

The  
**EVANGEL**

*Seminary Edition*



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# From the EDITOR

The historians of our small town have taken care to preserve a millstone from the early days of milling grain into flour. This intimidating stone is almost as tall as I am and quite impressive to stand next to. I appreciate the preservation of this historical piece, but it also reminds me of Matthew 18:6, which is a stern warning toward those who lead others astray.

Pastors and teachers of God’s Word have a very serious task to carry out. No other role in Scripture has such a stern warning attached.

You see, God takes teaching about Himself and our salvation very seriously. He wants us to know the truth about who He is and be completely assured of our peace with Him.

So when someone claims to teach Biblically, but actually troubles people’s minds and causes them to doubt God’s Word and work, this is a very serious matter.

One of the ways God cares for us is by giving us faithful pastors and teachers who help train us in wisdom, discernment, and the comfort of Jesus living and dying for us.

God puts pastors in place to help protect the flock from false teaching, from what may direct eyes away from Christ’s work for burdened sinners.

Perhaps you can think of a time when a careful, well-trained pastor has explained a Scripture passage or doctrine clearly after years of confusion. Or when your pastor has reminded you of God’s care during a very difficult trial.

Or maybe you have experienced the great relief in hearing these words: “Your sins are forgiven; be at peace.”

This is the joy of what our pastors do; they get to be in those moments of guiding hearts and minds to the Truth: to Jesus.

This edition highlights our seminary; may it remind you of the way God guards and keeps you and your salvation through the gift of a faithful pastor.

Gretchen Baker

The Editor

# Pray For Our Seminary

by *The Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins*

*“Whoever will call upon the Name of the Lord will be saved.” How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:13–15*

Who was your favorite pastor? Did you have a pastor who was a special blessing in your life?

Pastor Hinkeldey impacted my formative years. He required 3 years of catechism studies: 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. They were great! I had so many questions. Also, he trained me to be an acolyte. It was overwhelming to go right up to the altar and light the candles. Pastor Hinkeldey was a dramatic influence in my spiritual formation.

Pastor Campbell was my pastor during High School. We talked a lot about the Bible, church, Christian living, and the ministry. He encouraged me to consider pastoral ministry as a vocation. I went to the college he had attended and later went to the seminary where he was trained.

The pastor who had the greatest impact upon my understanding of the vocation of Holy Ministry was The Rev. Dr. Michael C.D. McDaniel. He was a dynamic Lutheran pastor who preached and taught the Holy Bible in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions. His messages were extraordinarily powerful and inspirational. I am grateful to God for each of my pastors, and especially for these three.

I hope that you have received the blessing of ministry from a wonderful pastor too. I suspect that your mother and father prayed that God would provide you with faithful and knowledgeable spiritual shepherds. I am sure that you have often thanked God for the pastoral leaders that He has given to you.

In addition to praying with thanksgiving for your own pastors, now is the time for you to pray for the pastors who will shepherd your children and your children's children. Now is the time to pray for the next generation of pastors who will graduate from our seminary and serve our congregations.

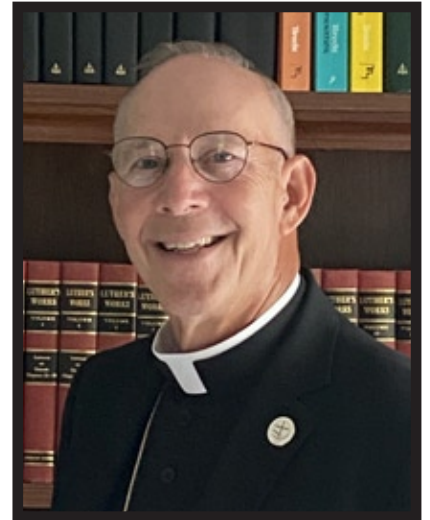
The purpose for which our seminary was founded is contained in The AALC Constitution and Bylaws: “The

purpose of American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) shall be to train men for the Office of the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacrament for The American Association of Lutheran Churches (The AALC)” [S15.02]. Across the Church, the number of men who are choosing the vocation of Holy Ministry appears to be shrinking. How-

ever, God continues to draw an ever-increasing number of godly and faithful men to our seminary! Hallelujah! God is bringing us wonderful, faithful men who love His Word and desire to serve His Church.

So, please pray for our seminary! Please pray fervently and frequently. Pray for our Seminary President, Dr. Jordan Cooper; our Administrator, Duane Kleven; and our Registrar, Bonnie Ohrich. Pray for our faculty, and pray especially for our students. We need their faithful hearts, their well-trained minds, and their lives of sacrificial service. We need the next generation of faithful pastors! Please pray with me:

*Merciful God our Heavenly Father, You sent Your Son Jesus as the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls, and You gave to Your Church pastors to preach Your Word, administer Your Sacraments, and care for Your people. Send The AALC faithful pastors who will believe, teach, and confess the Holy Bible and the Lutheran Confessions, and who will sacrificially serve and lovingly minister to Your people, through Jesus Christ Our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.*



**The Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins**

**The Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins serves as Presiding Pastor of The AALC and also serves as an instructor for ALTS.**

# SEMINARY UPDATE

from new ALTS President Dr. Jordan Cooper

Since our last national convention, I have had the privilege of serving the American Lutheran Theological Seminary as President. In that time, it has been a continual blessing to see God's hand at work in the lives of students and in our association as we train future pastors and church workers. I want to give you an update about what kinds of things have been happening since that time, and what to expect in the future.

