



PASTORAL Education

June 2013 • A newsletter for those interested in the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

An example to the flock

The benefits of continuing education for pastors have been cited and recited in convention resolutions that have repeatedly encouraged it. Phrases such as “staying current,” “growth,” “refreshment” and “rejuvenation” are among those most commonly employed to promote the concept that continuing education for clergy is a beneficial undertaking. To bolster the encouragement, the observation that many vocations require some modicum of continuing education to maintain certification is often added.

Yet, one often-overlooked benefit of a pastor engaging in continuing education is the positive example he sets for his congregation (1 Peter

5:3). The pastor who is inquisitive, intellectually curious, seeking to grow in his knowledge and understanding of God’s Word and its faithful application sets a powerful example for his flock. The members of the flock see modeled in their pastor an approach to God’s Word and theological inquiry that can inspire them to a vigorous lifelong study of God’s Word.

In some congregations, involving laity in the study of God’s Word can be a challenge. Pastors in these congregations frequently encourage participation in numerous Bible-class opportunities throughout the year. The month of May likely witnessed dozens upon dozens of pastors admonishing new

confirmants that “confirmation is not graduation.” Pastors who energetically engage in continuing education can provide encouragement for lifelong learning in both word and deed to their congregations.

This issue of *Pastoral Education* highlights some of the continuing-education opportunities available through Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. In addition to extensive on-campus offerings, each summer the seminaries go “on the road” with coast-to-coast opportunities for study and growth. Since these offerings are open to laypersons and to all church workers, consider what a powerful

example could be provided as pastors, laypersons, and other church workers participate side-by-side in these offerings.



Thomas

Together, through the study of the Word, they can “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). An example to the flock!

Dr. Glen Thomas
Executive Director
Pastoral Education

Carving out time to grow in the Word

A well-studied, well-fed pastor feeds the sheep well. If he himself doesn’t feed on Christ and His word, the congregation is going to suffer.”

The Rev. North Sherrill of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., like many LCMS pastors, believes there is great benefit for everyone when a shepherd participates in continuing education in the pastoral ministry.

“It’s great for our brothers and the laity when we join together for an opportunity to study a particular topic — it keeps your mind working as you study Scripture and enjoy fellowship with the brethren,” Sherrill said. “The laity benefits when their pastor is in the Word and shares it with them. I just see continuing education as having many, many benefits.”

However, with demands high and hours few in the parish, pastors often struggle to find or make the time for self-study, ongoing weekly study groups or annual pilgrimages to the seminaries for further education. Some men end up feeling as though the well is dry, that they’ve run out of fresh and insightful ways to proclaim the Gospel to their people and communities.

To assist pastors in the pursuit of learning and growth, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, (CSL) and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, (CTS) offer numerous continuing-education opportunities throughout the year that cover a range of topics and locations.

OFF-SITE COURSES AND SUMMER WORKSHOPS

Each summer, continuing-education courses are available at different locations around the country, depending on where it is most viable and convenient



Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

The Rev. Jeffrey Pulse, associate professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, directs the seminary’s continuing education efforts and teaches in the summer, off-campus courses.

for the host pastor who is coordinating the course. Typically three to five days in length, the courses are open to pastors, church workers and laity. Topics are collaboratively chosen by the host pastor, the seminary and the professor or presenter.

Rather than sending each pastor to the seminary once a year for an “intensive” course, summer workshops and off-site courses provide an opportunity for the seminary to come to the pastors. Most pastors attend a workshop that is geographically close to their parishes, although some may travel a bit farther to hear a particular presenter.

For a number of pastors, this may be the only formal continuing education that they receive in a given year, and often the only occasion they have to visit at length with other pastors and church workers.

“The continuing-education participants always talk about how good it is to get together and have deeper conversations — they like to be challenged,” said the Rev. Jeffrey Pulse, associate professor of exegetical theology and director of continuing education at CTS. “We offer many locations because some people are out in the middle of nowhere it seems. We also schedule them in the summer, when things are calm in the parish. But we hope to offer these workshops year-round in the future.”

