Another year of service has begun at CTSFW. Fall is always an exciting time on campus with students ready to begin their studies and our faculty refreshed and renewed for another year of faithful service. The chapel bells ring out again, daily calling us together to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The forests surrounding campus begin their annual explosion of color and beauty, and we are reminded of just how blessed we are to be in this place. Truly there is nowhere else I’d rather be than right here, watching as God forms men into pastors and women into deaconesses for His Church.

This fall, though, is different; special. For many years we’ve been conscious of the increasing burden of student debt on our graduates. That burden has been heavy for our graduates, their families and ultimately their ministries, challenging them in carrying out the work to which Jesus calls them. This year, though, thanks to God’s gracious and generous provision through the gifts of His people, the pastoral and diaconal students on campus will have their tuition expenses covered 100%. And so we rejoice: “Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” (Psalm 107:1)

From all of us at CTSFW, thank you! Through your countless faithful gifts over the months, years and decades our gracious Lord Jesus has provided for His future servants, and He continues abundantly to do so today. Yet, even as we celebrate this milestone, we remember that the grant can only continue by God’s grace through your generosity. Your partnership in this is essential and I thank you for it, as well as for all your ongoing support of our future pastors and deaconesses. We as a seminary and as a church must continue to do all we can to reduce the burden on our students so they can enter the service to which God has called them unencumbered by overwhelming material concerns.

As classes begin again, we hope you’re able to join our community alongside us. If you’re able to visit campus, I’d love to welcome you. If you’re unable to be with us in person, I’d love for you to join us for daily chapel services, which are streamed online. And please, make use of the wealth of resources we produce each and every week for sermon preparation, Bible study or simply for personal use. We are your Seminary, here to serve.

With you in Christ’s service,

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana
4 Through the Ages
By Andrea L. Schultz

The history of Christ Jesus feeding His people is one that cycles through the same story, generation after generation. Pastors feed His sheep, who feed their shepherds. Bound as we are by time, so often we see only the age that is set before us. But the tuition grants, financial aid programs, donation drives and Co-ops that serve the students at CTSFW are the bricks mortared on groundwork that was laid over 170 years ago by other men and women.

7 Blessings He Provides
By Rev. Mark C. Sheafer

What started as a three-year grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. has now become a continuing project of “Improving the Economic Well-being of Future Servants of Jesus Christ” for the years to come. Thanks be to God for all the blessings He provides!

10 “We are Your Seminary!”
By Rev. Jon D. Scicluna

We say what we do and we do what we say. And what we say is that “We Are Your Seminary” and “We exist to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.” And, because our congregations do matter and future generations are counting on us, we will remain consistent in our business practices.

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Through the Ages

Andrea L. Schultz

Vielleicht warden auch Prediger daraus,” a pessimistically hopeful Rev. Wilhelm Loehe wrote in 1846, speaking of the “katecheten” (catechists) who would be trained as quickly as possible without compromising the requirements of the Office of Holy Ministry at the practical seminary in Fort Wayne. “Perhaps they will become Preachers.”

The spiritual landscape of the American frontier in the 1840s was a grim prospect. Starved of access to God’s Word, a practical seminary was the Lutheran Church’s response to the cries of her German pioneers. It’s a story that’s been told many times here at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne: ordained missionary Friedrich Wyneken appealing to the church back in Germany for help, Loehe answering that call by sending money and half-trained ministers who would complete their education in America so that they could immediately begin serving, and the resulting formation of a seminary and a Synod. The scattered flock was baptized, catechized, reprimanded, forgiven and called on to serve those who served them.

Such is the refrain of the Church across time. The history of Christ Jesus feeding His people is one that cycles through the same story, generation after generation. The world cries out in need, and God uses our feet to go, our mouths to speak and our ears to hear. Pastors feed His sheep, who feed their shepherds. Bound as we are by time, so often we see only the age that is set before us. But the tuition grants, financial aid programs, donation drives and Co-ops that serve the students at CTSFW are the bricks mortared on groundwork that was laid over 170 years ago by other men and women.

Estate planning is a major part of the bedrock on which our giving rests, and the church’s first recorded donation to the Seminary in Fort Wayne through the death of one of her saints is nearly as old as the school itself. In 1849, three years after the Seminary began, 31-year-old Seminary Professor A. Wolter died from cholera, willing the school over half his assets.

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Above: Rev. Wilhelm Loehe
Opposite page: Rev. Friedrich Wyneken

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including his horse. The $1,200 estate bequest (bolstered by a gift from his sister in Germany) paid for a desperately needed four-room house following expansion of the Seminary in 1850. Seven years later, Dr. Wilhelm Sihler, the Seminary’s first president, and his colleague, Professor August Craemer (later her third president), canvassed area churches for support of another building program, rather than strain an already overtaxed Synod burdened by a poor economy and plans to expand the theoretical seminary in St. Louis. Local congregations responded with $7,000.

Many of CTSFW’s student aid programs also began in the early years, established by the wives of these men. Susanna Sihler, unofficial housemother, formed a sewing circle at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church to mend clothing for seminarians, unknowingly starting what is today the Synod’s oldest continually operating Ladies Aid. Later, when Craemer became a faculty member, his wife Dorothea joined Mrs. Sihler’s efforts. Mother Craemer, as she became known, supervised the kitchen and commissary, visiting farmers with Mrs. Sihler to gather food. Nearly 170 years later, local businesses, farmers and individuals alongside the support of the LWML still stock the Food & Clothing Co-op at CTSFW, and Donation Day, which has been a tradition at the Seminary for over a century, takes place this year on October 9.

But of course the story—and the boast in the generosity of the Church’s people—is older still. In 2 Corinthians 8:4, St. Paul praised the churches in Macedonia, who supported the apostle’s mission work, “begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints.” Before His death on the cross, Jesus’ physical needs were often cared for by such faithful women as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Salome and Peter’s mother-in-law. The origins of tithing spring from the Old Testament, especially in God’s establishment of the priesthood among the Israelites. And we see God’s changeless and unknowable grace when He declared of the Levitical priests through His prophet Ezekiel: “This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession” (Ezek. 44:28).
Desperate need cries out once more at our door. We live in a society hostile to the truth, among a people whose souls starve for what they refuse to seek. Vacancies remain a concern, as does student debt. Though additional programs have been created to assist congregations in specific, limited cases, the best thing CTSFW can do for the Church is to continue to train residential students. “You can’t become a soldier online,” explained the Rev. Jon Scicluna, chief operating officer at CTSFW and a former police sergeant, “you go to boot camp. You can’t become a police officer online—you go to the academy. Seminary is the training ground for pastors.”

Thus the 100% tuition grant, meant to ease the burden of student loans; another chapter in an ancient story. “By working with the students we can help remove the debt cloud that follows them wherever they go,” Rev. Scicluna went on. “The grant is for the Church. It’s a commitment to residential formation. A commitment to the success of the LCMS. A commitment to send out good pastors.” This campaign has been slowly maturing over the past six years, pushed to fruition by the need of the Church and built on an endowment that must continue to grow through the generosity of the Church and her members. “It’s an ongoing partnership with the Church to be able to provide the shepherds for God’s sheep.”

The Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, director of admission, views the 100% tuition grant through the eyes of the Church’s future pastors and deaconesses, who will someday fill her vacancies. “It means that Seminary is now possible for more people. I can tell our prospective students and their loved ones that we are breaking down the barriers between them and studying at the Seminary. When we put our students’ needs first, they are able to put their preparation for service in the Church first and not worry about the concerns that can get in the way of their formation.”

In an 1846 appeal for donations on behalf of the newly formed Seminary, Dr. Sihler wrote:

We wish to train
1. Men full of faith and well versed in God’s Word.
2. Men who will have nothing to do with the so-called Lutheran synods given to false unionism.
3. Men who have good knowledge and personal experience of this truth.
4. Men able and strong in teaching law and gospel.
5. Men who will serve the church in love and humility.
6. Men who will suffer every cross for the precious confession.
7. Men who will take heed to themselves and to all the flock.
8. Men who will be diligent in preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

And so we pray: may it be for us in these days too, Lord. Amen.

Sources:

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Back in November 2012, Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, received approval for a grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. to fund a project entitled “Improving the Economic Well-being of Future Servants of Jesus Christ.” This project began as a research study on the problem of student loan debt and the need for more awareness among the church-at-large regarding the financial challenges facing future seminary graduates. After this careful study of the problem of seminary student loan debt, CTSFW was awarded a continuation grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to apply the lessons learned from the findings of the first grant. The second grant primarily focused on two major items: 1) financial literacy for seminary students, and 2) the use of crowdfunding as a source of income to raise support for the needs of seminary students.
The first Lilly grant study revealed a need for CTSFW to provide a more direct approach for students to participate in some form of financial literacy training. In the years prior to receiving the grant, the Seminary had encouraged students to take part in the Financial Peace (Dave Ramsey) seminars that were sponsored by various local congregations in the Fort Wayne area. This training for students was funded with resources provided through the Indiana District of the LCMS and was optional due to the difficulty of students finding a local seminar that did not conflict with their seminary class schedule. But with the reliance of many students upon educational loans to finance their seminary education, it became apparent that a more specific approach to financial literacy training was needed that would allow for more students to participate without scheduling conflicts. To that end, CTSFW developed a partnership with two agencies affiliated with the LCMS to provide expert financial literacy training. Concordia Plan Services (CPS), which manages both the health care and retirement plans for all church workers in the LCMS, and the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) agreed to provide the manpower and resources to accomplish financial literacy training for CTSFW students.

The financial literacy education was led by Mr. Eustolio Gomez, who works for CPS as the Director of Financial Education and Wellbeing—Seminaries. First- and second-year seminary students were required to attend both a spring and a fall financial literacy seminar. Those students who had student loans were also required to attend a one-on-one financial counseling session with Mr. Gomez. The counseling sessions were open for any student from any grade level to attend. Student spouses were also encouraged to participate in all financial literacy activities. Fourth-year (or final-year) students who had student loans were required to attend a spring financial literacy seminar that focused on the topic of student loan repayment. These financial literacy seminars and one-on-one counseling sessions began during the Fall Quarter of the 2015-2016 academic year and have continued each year.

The seminars focused on helping students develop a personal budget for their living expenses, encouraging them to look at their spending habits on a monthly basis in order to achieve their financial goal of decreasing or eliminating the use of student loans. The one-on-one counseling sessions allowed students to meet privately with a financial planner where their situation would be kept confidential and without the hindrance of personal intimidation. Follow-up counseling sessions were encouraged and made available to all students so that they could discuss the progress of their financial goals. Spouses were invited and encouraged to attend both the seminars and the counseling sessions.

This program has now been in place for the last three years. In order to examine the effectiveness of the financial literacy training, some data analysis was performed. One such measure was to look at the borrowing habits of seminary students, particularly of first-year students. If a decreasing number of first-year students had to rely on student loans, then one could assume that the financial literacy training had a positive impact on their borrowing habits. The first incoming class to experience the benefits of the grant-sponsored financial literacy training was the class from the 2015-2016 academic year. For the 2015-2016 year, 86% of incoming first-year students requested a student loan for their first year of seminary study. However, the following year of 2016-2017, only 72% of incoming first-year students requested a student loan. For the 2017-2018 year, 48% of incoming first-year students requested a student loan. For the 2017-2018 year, 48% of incoming first-year students requested a student loan.

This data shows a nice steady decrease in the number of incoming student borrowers over the course of a three-year period. It should also be noted that the Seminary’s tuition grant program was also increased to help lessen the tuition costs for students. During this same period of time, the CTSFW tuition grant increased from a 55% grant in 2015-2016, to 60% in 2016-2017, to 70% in 2017-2018. In all probability, the combination of increased tuition grants and the financial literacy program helped
create these shrinking statistics in first-year student loan borrowing.

CTSW also conducted a survey of students who were involved with the financial literacy program. In December 2017, a survey was taken of students who participated in the financial literacy training in both the seminars and the one-on-one counseling. The survey was sent out electronically via Survey Monkey to first-year students, second-year students and students on vicarage. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate our financial literacy program and make any necessary improvements or adjustments. Over 60% of first- and second-year students found the financial literacy seminars to be useful. Fifty-five percent of first-year students and 80 percent of second-year students found the one-on-one counseling to be helpful.

Based upon the positive student feedback and improving student debt statistics, CTSFW is pleased to announce that the financial literacy program will continue in the future with the valuable support provided by Concordia Plan Services. We are continuing to evaluate the best ways to encourage and equip our students to become better stewards of the resources that God provides and will continue to provide them with student-focused financial literacy training. We are grateful for the expertise provided by Mr. Eustolio Gomez and the commitment of CPS to the financial well-being of future church workers. What started as a three-year grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. has now become a continuing project of “Improving the Economic Well-being of Future Servants of Jesus Christ” for the years to come. Thanks be to God for all the blessings He provides!

Rev. Mark C. Sheafer (Mark.Sheafier@ctsfw.edu) serves as the director of Financial Aid at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
“We Are Your Seminary!”

Rev. Jon D. Scicluna
This was the phrase we at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, Indiana, adopted as the theme to represent the Seminary at the last Synod convention in Milwaukee. The decision came after much discussion about our identity, both externally and internally. So how does one adopt this theme and make it part of what we do every day in support of our mission of forming servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all?

As the chief operating officer of CTSFW, it is my job to ensure we are all pulling the rope together in the same direction with a clear purpose, which is plainly spelled out in our mission statement. So how does one help the president in leading an institution of higher education to these ends?

First, a little bit about my background. Prior to coming to the Seminary early in 2004, I spent my career in law enforcement working for a large sheriff’s office in the Midwest. At the time of my retirement, I had reached the rank of commander and had spent time overseeing law enforcement operations, as well as spending an equal amount of time as the jail administrator. My first assignment upon being promoted to commander was that of jail administrator, a position I felt unqualified to hold as I had spent my entire career working on the law enforcement side of the organization. So what to do?

At first I didn’t do anything; I simply immersed myself in the day-to-day operations of a several-bed jail and learned. And what I learned quickly from the professional command staff under me was the fact that they already knew how to do the job. However, there was some hesitation when making decisions as over the years the operations manual had become overly complicated. If one wanted to find fault with an employee, there were plenty of ambiguities available in the manual.

