



| PREACH THE WORD — THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD |

All photos except where noted: LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

# Faithful *to the* Word of God

A devotional thought on 2 Tim. 4:2

**W**hen I was a parish pastor, I remember looking at the same readings I preached three years ago, thinking, “How am I going to preach this text in a way that is faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, that will best connect to the faith and life of my people and be new and engaging since the last time I preached it?”

During the week, I’d stand in the pulpit in the empty church and envision where everyone sat each Sunday morning. I’d think about their lives and struggles, their joys and illnesses, their pain and suffering, their hurts and blessings, their world and experiences. After studying the

text, I’d think about what I would preach to these beloved faces, lives and souls that the Holy Spirit would deliver into their ears to create, nourish and sustain their saving faith.

In 2 Tim. 4:1–2, God commands pastors to preach His Word to His people: “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus ... [to] preach the word.” This is what a pastor does — he preaches the Word!

Studies reveal that millennials (ages 22–37) value doctrine. They want to know what the Bible says, and they want to know how the Word applies to their lives and how they can live it daily. They want preaching that is worth their time and is true to

the Bible, while also being personal and engaging. This is no different than in Paul’s day, when he writes, “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

*Preach the Word* modules help you do just that! In this insert, I invite you to meet our authors, a pastor who has experienced a module, and those who create and produce them. We hope these modules will be an excellent and rich resource that helps our pastors preach the Word.

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

The Rev. Dr. James Baneck, above, is executive director of LCMS Pastoral Education. He assists the Synod’s chief mission officer to “provide leadership, coordination and oversight for pre-seminary education, seminary education and post-seminary continuing education, and by providing advocacy for pastoral education and health within the Synod” (Bylaw 3.4.3.8).

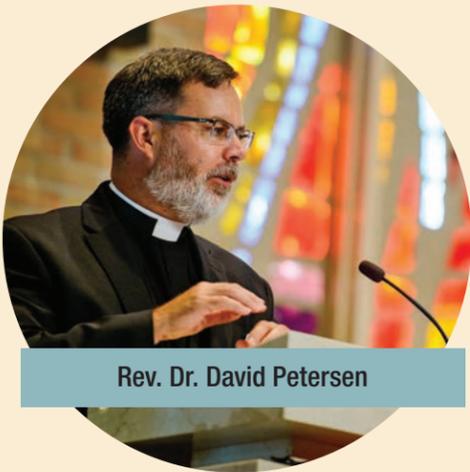
Baneck oversees *Preach the Word* (PTW), a post-seminary continuing-education initiative out of the LCMS Office of the President. Together, Baneck consults with the chairman of PTW, the Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher II; LCMS Communications; Doctrinal Review; and the PTW authors to produce video and study guide modules that help pastors grow their skills in the art of preaching while also earning valuable Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Pastors earn three (3) CEUs per module when participating in *Preach the Word*.

*They want to know what the Bible says, and they want to know how the Word applies to their lives and how they can live it daily.*



# The Who:

## The names and faces of *Preach the Word*



Rev. Dr. David Petersen

### Rev. Dr. David Petersen — “Sacramental Preaching”

“I am a parish pastor. I love preaching because of its promises. It is not such an informative speech; it is a supernatural event. This [module] is dear to my heart because good pastors, myself included, often fall into clichés and formulas that undermine their intent to uphold and honor the Sacraments and to teach the people to see how God works through means. The Sacraments are sometimes added on at the end of the sermon without any real connection to the text or the rest of the sermon. The module seeks to help preachers deepen their understanding of the Sacraments and to develop skills to make their preaching truly sacramental in ways that are not only exegetically faithful but are also communicated well.”

### Rev. Matt Peeples — “The Use of Technology in Preaching”

“I love distinctly Lutheran preaching because of its strong emphasis on the Gospel as the true agent for lasting impact in someone’s life. Lutherans have done a great job teaching preachers to bring the Gospel out of the text and apply it to the hearts of the people who need what only it can bring. We are living in the midst of the most drastic communications shift in human history since the Reformation. The shift has been so drastic and fast-paced it can leave people paralyzed as to how they should best



Rev. Matt Peeples

communicate the unchanging Gospel in an ever-changing world. This module is designed to not only help you make sense of these drastic shifts but to actually leverage them as you preach the Gospel. It’s great for those who consider themselves high tech or low tech and helpful for all preachers because it not only addresses technology, but the ways in which people take in information.”

