

# For the Life of the World

**Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne**

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## **Teach the Faithful**

By Stephen K. Preus

## **Reach the Lost**

By Lannon R. Martin

## **Care for All**

By Faith E. Fretham

CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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By Stephen K. Preus

By learning skills for sound exegesis, preaching and catechizing, diligently studying the Lutheran Confessions and examining the history of the Christians who have gone before us, the student of theology is prepared not only to learn God's teaching, but to teach it to others. In addition, he is equipped to *continue* learning it himself, that he might *continue* teaching it to others.

### 6 Reach the Lost

By Lannon R. Martin

When the Lord Jesus charged His disciples to make disciples who make disciples and so on, He was doing so with a great love for the generations of people for whom He had just willingly given His life. The lost were the passion of Jesus, and the lost need to be our passion as the people of God and particularly as pastors of His church.

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By Faith E. Fretham

It seems the criteria for a deaconess student or a deaconess serving in the field are that they are caring. This caring is seen through the relationships that develop because of the strong passion that these women have for serving the Lord. This passion is prevalent in the classes we take, the relationships among our brothers and sisters in Christ and the compassionate relationships with the people that we get to serve on a daily basis.

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## For the Life of the World

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# Care for All

By Faith E. Fretham



*Faith is thankful for her fieldwork at Concordia Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana. She says while serving them she has learned more about caring than she ever thought possible.*



Concordia Theological Seminary exists to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all. As a deaconess student at Concordia Theological Seminary, I feel that I especially relate to the last part of the seminary’s mission statement: “Care for all.” It seems the criteria for a deaconess student or a deaconess serving in the field are that they are caring. This caring is seen through the relationships that develop because of the strong passion that these women have for serving the Lord. This passion is prevalent in the classes we take, the relationships among our brothers and sisters in Christ and the compassionate relationships with the people that we get to serve on a daily basis. “Being a deaconess is not merely a career choice in which you perform certain external functions; being a deaconess is an identity to which you give yourself. Being a deaconess is therefore defined by the relationships that are established—relations to the pastor, to the church, to those in your care. It is in and through these relations that the church’s fellowship is constituted as we begin to see each other as we are in Christ,” says Dr. James G. Bushur, CTS Director of Deaconess Studies.

As deaconess students we are constantly learning the role of a woman in the church, and more specifically, the role of *diakonia* (διακονία) which literally means service. *Diakonia* is seen as a service to those who are in need, those who are suffering both physically and spiritually. These are reflected in a vertical and horizontal relationship; the former relationship being between God and mankind seen in Word and Sacrament and the latter relationship is us interacting with the world. As Dr. Bushur says, “The Father’s giving of Himself to His Son and through the Son to the church is communicated to the world through *diakonia*.” These relationships are not interchangeable. One cannot exist without the other.

Our brothers are also called to care for those who are suffering in body and in soul as well, but it sometimes can become too much of a burden for them. This is where the role of the deaconess office comes in. This relationship is reflected in Acts 6. In the early church the widows were being neglected. The disciples, who had been preaching and administering the Sacrament, appointed deacons to serve the tables of the widows so they would not go hungry. That way the Word and Sacrament could still be administered, and the people in need would be cared for. This relationship is important still today, which is why many of us come to the seminary to become deaconesses, so we can take care of those who need to be taken care of in both body and soul while

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**We care as a natural response to what Jesus did for us. His earthly ministry of caring for others by coming to serve and not to be served and His ultimate act of care through His suffering on the cross (Mark 10:45) stir us to respond by caring for others.**

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the pastor continues to preach God's Word and administer the Sacraments.

The caring relationships that we learn about are not just something spoken but something done. We are learning how to care, but it doesn't stop there. The caring relationships seen by all the deaconess students living on campus are examples of how we are training to be in caring roles in a church or institution one day. The moment one steps into Phoebe house (the on-campus female dorm) she's greeted by smiling faces and cheerful hellos. This is just one small example of the caring environment that prepares us for an exciting future of serving God's people.

This brings to question why we "care." As for myself, and I believe I speak for all the deaconess students, the answer is simple; we care as a natural response to what Jesus did for us. His earthly ministry of caring for others by coming to serve and not to be served and His ultimate act of care through His suffering on the cross (Mark 10:45) stir us to respond by caring for others (there's that horizontal relationship again!).

Many deaconess students feel that we can relate personally to Peter's mother-in-law. Jesus, seeing her, had compassion on her and healed her. Peter's mother-in-law, out of gratitude for what Jesus did for her, responded by caring for (*diakonia*) Jesus and those with Him (Matthew 8:15).

Like Peter's mother-in-law, we respond to what Christ did for us. This is something that we continue to do beyond the seminary. As deaconess students, we are assigned to fieldwork at a church in the community. The congregation I am assigned to provides me with many opportunities to step into

the role of caring for those within the church. I get the privilege of working with the senior group by spending time with them, leading their Bible Studies, etc. I have also worked with the children and assisting them in their needs as well. Hospital visits are also another way I get to practice caring for those in need. However, it is not just those inside the church with whom I get to work. I also work with those outside the church by going beyond the doors. I am assigned to residents of a nearby nursing facility and assisted living. I visit them as often as I can. The neat thing about being in the "care" part of ministry is the ministry of presence. Sometimes just being there for someone is ministry in itself.

The seminary prepares the deaconess students for a caring role in the church by providing a curriculum that teaches why we serve and the importance of caring for those we will work with. One of the first classes we take, *History of Office of Deaconess*, shows the important role of the women in the life of the church. The woman, who naturally has a nurturing and caring personality, is seen throughout the Bible as caring for those in need. The evangelist Luke emphasizes the importance of these women when he highlights the role of the women in Jesus' life, who took care of Jesus and the other disciples and those in need

(Luke 8:1-3).

Care is the result of mercy. In another class, the *Theology of Mercy*, we are able to learn the importance of mercy and where it comes from; the ultimate

act of mercy being the death of the Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ. The mercy that is shown to us by Christ compels us to care for those in need.

One project that has deemed to be very useful is case studies. In these case studies each student is able to research a typical issue that we might face as a deaconess. After completing the project, we as a class were able to discuss them. Some projects included suicide, teen pregnancy, homelessness. We were able to gather resources and focus on how a deaconess, with the theology of mercy in mind, can care for those dealing with these struggles.

Care is an important aspect of what we learn, see and do at the seminary. It is essential to the relationships that are built with everyone around us. It will continue to be essential. Every day there are deaconesses reaching out to the community, caring for those who are in need, taking care of the suffering in our congregations and reaching out to the hopeless both at home and abroad. These things are what I will be doing someday! Everything I do today is God's way of preparing me for the caring relationships that I will build in the future. I do this out of sincere response to the mercy that Christ showed us through His earthly ministry and ultimately to His death on the cross. ▲

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