Christian Involvement in Public Ethical Issues
By Peter J. Scaer

Baptismal Ethics in Family and Society
By Lucas V. Woodford

Standing Up for Life: The CTSFW Life Team
Jacob H. Benson and Hanna M. Hoffbeck, Contributors
What better way to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation than with a tour to the Luther sites in Germany? Amy and I hosted a group of pilgrims on a tour organized by Nawas International Travel and led by two exceptional guides, Elizabeth Deane and Scott Widenhouse, just before Thanksgiving. If you’ve made such a trek, you know how inspiring such a visit can be. But as most of our nearly 100 participants noted at one point or another during the trip, there is, at best, a veneer of Christianity now characterizing western Europe. The historic sites and magnificent churches inspire us with their stories and architecture, but in many cases they have become nearly empty shells, lacking a vibrant mission and ministry to their communities.

The idea of a Christendom, or Christian Europe, ceased to be meaningful at least two centuries ago. The United States lagged in its own secularization, but it is now fully upon us. I’m at the point in my life where I wonder what the future will be like for my children, my grandchildren, and yes, even my great grandchildren. The times are uncertain, to say the least!

And this is why our gracious God has given us His Word:

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2: 8–12

This passage from the Gospel of Luke is one of the best known and well-loved by Christians the world over. These words remind us how God saw fit to bring salvation to us through what looked to the world as someone helpless and fragile. Today some still look upon the small, the weak, the frail as those who are no use to us in society. We, of course, know nothing could be further from the truth. Our Father created each of us to be loved and cherished from conception to natural death. At Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, we teach and serve in a community that lives out that commitment to life each day: in our daily worship, in the classroom and in service to God’s people through fieldwork, vicarages and internships.

In this issue of the magazine you will hear from professors, students and alumni who are speaking up for the least of these and reminding us of whose we are when we are made new in the waters of Baptism. Dr. Peter Scaer and members of the CTSFW Life Team discuss our Christian duty to be God’s light as we speak up for traditional marriage, the unborn and those nearing the end of their earthly lives. Dr. Lucas Woodford talks about the importance of the family and the effects that unchecked media can have on our children, encouraging us to live out our baptismal calling as we care for the youngest members of our families. Dr. Matthew Rueger, who’s been serving God’s people for over 25 years, still marvels at that “wonder in the making” each time one of God’s own is brought to the baptismal font to receive that new life in Jesus Christ. And finally, the Rev. Michael Salemink has prepared an excellent Bible study pointing us to Christ and recognizing the sanctity of human life as God’s good gift.

As we walk through Advent, I pray that each of you revel in this gift of new life in Jesus Christ and rejoice as we prepare to celebrate His birth!

In Christ’s service,

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana
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Our Lutheran understanding of good works and morality frees us to love the neighbor in ways that most of Christendom lacks. To that end, to help form pastors and deaconesses who are doers and not hearers only, the Life Team at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, was formed.

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You can’t legislate morality. That’s what they say. Should there be laws governing strip clubs and gambling? How about abortion and marriage? Or should we simply live and let live? Some would say that the Church should stay away from social issues. After all, we do not want to become known as that fussy aunt, or the proverbial church lady who offers a voice of disapproval and a tsk-tsk every time someone is having fun.

On the other hand, if we as Christians do not step into the public life, laws will be made by others, many of whom have no regard for truth or goodness. As such, Christian citizens are called to participate in public debates. We might have a nuanced opinion on something like gambling. Perhaps, we may outlaw certain forms or regulate it. Perhaps a law is not necessary. The options are many. On the other hand, we cannot help but notice all the difficulties, hardships and heartaches that come with it. As Christians, we would do well to caution our people about how addictive it can be and how many families it destroys, however we might deal with it in the law.

Some might argue that we cannot impose our beliefs on others. But this is foolishness. Almost every law has something to do with morality. Driving fast may not be immoral in and of itself, but driving recklessly puts the lives of others in danger. No one would question that there should be a law against armed robbery. While we may have different views when it comes to gambling, the abortion matter is crystal clear. This is hardly a matter where Christians can agree to disagree. Science confirms what the Bible teaches. Life begins at conception and we are called to defend it. This is not simply a matter of abstract ethics. There are spiritual consequences. To turn our backs on the unborn is to turn our backs on Christ Himself, who defines our humanity and died to redeem us all. We can no more be silent about the fate of the unborn than we can walk past a man who lies half dead alongside the road. The unborn child needs an advocate and a Good Samaritan. As surely as Joseph was called upon to protect the lives of Mary and the Christ Child, so also are we called upon to protect the lives of the little, innocent ones. By shirking this duty, we deny the Lord who came to save us.

What then shall we say, if anything, about marriage? Some would argue that the state may do what the state wants. After all, some say, marriage belongs to the Church. Such thinking is shortsighted. Marriage laws are put in place

When we promote marriage in society, we are promoting the common good. As such, Christians would say that society does not create or define marriage, but is called upon to recognize it as a natural good. Natural marriage promotes the welfare of children, the safety of mothers and the betterment of men. Natural marriage promotes the rights of children to have a mom and dad. All of this we can say apart from the Scriptures.
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precisely to protect the innocent and vulnerable. Every child, Christian or not, deserves a mom and dad. Easy divorce laws are not simply immoral, but they put children at risk. So-called same-sex marriage is predicated upon the false notion that mothers and fathers are interchangeable. Such laws purposefully deprive a child of a mom or dad. As such, marriage laws are now unjust.

What is the leading indicator of a child’s success? It is the presence of a father at home. When we promote marriage in society, we are promoting the common good. As such, Christians would say that society does not create or define marriage, but is called upon to recognize it as a natural good. Natural marriage promotes the welfare of children, the safety of mothers and the betterment of men. Natural marriage promotes the rights of children to have a mom and dad. All of this we can say apart from the Scriptures. This issue, too, has spiritual consequences. By advocating for natural marriage, we honor the God who created us and Christ the Bridegroom who sacrificed Himself for the Church. When we are silent, we are denying the truth of nature, the God who created us and the Lord who offered Himself as a sacrifice.

As we speak in this way, we are not saying that the civil law must perfectly duplicate the moral law as found in the Scriptures. As a prophet, Moses told us that marriage was between a man

CTSFW students, faculty and staff participate in the annual March for Life in Fort Wayne.
and a woman, meant for life. As the leader of the nation of Israel, Moses made concessions for the people’s hard-heartedness and allowed for divorce in certain matters. We recognize that we live in a fallen world. Accordingly, we make laws against perjury in court, but not against lying. We recognize that it is wrong for a child to insult his parents, but we do not make it illegal. Some matters are better handled at the most local of levels. We have no desire to turn the world into a Church. We recognize that laws can only do so much. On the other hand, we do well to promote a world in which children honor their parents and can leave their bikes outside of their house without having to lock them up. When it comes to the biggest issues, matters of life and death and gross injustice, we must stand with our fellow citizens and fight for just laws that protect the innocent and defenseless.

