

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, FORT WAYNE
For the Life of the World

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Luther and Walther: Receivers of Grace

Todd A. Peperkorn

I'm Lifting My Eyes, Oh LORD....But for "How Long?"

Rick Marrs

Leaning into the Lament in Our Hymnody

Matthew A. Machermer

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Short early winter days lead people like me to bemoan leaving for work in the dark and returning home in that same dusky gloom. I'm sure many of you are like me—yearning for longer days and opportunities to bask in the bright warmth of the sun.

Longing for light is central to the season of Advent.

The night will soon be ending; the dawn cannot be far.
Let songs of praise ascending now greet the Morning Star!
All you whom darkness frightens with guilt or grief or pain,
God's radiant Star now brightens and bids you sing again.

(LSB 337 st. 1)

And yet, while we're constantly hearing that it is the "happiest time of the year," for many of us the holiday season is a time of hidden heartbreak, crippling guilt and shame, unrealized dreams, and lingering grief over missing loved ones. It is easy to feel separated from those around us and focus on the darkness rather than the promised Light of the World, our Lord Jesus, to come.

That makes it a good time to pray the Psalms and make them your own—just as Jesus did.

Lift up your eyes! The psalmist reminds us in Psalm 121 that, when we feel crushed by the oppressing darkness that seems to surround us at every point, we should turn our eyes to the Lord. He provides our help, our hope, our shelter, and rest.

The Psalms are an incredible gift. And so is our hymnody. When we find ourselves crying out, unsure what to say, they help give expression to our "groanings too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). They calm our fears and provide comfort and healing for our wounds.

Yet nights will bring their sadness and rob our hearts of peace,
And sin in all its madness around us may increase.
But now one Star is beaming whose rays have pierced the night;
God comes for our redeeming from sin's oppressive might.

God dwells with us in darkness and makes the night as day;
Yet we resist the brightness and turn from God away.
But grace does not forsake us, however far we run.
God claims us still as children through Mary's infant Son.

(LSB 337 sts. 4-5)

Whether you are thoroughly enjoying this "most wonderful time of the year" or you are struggling with the darkness around you, run to the church. Hear Jesus's Word, receive His forgiveness and gifts, sing praises to the Lord, and lean into your lament through the hymns and psalms. Christ has come. He has redeemed us and made us His own. And, He is coming again.

O Savior, child of Mary, who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory, who dost our weakness know;
Bring us at length we pray
to the bright courts of heaven,
and to the endless day. *(LSB 359 st. 4)*

Our prayer at CTSFW is that you take every advantage this season to receive the peace, comfort, hope, joy, and rest for your souls that you can find only in Christ. May our Lord "keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore." (Psalm 121:8)

In Christ,

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary
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Luther and Walther: Receivers of



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

It is all too easy for us to hear names like Martin Luther or C.F.W. Walther and treat them as heroes, men who were almost superhuman in what they were able to accomplish in this life. We can lift them up on a pedestal and think, “If only I had as strong a faith and willpower as they did! Then I wouldn’t have all these problems. Then I wouldn’t feel down all the time. Then I wouldn’t doubt whether God actually loves me.” We all have these feelings, looking up to other people and believing that they don’t deal with real problems like ours.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. In looking at the lives of these two men, we can see the story of God’s persevering love and mercy shine forth

time and time again. We can also see examples about how both of them went through dark times, and how both of them needed the help and encouragement

Grace

Todd A. Peperkorn

of others to bring them up out of the pit of despair. Let's take a look at an episode in each of their lives to see how God used others to lift them up.

When Martin Luther (1483–1546) was about 44 years old, he had what appears to be a physical and mental breakdown. The year was 1527, ten years after the posting of the 95 Theses. The Reformation was in full swing at that time, and it would be in the next couple years that Luther would pen what might be his most important works, namely, the Small and Large Catechisms. But in 1527, Luther (and most of his friends) believed he was going to die. It was a combination of physical, mental, and spiritual exhaustion, and it happened at the time when the plague forced the Wittenberg faculty to move to Jena. Today, we might look at these symptoms and presume that it was something akin to clinical depression. Whether that is the case or not is impossible to tell today. What matters for our purpose is that it was Johannes Bugenhagen Pomeranus who brought spiritual care to Luther's malaise.

The best treatise on this episode is by Martin Lohrmann and is entitled, "Bugenhagen's Pastoral Care of Martin Luther." Lohrmann recounts that both Bugenhagen and Justus Jonas (dean of the theological faculty at Wittenberg) cared for Luther during this time, watching over his spiritual needs while also caring for his body. Luther feared for his family, that they would be destitute upon his death. Luther also feared that he was really the source of all of the sectarianism that was on the rise throughout Christendom at the time.

Throughout these trials, Bugenhagen sought to draw Luther into the Scriptures themselves, to see his own life as an echo of the lives of the saints who had gone

before. The suffering we undergo in this life points to the suffering and death of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Lohrmann writes,

As presumptuous as it may sound to compare Luther to Hannah, Job, Paul, or John, these biblical references ultimately point not to Luther but to faith in the liberating God of the Bible. In this sense, these biblical verses from Luther's sickbed serve as both private pastoral care and also public proclamation of the gospel to all who suffer or mourn.²

At another time, Bugenhagen wrote of how strange it was to have the student become the pastor to his own mentor. He wrote:

I was about to go, but I wanted to know before I left, "Why did you call for me?" He replied, "It's nothing bad." But from there we went upstairs privately to the bedroom, and he commended all that was his to God and confessed his sin. Now the teacher was asking the student for words of God's consolation and forgiveness of sins from Holy Scripture and suggesting that I pray for him.³

At the end of the day, what Luther needed was a pastor to speak to him the very words of the Gospel that Luther himself had taught and preached for so many years.

In 1860, at 49 years old, C.F.W. Walther had a similar mental breakdown to Luther. It was 13 years after the founding of what we know today as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Walther was the President of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation

in St. Louis. He had stepped down as president of the Synod at the time, but it was not enough.

In a letter to Walther's congregation, we read about how Walther was doing and what happened to bring him back to health.⁴ Walther wrote of his own distress in this way:

I may and must now reveal to you that the last half of the previous year has been one of the most difficult times of my life. I was physically incapable of attending to even half the office that I am dignified to carry out among you in unworthy fashion. Even more, the prospect that I would again be capable of the same became gloomier and darker month by month. I owe it to you to be transparent. I was tormented night and day by the

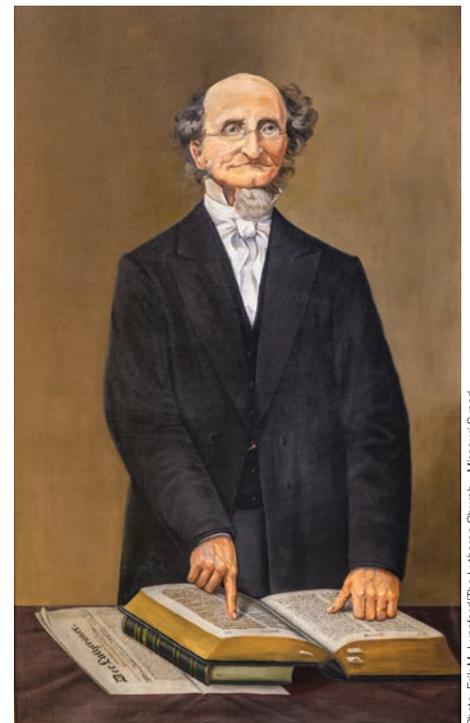


Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



In what seemed the darkest moments of their lives, both Luther and Walther were lifted up by their own pastors and congregations. God uses people to care for His world, and that includes His under-shepherds.

