments given to you and for you. But also given to you is a thorn in your flesh. It is a mind that is never quiet, that thinks of every little thing. It is a mind that observes everything around you, the fly buzzing against the window, the hum of the lights above, the chirping of the birds outside. Silence, too, roars loudly in your head, preventing you from completing the simplest of tasks. Even reading a paragraph, following a simple argument, or listening to a sermon can be, to say the least, thorny. Adult Attention Deficit Disorder is certainly a thorn in the flesh but is nothing to keep you from a faithful and useful life as the mouth of God to His people.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." These words of Jesus to St. Paul are for you too. The thorn of A.D.D. is a constant reminder that you are a sinner, but as a baptized child of God, you are also a saint. The Word of Christ's Holy Absolution makes you who you are. You are perfect and holy in His sight. To have A.D.D. does not exclude any man from this high and holy Office.

You are not left to fend for yourself. God provides for you through His bountiful means. He gives those who have gone into battle before you, who know what it is to struggle with your particular thorn. There are means available to help in coping with symptoms: medications, structured schedules, and personal study methods.

A.D.D. is real. It is crippling. It is a thorn in the flesh, but that thorn does not make you who you are. You are God's. You were created out of His great love, and because you are His, He provides all that you need to support this body and life. For you, the greatest and most invaluable of God's means are His Word and Sacraments.

He is there for you where He has promised to be. He is there for you through thick and thin, giving you the forgiveness of sins. He is there to hear your confession and to preach Absolution to you through His pastors. And as your dear heavenly Father, He is certainly quick to hear your prayers, just as He was there for His own Son in the garden with blood pouring from His brow.

It is that blood of Jesus that makes all the difference. It is the burden of your sins, the thorn of your side, that Christ bore for you in His weakness. In your stead, He received the just punishment your thorn deserved. Now, you can stand in His stead before His people and preach the Good News.

God's grace is sufficient for you; nothing more is needed. The harvest is plentiful. The workers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest would send you out to be among His workers.

Rev. Dustin Anderson (CTS 2007) serves Trinity Lutheran Church in Marseilles, Illinois.

Why Learn the Languages?

Rev. Jason M. Braaten

Language is the foundation of all communication and, therefore, stands as the heartbeat of any personal relationship. The lover communicates his thoughts, desires, hopes, and dreams through language to his beloved. Presence can and does communicate, but it is through conversation, through language, that we come to know others most intimately.

Language is also the foundation of all creation. “In the beginning . . . God said.” Everything that lives, moves, and has its being came to exist through language. Even salvation itself is rooted in language. Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Faith is begotten from language through the Word of Christ (Romans 10:10). In this way, language is central to everything the church believes and does.

There are, of course, practical reasons for learning the biblical languages. One such reason is that, by learning a foreign language in general, one’s knowledge and understanding of his native language increases. He has stronger vocabulary skills, a better understanding of language itself, and an overall improved literacy. This prompted Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to write: “Those who know nothing of foreign languages, know nothing of their own.”

Learning the biblical languages will also sharpen one’s overall cognitive abilities because learning a foreign language at all involves a variety of learning skills. Thus, Richard Riley, the former U.S. Secretary of Education under the Clinton administration, remarked: “We have strong evidence today that studying a foreign language has a ripple effect, helping to improve student performance in other subjects.” Learning the languages can actually enhance one’s ability to learn in other areas.

But still, why do we learn biblical Greek and Hebrew? What makes these languages so indispensable? Why not simply rely on the various good translations we already have? St. Jerome in the fourth century AD, supposedly said: “*Translatio traditio est.*” The phrase can mean that translation is tradition, that is, that the translation of

texts is rooted in the tradition of the church. On the other hand, it can also mean that translation is treason or betrayal, which conveys the sentiment that translation oftentimes betrays the text because it doesn't quite capture the fullest meaning grammatically, poetically, and literally. Each translation must give one of these categories an emphasis. It must decide whether it will be faithful to the words, to the poetry, or to the grammar. Sometimes they can all be captured, but often one is sacrificed to clarify the others. By learning the biblical languages, you are prepared to investigate how others have translated the biblical text. You are given the tools to see how it all fits together in their most original state.

For Martin Luther, the preservation of the biblical languages was inextricably tied to the preservation of the Gospel itself. "And let us be sure of this: we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments." Luther here sees the biblical languages not simply as the bearers of the Gospel but as the very abode of the Gospel—the place where it lives, dwells, and resides. So, if you wish to find the Gospel, look to the biblical languages—to the Hebrew and the Greek texts. For this is why we at the seminary still teach the languages, and this is why those who come to the seminary still learn them—because the Gospel is at stake.

Rev. Jason Braaten (CTS 2006) is a graduate student and Advancement Officer at Concordia Theological Seminary.

What About Me? The Wives Ask

Mrs. Julie Stiegemeyer

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. . . . So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife . . .”
(Genesis 12:1–5).

These verses have always had special meaning for me because they were the basis of the first sermon that I heard in the seminary chapel at the opening service of my husband’s first year at the seminary. I’ve often wondered what Sarai was thinking and how she was coping with this sudden and life-changing journey. Was she crying as she left her mother? Did she see it as an adventure?

The thing I like about Sarah is how honest she was. She was far from perfect; she—along with Abraham—laughed in the face of God’s promise for a son in their old age (Genesis 17:17 and 18:12). But God, in his mercy, blessed her with his gifts, including a son they never dreamed they would have. Hebrews says: “By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised” (Hebrews 11:11). It was God who gave Sarah this faith, who helped her through all of the changes in her life.

Over the years, I’ve heard and read a lot about being a pastor’s wife. The common perception is that a pastor’s wife lives in a fishbowl—meaning that everyone is always watching her. I’ve had strangers come up to me and feel sorry for me because my husband is a pastor. “Don’t you ever wish you were married to a plumber?” one person asked me.

However, in the first ten years of my husband’s ministry, I can honestly say that I have loved being a pastor’s wife. That doesn’t mean we don’t have problems or that we’re immune from sickness, frustration, and arguments. It simply means that I love my husband and am committed to him no matter what his vocation in life may be.

It is true that a pastor has many challenges and burdens to carry. He visits new babies in the hospital; he also visits teens who have attempted suicide. A pastor teaches the confirmands, and has to deal with their parents who almost never come to church. A pastor works for hours on a sermon, but then watches members of the congregation sleep through the message. These are burdens that your husband as a pastor will have to bear, and sometimes those burdens spill over to his personal life.

But there are many more joys than frustrations. He has the joy of sincere gratitude from a member who needed to hear what he had to say. He also watches the children he baptized grow into young believers who share the love of God with their neighbors. He is honored at an anniversary lunch, showered with gifts, and bragged about by his congregation. A pastor's duties are many and varied, and through each task, he ministers to sinners who come to hear about God's forgiveness and love for them in Christ Jesus. And these blessings also spill over to the family.

As a pastor's wife—just as in every other situation in life—we have a choice. We can choose to celebrate the joys in life, or we can focus only on the burdens. As a pastor's wife I heard recently said: "Your husband is a servant of the King. What other joy in life could there be?" And then I think that Sarah—and I—have it pretty good.

Mrs. Julie Stiegemeier is a children's book author and English professor. She has been married to Rev. Scott Stiegemeier since 1990.

Starting a Family at the Seminary

Mrs. Lauren Braaten

Consider yourself warned. Seminary folklore has it that during the second year of studies, you either purchase a car or have a child. While I haven't tested this hypothesis scientifically, a quick scan of the campus will show that the parking lot is full of cars . . . with car seats.

Our second year of seminary was quite uneventful; there were no new cars or babies. It was during our final year of seminary that I became pregnant, and we looked forward to the arrival of our first child at Christmastime. A few weeks before I was due to give birth, I lost my job. We were devastated. I was the main breadwinner, and without my job we wondered how we would be able to pay our bills and provide for our little one.

Thankfully, many of our fears about providing for our child were allayed through the Food and Clothing Co-op. I know firsthand what a blessing the seminary community and its resources are for families. The Food and the Clothing Co-op, open to all students and their families, is truly irreplaceable. Whether you're considering having children or if you already have little ones, the seminary is a wonderful place for families.

For your youngster, the Food Co-op carries formula, baby lotion, diapers of all sizes, every stage of baby food, and all for either one or two points. Actually, the baby food costs no points! (Points are earned by volunteering two hours a month at the Co-op.) With plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables as well as meat, bread, milk, eggs, and shelves full of great food, the nursing mom will find herself well situated to nourish herself and her child.

Also, the Clothing Co-op carries just about everything you could need for your baby. Donations come in daily, so what you are looking for today may be donated tomorrow. The baby room is always stocked with clothing and other accessories for newborns and toddlers. In fact, my son is quite the stylish little man thanks to the generous donations of others. There are bouncy seats, baby monitors, cribs, high chairs, strollers, car seats, and diaper bags, depending on the amount of donations.

There is also a toy room full of stuffed animals, games, books, and plenty of fun kid toys. The Clothing Co-op maintains a wish list, so if your little one has outgrown his crib, and you're in need of a toddler bed, simply ask to have this item put on the wish list, and should a toddler bed become available, you'll get a call.

I know of seminary wives who have gathered on a regular basis for play dates with their children and a chance to socialize. Many moms bring their children to chapel and join their husbands for worship each day. Some teenagers of seminarians lend their babysitting skills to care for the children in the seminary community. (Yes, we all should get out for a date once in a while!)

The city of Fort Wayne is also a great place to raise little future pastors' kids. Fort Wayne has three major hospitals with offices all throughout the city. Regardless of what part of town you live in, there is a doctor and a hospital minutes away. Ask any seminary wife who's had a child in Fort Wayne, and she would be happy to suggest a doctor or hospital so you wouldn't have to pick one randomly from the Yellow Pages.

The community of Fort Wayne offers great rates for children at such things as the zoo, museums, theaters, and restaurants as well as free events, including great outdoor activities in the summer. The Seminary Wives Association publishes a monthly newsletter highlighting many of these inexpensive or free opportunities. You get the latest scoop on these deals delivered right to your e-mail inbox!

Seminary life is full of changes and new adventures, and for some that includes starting a family or adding another little saint to the clan. With all the support and assistance this community has to offer, rest assured you will be well cared for, no matter what curveballs life throws your way. So, check the oil, and get that timing belt changed so that you won't need a new car anytime soon. And did I mention the rumor that something in the drinking water on campus leads to babies too?

Mrs. Lauren Braaten has served at Concordia Theological Seminary and LCMS World Relief and Human Care as a deaconess. She is married to Rev. Jason Braaten.

A Field Guide to Family Life at the Seminary

Mrs. Gretchen Roberts

I grew up at the seminary in St. Louis and started my family at the seminary in Fort Wayne. In all those years, two things stand out: one, my dad and my husband were often very busy; and two, my mom taught me how to cherish our family life, so that we always would have quality, if not quantity, time together.

A good family life is important no matter where you live. At the seminary, with the big, sometimes scary changes involved in moving and starting a new life, the emotional anchor family provides is doubly important. What's more, your years at the seminary will lay the groundwork for life in the parish, and the foundation of a happy family life will last through your years serving the church. Here are four ways to keep your family life healthy and happy at the Fort and beyond.

- 1. Have realistic expectations of how much time you'll have together.** Fifteen credit hours may seem like Easy Street compared to a full-time job, but don't forget the old rule of thumb: study three hours for every credit hour, and suddenly fifteen hours turns into sixty. If you're headed into seminary for a second career in the ministry, study time may be even longer as you flex your brain back into school mode after several years off.

Then there's socializing. To the uninitiated, a group of men sitting around drinking beer and debating whether John 6 is sacramental looks like slacking off. Wives, you may even think your husband is wasting precious time he could be spending on chores at home, playing with the kids, or taking advantage of quality time with you. But put away the "honey-do" list: that time is really well spent. Much of a seminarian's education happens outside the classroom—in the halls, in conversation, in heated debates over the nuances of theology. When he's out in the parish, feeling isolated, those very men he drank beer with at *Gemütlichkeit* are the ones he calls and e-mails for brotherly support.

You'll be much happier if you adjust your expectations of how much time your husband really needs for school, so you can make the most of the time you have with him.

- 2. Protect and enjoy your family time.** Certainly school must come first—that's why you're here, right? But don't forget about the other vocations God may have blessed you with, including husband and father.

I could tell you about all the things there are to do in Fort Wayne, but that isn't the point. What really matters is that the time you have together is full of joy and love. Years ago, men weren't allowed to have families while at the seminary. When you're stressed and busy and thinking of family time as another chore, instead thank God that you have your wonderful wife and children to help you through these challenging years.

Wives, life can get stressful for you at seminary too. You may be working to support your husband through school or staying home to raise the kids (feeling quite alone sometimes). Remind yourself to embrace and enjoy the moments you all have as a family, focusing on the many gifts God has given you instead of the pressures of your own day or the ways your husband may have come up short.

- 3. Keep your marriage alive.** Martin Luther called his wife, "my lord Kate," and Katherine was mistress of the original Lutheran parsonage. She put up with an awful lot—frequent unannounced visitors, Luther's bouts of depression—but when Luther got out of line, Katie didn't hesitate to let him know. One evening at the table, Luther was teasing her about having more than one wife, since women can only have one child a year, while men can have many. He went on for awhile, until Katie finally said, "Before I put up with this, I'd rather go back to the convent and leave you and all our children."

Of course, we Lutheran women can't threaten to run back to the convent, but we can follow Katie's example and put our own feet down when our husbands lose sight of how wonderful we are, which is bound to happen when they're engrossed in memorizing Hebrew verbs. As our husbands' helpers, we have the duty and privilege to support him in everything (that's why you're moving to Indiana, right?). Men, don't forget your side of this: Ephesians 5:25 says "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Luther may have married Katie to set an example of marriage, but you have the honor of setting an example of love.

- 4. Wives, get your own life.** When we first arrived at the seminary, I had a hard time as the trailing spouse. We'd moved for my husband; I had to quit my job and leave my family and friends to come to Fort Wayne. Our new social network revolved around his Greek study group, and it took me awhile

to make my own friends and find a job. In the meantime, I had too much time on my hands, and it was easy to resent my husband, who from day one had a whirl of activities and commitments.

It wasn't until I got involved in the Student Wives Association, taking classes on Tuesday nights and meeting other women, who would become my lifelong friends, that the resentment melted away. Suddenly I had things to do while my husband was holed up studying. Having your own thing, whatever it is, will help you focus less on what you don't have, and focus more on the blessings God has provided you during your time at the seminary.

How you cope with, and hopefully embrace, your seminary years will likely carry through when you're settled into the parish. Set a good precedent now for healthy family balance, and you'll have a happy family life in the future too. Your family is a wonderful gift from God. Revel in it, enjoy each other, and always remember to keep Christ at the center.

Mrs. Gretchen Roberts is a freelance writer who has contributed to Women's Day, Redbook, and Better Homes and Gardens. She publishes The Smart Woman's Guide to a Simple Life, a weekly dose of simple wisdom at www.smartsimplewoman.com. She is married to Rev. Derek Roberts who serves First Lutheran Church in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Pastoral Ministry

Watch Your Life and Doctrine Closely

Rev. Terry Cripe

“Kee a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching” (1 Timothy 4:16). Perhaps a brother pastor will (or has) used this passage as a blessing for you at your ordination. I’d briefly like to share with you my thoughts on this wise counsel from St Paul.

“Keep a firm grasp on your character.” That’s important because, as you will discover, there are some real characters out there among your brother pastors. We’ve all heard the phrase, “Character counts.” That is doubly true for the pastoral ministry. Few positions require such a high level of trust for effectiveness. A high school teacher once told our class, “There are four people with whom you must be totally honest: your banker, your doctor, your lawyer, and your pastor.” Look at the list of qualifications that St Paul sets forth in his first letter to Timothy and his letter to Titus. The majority of them have to do with character, not ability.

Yet you will face a multitude of situations that could cause you to lose your grasp on your character and behave in an uncharacteristic way. The child sitting in the front pew sails a paper airplane at you during your sermon. A teen curses you during catechism class. A single mom makes advances during a counseling session. An influential member assures you that you will do fine as long as you don’t bring any of those African Americans into his church. An organist refuses to play the order of service you have selected. Someone spreads a lie about you. If you are not maintaining a firm grasp on your character when any of those challenges bubble up, you will lose your grip. In fact, when most pastors have reacted to those kinds of situations in an out-of-character way, they have, upon reflection, said their inappropriate behavior happened when they were tired, worried about some issue in their own family, or were dealing with other crises. In nine times out of ten, your initial reaction to such situations will not be helpful. Rather, if at all possible, first spend time with your Lord in prayer and in Scripture. Then, if necessary, consult brother pastors before responding to the situation.

Even though we are known to be a church body concerned with doctrine, Paul's words about keeping a grasp on your teaching is not to be minimized. It is very easy to "go beyond what is written," as St Paul warns the Corinthians not to do. Keeping a firm grasp on your doctrine means knowing where the congregation has the freedom to decide matters and letting them do it even though their preference may not be yours. You will be tempted by those well-meaning people who will say, "Pastor, what do you think?" For four years you've been trained to tell exactly what you think to professors during the day and to classmates in long-night discussions over a beer or two.

But don't misunderstand this question. The first thing you should think about is, "Whose church is this?" Some will want you to do the heavy lifting and decide for them. You will have far better results by telling them all the information they need to make the decision that they will have to live with long after you've gone. Of course, when it is a question purely about doctrine, what either you or the congregation thinks doesn't count for much. But you will want to be very careful about setting the boundary that separates a doctrinal issue from a practical one. Not everything that is lawful is helpful, as the eager pastor who wanted to place the American flag in its so-called proper place soon learned when he tried to move it.

One of our synod's best ways to help its pastors maintain a grasp on their doctrine and character is the monthly circuit conference. Bring your questions and concerns about doctrine and practice to your fellow pastors first. The conference is your safety valve, where, without fear of censure from others, you can speak your mind and be open to their patient advice and correction. Voicing your concerns about a certain teaching to your people from the pulpit first places you in the risk of having to recant later. Then your parishioners will think, "If he was wrong about that, where else might he be wrong?" In addition, if your circuit develops a monthly schedule of topics and asks you to make a presentation, please give it your best effort as though you were preparing it for a professor. Your brother pastors will appreciate your hard work helping them keep a firm grasp on their doctrine too!

