CTSFW Admission: Connecting With Future Students
By Randall P. Wurschmidt

Formation: The CTSFW Experience
By Paul J. Grime

Don’t Think About It!
By Christopher T. Stout
“During its spring meeting at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), the [Council of Presidents] assigned 124 first calls (30 short of the 154 calls that were available to be filled) and assigned 112 men to vicarages (compared with 133 vicarage assignments available)…. ‘Obviously,’ [Southern District President Kurtis] Schultz told the COP and placement-committee members from the two LCMS seminaries, ‘we need to be encouraging in every possible way those men who wish to prepare for the Office of the Ministry, so that we can meet the needs of the people of the Lord’s Church.’”¹

There has always been an ebb and flow to seminary enrollment and placement. A few years ago several students at both seminaries did not receive calls during the annual placement service, though they were placed within a short period of time. This year, as the above quote shows, there were more calls for candidates than there were candidates available.

So what do we make of all this?

Jesus spoke to the issue in one of the best-known verses of the Gospel of Luke: “And he said to them, ‘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’” (Luke 10:2).

The need that our Lord addressed some 2,000 years ago remains foremost for the Church today. And the first thing we can do is pray—and pray earnestly! At the same time, preparing ourselves or encouraging that young (or not so young!) man who demonstrates the aptitude to be a pastor to consider attending the Seminary.

So what does this person look like? 1 Tim. 3:2–7 tells us:

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.

The articles in this issue of For the Life of the World underscore the process of formation that students (pastors, deaconesses and lay leaders) can expect as they make their way through the curricula of CTSFW. If you are thinking about service in the Lord’s church, or if you know of a person whom we could help in the discernment process, contact our Admission team for further information. In so doing, together we will see the Scripture fulfilled:

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10–11)

In Christ’s service,

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary
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In many ways, my job is easy: I love Fort Wayne and this Seminary, so I can tell you truthfully and enthusiastically why you should come here. Of course, whether or not you decide you want to attend has way more to do with the Holy Spirit than with any individual admission counselor.

7 Formation: The CTSFW Experience
By Paul J. Grime
Some might argue that the theological formation of future pastors is more complex than it has to be. While such a conclusion is tempting to draw, the reality is that our world is more complex than ever, with new and often subtle challenges to the teachings of Holy Scripture that bring confusion to God’s holy people.

10 Don’t Think About It!
By Christopher T. Stout
During my time at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, I was formed. That is to say, certain things became a part of me. There were truths that were emphasized so clearly, practiced so consistently by both staff and student body and preached so well in simplicity and faithfulness that they just became a part of me.

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The Admission Office is made up of four counselors (one of which takes care of deaconess applicants) and an administrative assistant who tries to hold it all together. As a team, we help to identify future students, assist them with the application and bring them into the Seminary community.

I only found out that one current student was planning to attend Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, when we received his GRE scores out of the blue. I had to call him and ask, “Are you planning to apply to the Seminary?” Another student met with me over dinner, where he talked and talked about the other things he was doing in life; he already had a doctorate in another field. He seemed to have no intention of becoming a pastor, and frankly, I didn’t expect him to come.
Still another student came to visit with me at a church in the Denver area because his pastor recognized his talents and thought he should at least talk to me (“He’s a theological pistol,” his pastor told me); it turns out that this guy had actually thought about being a pastor, but this was the first time anyone else suggested it to him, and it threw him for a loop. I also didn’t expect him to come, but God had other plans.

All of these men (who are terrific students, by the way) have one thing in common: they eventually spoke to an admission counselor who guided them through the application process. They are from very different backgrounds, range from 22 to 37 in age, have quite different personalities, and yet, I have no doubt they will all make fine pastors.

The Admission Office is made up of four counselors (one of which takes care of deaconess applicants) and an administrative assistant who tries to hold it all together. As a team, we help to identify future students, assist them with the application process and bring them into the Seminary community. Sometimes they are still in high school and many years away from applying. Sometimes they are older (even much older), and feel that they can no longer run away from what it seems God is calling them to do. But by talking to us, meeting with us and visiting the campus, they can discern whether or not becoming a student is the right thing for them.

Many men and women have families to consider, must think about their teenagers in school, their spouse’s job or a house to sell. Sometimes the financial obstacles seem insurmountable (they rarely are, though, and we’ll make sure you talk to someone in the Financial Aid Office). Sometimes the idea of leaving your life-long home is just too hard to overcome, you have parents who need assistance or you’re not prepared to live just anywhere in the country. Our admission counselors can speak to all these common objections, but in the end, you have to make the decision and nothing good can come from us twisting your arm. You have to want to be here. Some people want to come right away. Some wait for years before finally applying.

The application process is relatively easy, and as of this year is entirely online. There’s your name and address, of course. There are some very short theological questions (if you know your Small Catechism you can easily answer these). There’s an autobiographical statement, which allows us to get to know you a little better and helps you to think through, “How in the world did I get to this point where I’m thinking about seminary?!”

One important part of the application is for your pastor to write a recommendation. Usually your own pastor will have a unique perspective and will be very supportive of sending you here. For the men, another important piece is an interview with your district. Some district presidents will interview you directly, some will send a small group to where you live. For the women, you will interview with the director of the Deaconess Formation Program. And for everyone, you will send transcripts for all your college credits. Not every student of the Seminary has a college degree; your admission counselor can talk to you about the exceptions.

Every few weeks, a committee (made up mostly of professors) meets to go through completed applications. They look at your recommendations and your grades, they consider aspects of personality and competence. Through the meeting it is
your admission counselor’s job to build you up and present you to the committee in the best light (which is why it behooves you to get to know your counselor!). Once you are admitted, we will help you with relocation and all the little details which come with a big change in your life.

We can’t do our job as a seminary if we don’t have students. And our job is to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all. How can we have students if there is no one to identify them? And (to paraphrase St. Paul), how will we have any preachers and teachers if there is no seminary to teach them? This goes beyond the work of a few admission counselors. This is the work of the Church. God has commanded us to pray that He would send forth laborers into His harvest (Matt. 9:38), and so it is up to the Church to encourage men and women and boys and girls to consider church work. It is up to pastors to say, “Hey, have you ever considered being a pastor?” or “I could see you being an awesome deaconess.” It is up to parents and friends and fellow parishioners to encourage the young people in the congregation to attend Christ Academy—High School or Phoebe Academy—High School or just to plant the seed of interest. And it is up to the Church to support the seminaries in your prayers and giving, to donate to the Food & Clothing Co-op, to adopt a student, to train a vicar and to welcome a new pastor straight out of the Seminary.

Together we can ensure that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is poised to bring the Gospel to a broken and hurting world. Together we can proclaim confidently Christ crucified and risen from the dead in a society that is searching for answers. Together we can raise up future church workers to proclaim the works of God “that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God” (Ps. 78:6-7a).

In many ways, my job is easy: I love Fort Wayne and this Seminary, so I can tell you truthfully and enthusiastically why you should come here. Of course, whether or not you decide you want to attend has way more to do with the Holy Spirit than with any individual admission counselor. But I can encourage you to come to CTSFW; you will have the best theological education available to you, you will attend the finest chapel services in the world and you will make friends and have colleagues to the ends of the earth who will pray for you and support you as you consider this important work.

