CONCORDIA SEMINARY

FALL 2015

GOD’S WORD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE

THE WORD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE

GENERATIONS: THE CAMPAIGN FOR CONCORDIA SEMINARY

THE GOSPEL OF MARK IS TO BE HEARD
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis students, faculty and staff fanned out across St. Louis for servant events held during orientation week in September. Here, students Cody Peterson, left, and Tamrat Tadele Debessa help clean up a Gateway Greening garden at the St. Agnes Apartments, a senior housing complex in the Benton Park neighborhood. Photo: Tony Carosella
FEATURES

6 THE WORD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE
The spoken Word proclaimed as the sermon is not primarily dispensing information for our intellects. Dr. Glenn A. Nielsen shows how preaching is bringing the living and active Word.

10 THE GOSPEL OF MARK IS TO BE HEARD
The second book of the New Testament was most likely intended to be heard not read. Dr. James W. Voelz explains why we should allow ourselves to hear the Gospel of Mark.

15 GENERATIONS: THE CAMPAIGN FOR CONCORDIA SEMINARY
The Seminary launched its largest campaign, Generations, in September. Learn more about the $180 million campaign and how it will ensure future generations will be served by faithful, relevant and relational pastors.

IN EVERY ISSUE

5 From the President
6 Student Spotlight
19 News Worth Noting
24 Staff Focus
26 Events
28 Alumni and Friends
30

MISSION STATEMENT
Concordia Seminary serves Church and world by providing theological education and leadership centered in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for the formation of pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, scholars and leaders in the name of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

To be added to the mailing list, or to receive the magazine electronically, address correspondence to: Concordia Seminary magazine, Concordia Seminary, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105; call 800-822-5287; or email magazine@csl.edu. Congregations may request copies in bulk for distribution within their churches.

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“Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from above, that Your Word may not be bound. …” Books and literacy became increasingly common after the invention of moveable type in the 15th century, but with that blessing came the temptation to think that the Word of God is bound in a book called the “Bible,” too often kept on a shelf. “That Your Word may not be bound” and shelved but “have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ’s holy people” is the reason for this new academic year’s theme, “Living and Active.” “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:12-13).

Yes, that bound book we call the Bible is the inspired Word of God, but first and foremost, God’s Word is a living voice, intended to go from lips to ears and to its ultimate destination, your heart and mine. “Living and Active” reminds us that God’s Law should jump from print and cut to the heart, convincing us that we are “naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account,” and leading us to recognize our desperate need for Jesus and His Gospel, “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).

Scholars have estimated that only 10 percent of the population of the Roman Empire in the first century could read and write. When Paul said, “faith comes through hearing,” he was literally describing how the Spirit worked saving faith (Rom. 10:17). Literate people read Scripture to those who couldn’t read and all together shared the Good News through their connections and conversations. Today we strive to form pastors and deaconesses who will mature into speaking the Scriptures from their hearts into your lives. We do not teach them to read sermons but to speak the “living and active” Word that they have studied and memorized because they love this Word with their own hearts. We teach them to make connections through hospital, shut-in, evangelism and other visits so that they can make Gospel conversation with you and those in your community.

Thank you for sending us qualified students to take the “living and active” Word of Jesus into our nation and world. We need more students! Too many congregations continue to be vacant because seminary enrollments are low. And thank you for praying the Spirit’s blessing upon this new academic year, our 177th, that the Word leap off its printed pages to be spoken, heard and shared, “that in steadfast faith we may serve You and, in the confession of Your name, abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Amen.

Dale A. Meyer
THE WORD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE

by Glenn A. Nielsen

The Rev. Kenton Birtell ('95) preaches during worship on April 12, 2015, at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Holdrege, Neb. Photo: LCMS Communications/Erik M. Lunsford
A pastor begins work on his sermon. He opens his Bible and reads the passage. And God’s Word goes to work. This sermon will not merely delve into the content of the passage. It will not be just about what the text says, nor will it only be an informative speech.

No, the Word is living and active. Its intent goes with its content. It seeks to perform in the people what it is informing them of God’s will for their lives. God’s Word does what it says.

The spoken Word, proclaimed as the sermon, is not primarily dispensing information for our intellects to remember, although that is part of the event. It is more. Preaching is bringing the living and active Word to people’s lives so that those who hear this message will have their lives of faith strengthened and encouraged by the Gospel. We preach Christ crucified and risen, and that message changes people’s lives because it is alive and powerful.

Take the Hebrews 4 passage that says, “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:13). Read this and remember you are not hidden. You are exposed and naked before God. You must give an account. The Word goes to work. It frightens and warns. It accuses and condemns. It sends you in prayer for what comes next in the passage.

We have a great high priest named Jesus who sympathizes with our weaknesses. The sinless Son of God gives us confidence to draw near to God’s throne of grace. We receive mercy in Jesus. We find help in time of need. Yes, this Gospel Word goes to work too. It comforts and assures. It invites and strengthens. The Word does its work in our lives.

You may have recognized the distinctive Law and Gospel movement in those last two paragraphs. I hope you even experienced them at work in your life. You simply cannot go to God’s Word without encountering those two activities. But we need to be careful when preaching that we don’t make those two activities too simple.

Let’s move from the pastor preparing a sermon to a group of students in a classroom. Students in Homiletics 1, the Seminary’s introductory course in preaching, discuss how to preach the Gospel. The professor asks, “What are the functions of the Gospel?” The class is somewhat uncertain. They know the three functions of the Law (curb sin, mirror our sinfulness, instruct the believer). But the phrase “functions of the Gospel” is less familiar to them. So the professor asks the question differently: “What does the Gospel do?” He writes the more familiar answers on the board: forgives and declares us not guilty. But he wants the whole board to be filled, so he lists a couple more answers: redeems and rescues. “Can you think of any more that begin with the letter ‘R’?” the professor asks. A few students venture answers: restores, reconciles, ransoms, renews.


Soon the discussion broadens to various metaphors for the Gospel. (For a helpful discussion on Gospel metaphors, read Just Words by J.A.O. Preus.) Marriage. Children. Adoption. Inheritance. The “I am” statements from John: Bread, Vine, Life, Living Water, Resurrection, Truth, Good Shepherd and Door go on the board. Citizenship. Light. Birth. Soon the board is full (there are 30 named above!). Time for the point. See what the Gospel does? The Word is living and active. It is alive and powerful. We preach Jesus — Promised, Incarnate, Prophet, Priest and King, One who teaches and does miraculous signs. We proclaim His wondrous works of suffering, death and burial. Even more we proclaim the now living and active Lord, risen from the dead, sending His Spirit into our lives. Don’t stop there.

