

Guild Lines

FALL 2023



A PUBLICATION OF THE CONCORDIA SEMINARY GUILD | 801 SEMINARY PLACE, ST. LOUIS, MO 63105 | 314-505-7000 | CSL.EDU

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

“Sounds like em div” = M.Div. = Master of Divinity

The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Program is the normal route to certification for ordained ministry in congregations and other ministry settings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Students take between nine and 16 credits per semester, have one year of vicarage and attend a total of four years typically. After they complete their Seminary studies, they receive a degree and are eligible for ordination as a pastor in the LCMS.

“There is absolutely nothing for which I would exchange my M.Div. experience. It actually began with packing up and leaving my career and house.

“For me, this solidified an understanding of what it means to serve in God’s church, to figuratively and literally leave behind my old life and start anew. This

would also include going on vicarage. My trust in God grew immensely through these experiences. The formal classroom time was incredible. I have been a teacher and student both in the classroom and online. Online works, but nothing is better than being in the classroom and learning in the physical presence of others. Another equal joy was interacting with fellow students, the professors and the staff at the Seminary outside the classroom. To this day (20+ years later), I have lasting relationships with many. I thank God for my M.Div. experience.”

Rev. Rod Benkendorf (M.Div. ’02; S.T.M. ’07) is pastor of Hanover Lutheran Church in Cape Girardeau, Mo.



“Sounds like are A are” = RAR = Residential Alternate Route

The Residential Alternate Route (RAR) is the alternate route to pastoral ministry that is closely parallel to the M.Div. Program. Students study alongside those in the M.Div. Program, including the study of the New Testament based on its original language, Greek. The key differences from the M.Div. Program are the reduced number of courses and Old Testament studies using English. RAR students receive vicarage assignments, receive a certificate, not a degree, and are eligible for ordination in the LCMS.

“After teaching in Lutheran high schools for nearly 15 years, my wife and I decided that I should enroll at the Seminary to pursue pastoral ministry.

“The (RAR) Program at Concordia Seminary was immensely helpful to me because it could be completed

in three years instead of four. By giving me a year of credit for the time I had spent teaching in Lutheran schools as a commissioned worker, I was better able to afford the cost of moving my family to St. Louis as well as tuition and housing. After two incredible on-campus years of learning from outstanding professors, I served my vicarage, which became my first call to parish ministry. This allowed our family to move less often so that our children didn’t have to change schools more than twice. I highly recommend the RAR Program to any commissioned workers in the LCMS.”

Dr. Mike Weider (RAR ’14) is pastor of CrossRoad Lutheran Church in Katy, Texas.



“Sounds like es em pe” = SMP = Specific Ministry Pastor

The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program is a four-year, state-of-the-art distance education program that prepares men for specific pastoral ministries in the LCMS. Students receive academic training in the setting where they will continue to serve following ordination. While enrolled, they work with local pastor-mentors who support them with day-to-day guidance, encouragement and prayer. One intensive week per year is required on campus. Each student is assigned a vicarage, receives a certificate, not a degree, and may serve only in the specific type of ministry in which he was formed.

“I serve as principal/teacher for a smaller congregation that operates a prekindergarten through eighth-grade Lutheran school.

“Roughly two years into my service here, it occurred to me that our congregation might benefit from having another person on staff who could take on additional pastor duties without adding another salary, which we could not afford. With the support of church leadership, I enrolled in the SMP Program. I continue to serve as principal/teacher and now also as an SMP pastor. In our situation, it has enhanced an already positive church and

school relationship, as our pastor is actively involved in our school ministry, and I am visibly involved in the church-side ministry. Looking back, the 36 years I had served in church/school ministry have done a great deal to form me into a person who is able to serve effectively as a pastor. Without the opportunity to continue to serve as a commissioned minister, I would have been unable to pursue pastoral ministry; it was simply not feasible financially. I have been blessed by the mentors who have invested in helping me understand the pastoral ministry: Dr. Ron Rall, Dr. Daniel Mattson and our current senior pastor. All have served as incredibly valuable sources of counsel and wisdom. The academic requirements for the SMP Program, while not requiring Greek or Hebrew, have provided a comprehensive program of pastoral preparation in conjunction with the mentorship program.”