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Interested in learning more about the admission process? Go to www.ctsfw.edu/Admission, email Admission@ctsfw.edu or phone 800-481-2155 and one of the staff will be happy to answer all your questions.
When I attended Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, some three decades ago, I remember well the frustrations that would occasionally be voiced concerning the training of future pastors for service in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. “Require more experience in evangelism,” were the cries of some. “No, it’s stewardship training that they need,” others countered. Meanwhile, professors struggled to cover everything that was on their course syllabi. Truth be told, there just wasn’t enough time.

At the heart of our current training are the traditional theological disciplines. Some things simply cannot be reinvented. Thus, in-depth study of the Scriptures remains a high priority. And for future pastors, that means studying the biblical text in the original language. There is simply nothing that can substitute for a careful study of the inspired text with all of the nuances that the Greek and Hebrew bring to that study.
There still isn’t. While congregations hope and pray that their pastors will be well prepared to address every conceivable issue and need that they have, the Seminary faculty knows that that is an impossible task. And so, more than a decade ago, the faculty undertook a careful review of the curriculum, seeking to address the ongoing challenge of preparing pastors, and now deaconesses as well, for service in an increasingly complex and, at times, hostile world.

Pastoral and Diaconal Formation

At the heart of our current training are the traditional theological disciplines. Some things simply cannot be reinvented. Thus, in-depth study of the Scriptures remains a high priority. And for future pastors, that means studying the biblical text in the original language. There is simply nothing that can substitute for a careful study of the inspired text with all of the nuances that the Greek and Hebrew bring to that study.

Lest our study of the Scriptures become divorced from the generations of Christians who have gone before us, pastoral and diaconal formation also lead into an examination of how Christians contended for the faith in past centuries. Central to that study is a focus on the theological formulations that have been the hallmark of the Lutheran tradition, namely, the confessional and doctrinal writings of the Lutheran church. This study is not for the purpose of satisfying some intellectual curiosity but to equip future servants of the Church to apply these timeless insights to the present-day work of ministry.

Where the Rubber Hits the Road

Translating these theological insights into real life application comes in a variety of ways, both in and out of the classroom. Future pastors, for example, have courses in worship, preaching and teaching, to name but a few. Deaconess students explore various ways in which the Church carries out her work of mercy in meeting a world of need.

Recognizing that no faculty would ever be fully equipped to address the many ministry settings into which our students will be placed, the new curriculum added a component of modules that are taught by experienced pastors and other experts in a variety of fields. Students choose from a number of topics in which they either have an interest or no particular experience. Module offerings change from year to year; in the past year, students have had the opportunity to attend sessions covering such topics as time management, suicide prevention,
assimilation of new members, campus ministry and ministering to those in hospice.

But that’s all still classroom learning. Students move beyond the classroom on a regular basis. They are all assigned to a local congregation for fieldwork during their first two years of study. There seminarians begin the task of learning by doing, namely, by assisting in the service and even preaching on occasion. They and the deaconess students also learn by observing and participating through visits with the pastor to the hospitalized and homebound, by first sitting in on and then teaching Bible classes or Sunday School and by taking part in visits to potential members.

The experiences also take our students beyond the Seminary. Past trips have included an immersion in urban and rural ministry as well as several overseas mercy trips to Madagascar. Students sometimes arrange individual trips to broaden their horizons and experiences.

Capping the learning that occurs outside the classroom is the vicarage/internship year. Here the student spends a full calendar year with a mentor pastor who gives direction and guidance that gives future pastors a true sense of the calling for which they are preparing and deaconess students a taste of the rich opportunities that await them.

**At the Center of It All**

Any visitor to our campus is immediately drawn to Kramer Chapel with its commanding presence at both the center and highest point of the campus. That presence, however, is more than just physical. Ever since the Seminary’s move to the Fort Wayne campus nearly 40 years ago, the chapel and its rich Christ-centered worship has commanded the attention of students and faculty, guests and visitors. Receiving the gifts of God in Word and Sacrament are at the very heart of the Church’s mission, something that has defined CTSFW for generations.

So central are these gifts that the curriculum revision mentioned earlier in many ways reflects the place of worship in the life of the Church. We established interdisciplinary courses that focus on the central pastoral acts of Baptism, preaching and the Lord’s Supper. It isn’t uncommon for courses in Pastoral Theology to turn to the Synod’s Agenda as a way of demonstrating how our liturgical rites reflect the very essence of our theology. Even a class as unassuming as Greek Readings, which seminarians attend every week for their first two years of studies, enables students to form a connection with the Church’s worship life as they study—in Greek—the Gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday. Again and again, students are encouraged to place their theological studies in the broader context of the Church’s life.

**Conclusion**

Some might argue that the theological formation of future pastors is more complex than it has to be. While such a conclusion is tempting to draw, the reality is that our world is more complex than ever, with new and often subtle challenges to the teachings of Holy Scripture that bring confusion to God’s holy people. More than ever, the Church needs pastors who are thoroughly grounded in the Word of God and fully conversant in how the Scriptures speak to the current challenges.

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**The Rev. Dr. Paul J. Grime**

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Abundant Life Lutheran congregation provides braille and extra-large print bulletins and studies to the Charlotte community and has about a dozen blind or visually disabled members. Pastor Stout talking with Belviea (right), who recently fell asleep in the Lord, and Jane. Neither would have been Lutheran if it had not been for this service provided by a blind member of Abundant Life who has an embossing machine.
“Don’t think. Just do.” I often heard this from the mouth of Dr. Nordling in my summer Greek class during July and August of 2008. He was referring to the importance of understanding certain specifics about the Greek language (parsing verbs, for example) so well that you didn’t have to think, you just did. He wanted his class to understand parts of the language so well that it became a part of us. If it became a part of us, then reading Greek would become a joy and not a burden. If we had to think too much, we would quickly become burdened. If it became a burden, it might quickly be neglected once we were in a parish setting.

During my time at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, I was formed. That is to say, certain things became a part of me. There were truths that were emphasized so clearly, practiced so consistently by both staff and student body and preached so well in simplicity and faithfulness that they just became a part of me.

In preparing for this article, I came across this quote from Francesco Petrarca, an Italian poet from the 14th century, “I ate in the morning what I would digest in the evening; I swallowed as a boy what I would ruminate upon as an older man.” Stating this truth in a more familiar way, we often might pray for the Lord to help us “inwardly digest” our Lord’s Word. That is to say, we pray that the Lord’s Word penetrates into our conscience, our morality and our ethics.

At CTSFW, I swallowed truths that I now ruminate on as a young pastor. After leaving the Seminary in May of 2012, I left not only knowing more of the truths of the Christian confession, I left with many of those truths being a part of me and growing into even more of those truths.

I don’t always have to think much about the need for my hearers to have the comforting truth of our Lord Jesus’ death and resurrection when they are near death or when they have experienced the death of someone they love, I just do it. This wonderful truth became a part of me, not only because it was taught in the classroom, preached in the chapel and discussed over coffee, but also because it was rubbed into my ears by dear Seminary professors when my wife and I experienced the death of our first child in a miscarriage. I don’t have to think much about how a note of comfort or consolation will be received by a member of my congregation. I often just do it because I know how it was received by me during times of trial and tribulation when I was a student.
I don’t have to think much about proclaiming our Lord’s all atoning death which won for us the forgiveness of sin and God’s favor, I just do it because I was on the receiving end of hearing the absolution in chapel, in the classroom and in conversation. This sweet absolution gave to me a clean conscience before God. It was a comfort as I struggled in my vocations as a student, husband, father, son and friend. It is a comfort as I struggle in my vocations as pastor, husband, father, son and friend, and so I know it will be comfort for the sheep which our Lord has given me to undershepherd as they struggle in their many vocations.

