

Lutheran Life[®]

A man with glasses and a mustache is shown in profile, sitting outdoors and reading a dark brown Bible. The Bible's cover has "Holy Bible" written in gold. He is wearing a dark plaid shirt. The background is a soft-focus landscape with a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare effects. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

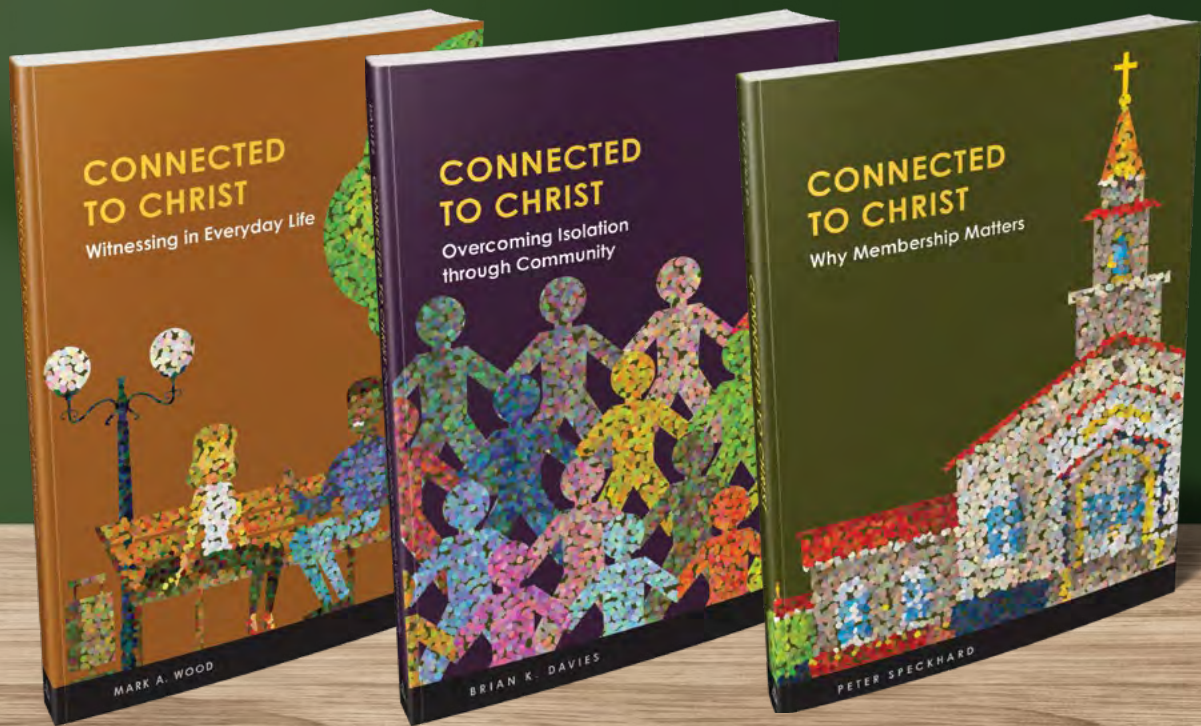
ISSUE 223

Inside this issue:

Advice and
encouragement
from church
workers.

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Q&A with Rev. Andrew Jones

By Amy Bird

Pastor Andrew Jones currently serves as pastor at First Lutheran Church and Preschool in Concord, California, about thirty miles northeast of San Francisco. He's served the church in varying roles over the years, including campus ministry, international mission work, professor of preaching, and parish pastor. Andy enjoys writing, hiking, and random adventures with his wife, Stephanie. His debut book, *Ten Questions to Ask Every Time You Read the Bible*, was released in November 2022 and is a helpful resource for the study of God's Word—individually or with a group.



Q: What's your favorite part about pastoral ministry?

A: I love hearing about what God is up to in the lives of His people. I love hearing stories of times when God showed His faithfulness in their lives. I am honored to be let into situations where those stories are ready to be told.

“The task of a pastor is to till the soil, plant, and water. God will give the growth.

You’re not responsible for the most important part. God is. . . . Let God take care of the rest. ”

Q: Briefly share your journey of becoming a pastor. Is this something you’ve always wanted to do? How did you discern the call? Are you doing the kind of ministry you thought you would?

A: People started telling me that I would be a pastor when I was four years old. I told them no. God tugged at me throughout my freshman year at Concordia University, St. Paul, until I entered the pre-seminary program, but I took a seven-year detour after graduating from college. On the final stop of that detour, in Frankfurt, Germany, Pastor Bob Flohrs and Pastor Brent Smith sat me down and informed me that I had the gifts and temperament to be a pastor and I should really go do that. So, after much praying and many conversations with trusted voices, the detour ended and I started classes at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 2013.

I was not sure if I’d serve domestically or internationally when I started seminary, but I have found the Bay Area to be a good fit that utilizes some of the skills I gained living internationally.

Q: What’s something about being a pastor that surprised you once you got into a parish setting?

A: I spend a lot of time caring for people via email and text messages. However people choose to reach out to me is how I respond to them, which means I craft a lot of pastoral care emails.

Q: What would you say to teenage Andy concerning matters of faith or a future career as a pastor?

A: Teenage Andy needed to hear that he wasn’t alone—that there were other people struggling with his struggles. I would have told myself to be curious and that my voice and my questions mattered. I would have introduced myself much earlier to the paradox of humility and courage.

