



PASTORAL FORMATION IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

# What Kind of Pastor do you want for your children and grandchildren?

**M**y most fervent prayer and desire in life is that my four children and three grandchildren (so far!) are baptized, hear the preached Word of God, learn the catechism, believe in Jesus Christ, receive the Lord's Supper, live the baptismal life and go to heaven. The same is true for my aging parents — that they hear the true Word of God preached into their ears, that their pastor feeds them Christ's body and blood, and that they receive his faithful pastoral care in their ailing hour as he prepares them for their death and resurrection. Am I any different from you? Isn't this also your prayer and desire?

Pastors are vital for the faith and life of all people. Consider the questions, struggles and temptations your children, grandchildren and parents endure. Did God create the world in six 24-hour days or not?

Why does it matter? What happens to my miscarried child? Is it wrong to have doubts about my faith? How can I keep believing when my body is wracked with pain? Why am I being persecuted as a Christian? What is my role in politics? Why is it so important that Christ's body and blood be in the Sacrament? Is God serious about my sin? Can't I just dedicate my child instead of having him baptized? Do I have to believe in every detail of the Bible? Don't all religions end up with the same god? Is there really a heaven?

These are real life-and-death issues that your children, grandchildren and parents face every day. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod forms pastors to give pastoral care to such eternity-impacting issues. To give pastoral care amid these life situations takes more than teaching a

man to do pastoral functions; it takes pastoral formation to shape the whole man of God. Pastoral formation involves spiritual, character, confessional, intellectual, physical and emotional development. God forms and shapes the whole man to think like a pastor, speak like a pastor, act like a pastor and look like a pastor. A man with pastoral integrity — faithfully teaching and preaching God's Word, feeding God's people with the blessed Sacraments and giving pastoral care in all of life's situations — is the kind of pastor I want for my children and grandchildren. Am I any different from you? Isn't this also your prayer and desire?

"I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding."

— Jer. 3:15



By Rev. Dr. James Baneck,  
executive director of LCMS Pastoral Education

## It Takes a Church

From the font to the classroom and beyond, pastoral formation is a lifelong endeavor. It takes all hands on deck, both on and off the seminary campus, to form a pastor.



### Baptism

Pastoral formation begins at the font, where God creates faith and receives this young man into His eternal kingdom.



# Seminary Presidents SPEAK

The Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr., president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSFW), and the Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, talk about how the Synod's seminaries form pastors for God's Church.

## How are your 2018 seminary graduates poised to serve as called and ordained pastors in the Church?

**LR:** The graduates of 2018 will be heading into a changing world, facing challenges their parents and grandparents could not have fathomed. What remains the same, however, is that the graduates of 2018 will be armed with the changeless Gospel so desperately needed by every man, woman and child. Our final-year students have dedicated themselves to their studies and practical experiences during fieldwork and vicarages and are looking forward to connecting with and serving God's people as they teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all.

**DM:** We've been listening to what laypeople and pastors want to see in our graduates, and we've responded through our new curriculum and campus life. Our 2018 grads are outwardly focused on mission and showing God's love in Christ to their neighbors, all the while caring for the members of their congregations. Because today's country and world are so diverse, our graduates are eager to cross cultural divides with the Good News of Jesus, and to do so with sensitivity. And because we've heard over and over again the plea for pastors to be effective and collaborative leaders, our graduates are learning leadership skills not taught generations ago. In every aspect of

life, we've taught and modeled to our students wholehearted love of God and love for people.

## How does your seminary make them ready?

**LR:** What we do at CTSFW is help form each man into a well-rounded servant of Christ. We prepare pastors who will speak faithfully from the pulpit, but also in the community and public square. We prepare church workers who will embody the mercy of Christ, willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Christ and the least of His brethren. We intend that our students will engender in their people a willingness to bear the name of Christ amid opposition, and even persecution. Daily worship is a foundation of this formation as it brings the entire community together, building us up as we hear the Scriptures and receive the Lord's Supper. Our community walks beside each man during his time at CTSFW, preparing him with an understanding of the Christian faith that is Christ-centered, biblically based, confessionally Lutheran and evangelically active, focusing on the mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every context.