While we may have temporarily lost the fight for marriage, we must continue to make the case for the truth. Even now, Christians are suffering, losing their businesses, being subjected to fines and firing, simply for conducting their lives in accordance with the truth that every child deserves a mom and dad. While society moves towards injustice, we must speak for those who would rather not participate in that injustice. The same kind of thinking that forces a florist to design flowers for a so-called same-sex wedding will one day compel doctors to perform abortions. This same intolerance has led Christian adoption agencies to close, which is a gross injustice to the children. Add to the mix children who are subject to mutilating surgery, victims of the pervasive gender ideology. Consider also speech codes that prohibit citizens from recognizing male and female. More than ever, then, we must enter into the public square and speak out for our fellow Christians who wish to live out their lives in accordance with the truth of nature and in adherence to God’s will. As we do, we will stand for the truth and in service to our neighbor.

As we look back at our history, we do well to remember that Christians led the fight against slavery. Martin Luther King Jr., a Christian minister, drew upon natural law to promote civil rights. So also, as Christians we are called to be defenders of the defenseless and to speak for those little ones who have no voice. Otherwise, we too will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment. This is what it means to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Show me your faith, James says, and I will show you my works. Faith in the heart suffocates if not given a voice. So, enter into the public arena as is your right and duty. Speak and defend your neighbors, and in doing so, proclaim Christ who was conceived for our salvation.

The Rev. Dr. Peter J. Scaer (Peter.Scaer@ctsfw.edu) serves as associate professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.
Embattled Florist Barronelle Stutzman Shares Her Story at CTSFW

By Andrea L. Schultz

October 6, 2017, Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, invited Barronelle Stutzman to speak to students and staff about her ongoing legal case. In 2012 Stutzman was sued after declining to design floral arrangements in a same-sex wedding for a longtime friend and customer.

Stutzman came to Fort Wayne for a fundraiser with Indiana Liberty Coalition. The president of the group, Monica Boyer, contacted CTSFW to let them know the florist would be in town. Dr. Peter J. Scaer, associate professor of Exegetical Theology at CTSFW, recognizing that these are the issues that those in the ministry will increasingly have to deal with as they go into the field, set up the presentation as an opportunity for future pastors and deaconesses to see faith in action, as well as its consequences. Stutzman summarized the judicial opinions that may end up taking her business, home and savings. “You can have your faith, but you cannot practice it outside the four walls of your church.”

At one point during the case the Washington Attorney General wrote her a letter, offering to drop the lawsuits if she’d pay a $2,000 fine and would no longer refuse to participate in same-sex weddings. Stutzman said no. As she explained in her response letter to the Attorney General: “I cannot sell that precious freedom. You are asking me to walk in the way of a well-known betrayer, one who sold something of infinite worth for 30 pieces of silver. That is something I will not do.” And while she’s had to change the way she goes to work in response to the threats against her, she’s also received encouragement from people across the globe, 68 countries in all.

At the end of the question-and-answer session, the students, faculty and staff stood to applaud her. As she was wiping the tears from her eyes, they sang “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” Scaer gave her a replica of the statue of Martin Luther holding God’s Word. “We teach it and preach it,” he said. “You’re living out the story of Luther among us.”

Andrea L. Schultz (Andrea.Schultz@ctsfw.edu) serves as a marketing specialist at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
People love stories. Stories have a way of helping us see ourselves in light of the meaning and purpose of life. One of the things I love to do with my five (soon to be six) kids is read stories to them. They love stories. Reading to them opens tremendous avenues for caring conversations about life and society, about family, about manhood and womanhood, about sex, about faith and about all their hopes and dreams. It is, quite frankly, a wonderful tool for teaching children and passing on the faith from one generation to the next.

In our house, we have a wide range of classic books of literature, mixed in with books on virtues and character and, of course, all the great stories, parables and wisdom literature of the Bible. Take *Alice in Wonderland* for example. In Chapter 6 there is a great exchange between Alice and the Caterpillar:

“Who are you?” said the Caterpillar. This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, “I—I hardly know, sir, just at present—at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.”

Though written a long time ago, this conversation describes the condition of our times. We live in a world that has lost its story. People are emerging without an understanding of who they are or even where they come from. Increasingly they are making up their own story as they go along. The result is the spiritual mayhem and moral chaos we see reflected in current entertainment media.

But the same media helps distract people from the sheer emptiness of life without a story. Remember *Seinfeld*? The most popular comedy of all time was self-admittedly a “show about nothing.”

Sadly, entertainment often simply reflects the prevailing thought of the day. And when “nothing” is the goal, the manner of getting there is simply to indulge and revel in whatever feels good along the way, ignoring any and all moral constraints.

When the world is stripped of meaning and purpose and the self is stripped of any and all moral character, we’re left with the cultural madness and social mayhem we see reflected in the digital media and entertainment of our day. Our digital age has created a world of spiritual and moral zombies, as increasingly we (kids, adults and whole families) stare into our smartphones and other digital devices that teach us to look to ourselves and at ourselves, as we obsessively project our segmented, fragmented and exaggerated lives on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter.

This is a moment of opportunity for the Church boldly to address the challenges of our age. Many want to know how to confront the toxic moral
and spiritual influences all around: how do we find hope and develop good habits of faith and life that can combat this evil and build biblical character and the family unit, not only amongst ourselves but for the next generation of Christians?

Our Lutheran answer is the baptismal life, which brings the joyous reality of the redeemed, sanctified and moral life we are given to live here and now in Christ Jesus. Holy Baptism is not just an idea or abstract thought. It not only imparts spiritual reality that has practical application for the life of every Christian, but it gives holy character and a specific identity that wraps the baptized believer into the life and story of Jesus Christ.

Scripture clearly affirms this (see Rom. 6:4-5), and the Small Catechism succinctly confesses this reality about Baptism when it says, “It indicates that the old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.”

In repentance Christians not only confess sin but turn away from that sin and evil desire in sorrow and contrition. Thus, our sinful thoughts, behaviors and vices are drowned and die. We confess them as wrong. We plead for mercy and forgiveness. In so doing, we spiritually crucify the sinful self and bury it with Christ (Rom. 6:4), thereby mortifying the flesh. The habit of daily repentance therefore brings with it an ethic of faith lived in union with Christ. Paul put it like this: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). In a world that has lost its
Rather than letting media and entertainment shape our kids and families, let’s be intentional about shaping them with the story of Christ and regularly weave them into that grand story of redemption, sanctification and salvation. Even better, let them see His love in action as we together live out the identity and character of Christ given to us in Holy Baptism right here and right now.

story and aims to disorder everything that God intimately and intricately ordered, our baptismal identity and character beautifully equip us to live a new life. Each and every day we are newly created in Christ Jesus as sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father to live ordered lives in a chaotic world.

