



# PASTORAL EDUCATION

September 2009 ■ A newsletter for those interested in the ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

## To establish the Specific Ministry Pastor Program

(2007 LCMS Convention Res. 5-01B)

*Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Program be adopted in principle and the seminaries, Board for Pastoral Education, and Council of Presidents be authorized to implement it; ...*

*Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee be placed under the supervision of the Board for Pastoral Education; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee develop comprehensive guidelines that are consistent with the theological foundations, educational expectations, rostering process, training of mentors and supervising pastors, and membership limitations intended for this Specific Ministry Pastor Program; and be it finally*

*Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee submit a progress report to the Synod at least nine months prior to the 2010 convention.*

## SMP students finish first year

This issue of *Pastoral Education* highlights a milestone in the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program: The completion of the first year of course work. One year ago, the first 54 SMP students participated in new student orientation on the campuses of our seminaries, just 14 months after the SMP program was adopted “in principle” at the 2007 LCMS Convention. This milestone is a testament to the many ways the Lord of the Church has blessed the development and implementation of this program. Chief among these blessings is the collegial and fervent work accomplished by our seminaries, the SMP Committee, the Board for Pastoral Education (BPE), and the Council of Presidents.

The SMP program allows appropriate pastoral candidates, identified and raised-up at local ministry sites, to be formed for pastoral ministry while remaining and serving at these local ministry sites, the same sites they will eventually serve as called and ordained SMPs. Men are formed for service as missionaries and church planters, as staff pastors with a specific focus in multi-staff congregations,

and as worker-priests in congregations that can no longer support a full-time, general pastor. The program enables a response to urgent mission needs for Word and sacrament ministry while maintaining a Lutheran understanding of those who should publicly preach and administer the Sacraments.

The SMP program utilizes advances in distance education technology to accomplish pastoral formation with the excellence that has been the hallmark of our seminaries. It utilizes experienced supervising pastors to provide on-site counsel and guidance to students. The program is a wonderful partnership between the church and its seminaries in the formation of men for pastoral ministry.

With one year of SMP course work completed, this is an appropriate time to receive initial reactions to the program. The BPE and both seminaries are facilitating a survey of the first SMP students and supervising pastors in order to gain their feedback. Reactions will also be sought from LCMS district officials and others who have significant involvement in SMP. In addition, the SMP Committee is gather-



Dr. Glen Thomas

ing data to provide “a progress report to the Synod at least nine months prior to the 2010 convention,” as stipulated in Res. 5-01B. This report will be available on the BPE Web site, [www.lcms.org/pastoraleducation](http://www.lcms.org/pastoraleducation), in early October.

What will be the next milestone for the SMP program? Lord-willing, one year from now the first SMP students will be ordained. They will still have two additional years of formation remaining, but they will complete that formation as ordained SMPs. May the Lord of the Church continue to work in them and through them to accomplish His mission!

**Dr. Glen Thomas**  
Executive Director  
Board for Pastoral Education

## Frequent SMP questions

Both Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) seminaries are preparing for their second classes of students in their Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) programs, designed to prepare pastors while they serve in congregational and mission contexts. The program addresses the need for pastors in the LCMS, specifically for mission and special ministry situations.

Following are some basic questions and answers to help congregations and individuals learn about the SMP program:

**Q: How long does it take to complete the program?**

**A:** The SMP program is designed so it may be completed in four years. As he studies, the student also serves within a ministry context such as a congregation, mission plant, or ethnic ministry. During the first two years the student is an SMP vicar while he completes his first seminary courses. After completing his first two years, he is eligible for a call from his vicarage site and ordination. During the next two years, he takes eight more courses. Throughout all of his course work, he meets regularly with his supervising pastor.