God be with you in your service to His people as their pastor.

Rev. Terry Cripe (CTS 1974) is a pastor from Ohio who has served as the Ohio District president since 2006.

The Pastor and His Family

Rev. David H. Petersen

Family life is not unique to pastors. Every Christian is called to family duties for no Christian lives in isolation, apart from a family. Pastors' families are somewhat unique in that a healthy family life is required both to enter into and to remain in the office of the holy ministry. This isn't generally true of secular work. Few employers would terminate an employee who gets divorced, or has an affair, or whose children won't come to church. For most employers, your family life and what you do on your off time is your own.

The fact that pastors must have healthy family lives and must live in an outwardly decent manner is often seen by pastors and their families as a burden. The metaphors mostly invoked are that of "living in a fishbowl" and "double standards." The family often feels they are being watched and judged at every turn. This feeling can create a great deal of fear and stress in both those who desire the noble task and in those who serve in it, as well as all those who love them.

But there are unique benefits enjoyed by the pastor's family that are often overlooked.

1. Time at home.

Most pastors don't work an average week much over sixty hours. Most pastors work closer to fifty hours a week, including Sunday mornings. Since they rarely suffer a commute, that puts pastors at home more than the average working American. Many pastors even go home for lunch, which is practically unheard of in corporate America.

2. Time at work with the family.

Part of the pastor's work includes time with his family in worship. The pastor's family is involved in his work. They not only know his co-workers, understand and honor what he does, but they see him in action week after week. For the pastor, work time and family time often blend. If the pastor's children are in the parish school, this is even more true. Few of those in church on Sunday morning can call worship both work and family time.

3. Time for family when needed.

Pastors have one of the most flexible schedules in America. It is mostly easy for pastors to attend school and church functions with their families. There has never been a more understanding employer than the church when it comes to family values and family time.

Pastors who live in parsonages are also free of the normal chores of home maintenance, again, giving them more time for family.

But what of the pressure of living in the fishbowl? Apart from some unfortunate and isolated instances, the modern church does not actually inflict this pressure on its pastors and their families. In the past fifteen years, we have seen a great increase in pastors' wives working outside the home, pastors' kids being home schooled or not attending the local Lutheran high school, and pastors buying their own homes. So also pastors' wives are no longer automatically expected to teach Sunday School, to belong to the Ladies'Aid or LWML, to sing in the choir, or play the organ. The congregations of the LCMS have simply allowed pastors and their families to make their own decisions.

The feeling of living in a fishbowl is mostly a self-inflicted phenomena. The reality in most places is not much different from being the wife or children of the principal of the local high school or dentist or some other public figure. There can be some pressure. There is a public aspect to the pastor's family life. And the family does have an obligation to love and support the father. It will certainly be noticed if these are glaringly missing. But how the family does that is up to them and congregations are very supportive and understanding, wanting the pastor and his family to be happy in their community.

So also it should be noted that the slight pressure pastors and their families endure is not all bad. The Law works not only to accuse us and teach us. It also works to guide us. All Christians are guided by the Law. Consider the Law's demand that we study God's Word and call upon God's name. The Christian policeman is called upon to do those things as much as the pastor, but for the most part he must do them after work, while the pastor does them as part of his office and employment. He does so for the good of the congregation he serves. But it is also good for him, for the man who serves as pastor. In much the same way, the discipline to be a good family man is stronger for the pastor than the Christian policeman because the pastor's livelihood depends upon it and it is also more obviously related to his being a good pastor than it is to the policeman being a good policeman.

Thus it turns out that despite its challenges, family life is easier in a pastor's house than it is in a layman's.

Rev. David Petersen (CTS 1996) is currently serving at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Myths About Being a Pastor's Wife

Mrs. Julie Stiegemeyer

The memories. . . I treasure more than any are all those many times we gathered together around God's Word and Sacrament—the sad but comforting prayer service after 9/11, the funerals when the message of God's grace and love for us supported us in our grief, the darkened church on Good Friday with the Easter lilies scenting the back stairway . . . I want to thank you with heartfelt gratitude for welcoming my family into your homes, for your patience and kindness, for making our family feel so loved and cherished."

These are some of the thoughts I shared in a goodbye letter to our congregation when my husband, their pastor, took a call from his first parish in 2006. He had served Concordia Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for seven years, and when it was time to say goodbye, I shed lots of tears.

If your husband is considering becoming a pastor, you probably have a lot of questions, not only about the practical matters of moving to the seminary and making a living through his years of education, but also about what being a pastor's wife in a congregation is all about. Will the congregation expect you to be in charge of VBS, Sunday School, and the choir? What will the congregation mean to you and your family? Will you shed lots of tears when you leave your first parish? In other words, will your experience in the congregation be a wonderful, uplifting one, or one filled with frustrations?

In order to explore some of these questions, let's visit some of the myths that you may or may not have heard (or even may assume about the pastors' wives you know), and see if we can come up with some strategies and tips that will help you as you consider the possibility of being a pastor's wife.

Myth #1 – A Good Pastor's Wife Plays the Organ, Serves on the Ladies' Aid, Works as the Sunday School Superintendent, Helps with the Altar Guild, and Sings in the Choir.

Behind this myth is the idea that the pastor's wife has to be involved in all areas of congregational life, even if she has no natural inclination to work on all of those

various tasks. I know a pastor's wife who likes being the church secretary, another who enjoys playing the organ, a third who gladly serves on the altar guild, and still another who loves teaching Sunday School. Each one is naturally drawn to these different tasks because it is what she likes to do. Everyone enjoys doing different things, including pastors' wives, which means that it is okay to say no to serving on a committee that has little appeal. It is also commendable to serve in a sacrificial way. I mean, who really loves to wash dishes after an Easter breakfast, or put away chairs after Bible class? There are tasks that need to be done, and a sacrificial and giving spirit should characterize every Christian.

But it all comes back to vocation. A pastor's wife's primary vocation is to serve her husband as wife, to care for the needs of the home, to tend to children if she is a mother. These are her primary vocations. Serving on fifteen different committees at church can definitely cut into your schedule and could limit your ability to care for those placed in your care—your family. So, choosing how to be involved at church not only is based upon your interests; it also depends on how much time you have available. This depends on many factors—a work schedule, family commitments, etc. Being overcommitted and overly busy can lead to burn-out, frustration, and general crabbiness. And who wants to be crabby? I sure don't.

In my years in the parish, helping out at church was, indirectly, a way that I could assist my husband. If no one stepped forward to coordinate VBS, I would be able to help. This can truly be a service to the church. But I've also heard of situations where it can also backfire. The pastor's wife can be stretched too thin, and the congregation becomes overly dependent on very few individuals to keep things at church running.

The policy I have developed is to give myself at least six months in a new location before becoming involved in any ongoing volunteer work, which includes joining a choir, serving on the PTA, or being involved in committees at church. That gives me time to adjust to a new situation and figure out where my time can be spent in the most beneficial ways as well as keeping me focused on my primary vocations of wife and mother.

Myth #2 – A Good Pastor's Wife Doesn't Work Outside the Home.

This is, obviously, an individual choice that each pastor's wife makes with her husband. Often, a pastor's salary is modest, so the extra income the wife can bring in can be a great benefit to the family. But if the pastor and his wife have children, daycare then can become an issue. Although I've never seen any research done on this issue, my guess is that a majority of pastors' wives are employed. The truth is that pastors' wives, generally speaking, have lots of options. One of those options might be to work from home. I've enjoyed the opportunity of writing and working from home, which allows my schedule to be flexible. One thing to keep in mind is to avoid a job that might prevent you from coming to church for worship services, which would be a problem, not only for the pastor's wife, but also for any Christian.

Myth #3 – A Good Pastor's Wife is an Excellent Homemaker.

This myth is rooted in the idea from years past that the pastor lives in a parsonage, which his lovely wife keeps in glowing condition so that members of the congregation can stop by at any time, day or night, and expect to be served a delicious cup of coffee and blueberry muffins piping hot from the oven. This is, obviously, a fantasy. While I've had the occasional unexpected visit and I've been able to welcome a church member into the home and give them fresh scones and a cup of tea, I've also had situations when people have stopped over unexpectedly and gotten licked by the dog, hissed at by the cat, and treated to kids screaming through the kitchen.

The truth is that—whether you live in a parsonage or not—pastors and their families are very normal. Sometimes the house is a mess. Other times it's clean. Sometimes I am feeling hospitable. Other times I may need a nap and not want visitors. Even if you live in a parsonage, a congregation should respect your family's need for privacy and give you the space you need—and most congregations do just that.

That is not to say that you cannot help a friend in genuine need nor turn away the runaway who is standing on your doorstep at 11:00 at night (which happened to us years ago). But everything is tempered with moderation. Welcome the congregation into your home for an annual Christmas open house, have the elders over for a barbeque or host a youth picnic. But if you are still in your pajamas at 10:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning, don't be afraid to ask an unannounced visitor to come back later.

Myth #4 – A Good Pastor's Wife Doesn't Mind Being Referred to Only as "the Pastor's Wife" and Never by Her First Name.

The truth is that pastors' wives have unique, individual skills and talents, and they each hope to be known not only for their connections to their family, but also for their unique contributions. We want to be known as Julie who writes, Marsha who knits, Ginger who homeschools, or Sharla who sings. Of course, we also want to be known as the pastor's wife. We are proud of our husbands and try our best to support them. But we also are individuals. Most congregations embrace their pastor and his family, and enjoy and even brag about their pastor and his wife's abilities. Our congregation in Pittsburgh was very supportive of my children's books and helped me with book signings and promoted my books to friends and neighbors. This is, probably, quite typical. Most congregations love and support their pastor—and by doing so also love and support his family.

Myth #5 – A Good Pastor's Wife Never Loses Her Temper, Never Yells at Her Children, Never Disagrees with Her Husband, Never Peels Out of Her Driveway in a Huff, and is Never Late for Church.

This is a big one! Behind this myth is the idea that pastors' wives are perfect—which of course, we know is not true, but the myth is still perpetuated, consciously or not. Think of the Church Lady from Saturday Night Live. From what I remember, this character was not a pastor's wife, but there is this persistent notion that pastors'

wives are prim and proper and look down their noses at sin. They never have problems, never get frustrated. In short, the myth basically is that pastors' wives are sinless.

And, admit it: we all buy into this myth not only about our pastors but also about their families. We raise our eyebrows when we hear a pastor's wife shout at her kids or gossip about a neighbor. We become irritated with the pastor who is ten minutes late to a meeting.

The truth is that pastors and their wives do try. Because we are loved by Christ and rejoice in the salvation He has earned for us, we in turn love our neighbors and do our best to live godly lives. But the bottom line is that we're all sinners. We're all desperately in need of the grace and mercy of Christ. Pastors and their wives do not have a special pipeline to God. My prayers are not more effective than anyone else's. And though I do spend a lot of time in church, I still lose my temper, don't feel like cooking dinner, get lazy, make nasty comments, gossip, and get angry much too easily. And for these things I repent. The truth is that a pastor's wife—just like everyone else—is loved by Christ, doing her best to fulfill her vocation of wife to the man God placed into her arms.

If your husband is considering going into the Office of the Holy Ministry, you are both in the middle of a challenging and emotional decision. But you can rest assured about one thing: God who has cared for you all your years will continue to guide and love you. No matter what changes happen in your family, our faithful God will see you through it all.

Mrs. Julie Stiegemeyer is a children's book author and English professor. She has been married to Rev. Scott Stiegemeyer since 1990.

A Pastor with Depression

Rev. Todd Peperkorn

*"My flesh and my heart may fail
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:26).*

What does a pastor do when he can't get up in the morning? Where does he go when he can't face the everyday tasks of the preacher like shut-in calls, funerals, weddings, or even Sunday morning? When the thought of standing in front of a Bible class or shaking people's hands after church fills the pastor with dread, then he is in trouble.

Welcome to the pastor and depression.

Depression strikes one in every ten people in America and is particularly common among service fields like social workers, nurses, doctors, teachers, pastors, and others. Those who give of themselves every day by taking on the trials and difficulties in the lives of others often find themselves overwhelmed by the weight put upon them. This weight or yoke of the office can become a real, physical burden that has an effect upon the body. Depression is one of the common outcomes of this weight.

Depression is not simply feeling sad for a while, even if it may last for a few weeks or more. Depression is a medical condition that involves prolonged feelings of sadness or melancholy, the inability to function on a day-to-day basis (at various levels), and usually manifests itself in physical symptoms like insomnia, irregular eating patterns, decreased libido, and other problems. Medical manuals will use the lovely phrase "neurovegetative" signs. What this means in English is that the patient may simply cease to function in normal settings because of the changes in the nervous system. The causes can be genetic (hereditary), but it can also be caused by a series of situations or triggers, such as stressful situations in the congregation or at home, chronic problems with individuals in the parish (antagonists), or others.

But there is hope. Although depression is serious, it is also treatable. Medical advances have made the treatment of depression much more patient oriented and

specific than they were even ten years ago. Between medication, counseling, a supportive family, and the ministry of a faithful pastor, healing is possible, and the pastor may come out as a better pastor at the end of the journey.

Why does it take all of these people? First of all, the pastor has to get over himself and the thought that he can face all problems alone, or that depression is simply a part of the Office. Second, depression is a medical condition, not simply an emotional state of mind. If you broke your leg, you would go to a doctor. If your mind is not working as it ought, then go to a doctor to figure out what the problem is! A faithful pastor can help you work your way through all of these things, offer the comfort of the Word of God, pray with you and for you, and minister to you with the forgiveness of sins in private confession and absolution. A counselor will help you work through the situational problems each patient faces, and help to order the healing, and help the patient to make decisions that they may be unable to make themselves.

Depression is real, and it is a challenge for pastors. Our knowledge of this disease grows every day, but more importantly, our Lord suffers with us in all of our trials. He promises health and healing to all who call upon Him, whether it be in this life or finally in the life to come.

Finally, in terms of the Ministry, it is always important to realize that it is Christ's Ministry, not yours. Our heavenly Father will use your weaknesses as His strengths, and will bring all things together for the good of His Church (Ephesians 1). It does not all sit on your shoulders. You are never alone.

Rev. Todd Peperkorn (CTS 1996) served as an admission counselor at Concordia Theological Seminary for three years and has been a pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Wisconsin since 1999.

Making Disciples

Rev. Ernie Lassman

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18–20).

Making disciples of Jesus Christ is based on one simple fact: He is alive. On the third day, he rose from the dead. If that is true, and it is, then everything about Jesus Christ is true. He is the world's only Savior from sin, death, and eternal damnation. He alone has done all that is necessary for mankind to be reconciled to God through the forgiveness of sin. On the cross Jesus Christ was punished for the sins of the world and the debt that every human being owed to God was canceled in full (Colossians 2:13–15). The cross is the turning point in human history. With sin forgiven and reconciliation to God accomplished, every other blessing of God is available including the resurrection from the dead to eternal life. No wonder that this message of Jesus Christ is called Gospel, the Greek word for good news.

Any good news is meant to be shared with others. How much more so then the Gospel? There is so much bad news in the world. The Christian Church and especially pastors have the wonderful joy of bringing good news to others. A pastor wants others to know what he knows and to have what he has: good news in Jesus Christ.

But Jesus tells us not simply to tell others about Him but to make disciples. There might be many ways to bear witness to Jesus, to tell others about him, but there is only one way to make disciples: baptizing and teaching. The New Testament Greek word for disciple means learner. We can see this definition of a disciple in what Jesus says in the Matthew 28:18–20: "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." This teaching is not simply head knowledge, although that is included, but this teaching involves the whole person: intellect, heart, and will. Such teaching includes the good news of Jesus Christ as savior from sin, death, and damnation. But, of course,

such teaching involves learning to live “a life worthy of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27). To be a disciple of Jesus Christ includes both what to believe and how to live.

The pastor has a central role to serve in making disciples. There are many ways to witness to Christ, to share the Gospel with others, but to be a disciple means to be taught the Christian faith. This is one of the main tasks of the pastor (2 Timothy 2:2) as he teaches the whole will of God (Acts 20:27). In addition to preaching the Word from the pulpit and teaching Bible classes, the pastor teaches a course on basic Christian teachings that every Christian needs to know to be a disciple. This course is known by a variety of titles: Adult Catechism, Adult Instruction Class, or Adult Information Class. The seminary’s mission is to equip men for this very task of bringing the gospel to others, teaching others the whole will of God. The life of a pastor includes ongoing study of God’s Word, building on the solid foundation he was given at the seminary. With great joy and enthusiasm the pastor teaches others all that he knows.

But discipleship includes being baptized. Teaching and baptizing always go together. The infant or young child who is baptized is taught the Word of God, both at home and in the congregation. While many may teach the child, the pastor remains the main teacher of the congregation and teaches children the whole will of God through catechism classes and in other ways. Adults and older children who are brought to faith through the Word are then baptized by the pastor who has been called by the congregation. Baptism is the linchpin that holds faith and works together. In baptism the disciple receives all the blessings of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:26–27). But Baptism also makes the disciple dead to sin and alive to God by uniting him to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1–11). Baptism empowers the disciple to live a life worthy of the Gospel. What a joy to be God’s servant by baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit so that others might receive what Jesus Christ has won and be His disciples. Through his call the pastor has been given the public office of the ministry in which he is authorized to preach and teach the Word and to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (AC V).

For three years Jesus Christ personally taught and supervised the twelve apostles so that they might be equipped for their mission. He gave them His authority and promised His presence. Through the many centuries, countless men have followed in their footsteps. Will you be one of them? Do you have a desire to make disciples by baptizing and teaching? Do you want to tell others what you know and give them what you have in Jesus Christ? If you do, the seminary is ready to form you as a servant of God to make disciples by baptizing and teaching.