One of the most important things I learned as I progressed through the ranks was the fact that, as a whole, we had great people working for the department. When faced with a decision, all of them wanted to do what was right and, if they were given simple and clear guidelines, they would always do just that. So, in a short time, we boiled down the volumes of operations manuals to three talking points that would become the foundation to all of our policies and procedures: 1) no one escapes our custody, 2) no one dies in our custody and 3) none of the deputies gets hurt (the most important to me). Within no time, when a member of my command staff came in with a proposal for a new policy or procedure, they simply held up three of their fingers and justified the change within the lens of the pillars established for everything we did.

In the fall of 2012, after serving a dual parish in Arizona, I received a call to serve the Seminary as the vice president of Advancement, the fundraising arm of the operation. Again I found myself serving in a capacity that was foreign to me. And again I found myself surrounded by a group of highly capable, professional and committed church workers. They knew why they were there and they gladly accepted the challenge of raising the funds needed to provide the world-class residential education our students receive here at CTSFW. Providing the best possible candidates to serve our congregations either as pastors or other professional church workers is not an easy task, and in today’s world it’s expensive. It is these committed fundraisers, working with the generous members of the LCMS, who provide for the majority of our students’ tuition as well as the bulk of our operating budget. That is right, it is only through this partnership with the Church and her members that pastors and other church workers can be trained and sent into our Lord’s harvest field where, indeed, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Luke 10:2). And, for this partnership and support, we at CTSFW are forever thankful as together we “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2).
laborers are few” (Luke 10:2a). And, for this partnership and support, we at CTSFW are forever thankful as together we “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:b).

In the fall of 2015, little did I know but a new assignment awaited as President Rast asked me to serve as the Seminary’s chief operating officer. And, in the words of the late Yogi Berra, “It’s déjà vu all over again.” At this point in my professional life I did what any of us would do: I simply looked back at the challenges I had faced before and built upon them.

During the first few days in this new assignment I met with all of the departments’ leadership and learned what was important to them. I was interested in learning how they saw their department in the big picture of the Seminary’s operations. I wanted to know if they understood what our mission was and how their individual talents supported this mission. And again, not to my surprise, I learned that CTSFW has recruited and retained committed professionals over the years who knew what was important and understood very clearly the role that they played in successfully accomplishing our mission.

All I needed to do was provide vision, empowerment, resources and the encouragement to keep things moving smoothly in our service to the Church. In doing so, again I thought of what simple, yet effective guiding principles could be introduced to ensure our professional staff would always know they were pulling the rope in the same direction. And so, the three guiding principles which we have adopted are:

**Transparency.** Transparency means we can take our books or financial records out to the flagpole in front of the campus at high noon and expose all of our business practices to the entire world. After all, it is not our monies we spend to operate this institution, but yours, gifted to “Your Seminary,” that your grandchildren might have a pastor.

**Equality.** We insist that all of our staff as well as students, from top to bottom, are treated equally and have access to a long and fulfilling career in service to the Church.

**Consistency.** We do what is right even when no one is looking. There should be no surprises; we are a nonprofit organization that exists to fulfill our mission. We say what we do and we do what we say. And what we say is that “We Are Your Seminary” and “We exist to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.” And, because our congregations do matter and future generations are counting on us, we will remain consistent in our business practices.

None of this would be possible without your partnership! So, on behalf of our student body, our faculty and our entire staff, I say thank you and may the good Lord continue to bless you all.

The Rev. Jon D. Scicluna (Jon.Scicluna@ctsfw.edu) serves as the chief operating officer at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Stewardship
Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador

Few words have ever been uttered from pulpits across the Church that can send shudders down more spines than the word “STEWARDSHIP.” When a pastor even hints at the topic of stewardship, men reach for their wallets and women clutch their purses. Stewardship has been kidnapped and held hostage by the sinister villain named “Paying the Bills.” It also strikes at the heart of man’s desire to own things and therefore be like God.

Stewardship is a theological matter. Human beings were created to be stewards! The vocation of steward is rooted in the creation account of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Creation establishes the creator/creature relationship. The human steward is the only creature that is created in the image of God. The word tselem (image) implies a replica of the original. God intended the man to bear His image as an element of creation within creation. This image-bearing becomes the task of the steward. It is within the image that the holy and just man would do exactly what the Lord had created him to do: steward creation. As the steward was created to have rada (dominion) over and was to kabas (subdue) creation, it is tempered by God’s creative call for man to bear His image. The steward doesn’t own creation. God does. He is to rule over it and subdue it as a reflection of the Creator! Genesis 2:15 further illustrates this by explaining the task of stewardship as one of working and keeping creation.

Stewardship is work! It is a joyous work. This work is more than just menial labor. There is a connection between the word avad (work) and worship. This will be echoed by Paul in Romans 12. It is man’s work to worship the Lord. He does this by doing what the Lord has given him to do—that is, have dominion over creation by subduing it and by working and keeping it.

But this would only be a joyous work until the first stewardship crisis of Genesis 3. The sin of the first stewardship crisis is covetousness. In seeing that the fruit was good, delightful to the eyes and conveys something that is not hers, the woman takes and eats. Then she gives to her husband and he eats. The hands that were created to steward reach out for that which does not belong to them. In this a claim of ownership is made. Covetousness gives way to theft. Theft gives way to idolatry. We have been bearing the consequence ever since. Unfaithful stewards are worthy only of death.

The same Creator who commissioned the steward is also the One who grants grace. The concrete reality of the recreation of the cross and empty tomb forgives the unfaithful steward and restores him to his original task of stewardship. Baptism changes our present as well as our future. It “works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this as the words and promises of God declare.” This act of restoration re-establishes the condition of the steward. Justification gives way to sanctification. Stewardship is sanctification in action. Stewardship is a Third Article response to our redefined relationship with God in the Second Article using First Article gifts.

Stewardship is not an activity which begins with the steward. It originates in the work of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is the work of the Spirit. Therefore, stewardship is the act of the Spirit as well. The Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps in the true faith. This includes stewardship. He does this by the Gospel. Stewardship that does not begin and end in the Gospel is not faithful stewardship.

To teach stewardship rightly, it is critical that one begins with identity rather than activity—God has made us to be stewards! He acts in and through us! This frees the steward from obligation. So freed, the steward is a steward of God’s greatest gift: the Gospel.

2. Luther, Martin. Luther’s Small Catechism, with Explanation. ed. Sara Tyson and H. C. Schwan (St. Louis: Concordia, 2008), 24.

The Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador (pastormeador@gmail.com) serves as senior pastor of St. John Lutheran Church and School in Plymouth, Wisconsin, and is contracted by the LCMS Office of National Mission as assistant coordinator for Stewardship.
Tell us a little about yourself.

I am from the little state of Rhode Island! I lived and grew up in Little Rhody for 18 years, until I moved to sunny Florida in 2009. Both of my parents worked in retail, and I am the oldest of five siblings. I met my wonderful wife, Jenna, during my first year of Seminary while working at my fieldwork congregation at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Avilla, Indiana. My wife has a degree in culinary and baking from Ivy Tech in Fort Wayne—but Jenna desires to return back to school and become a school teacher. We were married on June 10, 2017, and went on vicarage to Trinity Lutheran Church in Hampton, Iowa. Now we are back home at the Seminary with our two loveable cats, Buddy and Cooper!