Each seminary offers an average of 20 courses or workshops in the summer. Topics change each year, but the seminaries report that some topics are perennial favorites.

“The most popular topics tend to be preaching and pastoral-care types of classes,” said the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Kloha,

associate professor of Exegetical Theology and director of continuing education at CSL. “Pastors are looking for ideas for preaching and refreshers. Also, biblical topics are especially popular as pastors seek inspiration for Bible studies, as well as just enjoying the time to be a student rather than a teacher.”

(See Page 2 for a listing of 2013 seminary off-campus continuing-education opportunities.)

FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN PASTORS’ CONFERENCES

When pastors gather for their district conferences, the seminaries dispatch faculty members to offer papers at these events, contributing to the continuing education of the participants. This provides an occasion for the pastors in each geographic location to learn together and establish greater unity in their circuits and districts.

“All of our faculty members do pastors’ conferences about six to 10 times per year, some every weekend,” Pulse said. “It helps pastors inform their preaching and teaching, but the thing that’s most useful about it is somewhat intangible — it whets their appetite to read and study more, to be better informed, and increases their desire to continue learning.”

CSL faculty members served as the main speakers at six district conventions last summer and at more than a dozen pastors’ conferences in the fall.

“It has become an LCMS tradition to have an essay presented at district and Synod conventions,” Kloha said. “It’s almost a regular part of a professor’s life now to be engaged with pastors in this way.”

In addition to the continuing-education benefits, the events also allow

(See *Carving out time*, Page 3)

2013 SEMINARY OFF-CAMPUS CONTINUING-EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS

For more information:

Email: Linda Nehring at ce@csll.edu or the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Kloha at klohaj@csll.edu
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Fremont, Neb.

Dr. Kent Bureson
June 24–26, 2013
Incense Rising and Screens Descending: How Do We Worship God in the 21st Century?

Las Vegas, Nev.

Dr. Andrew Bartelt
July 15–17, 2013
Isaiah 1–12, The Holy One of Israel in Our Midst

Orange, Calif.

Professor Jeffrey Kloha
July 15–17, 2013
In Christ and In the World: 1 Corinthians and the Christian Life in a (Sometimes) Hostile Culture

Phoenix, Ariz.

Professor Anthony Cook
July 15–17, 2013
Kingdom Consistency: Proclaiming Law and Gospel in the Kingdoms of Darkness and Light

St. Louis, Mo.

Dr. Robert Weise
July 29–30, 2013
Biblical Marriages and Same-Sex Unions: From the Normal to the New Normal

Oakley, Kan.

Dr. Jeffrey Kloha
July 29–31, 2013
In Christ and In the World: 1 Corinthians and the Christian Life in a (Sometimes) Hostile Culture

West Des Moines, Iowa

Dr. David Schmitt
August 5–7, 2013
Sermon Structures

West Fargo, N.D.

Dr. Paul R. Raabe
August 5–7, 2013
Zion and the Nations: Isaiah and Today

Cleveland, Ohio

Dr. Joel Okamoto
August 5–7, 2013
Being Lutheran in a Post-denominational Situation

Adrian, Mich.

Dr. Bruce Hartung
August 5–7, 2013
Things Spiritual: Warfare, Direction, Formation

Overland, Kan.

Dr. Glenn Nielsen
August 5–7, 2013
Out of Creation Comes Creativity — for Preaching

Seymour, Ind.

Dr. Rick Marrs
August 5–7, 2013
Making Christian Counseling More Christ-Centered

West Bend, Wis.

Dr. Charles Arand
August 12–14, 2013
The Art of Living by Faith: The Theology of Luther's Catechisms

Pine Bluff, Ark.

Dr. Henry Rowold
August 12–14, 2013
When Things Fall Apart — Study of the Book of Job

Ocala, Fla.