Q: What would you say to a man—young or old—who’s considering becoming a pastor?

A: I think I will speak to those who are trying to fight against being a pastor, and I’ll say this—I hear you. I know it is a scary prospect. The care of souls is challenging, particularly when you are well aware that your own soul isn’t perfect. But God is faithful. The task of a pastor is to till the soil, plant, and water. God will give the growth. You’re not responsible for the most important part, God is. So if you (and others around you) think you are equipped in skill and temperament to till, plant, and water in God’s garden, then let God take care of the rest.

Q: What role can laypeople play in encouraging men in their congregation to consider the call to be a pastor?

A: Discernment is a spiritual gift that not everyone has. If you have this gift, use it. Encourage those you perceive God has gifted to be pastors to pursue pastoral ministry.

Q: Any encouragement you’d like to give to fellow pastors who might be tired or discouraged in ministry right now?

A: One of the verses I remember being shared at my ordination was 1 Corinthians 15:58:

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

Your labor is not in vain. Not because of the office you are in, not because you are so good at your labor, but because of the Lord. It is the Lord’s harvest field. Till, plant, water, and let God give the growth.

Q: Anything else you’d like to share about being a pastor?

A: One of the most important things about being a pastor I have found is having a dedicated Sabbath day. Not just a day off. Not a day where you sort of finish up the sermon. But a true day (or at least part of a day) of rest. A lot of pastors forgo this, but I find it is vital to my recovery as well as mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health. If your pastor does not have a day of rest, advocate for whatever needs to happen to make that a reality. †

TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK EVERY TIME YOU READ THE BIBLE

As you read through the Bible, ask yourself these ten questions and use real-life applications to gain confidence journeying through God’s Word. Find this title and others in this issue at cph.org.



Prayers for a PASTOR

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FOR OUR PASTOR(S)

Lord Jesus, You are my great High Priest, who intercedes with the Father on my behalf. During Your earthly ministry You called men to be Your apostles, and still today You call men to be pastors in Your Church—to proclaim the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins, to baptize, to nourish Your people with Your holy Supper, and to minister in countless ways to Your flock.

Grant to my pastor(s) fidelity to Your Word, wisdom by Your Spirit, and strength from above, that he may carry out his calling faithfully. Make him a fearless confessor of Your truth. Keep him from error in his teaching and from scandal in his life. Give him courage to admonish those who stray, compassion to bind up the brokenhearted, and discernment to apply Law and Gospel to all appropriately. May he protect Your flock from ravaging wolves and shepherd Your lambs into green pastures.

Move the members of my congregation to have proper respect for our pastor(s), to obey him, and to gladly accept the Word preached to us. Keep our pastor(s) and our parishioners faithful until death, that together we may receive the crown of life; in Your name, O Jesus, the only Savior of the world. Amen. †

Prayer of a Student of Theology

Excerpt from *Lutheran Prayer Companion* © 2018 Matthew Carver, published by Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.

My God, up till now I have studied wisdom, knowledge, arts, and languages. Give me grace further to pursue my intentions earnestly and zealously and to make good use of my time. Let me consider well what an account I will have to give for wasting the flower of my youth in idleness, drunkenness, gluttony, indecent dancing, gambling, and other sinful foolishness, and squandering my parents' sweat and blood and dashing the hopes of my fatherland. At the same time, let me also remember that it is not enough to use my natural gifts well, practice and master all fields of study, and know all that the world can teach me, if in doing so I still lack the chief thing, which is heavenly wisdom, the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, the art of faith, the law of love, the practice of godliness, and the knowledge of dying a blessed death. With worldly studies I may endear myself to the world, but without these spiritual arts, I cannot please You, my God. And what would I gain if in pleasing the world I were yet detestable in Your sight?

Therefore I humbly beseech You in the name of Jesus Christ to enlighten my heart with Your heavenly light of grace, to hallow and sanctify my diligence and labor, and, according to Your pleasure, to prepare me for Your holy ministry. Grant that I may cultivate a good conscience in all respects, both toward You, O God, and toward other men, that I may walk in Your godly fear; call frequently to mind my baptismal covenant; live in humility, meekness, chastity, and moderation; and keep myself unstained from the present ungodliness of the world. I am one of the Nazarites of Your Church, a dedicated servant of God separated for Your holy service. I am a young tree from which many simple souls hope someday to have many fruits of doctrine, comfort, and edification. Therefore, my God, give me a renewed, enlightened, godly heart, that I may cultivate a holy way of life. O God, my Father and Lord of all loving kindness, give me that wisdom which constantly surrounds Your throne, for I am a feeble man, and of a short time, and fall short of the understanding of judgment and laws; for if one be perfect among the children of men, yet if Your wisdom be not with him, he shall be nothing regarded. Send her out of

Your holy heavens and from the throne of Your glory; send her, that she may be with me and may labor with me, that I may know what is pleasing to You. And if it be Your divine will, my Father, some day to place me in a certain post, or if You will even grant that I may serve You in Your Church (my mind and thoughts being so directed by the inward urging of Your Holy Spirit), then make me perfectly equipped for that purpose. I know, O almighty God, that in Your most wise counsel You have already set the time, place, and occasion. Far be it from me, then, that I should dictate and prescribe these for You, let alone acquire them by the means which this present world adores and which are used by those whom You Yourself have called "runners" (Jer. 23:21), but which are not in accord with Your Holy Word, but contrary thereto, and for that reason not compare myself to the world nor imitate their thinking. Send me where You wish, only grant that it may serve for the glory of Your most holy name and the salvation of all who hear me. Let me then be full of power and spirit, full of right and might, full of living knowledge, full of faith, full of love, full of godly zeal, full of heavenly wisdom, full of piety, humility, meekness, chastity, moderation, and other virtues, that I may become and be a new creature in Christ, a truly enlightened, converted, and holy man, an example for the faithful in word and conduct, charity and patience, that I may hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and so in all things adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. Amen.†