The formation I received at CTSFW came not only from the faculty, it also came from the student body. As certain truths became a part of me, so also certain friendships became a part of me. I don’t always have to think much about whom I am going to call or email when I am experiencing a difficult time in the congregation, I just do it because of relationships built with students who are now pastors with me. These friendships that were formed at the Seminary continue to form me now. And even more, I know that friends that my wife met at CTSFW are now a part of her. They were formed by the truths of the Christian faith and together they formed and continue to form each other. They provided and continue to provide mutual support and trust. They are now a part of each other.

The Lord’s desire for His Word to be proclaimed to those still dead in their sin, the necessity of always being prepared to give a reason for the hope that we have within us and the call for us and our congregations to be intentional in outreach to our communities were given for us to digest inwardly at the Seminary. My love for the Lord’s Word, my meditation on it and my way of hearing the comforts that come from it have all became a part of me as I was formed at CTSFW. My mind, my conscience, my piety, my prayer life, my preaching and my family life were also formed at the Seminary. My love for the Lutheran Confessions, my love for our hymns, my love for Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard, Walther and Giertz are all now a part of me because I was fed these fathers in the faith in order that I may ruminiate on their confessions for the rest of my life.

And when I fail at loving all of these gifts, comfort and forgiveness are found in the confession of my sins–yet another gift given and formed into my life from the communion of my brother pastoral students and professors at CTSFW.

Because the Seminary community confessed and practiced the call for us to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16) and to store up our Lord’s Word in our heart, that we might not sin against Him (Ps. 119:11), I was formed in the Lord’s truth. I was fed truths in the classroom, in the chapel and over coffee by both faculty and students that I digested inwardly (sometimes intentionally and more often unintentionally) and will continue to be nourished by it for the rest of my life. As I continue to read many of our fathers in the faith and continue to listen to many pastors and teachers in the Synod, I also realize how much formation I still have yet to go on this side of seminary.
Seminary as Boot Camp for Christ’s Soldiers
By John T. Pless

The tranquil campus of our seminary in Fort Wayne might not look much like a boot camp, but in reality that is what it is. In 1 Tim. 6:11–16, the Apostle Paul speaks to Timothy as a man being prepared for battle.

Back in 1936, living in the shadow of Nazism, Hermann Sasse wrote, “We come out of a time in which the Church was understood as a place of rest in a restless world” (Witness, Magdeburg Press, 2013, p. 195). He noted that Christians of the previous generation had forgotten Jesus’ words that He had not come to bring peace but a sword” (Matt. 10:34). Instead Sasse asserted “They wanted to have the peace of Christ without the harsh war he orders us to enter. They wanted a church where they could save their souls and live undisturbed by the noise of the world. But thereby they forgot the deep peace that the Redeemer of the world alone can give us, and they forgot the real Church” (Witness, 196).

What Sasse said so many years ago still rings true today; perhaps even more so as now we clearly find ourselves on a battlefield. No longer does the Christian church enjoy a privileged place in North America. We are all too familiar with the ways that the presence of Christianity is marginalized, long-honored virtues dismissed and religious conviction sequestered to the realm of a private and even toxic sentiment. A few years ago it was popular to speak of the culture wars. But the conflict in which our Lord calls us to be engaged is deeper and more deadly than a clash of cultures. It is, as the Apostle says in Ephesians 6, a wrestling match not between flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over the present forces of evil in the heavenly places. It is to this battle that Timothy, the man of God, is called to stand and to fight as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

As he had done in Ephesians 6, Paul also uses this military imagery in the Pastoral Epistles. He is, Luther says, like a pious field commander addressing soldiers in battle admonishing them to be bold, courageous and confident. So Timothy is exhorted to lay aside every entangling sin that would ensnare and drag him into certain destruction, to be content and not glued by greed to the riches of this world. Instead he is exhorted to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness and gentleness. These are the weaponry of our warfare. Timothy is to lay hold of the eternal life to which he was called through the Gospel and confessed before the presence of many witnesses. Only in this confession can he fight the good fight of the faith. And it is only in this confession that you can fight the good fight of the faith.

This good confession was made by our Lord Jesus Christ before Pontius Pilate when He did not deny but confessed that He is the King whose kingdom is not of this world. A good confession is never made up, never simply the assertion of a subjective theological opinion; it is a speaking back to God and to the world the words which the Lord Himself has spoken to us. There is gravity, a weightiness to this confession for it is made coram deo, in the presence of God. The auditor of this confession is not just the ears of other people but of the living God Himself. So the question is not what will the world think or how will our unyielding stance be evaluated by the media, but what will the Lord, who judges the living and dead, hear from your lips? “So everyone who acknowledges me before men,” Jesus says “I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32-33).

Such confession is always a matter of the First Commandment. Will you fear, love and trust in God above all things? To cling to the First Commandment is to invite conflict and attack. For even though there is but one true God–Father, Son and Holy Spirit–there are gods and lords aplenty in this old dying world that vie to have you aligned with them, fearing, loving and trusting in them rather than the Son of the Father who was crucified for your sins and raised again for your justification.

Paul does not leave Timothy or you without comfort and consolation. His words are far more than a rallying of the troops with a harangue to incite them to face the battle unflinchingly. Paul’s exhortation in 1 Timothy 6 is spoken against this eschatological horizon: “the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will display at the proper time.” He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He alone is the possessor of immortality. He is Light of light and the darkness has not and will not overcome Him. The outcome of this war is not in doubt, for the Lord who will come on what Luther called that dear Last Day has already won the victory by His dying and rising. He has already purchased and won you with His precious blood and innocent suffering and death that, as the Catechism confesses, you might live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness even as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity.

The Rev. Prof. John T. Pless (John.Pless@ctsfw.edu) serves as assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
“I once met someone who was surprised that I had moved my entire family to Fort Wayne for seminary. I don’t know if people realize the resources that the Seminary has developed to make the transition to Fort Wayne easier on families. It is still difficult, especially given all the moving involved, but the Seminary provides assistance. The Seminary offers help in finding housing, connects a student with congregations that want to provide financial assistance, communicates clearly about other sources of financial aid and provides food, clothing, toys and furniture through the Food & Clothing Co-op.”

College years are a time for discovery and expanding one’s horizons. Daniel Burfiend was on that road to discovery when he began his freshman year at Hillsdale College. He had grown up in a Christian home but harbored some doubts about his faith. Shortly after arriving on campus, he came into contact with faithful members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) who would challenge him, support him and help him discover how he could best serve as a Christian in today’s challenging world.