thought that through my fault in many different ways, our congregation would withdraw with quick strides from the path of the first love and simplicity. And more than that, my own relationship with my God and Lord filled me with deep aversion and vexation. God placed before me, as never before, my entire past. He let me see my misery as I had never seen it before. I was filled with misery and distress. It appeared to me as though God had cast me away from His countenance. It seemed as though He regarded me as a rejected instrument, as if I were not a worker but a stumbling stone in His vineyard, which He must finally cast aside.⁵

Again, like Luther, it is impossible to truly apply a medical diagnosis to someone from the past. But Walther’s words of self-doubt and torment sound all too familiar to those who suffer from clinical depression. How could God actually save such a wretch? What was it that started to turn things around for Walther? He continues, “It was the flood of words of consolation and acts of brotherly love and care that fourteen days ago began to flow over me. These kindnesses irresistibly moved my weakened heart . . . you are the ones whose words and deeds have raised me up from the ashes in which I sat deeply afflicted.”

When Walther was in need, it was his own congregation that stepped up, cared for him, and even paid his way for a sabbatical in Germany. It does not take much to recognize that they saved his ministry and possibly his life.

This has been a short glimpse into these two episodes, but they are instructive. What can we learn from these two times which were so similar in many ways? In the words of one of my own spiritual fathers, “every pastor needs a pastor.” In what seemed the darkest moments of their lives, both Luther and Walther were lifted up by their own

pastors and congregations. God uses people to care for His world, and that includes His under-shepherds.

How do we live and teach this today in our congregations and in our lives? Here are a few ideas:

- ✘ Learn to think of times of rest as sacred time that God gives for health and restoration. Pastors, don’t let your own sense of responsibility push out that needed time! And congregation members, help your pastor to take the time off that he needs.
- ✘ Start seeing the relationship between receiving mercy and giving mercy to others. I can’t truly give unless I have first received. This is true for spiritual care, but it is also true for physical and emotional care.
- ✘ Don’t underestimate the power of God’s Word to comfort and enliven us. With both Luther and Walther, it was the words of consolation given to them in their time of need that gave hope.

May our churches ever be places of hope and consolation, both for our people and for our pastors. 

1 *Ibid.*, 129
 2 *Ibid.*, 129.
 3 As cited in Lohrmann, 131.
 4 From *At Home in the House of My Fathers* (CPH, 2009), 142–145. Translated by Matthew C. Harrison.
 5 *Ibid.*, 143.

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Scan the code to learn more about Dr. Peperkorn’s book, *I Trust When Dark My Road: A Lutheran View of Depression.*



I'm Lifting My Eyes, O LORD...But for “How Long?”

Rick Marris



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Hardly any of us in the United States have traveled this route through a pandemic before. Only the most elderly remember the 1918 influenza pandemic. Others, born in the 1950s or earlier, remember when the infection of polio caused constant anxiety. But now, we have all been journeying through a COVID-19 pandemic that has taken over 700,000 lives in the USA and over five million lives worldwide (as of November 2021). It has been a strange disease, affecting many people with negligible symptoms, but threatening and taking the lives of a small percentage.

The mental health implications have been ubiquitous. One journal article (*JAMA Psychiatry*, February 2021) notes that since COVID struck, emergency room consults for suicide attempts are up by 6% and drug overdoses up by 17%. Another reports that alcohol use is up by 29%, and even higher among those who were already struggling with anxiety issues prior to the pandemic (*Preventive Medicine*, April 2021). People who were excessively fearful about germs pre-COVID (e.g., those with obsessive-compulsive disorder) have become even more anxiety-stricken about leaving their homes or even having their loved ones leave their homes. Some estimates have claimed that symptoms of depression and anxiety have nearly doubled among adults (*American Journal of Health Promotion*, February 2021). Counseling agencies tell me that they have waiting lists for clients and not enough professional counselors to see them all, even with online options.

Anxiety is a normal, even healthy response to dangerous things. All other mammalian creatures have spurts of anxiety, most notably when a large predator is chasing them. Their anxiety response helps save them by splashing their blood, heart, lungs, and muscles with adrenaline and cortisol, which makes them faster and stronger and more apt to outrun or fight off the predator. God created mammals, including humans, to react this way. However, when the threat of the predator has subsided, the non-human mammals can return to a more normal life of peaceful eating and drinking along their path.

As a human mammal, I have been created with “my reason and all my senses” (*Luther’s Small Catechism*). Our reason is both a blessing and a curse since our intellect can lead us to habitually think about the dangerous things in our lives, including things that other animals cannot see or consider, like microscopic bacteria and viruses. While a wildebeest may anxiously run from a lion for a few minutes, their adrenaline, cortisol, and other neurochemicals largely return to normal after a short time. For us, these neurochemicals can stay revving up our hearts and lungs as we anxiously ponder all the dangers in

this sin-filled, groaning world, keeping us from ever feeling at peace. Other mammals can have a strong sense of fear or anxiety, but only humans truly have the capacity for phobias and anxiety disorders. I have not frequently seen the terms Coronaphobia or COVIDphobia yet (they were apparently coined in fall 2020), but I think it’s just a matter of time, especially in light of the media and governmental focus on the virus.

Generations of believers before the 1918 flu, even in Old Testament times, were constantly aware that epidemics or contaminations (e.g., typhoid, cholera, etc.) could take the life of a healthy person within days, even hours. Our ancestors knew the path of their lives was fragile. We moderns, having lived during ever-increasing life expectancy statistics, have falsely embraced the belief that the medical field will overcome our diseases, despite the fact that we know even the best medicine only delays the journey toward death. Medicines can never overcome death! Only Jesus has overcome our death, through His cross and resurrection on a hill called Zion.

Psalm 121 is a song of a pilgrim journeying to Zion:

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

For centuries, faithful pilgrims have been chanting this psalm, and the other pilgrim psalms surrounding it, to each other as they journey through all sorts of dangers in life. Psalm 122 specifies that the journey is to the temple in Jerusalem, to the peace and security within the walls of Zion. Psalm 120 expresses more distress along the journey and echoes more pleas, like a lament psalm. Jesus likely voiced these psalms on His various journeys to Jerusalem, perhaps even His last journey to His cross.

During this time of pandemic anxiety, many people are looking for a confident path, especially those who already suffer from mental disorders. They sense that science and medicine, while wondrous gifts from God, can provide only limited, temporary hope.

Throughout this pandemic journey, I have directed many counselees to the lament and complaint psalms, like Psalm 13: “How long O LORD? Will you forget me forever?” Lament psalms give us the words to confidently, faithfully complain back to our Lord during times of distress. Such psalms spend the majority of their words pleading for God to look toward us, to not forget us, to listen to our pleas. They then usually end, sounding like a faithful pilgrim psalm, trusting in His unfailing love and rejoicing in His salvation.

The church has an opportunity to remind believers and the “unchurched” that the ultimate Way, Truth, and Life is Jesus Christ. Research shows that more people struggling with mental disorders will approach a pastor or other church leader (25%) than they will consult with a psychiatrist or other MD (16%). Despite the media’s persistent anti-church messaging, many people still seek out the consolation of the church during times of crisis. And in the journey of this generation, the consolation and support that the church can provide is aided by a cadre of more than 50,000 professional Christian counselors who have more First Article expertise about mental illness.

