The Gift of Vicars
By John D. Reynolds

The Re-gifting of God's Gifts
By Amy C. Rast

Good and Gracious Gifts from God
By Jeffrey H. Pulse
Trips through a number of stores early this autumn stirred some of the same frustrations of past years. It seems that the “Holiday Season” starts earlier each year. Even “Black Friday” has given way to shopping all day long on Thanksgiving…Thursday!

And when I get too frustrated, I turn to texts like Job 20:20-21: “Because he knew no contentment in his belly, he will not let anything in which he delights escape him. There was nothing left after he had eaten; therefore his prosperity will not endure.”

We live in a culture that encourages us, at nearly every turn, to be discontent. Commercials tell us that we really need a larger television, that expensive dress, that…well you fill in the blank. Consumerism pushes us at every turn to want more, even when what we have is more than enough. It is so much a part of the air we breathe that we don’t even think about it.

This discontent is fostered in the midst of a level of general abundance in the United States unlike anything the world has ever seen. And for that we truly should give thanks. We are blessed beyond measure—and Concordia Theological Seminary is living proof of that. God continues to give us His gifts more abundantly than we could possibly deserve or imagine.

And so in this issue of *For the Life of the World* we are taking a moment to step back and reflect on some of the greatest gifts God gives to His church: pastors, vicars and deaconesses.

Students are the beating heart of this seminary. Each year we have a new group of gifted people come together to form a “class.” But that is far too impersonal for what God is actually drawing together. These are people the Holy Spirit has called and gathered into His church, and now He is forming them into servants of Jesus Christ. A central element of that formation is helping students begin to realize and explore the specific ways God has gifted them for service.

The articles by Prof. Pulse, Dr. Reynolds and Deaconess Rast point us to the way God faithfully continues to support His church and the mission He has entrusted to it so that the greatest gift of all, salvation in Christ Jesus alone, might build up the Church and be a blessing in the sphere of service God entrusts to them.

If there’s a downside at the Seminary, it’s that the students move through the community so quickly to their places of service. That is as it should be. We cannot selfishly hold them to ourselves. And so we rejoice that they enrich the Seminary, but move on quickly; for the Lord’s way is to not tuck gifts away, but to share them abundantly with His people.

And that is real cause for Thanksgiving!

In His service,

L R R J.

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary
4 The Gift of Vicars
By John D. Reynolds

Preaching, teaching and calling on the homebound or hospitalized were certainly something I expected to do with frequency. But what I was unable to foresee was how being immersed in God’s Word to prepare for these tasks of a vicar prepared me to confess the Gospel in not only these situations but also in every other aspect of my day.

7 The Re-gifting of God’s Gifts
By Amy C. Rast

Eventually the deaconesses who are formed here at Concordia Theological Seminary leave this place to serve in congregations, human care ministries and missions, sharing the mercy and compassion they have first received through Christ from their church family and practiced here with us. They re-gift what God and His people have given to them by teaching the faithful, reaching the lost and caring for all.

10 Good and Gracious Gifts from God
By Jeffrey H. Pulse

Good and gracious gifts from God. They come in many sizes and shapes, they surprise us with gasps of delight and sighs of contentment, they spring up and overwhelm us at the most opportune and most unexpected moments. And, sometimes, often times they are people—and sometimes, often times they are church workers—and sometimes, often times they come from Concordia Theological Seminary!
The vicarage year is one of putting in practice classroom learning in a real world setting.

Noah Rogness, pictured here with his wife, Rebekah, and daughter, Lydia, is serving his vicarage at Trinity Lutheran Church, Palo Alto, California.
Each year toward the end of April, excitement and anticipation fills the air around the Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) campus as Vicarage Assignment night approaches. During an evening service, in a packed Kramer Chapel, seminary students in their second year of study are called forward to receive their vicarage assignment. The Vicarage Assignment Service and the next evening’s Candidate Call Service are two of the most watched CTS services on the Internet each year.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) established the yearlong vicarage requirement at a Synod convention in 1932. The resolution states that all seminary students complete a yearlong vicarage after their second year of study. Vicarage is a 12-month internship that provides students with the practical experience of working with people in a congregational setting under the direction of a pastor/supervisor.

The events leading up to vicarage assignment begin months before in congregations across the Synod as pastors and congregational leaders discuss parish needs and desires. As congregations study and analyze opportunities for the Gospel, a vicar may be considered as a missional opportunity. Vicars are not pastors, so certain pastoral acts are inappropriate for vicars (i.e., sacramental acts and Rites of the Church). However, vicars can assist a pastor in many ways as they learn about serving as a pastor. They can preach and teach under the supervision of a pastor. Vicars can assist with the distribution of communion, they can help with youth groups, visit the sick and shut-in, make evangelism calls and by doing these things they learn and observe the work of a pastor. The vicarage year is one of putting in practice classroom learning in a real world setting.

Chris Suggitt, currently a fourth-year student, shares some of his reflections from his vicarage year at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Palo Alto, California. “Every man has certain expectations of what the year might hold for him as he begins his vicarage. Preaching, teaching and calling on the homebound or hospitalized were certainly something I expected to do with frequency. But what I was unable to foresee was how being immersed in God’s Word to prepare for these tasks of a vicar prepared me to confess the Gospel in not only these situations but also in every other aspect of my day. This was a valuable learning experience for me because as pastors, we must be ready to confess the faith outside of the planned times we meet with people and proclaim Christ as we engage those on the street, at a dinner party or who stop by your study unexpectedly. This year of formation is vital for men preparing for the Office of the Holy Ministry.”

No classroom experience can completely prepare a seminary student for the all the joys and sorrows of parish life. The joy of baptizing an infant and the sorrow of seeing a senior saint leaving our earthly family, the awkward adolescence in confirmation class and the elder full of wisdom and grace are just a few of those experiences. These experiences form a

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Pastor. God’s grace and forgiveness form the basis of all we do, say and even feel. And the parish is the place where the “rubber meets the road.”

“Vicarage turned my knowledge into wisdom. When I started vicarage, I didn’t know what to expect. When I completed vicarage, the theology that had been in my mind was cemented in my heart,” explains fourth-year seminarian Tyler Walworth, who served his vicarage year at Trinity Lutheran Church, Reese, Michigan. “The reality that the Gospel of Christ needs to be given in Word and Sacrament was impressed upon me. Now I am even more motivated to become a pastor for the sake of God’s people.”

