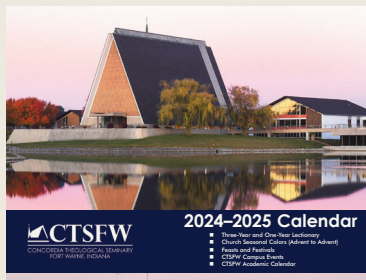




## 2024–25 CTSFW Wall Calendars Available



The annual CTSFW wall calendar was mailed in November to CTSFW alumni and synod congregations. A limited number of additional calendars are available. To request your calendar(s), please contact Colleen Bartzsch at (260) 452-2150 or [Colleen.Bartzsch@ctsfw.edu](mailto:Colleen.Bartzsch@ctsfw.edu).

### Corrections: Fall 2024 *For the Life of the World*

- Front Cover: The president’s chain of office, which was featured on the cover, includes the seminary’s motto, “Preach the Word,” in Greek, but the Greek is incorrect, with an alpha instead of a lambda in λόγον (*logon*; “word”). It’s time for a new chain of office.
- Back Cover: It’s Nicaea, not Nicea, an error that escaped our notice in the Symposia ad on the back cover.

## FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture verses are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

## FEATURES

### 4 Talking to People About Jesus

*James Woelmer*

We plant and we water, but only the Holy Spirit causes faith to be created through the Gospel (1 Cor. 3:6; 12:3). Our job is simply to be faithful in the proclamation of God’s Word.

### 7 The Confident Confession and Pastoral Formation

*Todd A. Peperkorn*

One of the characteristics we instill in our future pastors is confidence in our confession of faith, which comes from knowing who you are in Christ, what you are there to do, and having the capacity to do it. Field experiences play a central role in building this confidence.

### 10 Equipping College Students to Live Confident in Christ

*Jared DeBlieck*

As a campus pastor at a public university, I strive to catechize my students to see the world for what it is—a place lost to itself in a spiritual nosedive, spinning out of control at an alarming rate. My aim is to encourage confidence in our doctrine and practice, to better equip their belonging in Christ here.

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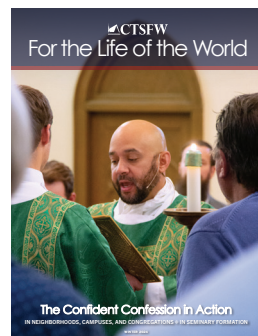
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### On the Cover

The Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, Assistant Vice President of Admission and Christ Academy Director at CTSFW, reads the Gospel lesson in a Divine Service at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

(Photo: Steve Blakey)







# THE CONFIDENT CONFESSION AND PASTORAL FORMATION

*God's Word Does What It Promises.*

*By Todd A. Peperkorn*



**O**ne of the characteristics we instill in our future pastors is confidence in our confession of faith, which comes from knowing who you are in Christ, what you are there to do, and having the capacity to do it. It is sometimes hard to measure, but it is very easy to spot if it is present or if it is missing.

St. Paul talks about this in 2 Corinthians when he writes,

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. (2 Cor. 3:2–4)

What we seek to instill is not confidence that could be confused with arrogance. That kind of confidence is never really helpful for the undershepherd in Christ’s Church. Arrogance and pride come from thinking too highly of oneself and too little of others. No, the confidence we are talking about is confidence that the Word of God does what it says, and that Christ always keeps His promises. My vocation as a pastor is not to defend Christ because He is weak and needs my help. Rather, we confess the

**“The confidence we are talking about is confidence that the Word of God does what it says, and that Christ always keeps His promises.”**

faith in confidence because Christ’s promise does not waver when things are hard. His promise goes out, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

But how do you instill confidence in a good confession? Probably the best way to do that is through experience. Field education, the vicarage, and other experiential opportunities (e.g., mission trips, internships, volunteer work) are invaluable elements of the formation process. Here are just three examples from our current student body.