Throughout this pandemic journey, I have directed many counselees to the lament and complaint psalms, like Psalm 13: “How long O LORD? Will you forget me forever?” Lament psalms give us the words to confidently, faithfully complain back to our Lord during times of distress.

Such psalms spend the majority of their words pleading for God to look toward us, to not forget us, to listen to our pleas. They then usually end, sounding like a faithful pilgrim psalm, trusting in His unfailing love and rejoicing in His salvation. Knowing that our Lord Jesus has ultimately carried all of our sins, sorrows, infirmities, and sufferings (Isaiah 53), and conquered them on His cross, may we, His Church, carry one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2) during this pandemic journey, looking to His hill from where our help ultimately comes. 🏔️

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Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Leaning into the Lam



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

In 1518 Martin Luther wrote, “A theology of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theology of the cross calls the thing *what it actually is*.”¹ This pithy phrase warrants some serious reflection in our days. In the last two years, we have been plagued by COVID, mandates, virtue signaling, tribalism, faithlessness, and uncertainty. The effect on our churches has been significant. The effect on ourselves is no less significant. Mental Health America reports, “the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the entire population of the country. While the risk of contracting the disease itself is a population-wide traumatizing event, our physical and social environments have changed as well, leading to greater rates of isolation and loneliness, financial hardship, housing and food insecurity, and interpersonal violence.”² While we are tempted to search for a silver lining in all of this, we know the truth. Humanity is sinful, as is God’s once perfect creation. And when our lives become tragic, this inherent sinfulness is brought to the fore. In a sense, COVID has done all of us a favor by showing us that our attempts to solve the world’s problems and usher in a perfect society are futile. So, with Luther, we learn to be theologians of the cross: calling a thing what it is. We are broken people, attending broken churches, living in broken communities. Some of this is our own doing. Some of this has been done to us.

ent in Our Hymnody

Matthew A. Macheimer

Now is a time for us to rediscover lament. The Bible speaks of lament often, recording numerous instances where the patriarchs and prophets, the heroes of faith, cry out to God in lament; sometimes even accusing Him of wrongdoing! Yet, we cannot rightfully lament until we learn one difficult truth. Everything that happens to us in this life, whether good or bad, is permitted by God Himself. “When souls in our families and congregations suffer—when people in our neighborhoods and in our world suffer and die—our instinct is to explain the suffering away in an effort to defend God. This instinct is contrary to God’s Word . . . in fact, it is harmful to those who are suffering.”³ So we acknowledge that our suffering is allowed by God, saying with Job “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD (Job 1:21).” Far from being a cry of unbelief, our lament to God is a sign of *true faith*. The one who cries out to God must first believe that He is all-powerful and has allowed our suffering! The unholy trinity of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature would cause us no suffering if God chose to prohibit them.

The Church’s first hymnal, the Book of Psalms, provides us with a pattern for lament. Consider these words of David, as recorded in Psalm 13.

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
(Psalm 13:1–2)

David is not interested in having a polite and rational discussion with God regarding the evil that has befallen him. “He knows the real reason for his

distress. Yahweh has forgotten him. Yahweh has hidden his face from him . . . that realization does not paralyze him; it aggravates him.”⁴ You may ask, how can David speak to God like this? How can God expect *me* to speak to Him like this? The answer to these questions is simple. David speaks to God this way because he is a member of God’s covenantal people. He has the right. We, as baptized Christians, also enjoy this right. We have entered into a covenantal relationship with God; not by means of our own actions, but by means of God’s gracious invitation through Jesus Christ. So we cry to Him with audacity, knowing “that things are not as they ought to be. Since suffering comes upon us without our wanting and willing it, but by God’s imposition, we are passive sufferers.”⁵

In addition to the psalter, the Church’s hymnody provides us with a pattern for our laments. They speak to us not only of God’s allowance of our suffering but also of His grace for us *in* our suffering. Like the Psalms, hymns give us words to sing when the anguish of our lives has caused our throats to run dry and our hearts to despair.

Consider these words from the hymn “What God Ordains Is Always Good.” God ordains the bitterness of our lives. He does this not because He delights in our trouble, but so that He might comfort us in our sorrows.

What God ordains is always good:
Though I the cup am drinking
Which savors now of bitterness,
I take it without shrinking.
For after grief
God gives relief,
My heart with comfort filling
And all my sorrow stilling.
(*Lutheran Service Book 760, stanza 5*).



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



While God may seem silent, He is not inactive. He uses our suffering to bring us closer to Him, to focus our eyes on His Son, the One who has suffered in our stead. Jesus Christ promises an end to our suffering, and His anguish on the cross gives our suffering meaning. The Lord has ordained a time for all things. So even now, while we suffer, we sing to Him in faith. We know that, in His good time, He will alleviate our misery and bring us into the joy of eternity.

Georg Neumark’s fabulous hymn, “If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee,” reminds us that God *wants* to hear our laments. He desires us to hold Him to His promise: to place the work of Christ before His eyes when we are suffering. Sometimes He will give us what we pray for and relieve our distress. Other times He will allow our suffering to continue: not because He has cast us off, but because, in His wisdom, and for Christ’s sake, our trouble is for our benefit.

Nor think amid the fiery trial
That God hath cast thee off unheard,
That he whose hopes meet no denial
Must surely be of God preferred.
Time passes and much change doth bring
And sets a bound to ev’rything.

(Lutheran Service Book 750, stanza 5)

Indeed, there is a time for all things. Right now, we find ourselves in times of uncertainty. As our nation rages and our kingdoms totter, we desire that God would utter His voice into our broken lives. COVID has left many feeling alone and unloved. Careers that we have spent years building up have come toppling down. And while God may seem silent, He is not inactive. He uses our suffering to bring us closer to Him, to focus our eyes on His Son, the One who has suffered in our stead. Jesus Christ promises an end to our suffering, and His anguish on the cross gives our suffering meaning. The Lord has ordained a time for all things. So even now, while we suffer, we sing to Him in faith. We know that, in His good time, He will alleviate our misery and bring us into the joy of eternity.

There is a time for ev’rything,
A time for all that life may bring:
A time to plant, a time to reap,
A time to laugh, a time to weep,
A time to heal, a time to slay,
A time to build where rubble lay,
A time to die, a time to mourn,
A time for joy and to be born,

A time to hold, then be alone,
A time to gather scattered stone,
A time to break, a time to mend,
A time to search and then to end,
A time to keep, then throw away,
A time to speak, then nothing say,
A time for war till hatreds cease,
A time for love, a time for peace.

Eternal Lord, Your wisdom sees
And fathoms all life’s tragedies;
You know our grief, You hear our sighs—
In mercy, dry our tear-stained eyes.
From evil times, You bring great good;
Beneath the cross, we’ve safely stood.
Though dimly now life’s path we trace,
One day we shall see face to face.

