

# The SMP Program Curriculum

of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

**This curriculum is designed to meet the “Pastoral Formation Outcomes” that have been adopted by the faculty of Concordia Seminary. The outcomes are available upon request and are listed in the SMP policy manual. The following will help you see where we are going.**

The “Narrative” that sets forth the vision:

The SMP Curriculum (17 courses/four years) begins and ends with courses dealing with the pastoral ministry as a ministry of speaking the Gospel (“Intro to Pastoral Ministry” and “Pastor as Theologian and Leader”). In between these bookends the courses are organized around a narrative that integrates and binds the curriculum together. The pastor speaks the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the context of the grand narrative of God’s activity in human history.

## Pre-Ordination

Given that a pastor is called by the church (1) To speak the Gospel we have to ask (2) What is the master story of the gospel that the Christian church has proclaimed everywhere and at all times; and (3) What are the key episodes and themes of that story? (4) What distinctions and themes do Lutherans find vital for the telling of Jesus’ story to others so that it is in fact the Gospel? (5) Having explored the story, we now explore the questions, “How does the story of the gospel become my story?” and (6) “How do we encounter this story in worship? “ (7) With the gospel having become ours, “How do we bring this story to others through preaching?” and, (8) “How do we teach the story of the Gospel to those who have little acquaintance with Christianity?” Finally, (9) How do we confess the Gospel before the world until Christ returns?

*[Certification, Call, and Ordination may now take place in the SMP program.]*

## Post-Ordination

Here we return to the master story of the Gospel but consider its instantiation in the particularities of the biblical texts and history. Thus we begin by (10) Exploring the role and use of the Scriptures for speaking the Gospel. Then we explore how the Gospel narrative is told and lived out in (11) The Old Testament and (12) The New Testament as well as (13) How the Reformation recovered the Scriptural Gospel for a new generation. Then we turn to the questions about how we include others in that story today through (14) The task of preaching and (15) By means of the church as the means and goal of the *missio dei* within the midst of the world. SMP curriculum concludes where it began, with the (16) Pastor as theologian and leader. This course also provides the transition to the second part of the curriculum leading to a Certificate/M.Div.

## **SMP Courses**

### **SMP101 Introduction to Pastoral Ministry**

An introduction to the theology and practice of the pastoral ministry as a ministry in which the pastor is called to speak the Gospel. This course will explore issues related to the foundation of the pastoral office, the nature of the pastoral ministry, and the pastor's relationship to the priesthood of the baptized.

### **SMP102 The Master Narrative**

In speaking the gospel, the pastor confesses the work of Jesus Christ as central to God's involvement with the world (from creation to consummation). This course will explore how in worship and in the world, the master narrative of the Gospel re-stories our individual and corporate lives and shapes how we live.

### **SMP103 Creedal Themes**

The gospel as summarized in the creed has a number of theological subplots that interlock with one another and whose meanings (doctrines) are indispensable for the master story. This course will explore how the Scriptures teach and how the church confesses the doctrinal truths that form the Creedal Story.

### **SMP104 Lutheran Distinctions**

The grand narrative of the Gospel has focused thus far upon the presence and work of God within created history. It will now highlight the anthropological dimensions of that story and will explore how the Reformation brought those dimensions out by making distinctions between law and gospel, the two kinds of righteousness, the two kingdoms, etc. in order to confess the Gospel in its day.

### **SMP105 Means of Grace**

God's dramatic involvement within the world from creation to consummation centered in Christ also involves us. In a certain sense, the master story of the gospel re-stories our lives by incorporating us into the mission and work of Jesus Christ. This course will explore how God's story of redemption becomes our story through the visible and spoken words of baptism, absolution and the Lord's Supper.

### **SMP106 Preaching I**

People who have become part of God's story of redemption are called upon to tell that story to others as they have opportunity. Pastors are called to proclaim that word publicly on behalf of the congregation. This course will explore how the pastor moves from the study and interpretation of the word of God (1/3) to the construction of sermons and the proclamation of the Gospel (2/3).

### **SMP107 Teaching the Faith**

Because the story of God's dramatic redemption of the world takes a minute to hear but requires a lifetime to live pastors are called not only to proclaim the gospel but also to lead people into an ever deepening understanding and appreciation of that inexhaustible story. This course will explore the nature and task of teaching the faith from cradle to grave. Special emphasis will be given to the task of catechesis and the teaching of Luther's Catechisms.

### **SMP108 Introduction to Worship**

The story we proclaim and teach becomes “incarnated” through its reenactment in the church year and the liturgy. Together pastor and people re-live the story as God comes to them corporately in worship the means of grace. This course will explore the theology and practice of worship in the context of the local congregation.

### **SMP109 Lutheran Confession of Faith**

The task of telling and confessing the dramatic story of God mission within the world continues until Christ returns. The pastor confesses that story against all errors that seek to distort it. This course will explore how the confessions of the church, the roadmap to the heart of Scripture, inform the pastoral task of dealing with errors that distort the master story of the Gospel.

### **SMP110 Scripture and Faith**

The master story of the Gospel is instantiated within the Biblical accounts and told by them in various ways. As one who proclaims the Gospel, the pastor uses these Biblical accounts as the source and norm for preaching and teaching. This course will explore the nature of the Scriptures, how the canon was collected, and the purpose and use of the Scriptures within the Christian life.

### **SMP111 Old Testament Theology**

God’s dramatic involvement in the world begins with the mission of God in creation and the commission that He gave to his human creatures to care for it. Because they failed God re-enters his creation to redeem and restore it. This course will explore the theology of the gospel story as told in the Old Testament.

### **SMP112 New Testament Theology**

God’s mission to save the world culminates in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of his Son. With the creation of the New Israel on Pentecost the church took the story of the Gospel to the far reaches of their world. This course will explore the theology of the New Testament with special emphasis on the themes that emerge as the New Testament writers tell the master story.

### **SMP113 Lutheran Reformation**

With a more thorough grounding in the nature of the Scriptures as well as the theology of the Old and New Testaments, the pastor recognizes a number of interpretative questions and challenges to the proclamation of the richness of the biblical Gospel. This course will deal in more depth than course #6 did with the issue of hermeneutics (2/3) as it applies to preaching the text (1/3).

### **SMP114 Preaching II**

The Reformation was a recovery of the Biblical story that resulted in a concomitant preaching revival. This course will demonstrate how the creedal and biblical narrative was at times hidden or lost in the centuries preceding the Reformation, how it was recovered by Martin Luther and the Reformation, and how it is proclaimed today.

### **SMP115 The Church**

Within the grand narrative of the Gospel the church appears as both the means and the goal of the mission of God. It is the means by which the mission of God is furthered in the world today and the goal of the mission of God in the new creation. The church has taken the master narrative of the Gospel into other cultures and it has found it necessary to translate that story. In the living out that story it has found ways that are faithful to the Scriptures which take into account the challenges of culture. This course will examine how Americans hear and filter the Biblical Gospel, and will explore ways in which the church can tell the story in today's cultural context.

### **SMP116 Pastor as Leader and Theologian**

This initial portion of the curriculum ends where it began—with the pastor who is called to tell the master story of the Gospel. Here we begin to look at how the pastor exercises leadership in the church as a theologian of the church. This course will explore the ongoing challenges of theology within the church today and will introduce the student to the distinctive methodologies of the various theological (exegetic, historic and systematic) disciplines