

8-1-2015

# Concordia Seminary magazine | Summer 2015

Jeffrey Kloha

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholar.csl.edu/csm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Kloha, Jeffrey, "Concordia Seminary magazine | Summer 2015" (2015). *Concordia Seminary Magazine*. 14.  
<http://scholar.csl.edu/csm/14>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Seminary Magazine by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

# CONCORDIA SEMINARY

SUMMER 2015



SENT TO  
**SERVE**

WALKING THE WALK IN FAITH

CALL DAY 2015

A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

# *first look...*

*As people gather on Chapel Plaza for a reception to celebrate the pastoral Call Service, April 29, 2015, a plane lights up a trail behind the cross atop the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus. This photo captures the end of an exciting day that included two services celebrating students who were sent out into ministry to lead with the Gospel.*







# CONCORDIA SEMINARY

THE MAGAZINE OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS

## FEATURES

### 6 FEATURE: SENT TO SERVE

Throughout the year, Concordia Seminary “sends” its graduates into the world. But what does that mean? What does the Bible say about this? Dr. David J. Peter looks to Acts to answer these questions.

### 10 FEATURE: WALKING THE WALK IN FAITH

Chris Paavola, a student in the Residential Alternate Route program, moved with his family to plant a church in an urban neighborhood near St. Louis. They’ve begun prayer walking, 100 miles so far, as one way to serve the community.

### 14 FEATURE: 2015 CALL DAY INSERT

Get all the details about Concordia Seminary’s calls, vicarage assignments, and deaconess interships from this academic year, and read about how live streaming and social media has made this day more accessible than ever.

## IN EVERY ISSUE

5	From the President	28	Events
20	Faculty Focus	29	Support Your Sem
23	News Worth Noting	30	Alumni and Friends
26	Student Spotlight		

*Correction:* In the Spring 2015 issue, Margot Loeb was incorrectly identified as Willie Miesner in the Seminary Guild update on Page 29. We apologize for the error.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Concordia Seminary serves Church and world by providing theological education and leadership centered in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for the formation of pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, scholars, and leaders in the name of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

To be added to the mailing list, or to receive the magazine electronically, address correspondence to: *Concordia Seminary* magazine, Concordia Seminary, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105; call 800-822-5287; or email [magazine@csl.edu](mailto:magazine@csl.edu). Congregations may request that copies in bulk for distribution within their churches.

Copyright © August 2015, Concordia Seminary, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior written permission of Concordia Seminary.

## LET'S BE SOCIAL!

-  [www.facebook.com/ConcordiaSem](http://www.facebook.com/ConcordiaSem)
-  [@ConcordiaSem](https://twitter.com/ConcordiaSem)
-  [@ConcordiaSem](https://www.instagram.com/ConcordiaSem)

**Publisher**  
Dale A. Meyer

**Executive Editor**  
Jeffrey Kloha

**Managing Editor**  
Vicki Biggs

**Editor**  
Becky Pagel

**Art Director**  
Jayna Rollings

**Designer**  
Michelle Meier

**Assistant Editor**  
Tiffany Leong

**Contributing Writers**  
Vicki Biggs, Kim Krull,  
Tiffany Leong, Becky Pagel,  
Megan Panarusky

**Photographers**  
Jill Gray, Tiffany Leong,  
Nancy Olson, Mark Polege



Concordia Seminary magazine is a member of the Associated Church Press, the oldest interdenominational religious press association in North America.

*Cover image: Residential Alternate Route student Chris Paavola, along with his wife, Ashley, and their children, Isaiah and Selah, prayer-walk through the streets of University City, Mo., July 2, 2015. Paavola is starting a church plant in the area, called All Nations. Photo: Jill Gray*

# *from the* PRESIDENT

Sent to Serve. I remember my early years in congregational ministry. When a situation arose, I asked myself, “What would a pastor do? Those pastors who influenced me, what would they do in this situation?” As I gained experience, I eventually came to realize that I was no longer acting like a pastor; I am a pastor! The students we send you will, I pray, come in time to feel nicely fitted in their calling, but for now they’re facing a temptation that could upset your congregation and weaken its mission.

They are tempted to equate their academic preparation with personal spiritual maturity. They could arrive at your church, hang their diploma on the wall, perhaps don a collar or deaconess uniform, and be tempted to think they are different from you, that they are closer to God because of the knowledge they acquired in the Seminary, and because they have been set apart for public ministry. Paul David Tripp paints a scary picture: “Academized Christianity, which is not constantly connected to the heart and puts its hope in knowledge and skill, can actually make students dangerous. It arms them with powerful knowledge and skills that can make the students think that they are more mature and godly than they actually are. It arms students with weapons of spiritual warfare that if not used with humility and grace will harm the people they are meant to help” (“Dangerous Calling,” *Crossway*; 54). St. Paul puts it this way, “Knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Cor. 8:1).

Formation at Concordia Seminary aims to send graduates to you with knowledge, skills, and especially the selfless love of Christ. One faculty committee meets weekly to monitor the progress of students, and the entire faculty gathers quarterly to share observations about students. Besides regular conversations between our administrators and pastors, the full faculty meets annually with all district presidents to discuss how we can improve formation before and after first calls. Together we strongly encourage our graduates to participate in continuing education and in the Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) program, and we ask you also to encourage them to keep growing.

In a few weeks I’ll lay on our new students their greatest purpose at Concordia Seminary: To quest after God and be found by Him in the faith, hope, and love that are in Jesus Christ. “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [learning how to preach, teach, visit, and so on] will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). Please keep sending us students who are intellectually able and who demonstrate a loving heart for people. Pray that faculty and staff model for them knowledge and skills governed by a servant’s heart, “every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). Then receive them back into your congregations and circuits the most excellent way possible, with love, for we all together are the body of Christ and members one with another (1 Cor. 12:12, 31).

*Dale A. Meyer*

Dale A. Meyer



*Dr. Dale A. Meyer pitches in with the gardening at the Seminary's orientation servant event at a local area community garden in the inner city of St. Louis, Sept. 3, 2014.*

# SENT TO SERVE

BY DR. DAVID J. PETER  
Associate Professor of Practical Theology

*Second-year students raise their hands in response to a question during the vicarage assignment service, April 29, 2015, in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus.*



In the very early chapters of Acts, God brings people from various places to Jerusalem in order to connect them with the life-saving message of the risen Christ. So, for example, in Chapter 2 (verses 9-11), people are gathered from the east (“Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia”), from the north (“Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia”), from the west (“Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome”), and from the south (“Arabians”). The point is that God brings them from many disparate and distant lands to a central place — Jerusalem — where the Gospel is proclaimed to them.

But as the story of the Church progresses through Acts, the direction by which God moves people reverses. Rather than bringing people to a central place where the Gospel may be heard, God predominantly sends His representatives outward to where other people live. It is to those places and for those people (“for all who are far off,” Acts 2:39) that the Gospel is proclaimed. In other words, God’s servants are sent. They are sent, even as Jesus had commissioned them just before ascending into heaven: “And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Clearly the movement of Christian witness in Acts changes from being one which is largely centripetal — that is, pulling unbelievers toward the gathering of believers — to one that is primarily centrifugal, in which believers go out to where the unbelievers are. The Church is sent for mission (the word “mission” originates from a word meaning “sent”).

The society in which we live is becoming increasingly like that which the early Church encountered in Acts. In many ways the 21st century resembles the first century. North Americans live more and more in what can be described as an unchurched culture. Christianity is not given preferential status. Christians are increasingly regarded as outsiders rather than insiders within this culture, much as they were in the Roman empire of the first century. And so there is the need to adjust our church’s engagement with society. Like the early Christians in Acts, we move from a predominantly centripetal

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >*



approach (which assumes that people in society will be attracted to what the Church has to offer) to a more centrifugal one (which involves Christians going forth from the assembly into the world and engaging the unchurched in their life contexts).

## THE SEMINARY'S ROLE IN SENDING

In many ways, sending is what Concordia Seminary is about. The ultimate purpose of the Seminary is to send church workers — pastors, deaconesses, missionaries, and theological scholars — into the mission field of North America and beyond. Professor Andrew Bartelt is fond of welcoming new students to the Seminary with this greeting: “We are glad that you are here! We can’t wait for you to leave!” This unexpected salutation causes one to pause and to ponder what Seminary education is all about. Indeed, we rejoice when God brings more and more students to study and learn at Concordia Seminary in a kind of centripetal movement. Yet the church rejoices even more when at Call Day these students receive their assignments to go throughout the world and deliver the Gospel to people in their far-flung congregations, communities, and homes. They are sent from St. Louis to be missionaries at places such as Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; Pascagoula, Miss.; Algona, Iowa; Tucson, Ariz.; Kennewick, Wash.; and Mexico City. Such is the centrifugal movement of mission!



The sending of Gospel servants was God’s plan in the first century, and it continues to be His plan in the 21st century. In Rom. 10:13, Paul cites God’s promise that was delivered through the prophet Joel: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” But then Paul reminds us that this doesn’t happen unless heralds of the Good News

are sent to where “everyone” lives. Paul observes: “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?” (Rom. 10:14-15). How indeed! The centrifugal movement of sending is essential for the life-transforming Gospel to connect with sinners who are distributed throughout the earth. The mission, the sending, is for the sake of the message, the Gospel. And this is all for the sake of the salvation of souls throughout the world.

## SENT TO SERVE

If it is true that the Seminary is all about sending, then it is also true that the Seminary graduates are all about serving. Those who are sent forth are sent to serve. Indeed, the very titles which these graduates assume express this truth. A pastor is also a minister, a title which at its root means to serve. A deaconess likewise is a servant; the ascription derives from the New Testament word for one who serves. These workers are sent forth to serve in the pattern of Christ, who “came not to be served but to serve” (Mark 10:45).