Our baptismal identity and character are especially helpful in our digital age. With the advent of Netflix and other digital streaming services, shows like Big Mouth, I am Jazz and Thirteen Reasons Why can rapidly invade the hearts and minds of youth and family with the moral revolution of our time.

Each of these releases strives to mainstream a chaotic world and normalize the moral revolution of a world devoid of meaning. Big Mouth is a just released Netflix “adult” animated comedy series that explicitly, vulgarly and disgustingly explores the teenage challenges of puberty. I am Jazz is an American reality television series on TLC about a transgender “girl” named Jazz Jennings that features Jazz and family dealing with teen drama through the lens of a transgender youth. Thirteen Reasons Why is an explicit and vulgar Netflix drama about the challenges of high school that led one young girl to commit a brutal suicide and leave behind recordings of 13 reasons why she did it.

Disorder, decadence and despair have become the new normal of our society. In a world without a story, we Christians need to resist these lies, that’s for sure. We must be bold to stand against sin and cultural mayhem. But we must be bold about what we are for. We serve a living Lord who is the Light no darkness can overcome. Let’s band together to reclaim family virtue and live in the grand story of the new creations we are made to be through Christ in Holy Baptism.

Now, as ever, the Church needs to proclaim boldly the cleansing, purging and sanctifying work of Jesus Christ through His Word and Holy Baptism. Likewise, we need to teach boldly and preach the truth of God’s Law, while also declaring from where the power to live an ethical life comes. “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

The Church is a beacon of light and life on an ocean of darkness and death. We provide an oasis of hope for the defiled, truth for the confused and relief for the tortured souls of our day. They, along with every last sinner on the face of the planet, need the cleansing, purging, healing and sanctifying power of the Gospel—not just for the forgiveness of sins, but for the daily reception of a holy identity and a holy lifestyle that comes through Baptism into Jesus Christ.

While staying informed about the false narratives of our digital and media saturated society and the challenges of living in a world without a story, we must be bold to tell the biblical story. Let our children learn from us once more the true story—even as they see it modeled in our lives—that marriage is an earthly image of the true union of Christ Jesus and His Bride, the Church. Let them see in us what it means to be a godly woman, a godly wife and mother. Let them learn within the family of faith what it means to be a godly man, a godly husband and father. Let them honor their own bodies and revere sexuality as a profound gift of God’s creation as they see sexual chastity and faithfulness modeled among the communion of saints.

Rather than letting media and entertainment shape our kids and families, let’s be intentional about shaping them with the story of Christ and regularly weave them into that grand story of redemption, sanctification and salvation. Even better, let them see His love in action as we together live out the identity and character of Christ given to us in Holy Baptism right here and right now.
Christian Ethics and Morality
By Gifford A. Grobien

One may get the impression that reflections on the moral life are secondary in the Lutheran congregation. If justification is the center of faith and life, and all theology is Christology, perhaps morality can be made a private matter, outside of churchly consideration and conversation. Yet the centrality of justification is not to marginalize other teachings but to set them into their proper relationship with justification.

To place the moral life in its proper relationship to justification, we recall the consistent Lutheran understanding that good works grow out of the righteousness of faith as the fruit of regeneration. Indeed, we recall that justification is regeneration to new life. This means that as justified children of God, we have been given a new life to live. Morality simply refers to the life that we are to live—the good life into which our Father has placed us with all of the good things that He intends for us. To be moral means simply to act in a way that embraces and seeks after all of these good things.

Today’s world attempts to virtualize reality and mediate society. Yet the good world our Father calls us to is tangible and physical, with relations grounded in perception and primary experience. True friends don’t just text, they take every opportunity to meet, to look upon each other, to touch. New daughters and sons do not enter the world in a calm and controlled manner but by extended physical labor, which is linked with emotional bonding. The most intimate natural relationship, between husband and wife, is a profoundly physical relationship, stimulating great emotion and hope for deep, relational connection. It is that the physical and tangible are caught up with the intellectual, emotional, relational, psychological and even spiritual. God Himself became a man to be touched, to be seen face to face and to be heard. More than this, He became a man so that He could see us face to face, to touch us, to hear our prayers and cries in real ears.

It is this tangible, relational life which is the center of the moral life. Is morality, after all, about what good I do for my mother or father; what good I do in the Church of God; what good I do for my wider community?

These three areas of life: your family, your household and your wider community, are the real points of attention of Christian ethics. There ought to be no concern about moralizing or pietism or legalism—we could not even begin to think of what is good if we were not already placed into the good life of salvation by our gracious Father! Instead, as saved people, we embrace the life our Father gives us and look at the needs of those He has put into our lives.

Who is your father, mother, brother, sister, son or daughter? Perhaps God has given you some or all of these. You know them. You see what their needs are. Serving these needs is one aim of the moral life.

Do you not have a father, mother, spouse, son or daughter? God has not left you alone. Even if you have no natural family, your heavenly Father has given you new fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and children in the household of faith, His Church. Who are the shut-ins longing for a visit? Who are the weak or poor in need of assistance? Your Father has set them before you to serve.

Indeed, all of us, whether we have many natural relatives or none, have the members of Christ’s body to serve. This is the center of the new, good life into which our Father places us. As we receive life from His Son, baptismal regeneration, the word of forgiveness to comfort, and the food of eternal life on the way and so we also see, hear, touch, speak and comfort those who share in this divine, earthly life.

And finally, there is your wider community: whether you are active in politics strictly speaking, or simply engaged with those in your neighborhood, those you meet in clubs, organizations, projects or meetings, God sets them before you as people to see, hear, help and to work with for the good of this world.

In the modern world, we can even extend our knowledge and relations to some extent over great distances. We can help those across the world or across the country; we can support churches and ministers in faraway lands or just across town.

Wherever we are, God has placed people into our lives. As our Father granted us life and sustains this life in Christ, what a joy it is to receive goodness from Him and to pursue goodness for those with whom we live.