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A Pastor in the City

Rev. Ingo Dutzmann

The world comes to my doorstep. I know this sounds almost egotistical, but it is true. The world really does come to my doorstep. I am blessed to be the senior pastor of a congregation in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod that is located deep in the heart of a major American city. It is a difficult, challenging, rewarding, and exhilarating experience to be the Lord's metropolitan undershepherd, and it is the only place in which, God-willing, I want to serve out my ministry.

I know. I know. To some of you, this sounds like madness. You may find yourself in agreement with the early nineteenth-century clergyman Caleb Colton who said, "Men, by associating in . . . cities, improve their talents, but impair their virtues; and strengthen their minds, but weaken their morals." Or consider the seventeenth-century poet Abraham Cowley who lamented, "God the first garden made, and Cain the first city."

Yet there have been other voices. The nineteenth-century Scotsman Thomas Guthrie said, "I bless God for cities. They have been as lamps of life along the pathways of humanity and religion. Within them, science has given birth to her noblest discoveries. Behind their walls freedom has fought her noblest battles. They have stood on the surface of the earth like great breakwaters, rolling back or turning aside the swelling tide of oppression. Cities indeed, have been the cradles of human liberty. They have been the active sentries of almost all Church and state reformation."

Early in the Book of Acts, Jesus promised His followers to await the baptismal power of the Holy Spirit before going out to "be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:5, 8). While ministry to cities receives minor mention here, it is instructive to note what actually happens when the first missionary journeys take place. Armed with our Lord's encouragement, the early voyages of St. Paul and his varied entourage took them to the cities made famous by the canonical books that carry their name: Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica, and Rome. While certainly there were ministries in the Galatian countryside, these receive far less mention in the Scriptures. It is the cities

where the seeds of a nascent Christianity sprouted, grew, flourished, and then spread throughout the civilized and uncivilized world.

As the Early Church gained in members and stature, it was in the cities that an enormous Christian vitality emerged. The great cities of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Damascus, Byzantium, and Rome became the thriving centers of this faith. Even after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Muslims, it was another city, Moscow, that assumed the mantle of the fifth city of Eastern Orthodoxy.

By the time of the Reformation, it was the cities of Wittenberg, Augsburg, Leipzig, Braunschweig, Hanover, and Dresden, all of which figured prominently in the rise of what was to become the great movement to restore the centrality of the Scripture as the only rule and norm of faith and life. Is it any wonder that in the so-called new world the Lutheran presence became so prominent in New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, and others?

I freely admit that our denomination has not fared well in the city of late, but cities still draw the people of God today for the same reasons that the early apostles were lured to them. In a nutshell, cities are without question the world's economic, political, musical, medical, literary, technological, and artistic hubs. And, most importantly, they are also the hubs of religion.

Where but in a city do Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus regularly get invited to your church by Christian colleagues and friends? Where but in a city church do you find members on welfare worshiping alongside multi-generational millionaires? Where but in a city do you get a small glimpse of what heaven will be like as Asians, Africans, Americans, Australians, and Europeans worship together side-by-side? Where but in a city does even a small congregation have the corporate will, personal talent, and musical resources to lift up vibrant liturgically-based Word and Sacrament worship to its rightful place as the spiritual highlight of the week? Where but in a city do you find students and young professionals ready, willing, and able to joyfully assume the burdens of leadership in large numbers alongside their older colleagues? And where but in a city can you affect future leaders of countries all around the world by introducing them to the Savior of the world?

Permit me to give you a few examples of city ministry that I have not experienced in any non-city setting. I realize that God can and does work miracles wherever He wills, but I truly believe the number and scope of these miracles is directly attributable to the fact that I work and minister in the heart of a city.

For instance, an ex-convict was sent by a prison chaplain to me with the admonition that if Christ was not to be part of his rehabilitation, he'd find himself back behind bars. Happily, he seems determined not to recidivate. An Asian couple felt led to publish and copyright their own Christian pamphlet for distribution by the thousands to a distant land. The leader of a city synagogue regularly attends our worship with his Lutheran wife and child and comments on the interesting

connections between the Hebrew prophecies and New Testament fulfillment. A teenager from a broken home asks me what it takes to be a Lutheran, and in time, he and his mother become convicted followers of Jesus. A recovering homosexual becomes such a dedicated Christian that I find him comforted by The Book of Concord shortly before he dies of medical complications. A member is so taken by the vibrancy of our ministry that she commits herself to an increase of financial stewardship from \$200 per month to over \$2,000 per week. A young musician from a land behind the former Iron Curtain wins a prestigious award for organ performance and is offered a lucrative career in concertizing. Instead, he applies for a music position in our church, because he says that after years of not being allowed to worship, he'd rather serve Christ than his own personal musical ambitions. Is it any wonder that my wife and I feel God is blessing us in ways we could not have dreamed possible just a decade ago?

I'd like to sum up by sharing the contents of a postcard I received from a prominent Japanese businessman with three earned terminal degrees, a man whose twenty-two-year-old daughter I had baptized some months earlier much to his displeasure. To her credit, she had told her father what she intended to do prior to the Baptism. The card read, "Dear Pastor Dutzmann, My daughter was bad. Now she is good. I believe this has something to do with Jesus. I must think about this. Sincerely yours." Yes, I might have gotten this card while serving outside the city but probably not. The truth is that just as St. Paul and the apostles saw the cities as the hub to which people came for a myriad reasons, so too the cities send people out after they become convicted Christians, and they, in turn, with the help of the Holy Spirit turn the world upside-down. Indeed, as a city pastor, the world comes to my doorstep.

Rev. Ingo Dutzmann (CSL 1980) has served a congregation in Boston, Massachusetts, since 2003.

Sermons with Substance

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Naumann

So you have your sermon text in the original language and in the translation of your choice. You have your favorite commentaries and perhaps a word processor or other apparatus. Now what?

You prepare a sermon, a message, an exposition of God's Word. Regardless of what you may call it, and regardless of whether you will be expounding the Holy Scriptures from an outline or a complete manuscript, the task will be the same: you will endeavor to communicate God's Word to His people.

A sermon with substance will be one in which divine revelation constitutes the point of departure—the launching point. The challenge is to articulate the message at the heart of a given biblical text in language that your audience understands. As Scott Stiegemeier wrote recently, “It’s about understanding the Scriptures AND understanding the people so that the one can be applied faithfully to the other.”

The people gathered to listen to you may be a mixture of people across the whole range of beliefs and understanding, from seasoned Lutheran believers to the unchurched or even de-churched. This is where you as a curator of souls are called upon to make diagnoses and apply the appropriate remedy to your patients. For this reason, the Law and Gospel paradigm is widely taught as intrinsic to a sermon's structure.

Everyone listening to you suffers from the same sickness—sin and guilt—real or perceived. Since some will, no doubt, be oblivious to or in denial of their sins, it is the preacher's job to awaken their consciences with the truth that God's Law reveals. Yet the “disclosure of sin,” as the Lutheran Confessions call it, may be the easy part, but it is not the supreme aim of the preacher.

The sermon is to be a proclamation of the Gospel above all. Without the good news about Christ as Savior being pre-eminent, the sermon is at risk of becoming more poisonous than helpful—a pitfall that has historically plagued many a sermon in the past. As the Formula of Concord warns,

“In regard to the disclosure of sin: the veil of Moses [2 Corinthians 3:13–16] hangs in front of the eyes of all people as long as they only hear the preaching of the law and nothing of Christ, and thus they never learn to recognize the true nature of their sin from the law. Instead, they either become presumptuous hypocrites, like the Pharisees, or they despair, like Judas.”

Melanchthon summarizes the true aim of a sermon when he writes, “The sum of the preaching of the gospel is to condemn sin and to offer the forgiveness of sins, righteousness on account of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, so that having been reborn we might do good. Christ includes this in a summary of the gospel when he says in the last chapter of Luke [24:47] ‘that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in [my] name to all nations.’”

Preachers are taught to conclude sermons with a Gospel thought rather than a Law challenge because the Gospel, rather than the Law, is what truly motivates people. A Gospel thought leaves people with grateful hearts, searching for ways to react with service, as the Psalmist says, “What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people” (Psalm 116:12–15). Grateful hearts are devoted hearts, and thankful people to whom the Gospel has been given will commit themselves to service more willingly than people who are issued with demand after demand of the Law.

Remember who your main audience is. Most will be regenerate sinner-saints, fully equipped with new selves being ever more conformed to the image of their Creator. They will be Christian people more in need of “teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16) than heathens in need of regeneration.

Believers who listen to your sermons will always be encumbered with an old Adam that only reluctantly listens to what you say. But they will also be blessed with a new self that God has prepared to hear His Word. For this reason, human beings need a dynamic proclamation of both Law and Gospel. Rev. William Cwirla once wrote that the late Dr. Kenneth Korby was admired because he “preached the Law lawfully, not a moralizing, defanged legalism that gums you, but a Doberman that locks its jaws on you and won’t let you wiggle out of its grip. Korby’s law preaching was short, swift, and surgical. The wages of sin is death, and no one, including you, dear hearer, ever misses payday. No pious platitudes of rehab and recovery. No bargaining with God, or buttering Him up with greasy religion. The Law’s killing accent was always on the penultimate syllable of God’s Word, however, the ultimate was always the Gospel. He preached the Gospel evangelically, proclaiming Jesus Christ and His all-reconciling bloody death by which sinners are justified and all things are made new. It was an imperative Gospel that called for faith and created the faith it called for.”

Nor should the ordinary sermon situation be demeaned as mere “preaching to the choir.” The most effective sermons are those that build up believers in need of help

to become what St. Peter called “living stones . . . being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”(1 Peter 2:5). A sermon that is useful to the choir will effectively multiply the ministry of the pastor by helping equip those whom God expects to be useful ambassadors for Him in their day-to-day vocations outside of the walls of the church. Deliver a sermon of substance, and you will have done your part to be God’s messenger, and preaching will “so sweet a service be that angels well might envy me”(LSB 560).

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Naumann (CTS 1982) served a Lutheran congregation in London, England, before coming to the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, area in 2003 to become pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Oakmont.

Writing for the Ear

Rev. Kurt Onken

I've never considered myself to be a writer. Sure, I've been writing sermons every week now for over eleven years. But with early training in the performing and visual arts, I've always considered myself to be more of a musician and an artist. My tools of the trade were the piano and the violin, reading dots on a staff with little flags attached. Or they were pencils, pen and ink, and paint and brushes, making marks and strokes on paper and canvas.

I don't know why it took me so long to realize it, but it finally dawned on me that as a pastor, I really am a writer. Pastors have to be wordsmiths. They deal with words and their meanings as they seek to proclaim the timeless truth of the Gospel.

Now, this doesn't mean that all pastors are going to be producing theological tomes, journal articles, or novels and screenplays. Sermons may be all they will consistently write throughout their ministry (not counting the occasional church newsletter article). Nevertheless, pastors are still writers.

Lately, I've also been more conscious of writing for the ear rather than the eye. In other words, writing something that will be spoken and heard is different than writing something that will be read and processed in the head. When you read, you may be able mentally to process a very long sentence similar to some of St. Paul's lengthy passages in his Epistles, where he goes on and on to make a theological point, his thoughts separated in the text by conjunctions and commas and semi-colons and parentheses (although none of those are present in the original Greek; they are placed there by translators for ease of reading and comprehension). In case you didn't notice, that last sentence was a very long one. I imagine you handled it very well as you read along. Listening to that long sentence in a Sunday sermon, however, could be problematic. It would be very easy to drift off in the middle and start thinking about what you are going to have for lunch after the service is over. Therefore, one key to writing for the ear is to use shorter sentences.

Also, it's important to have a clear theme with an outline that makes sense. One thought should logically follow upon another. When the sermon goes off on

tangent after tangent, the hearers will leave wondering, “What in the world was that preacher trying to say?”

Another key to writing for the ear is to use simple words. Don’t try to impress everyone with your extensive vocabulary. You’ll just sound pretentious and you will only confuse your hearers. Certainly, words like *justification* must be used. But it’s important to unpack theological terms for the listeners. Otherwise, they will start to tune out.

There are other literary devices that can be used when writing for the ear. You may be familiar with them if you’ve ever studied poetry. Repetition is the repeating of a word or a phrase. Alliteration is the repetition of a sound, in particular the first consonant of a word. Rhyming can also be used, but sparingly. After all, you’re not Dr. Seuss and you’re not preaching about green eggs and ham or a cat in a hat.

Writing is a craft. Writing a sermon is too. Pastors ought to take steps periodically to evaluate their skills and improve their craft. But a well-crafted sermon is not going to improve the power of the Word of God. The Word of God is what works. Read Isaiah 55:10–11. On the other hand, it’s important for the preacher not to get in the way of the Gospel by preparing sermons that are hard to listen to.

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Teaching the Faith

Rev. Berton Greenway

“An overseer, then, must be . . . able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2).

The young Christian lady in my office was lamenting her sins. Aware that she had failed God again, she felt an overwhelming despair. I assured her of God’s love in Christ and how He carried her sins to the cross. I explained to her the meaning of justification and about how, without our works, God declares us righteous before Him. As I did, you could see joyful recognition in her eyes, the blessed awareness that these were familiar words of comfort and life. Yet, suddenly and strangely, with that recognition came more sadness and almost disgust. “Why do I keep forgetting this, Pastor? Why does this not come naturally to me?” Without her knowing, she had suggested a most basic Christian truth. “But that’s just it,” I told her. “It doesn’t come naturally to us. This Gospel has to be learned over and over again.”

It is important to remember that the Christian truths we teach are not as rationally perceptible as to say that two plus two equals four. While not irrational, these truths are by nature incomprehensible to us, that is, we can’t on our own understand them. The words of Paul come to mind: “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Corinthians 2:14). Nor is it possible for a Christian to retain this confession by his own wisdom and strength. The flesh is far too weak, the temptations of the world are far too great, and the demonic attacks of the evil one are far too powerful. All of this keeps us from remaining in faith on our own. One might as well try to kiss his own elbow than to become and remain a believer in Christ on his own. The words of the catechism spell this out: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him.” If we take that seriously, then the young lady was right: “The message of God’s forgiveness in Christ does not come naturally to us, nor does believing any of the truths of Christ.”

If we continue Luther's thought mentioned above, we find that Luther also knew the solution to this problem of unbelief. Luther continues, "But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His Gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith." The Gospel is the power that works faith in our hearts. This is why the Gospel must be taught over and over again, and it is why pastors are called to teach the doctrine of Christ. We must teach a Gospel that human beings cannot discover, find, or even believe on their own. This is why Paul told Timothy that one of the characteristics of a qualified overseer (pastor) is that he must be "able to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2). The Gospel of Jesus must be taught if it is to be believed, as Paul says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). This need to teach is why our Lord included it in His Great Commission: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20).

Of course, if we are to teach, we must be taught to teach. Even Apollos, though filled with the Spirit of God, was taken aside and taught privately by Pricilla and Aquilla so that he might teach the faith "more accurately" (Acts 18:26). The seminary becomes that very important process in the development of pastors. Taking seriously the confessional requirement that all pastors have a "rightly ordered call" (AC XIV), so that they may be equipped to teach the faith handed down to us, is why our Church insists that those who occupy the Office of the Ministry be first taught so that they can teach others.

This follows the pattern of our Lord. According to Scripture, Jesus taught His disciples for three intense years. It was not an easy process for these humble men. What Jesus taught did not come naturally to them. When they relied on their own reason or feelings to arrive at spiritual conclusions, Jesus, the great Teacher, patiently turned them back to His Word. Day after day, He taught them the message of the Kingdom. In a similar way, one's studies at the seminary are not always an easy process. A seminarian is taught not to rely upon his own reasoning powers, but only on the doctrine of Christ as found in the Word. For all these reasons, time at the seminary will be a challenge both spiritually and academically.

But while the time at the seminary will not always be easy, most pastors will find that their four years of seminary education were some of the best years of their lives. What a delight it is to sit at the feet of learned professors, enveloped in the teachings of Christ and His Word. There is an ongoing realization that you are being taught to teach God's people something more than mere religious facts. Instead, you are learning the eternal, powerful truths of God's saving mercy in Jesus Christ. It is more than extraordinary to know that each day you are being taught the most important truths in this world.

Yes, there is nothing more essential for all human beings than the Gospel that God has called His pastors to teach. They are chosen by Him to instruct others in the most precious of all truths, the truth of Jesus Christ given for us on the cross. They teach of His person, His work, and His victory for all mankind. They instruct God's people in the meaning and use of Baptism, Word, and Supper. They teach them to

pray and do good works and much more. None of this comes naturally to us. And that is why pastors are taught to teach.

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Confession and Absolution

Rev. Prof. John Pless

Justification is both a problem and solution. Oswald Bayer has described human existence as forensically structured. That is to say, life demands justification. Listen to the way people respond when confronted with a failure. It is the language of self-defense, rationalization, or blaming. No human being wants to be wrong. Or listen to the eulogies delivered at the memorial rites for unbelievers. More often than not, they are attempts to vocalize why the deceased person's life was worthwhile. They seek to justify his or her existence. If one is not justified by faith in Christ, one will seek justification elsewhere in attitude or action.

To confess your sin is to cease the futile attempt to self-justify. Rather, it is to join with David in saying to God, "Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you might be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment" (Psalm 51:4). In confession, the sinner acknowledges that God is right. It is to agree with God's verdict. You are guilty.

But to speak of guilt requires some clarification today for another word has come to attach itself to guilt. Now we speak of guilt feelings. Guilt is seen as the subjective reaction of the doer to the deed, (i.e., how I feel about what I have done). But this is not the case with the Scriptures' use of the word *guilt*. In the Bible, guilt has not so much to do with emotions as it does with what happens in a courtroom when a judge declares the defendant guilty. The criminal may or may not have reactions of remorse, regret, or shame. It doesn't matter. The verdict of the judge establishes the reality. God's Word of Law unerringly establishes His judgment. There is no appeal.