## SERVING WHAT?

What is it that these servants are sent to serve? Paul provides a clear answer. He again quotes the Old Testament (Is. 52:7) and states: “As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’” (Rom. 10:15). These workers are to be, using one of Martin Luther’s favorite ascriptions, servants of the Word! They are to be those who serve forth faithfully and prolifically the Word of the Gospel! Paul indicates that this serving is through proclamation, and so pastors are taught in the Seminary to preach and teach the messages of Law and Gospel. As appropriate, deaconesses also are equipped to share the Good News in their contexts of serving.

*Participants in the MissionShift Institute trek through different parts of St. Louis on a tour of ministries in the metro area, Sept. 13, 2014.*

## SERVING HOW?


Next, how do these sent servants serve? It is by proclaiming the Good News. But there is another dynamic to the task of serving. Indeed, proclamation of the Gospel is the goal, but this also is accompanied by demonstration of mercy and care. Pastors and deaconesses are distinctively prepared for this service as they demonstrate the love of Christ in word and deed to those who are hurting, needy, ill, injured, aged, ailing, and dying. As is described in Acts, oftentimes the Church's care for people's bodily needs lays the groundwork for an openness to spiritual healing through the Word of the Gospel (see Acts 2:44-45, 3:1-26, 4:32-35, 5:12-16, 6:1-7, 9:32-43). Demonstrating love through acts of mercy accompanies the witness of the Word. Serving involves both demonstration and proclamation.

## SERVING WHERE?

Where do these who are sent by the Seminary serve? The obvious answer is that they are to serve where they are sent. Since most of the graduates of Concordia Seminary are sent to Lutheran congregations that have called them, their service is rendered to the members of those congregations. These saints gather weekly around Word and Sacrament in worship, where pastors preach, lead the liturgy, and administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In this manner, God employs the centripetal movement by bringing people to this central place where He is present, to bestow the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, all according to His promise. But the centrifugal motion is also apparent in the service of faithful pastors and deaconesses. These servants have the distinctive privilege and joy of entering into the daily places and the ordinary lives of the flock. They visit members in their homes, workplaces, schools, and other contexts of everyday life. They comfort parishioners in hospitals and nursing homes. Their presence is beyond the premises of the church building. Concordia Seminary seeks to form pastors and deaconesses who embed themselves in the lives of the people to whom they have been sent. The old adage still rings true: "A home-going pastor makes for a church-going people."

## SENT TO WHOM?

Nevertheless, the centrifugal movement doesn't end there. It is not limited to the members of the congregation, although the pastor should never neglect them. Instead, the movement extends even farther into the wider community. For it is to the lost, as well as to the found, that Seminary graduates are sent. Jesus stated that He was sent to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Christ lived among those who were not regarded as part of the religious institutions of the first century, showing love and mercy to those who were considered to be sinners by the ecclesial establishment (Mark 2:15-17; Luke 15:1-7). Now He sends pastors to do the same (John 20:21). They are sent to serve those beyond the premises of the church property and into the lives of those lost in unbelief. They are to incarnate Christ in the broader community beyond the congregation of believers. This is especially important today in this "post-Christian" society in which many people question the value and relevance of Christ. It is this mission, the mission to those who have not believed and who have never heard, that Paul refers to in Rom. 10:14-15. As it was in the first century, so it is now in the 21st century. It is to the lost — as well as to those found in Christian congregations — that pastors, deaconesses, and missionaries are sent to serve.



**FOR IT IS TO  
THE LOST,  
AS WELL AS TO  
THE FOUND, THAT  
SEMINARY GRADUATES  
ARE SENT.**



# WALKING THE WALK IN FAITH

*Ashley, Chris, Selah, and Isaiah Paavola stop at the crosswalk signal on Delmar Avenue in University City, Mo., on their weekly prayer walk through the community, July 2, 2015.*

Farm equipment is not a typical sight in the city. But Chris Paavola has walked over 100 miles in University City near downtown St. Louis, praying as he goes, praying what he sees. And when he looks down at his feet, he sees plowshares.

“On our very first prayer walk,” Chris said on his blog, “we were struck with the image of our feet like plowshares, with our prayers tilling the hard earth and making it ready for planting. It’s a metaphor that stuck with us ever since. Whether it’s the first century or today, prayer prepares the way as a church begins.”

Chris Paavola has been assigned a vicarage to plant a Lutheran church in an unserved part of University City.

He also is raising a family, sparking a community action campaign, and studying in the Residential Alternate Route (RAR) program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

For Chris, all of these roles and pursuits find their meaning in one thing: They are opportunities to love people and introduce them to Jesus.

## A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE KINGDOM

Chris met his wife, Ashley, years ago while both were serving at St. John Church in Ellisville, Mo. Ashley started working as a receptionist at the church when she was 18 years old, and then moved into a variety of roles that allowed her to share her love for Jesus Christ with children and youth. When she resigned in March 2015 to focus on the new church plant, her family and her church celebrated 10 years of Ashley’s leadership and ministry to the next generation.

Chris, in turn, began by working with youth at St. John, but then became the director of worship production. Chris met Ashley while she was still working as a receptionist. A friend remembers Chris finding excuses to walk past her desk several times a day. Chris saw “a fire in her eyes to help kids know Jesus.” Ashley was drawn to the way Chris sees God’s hand moving in the events and moments of people’s lives. The two have been married for 10 years, and have adopted two children, Selah and Isaiah. From the beginning, Chris and Ashley’s desire to see

more people know and follow Jesus has been deep and mutual. As they explored opportunities, church planting presented itself as a clear path to bringing the Gospel to people who have not been connected to any church. “More churches reach more people, new churches reach new people, different churches reach different people,” Chris said. Prayer and discernment led them to believe church planting was a good fit for their family.

## PREPARING TO PLANT

The natural next step was to pursue pastoral training at Concordia Seminary. In May, Chris completed the two years of classroom study required for the Seminary’s RAR program, for which he qualified based on his age and past experience.

One of his professors, Rev. Todd Jones, expressed confidence that Chris is well-equipped to plant a church. “He’s a high-energy, highly relational person who’s very centered in his calling to be a missionary,” said Jones, who oversaw Chris’ field education and his assessment as a potential church planter. “He’s good at not letting the task overtake the relationship.”

Jones said other professors also could see Chris’ ability to connect with people. “He was bringing the real conversations he was having into the discussion of our theology,” Jones said.

This fostered practical application and showed that Chris was clearly engaging the world around him.

Chris also engaged fellow students. “The friendships formed with guys in class — the lunchroom conversations, the hallway conversations — those were huge,” he said. “Iron sharpens iron.” Some of these friends and professors have walked alongside him as he prepares to plant a church.

Supportive relationships with other congregations in the area and with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Missouri District also are vital to the success of a church plant. Chris and his vicarage supervisor, Rev. Joe Sullivan, have been in conversations with St. James Lutheran Church, located at the northwestern edge of St. Louis. They hope to develop ways of working together. The district also is supporting the church plant, seeking to reach people who have not been connected to a Lutheran church.

**“MORE CHURCHES  
REACH MORE PEOPLE,  
NEW CHURCHES REACH  
NEW PEOPLE, DIFFERENT  
CHURCHES REACH  
DIFFERENT PEOPLE.”**

**CHRIS PAAVOLA**

## A STUDENT IN PRAYER

As Chris' time at the Seminary progressed, the Paavolas were presented with the opportunity to be involved in a church plant during his vicarage, working just a few miles north of the campus in University City (U City). This urban community of 35,000 people contains neighborhoods separated along racial lines. Yet the majority of its people, regardless of their race, feel a great deal of pride in U City. Residents place a high value on the arts — music, theater, dance, and visual art. Furthermore, they want to see their young people engaged in positive activities and pursuing a positive future. Thus, despite divisions, the opportunities to connect and work together are abundant.

Chris responded to this church plant opportunity by beginning to take Seminary friends, professors, friends from St. John, and his family on “prayer walks” through U City on Friday mornings before class.

“It started with Ashley and me trying to discern whether God was calling us to U City,” Chris said. Ashley said they put the children in the back of the van with a movie and drove around the city, looking and praying. Doing this prompted them to go back and do it again. Driving eventually turned into walking, and Chris now has a map full of highlighted marks, indicating the vast number of streets where he has walked and prayed.

How does prayer walking work? Many of Chris' prayer-walking companions have never done it before, and have questions. Often Chris starts by saying “pray what you see.” He and his companions will pray for the faith and well-being of the people they encounter, or the constructive use of buildings they pass. They also will draw on Scripture for prayer: tripping on broken sidewalk has prompted, “Keep our feet from stumbling.” Spotting artificial plants has prompted, “Make us a church that bears fruit.”

“Prayer walking is letting God bring His requests to me, not me bringing requests to God,” Chris said. “Even though we are the ones praying, God can use what He brings into our line of sight to show us what He wants us to ask for, what is on His heart, and how He is working.”

This has certainly been Chris' experience as he has prayer-walked in U City every week for more than a year. Along the way, he wrote a short book for Amazon Kindle called *Pray What You See* to prepare his prayer-walking companions and to share what he has learned. The response to the book has been far greater than Chris expected, and he is excited and humbled at the thought of all the prayer walks it might be inspiring in neighborhoods all over the world.

## THE RIGHT FIT

The more the Paavolas prayed, explored U City, and talked to residents, the more they realized just how well the city and their family fit together.