The Rev. Dr. Gifford A. Grobien (Gifford.Grobien@ctsfw.edu) serves as assistant professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.
Our attitudes toward life—whether it be the unborn or those nearing the end of their life—are reflected in the way we carry out the mission of the Church. Indeed as the Bride of Christ, the Church must constantly be meditating on what it means to be a faithful bride, and how to be a caring mother who gives birth by way of Baptism. Thus, the entire Christian life—including the mission of the Church—flows from our understanding of Christ. Yes, primarily Christ crucified, but not only Christ crucified: Christ incarnate, Christ as a child and student, Christ as teacher, Christ as example, Christ crucified, Christ resurrected, Christ ascended and Christ present in His preached Word and in His sacraments. The very concept of morality must begin with the Word made flesh in the womb of the virgin.

When we say that “life is precious,” that “children are a gift from God,” that “marriage is a blessing” we do well. But these are only true insofar as they are pregnant with the life-lived. “Marriage is a blessing” is nothing unless I myself speak highly of married couples, seek marriage for myself, and encourage young men and women to keep themselves sexually pure and seek a godly spouse. “Children are a gift from God” is nothing if I don’t smile at every baby I see—especially a baby in the arms of an unwed mother—or if within marriage childbearing is avoided and fertility treated like a disease. “Life is precious” means nothing when I treat my own body like an empty shell by means of overindulgence, drunkenness and sloth. Claiming to be pro-life means nothing when I ignore my parents and elders and when I let my brothers and sisters despise and end their own lives.

Our Lutheran understanding of
good works and morality frees us to love the neighbor in ways that most of Christendom lacks. To that end, to help form pastors and deaconesses who are doers and not hearers only, the Life Team at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, was formed. It is our hope that by bridging the gap between the academic and the parish worlds we can equip students at CTSFW to speak on life issues to their congregations and the broader community in which they serve.

“The faculty, staff and students of CTSFW have historically been extremely active in the Life Movement. We participate in congregational, local and national efforts within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), partner with other Christians, provide theological education on life within the classroom and community, participate in the annual 40 Days for Life campaign and the local and national marches for life,” says Deaconess Amy C. Rast, associate director of Deaconess Formation at CTSFW and mentor for the CTSFW Life Team. “Creating a Life Team on campus was an intentional effort to prioritize life in our faith community by raising up a student leadership team to organize annual opportunities for us to learn about and confess life.”

Some of the ways this takes place on campus is by inviting speakers to come and present on a topic related to the myriad of life issues. One such event will feature a speaker from Silent No More. This is a group that seeks to help women who have had abortions find healing and some even find the courage to begin speaking about their experience. We will also have a pastor from the Fort Wayne area discuss end-of-life decisions and the ethical concerns related to such a topic.

But we do not merely speak among ourselves about such things. The Life Team also encourages students to be involved in the community and seeks to give opportunities for such action. Driving through a busy intersection this fall, one may have seen, on several occasions, a group of young men dressed in black and young women in blue holding a vigil outside the only Planned Parenthood clinic in Fort Wayne. And if the passerby had a window rolled down, he would have heard the sound of hymns that recalled our Lord’s own birth being sung, the Litany being chanted or the very youngest of people being commended to God’s care. In January, the March for Life will be held both in Fort Wayne and Washington D.C. The Seminary will be represented at both events.

Political action, public prayer and marches for life are all necessary first steps. Talking the pro-life talk is important. It is necessary. However, also necessary is walking the pro-life walk, engaging the victims of this culture of death on a personal and intimate level. It is our hope that as the Life Team becomes more present in the Seminary community, the Seminary community will become more present in the pro-life movement in Fort Wayne and beyond.

Jacob H. Benson
(Jacob.Benson@ctsfw.edu) is a fourth-year M.Div. student and Hanna M. Hoffbeck
(Hanna.Hoffbeck@ctsfw.edu) is a second-year student in the Deaconess Formation Program at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne. Both are active in the CTSFW Life Team.
Lenten Preaching Workshop

Monday
January 15, 2018
8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

A Return from Exile: A Lenten Journey

Lent has always been considered a journey. For 40 days we journey with Jesus to His cross and consider our sin and shame that He carried. In our Pre-Lenten workshop, Prof. Pulse, using biblical motifs, will connect our Lenten journey with the 40 years the Israelites wandered through the Exodus wilderness as they anticipated entrance into the Promised Land.

Materials for this workshop are from the 2018 Lenten series of the same name from Concordia Publishing House.

Presenter: Prof. Jeffrey H. Pulse, Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Fee: $40.00 per person, includes lunch. Register online at www.ctsfw.edu/LentenPreaching.

For additional information email Symposia@ctsfw.edu or phone 260.452.2204.

Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, will again host its annual Symposia January 16–19, 2018. Held every year on the Fort Wayne campus, presentations on Exegetical Theology and the Lutheran Confessions will highlight the four-day event.

The 33rd Annual Symposium on Exegetical Theology

The Communion of Saints: Called Into Fellowship

Tuesday, January 16

8:45 a.m. Welcome
Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

8:50 a.m. Community in Crisis: Finding Communion Through Lament
Prof. Ryan M. Tietz
Assistant Professor of Exegetical Theology
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

10:00 a.m. Chapel

10:30 a.m. Break

11:00 a.m. Unity in the Body of Christ: The Mystery of the Communion of Saints
Dr. Arthur A. Just Jr.
Chairman and Professor of Exegetical Theology
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

12:00 p.m. Lunch
The 41st Annual Symposium on The Lutheran Confessions
Confessional Lutheran Reflections on the Moral Life

Wednesday, January 17

1:15 p.m. Welcome

1:30 p.m. Palliative Sedation for the Suffering: Euthanasia or Good Medical Practice?
Dr. Gilbert C. Meilaender
Senior Research Professor of Theology
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana

2:45 p.m. Lex Semper Accusat—Really?
Dr. David P. Scaer
Chairman of Systematic Theology
The David P. Scaer Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

3:15 p.m. Break

3:45 p.m. Is Non-Involvement in Public Ethical Issues a Confessional Option?
Dr. Peter J. Scaer
Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Thursday, January 18

8:30 a.m. Ethical Tensions within World Lutheranism
Dr. Albert B. Coliver III
Director of Church Relations and Assistant to the President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
St. Louis, Missouri

10:00 a.m. Chapel

11:00 a.m. Christian Opposition to the New Sexuality: Optional or Not?
Dr. Gifford A. Grobien
Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Friday, January 19

9:00 a.m. Moral Warriors—A Contradiction in Terms?
Chaplain (Colonel) Jonathan E. Shaw
Director of Operations, U. S. Army Chaplain Corps
Pentagon

10:00 a.m. Panel Discussion—Church and Society: What Are the Rules of Engagement?
11:00 Chapel

For more information go to www.ctsfw.edu/Symposia or call 260.452.2204.
Tell us a little about yourself.
I grew up in Peoria, Illinois, the second of five children in a very involved church family. We attended Mt. Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, Peoria. I graduated from Concordia University Chicago in 2016 with a B.A. in Communication and a music minor. While there, I met my husband Sawyer, who is currently a second-year M.Div. student here at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne. We have an eight-month-old son, Matthias, who keeps us quite busy in between all our classes and studying!