Rev. Brian Ryherd (SMP ’22) is school principal and pastor of Abiding Savior Lutheran Church and School in St. Louis, Mo.



From the Guild President



Welcome to the fall 2023 issue of *Guild Lines*! Many in our society regulate their schedule by the school year or academic year. For these people, summer means time off — vacation!

The Guild’s Board of Directors, however, does not take much of a break. The Board met at the beginning of June to plan the programs for the Guild luncheons for the 2023-24 academic year. The vice president develops the details of the proposed plans over the summer. In late spring, the president spoke briefly about the Guild to students receiving calls, giving them Guild information and membership forms to take to their new congregations.

The Board met again at the beginning of August. The hospitality chair worked over the summer and presented plans for the luncheons including menus, costs, hostesses, etc. The project fund chair arranged for cookies and lemonade at the Commencement reception, monitored contributions, funded completed projects and greeted new students at Orientation with a complimentary copy of a journaling Bible from the Guild in August. The publicity chair assembled the fall issue of *Guild Lines* and monitored the Guild’s presence on the Seminary website and in publications. The membership chair reviewed the membership forms, encouraged membership and made name tags for luncheon attendees. Minutes are taken at each Board meeting and Guild gathering by the recording secretary and shared appropriately.

The Guild finances are kept in order by the treasurer and assistant treasurer. Our meetings are kept in order by the bylaws chair. The historian assembled appropriate Guild materials from the last year and deposited them at the Concordia Historical Institute. Thank you notes have been sent to the appropriate people and the Board and local Guild members have been reminded of upcoming meetings by the corresponding secretary. Our Seminary liaison has continued to be a “jack of all trades” and kept the Guild running smoothly. Board camaraderie and fellowship was enhanced at the luncheon hosted by first lady, Tori Egger, at the president’s home after the June board meeting.

With things well planned, if you live in the St. Louis area, we look forward to seeing you in person at our luncheons/meetings. If you live farther away, we look forward to receiving your support through membership renewal and a project fund contribution as the Guild begins its 91st year.

Lord’s blessings,
Carol Schmidt

News Bit

Upcoming luncheon dates set

Mark your calendars for the 2023-24 luncheon dates 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. in Koburg Hall:

- Dec. 8, 2023
- Feb. 2, 2024
- March 15, 2024
- May 3, 2024

Greetings from our Adopt-A-Student seminarians

The Seminary Guild supports four students throughout their time at the Seminary through direct-to-student aid. Each academic year, a first-year student is selected to replace a concluding student. Here is the latest from this year’s students.

Just-in! Meet our first-year seminarian, Matthew Nelson

Matthew Nelson’s home congregation is Trinity Lutheran Church in Utica, Mich. He is currently enrolled in the Master of Divinity Program.



Tim Handrick/second-year seminarian

Over the summer, I was able to go to Israel with a group of students from the Seminary. This was not a sightseeing trip but rather an immersive learning experience led by LCMS Pastor Tom Zelt (an expert in the field of biblical history and archeology). We read the story of David and Goliath while looking out at the Elah Valley and walked down from the Mount of Olives along the path where Jesus entered Jerusalem during Holy Week. These and many other experiences on our 16-day journey connected the words in my Bible to real bodies of water and land where they are still discovering ancient remains from biblical history. Being there in person was an experience of a lifetime that will forever change the way I see the narrative of Scripture. In a similar way, this is why I am at Concordia Seminary rather than studying from a distance. Being immersed in the culture, camaraderie and spiritual conversations on campus are shaping and



forming me and my family for the rest of our lives. Thank you for your support as we continue following God’s path for us toward pastoral ministry.