John says that to deny the verdict means that the truth is not in us. But denial can never bring release. Only God's Absolution can release from the accusation of the Law and unlock the sinner from his sins. Lutheran theology is nothing if it is not realistic! Like the Scriptures, Lutheran theology does not start with notions about human freedom and the potential (great or small) that human beings have. Theologies that start with assumptions about human freedom end up in bondage. Lutheran

theology begins with man's bondage in sin and ends up with the glorious liberty of the Gospel. The bondage to sin is not a slight defect that can be corrected by appropriate self-discipline. Neither is it a sickness that can be cured by the appropriation of the medication of regular doses of God's grace. Sin is enmity with the Creator that carries with it God's verdict of guilt and a divinely-imposed death sentence. To be a sinner is to be held captive in death and condemnation. The distance between God and humanity is not the gap between infinity and the finite but between a holy God who is judge and man who is the guilty defendant.

Confession is the acknowledgment of this reality. In the rite of individual Confession and Absolution, we pray, "I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all my sins. I have lived as if God did not matter and as if I mattered most" (*LSB* 292). The sin is named not in an effort to get it off one's chest but to acknowledge it before the Lord to whom no secrets are hid. Where sin is not confessed, it remains festering and corrosive, addicting the sinner to yet another go at self-justification. Confession admits defeat, and so leaves the penitent open for a word that declares righteousness, a verdict that justifies. That word is absolution. It is absolution alone, says Gerhard Forde, that is the answer to absolute claim of God who is inescapably present to the sinner.

The focus in the rite of Confession and Absolution is not on the actual confession per se but on the absolution. Disconnected from absolution, confession turns into just another effort to save ourselves. Then the old Adam begins to reckon that he is right with God because his confession was so completely sincere or deeply heartfelt, or that he has been so pious and courageous to make individual confession a part of his regular spiritual discipline. In the Medieval Church, the requirement of no less than an annual trip to the confessional booth and the enumeration of specific sins had transformed Confession into a spiritual torture chamber rather than an occasion for broken bones to be made glad in the Word from the Lord: "I forgive you all your sins."

It is at this point that Luther filters the old practice of private confession through the sieve of the Gospel so that it could be reclaimed for the sake of terrified consciences. In this new version of an ancient rite, the pastor is not there as an ecclesiastical detective to flush out hidden transgressions or an inspector who must assure that standards of quality control are indiscriminately applied to penitential acts. Neither is the pastor a therapist trafficking in slogans of affirmation, a ministry of presence (whatever that frightening term might mean!), or a coach to get you enabled for a sanctified life. No, the pastor is here as the ear and the voice of the Good Shepherd. His words of forgiveness are not his own, but the Lord who has sent him (John 20:21–23).

The ear of the pastor becomes the grave that forever conceals the corpse of sin. It is buried there never to be disinterred. In fact, the pastor's ordination vow puts him under orders never to divulge the sins confessed to him. Never means never. Pastors learn to practice God's own forgetfulness of sins (Psalm 103:9–14). Sins confessed to

the pastor are sealed away in silence.

But the pastor's lips are not sealed. He has a verdict to announce on the basis of the death of the Righteous One for the unrighteous. Your sin is not loaded on your own shoulders. It is carried by the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He takes it to Calvary. There it was answered for in His own blood. His verdict is absolution: "I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." That is justification in faith in action. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

Prof. John Pless graduated from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, in 1979. He was certified for the LCMS through CTS in 1983. He spent a number of years in campus ministry in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and has taught at Concordia Theological Seminary since 2000.

The Lord's Supper

Rev. David Fleming

Isaiah was the first to record the *Sanctus*—the holy, holy, holy of angelic worship at the Lord's throne. He saw the Lord. Poor humbled Isaiah was ashamed of the rot that had come from his mouth and the mouths of his neighbors. It was then that an angel was sent with a coal from the altar to purify his soiled lips. The angel spoke directly to Isaiah, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged."

In the Divine Service, it's rather similar. The *Sanctus* of angels and archangels and all the company of heaven resounds in our ears. We see the Lord appear before us hidden under bread and wine. Then a poor, humbled pastor who has been ashamed of the rot that has come from his mouth and from the mouths of his people has not a coal but the Lord Himself touch his lips and mouth.

After Isaiah's lips were purged, he was sent. After my lips have received the true Body and Blood of Christ to release me from my sins, I'm sent too. The lips and tongues of many sinners hunger and thirst for righteousness, and Christ, the Lord our righteousness, is here to fill them.

When the fullness of time had come, God came down from heaven into the virgin's womb. Then when His saving sacrifice was about to be offered, He left as a last will and testament the only earthly possession that remained at His death—His body and blood. Now that gift, the most powerful medicine ever, bequeathed to His faithful throughout the ages, is taken by my hand and given to fellow sinners of practically every size and shape, sin and fear. One Savior fits all.

Distributing the Savior to sinners is humbling and encouraging, stunning and riveting. The beautiful rhythm—the body of Christ given for you; the body of Christ given for you; the blood of Christ shed for you; the blood of Christ shed for you—echoes the heavenly hymn of holy, holy, holy. Angels are weeping as sinners are being restored. A father and son are reconciled as Christ touches both. A troubled teen receives Christ's comforting touch. A blind woman gently receives the Savior who hasn't yet explained why she's blind, trusting that He is, as He promises, her Savior.

A man who knows death is near receives Christ with urgency and yet peace. A husband and wife who threw sharp dagger-like words at each other the night before now drink from the same cup of the cleansing, loving blood of God. A confirmand speaks her “amen” to the truth that this is the body of Christ for her. Her look and tone expresses that her “amen” is a confession of faith.

No matter how they look, no matter how they sound, no matter whether they are able to kneel or are forced by injury to stand, they come burdened with sin from a broken world to the fullness of the new creation. God in crucified and risen flesh has come to fulfill His kingdom in them. He pours His life-giving body and blood into their dying bodies. The great Physician has become the medicine of immortality. These dying sinners, like their dying pastor, will live in Christ with Christ in them.

I remember a man who was fighting cancer. He was weakened by the disease and another dreadful round of chemo. But he would not stay home. He directed his wife to bring him to church. He stumbled on the way to the Sacrament. Ushers rushed to his side. He allowed them to help him up, but when they saw the torn skin on his arm and tried to turn him around and get him help, he pushed them away. As reverently as he could, he continued to the rail, bowed, and knelt before the Lamb of God who takes away not just the sin of the world but his sin. Bleeding, he ate the body of Christ and drank His blood. He could not imagine choosing to be anywhere else.

I remember a dying pastor, a dear friend, receiving his Savior with me on a screened porch on a beautiful day in June. We celebrated the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession with Jesus’ healing touch for our burdened souls. We enjoyed Christ’s peace that passes all understanding.

I remember a dear family gathered at the rail the day after their ten-year-old son and brother had died on a country road. The six of them had been there the Sunday before the accident. The five were there the Sunday after. We all had tears in our eyes. We all rejoiced that Brandon was safe and was with the same Christ who was filling and blessing us.

In cramped hospital rooms or spacious homes, in a stale, humid care center or in a beautiful chancel, by His Word, Christ deigns to come and eat with sinners in His body and blood under bread and wine. He heals, frees, encourages, and strengthens our bodies and souls. He brings His heavenly reign to a now uncommon place on earth. It’s a privilege to be a witness to it all but even better to be a recipient of my Savior.

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Pastoral Ministry with a Preschool

Rev. Rex Umbenhauer

Jesus!" said the little girl with wide, searching, blue eyes and beautiful blond hair as she looked at me. I was passing by on my way up the aisle toward the front of the nave to lead our preschool chapel. And then, when I turned around, I saw at least eighty other little children along with their teachers all looking at me, waiting to be greeted, waiting for what Jesus would give them: the faith of child. What a joyful and humbling privilege. How thankful I am to be blessed with a preschool as part of my ministry.

It wasn't always this way though. When I first arrived from the seminary, there was no preschool; there were no children in the parish other than those of my own family except one. Those were good days, but now, just over six years later, four since we started the preschool, my ministry is enriched with the addition of more than one hundred thirty preschool-aged children and their families. What a wonderful opportunity the Lord is giving us to reach out with His love and grace.

The Lord instructed His disciples more than once regarding the importance of children and their place in the Kingdom. During His Galilean ministry, Jesus used a young child's humble position to illustrate who would be greatest in the Kingdom, and then the Lord let His disciples know that to welcome a child in His name is to welcome Him. Then, further stressing that the little children not be overlooked or thought of in a lesser way, Jesus says, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10). And later, after the Lord had entered into Judea, His disciples received another lesson. Little children were being brought to Jesus, and the disciples rebuked those bringing them, which immediately brought Jesus' response, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

It is easy for the young children to be overlooked as Jesus' disciples demonstrated, and as we can so easily do, and yet ministering to the little children of a preschool is filled with blessing upon blessing. The Lord wants the little children to

have the love and grace He has for them, and one way to feed them is in our chapel services. To hear such young children pray the Lord's Prayer and learn to recognize the Bible as God's Word, the place from which God speaks, is edifying to the faith of all present, including the teachers and any parent present. There are some parents that attend the preschool chapel fairly regularly, and one might think that they're just checking up on the nature of what is taught, but the frequency of attendance betrays them. I know that several haven't heard the Word taught for many years, and I can see in their faces a joy for being there.

Having a preschool as part of my ministry provides opportunities to meet and create relationships with many more parents than I would otherwise have a chance to. Through various activities sponsored by the preschool for the parents, their children, and for our church members, such as special breakfasts and lunches (e.g., Mother's Day, Father's Day, and many others) held at the school, I get to meet parents in a casual way. Such occasions open the door for the parents to get to know me and for me to learn of ways I can minister to them. Additionally, we have preschool and church get-togethers (e.g., dinners, lectures, and other activities).

A bright spot each month is when one of the preschool classes comes to sing in church. It opens the door for many more to hear the Gospel, since not only do the little children sing of God's grace in Christ, but they and the congregation have an additional opportunity to have the Lord come to them in His Word as I teach the children the Gospel reading for the day. And then we have all the children join our Sunday School teachers so they may hear more from the Lord, while their parents, with no distractions, are fed the Word of the Lord themselves. What joy I feel when parents come and tell me how their children are repeating at home things they learned in our preschool chapel, either through my lesson or through song. For many, this is their only exposure to the Gospel.

Having a preschool as part of my ministry is not only pleasing to the Lord, but it is a special joy for me and for the rest of my congregation. I love seeing the upturned faces covered with smiles and warm greetings each time I enter the preschool, when they come for chapel, or when we see one another out in the community, for in doing so these little children are really greeting the Lord. How true our Lord's words are: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

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Three Books for a Lutheran School

Rev. Brian J. Hamer

The heritage of classical Lutheran education is rooted in two branches of the seven liberal arts: the quadrivium or fourfold way of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music; and the trivium or threefold way of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. However, the crown jewel of Lutheran identity in the day school is the use of three theological books to cast a Lutheran perspective on our understanding of the seven liberal arts: the Bible, the catechism, and the hymnal. This essay will describe the pastoral use of these three books for the Lutheran school, using the worship life of my church's day school as a case study.

The use of the Bible in public worship is guided by a Lutheran lectionary. I use the one-year series in the *Lutheran Service Book* because it annually repeats sacred texts, has a lively legacy in Lutheran Orthodoxy, and is sorely needed by the many students in our day school who do not hear these pericopes on Sunday morning. It is temptation for pastors and teachers to read unreasonably short lessons in school chapels or even to skip the reading of the Scriptures altogether and proceed directly to the object lesson. However, since faith comes by hearing, I believe that it is good pastoral practice to read the entire pericope to their ears (e.g., Matthew 21:1–9 for Advent I), reserving all commentary for its rightful place in the sermon.

Preaching to young children is a challenge because of their limited attention span and vocabulary. This concern probably explains the object lessons that I have witnessed, most regretfully the use of the song “So Long, Farewell!” from “The Sound of Music” as a hinge to Jesus’ Farewell Discourse in John’s Gospel! However, the quantum intellectual leap from the secular object to the sacred text requires abstract thinking, an intellectual ability that normally develops around age twelve. Yet the hearers of mainline children’s sermons are usually under the age of twelve. The motto of Concordia Theological Seminary from the Pastoral Epistles, “Preach the Word!” (2 Timothy 4:2), reminds and inspires me to stand in the pulpit, to wear the usual vestments of the minor office, and to preach a short and simple sermon of Law and Gospel.

The teachings of the Bible are summarized in children's terms in the catechism, a book that must be incorporated into the school chapel. "A Form for Opening and Closing Christian Schools" (*TLH* 50–52) is modeled on the catechetical vespers of early Lutheranism and prescribes a catechism lesson between the Collect and the Scripture lesson. I choose a short and simple catechism lesson from the most basic texts of the catechism. For example, an appropriate catechism lesson for Advent I is the Second Petition ("Thy kingdom come") because it offers a Law handle based on the false expectations of the Palm Sunday crowd and a Gospel handle based on the right expectations of a kingdom under the cross. We learn the catechism lesson at the prescribed place in the liturgy and repeat it several times throughout the sermon, thereby drumming into the ears of the faithful all that they truly need to know for their salvation.

The hymnal provides liturgy and hymns to give doxological expression to the doctrine in the Bible and catechism. In addition to "A Short Form" in *TLH*, there are also several daily offices (Matins, Vespers, etc.) in *LSB*. I cannot stress enough the ancient maxim, "repetition is the mother of learning." Pick one liturgy, learn it by heart, and pray it repeatedly. Picking one liturgy encourages stability and the use of the memory. Learning the liturgy by heart helps to incorporate non-readers into the liturgy. Praying it repeatedly fosters liturgical learning for life, especially if these principles are reinforced by the rituals of the liturgy, such as making the sign of the cross. To take a lead from Proverbs, "Train up the children in the liturgical way that they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it."

Hymns should be chosen from official LCMS hymnals (*TLH*, *LW*, and *LSB*) according to text, tune, and context. Texts should be evaluated by their theology, tunes by their appropriateness to the theology in the text, and the context according to the capabilities of the students and the season of the church year. Of inestimable help in this regard is the booklet, "Singing the Faith: A graded and seasonal approach to learning Lutheran Hymns and Liturgy" by Richard and Barbara Resch (Concordia 2003). For example, one choice for non-readers for Advent I is the refrain of "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel." The readers could sing the entire hymn, while the non-readers join in the refrain. The teaching of the hymn will require a competent church musician, pastoral visits to the classrooms, and cooperation from the teachers. But the rewards for the church and school are beyond measure.

As the pastor uses three books for the Lutheran school, he should ask himself two ongoing questions for evaluation: (1) Is the liturgy done well? and (2) Do the students understand what is going on? The obstacles may be numerous, but as the pastor brings these three books to the school, he knows that the Good Shepherd is gently tending His flock through the work of the pastor. It is through the pastor's reading and preaching of the Scriptures that Christ shares the good news of His cross and resurrection. It is through the pastor's instruction in the catechism that the Good Shepherd leads the flock beside the still waters. And it is through the pastor's liturgical leadership that Christ incorporates His sheep into a high and holy doxology to Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit.

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Ministry with Youth

Rev. Grant Knepper

Youth ministry can be one of the most rewarding areas in church work; after all, Luther himself called youth the “fount and seed of the church.” Working with youth is working with the future of the Church. Today’s youth are tomorrow’s pastors, teachers, and congregational leaders, and being a part of their spiritual formation is a joy and a privilege. What you do in the here and now has a direct influence on what they will do in the then and there.

At the same time, youth ministry can be one of the most challenging areas as well, especially for those who work with high school youth. To be sure, the teen years are not the easiest time in a person’s life. There will be a lot of things going on the lives of your youth. In addition to church activities, there are also a myriad of other things that they spend their time doing. School, sports, part-time jobs, and family obligations alone can fill their schedules to the breaking point.

As if this were not enough, your youth also have to juggle all these activities at the same time that their bodies are making drastic and seemingly inexplicable changes as their physical maturity outpaces their emotional maturity. They have little control over their schedules and even less control over their bodies. The raging distractions of the present and the temporal can make any contemplation of the future and the eternal difficult at best. It is no wonder that so many teenagers seem to have questions about who they are.

Identity can be a troublesome issue for anyone, but it can be especially confusing for youth. The confusion arises because your youth, for the most part, are given their identities by others. They are given identities by their families, by their teachers, and especially by their peers. This causes a lot of stress. Unfortunately, for most youth, they are trying to shed a bad identity, live up to a good identity, and establish an identity independent of the labels put on them by others all at the same time.

As your youth navigate the difficult waters, one particular area of identity can make all the difference for them: baptismal identity. In their Baptisms, God called

each of your youth by name, washed them clean of sin, and recreated them as believers. In the waters of Baptism, they encountered the living God and received the gift of faith. In Baptism, they were united with Christ. The benefits of the cross were applied to them, and their eternal lives began. In their Baptisms, they were given an identity as children of God.

With so much of their lives still before them, baptismal identity gives your youth something in the present to hang onto. It is an identity that is given them by God Himself, it is something that they did not have to do anything to get, and it is something that no one can take away from them. Baptismal identity is not subject to the whims of their family or friends. It is not dependent on athletic ability, brain power, or fashion sense. It is what it is, and it is always there.

In a highly transitory time of life, baptismal identity is something that is permanent. Remember your own days as a teenager. Are you the same person now that you were then? Much of what our youth are today will be left behind as they become adults. Baptismal identity, on the other hand, is something that is a part of their lives forever. No matter who they become, they remain children of God. In times of temptation, in times of testing, and when God seems far away, baptismal identity can serve as a powerful reminder that Jesus is with them always.

At a time when most of their lives are lived under the constraints of peer pressure, parental expectation, and educational responsibilities, baptismal identity is the Gospel that breaks the tyranny of the Law. While others are telling them who they should be, their Baptisms remind them of who they already are.

You have a great opportunity to remind your youth of their Baptisms and to show them who they are in God's eyes. And, in turning your youth back to their Baptisms, you also have the chance to remember your own.

Rev. Grant Knepper (CTS 1998) served congregations in Arizona and Washington, worked as a development officer for Concordia Theological Seminary, and currently pastors Zion Lutheran Church in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Pastoral Care for University Students

Rev. Peter C. Cage

Iforgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” That is God’s living voice. It is a Word from outside in. It is Absolution.

