

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

Spring 2021, Volume Twenty-Five, Number One



The Seminary They Couldn't Close

Dr. Cameron A. MacKenzie

Blessed Is the Man Who Waits

Dr. James G. Bushur

Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled

Dr. Scott R. Murray



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I love delving into the stories of the past and discovering *how* and *why* certain things came to pass—I suppose that’s why I’ve spent my life studying history. While I enjoy this learning for its own sake, being a historian is so much more than that. I find great satisfaction in the lessons learned from the past that can be applied to our circumstances today and that help us plan for the future.

One of the great frustrations of this past year, under the COVID-19 pandemic, is how it has thrown our future plans into uncertainty. At CTSFW, we are always planning months and years in advance. The pandemic has thrown some of our plans out the window. I know that this has been as true for you as it has been for us. It is *very* frustrating. But should we be surprised? Remember James 4:13–14: “Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.” Still, we all long for a return to normalcy and the ability to plan for our future with a degree of certainty. At the Call Service last April, I preached on the Emmaus passage from Luke 24:13–35:

“We had hoped.” The finality of the disciples’ words is overwhelming. All they had worked for, hoped for, prepared for over the course of a number of years was now ended, finished. Their hopes were wrecked, their dreams unrealized, their expectations dashed . . .

Yet as they trudge along, they are joined by an unrecognized companion who engages them in what may be the most ironic conversation recorded in all of the Scriptures. Ironic because we know who He is and what the outcome will be. But our downcast disciples are kept from recognizing their friend . . . But why? Why could they not recognize Him? And the answer is simply this: so Jesus could reveal Himself to them in the midst of their human weakness and within the context of their profound challenges, as He always does through the Scriptures and the breaking of the bread . . .

I went on to talk about the disappointment we felt where there had previously been hopeful anticipation and then brought our attention back to our friends on their walk to Emmaus:

“And they stood still, looking sad.” That could be us.

But it *cannot* be us. Because we *have* hope. We hope because we know and believe the outcome of Jesus’ story. We know that Christ is risen: He is risen indeed! Alleluia.

The lack of certainty about the future is very unsettling. Yet there is one certainty—One in whom we can place all of our hope: Christ. He is faithful. He will continue to work His purposes for the sake of His beloved bride, the Church.

CTSFW is celebrating 175 years of service to the Church. We are certainly taking time this year to recognize the partnerships and the blessings we have received over nearly two centuries. All of this looking back is helping us to prepare for all that is yet to come. We plan for the future with great hope because Christ’s promises are certain. I pray that you may find peace and comfort in that certain hope as well.

In Christ’s service,

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

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For the Life of the World

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The Seminary They C

In the early 1990s, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne was the setting for a synodical controversy over the involuntary retirement of the Seminary's president, Robert Preus. Powerful men in Synod started to discuss closing "the Fort" and selling the property. Thankfully, those plans went nowhere and by the late '90s, CTSFW had recovered. It would remain what it is today — an essential part of the synodical system for training men for the pastoral ministry, and now also women for service as deaconesses.



The Seminary origins go all the way back to Wilhelm Loehe (1808–72), Lutheran pastor in Bavaria, who started training men in 1841 for service in America, when the need was great on account of German immigration. In 1846, Loehe sent 11 students and a teacher to Fort Wayne, to Pastor Wilhelm Sihler, to begin a seminary. The idea was to get men ready for frontier ministry as soon as possible and not to worry about whether they had the kind of academic training that Lutherans in the old country would expect of their pastors. So CTSFW was established to meet an “emergency” situation.

But this was not the first time that people had talked about closing this Seminary. In fact, there were several previous episodes in its history that went a lot further than talk. Part of the explanation arises from the circumstances in which the Seminary began. Its origins go all the way back to Wilhelm Loehe (1808–72), Lutheran pastor in Bavaria, who started training men in 1841 for service in America, when the need was great on account of German immigration. That was still his thinking when in 1846, Loehe sent 11 students and a teacher to Fort Wayne, to Pastor Wilhelm Sihler, to begin a seminary. The idea was to get men ready for frontier ministry as soon as possible and not to worry about whether they had the kind of academic training that Lutherans in the old country would expect of their pastors. So CTSFW was established to meet an “emergency” situation.

But when would the “emergency” end? As long as Germans kept coming, the need for CTSFW remained evident. But what would happen when that immigration slowed to a trickle in the 1890s? And what if the more “academic” track into ministry represented by the prep schools (six years, basically high school and junior college) and St. Louis was producing more and more

graduates? Would the Synod still need a “practical” seminary for men who, for whatever reason, did not attend St. Louis, the “theoretical” seminary?

Ironically, in 1896, just when the Seminary was marking its 50th anniversary, the synodical convention of that year considered the question of whether to close it. When the discussion concluded, the delegates voted unanimously that, for the welfare of the church, CTSFW should remain open. The Synod could “not yet” do without the school. That “not yet” would haunt the school for decades.

Of course, one might expect the question of school closures, including seminaries, to arise in the 1930s during the Great Depression, and it did. What one might not expect is for the question of closing the Sem to have arisen in the 1920s, but it did then as well. Some of the motivation for considering whether or not to close Springfield (where the Seminary was located from 1875 to 1976) was a new campus for the St. Louis seminary. In 1926, that institution moved from facilities that dated back to the 1880s, to brand new ones, erected at a cost of \$2.5 million dollars in Clayton, Missouri. Couldn't this campus also house the “practical” program? At least, that was the suggestion of a “special conference” from Wisconsin that the

ouldn't Close

Cameron A. MacKenzie



synodical convention of 1926 took up. After all, the proponents argued, the Springfield facilities were so poor that the whole campus needed to be rebuilt and anyway, wouldn't it be better if the training of all Synod's pastors was as uniform as possible? For many subjects, the theoretical and practical students could actually attend the same class. Besides, many of the prep school graduates weren't really capable of succeeding at the theoretical school, but if the practical program moved to St. Louis, such students could still go there and take a less rigorous route into the ministry instead.

But the Springfield Seminary responded with several objections, e.g., the difficulty of instructing two kinds of students with substantially different levels of academic preparation in the same class or the risk that the theoretical division would so overshadow the practical program that the latter would suffer neglect or die out entirely. For 80 years the practical Seminary had demonstrated its value to the Synod. Why should the church risk losing it by merging the two institutions? When the debate came to a conclusion, once again the Synod resolved to maintain the Seminary in Springfield and even appropriated money

Above, clockwise from upper left: *Luther Hall at the Concordia Theological Seminary Springfield campus; Logo to celebrate CTSFW's 175th Anniversary; Luther Statue on the Springfield campus; an aerial shot from 1961 of the then Concordia Senior College campus. CTSW moved to the campus in 1976.*

for new buildings. There was still room for an alternative to the more academic program represented by St. Louis.

But more debate was on its way. Although the 1929 convention did not consider closing the Seminary, it did appoint a committee to assess the entire Synod's system of education, and in 1932 that committee reported the Seminary had accomplished the purpose for which it had been founded. Furthermore, the practical program led to an inferior kind of pastor—one who could not use the biblical languages. Therefore, Springfield should be repurposed to offer courses on missions for men going overseas to teach, as well as courses for lay workers in the church. Once again, however, Synod rejected the recommendations and the practical seminary remained open.

But by 1935, the synodical tide was definitely turning against Springfield. On account of the Depression, the task of placing graduates of both seminaries into the ministry had become severe. By that year, there were about 300 candidates who had not been placed. So once more a Synod convention considered a motion to close the Seminary and this time it passed by the narrowest of margins, 266 in favor of closing, 265 opposed. But with the vote that close, Synod leadership decided to consider the question again so as to achieve a broader consensus—and they did, but perhaps not the one they expected. Two days later the convention voted to reopen the Seminary by a vote of 283 to 256.

Many still had their doubts. In response to changing expectations in America about educational qualifications for all professions, including clergy, Springfield began raising its admissions standards and strengthening its curriculum, but were changes like these consistent with the original objective of the Seminary? Furthermore, was there really any need for a way into the ministry for men who did not have the education and training provided by the prep school/St. Louis system? At the 1941 and 1944 conventions, these questions were

debated once again, but once again the Seminary persuaded the Synod that it was still needed.

But now the tide turned in the opposite direction. First of all, there were soldiers returning from battle after World War II and then Korea, who were excellent candidates for the ministry but would not be going to prep schools. Springfield was the obvious place for them. Secondly, congregations were beginning to establish local Lutheran high schools that would naturally encourage some young men to think of becoming a pastor. Campus ministries were also being established at secular universities. Once again Springfield was the logical choice for graduates of such schools who wanted to be pastors. So finally, in the late '40s and '50s, the Seminary secured its place in the synodical system, even though it changed its actual place by moving to Fort Wayne in 1976.

So “the Fort” was here to stay. But what about today? New challenges now face the Seminary. One of these is demographic. For some time now, the Missouri Synod has been shrinking in size, in part due to white American Protestants having fewer children. Secondly, American higher education is making more and more use of nonresidential, internet-based education. So what does the future hold for CTSFW?