You previously were a Roman Catholic. What influenced you to convert and eventually study to become a pastor?

As a Roman Catholic, I feared God and I was unsure of my salvation because of my many sins. No matter what I did to make up for my sins, I could never find any peace or comfort because the good that I did was always tainted by my sin and still left me with doubt. But one weekend I started to go to Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in Smithfield, Rhode Island, with my grandparents. And from then on my conscience, which was once burdened on account of my fear of God and His wrath, was finally comforted by the pure preaching of the Gospel. At this church I learned that God was not a mean and terrible judge, but our Great Redeemer who did everything that was needed to save us from our sins. After a few years of attending Our Redeemer and after much, much prayerful consideration, I wanted to become a pastor to help others in the same way that my pastor once helped me. I want to preach and proclaim Christ crucified to lost and misguided souls so that they too may finally receive the true comfort and peace which only comes to us through Word and Sacrament.

Why did you choose CTSFW?

From the time I knew I wanted to become a pastor, I knew I wanted to study at CTSFW because the pastor who helped me went here. I wanted to receive the same education and training that he received so that I could be just as effective as he was. Not only that, but when I visited the campus I fell in love with its beautiful chapel, its amazing library and its world-renowned professors! After attending CTSFW for a few years, I now consider this Seminary to be my home away from home!

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

I believe the most surprising thing about the CTSFW experience has to be the relationship that we have with our professors. When people think of a professor, they may think that they are unapproachable and do not want to be bothered. But this is not the case at CTSFW! Here our professors are much more than academics. They are also loving and caring pastors who have the best interests of their students at heart. Our professors honestly care about their students and want to help them grow and become the future pastors that they know we can be. Our professors love to spend time with their students, talking to them about theology, doctrine, pastoral practice and even Star Wars. They eat with us at lunch, they invite us into their homes, and even share a drink or two at Gemütlichkeit! The great respect and Christian love that our professors have for us is like nothing else that I have ever experienced elsewhere in higher education.

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

I would encourage him to prayerfully consider it. Just as being a pastor is not
easy, going to seminary is also not easy. Many things will be expected of you and great sacrifices will have to be made as you try to find a healthy balance between family, work and study.

But as challenging as seminary may be, you are not alone in your struggles. Many, if not all, of the students at CTSFW struggle in some way that is common to you. Whether this struggle manifests itself in your finances, your study or whatever it may be, we know, trust and believe that the Lord will help us and guide us throughout our trials and tribulations (Is. 41:13). Not only that, but you have your fellow brothers at the Seminary, your professors, your home pastor and congregation to support you, comfort you and help you in the way that you need help. Seminary is challenging but it’s not impossible for those who are called to serve the people of God as their pastor.

Any comments that pertain to “Preparing Pastors for a Changing World”?

Although the challenges that we face are different from those of the past, the problem of sin remains constant no matter what form it takes. And because sin remains constant, our need to preach against it is vital, no matter how tough or uncomfortable it may be. We are called to show our Father’s mercy by speaking the truth of God’s Word in love to our neighbor. This is what Christian love is. Christian love warns people of the danger that lies ahead of them if they continue on in their sin. If your child is about to stick her fingers into the electrical socket, what does love tell you to do? If your intoxicated friend is about to drive home, what does love tell you to do? Christian love tells you to warn them, especially those whom God puts into our lives, of the danger they are in, no matter how uncomfortable it may be; because, like our Heavenly Father, we do not desire the death of any sinner but “desire all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (Ezek. 18:23; 1 Tim. 2:4).

Even though difficult times lie ahead of us, the Lord does not abandon us or leave us to our own devices. He gives us His sure and certain Word to proclaim the truth to the world and announce the free forgiveness of sins, which Jesus Christ has won for us through His death and resurrection and gives to us through faith in Him and His promises of life and eternal salvation. And it is with His Word and the training that we receive at CTSFW that we become prepared to preach to this changing world.

Any thoughts about the importance of the financial support that our congregations have given our students? How will their support be helpful to you as you prepare to leave the Seminary for parish ministry?

Financial support from our congregations is vital. If it were not for congregational financial support, I know for a fact that I would not be able to attend Seminary. Many of us have accumulated a large debt from our previous four-year degrees, and the debt that we gain from Seminary does not help our situation. But the generous support from our congregations and donors has made Seminary more affordable. The support that we receive has helped us pay for tuition, books, healthcare, rent and other expenses. And for that I cannot thank our congregations and donors enough for their support. The more help we receive, the less debt we bring with us to the ministry.

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.
Upcoming Events at CTSFW
Mark your calendars and register today!

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

Lutheranism and the Classics: “Arguing with the Philosophers”
September 27–28
Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/Classics
Phone: 260.452.2204

Christ Academy: Confirmation Retreat
September 28–30
Information: www.ctsfw.edu/Confirmation
Register: ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu or 800.481.2155

Seminary Donation Day
Tuesday, October 9, 9:00 a.m. in the Student Commons
Email: SemGuild@ctsfw.edu
Phone: 260.485.0209

Prayerfully Consider Visit
October 17–20
Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/PCV
Email: Admission@ctsfw.edu
Phone: 800.481.2155

Christ Academy: College
October 25–28
Register: www.ctsfw.edu/CAC
Email: ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu
Phone: 800.481.2155

Luther Hostel: “Suffering and the Theology of the Cross: 500 Years after the Heidelberg Disputation”
October 31–November 2
Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/LutherHostel
Email: Retreats@ctsfw.edu
Phone: 260.452.2204

NOVEMBER

Good Shepherd Institute: “Let Us Pray”
November 4–6
Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/GSI
Phone: 260.452.2204

Organ Recital
Sunday, November 4, 4:30 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Choral Vespers with Bach Cantata 106, “God’s Time Is the Best”
Sunday, November 4, 7:30 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Choral Evening Prayer
Monday, November 5, 5:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Hymn Festival
Monday, November 5, 7:30 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Advent Preaching Workshop: “I Can(‘t) Wait!”
Tuesday, November 6, 1:30 p.m.
Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/PreachingWorkshop
Phone: 260.452.2204

Seminary Guild with Rev. Jon Scicluna
Tuesday, November 13, 1:00 p.m. in Luther Hall
Email: SemGuild@ctsfw.edu
Phone: 260.485.0209

Continuing Education: “Life of Children in the Church: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper” with Dr. David Scaer
November 14–16 in Pensacola, Florida
Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/CE/Pensacola
Email: lcpcola@gmail.com
Phone: 850.438.8138
DECEMBER AND JANUARY 2019

Advent Candlelight Evening Prayer
Saturday, December 8, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Seminary Guild Christmas with the Kantorei
Tuesday, December 11, 1:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel
Email: SemGuild@ctsfw.edu
Phone: 260.485.0209

Epiphany Evening Prayer
Sunday, January 13, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Lenten Preaching Workshop
Monday, January 14, 1:30 p.m.
Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/PreachingWorkshop