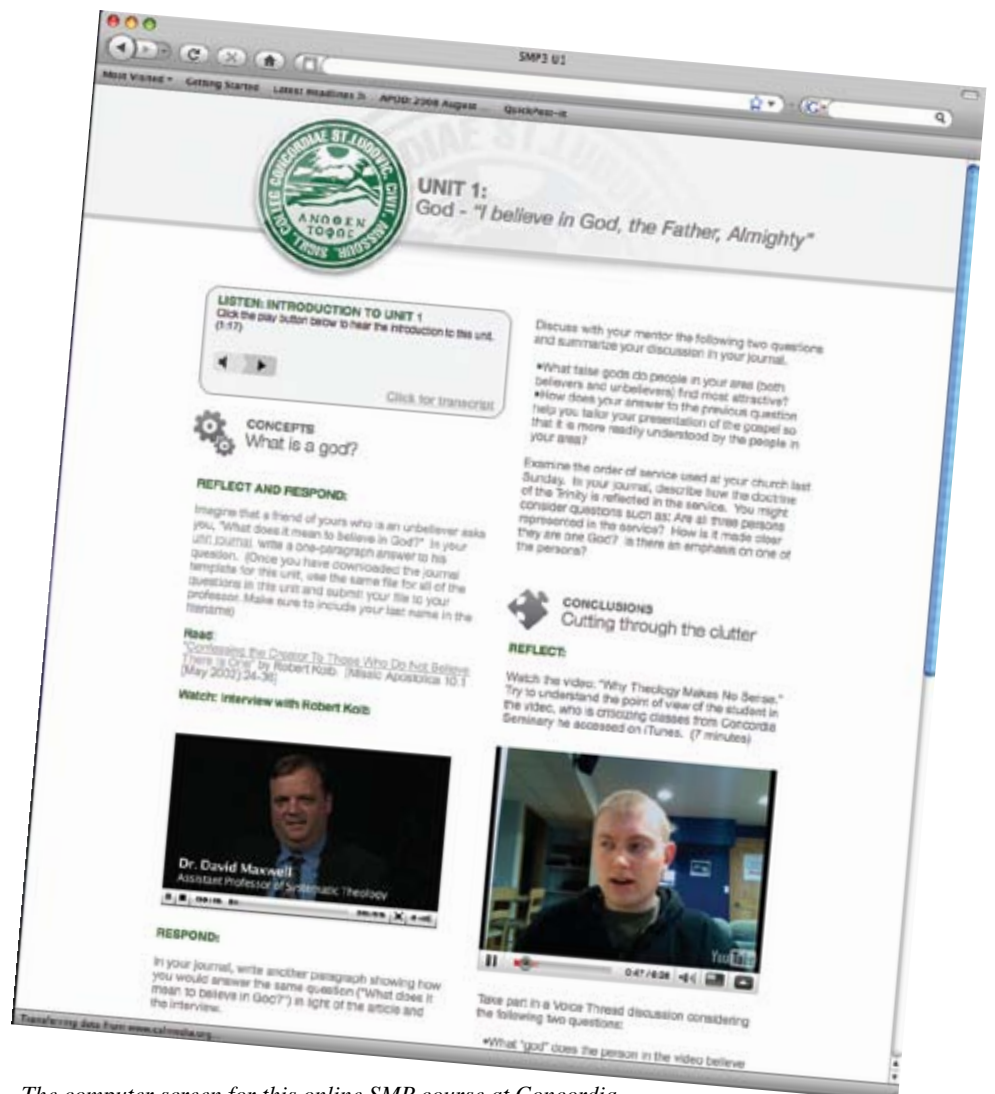
**Q: How are the courses delivered to students?**

**A:** Most SMP instruction is by distance education using the Internet. The courses include lecture and discussion using streaming video, web cams, and e-mail. Students complete readings, assignments, and tests, and meet regularly with their local pastor-mentors. Each year, students also spend one week attending an on-campus (residential) seminar with their cohort groups. In addition to coursework, the week offers opportunities to build community with fellow SMP students, resident students, and faculty. Methods for delivering courses, conducting faculty contact and discussion, and use of residential seminars vary between the two seminaries.

**Q: How do SMP students gain practical experience?**

**A:** SMP recognizes the value of contextual learning where students apply their studies as they serve in specific ministries identified by congregations and districts. Regular meetings with mentor-pastors allow additional discussion and practical instruction from experienced pastors.

(Continued on Page 2.)



The computer screen for this online SMP course at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, demonstrates how students are encouraged to interact with the course material in light of their ministry context.

# MEET THE SEMINARY PROFESSOR:

## DR. RICHARD NUFFER

# Teacher, lawyer, pastor, professor: Richard Nuffer finds joy in each day

A mid-life birthday gift helped Richard Nuffer respond to the desire he felt to become a pastor, giving fruit to a seed that had been planted when he was a confirmation student.