We don't know the future, but we know who holds the future. As The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod sorts through the challenges the need for the faithful work of your Seminary remains vital. Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne stands ready to adapt as needed in order to continue its service to the Synod in preparing church workers. It has done so for 175 years and, by God's grace, it will continue to do so for many years to come. 🏰

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

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Blessed Is the Man Who Waits

James G. Bushur

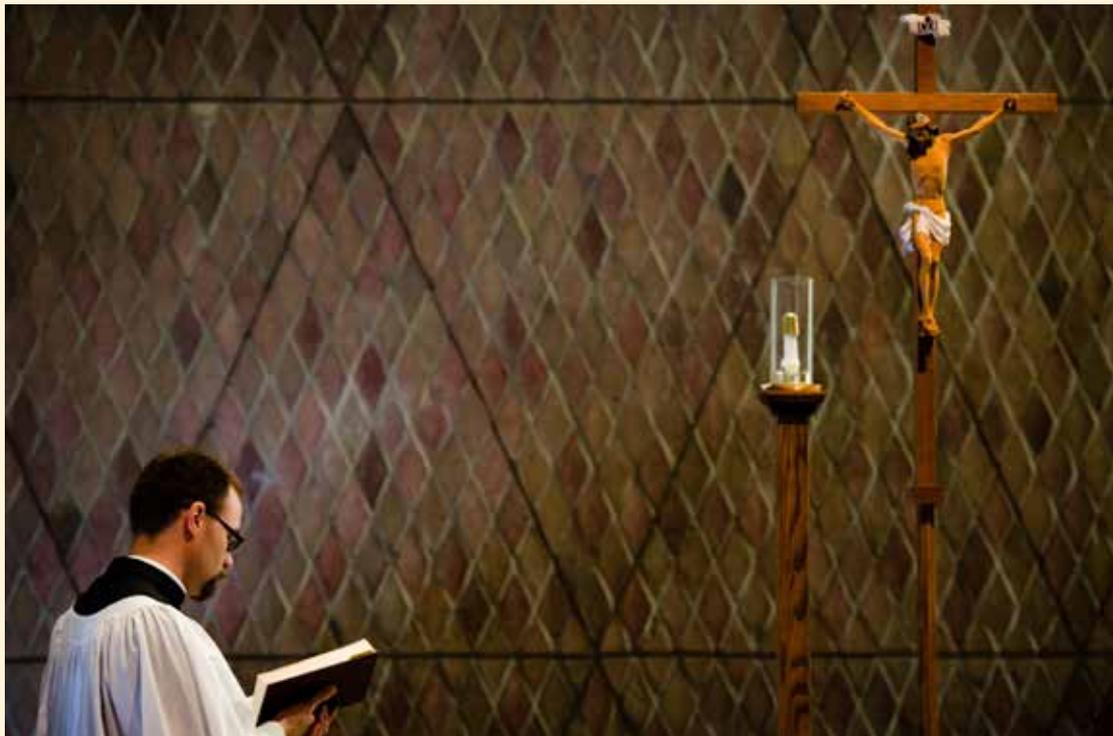


Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

“Blessed is the man who waits.” Daniel 12:12

Historically, oppressed and victimized minorities are tempted toward two opposite extremes—zealotry or despair. The passion of zealotry often compels us to seek victory at all costs, a victory that idolizes the world and finds fulfillment in its power and pleasure. The zealous can be tempted to take power from their oppressors and wield it for themselves in retributive vengeance. Such zealotry often takes the form of activism, as anger arouses the will and gives birth to actions that serve the selfish desire for revenge. The Jewish rebellions against Rome in the 1st and 2nd centuries demonstrate the power of zealotry. Zeal tempts the strong to conquer their oppressors and take the power of the world for themselves.



The patient can be seen as impotent spectators, doomed to an inconsequential passing of time without achievement or fulfillment. To be patient is equated with doing nothing; and to do nothing is to achieve nothing; and to achieve nothing is to be nothing. Patience is the Christian form of life and it is supremely active. However, the aim of the patient way of life is not to eliminate or to evade suffering, but to bear it, to endure it, and finally to outlast it.

The passion of despair, on the other hand, compels us to repudiate this world and to surrender it to the oppressors. The passion of despair is resigned to perpetual defeat. Despairing minorities can be tempted to wash their hands of any responsibility for the world, withdraw from its petty conflicts, and orient their hope toward a transcendent utopia. Such despair often takes the form of pacifism, as sorrow dampens the spirit and gives birth to the moral paralysis of surrender and self-pity. Ancient gnostic sects followed this path, tempting the vulnerable to flee the world for a spiritual fulfillment in an alternate reality.

In the United States, the holy, Christian Church finds itself facing a fork in the road. Since the days of Emperor Theodosius I (379 AD) Christianity has enjoyed privileged status in western European culture. As the “establishment,” the Church has enjoyed a profound freedom to wield political, legal, intellectual, and even cultural power, according to its own mission and purpose. Yet, perhaps many recognize that the Church’s privileged status in the present age has come to an end. The tragic fragmentation of the Church since the Reformation and the rise of secularism in its countless forms have pushed the Church to the fringe of society. Politically, legally, intellectually, and culturally the voice of orthodox Christianity is diminishing.

Zealotry or despair—which path shall we follow? Shall we seek to regain power in this world and wield it against our opponents? Shall we surrender this world to those who oppose us, withdraw from conflicts that seem insurmountable, and seek fulfillment in a transcendent realm? Shall we idolize the world or shall we repudiate it? These paths appear to follow opposite trajectories, but in fact share a common goal. Both paths tempt us with the desire to avoid suffering and sorrow. The zealous would end their suffering by taking power from their oppressors and using it for the pleasure of revenge. The despairing

would end their suffering by fleeing the conflict and avoiding the sorrow of an inevitable defeat.

In America, the Church stands before this fork in the road; yet, our present situation is not the first time that zealotry and despair have tempted the Church. For the first three centuries of its existence, the Church faced wave after wave of hostility. Early Christians faced political exclusion from the ruling class, legal persecution by city magistrates, intellectual ridicule from the philosophical elite, and cultural contempt from pagan society. Since the beginning of the 2nd century, Roman rulers identified the Christian Church as a “superstition” and a dangerous “contagion” that needed to be quarantined for the good of society.¹

Thus, as an oppressed and persecuted minority, the ancient Church experienced the inclinations toward zealotry and despair. Some were tempted to accept the call of Jewish zealots to take up the sword in rebellion against Roman rule. Others were tempted to follow certain gnostic teachers in repudiating the material world and disdaining the body as the source of suffering and sorrow. The ancient Church rejected both paths in favor of a third—the path of patience or, better, long-suffering. *The Epistle to Diognetus* (150 AD) claims patience or “long-suffering” as the central virtue of God’s character.² Tertullian (200 AD), a Christian catechist in Carthage, wrote the first treatise dedicated to patience as the “highest virtue.” Gregory Thaumaturgus (240 AD), the bishop of Pontus, adds patience to the four cardinal virtues of the pagan philosophers, describing it as “that virtue peculiarly ours.”³ And Cyprian (250 AD), bishop of Carthage, during a deadly plague and one of the most intense persecutions of the Church under Emperor Decius, wrote a truly profound theological treatise designed to focus his flock in a single direction: *On the Good of Patience*.

Yet in American culture, there is no virtue that meets with more skepticism

and suspicion than the good of patience. We live in a supremely impatient society. “Seize the day!” “Life is short!” “Time and tide wait for no man!” Such ancient aphorisms have all been transformed into calls for action, boldness, and ambition. “A man is defined by his actions,” we are told, so “just do it.” The politics of our day feed this activism by agitating the electorate with crisis after crisis, each marketed in ways to effect immediate action. In such an activist culture, patience is disdained for its perceived passivity. The patient can be seen as impotent spectators, doomed to an inconsequential passing of time without achievement or fulfillment. To be patient is equated with doing nothing; and to do nothing is to achieve nothing; and to achieve nothing is to be nothing.

From the beginning of his treatise, Cyprian rejects the definition of patience as passivity or inactivity. “We do not speak great things, we live them.”⁴ This striking aphorism rejects the kind of patience expounded by pagan philosophers. Patience is the Christian form of life and it is supremely active. However, the aim of the patient way of life is not to eliminate or to evade suffering, but to bear it, to endure it, and finally to outlast it. Cyprian rejects both zealotry and despair as forms of impatience. Both paths seek to avoid suffering, to evade sorrow, and to circumvent the anguish of this world. For Cyprian, such impatience is the essence of sin and the genetic trait generated out of the devil himself. “The devil suffered impatience that man was made in the image of God,” writes the bishop of Carthage. This impatience the devil then engendered in humanity. Impatient for truth, Adam settled for the devil’s lies. Impatient with God’s discipline, Cain murdered his brother. Impatient for food, Esau sold his birthright. Impatient for Moses’ descent from the mountain, Israel formed a golden calf.⁵ All sin is impatience, a failure to persevere, and so always “falls short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

For Cyprian, patience is the supreme genetic trait of God’s own life. “From him patience begins... the origin and greatness of patience proceed from God as its author.”⁶ And so, it becomes children to imitate their Father. Indeed, the patience of God is manifested in those generated from His Seed. It is seen in Abel “who initiated and consecrated the origin of martyrdom.”⁷ It is seen in Abraham who bore the command to offer his son, in Isaac who suffered the binding, in Jacob who makes peace with his brother, in Joseph, Moses, David, and all the righteous. Yet, it is only in Christ that “a full and perfect patience” is finally “consummated.”⁸ As the true Son, Jesus gives form to the perfect patience of the Father. Although righteous, He bears the sins of the world; though immortal, He suffers death; though guiltless, He is reckoned with sinners. Jesus even “bears Judas to the last with a long patience.” He did not “openly point him out, nor refuse the kiss of the traitor.”⁹

Some may object, claiming love as the supreme virtue of God’s nature. Yet, Cyprian points out that Paul calls love the greatest precisely because it “abides” (1 Cor. 13:13). “Charity is the bond of brotherhood... take from it patience...it does not endure. Take from it the substance of bearing and of enduring, and it continues with no roots nor strength.”¹⁰ For Cyprian, patience actively and persistently struggles. Yet, patience does not seek fulfillment in the ruling of this world nor in the rejection of this world; it seeks fulfillment in the redemption of this world, in the repentance of sinners, in the resurrection, and in the manifestation of Christ in the glory of His Father. The resurrection and the life of the world to come gives Christians the freedom to be patient, the freedom to turn the cheek, to love the enemy, and “to bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

For Cyprian, patience is freedom because it has no boundaries—both its beginning and its end reside in God

and so, patience is the only path for Christians. Thus, Cyprian ends with a final exhortation. “Let us wait for him, beloved brethren... let us consider his patience in our persecutions and sufferings; let us give an obedience full of expectation for his advent.”¹¹ This exhortation points to the example of the martyrs who, as Cyprian points out, continue to endure the command of God to wait (Rev. 6:9-11).