So as extended families watch the service on the Internet or from the pews in Kramer Chapel, they are joined in viewing by pastors/supervisors and laity all over the Synod who are excited to see who will be their new vicar. This coming year the service will on Monday, April 27, 2015. I will be the man in the pulpit at the end of the service reading the names and locations to which the vicar-elect will be assigned. See you then! 

The Rev. John D. Reynolds (John.Reynolds@ctsfw.edu) serves as director of Vicarage and Internship and assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. If your congregation would like to learn more about the CTS Vicarage Program, email Vicarage@ctsfw.edu or phone 260-452-2190.

No classroom experience can completely prepare a seminary student for the all the joys and sorrows of parish life. The joy of baptizing an infant and the sorrow of seeing a senior saint leaving our earthly family, the awkward adolescence in confirmation class and the elder full of wisdom and grace are just a few of those experiences. These experiences form a pastor. God’s grace and forgiveness form the basis of all we do, say and even feel.

Ryan Janke is serving his vicarage at St. John Lutheran Church, Hubbard, Iowa, and Immanuel Lutheran Church, Iowa Falls, Iowa.
The little girl smiles and places her gifts beneath the boughs of the Christmas tree. She spent the afternoon in her bedroom, wrestling with festive roles of wrapping paper taller than she, struggling with safety scissors and tape, lovingly fashioning the paper to fit each item. She thought long and hard about what they each needed, Dad, Mom and siblings, and chose a gift for each of them from her own possessions. Her brother will receive the tattered, stuffed dog that brings comfort at bedtime; her sister the CD of music that always cheers her. For Mom she chose the box of tissues from her bedside table, perfect for wiping runny noses and tears. Dad’s gift was a small cardboard heart that she has decorated with a photo of herself. It will remind him of how much she loves him when he is away at work.

Through her family, the Church, the deaconess has learned how God meets the needs of His people through His Son, Christ Jesus, and how in their joyful response they share these gifts with one another, they re-gift. In the midst of His people the Church, in the daily life of community, the deaconess has learned to love by being loved, to forgive by being forgiven, to help by being helped. We love because He first loved us.

Deaconess Faith Swenson (CTS 2014) serves at St. John Lutheran Church, Hillsboro, North Dakota.
The deaconesses who are formed here at Concordia Theological Seminary leave this place to serve in congregations, human care ministries and missions, sharing the mercy and compassion they have first received through Christ from their church family and practiced here with us. They re-gift what God and His people have given to them by teaching the faithful, reaching the lost and caring for all.

Re-gifting frequently occurs at family gatherings and office Christmas parties. For many it is an opportunity to dispose of an unwanted item they’ve received or no longer need, that singing fish plaque, the chia pet or the tacky looking sweater. Giving what we have, not out of the receiver’s need but the giver’s.

The child’s re-gifting is distinct. These are things dear to her—things of her very own that she chose to meet her loved one’s needs, humble gifts, not shiny and new, but cherished and useful. She has responded in love and compassion to those who have shown her love and compassion, re-gifting what has first been gifted to her.

Her parents are re-gifters too, passing on the gifts that they have received from God and shared with one another. This is a reflection of the gift of love that they each have received, father, mother, daughter, from their Heavenly Father, specifically that long awaited gift of a Savior, God’s Son, Jesus Christ.

Made one with Christ in baptism, our Heavenly Father calls us His own as He places us into His family, the Church, where we are nurtured by Him and by the family of faith. In our
congregational life we devote ourselves, as has the Church throughout the ages, to the apostles’ teaching (kerygma and didache) and the fellowship (koinonia), to the breaking of bread and the prayers (leiturgia). As God’s family we have all things in common and share them as any have need (dikonia). Together in Christ we live and breathe and have our meaning.

Through her family, the Church, the deaconess has learned how God meets the needs of His people through His Son, Christ Jesus, and how in their joyful response they share these gifts with one another, they re-gift. In the midst of His people the Church, in the daily life of community, the deaconess has learned to love by being loved, to forgive by being forgiven, to help by being helped. We love because He first loved us.

The deaconess, like the little girl, received love from God and family and returns, re-gifts, that love to those who love her. She re-gifts spiritual care to those who care, teaches the Christian faith to those who teach, forgives the forgiving, shows mercy to the merciful. All because God has been merciful to her. The gift passes from generation to generation. She is familiar with this life, the life of the Church, and she receives from it and gives to it. She learns to take that love of Christ out to the suffering and the needy, to bring light and life to the world.

She re-gifts the very same gifts that Christians have received from Christ Jesus and have been re-gifting from generation to generation. Visits to the sick and lonely, Sunday School lessons to fourth graders, transportation to the doctor’s office for refugees, food for the hungry at the food bank, tutoring in an after school program for low-income children, leading a Bible study for women inmates at the county jail, serving Thanksgiving dinner to the poor, staying up all night with the youth at a lock-in, presenting on mercy at the LWML Zone Rally, playing the organ for worship, washing dishes after a funeral dinner, calling on inactive members, comforting a grieving widow, reading Bible stories to the preschoolers, organizing Vacation Bible School, leading seniors in hymn-sings, educating the congregation on the sanctity of life. She is carrying out our Lord’s admonition to “Love one another as I have loved you.”

Eventually the deaconesses who are formed here at Concordia Theological Seminary leave this place to serve in congregations, human care ministries and missions, sharing the mercy and compassion they have first received through Christ from their church family and practiced here with us. They re-gift what God and His people have given to them by teaching the faithful, reaching the lost and caring for all. With joy we at Concordia Theological Seminary re-gift these faithful women to you so that they may share God’s gift of mercy with you and help you re-gift the precious gift given to us from God Himself, His only-begotten Son, with the world.

For more information on how a deaconess can be a gift to your congregation or to prepare for service as deaconess of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, please contact Deaconess Amy Rast at Amy.Rast@ctsfw.edu or 260-452-2225. Additional information on Deaconess Studies is also available at www.ctsfw.edu/Admission.

Deaconess Amy C. Rast (Amy.Rast@ctsfw.edu) serves as associate director of Deaconess Studies at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The Rev. Kyle Krueger blesses Deaconess Jennette Heller (CTS 2014) during her commissioning service at Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Soest), Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Good and gracious gifts from God. They come in many sizes and shapes, they surprise us with gasps of delight and sighs of contentment, they spring up and overwhelm us at the most opportune and most unexpected moments. And, sometimes, often times they are people—and sometimes, often times they are church workers—and sometimes, often times they come from Concordia Theological Seminary!

The Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy, president of the LCMS Minnesota South District, participates in the ordination of the Rev. Andrew Herzberg (CTS 2014) who serves at Trinity Lutheran Church, Farmington, Minnesota.
Good and gracious gifts from God. They come in many sizes and shapes, they surprise us with gasps of delight and sighs of contentment, they spring up and overwhelm us at the most opportune and most unexpected moments. And, sometimes, often times they are people—and sometimes, often times they are church workers—and sometimes, often times they come from Concordia Theological Seminary!

Pastors, vicars and deaconesses formed at Concordia Theological Seminary truly are God’s gracious gifts to the Church. When they begin their seminary studies, that formation has not yet taken place. It comes through classroom learning; practicing what they have learned via fieldwork; and through discussions with classmates and professors. This formation and preparation certainly take place best in the residential study model. While there are times when distance education can be of benefit, the residential setting allows for a connection that can only take place in person, providing that opportunity for personal interaction over a cup of coffee in the Student Commons or during research in Walther Library.

The study at CTS is rigorous. Along with attending classes there are tests and papers to be written. Those papers will be returned with comments to rewrite and expand; students will be pushed to defend their views. Of course, there is also a lot of nurturing, too. Professors share stories from their time at seminary so students will get the point and see the goal. It is all in the process of shaping and educating good, solid theologians and dedicated, practical pastors for God’s Church.

Why is it important to put students through such a rigorous course of study? It is no mystery to any of us that our world is a challenging and challenged place. There are wars and rumors of wars, corruption and evil, marriage and family under constant attack, and, as images of Revelation flash through our minds, the Church needs to know where it stands and how it stands in the midst of the chaos. What does the Gospel of Jesus Christ look like in this mess? A hammer, a torch, a lion or a dove...? The students formed at CTS learn that it is all of the above, and it must be communicated in the right amount at the proper time.

...give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you. Luke 6:38

The imagery of a vessel filled to the brim and then pressed down and shaken together in order to fill it even more completely, and still it is overflowing, is a beautiful picture of God’s way of blessing His people. Our God is a God of good and gracious gifts, and He is generous.
The Rev. Steven Conradt and his wife, Bernadette, following his ordination at St. John Lutheran Church, Shawano, Wisconsin.

And so your Seminary shapes and prepares men and women for service to the Church. Your Seminary sends these gifts from God to you in order that, together, you might be the LORD God’s city on the hill. And you, the members of congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, have an important role to fill in this process.

And so your Seminary shapes and prepares men and women for service to the Church. Your Seminary sends these gifts from God to you in order that, together, you might be the LORD God’s city on the hill. And you, the members of congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, have an important role to fill in this process. This includes your role in encouraging men to consider service as a pastor! It also includes your role of providing prayerful and financial support to the Seminary and its students. The world and its darkness will not end until our Savior returns. Until that Advent, your Seminary, with your help, will continue to form, shape and nurture good and gracious gifts. Good and gracious gifts from God.

The Rev. Prof. Jeffrey H. Pulse (Jeffrey.Pulse@ctsfw.edu) serves as director of Certification and Placement and associate professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a pastor, you can learn more at www.ctsfw.edu/Admission. You can also connect with a member of our Admission staff at Admission@ctsfw.edu or 800-481-2155.
A couple of years ago, Dr. Reinhard Slenczka gave a paper at our sister seminary in Oberursel, Germany, on “Theology in Discipleship of Jesus Christ” (it was subsequently published in the July 2013 issue of *Kerygma und Dogma*, pp. 193-206). In this paper Slenczka stressed the fact that to be a theologian is to be taught by the Triune God through His Word, the Holy Scriptures. Hence being a student of theology is a form of discipleship. To be a disciple is to be a learner of God’s Word. That certainly takes place in the classroom as students sit before the text of Holy Scripture doing the hard work of exegesis, utilizing Greek and Hebrew, concordances and commentaries so that they might know what the Spirit has put into these words.

Discipleship continues as students follow their Good Shepherd as He speaks with words which are spirit and life and gives them His body and blood to eat and drink in the Sacrament of the Altar. Hence, Kramer Chapel is the focal point of our campus, not only architecturally but in the service of what is going on in this place. Academic capacity and spiritual formation are set in opposition. The one cannot go on without the other if the Church is to have faithful servants in her pastors and deaconesses.

Field Education is part of the process. Early in their first quarter, new students are assigned to a local congregation where they will spend two years shadowing the pastor, participating in various aspects of congregational life and learning by doing in ways that are appropriate to their position as a student. This again is part and parcel of the student’s life of discipleship. Weekly lectures focus on Luther’s *oratio, meditatio* and *tentatio*, forging the link between disciplined study and prayer and involvement in the life of the congregation under the cross.

The way to vicarage is prepared by Field Education. The vicarage year, in many ways, is an intensification of the life of the student as a disciple. Here we hope that the student as disciple learns that Lutheran theology is never abstract or theoretical, but is always dealing with man the guilty sinner and God the justifier of the ungodly to paraphrase Luther’s comments on the scope of the theologian’s work in his commentary on Psalm 51.

Under the mentorship of a seasoned pastor, the vicar is something of an apprentice learning by watching and doing, even as he continues to immerse himself in the study of the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions and devoting himself to a life of prayer. It is not a question of study or service to the church; it is always both going on together. Good vicarages do not allow the two to be torn apart.

Paul exhorts Timothy in his ongoing life of discipleship: “Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:15-16). Vicarage provides the place for the student/disciple to do this very thing, that is, to practice the doctrine which he is learning as he grows in the discipline required of pastors, and it gives the Church the opportunity to see and rejoice in his progress. Vicarage is an arena for discipleship.

The Rev. Prof. John T. Pless (John.Pless@ctsfw.edu) serves as director of Field Education and assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
What kind of learner are you? Do you prefer to do your own research, read, then accomplish your goal? Are you able to grasp the concept faster if you watch someone else complete the task? Or, do you learn best by doing? Fortunately, men who are serving as vicars can benefit from all these options as they spend a year within a congregation and under the supervision of a pastor. Concordia Theological Seminarian Jacob Hercamp is learning this first hand as he serves his vicarage year at Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Imperial, Nebraska.