**DM:** They have been well formed in how to read and use the Scriptures to bring glory to Christ, how to think theologically about the many issues that arise in our present culture, and are well-

grounded in our Confessions and the history of the Church. More so than previous generations, today's graduates have been given a wide breadth of experiences through which they learn to integrate the theology of the classroom with their own life experiences and the life experiences of people in today's world. And we have intentionally provided ways for their wives and children to grow in understanding what it means to be in ministry. We want the entire family to feel fully ready on their first call.

## What will it take for these men to continue to grow in knowledge and wisdom as they serve their sheep into the future?

**LR:** While these men will graduate this spring from CTSFW, they will never graduate from growing in the wisdom of the Lord. How will that be accomplished? Certainly through a continuation of personal devotional time and study of the Scriptures. Both of these can be enhanced as our graduates, and all pastors for that matter, take advantage of the resources offered by CTSFW at [ctsfw.edu/resources](http://ctsfw.edu/resources). These online resources include the weekly podcasts offered by the faculty on the readings for each Sunday of the Church Year. They have the opportunity to receive the Word during our daily livestream of morning worship in Kramer Chapel. There are also the Advent and Lenten Preaching workshops, myriad CTSFW continuing-education courses



The Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer (left), president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast Jr. (right), president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., at the 2016 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

offered in locations across the nation each summer, as well as the annual Good Shepherd Institute and Symposia Series. Congregation members also have an integral role in helping their pastor keep up with continuing-education opportunities available from both the seminary and Synod. When congregations encourage their pastor and make it possible for him to take advantage of these opportunities, they are ensuring the spiritual health of their pastor and their congregation now and in the future.