Symposia Series
January 15–18
Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/Symposia

Symposia Choral Vespers
Wednesday, January 16, 5:15 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Symposia Vespers and Organ Recital
Thursday, January 17, 4:00 p.m in Kramer Chapel

FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2019

CTSFW Tours: The Holy Land
February 3–March 4
Information: www.ctsfw.edu/CTSFW-Tours
Phone: 260.452.2119

Christ Academy: Confirmation Retreat
February 15–17
Dr. Arthur Just Jr. will teach on Baptism
Information: www.ctsfw.edu/Confirmation
Register: ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu or 800.481.2155

Choral Vespers
Sunday, February 17, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Seminary Guild with Dr. Don Wiley
Tuesday, February 12, 1:00 p.m. in Luther Hall
Email: SemGuild@ctsfw.edu
Phone: 260.485.0209

Seminary Guild with Andrea Schultz
Tuesday, March 12, 1:00 p.m. in Luther Hall
Email: SemGuild@ctsfw.edu
Phone: 260.485.0209

Lecture/Recital Convocation: Church Music for Lent
Wednesday, March 20, 11:00 a.m. in Kramer Chapel

For more information please visit our website at www.ctsfw.edu or call 260.452.2100.
The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse thinks of himself as a pastor first. After graduating from CTSFW he spent his first 22 years in the parish, serving congregations in Iowa and Washington, before joining the faculty in 2007. Even now, while working at CTSFW not only as an associate professor but also as director of Certification and Placement, he serves in a local parish as vacancy pastor of Shepherd of the City Lutheran Church. The church sees a lot of incoming and outgoing fieldwork students, including vicars. “Be nice to me,” he likes to rib the new students when they first arrive, after introducing himself as placement director. “I decide where you go.”

Because of my duties as placement director I know firsthand the difficulty facing the students with excessive debt loads. Some students cannot be considered for certain calls because the congregation does not have a parsonage and there is no way the student will qualify for a home loan with his debt level. Hopefully, we will be able to help lighten this debt load with the 100% tuition guarantee.

What is your background?

How did you serve before becoming a CTSFW faculty member?
I was in the parish for 22 years before coming to CTSFW: nine and a half years at St. John’s in Burt, Iowa, and 12 and a half years at Peace in Bremerton, Washington.

In addition to serving as professor of Exegetical Theology, in what other roles have you served at CTSFW?
I am the director of Continuing Education and the placement director currently. I have served as the vicarage director in the past.

How has seminary education changed in the years you have been on the faculty?
I joined the faculty in 2007 at the time the new curriculum was being implemented. I was taught under the old curriculum, so it has been interesting to be a part of this switch. In fact, I was especially excited to come to the Seminary because of the new curriculum.
How has the student body changed in the years you have been on the faculty?

The trend has been toward younger seminarians. We are receiving more and more Concordia grads as well as others directly out of college. There are fewer second-career men.

What has been your favorite course to teach and why?

I love teaching anything in the Torah, especially Genesis. Some of this is due to my Ph.D. work on the Joseph narratives. However, I think my absolute favorite classes are the Deaconess Psalms Course and Job. I think this is because of the practical nature of these books and their use in pastoral ministry and diaconal service.

What has been most challenging to you as a professor?

Learning to think and write like an “academic” instead of a parish pastor.

What has been the most rewarding to you as a professor?

Call night when I am privileged to announce the Calls for our students.

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

Preach the Word and love the people. It really is that simple and that complex!

This issue of the magazine will be focusing on stewardship and the partnership between the Seminary and congregations of our Synod in supporting our future pastors. It’s only through this support and partnership that we are now able to offer a 100% tuition guarantee to all of our residential students. As the director of Placement, how do you see the tuition guarantee affecting our students as they head out into the parish?

Because of my duties as placement director I know firsthand the difficulty facing the students with excessive debt loads. Some students cannot be considered for certain calls because the congregation does not have a parsonage, and there is no way the student will qualify for a home loan with his debt level. Hopefully, we will be able to help lighten this debt load with the 100% tuition guarantee. I strongly believe that this is a problem that is the responsibility of the entire Synod to address: seminaries, congregations, Districts, Synodical entities, etc. It is not a simple solution but it is an attainable one.

Please feel free to add any additional comments.

The Seminary is a wonderful environment for learning and training. However, we the Seminary can train and give the tools, but it is the congregation that makes pastors (and deaconesses)! I know this was true when I received my first call. The congregation brought it all together for me. Seminaries are essential, but they are one of the essential elements needed to carry out the work of training and forming servants for the church.
173rd Academic Year Begins at CTSFW

1. First-year pastoral students with President Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
2. First-year deaconess students with Dr. James Bushur, director of Deaconess Formation, and Deaconess Amy Rast, associate director of Deaconess Formation
3. Members of the CTSFW faculty
4. Left to right: Dr. Don Wiley, Rev. Paul Hopkins and Rev. Sergio Fritzler
5. President Lawrence R. Rast Jr. proclaims the opening of the 173rd Academic Year
Shortly after 10 a.m. on September 4, 2018, the Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. declared the beginning of the 173rd academic year of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. President Rast preached for the Opening Service, speaking on the demands of Seminary in context of Jesus’ declaration that His yoke is easy, His burden light. “Some of you take up that yoke for the first time today as a student,” he said. “Others have been doing so for some time. But those of us who have been around for a bit know that the Seminary isn’t easy—and it’s not supposed to be. We are a graduate school of theology. We are academically demanding. The courses are not light. If the classes don’t get you to this point, fieldwork and family needs will contribute to that as well. And so this text, which our Lord intends to be comforting, can cause us distress.

“But when you feel this way, remember,” he continued. “You are so dear to our Lord Christ that He yoked Himself to the burden of the Law, fulfilling it. He yoked Himself to death in your place that you might have life. And now you are yoked to Him through baptism into His death, so that just as He was raised from the dead, you and I too will have newness of life eternally.”

The installation of newly appointed faculty and ordained staff followed the sermon. The Rev. Dr. Daniel J. Brege, president-elect of the Indiana District, installed three men: The Rev. Dr. Don C. Wiley, the Rev. Sergio A. Fritzler and the Rev. Paul G. Hopkins. This is the second year in a row that Dr. Wiley has been installed at CTSFW, this time as assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions (following his installation as a guest professor last year). He brings with him a background in missions and in the parish, along with his experience as assistant director of Spanish Speaker Church Worker Formation.

Rev. Fritzler was then installed as director of SMP Español/English alongside his fellow pastor, the Rev. Hopkins, who was installed as an advancement officer. Rev. Fritzler hails from Argentina, Brazil, and most recently Santiago, Dominican Republic, where he serves as dean and professor at Centro de Misericordia y Seminario Concordia “El Reformador.” Rev. Hopkins, on the other hand, is a former police sergeant, a 2005 graduate of CTSFW and a pastor of 13 years’ experience. His son also graduated from CTSFW, only 10 years after his father in 2015, so Rev. Hopkins is singularly placed to know and understand the needs of the Seminary’s students.