“I went to college with the intent to study politics, but soon changed my mind after I encountered passionate LCMS members (I did not grow up in the LCMS) who challenged my assumptions about what it means to be a Christian. I grew up fearing that I had not truly been ‘saved’ or had not fully committed my life to Christ. I was looking for some sort of experience to assure me that I was really a Christian,” shares Burfiend. “I began attending an LCMS congregation and also read Luther as part of the core curriculum in college. From the congregation and from my reading of Luther, I heard the Gospel. I came to a better understanding of Scripture, realizing that no level of
Looking Forward

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and her decision to become a registered nurse. His decision to work a few years working as a development and enrolling at CTSFW, Burfiend spent a wonderful part of the curriculum." Reading for the upcoming Sunday) to be Readings class (a study of the Gospel coming Sunday. I have found the Greek included the study of a pericope for the rhythm of the Church Year and wanted to restructure its teaching around the reason was probably the most important. This explains Burfiend. “I also liked the Choral Vespers on several occasions,” attended and enjoyed the All Saints worship in Kramer Chapel and I had the professors there, I appreciated the I appreciated what I had heard from home pastor encouraged me to attend, Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne. “My seminary to attend. Several important factors came into play with his decision to attend Concordia Theological Seminary provides assistance. Given all the moving involved, but families. It is still difficult, especially during his seminary years. To add to that, they are both very thankful for the resources available to CTSFW students. “I once met someone who was surprised that I had moved my entire family to Fort Wayne for seminary. I don’t know if people realize the resources that the Seminary has developed to make the transition to Fort Wayne easier on families. It is still difficult, especially given all the moving involved, but the Seminary provides assistance.

Between graduation from Hillsdale and enrolling at CTSFW, Burfiend spent a few years working as a development officer and his wife, Roseli, earned a degree in nursing. His decision to work and her decision to become a registered nurse were made to help ensure they would be on good financial footing during his seminary years. To add to that, they are both very thankful for the resources available to CTSFW students. “I once met someone who was surprised that I had moved my entire family to Fort Wayne for seminary. I don’t know if people realize the resources that the Seminary has developed to make the transition to Fort Wayne easier on families. It is still difficult, especially given all the moving involved, but the Seminary provides assistance.

The Seminary offers help in finding housing, connects a student with congregations that want to provide financial assistance, communicates clearly about other sources of financial aid and provides food, clothing, toys and furniture through the Food & Clothing Co-op.” Burfiend’s four years of study, that included field work, three years of classroom study and a one year vicarage, have deepened his appreciation for residential seminary education. “Residential education at CTSFW brings men together from different parts of the world. These men study in close proximity to one another, sometimes living in the same building and eating at the same tables. While they have different backgrounds and experiences, those preparing to be pastors have the same confession of faith. As they study God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions, they discuss the most faithful ways to teach the faith and live out that faith in life and worship. Thus, residential education can be very helpful in promoting unity on the basis of God’s Word.

“Residential seminary education also offers the opportunity to reflect on class lectures with professors and students during coffee hour or over lunch. I have found that these informal gatherings give me the opportunity to think through what I have learned and raise questions that cannot be asked (due to time) in the lecture setting. I have the opportunity to clarify specific points and even to ask about how those ideas might impact daily life.”

Burfiend completed his M.Div. degree in May of this year and has chosen to stay on one more year at CTSFW to serve as a graduate assistant for the Pastoral Ministry and Missions Department while working on his Master of Sacred Theology degree. He will receive his call into the Holy Ministry in May 2016 and looks forward to putting into practice all he has learned and experienced at CTSFW. “It has been a blessing to study God’s Word, learn and grow here at the Seminary. By the grace of God, I desire to preach and teach His Word faithfully so that others may know and receive Him and the forgiveness He gives.”

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.

“Both our boys are full of life and mischief and keep us on our toes! Theo is Mr. Social, with a smile for everyone. Sam is our strong, serious one, who adores his older brother. Despite all the hurdles parents face, we are so blessed to have these little ones in our home and to share our seminary journey with them.”
On May 22, 2014, the Rev. Dr. Roland F. Ziegler, associate professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, was named the first holder of the Robert David Preus Chair in Systematic Theology/Confessional Lutheran Studies. Mr. William Hecht and his wife, Susan, were two of the original endowers of the Chair. Hecht offered his thoughts on the importance of the Chair in a letter to CTSFW President Lawrence R. Rast Jr. Now, at the first anniversary of the establishment of the Chair, we are pleased to share that letter.

It is with heartfelt thanks to our merciful God, to you and the Fort Wayne Seminary that Susan and I celebrate the establishment of the Robert David Preus Chair in Systematic Theology/Confessional Lutheran Studies. Our hearts are filled with joy—and our prayers have been answered—that the man widely recognized as the greatest Lutheran theologian of the 20th century receive this honor that he so justly deserves. We realize that our family joins a chorus of thousands who believe that Robert Preus left his indelible mark on modern day confessional Lutheranism. We feel especially blessed that we were in the position to be one of the original endowers of this Chair. Robert touched all of our lives in a very special way both personally and spiritually.

In my case I first met Dr. Preus 57 years ago when he became a professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. To say that Robert molded my confessional Lutheran theology is an understatement. It is no exaggeration to say that as a seminary student in 1957 I immediately felt that I had found my theological mentor. It took a while longer for me to realize that this outstanding man would become the older brother that I never had had as an only child.

Under God’s divine providence Robert became one of my best friends for life, and our families became very close over the years. Susan and Donna (Dr. Preus’ wife) developed a wonderful friendship, and some of the Preus children became regular babysitters for our little ones. Susan thankfully rejoices at the pastoral role this theological giant played in our lives. We had been given the special gift of a second son in May of 1962. We named him Robert David Hecht. When our dear son was called home to Heaven at the age of one day, it was Robert Preus who sat at Susan’s bedside, prayed with her and comforted her and then preached our son’s funeral sermon. Throughout the rest of his life when Robert and Susan would be together, the conversation would turn to loving remembrances of that very special time. In 1993 when our third son, Tim, welcomed his firstborn child, a son, he named him Robert David Hecht as well. Robert flew out to Virginia a week before Christmas to baptize Robbie and his cousin Christian, and that was the last time our family as a whole was able to be with our dear friend Robert Preus.

Susan always referred to Robert as her pastor. They enjoyed long talks, vivid debates, attending conventions and meetings in Washington and keeping the ties between our two families strong. Ultimately every event and conversation was a pathway to confessional theology where Robert’s faith was shared with everyone no matter the size or persuasion of the group. Through stories and examples Susan has continued to share those bits of faith that Robert gave to all of our family.

The interest that Dr. Preus showed in me from the very beginning never ceases to amaze me. Certainly as a young student I would not have appeared to be a very good candidate to become a theological scholar. I had
plenty of enthusiasm and was not shy about expressing my conservative beliefs. But I am reasonably certain that I had less formal theological training than any other student in my class. I grew up in the heart of the Bible Belt in South Georgia where my daddy was undoubtedly the first Lutheran anyone in Tifton, or Tift County for that matter, had ever seen. When he moved to Tifton in 1928 to become the manager of the local chain dime store, he was the first Lutheran ever to live in that county. A couple of years later when he married my mother, who had grown up Baptist like the majority of the Tift County residents, she would become the second Lutheran in that area. She had visited her brother-in-law in Miami long enough to take confirmation instructions. When I was born in 1933 and baptized in St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Miami, where mother had been confirmed, I was the third Lutheran in Tifton. Just a year before I first met Dr. Preus my dad had finally convinced the Florida-Georgia District (of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod) to start a mission in Tifton. A few dozen other Lutherans had moved there, mostly to work at the Agricultural Experiment Station. Therefore, the only theological training I had while growing up came from my dad, who fortunately had graduated from the Lutheran high school in River Forest, Illinois. My daddy, who was an unusually devout Lutheran, did the best he could while working six days, and most nights, a week during the Great Depression to teach me Lutheran doctrine. Daddy planted the seeds of how the Lutheran Confessions were the most accurate interpretation of the teachings of Holy Scripture. Then by God’s grace I met Dr. Preus who nurtured my elementary knowledge of Lutheran doctrine and turned me into a fairly well accomplished Lutheran theologian. I took every possible course taught by Dr. Preus during my remaining years at the Seminary. The rest is history. I learned my theology at the feet of a master theologian, and for that I will always be eternally grateful. By word and deed, this man of God taught me how the Gospel of Jesus Christ can change lives—starting with my own!