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Q&A with Kantor Christina Roberts

By Amy Bird

CHRISTINA ROBERTS has served as the kantor of Our Savior Lutheran Church and School in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for over two decades. Her position allows her to do the things everyone expects of a church musician: play the organ, direct choirs, teach music, and plan services. But it also means that she gets to sing kyries with preschoolers, pair preteens and senior citizens together in folk dances, assemble pipe organs, speak and play for other church workers, oversee instrumental lessons, compose new Psalm settings, lead a daylong hymn sing of the entire hymnal, post videos of introits on social media, edit bulletins, act as a human metronome, recite the catechism, and do a plethora of equally wonderful and diverse activities that help her neighbors sing of Christ.



Q: Briefly share your journey of becoming a musician and a kantor. Is this something you've always wanted to do? Did someone encourage you along the way?

A: I was in my first year of teaching public school band when the music director at my congregation died from cancer. The Sunday after the funeral, her widower, along with our pastor, asked me to take on her job so the church would not be without a musician. The solemnity that accompanied my career shift taught me from the beginning that in our work, we serve fellow Christians when their souls most deeply need the comfort and joy that only Christ can give.

Q: What is a kantor and how does a kantor support the life of the church?

A: Kantors are the church's chief musicians, but really, all Christians are given the role to sing and make music to the Lord. So while kantors often provide music for the church, we do so with the goal of helping the entire congregation lift their voices in proclamation and praise.

Q: What's your favorite part about being a kantor?

A: Nothing beats the experience of making beautiful, well-crafted music with others. This is especially true when the others are your brothers and sisters in Christ, and the music you are making sings forth Jesus' saving work. Those moments allow us to hear tiny sound bites of the glorious symphony of the new song we'll experience in the resurrection.

Q: What formative role can hymns play in the life of the church for all ages?

A: Hymns use the best of poetry and music to implant the promises of God into our entire lives. Newborns hear the strains of "God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It" (LSB 594) peeling over their wet little baptized heads. Later, their parents will lull them to sleep with the gentle melody "My loved ones, rest securely, For God this night will surely From peril guard your heads" (LSB 880:5). As the young Christian grows, he can face life's temptations by boldly singing out, "Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word" (LSB 655:1). And as this life on earth draws to a close, even our weak,

struggling breath proclaims the hope “That these mine eyes with joy may see, O Son of God, Thy glorious face” (LSB 708:3).

Q: What season of the Church Year holds your favorite music? What makes that season’s music so meaningful to you?

A: Because it’s a cantor’s job to plan and prepare ahead of time, I get legitimate opportunities to play Christmas music in July or Easter hymns in the dead of winter. But still, I find that I love most whatever season of the Church Year we’re currently in. I’m always unnecessarily surprised that the Holy Spirit sees fit to fill the current spot in the lectionary with the rich gifts of Christ’s Word and song that fit my every need.

Q: What would you say to a person—young or old—who’d like to get more involved in music ministry at their church?

A: Don’t be afraid to join the choir or to tell your church musician that you play an instrument. Your cantor may not know that you have a beautiful voice or can play a mean trumpet fanfare, and it’s often tricky to discern this information from our spots in the loft. Most of the time, we’re thankful for this information and overjoyed at the prospect of more musicians with whom to work.

Q: What encouragement would you give to someone who’s new to Lutheran hymnody or might get lost singing along during a service?

A: The best things in life always take an investment of time and energy, which can feel daunting as you face down seven stanzas or juggle hymnal pages. The literal Good News is that Christ’s work has already earned your salvation, and so for the rest of your days, that time and energy isn’t spent attempting to win God’s favor but instead in digging into the riches He’s laid out in His Word and the Church. Many of these riches are found in your hymnal. Can it be tricky to navigate? Sure. Most people are happy to lend a hand, but also consider asking the pastor or cantor if you may borrow a hymnal to take home.

Once you’re home with the hymnal, page through it to familiarize yourself with the layout. Even the structure of the book helps us orient ourselves, our worship, and our lives in Christ. Notice how the Psalms—the Bible’s own hymnbook—are the first numbers in

the book. Study the similarities between the Divine Services that remain faithful to the Christian practice of worship for centuries. Check out the orders for your own daily devotional life and practice putting the hymnal to the test by using those. See how the hymns are organized around the Church Year and keep us focused on Christ’s saving work.

Q: You mentioned leading a daylong hymn sing through the entire hymnal. What stands out as you reflect on that day filled with song?

A: Singing through every hymn in *Lutheran Service Book* is an event etched in my memory and, I pray, in the memories of all who participated. The marathon was live streamed, and Lutherans around the country recorded hymns for us to insert throughout the day. What started out as a practical way to allow us breaks turned into a gorgeous illustration of “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name” (LSB 940), stanza 3: “And from morn to set of sun Through the Church the song goes on.”

