

For Immediate Release

Contact: Vicki Biggs
Director, Public Affairs & Media Relations
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
www.lcms.org
314-996-1236
314-556-3829 (cell)

Missouri Synod Seminary, Saint Louis University Announce New Dual Master's Degree for Deaconesses, Social Workers *Unique opportunity for education in church and service professions*

ST. LOUIS—June 6, 2011—A revolutionary opportunity for education in the church and service professions debuts this fall. For the first time, [Concordia Seminary, St. Louis](#), and the Saint Louis University [School of Social Work](#) will offer a dual master's degree program for students interested in pursuing careers as deaconesses and social workers. This program is offered in collaboration with [The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod](#) (LCMS).

The dual-degree, a Master in Social Work from Saint Louis University and a Master of Arts in Deaconess Studies from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will become available in the fall of 2011 for eligible students. It is designed to foster an ongoing relationship between the church's ministry and service to the community by encouraging more deaconesses to pursue careers in social work.

Historically, deaconesses are dedicated to serving the church in its work of charity, compassion and human care. They often serve congregations, foreign missions, hospitals, nursing homes and social ministry agencies.

“This new dual-degree program will be a true blessing not only for the church, but also for the world in which it serves,” said LCMS President [Dr. Matthew C. Harrison](#). “This program will allow deaconesses the opportunity to be trained theologically as well as in social work, equipped immediately as graduates to take up their callings in social service organizations around the world.”

This marks the first time the two schools have worked together to offer a dual-degree arrangement. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is one of two seminaries of the LCMS, offering pastoral and deaconess formation and programs for theological scholars. Saint Louis University is a Catholic, Jesuit university ranked among the top research institutions in the nation.

“This collaborative partnership is an example of the creative and fresh thinking the church needs as it seeks to bring the Gospel to people in this post-church culture in which we live,” said Dr. Glen D. Thomas, the LCMS executive director of pastoral education. “This new program greatly expands opportunities for deaconesses to bring Christ to people in new locations and settings.”

Through the dual-degree program, students will receive theological education and formation along with the framework, skills and resources necessary to engage in social work practice that is especially geared to help the ministries and service organizations recognized by the LCMS.

“We are very excited about the new opportunities that this relationship with Saint Louis University offers to our students and the church,” said Dr. Erik Herrmann, director of deaconess studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. “As workers dedicated full-time to the church’s ministry of compassion, charity and human care, deaconesses trained as social workers will be able to help the church on both the local and national level to better embody the vision of the church as a community that is known in the world by its love for others.”

Most internships will be offered through a Lutheran social service agency.

“We believe the dual-degree program will increase professional services to help the church address the social needs of the communities it serves,” said Dr. Donald M. Linhorst, director of the School of Social Work for Saint Louis University. “The School of Social Work already has strong working relationships with Lutheran service agencies and we look forward to this new opportunity to work together.”

For more information about the program, please contact the admissions department at [Concordia Seminary](#) at 800-822-9545, or the [Master of Social Work](#) program at Saint Louis University at 314-977-2752.

About Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Founded in 1839 by a group of emigrants from Germany, [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 and leaders in the name of [The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod](#).

About Saint Louis University

[Saint Louis University](#) is a Catholic, Jesuit university ranked among the top research institutions in the nation. The university fosters the intellectual and character development of more than 13,000 students. Founded in 1818, it is the oldest university west of the Mississippi and the second oldest Jesuit university in the United States. Through teaching, research, health care and community service, Saint Louis University has provided one-of-a-kind education, leadership and service for nearly two centuries.

About The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), is a mission-oriented, Bible-based, confessional Christian denomination headquartered in St. Louis, Mo. Founded in 1847, the LCMS has more than 2.3 million baptized members in some 6,200 congregations and more than 9,000 pastors. Two seminaries and 10 colleges and universities operate under the auspices of the LCMS, and its congregations operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in America. The church broadcasts the saving message of Jesus Christ over KFUE Radio, and it has relationships and active mission work in 88 countries around the world. In the last five years, the LCMS has awarded more than \$35 million through more than 900 domestic and international

grants for emergency response and disaster relief. Today, the LCMS is in full doctrinal fellowship with 33 other confessional Lutheran church bodies worldwide and is a founding partner of [Lutheran Services in America](#), a social ministry organization serving one in every 50 Americans. For more information, visit www.lcms.org.