## New Students

While I have been in this position, I have been in contact with several current students and prospective students for the future, who are interested in pursuing theological education. The number of people interested in our program has continued to grow, as I have had conversations nearly every week with people who are considering enrollment. There have been days where I've had back-to-back Zoom meetings with potential students from morning until evening. It is wonderful to see the interest in theological education that continues to be prevalent.

Of course, not everyone who has shown interest in our program has also enrolled, nor should we expect them too. There is a lot to think and pray about before deciding to enter into churchwork. It is imperative both for our school and for the students themselves that there is clarity about the divine call. With that being said, we have had several new students enter our programs, and others who have audited a course to get an idea of what seminary would be like. We also have several others who are currently finishing up Bachelors programs or other things before starting seminary. We expect that we will continue to grow in enrollment moving into 2022.

## Beginning Our Journey in Accreditation

One of my primary interests in taking this position has been in entering into the process of accreditation. There are a few reasons why this undertaking, which is quite a bit of work, is worth doing. First, this process is helping us put organizational pieces in place to make our education better. By following the guidelines of accredited schools, we can offer a sufficient amount of resources to assure that our future pastors and church workers are properly equipped to lead congregations. Second, this will allow students who graduate from our program to move into further education if they should desire to pursue a PhD or DMin. Third, it will aid in the reputation and credibility of the education that we offer.

We are currently working with the Association of Biblical Higher Education throughout this process. This organi-

zation helps theological schools to achieve accredited status on a national level. I have attended conferences of theirs online which have already borne fruit in our seminary. The Commission for Higher Education, myself, and our administrator Duane Kleven, have all been hard at work implementing these changes, and we are very excited about what the future holds.



**Dr. Jordan Cooper**

## What You Can Do

If you have ever thought about pursuing ministry in any way, or just in furthering your theological education in some way, we welcome you to join us. We offer an auditing option for several of our courses if you have some curiosity and just want to check out what seminary education might be like. We also welcome pastors to audit courses to refresh on any topics that they might desire to get further in-depth with.

Along with enrolling yourselves if you have interest, we also have needs going into the future in two other areas. First, and most importantly, we need your prayers. The work done by the school is guided by the Holy Spirit who gives and strengthens faith. We desire any prayer that can be given for our aid. Second, we need a solid financial base to continue to fund our current operations as well as our move into the future as we expand, and continue through the accreditation process.

May God bless and strengthen our efforts to bring forth workers into this world to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and the salvation won for sinners.

**Dr. Jordan B. Cooper was elected Seminary President of the American Lutheran Theological Seminary at The AALC General Convention held October 2020. Dr. Cooper teaches Systematic Theology (Doctrine I & II, Lutheran Confessions I & II, and Apologetics) at ALTS.**

# Seminary Determines Objectives

by *Dr. Brett Olsen*

The primary purpose of the American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) is to prepare future pastors for The AALC, to provide sound Christ-centered education for our congregational members, and to share the Gospel message in our troubled, secular world. The Commission for Higher Education (CHE) is the advisory group of volunteers and pastors tasked with the duty of overseeing the ALTS. We are passionate about this duty, and we began our term looking for ways to strengthen the seminary's current foundation while also looking to the future. What could we do to improve the education and training of our future pastors? How could we attract new students, those called to serve our Lord in a pastoral setting as well as those called to spread His message in other ways? What can we do to ensure the seminary's own longevity?

With these questions, we developed a set of what we termed "strategic objectives" for the ALTS. These objectives ranged from short-term goals, such as growing our pool of adjunct professor (what I call our "bench"), to longer-term "what-if" goals such as leveraging our online delivery to expand the seminary's reach across the globe. Yes, some objectives are a bit more ambitious than others, but each fulfilled that primary purpose of the ALTS.

While discussing these objectives within the CHE and sharing them with The AALC leadership, we concluded that one central objective encompassed many of the goals within its scope: achieving accreditation. I will not go into the details of this objective as Rev. Dr. Cooper has a companion article focusing on the significance of reaching this goal. Rather, I will refer to two of the CHE's strategic objectives that we will need to achieve for accreditation to be successful.

The first objective is a review of the constitution and bylaws of The AALC and the ALTS. Accreditation requires a specific organizational structure, which may lead to some uncomfortable but necessary discussions. These requirements could not have been foreseen when The AALC constitution and bylaws were first penned. An initial review by

the CHE and AALC leadership will lead to proposed changes reviewed at the General Convention. This is not a short process, and any constitutional changes should not be. These proposals require thorough consideration. The CHE are working diligently to make sure this process is transparent, thorough, and purposeful.

The second objective is the development of a financial strategy for the ALTS. In my day job, this topic is more my cup of tea. One requirement for accreditation is greater financial autonomy for the seminary. This includes the ability to budget, spend, and plan more independently than the current organizational structure provides. An even greater need, however, is achieving financial security to ensure longevity, to make sure our seminary can continue to shine Christ's light for a long time. We are working on spending forecasts for improved planning, scholarship ideas to help our future pastors graduate with lower debt loads (or none), and donation strategies to help individuals and congregations support the seminary in the most effective and efficient ways possible.

We are excited about the future of the ALTS, and we hope you are as well. We look forward to sharing our ideas and progress with every congregation. We also appreciate your support and, most especially, your prayers.



**Dr. Brett Olsen**

**Dr. Brett C. Olsen serves as Chair of the Commission for Higher Education.**

# Seminary Offers Courses, Updates Website

by Duane Kleven

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Seminary continues to strengthen and grow in many ways. Our international presence continues to grow with students from Germany, Wales, British Columbia, Ecuador, and throughout the United States. This is due in part to our association with the International Lutheran Council (<https://ilc-online.org/>) and our new website (<https://www.alts.edu/>).