### Rev. Dr. David Schmitt — “The Use of Story in Preaching”

“I love that Lutheran preaching is centered on Christ, not in a way that is formulaic, but [in a way that is] faithful, using the creative variety of Scripture to proclaim the creative work of God, forgiving sin and bestowing life and salvation in Jesus, who is Lord of all. I value the module [because it] helps preachers consider the ways in which they tell the story of God, the stories of God’s people, the way in which God is at work in the world. If you have ever wondered whether you should tell a particular story or how much time or detail you should share in telling a story, this module will give you a way to identify the kind of story you are telling and the way to develop that story in the sermon.”

### Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenschler II — “Delivering the Gospel Live and in Person”

“I was a parish pastor in Michigan and Texas for 15 years, and now for 19 years I’ve had the privilege of helping form new Lutheran preachers. In my years as an every-Sunday preacher, I definitely had a sense that what we Lutheran pastors were doing —



Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenschler II

bringing our folks faithfully divided Law and Gospel — was truly preaching the Scriptures as God inspired them. But now, as a guy teaching preachers-to-be — and interacting with pastors of other Christian traditions — I’ve seen even more clearly that Law and Gospel as we Lutherans understand it is the way people really do hear Christ crucified and risen. Preaching is to be incarnational — that is, a real-live, person-to-people event. Something of that is lost when a preacher reads, or even word-for-word memorizes, his sermon — to say nothing of the hearers’ attentions being lost. This module is about how we can do in the pulpit with the Word of Christ the very same things we do so successfully in live communication all the time — without sacrificing one bit of the careful preparation or even our well-crafted wording. I call it ‘thinking in thoughts.’ I think every experienced preacher knows the difference between

looking out at hearers who are really focused and looking at those who are wandering or worse. This module is about how we can be focused on our hearers and on the content of the Gospel we’re proclaiming — so that those hearers remain engaged and hear the word of the cross we bring.”

### Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy — “Textual Preaching”

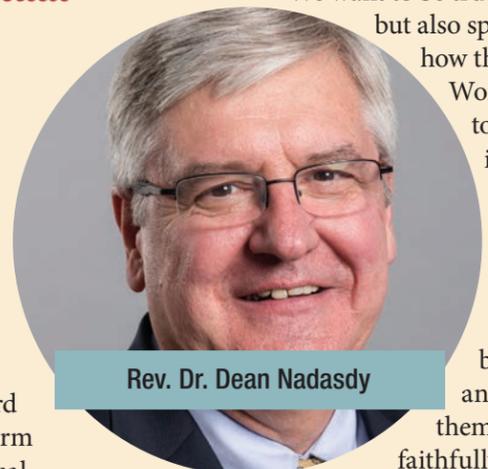
(The use of biblical text in sermon preparation) “I taught homiletics at Concordia Seminary in the ’90s, and I love how Lutheran preaching is riveted to the biblical text. The text gives authority to our preaching and shows the confidence we have in the Word and the Gospel to transform lives. My module on textual preaching helps preachers engage the text in every aspect of sermon preparation and presentation. In a time when many listeners do not know the biblical text, it is crucial that we keep

the text before them throughout each sermon. Too many of us walk away from our text too soon or we impose a sermon structure on a text, which doesn’t allow the text to speak clearly. At the end of our sermon, we want our hearers to know not just what we said, but what God says in His Word.”