We announce that He rules at God’s right hand, right now, for us, interceding for us. And wonders of wonders, He will return, and on that last day we will, with body and soul reunited, not just draw near to the throne of grace, but add our voices to that glorious, triumphant choir singing into eternity. Yes, we preach this living and active Word, and we do so with the incredible variety and richness of God’s Word determining which facet of this Gospel diamond to reveal in for each particular sermon.

“FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE.”
(Heb. 4:12 ESV).
Now back to the pastor preparing his sermon. So what text will be the basis for his sermon? The words of 2 Cor. 8 are beginning to do their work. Which words? The Macedonian church has given money beyond its means to the collection taken for the poverty-stricken church in Jerusalem. The Macedonians are in “extreme poverty” themselves, but they are begging to take part in this relief for the saints. Their giving has resulted in a wealth of generosity. They have excelled in this act of grace. Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to excel in generosity too. Then come the Gospel words from which this generosity flows: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

Dr. C.F.W. Walther, the first president of Concordia Seminary and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in one of his lectures about Law and Gospel, said this:

But when a preacher proclaims what he has often experienced in his own heart, he will easily find the right word to speak convincingly to his hearers. When his words come from the heart, they, in turn, penetrate the heart of the hearers, according to the old saying: “It is the heart that makes eloquent.” This is not the fake eloquence gained in speech class, but the healthy spiritual skill of reaching the heart of hearers.

Now the Word is living and active in and of itself and not dependent on the prior experience of the pastor. However, the pastor who has been acted upon by the Word, who has it living within his heart during the study of the passage, will bring authenticity and conviction, urgency and personal involvement, that same message to the people — where we pray it will do its work on the hearers of the sermon.

And, then, when the sermon is delivered, the Word does its work on the hearers. This time the scene is the professor’s office. He is reading a sermon, not from an introductory student, but from a pastor who is in the Doctor of Ministry program. The story in the sermon goes something like this:

I had an experience recently that I want to share with you. I was making a hospital visit to a member, and while you don’t know all the details, suffice to say that you have experienced something similar. My parishioner is still cognizant of some things, but other things are starting to slip away. Maybe in her most lucid moments she knows, comprehends where she is, but not all the time, and how she got there to that hospital bed was, for the most part, a total mystery.
She was being well cared for by a loving husband and a good nurse, and the husband shared with me an experience of a day or so prior: The hospital chaplain had stopped in and during his visit, he asked whether she had a favorite hymn. Now that she knew. She said it was, “Jesus Loves Me.” The chaplain began to sing and after only a moment, she sang too. When they finished the first verse, the chaplain went on to sing the second verse. (The hymn is Lutheran Service Book 588 for all who right now are wanting to know the second verse!) As I listened to the chaplain and my parishioner sing, I was sure it was the most beautiful duet ever sung.

“What’s next?” my parishioner asked. She asked that over and over again in that hospital room. We told her that she would soon have lunch, and said it was important for her to eat and get her strength and on and on we went. “What’s next?” she asked again. And we’d talk about the food again, all the best the hospital kitchen had to offer. And then she spoke a little more, but it was difficult to hear. So we got close, trying not to miss a thing, wouldn’t want to miss a thing, and what did she say? “I want Holy Communion.”

The professor sits back, with eyes closed, and imagines all the sermons this woman would have heard over the many years of her life. Clearly, the Word is still alive and active in her, deeply embedded in her faith. The professor is reminded of just how many ways God’s Word powerfully works in people’s lives. Perhaps it is during the hearing of the sermon, with assurance of forgiveness or comfort during grief. Perhaps it is a couple days later when the sermon on excelling in generosity leads a member to buy gas for a stranded traveler. Perhaps it is near the end of life with the words, “I want Holy Communion.”

Yes, the Word is living and active.

Dr. Glenn A. Nielsen is the director of vicarage and deaconess internships at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.
the Gospel
of Mark
IS TO BE HEARD!

by James W. Voelz
It is quite natural for us who have grown up in a literate environment — indeed, in a print environment — to think that the books of the Scriptures are intended to be read by the people of God. But it is much more likely that the books of the Bible were intended to be heard not read, certainly not read silently and privately.

First, to limit ourselves to the New Testament, the literacy rate of the Greco-Roman world was probably between 5 to 10 percent of the population. This means that almost certainly Gospels and Epistles were not designed for private reading.

Second, reading in the ancient world was, with very few exceptions, done out loud, not silently, which means that even if someone did confront a document by himself and engage in a “private reading,” such a reading would have been spoken aloud, so that what confronted the reader essentially were sounds emanating from his mouth, not markings on the page that evoked (silent) meanings in his mind. (Greek was generally written in capitals with no spaces between the words or sentences [SOMETHINGLIKETHISPHRASE], which almost forced the reader to pronounce syllables out loud, helping/causing the “words” to “form.”)

The Gospel of Mark seems to confirm this understanding. First, there is Jesus’ statement at the end of His discourse in chapter 13 concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of the Son of Man, 13:37: “That which I say to you (plural) I say to all, ‘Watch!’”

While this may be understood as an admonition to a single private reader, I can tell you from the oral performances that our Concordia Seminary, St. Louis troupe has done of the Gospel of Mark, that it is much more impactful, much more “alive,” if it is done orally for an audience who receives it personally with their ears. (A similar impression is made with Jesus’ statement in 2:10 at the healing of the paralytic: “But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority actually to forgive sins upon earth — he says to the paralytic …”


Dr. Kent J. Burreson, the Louis A. Fincke and Anna B. Shine Professor of Systematic Theology, practices in August in Werner Auditorium for an upcoming presentation of The Gospel of Mark.

This “you” plural addresses the audience directly in an oral presentation, with Jesus’ words breaking down the so-called “fourth wall” between the actors and the audience, something that does not happen in a private, silent reading.)
The vision for Concordia Seminary’s The Gospel of Mark presentation began with Dr. Michael Zeigler. Zeigler, pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church in St. Louis, was in his last year at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 2010, finishing up his Master of Divinity, when he became intrigued with the idea of the oral delivery of Scripture. Earlier that year, scholar Dr. David Trobisch — recognized internationally for his work on the letters of Paul, the formation of the Christian Bible and Bible manuscripts — had held a workshop at the Seminary on the oral presentation of New Testament books. Trobisch’s idea excited many on campus.