Dr. Tim Saleska
August 12–14, 2013
Influenced by a Cloud of Witnesses: Reading the Psalms for Spiritual Strength

Woodburn, Ore.

Rev. Mark Kempff
August 16–17, 2013
Ministering to the Hispanic/Latino Family (English only)

Cary, N.C.

Dr. Joel Biermann
August 19–21, 2013
Two Kinds of Righteousness: A Better Paradigm than Law and Gospel

Santa Fe, N.M.

Dr. Jeffrey Kloha
August 19–21, 2013
Why Some and Not Others? The Canon of the New Testament in Historical and Theological Perspective



Hillsboro, Ore.

Dr. Leopoldo Sánchez
August 19–21, 2013
Do Lutherans Take Sanctification Seriously? Models of Sanctification for Everyday Living

Melrose Park, Ill.

Dr. Leopoldo Sanchez
August 9–10, 2013
¿Enseñan los luteranos la santificación?: Modelos de santificación para el diario vivir (Do Lutherans Take Sanctification Seriously? Models of Sanctification for Everyday Living) (Spanish Only)

Tampa, Fla.

Rev. Mark Kempff
August 9–10, 2013
Ministrando a la familia hispana/latina (Ministering to the Hispanic/Latino Family) (Spanish only)

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, FORT WAYNE

For more information:

Email: Kara J. Mertz at CE@ctsfw.edu or Rev. Jeffrey Pulse at Jeffrey.Pulse@ctsfw.edu
Web: www.ctsfw.edu/CE
Phone: (260) 452-2103

St. Cloud, Minn.

Dr. Dean Wenthe
May 29–31, 2013
1 Peter

Jackson Hole, Wyo.

Dr. Adam Francisco
June 3–5, 2013
“Why Should I Believe You?” Christian Apologetics for Today

Austin, Texas

Rev. John Pless
June 4–6, 2013
Toward a Pastoral Theology of Suffering: Responding to the “Why” Questions

Castle Rock, Colo.

Dr. Charles Gieschen
June 5–7, 2013
The Presence of the Son Before Christ

Concordia, Mo.

Dr. K. Detlev Schulz
June 10–12, 2013
Worldviews and Religions

Cheyenne, Wyo.

Dr. James Bushur
June 10–14, 2013
Christianity in Conflict: 2nd Century Faith as a Model for the 21st Century Church

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Rev. John Pless
June 17–21, 2013
Confessing Christ in Crisis: Lessons from Hermann Sasse

Grand Junction, Colo.

Dr. Adam Francisco
June 24–26, 2013
“Why Should I Believe You?”: Christian Apologetics for Today

Sioux Falls, S.D.

Rev. John Pless
June 24–26, 2013
Luther as a Pastoral Theologian

Seattle, Wash.

Dr. Peter Scaer
June 24–28, 2013
The Synoptic Gospels

Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dr. Adam Francisco
July 1–3, 2013
“Struggling in the Cause of Allah:” An Overview of the Muslim Worldview

Nashville, Tenn.

Rev. John Pless
July 8–10, 2013
Hermann Sasse as Pastoral Theologian

Paris, Texas

Dr. Cameron MacKenzie
July 15–19, 2013
Luther's Theology in Today's World

Albuquerque, N.M.

Dr. Lawrence Rast Jr.
July 29–August 2, 2013
History of Seminex

Mechanicsburg, Penn.

Dr. James Bushur
Aug. 5–7, 2013
Christianity in Conflict: 2nd Century Faith as a Model for the 21st Century Church



Charleston, S.C.

Dr. K. Detlev Schulz
August 5–7, 2013
The Doctrine of Church and Fellowship

Flathead Lake, Mont.

Prof. Roland Ziegler
August 5–9, 2013
Faith and Reason

West Bend, Wisc.