Before all time had yet begun,
You, Father, planned to give Your Son;
Lord Jesus Christ, with timeless grace,
You have redeemed our time-bound race;
O Holy Spirit, Paraclete,
Your timely work in us complete;
Blest Trinity, Your praise we sing—
There is a time for ev’rything! 🙏
(Lutheran Service Book 762)⁶

- 1 *Book of Concord*, <https://bookofconcord.org/sources-and-context/heidelberg-disputation>
- 2 “Spotlight 2021 – COVID 19 and Mental Health,” <https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/Spotlight%202021%20-%20COVID-19%20and%20Mental%20Health.pdf>
- 3 Gregory P. Schulz, *The Problem of Suffering: Parts One and Two* (presented at “Encore” Conference of Doxology: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel, Saint John’s Abbey, Collegeville, MN, February 10–12, 2017).
- 4 Timothy Saleska, *Psalms 1–50* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2020), 285.
- 5 Gregory P. Schulz, “Pain, Suffering, Lament,” *LOGIA*, vol. 24, no. 1 (Eastertide 2015), 12.
- 6 *Lutheran Service Book*. Prepared by the Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (St. Louis, MO: 2006), 762.

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“...The Mutual Conversation and Consolation of Brethren.”

Jeffrey H. Pulse

These are the words as written in the Smalcald Articles III. iv. A few surprises for me here! First, somehow I have missed the “conversation” part. I always hear, and hear frequently, the words: “for the consolation of the brethren.” Conversation? Not so much. The second surprise is the lack of the definite article before “brethren.” The third surprise—and a BIG surprise at that—is that the section these words are under in the Smalcald Articles is entitled: “IV. The Gospel.”

Here is the entire article:

We shall now return to the Gospel, which offers counsel and help against sin in more than one way, for God is surpassingly rich in his grace: through the spoken word, by which the forgiveness of sin (the peculiar function of the Gospel) is preached to the whole world; second, through Baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth. Through the power of the Office of the Keys, and finally, through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren. Matt. 18:20, “Where two or three are gathered,” etc.

The mutual conversation and consolation of brethren is a means of grace? That makes my Lutheran posterior squirm a bit. It is a good thing it is written clearly in our Confessions, or I would be having a strong conversation with someone with little or no consolation! I should have paid closer attention in Confessions II class at Sem.

Oddly, even though we so often leave out the “conversation” part of the quote in our banter amongst one another, it seems that it is the part we do the most. We talk. We discuss. We argue. We debate. We have collegial conversations.



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

But do we console? Do we comfort? Do we forgive? Do we give grace?

The Confessions have placed “the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren” in some very lofty company. The Word, the Sacraments, and the Office of the Keys are all means by which the forgiveness, won by our LORD and Savior on the tree, is delivered. Grace! No one can deny our desire and longing for grace. No one can deny our desperate need and hunger. No one can deny that the LORD has purchased that which we need to be reunited with our God. How is it then that we are so very apt at denying consolation?

“Well, if my brother came and asked (begged) me I would . . .” “If he was truly worthy of consolation I would . . .” “If they changed and followed my way of doing and thinking I would . . .” It seems we have forgotten the basic definition of

“grace.” Grace is defined as “undeserved forgiveness,” and, most importantly, this definition flows straight from the acts of Christ on the cross on our behalf. Who among us is worthy? Which one of us has deserved the forgiveness bought and paid for us by Christ Jesus? Not one of us deserves consolation, comfort, and forgiveness—but Jesus suffered, died, and rose again anyway!

And regarding that missing definite article before “brethren.” This does not seem to mean the gathering together of the like-minded four out of seven in my *winkel*. It would seem to be bigger than that, perhaps even all believers. Kolb and Wengert translate “brothers and sisters.” Luther constantly tells us not to shun the gathering together. It is not healthy, it is not good, and it deprives us of something unique and special—mutual conversation and consolation. It deprives us of the undeserved forgiveness delivered to us and the opportunity to deliver it to brethren.

The Gospel has a peculiar function, delivering the forgiveness of sin. Grace, the undeserved forgiveness, is ours in Christ Jesus. The mutual conversation and consolation of brethren are our blessed opportunities and responsibilities to share that which was first freely poured out upon us. 🙏

The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey H. Pulse (Jeffrey.Pulse@ctsfw.edu) serves as the Dean O. Wenthe Professor of Old Testament Theology; the Director of Certification and Placement; and the Director of Continuing Education at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Deeply and Richly Rewarding

By Rebecca S. Ahlersmeyer



A Life-Long Love

There is no doubt that Kantor Matthew Machemer has found his calling. Growing up outside Detroit, Machemer said he wanted to be a church musician for as long as he could remember. With his father, a church musician, and his mother, a Lutheran school teacher, as inspirations, he got his bachelor's degree in music education (with an emphasis in choral music) from Concordia University Chicago (River Forest at the time) in 2007 and recently acquired his Master of Church Music from Concordia University Wisconsin. Machemer found that this education was "a fantastic experience" and the perfect opportunity to invest in his life-long love of music and learning. "I think it's important for me, at the Seminary, to bring as much musical expertise to my position as I can, and as much knowledge of church music and liturgy and how those things are expressed in the Lutheran tradition as possible."

Two Wonderful Gifts of God Together

Joining the staff of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), in 2014 as an associate kantor and instructor, Machemer immediately began taking classes in pursuit of a Master of Arts in Theology degree before switching to an MDiv. "I had considered pursuing the pastoral ministry kind of in the back of my mind, but I was undecided. After a few years, I decided

that this thought wasn't going away." He prayed about it a great deal. Then he decided that if he passed Greek, he should go for it—and, "by God's grace," he did. "I'm really excited for what this means in my service to the Seminary, its students, or to the people wherever God would place me. The aspects of the pastoral office that the Lord has given to His Church are just amazing, and to be able to preach, to be able to teach, to be able to provide spiritual care to students, to families, to whomever . . . it's just an amazing responsibility and a privilege. I'm excited to pursue that and I pray the Lord would use me according to His good purpose." Machemer sees ordination as "an opportunity to combine two wonderful gifts of God together, church music and the pastoral office." His hope is that he can remain at the Seminary and "serve in an even more complete fashion."

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work

When Kantor Machemer said "we decided to go for it" when speaking of his higher educational pursuits, it was clear that he's got a good teammate at his side. "Nothing that has happened to me professionally could've happened to me without my wife, Andrea, by my side. She's an amazing woman. She's a wonderful mom. She's a wonderful wife. She has been endlessly supportive of me . . . none of these things would be possible without her." Matthew said that when he comes to her with ideas and asks her

opinions, she nearly always says, "You should do it. Yes, of course you should." While he expressed that the work/life balance can be a challenge at times, "she also does a good job of keeping me grounded, helping me to keep my priorities where they need to be." From their first "meeting" at his Baptism, to reuniting as freshmen in college, to their marriage in 2008, Machemer says, "she is, by far, the better part of our relationship."

This Place is Their Home

Matthew and Andrea are members of Saint Paul's Lutheran Church in downtown Fort Wayne along with their four kids: Noah (10), Ella (8), Henry (5), and Winston (2). The Machemers are very active in their congregation. Alongside the couple's other frequent volunteering, Matthew is involved in a variety of musical capacities (including directing the adult choir) and teaches Sunday school, and Andrea is the Sunday school superintendent and very involved in the day school in which their children are enrolled. "We want to foster in our kids the idea that this place is their home—it's where they go to church, it's where they go to school, it's where life is. That's really been a wonderful thing."

He did note how living and working on campus has enhanced family and church life. "One of the nice things about being at the Seminary is that this place has become an extension of the church life of our family. Work at the Seminary



is spiritually edifying, even while it requires a lot of work to help form future church workers . . . it is a beautiful reciprocal relationship in that sense.” Not only do his kids get to grow and play with the children of other church workers, but it also gives the family the chance to be more present in campus life, caring for students and their families and welcoming them into their home. “It’s a really unique place, a special place.”