Before being assigned his vicarage in the spring of 2014, Hercamp had already had an interesting journey. He grew up in a Lutheran family and attended Lutheran schools through high school, but when it was time for college he chose Indiana University, Bloomington, where he would study Chemistry. “While at Indiana University, I met many great Lutheran friends. Some of those friends wanted to create a chapter of the national Lutheran fraternity, Beta Sigma Psi. Being a leader in the fraternity, I learned just what it meant to be a servant for my brothers,” explains Hercamp. “My affiliation with the fraternity cemented my decision to go into the ministry. I chose to attend Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne because many of my fraternity brothers were pastors’ kids whose fathers either went to or worked at CTS.”

While in his first year at CTS, Hercamp learned of the possibility
Hercamp also experienced two life-changing events while in England. First, during Christmas Break, his girlfriend, Emily, traveled to Cambridge for a visit and they became engaged. Following the visit they began planning their June wedding while he was in England and Emily was an ocean away in Michigan. Second, he received his vicarage assignment to Zion. “When Imperial was named as my destination, I was surprised by the location. That being said, it is a small town, but Imperial is a great place to live and be. Imperial has welcomed us with open arms, and we have been extremely blessed by the congregation. The people of Zion are proud of their vicarage program; they love knowing that they play a major role in the formation of future pastors,” shares Hercamp. “I am also blessed to have such a great vicar supervisor. Pastor Kahle is a great man who teaches Law and Gospel extremely well. He keeps a good eye on things, yet at the same time gives me the freedom I desire to complete tasks. He also is very honest when speaking to me, letting me know what I am doing well and what I need to continue to work on.”

The opportunities for vicars are many. They will work with young and old, within the congregation and among the community, in worship and in social settings. All these experience help men see the joys and challenges they may endure when they become a pastor. “I think the most challenging aspect of my vicarage has been teaching the fifth and sixth grade confirmation class. I teach them for one hour a week, but the rest of the week they are taught by the world. I am in constant conversation with my vicarage supervisor about how to teach the students in the best way. Sometimes it is an uphill road, but I am happy and blessed to be teaching these kids the chief parts of faith.”

Hercamp is now about halfway through his vicarage year and clearly sees its value. “It is the most important year of seminary education because this is where the rubber hits the road. You get a chance, finally, to use the knowledge you have stock-piled. If married, you and your wife will learn to work together in a parish environment. You get the chance to preach on a consistent basis, and personal or leadership weaknesses are highlighted and addressed.”

The Hercamps will return to the CTS campus for his final year of study beginning in September 2015 and look forward to receiving a Call in the spring of 2016. “I pray that the Lord will use me in His service however He will. It would be an absolutely awesome opportunity to be a campus pastor! I went to Indiana University and found a home at University Lutheran Church, and that feeling was amplified when living in the Beta Sigma Psi house. It created for me a small home of great friends in the midst of a large university. I feel that there is much work to be done helping incoming college students connect better to their campus Lutheran churches and for pastors to connect better to newly arriving students, as well as the students already on campus,” says Hercamp. “College is a very important time in the faith life of young adults who are beginning their independent faith life. I did not even consider seriously going into church work until I was on campus. I thank God for the blessings that He gave me through my time at University Lutheran Church; without that time I doubt I would be attending seminary today.”

Jayne E. Sheafer (SeminaryRelations@ctsfw.edu) serves as managing editor of For the Life of the World and director of Seminary Relations at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
We hear a lot about mentoring these days. Colleges look to match interns with seasoned professionals. Service organizations create opportunities for youth to learn from established members of their local communities. None of this is new in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). One of our very best mentoring programs is the one-year vicarage that typically takes place after a student’s second year of seminary education.

The Rev. David Kahle leads the members of Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Imperial, Nebraska, in worship.
The Rev. David A. Kahle (CTS 2005) served his vicarage year at Hope Lutheran Church, Bradenton, Florida, and now serves as pastor and vicarage supervisor at Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Imperial, Nebraska. The purpose of the vicarage year is to provide students with the practical experience of working in a congregational setting under the direction of a pastoral supervisor.

Kahle has two goals when it comes to working with vicars, “To constantly become a better pastor and mentor for vicars, and to help vicars get practical experience in applying Law and Gospel in the parish.”

To that end, Kahle takes seriously his role in the formation of future pastors and does his best to show the vicars he supervises how a faithful undershepherd cares for his flock. “We need to continue to provide to the people of God the strong Law and purest Gospel. In these means, the God of salvation will work His will and gather His flock,” says Kahle. “If we get lazy in providing a true and pure teaching, the people of God will and should see us as false. We are not another worldly cure for drought or disease, nor are we the next best entertainment source or emotional fix-all. We are the Church of God in Christ. We are those redeemed by the Lamb of God. We are the chosen bride of Christ. We have something better than earthly treasures. We have the Bridegroom and the beautiful robes of righteousness. This treasure should not be watered down. It should be delivered in all its truth and purity for the salvation of man.”

When agreeing to participate in the Vicarage Program, both pastor and congregation take on extra responsibilities. This includes extra time given by the pastor to help teach and train and the commitment by the members of the congregation to provide the financial means to support the vicar. While many pastors find there are not enough hours in the day to complete their tasks and congregations’ budgets may be stretched to the limit, some may ask if it is worth it to find a way to support a vicar. Kahle says it is absolutely worth it! “First, they are a blessing to the local congregation because they bring fresh learning, new ideas and great zeal to our congregation. They also give our congregation a bigger picture. They see that everything we do here is for the future. That future that is poured into our children, grandchildren and generations we cannot number. They now see themselves, in these vicars, as keys to the future preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

Second they are a blessing to the church-at-large. Vicars need to hear positive, critical feedback. By providing this they will go out as trained pastors of the Lord’s church. This is a gift that has been hard for us to give up. I mean that it is hard for us to say goodbye to them each year. This is a gift that we are always excited to hear about when we get reports of these men as pastors in their own congregations.

“I would recommend that other congregations participate in the Vicarage Program. Our church body doesn’t just need places that can pay a vicar for a year. We need places that have courage to care for and direct young men.”