Vicar Jon Poppe is serving this year at Grace Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg, Florida. Pastored by Rev. Kevin Loughran (CTSFW 1993), Grace is a congregation in one of the fastest growing parts of the country. It is sometimes hard to keep track of all the comings and goings of people on the Florida coast. This is even more true when not one but two hurricanes hit within the span of two weeks.

How do you demonstrate a confident confession in the face of such tragedy? Vicar Poppe was faced with a somewhat tricky text from Mark 10, the rich young ruler, in a sermon he preached after Hurricane Milton struck.

How do we encourage generosity in the face of hardship while at the same time providing comfort for those who are hurting? Near the end of his sermon, Poppe said,

Today’s reading calls us to destroy the idols in our lives—whether wealth, government, sports, or science. These gifts are not inherently evil, but when they become the focus of our trust, love, or fear, they take God’s rightful place in our hearts. For example, prioritizing a sports game over worship or trusting in modern medicine more than God’s providence can reveal misplaced devotion.

Even as we are warned against idolatry, we are reminded of the completeness of God’s promise. Salvation, which is impossible for man, has been made possible through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit, given to us in Baptism, opens our ears to hear Jesus’ call to follow Him and trust in His promises.

This is confidence that the Word of God will do what it promises.

Seminarian Aaron Wade is a second-year student from Seymour, Tennessee. When he found out about a summer field work opportunity in evangelism, Aaron jumped at the chance.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Grabill, Indiana, is a small community just north of Fort Wayne. Thanks to the Indiana District Summer Evangelism Internship program, Aaron was able to knock on 2,000 doors, develop promotional materials for the congregation, participate in the nearby Leo Farmer’s Market, attend city council meetings, and teach ten classes on individual witnessing to members of the congregation.

This has led to a change in attitude on the part of the congregation. Aaron is now doing his regular field work at Prince of Peace and continues to work with their vicar, Kenny Klaehn, and Pastor Robert Eickmann to bring the love of Christ to this community.

Vicar Josiah Junkin is from Newman, California, and currently serves as a vicar at Faith Lutheran Church in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, with Pastor Jacob Eichers (CTSFW 2017). In addition to his normal duties as a vicar, Josiah is also working as a church planter and evangelist for the Viroqua community near La Crosse, Wisconsin.

He is getting quite a lot of on-the-job training in church planting through this work. It has included everything from extensive demographic studies, getting to know the community, looking at the religious layout of Vernon County, and trying to find the elusive “viability” levels for starting a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) parish in Viroqua. Vernon County currently has no LCMS congregations. There are, however, numerous ELCA and some WELS congregations. How do we minister to the people of this community in ways that are faithful and merciful?





Counter-clockwise from top right: CTSFW student Aaron Wade works as a summer evangelism intern at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Grabill, Indiana; CTSFW Vicar Josiah Junkin at the Viroqua Chamber Bash in Viroqua, Wisconsin; CTSFW Vicar Jonathan Poppe, left, and the Rev. Kevin Loughran (center) of Grace Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg, Florida, make an onsite visit after Hurricane Helene struck last fall.

One of the questions of interest is the rise of “online” attendance at churches. Many of the congregations in the area are now counting online participation as a part of their attendance statistics, which presents a skewed picture of the priority of being in the Divine Service.

By planting a church in communities like Viroqua, the LCMS can be of service to communities that have stagnated in faith and life and can be a positive influence on the continued growth of small-town America.

Each of these young men represents the future of the ministry of the LCMS. There are many people who have contributed to their formation toward becoming pastors. At the end of the day, though, it is Jesus Christ through

His Word that will shape them into the pastors He wants them to become. As the author of Proverbs puts it so well, “for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught” (Prov. 3:26).

By God’s grace, the future is bright. May He continue to shine His light upon the Church here in the United States and beyond! 🏳️‍🌈



Dr. Todd A. Peperkorn serves as Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions, Director of Vicarage, and Director of Pastoral Formation Programs at Concordia Theological Seminary.