

# THE TRUTH OF CHRIST IS THAT IMPORTANT!



PHOTO: LCMS/ERIK M. LUNSFORD

## PASTORAL FORMATION RETREATS



As our seminarians are formed for service in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, it's important that these future pastors are well-acquainted with their Synod, how it lives together, and the resources their Synod makes available to them once they become pastors in LCMS congregations. The LCMS Office of Pastoral Education is hosting Pastoral Formation Retreats for our seminary students. During these retreats, seminarians will have the opportunity to interact with LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison; Chief Mission Officer Rev. Kevin D. Robson; and the executive directors of the Office of International Mission, the Office of National Mission, Pastoral Education, Mission Advancement, Communications and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. The retreats scheduled for 2020 include:

**Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) —  
Jan. 8 (LCMS International Center)**

**Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort  
Wayne, Sem IV class — Jan. 17–18  
(Concordia Theological Seminary)**

**Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Sem IV class — March 17  
(LCMS International Center)**

**Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
SMP students — June 24  
(LCMS International Center)**

BY REV. DR. JAMES BANECK, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF LCMS PASTORAL EDUCATION

***“I am the way, and the truth,  
and the life” (JOHN 14:6).***

**A**longside the other seminarians, Mark stands up and gets in line. His heart is pounding. His wife is watching and waiting. He hears his name read. He hears the name of the district, the congregation, the city and state. This is Mark's first call into the holy ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The seminary hands him a packet and a diploma. Mark and his wife pack the U-Haul and drive to their new community. They get out of the car and enter a whole new world.

The world Mark steps into has changed from what he read in his textbooks from the days of Luther (1500s), or Walther and the beginnings of the LCMS (1847), or stories he heard from the glory days of the LCMS from his grandparents (1950s), or even the declining church he observed from his parents.

Mark begins to meet the people of his congregation and community. They've all been affected by the world. Some believe in the Triune God who created and redeemed the world. Some believe there is a god out there who started this mess, but they would rather rely on their own reason and strength and are rather skeptical about the truthfulness and accuracy of the Bible. Some, even in the church, believe the world started with some big bang and evolved into what it is today. Others don't believe

in God at all and instead think everything that happens to them happens by chance. Others in the church and community believe their faith is based on their emotions, and they define God the way that suits them best — regardless of what the Bible says. Others have been watching too much “Star Wars” and “The Office” and the Hallmark Channel, and they either believe that life is totally meaningless or they see themselves as their own little god that everything in the world revolves around. And still others in Mark's brand-new world are pretty faithful in the congregation but are rather vocal that every other religion and idea is just as valid as their Christian faith and that, in the end, everyone is going to go to the same happy place.

Since the time of his Baptism, Mark has been formed to be a Lutheran pastor. After the Hymn of the Day, Mark will stand in the pulpit and preach the forgiveness of sins and eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is the creator of the world. Mark will preach and teach this eternal truth in Bible class, to the youth group and to the shut-ins. The abiding truth of Jesus Christ, embedded in the inspired and inerrant Word of God, will permeate Mark's ministry. This truth of Christ will be preached into the lives and souls of His people as He provides them with pastoral care on earth and prepares them for eternal life in heaven.

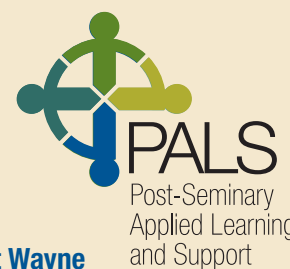
This is the importance of pastoral formation in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod!

## POST-SEMINARY APPLIED LEARNING AND SUPPORT (PALS) DINNERS

PALS is a program of the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education that helps pastors and their wives transition into a first call. Pastoral Education is hosting dinners for the Sem IV students and wives at each seminary to introduce them to the PALS program.

**FEB. 23 at Concordia  
Seminary, St. Louis**

**APRIL 15 at Concordia  
Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne**







PHOTOS: LOMSERIK M. LUNSFORD

# A VIRTUOUS CALLING

**T**he Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod confesses that the church stands or falls on the article of justification — that we are declared righteous through the blood, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have forgiveness of sins and eternal life solely and freely through the merits of Jesus Christ (AC IV).

In AC V, we confess, “So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted.” This means that the Holy Spirit creates and sustains saving faith in His people through the preaching, teaching and pastoral care of His called and ordained pastors. This is why we form pastors!



## WE FORM PASTORS BECAUSE ...

- › **It is a noble calling from God** — The eternal Triune God instituted the holy ministry to represent Him to preach the Word of God and announce the full, free forgiveness of sins to God’s people.
- › **It is a high vocation** — Being a pastor is a life’s work; it is a mission given by God to care for His people in this fallen world with the comforting, saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you’” (JOHN 20:21).**

- › **It is an honorable service** — Being a pastor is a virtuous calling, an office to which we want our young boys and men to aspire.
- › **It has eternal effect** — Luther calls the Office of the Holy Ministry the highest office in the land, not because of the man but because of its effect. Through this office, God saves sinners for all eternity.
- › **It exemplifies Christ and His glorious cross** — The Office of the Holy Ministry is lived under the cross of Christ. It is not of this world, nor does it receive the glory of this world. This office shares in the suffering of St. Paul, who writes, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (GAL. 6:14).