Speaking to the congregation, drawn together in the Seminary community by their roles as faculty, staff, students and family, President Rast concluded in his sermon: “And so redeemed by Christ, baptized into His death and resurrection, knowing the Father because Jesus has chosen you to receive His revelation: be at peace. For Christ is your peace, your Sabbath; rest and remain in Him today and always.”
During 45 years of marriage, God entrusted my husband and me with many blessings and possessions. As we grew together in the life of the Church, we became more cognizant of our responsibility to steward all that God provided to us. We have used our time, talent and treasure to further God’s kingdom and our testimony to encourage others to know the saving love of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and rose again to give eternal life to all.

Since the US Death Rate is 100%, we realize that good stewards care about both the present and the future. We also knew that dying “intestate” (meaning “without a will”) results in the government taking charge of our estate. When that happens, much of what God has entrusted to His people ends up going to the government and lawyers. Furthermore, in California, where we reside, it is also imperative to have a family trust to circumvent the legal expense of probate and preclude government involvement.

When we began our estate plan, our first inclination was to give our entire estate to our church and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Those thoughts changed when we considered how that testimony might affect our family members. Even though we had no children, we have siblings, including a brother who was a pastor trained at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne. We also have nieces and a nephew who would need additional support during their retirement years. With help from CTSFW and the LCMS Foundation we created a charitable remainder trust to be funded upon our deaths. The Foundation ensures that a portion of this trust will be distributed annually to living heirs until the final heir dies. Later, the remainder will be divided to support LCMS seminaries and the Church.

On account of our own experience, we encourage all of you to take this first step in preparing your will during “Write a Will Week!”

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“Write a Will Week”

It is estimated that nearly 65% of Americans do not have a properly prepared will in order that their assets may be dutifully and lawfully passed down to heirs and organizations. Therefore, as CTSFW enters its 173rd academic year, we are once again partnering with the Planned Giving Council of Northeast Indiana to encourage people within our local community to participate in “Write a Will Week” from October 22–26. Attorneys volunteer to come to the campus and create Simple Wills at no charge, as long as the will contains at least one charitable bequest to a nonprofit organization. This nonprofit can be the Seminary, but does not have to be. To schedule time with one of the attorneys (all of whom are local LCMS Lutherans), call 260.452.2204.
Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, finds its main purpose in the joy of forming servants who take the Gospel into the world. Here we train pastors, deaconesses and educated laypeople who are equipped to teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all. Here the Seminary sends men and women out into an ever-changing world with the changeless Word of God.

But still, as Jesus tells His disciples in Luke 10:2, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” There are many congregations and people that need a pastor—a shepherd—to preach the Gospel and deliver the gift of forgiveness. In last year’s Candidate Call Services, the two seminaries were short over 60 candidates, unable to provide laborers for every congregation that had requested a pastor. These churches sit vacant, some making do with a supply or vacancy pastor, others with no one. They have no called pastor to care for them through the joys and struggles of life.

So what can we do to help these and future congregations in need of a pastor? Christ answers this question in the rest of Luke 10:2, saying, “Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Thus the first thing we are called to do is to pray for more laborers. It’s really just that simple. Pray. It is the Lord’s ministry into which He calls more men. He is the only one who has and will continue to provide faithful laborers to tend His fields, prime and ready for the harvest. So please pray for laborers, pray for those who train laborers, and pray for the congregations they will serve.

The next thing we can do is consider those men and women around us who might be a good fit as a pastor or a deaconess, and then encourage them to consider it. Who do you know that the Lord could use for this holy task? Who do you know in your congregation or among your family and friends who have the skills that would make for a good pastor or deaconess? Maybe it’s someone who is close to you. Maybe that person is even you. Maybe you’ve thought to yourself that He has gifted you in ways that could be useful to Him and His Church. Maybe others have told you that you should look into this. Every Christian man should prayerfully consider whether the Lord could use him as a pastor. Every Christian woman should likewise consider whether the Lord would have her serve as a deaconess or in another auxiliary office in His Church. Encourage those in your life also to prayerfully consider these vocations.

Last, as part of this prayerful consideration, all are welcome to come and visit us here at CTSFW. One of the best ways to discern whether studying to become a pastor or a deaconess might be your future is to come to campus, to walk the path others have walked before you, and to meet current students and the professors who teach them. While here you will see the community of the faithful that makes up the Seminary. You’ll see how our life together begins in our chapel with worship, which then flows throughout our community and into everything we do. You’ll see those who, like you, are considering this vocation.

The Lord of the harvest is faithful. He will continue to send laborers into His field to carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and administering His Sacraments. It is He who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the unchanging Word that can save this ever-changing world.

Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt serves as the director of Admission and the director of Christ Academy at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
The Rev. Dr. John T. Pless’s book, *Handling the Word of Truth: Law and Gospel in the Church Today*, has been translated into two additional languages: Portuguese and Chinese. The Lutheran Heritage Foundation supported the translation of his book into Chinese, the release of which was celebrated by a lecture series in Taiwan. Dr. Michael Paul, an LCMS missionary serving there, and Dr. Joseph Lu, who received his Ph.D. in Missiology from CTSFW and now serves as a professor at the China Lutheran Seminary, arranged the lecture series. Dr. Pless lectured at six different locations across the island in April.

The Rev. Dr. Walter A. Maier III has written one of the largest Concordia Commentaries, covering the first 11 chapters of 1 Kings. Released by Concordia Publishing House (CPH) in May 2018, *1 Kings:1-11 – Concordia Commentary* is a rich, comprehensive resource on the theological implications of a portion of the history of Israel’s monarchy. “This is manifestly a commentary for the church,” wrote Dr. Peter J. Leithart, president of the Theopolis Institute, Birmingham, Alabama, “a thorough and judicious guide for pastors who want to sustain their flocks with a healthy diet of God’s living Word.”

Shortly before 2018 Call Services in April, CPH hosted an Author Recognition Reception at CTSFW. The Rev. Dr. Naomichi Masaki was able to meet with Editor Laura Lane, who is working on *The Christian Difference* volume to be published in 2019. *The Christian Difference* is a follow-up to *The Lutheran Difference* (published in 2010), which identified the differences between denominations to help Lutherans explain their beliefs to those outside of the Lutheran Church. This volume takes a wider view, comparing Christianity to other major religions. Dr. Masaki had recently submitted his own contribution to the volume: a manuscript on Buddhism, Confucianism and Shinto as they relate to Christianity.
Free? Or Not Free?

Rev. Dr. Daniel J. Brege

It is free! My salvation costs me nothing! St. Paul was inspired to write to the Ephesians: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (2:8-9). My works do not buy salvation; they don’t even create a down payment on it. My good works are worth nothing as far as the purchase of my salvation goes.

What about my faith? Is that a good work that contributes a little towards my salvation? Is my faith the down payment? Of course, St. Paul already precludes one’s apparent saving work of faith by stating that our salvation is “not a result of works.” But additionally, as Walther and others would observe, when “faith” is expressed in the New Testament, frequently one can obtain a clearer understanding of what is being expressed by substituting the object of faith (Jesus) for the word faith. Thus, for those who wrongly think that their faith is their down payment—that their faith is their little contribution to salvation—Walther’s paraphrase of Ephesians 2:8a would read, “For by grace you have been saved through Jesus.” Our faith accomplishes nothing; it is the object of our faith that does it all.