As a college student, I loved that sentence of the liturgy. I wanted to hear it and knew I needed it. I went to the Divine Service—admittedly more out of habit than honest devotion—but never regretted hearing the Absolution again, even when I just stumbled into it.

I don’t boast that I had a greater sensitivity to sin or a heightened intuition of my identity as a baptized child of God than anyone else. I didn’t. In fact, my outward behavior would likely make a strong case that I cared little for the things of God. Still, I felt some of my sin and shame and occasionally carried a stricken conscience. I was a college student after all. And that sentence from the Small Catechism—“from the pastor as from God Himself”—became increasingly precious.

On the college campus today, students desperately need this same ministry of our Lord’s Absolution wherein God removes sin. But students come from so many different backgrounds and often don’t believe they need this divine sentence—this merciful judgment—at all. This is the result of too much static on campus, so many demands, so many options, so many flavors, so much emotion, entertainment, and theatrics. And worst of all, it is the result of too much unbelief.

Admittedly, one can hardly find a typical student on campus. But what can be found is the *Lutheran-from-birth* who has never gone to any church except the one she attended every week back home. She finds that a convenient excuse to keep herself from God’s presence and His speaking and giving on Sunday morning. She’s not as well catechized as her confirmation certificate might lead you to believe.

One can also find the student who got confirmed in grade school and hasn’t been to worship except for family Christmas. He’s a business major now, and mom thinks he’s doing well since he has a job lined up after graduation. His proud mom is wrong. His faith eroded. His Baptism is long forgotten. He’s just lost and stumbling

through life.

The painfully shy girl with the party-prone roommate is also there. She's not making friends and is terribly homesick and alone, so paralyzed with social fear that she doesn't connect with anyone, much less the local congregation around the Lord's altar.

Or consider the student who loves the fun high school youth group feel of one of the hip parachurch groups on campus, but under their influence, she begins to doubt her standing before God since she was baptized as an infant (which they claim doesn't count) and never made an adult decision for Jesus. Lured by an emotional plea to finally be a real Christian, she is being led away from the ancient faith of the catechism and Christ's work on the cross to the American religious ideal of having faith in her faith.

Think upon the student on the brink of despair—desperate, worn down with too much weight on him, and suffering from too many expectations. He just dropped another class and doesn't think he can stay in his major. Now he is left to wonder what his future looks like since he can't do what he planned to do for the rest of his life.

Don't forget the new freshman—not as mature as he thinks—who makes use of his new so-called freedom to get stupid drunk. Repeatedly. And his laptop has settled onto Internet porn. After all, who's to judge? Who is harmed? Who will ever know?

And then there's the young woman with the break-up of her first serious relationship where sex had become pretty routine and expected. But now sin awakes, and the guilt and stain remains in the conscience.

So, welcome to college, the place where standards evolve quickly and the next big thing is already making an appearance in some prof's lecture. College: it's where abortion is just as common among Christians as it is among unbelievers; where sexual intercourse is redefined as that which scratches a natural itch, hardly considered just a matter for holy marriage anymore; and homosexuality is an empowering personal expression not only to be tolerated but accepted by all.

Now, go down to the local coffee house and dive into the bohemian banter. Talk with the articulate young man who went to Lutheran school as a kid but now tinkers with Buddhism. Greet one of the other campus pastors who insists that there are many ways to God, and Jesus is just one of them. Happily serve as the religious resource for the guy writing an English paper on Flannery O'Connor's short stories but who isn't familiar enough with the Christian faith or Baptism to make his argument. Be refreshed by the young man who is comfortable enough to ask you, "Are you a priest? My friend and I were trying to list the Ten Commandments but can't remember them all. What's after 'No other gods'?" and talk for a while. Invite him to worship and the campus Bible study. You'll likely never see him again, but who knows?

College can be a black hole, especially for the Christian. The environment and the skewed priorities take their toll. The saddest student is the one who wakes up one day and wonders how he became this aimless person he'd never thought he'd become. Students have been swallowed whole by the prevailing culture that cares nothing for an incarnate God, a God who dies and is risen, and comes with light and life for you from the font and altar. Some of these students find you. Many still avoid you. By God in His mercy, you find some. Others just float and bump into things.

To this mixed and perplexed audience and to the little congregation gathered by the Holy Spirit around sermon and Sacrament, the campus pastor proclaims and delivers the glorious things of our crucified God. The Holy Spirit creates and nurtures His Church. The lost return to the Father and are catechized in the one, true faith. One by one, sinners learn Christ and speak a sturdy "Amen" to that sentence spoken for them: "I forgive you all your sins."

These students aren't so different from people you find in any parish. It is only that certain issues are magnified and age-driven. Sin and suffering is universal. Their need is universal. But the pastor comes for each of them where they are at—all those different places—with God's Word. He is Christ on campus. He brings a divine Word of Law that reveals where all the sin is and kills the old Adam. He also gives Absolution, His other Word that creates life and restores a new man through Jesus Christ.

The entire Gospel is summed up and delivered in that Absolution. The whole Christian life of the baptized is wrapped up in those words from the outside that God speaks into sinners. Hear the pastor say it, but know that it is not his sentence. It is Christ's sentence; it is the firmest place to stand when the world and Satan are swirling fast and dangerously around you. His sentence delivers what it says in His saying it: "I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Rev. Peter Cage (CTS 1991) was a campus pastor in Muncie, Indiana, for seventeen years and has served Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana, since 2007. He also has experience as a chaplain for the Air Force Reserves.

Mission of Campus Ministry

Rev. Eric Andrae

How many isms can you name? Secularism, modernism, postmodernism, Darwinism, Marxism, liberalism, scientism, materialism, consumerism, feminism, relativism—did I leave any out? Well, academia does not. Your local university is fertile breeding ground and provides sustenance for every imaginable ism. However, instead of being cheated by vain philosophies and empty deceit according to the principles of the world and men, we want students to meet one man in particular: God incarnate, Jesus Christ. Only in him will they be complete.

Studies indicate that as many as eighty-five to ninety percent of confirmed Lutheran youth are no longer in the church by age twenty-five. That's bad news. The good news is that similar surveys show that eighty percent of today's college freshmen report an interest in spirituality, while seventy-five percent are searching for meaning and purpose in life. The collegiate years are a crucial time of transition and searing soul-searching. The really good news, indeed the Gospel, is that as this generation of students searches for meaning, authenticity, and identity, the church gives that which they seek (Hebrews 13:8; cf. 2 Corinthians 4:1–18).

How does the church through campus ministry give this identity in Christ, this connection to the Father, this complete life in the Spirit? Here in Pittsburgh we are committed to helping all students grow into the Christian faith through the teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We foster a life and a loving community centered around the Gospel, the Scriptures, and Sacraments of Jesus Christ through worship, nurture, outreach, friendship, and service. As a campus pastor, I—in no particular order here—counsel, marry, baptize adults, play basketball, speak on campus to both Christian and non-Christian groups, pray, socialize, participate in service projects, lead worship, study, catechize, engage the (pop) culture, preach, evangelize, follow up with visitors, defend the faith, serve as chaplain for Lutheran Student Fellowship and International Student Ministry, share meals, supervise our English as a Second Language program, open my home, teach Bible study, seek out the inactive, foster a sense of community, hear private confession and absolve, recruit and train and meet with lay leaders, e-mail, phone call, attend conferences, visit with students,

contact and meet with prospective students, keep records, promote our activities, meet with college faculty and staff, sustain the faithful, write and publish, participate in ecumenical activities to the extent conscience and confession allow, etc., etc. Every week, every day is different. It is never dull, always exciting. I love it. I love being a campus pastor (Galatians 6:2).

All of this must be done with honesty and integrity, in other words, with the objective, concrete clarity of truth (2 Corinthians 4:2). Those involved with confessing Christ on campus must boldly declare who we are. We must be confident and honest in our identity.

We must be, believe, and proclaim who we are. The belief of the heart and the confession of the mouth is one act of faith (Romans 10:8–10). This entails both a clear understanding of what (more appropriately in whom) we believe and a consequent sharing of that faith with others. It means a commitment to the infallible Scriptures, and to the creeds, confessions, doctrine, and worship of the church as handed down to us by those who came before (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

We must teach who we are. We have the Lord's mandate (Matthew 28:18–20). The baptismal incorporation of a sinner into the life of the church and the body of Christ includes a life-long catechesis, an ever-present teaching of the concrete truth of the faith. And "The one who teaches well is the one who distinguishes well:" God's Word of the Law—His demands and requirements which, unmet by us sinners, always mean our death—and God's Word of the Gospel—His gracious and life-giving proclamation of the forgiveness of our sin on account of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Here, at the Christ-point, is where distinctions truly must be clarified on campus—where Allah, Buddha, the New Age, Wiccans, and many others all compete for the time and appetite of the scholar who saunters up to the smorgasbord of spirituality served on a regular basis. The person and work of Jesus Christ ultimately must be the center, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of all mission and catechesis (cf. John 14:6). As such, when the campus minister finds himself amid Muslims, Jews, Hindus, or others, as he so often will, distinctions must be made between dialogue and prayer, between study and union, or if you will, between an inter-faith lunch meeting and leading worship together, between a book discussion group and mutual sharing in the holy things of God in the liturgy.

Nicole, a senior at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), came to First Trinity a spiritually-lost freshman, showed up at our Welcome Back Barbecue, and now leaves a confirmed Lutheran who is "truly sad to be leaving the one place where I always had people and God to count on." Queen, a Pitt graduate student from China, was an atheist two years ago. After we met at a Graduate Student Orientation Fair, she started attending worship and was aided in her understanding by the simple structure and uniformity of the Lutheran liturgy; she also found that the people at First Trinity "care for each one's life, thinking, problems. So more and more students visit this church and stay because we have found our home in both physical sense and spiritual sense."

Queen was baptized on Christmas Eve 2006!

I love being a campus pastor. My seminary years—through instruction, mentoring, worship, care for body and soul, and hands-on experience—equipped me to be the pastoral theologian and theological pastor I need to be.

I love being a campus pastor. I can think of nothing more exciting, important, rewarding, enriching, or meaningful. There could be nothing more crucial (“of the Cross”), nothing more vital (“of life”).

I hope and pray that you will consider this vocation.

Rev. Eric Andrae (CSL 1997) has served in both parish and campus ministry settings since 1997 and specifically at First Trinity Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, since 2001.

Caring for Shut-ins

Rev. Timothy Pauls

"My grandfather fought in the war."

She sits dignified in her wheelchair, hymnal held in transparent, blue-veined hands. Emma's eyes are a piercing blue as she glances at me. For a moment, I've been turned from pastor to pupil. I'm at the care center to give her Holy Communion. We've worked our way through the service from the Invocation to a brief sermon. Not all shut-ins possess the energy for the entire liturgy, but Emma is alert as ever.

The United States has just invaded Iraq in the wake of September 11, and I've talked about war as part of the wages of sin and the certainty of Christ in a violent world. Worship services with shut-ins often involve some give-and-take that isn't a part of public worship, and she speaks as my little sermon concludes.

"My grandfather fought in the war." She's staring into the past now, sorting through memories to give me the accurate details. After a moment, she continues, "He told me stories. He was a soldier in the infantry. When the battle started, they charged out of the woods and into the field. He doesn't know what happened next, but when he woke up, there were many bodies on the ground." She hesitates for the right words. She always speaks deliberately. "He started wandering around, trying to find someone else alive, and finally found another soldier." Another pause. "They spoke a little while, made sure that each other was okay. They figured out where the armies were." She's standing with them in her mind, the three of them getting their bearings. "Then they went their separate ways. They were on opposite sides. The other man was wearing blue, and my grandfather wore gray."

Blue and gray. Emma is ninety-eight. Her grandfather fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War. That's far enough from my life that it's just a story in history books. But in a care center in Boise, Idaho, there's a woman who sat on her grand-dad's lap and heard firsthand stories of the War between the States.

She breaks her reverie and smiles apologetically. "I'm sorry. Where are we?"

We're at the liturgy for Holy Communion. We quietly sing the Sanctus and pray the Lord's Prayer. Then I speak the Words of Institution: "Take and eat, this is My body, which is given for you."

For you, Emma, for you.

Our culture glorifies youth and tries to forget about aging. There are doubtless many reasons for this, but one is that aging leads to death, and the world wants to ignore the remorseless enemy that shadows all their days. So the world would rather watch the young and ignore the elderly. The results are tragic: our society has amnesia as it refuses to listen to those who have left us this place for our inheritance.

Pastors and congregations can be tempted to ignore the elderly, but it is for different reasons. Concerned by declining numbers and loss of congregational leaders, many are tempted to focus on gaining newer, younger members at the expense of older members who consume time and effort without offering much in return. But Luther once noted that, as long as we are on this earth, we are God's instruments. Sometimes, we are active instruments whom God uses to serve others. Sometimes, we are passive instruments whom God uses to teach others how to serve. Emma has summed this up more than once as she adjusts to the amputation of her leg: "Pastor, I'm ready to go. But as long as the Lord wants me here, I'm willing to stay."

Emma is the Lord's instrument at that care center for His purposes, and for all I know, His purpose is to teach her pastor more about His faithfulness to His people. When Christ died for the world, He died for Emma. She knows this because, generations ago, He said, "Emma, I baptize you." Even now He says through a pastor's mouth, "I forgive you all of your sins," and "This is My body, given for you." So I have the pleasure of telling Emma that even if everyone else should forget her, Jesus does not.

A few months from now, I will preach at her funeral. The text will be Philippians 1:21-23: "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Far better indeed. But until then, Christ is not far away. No matter age or disability, He is as near to His people as His Word and Sacraments, and not one of them will be forgotten.

Rev. Timothy Pauls (CSL 1993) currently serves Good Shepherd Luthlean Church in Boise, Idaho.

Visiting the Sick

Rev. Arthur Litke

"I was sick and you visited Me" (Matthew 25:36).

As a pastor, I have made thousands of calls on the sick and shut-ins over the past twenty-six years. I can always tell by the reception I receive from the people I call on that my visits are appreciated. But last summer, I found myself on the other end of this interaction when, for the first time in my fifty-two years, I spent eight days in the hospital as a patient. The many cards, visits, and telephone calls that I received were comforting, to be sure, but the most comforting of all were the visits I received from brother pastors. They prayed with me and spoke the Word of God to me, and one even brought me the Lord's Supper. These visits eased my burden like nothing else.

Why were these visits more comforting? It was not because our relationship was closer or because the pastors had more charming personalities. It was because they, in a very special way, came as representatives of the Lord, Jesus Christ, bringing with them the Savior's means of grace in Word and Sacrament. In this sense, these visits, unlike any others, were incarnational. Christ Himself came to me when these pastors visited, because they brought Christ with them in a very real and tangible way. The whole experience gave me a better appreciation of the great responsibility and honor that comes to me when I, as a pastor, am given the privilege of bringing the Savior to those who are sick.

When the pastor visits the sick, he is really performing a dual role. He comes first of all as a brother Christian. "Bear one another's burdens," writes the apostle, "and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Visiting the sick (together with offering support and encouragement in all circumstances) is the responsibility and privilege of every Christian, who is a part of the "great . . . cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) with which the child of God is surrounded. Especially when things aren't going so well, we need the comfort of Christian fellowship, the knowledge that we do not have to face difficulty alone but that Christ is with us through the presence of our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

But the pastor brings something even more powerful to the bedside of those who are ill. It is not only the comfort of friendship or even Christian fellowship, but it is the Savior Himself. In Word and Sacrament, Jesus Himself visits the sick with the healing that only His Gospel can provide. His promise is sure: "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:20). From the perspective of a person who is ill, a visit from the pastor is not just a visit with a friend or acquaintance. Instead, it is a visit with Jesus Himself, not because of who the pastor is, but because of the means of grace that he brings with him.

Visiting the sick and shut-ins has been for me both one of the most challenging and one of the most rewarding experiences that I have as a pastor. No matter how busy you are, you can't cut corners with this part of your ministry. It always takes priority. It only takes one phone call to rearrange your schedule, no matter how crowded that schedule is already.

But it is also rewarding to see the comfort that the Gospel brings to people who are suffering. This past fall, my wife and I visited the congregation where I began my ministry so many years ago. As soon as we walked into the narthex, a woman (who, I must confess, I did not remember) greeted me enthusiastically and told me how she has never forgotten my visit to her in the hospital shortly after I arrived there. But it wasn't me that made such a big impression on her; it was the Gospel that I brought to her.

I am forever grateful to the Lord Jesus, first for the Gospel itself as it speaks to me, and also for the great privilege of bringing that Gospel, in Word and Sacrament, to His people, especially those who are suffering.

Rev. Arthur Litke (CTS 1981) hcurrrently serves Bethel Lutheran Church in Glnsbaw, Pennsylvania..

A Long-Term Pastorate

Rev. Philip Meyer

When people ask how long I have been the pastor at Immanuel and I say, "Thirty-four years," there is often a stunned silence. They often reflect, "Thirty-four years is a long time to be in one place." It's the same kind of reaction that many couples get when they tell inquiring people how long they have been married. In our day we have become accustomed to marriage, divorce, and remarriage, often in serial form.

The relationship that a pastor and congregation have is a lot like marriage. When you are ordained and installed you will be asked a series of questions to which you will answer: "I do" or "I will with the help of God," or something very similar. They sound a lot like marriage vows. The congregation answers with similar words. In the rites of Ordination and Installation we have a parallel with marriage. You may feel as though you are taking on another wife. In the very best sense, this is true.

Marriage is not easy. Marriage takes a lot of work, and sometimes the work is very difficult. Just like a marriage, the relationship between a pastor and his congregation takes time to develop. There are frustrations and obstacles to overcome. The level of trust must be constructed and maintained by both. Patience must be one of the virtues exhibited by both a pastor and his congregation. Young married couples know this. Perhaps the need to be reassured that the spouse is not going to run out remains strong for some time. As time passes one realizes that the level of trust has grown and that each trusts the other.