**DM:** Lifelong learning! We don't want our graduates to think they've learned it all. We do

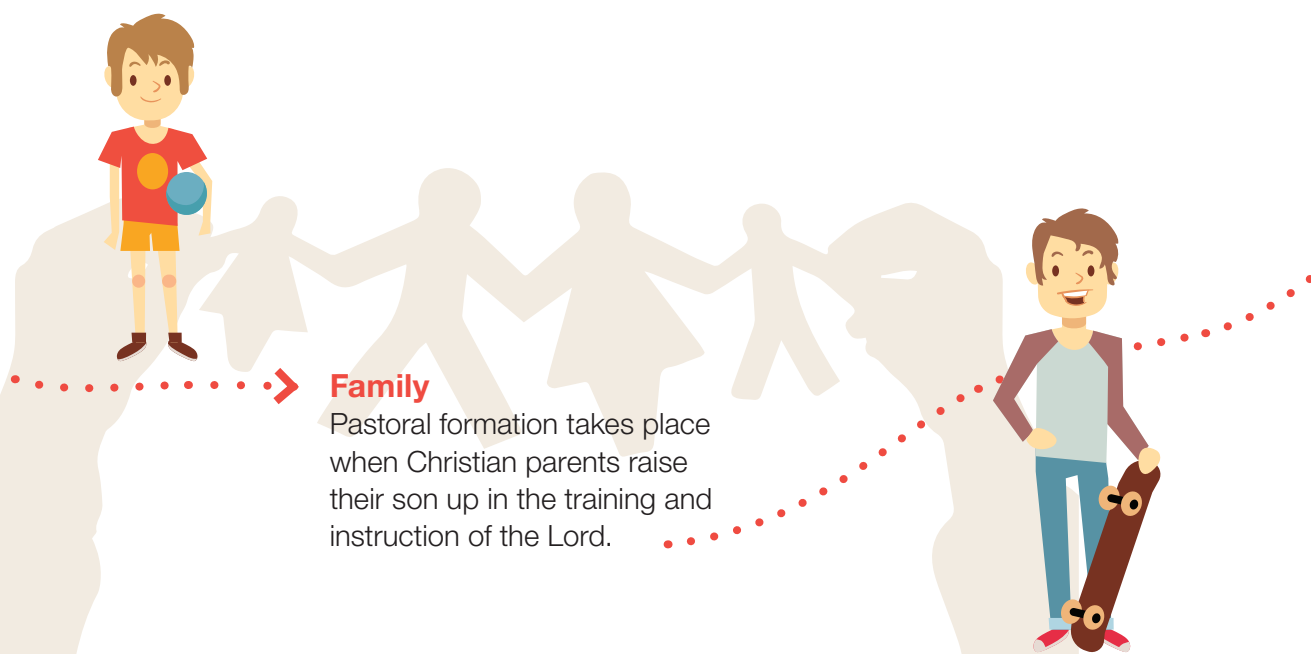
## Figuring Seminars

**94** Students entering seminaries

**163** CUS pre-seminary students

**73%** of new seminarians are lifelong LCMS

Top districts: Michigan, Northern, Minnesota



### Family

Pastoral formation takes place when Christian parents raise their son up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

### Church

Pastoral formation happens as the pastor feeds this young man with God's Word and Sacrament, and as he is nurtured in a faithful congregation. Lutheran schools also are very formative for the future pastor's life and ministry.



Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the Rev. Dr. [Name] at the Synod convention in St. Louis in 1850. [Name] addressed the Missouri Synod in Milwaukee.

want them to radiate to their congregations the joys of learning and growing in faith and mission. This includes taking part in PALS, seminars, classes, reading programs and numerous other opportunities available. Our seminary offers the annual Theological Symposium, the Multiethnic Symposium, graduate programs and numerous lectures and presentations available online. [Concordiatheology.org](http://Concordiatheology.org) offers a wide and deep variety of resources and information about continuing-education opportunities. Please, congregations, support continuing education by your pastors and church workers!

## C.F.W. Walther on the Office of the Ministry

The first president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was C.F.W. Walther (who served 1847–50 and 1864–78). He presented *The Church and The Office of The Ministry* at the Synod convention in St. Louis in 1850. In its preface, Walther writes: “We seek to make a contribution so that in the presently disputed important question [concerning the church and the office] also the voice of our church in its public confessions and in the private writings of its teachers may be heard and considered.” These words in Walther’s preface remain relevant in our day: “We did not pattern the doctrine of our church [and ministry] after the conditions prevailing here, but rather ordered these conditions according to the doctrine of our church [formulated from Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions].”

As the LCMS continues to place pastoral formation as one of the highest priorities in our church, it is good to keep before us what we believe, teach and confess concerning the pastoral ministry. **As you pray for your pastor, our seminaries, pastoral formation and our beloved Synod, please consider once again Walther’s theses (statements of belief) concerning the office of the pastoral ministry.**

- The holy preaching office or pastoral office is an office distinct from the office of priest, which all believers have.
- The preaching office or the pastoral office is not a human institution but an office that God Himself has established.
- The preaching office is not an optional office but one whose establishment has been commanded to the Church and to which the Church is properly bound till the end of time.
- The preaching office is not a special state in opposition to or holier than that of ordinary Christians, as was the Levitical priesthood; rather, it is an office of service.
- The preaching office has the authority to preach the Gospel and administer the holy Sacraments, as well as the authority of spiritual judgment.
- The preaching office is conferred by God through the congregation as the possessor of all ecclesiastical [churchly] authority or the Keys, and through the call that is prescribed [arranged] by God. The ordination of those who are called with the laying on of hands is not a divine institution but an apostolic, churchly order and only a solemn public confirmation of the call.
- The holy preaching office is the authority conferred by God through the congregation as the possessor of the priesthood and of all churchly authority, to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public office on behalf of the congregation.
- The preaching office is the highest office in the Church, from which flow all other offices in the Church.
- To the preaching office there is due respect as well as unconditional



obedience when the preacher uses God’s Word. Yet the preacher has no dominion in the church. Therefore, he has no right to introduce new laws or arbitrarily to establish adiaphora [neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God] or ceremonies in the church. The preacher has no right to inflict and carry out excommunication alone, without the preceding knowledge of the whole congregation.