Dr. David Scaer
November 18–20, 2013
Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Continuing education: A rewarding group effort

When pastors avail themselves of the many continuing-education opportunities offered by the seminaries, everyone reaps the reward. The following six people — two participants, two laypeople and two site coordinators — express in their own words how continuing education has positively affected them and the church at-large.

RECHARGED AND REFRESHED

The Rev. David Fleming, senior pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., graduated from seminary in 1986, and has been at his current parish for more than 20 years. During that time, he has participated in many continuing-education programs and has attended courses on Luther, Walther, Leviticus, Amos, preaching, early church fathers, liturgy, hymnody and counseling, to name just a few.

“I cannot think of a class that wasn’t valuable,” said Fleming. “Often I’m surprised by a class which I fear will not be helpful, but it is. Overall, exegetical (Scripture study) classes have been the most useful, but historical, systematic and pastoral classes have also produced abundant fruit. One class many years ago,

on Luther’s catechisms, has propelled my teaching of the important basics of the Christian faith.”

Having been a pastor for many years and now leading a congregation with a school, Fleming has a need to continue finding new and interesting ways to speak of our Lord’s gifts.

“The classes have kept me fresh,” he said. “If I don’t keep learning and growing in understanding about the stunning mysteries of the faith, I find I get flat about the riches of the Lord’s goodness. But classes with engaging professors, interesting pastors and dedicated laity give me vital opportunities to dig deeper and grow.”

For his congregation, the advantages of having a pastor who engages in continuing education on a regular basis are numerous, and the investment that they make in keeping their pastor sharp and revitalized has a guaranteed return.

“The pastoral ministry is mentally and spiritually demanding work,” Fleming said. “For some there are more than 70 sermons a year, hundreds of Bible classes per year and many counseling sessions of all types. It’s easy to get in ruts and feel isolated. A congregation



Laurie Russo

The Rev. David Fleming, senior pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, Mich., has participated in continuing-education experiences for more than two decades.

with a recharged, refreshed and mentally-engaged pastor has the gift of a pastor who is ready to get back in the saddle and has sharpened theological tools at his disposal. I am very thankful that both of the congregations I have served were willing to budget funds to make such constant learning possible.”

ENHANCING LIFE IN THE PARISH

Glenn and Barbara Knepper, members at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., are thankful to have two pastors who stay

involved in continuing education. As their congregation hosts a course each year, they’ve seen firsthand how additional learning benefits pastors and congregations.

“During sermons, Bible studies and occasionally in other settings, I hear the pastors incorporating didactic information given during a course and also recognize them using more complex principles discussed in the class,” Glenn Knepper said. “I see the

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Carving out time

(Continued from Page 1.)

the seminary faculty a chance to connect with parish pastors and, therefore, bring their experiences back again to the classroom to benefit seminarians.

ONLINE CLASSES AND RESOURCES

As may be expected, online courses and resources are and will play a role in the continuing education of pastors. Both seminaries currently offer online courses, and as time and technology progress, they hope to add to their catalogs and expand online learning.

“We’re growing into this one a bit. Every field has online continuing education, yet we need to be careful what kinds of materials we do online,” Kloha said. “A lot of continuing education out there is between professor and student, but for pastors some topics might be more helpful when offered as a group

doing continuing education online rather than as an individual.”

THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIA

There is a need for pastors to be regularly informed and engaged in contemporary topics, to examine and delve into particular subjects that currently impact the church and world. For this reason, an annual symposium is held on-campus at each seminary for pastors, church workers and laity. These symposia typically last between two and five days, with other workshops available during the week as well.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

The seminaries also offer numerous additional on-campus continuing-education opportunities, conferences and workshops throughout the year. Many of these are designed for particular

groups of people, such as musicians, writers and chaplains, but all boast some benefit for pastors and church workers as well.

These events are listed on the events and continuing-education sections on each seminary website.