Our upgraded website is the result of a very generous donation that gave us the ability to do a complete from-the-bottom-up review and rewrite what ALTS presents to the world. Some of the top improvements include the ability for would be seminarians to communicate directly to us using our contact page; additionally, we can now take donations directly from the website which helps in many ways as well.

Our students and guests have access to the Wartburg Center (<https://www.alts.edu/the-wartburg-center>), which has a full selection of free online Christian resources. The Wartburg Center takes its name from Wartburg Castle. Wartburg Castle was the location where Martin Luther translated the New Testament of the Bible into German. This page is a one stop-shop for free Christian material.

Our Schedule and Events page (<https://www.alts.edu/events>) highlights our teaching schedule for each Quarter. Our Fall Quarter begins in September, Winter Quarter in January, Spring Quarter in April, and our Summer Quarter begins in July. The events pages are updated just prior to registration opening for the quarter at hand.

Our Summer Quarter is becoming a popular destination for guests interested in Seminary Education but are unsure of how “online” education works or are unsure about their own ability to learn in an online setting. During the Summer Quarter, we have been selecting courses that are required by our seminarians and have general interest to the population at large. We began this process in the Summer of 2020 with P120 Teaching the Faith taught by The Rev. Dr. Craig Henningfield. This was followed in the Summer of 2021 with EO101 Old Testament Introduction taught by The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse. What a great success.

This sounds interesting and fun, but I am sure you are asking yourself, “How much does this cost and can I afford to do this?” The answer of course is yes. ALTS has revised its policies on auditing its courses with two goals in mind:

1. Make the Seminary a place for our Ministerium for continuing education without a great financial burden.
2. Provide continuing education opportunities for the congregants of The AALC and the public.



**Duane Kleven**

To learn more about our programs, costs, and our courses, please see our student guide at the Wartburg Center under “A” for ALTS Student Guide.

Additionally, we have restructured our education programs as a first step of many as we look towards accreditation. We have three primary programs:

- Master of Divinity (M.Div.): this is the path to pastoral ministry;
- Master of Arts in Religion (MAR): this path prepares men and women for service in Christ’s Church;
- Master of Arts in Theology (MAT): this path educates men and women with the foundations of the Christian Faith.

You can explore these programs in detail in the ALTS Student Guide.

We are anticipating our first graduate of Master of Arts in Theology – Doctrinal Studies in the Spring of 2022 and our first graduate of Master of Arts in Religion – Administration in the Fall of 2022.

Please contact me with your questions, comments, and concerns: [ALTSAdministrator@taalc.org](mailto:ALTSAdministrator@taalc.org).

**Mr. Duane I. Kleven is the Executive Administrator of the American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS).**

# Professor Introduction

## Dr. Nathan Greeley

I am honored, grateful, and blessed to have the opportunity to teach apologetics at the American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS). My own background reflects the importance of apologetics to the life of faith. I was raised in a Christian family but lost my faith as a teenager in the late 1990s. Several years later, I became deeply unsatisfied with my life and realized that something important was missing. I began to read philosophy and study Christianity in much more depth than I ever had before. Though I didn't have a quick or easy return to the faith, eventually by God's grace I was led through the wasteland of progressive Christianity back to conservative Christianity, and then later to orthodox Lutheranism.

Long before the culmination of this journey, however, my rekindled interest in spiritual matters led to my enrolling in a graduate program in philosophy of religion and theology at Claremont Graduate University. Here I eventually received the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. Though Claremont was not a confessional school, it did expose me to many notable Christian thinkers who came to have a great influence on me. In particular, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Luther were highly important in my intellectual and spiritual development. C.S. Lewis, John Warwick Montgomery, and Peter Kreeft were apologists that I derived much wisdom from. Their writings were key in convincing me that biblical Christianity is supported by a great deal of impressive evidence.

Since finishing graduate school, I have been teaching full time at a classical Christian school in Kokomo, Indiana. I also have been part time instructor in philosophy at Indiana Wesleyan University, where my wife is a professor. Two years ago I became the Fellow of Apologetics and Philosophical Theology at the Weidner Institute, and in 2021, I commenced teaching for ALTS. My first published

book, *Christian Apologetics: A Lutheran Introduction*, is being published this year with Just & Sinner.

One thing I have appreciated about teaching for ALTS is the high quality interactions that I have had with students. Often it is held that an online setting cannot capture the level of personal engagement that is fostered by onsite instruction. However, I have not experienced any difficulties in my ability to connect and converse with students at ALTS.

As a professor of apologetics, I am greatly interested in encouraging seminary students to make apologetics a significant part of Christian education at their respective churches. Today, more than at any time since the early centuries of the church, apologetics is crucial to the health of churches and the retention of young people. That being the case, providing apologetics instruction that can reach people in the pews is a passion of mine. I'm looking forward to helping to equip the next generation of pastors and scholars to do this necessary and important work.



**Dr. Nathan Greeley**

**Dr. Greeley teaches Systematic Theology (Apologetics) at ALTS.**

# Professor Introduction

## The Rev. Dave Spotts

October 30. It's the first day of class, so we go through the traditional, almost sacred, dance. We present the syllabus (course schedule, rules and regulations), then at least the professor makes a brief introduction. What do I say? I'm Dave Spotts. I hold an MA in classical Greek, an MTS degree from ALTS, and am an all-but-dissertation Ph.D. candidate at the University of South Africa. I've taught Latin and Greek on the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels since 1995 (I don't say how many years because that keeps changing). I work as a missionary campus pastor in Columbia, Missouri, where I live with my wife and one young adult daughter. I resist the urge to say I enjoy cooking my family and wildlife. Or not, depending on the mood.