Who influenced you to study to become a deaconess?
While growing up, I thought off and on about being a church worker. I started my freshman year of college as a Music Education major with the intent of teaching in a Lutheran school, but I soon realized that wasn’t the best fit. The most difficult part of switching my major to Communication was realizing that I was no longer going into church work. Although I knew deaconesses existed, I did not know how they served the Church. It wasn’t until I attended a presentation on the deaconess vocation, given by a CTSFW Admission counselor at a Higher Things conference, that I saw how deaconesses serve the needs of the Body of Christ. Although I didn’t attend the presentation with the slightest interest in becoming a deaconess, I left thinking that it might be a good fit for me. I loved the focus on mercy and the Church, and I could see how my Communication major would fit in—it was the vocation I didn’t know I was looking for.

Why did you choose CTSFW?
CTSFW is the rare type of educational institution that provides the whole package. Not only are the professors and classes world-class, but the chapel life, community and campus enrich students in every aspect of education. The learning that begins in the classroom flows throughout the campus in discussion and fellowship and reaches into the world with mercy and care for all. The Deaconess Formation Program has a strong focus on formation. This focus allows us to be shaped by Word and Sacrament into future servants of the Church. The CTSFW Deaconess Formation Program cultivates humility, meekness and mercy centered solely on the person and work of Christ.

What have been your greatest challenges and rewards thus far in your seminary experience?
Attending seminary alongside my husband certainly presents us with great challenges but also great rewards. When you’re both in graduate school and both working a few hours a week, some days seem impossibly overwhelming. However, there’s nothing more encouraging than knowing what the other is going through and experiencing the ups and downs in such similar ways. Plus, you really can’t beat the conversations about what you’re learning in class, the connections you’re making and the reflections and processing on how to best serve God’s people.
Getting to Know Deaconess Student Rebecca Meyers

What do you think laypeople would find most surprising about the seminary experience?

I think laypeople might not initially realize that amongst the in-depth studying of God’s Word and Lutheran doctrine, we’re also learning about them. We’re being taught how we can best teach God’s Word to them, how to walk beside them in suffering, and how to show them how they can use their God-given gifts and abilities to serve the Church. Through their financial gifts and their prayers, they daily help and support us as we work toward lives of service to the Church.

How would you encourage someone who is considering studying to become a deaconess?

I would encourage her to listen to people’s experiences, ask questions and pray. Listen to the experiences of your pastor, other church workers and seminary students. Ask questions about your confusion, worries, the faith, seminary life and church work. Pray as you discern how best to use the gifts and talents God has richly bestowed on you.

The theme for this issue is “Lutheran Reflections on the Moral Life.” Any comments on how this topic has impacted your formation at CTSFW or how you see yourself addressing them as a deaconess?

Since moving to Fort Wayne last year, I’ve been employed at Allen County Right to Life. Working in such an organization has provided me with a new perspective and an education regarding life issues. I think it’s so important for church workers to seek out further education on the struggles our members are continually facing: read books and attend conferences on life issues, abuse, sexuality, poverty—the list goes on. The more we know about such topics, the better equipped we are to walk alongside those who are hurting and to help them find the best resources.

As a deaconess formed by God’s Word and taught at an institution that takes these topics seriously, I know I will be able to address topics on the moral life with precision and care. 📚

To learn more about church worker formation at CTSFW, go to www.ctsfw.edu/Future-Students. Connect with our Admission staff at Admission@ctsfw.edu or 800.481.2155.
The Rev. Dr. Gary W. Zieroth was born and raised in Canada (Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto). It wasn’t until his early 20’s that he felt led to study toward the pastoral ministry. He attended Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and majored in psychology and counseling. He earned his M.Div. from Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, in 1990. He later earned his D.Min. degree also from CTSFW in 2006. His dissertation/project was on the topic “Equipping Parents for More Effective Ministry.” He is married to JoAnn and they are proud parents of four children: Anna (married to the Rev. Brennan Woell), Luke, Kara (married to Josh Eckstein), and Mark.

Lutheran ethics emphasize that it is in the concrete stations (family, church, government) that God wants people to live responsible lives in their vocations. It is therefore not moral actions understood as good works that are religiously significant, but rather justification by grace through faith in Christ that recovers the relation between the person and God.

How did you serve before becoming a CTSFW faculty member?
Right out of the seminary, I was called to serve Trinity in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada, and then called to serve a mission start, King of Kings Lutheran, in St. Albert, Alberta. After eight years in Canada, I accepted a call to serve St. Paul’s Lutheran Church and School in Kingsville, Maryland, as associate pastor. I then accepted a call to serve as senior pastor at St. John’s Lutheran Church and School in Chaska, Minnesota. In all, a total of 26 years in the parish ministry. I also served The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on various task forces and led the Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) Program for two years. I have taught online graduate-level courses for two of our Concordia Universities.

Tell us about the roles in which you serve at CTSFW.
Here I serve in the Pastoral Ministry and Missions Department. So far, I have taught courses in catechetics and pastoral counseling and this Spring will be teaching “Confessing Christ in Today’s World.” As the dean of Students,
I help make sure that all of the student’s and family’s needs are met. I act as the students’ advocate and provide a voice for them to faculty and administration. As the director of Vicarage and Internship, I place the vicars into congregations and assist in placing the deaconess students into their year of internship.

**How has seminary education changed since you were a student?**

I find that the four disciplines (practical, exegetical, historical, systematic) are more integrated and are taught more holistically than 30 years ago. These Theologia classes are taught by different faculty from different departments for the same class.

**What has been most challenging since returning to academic life?**

Simply put, the tremendous learning curve adjusting from the life of a parish pastor to that of a professor. Of course, missing regular opportunities to preach hit me around Reformation/Advent last year.

**What has been the most rewarding?**

Serving with an outstanding faculty and colleagues, some of whom were my professors when I was a student here. Also, watching the growth and spiritual formation of our students as the months and years pass, and finally to know that they will be sent off to preach, teach and serve.

**What is your best advice to students who will be heading out to serve as pastors and deaconesses?**

To remember to feed your own soul on a daily basis. To remain in the Word and so remain in Christ. To remember that the battle has already been won on the cross and the empty tomb.