Zeigler started thinking and researching the idea of presenting Mark through a dramatic oral presentation. After meeting Trobisch, Zeigler read about Dr. David Rhoads, New Testament professor emeritus at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and his oral interpretation of Mark. He started chatting up the idea of doing a dramatic presentation of Mark with others at the Seminary, including President Dr. Dale A. Meyer, his preaching professor, and Dr. Beth Hoeltke, public services administrator for the library and special assistant to the graduate school.

“Maybe we could do this,” Zeigler told them.

The group decided to use the text from a new commentary of Mark written by Dr. James W. Voelz, the Dr. Jack Dean Kingsbury Professor of New Testament Theology at the Seminary. Voelz was in the midst of writing the newest Concordia Commentary for Concordia Publishing House on Mark 1:1-8:26, which seemed like the perfect translation for the oral presentation.

Mark is tailor-made for a production, Zeigler said. At 16 chapters, it is the shortest of the four Gospels, features more than 50 characters and shows lots of Jesus’ action and interaction. It’s a fast-moving narrative that uses the word “immediately” about 40 times, Zeigler said.

Adding to the appeal of presenting Mark was the fact that many scholars had begun to conclude that Mark was
Second are the demonstrative pronouns in chapter 4, in our Lord’s explanation of the Parable of the Sower and the Seed (vv. 15-20). The translations regularly obscure the actual Greek structure here, but close attention should be paid to the actual wording of our Lord in the original. Jesus says, e.g., in 4:14-16: “The sower sows the word. And these are the ones beside the road. … And these are the ones who are being sown upon the rocky ground.”

How are those demonstratives to be understood while reading silently and privately? Do they not indicate that an oral presentation is going on, with the “reader” as Jesus pointing out the people that He is talking about? The lines are extremely natural in an oral setting; in a silent reading setting they cause virtually all interpreters to understand the Greek against its natural meaning.

Third, there are many places in Mark where one is forced to confront a passage aloud to understand it.

Consider Jesus’ response to the man with the demon-possessed boy in Mark 9. The man says to our Lord (v. 22): “But if you are able, come to our aid by having compassion upon us.” Jesus replies, “If you are able? All things are possible to the one who believes.”

But just what tone and voice inflection did Jesus use for His question in this response? Was it quizzical? Was it disgusted? Was it confrontational? One’s choice makes quite a difference, but the enormity of it all is apparent only in an oral presentation, where one is forced to make a choice — forced to make a given voice inflection and forced to give a bodily reaction.

Finally, consider the difficulty of understanding Mark 14:41. Here the Greek seems to say something like this: “And he comes the third time and says to them, ‘Sleep, finally, and take your rest. He is distant. The hour has come. Behold the Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of sinners.’”

This only makes sense in an oral context. Jesus tells the sleeping disciples to sleep and take their rest, and then that he — the betrayer — is distant.

This is followed by quiet and peace. And then — and only then — is there upset and commotion: “The hour has come.

written to be shared aloud with an audience. “In the ’80s, people started to have a sense that actually we should be listening to the Gospels rather than reading them silently to ourselves,” Voelz said.

At the time of Jesus, only 5 to 10 percent of the people in the Roman Empire could read.

“That has profound implications for our understanding of how the Gospel of Jesus Christ got into the hearts of people in the first century and, pending our thoughtful reflection and strategic pastoral and parish action, how we can witness more effectively in the [21st] century,” wrote Meyer in this summer’s Concordia Journal.

In 2013, the Seminary formed The Gospel of Mark troupe of six presenters who would memorize and present Mark. The group hoped to offer a glimpse of how the second book of the New Testament might have been heard by its first listeners.

“Our original plan was to do it once at Concordia Seminary,” said Hoeltke, production manager for The Gospel of Mark.

The Mark troupe was assembled and included Zeigler; Voelz; Meyer; Dr. Kent J. Burreson, the Louis A. Fincke and Anna B. Shine Professor of Systematic Theology; Dr. David R. Schmitt, the Gregg H. Benidt Memorial Professor of Homiletics and Literature; and Dr. Ron Rall, pastor of Timothy Lutheran Church in St. Louis.

The presenters divided Mark into six parts, beginning with Voelz and ending with Schmitt. Most of the presenters memorized between three and four chapters of Mark. The team held one dress rehearsal.
In April 2013, The Gospel of Mark debuted on a Friday and Saturday night in Werner Auditorium with each of the presenters dressed in black. Save a few simple props, the stage was bare. The emphasis was placed on the words of Mark.

The two-hour program encouraged attendees to “sit back and listen — do not try to read along. Allow the words to wash over you and the proclamation of rule and reign of God in Jesus to confront you. St. Mark will enthral you with his words, his images and his message.”

Hoeltke said that by hearing Mark in its entirety, listeners made the connections that Mark was trying to make.

“It was overwhelming,” Hoeltke said. “More than 300 people attended the two nights combined.”

Afterward, Meyer was especially enthusiastic about The Gospel of Mark becoming a regular part of the Seminary, Hoeltke said.

“We said, ‘You know, this might be something,’” Hoeltke said. “We started talking and one of us said, ‘What if we hit the road? What do you think?’”

In September 2014, The Gospel of Mark went on tour and held three performances at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, St. Louis; Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.; and Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.

In 2015, the troupe appeared at Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, and First Immanuel Lutheran Church, Chicago. Moving forward, the goal is to present Mark twice each year, Hoeltke said. The troupe hopes to take Mark to all of the Concordia University System schools.

Meyer calls The Gospel of Mark presentation “phenomenal.”

“I’ve used it sometimes in place of sermons when I’m on the road,” he said. “I think when I preach I can hold a crowd, but it’s nothing like the crowd when I do this. You watch the crowd and this is more commanding than a sermon.”

Voelz said The Gospel of Mark is presented in the “way it should be received.”

“It’s not the first Gospel,” he said. “It’s not a primitive Gospel. It’s not a simple or crude Gospel. It’s a sophisticated later Gospel with excellent use of the Greek language.”

Zeigler said he is thrilled about The Gospel of Mark’s transformation from a simple vision to a perennial event.

“It’s become much more than I’d ever thought it would be,” he said. His ultimate hope is for listeners to “experience the presence of Jesus in a new and powerful way,” Zeigler said. “I want them to meet Him in the only way that we can, through the Word. [I want them to] get to know Jesus, be around Jesus, see what it’s like to hang around Jesus and live in the story.”

Dr. Ron Rall (’73, ’83, ’06), pastor of Timothy Lutheran Church in St. Louis, rehearses The Gospel of Mark in August in Werner Auditorium at Concordia Seminary.
Introducing
THE PROMISE OF CHRIST FOR ALL GENERATIONS

For more than 176 years, Concordia Seminary has prepared its students to fulfill God’s call as pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, scholars and leaders to carry out ministry in the United States and around the world. As we anticipate the church’s future need for shepherds, we invite you to join us in Generations: The Campaign for Concordia Seminary. Through the campaign, your gifts will help empower the Seminary to achieve its eternal mission.