What don't I say? I never point out to the students that most of the reasons they have heard for studying foreign languages, especially Latin and Greek, are not very important. But it's true. As early as 1989 when I was a young graduate student, I was questioning the ad campaigns which said you should study Latin so as to know how English works, to boost your SAT English score, to gain multicultural literacy, and to become a more confident you. All this does happen, but it just so happens that the chess club or orchestra has the same effect. We could talk about why that is, but I'll let you figure it out on your own. You're smart. You can do it.

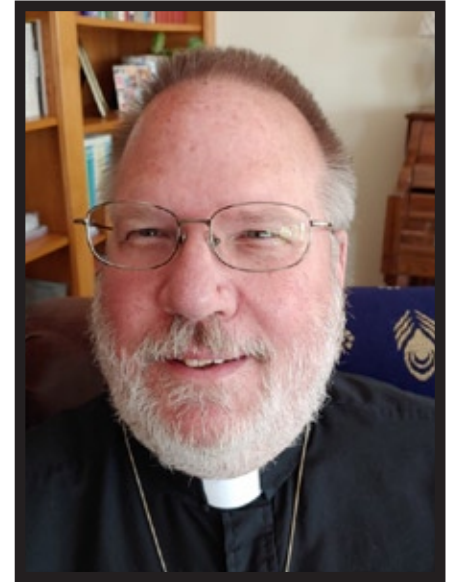
A much better reason for work in biblical and theological languages is to grow in our understanding of the context of Scripture. If you want the academic term for it, in general you want to learn principles of philology. Those apply to all messages, in all languages. More specific to biblical studies, you learn to engage in exegesis, drawing meaning out of the text of Scripture. My degree in classical Greek was focused on philology, the art and science of literary interpretation.

A study of grammar and vocabulary won't take you into this world of interpretation. You have to go farther. This is why I was so dreadfully frustrated when I went to a seminar for homeschoolers and Christian school leaders, presented by a luminary in the world of Latin education, who proceeded to tell the room full of eager listeners that the reason to learn Latin was to be able to translate Latin into English. Sorry, lots of people can do that. And I personally know dozens who can do it better than I can. Their translations are for sale everywhere. Changing from one code to another is not that big a deal.

What about reading (not translating, but reading) in the biblical languages as a means to understanding and entering into the world of the author and the earliest audience? That's our end goal. Why would Matthew choose to edit the genealogy of Jesus to fit into three groups of fourteen names? Why does Paul sometimes list exactly 24 types of sin? What's going on with the parallelism in Scripture? Why would the author of Hebrews pretend not to know where something is written? And what's up with lukewarm water in Laodicea?

We don't learn that in a Greek grammar class. There isn't time. But, by God's grace, as we learn as much grammar and vocabulary as we can, we also try to open students' eyes to the kind of dialogue they can have with the authors and even with the early hearers of Scripture! In the end, as students are learning that they are not dealing with a message from their native language and culture, they are spurred on to a careful, detailed way of reading which enables them to ask meaningful questions, then seek out good answers.

All right, class! Let's try to read this! If you want to join with us, check out [www.ALTS.edu](http://www.ALTS.edu) or my work at [www.WittenbergCoMo.com](http://www.WittenbergCoMo.com).



**The Rev. Dave Spotts**

**Rev. Dave Spotts is a missionary campus pastor to the collegiate communities in Columbia, Missouri. He is currently serving as a vacancy pastor for a Missouri Synod congregation in mid-Missouri. In his spare time he loves cooking, his family, and wildlife. Rev. Spotts teaches *The Bible in Context and Greek* at ALTS.**



## Professor Introduction

# Rev. Dr. Jeffrey H. Pulse

I was called to teach at Concordia Theological Seminary in 2007. I arrived after 22 years in the parish ministry, and as a new associate professor, my office was located in the last building, Augustine—there was no room in the inn, also known as Jerome and the faculty offices. This proved to be a good thing. Not only because it was a bit more quiet so I could figure out how to teach Old Testament classes, but also due to the fact it was also the location of the ALTS offices.

I immediately made friends with Rev. Franklin Hays, and later with Dr. Curtis Leins. Then I was invited to be the main presenter at The AALC Pastors' Conference in St. Louis, which gave me the opportunity to meet even more of the brothers associated with The AALC. Dr. Leins and I even did some brainstorming on what an online seminary education would look like—Concordia Theological Seminary – Fort Wayne was developing the new SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) online courses at the time—and then, one day, I was teaching Old Testament courses online for the ALTS.

It all seems as a blur to me now, but so my association with The AALC developed. Now I have developed and teach the Old Testament, the Books of Moses, and the prophet Isaiah. It has given me the great privilege of teaching and interacting with many future pastors for the ALTS who are zooming in from all over the world—one man from Germany and another from Honduras recently, as well as my first woman student who just wants to learn more about the OT. I believe I have been teaching the OT courses from the beginning of the program.

From where I sit and think—and I sit a lot and think a little—this way of training pastors for your seminary seems to be a successful model. The pastors who have come through the program and been called into parishes have proven to be capable, faithful servants of the LORD. I have noticed a trend toward younger men lately, and I do not think it is because I am aging out!

This is an encouraging sign for the church and the future of The AALC and I pray the LORD will continue to send His workers into the harvest fields. It is a big harvest!

In closing, I offer my thanks for the opportunity to be a part, however small, of the ongoing effort of preparing pastors, and lay people, to serve The AALC. May God continue to bless you as you walk by faith.