IT STARTS ON CAMPUS

Even before they graduate from seminary, future pastors are encouraged toward lifelong learning and continuing education, even before they graduate. Both seminaries offer reduced rates and/or waived fees for students at continuing-education events to give them a taste for what continuing education has to offer. In the classroom, professors work to cultivate a desire for continued learning among future pastors.

“The seminary atmosphere in itself encourages students to think theologically and strive to learn and grow more,” Pulse said. “We tell seminarians to keep on studying, that they’ll run into things in the parish that require them to brush up on certain topics. We try to plant that seed — instilling excitement in learning theology — then it’s hard to hold them back. This is what our Synod wants; we want all pastors to continue to grow and enhance their education.”

“Some areas of study are better taught when the pastor is in the congregation,” Kloha said. “This is where PALS (Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support) comes in. We try to just make it a regular part of their lives as parish pastors, to continue studying.”

Parishes and parishioners benefit greatly from having shepherds who continue to study, grow and connect regularly with God’s Word.

“Ultimately, when your pastor is excited and learning Scripture, the congregation will catch that and want to



Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Kloha, associate professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, directs the seminary’s continuing education efforts and teaches in the summer, off-campus courses.

learn and engage more in the Word, too,” Pulse said. “The congregation is always a beneficiary. A pastor who is constantly growing, studying, learning ... he’s a better pastor. Not because he knows all the answers, but because he himself is doing just what he asks his congregation to do, to be in Bible study and continue to engage in God’s Word.”

And that’s not all. “The biggest thing too is for pastors to have an opportunity to step out of their day and actively reflect on what they’re doing, have conversations with other pastors and be encouraged,” Kloha said. “Sometimes it’s not so much the new skills that they gain, but stepping out and taking a look at things in a new way and bringing that to bear directly on their ministry in the next week. It really is for encouragement and refreshment as much as education.”



Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

Annual symposia are offered on both seminary campuses, as are numerous seminars, workshops and conferences, providing continuing-education opportunities on a wide array of topics.

Continuing education

(Continued from Page 3.)

pastors invigorated by learning new ideas. They recognize linkages, broaden their understanding and gain confidence through extended focus on organized learning and increased interaction and networking with peers.”

Glenn Knepper also attends the continuing-education courses in order to learn, all the while witnessing how the pastors absorb the information and interact.

“As pastor attendees ask questions and make comments, I see them excited and motivated. Their discussion demonstrates that they’re expanding their knowledge, understanding and perspective of the material. The pastors bond with each other and demonstrate their own humanity. Seeing that helps provide congregants with an example of how to integrate their spiritual life and belief with their own daily temporal concerns.”

Barbara Knepper sees another practical aspect to hosting continuing-education courses close to home.

“I think that having the continuing-education courses come here helps to save more money for the pastors and congregations and is more cost efficient in general,” she said. “In addition, pastors — who work a lot outside their own homes — can remain closer to their own families.”

Barbara Knepper also participates in the continuing-education experience by helping serve refreshments. She said she and the other volunteers helping throughout the week receive as much reward out of serving attendees as the

with hosting courses for pastors, church workers and laypeople at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Seymour, Ind.

“First, it keeps me committed to continuing education,” Blumenberg said. “By doing this each year, it means that I’ll be continuing to grow in a particular way. Second, we have the opportunity to be involved in the selection of speakers and topics, which allows us to choose courses that have a specific connection to our needs. Third, our congregation is well-suited to host classes, since it is located in an area that has many congregations, is easy to drive to and has accommodations for housing and food for those who need those services. We have a faithful core of pastors that come each year.”

Blumenberg finds that by hosting workshops, it helps him meet continuing-education needs, even as he provides the opportunity for the brother pastors in his area to learn and grow.

“A few of the benefits I have received include getting some ‘new tools in the toolbox’ of pastoral ministry, engaging in short-term scholarly study, renewing our perspective through presentations and discussion, and learning through the experiences and reactions of fellow pastors. The fellowship is great, too.”