SEMINARY PRIORITIES

• Ensure the Seminary remains steadfast in its mission with a vibrant tradition of confessional Lutheran theology
• Give pastors and other church leaders tools for ministering in caring ways
• Instill a deep sense of servanthood for Christ and His Church
• Advance excellence in scholarship and education
• Equip graduates to serve diverse cultures in a changing world
• Promote continuing pastoral education and lay leadership training
• Enable the Seminary to encourage strong, thriving congregations

To fulfill our promise to students and build upon the tradition of excellence that has defined the Seminary, we invite you to join us in Generations: The Campaign for Concordia Seminary.

Your support will help ensure that future generations will be served by faithful, relevant and relational pastors who share the Gospel message in ways that advance the Great Commission.

“God help us through the campaign to provide coming generations ‘with confidence and cheerful courage’ in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!”

— Seminary President Dr. Dale A. Meyer

Previous page: This photo of Seminary President Dr. Dale A. Meyer and his grandson Connor gazing at the cross atop the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus has become the signature photo of the Generations Campaign.

Left: Seminary President Dr. Dale A. Meyer preaches during the Opening Service for the 177th academic year in September in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus.
CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

ENDOWMENT FUNDS AND ESTATE GIFTS

Goal: $110 million

Concordia Seminary’s vision is to be the world leader in Lutheran formation and scholarship. In our quest to achieve this vision, the endowment of Concordia Seminary will be strengthened through additional gifts, wise investment policies and the careful stewardship of earnings.

Endowment and estate gifts may address a number of priorities, including:

• Operational endowments
• Endowed faculty chairs
• Scholarship endowments

These gifts are your opportunity to:

• Leave a legacy
• Honor or remember a loved one or pastor

ANNUAL SUPPORT AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Goal: $60 million

Concordia Seminary is blessed with ongoing gifts given directly by individuals and congregations each year. These gifts serve as the foundation for the Seminary’s annual revenue needs. Our supporters who make sacrificial gifts are eager to ensure that the Seminary provides students the best theological education in the world. The residential Master of Divinity (M.Div.) model of seminary education is the signature program of pastoral formation in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Annual gifts help to ensure excellence in three key areas:

• Sustain and grow scholarships
• Retain and develop world-class faculty
• Maintain our beautiful, iconic campus

Your annual, ongoing gifts strengthen our ability to recruit and prepare those who will serve future generations.

LIBRARY AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

Goal: $10 million

Concordia Seminary has long been a trailblazer when it comes to technology. In 2014, more than 1 million downloads of Seminary-produced materials were made by students, church workers, scholars and researchers here and abroad. The Seminary aims to keep pace with technological advances so on-campus and off-site education programs can effectively be delivered to students and the broader Church.

The Generations Campaign will expand the Seminary’s digital capability and create new avenues for academic endeavor and continuing education. Through library facility upgrades, the Seminary will create a state-of-the-art learning environment for students, ensure our vast collection of precious materials and extensive academic collections are preserved for the future, and create an appealing educational destination.

Rendering of the new south entrance to Concordia Seminary’s library, which will serve as a gathering place and center for learning as well as the main access to the campus.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
AN INVITATION FROM THE GENERATIONS CAMPAIGN CHAIRS

“As Lutheran Christians, we have benefited mightily over the years from many faithful and effective pastors, most of whom graduated from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Their theological understanding, clear proclamation of the Gospel, and evangelical zeal to reach the hurt and lost have served as an inspiration to us and make us eager to help the Seminary form more pastors like them.

“We are committed to carrying forward these values and priorities as chairs of this campaign, and urge you and your congregation to join us in the cause.”

— Craig and Jane Olson
Orange, Calif.,
Campaign Co-Chairs

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GENERATIONS CAMPAIGN, GO ONLINE OR CONTACT OUR OFFICE TODAY.
Service honors first responders

“The first responder is one of the ways the love of God is taken to the people,” said Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president of the Seminary, during the First Responders Appreciation Day service honoring first responders Sept. 25 in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus. “I am humbled by what you do. We thank you, not as we ought, but as we are able.”

Dozens of first responders from Clayton, Richmond Heights, Shrewsbury, Affton, St. Louis and Cape Girardeau, Mo., attended the service.

“You’re here today because it’s our only way of expressing our gratitude.”

Wrede reflected on his ministry to first responders on-site at Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001.

Afterward, he asked the first responders in attendance to stand. They were greeted with a long applause. Wrede then blessed them, using the same words he spoke to first responders on 9/11:

“God bless you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. May God’s holy angels watch over you as you serve Him today.”

Marriott brings wealth of worship experience

James F. Marriott joined Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in August as the director of musical arts.

Marriott will assist in planning and leading the worship life of the Seminary community. He will conduct Seminary choirs and serve as the principal organist for services in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus.

“Music contributes to the Spirit’s working so that we love the Lord more and more with all our heart, soul and mind, obeying God’s total claim on our whole being,” said Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary.

“As director of musical arts, Jim brings experience, knowledge and skill to Concordia Seminary that will teach and enhance the worship of those who will in turn be leaders of congregational worship for generations to come.”

Marriott succeeds Rev. David Johnson.

Holding degrees in music from Concordia University, Nebraska, Seward, Neb., and Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Marriott is a candidate for a Ph.D. in liturgical studies at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill.

Marriott has served a variety of congregations across the United States, including Trinity Lutheran Church, Lisle, Ill., where he was the director of worship, 2009-15. Previously, he was the director of sanctuary worship at St. John Lutheran Church and School, Rochester, Mich., 2007-09, and the minister of music at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Jacksonville Beach, Fla., 2004-07.

“I look forward to participating in the already vibrant worship life at Concordia Seminary, and am eager to serve the students, faculty and staff, administration, families and guests that comprise our community of believers,” Marriott said.

“I am humbled at the opportunity to learn and to grow in such a rich academic and theological environment, and pray that whatever contribution I bring will be Christ-centered and Spirit-inspired.”
Rev. Laokouxang (Kou) Seying joined the faculty in September as associate dean for urban and cross-cultural ministries. He is the Lutheran Foundation Professor of Urban and Cross-Cultural Ministry.