His path has included teaching, law, parish ministry and, now serving as associate professor of pastoral ministry and missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.

"In 1986, my bride, Pat, surprised me with a birthday gift—a trip to the seminary in Fort Wayne," he says. He remembers the beautiful October day, hearing encouraging words and meeting a diversity of men who had come to study.

At the time, Nuffer was practicing law in Texas, specializing in civil litigation. He started with a large law firm that specialized in insurance defense and later in private practice. All through law school and in practice, he adds, the prospect of pastoral ministry had nagged him.

That gift followed "lots of conversations" with Pat, he says. Nuffer was enjoying a good income, but earned it with 70-hour weeks and intense weekend preparation. He wondered if it was time to go in a different direction.

"There were always ifs—if you could write an airtight contract, if you could get me a divorce agreement that would

guarantee a nice retirement, if you could just beat this criminal charge," he recalls. "People were looking for some better, bigger good: if they could solve this legal program, their life could be happy."

He knew the "ifs" reflected the fallen human condition and that the only good contract was the one God made with all who believe His Son is their Savior.

Throughout his careers, Nuffer has gathered experience that shapes his teaching and service. As a college graduate he first spent four-and-a-half years teaching in the inner city of Chicago. "It was my first, and significant, cross-cultural experience. It helped me see human needs in a real way. Kids would come to school hungry and sick. I realized that acts of mercy must accompany the Gospel."

He entered the seminary in 1989 and served his vicarage in 1992 at Peace Lutheran Church in Rockport, Texas. He also served there as pastor until late 1997, when he was called to serve at the seminary. He teaches a two-thirds load and handles administrative responsibilities as dean of assessment, coordinator of residential alternate routes to ordination, director of vicarage, and coordinator of Clinical Pastoral Education.

"The teaching experience was excellent preparation for teaching at the seminary," where his subjects include homiletics, catechesis and church polity. And, from his law experience, he offers an elective course that surveys how law affects the pastor.

"The beauty and fun and heart of it is being in the classroom with the students, being with them outside of class," he says. He tells his students that congregations

are filled with wonderful loving people who are sinners like their pastors.

"There is a history that precedes you," he continues. "Explore that; get to know the congregation and do the one thing needful—preach Christ."

As dean of assessment, he explains, "I ask students what's the best thing and worst thing about your seminary experience. While the seminary may be an 'ivory tower,' Nuffer adds, "There's a real value in that sort of modeling of community, so pastors can go out in the parish and model and encourage others to love and care for one another."

Accrediting agencies encourage educational institutions to measure actual learning results against their learning

objectives in order to strengthen their programs. "My job," he explains, "is not to administer tests but coordinate efforts to make sure we are asking the right questions and getting feedback from constituents, including lay leaders and graduates."

The seminary also influenced Nuffer's wife. When the youngest of their four children began college, Pat, a speech pathologist, enrolled in the seminary's first deaconess class. A deaconess with Zion Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, she works with Hands of Mercy, involving ministry to people with disabilities in the West African country of Sudan and training deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan to care for the disabled.

Nuffer also is active at Zion, where he serves on the board of directors and as head of evangelism, being careful to remind himself, "I'm not the pastor and I want to enjoy the congregation."

In all his aspects of service, he adds, "I really like relationships with people, to think somehow I could be helpful to some student, a staff person or a fellow faculty member. I like to see something that comes from each day."



### MEET THE SEMINARY PROFESSOR

A continuing series of articles designed to provide greater familiarity with the faculty members serving at the LCMS seminaries in Fort Wayne and St. Louis.

## SMP QUESTIONS

(Continued from Page 1.)

**Q: What ministry needs lend themselves well to the SMP program?**

**A.** SMP is designed to answer specific ministry needs, which vary by location and by the opportunities available in congregations or districts. Some examples are "mother congregations" planting churches; congregational ministries focusing on youth, senior adults, or other special groups; efforts to serve and revitalize congregations that are no longer able to support a full-time pastor; outreach to immigrants or ethnic groups; and rural ministry.