This year, CTS seminarian Jacob Hercamp is serving as vicar and gaining a wealth of experience (read more about Hercamp on page 14). “Our vicars have the full range of opportunities. We cannot provide every experience, but we do not lack in what they have to do. They also benefit from a very loving and strong congregation. They get great feedback and are given great trust and respect,” explains Kahle.

Each of the vicars who has served at Zion has left with a much better understanding of what it means to be a pastor. Kahle models that beautifully when he shares his own pastoral goals, “I want to preach and teach until the good Lord calls me from this veil of tears or my body is no longer able. I will serve until I can’t or the Lord says I am done. I will preach the forgiveness of sins and guard against those who would corrupt the Word of God and His people.”

Jayne E. Sheafer (SeminaryRelations@ctsfw.edu) serves as managing editor of For the Life of the World and director of Seminary Relations at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
**The 30th Annual Symposium on Exegetical Theology**  
**The Integrity of the Scriptures: Text and Canon**

**Tuesday, January 20, 2015**

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| 8:50 a.m. | How Important Is the Homologoumena and Antilegomena Distinction for the New Testament Canon in the 21st Century?  
The Book of Revelation as a Test Case |
|         | Dr. Charles A. Gieschen                                           |
|         | Academic Dean and Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary |
| 10:00 a.m. | Chapel                                                               |
| 11:00 a.m. | Manuscripts and Texts of the New Testament: A Case Study on the Textual Tradition of 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 |
|         | Dr. Jeffrey J. Kloha                                               |
|         | Provost and Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri |
| 12:00 Noon | Lunch (Katherine Luther Dining Hall)                               |
| 1:00 p.m. | Toward a Theory of the Early Development of the New Testament Text |
|         | Dr. Charles E. Hill                                                |
|         | John R. Richardson Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida |
| 2:15 p.m. | Jeremiah: Premier Exhibit of Textual Elasticity or Interesting Example of Textual Stability? |
|         | Dr. Dean O. Wenthe                                                 |
|         | President Emeritus and Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary |
|         | President, Concordia University System                             |
| 3:15 p.m. | Coffee Break                                                       |
| 3:30 p.m. | Panel Discussion                                                   |
|         | Dr. William C. Weinrich, Moderator                                 |
| 4:45 p.m. | Vespers                                                            |

**Wednesday, January 21, 2015**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Short Exegetical Paper Sectionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Acts: Defining the Canon from Within</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Peter J. Scarr</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Chapel</td>
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**Concordia Theological Seminary** in Fort Wayne, Indiana, will again host its annual Symposia January 20–23, 2015. Held every year on the Fort Wayne campus, presentations on Exegetical Theology and the Lutheran Confessions will highlight the four-day event.

Celebrating its 30th year, the theme for the Exegetical Theology Symposium is *The Integrity of the Scripture: Text and Canon.*

The 38th annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions has chosen *Culture: Friend or Foe* as its theme.

For more information go to www.ctsfw.edu/Symposia or call 260-452-2204.
11:30 a.m. ἀσφάλεια as Canonical Criterion
Dr. Arthur A. Just Jr.
Professor and Chairman of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary

12:30 p.m. Lunch (Katherine Luther Dining Hall)

The 38th Annual Symposium on The Lutheran Confessions
Culture: Friend or Foe?

Wednesday, January 21, 2015

1:45 p.m. Culture—No Escape
Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President and Professor of Historical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary

2:30 p.m. Biblical Studies as Culturally Driven Discipline
Dr. David P. Scaer
The David P. Scaer Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology and Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary

3:30 p.m. Break

3:45 p.m. American Response to German Politics before WWII
Dr. John P. Hellwege Jr.
Pastor, Emmaus Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri

5:00 p.m. Choral Vespers

Thursday, January 22, 2015

8:45 a.m. Islam’s Future in America: Replacing a Christian Culture
Dr. Adam S. Francisco
Associate Professor of History and Political Thought, Concordia University, Irvine, California

10:00 a.m. Chapel

10:30 a.m. Dedication of Walther Library Expansion

11:30 a.m. Lunch (Katherine Luther Dining Hall)

12:30 p.m. When Culture Was First Made Christian: The Accomplishment of Constantine and Theodosius
Dr. Alvin J. Schmidt
Professor Emeritus, Illinois College, Jacksonville, Illinois

1:30 p.m. Culture and the Vocation of a Theologian
Dr. Roland F. Ziegler
The Robert D. Preus Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Confessional Lutheran Studies, Concordia Theological Seminary

2:30 p.m. Break

2:45 p.m. Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage: The Triumph of Culture
Dr. Gifford A. Grobien
Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary

3:45 p.m. The New Paganism
Dr. J. Budziszewski
Professor, Department of Government, The College of Liberal Arts, University of Texas, Austin, Texas

5:00 p.m. Organ Recital

5:30 p.m. Reception (Walther Library) and Banquet (Katherine Luther Dining Hall)

Friday, January 23, 2015

8:30 a.m. How a Constitution May Undermine Constitutionalism
Dr. Budziszewski

10:00 a.m. Chapel (with the Seminary Kantorei)

Lenten Preaching Workshop
Singing with the Exiles

Monday, January 19, 2015

8:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Although the entire book of Isaiah pulsates with richness and depth, chapters 40–55 contain some of the best-known, most-cherished and theologically significant texts in the Bible. This seminar, based upon Dr. Reed Lessing’s Concordia Publishing House (CPH) commentary on these chapters, will employ Singing with the Exiles, his Lenten Sermon Series based on Isaiah 40–55 published by CPH in November 2014. These resources include worship services, sermons, Bible Studies and daily devotions, making this a one-stop seminar that will equip the pastor to lead his congregation through these amazing chapters, and through them from the cross and the empty tomb.

Presenter: The Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing was on the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, from 1999–2013. He currently serves as senior pastor at St. Michael Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Lessing’s books include Interpreting Discontinuity: Isaiah’s Tyre Oracle (Eisenbrauns, 2004), Jonah (CPH, 2007), Amos (CPH, 2009), Isaiah 40-55 (CPH, 2011), Prepare the Way of the Lord: An Introduction to the Old Testament (co-authored with Andrew Steinmann, CPH, 2013) and Isaiah 56-66 (CPH, 2014).