Cyprian’s exhortation needs to be heard again in our day. Our fulfillment is not found in ruling or rejecting this world; it is found in the advent of Christ, the repentance of sinners, the resurrection of the body, and the life of the world to come. May our patience be a sign of God’s enduring mercy and a testimony to the hope of the resurrection. On that day, the beatitude will be fulfilled: “Blessed is he who waits” (Dan. 12:12). 

- 1 See Pliny the Younger’s correspondence with the emperor Trajan.
- 2 See *Epistle to Diognetus* 8.7, 9.2.
- 3 Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Oration and Panegyric Addressed to Origen*, 12 (ANF, vol 6, p 33).
- 4 Cyprian, *On the Good of Patience*, 3 (ANF, vol 5, p 484).
- 5 Cyprian, *On the Good of Patience*, 19 (ANF, vol 5, p 489).
- 6 Cyprian, *On the Good of Patience*, 3 (ANF, vol 5, p 484).
- 7 Cyprian, *On the Good of Patience*, 10 (ANF, vol 5, p 486).
- 8 Cyprian, *On the Good of Patience*, 7 (ANF, vol 5, p 486).
- 9 Cyprian, *On the Good of Patience*, 6 (ANF, vol 5, pp 485-486).
- 10 Cyprian, *On the Good of Patience*, 15 (ANF, vol 5, p 488).
- 11 Cyprian, *On the Good of Patience*, 24 (ANF, vol 5, pp 490-491).

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Let **Not** Your Hearts



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

As people are recovering from the devastating effects of COVID-19, many feel that their trial is a sign of their weakness or their sin or their unrighteousness. Sometimes we are even unable to articulate this, though the anxiety and pressure leaves us with this vague unease that our suffering is a divine judgment against us. When trial and testing come upon us, we so easily presume that they are a sign of God’s wrath, that He is punishing us with such burdens and sorrows. Several people have said to me, “Pastor, I know that God is trying to teach me something by this crisis, but I don’t yet know what it is.” The human heart is bent toward self-blame. We fall into what we think of as a moral explanation for our sorrows: “I must’ve done something to deserve this.” This, of course, is the flip side of moral self-righteousness, which presumes that good things happen to me because I have been good. The human heart, in its perversity, is also geared toward self-righteousness. Both self-blame and self-righteousness are equally perverted. If we find the meaning of our trouble in our own hearts, we will never know what God wants to teach us by our trial.

Be Troubled

Scott R. Murray

Christians see their trial and suffering quite differently from those who do not know God's love in Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for our sins by suffering on the cross of Calvary and offering His blood for us. He has made the full payment for sin. Why would we think that our suffering would be some kind of co-payment? How could we consider the priceless blood of Christ to be in any way supplemented by the value of our suffering, sorrows, or trials? If we did, we would be looking at the moral value of our world through the lens only of the Law and not of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. If we live only in the Law, we will never understand the blessing of the crosses that God sends us to exercise and strengthen our faith.

When I am in the midst of trial or difficulty, I am greatly encouraged by walking with Christ to Golgotha's hill. Here is the greatest trial, agony, and suffering. It dwarfs our own. I'm not trying to minimize the significance of our human suffering. No, when I cannot understand the meaning of my own suffering, walking to Calvary with Jesus shows me that the most blessed person, Christ Himself, undergoes the highest agony. It shows me that the greatest blessing flows out of the greatest suffering. If the sinless Son of God can undergo suffering and agony for my sake, it changes the meaning of my own suffering.

His heavenly Father laid on Him the iniquity of us all, that we might be freed from our sin. His suffering changes the moral meaning of everything. It changes the meaning of our suffering. God uses it to strengthen our faith and make us all the more thankful confessors of His Gospel. Our suffering cannot be a payment, because Christ has paid for every and all sin. Therefore, our

suffering must mean something else. Our trials mean that God is urging us into greater faith, a higher confidence in Him, and an otherworldly certainty about His grace toward us. We are becoming blessed with the Blessed One, who sanctified our suffering. Only through the Gospel will we ever know the meaning of our suffering.

From time to time, I suffered anxiety and fear because of all the frightening things that happened this past year and still echo through our culture and nation. Last April, when churches shut down and services went virtual, I suffered 10 days of deep anxiety. I worried about the Church, the future, the nation, and my service to the Gospel. I think many people suffered something of this sort; especially because of the social isolation to which we were all subjected. The Lord brought me through by turning me back to His Word, to what was truly important: preaching Christ to sinners, sinners humbled by their experience of disease and its ill effects. I needed to be turned away from myself and set upon Golgotha under the blood-spattered cross. I needed Jesus more and not less in this crisis.

During the last few months of 2020, I was often approached by parishioners as well as guests from other parishes thanking me for preserving Divine Services, but it was simply a matter of keeping first things first. God gives Himself to His people in Word and Sacraments. COVID could not change that. Instead, the Gospel of Christ addresses our fears and promises salvation, so that whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord (Rom. 14:8). Despite my anxiety about the church, the Lord has brought great blessings out of this crisis. My parish is now experiencing growth, which we

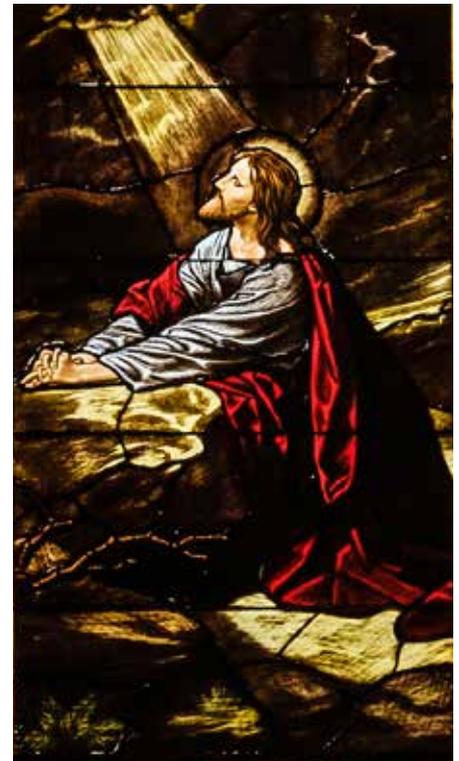


Photo: Erik M. Lunstedt/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Opposite page: *The Rev. Andy Wright, pastor of Saint John Lutheran Church, Keystone, Iowa, on Monday, Aug. 17, 2020. "The tornado sirens went off. You could hear the wind and things just breaking all around you, for about 30 minutes straight. At first we thought a tornado was hitting. But it was not until the storm was starting to dissipate that I looked outside, and saw trees down all around our street, and then I looked back at the church, and my mouth just dropped open."*

Above: *The interior stained glass of Saint John Lutheran Church, Keystone, Iowa, survived intact despite a massive "derecho" wind storm that tore through the Midwest, hitting thousands of square miles with winds of up to 112 mph.*



Our suffering cannot be a payment, because Christ has paid for every and all sin. Therefore, our suffering must mean something else. Our trials mean that God is urging us into greater faith, a higher confidence in Him, and an otherworldly certainty about His grace toward us. We are becoming blessed with the Blessed One, who sanctified our suffering. Only through the Gospel will we ever know the meaning of our suffering.

could not have anticipated in 2019. The health challenges and obvious cultural decline of 2020 had its own blessed way of making clear what is important to us and has driven us back to the gifts of God in Christ.

Jesus is especially thinking of the suffering, anxiety, and trial of His disciples when He encourages them on the night of His betrayal. He says, “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me” (John 14:1). He knew the fear that would overtake them when the Shepherd is struck and the flock scattered (Matt. 26:31). While facing the weight of the world’s sins pressed down upon His holy arms at Golgotha, He is concerned for them in their coming tribulation and anxiety.