Seying brings extensive experience as a pastor and teacher, as well as in developing multicultural ministry within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

The first ordained HMong pastor in the LCMS, Seying has served the California-Nevada-Hawaii District (CNH) since 2004 as a deployed mission developer/strategist of Joy of Harvest Ministries through St. Paul Lutheran Church in Merced, Calif., and Greenhaven Lutheran Church in Sacramento, Calif.

Much of his multicultural ministry experience was in HMong, Southeast Asian and African immigrant communities, especially in the areas of leadership training. Besides serving in the LCMS CNH District for more than a decade, he served as pastor of HMong Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minn., 1991-95.

Seying also taught religion and theology at Concordia University, St. Paul, 1992-2004, and was the missionary-at-large for the LCMS Minnesota South District, 1995-98.

Seying was involved in early discussions within the LCMS that led to pastoral training programs for immigrant and nontraditional students. His leadership training program and participation in multiethnic leadership training has provided leaders for many language-specific ministries and led many to the Holy Ministry from various ethnic groups. Also in addition to writing devotional materials, mission articles and frequently giving presentations on missiology, Seying is the editor-in-chief for various major theological works in the HMong language.

“Our Lutheran faithfulness to the Word of God and our confessions to the world have caught the attention of many language groups from beyond the borders of LCMS,” Seying said.

“Rev. Seying will strengthen the work of our Center for Hispanic Studies and Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology. And his experience as a missionary, pastor and teacher will be of great benefit also to our residential students and the congregations that they will serve,” said Seminary President Dr. Dale A. Meyer.

Seying holds a Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., has studied systematic theology at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.; and is completing his doctorate of philosophy at Concordia Fort Wayne.
Seifrid joins exegetical faculty, returns to LCMS roots

In September, Dr. Mark Seifrid, a pre-eminent scholar of the New Testament letters of Paul, joined the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis as a professor of exegetical theology.

Seifrid has published major works on justification in the New Testament and a commentary on 2 Corinthians, and is currently writing a commentary on Galatians. He has published numerous articles on Pauline theology and the doctrine of justification — in particular articulating a Lutheran view of justification as drawn from the Pauline Epistles.

Seifrid earned a Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament from Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., in 1990. He received the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill. He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Illinois, Champaign.

For the past 23 years, Seifrid has taught New Testament interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Most recently he served there as the Ernest and Mildred Hogan Chair in New Testament Interpretation. Raised in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), Seifrid joined the evangelical movement in college. In the years since, he has been drawn back to his LCMS roots and is now a member of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Des Peres, Mo.

“The spirit of God, along with my continuing interaction with Scripture, really convinced me of the truth embodied in the Lutheran Confessions,” Seifrid said. “Baptism, the Lord’s Supper and the distinction between Law and Gospel are elements of Lutheran theology that take up what’s in the Scriptures. Then, in their own way, reading the confessions helps us to hear the Scriptures properly.”

Prior to receiving this appointment to the faculty, Seifrid participated in the LCMS “prior approval” process.

Over the next several months, Seifrid will go through the LCMS colloquy process in order to be able to receive a call to the faculty.

“He is an eloquent defender of the classic understanding of Law and Gospel in St. Paul, which was that of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, over against the so-called ‘New Perspective on Paul,’” said LCMS President Dr. Matthew C. Harrison. “He also confesses the full truth of the confessional writings of our church as his own. It will be our great blessing to have him finish his academic career serving in the LCMS.”

New faculty and endowed chairs installed at the Opening Service in September in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus included, from left: Dr. Kent J. Burreson, the Louis A. Fincke and Anna B. Shine Professor of Systematic Theology; Dr. Mark Seifrid, professor of exegetical theology; Rev. Laokouxang (Kou) Seying, Lutheran Foundation Professor of Urban and Cross-Cultural Ministry; and Dr. James W. Voelz, the Dr. Jack Dean Kingsbury Professor of New Testament Theology.
Five faculty members were installed as occupants of three new endowed chairs during the Seminary’s Opening Service in September in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus.

**Dr. James W. Voelz**, graduate professor of exegetical theology, was installed as the first occupant of the Dr. Jack Dean Kingsbury Chair of New Testament Theology.

Voelz delivered the first Dr. Jack Dean Kingsbury Lecture in New Testament Theology, “Return to the Text: Literary Criticism and Beyond,” Sept. 22 at the Seminary.

**Dr. Charles P. Arand**, professor of systematic theology, dean of theological research and publications, and director of the Center for the Care of Creation, and **Dr. Robert Rosin**, professor of historical theology, were installed as Eugene E. and Nell S. Fincke Graduate Professors of Theology.

**Dr. Kent J. Burreson**, associate professor of systematic theology and dean of the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus, and **Dr. David R. Maxwell**, director of the graduate school and an associate professor of systematic theology, were installed as Louis A. Fincke and Anna B. Shine Professors of Systematic Theology.

Eugene E. Fincke, who faithfully served the Seminary as a member of the Board of Control, 1959-77, and his wife, Nell. S. Fincke, established the Eugene E. and Nell S. Fincke Graduate Chair of Theology and the Louis A. Fincke and Anna B. Shine Chair of Systematic Theology to “advance the cause of orthodox biblical and confessional Lutheranism,” according to endowment documents.

Dr. Dale A. Meyer said: “Two things especially impress me about the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Fincke. First is their commitment to a strong future for solid biblical and Lutheran teaching. Second is their foresight for the future. Anticipating the day they would be called to heaven, they provided for Gospel ministry for generations to come. Those who follow us need to know Jesus!”

“How humbled and motivated we are by their gift for our Savior’s mission.”
The Board of Regents of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis voted to extend President Dale A. Meyer’s service through 2020 during its regular meeting held Aug. 14 at Concordia Publishing House.

The vote took place after the Board received a review of Meyer’s performance from Rev. Hal Senkbeil, review committee chair, per the Handbook of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The Handbook requires a review of seminary presidents every five years.

The Board appointed Meyer interim president beginning in November 2004 and, with three other electors, chose him as 10th president in May 2005.

“The input we received through our review process from within and outside of the Seminary community has confirmed what our Board has learned firsthand: Dr. Meyer is a great president,” said Senkbeil and Board Chair Rev. Ralph Blomenberg in a joint comment. “He is a respected scholar, preacher, leader, teacher and churchman.

“The full range of responses we received all provide helpful insights leading toward even greater effectiveness in the years ahead. Dr. Meyer and his wife, Diane, have contributed greatly to the vibrancy of our Seminary community. We are delighted that he will continue to lead the Seminary, helping form pastors and servants with a passion for the mission our Lord Jesus has given to His Church in these difficult times, giving hope and life in Christ.”