The courses that Blumenberg and his congregation have hosted are as varied as they come, but are nonetheless helpful and necessary for pastoral growth, as well as for the congregation itself.

“Some of the recent events we have hosted have dealt with preaching and how we can join from a biblical, creation and preservation perspective the

considering how I’ll participate in continuing education,” Knepper said. “Visiting the seminary is great, but expensive. But continued learning is still necessary. Do you want to go to a doctor who graduated from medical school in the 70s and hasn’t learned since? Pastors, too, need new ways to speak about things, different ways of preaching and thinking and talking.”

The diversity in the topics offered has played a huge role in Knepper’s enjoyment of continuing-education classes and workshops. While many pastors are more likely to attend a workshop on a biblical or pastoral-care topic, he finds that even more obscure topics are beneficial to his ministry.

“I recently took a course on Walther and his times. There is nothing practical about that, but it was still helpful. Sometimes it surprises you. I thought it would have nothing to do with anything, but it really helped me to talk about our Lutheran identity in the 21st century.”

Currently, continuing education is not required for pastors, although it is encouraged. Knepper feels that in the future, it would be helpful to establish a requirement for clergy to participate in continuing education.

“In the fields of medicine and law, continuing education is required, but for clergy it is not,” he said. “We know the value of continuing education. The church talks about it all the time, but it’s not required. My hope is that we can make some continuing-education experiences mandatory for pastors.



Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
The Rev. Ralph Blumenberg, senior pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Seymour, Ind., hosts and attends summer courses offered by the seminaries at Immanuel.

Like his pastor, Anders also agrees that distance from the home parish plays a key role in the ability of a pastor to engage in continuing education.

“Many congregations, including ours in Oregon, have tight budgets where no funding is provided for continuing education,” Anders said. “Providing courses within driving distance can reduce costs and make it possible for pastors to attend. Engaging our ever-changing culture is always a challenge, but our neighbors desperately need to hear the Gospel. I believe that continuing education of other world views, religions and immigrant cultures can help pastors and laity share Jesus with our neighbors.”

CARRYING ON TRADITION

When the Rev. Warren Graff arrived 10 years ago at Grace Lutheran Church, Albuquerque, N.M., he was walking into an already established host site for continuing education, so he jumped on board.

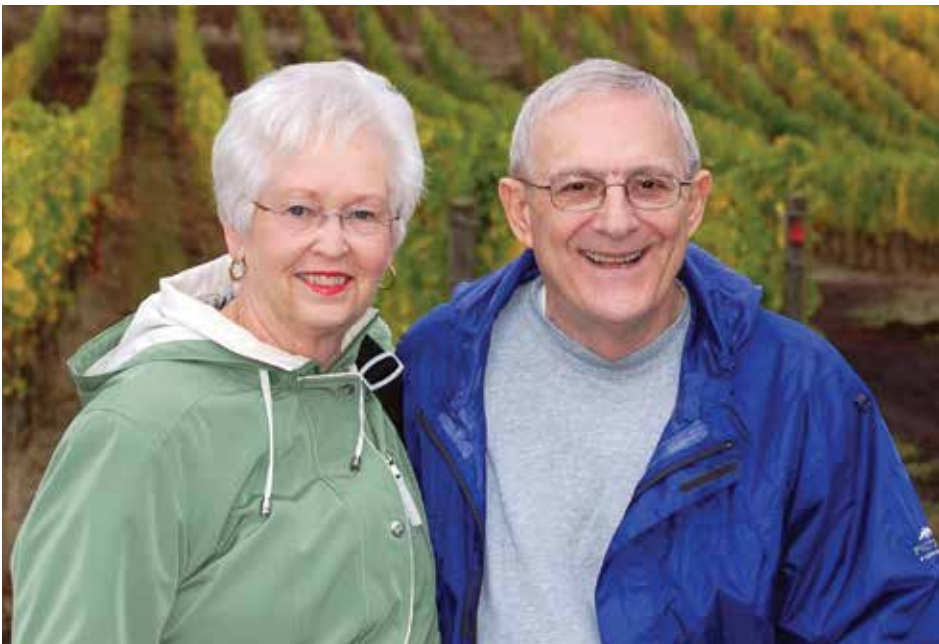
“I’ve been happy to continue offering Grace as a host site. I like doing this and so does the congregation,” Graff said. “We have one of the bigger sites — 17 to 24 pastors or so usually attend — so it ends up being a great time among the pastors and we have guys who come from all over. They have this on their radar.”