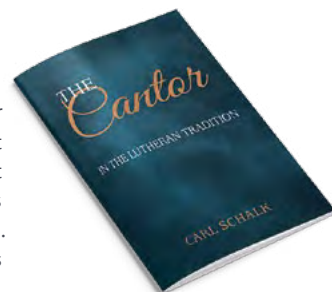
When the schoolchildren finished their seven-hour portion of the marathon, they erupted in cheers of joy. Each child was given a wooden organ pipe on which our deaconess had elegantly inscribed his or her name, and as the students made their way into the hallway, the sounds of singing, laughing, and pipe-blowing made for a cacophony of happiness that spilled out into the cold afternoon and encouraged and enlivened me to take on the remaining two hundred hymns!

Q: What encouragement would you give to a congregation in general about being a “singing church”?

A: We sing in full voice because we have full forgiveness. The key to being a singing church is to sing because you actually believe the very things you are singing. †

THE CANTOR IN THE LUTHERAN TRADITION

From Carl F. Schalk and the Center for Church Music, this booklet helps teach about the important and inspiring vocation of cantors within the Lutheran Church. Find this title and others in this issue at cph.org.





SINGING & LISTENING IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

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THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP —→ THEOLOGY OF MUSIC

A Lutheran theology of worship emphasizes what is primary and of first importance: in the Divine Service, we receive God’s richest gifts—forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life in the very presence of Christ. In the waters of Holy Baptism, God “claims us as His own” (*LSB*, p. 268) and, in the words of the Small Catechism, “works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe” (Baptism, Second Part; *LSB*, p. 325). In the Lord’s Supper, we receive the true body and blood of Christ “under the bread and wine” for the “forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation” (Sacrament of the Altar; *LSB*, pp. 326, 327). The Word of God, which permeates the Divine Service, is

“able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). The Holy Spirit works through the Word: “The Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith” (Third Article; *LSB*, p. 323). In the Divine Service, through Word and Sacrament, God is the gracious giver of priceless gifts—forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life. Those gifts from our merciful God are *primary*. We receive those gifts and subsequently offer our thanks and praise, which is *secondary*. This Lutheran theology of worship “puts first things first,” emphasizing God’s life-giving gifts to His redeemed creatures, rather than our acts of praise, which sometimes are mistakenly conceptualized as the sum total of worship.

MUSIC IS DRAWN INTO THE VERY PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL—LUTHER REMINDING US THAT PROCLAMATION AND PRAISE ARE INEXTRICABLY CONNECTED.

This Lutheran theology of *worship* is the basis for a Lutheran theology of *music*. In this theological understanding of music, proclamation of God's saving Word through music is primary. Luther identified language and music as God's gifts to be used in conjunction with one another for proclaiming the Word of God. Moreover, Luther understood that we praise God by proclaiming His Word. Thus, all of our music making in the Divine Service—sung portions of the liturgy (whether by congregation, pastor, or choir), hymns, choral and vocal music, instrumental music based on hymns—has this extraordinary proclamatory function. As Norman Nagel observed in his introduction to *Lutheran Worship* (1982): "The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts, and together we receive and extol them." Earlier in that same introduction, Nagel noted: "Music is drawn into this thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious giver God" (*LW*, p. 6).

As the Lutheran theology of *worship* serves as the basis for a Lutheran theology of *music*, one can observe a significant parallel. In this theology of *worship*, the focus is squarely on God's gifts to His creatures. In this theology of *music*, the focus is squarely on the musical proclamation of God's Word, the good news of the Gospel. Just as Lutheran worship is not about us but rather about what God has done for us, so, too, Lutheran music is not about the musicians, or even about the aesthetic beauty of the music, but it is primarily the proclamation of God's Word and secondarily the creatures' sacrifice of thanksgiving (see Psalm 116:17). As Nagel wrote: "Music is drawn

into this thankfulness and praise," and, we might add, music is drawn into the very proclamation of the Gospel—Luther reminding us that proclamation and praise are inextricably connected.

That a Lutheran theology of music is based on and grounded in this Lutheran theology of worship makes all the difference in terms of what music *means* in the Lutheran Divine Service. Music in Lutheran worship is not only about expressing joy, though that is a part of what music may accomplish within the varied contexts of liturgy, Church Year, and lectionary. Music in Lutheran worship is not merely an accompaniment to times of reflection or meditation, though that is a part of what music may accomplish within the contexts of liturgy, Church Year, and lectionary. Music—particularly by way of hymns, vocal/choral music, and hymn-based instrumental music—takes on specific theological meaning in Lutheran worship. That is a distinctive characteristic of Lutheran music, one that congregational singers and listeners do well to regard and understand, and one that Lutheran pastors and church musicians will always seek to nurture. †

LUTHERAN MUSIC AND MEANING

Continue reading *Lutheran Music and Meaning*. You'll see how Lutheran Music extends beyond the page to a full and powerful proclamation of God's Word.

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Q&A

with Dr. Heath Lewis, DCE

By Amy Bird



Dr. Heath Lewis is a director of Christian education (DCE) serving at Concordia University, St. Paul, as assistant professor of Christian education and leadership. In his role, he teaches courses in Christian ministry, theology, and leadership, while leading the integration of Lutheran theology into a new online campus, CSP Global. St. Paul, Minnesota, has been home for Heath, his wife, Jessica, and their daughter, Kennedy, since 2015.

Q: Briefly share your journey of becoming a director of Christian education. Is this something you've always wanted to do? Are you where you thought you'd be when you first started out?