We too are His disciples, and He speaks to us. Luther says of Jesus’ encouraging speech, “These words were recorded, not for [the apostles’] sakes, but for ours, that we might learn

to apply this comfort to both present and future need.” How much we need Jesus’ encouragement in these COVID-stressed days! He has not abandoned us. He is not punishing us. Yes, the unbeliever may see the struggles of this past year as a clear statement of God’s righteous wrath against a sin-sick world and a decayed society. However, we Christians should always look upon our experiences from the standpoint of the cross and faith. Luther encourages believers, “Where suffering and the cross are found, there the Gospel can show and exercise its power.” Christ has promised that the suffering Lord would be with us in our suffering, for our good and blessing. He says to us, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27). This is the Word upon which we should feed, and in it find our life. Luther says,

“From these and similar words and admonitions of Christ, we should also learn to know the Lord Christ aright, to develop a more cordial and comforting confidence in Him, and to pay more regard to His Word than to anything else which may confront our eyes, ears, and other senses. For if I am a Christian and hold to Him, I always know that He is talking to me.” When He does, He is saying, “My dear child, do not be afraid. No matter what, I am still your Lord. Let not your hearts be troubled.” 

The Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray (smurray@mlchouston.org), is the Senior Pastor of Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas, and serves as the Third Vice President of the West Southwest Region of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He also serves on the Board of Regents of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.





Hope in Christ— Not Buildings

Adam C. Koontz

Our hope is and was always only in Christ. That was true when institutions and finances and demographics all seemed so favorable to us. That is true when sometimes very little is projected to favor our church body. Our hope was never in statistics; it was always only in Christ. That's why if you have a symbol of hope somewhere in your church's sanctuary, it's an anchor. Hope holds onto what is sure and keeps us stable when the seas rock and the winds roar. We have safe harbor because we have hope for an anchor.

Hope is not the last resort of the desperate, as if we said, "Well, since we don't have much going for us now, let's see if Jesus might be able to do something for us." Jesus was our sole hope in the days when seminaries sent out hundreds of men between them each year, and He is the sole hope of the men who will enter the harvest work this year too. Jesus was interceding at the right hand of the Father for the men who got a car and enough money to start building a church in the 1950s, where people just seemed to show up, and Jesus is interceding for the men who now go out to places where people don't show up like they used to.

Our hope was never in our *plans*, our *comforts*, or our *purposes*, but since our hope is in Christ, it definitely rests on Christ's *plans for us*, *comforts for us*, and *purposes for us*. He is the same today, yesterday, and forever. If our plans crumble, His are carried out. If what was our comfort and our routine is now gone from our lives, He sends His Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to guide us afresh. If our purposes are thwarted and we don't know where to turn next, His purposes

are infallible and good and mighty.

Why say this now? Because on some level we all thought or intuited that our many plans, our accustomed comforts, and our human purposes were worth more than they have proved to be. On some level we expected that the world, the public health authorities, the governors of our states, the mayors of our cities, our congregations, our schools, and just about everything else in our lives would show more respect for our sense of how things should be than they have. We thought that we could go here and there without having to say what James advised us to say, "God willing" (James 4:15).

The glory of the past 12 or so months is how much has been revealed. Some of that was clarifying. Some of that was very unsettling. All of it will prove to work for the good of Christ's body, the Church. "Good" does not mean easy. "Good" does not mean foreseen by us or known by us. "Good" does not mean accustomed or comfortable or statistically projected. "Good" means godly. "Good" means working for our salvation and the world's salvation

through the message of the Gospel. "Good" means Christ's words and works prevailing in all things. That's our hope, and it's founded on God's Word that all things—including times of enormous upheaval and change—work together for those who love God, who are called according to *His purpose* (Rom. 8:28).

There isn't anything more wonderful than His purpose, and that was always true. His purpose is to save sinners through the Son's atoning sacrifice and death-destroying resurrection. There was a time when very few people believed that God's purposes would find their "Yes" and their "Amen" solely in the crucified and risen Messiah. Very few believed, very few listened, very few picked up on what they were hearing. That didn't stop God and His gracious and glorious purposes in Jesus Christ for the world's salvation. Do we think that somehow the Victor of Mount Calvary and the Prince of Peace will be thwarted by what has happened with us in the past year, or that He will step down from His throne because our future is unsure?

Christ is always King. People, institutions, financial projections, and many other things come and go in the church, but they are always in the service of His Gospel and at the beck and call of His Spirit. Only our gracious God and His Word endure forever. In Him alone we hope. 🏰

The Rev. Dr. Adam C. Koontz (Adam.Koontz@ctsfw.edu) serves as assistant professor of Exegetical Theology and the Director of Field Education at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Shining His Light Together

Patti Miller

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

As a little girl, I loved to draw and make things. Even though I was very shy, God gave me plenty of people to love and who loved me; I think, just so that I might one day overcome that shyness. Since I loved my time alone, I often sat on our front porch, cross-legged with my sketchbook in my lap and pencils in my hand, asking myself “What should I draw?” Lots of drawing led me to study visual art in college and the love of godly parents and grandparents led me to faith in Christ. Since those early days of drawing and a preference for being alone, God has blessed me with a great desire to study His Word. In my hearing and study of His Word, I have found plenty of things to draw, and many joyful reasons to reach out in service and love to His people.

As I consider the Holy Scriptures and many of the pericopes and verses that have inspired my art, this verse from Matthew has been a strong and guiding inspiration to me. This light, ignited by faith and the blessing of God’s Word in my life, is why I began and continue



Top: Good Friday *bulletin cover*

Above: Advent 3 Sword *digital art cover*

to create visual art that serves to point to the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This light that shines in my heart and in the heart of all believers is the light of faith in Christ. It is a shared

light that shines from our participation as a member of the body of Christ. It is a light that is fanned in relationship with Christ and with one another, so that together we may shine His light into the darkness of sin and suffering. Our hope, as His body, is that all may receive and know the peace and healing of faith and forgiveness in Christ our Lord. It is a light to our path for this life and, best of all, it lights the way to a greater and eternal life. That is my hope as I paint and my desire as I create. It is why I must use the gift of art that God has given to me to share with His Church and the world. My prayer with every stroke of a brush or every pixel I draw on a screen is that others will come into this wonderful relationship and fellowship as children of God, that they will find their way to the sanctuary where His Word is proclaimed and the gifts of faith and forgiveness are received.

God gives gifts to His Church so that all people might receive forgiveness, life, and salvation in Christ. To each individual He gives unique gifts so that they might serve those around them and bring them into the family of believers. In 2003, I served my church as a church secretary. During my first week, I realized that we were without a preprinted bulletin cover. At the time it seemed like a pretty insignificant event. I had agreed to take the position because of my art and design background, as well as my knowledge and ability to put together a bulletin and newsletter—two really important things in the life of a congregation before our reliance upon social media and the internet. The congregation had recently undergone staffing changes and was in the middle of the call process. With the vacancy being filled by local Lutheran pastors, along with the recent changes

in staffing, the normal subscription to bulletin covers had expired. I found myself on a Thursday afternoon ready to print the order of service but not sure what should go on the front. There is where it started. I began that day and each week after that to study more intensely the Gospel lesson for the week and come up with a drawing or sketch that might point to that lesson, that I could use as a bulletin cover. What was really going on here during that solid year of study and drawing of bulletin covers each week, was the building of a relationship. The congregation there in my hometown of Fairhope, Alabama, my family in Christ, allowed me to do and share the drawings with them each week.

My hope, of course, was that something in the drawings would inspire each of them and their understanding of God's Word and connect them to service of the Word. Greater really was their service to me than mine to them. That year of study and sketching allowed me to dig deeply into God's Word, something I had always loved to do. Doing so consistently each week, in a way I had not done before, created an ever greater desire to study and to serve. My relationship with God was fueled by His Word. The opportunity to shine His light and to continue to study was also fueled by my relationship with my brothers and sisters in Christ in Fairhope and our new pastor, the Rev. William Parsons, who accepted the call to serve Redeemer, and who first told me that I should consider deaconess studies at CTSFW.

After serving Redeemer as church secretary, I was blessed to serve in the senior care industry for 10 years, using my love for creating art with the elderly and dementia patients. During that time, I began transferring many of

my bulletin cover designs to painted wood pieces. My painted wood crosses have traveled the world, and I have completed many original works for both LCMS congregations and Christian organizations, as well as hundreds of pieces for individuals wanting to share the Word and images with others. During this time, God continued to give me opportunity to grow in faith and formed in me a greater desire to serve His suffering people in need of the Gospel message. He also brought to me many opportunities to create religious art. In all areas of my life, God continued to bring people into my life who encouraged me in my service to others and in my art.



Above: *Patti Miller with the Rev. Dr. Ralph Blomenberg at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Seymour, Indiana.*

These relationships are all so important to me and to the path that I would continue to walk, where I find myself today.

In the fall of 2018, my husband, George, and I moved to Seymour, Indiana, to be close to our two daughters, their families, and four young grandchildren. All of a sudden, there were again before me opportunities to develop new relationships and new ways to serve with my art. Our move to Indiana also brought a renewed interest—with a little nudging from my good friends, the Rev. Dr. Ross, Mireya Johnson, and others—to pursue

the Distance Deaconess Formation Program at CTSFW. In the summer of 2019, I attended my first set of on-campus intensives. At present, I am very blessed to continue to grow in faith and service as I serve at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Seymour, Indiana. My time at Immanuel has been nothing but a gracious outpouring of opportunity from God. My work there has allowed me to use my gift of service to others through my work as children's ministry director, as well as my visual art background as communications secretary. George and I both are blessed once again by the many new relationships in Christ we have formed at Immanuel in Seymour. I

am so thankful to my pastors, to my mentor, the Rev. Dr. Ralph Blomenberg, and my entire church family there for allowing and encouraging me to share my art in many ways, so that it may shine the light of Christ and give glory to our Father in Heaven.