**The theme for this issue of the magazine is “Lutheran Reflections on the Moral Life.” Any thoughts?**

Lutheran ethics emphasize that it is in the concrete stations (family, church, government) that God wants people to live responsible lives in their vocations. It is, therefore, not moral actions understood as good works that are religiously significant, but rather justification by grace through faith in Christ that recovers the relation between the person and God. The moral life is the result of this relationship rather than its source. Luther believed that this conviction was central to biblical theology. Therefore, we have always held the priority of Scripture in ethical and moral thought. 📖
DIG DEEPER THIS SUMMER

Christ Academy
For high-school-aged young men
June 17–30, 2018

Phoebe Academy
For high-school-aged young women
June 17–24, 2018

Registration Now Open!

These two academies are open to those who are entering their freshman year through those who have completed their senior year in high school.

CHRIST ACADEMY–HIGH SCHOOL

At this two-week immersive experience, high-school-aged men encounter a foretaste of seminary life, centered on Lutheran theology, worship and fun. Classes are taught by CTSFW professors, ordained staff and local clergy. Pastors, please consider this opportunity for promising parishioners as they consider service in the Church. More information is available at www.ctsfw.edu/CAHS.

PHOEBE ACADEMY–HIGH SCHOOL

At this week-long event, high school ladies explore the vocation of deaconess, study theology and meet peers with this same passion. Send your ladies to us to consider God’s Word on mercy and what it means for us today; meet deaconesses serving the Church right now; learn what they do and how they are trained to serve their neighbor. For more information please visit us at ctsfw.edu/PAHS.

For more information contact:

Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt
Director of Christ Academy
ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu or PhoebeAcademy@ctsfw.edu
260.452.3140
www.ctsfw.edu/CAHS or www.ctsfw.edu/PAHS
Dr. James G. Bushur, The Carl and Erna Weinrich Associate Professor of New Testament and Early Church Studies, has written *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Mosaic of Christ: Preaching Scripture in the Era of Martyrdom*. In describing the book, the publisher, Routledge, says, “Using insightful close reading of Irenaeus, allied with a firm grounding in the context in which he wrote, this book will be vital reading for scholars of the early Church as well as those with interests in patristics and the development of Christian exegesis.” The book is available at www.Amazon.com.

Prof. John T. Pless, assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions, and Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, president, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, are editors of *Closed Communion? Admission to the Lord’s Supper in Biblical Lutheran Perspective* (Concordia Publishing House). In addition to two chapters by Pless, the book contains a chapter by Dr. Carl Fickenscher II, professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions.

Dr. David P. Scaer, The David P. Scaer Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology, is a contributor to *Infants and Children in the Church: Five Views on Theology and Ministry* (B & H Academic). In the book, five theologians, representing the Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed and Baptist faiths, discuss Baptism as a means of grace and a child’s capacity for faith. Following each essay, each of the other four contributors provides a critique. Those entrusted with the care of children, especially pastors and parochial and Sunday school teachers, will profit from surveying the five views and how each responds to the other.

Both *Closed Communion? Admission to the Lord’s Supper in Biblical Lutheran Perspective* and *Infants and Children in the Church: Five Views on Theology and Ministry* are available at the CTSFW bookstore, Bookstore.ctsfw.edu.
For the past two years, planning has been underway to expand the doctoral programs offered at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne. In response to decades of national and international requests for additional doctoral offerings at CTSFW, the Seminary is on track to add a Ph.D. in Theological Studies Program beginning with the 2018-19 academic year. “We have long been respected internationally for our Biblical and Confessional Lutheran studies,” noted Academic Dean Dr. Charles A. Gieschen. “Now we are ready to offer a Ph.D. program with concentrations in these disciplines.”

Dr. Naomichi Masaki, director of both the S.T.M. and now this new Ph.D. in Theological Studies Program, is delighted to offer this area of study to those interested in pursuing a terminal degree. “Here the Lord has given an extraordinary opportunity to study the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions that are taught by world-class, confessional, Lutheran theologians. I pray that the Lord may richly bless this program for the sake of the mission of the Church here and worldwide!”

The program is accepting students for Fall 2018, with applications due by March 15, 2018. As the program gets underway, the application deadline for Fall 2019 will move up to January 15, 2019. For more information about the program, contact Dr. Masaki at Naomichi.Masaki@ctsfw.edu. For those interested in the two-year graduate assistantships (which funds tuition for two years and offers an annual stipend), contact the Office of the Academic Dean at Kara.Mertz@ctsfw.edu.

Dr. Naomichi Masaki is director of the Ph.D. in Theological Studies Program.
SMP Completion and Fall Vicarage Assignments Announced

On November 7, the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Class of 2013 was recognized for completion of the SMP Program. Created to provide faithful men to congregations that could not otherwise secure a full-time, fully compensated pastor, the SMP Program takes four years to complete. After completing the SMP Program, men are called to specific ministries where they have a general ministry pastor supervise them for the duration of their service.

“We are very, very proud of the students who have completed the SMP Program at Concordia Theological Seminary,” said the Rev. Dr. Carl C. Fickenscher II, director of Pastoral Formation Programs at CTSFW. “We are delighted that at this time they are already serving in calls for which they have been prepared. We ask God’s blessing upon their service, and we ask the support of the Church for them in their service.”

Completing the SMP Program are:

Daniel A. Holm, SMP pastor, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rialto, California, Pacific Southwest District
James A. Neuendorf, who will go on to pursue a M.Div. degree.
Timothy C. Selim, SMP pastor, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Cadillac, Michigan, Michigan District
Dean M. Suehring, SMP pastor, Immanuel/St. John Lutheran Churches, Marion/Tigerton, Wisconsin, North Wisconsin District
Samuel P. Watters, SMP pastor, Living Word Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Michigan, Michigan District

On November 9, the Rev. Dr. Gary W. Zieroth, director of Vicarage and Internship, announced assignments for the three men receiving vicarage assignments this fall. “We are grateful to God that He continues to send forth laborers into His harvest field,” said Zieroth. “We are also grateful for pastors and congregations who continue to partner in ministry with CTSFW to help form future pastors through the Vicarage Program. God continue to bless these men and their families in the months and years to come.”

Vicarage Assignments are:

Jonathan C. McCall, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Lone Wolf, Oklahoma, Oklahoma District
Jordan E. Schaller, Grace/Trinity Lutheran Churches, Neligh/Elgin, Nebraska, Nebraska District
Jay R. Weideman, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Herscher, Illinois, Northern Illinois District

To learn more about studying for the pastoral ministry, go to www.ctsfw.edu/future-students/pastoral or connect with our Admission team by emailing Admission@ctsfw.edu or calling 800.481.2155.
There are many definitions of morality floating around the internet. Morality is called a “code of conduct,” a “system of behavior,” a “body of standards” and “conformity to ideals of right human conduct.” The definitions all carry overtones of being forced into a box of rules. Such definitions become all the more problematic when one considers that we are not by nature a moral people. Being born with original sin means we are born with hearts that seek ourselves even when we might hurt other people, in other words, we are born immoral. A soul born with an immoral nature cannot be changed by forcing it into a box of rules.