First, through the adoption of their children, their family has become multiracial, and reconciliation between races is close to their hearts. “Make us a church as diverse as the city we serve” is a prayer that God has continued to lay on Chris' heart. In fact, this prayer inspired the name of his new church plant: All Nations. Chris hopes that a visible racial unity among All Nations' people will give others pause and make them curious. He wants this church to validate the confession that Christ really is for “all nations.”

Second, Ashley's care for young people matches U City's need for youth engagement. “My hope is in helping them see their identity in Christ,” she said. The more young people understand their identity and feel they have a purpose, she explained, the more they will be drawn to engage in positive, purposeful activities. Idle activities, or even activities that cause trouble, will naturally tend to fall away.

Finally, Chris' love for the arts is at home in U City. “Art speaks across racial and demographic lines. A color is a color and a song is a song, regardless of your ethnicity,” he said. For Chris, the arts are not only a joy but also an

***Chris and Ashley Paavola prayer-walk through University City, Mo., letting God lead their steps, June 12, 2015.***



excellent starting point for relationships. Furthermore, they are a means by which his diverse congregation will be able to connect with one another and even praise Jesus in creative ways.

The realization of this three-pronged alignment between U City and their family, combined with guidance received through time spent in prayer, led the Paavolas to accept the opportunity to make U City their new home and begin a new church there.

## SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Something else happened as Chris prayed specific prayers for U City: his heart for its people grew. Even as he prepares to plant a church to bring the message of the Gospel to people, he has come to understand more deeply the day-to-day physical needs of people in the community.

Conversations led to plans, and now some 15 U City community organizations have partnered in a campaign to ask residents, “What is your hope for the future of U City?” Postcards bearing this question will be mailed to every U City home in August and September. The conversation also will take place on Twitter. In October, once all the postcards and tweets have been collected, organizers will count and reveal the top 10 hopes U City residents have for the future, as well as give residents the opportunity to get involved with the partner organizations as they take action to turn the 10 major hopes into reality.

Chris was humbled as each community organization accepted the invitation to participate. Organizations that hadn’t worked together before have come together for this campaign. They believe that U City’s people can do great things if they work together. So do the Paavolas.

## MANAGING THE TRANSITIONS

“It’s exhilarating and terrifying all at the same time,” Chris said.

As the Paavolas have followed Jesus from Ellisville to Concordia Seminary to U City, and from steady jobs to school to church planting, they are constantly faced with new joys and new pressures.

Ashley said, in the moments of whirlwind change, “You look at each other and go, ‘We did this, right? And we’re still OK, right? OK, good.’ And then you keep going.”

“Everything we’re doing is because we feel called,” said Chris. “[Our] family will be stronger for putting it in a place of trust like this.”

And they can see that this is true. “The last two years have been a ridiculous showing of God’s will,” Ashley said. For example, some events that could have been stressful were surprisingly smooth. Their house in Ellisville sold before it even went on the market, and they found a home to rent in U City within the following week. Ashley loves moments that reveal how God has been working long before they knew what they needed, and she looks forward to more of them. “For me, that’s really exciting, to learn what God has planned already,” she said.



**HOW DOES PRAYER WALKING WORK? “PRAY WHAT YOU SEE.”**

CHRIS PAAVOLA

## FIXING THEIR EYES

God has surely been working all along to prepare Chris and Ashley for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, and to orchestrate opportunities for them to do just that. Even as they currently find themselves sent to plant a church in U City, they are sure many surprises still await them. Yet their focus on Jesus and helping people meet Him is a calling that God will undoubtedly continue to nurture and bless. “I’m looking forward to reaching lost people,” Chris said. “There’s really not anything else I’d rather be doing.”

*More than 100 miles down, Chris Paavola keeps his map of University City, Mo., close. He highlights the streets he has walked and prayed in an effort to cover the whole city in prayer.*

# CALLS FOR THE 2014-15 ACADEMIC YEAR

*Unless otherwise noted, all calls were in the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program and announced on Call Day, April 29, 2015.*

## CALLS INTO THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

### ATLANTIC DISTRICT

- † **Anderson, Timothy:** St. Peter Evangelical, Pine Island/Warwick, N.Y.
- † **Budenholzer, Mark:** Calvary, East Meadow, N.Y.
- † **Luhman, Ethan:** St. Paul's Evangelical, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
- † **Mayer, Morris:** The Village, Bronxville, N.Y. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Taber, Jason:** Lutheran Church of St. John the Evangelist, Brooklyn, N.Y.

### CALIFORNIA-NEVADA-HAWAII DISTRICT

- † **LeGreco, Nathan:** St. Mark, Elko, Nev.
- † **Vallejo, Juan:** Trinity, Watsonville, Calif. (CHS)

### CENTRAL ILLINOIS DISTRICT

- † **Doublestein, Philip:** Redeemer, Peoria, Ill.

### EASTERN DISTRICT

- † **Nickel, Jeffrey:** Holy Cross, Clarence, N.Y.
- † **Wolf, Richard:** Holy Cross, Middleport, N.Y. (SMP Spring '15)

### ENGLISH DISTRICT

- † **Palmer, Joshua:** Catalina, Tucson, Ariz.
- † **Schneider, Christopher:** Beautiful Savior, Lee's Summit, Mo.

### FLORIDA-GEORGIA DISTRICT

- † **Boeck, Thomas:** Faith, Marietta, Ga. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Carlson, Jeffrey:** Trinity, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (RAR)
- † **Chitwood, Kenneth:** First, Gainesville, Fla. (CMC)
- † **Ellsworth, Adam:** Grace Evangelical, Atlanta, Ga.

### INDIANA DISTRICT

- † **Ferry, Joseph:** SouthWest, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- † **Schultz, David:** St. Peter's, Fort Wayne, Ind.

### IOWA DISTRICT EAST

- † **Balvanz, Richard:** King of Kings, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (SMP Spring '15)

### IOWA DISTRICT WEST

- † **Hannemann, Aaron:** St. Paul, Ankeny, Iowa
- † **Schlund, Thomas:** Trinity, Algona, Iowa

### KANSAS DISTRICT

- † **Blickhahn, Henry:** Our Redeemer, Hutchinson, Kan. (SMP Spring '15)

### MICHIGAN DISTRICT

- † **Black, Eric:** St. Paul, Kalkaska, Mich.
- † **Hall, Matthew:** Faith, Bay City, Mich.
- † **Howard, Daniel:** Hope, Warren, Mich. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Huff, Mark:** Faith, Port Huron, Mich.
- † **Kuehl, Kyle:** Trinity, Newberry, Mich.
- † **McCarty, David:** Emmanuel, Britton, Mich. (RAR)
- † **Schuler, Matthew:** Holy Cross Evangelical, Oxford, Mich.
- † **Woell, Brennan:** St. Luke, Nunica, Mich.

### MID-SOUTH DISTRICT

- † **Krueger, Kenneth:** Grace Celebration, Cordova, Tenn.
- † **Tooley, Mark:** Peace, Conway, Ark. (SMP Spring '15)

### MINNESOTA NORTH DISTRICT

- † **Manthe, Jeffrey:** SonRise, Avon, Minn. (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Mommens, David:** St. Paul's, Melrose, Minn.
- † **Richter, Kevin:** Peace in Christ, Hermantown, Minn.
- † **Sorensen, James:** Holy Trinity / Immanuel, Blackduck/Cass Lake, Minn. (Fall '14)
- † **Varns, Jonathan:** First/Good Shepherd, Ely/Babbitt, Minn.

### MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT

- † **Audette, Andrew:** theAlley Church, Cottage Grove, Minn.
- † **Mulso, Michael:** Emanuel, Inver Grove Heights, Minn. (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Rieger, Paul:** Trinity, Faribault, Minn.



*Dr. Dale A. Meyer congratulates fourth-year student Adam Ellsworth on his call to Grace Evangelical, Atlanta, April 29, 2015, in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus.*



*Left: Fourth-year student Ethan Luhman, center, shares the news of his call to St. Paul's Evangelical, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., with his family. Right: Alyssa and Jesse Kueker smile for a family photo before the Call Service begins. Both photos, April 29, 2015, in Chapel Plaza.*

**MISSOURI DISTRICT**

- † **Hunsaker, Mark:** Praise and Worship, Branson, Mo.
- † **Kapels, Calvin:** St. Stephen, Liberty, Mo.
- † **Kueker, Jesse:** Trinity, Clinton, Mo.
- † **Longman, Eric:** St. Paul, Jackson, Mo.
- † **Rolf, David:** Peace, Kansas City, Mo.
- † **Roth, David:** Zion/Mount Calvary, Owensville/Belle, Mo. (RAR)
- † **Schlund, Andrew:** LCMS Board for International Mission, Mexico City
- † **Schweigert, Jon-Michael:** Faith Evangelical, Knob Noster, Mo.
- † **Walston, Robert:** Christ Memorial, St. Louis, Mo.

**NEBRASKA DISTRICT**

- † **Eliason, Carl:** Peace, Grand Island, Neb. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Emery, Glen:** Immanuel, Osmond, Neb. (RAR Fall '14)
- † **Haack, James:** Beautiful Savior, La Vista, Neb. (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Kruse, Caleb:** Lord of Life, Elkhorn, Neb.
- † **Pitsch, David:** Good Shepherd, Gretna, Neb.
- † **Wiese, Daniel:** Mount Calvary, Holdrege, Neb. (SMP Spring '15)

**NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT**

- † **Mongeau, Kevin:** St. Paul's, New Hartford, Conn. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Smith, Justin:** Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, New Fairfield, Conn.

**NORTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT**

- † **Balk, Jordan:** Mount Olive, Weston, Wis. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Jones, Kyle:** Faith, Appleton, Wis.
- † **Swanson, Timothy:** Rib Mountain, Wausau, Wis. (RAR)

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT**

- † **Federwitz, David:** Lutheran Bible Translators, West Africa (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Richard, Keith:** Immanuel, Belvidere, Ill. (SMP)

**NORTHWEST DISTRICT**

- † **Lane, Marcus:** Lamb of God Evangelical, Seattle, Wash.
- † **Lange, Alexander:** Holy Cross Evangelical, Albany, Ore.
- † **Larmi, Eugene:** Lamb of God, Wasilla, Alaska (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Noble, Andrew:** Bethlehem, Kennewick, Wash.

**OHIO DISTRICT**

- † **Smith, Jeffery:** St. Paul, Westlake, Ohio
- † **Steinbrenner, Adam:** St. John, Dublin, Ohio

**PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DISTRICT**

- † **Barker, Robert:** Trinity, Simi Valley, Calif. (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Blake, Kyle:** LINC Los Angeles for First Lutheran, Long Beach, Calif. (CMC)
- † **Cuen, Eduardo:** Trinity, Norwalk, Calif. (SMP Fall '14)

- † **Jennings, Mark:** Our Savior, Bellflower, Calif. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Martin, Paul:** Faith, Vista, Calif. (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Ruehs, Jonathan:** Board of Regents, Concordia University, Irvine, Calif. (CMC)
- † **Smith, Ted:** Good Shepherd, Yucca Valley, Calif. (CMC)

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT**

- † **Mauss, Douglas:** Family of Christ, Colorado Springs, Colo. (SMP Fall '14)

**SELK DISTRICT**

- † **Hoyer, Jacob:** Holy Cross, Lake Mary, Fla. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Johnson, Christopher:** Holy Cross, Lake Mary, Fla. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Steinbrueck, Kurt:** Family of Christ, Tampa, Fla. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Whitehead, William:** Family of Christ, Tampa, Fla. (SMP Fall '14)

**SOUTH DAKOTA DISTRICT**

- † **Letsche, Jason:** Blessed Redeemer, Brandon, S.D.
- † **Nemera, Chera:** Lord of Life, Sioux Falls, S.D. (EIT Fall '14)
- † **Resner, Matthew:** Immanuel/St. Paul, Menno/Scotland, S.D.
- † **Wilshusen, James:** Emanuel/Zion, Sisseton/Waubay, S.D.

**SOUTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT**

- † **Adetiba, Benjamin:** Bethany, Milwaukee, Wis. (EIT Fall '14)



- † **Anderson, Daniel:** Mount Olive, Madison, Wis. (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Novelli-Oliveros, German:** Grace, Milwaukee, Wis. (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Thao, Moses:** Redeemer, Manitowoc, Wis. (EIIT Fall '14)

#### SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT

- † **Ellis, Garet:** First, Towson, Md.

#### SOUTHERN DISTRICT

- † **Biernacki, Christopher:** Our Redeemer, Florence, Ala.
- † **Carlone, Brandon:** Peace, Oxford, Miss.
- † **Fertitta, Patrick:** University, Tuscaloosa, Ala. (Summer '14)
- † **Garnett, James:** Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Biloxi, Miss. (Winter '15)
- † **Henze, Richard:** Our Redeemer, Clinton, Miss. (RAR)
- † **Luttinen, Calvin:** First English, Metairie, La.
- † **Miller, Wayne:** Grace, Mobile, Ala.
- † **Waffel, Derek:** Christ, Pascagoula, Miss.

#### SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT

- † **Beuster, Alan:** Hope, Granite City, Ill. (RAR)
- † **Marth, Cory:** St. John, Sparta, Ill.
- † **Ostlund, Daniel:** Holy Cross, Waterloo, Ill. (Summer '14)

#### TEXAS DISTRICT

- † **Ashcraft, Karl:** Water's Edge, Frisco, Texas (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Bashir, Sabir:** LINC North Texas, Dallas, Texas (EIIT Fall '14)
- † **Cody, William:** Good Shepherd, Iowa Park, Texas (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Duffy, Joshua:** Pilgrim, Houston, Texas
- † **Grebing, Barrett:** Texas District LCMS, Austin, Texas
- † **Holder, Christopher:** Holy Cross, Dallas, Texas (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Jennings, James:** Faith, Huntsville, Texas (SMP Spring '15)
- † **Jurischk, Bradley:** St. Timothy, Houston, Texas (SMP Fall '14)
- † **Mahmood, Wilson:** Board of Mission Administration, Austin, Texas (EIIT Fall '14)
- † **Pulliam, Mark:** Mount Calvary, San Antonio, Texas (CMC)
- † **Smith, Garrett:** Christ, Loebau, Texas
- † **Weider, Michael:** Memorial, Katy, Texas (RAR)
- † **Winters, Thomas:** Concordia, San Antonio, Texas (SMP Fall '14)

#### PENDING

- Campbell, Delwyn** (CMC)
- Espinosa, Alfonso**
- Heckert, Peter**
- Ochoa, Gabriel** (CHS)

- Ramirez, Walter** (CHS)
- Thomas, James**

#### DEACONESS ASSIGNMENTS

#### IOWA DISTRICT WEST

- † **Guerra, Noemi:** Shepherd of the Valley, West Des Moines, Iowa (CHS Fall '14)

#### SOUTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT

- † **Catchpole, Rebecca:** Our Savior Deaf Lutheran, Madison, Wis. (DIT)

#### SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT

- † **Lustila, Holly:** Eternal Shepherd, Seneca, S.C.

#### TEXAS DISTRICT

- † **Jofre, Erica:** LINC Houston, Houston, Texas (CHS Fall '14)

#### PENDING

- Fernandez, Lisa** (CHS Fall '14)
- Guevara, Iris** (CHS Fall '14)

CHS: Center for Hispanic Studies  
 CMC: Cross-Cultural Ministry Center  
 DIT: Deaf Institute of Theology  
 EIIT: Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology  
 RAR: Residential Alternate Route  
 SMP: Specific Ministry Pastor Program

## Getting social with @mattschuler



**Fourth-year student Matt Schuler, left, takes a selfie with John Klinger, Concordia Seminary's chief information officer, at the LCMS Michigan District convention in June 2015.**

Social media has become increasingly important as a means of communicating with others, and the Church is no exception. Many pastors are embracing

social media in an effort to connect with people, whether they are part of their congregation or not. Concordia Seminary students know this, and Matt Schuler (@mattschuler), 2015 graduate and newly ordained pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Oxford, Mich., is one of them.

"I had a fantastic opportunity during my final year at the Seminary when our Student Association president, Tom Schlund (@Tom\_Schlund, '15) asked me to run the Student Association's Twitter account, @ConcordiaSTL," Schuler said. "That provided me a chance to engage with the Seminary accounts run by Communications Manager Becky Pagel (@beck123) and really broadcast our messages to a wide audience."

Through this unique experience, Schuler saw how social media practices, such as live tweeting and live streaming, connected people in new and surprising ways. He also realized that people valued

his perspective. "On Call Day, I was using Periscope [a live streaming application] to live-stream the announcement of our call locations. There were students and students' wives commenting on the stream and saying they were excited to see the view from the pew," he said. "That's the crux of why we use social media: to provide a beneficial insight or angle that would have otherwise gone unseen by others, and also to engage people where they are."

Schuler hopes other Seminary students will learn the value of social media and use it to engage their church members and communities when they become pastors. "There are plenty of strategies out there, and there are tools to help you manage your posts; it doesn't have to be time-consuming," he points out. "There are so many ways to use social media, and there are many networks to choose from, but the foundation for all of them comes from actually being social."

# 67

## STUDENTS RECEIVED CALLS at the Call Service

# 14

# TEXAS

HAD THE GREATEST NUMBER OF STUDENTS CALLED

# LCMS MISSOURI DISTRICT 17

HAD THE MOST VICARAGE ASSIGNMENTS:

# 71 STUDENTS

received assignments  
at the Vicarage Service



Barb Hofmann @barbhofmann · Apr 29  
Welcome Josh Duffy!!!! Praise God! #CallDayWatchParty

Photo: @barbhofmann

## Furthest U.S. Call: Wasilla, Alaska

(a 3,700-mile, 63-hour drive from Concordia Seminary)

285K Tweets about this trend

### #Exponential

Just started trending

### Jarrett Jack

Jarrett Jack sparks season-saving run for Nets in win over Hawks - ...

Just started trending

### #OC15

4,902 Tweets about this trend

### Sen. Bernie Sanders

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders Jumps Into The Presidential Race

6,322 Tweets about this trend

### #CallDay2015

683 Tweets about this trend

Christians

# #CallDay2015

HAD APPROXIMATELY 1,000 TWEETS

#selfie with @DaleMeyerda  
#Helpersofjoy @thelcms  
#CallDay2015 #newpastors



Dale Meyer and 2 others

4/29/15, 7:48 PM from Clayton, MO

Photo: Joseph Ferry and @concordiasem

Nearly 10,000 unique visitors to the website  
<http://callday.csl.edu>

## MORE CALL DAY WATCH PARTIES THAN EVER BEFORE

50+ #calldaywatchparty tweets | 3 watch party videos | 10 watch party "selfies"

Plan to join in next year: @ConcordiaSem facebook.com/ConcordiaSem @ConcordiaSem

# VICARAGE AND DEACONESS INTERNSHIP ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments were in the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program and announced on Call Day, April 29, 2015.

## ATLANTIC DISTRICT

† **Raddatz, Simeon:** Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Garden City, N.Y.

## CENTRAL ILLINOIS DISTRICT

† **Warnke, Joseph:** St. John's, East Moline, Ill.

## EASTERN DISTRICT

† **Pronsati, Andrew:** St. John's, Orchard Park, N.Y.