In May of 2021, I plan to complete the Deaconess Formation Program at CTSFW and to continue my service to God's people in Seymour as a deaconess. As a deaconess, I'm excited to continue to use my art, as well as the many other gifts, for service that God has given to me. With joy I

look forward to the work of shining His light with and alongside my brothers and sisters in Seymour, the Synod, and around the world, so that others may be brought out of darkness and, with us together, into the great light of hope and peace found through faith in Christ. Galleries of my work can be found on my website at www.jubileeart.com. 🏠

Patti Miller serves as the Children's Ministry Director and the Communications Secretary at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Seymour, Indiana.



EVENTS SCHEDULE

Mark your calendars or register today!

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



"Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!"
Psalm 105:1

APRIL

Christ Academy: Confirmation Retreat

April 9–11

Information: www.ctsfw.edu/Confirmation

Register: ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu or (800) 481-2155

175th Anniversary Lecture Series



Sunday, April 25, 2:30 p.m. in Sihler Auditorium

"Luther on Trial at the Diet of Worms"—Dr. Cameron A. MacKenzie

Easter Hymn Festival



Sunday, April 25, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Vicarage and Deaconess Internship Assignment Service



Monday, April 26, 7:00 p.m.

Candidate Call Service



Tuesday, April 27, 7:00 p.m.

COVID-19 Preparedness for Lecture and Event Attendees

Please know that CTSFW is truly blessed to have you as our guest, and we take your safety very seriously. We will keep you updated as we follow CDC Guidelines, clean all surfaces thoroughly and regularly, and design classes and events to allow for social distancing. Masks are required for every attendee while indoors and when less than six feet apart outdoors. We appreciate your understanding. We are thankful for the opportunity to safely open our doors to you. We pray your experience is as enjoyable and enlightening as it is peaceful and protected.

MAY

Baccalaureate



Friday, May 21, 10:00 a.m. in Kramer Chapel

Commencement Organ Recital



Friday, May 21, 2:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Commencement



Friday, May 21, 4:00 p.m.

JUNE

Christ Academy: Timothy School

Christ Academy: Phoebe School

June 20–July 3

Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/TimothySchool (boys) or www.ctsfw.edu/PhoebeSchool (girls) or (800) 481-2155

JULY

Organist Workshop

July 26–30

Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/MusicWorkshops
Contact: Music@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-2224

SEPTEMBER

Opening Service



Tuesday, September 7, 10:00 a.m. in Kramer Chapel

OCTOBER

SAVE THE DATE



Culminating Anniversary Event

Sunday, October 24



Services and lectures will be livestreamed online at www.ctsfw.edu/DailyChapel or www.facebook.com/ctsfw.

Some services may be open to the public. Please check our events website for the most current information.

HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA

May 31–June 2

Dr. Arthur Just

Liturgy as Pastoral Care



WYOMING DISTRICT

May 31–June 4

Dr. Adam Koontz

To the Point of Shedding Blood: Christian Martyrs in the First Three Centuries



GONZALES, LOUISIANA

June 7–9

Prof. John Pless

The Formula for Pastoral Ministry



AUBURN, MICHIGAN

June 14–16

Rev. Eric Andrae

Bo Giertz: The Atheist Who Became a Bishop



KNOWLES, OKLAHOMA

June 14–16

Dr. Roland Ziegler

Luther's Bondage of the Will



CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

June 15–17

Rev. Chad Kendall

Early Christian Mercy to the Secular Culture



CARLYLE, ILLINOIS

June 21–23

Dr. Adam Koontz

To the Point of Shedding Blood: Christian Martyrs in the First Three Centuries



DECATUR, ILLINOIS

June 21–23

Dr. Reed Lessing

The Book of Jeremiah: Overcoming Life's Sorrows



GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

June 21–25

Dr. James Bushur

Theological Narratives that Surround and Support the Nicene Creed



PLANO, TEXAS

June 22–24

Dr. Roland Ziegler

Faith and Reason



SHAWANO, WISCONSIN

June 28–30

Dr. Dean Wenthe

Scripture and Sacramentality



ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA

June 28–30

Dr. Adam Francisco

Apologetics for the 21st Century



LE MARS, IOWA

June 28–July 1

Dr. Naomichi Masaki

Refreshing the Confession of the Office of the Holy Ministry



ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

June 29–July 1

Prof. John Pless

The Formula for Pastoral Ministry



RIVERTON, UTAH

July 12–14

Dr. Reed Lessing

Exodus: "Let My People Go!"



WENTWORTH, SOUTH DAKOTA

July 12–14

Dr. Adam Francisco

Apologetics for the 21st Century



GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

July 19–21

Dr. Lawrence Rast

TBD



ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

July 19–23

Dr. Naomichi Masaki

Luther's Great Galatian Lectures



TUCSON, ARIZONA

July 19–23

Dr. Benjamin Mayes

Johann Gerhard on Biblical Interpretation and the Knowledge of God



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

July 26–28

Dr. Gifford Grobien

Law, Virtue, and Life in Christ



TAMPA, FLORIDA

July 26–28

Dr. Adam Francisco

Why Should I Believe You?:
Christian Apologetics for Today



ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

August 2–4

Dr. Roland Ziegler

Luther's Bondage of the Will



FLATHEAD LAKE, MONTANA

Aug 2–6

Dr. Jeffrey Pulse

Joseph Narratives: A Tale of Two Brothers
in Genesis 37–50



SILVER BAY, MINNESOTA

August 2–6

Dr. Gifford Grobien

Methods in Moral Theology



CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA

August 17–19

Dr. Gifford Grobien

Sanctification



DENVER, COLORADO

August 23–27

Dr. Adam Koontz

Against the Stream: Paul's Missionary
Gospel in Hard Times



AUSTIN, TEXAS

August 24–27

Prof. John Pless

Pastoral Care from Luther's Letters of
Spiritual Counsel



FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

Oct 18–22

Dr. Robert Macina

The Divine Service in the Old Testament



Please note that information is subject to change. Check our website at www.ctsfw.edu/CE for the most current information.

ADDITIONAL CLASS AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

To register by phone with credit card:

Contact LeeAnna Rondot at (260) 452-2204.

To register online:

Visit our website at www.ctsfw.edu/CE.

To find out additional information about individual classes (including accommodations):

Contact the site coordinator listed on each site's webpage.

To find additional Continuing Education classes:

Visit our website at www.ctsfw.edu/CE.

To inquire about adding Continuing Education opportunities:

LeeAnna Rondot

Administrative Assistant for Continuing Education

Email: CE@ctsfw.edu

Phone: (260) 452-2204

Dr. Jeffrey Pulse

Director of Continuing Education

Email: Jeffrey.Pulse@ctsfw.edu

Phone: (260) 452-2273

Deaconess in Service

Derek Wolter



So, what exactly does a deaconess do? Anna Miels, a deaconess intern at Lutheran Home and Harwood Place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, could provide a ready answer to that question, if she could take a minute from her work during the current COVID-19 situation. So I, her supervisor, will speak on her behalf.

A deaconess in a mercy-based ministry, such as a health care center, spends hours each day visiting our residents on a one-on-one basis. She often is the only visitor that a resident will have who is there simply to provide comfort and companionship. Families are currently restricted from all visits, and staff members are overwhelmed due to absence of fellow workers. The deaconess is that one-on-one assurance that a person, in his/her humanity, is important, valued, and cherished, not only by our Lord, but by fellow members of the Church of Christ.

The deaconess answers requests to be with a resident who is actively dying, whose family is not able to be present, whether because of virus restrictions or distance from each other. She prays with and for the resident, reads the words of Scripture, and offers prayers for peace and comfort during the transition from this world to our Lord's heavenly presence. She may be the last person to speak a word of hope, to hold a hand in comfort, to ease the loneliness that often accompanies death.

The deaconess answers the call to bring a word of comfort to someone suffering through depression and hopelessness. She is there when a person is isolated by a new routine when they arrive, or when a resident loses a child or grandchild to death. She sits with the individual in their loss and hurt, bearing the burden of pain and fear with them as she speaks of Christ, His love and presence, and the hope that He brings of restoration.

The deaconess provides for the needs of the staff by taking upon herself extra duties, so that staff members can rest and find some refreshment for their spirit. She may serve meals in resident dining rooms, help with resident hygiene, or make deliveries of clean clothing and supplies from families who cannot go past the front desk. She calls the families of residents she has visited, giving them the assurance that their loved one is cared for, that the resident has an advocate in the facility, even though family cannot be there. She goes above and beyond to meet the needs of God's

people as they develop in real time.

The deaconess expands her offering of Bible classes and devotions to comply with orders restricting the number of people who can gather. Her number of events may go from two to six in a week, and she is there with kindness and compassion as she delivers the Word of God and the hope of the Gospel to those in her care. She may be asked at a moment's notice to develop a series of devotions to include in a weekly devotion booklet, so that people can have a spiritual resource that speaks to their current fears and situation. She may arrive early and stay late so that she can enter her care notes in residents' individual records, having spent her regular eight-hour schedule in direct personal care of the residents, her duties and events having expanded due to the current crisis.