Ancient Immorality

The Roman Empire in Paul’s day was rife with cruelty, sexual hedonism and oppression. Romans were bold with their immorality. At one point in its history, the city of Corinth was a center for sex tourism. The congregation there was even scandalized by a case of incest among its own members. St. Paul’s approach to this immorality is helpful for us in a world perpetuating the same sins.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Cor. 6:9–11
Immorality separates people from the Kingdom of God. For Paul, it was something worse than just a matter of bad behavior. Immorality was something the people were, not just what they did; “such were some of you.” The very nature of people had to change, not just their outward behavior.

**A Solution in Christ**
Yet this is exactly what Paul talks about: “But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” God made them into new beings. He washed them from the filth of the world in Baptism and refashioned them to be His children. God sanctified them and made them holy by placing His Holy Spirit in them. He justified them, or declared them righteous, through Jesus’ righteous life lived for them. God didn’t just go after their behavior; He seized them at the core of their being and remade them into the image of His holiness and love.

It has been 27 years since my graduation from Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, and I am still amazed at the power of Christ to change people. How blessed I am to be able to watch Jesus change souls into children marked by God’s Triune name at the baptismal font. How humbling it is to witness the work of the Holy Spirit easing the guilt of people’s immoral past and giving them new hope and new direction in the love of God.

The mercy and forgiveness Jesus gives through the ministry of His Church does change people at their core. Grace is a miracle of changed being. In a world sinking to ever greater levels of immorality, it is Jesus and Jesus alone who restores souls to a truly moral life. Laws in and of themselves can never fix our immoral culture, but a Savior who makes redeemed children out of enemies can. 

*The Rev. Dr. Matthew W. Rueger (CTSFW 1990)* serves as pastor of St. John Lutheran Church (www.stjohnhubbard.com), Hubbard, Iowa.

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**SAVE THE DATE!**
**MAY 16–18, 2018**

**Alumni Reunion 2018**

**Celebrating Class Years Ending in 3 & 8**

**Celebrating Ministry, Anniversaries & Friends!**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**
Call 260.452.2260 or email Alumni@ctsfw.edu

**Concordia Theological Seminary**
6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46825
www.ctsfw.edu
Music of the Christmas and Epiphany seasons presented by the Kantorei of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Wednesday, January 3, 7:00 p.m.
St. Luke Lutheran Church
330 Hannahstown Rd.
Cabot, PA 16023-2204
www.stlukecabot.org

Thursday, January 4, 7:00 p.m.
Martini Lutheran Church
100 W. Henrietta St.
Baltimore, MD 21230-3610
martinilutheran.org

Friday, January 5, 7:00 p.m.
and
Saturday, January 6, 9:30 a.m.
Immanuel Lutheran Church
1801 Russell Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22301-1934
immanuelaalexandria.org

Sunday, January 7, 8:00 a.m.
and
10:30 a.m.
St John Lutheran Church
1900 Wales Rd. NE
Massillon, OH 44646-4194
stjohnlutheranmassillon.org

Sunday, January 14, 4:00 p.m.
Concordia Theological Seminary
Kramer Chapel
6600 N. Clinton St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
www.ctsfw.edu
A big step in keeping plans focused on obedience to God is having pastors and church workers who have studied and are well-versed in Scripture and willing to guard and guide us.

Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, works toward accomplishing this by the education of pastors and deaconesses to lead in keeping the Word of God, always, in the forefront.

At CTSFW, the Seminary Guild is focused on helping students as they prepare to become, among other things, counselors on the moral issues involved in marriage, illness, death and many new complex concerns in this modern day.

The most recent project of the CTSFW Guild is The Legacy Project Fall 2017.

After the launching of this project on September 18, 2017, 47 pastoral ministry and deaconess students were given the Pastoral Care Companion, which is one of their required textbooks. It is the hope of the Guild to continue this project to help incoming students with the cost of required textbooks, along with offering other nurturing endeavors.

To be a part of the Seminary Guild, join as an individual member or your organization can join as an associate member.

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

UPCOMING GUILD EVENTS

December 12, 2017
Christmas with the Kantorei
Kramer Chapel
1:00 p.m.

February 13, 2018
Dr. Cameron MacKenzie
Luther Hall
1:00 p.m.

March 13, 2018
Student Focus
Luther Hall
1:00 p.m.

April 10, 2018
Spring Luncheon
Luther Hall
12:00 p.m.

Seminary Guild President
Joyce West presents a copy of the Pastoral Care Companion to first-year student Christopher Durham.
The car made its way through the west suburbs of Washington, D.C., on a calm Sunday morning. As we drove along tree-lined streets, my GPS announced, “You are approaching your destination on the left.” There was the sign for Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church and the familiar LCMS logo.

The hallways were crowded. The building was teeming with excitement and joy! Just the day before, George Fields, a son of the congregation and recent graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, was ordained into the Office of the Public Ministry.

The following day, Sunday, at the beginning of the Divine Service, Fields and Deaconess Sara Schultz, a graduate of the CTSFW Deaconess Formation Program, were married. The Rev. Dr. William C. Weinrich, professor of Historical Theology at CTSFW, preached both days.

Ordination and marriage, all within 24 hours! Such is the cycle of life at Saint Athanasius, a congregation particularly committed to helping the men and women it sends to CTSFW. Theirs is a remarkable story of spiritual and financial support.

The Rev. James A. Douthwaite, pastor of Saint Athanasius, explains the program. “While I attended Seminary, I received encouragement from my pastor, Rev. Jeff Schrank, and the congregation at Holy Trinity in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. When I was home on a break, Pastor Schrank would have me preach or assist during services. That would keep me visible before the congregation. They supported me by sending regular checks and making sure I had what I needed.

“Today our congregation supports the students we send. When a seminarian returns, I have him preach so the congregation can watch his progress. They see how he is growing and developing and being formed as a pastor. They appreciate that and it gives them a sense of satisfaction.”

Just as his home congregation supported him financially, the congregation at Saint Athanasius commits to pay for the unmet financial needs of its students. Douthwaite adds, “Our goal is to
make sure that our students graduate with no debt as a result of their seminary costs. We refer to this program as The Society of Saint Athanasius.”

There is a formal approach to this financial support. The congregation includes the amount requested by the Seminary for each student in the annual budget. Douthwaite makes sure the student applies for the district aid available. “Our SELC District is generous with our students.”

In addition, the congregation has special offerings three times a year in the months before each academic quarter begins. August, November and February are set aside for special offerings. The money collected goes to the students.