The Seminary pays tribute to a beloved and deserving man in establishing the Robert David Preus Chair in Systematic Theology/Confessional Studies. It has been such a blessing for our entire family to have Robert’s influence in our lives and to now take part in the establishment of this chair. Our congratulations to Concordia Theological Seminary, the Preus family and all the next generations of servants in our church who will benefit from the lessons learned as they study confessional Lutheranism.

In Christ,
Bill Hecht
Seminary Announces Spring Placements

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, is pleased to announce its Spring 2015 vicarage assignments, deaconess internships, calls to the pastoral ministry and deaconess placements.

VICARAGES
April 27, 2015

BRADLEY D. AKEY
Luther Memorial Chapel
Shorewood, Wisconsin
South Wisconsin District

PHILLIP J. ALLMAN
Lutheran Church of Our Savior
Cupertino, California
California-Nevada-Hawaii District

KEVIN P. BELTER
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Basehor, Kansas
Kansas District

ROBERT Q. BRUGGEMAN
NEK Lutheran Partnership
Napoleon, Ohio
Indiana District

DONALD J. BRUCE
Lutheran Church
Minocqua, Wisconsin
North Wisconsin District

MARCUS A. WILLIAMS
Immanuel/Lutheran Church
San Luis Obispo, California
California-Nevada-Hawaii District

EMILY R. DANIELS
Concordia Theological Seminary
and Shephard of the City Lutheran Church
Fort Wayne, Indiana
Indiana District

JACOB J. EICHERS
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Columbia City, Indiana
Indiana District

AARON E. YAEGER
Lamb of God Lutheran Church
San Luis Obispo, California
California-Nevada-Hawaii District

MARGARET A. P. RUEHLE
Messiah Lutheran Church and Classical Academy
Keller, Texas
Texas District

KEATON G. CHRISTIANSEN
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Alamosa, Colorado
Rocky Mountain District

JAMES L. ROCKHILL
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Martinsville, Indiana
Indiana District

RICHARD C. STEPHENS
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin
North Wisconsin District

CATHY L. WILCOXEN
Lutheran Church
San Luis Obispo, California
California-Nevada-Hawaii District

JAMES L. ROCKHILL
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Martinsville, Indiana
Indiana District

Shepherd of the City Lutheran Church
Ontario, California
California-Nevada-Hawaii District

PASTORAL CALLS
April 28, 2015

JACOB D. BERGER
Zion/Our Redeemer Lutheran Churches
Douglas, Wyoming
Wyoming District

KEATON G. CHRISTIANSEN
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
(Associate Pastor/Executive Director)
Alamosa, Colorado
Rocky Mountain District

JASON K. CODY
Trinity Lutheran Church
(Associate Pastor/Worker Priest)
St. Francis, Minnesota
Minnesota South District

18
June 2015

Deaconess Placements
May 21, 2015

Monday, May 21, 2015
Deaconess Placements

Symposia Series 2016

31st Annual Symposium on Exegetical Theology
Character of Reformation Exegesis
January 19–20, 2016

39th Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions
Luther and the Reformation: Beginning the Celebration
January 20–22, 2016

Held every year on the Fort Wayne campus, presentations on Exegetical Theology and the Lutheran Confessions will highlight the four-day event. More information coming soon at www.ctsfw.edu/Symposia.
CTSFW Students Receive Academic Awards

On Tuesday, May 12, 2015, awards were presented to Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, students for excellence in their studies, writing and example to others:

**Jacob Benson**—Systematic Theology Department Writing Award, for his paper “Numbers Chapter 11 as Background for Understanding the Apostolic Office and Biblical Inspiration.”

**Daniel Burfiend**—Zondervan Biblical Languages Award, given to encourage continued studies of Scripture in its original language.

**Rene Castillero**—Pastoral Ministry and Missions Department Writing Award, for his study series “Ten Lessons on the Large Catechism.”

**Jacob Eichers**—Historical Theology Department Writing Award, for his paper “Study of Tyndale and Luther on the Lord’s Supper.”

**Eamonn Ferguson**—The Classical Association of the Middle West and South Award for Outstanding Accomplishment, given in recognition of excellence in Greek and assisting other students with their Greek studies.

**Aaron Hambelton**—Gerhard Aho Homiletics Award, presented for the best sermon. A wedding sermon based on Ephesians 5:21–33, “Do We Have To?”

**Christian Preus**—Lepper–Draves Scholarship to provide a stipend for a student, who will be in his fourth-year of study in the coming academic year, who has excelled in the study of Dogmatics and Confessional Theology.

**Christopher Suggitt**—Shepherd’s Staff Award, voted on by his peers and presented to the fourth-year student who exemplifies pastoral faith and life.

**Timothy Wilcoxen**—St. Timothy Award, given to encourage a second-year student in his continuing studies of the Holy Scriptures.

**Marcus Williams**—Exegetical Theology Department Writing Award, for his paper “Petrine Authorship for Hebrews.”

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**The End Times & Resurrection: Confident Comfort in Christ**

October 28–30, 2015

- Presentations by CTSFW faculty, including President Lawrence Rast, Dr. Charles Gieschen and Dr. David Scær.
- Attend classes with current students.
- Celebrate with a special Reformation Service.

For additional information email Retreats@ctsfw.edu or phone 260-452-2204.

Online registration will be available soon at www.ctsfw.edu/LutherHostel.
CTSFW Continues Work to Address Issue of Educational Debt

Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, continues efforts to address the growing challenge of educational debt among seminary students. In July 2012, CTSFW was awarded a three-year grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. to study and promote awareness about this issue. In January 2013, CTSFW began its work under the theme “Improving the Economic Well-being of Future Servants of Jesus Christ.” CTSFW has surveyed students, alumni, donors and congregation leaders to get feedback on the issue. The findings from these surveys, plus suggested action items to encourage increased support for students and teach students how better to handle educational debt, are found in a report recently released by the Seminary.

“We offer this report as a means for the church to begin to understand the financial challenges faced by current and future seminary students. The problem of seminary student educational debt has been building for a number of years, and it is our hope that this report will begin a process to reverse this troubling trend of increasing student loan debt among our future church workers,” commented the Rev. Mark Sheafer, CTSFW Lilly Grant project director. “This, of course, is not an issue that can be addressed by CTSFW alone. To realize successful solutions we propose to work jointly with those at the congregation, district and Synod levels.”