A: I never considered church work as a career option until spending time on a service trip in Los Angeles, California, between my junior and senior years of high school. It was there that the Holy Spirit first placed the idea in my mind that working in the church could be a great way to serve others through my career. I returned home and talked with my parents and my pastor, who introduced me to DCE ministry. After prayer

and consideration, I enrolled in the DCE program at Concordia University, Nebraska, and the rest is history, as they say! God continues to surprise me; if you had ever told me growing up that I would teach at a university as an adult, I'd have laughed—a lot. But here we are!

Q: What is a DCE and in what various ministry settings can a DCE serve?

A: At the 1999 DCE summit, the following definition was crafted to help explain the office and work of the DCE: “A director of Christian

education is a synodically certified, called, and commissioned lifespan educational leader prepared for team ministry in a congregational setting.” Since that time, the work of the DCE has certainly evolved. While many DCEs still serve in congregational settings, DCEs often serve in other settings like Lutheran schools, camps, registered service organizations, universities, and more. One of the great things about DCE ministry is how these workers fulfill so many roles in support of the Church’s mission today!

Q: What’s your favorite part about DCE ministry?

A: One of the greatest joys has been how Christian education offers a pathway to walk with people through the entirety of life—the good, the bad, all of it. Of course, it is fun to rejoice and celebrate the great moments of life with others. Conversely, walking through difficult times with people can be quite taxing. But I believe if someone allows you to walk through the hard things in life with them, it means they trust you, which is a beautiful gift. It means you’re probably where you need to be in that moment. It is an opportunity to point the person to the hope that is theirs through Christ Jesus.

Q: What’s your favorite course to teach at Concordia University, St. Paul, and why?

A: I love teaching our Ministry Leadership course. Our Western culture seems to have a myth about leadership, that leaders are the most important people in an organization and nothing of note occurs without them. It is a fun challenge to help students move from a perspective of leadership as power toward a vision of leadership as service. From a Christ-centered perspective, we dive deeply into servant leadership before exploring a host of practical resources on how groups and organizations develop. In the end, I hope my students see their work as leaders in ministry as an extension of their calling as followers of Christ.

Q: Any encouragement you’d like to give to fellow DCEs who might be tired or discouraged in ministry right now?

A: I’ll offer two pieces of encouragement for *anyone* (including but not limited to DCEs), written by others and far better worded than I could ever articulate on my own.

First, check out the song “13 (There Is a Light)” by U2. Our friend Bono reminds us that darkness exists but so does light.

Second, and of far greater importance, from Jesus Himself in John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

Q: What would you say to a person—young or old—who’s considering becoming a DCE?

A: Take time to give it prayerful deliberation. I believe that if you are feeling a prompting to consider a church work career, there is probably a good reason for it! Talk with your pastor, other faith mentors, and family and friends who know you well. Visit with workers currently serving in the field as DCEs to learn more about their work. Connect with the Concordia University System schools to learn more about what the training and certification process entails. Above all, pray, pray, pray! It is not everyone’s calling to serve as a DCE or church worker, but for those who are, it is joy-filled work and worthy of your consideration! †

CONNECTED FOR LIFE: ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO YOUTH MINISTRY

Learn how to effectively guide your youth ministry with tips and encouragement from seventeen previous leaders who share your experiences. Find this title and others in this issue at cph.org.



Priesthood OF ALL BELIEVERS

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Not only does God work through the daily efforts of normal people, but He also ministers through the daily ministry of normal people. Scripture talks about the active ministry of all Christians in this way:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9–10)

Jesus does His work through you. He seeks and saves the lost through you. He places His word in your mouth. He forgives the broken-hearted through your proclamation of Christ's forgiveness. He invites rebellious sinners to repent through your invitation to repentance. He delivers the peace of God through your peaceful presence. Jesus lifts the fallen from

the floor with your hands. Jesus feeds the famished with your spoon. His work is done through you. Baptism flooded your life with eternal purpose in Christ Jesus: you are part of the priesthood of all believers.

All believers are equal in their relationship to God. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The Law shows that we are all

in desperate need of a Savior. All stand before Christ Jesus as open-handed beggars in need of mercy. And faith receives Christ's righteousness equally in the waters of Baptism and the proclamation of the Gospel.

Rediscovering and applying the scriptural teaching of the priesthood of all believers radically transformed medieval society. Lutheran theology declared that nuns and mothers, monks and fathers, priests and plumbers, popes and paupers were all of equal worth before God. According to the priesthood of all believers, the homeless Christian living on the outskirts of town is of the same standing before God as the corpulent cardinal in red robes of silk. Living for God is not about fleeing the work to which God has called you so that you can live in a monastery praying all day; rather, living for God is about faithfully being used by God to perform the work to which He has called you.

To be certain, the priesthood of all believers does not negate the need for pastors. Lutheran theologians defended the Office of the Ministry in Article V of the Augsburg Confession. Pastors engaging in Word and Sacrament ministry are the means by which the Gospel is delivered to the Church. The Gospel cannot be heard unless it is proclaimed (Romans 10:14). The pastor's purpose is first and foremost Word and Sacrament ministry. Pastors preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, and shepherd the flock following Jesus.