**Q: Do students make application directly to a seminary?**

**A.** It has been said, "SMP is about the ministry, not the man." The process begins with a specific ministry need being identified by a congregation, circuit, or district. The entity identifies a man who meets the scriptural qualifications for ministry and invites him to submit an application and related documents to the district office. The district examines the application and the individual to determine if the individual and ministry qualify for the SMP program. If they qualify, the district submits the completed package to the seminary. The seminary then acts on the application and notifies the applicant and the district of its decision.

Among the expectations of the SMP candidate: significant experience in the life of the church; support of his spouse in this educational pursuit; commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; loyalty to the LCMS doctrinal position; demonstrated knowledge of the Scriptures and Christian doctrine; and competence in leading worship, preaching, spiritual life and Christian witness, and teaching the faith.

**Q: What is the cost of the program?**

**A.** Annual costs, depending on the seminary, may range from \$6,500 to \$8,000 a year for tuition, fees, books, travel and housing for the residential seminars, and additional field seminars. At this point, the seminaries are unable to offer financial support, but it is anticipated that support will be provided by congregations and districts.

Costs and tuition reflect the quality of the program. Distance education that gives proper attention to pedagogy, formation, community, and outcome assessment can involve greater expense than residential programs. However, the costs are more than offset because students do not need to relocate to conduct their studies.

**Q: Are there any restrictions for SMP pastors?**

**A.** As the name implies, the program is intended to help congregations, circuits, and districts receive pastors for specific ministries such as church planter, youth pastor, campus pastor. The SMP graduate is not a "general pastor." At the outset, a type of ministry is declared and it remains the realm where the SMP pastor is eligible to serve. He may accept a call to another location and serve there

within his specific ministry category. The SMP pastor is always under the oversight of a general (non-SMP) pastor, even after his four-year program is completed.

**Q: What options exist for SMP students following graduation?**

**A.** While SMP pastors may simply remain SMP pastors, they may choose to apply their SMP courses toward a Master of Divinity degree. The M.Div. degree must be completed through residential study at an LCMS seminary. (See the question above regarding general oversight and eligibility for calls.)

**Q: How can I obtain additional SMP program information?**

**A.** The best place to begin is on the Web site of the Board for Pastoral Education ([www.lcms.org/pastoraleducation](http://www.lcms.org/pastoraleducation)), where you will find links to admission criteria and sequence, supervisor responsibilities, more questions and answers, covenant agreements, applications, and information about mission service. The site also has links to the contacts at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

**WHAT a WAY**

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## Congregations participate in seminary campaign in St. Louis

Congregations throughout the Synod are being invited to consider the importance of keeping Concordia Seminary in St. Louis strong in equipping pastors for generations to come. The seminary's five-year "How Will They Hear" campaign is currently in its congregational phase. Funds will support seminary programs, build its endowment and renovate areas of the campus.

"We know congregations are faced with many challenges and opportunities," said Dr. Dale A. Meyer, seminary president. "The current economy has become an obstacle for many, and we pray that the vital work of congregations will not be hindered. Also, we know that all congregations recognize the importance of pastoral education and will want to support this work as they are able."

"We applaud congregations that are becoming involved in the campaign," said Dan and Sandy Clark, co-chairs of the Campaign's National Steering Committee. "A special event was recently held in our congregation (Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Lakewood, Colo.) that featured the ministry of the seminary and provided an opportunity to recognize, in a special way, the valuable work of our pastors."

Some congregations are considering special Seminary Sunday observances. Some have included the campaign and the seminary in their budgets. Some are planning special offerings. One congregation wanted to say "thanks" for receiving a recent graduate whom they describe as "a wonderful collection of God-given talent, humility, and pastoral compassion." One generous person recently started an endowment at the seminary in the name of her pastor.

"We are seeing people and congregations doing some wonderful, visionary, and creative things to thank their pastors and to support the seminary's formation of future pastors," said the Clarks.

The campaign is scheduled to conclude by July 2010. Congregations seeking ways to participate in the campaign can call Seminary Advancement at 800-822-5287.



## JOINT SEMINARY FUND: Addressing the funding challenge

The last issue of *Pastoral Education* began the treatment of a topic that many recognize to be a matter of high priority: the educational indebtedness of ordained and commissioned ministers. While this series of articles deals primarily with ordained ministers, virtually all of what is expressed is equally applicable to commissioned ministers.