As in any marriage, there are frustrations in a long pastorate. Things don't always go the way one hopes or wants. Sometimes we probably haven't liked each other very much, but we stayed with this marriage. It becomes very tempting to look elsewhere, to a new call. We begin to think that the grass is greener somewhere else. Of course, the pastor may become stagnant and lazy in his thinking and actions. He might be like the slovenly husband who no longer presents himself to his wife as though he is still wooing her. Congregations can treat their pastors with contempt, as though they can always get another. Neither should be looking for a way out of the relationship.

Happy husbands and wives learn to listen to each other and to treat each other with respect. Pastors and congregations need to have that attitude too. When they act that way toward each other, then love and respect grow and deepen through shared experiences—both good and bad. Expressions of love will always be found in a healthy marriage, and that's true of pastors and congregations too. Blessed are those congregations and pastors where concrete expressions of love are shown. And what a blessed example to the community around them. As we admire a marriage that has lasted twenty-five, thirty, forty, or fifty years, so we admire congregations and pastors who have lived together under God's blessings for long periods of time. It speaks well of the Gospel we proclaim. It makes the church attractive to prospects.

As I reflect on my thirty-four years at Immanuel, the joys certainly outweigh the frustrations. Some of the children who were my catechumens when I arrived have grown up, gotten married, and had children of their own. Now those children are my catechumens. We've had an intergenerational experience together. What a joy to see the people of the congregation journey through life under God's blessing and to be part of two, three, or even four generations. I have felt as though many of them were my own children, and in a sense, they are. I have baptized, confirmed, married, and buried entire families, sometimes three generations. We have walked together for a long time. We know each other well. We love each other because of Christ and because of this walk we have had together. For many of them, I am the only pastor they have ever known. I feel like a husband, father, and grandfather to these people. It is the blessing that God gives after many years, much like a husband, father, and grandfather experiences when he looks back on his life with his family.

Another of our joys has been participating in the vicarage program of our synod. We've had twenty vicars and have come to regard them as our children. We've had a part in training pastors for the church, seeing them struggle and grow, and this has been a distinct joy for us as parents. It helps connect us with the synod.

Change happens in this earthly life. We live in a world that changes so rapidly we can scarcely take it in. While our doctrine and practice dare not change, we rise together to meet new challenges. As pastor and congregation have learned to trust each other, encountering change is a much less threatening thing. We experience it together. Under our Lord's watchfulness, pastor and congregation are kept safe in His Word and Sacraments.

One day I'll reach the end of my pastorate here. It's possible that I might even establish the record for longevity in this place. I didn't set out to establish such a record, but by the grace of God and under His blessing, I'd be pleased to say that Immanuel and I have had a long and happy marriage. I hope that you experience this joy and satisfaction too.

Rev. Philip Meyer (CSL 1971) has served Immanuel Lutheran Church in Terre Haute, Indiana, for over thirty years.

Military Chaplaincy

Chaplain (Captain) Edward Grimenstein

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering."

Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes.

I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.

When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith . . . Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour (Matthew 8:5–10, 13).

The centurion who encountered Jesus was a warrior. He was a fighter. He was a commander of other soldiers. And yet this warrior also knew he desperately needed Jesus. This remains true today. Warriors in our Armed Forces still need Jesus.

As a chaplain serving in one of the branches of our Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines) you will have an opportunity to bring Christ in Word and Sacrament to modern-day warriors who desperately need to hear that liberating Word of Jesus today. Being a chaplain can be challenging—deployments can be long and frequent—but Christ's commission truly covers all people in all nations even when some are asked to invade other nations or to protect their own.

Chaplains are instrumental in bringing Word and Sacrament ministry to so many people in our Armed Forces who are called to sacrifice so much for their country.

Wives, husbands, and children often face uncertain futures when their lives are enmeshed within service to country. But a Lutheran chaplain can make all the difference! Chaplains have the chance to bring spiritual continuity and certainty as they offer distinctively Lutheran services every Sunday to families.

Chaplains, like pastors, don't just work on Sundays. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of being a chaplain occurs from Monday through Saturday. On a daily basis, chaplains are encouraged to be in the workplace, mess halls, motor pools, and offices of everyone they serve in order to provide a constant ministry of Christ's presence to people who so often long to hear a good word. Chaplains truly are with their people day in and day out. Since there is so much contact, it is not uncommon for a chaplain to meet many different religious faiths. Running across a follower of Judaism, Islam, or speaking with a Wiccan or Presbyterian not only happens often, it will sometimes happen all in the same day. As a chaplain, your primary role is to ensure the religious rights of all people—Christian and non-Christian alike. Even though chaplains are not allowed to proselytize to those who already have a religious faith, there are always opportunities to speak about Christ to all people.

Chaplains also offer important counseling and spiritual insight to those who desire it. The Armed Forces train chaplains in marriage counseling, suicide prevention, and a host of other counseling techniques to assist service members on a daily basis. But chaplains aren't just counselors—we are men of the cloth who have ample opportunities to speak God's Law and Gospel when those seasons are right. Chaplaincy is filled with mission opportunities; it is just a matter of taking the time and seizing the moment.

But sometimes mission opportunities actually seize us! Currently the Armed Forces have been involved in many struggles in this world and undoubtedly will for years to come. Chaplains can be valuable assets in distant countries. It is during a deployment that chaplains truly earn their money, so to speak. During a deployment, men and women are suddenly faced with daily life and death situations. They are often confronted with the ugliness inside the sinful hearts of all people. During these moments, Lutheran chaplains can bring a distinctive difference to the table. Lutherans have a keen understanding of the sinful flesh inherent within all people. But it is especially in these moments that Lutheran chaplains can speak about Christ—the only one who can conquer death and bring life even in the middle of war.

But deployments are not the only times chaplains will be called to face down death. One duty chaplains will perform from time to time is to care for those who have died. Not only are chaplains involved in nurturing the living, caring for the wounded, but chaplains are also involved in honoring the dead. This honoring can be shown in providing graveside ceremonies for retirees or chapel services for those who have been killed in war. Chaplains are also entrusted with the sobering and yet honorable task of notifying loved ones when a husband, wife, or child has been killed in war. These tasks are difficult and can be very trying. But there is nothing more important than bringing the presence of Christ to this dying world and being the fragrance of life in the midst of death.

The centurion said, “Lord, just say the Word and my servant will be healed.” God’s Word doesn’t just magically appear on a submarine or air base. The Word of God doesn’t just appear in the middle of an obscure town in Afghanistan. God’s Word comes through you—a military chaplain. Christ is pleased to have Himself dwell in the words of sinful preachers. In order for Him to dwell, there have to be sinful preachers available! If you are considering service in the Armed Forces as a military chaplain please contact the synod for more information—warriors still need to hear a Word from Jesus.

Rev. Dr. Edward Grimenstein (CTS 1999) is a military chaplain in North Carolina.

Interacting with Difficult People

Rev. Dr. Richard J. Davis

Interacting With Difficult People?” Perhaps it should be: “Interacting with People.” Not that every person we meet inside and outside our congregations is difficult, but if we learn to deal with most anyone, those who are difficult won’t seem so difficult. Each of us is unique. We have different values, precepts, and experiences that make us special. Besides, people aren’t difficult, just different. For example: I like to do things slowly and get it right the first time. Someone else might like to just do things quickly, and if it is right, that is good. But if not, there is plenty of time to redo it. This might drive me up a wall, but I have learned how to deal with the differences.

Personalities come into play when we interact with others in our every day lives. Our personalities and those of others we interact with may vary with each encounter. I am sure everyone has heard the phrase “personality conflict.” I didn’t get along with him/her because our personalities clashed. Perhaps it wasn’t having a different personality, but that you didn’t understand the other person’s personality and how it interacted with your own.

Jesus gives two great Commandments. “Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, soul, and mind” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” We could change that just a little to say, “Understand yourself and then understand your neighbor better.”

Understanding ourselves and our own difficult behavior helps us in interacting with those whom we come into contact with that we feel are difficult. This, of course, is humbling because it acknowledges that the difficult people out there are not so different from us. What pushes our buttons to turn us into difficult people? We can react to the difficult person or respond to him, the choice is ours. When we react to a difficult person or to anyone for that matter we might become very aggressive, complaining, passive, resistant, or even people pleasing. When we respond we take a few moments, collect our thoughts, and respond not to the behavior of the difficult person, but to what is underlying and making this person difficult.

When a person understands his own personality and understands why he does some of the things he does, or thinks some of the ways he thinks, he becomes more

self aware. Self-awareness is the key to understanding others. If I am an introverted personality and you are an extroverted personality, how should I relate to you or understand the differences?

Within your ministries, there will be people who seem to be difficult. It is said that a pastor needs the mind of a scholar, heart of a child, and the hide of a rhinoceros. If we keep these in mind it might help us to handle difficult, that is, different people.

We must realize that we will have conflicts and there will be people who just cause difficulties for us in ministry. At the heart of most conflicts are desires, either good or bad, that have become controlling demands. One of the first things we must get to is the heart of the conflict. Why is this person being so difficult? There is usually something under the surface of the difficulty that is causing this person to be in conflict with you. It could be something a previous pastor said or did. It could be something you said or did and are not aware of it causing any conflict or concern.

Can we grow in dealing with difficult people? The answer to that is yes. We can grow in our faith and reliance in God to handle each situation. Perhaps we should look at life as a school and difficult people can serve as our teachers. What can I learn from this situation about myself and others? We can understand that we are separate from our difficult person, and not be a codependent. How is this difficult person bringing out the negative reaction in me?

Many times difficult people come to us with criticism, making it very personal. We need to respond to criticism when it comes our way. First, we should consider the source: Who gave this criticism? Was it a chronic fault finder or a mature Christian? Was the criticism shared in anger or in kindness? Do not smooth things over if you do not agree with the criticism. Our job is to listen but not necessarily change due to criticism if it is not positive. We need to be careful not to abuse our authority. Make sure your job description is specific so that if there is ever criticism that you are not performing your duties, you have a specific document to look at and see if it is true. You could also think about walking in that person's shoes—empathy. Knowing the stress and other factors that the other person is going through might help to get to the heart of the conflict. Always remember when you are responding to criticism you are responsible for Christ-like behavior. Ask for forgiveness if you contributed to the difficulty. When the criticism has passed, don't fixate on it but pray about it. Let it go. Let go any feelings of anger, rejection, and self-pity. Keep criticism in perspective of the whole picture.

We don't enter congregations looking over our shoulders, becoming paranoid that anyone of our parishioners could be our difficult person. We are to be aware of who we are so that when difficult people arise, we will be more ready to manage them as Christ would: with prayer, care, love, and forgiveness.

Rev. Dr. Richard Davis has been on the staff of the Board for Pastoral Education at Concordia Theological Seminary since 2002.

Responding to Criticism

Rev. Timothy Puls

"Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning" (Proverbs 9:8).

As I sat in my college English class waiting for my teacher to return our latest assignments, I was confident. I was self-assured. Some may even say I was smug. After all, I did put in quite a few hours in the library researching the topic. I had taken a whole weekend to rewrite, proofread, and type what I was sure would be an A paper. As the professor reached my desk, I smiled up at her, secretly waiting for her nod of approval on a job well done. Well, here it was, the moment of truth. I looked down at my paper. I had never seen so many red marks in my life. Beaming brightly like a neon light at the top of my paper was the unexpected grade of C. How could this be? Didn't she know how much time I had spent on this? Oh, I would like to see her do better. I was angry.

Later that evening, after the shock had worn off, I took out my paper and began reading the comments. As much as I hated to admit it, she had very valid points. This constructive criticism was exactly what I needed in order to become a better writer, reader, student, and eventually pastor. The more I read, the more thankful I was. Some of the grammar mistakes I had made were the same ones I had been making for years. Now, I not only knew why I was making these errors, but I knew how to correct them. The refining of my writing helped me in college, seminary, and especially in the ministry.

Although criticism is painful and a blow to the old sinful man, it helps shape and mold you to be the kind of person God wants you to be. Jesus said in John 15, "I am the vine you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him he will bear much fruit but apart from Me you can do nothing." Our Lord often speaks to each of us through the voice of others, words of Law and words of Gospel. And although the Law prunes, the Gospel bears fruit. Just as the life of the branch is found in the Vine, so our life is rooted to Christ in Holy Baptism. When we were grafted into Christ, we were like wild fruitless saplings; we were nothing on our own. Yet the Holy

Spirit, through water and the Word, attached us to something far more beautiful and fruitful than we would ever be. He attached us to Christ, our forgiveness, redemption, and our life now and forever. Now, I understand that it's on account of the fact that I no longer live but Christ who lives in me, as St. Paul says. The ability to reach out into the lives of others grows when the obstacles—namely our sinful selves—are removed from the path of the one who fills us in every way: Jesus Christ.

As a pastor and a Dean of Students, I am sometimes placed in a role that is uncomfortable to all of us. That is the role of sharing constructive criticism with seminarians. Criticism in itself is never the end goal or purpose. Like pruning of branches, criticism is to be taken in a positive and loving way that will help you to grow and bear fruit. When we are able to look at our flaws and mistakes in a positive way and make changes, it will benefit not only us but also those around us. When we, as servants of Christ, realize that we are flawed, it makes us more fully equipped to serve others in Christ's name. "Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning." That is what going to seminary is all about: entrusting yourself to others in order to "be wiser still." Pastoral formation happens when we are in contact with both those who lead us and those who stand beside us along the way. It means being shaped and formed by loving people who walk us through the difficult paths and lovingly guide and support us along the way.

Rev. Timothy Puls (CTS 1989) has been a pastor in Colorado and has been on staff at Concordia Theological Seminary since 1998.

The Two Kingdoms

Rev. Mark E. Sell

“**P**astor,” says the angry single mother, “my ex is such a jerk! I hate dropping the kids off at their father’s house.” She wrestles with her emotions because her son loves his father.

This sinful world is filled with grey, especially in relationships. This is not to say that sin is not sin; however, marriage and family belong to the kingdom of the left (state), not the church. It’s about order, primarily, and sin secondarily.

So much sin is overlooked for the sake of keeping a family together. It just doesn’t seem right. It stuns young pastors. Yet, pastors regularly cross over into the worldly realities of the state when working with marriages. Two-kingdom theology assists the pastor who grapples with complicated lives immersed in sin and emotions. Discerning the truth is often impossible, like separating the bananas from the milk after blending.

Regardless of the ex’s sin—penitent or not—life for the family must go on. Mom is still called to her vocation, as are the children. Even the jerk ex-husband is still father to the children, though not the husband to their mother. It is a life of difficult and convoluted relationships manifested in holidays and weekends.

Two-kingdom theology is fundamental when dealing with broken families. In the kingdom of the left, the goal is to bring as much order as possible into the sinful world. Many times, especially after a recent divorce, pastorally bringing order is a great way to settle things down before you introduce sin and grace. The pastor’s compassion for the brokenhearted family can work to introduce a sense of order and calm for all involved. The Law is applied for the sake of civil order and quietude. Here, spiritual righteousness is not the goal.

It might not be the time to address the father’s sin as a husband. Accepting the lesser of two evils is common—actually, it is how anything gets done in the civil realm. Here, progress, not perfection counts. If the father is willing to be a civilly good father to his children, take it, praise it, and thank God for it. It brings order and continuity to the family. Encourage it with the mother, for it is God’s will that fathers love their children and children their fathers.

As Walther wrote, distinguishing Law and Gospel is taught by the Holy Spirit in the school of experience. Timing is everything. Sometimes rushing to identify the sin is not the first thing to do. Setting the sin aside and addressing order and civility in the home might be the way to go. It could be received as a sacrifice of love and caring.

However, as with all application of Law and Gospel, even when the secondary goal is to bring civility, the primary goal of the church is to identify sin—not to be sure “the jerk gets what he deserves”—rather, that he may repent, be forgiven, and allow spiritual healing and order to enter the family again.

Spiritual order is far different than civil order. It is how a Lutheran pastor brings healing to the brokenhearted. “Do the right thing,” will always lead the person back to sin or rebellion, even when he does his best to do the right thing. Outward civil order is praiseworthy, but even the “best neighbors” are unable to create spiritual order.

Only Christ creates spiritual order through his bride, the church. There, the sacramental life consummates the holy marriage between Christ and his bride. Baptism kills the person and brings life and salvation. The new life of repentance and absolution becomes the daily death and resurrection of the baptized. It leads the child of God to the eternal wedding feast where the resurrected body and blood is given for the remission of sins.

In the presence of God, the best Christian mothers and fathers stand condemned for their sin—even more so for the pastor. Sometimes counseling sessions, elders meetings, sermons, and hospital visits, easily appear to be the Lord’s work and the family is left up to the wife.

This spiritual order of the Christian can not be found in the ministers of the state, but only in the church and her ministers. When the church forgives through pastors and sheep alike, it is the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the right. Here, the marriage never ends and every day is one of rejoicing, for the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is our groom who suffers all things for us. He brings us to the table to eat and drink, to feast on the eternal blessings and rejoice in the comfort of heaven. To earth He comes to make us right.

When the brokenhearted mother walks into your pastoral study, begin in your heart with your own lack of order. Repent of your sin. Be absolved. With the same forgiveness, patience, and grace the Father shows you, begin to understand what is needed for this hurt mother. God’s two kingdoms serve each other according to their purpose and function. For the pastor, he wisely uses both to bring calm and order to the frantic single mother and her family as well as repentance and absolution.

Then, as every faithful pastor practices what he preaches, repent of your own sin in dealing with this family. Lest you think you have no sin, read carefully Luther’s Large Catechism on any one of the Ten Commandments. Now—who is the jerk father, the jerk husband or son? Enjoy your own Baptism and the forgiveness of sins. For your life, too, is one of daily death and resurrection, repentance and absolution.

Your work and compassion are absolved in the blood of Christ.

Rev. Mark Sell (CTS 1988) has served a large congregation with a school in Michigan, worked as an editor for CPH, and is currently involved with an arm of LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

Ministry and Legal Authority

Mssrs. Kermit A. Brashear
and Kurth A. Brashear

“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God” (Romans 13:1).

As the world becomes more complex, as congregations encounter more real world scenarios in their daily activities and operations, the church often finds itself unprepared for the requirements of its existence in the left-hand kingdom, overseen by elected officials, regulated by federal, state, and local law, ordinances, rules, and regulations, and governed in its corporate dealings by various statutes, nonprofit corporation acts, and the Internal Revenue Code. This lack of preparation is to some extent understandable, for churches have often been regarded by both the general public and governing authorities as they view themselves, that is, as entities in this world but not of this world.