In addition to this report, CTSFW has produced and distributed a video to raise awareness throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, provided fundraising ideas for congregations, offered giving opportunities and created informational bulletin inserts and brochures. These resources may be found at www.ctsfw.edu/SupportFutureServants.

Somewhere miraculously wonderful happened today. My husband and I paid off our very last school loan.

We each have Master’s degrees and 15 years of combined higher education under our belts. I stay home and we live on one salary. We are raising a “litter” of children. Society tells us we shouldn’t be able to save money because kids are too expensive and shopping is too necessary. But, ha! We officially own our own brains. Pretty cool.

We have a ton of people to thank for this milestone. We left seminary three years ago with about $40,000 in student loan debt. I can’t even begin to describe how this was possible. $40,000 in three years on one salary? Sure, we made sacrifices, cut spending, lived on less, and spent every extra dollar on paying this off, but that isn’t why it was paid off. Thanks be to God for the people He has placed in our lives to love and care for us as we attempt to live a humble and thankful life.

God has been very gracious to us through our supportive families and our congregations who care for us.

I was nervous about sharing this because I know so many in the barrels of student loan debt. Please, let this be joyful for you. It is possible. Do not lose hope.

Kelly Stout
(Kelly’s husband, Chris, graduated from CTSFW in 2012)
On Friday, May 22, 2015, the Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, community celebrated the close of its 169th year. Since 1846, CTSFW has been blessed to prepare men to serve as pastors and, since 2004, women to serve as deaconesses in congregations, institutions and in the mission field all around the world.

“At this time of commencement, the faculty once again gives thanks to our Lord for the unique opportunity that we have been given to form the men and women to be servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all. We rejoice with each of our talented students as they are awarded their academic degrees and take up new responsibilities of service in the Lord’s kingdom,” commented CTSFW Academic Dean Charles A. Gieschen.

1. Kramer Chapel is filled to capacity with family and friends celebrating the graduation of their loved ones. 2. CTSFW 2015 M.Div. graduates are all smiles before the commencement ceremony. 3. Graduates from the Master of Arts in Deaconess Studies Program looking forward to receiving their diplomas. 4. (l-r) Rachel, Joshua and Rev. James Woelmer. Joshua celebrated his graduation from the M.Div. Program and his father, James, was honored as Alumnus of the Year. 5. The Rev. Daniel Preus served as speaker for the commencement ceremony. He was also awarded the Doctor of Divinity (Honoris Causa).
In addition to the awarding of Master of Arts, Master of Divinity, Master of Sacred Theology, Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Philosophy degrees, several special honors were conferred:

**Alumnus of the Year:**
Rev. James Woelmer (CTSFW 1990), Faith Lutheran Church, Plano, Texas

This award had been established by the CTSFW Board of Regents to honor a graduate who has distinguished himself by faithfully shepherding the people of God with excellence in preaching, teaching the faithful and reaching the lost while also strengthening his alma mater by recruiting, publicizing and supporting the Seminary’s mission.

The Rev. Woelmer and his congregation are proud supporters of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Faith Lutheran Church has 12 sons of the congregation who are now pastors. Ten of them graduated from CTSFW. Faith Lutheran Church has planted five daughter congregations, including one which just started in April of this year. Faith Lutheran Church runs a classical school from preschool through 12th grade. Woelmer works with three associate pastors and eight full-time teachers in the school. He also teaches Old and New Testament in their high school.

Woelmer and his wife, Rachel, have been blessed with five children. Joshua, who earned his M.Div. degree from CTSFW this year and will pursue a S.T.M. degree; Jacob, who is an engineer in Houston and is active at Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston; Bethany, who graduated from Concordia University Wisconsin with a degree in Parish Music; Grace, who attends Concordia University Nebraska in the Teacher Education Program; and David, who is a junior at Faith Lutheran High School and is a regular attendee of Christ Academy at CTSFW.

**Doctor of Divinity Honoris Causa:**
Rev. Daniel Preus (CTS—Springfield 1975), The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Third Vice President

The Rev. Daniel Preus represents The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s (LCMS) Central Region and serves on the pastoral staff at Hope Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri. He has served congregations in Indiana, Illinois and Colorado. From 1995 to 2001, he served as the director of Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, and from 2005 to 2012, as director of the Luther Academy, an organization devoted to promoting confessional Lutheran theology.

In other service to the church, Preus sat on the LCMS Board for Parish Services, the LCMS Board of Directors and the Board of Directors of Lutheran Church Extension Fund. He was a leader in discussions resulting in the declaration of church fellowship between the LCMS and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya in 2004 and was a liaison between Concordia Historical Institute and the Federal Republic of Germany from 1995 to 1996, where he worked for the return of the Luther manuscript Wider Hans Wurst to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Preus and his wife, Linda, live in St. Louis. They have three sons, two daughters and eight grandchildren.

**Miles Christi (Soldier of Christ) Award:**
Winfried (Joe) I. Strieter
Maumee, Ohio

The Miles Christi Award has been created by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary in order to recognize and honor each year Lutheran laymen or laywomen who have glorified God through a real contribution in some field of human endeavor and who have displayed the characteristics of good soldiers of Christ (2 Tim. 2:3).

Mr. Strieter is a member of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Perrysburg, Ohio, where he serves as a member of the Board of Elders and sings in the senior choir. He has served as Sunday School Superintendent, Adult Bible Class teacher, Congregation President and Vice President, Adult Choir Director and as a member on the boards of Stewardship and Education.

He has served the LCMS Ohio District on its Board of Directors, as a lay delegate to district conventions and as a member of the Toledo Chinese Ministry Task Force. He has served the Synod as a lay delegate to three conventions.

He has been a faithful supporter of CTSFW for many years as a member of the President’s Circle.

He and his wife, Alice, have been married for 55 years. They have three children, six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

We thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon CTSFW and look forward to beginning our 170th academic year with Opening Service on Sunday, September 13, 2015.
## Continuing Education Opportunities

**Sponsored by Concordia Theological Seminary–Fort Wayne, Indiana**

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## Additional CEU Credit Opportunities with Our Partners at Doxology

- Illinois
- Kansas
- South Dakota

Registration information found at [www.doxology.us](http://www.doxology.us)

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**Contact Us for More Information:**

- Kara J. Mertz at CE@ctsfw.edu
- Prof. Jeffrey Pulse at Jeffrey.Pulse@ctsfw.edu
- Phone 260-452-2103

Please visit our website regularly to check for additional site information: [www.ctsfw.edu/CE](http://www.ctsfw.edu/CE).
There is much knowledge to be gained in our Internet age. Many subjects can be researched on a computer or a smart phone with just a click of a button. Interesting bits of information and unique facts may be gleaned through self-study. You can perform a Google search of almost any topic and learn something. That is tacit learning.

There is another form of learning which involves and enriches all your senses and deepens and enlivens your perspective like nothing else. It is explicit or experiential learning. If you have traveled, you know the joy of experiencing a new town, city or park. This is similar to what St. John tells us he shared with Jesus. What the Apostles Peter, James and John absorbed with Jesus was much more abundant and meaningful than objective facts and data because their study involved all of their senses and being. They saw Him every day and looked into His very eyes. They witnessed Him raise Lazarus from the dead, heal the sick and drive out demons. They heard Him distinctly with their own ears and they perceived how He cared so compassionately for people. These three, unlike the other nine disciples, also beheld Him glowing with such brightness on the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah. Finally, they touched His hands, with nail pierced stigmata, after the resurrection.