To address the education funding challenge for pastors, a three-pronged approach is being suggested by the LCMS Board for Pastoral Education:

- 1) Reducing the amount of educational debt incurred prior to seminary enrollment;
- 2) Reducing the amount of educational debt incurred during seminary enrollment;
- 3) Creatively addressing the educational debt incurred through steps taken by districts and congregations after seminary graduation.

This article addresses items two and three above.

### Reducing debt incurred during seminary enrollment

LCMS members are responding with support through gifts directly to our seminaries and gifts to The LCMS Joint Seminary Fund (JSF). The average amount of aid received during the 2008-09 academic year at our seminaries was more than \$15,000 per student, not including any loans. In spite of these challenging economic times, gift income to the JSF increased over the previous year. The JSF ended the fiscal year on June 30 having received \$16,357,831 in total gifts versus \$12,516,565 the previous year.

"We are so very thankful for the way God's people are responding to the challenge of supporting our future pastors and deaconesses," commented Rev. Paul Kienker, vice president of the JSF. "We are working hard to get the word about The LCMS Joint Seminary Fund out into the church so that individuals, congregations, auxiliaries, and others will know about the great opportunity it provides. Through one gift, students at both seminaries are supported."

### Creatively addressing debt following graduation

Districts and congregations are responding to the need to assist ordained and commissioned ministers with the educational debt they have incurred. Congregational leaders and others are encouraged to broach the subject of educational indebtedness with their ordained and commissioned ministers, who are often reluctant to initiate a discussion of this nature. Districts are encouraged to consider ways in which they can assist recent graduates who may be struggling to handle educational loan payments. Examples of efforts underway in two districts, Kansas and South Dakota, provide examples of what can be done:

The Kansas District has been helping rostered professional church workers repay their educational debt since 1998. Rostered synodical graduates and rostered workers completing the colloquy program are eligible to receive grants if their graduation date is within the past 10 years. In 1998, 20 applicants received \$200 each. In 2008, 47 applicants received \$1,100 each. Funds for the grants come from endowment interest, half of the district Ash Wednesday offering, and gifts from congregations and individuals. Grants are sent directly to the lender and are intended to help reduce total indebtedness, not to make payments in advance or to reduce the amount of currently scheduled payments.

CWEDA (Church Worker Education Debt Assistance) is the program in the South Dakota District to assist and encourage ordained and commissioned ministers in the payment of education debt. In 2008, grants to workers ranged from \$300 to \$1,250. The program is funded by undesignated gifts to the South Dakota District and by interest from an endowment fund. Creative ways of funding the program include: MEDA (Motorcyclists Eradicating Debt Alliance) featuring per mile pledges over a 1,500 mile trip; and German Sausage Suppers sponsored by the District LLL.

Addressing this issue involves not just one group pursuing one method, but rather the entire church supporting future generations of ordained and commissioned ministers, using a variety of means. The next issue of *Pastoral Education* will continue the treatment of this significant issue.

### A Gift to The LCMS Joint Seminary Fund

Prior to then, please consider a gift to The LCMS Joint Seminary Fund in support of our future pastors. One gift supports students at both seminaries. Many congregations and groups within congregations have now added The LCMS Joint Seminary Fund as a line item in their annual budgets. For more information on how you can support the future pastors of the LCMS through a gift to The LCMS Joint Seminary Fund, please visit [www.lcms.org/JointSeminaryFund](http://www.lcms.org/JointSeminaryFund), or contact:



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## CTS, FORT WAYNE

## Campus sees renovation and innovation in Fort Wayne

As Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, enters its 164th academic year, many exciting ventures await as the seminary continues its mission of "forming servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all."

The reconstruction of the Kramer Chapel retaining wall is nearing completion and the large expansion of the existing Walther Library is about to begin. Construction is scheduled to conclude in the spring of 2011.

"We are most grateful for the support of God's people in serving generations of students and faculty. Kramer Chapel will display its original beauty as the retaining wall is completed, commented Dr. Dean Wenhe, seminary president. "The library expansion will provide an appropriate home for our valuable collection of volumes and offer inviting study areas for our seminarians and deaconesses. Everyone is welcome to visit and see the construction underway."