And why not? Our pastors are called, not employed. The ecclesiastical supervision of our rostered workers is, to a significant extent, exempt from review by the courts under the protections of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America. Our congregational properties are exempt from real estate taxes and our congregations are exempt from paying sales and use taxes, as they conduct their ministries. Our churches do not pay income tax, nor are they required to apply for recognition as tax-exempt organizations under federal law. In these areas, and others, the message our churches, as well as those of other denominations, receive, intentionally or not, is often: The law does not apply to us.

Reflecting on the words of St. Paul in the Letter to the Romans, we understand that this impression is mistaken. The church and its leadership has, at times, forgotten the truth set forth in Scripture—that God rules the left-hand kingdom through secular authority and that the affairs and interactions of those in the left-hand kingdom, Christian and non-Christian alike, are governed by said authority. Through such authority and the law it applies and enforces, order and peace is maintained, persons

and property are protected, and wrongdoing is punished, enabling the church to be free to worship God and preach the Gospel freely and without interference. A congregation, then, as with its individual members, is subject to secular authority in its dealings and conduct as a corporate entity.

In light of this, it becomes clear that the oft-repeated discussion in our congregations about whether they are a business or a church misses the point. It is a false choice, for our congregations are both, that is, they are nonprofit corporations whose “business” is being a church. While this notion may initially give rise to disbelief or disagreement, upon further reflection, you will hopefully see the merit in such an approach.

Unique in society, churches rely heavily, almost exclusively, upon volunteers to conduct their affairs, including operations, finance, property management, and leadership. Unfortunately, in some instances the volunteer who assumes a position may not have the requisite or desirable talents or skills for a position, but rather is the only individual willing to serve in said capacity. Indeed, in some instances, the volunteer has only been a member of the church for one year. In contrast, when a position is vacant in other secular entities, both for profit and nonprofit, they will collect and review resumes, interview multiple candidates, consult references, conduct background checks, and hire the individual they deem best qualified.

While these contrasting approaches may not, at first, raise caution, consider the relative merits thereof in the following circumstance: the position in question is for treasurer and the entity in question (church or business) has annual revenues of \$1,000,000 and ten employees. Suddenly, the lack of a business approach to the secular activity of the church gives one serious pause.

Because the means by which churches conduct their activities (i.e., primarily through the efforts of volunteers) will not change, it is imperative that practices be adopted that will ensure that such activities are conducted in a proper manner. Using business practices and adhering to statutory requirements protects the church, its members, staff, and volunteers. Counting committees can reduce the opportunity for theft, audits can identify instances of fraud, employee reviews and discipline can minimize terminations, insurance reviews can result in adequate protection of church assets, and operating policies can prevent improper benefits to staff or members, misuse of property, and the opportunity for child abuse.

Conducting its secular affairs in a business-like manner enables a congregation to manage its assets, protect its employees and volunteers, and minimize the risk of legal problems that could destabilize a congregation. Adhering to nonprofit corporate laws both creates and reinforces orderly processes for decision making and the conduct of corporate affairs. Together, such processes and procedures foster a sense of trust where it would not otherwise normally exist, but which is critical if the church is to undertake its proper right-hand kingdom work.

Business procedures and adherence to law, however, will not always be sufficient. In such cases, a congregation must consult those legal, financial, accounting, and other professionals who can provide the knowledge, information, and insight which is not present among its members. These individuals have God-given talents which are to be used to serve Him, so allow them to serve by assisting you and your church.

While your seminary education will certainly prepare you to be a shepherd of the flock of believers, do not leave the seminary without also understanding that you will be involved, to varying degrees, in the day-to-day operation of legal entities which own property, employ individuals, enter into contracts, receive and expend hundreds of thousands of dollars, have children entrusted into their care, and govern themselves according to legally binding documents. Our congregations exist in both the Kingdom of the Left and the Kingdom of the Right. Prepare yourself for your work, and the work of the church, in both kingdoms, that all may be done to and for the glory of Almighty God!

Mssrs. Kermit A. and Kurth A. Brashear are LCMS laymen who practice law in Omaha, Nebraska.

Growing in Mission

Rev. Ralph Patrick

“Jesus therefore said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained’” (John 20:21–23).

It is exciting, and perhaps a bit overwhelming, to contemplate coming to the seminary. However, one quickly adjusts, and soon the seminary environment becomes home. After a short time the seminarian is called away from home, and into “fields white for harvest.” That field might be literal, in a small town in the middle of farm fields somewhere in the Midwest. Or it could be in the inner city, where a field can only be seen in the figurative sense. Or perhaps it might be in a far away country, where the fields are a different color and speak a much different language. Wherever one is sent (which is the meaning of the word mission), the Call is certain to be initially overwhelming, just as it was for the disciples.

Following Jesus’ death the disciples were afraid and uncertain of their future. This is how seminarians frequently feel. I remember my first Call to the inner city of Chicago, the euphoria soon gave way to reality, and a recognition that the task that awaited me was far beyond my abilities. How much more for the disciples? They would soon be called to be Christ’s witnesses in “Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” Talk about being in over your head. But the resurrected Lord came and stood among them, and gave them His peace. And then He commissioned them, called them, and equipped them with the Holy Spirit. They would not be alone. He granted them the Office of the Keys, that peculiar church function by which Christ remits the sins of those who are penitent, and retains the sins of those who are not. This was not something that just anyone and everyone could do—this was reserved for the “called and ordained servants of the Word.” The disciples were the first to occupy the pastoral office, but certainly not the last. Their primary role was to administer Christ’s Word and Sacraments according to His bidding; and

to be faithful even unto death. Though we are separated by centuries, it is the same Call that He gives men today as they enter into the Holy Ministry; to faithfully preach His Word and administer His life-giving Sacraments in a world that is dying in sin.

How easy, and tempting, it is to lose sight of this. The Rev. Carl Schlutz once related to the following to a young seminarian: "When I was first in the ministry, my goal was to save the world. After a number of years I decided to be content to save the people in the city where I was serving. After more time elapsed in my ministry, I changed my focus on saving the people in my congregation. Finally, toward the end of my ministry, I realized that I didn't need to save anyone, for they have a Savior, Jesus Christ, and it was up to HIM to do the saving. I was simply his tool." Pastor Schlutz, whom the Lord has now called to glory, was a very wise man and a very faithful pastor. We would all do well to heed his words.

We live in a success-oriented society, one in which numerical growth, power, personal prestige, and popularity is the bottom line. When pastors leave the seminary we are prone to buy into this type of thinking. Far too many pastors are more concerned with feeding their egos, than with crucifying them. As a result we place the emphasis on what WE are doing, where WE are doing it, and how WE can get it done. This results either in disappointment when OUR expectations aren't met, in which case we place our name on a Call list, convincing ourselves that our work is finished; or it creates a false sense of satisfaction with ourselves and pride (albeit cloaked in sanctified "Jesus talk") in what we have accomplished for the sake of the kingdom.

Christ does not call us to success, nor to making the mission (whatever that may mean) our primary mission. He calls us to feed His sheep, to faithfully proclaim His saving Gospel of Word and Sacrament, to sow seeds of salvation, and allow the Holy Spirit to grant growth if, when, and where He chooses. This was the Call of those first pastors, and it remains the primary calling and purpose for the pastoral ministry today.

Rev. Ralph Patrick (CTS 1988) is the senior pastor at Peace with Christ Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, Colorado.

How To Read the Bible

Rev. Dr. Peter Scaer

“**H**ow do I read the Bible?” If you are asking this question, you are already on the right track. The question shows you care about the Bible and think it is worth reading. Perhaps you’ve already begun. Good for you. Biblical illiteracy has led to an undeniable dumbing-down of our culture. And the Bible is undeniably great literature as well as foundational for Western society.

Still, there has to be more. The Bible is more than a cultural deposit, a work of literature to be analyzed and dissected. While the Bible may be the object of our attention, we, in fact, are its target audience because through it, God speaks to us (2 Timothy 3:16). In an age of relativism, the Bible’s claim is decidedly universal and objective. Israel’s Messiah has come to be the world’s Savior. The Bible also speaks on a personal level to each and every one of us. Its message matters, not simply on a literary or philosophical level. It’s a matter of life and life’s meaning.

Having said that, you may still feel like the Ethiopian eunuch who, having been asked whether he understood the Scriptures, famously replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” That, I suppose, is where pastors come into the picture. Even as our Lord Himself was the best Teacher, so also He trained men to be teachers of His Word (Matthew 28:20). Faithful pastors, following in the footsteps of the great teacher, are entrusted with the great and noble task of teaching God’s Word to the people, even as Philip taught the Ethiopian eunuch and led him to the knowledge of salvation.

Still, the question arises, “When I am reading the Bible at home, what should I expect to find?”

Check out a typical Christian bookstore, and you’ll find scores of self-improvement books telling you how you can become healthier, wealthier, thinner, and happier by applying various biblical principles. Similarly, I have friends who are constantly reading the Scriptures as if they were tea leaves predicting the future rising and falling of earthly empires. Such biblical prophecy clubs turn the Bible into a parlor game and miss the point entirely.

Perhaps the better question is “Who should I expect to find?” The answer, of course, is Christ Jesus. Christ is not simply the main topic of Scripture; He is its Alpha and Omega. In fact, Scripture’s every letter testifies to our Lord and the redemption that He has won for us on the cross. As Paul said, “I am determined to preach nothing among you but Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). All the prophets and apostles shared Paul’s determination and conviction.

The Gospels form the center and heart of Scripture, for within them we hear of our Lord’s birth, life, death, and resurrection. In the Gospels, God most fully reveals Himself in Christ, who makes Himself known in word and deed. For this reason, we stand when the Gospel is read in church. Everything in the Old Testament anticipates the coming of Jesus. When our Lord was explaining the Old Testament to the Emmaus disciples, we are told, “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Likewise, in the New Testament epistles, the apostles reflect upon the life and ministry of our Lord and apply it to particular circumstances within the Church.

Now, you might ask yourself, are there any tools that would help me become a better reader of Scripture? Well, there is no microwave that can speed up the process. As in any other discipline, it takes time and practice. If you want to swim, I would encourage you to jump in the pool. And, generally speaking, the more you read, the better reader you will become. You may read the Bible alone at home, but this reading is not done in isolation. We read within the context and community of the Church. It is good for pastor and people to read the Scriptures together.

If you are interested in a particular book of the Bible, you may want to go ahead and buy a commentary, perhaps one from the Concordia Commentary series. Or, you may consider reading Scripture along with the Early Church fathers. Then again, there is something to be said for simply reading Scripture for enjoyment. If Bible reading becomes a chore, you won’t do it. So, look at a few psalms and see how they strike your fancy. Find the story of David or Ruth, and dig in. Read a small epistle in one sitting. And ask yourself, in all cases, how the story, psalm, or epistle teaches you about Christ.

Now, it helps, I think, if you are grounded in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the faith of the Catechism. Doctrine has a certain shape or form, even as Scripture, too, has its own shape and form. You might also consider this: You already know a lot about God through His church. You know that He loves to baptize, to cleanse us, and raise us to new life. You know He loves to feed us in His Supper. Therefore, you should expect to find that throughout Scripture our Lord is cleansing and feeding His people. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, you should expect to find little reminders of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. In that sense, the Bible is like a mystery novel that finds its climax in our Lord’s death and resurrection, even as it is actualized and effective in Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

One trait that I think is underrated is that of curiosity. When you read Scripture, read as an explorer with a sense of adventure and discovery. Put yourself in the mindset of one who is prospecting for gold or an oilman looking for a gusher. If

something strikes you as odd, make a mental note. Don't be too quick to harmonize everything and make hasty judgments. Do not use Scripture only to confirm what you already know. Scripture is a lot more interesting than any system or preconceived notions you may have.

Certain skills will help you become a better reader. If you would be a teacher of others, it would help if you knew Greek and Hebrew. God's Word is like nutrition or an exercise program: the effects are not immediate, but they are long-lasting. God's Word is like a seed that once planted in the heart is able to take root, sprout, and result in the great fruit of faith. So, by all means, keep reading.

Dr. Peter Scaer (CTS 1992) is a professor of the New Testament at Concordia Theological Seminary.

Appendices

Good Books to Read Before Coming to the Seminary

Prof. John Pless

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A Curriculum from and for the Church

Prof. John T. Pless

The 2005–2006 academic year at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, witnessed the inauguration of a new curriculum, which had been in the making for the better part of a decade. Over thirty years had elapsed since the seminary last revised its curriculum; however, changes in society and in the church, as well as an increasingly diverse student body—many of whom are fairly new to Lutheranism—prompted the faculty to reflect on the adequacy of the current curriculum to form the minds and hearts of future pastors for ministry in this new century. Curricular changes were neither made lightly nor without deliberation and some spirited debate. The process spanned several years as it engaged the faculty in the reading and discussion of a wide array of writers involved in theological education and pastoral formation in North America and abroad.¹

A significant text in this process was Reinhard Hütter's *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice*.² Hütter develops the argument that doctrine is not a theoretical abstraction, but it is rather embodied in the concrete practices of the church: liturgy, preaching, pastoral care, catechesis, and mission. Hütter's insights, which were forged by his engagement with George Lindbeck, Oswald Bayer, and Erik Peterson were provocative in faculty discussion and formative for a curriculum centered in the practices of the church. Since the seminary's mission is "the preparation of pastors for the congregations and missions of the LCMS. . . Its programs and services offer an understanding of Christian faith which is Christ-centered and biblically-based, confessionally Lutheran and evangelically active,"³ the new curriculum, too, is shaped by the realities that constitute the church, namely, the preaching of Christ crucified and the administration of the sacraments. A curriculum governed by the gifts of Christ in Word and Sacrament intentionally reflects both the life of the pastor and that of the congregation.⁴

Worship, therefore, is not a devotional addendum to the study of theology but the matrix for such study. Kramer Chapel dominates the campus of Concordia

Theological Seminary not only architecturally but also thematically, as academic rigor is not separated from a life of faith nurtured by sermon and sacrament as well as doxologically expressed in the daily offices. The curriculum integrates exegetical and dogmatic studies, historical investigation of the church's traditions, and the development of pastoral skills with the ongoing worship life of the church centered in font, pulpit, and altar. This is the key to the revised curriculum.

This new curriculum seeks to catechize students into God's means of grace in a fundamental and holistic manner. It assumes regular participation in the Divine Service and the prayer offices of the church. Recognizing the fact that our culture is increasingly biblically illiterate and, moreover, that a significant number of students are either fairly new to the Lutheran Church or inadequately catechized in their home congregations, the new curriculum makes engagement with primary texts, especially the Holy Scriptures and the Small Catechism, a priority. The seminary does not exist to produce religious technicians, ecclesial managers, or psychological therapists, but rather thinking and speaking pastors who are able to articulate the truth of the Gospel with competence and accuracy in a world fragmented and often chaotic. Our seminary president, Dean Wenthe, along with our former academic dean, William Weinrich, provided excellent leadership to achieve this goal.⁵ The revised curriculum aims at forming students in their ability to think and act theologically with good skills: critical and analytic. The classroom and the seminary community should prepare the student to express the truth of the faith both orally and in writing.

There is less emphasis on isagogics and more emphasis on the reading, interpretation, and proclamation of texts, especially the texts of the Gospels. Plenary lectures as well as small working groups will be used in these classes as students are led to see how doctrine is derived from the biblical texts. Three Gospel courses are required (Gospel I: Matthew; Gospel II: Mark/Luke; Gospel III: John), and each student participates in six quarters of New Testament Greek Readings (one-hour seminars comprised of no more than six students). These seminars are devoted to the translation and interpretation of the Gospel lection for the coming Sunday in the church year with a view toward preaching. Thus, the seminar provides the student with a model for ongoing study. Faculty members from every department, not only the Exegetical Department, teach these seminars. Ability in Greek is a prerequisite for enrollment in the Master of Divinity program. Hebrew I and II are part of the required curriculum for those who enter without knowledge of this language.

There are no independent courses in isagogics or hermeneutics in the revised curriculum as these are covered within the exegetical courses. In addition to the Gospel courses, there are two required courses in the Pentateuch, and one course each on Pauline Epistles, the Major Prophets, and the Psalms. The Psalms course is interdisciplinary, taught by faculty from both the Exegetical and Pastoral Ministry and Missions Departments in order that the use of the psalms in worship and pastoral care is highlighted.

A required course in catechetics focuses extensively on the use of the Small

Catechism. It is expected that all students will be able to recite the six chief parts as well as the daily prayers by heart. The student is being catechized into the texts of the Catechism even as he is being prepared to teach it. The catechetics course approaches the Catechism not so much as a text book or educational resource but as a book of doctrine, prayer, and life so that the future pastor develops the *habitus* of a catechist.⁶

The teaching of liturgics has an expanded place in the new curriculum. Student assessments from recent years reflected the need for more depth in the study and practices of worship than was given in the one required course of the previous curriculum. The new curriculum has two required courses in liturgics. Liturgics I is devoted to the biblical foundations, historical development, and theological significance of the liturgy as well as instruction in the basics of officiating at the Divine Service and prayer offices. Liturgics II attends to the church year, hymnody, and worship planning.

Three required courses in the Lutheran Confessions introduce students to the historical background, doctrinal content, and ongoing relevance of the documents in the Book of Concord. The three courses in dogmatics follow a traditional, creedal outline in equipping students with the knowledge of Christian doctrine and practice in the ability to think theologically and articulate the confession of Christ with faithfulness, clarity, and coherence.