## ENGLISH DISTRICT

† **DeLaRosa, Victor Manuel:** Chapel of the Cross, Mission Hills, Calif. (CHS)

## FLORIDA-GEORGIA DISTRICT

† **Cobos, John:** Hispanic Mission and Ministry, Tampa, Fla. (CHS)

† **Kyle, John:** Grace, Winter Haven, Fla.

† **Makey, Joshua:** Hope, Plant City, Fla.

† **Sanabria, Miguel Andrés:** Hispanic Mission and Ministry, Tampa, Fla. (CHS)

† **Schultz, Jacob:** St. Paul Evangelical, Boca Raton, Fla.

† **Small, David:** Bethlehem, Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

† **Staffeld, Timothy:** Mount Calvary, Warner Robins, Ga.

## INDIANA DISTRICT

† **Hoffmeyer, Alex:** Immanuel, Seymour, Ind.

## IOWA DISTRICT EAST

† **Adelsen, Peter:** Our Redeemer, Iowa City, Iowa

## KANSAS DISTRICT

† **Bailey, Robert:** Ascension, Wichita, Kan.

† **Benito, Juan:** Immanuel, Kansas City, Kan. (CHS)

† **Cordt, Nicholas:** Risen Savior, Wichita, Kan. (SMP)

† **Kusch, Matthew:** Beautiful Savior, Olathe, Kan.

† **Werner, John:** Our Savior/Zion, Marion/Hillsboro, Kan.

## MICHIGAN DISTRICT

† **Duerr, Mark:** Immanuel, Macomb, Mich.

† **Hauser, Aaron:** Our Savior, Lansing, Mich.

† **Hauser, Matthew:** Peace, Saginaw, Mich. (SMP)

† **Peitsch, Adam:** St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth, Mich.

† **Phillips, Michael:** Grace Fellowship, Romeo, Mich. (SMP)

† **Schwarz, Mark:** Immanuel, Grand Rapids, Mich.

† **Zischke, JohnDavid:** Messiah, Clio, Mich.

## MID-SOUTH DISTRICT

† **Gall, Timothy:** Faith, Tullahoma, Tenn.

† **Hoag, Matthew:** First, Chattanooga, Tenn.

† **Kegley, Casey:** The Point, Knoxville, Tenn.

## MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT

† **Fenton, Charles:** Eastern Heights, St. Paul, Minn. (SMP)

† **Knippa, Colter:** Woodbury, Woodbury, Minn.

† **Schmidt, Tobias:** Cross View, Edina, Minn.

† **Scott, Tobin:** Trinity, Rochester, Minn.

## MISSOURI DISTRICT

† **Chrismer, Daniel:** St. Trinity, St. Louis, Mo.

† **Cox, Caleb:** Immanuel, St. Charles, Mo.

† **Fair, Stephen:** Blessed Savior, Florissant, Mo.

† **Ferguson, Travis:** Trinity, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

† **Jones, Andrew:** Salem, Affton, Mo.

† **Kirschenmann, James:** St. Paul's, St. Louis, Mo.

† **Miller, James:** St. Paul's, Des Peres, Mo.

† **Paavola, Christopher:** New Beginnings, Pacific, Mo. (RAR)

† **Reiter, Craig:** Holy Cross/St. John's, Ste. Genevieve/Arnold, Mo.

† **Senter, Thomas:** Campus Lutheran, Columbia, Mo. (SMP)

† **Shults, Nicholas:** Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, St. Louis, Mo.

† **Thole, Samuel:** Hanover, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

† **Vang, Chou:** Beautiful Savior, Bridgeton, Mo.



*Dr. Glenn Nielsen hands second-year student Nikolos Teller his assignment papers to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Baltimore, April 29, 2015, in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus.*



*Above: Second-year student Andrew Johnson and his wife, Tiffany, a third-year deaconess student, go over their assignments to St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Oviedo, Fla., April 29, 2015, in Chapel Plaza.*

*Below: Second-year student Simeon Raddatz and his wife, Lauren, celebrate his vicarage assignment at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Garden City, N.Y., April 29, 2015, in Chapel Plaza.*



† **Williamson, Peter:** St. Paul, St. Joseph, Mo.

#### MONTANA DISTRICT

† **Heckmann, Joel:** The Church at Creston, Kalispell, Mont.

#### NEBRASKA DISTRICT

- † **Abel, Nathan:** Zion Evangelical, Pierce, Neb.
- † **Lytikainen, Matthew:** King of Kings, Omaha, Neb.
- † **Wells, Timothy:** Cross of Christ, Aurora, Neb.
- † **Wright, Brian:** Christ, Cairo, Neb. (RAR)

#### NEW JERSEY DISTRICT

† **Davis, Shawn:** Holy Trinity, Lawrenceville, N.J.

#### NORTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT

- † **Shudy, David:** Peace, Antigo, Wis.
- † **Spaulding, Nathan:** Pilgrim Lutheran Church & School, Green Bay, Wis.

#### NORTHWEST DISTRICT

† **Atkinson, Dustin:** Immanuel, Everett, Wash.

#### OHIO DISTRICT

† **Leech, Joseph:** Holy Cross, North Canton, Ohio

#### OKLAHOMA DISTRICT

- † **Fields, Anthony:** Holy Trinity, Edmond, Okla.
- † **Vang, Sing:** Good Shepherd, Tulsa, Okla. (SMP)

#### PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

- † **Beran, Joseph:** Christ's Greenfield, Gilbert, Ariz.
- † **Grant, Corey:** St. John's, Oxnard, Calif. (CMC)
- † **Stetson, Adam:** St. John Evangelical, Bullhead City, Ariz.

#### ROCKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT

† **Hohnstadt, Kevin:** Bethlehem, Lakewood, Colo.

#### SELV DISTRICT

† **Johnson, Andrew:** St. Luke's, Oviedo, Fla.

#### SOUTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT

- † **Maske, Daniel:** Trinity, Howards Grove, Wis.
- † **Mol, Aaron:** Trinity Evangelical, Freistadt, Wis.

#### SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT

- † **Bird, Aaron:** Living Savior, Fairfax Station, Va.
- † **Burdette, Paul:** Our Savior, Clyde, N.C.
- † **Kent, James:** Concordia, Conover, N.C.
- † **Teller, Nickolas:** Immanuel, Baltimore, Md.

#### SOUTHERN DISTRICT

- † **d'Entremont, James:** Good Shepherd, Gulf Breeze, Fla.
- † **Drinnon, Roger:** St. Mark's, Elberta, Ala.
- † **McCarthy, Christopher:** Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills, Vestavia Hills Ala.

#### SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT

† **Nieman, David:** Our Savior, Carbondale, Ill.

#### TEXAS DISTRICT

- † **Celia, Anthony:** Water's Edge, Frisco, Texas (SMP)
- † **Crowe, William:** Faith, Georgetown, Texas
- † **Jones, Jarrett (Jett):** St. John, Mansfield, Texas (SMP)
- † **Lanham, Curtiss:** CrossPoint, Katy, Texas (SMP)
- † **Morales, Cristian:** Cristo El Salvador Lutheran Mission, Del Rio, Texas (CHS)
- † **Vanderhyde, Joshua:** Cross Lutheran Church & School, New Braunfels, Texas

#### DEACONESS INTERNSHIP ASSIGNMENTS

#### CALIFORNIA-NEVADA-HAWAII DISTRICT

- † **Cabrales, Maria del Carmen:** Grace Hispanic Ministries, Escondido/San Diego, Calif. (CHS)
- † **Ruiz, Eunice:** Hispanic Mission St. Paul, Pomona, Calif. (CHS)

#### MISSOURI DISTRICT

- † **Bauer, Erin:** Village, Ladue, Mo.
- † **Ringelberg, Emily:** Immanuel, Washington, Mo.
- † **Bernhardt, Greta:** St. Stephen, Liberty, Mo.

#### NORTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT

† **Arndt, Marissa:** Lutheran Church Charities, Northbrook, Ill.

#### SELV DISTRICT

† **Johnson, Tiffany:** St. Luke's, Oviedo, Fla.

#### TEXAS DISTRICT

† **Pruhs, Shea:** Christ The King, Kingwood, Texas

# Partnering to help teachers lead with the Gospel in Ethiopia

“What we are being asked to do in Ethiopia plays exactly to our strengths as a seminary.” So explains Dr. William W. Schumacher about Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s partnership with Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, half the world away in Ethiopia.

Schumacher, professor of historical theology and director of the Institute for Mission Studies at Concordia Seminary, knows of what he speaks. He is the faculty member leading the Seminary’s involvement in helping the Ethiopian Lutheran church advance its theological education program.

The Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS) is the primary theological institution associated with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), one of the world’s largest and fastest growing Lutheran churches. Headquartered in Addis Ababa, the church counts some 7 million members and baptizes an average 5,000 people a week.

Despite the fact that there are six additional seminaries and Bible training


locations serving the EECMY, the church is desperate for well-formed, theologically trained pastors and deaconesses to meet the needs of its growing membership. That’s where Concordia Seminary and Schumacher come in.

“The LCMS has sent short-term guest professors from both seminaries and a few pastors with advanced degrees to teach from time to time at MYS, but when it comes to strengthening a seminary program, that’s not enough,” Schumacher said. “They need a strong, ongoing relationship with another theological institution. Concordia Seminary stepped up and offered to help.”

Thanks to the vision of the Seminary’s leaders, this is a wonderful opportunity to be involved in a mission closely aligned with our expertise, Schumacher added.

## The search for a partner

The EECMY’s traditional partners are the members of the Lutheran World Federation. However, the church recently broke ties with some of its partner churches over differences relative to the divine institution of marriage and the ordination of practicing homosexuals. Breaking fellowship meant a loss of support on many levels; it wasn’t an easy decision for the EECMY. But it had to stay true to what it believes biblically and to the country’s culture.