A full experiential learning process is one of the main reasons why so many people love to travel to new locations, to become more fully familiarized with them. It is for this same reason that many more men are encouraged to take in the full seminary experience as a student. A person will have perhaps 20 professors to engage with in or out of class over two to three years, live in dorms and attend classes with students from all places in the United States and around the world. They will witness a local pastor care for people at their fieldwork church and on their vicarage as well. While you were students you had this opportunity to experience ministry from many different people, perspectives and contacts which helped to shape and mold you for your present vocation.

This rich encounter is still available at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, for more men and women who desire theological education, ordination or deaconess certification. The way we make that happen is through encouragement of CTSFW alumni like you. When you encourage them to connect with our admission staff, visit the campus, look at useful tools within our library and worship in Kramer Chapel, perspectives do change. We pray that you will continue to partner with us and inspire more of God’s people to see a future vision become a present reality.

The Rev. Timothy R. Puls (Timothy.Puls@ctsfw.edu) serves as director of Alumni and Church Relations at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Long before the members of the Concordia Theological Seminary Guild come in contact with the students at the Seminary, the students have been through the admission process and are ready to begin studies to become workers for the Lord.

We know that prior to the admission process the students have gone through self-searching, prayer and life-changes before the decision is made to seek admission to the Seminary and into the realm of learning to be a messenger of God.

The Seminary Guild is grateful that not only the present Seminary students, but all the pastors and deaconesses now actively serving our Lord in the world, chose to go through the admission process.

The Guild supports students during their time at the Seminary in prayer, receptions to welcome them, celebrations as they graduate, monetary contributions to make their Seminary experience more comfortable and other kindnesses.

It would be good to have your help in supporting the students by joining as a member of the Guild. Meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month in September through May, with the exception of January. Whether or not you are able to attend meetings, you can become an affiliate member either individually for $10 or as a church group for $25. Your membership fee is used for the projects that are planned for the students.

Whether you are going through the admission process or giving support to those who have been admitted, the Word of the Lord says: I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Is. 41:10b).

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

Yes, we are interested in becoming an Affiliate Guild. Please send more information to:

Name: _________________________________________________________________
Organization: ___________________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________
City: ___________________________ State: _______ Zip: _________________
Email: __________________________________________________________________

☐ We are enclosing a donation payable to Concordia Theological Seminary Guild, c/o Linda Scicluna, 4 Wycliffe Place, Fort Wayne, IN 46825-4496.

☐ 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.
Working Together: CTSFW Military Project and the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces
By Carolyn S. Brinkley

In recent months the Military Project of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s (LCMS) Ministry to the Armed Forces have had the opportunity to pool resources to support our chaplains more effectively in their important and valuable missionary calling. Working together we are able to care more fully for our courageous and faithful pastors who are the presence of Christ through Word and Sacrament to the men and women who protect our freedoms.

Chaplain Craig Muehler, director of the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, writes, “What a blessing the Fort Wayne Seminary Military Project has been to the Ministry to the Armed Forces for the LCMS and our chaplains! They have continually answered the call to support our LCMS military chaplains by providing them with packages of goodies as well as theological and worship resources to assist them in the ministry. We have a true partner in our efforts to take care of our chaplains, their families and those whom they are called to serve in the most austere conditions! We thank God for our collaboration and partnership with the Military Project of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana!”

Many thanks to all for your generous support enabling this work of mercy to continue and grow. Your loving gifts are the backbone in providing body and soul care for our chaplains and those who serve as God’s instruments of protection. Thank you!

How can you help?
Please keep our chaplains and military personnel in your prayers. They are God’s instruments of protection. For information on service projects or how to start a military project, please email MilitaryProject@ctsfw.edu or call 260-542-2140.

Monetary donations can be mailed to:
Concordia Theological Seminary
Attn.: Military Project Coordinator
6600 N. Clinton St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46825-4496

Deaconess Carolyn S. Brinkley (MilitaryProject@ctsfw.edu) serves as coordinator of the Military Project at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Few in Number, Mighty in Service

Although few in number, the members of Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, Arkansas, together with Pastor and Mrs. Baisch, give generously to supply the needs of the saints, especially the needs of the students and families at CTSFW. We give thanks to God for their mighty service to Him and His Church, as they work with us to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all.

Faith Lutheran Church in Fairfield Bay, Arkansas, is a congregation of 64 members located in the picturesque Ozark foothills of north-central Arkansas’ Bible Belt. Although the congregation’s membership is few in number, its generosity makes a huge impact on the work of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

Largely a retirement community, Fairfield Bay lies on the north shore of Greers Ferry Lake, about 80 miles north of Little Rock in the midst of a beautiful, yet sparsely populated, region of the state. While Faith’s nearest neighboring LCMS congregation is some 50 miles away, the members of Faith do not allow the congregation’s small size or geographic remoteness to keep them from reaching out in love to support our CTSFW students with their prayers and financial gifts. They gladly look beyond themselves to serve the needs of others, especially...
those who are preparing for service as pastors and deaconesses in the LCMS.

The congregation gives regularly to support the general operations of the Seminary as well as our Student Adoption Program. Faith’s Ladies Aid provides its own Student Adoption gifts, in addition to contributing to the Seminary’s Food and Clothing Co-op. A quilting group at Faith delights in creating and donating quilts for our students. The generosity of the congregation is further enhanced by the gifts of individual members, many of whom have adopted one or more of our students.

When asked about the incredible generosity of the congregation, Faith’s pastor, the Rev. Arthur Baisch (CTSFW 1993), said that shortly after he arrived at Faith in 2008, he spoke about the need to help seminarians at both CTSFW and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He then asked the congregation to set a goal for a dozen families to adopt six students from each seminary. The members of Faith responded very positively to their pastor’s request. They speak of how happy they are to support our seminarians and their families. They enjoy reading the thank-you letters from our students and knowing firsthand that they are making a positive difference in the lives of these future servants of Christ’s Church.

Baisch and his wife, Evelyn, are also generous supporters of CTSFW. Pastor Baisch is a second career pastor. After serving as a Lutheran educator for 10 years and then as a financial representative for Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL), now Thrivent Financial, Baisch enrolled at CTSFW at the age of 46. The Baisches had three children at home at the time, ages 13, 11 and 2.

During their seminary years, money was tight, even with Evelyn working full time and the two older children helping financially with paper routes. The Baisches fondly recall the generosity of a Massachusetts pastor who adopted them and gave them $100 a month. They used this money to purchase fresh produce and meat, which supplemented the food they received from the Seminary’s Food & Clothing Co-op.

Remembering the help they had received at Seminary, the Baisches, in turn, want to help current and future seminarians and their families. They have done so in a variety of ways over the years. At one time, they even adopted three of our students simultaneously.

The Baisches have also included CTSFW in their estate plan. They worked with Mr. Allen Helms Senior vice president for Gift Planning Services of the LCMS Foundation, to establish a charitable remainder trust that will benefit CTSFW and other LCMS organizations long after the Lord calls them home to heaven.

St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, “You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God” (2 Cor. 9:11-12). Although few in number, the members of Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, Arkansas, together with Pastor and Mrs. Baisch, give generously to supply the needs of the saints, especially the needs of the students and families at CTSFW. We give thanks to God for their mighty service to Him and His Church, as they work with us to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all.