Although the pastor speaks the words, God does the verbs; the pastor may speak the words of forgiveness, yet it is God who has done all the work of securing forgiveness in Christ Jesus. It is in the mouth of the pastor that Christ has located the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins. From the mouth of the called and ordained pastor one can and should expect to hear the Gospel. This word of forgiveness is as valid as if Christ Himself spoke the words. The Office of the Ministry is established by Christ and conferred upon the individual pastor through the call of a congregation.

Does this negate the priesthood of all believers? By no means! . . . Lutherans live and breathe theological tensions. Scripture teaches that God calls all believers to perform work in the kingdom of God. And Scripture teaches that God calls some believers to perform work in

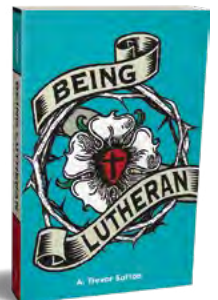
ALTHOUGH THE PASTOR SPEAKS THE WORDS, GOD DOES THE VERBS. . . IT IS GOD WHO HAS DONE ALL THE WORK OF SECURING FORGIVENESS IN CHRIST JESUS.

the kingdom of God as pastors. God's Word does not teach either one or the other. Both callings are noble, true, and valid. Pastors declare Christ's forgiveness to the congregation. And all believers declare Christ's forgiveness to fellow Christians. Both rely fully on the promise of Christ.

The difference is in vocation. God has called different people to different vocations. God has called some to be part of the universal priesthood and others to be part of the Office of the Ministry. The Church engages the world knowing that God has delivered His forgiveness to us through different means. Individual Christians have been called to deliver Christ's forgiveness to one another. The pastor has been called to deliver Christ's forgiveness to the community of believers in Word and Sacrament ministry. Different vocation. Different calling. Same purpose: God's work through us. †

BEING LUTHERAN

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Q&A with Dr. Beverly Yahnke, Clinical Psychologist

By Amy Bird



Dr. Beverly Yahnke is a clinical psychologist currently serving as the executive director of Christian counsel at DOXOLOGY: A Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel. While she may be best known for her work as a psychologist, Beverly says her most important identity was received in a life-giving washing with water and Word at the font. Since that time, she's rejoiced in receiving Christ's gifts with brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ throughout the Church. Beverly is particularly grateful that a backward glance through her life reveals how God has aligned the pieces of her life experience to prepare her for the work He would have her do.

Q: Briefly share your journey of becoming a clinical psychologist who has a heart for supporting church workers.

A: My earliest academic experience at Concordia Milwaukee taught me that I loved a Christian college—every professor was a pastor! I completed my undergraduate work at Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, where I loved going to chapel every morning. At the time, I was a speech major. Thereafter, my master's degree in rhetorical theory from Purdue acquainted me with the power of language and tools of communication. Nothing could have been more useful in equipping me for the work I would do for a lifetime.

Q: Share more about your heart for specifically supporting church workers in their vocations; why is this important to you?

A: Concordia Milwaukee hired me to teach speech and English. I discovered that I loved to teach—I had never considered such a thing. I was grateful that at the tender age of twenty-five, God had brought me to a place of service that delighted me. Many of my students were preparing for vocations as pastors and teachers.

As students began to share their personal lives and struggles, I wanted to do more to help them than simply listen. I continued working in the classroom and completed my PhD in psychology. After I began teaching psychology at Concordia, I received a sabbatical, completed my clinical internship, and was licensed as a psychologist. Shortly thereafter, I began an outpatient mental health clinic in Milwaukee. I named it Christian Counseling Services. In retrospect, every early experience had prepared me to serve the servants. I then spent nearly twenty-five years serving pastors, teachers, and their families in my role as a clinical psychologist. Countless pastors and church workers taught me about the joys as well as the challenges of serving in the Church. I cared deeply about these people, knowing that many of them routinely made significant personal sacrifices in their vocations as pastors and teachers.

An ever-increasing number of pastors came to my private practice. I saw weary clergy; clergy doing battle with their assistants or associates; clergy who were burning out; and clergy who had the traditional family challenges in their roles as husband, father, and son. I saw clergy whose lay leaders treated them poorly—or whose congregations didn't respect the Office of the Holy Ministry and whose expectations for their pastor were unrealistic.

The hours not filled by pastors were filled by their wives and children, as well as teachers. I began doing regional and district conferences for educators and clergy, sharing what I had learned about wellness, faithfulness, God's remarkable gifts, and discipleship.

Q: What are some of the unique dynamics of supporting church workers in their vocations?

A: Every pastor needs a pastor. Lay leaders who support the pastor and his family are vital to their pastor's well-being. Parish members often have great respect and affection for their pastors, but sometimes have difficulty setting reasonable expectations for the work that he does. Many parishioners simply may not realize the number of hours a pastor spends caring for his parishioners. When lay leaders work effectively with their pastor, they assist their church to accomplish all sorts of tasks, they work collaboratively on parish planning, and they also ensure that the pastor's needs for his family's well-being and financial stability are honored.

My work with DOXOLOGY routinely invites lay leaders to attend a weekend retreat with their pastor. Congregations need to understand some essential concepts if they are to support their pastor, his family, and their church. The weekend retreat examines the mission of the Church and the Office of the Holy Ministry, Lutheran identity, faithful mission, the challenges of a post-Christian culture, caring for one's pastor and his family, and stewardship, as well as ensuring that lay leaders and pastors discuss and share reasonable expectations for ministry.

Q: An October 2021 Barna study found that 38 percent of U.S. pastors (not LCMS-exclusive) are on the verge of burnout. What counsel would you give to a church worker who's feeling discouraged or tired in ministry?