A Humbling Privilege

Kantor Machemer serves the church in a number of other ways as well. He volunteers as cantor for the retreats and conferences of DOXOLOGY, a synodical Registered Service Organization (RSO) providing a safe place for clergy to seek pastoral care, address their spiritual and emotional health, and enhance their skills as servants of Christ. “It allows me to connect with guys in the field, to serve them and serve alongside them.” He also has served many churches by playing hymn festivals, recitals, and festival services, completing compositional projects, and teaching on a variety of subjects. “It’s been a huge humbling privilege for me to be able to serve the Lord’s church in those ways.”

Creative inspiration

Kantor Machemer is a published composer (with works available through Concordia Publishing House) and says that inspiration can come from a multitude of

sources. “I’ve always wanted to compose, ever since I started experimenting with that sort of thing in high school.” As he’s grown as a musician—in his exposure to different types of church music and in his understanding of music and theory—it has only “fueled that passion to write.” He gets inspired by the work of others. Sometimes he will consider a certain text that he loves, “and I’ll just challenge myself, ‘Hey, can you write something useful in this context in this style?’” Necessity, however, is often the mother of invention. Oftentimes, when he can’t find a good organ prelude for a given Sunday or a specific piece that works for his choir, he just says to himself, “Why don’t you write one?”

Awe-Inspiring Ramifications

Machemer wanted to express his gratitude to everyone who supports the Seminary and makes all of his joy in service there possible. “Those gifts are not in vain. The fruit produced by those gifts is almost impossible to calculate. They help us to take care of men and women and continue our mission to teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all. Those gifts have eternal consequences and are not taken lightly. The ramifications really are awe-inspiring.”

Where the Church Finds Its Expression

Driven by a passion to serve God and His Church, the Seminary has been and

will continue to be a wonderful setting for spiritual growth—for faculty, staff, students, and their families. “Sometimes I stop and think about being able to model and teach future church workers, to equip them to serve the Lord. It’s so humbling and unique . . . to know that this work will affect the church at large is both an honor and privilege.” To anyone considering the call to come study, grow, and find a home among like-minded brothers and sisters in Christ at CTSFW, Kantor Machemer says, “Do it!” He knows it is a prayerful consideration and a question every person must answer for him- or herself, but he encourages prospective students to “consider coming to visit and talk to people . . . the Admission Department does a wonderful job.” We are truly blessed and thankful that, just as Machemer described how God’s wonderful gifts of church music and ordination work together, so the church and her Seminary work together to prepare servants in Christ to teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all. “It’s a place where the church finds its expression. We try to live out the life of the church in the community. It’s not always easy, but it’s deeply and richly rewarding.” ▲

Rebecca S. Ahlersmeyer (Rebecca.Ahlersmeyer@ctsfw.edu) serves as the Communication Specialist at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.





EVENTS SCHEDULE

Mark your calendars or register today!

For more information, please visit our website at ctsfw.edu/Events or call (260) 452-2100. Please check the events webpage for current information as events are subject to change.

JANUARY 2022

Lenten Preaching Workshop

Monday, January 17, 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/PreachingWorkshop
Phone: (260) 452-2204

Symposia Series

January 18–21



Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/Symposia

Vespers

Tuesday, January 18, 5:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel



King's Men Alumni Game

Tuesday, January 18, 7:00 p.m. in Wambsganss Gymnasium

Epiphany Choral Evening Prayer—Kantorei

Wednesday, January 19, in Kramer Chapel, 5:00 p.m.



Symposia Vespers and Organ Recital

Thursday, January 20, in Kramer Chapel, 4:00 p.m.



FEBRUARY 2022

Seminary Guild

Tuesday, February 8, 1:00 p.m. in Luther Hall

For more information contact Phyllis Thieme at (260) 485-0209 or SemGuild@ctsfw.edu.

Christ Academy: Confirmation Retreat

February 18–20

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/Confirmation

MARCH 2022

Seminary Guild

Tuesday, March 8, 1:00 p.m. in Luther Hall

For more information contact Phyllis Thieme at (260) 485-0209 or SemGuild@ctsfw.edu.

Prayerfully Consider Visit

March 17–19

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/PCV
Phone: (800) 481-2155

Lenten Vespers with the Kantorei

Sunday, March 27, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel



APRIL 2022

Seminary Guild Spring Luncheon

Tuesday, April 12, 12:30 p.m. in Luther Hall

For more information contact Phyllis Thieme at (260) 485-0209 or SemGuild@ctsfw.edu.

Easter Hymn Festival

Sunday, April 24, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel



Vicarage and Deaconess Internship

Assignment Service

Tuesday, April 26, 7:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel



Candidate Call Service

Wednesday, April 27, 7:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel



MAY 2022

All Alumni Reunion

May 18–20

Register: Alumni@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-2204

CTSFW Golf Outing

Wednesday, May 18

Register: Alumni@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-2260

Baccalaureate

Friday, May 20, 10:00 a.m. in Kramer Chapel



Commencement Organ Recital

Friday, May 20, 2:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel



Graduation Exercises

Friday, May 20, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel



Services and lectures will be livestreamed online at ctsfw.edu/DailyChapel or [facebook.com/ctsfw](https://www.facebook.com/ctsfw). Please check our events website ctsfw.edu/Events for the most current information.



SAVE *the* DATE!

ALL ALUMNI REUNION

May 18–20, 2022

RETREAT, RELAX, *and* RECONNECT



More details coming soon!

Questions?

Contact LeeAnna Rondot at LeeAnnaRondot@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-2204.

To register or for more information scan the QR code or visit us at www.ctsfw.edu/Alumni.

CTSFW Golf Outing

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

RETREAT, RELAX, *and* RECONNECT



Location

Cherry Hill Golf Club
6615 Wheelock Road
Fort Wayne, IN 46835
(260) 485-8727

Contests

Closest to the Pin
Longest Drive
Longest Putt

Cost and Registration

\$65 per player
\$45 for alumni, clergy, and students!
(includes sack lunch, 18 holes, beverages,
and Alumni Picnic on CTSFW Campus)
Golf attire is expected and course rules apply.

Schedule

10:00–11:00 a.m. Registration & Warm-Up
11:00 a.m. Tee-Off “Scramble” with Sack Lunch
4:30–6:30 p.m. Awards, and Alumni Picnic
at CTSFW Campus



Registration

LeeAnna.Rondot@ctsfw.edu (260) 452-2204

Questions?

Contact: Rev. Dr. Timothy R. Puls, Director of Alumni & Church Relations
at Timothy.Puls@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-2260

Jesse Brubaker—Alternate



Please provide a brief biographical sketch.

I have been serving the Church as a director of Christian education (DCE) in Southern California since graduating from Concordia University Irvine in 2008. My wife, Bethany, and I met at CUI and were married shortly after graduation. We now have four children ranging from a 10-year-old to a 16-month-old. After growing up wanting to just help out in the church, I truly enjoyed the training, opportunities, and experiences I gained as a DCE. I had pushed off the decision to study for the pastoral office for more than six years, but I am happy to have taken the plunge. Our family loves it in Fort Wayne and I am enjoying being at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne (CTSFW), as an alternate route student, studying for my Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies and waiting to see where God sends us next.

What is your home congregation?