**Rev. Dr. Jeffrey H. Pulse**

**The Rev. Dr. Pulse teaches Exegetical Studies (Old Testament Introduction, Pentateuch, and The Prophets) at ALTS.**

## Professor Introductions



**Dr. Dost**



**Dr. Henningfield**



**Rev. Shields**

Dr. Timothy Dost: teaches Reformation History; Modern and Postmodern Church History. Dr. Timothy Dost is an associate professor of Historical Theology and faculty secretary at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Dr. Craig Henningfield: teaches Catechesis; Pastoral Theology and Life; Teaching the Faith; Preaching I & II; Missions;

and serves as Pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church (LCMS), Steamboat Springs, CO.

Rev. Rich Shields: Former ALTS President; teaches Hermeneutics, New Testament Introduction, Synoptic Gospel, Pauline Letter, Theological Prolegomena, Law and Gospel, Pastoral Leadership, Church Administration.

## Professor Introduction

# Rev. Dr. Cary Larson

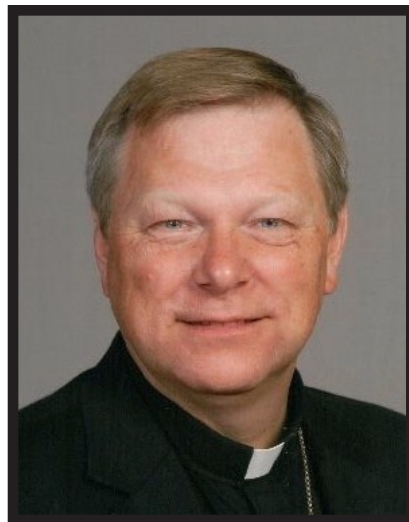
The Rev. Dr. Cary Larson is the Assistant Presiding Pastor of The AALC and the called pastor to Christ the King Lutheran of Waseca, MN. He is married to Connie, and they are blessed with three adult daughters, two son-in-laws, and three granddaughters and a grandson.

Dr. Larson graduated from The Lutheran Institute of Theology, Brookings, SD, in 2020 with a Doctorate in Ministry with an emphasis in Evangelism. He is a “second career” pastor with experience in information technology in the business sector, an educator for the University of Minnesota, Minnesota Extension Service, and retired from the United States Navy Reserves as a Commander.

Dr. Larson teaches practical theology classes with the goal of preparing

seminarians to serve Christ and the Church with intellect, wisdom, and integrity in ministries that span from the congregation to the larger church, from spiritual practices to life in the public sphere. As future pastors, teachers, and leaders, students learn to think deeply and broadly about the Christian faith through the lens of the inerrant Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and apply this knowledge as “seelsorge” or spiritual caregiver for congregations in The AALC.

**Dr. Cary Larson teaches Practical Theology (Pastoral Leadership, Pastoral Theology and Life) at ALTS.**



**Rev. Dr. Cary Larson**

## Seminary Student Introductions

# JOHN LINCH

### Seminary Student

**Tell us about yourself:**

Where are you from? Ames, Iowa

Family: Wife - Deb, three children (2 married and one in college)

Occupation: Banker

**What brought you to Seminary?** A desire to deliver Word and sacrament.

**What degree are you pursuing?** Master of Divinity

**What are you enjoying studying this year?** I find that all the classes offer something to enjoy.



# KRISTAN JOHNSON

## Seminary Student

### Tell us about yourself:

Originally from Houston, Texas, currently living in Blythewood, SC.

Family: Married, wife: Adrienne. 3 kids: Jarius - 23, Alicia - 15, Khloe - 9

Occupation: 20-year U.S. Army Officer, Rank: Chief Warrant Officer 4

**What brought you to Seminary?** Primarily, a calling/command from God to bear witness to his love in Jesus Christ; Secondary, a conviction to use my time and talents in service to the church and fellow man

**What degree are you pursuing?** Master of Divinity

**What are you enjoying studying this year?** I'm enjoying studying the early church, its leaders, and their sacrifices. It puts into perspective true sacrifice and struggle for the glory of God. It is very humbling and refreshing to partner with other men of God in this quest.



# JON BLAIR

## Seminary Student

### Tell us about yourself:

I am from Lenoir, NC, which is located near the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I have been married to my wonderful wife Melanie for 26 years. We have two children. My oldest is Maddie, and she is a junior at Lees-McRae College studying nursing. Joshua is a senior at Caldwell Applied Sciences Academy and hopes to pursue engineering in college. I am employed with Skyline National Bank in Lenoir as a credit analyst. I have been in banking most of my career.

**What brought you to Seminary?** I grew up as a Lutheran and have been discerning the call to ministry for many years. After much prayer and deliberation, I was led to ALTS.

**What degree are you pursuing?** Master of Divinity

**What are you enjoying studying this year?** I have taken some great courses this year. I have enjoyed learning about the History of Worship, Hermeneutics, as well as Introduction to the Old Testament. I am currently taking Early Church History.



# BRIAN RUUSKA

## Seminary Student

### Tell us about yourself:

I've lived in Minnesota near the Saint Paul area for the last 40 years. The history of my family roots stretch into several Finnish populated towns of Michigan's upper peninsula.

My wife Barbara and I were recently given the opportunity to retire early after serving many years in corporate America where I applied my skills in engineering and information technology projects.

**What brought you to Seminary?** My former church body prohibited adults from studying the Bible. By the grace of God, I was led to confessional Lutheranism and now continually seek to learn more about God's Word and His pure doctrines. Through the encouragement and support of Pastor Joe Marsh, I enrolled in the seminary to apply more rigor into my learning process.

**What degree are you pursuing?** Although I'm still in the early phases of study, I seem to be most interested in the Doctrinal Studies of the Master of Arts in Theology degree.