In short, the deaconess is an extension of the chapel, the visible reminder of the presence and love of God in Christ. Her hands, her voice, and her skills all seek to serve the Lord by bringing comfort, meaning, and peace to His people as they experience the cares and fears of a fallen world. She is the servant of her Lord, seeking only to bring comfort to His people. She is a great resource to the Church, and a blessing to any ministry to which she is attached.

As you can see, Anna has been a true gift to us during this past year. There is no way that the spiritual needs of our residents could ever hope to be met if we did not have her with us. This young woman truly embodies the vocation of service to the Lord's people, and we are blessed that she is among us. 🙏

The Rev. Derek M. Wolter (CTSFW, 1989) serves as the Director of Spiritual Care at the Lutheran Home and Harwood Place in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. In addition, Lt. Col. Wolter serves as unit chaplain for the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Wisconsin. His ministry has been varied, with calls as a parish pastor, missionary to Russia, Air Force chaplain with several deployments, and healthcare chaplain.



The deaconess is an extension of the chapel, the visible reminder of the presence and love of God in Christ. Her hands, her voice, and her skills all seek to serve the Lord by bringing comfort, meaning, and peace to His people as they experience the cares and fears of a fallen world. She is the servant of her Lord, seeking only to bring comfort to His people. She is a great resource to the Church, and a blessing to any ministry to which she is attached.

In Luke 6:36 Jesus calls us to a life of charity as He bids us to
“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

You’ve always wondered and prayed about God’s plans for your life.

You have gifts and a passionate faith.

You see a world hurting and in need of a Savior.



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



You desire to serve Him:

- ...on the mission field.
- ...in the congregation.
- ...in the preschool.
- ...beside the hospital bed.
- ...in the women’s shelter.
- ...in the nursing home.
- ...in the soup kitchen.

Anywhere you can find people, you can find suffering.

Anywhere you find suffering, you’ll find a need for someone to share Christ’s love and mercy.

Could that someone be you?

As a student in the Deaconess Programs at CTSFW, you will be immersed in the study of God’s Word, the Lutheran Confessions, and the finest practical training to care for people in need. You will discover what it is to share the love of Christ with a broken and dying world through simple acts of kindness and mercy.



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

Our admission counselors are here to help you prayerfully consider how you can serve in Christ’s kingdom.

CTSFW Receives Highest Ratings

The administration and Board of Regents of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana (CTSFW) are pleased to announce that CTSFW has again received full accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for the next 10 years—the longest term the accrediting agencies can approve. “This 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation builds upon the strength of the 10-year reaffirmation achieved in 2010,” said President Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

“Both commissions recognized CTSFW’s strong sense of mission and identity.”

“Both visitation teams commended the culture of assessment that informs integrated planning,” noted Professor Robert Roethemeyer, the Vice President of Strategic Planning and Mission Execution and self-study chair. “These are great characteristics to celebrate in this 175th year of forming pastors, deaconesses, and other servants of Jesus Christ for the congregations and service organizations of The LCMS and beyond.”

The accreditors noted that CTSFW’s “mission and [Lutheran] identity permeate, animate, and guide the school and are supported by a strong sense of community.” They also complimented the Seminary for “exceptional financial stewardship and generosity of the Seminary’s constituency (both local and global) that make it possible for students to graduate with manageable debt.”

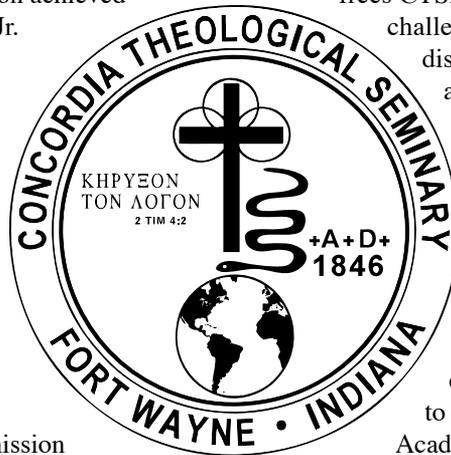
The tremendous amount of work that goes into preparing an institutional self-study of this magnitude allows the Seminary

to celebrate and build upon its strengths and recognize areas for potential growth and improvement. President Rast commented, “The 2020 Institutional Self-Study provides a foundation for our next deep dive into strategic planning, which will align the Seminary’s budget to the plan and engage the full Seminary community in its creation and implementation. This cycle of planning and assessment frees CTSFW to embrace new opportunities and

challenges and build on what it means to be distinctively Lutheran, community-oriented, and committed to excellence.” Rast further noted, “CTSFW is planning for the future by assessing broad external influences and partnerships. In the coming years, CTSFW will engage the broader Synod to partner in the development of a plan for the future of pastoral and diaconal formation in the LCMS.”

“In spite of the challenges we have all experienced this past year, there is much to celebrate,” said Dr. Charles A. Gieschen, Academic Dean. “The reports that we have received from ATS and HLC are great affirmations from widely-respected accreditors of the excellence and integrity of all that God is doing through CTSFW, on a daily basis, to form more servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.”

For more information on how you can support the work and mission of Concordia Theological Seminary, visit www.ctsfw.edu.



“It’s a Family Business”

Rebecca S. Ahlersmeyer



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

Remarkably talented and savvy, yet very humble, Deaconess Amy Rast would much rather joyfully talk about how God is using her deaconess alumni than about herself. So it was a unique honor and privilege to learn more about the Associate Director of Deaconess Formation.

From Farm to Mission Field

“Born, raised, and baptized Missouri Synod Lutheran,” Deaconess Amy Rast was the third child of six, nurtured by wonderful parents on a farm in upstate New York. She met the Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast Jr. at Concordia River Forest, and this year marks their 35th wedding anniversary. Together they have three children, Lawrence, Karl, and Joanna, and welcomed their first grandchild, Graham, on February 23.

Growing up in a poorer area and observing what families went through inspired Amy to pursue social work. She got her Bachelor of Social Work from St. Francis College in Fort Wayne and her Master of Social Work from the University of Michigan. For many years she worked with children and families at Catholic Charities in Tennessee, then at Lutheran Social Services in Fort Wayne. In 2009, she started work with Cross Connections Counseling as a counselor, soon becoming a coordinator and trainer for the Covenant Partner Program. It was

her experience counseling that led her to pursue theological study, encountering an array of challenging and heartbreaking circumstances, wanting to provide the best, most godly counsel she could. She got her Master of Arts in Deaconess Studies from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSF), just as a need for leadership opened. In 2013 she joined the Deaconess Formation Program.

Busy and Blessed

To say that Deaconess Rast keeps busy would be an understatement. Establishing internships and finding placements for students is an ongoing labor of love, alongside developing new programs and initiatives for mercy work. She is in continual pursuit of places where she and her students can help and serve. When her children were young, she served as a cook at Zion Lutheran Church when their school cook was hospitalized. She smiled, “I had a master’s, and was cooking in a school kitchen. It’s through things like that that He forms us.” Most

recently, she serves the community with New Life Lutheran Church cooking for their Wednesday night Bible study outreach. She has also been a Stephen Ministry leader at Emmanuel Lutheran Church for five years and served on the board of Lutheran Senior Care Ministry for six years.

What a Deaconess Does

As Rast explained, “Pastors preach the Word and administer the Sacrament...deaconesses come alongside the people, helping them to receive and share God’s gifts. Deaconesses bring these gifts to the world and the world into the church.” Deaconesses match needs with skills. Each deaconess brings unique talents, skills, and gifts to God’s people in their ministries. They are highly-educated, theologically-trained, well-versed women responding to human suffering and need. Deaconesses work in special education, deaf ministry, outreach, and engaging children. They are teachers, musicians, and social workers. From food banks to school counseling offices, hospitals to refugee resettlements, wherever there is human need, deaconesses are there.



“A Beautiful Change”

“Man plans, God laughs,” Rast quoted the old Yiddish adage. “Women come here with their own plans ... to serve Him, to learn more, see mercy needs. I get the joy of watching the Lord form them for service in ways they didn’t expect.” That has been one of the most rewarding things about Rast’s position. “Watching them in formation, you see a beautiful change. They become more confident in their faith and theology. They encourage each other.” She was quick to note how students enrich the campus as well, from all different stages in life. When women enrolled in the distance learning program come to campus, “they bring a wealth of wisdom, ideas, and resources.” The residential students bring fresh energy and truly become a sisterhood, encouraging each other as they grow in their faith and abilities. God has given Rast the gift of seeing the fruits of many seeds sown go forth and bless the world. “We are fearfully and wonderfully made. The fruit we bear is how we care for His people.”

The Flow of Mercy When the Earth Stands Still

2020 created a need for a new creativity in ministry and how we

serve one another, and so mercy work manifested in new ways. “People have been isolated. How do you find the people who are hurting when everyone is hiding?” Deaconesses and deaconess students helped meet the challenge by exploring new ways to interact, including VBS packets dropped in driveways, Bible studies and prayer sessions via Zoom, and student check-ins via phone. The deaconesses-in-training have been writing devotionals, to be recorded alongside Bible verses and hymns, to bring comfort to isolated people of advanced age and the visually impaired. “We’re learning to mourn together,” Rast says of the global effects of the year of cancellations, “There were missed events, people being stuck at home, barred from seeing family.” While it may have seemed that the virus interrupted the flow of mercy, “He has not stopped the flow, we just had to figure out how to do it differently.”