Having served at three different congregations as the DCE, each of them

has been a home to me for a season, and I have been blessed to have brothers and sisters at each who will forever be important to me. However, the church where I was a member through junior high, high school, and college, as well as served as a DCE for more than five years, will always feel like home. Loving Savior of the Hills in Chino Hills, California, was home to so many important people and events in my life. My pastors (Pastors Rauscheck, Page, and Wu) and youth leaders (Bill and Traci Smoyer and Chris and Linda Bakke) all took me under their wings and helped me become who I am today. It was because of my time there in my youth that I felt a desire to serve others through church ministry.

How long have you been a member of the LCMS?

Though my mom made sure that I grew up going to church, we were not always part of the LCMS, but after being confirmed in 2001, I have been a member ever since.

What drew you to CTSFW?

After feeling led to consider pastoral ministry, I looked into all of the paths to ordination in the LCMS. I had considered the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center out of Concordia University Irvine, the SMP Program, and both seminaries. I was happy to hear that the seminaries would help fly out prospective students, so Bethany and I came out to visit Concordia St. Louis (CSL) and CTSFW. Both seminaries gave us wonderful tours, listened to our questions, and made us feel at home. After a great deal of prayer and knowing that this would be a big commitment for our whole family, we felt like CTSFW was the correct decision for us.

How has this transition been for your family?

We have loved our time in Fort Wayne. Our whole family has been born and raised in Southern California and, while we love it there, the seasons, community, and space in Fort Wayne have been wonderful treats. Bethany

Routes Student



has been able to participate in SWA (the Seminary Womens' Association) and has found great comradery in the wives of our fellow seminarians. We are also happy to have so many children of similar ages for them to become friends with. I had been concerned that we would be one of the few (if not only) second career families, but we have all been blessed to make friends and fit into the community.

What have been your greatest challenges and rewards thus far in your seminary experience?

The greatest challenge for me came at the very beginning of our Seminary time. Getting back into studying and taking regular quizzes and tests during summer Greek was a big change after graduating back in 2008, but I am so thankful for that time. Summer Greek was great, both for learning Koine Greek as well as reacclimating to being a student. It was subsequently such a joy to be able to translate 1 John by the end of the class. Having the time with Dr. Nordling and

our Greek tutor, Dan Harrington, was exciting, often grueling, and, in the end, so rewarding.

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

For those who are considering studying to become a pastor, I would tell them, "That's great!" I believe that there are many men who could be fantastic pastors. I would encourage them to pray about it continuously and to talk with their pastor and those who know them the best. I know that I was my own greatest roadblock in taking the leap to go to the Seminary. It was through the encouragement of friends, family, and my pastors that I felt encouraged to follow what God has been calling me to.

For husbands and fathers who are considering going to the Seminary, but are concerned about quitting their jobs and moving away from friends and family, I would tell them that God will make it work. This was one of the

biggest hurdles in my own prayers and decision process. Thankfully, we have a faithful God who has provided for us in so many ways. He will bring things together that you cannot even imagine—in addition to all of the things that the Seminary has in place to make the transition easier.

What are your personal goals/vision for your future service as a pastor?

I look forward to being able to serve in whatever situation, wherever God places me. I loved leading youth and family ministry and having the ability to help people grow in faith. I have often joked that to be a pastor would mean continuing to do so, but with more tools in my belt. Ultimately, I know that there is a great deal of work to be done in God's kingdom and I am happy to be a part of what He is doing. 🏡



Joy in Patient Endurance

Michael P. Schuermann



1.



2.



1. *The Rev. Micahel Schuermann and students from UniLu pose for a group shot after spending an afternoon touring and volunteering at a Pregnancy Resource Center and Merci's Refuge in Champaign, Illinois.*
2. *UniLu students and Rev. Schuermann during an outing to a local pumpkin patch.*
3. *Rev. Schuermann and students of UniLu tackle a trivia event together.*
4. *The UniLu Choir members with Pastor Scheurmann.*

“This has been my worst year of being a pastor.”

As intense gathering restrictions and mask mandates continued here in Illinois toward the end of 2020, a brother pastor confessed this to me. He had shouldered a great burden as he cared for his congregation; especially in the conviction that he must continue to be a steward of the mysteries to his people in the ordinary weekly Divine Service as well as in other extraordinary ways for those who were weak or afraid. In his case, a fair amount of congregational disagreement and tension ensued. He was not alone in this burden.

I hadn't faced as tough a year. Though it was a difficult one, I can definitely say I would not rank it worst. I began serving at University Lutheran Church in Champaign, Illinois, at the very beginning of 2020. I had really only had about six “normal” weeks with this majority-student congregation before the whole country ground to a halt. With most of my congregation now absent

from town and back home, I had a small group to care for.

We did “online church” for a handful of weeks until it was more clear what was really going on in our area. Then our little congregation regularly and gladly gathered together for the ensuing months. Until August, the campus was pretty much deserted and there were practically no students in town.

Come August, my own struggle became apparent. It's the pastoral struggle I've experienced for the so-far 11 years of pastoral ministry that God has blessed me to carry out. That struggle is this: lacking confidence in the often slow working of God in the hearts and minds of His people. In other words, God is very, very patient, and I find myself to be very much *not*. My struggle manifested in anxiety, frustration, and even despair over so many who seemed not to hunger or thirst for the gifts of God so needed in the midst of upheaval and daily uncertainty.



3.



4.

But throughout this time of struggle, the Lord, of course, cared for me and taught me patience and trust in Him. He did this in a myriad of ways:

- ✘ During the height of the restrictions here, He sent two dear Christian men to be instructed and received into our communion fellowship, away from a congregation that taught and confessed quite wrongly about God’s teaching from the Scriptures.
- ✘ He gave a dedicated group of congregants throughout the 2020–21 school year who were eager to be together and prayed, sang, played, cared, and worked together with much joy.
- ✘ He has, so far this year (2021–22), brought many new faces into the pews of University Lutheran.
- ✘ He has, also this year, brought six dear people who desire to be catechized in order to come to the altar to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

From August 2020 and on, the Lord has seen fit to teach me this lesson (amongst many): His ways are not my ways, nor His thoughts my thoughts. In so teaching me, He’s given me cause for great joy in trusting in Him. In Hebrews 11, we’re given a long list of many Old Testament saints who patiently, faithfully waited for the fulfillment of God’s promised salvation: “And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised. . .” (verse 39). They waited for, but did not get to see, the joyful day that we are blessed to know.

That day is the day when Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, paid for all sin. On that day He gave me wonderful good news to preach to all these saints today. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and

perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1–2).

The Son of God patiently waited from eternity for the proper time to become flesh and dwell among us. Not for any reason other than to patiently bear the sin of the world to the cross of Calvary. His patience encourages me to be patient. His endurance rallies me to endure. In patience and endurance, I have learned, comes great joy. 🏔️

The Rev. Michael P. Schuermann is pastor of University Lutheran Church in Champaign, Illinois. He graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in 2010.



Different Gifts, Sa



Since Christ founded his Body, the Church, we have been told that we all have “gifts that differ according to the grace given to us” (Rom. 12:6a), that there should be “no division in the body” and that all members should “have the same care for one another” (1 Cor. 12:25).

Considering our Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19a), it is vitally important that we invest in the ability to speak the language of all peoples. This mission, this need for the vital Gospel of grace and redemption, is true for

all—including those who cannot hear His Word. “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. 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

me Care

Rebecca S. Ahlersmeyer

to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom. 10:13–14). This is why we need well-trained and skilled servants in Christ who can teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.