Along with the physical improvements, CTS welcomes a large class of 80 to 85 M.Div. and deaconess students who will begin their studies while returning students resume their studies. Also, a new class of 10 to 20 Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) students will be on campus for the first time in late September and early October, as well as a second-year class of 23 students.

CTS has launched its online Greek



program for academic credit. This innovative program allows prospective students to complete one of the more intimidating aspects of seminary education without the risks associated with relocation and residential enrollment.

In addition to the beginning of another academic year, CTS presents three other events on campus for laity and clergy during October and November:

- The "Dealing with Darwinism" conference begins Oct. 9, and ends on Oct. 10. This conference will feature guest speaker Dr. David Menton, who will highlight challenges and opportunities that have arisen in light of 150 years of Darwinistic exposure.
- Miss America, Katie Stam, will also be at CTS on Oct. 15. She will speak to children, students, and adults throughout the day while she is in Fort Wayne.
- November 1-3 marks the 10th anniversary of the Good Shepherd Institute (GSI). The theme will be "Bach in Today's Parish: Still the Evangelist."

For more information visit <http://www.ctsfw.edu> or e-mail [publicrelations@ctsfw.edu](mailto:publicrelations@ctsfw.edu) or call 260-452-2100.



Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Collins, Colo., is raising up four men from the congregation to serve in specific ministries. Senior Pastor Tim Runtsch, left, serves as pastor-mentor to four SMP vicars, including Gerry Harrow, right, who is responsible for multi-site development.

## SMP helps Redeemer continue its mission momentum

With four SMP vicars, Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, Co., is finding a way to continue the momentum of its ministries and gain direct benefits as the staff learns.

“Raising up people from within the congregation to serve as staff—in this case pastors—allows them to already have the mission, vision, and values of Redeemer deeply imbedded in their hearts and minds,” says Rev. Tim Runtsch, senior pastor. “This allows us to expand the mission of our church right away while at the same time having them go through a very sound educational process.”

The vicars are SMP students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and include two directors of Christian education and two laymen. They all serve on the church staff (one layman is part-time) and range in age from 31 to 69.

Runtsch comments that the men have sensed a calling, but would not have pursued pastoral ministry if they had to uproot families for a four-year residential program.

“This is no fly-by-night seminary education,” he continues. “They are receiving a rigorous series of courses that will prepare them well to be pastors in our church body. Our congregation is receiving already wonderful ministry from our four vicars.”

Runtsch serves as pastor-mentor to all four. They meet one-on-one as needed, but most of their mentor-student conversations are in a group that sometimes includes Associate Pastor Matt Blackford.

“We have had lively, engaging, in-depth conversations,” says the senior pastor.

The vicars are engaged in diverse ministries. Ryan Meyer, a DCE, directs ministries reaching elementary to college-age students. Scott Coerber, also a DCE, is director of discipleship. Gerry Harrow leads Saturday worship and focuses on multi-site development. Phil Wilgers serves part-time with senior ministries.

“Their skill, expertise, understanding, and God-given ability is put to bear right away, rather than sending them off to the seminary and four years later maybe

receiving them back—or not,” Runtsch comments. “Our congregation is able to pay the entire cost of the seminary education. We feel this is appropriate because it is part of their training up to serve here.”

Vicar Gerry Harrow is looking forward to how God will use him in the future, but right now his role is to assist Redeemer Lutheran Church launch additional sites in the North Colorado area.

A chemical engineer by degree, Harrow, 54, marvels at how God used diverse life experiences to bring him to this time and the SMP program. “I believe in God’s provision and God’s direction. I think the doors will open and that’s where I am supposed to be,” he comments.

Harrow has considered pastoral ministry since college, and even met with seminary representatives, but the timing wasn’t right.

“SMP is a way to pursue the pastoral ministry while actively participating in the ministry,” Harrow comments. “So it ended up being the route that I believe God has opened up for us.”

He says his SMP study is going well: “Being able to take the courses and discuss things with the professors weekly and dig into the information they’ve given us has opened up an amazing horizon for where God has led us all,” he observes. “It has been difficult at times balancing life and ministry and school, but that’s just part of it.”

Harrow says he appreciates the holistic approach of the seminary’s distance education courses. “The four departments worked together and jointly came up with these courses. The instruction has a lot of continuity.”