- To the preaching office, according to divine right, belongs also the office to judge doctrine, but laymen also possess this right. Therefore, in ecclesiastical courts and councils they are accorded both a seat and a vote together with the preachers.

## ng Out ANS 2017–18

Average age of new seminary students: **28.7**

**107** New candidates expected this spring

et membership for seminarians:

an, Central Illinois, n Illinois, Southern Illinois, ota South, Missouri



### Concordia University/ Pre-Seminary

Pre-seminary study at one of the CUS schools provides an opportunity for the future pastor to develop lasting friendships, become enculturated into the LCMS ethos and absorb the biblical languages.



### Seminary

The pinnacle of pastoral formation, the seminaries instruct and examine the future pastor, leading to his call and ordination.

# Examine, Call, **ORDAIN**

What does your pastor mean when he says, “*As a called and ordained servant of Christ*”?

In our Lutheran Confessions, Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession (1530) states, “Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.” Your pastor is saying that he has been:

## Examined

This means he is personally and theologically qualified for the office, and is above reproach. It also means that he can teach sound doctrine. Furthermore, the seminary faculties have examined him in Scripture, the Confessions and life. His mind, heart and skills have been formed to the pastoral vocation.

## Called

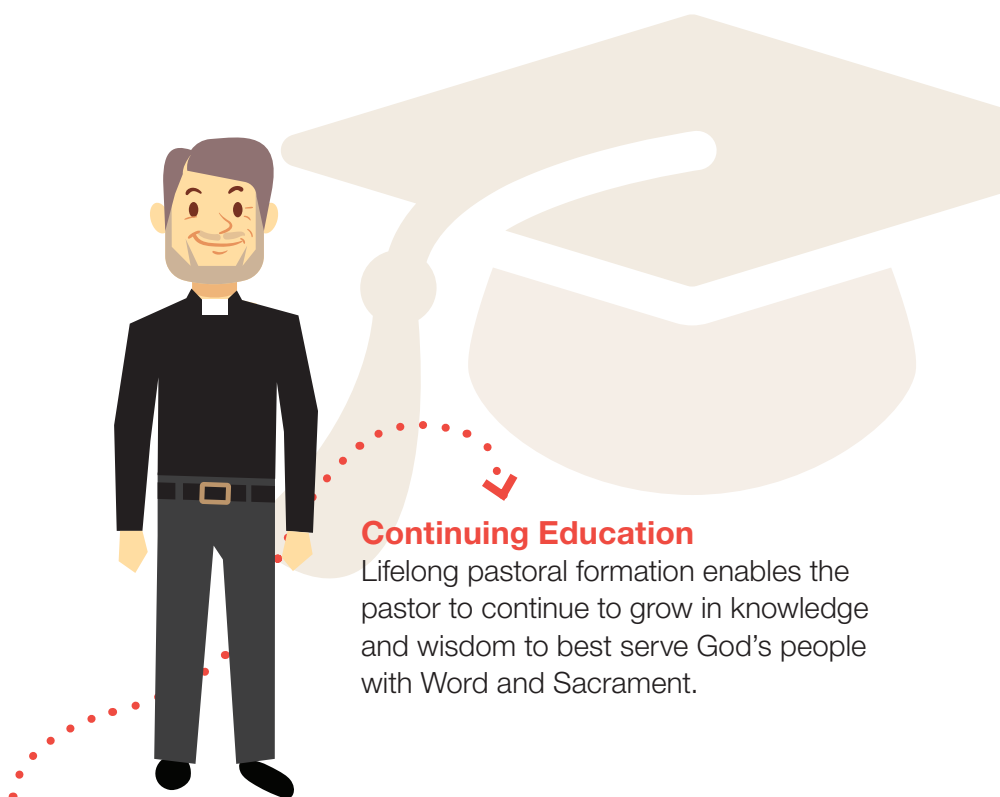
God calls a man into the office through the church. This means he has been “sent” to a designated location and field of service. The “call” also indicates the consent of the church in receiving the ministry of the man called.