And in relation to the object of our faith—the Lord Jesus—in Him we find the cost of what for us is free. Indeed there was a cost for salvation; it was the most expensive purchase in the universe. In writing his first epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul stated succinctly, “You were bought with a price” (6:20a). What, then, was the price, the cost of our salvation? It was the very life of God! Both the Old and New Testaments frequently identify the life of a creature with its blood (Lev. 17:14). The Apostle Paul, speaking to pastors, explains that they are to “care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood” (Acts 20:28b). The cost to purchase the Church, the cost of salvation, was the lifeblood of God Himself! The price of salvation was not free! Christ gave His life. His blood paid for the sins of all…but that is why it is now a gift to us!

Considering stewardship, we have been freed in Christ; we need not do or give anything in order to stand in God’s good favor. Yet, repeatedly the Apostle Paul states—often after explaining that we possess salvation as a gift—that our God has created us anew in Christ, that our God has given us the Spirit of Christ, that our God empowers us to respond to His love in Christ with good works. Thus, in the verse which follows the Spirit’s promise that we are saved as a gift (Eph. 2:8-9), the apostle explains: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” We were created anew in our baptism, born again, that as the newly created we would be enlivened unto good works, to love and live for our neighbor.

We have numerous “neighbors” who need our loving care. Among them are our seminary students at both seminaries. They continue to need support for their families, for books, etc. Some supporters of the seminaries are now misunderstanding that a seminary student’s tuition is “free.” Indeed we thank the Lord that our seminarians now receive “free” tuition, that they no longer need to worry about this cost—either while at the seminary or after they graduate. But is this tuition truly free? Indeed there is a cost. Not only do Fort Wayne and St. Louis need the money to back up this promise to pay tuition, but there remain many other costs to be fulfilled daily at each seminary, costs which before “free tuition” had been partially fulfilled by the tuition paid by the students.

We pray the Lord will bless the baptized that they who are freely saved may by God’s grace in Christ be empowered to freely love and live for their neighbors—uniquely for our seminarians.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel J. Brege (djbrege@centurylink.net), CTSFW 1982, was installed as president of the Indiana District on September 9, 2018. He served as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church (Preble), Decatur, Indiana since 1982.
The pastor and people at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Moline, Illinois, often recount events of personal and congregational importance not by the year on the calendar, but by the vicar who was serving in their midst at that point in time. Why? Because the coming and going of vicars has been such an integral part of the rhythm of their life together. The 49th vicar of the congregation, Alexander Blanken, has recently been installed for his year of service and learning with the people there.

The vicarage program at Holy Cross began when the congregation was only in its second decade of existence. Begun as a mission congregation in 1950, the 34 charter members gathered in a cinderblock, house-like building constructed by the Central Illinois District (which serves today as the congregational office space). Seven years later, during the apex of the baby boom, the congregation had outgrown this space and a new sanctuary was designed and built. In another seven years, records indicate that the congregation saw the need for an additional staff member to relieve some of the workload of the pastor. Thus, an application was made for a vicar.

The first vicar, Walter Stuenkel, arrived at Holy Cross in December of 1964 and continued until February of 1966. All subsequent vicars have served for only one year. There was an unbroken link of successive vicars until 2000, when the congregation had a five-year hiatus from the program.

The Rev. Eldor Haake, who served the entirety of his 51 years of ministry at Holy Cross, was noted for his emphasis on Christian education. Undoubtedly, he viewed the vicar and the vicarage experience not merely as a helper for himself, but as an opportunity to be involved in the education and shaping of future pastors.

It is because of this philosophical mindset that the vicarage program continues at Holy Cross. The vicar is more than just “hired help” for one year. The congregation regards the privilege of hosting the vicar and his family as a two-way street. While the vicar serves the people of the congregation with the comfort and counsel of God’s Word, the congregation also serves the vicar by providing a loving and supportive environment where he can gain valuable, “real life” experience and put his seminary education into practice.

The vicar participates and shares in the wide range of pastoral duties under his mentor’s supervision. Most vicars come with a keen desire to gain more preaching experience. This goal is easily met through the course of the year in a congregational setting. The vicar preaches at regular intervals for the Sunday and midweek services of the congregation, and also has other opportunities to proclaim the Word of God in services conducted at nursing homes, assisted living facilities and homeless shelters.
When preaching in a congregational setting, the vicar has an opportunity to do what he will eventually do week after week as a pastor: namely, preach to his own people, not merely to an assembled group of strangers. This is the link between visitation and preaching. As the vicar calls upon the members of God’s flock in a particular place, he becomes aware of their personal joys and sorrows, successes and failures. He can then apply the Word of God in such a way that he might hear the resulting comment from a parishioner at the conclusion of a service that is a delight to any shepherd’s ears: “Thank you. That sermon was meant for me.”

In a similar manner, the teaching of God’s Word week after week in youth catechesis or congregational Bible study provides the vicar with the opportunity to witness Christ’s lambs at every age grapple and grow in their understanding of important scriptural truths. Many adult members of Holy Cross who were confirmed in the congregation years earlier have warm, vivid memories of catechism class with the vicar. While they might not remember the vicars who came before and after that time, they certainly remember the one who was with them for those vital years of maturity and growth.

Likewise, when the vicar accompanies the pastor as he ministers to those who are dying and their families, the vicar often is privileged to develop a special relationship with them. Years later, vicars recount the vital personal experiences they gained at the deathbed of the Lord’s saints and can recall the names of those they were with at life’s end.

All of this is to say that the vicarage year is not merely a checklist of duties and responsibilities needed to gain pastoral experience; rather, it is all about knowing and relating to people in a wide variety of life circumstances. It is not simply about the flock learning from the bright seminary intern; it is about the always-student seminary intern learning from them as well. And it is about both learning from God together. The vicarage year reminds the future pastor that ministry is more than a mere job—it is a joyous privilege and calling. It should instill in him an eagerness for the day of ordination, when he will be in the midst of God’s people again, not simply as a servant and learner, but as a servant, learner and leader; an undershepherd of the Chief Shepherd.

Each of the 49 vicars at Holy Cross have been unique individuals. They have come from all parts of the United States and from many different home congregations. Some have been married, others single. Many of them have been young and entered the Seminary immediately following their undergraduate education. Several have had successful first careers and have chosen to prepare for the ministry later in life. Their own traits and circumstances mirror those of the people they will one day serve.

The vicar’s farewell Sunday is always a bittersweet experience. The congregation bids goodbye to a man and his family whom they have learned to know and love. The same holds true for the vicar and his family as they part from the congregation. Yet both vicar and congregation alike know that they will have an enduring effect upon each other.

The word “formation” is now used for the process of preparing a man to be a pastor. It is a good word which relates well to the vicarage experience. Every pastor remembers this vital year. Whether he realizes it or not, his vicarage congregation will have had a part—a part along with his family, his pastors, the Seminary, his fieldwork congregation, as well as other influential individuals and groups—in shaping him into the kind of pastor he will one day be.