**What are you enjoying studying this year?** I have really enjoyed the Theological Prolegomena class taught by Professor Rich Shields because it has helped to clarify and distinguish what it means to be authentically Lutheran.



# JACOB SCHAEFFER

## Seminary Student

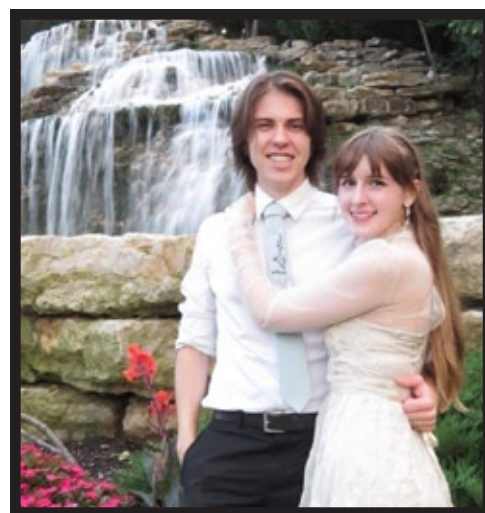
### Tell us about yourself:

I'm originally from Las Vegas, NV, and my wife Hannah is from Olathe, Kansas. We're currently living in Fort Wayne, IN. We've been trying for children for a couple years now, but we will leave things to the Lord. I'm currently doing delivery driving and day trading to make ends meet, and my wife is an online student and stay-at-home wife.

**What brought you to Seminary?** I began to attend ALTS because I am very passionate about the Holy ministry and the Holy Scriptures. I've known I wanted to be a pastor since a fairly young age, and because that desire for the office continues to grow by the year, I have continued to pursue it. Being online makes it much easier to study while also having another job to attend to.

**What degree are you pursuing?** I'm pursuing an M.Div. in hopeful anticipation of ordination and service as an AALC pastor.

**What are you enjoying studying this year?** So far, I'm really enjoying my Greek course with Rev Spotts. Greek has proved to be incredibly challenging for me, but I'm very appreciative of what it will equip me to do concerning the study of the Holy Scriptures.



# STEVE WIEBE

## Seminary Student

### Tell us about yourself:

My wife, Jennifer, and our three children, Luke and Sophia (twins, age 14), and Claire (age 7) currently live in Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.

I'm a professional engineer with an MBA (Master in Business Administration). I was a business owner and manager in the renewable energy industry for many years.

**What degree are you pursuing?** I'm now focusing my attention on the M.Div. program with ALTS. After this term I'll have 11 of 30 classes completed.

It will be interesting to see where the program leads me and my family in the years to come.

**What are you enjoying studying this year?** Learning more about the distinction between Law and Gospel has been a joy and blessing.



# CHAD ZIMMERMAN

## Seminary Student

### Tell us about yourself:

I'm originally from Arvada, Colorado, but spent my adult life splitting my year between Colorado and Fukuoka, Japan, as a self-supported missionary. I'm the middle son of three, and the first Lutheran! I went to school in Japan and got dual Japanese language certificates, after realizing most of the missionaries I knew there didn't speak the language well enough to preach or even lead Bible studies in Japanese. Currently to support my missionary efforts in Japan as well as my seminary funds, I run a YouTube channel, and guide people professionally in several countries... when COVID isn't the norm.

**What brought you to Seminary?** I wanted to help the mission field in Japan! But once I got proficient in Japanese, I also realized the need for theological capability. So after asking my favorite Christian pirate's radio station what he would recommend, I got in contact with Dr. Leins and the seminary. :)

**What degree are you pursuing?** Master of Divinity

**What are you enjoying studying this year?** Weirdly my favorite thing I've been studying this year has been church liturgy! I came from a pretty low liturgical background, so seeing the Lutheran church has a rich history of a spectrum of liturgies has been very eye opening and enjoyable!



# COLLEGE OF PASTORS

*AALC Pastors' Conference  
held Oct. 25-28, 2021*

*by Rev. Abraham McNally*



What is the benefit of having a Pastors' Conference? We hold them every year in The AALC. This year we had excellent teaching concerning the theology of men's ministry from the Rev. Dr. Cary Larson which he himself can elaborate on. It is helpful and encouraging to hear updates on the state of the association and the seminary which we received from Dr. Leins and Dr. Cooper. It is great to be together as brothers in The AALC. After all, many of us are very far apart, and we don't have many opportunities to chat and catch up. After all these benefits, I noticed another element to the conference which seems to be necessary.

I am talking about the conversation between the pastors at the conference. Of course, the pastors talk about difficulties in their individual ministries and offer each other advice, commiseration, and even (or especially) absolution. However, another type of conversation also prevails. I wonder if the average parishioner asks, "What do you pastors do at your conference, sit around and talk about theology?" At first this question seems to deal in stereotype, but the answer to the question is, "Yes, absolutely."

The Pastors' Conference serves as a "college of pastors." The etymology of "college" tells us the word comes from "dispute together." The Pastors' Conference affords pastors the opportunity to converse about topics they may be unable to discuss in their everyday ministry. They are able to give voice to their thoughts and formulations to an audience that shares the same passions and interests. These conversations happen during breaks, at lunch, and even waiting in line for the restroom. From my experience, as much as pastors need the opportunity for fellowship, worship, and personal pastoral ministry, they need the opportunity for theological discussion and expression.

Another connection with the etymology of "college" is the definition "partner in office." No matter the separation in age, education, or distance, the pastors of The AALC are all partners in the same office of making disciples of Jesus Christ. Our theology provides the foundation for that ministry. The Pastors' Conference fulfills many needs for our pastors each year. However, the need for this collegiality is often overlooked, but no less important.