Fee: $40.00, which includes lunch. You may register online at www.ctsfw.edu/Symposia or by phoning 260-452-2204.
Men studying at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) are preparing for a life-time of service to God’s people as pastors, missionaries, evangelists and teachers. The commitment of our Synod to ready these men thoroughly continues with years of rigorous preparation. The expenditure of concentrated effort, systematic study and financial resources is daunting. It is with prayer and financial support that the Church can and should readily aid these men.

Home congregations have often had special interest in the men who have come from their midst to pursue theological studies. It is only appropriate these congregations be invited to undertake support for the student they know so well. CTS, through the Office of Financial Aid, has provided very helpful information to educate congregations concerning the weighty financial demands and also has encouraged reasonable targets for support.

In response, Grace Lutheran Church of Auburn, Michigan, used a creative approach to encourage support for second-year seminarian, Aaron Yaeger. It was called Sem Ride 2014. Over the course of four days in late August, Pastor David Reed (CTS 1983) rode his bicycle the 250 miles from Auburn to the Seminary. During those days, a special blog, www.semride.blogspot.com, was continually updated to chart progress of the ride and support being received.

Upon arrival in Fort Wayne, the congregation was able to assure Aaron, whose wife Diana is in her final year of deaconess training, of having exceeded the support goal. The occasion also allowed generous members of the congregation to expand their awareness of the Seminary in general. Reed remarked, “Even though two of the days were the hottest of the summer, it was a wonderful trip with tremendous benefit. The gain was not just for Aaron or our folks, but ultimately for many whose lives will be served through vocations which carry the Gospel of Christ.”

To learn more about the financial need of CTS students and how you can help, connect with CTS Director of Financial Aid Rev. Mark C. Sheafer at Mark.Sheafer@ctsfw.edu or 260-452-2151.
The CTS Bookstore supplies materials for students, as well as many useful products for the pastor’s library. Clerical vestments, CTS logo clothing and gift items are also available from the bookstore. Laypeople will find the CTS Bookstore an excellent venue for their needs as it offers a wide variety of Bibles and resource materials, religious gifts, jewelry and clothing.

For online ordering, please visit Bookstore.ctsfw.edu.
If you are on the campus in Fort Wayne, the bookstore hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. and Friday from 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.


CTS Faculty Visits Around the World

Dr. Carl Fickenscher
February 20–21
Northeast Colorado Free Conference
Calvary Lutheran Church
Wray, Colorado
February 22
Worship Service
Calvary Lutheran Church
Wray, Colorado

Dr. Charles Gieschen
January 25
Preacher for 60th Anniversary
Our Savior Ev. Lutheran Church
Hartland, Michigan

Dr. Gifford Grobien
February 14–15
Natural Knowledge of God Conference
Grace Lutheran Church
Lamar, Missouri
February 28
Mercy Seminar
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dr. Naomichi Masaki
March 9–14
Lutheran School of Theology
Gothenburg, Sweden

Prof. John Pless
December 28
Worship and Bible Study
St. John Lutheran Church
Conover, North Carolina
February 28–March 14
Lutheran Theological Seminary
Pretoria, South Africa

President Rast
January 10–11
Preacher at 150th Anniversary
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Oconomowoc, Wisconsin
February 8–10
Northern Louisiana Pastors Gathering
Alexandria, Louisiana

CTS 2015 Wall Calendars Available

The 2015 wall calendar from Concordia Theological Seminary features photos of the seminary community, CTS events for 2015 and the lectionary for the year. The calendars were mailed to all CTS alumni and all congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in mid-November. A limited number of additional copies are available to individuals and congregations by phoning 260-452-2150 or emailing Colleen.Bartzsch@ctsfw.edu. There is a $5.00 mailing charge for quantities of one to 10 calendars.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday, January 4</th>
<th>Thursday, January 8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial Lutheran Church</td>
<td>St. Matthew Lutheran Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5800 Westheimer Road</td>
<td>1301 31st Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston, TX 77057-5617</td>
<td>Gulfport, MS 39501-1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.mlchouston.org">www.mlchouston.org</a></td>
<td>stmatthewgulfport.tripod.com</td>
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<th>Friday, January 9</th>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Christ the King Lutheran Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2711 Helena Avenue</td>
<td>208 E. Watts Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nederland, TX, 77627-6901</td>
<td>Enterprise, AL 36330-1813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.holycrossutures.org">www.holycrossutures.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.enterpriselutheran.org">www.enterpriselutheran.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Monday, January 5</th>
<th>Saturday, January 10</th>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>4:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. John Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Redeemer Lutheran Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 University Drive</td>
<td>200 S. Section Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Charles, LA 70605-5634</td>
<td>Fairhope, AL 36532-1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.saintjohnlutheranchurch.com">www.saintjohnlutheranchurch.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.redeemerfairhope.org">www.redeemerfairhope.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Tuesday, January 6</th>
<th>Sunday, January 11</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Immanuel Lutheran Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4423 I - 55 N</td>
<td>24 W. Wright Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson, MS 39206-6102</td>
<td>Pensacola, FL 32591-2912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.ChristLutheranJacksonMS.org">www.ChristLutheranJacksonMS.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.immlu.com">www.immlu.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Wednesday, January 7</th>
<th>Sunday, January 18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>4:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salem Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Concordia Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>418 4th Street</td>
<td>Kramer Chapel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gretna, LA 70053-5317</td>
<td>6600 N. Clinton Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.ctsfw.edu">www.ctsfw.edu</a></td>
<td>Fort Wayne, IN 46825-4996</td>
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A retreat for high school men who are considering the vocation of the Office of the Holy Ministry.

REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 1, 2015!

Christ Academy High School
The Summer Event for High School Men

June 14–27, 2015

For more information please call: 1-800-481-2155
or contact us via email at: ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu.
You may also register online at: www.ctsfw.edu/ChristAcademy.
The words of Jesus are so deeply comforting to sinful and selfish people. Even though we as earthly people may succeed at times in providing gifts to others and our children, we know that we can also fail miserably. Thankfully, out of eternal love, joy and compassion, the heavenly Father abundantly showers us with far more than for which we could ever ask.

Some of the most important spiritual gifts for our life of faith are pastors who faithfully preach, teach and administer Christ’s sacraments and deaconesses who work alongside pastors in providing special care for God’s people. We at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) are thankful that we have the opportunity to prepare new workers and laborers for the harvest field and are truly appreciative of the labors of faithful alumni and graduates. Thank you for bearing the light and life of Jesus Christ in all that you do and say!