**“THEY WANT A  
STRONG LUTHERAN,  
CONFESSIONAL PROGRAM.  
WE HAVE A QUALIFIED  
FACULTY WITH THE  
GIFTS AND KNOWLEDGE  
THAT CAN HELP  
THEM WITH THAT.”**

**DR. WILLIAM W. SCHUMACHER**

*Ethiopia, a country of nearly 97 million people in eastern Africa, is home to one of the fastest growing Lutheran churches in the world.*



*Dr. William W. Schumacher gives a lecture about writing a master's thesis and discusses academic standards, method, and purpose with more than 50 students and faculty at the Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 4, 2015. Photo: Dr. Erik Herrmann.*

“After a huge and courageous move on their part [to break those ties], the EECMY reached out to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” Schumacher said. “Although we are not in altar and pulpit fellowship with EECMY, they see in us — among other things — an education partner that can help make their program as strong as it can be.”

That is exactly what Concordia Seminary is working toward: helping to make the MYS programs effective, biblically faithful, and sustainable. “The Mekane Yesus Seminary is doing a good job. They have capable leaders. They have clear goals about where they want to go,” Schumacher said. “We aren’t there to make them a carbon copy of Concordia Seminary. They want a strong Lutheran, confessional program. We have a qualified faculty with the gifts and knowledge that can help them with that.”

Dr. Wakseyoum Idossa, president of the EECMY, visited Concordia Seminary last December, and spoke about his church’s extraordinary growth and the ministry that could be accomplished by working together. “Over the last 175 years, Concordia Seminary has prepared thousands of theologians and pastors for the ministry of the Church of God,” Dr. Wakseyoum said. “This is a great opportunity for the EECMY and its theological seminaries to partner with Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and share in the blessings of this rich experience in the process of building the capacity of our evangelists, pastors, and theologians for nurturing members of the fast-growing EECMY.”

### **Advancing an educational program**

The LCMS and the EECMY have worked cooperatively from time to

time over the years; however, recent discussions have focused on ways to work more closely, especially in theological education. Schumacher has firsthand insight; in 2006-07, he was granted a research sabbatical to survey the pastoral formation landscape in Africa. His goal was to visit as many Lutheran seminaries as he could and learn what they were doing. The MYS campus was on his list.

“If I was going to get a picture of Lutheran seminary education in Africa,” Schumacher said, “I had to visit the Mekane Yesus Seminary. It is too important and influential to miss.” Schumacher returned to MYS in April 2014 for eight weeks. He taught two courses: systematic theology and a course on the life and work of Martin Luther, both presented at the master’s level.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 >*

&lt; CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

He returned again in November 2014 and stayed through February to teach two additional master's-level courses: the history and theology of the Reformation era, and the history and theology of the early Church. His work on that trip included helping administrators enhance their curriculum plans in advance of the formal accreditation process.

“One of the significant differences in pastoral training in Ethiopia is that historically it has been presented as an undergraduate program,” Schumacher said. “With the support of the LCMS, the EECMY now is working to offer a master's-level program.”

Last year's concluding class included 60 graduates. Master's degree students are expected to write a thesis paper of 15,000-20,000 words. However, the MYS faculty needed assistance with teachers qualified to advise on the theses. Schumacher was instrumental in developing an agreement whereby American professors would serve as advisers. This past spring, Concordia Seminary sent four faculty members — Dr. Joel Elowsky, Dr. Erik Herrmann, and Dr. Paul Robinson, in addition to Schumacher — and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., sent Dr. Peter Scaer. “Each American professor was paired with a junior member of the MYS faculty — those who teach at the bachelor's degree level,” Schumacher said. “The Ethiopian partners helped the Americans understand the context from which the students were writing. The American partners brought our theological expertise and experience advising graduate student research. It made for a great partnership.”

This kind of partnership is helpful not just for the MYS faculty, but also for the hometown team, Schumacher added. “It helps to inform and refresh our faculty's view of the world,” he said. “We were exposed in a real, hands-on way to the global realities of pastoral education. That was good — we love teaching at Concordia Seminary, but once in a while, you should play an away game.”

**“WE FIND OURSELVES  
CONNECTED AT A DEEP  
LEVEL BECAUSE THE  
GOSPEL OF JESUS  
CHRIST IS THE PRIMARY  
FOCUS OF OUR LIFE  
AND WORK.”**

**DR. WILLIAM W. SCHUMACHER**

### Shared hope, joy for the future

In the short run, there will continue to be a need for additional faculty advisers to supervise subsequent groups of concluding students. Schumacher plans to return to the MYS campus in Addis Ababa — which translated from Amharic, Ethiopia's primary language, means New Flower — next spring, both to teach and to assist in the accreditation process. And he's looking forward to it.

“Just as I love teaching on the Seminary's campus in St. Louis, I also love teaching the Ethiopian students,” he said. “They are curious. They ask thoughtful, penetrating questions. And they love to talk about Jesus!”

And for all the differences of teaching in Ethiopia — where students are more ethnically and economically diverse with varied faith experiences, and the majority come to seminary as second-career students — there are many similarities.

“We have a shared history,” Schumacher said. “The history of the early Church is their history as well as ours. The Scriptures belong to them as well as to us.”

When Dr. Wakseyoum was on Concordia Seminary's campus last winter, he shared that the EECMY is focused on growth, missions, outreach, unity, human value, and peace. “And we have this in common with you,” he said. “We share your enthusiasm for bringing the Gospel to our neighbors.”

Schumacher echoed the sentiment and pointed to how the experience in Ethiopia aligned with Concordia Seminary's mission.

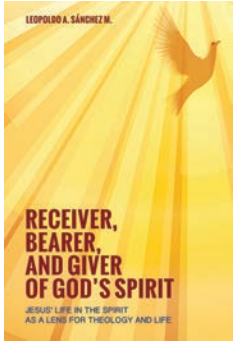
“We find ourselves connected at a deep level because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the primary focus of our life and work,” he said. “In our partnership with MYS, we have the opportunity to facilitate a rich understanding of the Gospel that can only strengthen their call to spread the Word.”

That, indeed, plays exactly to Concordia Seminary's strengths.

# Faculty and staff publications

## Leopoldo A. Sánchez M.

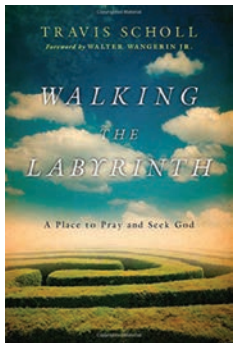
*Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God's Spirit: Jesus' Life in the Spirit as a Lens for Theology and Life* (Pickwick, 2015)



What difference does the Spirit make in the life of Jesus and in our lives? Answering that question without doing away with the divine dignity of Christ has been a challenge in the distant and recent past. But this need not be the case. The current work is a contribution to the growing field of Spirit Christology, which seeks to enrich the classic Logos Christology of the ecumenical Councils with a Spirit-oriented trajectory. This work highlights the author's assessment of early church fathers' readings of the place of the Spirit in the anointing of Jesus, a constructive proposal toward the complementarity of Logos and Spirit Christologies, ecumenical engagement with various theological traditions in the East and the West, and the first constructive assessment of the field informed by the Lutheran tradition.

## Travis Scholl

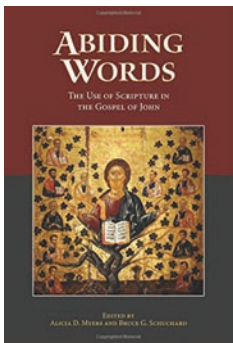
*Walking the Labyrinth: A Place to Pray and Seek God* (IVP Academic, 2014)



One day Travis Scholl discovered a labyrinth in his neighborhood. As he began to walk it, he found this ancient practice offered a much-needed path away from life's demands, allowing him to encounter God in quiet solitude. In this meditative guide, Scholl takes readers on a journey. With no end, but only a center, labyrinths become a physical symbol of prayer and our journey with God. Each step unites faith and action as travelers take one step at a time, living each moment in trust and willingness to follow the course set before them. Providing a historical and modern context for this unique spiritual discipline, Scholl weaves his own journey through a labyrinth with the Gospel of Mark's telling of the twists and turns of Jesus' life, providing 40 reflections ideal for daily reading during Lent or any time of the year.

## Alicia D. Myers and Bruce G. Schuchard

*Abiding Words: The Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John* (SBL Press, 2015)



The volume introduces and updates readers on the question of John's employment of Scripture and possible implications surrounding its usage for the Gospel's audiences both ancient and contemporary. With essays from an international collection of both experienced and newer scholarly voices, *Abiding Words* offers chapters that focus on key texts (e.g., Is. 40 in John 1:23, Jesus' harsh words to the Jews in John 7-8, Jesus' quotation of Psalm 69 in John 2) and others that pursue a more comprehensive analysis of John's use of Scripture throughout the entire Gospel.