**Rev. Abraham McNally serves Christ Lutheran Church of  
Germantown, MD.**

# In Memoriam

## The Rev. William L. Dreikorn

*September 6, 1943 – October 28, 2021*

The Rev. William L. Dreikorn, age 78, entered the Church Triumphant on October 28, 2021. He was an Emeritus Pastor on the Clergy Roster of The AALC. Pr. Dreikorn's wife, Melinda, was at his side when the Lord called him home. They were married for 40 years.

William was born on September 6, 1943, in Johnstown, PA. He graduated from Gettysburg Seminary in 1969 and was ordained that same year. He continued his education throughout the years. His degrees included a B.A. from Lenoir-Rhyne College; three degrees from Gettysburg Seminary: an M. Div, S.T.M., and a D. Min with a focus on ministry to the aging; and two from U.S. International University: a M.A. in Psychology and a Ph.D in Psychology with a concentration in pastoral care and counseling.

Pastor Dreikorn served congregations in Smithsburg, Baltimore, and Middletown, MD, and San Diego, CA. Two of his parishes were in rural and small-town settings,

and two were in metropolitan areas. He always considered a highlight of his pastoral ministry having been the opportunity to supervise the parish internship of 13 seminarians. He served as a Grief Counselor for Lutheran Social Services of Maryland and provided training and served as a counselor at the Baltimore Pastoral Counseling Center.



His past service to The AALC included Adjunct Professor of Pastoral Ministry for ALTS, Vice-Chairman of the Commission for Higher Education, Chairman of TAALC Study on the Role of the Pastor, Member of the Clergy Commission, and Member of the Commission on Publications.

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## The Rev. Robert M. Dennis

*April 24, 1933 – November 19, 2021*

The Rev. Robert M. Dennis, age 88, of Walker, MN, entered the Church Triumphant on Friday, November 19, 2021, in Bemidji, MN.

Robert was born in 1933 in Providence, RI, and graduated from Newark Community High School in Newark, IL, in 1951. Following high school, he went on to attend the Lutheran Bible Institute and North Park College in Chicago, IL, and Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, IL. He graduated from Luther Seminary in St. Paul in 1960.

Bob married his high school sweetheart, Verlene Anderson, in 1953 at Helmar Lutheran Church in Newark, IL. She preceded him in death. Following his ordination in 1960, he served congregations in Hollandale and Blanchardville, WI; Jevnaker and Mandt Lutheran Church in rural Montevideo, MN; American Lutheran Church in Long Prairie, MN; Hope Lutheran Church

in Long Beach, CA; Trinity Lutheran in Manvel, ND; Hosanna Lutheran in Grand Forks, ND; and Poplar Lake Lutheran in Fosston, MN.

Bob also served as a Navy Chaplain from 1960 until 1968. During his time in Long Prairie, he also served as an EMT with the Long Prairie Ambulance. He enjoyed vintage cars, including a restored 1948 Lincoln Continental.



Funeral services were held on November 24 at Calvary Evangelical Free Church in Walker, MN.

# Remaining “Steadfast in His Word” for 150 Years

October 3, 2021, was a special day for the St. Paul Lutheran Congregation in Tripoli, Iowa. We celebrated our 150th year anniversary remaining “Steadfast in His Word.” Pastor John E. Block presided over the morning service. A noon meal was served to the congregation and guests.

The Rev. Dr. Duane Lindberg, as a representative of The American Association of Lutheran Churches, delivered the sermon for the afternoon service and presided over the retirement service for Pastor Block. A cake and ice cream social followed the service with community and other church members invited.

In 1995, the congregation began its preparation for the celebration of the 125th anniversary. The theme “Steadfast in His Word – 125 Years” was chosen by vote of the congregation and committees established to prepare for the celebration to be held on Sunday, September 29, 1996.

A committee of women in the congregation was formed to make a special banner reflecting the theme to be hung in a large wall space of our new church. They started the project by incorporating part of a banner pattern by Concordia “Banner Patterns for Worship” and then making additions to it that would personalize it for our congregation and for our 125th anniversary. It was a team effort with one member guiding us in the construction process. The piece holding the three sections of the banner is the top edge of a pew that was salvaged from the church fire in 1990. It was hung under the guidance of a member who had served in the navy. There are several small pulleys fastened at the ceiling and secured behind the altar.

When it came to our 150th anniversary, we wanted to keep the same theme, and it was agreed that we treasured the 125th anniversary banner too much to replace it, so we decided to try to update the banner to reflect 150th anniversary. We contacted the lady who had guided us through the original construction for our 125th to see if it would be possible. She was so pleased that we still wanted to keep the banner and knew exactly what we needed to do. She was looking forward to our 150th anniversary celebration with much enthusiasm, but God had other plans – He called her home less than two months before our celebration.

We started out as a rural church called St Paul Lutheran Church of Siegel. The history has been a story of a congregation’s struggle to remain “Steadfast in His Word” and faithful to orthodox Lutheran teachings.

This started early in its history with a congregational split in which a large group of members left and no longer held to Lutheran teachings and continued through the years with other painful decisions and divisions.



**The sanctuary of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Tripoli, IA. Photo by Louise Krueger**

In the late 1960s, a national move against having the ALC join the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches was partly centered at St. Paul of Siegel.

The 1980s found St Paul Lutheran Congregation struggling to remain faithful as it openly opposed the changes allowed by the proposed merger into the ELCA. The congregation then stood by its convictions and voted to leave the national Lutheran body, a move that was misunderstood by some, castigated by others, and applauded by few outside the congregation.

The 1990s again found the congregation with many difficult decisions on whether to rebuild after the disastrous fire and if so, where to rebuild.