In order to acknowledge and celebrate such faithful service, we are planning to recognize all our CTS graduates on every five year anniversary of their ordination. We will especially honor those celebrating Silver (25 years of ministry) and Golden (50 years of ministry). So, if you and your classmates are looking for a unique opportunity to get together with others in your class, please consider attending one of these two day reunions.

In closing, I leave you with one word of thanks shared after a recent alumni reunion experience.

Dear Tim,

The recent commencement and reunion of the class of 1958 have been in my thoughts a number of times since returning home. It was a remarkable and memorable occasion. My personal thanks to you, your staff and the Seminary for your thoughtful and gracious kindness! You managed it all with a touch of class. I commend you. The Lord continue to bless your work and may the light of Christ brighten your day.

Cordially in Christ,

Gene Krentz

The Rev. Timothy R. Puls (Timothy.Puls@ctsfw.edu) serves as director of Alumni Relations and Church Relations at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
When a verse, like the one above, elicits a longing or desire to help, how does one act upon it? Pray would be the response expected and should be listed as the best advice. Then, let it be noted, that there is a blessing among us, named Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), that has been an answer to many prayers for many years. The faculty and auxiliary staff at CTS dedicate their daily lives to helping just that person who knows God is calling and needs a plan to move forward.

As a result, CTS counsels, educates and develops vicars, pastors and deaconesses and sends them into all nations as precious gifts to congregations, mission fields, schools and wherever God has need of them.

As students spend time on the Seminary campus, the CTS Guild is present to aid and support them as they become “gifts” by donating money for educational equipment, giving moral support with snacks at exam time, birthday surprises, receptions after special ceremonies and more.

To join the Concordia Theological Seminary Guild simply attend any meeting held on the second Tuesday of the months of September, October, November, December, February, March and April on the Seminary campus.

In closing, a promise from Psalm 92:13-14: “They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green.”

Joyce West (joyciew43@gmail.com) serves as president of the Concordia Theological Seminary Guild, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The Seminary Kantorei offer hymns of Advent and Christmas for the December Seminary Guild gathering.

☐ Yes, we are interested in becoming an Affiliate Guild. Please send more information to:
Name: _________________________________________________________________
Organization: ___________________________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________
City: _______________________________ State: _______ Zip: _________________
Email: ________________________________________________________________

☐ Please contact me with more information.

☐ We have enclosed our yearly $25 check for our group to be an Affiliate Guild.

☐ I have enclosed my yearly $10 check to be an individual affiliate member.

☐ Donation Day gift.
Lutheran Treasure Established on Bases
By Carolyn S. Brinkley

Many thanks to all who so graciously and generously provided copies of Lutheran Service Book (LSB) and Luther’s Small Catechism that were sent to Ch. James Buckman when he was stationed in Qatar. Your response to this unprecedented opportunity to establish our LSB and catechism on military bases in the Middle East was truly amazing! During just a few months over 800 hymnals and 3,000 catechisms were placed in seven different chapels. Nine Concordia Organists (31-CD set of all LSB hymns and liturgies) were also sent providing beautiful organ accompaniments for worship services. All of these theological and liturgical supplies will remain on these bases for many years to come and will be used by many denominations. Our heartfelt thanks go out to Ch. Buckman for his untiring zeal and missionary heart in bringing Christ’s mercy to those who guard our freedom. Ch. Buckman is now back in the States serving at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. He continues to distribute Luther’s Small Catechism and we continue to send them.

Along with the CTS Military Project, many others were also instrumental in this huge endeavor. Special thanks to Concordia Publishing House; KFUO; Nancy Rowley, Ministry to the Armed Forces, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS); Rev. Michael Moreno and all of God’s saints around the country who participated in this mission opportunity.

We also have newly deployed chaplains with unique needs and opportunities serving in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Diego Garcia, Djibouti and other locations. Ch. Jacob Scott, recently deployed to Afghanistan, writes, “I have been blessed by the work of the CTS Military Project. The Concordia Organist and the hymnals have been a Godsend. Further, it is humbling to receive care packages, prayers and words of encouragement from congregations across the country connected with the Military Project. I was first deployed to Iraq in 2003, before I was a pastor and a chaplain; many things have changed since then, but the support of the people and congregations back home has been unwavering. We are blessed. Thank you and God bless you all! Peace to you.”

Again, thank you to all who partner with us in making this work of mercy to our LCMS chaplains and the military personnel they serve possible.

May mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you. Jude 2

How can you help?
Please keep our chaplains and all military personnel in the Armed Forces in your prayers. They are God’s instruments of protection. For more information on service projects or ways to care for deployed military personnel from your congregation, please email MilitaryProject@ctsfw.edu or call 260-452-2140.

Monetary donations can be mailed to:
Concordia Theological Seminary
Attn.: Military Project
6600 N. Clinton St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Deaconess Carolyn S. Brinkley serves as coordinator of the Military Project at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Shortly after joining the Seminary staff, I had the pleasure to meet David and Paula Daniels at the Daniels Woodcarving Inc. company in Taylorsville, North Carolina. This was made possible as part of an advancement effort with President Lawrence Rast and Prof. Robert Roethemeyer. David and Paula welcomed the three of us into their home where we spent the next two days marooned with them as the result of a rare North Carolina snowstorm. What we experienced during those days helped reinforce my faith in our church and her membership. They, in true Southern fashion, made us feel as if we were family. Theirs is a refreshing story of faith, love and commitment to family, Christ and His Church.

This past September, while traveling through North Carolina, I once again had the distinct pleasure of visiting the Daniels in Taylorville. One of the questions I have when I meet rock-solid Christians who have made the decision to go over and above in their support of both their own congregation and other interests close to their hearts, such as Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, is what influences them to be such generous stewards of God’s gifts?

To answer that question, David and Paula took me back to their childhood. Both were born into loving, caring Lutheran homes: David in Taylorsville, North Carolina, where his Christian identity was formed at Salem Lutheran Church, and Paula in St. John’s Lutheran Church in Winston-Salem. They met while he was attending Wake Forest University and attending St. John’s.
“We support our church because it is who we are. Our parents and our grandparents were strong church people, and they raised us to be the same. We love our congregation and we love Pastor O.!” The Rev. Raymond Ohlendorf serves as pastor of Salem Lutheran Church, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

But what about our Seminary? What led you to your generous support of us? “Pastor Ohlendorf always stresses how important it is to support the Seminary,” David said. “Our relationship with CTS began many years ago when Pastor O. brought along a Seminary professor, Dr. Dean Wenthe, to teach a continuing education class at Salem Lutheran. Many members attended the class and learned to appreciate Fort Wayne’s faculty. Over the years, we must have met every one of the Seminary professors.” The Daniels, along with the whole congregation, were impressed with the biblical scholarship and pastoral care shown to them by the faculty of CTS.