The Need

With a rich history of deaconess ministry in the field of medicine, the analogy became clear: pastors need deaconesses the way that doctors need nurses. “Churches need mercy more than ever. People don’t see how hard the

pastor is working. Without deaconesses there, those servants of the Church, those pastors are exhausted. It’s unbalanced. We are the *body of Christ* and the head needs the pastoral help of all parts.” Rast cited Luther’s teachings, how being “Little Christs” to one another often means providing such essential service and support.

Answering God’s Call

To those considering diaconal studies, “I would encourage them—no matter what—continue to use and give your gifts. Put them to work. You may have special gifts in an area. What is compelling you?” Many gifted young women may not know about the Deaconess Formation Program, or may simply need a word of encouragement. For a Christian with a servant’s heart, there may be challenges in mercy work, but it’s as natural and vital as breathing. “Being merciful, helping God’s mercy work, it’s who we are as Christians. It’s a family business.” 🏡

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Specialist at Concordia
Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.*



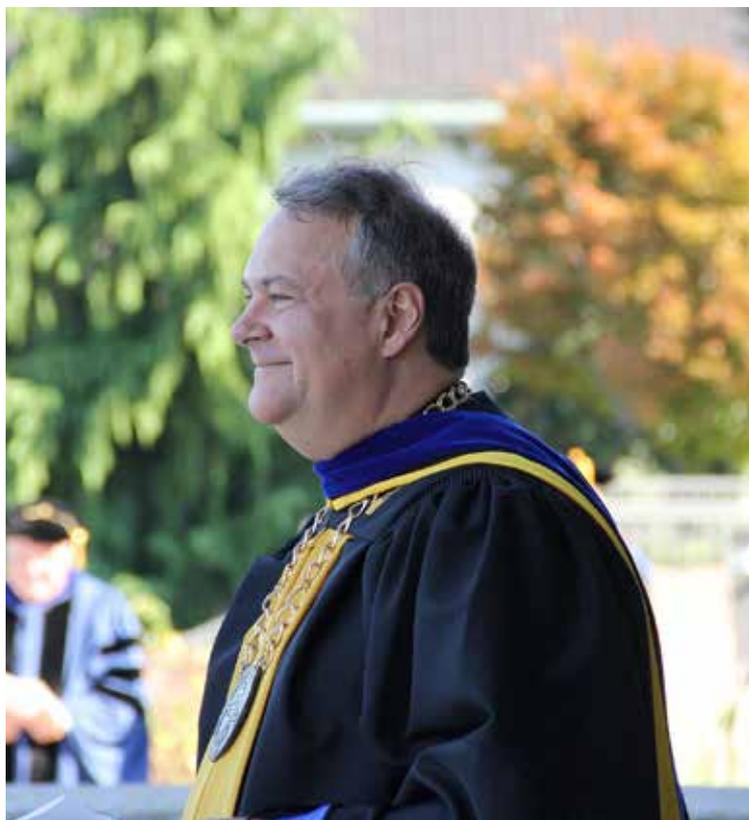
Rast Reappointed as Seminary President

The Board of Regents of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Indiana, is delighted to announce the unanimous reappointment of the Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. as president.

“The Board of Regents is very pleased that we can reappoint Dr. Rast for a third term as president of Concordia Theological Seminary,” commented Dr. Leo S. Mackay Jr., vice chairman, CTSFW Board of Regents. “He is uniquely qualified to lead the Seminary through the significant challenges facing all institutions of higher education and seminaries in particular. His commitment to the Lutheran Confessions and expertise as a theological historian will serve our church body well as he helps to guide the plans for the future of seminary formation in the years ahead. Dr. Rast is highly regarded by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and by Christendom the world over. We are thankful for the continued leadership of Dr. Rast as president of CTSFW.”

Rast has served as president of CTSFW since May 2011. “I have been incredibly blessed this past decade to work alongside the faithful and gifted people of the CTSFW community. We have a world-class faculty, an incredibly skilled staff, and a Board of Regents that bring experience, expertise, and commitment to the mission of the Seminary. My greatest joy remains my interaction with the students who will serve as pastors, deaconesses, and lay leaders in the LCMS and in our partner churches throughout the world,” shared Rast. “Ultimately, I am most thankful to our gracious Lord Christ, who is the Gift above all gifts. It is by His grace that this remarkable community was formed, continues to prosper in this, its 175th Anniversary, and will thrive into the future.”

The CTSFW community rejoices at this news and joins with Rast in requesting the continued encouragement of our friends as we move forward in service. “There are and will be challenges, so I ask for your continued prayerful support of this Seminary. By God’s grace, together with the larger Synod and our international colleagues, we will, with excellence, fulfill our mission to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.”



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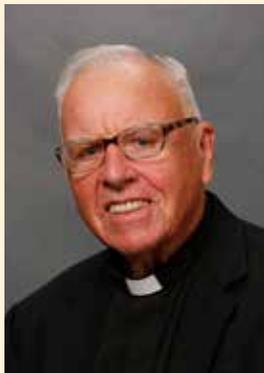


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- ▶ Register: www.ctsfw.edu/PhoebeSchool
 Email: ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu

Timothy School and Phoebe School are open to those who are entering their freshman year through those who have completed their senior year in high school.

If you are unable to attend both weeks, please contact us at ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu.

Faculty News



The **Rev. Dr. David P. Scaer**, the David P. Scaer Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, shared that the Rev. M. M. Moselane recently completed the translation of Scaer's book, *Getting Into the Story of Concord: A History of the Book of Concord*, into Setswana, one of the 11 languages of South Africa. The book is also available in French.



The **Rev. Dr. Jeffrey H. Pulse**, the Dean O. Wenthe Professor of Old Testament Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, recently had his dissertation, *Figuring Resurrection: Joseph as a Death and Resurrection Figure in the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism*, published with Lexham Press.



Chemnitz Library Initiative News

CTSFW worked with the Theological Book Network (TBN) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to ship two pallets of books to the Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary (JEMLS) in Obot Idim, Nigeria. “These 2,600+ volumes are part of CTSFW’s Chemnitz Library Initiative, to refresh the collection of the newly expanded and renovated JEMLS library. The Lutheran Church of Nigeria’s Archbishop Christian Ekong (DMin ’19, CTSFW) shared, “Thank you for all the good works you have done to get the books safely to Obot Idim, Nigeria. We were all on ground to receive the highly treasured gift for our Seminary, in our generation! To God be the glory! Please, accept my sincere gratitude on behalf of the entire membership of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria (the Board of Directors, Board of Trustees, Seminary Board of Governors, the Faculty and Staff of Seminary...)”

Left: Archbishop Christian Ekong (center) with new rector, the Rev. David Imuk (left), as the 94 cartons of books are unloaded.

Are you a pastor itching for a deep dive in theology after this last year of living under the pandemic?
Interested in examining some issues you are facing in your parish?

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The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) at CTSFW combines biblical and theological study with structured reflection on pastoral practice to develop your understanding and skills as a minister of Christ.

This program's design makes it affordable, accessible, and practical. Students meet for five days on campus to be refreshed by study, collegiality, and worship in chapel, while not keeping away from their ministry settings for extended periods. The program culminates in a dissertation project which benefits their congregations and serves as a process for systematic growth in pastoral practice.

For more information

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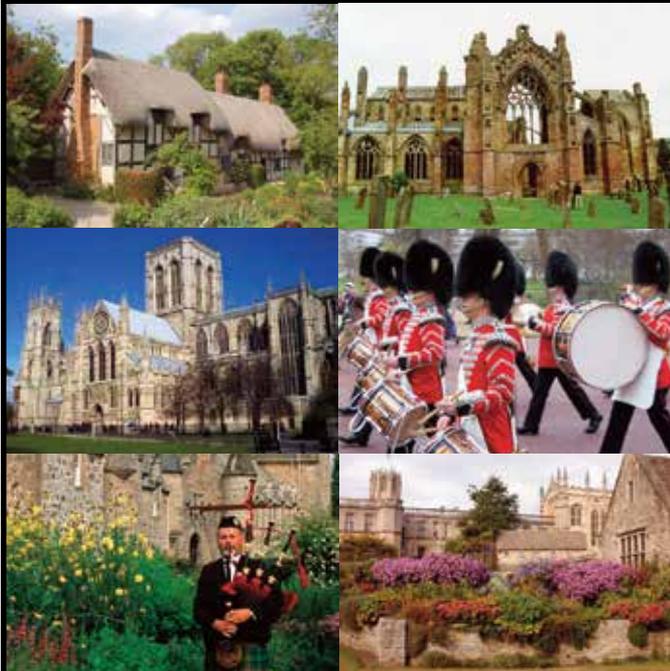
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The Great Need for Seelsorgers

Mark H. Steiner

Thanks be to God for faithful pastors, for *Seelsorgers*. In 1846, 11 men came from Germany to Fort Wayne to begin pastoral studies at the German Evangelical Lutheran Preacher's Seminary. Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW) was born, and the mission continues 175 years later!

Seelsorge, from the German *Seele* (soul) and *Sorge* (meaning both care and cure) is an apt descriptor of pastoral ministry. From this combination came the word for a caring pastor: *Seelsorger*.

Faithful pastors shepherd us through all the seasons of life. They proclaim the hope of the Gospel (Col. 1:23). They serve God's people in congregations large and small.

Here is one story.