Through these many trials, the Lord has chosen to be gracious to St. Paul Lutheran Congregation and sustain it for future service as it continues to trust in the Word: “Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall” (Psalm 55:22).



**Rev. Dr. Duane Lindberg delivered the sermon for the afternoon service and presided in the retirement service for Pastor Block. Photo by Steve Vorthmann**





The special anniversary banner was created for St. Paul's 125th Anniversary and then modified for the recent 150th Anniversary. Photo by Steve Vorthmann

Our congregation continues to struggle as we face a changing world, but we keep pushing on and have dedicated members who refuse to stop trusting in the Lord. We celebrated our 150th anniversary with gladness and thanksgiving but also with questions of "What are we going to do next?" since our current pastor also retired that day. Pastors are in short supply, and we are a small church.

During our 150th celebration preparation, the president of our congregation was in touch with our national headquarters' Presiding Pastor, Dr. Curtis Leins, from Fort Wayne, Indiana. We received information about the possibility of a pastor who would be available for us. We have an installation date planned. God supplied our need, and we are thankful and continue to be "Steadfast in His Word."

The congregation's statement of faith is based firmly on the inerrant and infallible Word and believes every promise of Holy Scripture. "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen" (I Peter 5:10-11).

## PRAYER BOOKMARK

### January 2022

1. AALC leadership
2. Board of Appeals and Adjudication
3. Board of Trustees
4. Call Committees
5. Christ Lutheran Church *Duluth, MN*
6. Christus Victor Evangelical Lutheran Church *Fayetteville, NC*
7. Christ the King Lutheran Church *Chesterfield, MI*
8. Christ the Ray of Hope Lutheran Church *Albuquerque, NM*
9. Pilot Knob Lutheran Church *Forest City, IA*
10. Clam Falls Lutheran Church *Frederic, WI*
11. Community Lutheran Church *Wausaukee, WI*
12. Elim Lutheran Church *Brush Prairie, WA*
13. Emmanuel Lutheran Church *Bremerton, WA*
14. For all the seminary students
15. God would raise up church leaders
16. Christ Lutheran Church *Germantown, MD*
17. Rev. Dr. Thomas Stover
18. Publications Commission
19. Rev. Tylan Dalrymple
20. First English Lutheran Church *Gibsonburg, OH*
21. Martha Stone, Commissioned Church Worker
22. Rev. Nigel Brown
23. Kris Johnson, seminary student
24. Rev. Andrew Virkus
25. Jonathon Guido, seminary student
26. Joel Guido, seminary student
27. Steve Wiebe, seminary student
28. World Missions Commission
29. Trinity Lutheran Church *Galata, MT*
30. Trinity Lutheran Church *San Pedro, CA*
31. Trinity Lutheran Church *West Hempstead, NY*

# PRAYER BOOKMARK

*February 2022*

1. Ascension Lutheran Church *Waterloo, IA*
2. Bethel Lutheran Church *Rowland, PA*
3. Bible Lutheran Church *Dodge Center, MN*
4. Bonnie Ohlrich, Secretary/Coordinator  
AALC/ALTS
5. Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church  
*Saint Paul, MN*
6. Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church  
*Ellis, KS*
7. Christ Lutheran Church  
*Chippewa Falls, WI*
8. Women of L.I.F.E. Committees
9. Clergy Commission
10. Dr. Dan Kruger, Treasurer of The AALC
11. Ukraine Ministry, Rev. Scott Yount
12. Local community
13. Online ministries
14. Persecuted Church
15. Radio Ministry
16. Regional Mission Developers
17. Rev. Daniel Cloeter
18. Rev. David F. Johnson
19. Rev. David M. Johnson
20. Rev. Dean Stoner, Administrative  
Assistant to the AALC
21. Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins, Presiding Pastor
22. Rev. Dr. James L. Hoefler
23. Rev. Irvin Stapf
24. Rev. Jamie Strickler
25. Rev. Loyd Ginn
26. Rev. Michael D. Holsten
27. Rev. Morris M. Kirchhof
28. Rev. Paul H. Hansen



## 2021 Pastors' Conference



# Rev. Hallock installed at Resurrection Lutheran

Rev. John Hallock was installed at Resurrection Lutheran Church (LCMS), Louisville, KY, on September 12, 2021. Rev. Dr. Daniel Brege and Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins co-officiated the installation service. Dr. Brege is the President of the Indiana District of the LCMS; Dr. Leins is the Presiding Pastor of The AALC.

A dual parish agreement between The AALC and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod allows for Rev. Hallock to serve in these two ministries: in The AALC as a federal prison chaplain and in the LCMS congregation at Resurrection Lutheran Church.

For the installation service, Rev. Hallock was joined by a large contingency of LCMS pastors, including a Lutheran pastor from Somalia. The service was conducted in two languages due to the large percentage of Somalians in the congregation.



Rev. John Hallock (center) was installed at Resurrection Lutheran Church (LCMS), Louisville, KY, on September 12, 2021. Joining in the celebration were multiple LCMS pastors, as well as the co-officiants: Rev. Dr. Daniel Brege and Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins. Submitted photo.

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*The*  
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Please be in prayer for and consider contributing to these upcoming editions:

May/June theme: Women Serving (deadline March 1)

July/Aug theme: 35th Anniversary of The Evangel (deadline May 1)

Sept/Oct theme: AALC Biennial Convention (deadline July 1)

Church News: *The Evangel* welcomes submissions of what's happening in your congregation, such as:

- Anniversaries of clergy ordination or installations
- Church activities or celebrations
- Men's and women's events
- Youth and children's activities
- Outreach or community events
- AALC clergy obituaries

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