David Yeago has described pastoral theology as the hands and feet of dogmatics.⁷ The practical courses, therefore, endeavor to ground students in church practices that reflect our confession of Christ and enable him to distinguish law and gospel in proclamation and pastoral care, articulating the faith in our culture with integrity. *Pastoral Theology I* is, in large part, based on the Agenda that will accompany the *Lutheran Service Book*. This course begins with the rite of ordination as the map for pastoral identity and work. The liturgical forms of Baptism, confirmation, Confession/Absolution, marriage, visitation of the sick, commendation of the dying, and Christian burial constitute the chief loci of the syllabus. *Pastoral Theology II* employs case studies to hone the student's ability to engage in spiritual diagnosis in order to make appropriate applications of the gospel. *Pastoral Theology I* and *II* are supplemented by a required course in pastoral counseling. A course entitled "Pastor, Congregation, and Synod" replaces the previous course in parish administration. This class attends to issues of churchmanship as well as kingdom-of-the-left aspects of congregational life.

Three courses in homiletics provide instruction in the theology of preaching especially the right distinction between the law and the gospel, sermon design, and delivery. Theological foundations and missional approaches consistent with Lutheran theology are at the heart of the course of an introductory course in missions and evangelism. Theological Ethics lays the foundation for a Lutheran approach to ethics in a postmodern world that is wary of assertions of absolute truth. Working from the premise that the doctrine of justification by faith alone is the "boundary and basis"⁸ also for ethics, this course aims at assisting the student in thinking theologically about

contemporary moral issues. A course in the previous curriculum, “Religious Bodies in America” has been replaced by a new course, “Ministry in a Pluralistic Context.” Whereas the older course was basically a course in comparative symbolics, the new course takes up the challenges of so-called post denominational Christianity, world religions, new religious movements, competing world views, and cultural diversity with a view toward apologetics and missionary proclamation.

An overview of church history is provided in three sequential courses with an additional required course on the Lutheran Church in America as well as at least one history elective. The historical dimension of the curriculum demonstrates the catholicity of the church and examines the ways in which God’s people have confronted error and confessed Christ in the past. A new feature of this curriculum is a seminar on Luther’s writings. The topic for this seminar varies as a variety of instructors select key treatises from the corpus of Luther’s writings for more intensive examination. For example, a systematic theologian might offer a seminar on *The Bondage of the Will* while a New Testament scholar might choose to host a seminar on Luther’s lectures on John or a homiletics professor might investigate Luther’s Advent sermons. It is hoped that this seminar will not only lead the student into a more in-depth knowledge of a specific area of Luther studies but that it will also equip him with the tools for continued study of the preeminent teacher of our church and his significance for pastoral ministry in the twenty-first century.

Perhaps the distinguishing feature of the CTS curriculum is the sequence of courses known as Theologia. These courses will be taught by a team of lecturers from the four departments. Theologia I is a first-year course based on Baptism. Theologia II focuses on preaching while Theologia III is built around the Lord’s Supper. Each of these courses will be integrative in nature as components of exegesis, historical theology, systematic reflection, and liturgical/pastoral practice are brought together. For example, in Theologia I, students will exegete key New Testament baptismal pericopes, examine historic baptismal liturgies, homilies, and other patristic texts, study the doctrine of Baptism in Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, and reflect on current baptismal practices. The course will utilize both plenary lectures and smaller weekly seminars similar to the format of the Gospel courses. The Theologia sequence indicates how deeply the curriculum is committed to the pastoral acts of Baptism, preaching, and the Lord’s Supper.

Another integrative aspect of the curriculum is field education and vicarage. Field education at CTS consists of involvement in a local congregation for the first six quarters of each seminarian’s career. Quarters three and four also include an institutional component where the student works in a hospital or nursing home/rehabilitation center. This experience in the field is linked with specific classes. For example, a student enrolled in catechetics is expected to teach the Catechism in his field education setting. Required one-hour plenary lectures for first- and second-year students each week works with specific readings to enhance theological development and further pastoral formation (see Appendix). In the first year, there is

an intentional move from vocation to office (first quarter) to the character of the pastor and his work (second quarter) to the theology of the cross as the framework for understanding pastoral life and work (third quarter). The focus of the second year is on classical themes in pastoral care, using Luther's letters in both first and second quarters. The third quarter provides occasion to discuss the confessional nature of the pastor's work, demonstrating that doctrine and practice cannot be divorced. An intentional and pronounced goal of field education is to shape the spiritual life of the pastor using Luther's well-known triad, *oratio, meditatio, and tentatio*.⁹

One of the more controversial aspects of the new curriculum is the reduction of electivity. The highly structured curriculum leaves room for only two electives. However the majority of the faculty agreed with the proposal as the new curriculum covers a broader range of topics in the required courses. Also offsetting the lack of electives are the six required modules on a range of practical issues such as stewardship, the pastor and the media, various ethnic ministries, particular issues in social ministry, specialized topics in pastoral care, time management, strategic planning processes, and ministries to special groups (youth, older adults, singles, military, campus, disabled, etc.). The modules are about six hours each, often offered on a Saturday and taught by a visiting pastor or layperson with proven expertise in the field.

Supplementing the formal curriculum, is the so-called ungraded curriculum, that is, those occasions both spontaneous as well as planned that allow for mentoring, exposure to contemporary theological issues, and involvement in church life, including mission outreach and Christian service. Among the planned events would be the seminary's annual symposia in January, the Good Shepherd Institute's conference each November, regular Wednesday morning convocations, and a number of mission and servant events both in the United States and abroad.

The four traditional departments that have characterized theological education since the time of Schleiermacher¹⁰ are maintained, but the boundaries have become much more fluid in the revised curriculum. In presenting the new curriculum to the faculty, the curriculum review committee articulated what it believed its distinct advantages to be:

- It is primarily churchly *and* academic, namely, holistic in nature rather than disjointed and disciplinarian;
- It purposefully addresses our post-Christian society and world;
- It forms students through an understanding of baptismal, sacramental identity;
- It is built upon a participation in the life of God himself;
- It is highly interactive between faculty and students;
- It emphasizes primary texts and source documents, rather than secondary sources;
- It is ultimately concerned with pastoral education and formation rather than

the simple imparting of information;

- It involves students from the beginning as novitiates, moving them toward the pastoral office;
- It models what a pastor actually does in the parish;
- It is shaped by the constitutive realities of the church's own life: Baptism, preaching, and the Lord's Supper;
- It involves mentoring, spiritual formation and relational aspects.¹¹

The curriculum review committee at Concordia Theological Seminary believes that the new curriculum is responsive to the needs of the church for pastors whose hearts and minds have been molded by the gospel of Jesus Christ and strengthened for intelligent and compassionate shepherding of the Lord's flock and the missionary confession of Christ Jesus in an unbelieving world. The curriculum endeavors to instill in the students "the virtues of the ordained life" as the student not only studies the Scriptures but lives in them as part of the baptized community gathered on campus for prayer and study.

Making the transition to a new curriculum is not without significant challenges as it calls for adjustments on the part of students, professors, and administrators. Certainly and especially, it challenges professors to continue to work in a collegial fashion, to broaden their view beyond the discipline of their academic specialization, and to take into account more fully the purpose of theological education for the life of the church in the world. It will, no doubt, take a few years to refine and further develop the pattern of theological education and pastoral formation that we have set for ourselves. Yet we believe that it is well worth the effort in order that the LCMS might have well-formed pastors who work with confessional integrity as able ministers of the New Testament in a complex and chaotic world.

- 1 The faculty read and engaged a number of articles and chapters of seminal books on theological education and pastoral formation including: David P. Scaer, "A Critique of the Fourfold Pattern," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 63 (October 1999): 269–280; Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001); Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 35–152; L. Gregory Jones and Stephanie Paulsell, eds., *The Scope of our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001); John W. Kleinig, "Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio: What Makes a Theologian?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 66 (July 2002): 255–268; Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism—Volume I: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 194–225; David Yeago, "The Spirit, the Church, and the Scriptures: Biblical Inspiration and Interpretation Revisited," in *Knowing the Triune God: The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church*, ed. James J. Buckley and David Yeago (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 49–93. Although published after the curriculum review committee had completed its work, the new book Charles Foster, et al. eds., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Formation* (Stanford, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006) appears to confirm the overall orientation of the new CTS curriculum.
- 2 See Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000).
- 3 *Concordia Theological Seminary: Academic Catalog 2005–2006* (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary, 2005), 20.

- 4 It should be noted that CTS now includes a Master of Arts degree leading to certification as a deaconess in the LCMS. Diaconal students take many of the courses required of Master of Divinity students. In the place of such courses as Hebrew, homiletics, and pastoral theology, the deaconess students take courses in the history of the office of deaconess, deaconess practice, and human care seminars. The deaconesses are also in a separate field education tract and complete an internship rather than a vicarage.
- 5 See Dean O. Wenthe, "More Than Leader, Administrator, and Therapist: The Scriptural Substance of the Pastoral Office," in *All Theology is Christology: Essays in Honor of David P. Scaer*, ed. Dean O. Wenthe, William C. Weinrich, Arthur A. Just Jr., Daniel Gard, and Thomas L. Olson (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000), 199–213.
- 6 For further development of this point, see John T. Pless, "Fidelity to the Catechism in Prayer and Preaching," *Lutheran Forum* 39 (Fall 2005): 8–15.
- 7 "Systematic theology is the tongue and mind of practical theology: it expounds the message to which we desire to be faithful. But practical theology is the hands and feet of systematic theology. It is the necessary fulfillment of all systematic theology, which must always intend to be in some sense church dogmatics, thinking interior and useful to the life of the church," David Yeago, "Testing the Spirits: Practical Theology and the Crucified and Risen God," *Dialog* 22 (Fall 1983): 252. Also see Gerhard Sauter, *Gateways to Dogmatics: Reasoning Theologically for the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 95–180.
- 8 Here, the work of Oswald Bayer is particularly helpful. See his chapter, "Justification: Basis and Boundary of Theology," in *By Faith Alone: Essays in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde*, ed. Joseph Burgess and Marc Kolden (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 67–85 and "Luther's Ethics as Pastoral Care," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4 (Summer 1990): 125–142.
- 9 See John T. Pless, "The Triangular Shape of the Pastor's Devotional Life," in *Lord Jesus Christ, Will You Not Stay: Essays in Honor of Ronald Feuerhahn on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. Bart Day, et al. (Houston, TX: Feuerhahn Festschrift Committee, 2002), 317–331; Also see Oswald Bayer's forthcoming work *Theology the Lutheran Way*, tr. Jeffrey Silcock and Mark C. Mattes, to be released in September 2007 from Eerdmans. Bayer develops Luther's *oratio, meditatio, tentatio* in contrast to various forms of scholastic and speculative theologies, demonstrating the necessity for an ecclesiological context for the study of theology. In large part, Bayer's work seems to confirm the direction that the new CTS curriculum has charted, although our faculty did not engage it directly in our work on the new curriculum. This very significant volume provides a theological framework conducive to the goals of the new curriculum. I am grateful to Dr. Mark Mattes both for sharing the pre-publication manuscript of *Theology the Lutheran Way* with me and for the ongoing conversation with him regarding the significance of Bayer's work for contemporary confessional Lutheranism.
- 10 See Farley, *Theologia*, 73–98.
- 11 Memo from the Curriculum Review Committee—March 27, 2002.
- 12 See William Willimon, *Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000).

Appendix: Field Education as Component in the Revised Curriculum

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter
First Year Weekly Lecture	Vocation and Pastoral Formation: the Life of Prayer— Key Texts: <i>The Minister's Prayer Book</i> edited by John Doberstein; Luther on Vocation by Gustaf Wingren.	The Character of the Lutheran Pastor— Key Text: <i>The Hammer of God</i> by Bo Giertz (small group discussions of this book).	Theology of the Cross and the Pastoral Office— Key Text: <i>On Being a Theologian of the Cross</i> by Gerhard Forde.
First Year Contextual Activities	Get acquainted with congregation, orientation with pastor.	Assist with liturgy— Accompany pastor on hospital/nursing home visits, evangelism and delinquent member visits.	Institutional visits— Observe/attend congregational board meetings.
Second Year Weekly Lecture	Classical Pastoral Care—Key Text: <i>Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel</i> edited by Theodore Tappert.	Luther letters continued.	Confession and Office— Key Texts: <i>The Lonely Way</i> - Vol. II by Hermann Sasse.
Second Year Contextual Activities	Institutional visits continue. Preach.	Teach Sunday School, Bible class, and/or Catechism.	Preach and Observe funeral.

Collects

Sunday

Lord of heaven and earth, on the first day of creation you separated light and darkness. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, the women came to the tomb and found not the darkness of death, but the living Light of the world. This day, as I gather in Your house with my brothers and sisters in Christ, cast away the darkness of my sin and doubt. Dispel all my fears and uncertainties of the future. Illumine the path You have laid out before me that I may serve You with a good conscience, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Monday

Lord God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, as I begin my work anew this day, I ask that You would make clear where I may serve Your people best. Give me courage to embrace a new calling to proclaim Your Word or grant me contentment to remain here serving my neighbor as I have been given skill, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday

Lord of the nations, You have gathered for Yourself a people from every tribe, language, nation, and race. Continue to send out workers to the far reaches of the world so that all people would hear the Gospel of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Wherever You place me this day grant me compassion for everyone I meet as Your Son has laid down his life for them, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday

Heavenly Father, Ruler of time and all creation, here amid another week grant me strength in my labors that I might not grow weary of my calling. As I contemplate Your calling for my life, continue to bless my work here and all my future endeavors, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday

Heavenly Father, in Holy Scripture you give us an image of the deliverance which is ours through the waters of Holy Baptism. You delivered Noah and his family; You delivered the children of Israel through the Red Sea; and You brought them into the Promised Land across the Jordan river. As I have been made your child, teach me to look to your care and guidance for deliverance and to know that whatever trial I must endure that you have worked all things for the strengthening of my faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday

Lord of our salvation, upon the cross Your Son laid down His life for the salvation of the world. As He has paid the wages of death and atoned for all my sin, grant me forgiveness of all my sins that I may live each day with a good conscience ever confident of Your enduring love for me, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday

Lord God, Heavenly Father, Your Son Jesus has promised to come again to judge the living and the dead, granting eternal life to me and all believers in Him. At the close of another week, keep me ever mindful that the days of this life pass quickly. Fill all my days with Your gifts of grace, making me an instrument of Your peace, and strengthening my faith until the end, through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wisdom

Lord of all truth, Your Son rejoiced that You have hidden the things of heaven from those who boast in their wisdom and understanding so that Your glory might be revealed as even the little children cling to Your promises in faith. As I study Your Word, open my eyes to see and my ears to hear the fullness of Your Word. Grant me faith to receive Your truth as trustingly as a little child and quiet all my doubts and uncertainties, through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Doing God's Will

Heavenly Father, Your Son has taught us to pray that your will would be done. Conform my will to Your perfect will that it may be done among us also. As in heaven the angels rejoice to see Your works, bring great joy to Your people on earth as they see Your plans and purposes for their lives unfold, through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Finances

Heavenly Father, Giver of all good gifts and Sustainer of all that you create; grant us all that we need to support this body and life. Deliver me from worry about money and all material things. Grant me discipline to live within the means which You have supplied and be content with what You have seen fit to give, through Jesus Christ Your Son our Lord. Amen.

Moving

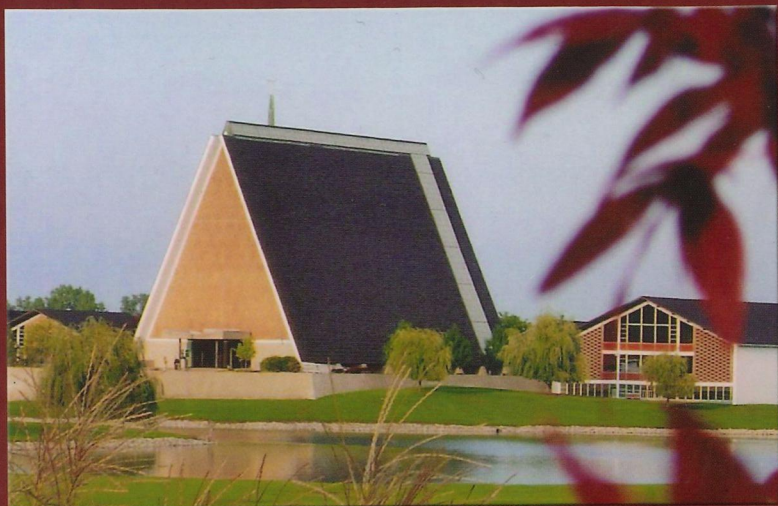
Heavenly Father, Maker of heaven and earth, You daily and richly provide for the needs of all Your creation. The birds of the air have nests, foxes have dens, and you have blessed me with shelter and security even as many live exposed to wind and weather. I pray that You would continue to provide shelter and comfort in our new home. As many moves lay ahead during my studies, grant me resolve and resilience to endure times of uncertainty. Grant forgiveness for any doubt of Your love and unite us with the family of believers wherever You call me to serve in the ministry of Your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.

Leaving family

Gracious Father in heaven, Your Son took on flesh and was nurtured by Mary and Joseph during His days of youth. You have blessed me with a loving family from whom I must now take leave in order to enter the seminary. Though distance may separate us, comfort each of us with Your *promise of unity in the Body of Christ* as we join each Lord's Day at Your table with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. Grant us times of joyful reunion and contentment in all our callings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leaving a job

Lord of the harvest, Your Son bid us pray that you would send out laborers into the harvest field. He called disciples from all walks of life and many and various jobs. To proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven, Peter, James, and John left their nets, Matthew left his work of collecting taxes, and Your Son left behind His tools of carpentry. Grant me courage to set aside my present work and answer Your call to proclaim Christ Crucified and serve Your people with your gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Concordia Theological Seminary is a community that believes, teaches, and confesses the saving power of baptismal water, proclaims the Gospel, and receives the gifts of the Lord's body and blood. It is through these means of grace that our community finds its life.

We are grounded in the Word and Sacraments as we study to become pastors. Our faculty is recognized worldwide for its outstanding academic and pastoral contribution to the church. These theologians shape us both inside the classroom and out.

What we learn in the classroom we experience in the chapel. We are rooted in the Word and Sacraments daily as we gather around font, pulpit, and altar, praying the church's liturgy morning, noon, and night. By continually receiving the life-giving Gospel of Christ, we are empowered to live by faith as we prepare to serve the church and proclaim Christ to all the nations.