### Rev. Dr. Glenn Nielsen — “Applying God’s Word into People’s Lives”

“I teach homiletics at Concordia Seminary, and I consider it essential that I am preaching regularly myself. To say and do what God’s Word directs me to say and do for the gathered people in such a way that they are sent forth strengthened and encouraged by the Gospel is a privilege and joy indeed. When I preach, I want the people to take the sermon’s purpose into their daily lives. It is not just to be heard during the service, but believed and lived on Tuesday evening, Thursday afternoon and Saturday morning. When they are driving to work or relaxing at home or walking down the aisle of the grocery store, I pray that the sermon has become portable into those situations as well. I strive to have the sermon apply to my daily life first, and then preach it to the people so that they, too, will carry this Word into the lives they live. I have read many articles on preaching and often see the comment that one of the most difficult tasks in preaching is making direct and appropriate applications of the Word into people’s lives today.

We want to be true to the text but also specific in how this is God’s Word for us today. Textual integrity and practical, contemporary embodiment are both needed, and bringing them together faithfully is not an afterthought but needs to be carefully thought out. This module seeks to help the preacher do both for the sake of the people who seek to live their faith in these challenging times.”



Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy

# The What:

## How does *Preach the Word* work?

**Rev. Donald Beaumont, pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church, Willowick, Ohio, and participant in *Preach the Word***

“I wanted to [participate in *Preach the Word*] because I know I’m not the best preacher. Preaching has always been my favorite thing, and Lutheran preaching to me throws the Gospel right at you. The uniqueness of Lutheran preaching lies in, ‘here is your sin, here’s what you can’t do about it, but here’s what’s been done.’ I could never preach like Paul, never anything close to those in the Bible, but I can stand up and tell others what Christ has done. I joined in *Preach the Word* with three other pastors in the circuit, and we met once a month as a group. That size group was perfect. The exegetical module played an important part for me and led me in a different direction than I originally had thought. One module in particular — ‘The use of story in preaching’ by Rev. Dr. David Schmitt — caused me to rethink how I preached. The topic of storytelling hit home — I think I was using too many stories. It helped me focus on what the lesson was saying. Dr. Fickenscher’s presentation on thinking in thoughts was very helpful too.”

**John Schimmelmann — member and treasurer of Bethel Lutheran Church, Willowick, Ohio**

“[Preaching] is the way to communicate the essential message that God loves all people and sent His Son to save us. Pastor Beaumont is committed to share God’s message with our congregation. His preaching has changed to include stories and anecdotes, which helps us to understand what God’s message means in our lives today. Pastor always emphasizes God’s Word and the love of Jesus Christ in his sermons, and he seems to preach with more boldness and confidence since he has taken the [*Preach the Word*] courses.”

**1. Form a triad or small group of pastors.**



**2. Each member completes and submits an enrollment form.**



**3. Gather together to engage with the videos and module discussion guide.**



**4. Apply what you learned through the module and record your own sermon for peer review.**



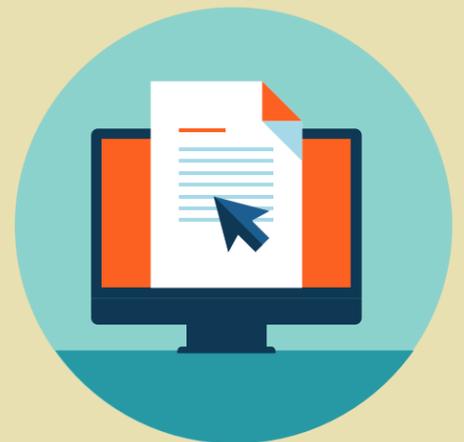
**5. Review your recorded sermon with the group and receive feedback.**



**6. Each member completes and submits a completion form.**



**7. A module delivery guide for leaders is provided to help facilitate the program.**



**8. Record your CEUs on your SET for having completed *Preach the Word*. (Three CEUs per module.)**



# The Why and How:

## The coming together of *Preach the Word*

### Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher II

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation was the occasion for initiating *Preach the Word*. The 500th is so much bigger a milestone than even most Lutherans realized, even after a year of festivities: half a millennium of blessings from the most eternally significant sequence of events that God has worked in history since the first century — setting free the saving Gospel for the world! That means it's really all about preaching — God getting the Word of Christ out there to be heard. I'm afraid the 500th is already quickly fading from people's memories, but if *Preach the Word* helps any pastors get the Gospel out more clearly, it'll be a continuation of the 500<sup>th</sup> that will then continue to be celebrated by souls for all eternity!"