A: DOXOLOGY has personal and professional strategies. Many also took the opportunity to have personal consultations and to receive individual spiritual care. We pray that pastors will never feel the need to bear burdens alone.

I've been so privileged to receive so much from so many throughout the years, and I'm grateful to countless souls who have taught me so many things. I regard it as a privilege to have the opportunity to continue to serve the servants. ‡



GROW SPIRITUALLY THROUGH THE WORD

Excerpt from *Navigating Ministry Challenges* © 2021 Concordia Publishing House, pages 169–72; All rights reserved.

(This title is a compilation of essays written by experienced pastors sharing their own stories, challenges, and lessons they have learned while serving the Lord in this specific vocation. Though this essay is written by a pastor for a pastor, there are still important lessons for us all to learn regardless of where God has called us to serve.)

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul admonished all Christians to be careful of their spiritual lives, saying, “Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). And this admonishment is especially important and necessary for pastors. . . . Pastors shepherd the flock of God, tending, guiding, and caring for the people of the Church in many important ways.

Pastors are therefore very special targets for Satan. If he can distort a pastor’s faith, distract him from his ministry, tempt him to focus on himself and away from Christ, or bring him down in any way, he can do great damage to the Church of Christ. So a pastor can expect strong and frequent attacks from the devil and his agents. And that being the case, a pastor must indeed “take heed lest he fall.”

St. Paul not only offers the admonishment to take heed but in his Letter to the Ephesians, he lays out explicit advice on how we should do that, saying,

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.” (Ephesians 6:10–18)

IT IS THEREFORE CRITICAL TO EVERY PASTOR'S SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND WELFARE THAT HE BE A STUDENT OF THE WORD OF GOD.

As a pastor, you know these words well and have probably preached and taught on these verses. But I encourage you to read and study them intently for your own spiritual edification and equipping.

You know that no man can “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” by his own power and will. The Lord equips a man for the Office of the Ministry and sustains him in the ministry with His Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit comes to us through the Means of Grace, the Word of God, and His Sacraments. It is therefore critical to every pastor’s spiritual health and welfare that he be a student of the Word of God, reading and studying it regularly. . . .

Set aside a specific time each day for self-feeding in and with the Word of God. There are some excellent tools available to assist a pastor in maintaining a disciplined and orderly reading of the Bible.

Our *Lutheran Service Book* includes a “Daily Lectionary” which provides an excellent daily reading of the Scriptures. There are also some very good devotional books for pastors that include a structured reading of the Bible. One of my favorites is *A Year with the Church Fathers* by Dr. Scott R. Murray. In his book, Dr. Murray directs the reader to a reading from the Psalms, followed by a reading from the Old Testament, and then a reading from the New Testament. There are then some devotional thoughts both from himself and from one of the Church Fathers. I use this book often and recommend it. It is available from Concordia Publishing House.

The *Treasury of Daily Prayer* is another excellent devotional book for pastors available at Concordia Publishing House. CPH also has several editions of *Day by Day*, which are daily devotions taken

from the writings of Martin Luther. And of course, Luther’s Small Catechism is a staple for a structured study of the Bible and the basic Christian doctrines. And a great aid for a structured daily study of the catechism is *The Lord Will Answer*, which is also available at CPH.

These are only a few examples of many good devotional books and guides for reading the Bible that are available. And using a variety of such resources is a good way to keep your devotional reading fresh and new each year. However it is managed, maintaining a disciplined reading of the Bible is of great spiritual benefit for any pastor.

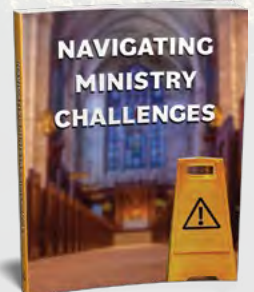
Another way to be engaged with the Word of God is to use an audio version of the Bible. Years ago, we used to use “The Bible on Tape,” but there are now a number of ways to listen to an excellent recorded version of the Bible. And such a tool is an excellent way to hear the Word of God while driving, while walking or running, or as a soothing and comforting way to go to sleep at night.

The bottom line is a pastor should read and study the Bible regularly for his own devotional life and spiritual growth. He should do what he encourages others to do. ‡

NAVIGATING MINISTRY CHALLENGES

Continue reading *Navigating Ministry Challenges* and learn more about other ministry leaders in this book. You'll find encouragements to continue working through every obstacle.

Find this title and others in this issue at cph.org.





Lutheran Church Extension Fund
> where investments build ministry

Three Ways LCEF Is Helping Church Workers Share the Love of Christ

Advertisement

Church workers always give of themselves.

Of course, they'll be the first to say that they have anything to offer only because of what they've received from Christ. But as they serve the faithful, they need all the support that their beloved church can give. Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) supports church workers from various perspectives. And LCEF is always dreaming up more ways to care for them so they can care for others.

Room to Grow, Room to Love

First, LCEF Ministry Solutions helps our church workers better engage their members and extend the Church's reach.

Grace Lutheran Church in Lafayette, Indiana, faced the excellent problem of a community that grew up around them. They desperately wanted to serve these neighbors and reach out to young families but didn't have the capacity. In partnership with LCEF's Ministry Clarity program, part of Ministry Solutions, the vision and path forward became clear for the congregation.

