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How Can We Help You?

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How Can We Help You?

The story stuck with me, although I no longer remember where I read it. Shortly after the end of World War II, LCMS president John W. Behnken was in Germany and invited himself to a meeting of some German Lutheran pastors. Imagine their shock when an American walked in! President Behnken's first words to them were pure encouragement, "How can we help you?"

In this partnership issue with Lutheran Hour Ministries, an organization that has a long history of supporting the work—particularly the work of laypeople—in local congregations, it seems fitting to ask the question again. Concordia Seminary is committed to providing to all the baptized of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod theological resources that are helpful for faith and life. The second of our four newly adopted strategic priorities says, "Leading with the Gospel . . . Concordia Seminary will provide resources that foster lifelong maturation of faith, discipleship, and skill both in pastors and the laity within their congregations." To that end, I invite you to share with us topics that will be of help to your congregation, especially for the nurture and growth of your laity. What Bible studies would be helpful? What studies in systematics and history will help illumine the faith? How can we teach, preach, and practice sanctification in a gospel-motivated way? What practical topics would contribute to more effective congregational life and outreach? How should an organization of volunteers govern itself? What does leadership look like—leadership that church members eagerly embrace? How can you assess community needs so that your congregation establishes new relationships that show the love of Jesus Christ?

In short, how can we help you? Upon reflection you will certainly have some suggestions. Feel free to poll some laypeople and ask what resources would help them understand and address their needs. Send your ideas to us at cj@csl.edu. Your suggestions will be gathered by our division of Theological Research and Publications to help guide our offerings to you in coming years.

People reflexively think of Concordia Seminary as the place that prepares future pastors and deaconesses. In post-church America, your Seminary must be more than that. The church maintains theological faculties in order to have an expert resource for the life and mission of all the baptized. How we need to use, how we need to make available all our studies and learning to the church we so love! We're ready; please send us your suggestions.

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President