The congregation also prays for the students, by name, every Sunday. “This encouragement and financial support have become part of our identity as a congregation,” explains Douthwaite.

“As a small congregation without even our own building, there are things we cannot do, and maybe identity could be an issue. We see the Church not as the building but as the people. Our people see themselves as the Church that sends and supports these students. They are proud of that.”

Pastor Douthwaite notes one of the fruits of this program. Financial support fosters a desire to be a good student. “Two of our recent seminarians have told me that because of the support and sacrifice of the congregation, they feel an obligation to dedicate themselves more to their studies.”

Daniel Broaddus is a fourth-year seminarian from Saint Athanasius. “Knowing the congregation supports me in this way gives me great encouragement. Going to the Seminary isn’t something I’m doing alone or I thought was a good or cool idea. I have the backing of a congregation that sent me and stands behind me. This makes me part of a bigger picture than just my personal desire.”

Douthwaite sees that generosity leads to more generosity in the congregation. “I really believe this is a fruit of the Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel. In Galatians 5, the first fruit of the Spirit listed is love. We could keep all our offerings and save for a building, but the people love their students, their Seminary and want to support them. “We try to be generous with other missions as well. So it’s not a ‘thou shalt’ but a ‘look what we can do!’ Our little congregation can make a big impact for the kingdom this way. It’s easy for little congregations to focus on being little and think they can’t do as much or offer as many programs as the bigger church down the street. But this is what we CAN do. And the people have embraced it and love it.”

Our hope here at CTSFW is that you experience this joy in your giving! Our Student Adoption Program is a great way to engage and financially support seminarians and deaconess students during their years at the Seminary.

Right now we have over 100 students who would benefit from Student Adoption. You can find the details about the program at www.ctsfw.edu/Student-Adoption. If you would like to talk to a member of our Financial Aid staff about the program, email Student Adoption@ctsfw.edu or phone 260.452.2167.

Thank you for your gifts! 📦

The Rev. Mark H. Steiner serves as an Advancement officer at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne. To learn more about supporting the mission of CTSFW, email Advancement@ctsfw.edu or phone 877.287.4338.

Your gift of support TODAY will keep on giving eternally as the Gospel is shared!

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In support of:
☐ Pastoral and Deaconess preparation ☐ Student Aid
☐ Other Seminary approved program: ___________________________

Giving methods:
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Please charge my ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
Card #: __________________________ Exp. Date: ______
Signature: _______________________________________

Or donate online at www.ctsfw.edu/Support-CTSFW.

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Gift matching opportunity:
If your employer matches charitable contributions, remember to request matching funds from your company.

Please send me information on:
☐ Endowments ☐ Including CTSFW in my will
☐ Estate planning ☐ Gift Annuities

Please detach and mail to Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825-4996.
Jesus Christ occupies the center of our lives and views. Everything about our existence rests upon the doctrine of justification. We speak truth as we receive it from Him. We show love as a reflection of His grace for us. Christian morality means enjoying and employing the Savior’s presence, compassion and power.

This especially includes respecting and protecting every human life as our neighbor. Neither legislative decrees nor judicial decisions nor philosophical principles nor emotional intensity nor cultural consensus form the foundation for our faith and confession. Rather, these forces—as well as our convictions and conduct—follow from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let’s consider the example of the sanctity of human life as God’s own image and gift.

1. To whom does the authority to decide life’s terms and death’s times belong (Deut. 32:29)? Why (John 1:3–4; Rev. 1:17–18)?

2. What makes this better than exercising such rights and responsibilities oneself (1 Cor. 1:25; John 10:10)?

3. What gives human life its preciousness (Gen. 1:27; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Cor. 6:19–20)?

4. How can one person become more important than another (Ps. 14:2–3)?

5. What can endanger or impair a person’s worth (Rom. 8:38–39)?

6. How then do we regard the vulnerable ones among us (1 Cor. 12:22–26; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 25:40)?

7. What guides our sensitivities and gives shape to our service (1 John 4:19; Matt. 22:37–39)?
8. In what ways are neighbors’ lives put particularly at risk in our context? In what ways might we intervene, advocate and assist?

________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________

God’s love gives each human life equal and infinite value. His grace saves, regardless of one’s age, appearance, origin, actions or abilities. So we proclaim and perform it. For Christian morality, understanding inspires undertaking. Our faith works. We do not deal in anger, accusations, comparing and competing. Instead, we declare and demonstrate Gospel gratitude, gladness and anticipation that treat both our life and our neighbor’s as privilege to us and special treasure to God! 🙏

We pray:
Lord of life, You create and bless all life with Your abundant care and mercy. Make us ever mindful of the many blessings You have given to us in this life. Move us to extend and protect that blessing of life for all people, especially the unborn, the elderly and those who suffer in the body. Keep us steadfast in Your Word of life forever. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

The Rev. Michael W. Salemink
(msalemink@lutheransforlife.org), CTSFW 2003, serves as executive director of Lutherans for Life, Nevada, Iowa.

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Calendar of Events

DECEMBER
December 9   Advent Candlelight Evening Prayer
            Kramer Chapel, 4:00 p.m.
December 12  Seminary Guild, Luther Hall, 1:00 p.m.

JANUARY
January 14   Epiphany Evening Prayer
            Kramer Chapel, 4:00 p.m.
January 15   Lenten Preaching Workshop
January 16-19 Symposia Series
January 17   Symposia Choral Vespers
            Kramer Chapel, 5:00 p.m.
January 18   Symposia Vespers and Organ Recital
            Kramer Chapel, 5:00 p.m.
January 21   Public Lecture Series
            Luther Hall, 4:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY
February 16-18 Christ Academy Confirmation Retreat

For additional information concerning these events, please visit www.ctsfw.edu or phone 260.452.2100. All times are Eastern Time.

CTSFW 2018 Wall Calendars Available

The 2018 wall calendar from Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, was mailed to all CTSFW alumni and all congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in December. 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 $5.85 mailing charge for quantities of one to 10 calendars.
ON-CAMPUS VISITATION EVENTS
FOR FUTURE PASTORS AND DEACONESSES

For more information you may also call 800.481.2155, email Admission@ctsfw.edu or visit www.ctsfw.edu/Admission.

Prayerfully Consider Visit
March 14–17, 2018
www.ctsfw.edu/PCV

Phoebe Academy High School
June 17–24, 2018
www.ctsfw.edu/PAHS

Christ Academy High School
June 17–30, 2018
www.ctsfw.edu/CAHS

Prayerfully Consider Visit
October 17–20, 2018
www.ctsfw.edu/PCV

Prayerfully Consider Visit
October 25–28, 2018
www.ctsfw.edu/CAC

Christ Academy College
& Phoebe Academy College

www.ctsfw.edu/CAHS