To learn more about giving opportunities at CTSFW go to www.ctsfw.edu/Advancement, email Advancement@ctsfw.edu or give us a call at 877-287-4338.

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Please detach and mail to Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825-4496.
Prayer, Meditation and Struggle

By Peter J. Brock

In Martin Luther’s preface to the first volume of his German writings, he exhorts the Church “to let the prophets and apostles stand at the professor’s lectern, while we, down below at their feet, listen to what they say” (AE 34:284). To that end, Luther learns from Psalm 119 the “correct way of studying theology” by following “three rules, amply presented throughout the whole Psalm,” Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio (34:285). As we will see from the Psalm itself, these three rules are given to be held together and considered as one nonlinear process of formation that begins in Holy Baptism and assumes a specific shape in focused theological study that continues throughout the life of the pastor or deaconess.

I. Oratio—Prayer
Read Ps. 119:1-40. For what does the Psalmist pray? Why would a student of theology pray such a prayer? (Compare these verses to Luke 24:36-49, 1 Cor. 1:18-31 and the Small Catechism’s explanation of the Creed’s Third Article.)

Since through the word of the cross God has made foolish the wisdom of the world, the Psalmist prays that his eyes be opened and his pride removed that the Lord would teach the word Himself. Faithful to His promises, Jesus appeared to His disciples on Easter evening, proclaiming the peace of His cross and opening their minds to understand the word of God, that the Christ should suffer, die and rise, that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed to all nations and that the promise of the Father (the Holy Spirit) would be sent by Christ for that purpose.

Thus Luther’s first instruction for the Christian in general, and the seminarian or deaconess student in particular, is to “kneel down in your little room and pray to God with real humility and earnestness, that he through his dear Son may give you his Holy Spirit, who will enlighten you, lead you, and give you understanding” (AE 34:285, 286). With the Psalmist in such prayer, even for those whose human knowledge and awareness of God’s Word are great, students of theology are given to despair of their own reason and strength to suffer the Lord’s address that comes down to us, as it came to Jesus’ apostles on Easter evening, in flesh and blood, in the Word preached, in the midst of a meal and in the depths of fear and affliction.

II. Meditatio—Meditation
Read Ps. 119:41-80. What does the Psalmist vow to do with “the word of truth,” the Lord’s testimonies and precepts? Is such meditation merely an internal, spiritualized speculation? What context is necessary for such activity? (Compare these verses to 2 Cor. 4:13, Col. 3:15-16 and Smalcald Articles III:8–”In these matters, which concern the spoken, external Word, it must be firmly maintained that God gives no one his Spirit or grace apart from the external Word which goes before.”)

The Psalmist prays that the Lord’s word of truth may not be taken out of his mouth, so that he may speak of God’s testimonies (v. 46) and sing of His statutes (v. 54). Learning from this, Luther emphasizes the actual/external/outward activity of meditation, which includes listening and speaking, reading and reflecting, suffering and singing. Here, for the student of theology specifically but no less for all Christians, the connection is commended between font and fellowship, pulpit and classroom, altar and cafeteria. The latter flows from the former and directs the student back to it as the external repetition of God’s Word gives form and substance both to its study and to the life its hearers live together in common interaction with that which is written, read, preached and heard. As the apostle exhorts, the context for such meditation is community.

Indeed, and as Norman Nagel well summarized of the life of such a seminary at the 1962 dedication of Westfield House in Cambridge, England (the theological college of the Evangelical Lutheran of England), “The Lord’s words here engage us, received in liturgy, studied in the ways our Lord has taken our words into His use, lived in community, and readied for sowing skillfully, wherever the Lord may put us for His use.” In my time at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, and in the years of continued study since, I have, by God’s grace, seen the truth of Nagel’s words for this Seminary, where “theological studies are underway, strong in Scripture’s Hebrew and Greek–loaded words being loaded for delivery.”
III. Tentatio—Agonizing Struggle with Temptation, Trial and Affliction (Anfechtung)

Read Ps. 119:81-176. What does the Psalmist lament? What is the cause of his suffering? To what does the Psalmist turn in his grief? (Compare these verses to Matt. 5:11-12; John 15:18–27; and 1 Peter 4:12-5:11.)

Luther writes that the one who meditates, the one who is “occupied with God’s Word,” must suffer, for “as soon as God’s Word takes root and grows in you, the devil will harry you, and will make a real doctor of you, and by his assaults will teach you to seek and love God’s Word” (AE 34:287). Jesus promised it would be so. Tentatio, therefore, “is the touchstone which teaches you not only to know and understand, but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting God’s Word is, wisdom beyond all wisdom.” That is, this agonizing struggle with temptation, trial and every affliction one’s vocation brings with it directs the sufferers not into themselves or their personal experience but, with the Psalmist, outward toward God’s inspired, inerrant, infallible Word. “It is not experience as such that makes the theologian a theologian,” German Lutheran theologian Oswald Bayer explains, “but rather experiencing Holy Scripture.”

Based on your study of Psalm 119, how does a residential seminary education provide a biblical context for pastoral and deaconess formation wherein the student lives, experiences and suffers the three rules of Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio?

When considering study toward the Office of the Ministry or diaconal service, what aspects of this context are especially significant for this formation?

Based on your reading of the other articles in this magazine, how are these aspects emphasized at the Seminary?

Let us pray: O God, source of all abiding knowledge, through Word and Spirit You both enlighten the minds and sanctify the lives of those whom You draw to Your service. Look with favor on the seminaries and colleges of the Church, blessing those who teach and those who learn, that all the baptized may apply themselves with ready diligence to their tasks and faithfully fulfill their service according to Your will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Rev. Peter J. Brock (CTSW 2010) serves as pastor of St. John Lutheran Church (www.stjohnbingen.com), Decatur (Bingen), Indiana.

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Calendar of Events

JUNE

June 14–27 Christ Academy High School
June 15–19 Musician Workshop: Basic Level Organists and Service Playing for Pianists
June 22–26 Musician Workshop: Intermediate Level Organists

JULY

July 9–12 Phoebe Academy High School

SEPTEMBER

September 8 Seminary Guild, Luther Hall, 1:00 p.m.
September 13 Opening Service for the 170th Academic Year, Kramer Chapel, 3:00 p.m.

For additional information concerning any of these events, please visit www.ctsfw.edu or phone 260-452-2100. All times are Eastern Time.

GREECE & TURKEY

November 12–23, 2015

$3,379 Round trip airfare from Chicago

Destinations include: Athens, Canakkale, Corinth, Delphi, Ephesus, Istanbul, Izmir, Kalambaka, Kavala, Thessaloniki, Pamukkale, Pergamum.

For more information contact CTSFWTours@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-2119.
ON CAMPUS VISITATION EVENTS
FOR FUTURE PASTORS AND DEACONESSES

Phoebe Academy High School
July 9–12, 2015
www.ctsfw.edu/PhoebeAcademy

Prayerfully Consider Visit
October 8–10, 2015
www.ctsfw.edu/PCV

Christ Academy College & Phoebe Academy College
October 29–November 1, 2015
www.ctsfw.edu/CAC

For more information you may also call 800-481-2155, email Admission@ctsfw.edu or visit www.ctsfw.edu/Admission.