## How can you encourage kids toward church work?

Church Worker Focus Groups revealed:

- › The middle school years are when most individuals first decide to pursue church-work vocations.
- › The greatest influencers on a child entering a church-work vocation are parents, pastors, youth directors, directors of Christian education, teachers and coaches, as well as anyone who says, “Have you ever considered serving in the church full time?”
- › People are attracted to full-time church work for the sense of community and belonging, the Lutheran schools, and the feeling of being called to do God’s work and make a difference in the lives of His people with the Gospel.



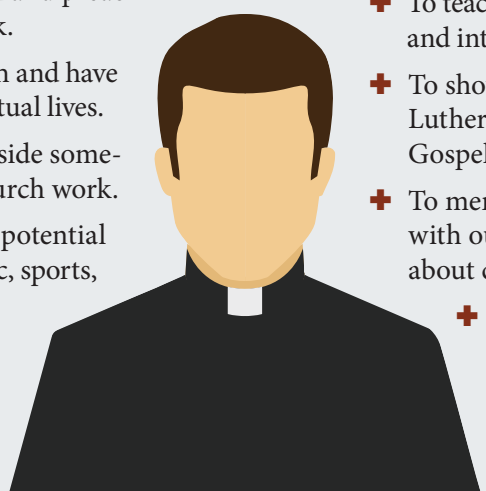
## INCREASING INTEREST IN CHURCH WORK

**O**ur Lord promises to send laborers into His fields, and one way that He works is through the encouragement and support of all those in the lives of young people considering church-work vocations. As we serve these neighbors, we need:

- + To be intentional.
- + To remind our pastors to talk and preach about the joys of church work.
- + To be relational with our youth and have a general interest in their spiritual lives.
- + To be patient and walk alongside someone who has potential for church work.
- + To find ways to interact with potential church workers through music, sports, youth programs and more.
- + To build a church-work vocation program in the church and school where

we can talk about, advocate for and support church workers.

- + To encourage our children to attend a Concordia university. (Start by visiting one!)
- + To make LCMS church, school and youth events something we all want to be in.
- + To teach God’s Word with truth, purity and integrity — this is what they want!
- + To show our thankfulness for our Lutheran identity anchored in the Gospel.
- + To mentor and develop relationships with our youth through conversations about church work.
- + To care for our current church workers to show this is a vocation that is respected, appreciated and admired.



## 2020 AND BEYOND

### WHAT'S NEXT?



Church Worker Recruitment Initiative communications will permeate the Synod



Standing Partnership meeting in Spring 2020 with the LCMS to plan the initiative



Aslanian Market Research will survey more than 2,000 individuals across the Synod

## JULY – DECEMBER 2019

COMPLETED

**10**  
FOCUS  
GROUPS



LCMS NATIONAL CONVENTION  
DELEGATES PASSED RES. 6-01,  
“CHURCH WORKER RECRUITMENT  
INITIATIVE,” BY

**94%**



## SEPTEMBER 2018 – JULY 2019

### JOINING THE CONVERSATION

LCMS National Mission, International Mission, Mission Advancement and Communications; district presidents; seminary faculties and seminary students; Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS); multiethnic conference; International Mission regional directors; Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML)



### – GENEROUS SUPPORT –

**\$125,000**

SCHWAN FOUNDATION

FROM THE

**\$125,000**

LCMS Board of Directors

FROM THE

### SIGNED CONTRACTS

- › Aslanian Market Research (AMR) to research church workers in the LCMS
- › Standing Partnership Marketing Communications to design a comprehensive communications and marketing initiative that permeates the entire LCMS



## SEPT. 11–12, 2018

*Pastoral Formation Summit:  
Leaders met to assess  
the current situation and  
outlook for pastoral  
formation in the LCMS.*

### A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

to move forward with a church-worker formation initiative focused on forming church workers from font to grave.



### WHO WAS THERE?

President REV. DR. MATTHEW C. HARRISON; Chief Mission Officer REV. KEVIN D. ROBSON; Pastoral Education Executive Director REV. DR. JAMES BANECK; Senior Assistant to the President REV. DR. JON VIEKER; CTSFW President REV. DR. LAWRENCE RAST JR. and CSL President REV. DR. DALE MEYER; Concordia University Presidents REV. DR. PATRICK FERRY, REV. DR. BRIAN FRIEDRICH and REV. DR. DANIEL GARD; and Senior Vice-President GRETCHEN JAMESON of Concordia University Wisconsin