This kind of support and clarity also helped Grace's pastor, Rev. Daniel Eggold, to focus on what he does best—providing Christ's gifts to the people in his care while they work together to reach out into the community and serve their neighbors. "We want to help grow the heart, mind, soul, and strength of those at Grace and our community," Eggold said. "We want to love our neighbors as ourselves."

Centering on Wellness

Sometimes, church work is overwhelming, and burnout can threaten to take hold of our pastors, deaconesses, teachers, and other church workers. That's why LCEF seeks to support church worker wellness to make those overwhelming times more manageable.

Grace Place Wellness, part of LCEF Ministry Solutions, provides retreats and wellness resources to keep church workers strong and healthy. Hundreds of church workers have been nurtured through Grace Place Wellness, helping restore joy and vitality to their ministry so they can return and serve their people and communities with vigor.

Bringing It Home

For many church workers, home ownership feels out of reach. The nuances of church worker calls and commissions aren't easily understood outside Lutheran circles. As a result, it can make it difficult for outside banks to meet the needs of church workers who desire to buy a home.

LCEF's Rostered Church Worker Mortgage Loan Program is designed for church workers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) so they can have their needs cared for by someone who understands those nuances.

This was precisely the case for Stephan and Rachel Gonzales. Following a move, these two

rostered LCMS teachers dealt with the problematic effects of housing market fluctuations for eighteen months. It caused them to foreclose on one of their homes rather than continue to pay for two homes indefinitely.

When they moved again for another call, they were limited to renting due to their previous foreclosure. However, rent was more expensive than the nearby, affordable homes. As longtime investors with LCEF, they knew about its loan program and applied. At long last, they were approved and could finally get back into their own home—nothing short of a miracle in their eyes.

With that hurdle out of the way, they could focus on what they loved most—serving God's people and teaching the faith.

How LCEF Supports Church Workers

All who invest with LCEF make it possible for these church workers to carry out their vocations because investments equip LCEF to support our beloved workers.

Together, we as the Church nurture those who care for us. And there isn't a church worker out there who would have it any other way—supporting and caring for one another and furthering ministries, just as our Lord intends.

"I invest with LCEF because they make home ownership a reality for people like me, and they make ministry possible for churches like the ones I've been a part of," said Rev. Dr. Kevin Austin, associate pastor at Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Chandler, Arizona. "Every step of the way, they're partners in making ministry and personal dreams a reality."

We can have peace for today because there's hope for tomorrow. And our hope will not put us to shame. †

Learn more at lcef.org

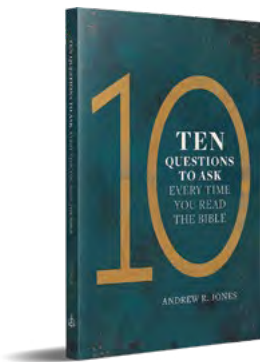
About This Issue's Author



Amy Bird is a writer and editor serving as the primary author of *Lutheran Life* and as a contributing author for various devotional resources. She studied communication and theology at Concordia University Wisconsin and holds an MA in systematic theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

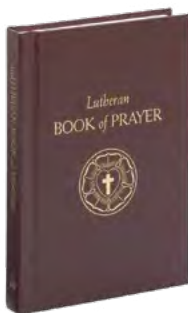
Featured Products in This Issue

Find these books and more products related to this issue online at cph.org.



Ten Questions to Ask Every Time You Read the Bible

God's Word is the foundational text for Christians, but understanding it all can feel daunting. Use these ten questions to navigate through the Bible and build confidence with each passage.



Lutheran Book of Prayer

Find a prayer for all of your daily needs with *Lutheran Book of Prayer*. Featuring creeds, a topical index, and selected Psalms, you can always find the words to pray to the Savior.



Lutheran Prayer Companion

Hold on to nearly 500 prayers written by Lutheran church fathers, over 100 hymn texts, and a topical prayer index to help you speak to God daily.

Featured Products in This Issue



The Cantor in the Lutheran Tradition

From Carl F. Schalk and the Center for Church Music, learn about the important work a cantor does and how this vocation contributes to the Church.



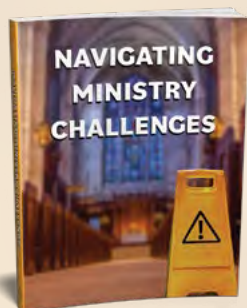
Lutheran Music and Meaning

Lutheran music goes beyond the page to become a powerful tool proclaiming God's Gospel message. Enrich your understanding of music's meaning in the Divine Service with Dr. Daniel Zager.



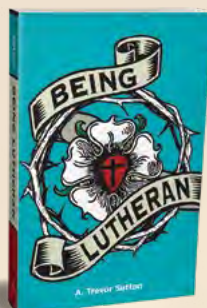
Connected for Life: Essential Guide to Youth Ministry

The Church's youth are not just the future—they're also the now. Find strength and comfort from ministry leaders to keep leading these important members of your congregation.



Navigating Ministry Challenges

Read encouragement and guidance from pastors and ministry leaders that have dealt with your same issues. See that it is with the grace, gifts, and faithfulness of God that you find the power to serve.



Being Lutheran

Throw out your old notes on what being Lutheran is "supposed to be." Rather, see that Lutheranism is very simple. It's about following Jesus through all of life's paths.



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READ ADVICE FROM PASTORS AND CHURCH
WORKERS TO ENCOURAGE YOU IN YOUR GOD-
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