## Rodolfo Blank

*La Carta a los Gálatas*  
(Concordia Publishing House, 2015)

## Hector Hoppe, editor; Marcos Kempff, Adolfo Borges Cantón, and Aurelio Magariño, translators

*La Biblia de la Reforma (The Bible of the Reformation)*  
(Concordia Publishing House, 2014)

## Robert Kolb

"The Lutheran Doctrine of Original Sin" in *Adam, The Fall, and Original Sin*  
(Baker Publishing Group, 2014)

"Orders for Burial in the 16th Century Wittenberg Circle," in *Gute Ordnung: Ordnungsmodelle und Ordnungsvorstellungen in der Reformationszeit* (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014)

"The 'Three Kingdoms' of Simon Musaeus: A Wittenberg Student Processes Luther's Thought/Terminology" in *Collaboration, Conflict, and Continuity in the Reformation. Essays in Honour of James M. Estes on his Eightieth Birthday*. (Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2014)

"Paul Eber as Preacher" in *Paul Eber (1511-1569): Humanist und Theologe der zweiten Generation der Wittenberger Reformation* (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014)

"[...] da jr nicht trawrig seid wie die anderen, die keine hoffnung haben. Der Gebrauch der Heiligen Schrift in Leichenpredigten der Wittenberger Reformation (1560-1600)" in *Leichenpredigten als Medien der Erinnerungskultur im europäischen Kontext* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014)

"Luther's catechisms" in the new edition of *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (the first time a non-German scholar has edited a part of the *German Book of Concord*). (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014)

## Francis Rossow

*Gospel Handles: Old Testament Lessons*  
(Concordia Publishing House, 2015)

## William Schumacher

"Unbekannte Brüder. Zur Beziehung zwischen Jan Kilian und Ferdinand Walther" and "Unknown Brothers. The Relationship between Jan Kilian and Ferdinand Walther" in *Jan Kilian: Pastor, Poet, Emigrant* (Texas Wendish Heritage Society, 2015)



# Five recognized at commencement exercises

Concordia Seminary closed its 176th academic year Friday, May 22, with a commencement ceremony to recognize the 87 graduates of 2015. It was a strong ending befitting a great year that focused on being and creating “helpers of joy,” a reference to the theme verse of 2 Cor. 1:24: “Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.”

“I am thankful for the graduates, their families, the faculty and staff, and our donors, all who further the mission of the Seminary for our Lord Jesus Christ,” said Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary. “To Him be the glory!”

Joseph Gorder, chairman and CEO of Valero Energy Corp., served as commencement speaker at the event held in the main quadrangle on campus. After the conferring of the academic degrees, the faculty granted honorary degrees and awards.

Gorder was awarded the Doctor of Laws degree (*honoris causa*). In addition to helping Valero Energy, the leading independent oil refiner in the United States, he also serves as chairman and CEO of Valero Energy Partners LP, and is a member of a number of other boards in the petroleum industry. Considered a faith leader in business and everyday life, Gorder is an active member and four-time congregational president at Concordia Lutheran Church, San Antonio, and hosts a monthly Bible study for his employees led by Concordia pastors.

Rev. Roosevelt Gray Jr., director of Black Ministry for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS),



**Dr. Dale A. Meyer, third from left, stands with honorees who were recognized for their service to the church before they process into the quad during commencement May 22, 2015. The honorees; from left, Rev. Stephen Starke, Rev. Roosevelt Gray Jr., Shirley and Dr. Karl Kreft, and Joseph Gorder.**

accepted the Doctor of Divinity degree (*honoris causa*). Known for challenging church members to be visible witnesses to their faith, Gray’s ministry has involved church planting; supporting urban school programs, churches, and community organizations; and working with service organizations and mission societies. He also has served the church as pastor at Faith Lutheran Church in Detroit, and Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Houston, and in admissions for Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Rev. Stephen Starke of St. John Lutheran Church Amelith, in Bay City, Mich., and author of more than 175 hymns, accepted the Doctor of Letters degree (*honoris causa*). Of the hymns he has written, 32 are included in *Lutheran Service Book*, the LCMS’ newest hymnal. Starke penned the Seminary’s 150th anniversary hymn, “In Halls of Wood and Stone,” and the 175th anniversary

hymn, “Come, Marvel at the Mercy of Our Maker.” Concordia Publishing House has published print and audio collections of his hymns as well. Starke also served as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Middletown, Conn., and St. John’s Lutheran Church in Chicago.

Dr. Karl and Shirley Kreft were presented the Christus Vivit award for their exemplary service to the church. Karl Kreft, who owned and operated Bohle Machine Tools, Inc., until retiring in 2000, and his wife have supported teaching and learning in the LCMS by serving in advisory and board-level capacities within the Concordia University System. The couple, members of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Downers Grove, Ill., also have provided many generous gifts to Concordia University System schools, Valparaiso University, and the Seminary to endow chairs and fund scholarships.

# Concordia Seminary honored with ACP awards

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, took home three awards from the Associated Church Press (ACP) at its May 1 awards dinner in Toronto. The ACP presented the awards in recognition of the exceptional content produced for *Concordia Journal* and *Concordia Seminary* magazine in 2014.

*Concordia Journal*, the Seminary's quarterly theological journal, received the prestigious Award of Excellence in the category of Best in Class for print journals. The journal also obtained the Award of Merit for its website, [concordiatheology.org](http://concordiatheology.org), and its successful promotion of and integration with *Concordia Journal*.

Additionally, *Concordia Seminary* magazine accepted Honorable Mention for its innovative uses of social media and its impact on the Seminary. ACP granted this award in recognition of last year's successful live tweeting on Call Day, and the resulting engagement shared in the

Call Day insert of the summer/fall 2014 issue of the magazine.

"The fact that experts within the field recognize the excellence of Concordia Seminary's theological resources is a testament not only to the good work of faculty and staff, but also to our readership," said Rev. Travis Scholl, managing editor of theological research and publications. "The awards simply recognize the high value that this global community of church workers, scholars, and laypeople place on the vigorous life of the mind in service to the Gospel."

The ACP is an interdenominational organization of print and digital publications, individuals, and affiliates across North America. Since 1916, the ACP is brought together by a common commitment to excellence in journalism as a means to describe, reflect, and support the life of faith and the Christian community.



*Concordia Seminary's Creative Services Manager Jayna Rollings traveled to Toronto on May 2, 2015, to accept the Associated Church Press awards on behalf of the Seminary, and captured this view of the CN Tower, one of the city's most widely recognized landmarks.*

## NEW ROUTE TO PASTOR CERTIFICATION AVAILABLE!

Graduates of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program can now continue their studies and earn General Pastor Certification through the SMP Alternate Route track. Sign up and earn credit toward an academic degree through this new program. For more information, go to [www.csl.edu/admissions/academics/altrt/smpar/](http://www.csl.edu/admissions/academics/altrt/smpar/).



# A bountiful harvest

Farming and the church are both deeply ingrained in Steve Struecker's life. It would be hard to leave one for the other. Fortunately, he doesn't have to.

A student in the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program at Concordia Seminary, Struecker is a lifelong farmer born and raised in West Bend, Iowa, two and a half hours north of Des Moines in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Iowa District West. Struecker and his son, Andrew, along with a partner, grow corn and soybeans on a large farm that has been in his family since 1870. For most of his life he has worshiped at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in nearby Whittemore, Iowa.

"I've been active in the church all my life," Struecker said. "But I didn't grow up wanting to be a pastor. I've always wanted to be a farmer." As he became increasingly involved at his congregation, he realized there were other rural churches that needed help, too. Struecker's response to that was to complete the deacon program through the district in conjunction with Concordia University St. Paul, in St. Paul, Minn., enabling him to fill in for pastors at rural congregations in his area when needed.

With mentoring by Dr. Steve Turner at Trinity Lutheran Church in Algona,

Iowa, who was recently elected president of the LCMS Iowa District West, Struecker began helping out every other week at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Livermore, Iowa, and Zion Lutheran

"As a deacon I was able to preach, but I had the desire to bring more stability to these congregations," Struecker said. "They needed a pastor, and I thought, either I do something or they would both close. Everyone had given up on them, but I wasn't willing to do that." With Turner's support and encouragement, Struecker decided to enter the SMP program at the Seminary. That meant both congregations, each worshipping 30-40 people per weekend, would remain open, and Struecker could continue farming while also shepherding the congregations.

"The SMP program continues to do what it was designed to do, and it is doing it well: forming pastors in specific ministry contexts and situations who otherwise would not be able to benefit from a seminary program leading to Synod certification and ordination," said Dr. Andrew Bartelt, director of the Seminary's SMP program.

"While rostered as specific ministry pastors, these men are well-qualified to bring the gifts of God's Word and the Sacraments as administered through the pastoral office to those who otherwise would not have any regular or full-time pastoral ministry."



**"EVERYONE HAD GIVEN UP ON THEM, BUT I WASN'T WILLING TO DO THAT."**

**STEVE STRUECKER**

Church in Lu Verne, Iowa, both congregations in small towns of about 250 people. He found he enjoyed rural pastoral ministry, despite the extra time it required. When the pastor at one of the churches retired, and with the encouragement of his mentor and other pastors in the circuit, Struecker decided he wanted to do something more.

*This summer's vacation Bible school at Zion Lutheran Church in Lu Verne, Iowa, as pictured on June 18, 2015, the largest in years, brought many children and their families to church, most for the first time. Vicar Steve Struecker, top row, second from left, is thankful for this opportunity to share the Gospel with so many new faces. Photo: Kathleen Struecker*



**“... I’LL TAKE MY COMPUTER ALONG IN THE COMBINE OR THE TRACTOR AND CAN BE PARTICIPATING ONLINE WITH THE REST OF THE GROUP ...”**

**STEVE STRUECKER**

*Thanks to modern technology, Vicar Steve Struecker is able to participate in online courses and discussions while out in the field in his combine, Nov. 2, 2013. Photo: Kathleen Struecker.*

Technically a vicar, Struecker now leads worship at both churches every Sunday. He begins with an early service at Immanuel at 8:30 a.m., and then heads over to Zion, 15 minutes away, for a 10 a.m. service. The timing is cutting it close, but Struecker and his wife, Kathleen, make it work. Apart from Sunday services, he also attends to the pastoral care needs of both congregations, something he enjoys and wasn't able to do as a deacon.

