TIMELINE

4 YEARS: 1839-1859
6 YEARS: 1860-1879
8 YEARS: 1880-1899
10 YEARS: 1900-1919
12 YEARS: 1920-1939
14 YEARS: 1940-1959
16 YEARS: 1960-1979
18 YEARS: 1980-1999
20 YEARS: 2000-2013
22 YEARS: 2014 AND FUTURE

MISSION STATEMENT

Concordia Seminary serves church and world by providing theological education and leadership centered in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for the formation of pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, scholars, and leaders in the name of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
Invigorating HIS Mission: That's what your St. Louis Seminary is doing as we celebrate our 175th anniversary. I hope you enjoy this special edition of Concordia Seminary magazine. Our great staff has worked long and lovingly so that this issue will bring you optimism for the future.

Concordia Seminary is about Jesus Christ. Our foundation and future is not Martin Luther but the biblical Gospel he heralded long ago. Our reason for existence is not The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or any passing human structure, although we have been greatly blessed by the structures of the institutional church. The Pharisees of the first century had much of their doctrine right (see Matthew 23:3), but they didn't understand that God's Son is grace for all people. Your Seminary teaches the doctrine and with Christ at the center.

After all, it's HIS mission to us and through us. To us: the programs at Concordia Seminary stress cross-cultural missions, but let's never forget that Jesus' coming to save us was the greatest cross-cultural event of all time. He crossed a cultural chasm, coming into our Law and sin-dominated world with the Gospel of forgiveness, life and salvation. HIS mission to us also radiates through us to others who don't yet know the Gospel. For our congregations and Synod to have vibrant futures, we'll not shrink back but follow Jesus across cultural divides.

Come to campus and experience how we're invigorating HIS mission. I'm not suggesting faith is our doing. “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel” (Sm. Catechism, Section One, Third Article). But justified, the Spirit invigorates us through Word and Sacrament to do the good works God has prepared for us to do. (See Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:13). Congregations are increasingly calling upon us for more programs of continuing education for pastors and laity alike in order to invigorate the mission of their congregations within their communities. We're eager to partner.

Our accrediting agencies have renewed our accreditations with high marks and no notations. The faculty has been called the strongest in worldwide confessional Lutheranism. The volumes in our library make it the second largest Lutheran research library in the western hemisphere. Your donations and fiscal discipline have resulted in the elimination of all debt and a stable financial position. Now we're working to secure future funding for coming generations. Seminarians' tuition costs are largely paid by scholarships. A new scholarship for all pre-Seminary students in our Concordia University System is generating great interest. Year by year our magnificent campus is being upgraded and our well-groomed grounds and gardens delight many thousands of visitors each year.

And we work hard, very hard, because we want coming generations to know Jesus, just as previous generations worked and sacrificed so that you and I would be brought to Jesus. At the end of the day, or at the end of 175 years, it's all about Jesus!

Dale A. Meyer
In 1839, a group of German immigrants built a small log cabin and founded Concordia Seminary (originally known as "The Log Cabin College") in Perry County, which is approximately 100 miles south of St. Louis, Missouri. The Seminary was founded by C.F.W. Walther (1811-1887), Ottomar Fuerbringer (1810-1892), Theodor Brohm (1808-1881), and Johann Friedrich Buenger (1810-1882); they came to America during the 1838 Saxon Immigration. It’s been 175 years: the Seminary has grown from one log cabin in the country to an urban 72-acre campus, and more than 12,000 pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, scholars, and leaders have been formed.

Perry County is located in the southeastern portion of the state of Missouri. Altenburg (where the Seminary was started) is a city in Perry County, 100 miles south of St. Louis. It is one of seven towns and villages in the area founded by German Lutheran immigrants in the 1830s. It and the others—Dresden, Frohna, Johannisberg, Paitzdorf, Seelitz, and Wittenberg—were named by settlers for towns in the Saxony region of their native country. These settlers laid the foundation for what would become The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
1850

By the mid-19th century, the community of Altenburg generously agreed to give their school to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (which was founded in 1847). The Synod moved the Seminary to the larger city of St. Louis. Many students moved along with the Seminary to its new home on the west side of South Jefferson Avenue at Winnebago Street. The first college building was dedicated in July of 1850, and needed several additions and renovations over the years.

Did You Know?

Besides being one of the largest seminaries in the United States, Concordia Seminary is also the second-oldest Lutheran seminary. Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, established in 1826, is the oldest; it was founded about 12 years prior to the 1838 Saxon Immigration, which led to the settlement of Altenburg and the subsequent establishment of Concordia Seminary.