Highlights of Meyer’s tenure include the elimination of the Seminary’s long-term debt and the expansion of the endowment from $43 million to $113 million.

Except for the recession year of 2008-09, the Seminary has shown surpluses every fiscal year.

The Seminary earned high marks from its 2014 accreditation visits and received several civic awards, most recently being named one of the top 100 work places in metropolitan St. Louis.

The Generations Campaign, with the goal of renovating the library and further building endowment, launched in September. (See related story on Page 15.) With a conscious focus on the future, the faculty is involved in the first thorough revision of the Master of Divinity curriculum in decades.

“I am thankful to the Board of Regents,” Meyer said. “This job is humbling. It’s humbling because it’s hard, often worrisome work, but it’s also humbling to labor with people who have a passion for the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Our faculty and staff are the ones who make things happen under God’s grace, and the Seminary’s faithful supporters are a constant encouragement. Thank you! To me it’s all about Ps. 115:1. I believe nothing is more important for our Seminary and Church than to live in the fear and love of God. For the rest of my formal ministry and until I see my Savior face-to-face, I have no stronger desire than to serve Him through His mission at Concordia Seminary.”
Recruiting with a personal touch

“Hi there. Good to see you.”

On the first day of orientation in September, fidgety and excited new students filed into Sieck Hall to get their pictures taken and retrieve their mailbox numbers. Rev. Bill Wrede worked his way through the hallway, smiling and shaking hands along the way. “How are you doing?”

For the students from places like Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Texas, it was a warm welcome to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Wrede, the Seminary’s director of ministerial recruitment and admissions, had helped some of the young men move from being a name on a list to an enrolled student on the path to the Office of the Holy Ministry. Years later, Wrede was overseeing the Seminary’s Sign School when two professors sat him down for a talk.

“The conversation was as simple as, ‘Have you ever thought of coming back to the Seminary?’” Wrede remembers. “I said, ‘Yeah.’ One of them asked, ‘How about now?’ and I said, ‘Sure.’ It was the right time. I had matured personally and vocationally.”

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After having been classmates at Concordia Ann Arbor and again during Wrede’s first stint at the Seminary, Schmitt and Wrede were both at the Seminary again. But this time Schmitt, his former classmate, was one of Wrede’s professors.

Schmitt said the transition was easy for the two friends because of Wrede’s humility. “Some people can be quite uptight about an elephant being in the room and they will do everything they can to avoid approaching it,” he says. “Bill will come into the room and say, ‘Oh, look at that elephant. Man I wish that wasn’t there.’ He has a way of naming what is really going on in situations with a gentle humor that allows people to converse and be at ease.”

In 2000, Wrede received his first call as a mission field developer for the deaf for the LCMS Atlantic District in New York City. He was to serve St. Mark Lutheran Church for the Deaf in Harlem and St. Matthew Lutheran Church of the Deaf in Queens. With his 1995 Chevy Corsica loaded with possessions, the small-town-Michigan-boy-turned-pastor admits he was giddy on the drive from St. Louis to New York City.

‘A lot of blessing’

On Sept. 11, 2001, Wrede made his way from Long Island to Manhattan shortly after hearing news of planes hitting the World Trade Center. He had only been out of the Seminary a year.

Wearing a clerical collar and khakis, he grabbed some anointing oil and headed west on the Long Island Expressway. He was initially turned away from the city like other civilians, but was allowed to ride
Rev. Bill Wrede, director of ministerial recruitment and admissions, is often known as Father Ted, a name he picked up while working in New York City. He often can be seen talking with students around the campus such as fourth-year student Eric Hauan.

in with an FBI agent after police saw he was a pastor. The two towers burned with acrid smoke in the distance.

Wrede provided pastoral care for 12 hours that day on the streets near Ground Zero. He comforted people who came looking for the lost or missing.

“They would just come up and fall into my arms and say, ‘My coworker, my friend … was in the towers,’” he says. “I consoled them. I prayed with them. There was a lot of blessing that day.”

After the second tower collapsed, Wrede moved his ministry spot to the northwest corner of Ground Zero where rescue workers were being deployed. He was standing on the street, trying to decide what to do when the face of a firefighter appeared through the cloud of debris.

“He fell into my arms, sobbing,” Wrede says. “He said, ‘Father, there’s no one alive. Everywhere we looked, there are just dead people.’”

Sometimes, just being there is such an important part of what we do,” Wrede says. “You don’t have to have flowery words. You don’t have to have big profound stuff. You just have to be there and be the presence of God at those times.”

For the people

The name on Wrede’s office door at the Seminary reads “Father Ted.” He picked up the moniker during his New York City days, from friends at a pub he frequented who could never remember his real name or the fact that he was Lutheran not Catholic.

He accepted the call as a Seminary admissions officer in 2011. He was named director the following year and is now one of three full-time recruiters.

Just like in the months after 9/11, Wrede sees his No. 1 job as providing ministry to those around him, wherever that may be. Many times, he says, pastors have no idea the impact they have on others.

“You can’t be everywhere, but you just pray to God that you’ll be in the places where things will happen,” says Wrede, a baritone whose vocal chords were damaged from the 9/11 debris. “It just shows the importance of our ministry, bringing God to the people, leading with the Gospel but also investing in people in ways that stretch you as a pastor. God gives you the tools to be able to do it.”

At the Seminary, Wrede spends time having coffee, lunch and conversations with prospective students, current students and former students. He encourages them on their journey to pastoral ministry and places a priority on building relationships.

“If you’re not around the people,” he says, “you’re not going to be there for the people.”

And so it was, throughout orientation week, Father Ted was around the students, “the people,” who were figuring out the path to pastoral ministry just as he had years before.
‘It makes the commitment worthwhile’

RESIDENT FIELD EDUCATION OFFERS HANDS-ON MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

“This is what I’m going to be seeing. This is it.”

That’s what Ryan Schnake has to say about the year he spent in Resident Field Education (RFE) and how it cemented his commitment to full-time pastoral ministry.

“It showed me the end goal of my commitment, helping bring people to the Gospel,” said Schnake, who just completed his first year at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. “It is a good feeling knowing you can make a difference. It makes the commitment worthwhile.”

RFE, commonly referred to by students as fieldwork, is the time Seminary students spend learning outside the classroom through observing and participating in ministry.

Much of this time is spent at local churches but students also engage in ministry at institutions such as prisons, hospitals or mental health facilities.

They also may elect to participate in short-term mission trips or spend a summer or a quarter at a church in another area of the country while completing their course work.

A one-year vicarage or internship also is a part of every pastor or deaconess student’s Seminary experience.