Rob Choate, vicar/third-year seminarian

This year, I am on vicarage in Oviedo, Fla., at St. Luke’s. I got married this past year in November to my beautiful wife, Alyssa. She also works at St. Luke’s as a deaconess intern and at Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries and Lutheran Haven. We have been incredibly blessed with the community we have here, which has been warm, welcoming and helpful. Aside from a vast array of ministry opportunities, this vicarage offers several fun activities that Alyssa and I plan to take part in this year. We are within an hour of the beach and all the Orlando theme parks. We miss the Seminary community and the fun, friends and learning we had there, but we are excited for the Holy Spirit to continue our growth as a pastor and deaconess this year.



Alyssa and I would like to extend our deep gratitude for your support of us this year. I treasured the opportunity to get to meet the members of the Guild a couple of years ago and was honored to have the ability to speak with you all as well. Vicarage is a wonderful ministry that churches perform for us. Vicarage congregations are such a great example of what it means to be the church. They pour so much into us to have another church reap the benefits two years later. They do this out of love for Christ and the work that He does through the church. This process has been a blessing to Alyssa and me and will continue to be a blessing to whatever congregation calls us in two years.

Luke Onken/ fourth-year seminarian

Greetings again in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I once again thank God on behalf of all of you for the generosity you have poured out on me, one of his humble servants, through all your financial gifts and prayers. It is an exciting time in my life: I have returned from vicarage and am beginning my fourth and final year at Concordia Seminary! I served my vicarage at Living Savior Lutheran Church in Fairfax Station, Va., a place quite foreign to me when I first arrived. However, the people of the congregation were welcoming and created a beautiful environment that fostered my growth as a future pastor. The most unique aspect of my vicarage was a campus outreach that I led at George Mason University. There, I could share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with Hindus, Muslims, atheists and so many more. I consider myself lucky to be able to share Him and His message of truth to so many that I encountered. I am greatly looking forward to my last year at the Seminary, and I thank you again for your prayers and support!



New seminarian Max Johnston, left, receives a journaling Bible during new student Orientation from Projects Chair Alice Kastens, center, and President Carol Schmidt.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ST. LOUIS, MO
Permit No. 1058

SEMINARY GUILD BOARD

President Carol Schmidt <i>Village, Ladue, Mo.</i>	Hospitality Eileen Smith <i>Peace, Lemay, St. Louis, Mo.</i>
Vice President Jane Schmidt <i>Christ Memorial, St. Louis, Mo.</i>	Membership Judi Winker <i>Peace, Lemay, St. Louis, Mo.</i>
Corresponding Secretary Di Egberts <i>Immanuel, Olivette, Mo.</i>	Projects Alice Kastens <i>Peace, Lemay, St. Louis, Mo.</i>
Recording Secretary Donna Werner <i>Peace, Lemay, St. Louis, Mo.</i>	Historian Joan Schlichter <i>Glendale, Mo.</i>
Treasurer Mary Jane Autry <i>Reformation, St. Louis, Mo.</i>	Publicity Angela Gielow <i>Zion, Harvester, St. Charles, Mo.</i>
Assistant to Treasurer Marie Springer <i>Resurrection, St. Louis, Mo.</i>	Advisory Member Tori Egger <i>Hope, St. Louis, Mo.</i>
Bylaws Margot Loebs <i>Immanuel, Olivette, Mo.</i>	Seminary Liaison Kim Braddy

2023-24 Adopted Service Projects

Journaling Bibles for incoming students*	\$4,000
Adopt-A-Student	4,000
Music arts	2,000
After chapel coffee time	1,000
Campus landscaping*	4,000
Student athletics and fitness center	3,000
New student Orientation*	3,000
Cookies for Commencement reception	800
Library books, subscriptions and periodicals	2,000
Total	\$23,800

* Completed projects

For donations or dues, make checks payable to
Concordia Seminary Guild and send to:

Mary Jane Autry
2076 Henley Woods
Arnold, MO 63010

Want to donate, learn more or become a member?
Visit us online at csledu/semguild or on Facebook
by searching Concordia Seminary Guild.

Concordia Seminary
801 Seminary Place
St. Louis, MO 63105