“Steve is a good example of the SMP program meeting the changing needs of the church,” said Rev. Wally Becker, assistant director of the SMP program. “He is serving the pastoral needs of two small congregations that possibly would no longer exist except for someone like Steve taking care of them on a part-time basis.”

When he completes the program, Struecker will receive a certificate to serve as pastor at both churches. He is halfway through the program and will be ordained in December 2015.

“Our farm has been in my family for generations, so walking away from farming to go to the Seminary just wouldn't work for me,” he said.

“The SMP program provides a great alternative. I get to study to become a pastor and continue farming.”

Through weekly online classes, residential seminars, and intensives, SMP students complete 16 courses that are taught sequentially, one per academic quarter. The program typically takes four years to complete and students stay with the same group of men, their cohort, for their entire course of study.

“Many SMP students are bi-vocational, working full-time jobs and serving a congregation on a part-time basis,” Becker said. “The extra coursework and studying adds even more time to an already busy schedule, and these men need to manage their time well in order to make sure they also have time for themselves and their families. Our SMP students are really making it work.”

It is a lot of work, but with the support of his wife, Struecker manages to balance his studies with his farm work. In fact, Struecker often finds time to complete his studies in an unusual place — inside his combine and tractors while out in the fields.

“With computers and satellites, we don't have to drive the machines anymore,” he said. “During the busy spring and fall seasons, I'll take my computer along in the combine or the tractor and can be participating online with the rest of the group for the Monday night classes.”

Through the SMP program, Struecker and others can fulfill their calling to serve the Church in both Word and Sacrament, while also serving in another vocation. In Struecker's case, two congregations remain open and he can continue to farm the land that's been in his family for generations. It's beneficial to his community, too. Case in point: This summer's vacation Bible school at Zion was bigger than ever, and provided 38 children and their families, many of them unchurched, with an opportunity to learn more about Jesus. That's extra work Struecker is glad to have.

The need for pastors is great, and the SMP program is one of the ways God is bringing more shepherds to His flock. To find out more about the SMP program, visit [www.csl.edu/smp](http://www.csl.edu/smp).

# UPCOMING ON-CAMPUS EVENTS



**SEPT. 1-4**  
Orientation

**SEPT. 4**  
Opening  
Service



**SEPT. 5**  
Family Day



**SEPT. 8**  
Fall quarter begins

**SEPT. 12**  
Sports Day

**SEPT. 22-23**  
26th Annual  
Theological  
Symposium

**SEPT. 25**  
First Responders  
Appreciation Day



**SEPT. 27-OCT. 2**  
Pastor Sabbatical Week



**OCT. 3-5**  
Faith Walk



**OCT. 15-17**  
Contemplate

**OCT. 26-30**  
Interim Ministry Workshop

# NOT JUST ANY SEMINARIAN...

*He's the future pastor YOU are preparing and getting to know personally.*

## ADOPT-A-STUDENT

Through Concordia Seminary's Adopt-A-Student program, you can help seminarians overcome the greatest obstacle they face when considering enrollment ... affording it. And while you are helping them, you get something in return. You will personally get to know your "adopted" seminarian.

Right now, there are many students waiting to be "adopted." With a gift of \$500 or more, you can help make it possible for future pastors, deaconesses, and missionaries to fulfill their calling. Make your gift today and get ready to meet "your" student!

For questions or to enroll as a sponsor: 800-822-5287, [adoptastudent@csl.edu](mailto:adoptastudent@csl.edu)

To give now: [www.csl.edu/give](http://www.csl.edu/give)



# From refugee to ‘phenomenal’ ministry leader

In 1993, a 26-year-old South Sudanese Christian arrived in the United States after what he humbly calls “a very difficult time.” Losing two siblings and many relatives and friends to murder and starvation in his war-torn homeland, Matthew Both knew he must flee with his wife, Rebecca, and daughter, Leah, if his family was to survive.

After a trek that included two days without food or water, the trio took shelter in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya — camps where they lived among the “Lost Boys of Sudan,” those children known for their tragic exodus during the long and bloody second Sudanese Civil War.

“He’s the perfect example of how, with some help and guidance, he educated himself as a grown man,” said Loum, who praises Both for “fabulous work bringing Sudanese people to Christ” in the United States and through ongoing mission work in his native country. “He has a missionary’s heart,” Loum said.

## Flight from Sudan

A missionary from the United States introduced Both, a member of the Nuer-speaking people, to Christ as a teenager in Sudan, in northeastern Africa.

“I went to school and learned my language in the church in

Wuor, and Simon Yiech were the first Sudanese to start in this program and they helped it spread around to other Sudanese in different states,” Both said. After a trip to visit members of the “Lost Boys” living in Grand Rapids, Mich., Both moved his family to that area in 2000 and began serving in lay ministry at St. Mark Lutheran Church, Kentwood, Mich.

“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

*Rom. 8:31-32*

“I looked like I was completely dying before I come to this country,” said Both, who eventually came to the United States speaking no English and unsure how to support his family.

Twenty-two years later, Rev. Matthew Both is a 2008 graduate of Concordia Seminary’s Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), associate pastor at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Renton, Wash., and “a phenomenal leader in the Christian Sudanese and Lutheran communities,” said EIIT Director Dr. John Loum.

my village and, on July 21, 1985, I was baptized into the family of God and became a believer,” Both said. Before his flight from Sudan, Both vowed that if he did not die first, he would become a pastor.

After three years in refugee camps, his family was among the Sudanese resettled in the United States with the help of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. They relocated in Des Moines, Iowa, where Trinity Lutheran Church was doing outreach to the Sudanese. “My nephew, James Mat



**Pastor Matthew Both baptizes baby Maya at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Kennewick, Wash., much to the joy of her parents, Paul Puok and Martha Kuon, April 28, 2013. Photo: Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

“I helped Sudanese, Dinka, Anyuak, and Equitorian people become members at the church because I was the only minister in Michigan for these ethnic groups [at that time],” Both said.



**Associate Pastor Rev. Matthew Both, second from left, is part of a legacy of strong leadership at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Renton, Wash. He is pictured here with a group of current and past pastors of the church, Sept. 21, 2014. Photo: King of Kings Lutheran Church**

While in Michigan, he completed increasingly challenging English as a Second Language course levels and earned a high school diploma. Both also took a big step toward his dream of pastoral ministry when he enrolled in Concordia Seminary's EIIT program to strengthen his understanding of Lutheran theology.

"Worker priests" is how Loum describes EIIT students like Both — tackling four years of demanding coursework (both online and residential seminars), "with families, full-time jobs, and doing mission work in their home countries."

### 'Always on the go'

Both is "always on the go," said Rev. Paul Birner, King of Kings' senior pastor, "utilizing his gifts among the Anglo people as well as the South Sudanese." In 2007, King of Kings requested Both's help starting Nuer-language worship in Renton, another growing center for resettled Sudanese families. A year later, he took a call to serve as the congregation's associate pastor and was ordained there.

Besides assisting with weekly worship, Both leads two monthly Nuer-language services, teaches Bible classes, makes home and hospital visits, and provides translation services to the local courts.

"Pastor Both does not sit in his office and wait for people to maybe come to him," Birner said. "He goes to them . . . in our community, several locations in Washington and Alaska, and in South Sudan and Ethiopia."

For example, on Easter, a few years ago, the South Sudanese did not come to worship at King of Kings as expected. So Both followed the tradition of his homeland, where pastors go out and collect worshipers for Easter. "He went to the apartment complexes where many South Sudanese live, held services there, and collected over 100 to worship," Birner said.

Both followed that same custom when he was in Ethiopia on Easter this April, helping with construction of a worship facility in Nyinenyang. "About 1,000 members are happy to see a new church built," he said.

### 'An exceptional guy'

Loum says his former student is "one of those people instrumental in planting the Lutheran church in South Sudan and setting up quite a few congregations there." He also calls Both "unique" among EIIT graduates who typically serve ethnic congregations. "Matthew is associate pastor for King of Kings,

a Caucasian congregation, and also serves the Sudanese side by side," Loum said. "He's an exceptional guy."

For his part, Both says he is blessed. "I came to America with one daughter, and now I have six loving daughters and two boys," he said of his and Rebecca's children, who include a niece the couple adopted when her parents died at an Ethiopian refugee camp. "I gained an education and know my language well," he said. "I received opportunities here in America [that] I would not have been able to receive in my home country."

Today, Both is training fellow South Sudanese to become missionaries. He's pointed many South Sudanese toward the Seminary's EIIT program and is helping his daughter, Nyamal, and another King of Kings member to prepare for enrollment. He also hopes to continue his own pastoral education to better answer his calling — to share Christ, including with his South Sudanese brothers and sisters who "lost so much."

This former refugee uses Romans to offer encouragement. "We have all struggled," Both said, "but God loves us. He will never give up on us, and He has a purpose for us because nothing can separate us from His love."



CONCORDIA  
SEMINARY

801 SEMINARY PLACE, ST. LOUIS, MO 63105



**26TH** ANNUAL  
THEOLOGICAL  
SYMPOSIUM  
*at Concordia Seminary*



*In remembrance of me:*

**MEMORY**  
AND THE LIFE OF FAITH

**SAVE \$25  
ON EARLY  
REGISTRATION**

Early registration ends Sept. 4.  
To register, visit  
[www.csl.edu/symposium2015/](http://www.csl.edu/symposium2015/)

Ministry **411** | SYMPOSIA  
CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS

**1** This workshop can be used to fulfill the symposia objectives for Ministry 411 and qualifies for 1 CEU.

SEPTEMBER 22-23, 2015 | CONCORDIA SEMINARY  
**MEMORY. STORY. IDENTITY. FAITH.**