One Day in the Life of Concordia College, St. Louis, in 1853

In October 1853, Professor Adolph Biewend described life at Concordia College for an article in Der Lutheraner.

“The day’s work is regulated by a new clock in the new wing and a bell in the court, which resounds a great distance. It rings at 5 o’clock in the morning to signify those not yet at work that it is time to get up. Fifteen minutes later joint morning devotion is held in the large lecture room under the direction of an instructor. Breakfast is served at 5:30 and then work begins.

“At 8:45 the bell rings as a warning to get ready for the morning lessons, which last from 9:00 to 12:00. After 12:00 dinner is eaten and students are free until 2:00. Five minutes before that bell rings, and afternoon lessons, which last until 5:00, begin. Then there is free time until 7:30 with supper at 6:30. At 7:30 the bell summons to work again, and at 8:45 the bell summons to vespers, which again is conducted under the supervision of an instructor, then the younger students retire. During study period the students of the Gymnasion are under constant supervision of a seminary student.

“During free time the students may be seen as they engage in all kinds of games on the playground or use the athletic equipment there, take care of a garden of which each one has a small one, beautify the grounds, or in summer go to the Mississippi River, about one mile away, for a bath (under supervision of an instructor). On Sunday morning they all go to the city and attend church and return after the conclusion of the afternoon service.”

1864

The Seminary continued to grow by leaps and bounds. The Synod grew tremendously in the 1850s, ’60s, and ’70s, and more and more students were coming to be trained at the Seminary. Pictured above is the graduating class of 1864, which consisted of eight students.

Meet Dr. C.F.W. Walther

Dr. C.F.W. Walther, the first president of Concordia Seminary, was born in Germany in 1811 and ordained in 1837. He sailed to America in 1838 with the Saxon Immigration. In 1841, he married Emilie and went on to teach and serve as Concordia Seminary’s president from 1850 until his death in 1887.

Walther was instrumental in forming The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and served as the church body’s first president, from 1847-1850, and again from 1864-1878.
Emilie Walther, wife of the Seminary’s first president, C.F.W. Walther, formed a sewing circle with women from two local churches. Emilie’s sewing circle provided seminarians with garments and blankets and helped with general mending needs. The ladies also provided financial assistance and collected food from local farms and gardens for the students. Today, groups like the Seminary Guild, the Lutheran Woman’s Missionary League (LWML), and generous donors continue to support seminarians in a multitude of ways. Emilie is pictured above (back, sixth from left) with members of her sewing circle.

The Curriculum of Concordia College in 1860

In this example of the Seminary’s curriculum from the Academic Catalog in 1860, Walther taught classes in Hermeneutics, the art of interpretation of Scripture. He taught New Testament Exegesis, the study of the New Testament books of the Bible, as well as a Church History and Liturgics (or worship). Brohm taught Homiletics, the art of writing and delivering sermons, as well as Catechetics and Pastoral Theology. Students also studied archeology, Old Testament Exegesis, history of Philosophy, and more.

Although teachings have advanced, many of these classes are still taught today. The core curriculum in place at the Seminary’s founding is still central to how students are taught today.
These students, seated in front of the original South Jefferson building, comprise the graduating class of 1887, which consisted of approximately 32 men. To put this into perspective: just two decades earlier, the Seminary graduated only eight students. Enrollment was increasing so quickly that the Seminary had trouble coming up with enough space for all of them. A second building was added to the campus, and then a third building joined them all together, and upper levels were added as well.

Did You Know?

In 1888, the faculty of Concordia Seminary consisted of only five people. (Pictured to the left; seated, l-r: Lange, Guenther, standing, l-r: Stoeckhardt, Pieper, Graebner). Numbering 35 full-time members in 2014, Concordia Seminary’s faculty is known and respected throughout the church for its combination of biblical, confessional scholarship and experience in applying the truths of God’s Word to people’s lives.

Today’s faculty is organized into four departments: Exegetical, Historical, Practical, and Systematic.
After decades of additions and renovations to the original building on South Jefferson Avenue, the Seminary determined the need to build a new school in its place. The new building was completed in 1883; it was a large Gothic structure with a central 136-foot-high steeple, a red brick exterior, and black walnut woodwork inside.

It was equipped with many classrooms, a library, dormitories, and a gymnasium in the basement. This new building could accommodate 200 students. Eventually, the Seminary outgrew this school and began plans for an even larger campus.

Did You Know?

While the new South Jefferson Avenue building was being built, Seminary students continued their classes at Concordia Publishing House, which was just down the street.
1909

Life in the 1900s was not easy by today’s standards. But this photo shows a group of students enjoying fellowship, laughter and something that looks like Guinness.