**Rev. Timothy Mech**, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Sheboygan, Wis., and a member of the *Preach the Word* steering committee

President Harrison, in conjunction with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, formed the *Preach the Word* committee of two pastors, two homiletics professors (one from each of our seminaries), the assistant to the president, a district president and the executive director of Pastoral Education. *Preach the Word* was set up to assist pastors in their preaching for years to come. The committee planned and designed online video modules and accompanying resources on different ways of preaching and chose pastors and seminary professors to develop and model them. It is the hope of the *Preach the Word* committee that pastors will improve preaching skills through this project and that *Preach the Word* would be a blessing to them and their congregations."



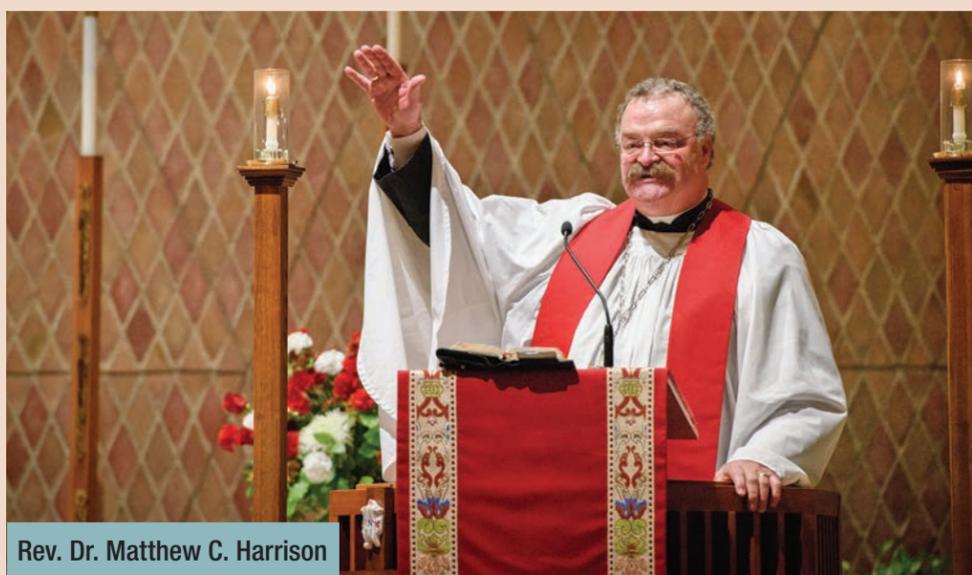
Rev. Timothy Mech

David Jablonski

where we take what we've filmed in the studio and combine it with graphics, images, charts, example sermons, even music — and make all of these elements flow in a video presentation that's informative and engaging. Preaching is a matter of such importance; consequently, we scrutinize every element of each module that we produce. As we work on these video modules, I'm often reminded of what Luther said: "Thus it is not the stones, the construction, and the gorgeous silver and gold that make a church beautiful and holy; it is the Word of God and sound preaching." —Al Dowbnia

**Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison**, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Preaching is not easy business. Ask any pastor. Yet there is hardly a joy known like that of a pastor when he has found a new insight from Scripture and then joyfully shared the Gospel with his people, and they've received it with joy. *Preach the Word* offers some great helps to preachers, who, like Luther said, desire to 'thump a new string' and find greater joy in the harrowing task of preaching."



Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

Al Dowbnia



Amanda Booth

**Al Dowbnia**, director of digital media production for the LCMS, and **Amanda Booth**, digital production specialist

As an animator and editor, I really enjoy finding and incorporating the best images and animations that support the script. Complementary images create a strong message, and these images help deliver the kind of teaching impact the modules must achieve." —Amanda Booth

The production process is very similar for each module, and it requires a significant investment of time — we want the finished product to be the very best it can be. The process includes pre-production, where we review the script and focus on gathering all of the digital assets we'll need. Next, we film the scripted portions with the on-screen presenter — this is always a pastor or professor. Then comes post-production,