All residential formation students participate in the fieldwork program, which demonstrates the Seminary’s commitment to experiential learning, said Rev. Todd Jones, director of RFE.

“The Resident Field Education program provides students the opportunity to synthesize the cerebral content of the classroom to the practical realities of a community of faith,” he said. “The experiences and conversations that occur in the parish are educational, in addition to sparking greater discussion in the classrooms on campus.”

Even though he’s fairly new to the Seminary, Schnake has already experienced a wide variety of ministry environments. A mission trip to Guatemala was particularly eye-opening.

“I saw the most intense poverty I’ve ever seen in my life, being endured by the most faithful people,” Schnake said.

“We feel like we deserve what we have because we’re such ‘good Christians.’ Not the case. It made me want to be a missionary more.”

Visits to a prison also surprised Schnake after he saw the Holy Spirit working in powerful ways in the lives of hardened career criminals.

“My initial reaction was, holy smokes, no way,” he recalled.

Schnake became even more motivated to return to the prison. He witnessed men expressing interest in Baptism not long after being sentenced.

Schnake had to hold back his emotions at the juxtaposition of events in order to keep his composure with the imprisoned men.

Throughout his RFE, Schnake also attended and assisted at three churches over the course of the year. It was a typical first-year experience to diversify the student’s understanding of what church life and operations can be like before the student becomes more deeply involved in a single church the following year.
He rotated through a small rural congregation to a large suburban congregation and then to a moderate-sized congregation in a suburban area. Schnake found the rural congregation to be especially warm, welcoming and supportive of its leaders. He felt he fit most naturally there. It was in this congregation that he had some of his first opportunities to lead liturgy and read Scripture during services.

The congregation encouraged him and Schnake said he became a more proficient speaker. He has since sought more opportunities to practice this skill set.

Another Seminary student, Andrew Coop, also rotated to these three congregations over the course of his first year. Coop, by contrast, found the moderate-sized suburban congregation to be the most natural fit for him. He said the pastors really cared that he and Schnake were there and wanted to get them involved. Coop will be returning to this church for his second-year RFE.

Coop also spent time in a hospital and at multiple churches in other states. The hands-on hospital visits were completely new to him. He shadowed a chaplain for about two weeks, the chaplain shadowed him and Coop eventually made visits to patients and their loved ones on his own.

Coop said he appreciated the experience because he knows hospital visits are a necessary part of ministry for most pastors. Coop's visits to New York, Phoenix and Los Angeles broadened his understanding of church ministry since he hadn't previously visited any churches outside the Midwest.

“I got to be with people in their everyday lives,” said Coop. His most significant takeaway from RFE? Building relationships and seeing their relevance to ministry.

For both Coop and Schnake, more ministry practice through RFE lies ahead, and with it new challenges. They look forward to continuing to apply what they learn in the classroom to the lives of real people. Both men said they have found a new kind of energy for ministry by getting to practice it along the way to ordination.

“Relationships really do matter,” Coop said. “It’s not just about you and the Bible. It’s about you and the people you minister to and how you can bring them that Word. If they know you really care about them, the doorways are really open and a lot of ministry can happen there.”
UPCOMING
ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

OCT. 21 & OCT. 28
Lay Bible Institute

NOV. 6
Green & Gold Day

NOV. 6
“The First Rosa” documentary film

NOV. 9-13
Interim ministry workshop

NOV. 13
Fall quarter ends

NOV. 30
Winter quarter begins

DEC. 5
Thriving in Ministry seminar

DEC. 13
Bach at the Sem

DEC. 18
Christmas recess begins
# UPCOMING FACULTY SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

## OCTOBER 2015

**DR. JEFFREY KLOHA**  
Oct. 24  
“Bible Translations: Reading Faithfully the Word of God”  
St. Paul’s Lutheran Church  
Cullman, Ala.

**DR. JEFFREY KLOHA**  
Oct. 25  
“Fully Convinced — Romans 4:13-24”  
Reformation Celebration  
St. Paul’s Lutheran Church  
Cullman, Ala.

**DR. DALE A. MEYER**  
Oct. 25  
Preacher  
Little Rock Circuit Reformation Celebration  
Little Rock, Ark.

**DR. DAVID R. SCHMITT**  
Oct. 25  
“Ephesians Live: Oral and Visual Performance”  
Concordia Lutheran Church  
Kirkwood, Mo.

**DR. JEFFREY KLOHA**  
Oct. 26  
“Text and Authority: The Origins and Reliability of the New Testament”  
Minnesota South District Fall Pastoral Conference  
Mankato, Minn.

**DR. CHARLES P. ARAND**  
Oct. 28  
“Christology of the Old Testament”  
Broken Arrow Circuit Reformation Celebration  
Broken Arrow, Okla.

**DR. ANDREW H. BARTELT**  
Oct. 28  
“Why It Still Matters to be Lutheran”  
St. Louis Clergy Forum  
St. Louis

**DR. ANDREW H. BARTELT**  
Oct. 31  
“Christology of the Old Testament”  
Broken Arrow Circuit Reformation Celebration  
Broken Arrow, Okla.

## NOVEMBER 2015

**DR. DALE A. MEYER**  
Nov. 1  
Preacher  
Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Austin, Texas

**DR. GLENN A. NIELSEN**  
Nov. 1  
Preacher  
Our Savior Lutheran Church  
Washington, Ill.

**DR. CHARLES P. ARAND**  
Nov. 5  
“A Christian Commitment to Creation Care” and “In Awesome Wonder: Finding Our Place in God’s Creation”  
Concordia University Wisconsin  
Mequon, Wis.

**DR. CHARLES P. ARAND**  
Nov. 6-8  
“In Awesome Wonder: Finding Our Place in God’s Creation”  
La Mesa, Calif.

**DR. JEFFREY KLOHA**  
Nov. 19  
“Global Seminary Initiative: A Look to the Future”  
LCMS Mission Summit  
Atlanta

**DR. DALE A. MEYER**  
Nov. 21-22  
Preacher  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church  
Wichita, Kan.

## DECEMBER 2015

**DR. DALE A. MEYER**  
Dec. 6  
Preacher  
St. John Lutheran Church  
Buckley, Ill.

**DR. MARK D. ROCKENBACH**  
Dec. 10  
“Every Pastor Needs a Pastor”  
LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission webinar

**DR. DALE A. MEYER**  
Dec. 13  
Preacher  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
Ferrin, Ill.

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**2015-2016 CONCERT SERIES**  
The Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus  
3 p.m. at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
Proclaiming the Gospel in a digital world

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis alumnus Rev. Matt Peeples ('09) was no digital communication or social media expert when he started The Point Church in Knoxville, Tenn., five years ago. But today his Lutheran church is sharing the Gospel far beyond its walls through the use of social media and other digital tools.