1903

What a sea of hats at the 1903 dedication of the Martin Luther statue! Standing over 21 feet tall — the granite pedestal is 12 feet tall, Luther himself is over 9 feet — the statue was a gift from local Lutheran congregations. It was originally placed at the South Jefferson Avenue campus, and moved with the Seminary to the Clayton campus. The statue, cast in Saxony, is a replica of the Luther statue in Worms, Germany.

Did You Know?

The log cabin was moved to its present location in central Altenburg in 1912. Its vertical oak 2-by-6 inch timbers were attached to the walls to stabilize the structure. The chimney was removed from the cabin at that time; a shelter was constructed over the cabin in 1915.
It’s an Apple Paring Party! Members of the Seminary community got together in 1915 to turn 10 bushels of apples into 160 quarts of apple butter for Concordia Seminary. After paring, the apples were cooked in open kettles over fires behind Trinity Hall. Constant stirring with long wooden paddles helped keep the apples from sticking or burning. This event was such a big part of Seminary life that they sold postcards featuring photos of the women cooking apple butter.

This postcard was written by Concordia’s second president, Dr. Franz Pieper. Pieper graduated from Concordia Seminary in 1875. He served as pastor from 1875 to 1878, serving first at Centerville, Wisconsin, and then at Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He joined the Seminary faculty as a professor of theology in 1878, and served as Seminary president from 1887 to 1931.
Smoke rose from the earth on a cold January day; men had to build a fire in the woods to thaw the ground enough for the groundbreaking ceremony to take place.

It was the first time that land had been broken by humans since the King of Spain deeded the land to the DeMun family, in pre-colonial times.

1924

The cornerstone was laid during a ceremony Oct. 26, 1924 (nine months after groundbreaking), that was transmitted across the country via the first broadcast of Lutheran radio station KFUO. While Seminary President Francis Pieper delivered an address in Latin, an airplane flew overhead. The irony of that moment is etched on a special capstone visible in the east gable of Wartburg Hall.

Pictured at right is the current campus during construction in 1924.

Plans for the new campus consisted of an administrative building, lecture hall, chapel, infirmary, dormitories, dining halls, assembly hall, service building, and power plant.

It took 2 1/2 years to complete construction.
Jacob Grebing of Altenburg, Missouri, is shown chopping wood for a replica of the log cabin, built in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Saxon immigration. Grebing’s father assisted the church’s founders in erecting the original log cabin for Concordia Seminary; the axe shown here is the same one his father used to trim the logs for the first log cabin 100 years ago. This replica cabin still stands on the Seminary campus today.

1939

Pictured above are two actors from the filming of “The Call of the Cross,” a 1939 movie about the founding of Concordia Seminary. The replica cabin Jacob Grebing helped build was used in the film. This movie is available on the Seminary’s website as a special feature of the four-disc DVD set of the movie “Walther.” The DVD is available for purchase at http://store.csl.edu/dvdset.

Did You Know?

The new campus was officially dedicated June 13, 1926, during a ceremony attended by more than 75,000 people from the United States and several foreign countries. At this point, the building committee was already raising money to build two more dormitories, due to record increases in enrollment.
Paul Hinrichs (left) and Jack Faszholz, two Concordia Seminary graduates, were major league baseball players in the 1950s. Hinrichs took a leave from his studies at the Seminary to pitch for the New York Yankees in the early 1950s, where he played with legends like Yogi Berra and Joe DiMaggio. He played for the Boston Red Sox after that, and then returned to the Seminary to complete his studies. Hinrichs served as a pastor for many years, and is now retired.

Faszholz was a pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals (with St. Louis’ beloved Stan Musial) and the Rochester Red Wings (the Cardinals’ minor league team at the time). He took classes at the Seminary in the fall during off-season and spent the rest of the year playing baseball. He was a pastor, teacher, and professor for many years before retiring.

Did You Know?

Coach Pederson’s legacy lives on in the Pederson Fieldhouse, named in his honor. The 1949 Preachers basketball team was the first to play in the Fieldhouse, where Concordia Seminary teams still play today.
On April 14, 1952, the LCMS Atlantic District issued a press release about the Concordia Seminary Chorus’ spring concert tour. The tour included stops at St. Matthew Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as well as a performance in a high school auditorium in Glen Rock, New Jersey, which had approximately 500 attendees. There was a concert in New York City as well; it took place at Immanuel Lutheran Church at 88th Street and Lexington Avenue, New York City, New York. Some 900 people attended.