Maybe the most significant things the Church and her members can do for the seminaries will struggle to exist. David, Paula and I joked that they had accomplished the trifecta—not only have they been extremely generous with their financial support, but they have also sent the eldest of their two sons to CTS. Michael and his wife Emily, a CTS deaconess student, are spending this academic year on his vicarage at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Terre Haute, Indiana.

I asked them how they felt when their son graduated from Concordia University Nebraska and again left home for Fort Wayne to become a seminarian. Paula said she was happy that Michael would be doing what he himself chose to do, serving our Lord’s Church. “Yet, at the same time,” she said, “I was sad knowing that our son, whom we love dearly, would move away and wouldn’t be at home with us anymore.”

David said he was proud knowing that he and Paula must have done something right along the way in the raising of their son. Yet he admitted also to being sad because he knew his son would most likely not be living close to home. “I also wish my parents were still alive to see what their grandson has become,” David replied.

What advice or encouragement would the Daniels give to others when it comes to sending students and financial support to the Seminary? “It is the right thing to do, it’s scriptural and it’s never legalistic,” David said. “If you love the truth, it is only natural that you want to give to help spread that truth.”

I have learned that there are three simple yet very important things that every member of the LCMS can do to assure that the truth that God so loved the world that He sent His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16) is proclaimed far and wide until Christ’s return: continue to pray for us, send financial support and also send us your sons and daughters whom, with God’s help, we will form into servants in Jesus Christ who will teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all.
For the Life of the World

In the

WORD

Gifts in the Flesh
By Scott R. Murray

Church workers are divine gifts to the Church. Their calling is to place before people the unique message of the Gospel. God has had a long history of speaking to His people through enfleshed messengers. Our Lutheran Confessions talk about the enfleshed nature of the ministry of the Church: “So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given” (AC 5.1). The Spirit places in our hands the means of grace, so that those who hear the message receive the Holy Spirit and are brought to faith.

Read Gen. 3:14-21. Who was the first preacher of the Gospel? ____________________________

Why do you think God used animal skins to cover Adam and Eve? How does this foreshadow the ultimate sacrifice of God’s Son (Heb. 9:22)? ____________________________

Read Gen. 18:1-15. Why did Abraham bow down to the ground when these three men appeared to him? ____________________________

Why did Abraham set the best he had before them? ____________________________

What was the message they brought to Abraham and Sarah? ____________________________

God delivers His mercy in the promise of the Seed who would crush the head of the serpent and rescue us from his deathly dominion. God fulfilled His promises by giving the gift of the messianic family to the patriarchs, as He did with Abraham and Sarah. Since God Himself is the first preacher, when we call workers into our midst to proclaim, they are following in a long line of proclaimers whose source and primary practitioner is God Himself. Those whom we call to serve among us are no ordinary people. They do not bring ordinary gifts, but bear the Gospel gifts to us in Word and Sacraments. They are the means delivering the means! God has placed in their hands the same message as He had delivered in the Old Testament and brought to fulfillment in the New.

Read Heb. 1:1-2. Who is the culmination and completion of the divine promise given in the Old Testament? ____________________________

Who should be the source and substance of Christian proclamation since His coming? ____________________________

What should we Christians think of Christ-less proclamation? ____________________________

Why then do we honor and esteem the leaders among us (Heb. 13:17)? ____________________________

Read Rom. 10:10-15. How do people come to faith today? ____________________________

What means do the preachers use? ____________________________

Why do some not believe? Why do some balk at the preaching and teaching of our leaders (1 Cor. 1:22-31)? ____________________________

In whose hands does the success of the Church stand (Acts 19:20 and Is. 55:10-11)? ____________________________

God Himself stands behind His Word; a Word which He has placed in the hands of His proclaimers. They are a blessing to the Church because they deliver to her the very things that create her and cause her to grow, when and where it pleases God the Holy Spirit. You never know when the Word delivered by our pastors will be received by repentant sinners.

A dear colleague served in a parish in a drug infested and decaying neighborhood for 10 years. During that time he moved into the neighborhood, was robbed at gun point twice, opened the church for Vacation Bible School for the first time in decades and walked the streets of the community to tell people about Jesus inviting them to
the church. Though he labored mightily, nothing he did worked. Sometimes those who hear the Word reject it. The preacher was still a mighty gift in that community as he spoke of Christ in his community. The Word is God’s and it is a mystery when it grows and when it does not. We need to treasure our workers who champion the “lost cause,” because our Lord has done exactly that for us, who were lost and are now found (Luke 15:9-10).

Read 1 Tim. 4:12-16. Why does Paul encourage Timothy by saying that no one should despise his youth? ____________

How does Paul command Timothy to be about God’s business? ____________________________________________

How important is purity of life and of teaching to the leaders of the Church? _________________________________

When our leaders speak God’s Word, we are hearing God Himself speak to us. So the relative age of those leaders is not as important as their faithfulness to the Word of God. Their first order of business is to read publicly the Holy Scripture in the gatherings of God’s people. In service to the Church, the congregation I serve always asks for a vicar. They do that to give a young man experience leading God’s people. There is nothing like learning by doing! Most of these men are young, but they are still delivering the Word of God to the Church. Everyone is growing through their service.

Read 1 Tim. 1:16-18. Why was Onisephorus important to Paul and the Church? ____________________________

Can you imagine the kinds of things that he did for Paul? How did this uphold the work of the ministry? ________

Pastors and deaconesses are trained at Concordia Theological Seminary. They both play their own parts in leading God’s people. Deaconesses provide leadership in the areas of human service, often holding up the hands of the prophets and serving God’s people in human care (Acts 6:1-4). They are the means delivering the means. What great gifts they are to the church and the world.

The Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray serves as senior pastor of Memorial Lutheran Church (www.mlchouston.org), Houston, Texas. He also serves as fourth vice-president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the LCMS President’s representative on Concordia Theological Seminary’s Board of Regents.
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