According to the World Health Organization, “By 2050 nearly 2.5 billion people are projected to have some degree of hearing loss and at least 700 million will require hearing rehabilitation.” Each one of those people will need to receive the message of salvation in Christ and the care of His servants. This need is why CTSFW has partnered with Lutheran Friends of the Deaf, whose vision is a world in which the Deaf community participates equally and fully in the Body of Christ.

During this past quarter, we had our largest group of students in recent memory involved in the Deaf Ministry course. What a blessing to know that these servants of Christ’s Church will have the skills and abilities to reach even more of its members.

Thanks to the support of the Mill Neck Foundation, and the hard work of Adjunct Instructor of Deaf Ministry Peggy Krueger and the Rev. Thomas Dunseth, not only will we see more sign language in our chapel, but also in congregations across the country and around the world.

To learn more about training and ministry to the Deaf community, including the Lutheran Friends of the Deaf, visit lutheranfriendsofthedeaf.org. 📖

Rebecca S. Ahlersmeyer (Rebecca.Ahlersmeyer@ctsfw.edu) serves as the Communication Specialist at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.





Raymond F. Walz

“The Gift That Keeps on Giving!”

Eileen Fitzenreiter

Raymond F. Walz was a quiet, humble man who lived well into his 90s. When I first met him, it was in the year 2014. When we originally met, he shared a story from his youth about his cousin who had struggled to feed and clothe his wife and 4–5 children while he attended Seminary. That situation stuck with Ray so much, making such a deep impression, that decades later when I asked him what ministries he wanted to support after he was called home, his quick reply was “the Fort Wayne Seminary, to help those poor men trying to become pastors.” Ray did not want any Seminary student to quit because of a lack of money. He told me, “We need more pastors and it’s so hard for them.”

Well, this past December 2020, Ray was called to his eternal rest with his Lord Jesus, but that is only the beginning of this story.

Ray was never married. He worked hard and led a simple life. Without a family with whom to leave his savings, he wanted to support the men who were compelled to attend Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), to become pastors. By the end of his long life, he had accumulated an estate valued at over four million dollars. While he left a few small gifts to heirs, and some to St. James Lutheran Church in Archbold, Ohio, the majority of it went into an LCMS Foundation Endowment Fund to bless CTSFW.

Ray instructed the LCMS Foundation that 90% of his estate go into an LCMS Foundation Endowment Fund to support Student Aid at CTSFW. Ray established this with the intent that the annual earnings on the investment would allow 4% of the balance to be an annual distribution to CTSFW to help students with their tuition costs. By distributing assets at this rate, the endowment fund would continue to grow and make an annual distribution to CTSFW, without depleting the principal of the endowment. At the current balance, approximately \$135,000 will go to CTSFW and the student aid fund annually. The final 10% of his estate was given by the LCMS Foundation directly to a local fund at his home congregation, St. James Lutheran Church, Archbold, Ohio, to relieve debt for current LCMS pastors. Another profound blessing!

Ray was so delighted after his plan of giving—long after he was in heaven—was complete. Therefore, every year before he died, after Ray got his taxes

done, he would call me and say he had an early contribution to the LCMS Foundation and his endowment. Then, as we visited and shared Christmas greetings, Ray even shared some of the delicious homemade candy, which he made every year. Just like the occasional cake he baked, Ray delighted in watching people enjoy his handiwork! It was a treat for all!

What Ray established with the LCMS Foundation is marvelous. It will continue to bless the LCMS, CTSFW, and seminarians, and numerous pastors in perpetuity. Decades from now, Ray Walz's gifts will encourage and financially support men called by our Lord to serve as LCMS pastors. What a blessing this sweet little old man was who gave in such a way that his gift keeps on giving!

The LCMS Foundation has been helping people like Ray and you with Christian estate planning for over 60 years. We have experienced counselors, such as the Rev. Dr. Timothy Puls at CTSFW, and others throughout the United States who are ready to be of service to you. We can be the catalyst for making your final planning an easy and effective process. No matter the size of your assets, we are willing to serve you! All it will cost you is the time we spend together. I have long believed that the best gift you can leave to your family and the ministries you care about is a well-organized, well-documented estate plan. We are ready to serve you! 🏡

*Eileen Fitzenreiter
serves as the Senior
Gift Planning Counselor
at LCMS Foundation.*



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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LCMS Foundation

TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER



ADMISSION



So you want to be a pastor or a deaconess, and you’ve discussed this with your pastor and perhaps others in your church. You have talked with your family and prayed to the Lord for wisdom and guidance. You have heard and been moved to answer our Lord’s command, to “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38). So, where do you go from here?

Come for a visit! Alumnus Rev. Jason Braaten refers to the campus visit as a key part of discerning whether the Lord is truly calling you to be a pastor or a deaconess. “When you visit CTSFW’s campus, you live in, indeed become a part of, our community for your stay. You aren’t an outsider but one of us . . . You will be brought into the rhythm of our days . . .” and, “for that time, be formed as a servant in Christ Jesus. You will sit in class with learned faculty who consider you not only students but also future colleagues.” He further explains that “you will see that what is taught in

class comes alive and is put into action.”¹ Visiting in person enables you to worship with the full campus community during our beautiful Kramer Chapel services, where Christ Himself is present and feeds His people. You will have the chance to engage in theological discussions that are often just as robust over lunch and during the post-chapel coffee break as they are in the classroom.

When should you visit? You can certainly schedule an individual visit at any time during the year, but you may also want to participate in one of our special group opportunities.

Prayerfully Consider Visit is a biannual event designed to give future pastors and deaconesses a firsthand look at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. At this free weekend, you attend classes, talk with current students, meet the faculty, and worship in Kramer Chapel. You also hear from CTSFW personnel who are on hand to make your transition to seminary life easier. You will learn about financial aid, housing, and the Food and Clothing Co-op. You will meet fellow brothers and sisters who are contemplating these vocations, just as you are. In addition to a tour of our campus, highlighting the historical and theological aspects of our facilities, there is also a driving tour of the city of Fort Wayne where you can explore the Seminary’s broader environs, its public and private schools, parks, and residential areas.

Each Prayerfully Consider Visit affords a vivid picture of what life as a CTSFW student preparing for the diaconal or pastoral ministry looks like. It is a time to have questions answered and to find encouragement from those who have already taken a step forward toward the Seminary. We invite you to become a part of this informative and impactful weekend. **The next Prayerfully Consider weekend is March 17–19, 2022.** You can find more information at ctsfw.edu/PCV or by scanning the QR code.



Your admission counselor is always on hand to offer you guidance in your deliberations. You are invited to call or email them at any time at (800) 481-2155 or Admission@ctsfw.edu.

May the Lord bless you and keep you as you prayerfully consider the pastoral ministry and diaconal service! 🏡

1 Braaten, Rev. Jason M. “Tools of Discernment.” *Formation: Essays for Future Pastors*. Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2008.



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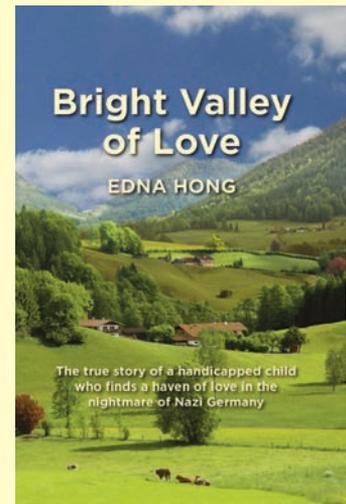
Bright Valley of Love Now Available

Concordia Theological Seminary Press has recently republished Edna Hong's engaging novel *Bright Valley of Love*.