The presence of a vicar in a congregation also reminds the people of God of the continual need for pastors in Christ’s Church. Holy Cross has been blessed with remarkable pastoral longevity. Only three men have served the congregation as pastor in its 68-year history. Yet the annual departure and arrival of vicars reminds the people of God that the Lord of the Church always provides workers for His harvest field. 🌿

Rev. Dr. Wilfred L. Karsten (holycrosslutheran@mchsi.com) serves as pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Moline, Illinois.

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Please detach and mail to Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825-4996.
The Seminary Guild exists to serve God by aiding the Church’s future servants, remembering and caring for both the physical and spiritual needs of the students at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne. They host receptions throughout the academic year, provide snacks during Finals Week, welcome new babies with homemade clothing, pick a major project each year that will meet a particular need on campus, support the work of the Co-ops, and last year initiated the Legacy Project to support the mission of CTSFW by helping students reduce the cost of their education.

The Legacy Project began September 2017 with the distribution of the Pastoral Care Companion (PCC) to every incoming Seminary student when they received their fieldwork assignment. Field Education marks the beginning of pastoral and diaconal training under the supervision of a congregational pastor. This year on September 24, 2018, seminarians and deaconess students will receive their fieldwork assignment. At the end of the convocation, the Seminary Guild will have the honor of providing a copy of the PCC to every student receiving their assignment.

Though it contains “Pastoral” in the title, the PCC is a resource for both Lutheran pastors and deaconesses for the care of souls in times of distress. The book contains Bible readings, liturgical texts, collects, prayers and hymn stanzas, serving as theological guidance on a variety of topics ranging from birth to death. Future pastors and deaconesses will carry the companion with them into the homes and hospital rooms of those most in need of comfort.

The Guild is thankful to the many individuals and groups who have generously responded with gifts to fund this project. Their support shows a deep commitment to the training of faithful LCMS pastors and deaconesses for future generations.

If you would like to contribute to the Legacy Project or simply learn more about the Seminary Guild and their work with the students at CTSFW, email SemGuild@ctsfw.edu.

Phyllis Thieme (fourten@frontier.com) serves as president of the Guild at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.
It was with great joy that the CTSFW Military Project recently sent 100 Lutheran Service Books for the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Chapel in San Diego to be used for Protestant services led by LCMS Rev. Gleason Snashall (who received his SMP certification from CTSFW in 2015). Each month, 1,400 Marines flow through the depot with an average Sunday attendance of over 100.

“The Military Project at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne has provided Lutheran Service Books (LSB) for Divine Services at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) in San Diego,” Rev. Snashall wrote. “The recruits at MCRD are generally between 18 and 19 years old and may never have been away from home for a significant length of time (recruit training lasts 13 weeks). Their computers, televisions, watches and cell phones are things of the past. No family, no old friends, no technology, just an instructor with other recruits in the unit; the instructor is, as one recruit put it, ‘he is the law!’ But if all we proclaim is that it is nice to have family or friends or technology, then the liturgical Divine Services at MCRD would be empty and meaningless. St. Paul has defined the ministry in a few choice words:

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. … For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. (1 Corinthians 1:18, 2:2)

“This defines my work as pastor at MCRD proclaiming the Gospel through Word and Sacrament. The LSB itself provides the backbone of that proclamation, giving me a teaching text that includes the Catechism and the Divine Service as administered in the recruits’ home parish. As these men progress, they discover Christ crucified in their own lives, seeing the parallel between being a marine in the Corps and a member of the Body of Christ.”

Worshippers at the chapel read, on the inside cover of each hymnal, this grateful message from the CTSFW Military Project: “Thank you for your important work of being God’s instrument of protection. The Lord Jesus bless you and keep you safely in His care.” We pray for God’s blessings on these hymnals as they bring the mercy of Christ through liturgy and song to those who protect us.

Many thanks to all who lovingly and graciously support the Military Project. Together we have the opportunity to equip chaplains and pastors in their important ministry of proclaiming the Gospel to the Armed Forces.

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

Deaconess Carolyn S. Brinkley (MilitaryProject@ctsfw.edu) serves as coordinator of the Military Project at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
What a blessing for our future pastors attending Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne, to know that their tuition is now covered for them. That doesn’t mean that the costs associated with educating a seminarian have gone away. It means that generous donors and congregations throughout our church have made much appreciated financial gifts to endow CTSFW with the means to cover tuition expenses for all students studying for the ministry. Given the fact that many students entering the Seminary do so with large student loan obligations from their undergraduate education, this is welcome news indeed as we seek to encourage more men to serve the Lord as pastors in His church! With the help of individuals and congregations committed to making sure seminary education remains affordable, such a financial blessing can continue for years to come. By it, men continue to answer the call to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ as pastors of the Church.

Make no mistake about it: the need for pastors is great. Fortunately, the Bible gives us some guidance in dealing with the need for workers in God’s vineyard.

Read Psalm 24:1-2. Oftentimes we Christians worry and fret about the Church and the number of vacancies we see in many of her pulpits. What important principle do we need to remember as we address the need for future pastors?

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Read Matthew 9:35-37. What did Jesus see as He wandered through the towns and villages? __________________________

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How similar is the world today as we wander through the towns and villages around us? __________________________

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There is perhaps no greater joy in the life of a congregation then when one of its sons or daughters answers the call to serve as a full-time professional church worker. The whole congregation embraces those young persons with love and support as they head off to seminary or college to prepare for their future life in service to the Lord. However, the excitement of studying and preparing for such a worthy endeavor is always tempered by the financial realities of paying for school related expenses, as well as housing, health insurance and many other miscellaneous expenses.
What did Jesus tell His disciples to do to help address the lack of workers? 

What can we do today? 

Read Romans 10:14-15: While here St. Paul is addressing the Jews and the conditions required for them to believe in Jesus, these verses also apply to any people who do not believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. What four conditions does Paul say are required for a person to call on Christ and be saved? 

It’s entirely possible that many members of the LCMS don’t fully understand the process of how men become pastors and end up serving in a particular church. How can congregations of the LCMS make sure all their members know and appreciate the process of pastoral development and placement? 

How can congregations of the LCMS help in this task of preparing and sending men into the world to preach the Good News? 

Read Matthew 25:14-30. In this Parable of the Talents, we see that the Lord knows His people are blessed with differing amounts of “talents.” We also see that He expects us to use our talents wisely as we serve the church. If we know that God has blessed each of us with “talents” unique to our abilities, and we also know that all things belong to God, how might this motivate us (as individuals and as congregations) in our desire to make sure that seminary education remains affordable? 

How might this principle help congregations throughout our Synod to identify and encourage men to consider the pastoral ministry as their vocation? 

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15. Many churches in the LCMS are blessed to be served by faithful pastors already. How can St. Paul’s words to the Corinthians help such congregations today see beyond their own needs and become motivated to help other congregations as they seek to have their pastoral needs met? 

Yes, the need is indeed great for men to answer the call to serve the Church as pastors. The Lord is well aware of the need and makes provision for His people to identify and train these men to serve where needed. When congregations and individuals are made aware of the needs that exist now and in the future, the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of His people to meet those needs. God is faithful and He will do it! What a blessing and privilege we believers have to be an important part of God’s present and future plans for His Church!

The Rev. Paul J. Mundinger (pastor@stjohnberlin.org), CTSFW 1998, serves as pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Berlin, Wisconsin.
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