The concert in Glen Rock was sponsored by the congregation of Bethlehem Lutheran, Ridgewood, New Jersey. Before the concert, the ladies of the congregation served dinner to the Chorus members, and provided them housing as well.

Expansion of Concordia Seminary

In 1956, enrollment at the Seminary reached an all-time high. Surging post-war enrollment meant growing student needs. New building projects were initiated in the 1950s and 1960s, resulting in new structures designed in the “ultraplain” architecture of the day.

Graduate Hall was constructed in 1951. Dr. Louis J. Sieck, who was president of the Seminary at the time, suddenly passed away the following year, and the building was renamed Sieck Hall in his honor.

Following the addition of Sieck Hall was the building of Loeber Hall, which was constructed in 1954. It functions as a dormitory and office space. Faculty Lane was extended the following year. In 1960, Seminary President Alfred Fuerbringer broke ground for Fritz and Metzger Halls, both student living quarters. Ludwig E. Fuerbringer Hall, which houses the Concordia Seminary Library, was completed two years later. During this time of rapid expansion, many existing buildings were renovated and air conditioning was installed, new parking lots were developed, and a second floor was added to Loeber Hall.

One of the most important additions to the Seminary campus was the completion of Luther Tower. Charles Z. Klauder, the architect who designed the campus in 1922, meant for it to be part of the original campus, but lack of funding prevented it from being built at that time.

Funding was provided by generous contributions and the Synod’s post-war “Conquest for Christ” campaign, which raised more than $13 million for the Lutheran education system.
Did You Know?

Concordia Seminary’s current President Dale A. Meyer graduated from the Seminary in 1973. Meyer joined the faculty at Concordia Seminary in 2001. He served as the Gregg H. Benidt Memorial Chair in Homiletics and Literature from 2001-2005. He became the 10th president of the Seminary in 2005. He also serves as professor of Practical Theology.

In 1938, Concordia Seminary established a Mission Department, or “Mission School,” to train students for service in foreign mission fields. The school played a significant role in the Synod’s international mission programs during the decades that followed. Later the work was expanded to include formation of missionaries close to home, in American towns and cities. In 1993, the Seminary founded the Institute for Mission Studies.

The dedication of the Mission Window in the Chapel of the Holy Apostles took place in 1963. The Chapel, located in the heart of the tower, was replete with religious symbolism. Some features include a three-dimensional wooden sculpture titled “The Throne of Grace,” the Te Deum Window, floor and ceiling symbols of apostolic mission, and an inscribed granite altar. The Mission Window was dedicated to past Synod Presidents Friedrich Pfotenhauer and John W. Behnken.
Although it was included in the original 1922 plans for the new Seminary, it took 44 years to secure funding and complete Luther Tower.

At various times after the main campus was completed in 1926, individuals and groups raised funds for the completion of the tower, but agreed to use the money for more pressing needs, such as student housing. It was in the 1960s when enough funding was secured to construct Luther Tower. Construction was completed in 1966, and the 49-bell carillon was installed in 1970.

Luther Tower rises 120 feet over Walther Arch. At the base of the arch is a stone bearing Luther’s coat of arms, and its surrounding four balconies bear engravings of the coats of arms of the four cities where Luther lived.

The darkest days in the history of Concordia Seminary came in the 1960s and early 1970s. A controversy regarding the authority of Scripture came to a head early in 1974 and resulted in the suspension of the sitting Seminary president and a majority of faculty leaving their positions in protest. A majority of students also left the school.

Five faculty members remained committed to the Scriptures and to the work of the Seminary, along with 100 students. With the help of God, the support of the church, and the redoubled efforts of the faculty, staff, and students, the Seminary finished the school year, celebrating together the 37 students who earned Master of Divinity degrees that May.

The controversy and the loss of faculty and staff was certainly a time of crisis for the Seminary, but the rebuilding immediately began. By fall 1974, enrollment nearly doubled and new faculty and executive staff were in place. Pictured above is the Dr. Ralph Bohlmann (first row, left), who had been called and installed in May as the Seminary’s president, with new faculty and staff at their installation that fall. The subsequent years saw enrollment continue to increase while faithful faculty members were called and commenced to teach.
1980

During the early 1980s, there was an emphasis on ministry to local neighborhoods. Students worked on a variety of evangelism projects, including the Cornerstone Coffeehouse, where students rented retail space across the street from the Seminary. There they performed Christian music and conducted a weekly Bible study that was open to the public.

1990

Pictured above is a new pastor and his family receiving their call on Call Day. Since the 1970s, the number of married students has increased to more than 50 percent. As a result, events such as Call Day are exciting, life-changing events for their families as well.