As a full-time member of the Redeemer staff, Harrow has a number of additional responsibilities: leading Saturday worship, occasional preaching at Sunday worship, teaching classes, and leading small groups. He also took the church planter assessment in preparation for Redeemer’s multi-site ministries plan.

“It’s a dynamic place with a lot of people who love the Lord and really want to connect more people to Jesus,” he says. “It’s a great ministry opportunity here.”

## SMP—and inner city ministry—is ‘real stuff’

“This is the real stuff” says Jeff Mueller as he describes his level of study in the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. “This shouldn’t be an easy route to becoming a pastor.”

Vicar Mueller is also involved in “the real stuff” of congregational life where he serves as a licensed deacon leading the revitalization of Sherman Park Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, an inner city congregation in Milwaukee. Forty years ago, it counted 2,600 members, but neighborhood change and internal conflict dwindled the congregation’s worship attendance to 64 by July 2006 when he began there.

“Our congregation isn’t growing in leaps and bounds, but every ministry we’ve added focuses on our community and our neighborhood,” says Mueller, who has drawn on his business experience to bring people together. “We want to transform ourselves to be an outward-thinking congregation and an outward-focused congregation.”

The congregation opened a school, which will have over 140 students in preschool through sixth grade this fall. With a public high school across the street, Sherman Park will open a youth center on Nov. 1 to provide after-school activities. A church music program helped the public school form a gospel choir. A Family Connections ministry focuses on physical and spiritual wellness with a special emphasis on families.

Mueller was assigned to Sherman Park, an English District congregation,

in a cooperative effort with the South Wisconsin District. He had completed pre-DELTO (Distance Education Leading To Ordination) study when the 2007 LCMS convention approved the creation of the SMP program, effectively phasing-out DELTO.

This action put him in a quandary in his pursuit of pastoral ministry, and he credits Concordia Theological Seminary staff and distance education director Dr. Douglas Rutt with helping him: “They’ve been really wonderful to work with. We had conversations as to whether SMP was the right role for me or whether I should be a resident student.

“The key was that I would have to leave Sherman Park to do residential study and we have just begun to turn things around,” he continues. “Things have happened here and a lot of organizations believe in us. We have had 47 baptisms in the three years. It’s a place that is very exciting right now.”

Like many men in the SMP program, Mueller, 49, has a unique path to the pastoral ministry. He worked for a paint company out of high school, twice owned and operated a sign painting businesses, and worked for Aid Association for Lutherans and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. With an eye on pastoral ministry, he began studying for a bachelor’s degree at Concordia University Wisconsin and also completed the lay ministry training program in the South Wisconsin District.

He is pleased with his first year in SMP, noting that he spends more time on homework than was projected. Still, Mueller says, “It has been a wonderful experience, working with the men and the professors.”

“My last class [homiletics] with Dr. Larry Harvala was just fabulous,” he adds. He compliments the professor’s technique for staying in touch with students, adding, “The pattern that he taught can be used throughout an entire career.”

Mueller incorporated an earlier class on the gospel of Luke into his ministry. “As I took the course, I also used it in a couple different settings—a basic Bible class and another intensive one where I could bring out the Gospel in the direction that Dr. [Arthur] Just saw it.”

At Sherman Park, Mueller has collaborated with another SMP student in writing grant proposals which gained funds for ministries and necessary staffing. Now, other men on the staff are taking lay ministry courses at Concordia-Wisconsin in preparation for SMP studies.

Mueller adds that pastors and staff of inner city congregations collaborated in writing a vision for ministry in Milwaukee. “It isn’t just nice words,” he emphasizes. “We believe in education and mercy ministries here and diverse opportunities to share the Gospel message. We can change our city.”



Vicar Jeff Mueller distributes the Lord’s Supper during an outdoor worship service at Sherman Park Evangelical Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. A student in the SMP program at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Mueller began serving the congregation three years ago as a licensed deacon in the English District.

The LCMS Board for Pastoral Education advocates and coordinates the formation of pastors, missionaries, and other church servants to serve the mission and ministry needs of Christ’s church. Pastoral Education is published four times a year as an insert in the *Reporter* by LCMS Board for Pastoral Education, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122.

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