The Point, which averages 225 worshipers each week, has a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. The church also has its own mobile app and live streams its Sunday services.

Many of the social media platforms that are now ubiquitous in American society were just starting when Peeples attended the Seminary.

“The entire culture shifted in the four years I was in Seminary,” Peeples said. “It was the biggest shift in communication since the printing press. Luckily, I was able to change a little bit with that.”

Facebook became available to the general public in 2006, the same year Twitter was founded. As of January 2014, 74 percent of online adults used social networking sites, according to the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C. In June 2015, Facebook had 1½ billion monthly active users, meaning 1 in every 7 people in the world used the platform to connect with family, friends and brands. While the iPhone wasn’t released until 2007, today 9 out of every 10 U.S. adults have a cellphone, and the majority of them own a smartphone.

That means for most American adults, access to social networking is usually within an arm’s reach.

At The Point, which meets in a temporary location at the Regal Cinema at the West Town Mall, social media is as much a part of the church as a Sunday morning bulletin.

“We invested more in our digital side, because we were portable,” Peeples said. He is grateful that while he was in church planter training and starting The Point, his wife, Liza, was working with professional Facebook pages. She created the church’s Facebook page and helped The Point establish an online community.

“All of a sudden, [Facebook] wasn’t just a place for us to share what we were doing,” he said. “This started to become a platform for interacting with people, and a platform where those interactions started leading to Baptisms.

“It was exciting.”

The church now shares photos, videos, events and inspiring messages across its social media channels.

One recent Twitter message read: “You have incredible purpose and God has a plan for you. For YOU. How’s that for beating a bad case of the Mondays?”

On The Point’s five-year anniversary in August, the church posted photos from a birthday service and celebration with the message: “Happy Birthday to The Point! We love our Point fam, the Regal, and the Knoxville community - cheers to 5 more impactful, Spirit-filled years!”

One man replied: “Great day as usual at The Point! 5 years goes fast when [you’re] doing good things!”

Since it began, The Point has experimented with digital and mobile tools. Each Sunday the church invites attendees to text questions to church leaders during services. The open invitation for anonymous and honest questions has become a vital part of the church’s culture.

The Point recently began streaming its services, allowing people who are unable to attend in person to hear the weekly message from their computers or mobile devices.
Anywhere from 50 to 100 people tune in to worship via the live stream weekly. Peeples said he heard of a church in China gathering around The Point’s messages and of a man who could not sleep but who was able to “have church” and find peace at 4 in the morning.

“The Good News of Jesus is so awesome that we wanted to give people as many opportunities as possible to connect to it,” said Casey Kegley, the church’s vicar and a Concordia Seminary student. Peeples said that being available as a pastor and a church on digital platforms creates a host of opportunities. People are able to experience The Point — messages, conversations, people, events — in a nonthreatening way.

“Realize that these platforms will be helpful, but you really want to let people know how they can meet you in person.

“If you’re going to be high-tech, make sure you’re also high-touch.”

When it comes to digital platforms, Peeples said church leaders should feel free to take the crawl-walk-run approach. He said they should not expect to use all platforms perfectly from day one, but should simply begin and learn as they go.

One method that has worked well for The Point is involving members who are personally active on social media to help the church develop content. This approach spreads the work around and keeps each person’s time commitment to a minimum.

By creating a team of people to help, Peeples finds himself free to interact with The Point’s social media just a few times a week or at specific times when something needs his attention.

Doing ministry in the modern digital age continues to be a learning experience for Peeples and The Point.

Peeples said he feels empowered by the ministry foundation he gained at Concordia Seminary.

“I truly believe Lutheran theology is the best theology for reaching the lost,” he said.

Peeples said he loves sharing the Lutheran perspective of grace, the commitment to answering questions about God the way God Himself answers those questions and the freedom to do outreach in all kinds of places — the digital world included.
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis provides a variety of on-campus visitation opportunities each year. These events give participants valuable information about formation for pastoral and diaconal ministry. There is something for everyone — including events for prospective students who are in high school, college or who are considering ministry as a second career.

**for ... High School Men**

**TASTE OF THE SEM**

Get a sense of the Seminary! Spend a weekend on campus diving into Lutheran theology, prayer and worship. You’ll talk with current students and professors, and enjoy kickball the Concordia Seminary way.

**Date:** Jan. 16-18, 2016  
**Fee:** None  
**Register online:** www.csl.edu/taste

**for ... High School Men and Women**

**VOCATIO**

Explore God’s calling and direction! This weeklong retreat includes Bible study, worship, discussion about vocation, a servant event and some St. Louis fun. A Concordia University System college fair is included.

**Date:** June 25-30, 2016  
**Fee:** $150 (travel assistance available)  
**Register online:** www.csl.edu/vocatio

**for ... Families**

**NEXT STEPS**

What about my family? Are you working to discern God’s direction for your life and perhaps ministry? Do you wonder about the impact on your family? Bring your family and spend two days on campus connecting with current students and their families to learn about transitioning to life at the Seminary from those who have already taken this step.

**Date:** July 8-9, 2016  
**Fee:** None  
**Register online:** www.csl.edu/nextsteps

**for ... College Students/Second-Career Men and Women**

**GREEN & GOLD DAYS**

Check us out! Spend a day on campus and see what the Seminary has to offer. You will meet current students and professors, attend classes and chapel, and end the day with dinner and discussion.

**Dates:** Nov. 6, 2015 | Jan. 8, 2016  
**Fee:** None  
**Register online:** www.csl.edu/greengold

**CONTEMPLATE**

Learn more about the student experience. This three-day visit offers an in-depth view of the preparation that leads to service as a pastor or deaconess. You will tour the campus, meet faculty and visit classes — all aimed at providing a preview of the Seminary’s world-class ministerial formation experience.

**Dates:** March 10-12, 2016 | Oct. 13-15, 2016  
**Fee:** None  
**Register online:** www.csl.edu/contemplate

**for ... College Students/Second-Career Men and Women**

**SHEPHERDS OF GOD’S FLOCK**

The decision-making process: You are considering the possibility of “service as a shepherd” but have questions. That’s right and good. At this one-day event you will explore ministry through Bible study, hear panel presentations from pastors and students, and talk with others who are asking the same questions.

**Date:** Jan. 7, 2016  
**Fee:** None  
**Register online:** www.csl.edu/shepherds