Professor Flashback

At left is Concordia Seminary’s own Dr. Andrew Bartelt lecturing on Hebrew in 1989. Bartelt graduated from the Seminary in 1976 and began teaching part-time before being called to the faculty in 1978. Bartelt is presently a professor of Exegetical Theology, the Gustav and Sophie Butterbach chair in Exegetical Theology, and director of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program.
Construction of The Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus began in 1990. The builder discovered that the original stone used in the Seminary’s 1926 buildings was no longer accessible. God intervened: an old smokestack made of the same stone became available, which was purchased, disassembled, and moved to the Seminary.

The chapel was dedicated Nov. 15, 1992. More than 1,700 guests attended the historic event.
2007

Deaconesses love Call Day too!

Originating in 19th-century Europe, the modern deaconess was introduced in Germany to help address the great spiritual and physical needs that emerged in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and increasing industrialization. In their efforts to embody the compassion of Christ for the hurting and sick, deaconesses helped to shape the fields of nursing, social ministry, and Christian education. Today, deaconesses are called by congregations and into foreign missions, employed by hospitals, nursing homes, and social service organizations. Through her theological training, skills, and practical experience, a deaconess serves the church by shaping and carrying out its works of charity, compassion, and human care. Set apart for such service, she helps the church manifest the evangelical vision of a community that is known in the world through its sacrificial love for others.

2003

The Seminary Guild, shown here attending one of their regular luncheons in Koburg Hall, is a women’s organization dedicated to supporting the students.

Founded in 1932, Guild members help students and their families by providing resources for needs that are not institutionally funded. Among their gifts are donations to the Food Bank and Re-Sell It Shop, furnishings for dormitories, and direct-to-student aid.

Each year the Guild develops a list of Adopted Service Projects and goals for their financial support; they also volunteer their time, build awareness within their communities, and gather regularly to ensure progress toward these goals.
2010

Oct. 1, 2010, was a historic day for Concordia Seminary; the campus had become debt-free for the first time since 1987. Dr. Kent Burreson, Dean of the Chapel, burned the mortgage on Chapel Plaza as part of a special celebratory service. As the pages burned, the assembled group sang the Common Doxology and offered prayers of thanks for the retirement of debt.

Did you Know?

Concordia Seminary launched the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) program in 2003. It is a distance-education program designed to prepare immigrants as pastors, missionaries, and deaconesses without moving away from their families, full-time careers, and their urban or ethnic immigrant communities and ministries.

2012

Rev. Bill Wrede, director of recruitment and admissions, enjoys fellowship with the students at Oktoberfest, an annual campus event that is sponsored by the Seminary’s Student Association.
A giant birthday cake was unveiled on campus Friday, March 28, as part of “Cakeway to the West,” a citywide art exhibit produced by local nonprofit stl250 in observance of the 250th birthday of the city of St. Louis. The custom designed, four-foot-tall, two-tiered fiberglass cake sculpture (painted by Janice Schoultz Mudd) was placed in Chapel Plaza and illustrates the history and doctrine of Concordia Seminary and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

stl250 chose 250 sites around the region as cake locations due to their historical relevance. Concordia Seminary was honored to be included as it celebrates its milestone 175th anniversary this year.

More than 100 students, families, faculty, staff, and community members attended the unveiling and the cake and coffee reception that followed in Koburg Hall.

Orientation week culminated with an opening worship service for all students, faculty, and staff. In his sermon that morning, Seminary President Dale A. Meyer reminded those in attendance that “we are all co-workers of faith.” Concordia Seminary students bring their own unique experience and background, but all are embarking on a journey to become effective pastors and church workers who lead with the Gospel. Regular worship together reminds each one of the important role they have in the church.
Future

The world looks very different today than it did in 1839 when Dr. C.F.W. Walther began teaching future pastors in a log cabin in Perry County, Missouri. One thing that hasn’t changed is Concordia Seminary’s commitment to providing theological education and leadership centered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

To address the changing world, Concordia Seminary is focused on the needs of people in Synod congregations as well as those in communities where the LCMS has a new presence. Programs like Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP), Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS), and Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT) form pastors and other leaders to effectively serve in new environments.

The Seminary’s history is important, but its future even more so. Today’s Seminary faculty and staff strive to build on the rich heritage of the past 175 years, and are committed to providing sound theological education and vibrant leadership development to future generations of church workers.

Learn More About Concordia Seminary

If you or someone you know would like to find out more about attending Concordia Seminary, please contact the Office of Admissions at 800-822-9545 or admissions@csl.edu. For more information about how you can support the mission and vision of the Seminary, please contact Seminary Advancement at 800-822-5287 or advancement@csl.edu.
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