## Ordained

While not commanded by God, ordination is understood as the whole Church’s confirmation of the call and takes place by the laying on of hands. The Church has the right to put her ministers in place, and ordination guarantees that right. (See 2016 Resolution 6-02.)



## What About Continuing Education?



### Continuing Education

Lifelong pastoral formation enables the pastor to continue to grow in knowledge and wisdom to best serve God’s people with Word and Sacrament.

“DOXOLOGY was born in the parish and remains rooted deeply in the day-to-day life of congregations: people struggling to make sense out of lives that often seem out of control, wondering where God fits into the picture, people who have been lifelong church members as well as people who identify as ‘spiritual, but not religious’ and haven’t seen the inside of a church in years. Because our continuing education combines instruction from people daily involved in the care and cure of souls, plus a heavy component of peer conversation, it is one of the most practical programs available anywhere. Unapologetically Lutheran, yet compassionately people-centered, **it helps pastors of all ages and experience hone their skills for applying the gifts of Christ to people in real-life situations.**”

—Rev. Dr. Harold Senkbeil, executive director for spiritual care, DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel

“*Preach the Word* has benefited me and my congregation by starting a conversation with pastors that I wouldn’t have a formal conversation about preaching with and getting a variety of ideas and insights. This fills a particular need that I don’t get to fill in any other way. There is exposure to seminary professors and preachers that I wouldn’t otherwise get, and **it is meant to reinvigorate my preaching — and that is what it has done!**”

—Rev. Peter III, pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Millstadt, Ill.

“**I think that continuing education is important no matter what you do in life.** It is especially important for pastors because there’s not enough time in a seminary curriculum to teach us everything we need to know, nor does it always make sense until you work with real people in real situations. PALS has been a great program to help with this growth and development that needs to take place after graduating from seminary. My favorite part is that it isn’t simply a continuing-ed course that you take and check off saying that you’ve taken it, but rather, PALS is a community where you are able to grow academically, spiritually and socially with other pastors and their families who are experiencing similar things.”

—Rev. Tom Schlund, pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Algona, Iowa

“Continuing education is very important for pastors. In my own field, it’s a lifelong learning process. Physicians, pharmacists, nurses, accountants, lawyers and many others are engaged in formal continuing-education programs. **Would you really want your pastor to stop learning after he leaves the seminary?** There is still more to learn about the Scriptures, our confessions and also the application to the lives of Christians. So many new challenges arise over the years. Our congregation has benefited from the insight that Pastor [Philip] Young has gained from his continued studies on many topics, [like] the Reformation. Yes, pastors need to keep studying, too!”

—Dr. Fred Guengerich, member, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Nashville, Tenn.

PHOTO: LCN/SENIK M. LUNSFORD; ILLUSTRATIONS: THINKSTOCK

## SUPPORTING PASTORAL FORMATION: A How-To Guide

How can you support pastoral formation? Let us count the ways.

1. Giving to the Joint Seminary Fund
2. Donating to the seminaries
3. Recruiting our sons for the public ministry
4. Supporting your church’s confirmation program
5. Praying for and supporting our Concordia University System
6. Encouraging families to catechize their children
7. Nurturing the idea of full-time church work in our Sunday schools
8. Providing opportunity for new pastors to participate in Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS)
9. Urging pastors to get involved in continuing education
10. Assisting pastors in joining programs like DOXOLOGY and Grace Place Wellness Ministries
11. Fostering interest in chaplaincy programs
12. Helping finance pastoral-support programs like Soldiers of the Cross and Veterans of the Cross