Typically, pastors graduate from seminary excited and ready to take on Word and Sacrament ministry in their new church, but they also tend to miss the academic atmosphere of seminary.

“The academic rigor of it, all of us miss that from seminary,” Graff said. “We go about our daily stuff, which is good, but it is also good to have five days of academic engagement. We need the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren. As pastors, being together for a week is nice encouragement for one another.”

Of course, the learning never stops with the pastor, but is passed on to the congregation.

“They benefit certainly because of the academic engagement of their pastor,” Graff said. “It may be nothing direct in a sermon, but they are being impacted by the Lord’s Word in areas I may not think to study. Also, at these events the congregation and pastors converse and the laity gets to see all of these Lutheran pastors in concert with each other. To get these professors out and spend a week with these guys is not just academically invigorating, but also encouraging to the church.”



Glenn Knepper
Glenn and Barbara Knepper, members at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, Mich., enjoy attending and assisting with continuing education events with their pastors.

attendees get from the course. They enjoy meeting other pastors who attend and like seeing and participating in the pastors’ interactions with one another. All in all, they believe that continuing education is simply beneficial to everyone involved.

“As latecomers to Lutheranism, I think Barbara and I more quickly gained a good understanding of Lutheran belief and more readily accept our role in God’s plan,” Knepper said. “I know we live a much better spiritual life because our pastors actively participate in continuing education.”

STAYING INVOLVED IN LIFELONG LEARNING

As a continuing-education site coordinator, the Rev. Ralph Blumenberg enjoys the many benefits that come

conversation about ‘green’ and ‘earth’ concerns, which have given me new insights into and approaches to these areas,” Blumenberg said. “The one this year will focus on keeping Christ and His Word in counseling.”

EDUCATION ON THE COAST

The Rev. Grant Knepper (son of Glenn and Barbara Knepper) of Zion Lutheran Church, Hillsboro, Ore., has attended more than a dozen continuing-education courses so far in his ministry. For him, the expense of traveling from Oregon to one of LCMS seminaries for further education is prohibitive, so he appreciates the various opportunities that have come to his part of the country.

“The expense — namely travel expense — is a huge factor when

LEARNING TO SHARE CHRIST IN TODAY’S CULTURE

“My job as a research engineer at Intel requires me to publish academic papers, attend conferences and keep current with university research. Likewise, pastors also need continuing education to refresh forgotten knowledge and learn new topics.”

So says Mark Anders, a member at Knepper’s church in Hillsboro, Ore., who echoes his pastor’s sentiments when it comes to the necessity of continuing education for pastors.

“Within the LCMS, we require our pastors to have a great deal of education at the seminary level, with extensive studies in languages, theology, history and ministry, including a year of vicarage,” Anders said. “Over time it is useful to refresh knowledge that has been forgotten and explore new topics, especially those relevant to today’s changing culture. This knowledge can be brought back also to benefit the congregation.”

From the perspective of a lay leader, Anders believes that many different topics are valuable for pastors who seek further education while in the parish.

“Especially useful are detailed studies of specific books of the Bible, relating Lutheran doctrine to today’s culture and world religions, learning more about church history — especially times that are not as well understood such as intertestamental, early-church, Lutheran, LCMS history and pastoral-care topics that enable pastors to better care for different needs within the congregation. Also, the study of theological issues behind controversial topics within the LCMS can be useful for educating pastors, and therefore laity.”