In 2009, a small group of people formed a mission church plant, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Pastors in the area, usually from Maryland, provided spiritual care to the saints, among them Clarence (Clar) and Jacquelyn (Jackie) Liske.

Clar was a veteran of World War II in the Army Air Corp as a sergeant air operations specialist. After the War, he worked some 40 years with helicopter flight services and commuter airlines in their ground operations. Clar married



Above, top: Rev. James Oester (CTSFW 1995), Rev. Amadeus Gandy (CTSFW 2018), and Rev. Charles Lehmann (CTSFW 2007), Saturday, November 16, 2019, at Rev. Gandy's installation at St. John's as the first resident pastor.

Above, bottom left: Exterior of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Above, bottom right: Clarence (Clar) and Jacquelyn (Jackie) Liske

Opposite page: St. John's "Good Shepherd" stained glass window

Jackie, and they had three daughters: Janet, Ellen, and Heide.

Whenever his work in aviation would take Clar to a new community, the first question he would ask was, “Where is my church?” The question, “Where will we live?” came second. He would often visit churches near a prospective job in advance of taking a position. Janet remembers traveling to Cleveland, Ohio, with her father as he was considering a job offer. They visited two or three churches and spoke with the pastors.

In 2013, Pastor James Oester (CTSFW, 1995) was called to serve St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Accident, Maryland. Part of the duties of that call was to serve the saints in Clarksburg. During Pastor Oester’s first visit with the Liskes, Clar asked him, “We need pastoral care. Will you continue to serve us?” Oester assured him that he would.

Pastor Oester recalls that Clar knew some German. When he visited Clar in his home and brought the gift of Holy Communion, Clar would greet him, “Wie geht’s?” He would respond with “Sehr gut!” Clar would ask, “What hymn are we going to sing?” Clar usually had a hymn in mind. Janet remembers singing many hymns with her parents and Pastor Oester during those home visits.

When Clar’s life was drawing to a close, he stayed at home. Janet, Ellen, and Heide took turns helping Jackie take care of Dad. Clar died a year after Pastor Oester arrived. When Jackie was in her final days, the sisters each took a two-week period to provide physical care for their mother. Pastor Oester continued to provide spiritual care for Jackie in the family home and in the hospital until her death in 2017.

Pastor Oester shepherded Clar and Jackie in the steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 1:3) to when they entered the Church Triumphant. Our hope is not wishful thinking. It is the knowledge that God fulfills His promises.

Pastor Oester shepherded the mission flock to Sunday afternoon, October 6, 2019. That day The Lutheran Church—

Missouri Synod received St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church as a member congregation of the English District.

The Rev. Dr. Harold Senkbeil, in his book, *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor’s Heart*, says that pastors, *Seelsorgers*, offer both “care in public worship and cure in private pastoral care as needed.” The Rev. Dr. George Krause, in his article, *Luther the Seelsorger*, says that Luther “based all his practice of pastoral care on the Word of God. Luther brought God’s Word to bear on the issues that faced God’s people.”

The Word of God bore much fruit in the lives of Clar and Jackie Liske as they raised their family of three daughters. Their daughter Janet is married to Tim Sheldon, a retired executive at Marriott Corporation. Their home is in Moatsville, West Virginia. They are both active members of St. John’s in Clarksburg.

Tim was in pastoral studies at CTSFW in the early 1980s. The financial burden to raise a growing family was great, and Tim began work in the hospitality industry. Janet and Tim know firsthand the ongoing need for student aid at CTSFW. Together they established an endowment to provide tuition assistance to prepare pastors who will serve the Church in future generations. Their nephew, Luke Otten, is a second year seminarian at CTSFW. Through this endowment, the Sheldons also honor both sets of their parents, Ernest and Ruth Sheldon, and Clarence and Jacquelyn Liske.

Yes, the need for *Seelsorgers* in the parish is great! The need to prepare *Seelsorgers* is great!

Here at CTSFW we strive to be good stewards of all that God has entrusted to us. Many people do not realize that the Seminary operates with little direct support from our Synod. Cash received from the Synod totals less than 2% of our annual budget. All our operating costs must be covered by earned or donated revenue.

If you would like more information to establish an endowment, such as one for student aid, please contact us at

advancement@ctsfw.edu or call us at 877-287-4338. Thank you for your prayers and gifts. Every single gift, whether large or small, is essential for CTSFW to fulfill its mission to prepare servants in Jesus Christ to “Make Known His Deeds!” 

The Rev. Mark H. Steiner (Mark.Steiner@ctsfw.edu) serves as an advancement officer at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.





IN THE WORD

“How Long?”

Ryan M. Tietz



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

We are people who live in exile. We are people who have experienced salvation through the waters of Baptism but are not yet in the Promised Land. This tension of being between causes us to look for a way to encounter God when life does not make sense. Lament is the language of exile. We as a church typically shy away from it. Lament exposes our vulnerabilities as hurting people. Lament unmask all of our pretenses of happiness. Lament also can shock people who hear it. At first glance, it may seem like unbelief. Well-meaning Christians may try to silence it. Instead, lament is the deepest cry of faith.

Habakkuk provides a model for encountering God when life is out of control. Habakkuk ministered in the late 7th century BC when life was about to spin out of control. His own people had utterly rejected the Lord since the time of Manasseh. However, they were enjoying a brief period of prosperity after the collapse of the Assyrian Empire. Prosperity had its problems. Their prosperity and power led to them trusting themselves and abusing their neighbor. Habakkuk sees this evil and cannot understand why God permits it. Habakkuk knows that God is faithful to His promises to care for the vulnerable. He also knows that God is the One who saves His people. These two things conflict with Habakkuk’s experience leading him to lament. We will look at Habakkuk’s first complaint and then turn our attention to the most famous verses of the book in Habakkuk 2. This entire book presents us a unique example of what it means to wrestle with God while suffering. As you look at his first complaint, keep in mind that Habakkuk never sins with this language towards God.

Habakkuk 1:1–4

What surprises you about this complaint?

Note the role of questions. We should be very mindful when we hear questions during suffering. These questions are not looking for an intellectual response. They are the essential way of expressing pain when one’s faith conflicts with one’s experience.

Take a look at the accusations Habakkuk levels against God. These are extremely serious charges. Habakkuk uses a variety of terms in his complaint.

- חָמָס (*chamas*) means violence. This accusation accuses God of failing in His obligation to help those in need. The cry “violence” was the ancient Near Eastern equivalent of calling 911 for help. Habakkuk also accuses God of being silent and not hearing. Compare this with the description of idols in Hab. 2:18–19.
- אָוֶן (*awen*) means injustice. This term is fairly broad but has the significant connotation of deliberate perversity. Compare the use of this term to Prov. 22:8.
- עָמַל (*amal*) indicates the act of making someone in need.
- שָׂדֵה (*sod*) includes acts of oppressing the poor.
- רִיב וּמַדּוֹן, (*riv/madon*) are terms for legal issues. The implication is that God has failed in keeping order for the people. The result is that God’s essential character of Torah and מִשְׁפָּט (*mishpat/justice*) are no longer present.

As you reflect on the language in this complaint, keep in mind that Habakkuk does not sin. He is wrestling with the real pain of suffering when life simply does not make sense. God does not condemn him for these words. The language of lament is the language of faith struggling to understand. It does not shy away from the reality of pain. It does not deny our Lord but approaches God and faith in the midst of suffering. J. Todd Billings helpfully observes how lament works as he reflects upon his own diagnosis with incurable cancer. He writes:

We don’t have to suppress anger or confusion or misery before coming before the Almighty. With an open heart, we bring all this before the covenantal bond, entrusting him to hear our cries and moving toward trust in his loving-faithfulness and covenant promises ... As we pray this, we confess, “I am not my own”; we are displaced from our old self, which seeks autonomy, to find our true life in that of the crucified Lord, the One to whom the Spirit conforms us.¹

Lament is the cry of faith that transforms us and gives us strength for the journey. Habakkuk never finds out the answer to his questions. Instead, the solution of the coming of the Chaldeans is even worse than the initial problem. The book now reaches its climax in Hab. 2:2–5.

Habakkuk 2:2–4

How does God answer Habakkuk’s complaints?

Note the key elements in Hab. 2:1–3.

- This is the only time where God is introduced as a speaker in the entire book, which points to its significance.
- The image of writing only happens at key parts in the Bible. Habakkuk’s hearers would have connected this to the empire that set up a massive stele with writing. The writing is an exercise of authority that indicates to every passerby that it has lasting validity, cf. Ex. 31:18, Is. 8:1; 30:8. The writing is the assurance of God’s lasting faithfulness.
- Running functions two ways. It first means that you cannot miss it even when speeding by. It also tells you how to run.

Waiting is the key answer to the lament. We should understand waiting as the equivalent of trust. How does Is. 30:18 help us understand this statement?

Habakkuk 2:4 is the essential message of what it means to live in the tension of trusting God but experiencing pain. Consider the important aspects of this verse.

- It begins with the image of a proud person who thinks he is in control. This person is a foil for the righteous person.
- Note how Paul generalizes this verse in Rom. 1:17.
- Encountering God in God’s Word strengthens our faith even as it invites us to pour out our pain in lament.

Prayer: Pray Hab. 3, reflecting on how this prayer may comfort you in the midst of your challenges. 🙏

1 J. Todd Billings, *Rejoicing in Lament: Wrestling with Incurable Cancer & Life in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2015), 172.

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



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