In this stirring and true story, Gunther, a handicapped and neglected child born in Germany during World War I, finds a new home at Bethel, a Christian community for the physically and mentally impaired. At Bethel, Gunther learns to speak and sing, walk and work, and pray and praise. He experiences both the joy of making friends for the first time and the sorrow of having to say goodbye. Through the care of pastors, deaconesses, and teachers, Gunther finds meaning and purpose in music, thanksgiving, and the everyday exercise of a life lived well, no matter the limitations.

The love and security of Bethel is threatened, however, by the Nazi regime as it targets the vulnerable. Can its 2,000 residents be saved?

Bright Valley of Love is available on Amazon in paperback, Kindle, and audiobook formats. The audiobook will include sung recordings of the many hymns referenced in the book. The paperback edition is also available in the seminary's bookstore.



Of the Father's Love Begotten

Epiphany Evening Prayer
led by the Kantorei
of Concordia Theological
Seminary—Fort Wayne

Thursday, January 6
7:00 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church
1377 Lester Rd.
Valley City, OH 44280
(330) 483-3883

www.spvc.org

Friday, January 7
7:00 p.m.

Zion Lutheran Church
766 S. High St.
Columbus, OH 43206
(614) 444-3456 www.zionlcms.org

Saturday, January 8
4:00 p.m.

St. Peter Lutheran Church
2525 E. 11th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46201
(317) 638-7245 www.stpetersindy.org

Sunday, January 9
9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Sunday morning services

Concordia Lutheran Church
305 N. Howard Rd.
Greenwood, IN 46142
(317) 881-4477 www.concordia-lcms.com

Wednesday, January 19
5:00 p.m.

Kramer Chapel
Concordia Theological Seminary
6600 N. Clinton St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
(260) 452-2204 www.ctsfw.edu

Lenten Tour

Lenten Evening Prayer
led by the Kantorei
of Concordia
Theological Seminary—
Fort Wayne

Sunday, March 6
Morning services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church
803 Swifts Hwy.
Jefferson City, MO 65109
(573) 636-6750 www.trinityjc.org

Monday, March 7
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

7611 Park Ln.
Dallas, TX 75225
(214) 368-1371 www.orlcs.com

Tuesday, March 8
St. Paul Lutheran Church

3501 Red River St.
Austin, TX 78705
(512) 472-8301 www.stpaulaustin.org

Wednesday, March 9
Memorial Lutheran Church
5800 Westheimer Rd.
Houston, TX 77057
(713) 782-6079 www.mlchouston.org

Thursday, March 10
Immanuel Lutheran Church
2565 Airline Dr.
Bossier City, LA 71111
(318) 746-2215 www.immanuelbossier.org

Friday, March 11
Grace Lutheran Church
5124 Hillcrest Ave.
Little Rock, AR 72205
(501) 663-0755 www.gracelutheranlr.org

Sunday, March 13
Morning services at 8:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

Grace Lutheran Church
2041 Madison St.
Clarksville, TN 37043
(931) 647-6750 www.glctn.org

Sunday, March 27
4:00 p.m.

Kramer Chapel
Concordia Theological Seminary
6600 N. Clinton St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
(260) 452-2204 www.ctsfw.edu



THANKS BE TO GOD

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If you are interested in learning more about the service of a deaconess, contact Deaconess Katherine Aiello at CTSFW.



Deaconess Katherine "Katie" Aiello

Email: Katherine.Aiello@ctsfw.edu

Cell: (260) 452-6994

Office: (260) 452-2213

www.ctsfw.edu/Admission



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**Concordia Theological Seminary exists
to form servants in Jesus Christ
who teach the faithful, reach the lost,
and care for all.**



IN THE WORD

Psalm 121

Ryan M. Tietz



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Words fail. We do not know what to say. We hear of another senseless death. We hear words like “flexibility” and “pivot.” We get strange looks for beliefs that seem, at best, incomprehensible, at worst, hateful. We try everything to fix the problems. We look to secular saviors to deliver us from this valley of the shadow of death. We cannot hide. We cannot escape the reality of life in a world of deaths. We live as part of a society that tries to deny the reality of death. The problem is that life is a series of deaths. Judith Viorist observes that life is a series of dyings that include birth, going to school, leaving home, getting a job, getting married, having kids, kids growing up, growing old, retiring, illness, and death.¹ When words fail, we go to where God gives us words. The gift of the psalter is that it is God’s words for us to say back to Him. They are also timeless. You do not need to be living in B.C. time to pray them. We pray and contemplate now Psalm 121. First, slowly read Psalm 121. Like all Psalms, it is poetry. Poetry is not meant to be read quickly. Poetry also appeals to the senses with its images. As you now read Psalm 121 a second time, what are some images that resonate with you?

Read Psalm 121:1. What are the images here that the psalmist uses?

The psalmist uses few words. We have no idea what problem provoked this. He is desperate and can only look up.

The language of mountains is key. Mountains are a big deal in the Bible. They are places of strength. More importantly, they are where God and humanity meet. Consider how Isaiah 2:2–5 describes the role of God and Zion. List as many mountains in the Bible as you can think of from Gen. 2 to Rev. 21.

Read Psalm 121:2. What is the basis for the psalmist’s help?

The divine name Yahweh (LORD) is key to confidence. The use of this name emphasizes God’s saving character.

The use of creation language is also important here. By appealing to God as Creator, he is restating his confidence that God orders all of creation and has the power to act. Creation language also expresses the hope of the restored new creation as Isaiah sees in Isaiah 65:17–25.

Read Psalm 121:3–4. How does the image of your foot slipping make you feel?

Even when things are well, we live on the brink of disaster. What are some ways that your foot might slip?

What comes to mind when you think about God as guardian?

The term for guard uses a Hebrew verbal form (a participle) that expresses ongoing action. God does this constantly.

Verse 4 serves to elaborate on what it means for God to watch over. The title “Watcher of Israel” is important. The term “Israel” is also an appeal to God’s ongoing relationship with people.

Read Psalm 121:5. Consider the image of shade. What is the appeal of this image in a world that beats us down?

The tone here points to what it means to have contentment and even joy. We can rest because we know that we are not in charge. Instead, we go to God’s gifts of refuge in His Word, Sacraments, and Church.

Read Psalm 121:6. The moon and sun now enter the imagery. By describing day and night, the psalmist acknowledges the threat and the constancy of contentment and protection.

Read Psalm 121:7. How does this verse give you hope?

The term “evil” (*ra*) is generic. It can mean both sin and any unpleasant thing.

The verse culminates in that God preserves the entire person from any bad thing that may happen.

Read Psalm 121:8. How does this verse remind you of Baptism? Especially here, consider the final blessing at the end of the Baptismal liturgy.

We do not have the words sometimes. We are left speechless by all of the disappointments, dying, and deaths that we experience. We find hope and joy in this Psalm. The psalmist is able to rest because God never stops resting. We also find contentment knowing that we are not in charge, but that God continues to provide hope and joy for us. Slowly read Psalm 121 again. As you do this, savor each image of hope and protection and rejoice that God will continue to sustain you. 

1 Judith Viorst, *Necessary Losses: The Loves, Illusions, Dependencies, and Impossible Expectations That All of Us Have to Give Up in Order to Grow* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

The Rev. Dr. Ryan M. Tietz (Ryan.Tietz@ctsfw.edu) serves as the Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology, the Dean of Students, and the Coordinator of Clinical Pastoral Education at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.



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