



COMMENCEMENT

*ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-SIXTH YEAR
ACADEMIC EXERCISES*

THE FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER
MAY 16, 2025 • 7 P.M.

CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS

Carillon Recital by John Klinger (Carillonneur)

PRE-COMMENCEMENT MUSIC

The Order of the Groups in the Processional

Candidates for the Residential Alternate Route Certificate
Candidates for the Degree of Master of Arts
Candidates for the Degree of Master of Divinity
Candidates for the Degree of Doctor of Ministry
Candidates for the Degree of Master of Sacred Theology
Candidates for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Faculty and Staff
Board of Regents
Platform Officiants
Recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award
Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Divinity
Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Letters
Seminary President

A Note on Academic Dress

The hoods worn by faculty members and candidates for degrees indicate the degree held, the subject in which it is held and the institution that conferred the degree. The colors of the silk lining the hood are the colors of the institution that granted the degree (e.g., the hood of Concordia Seminary is lined with myrtle green and gold). The color of the velvet edging of the hood, running forward around the throat, indicates the faculty or department in which the degree has been earned.

Scarlet: Theology
Violet: Law
White: Arts and Letters
Dark Blue: Philosophy
Light Blue: Education
Lemon: Library
Drab: Business
Pink: Music

A gold bullion tassel on the cap indicates a doctoral degree.

THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

In nomine Jesu



*As the hymn is introduced,
please stand and face the processional cross.*

THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Thy Strong Word (*LSB* 578)

1 Thy strong word did cleave the dark - ness; At Thy
 2 Lo, on those who dwelt in dark - ness, Dark as
 3 Thy strong Word be - speaks us righ - teous; Bright with
 4 From the cross Thy wis - dom shin - ing Break - eth

speak - ing it was done. For cre - at - ed
 night and deep as death, Broke the light of
 Thine own ho - li - ness, Glo - rious now, we
 forth in con - qu'ring might; From the cross for -

light we thank Thee, While Thine or - dered sea - sons run.
 Thy sal - va - tion, Breathed Thine own life - breath - ing breath.
 press toward glo - ry, And our lives our hopes con - fess.
 ev - er beam - eth All Thy bright re - deem - ing light.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise to
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise to
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise to
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise to

Thee who light dost send! Al - le - lu - ia,
 Thee who light dost send! Al - le - lu - ia,
 Thee who light dost send! Al - le - lu - ia,
 Thee who light dost send! Al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia with - out end!
 al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia with - out end!
 al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia with - out end!
 al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia with - out end!

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>5 Give us lips to sing Thy glory,
 Tongues Thy mercy to proclaim,
 Throats that shout the hope that fills us,
 Mouths to speak Thy holy name.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 May the light which Thou dost send
 Fill our songs with alleluias,
 Alleluias without end!</p> | <p>6 God the Father, light-creator,
 To Thee laud and honor be.
 To Thee, Light of Light begotten,
 Praise be sung eternally.
 Holy Spirit, light-revealer,
 Glory, glory be to Thee.
 Mortals, angels, now and ever
 Praise the holy Trinity!</p> |
|---|--|

THE INVOCATION

Rev. Prof. Thomas J. Egger, *M.Div., Ph.D.*
President

L In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

L Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory,

C **for the sake of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness!** (*Ps. 115:1*)

L Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C **He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!**

THE READING FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 12:1-3

THE HYMN

Evening and Morning (LSB 726)

1 Eve - ning and morn - ing, Sun - set and dawn - ing, Wealth, peace, and
2 Fa - ther, O hear me, Par - don and spare me; Calm all my
3 Ills that still grieve me Soon are to leave me; Though bil - lows
4 To God in heav - en All praise be giv - en! Come, let us
glad - ness, Com - fort in sad - ness: These are Thy works; all the
ter - rors, Blot out my er - rors That by Thine eyes they may
tow - er, And winds gain pow - er, Af - ter the storm the fair
of - fer And glad - ly prof - fer To the Cre - a - tor the
glo - ry be Thine! Times with - out num - ber, A - wake or in
no more be scanned. Or - der my go - ings, Di - rect all my
sun shows its face. Joys e'er in - creas - ing And peace nev - er
gifts He doth prize. He well re - ceiv - eth A heart that be -
slum - ber, Thine eye ob - serves us, From dan - ger pre - serves us,
do - ings; As it may please Thee, Re - tain or re - lease me;
ceas - ing; These shall I trea - sure And share in full mea - sure
liev - eth; Hymns that a - dore Him Are pre - cious be - fore Him
Caus - ing Thy mer - cy up - on us to shine.
All I com - mit to Thy fa - ther - ly hand.
When in His man - sions God grants me a place.
And to His throne like sweet in - cense a - rise.

THE ADDRESS

Rev. Matthew Anker, *Gr.Dip.Min.*,
President, Lutheran Mission–Australia

THE CONFERRING OF CERTIFICATES

The Presentation of the Residential Alternate Route Candidates
Rev. Prof. Timothy E. Saleska, *M.Div., M.Phil., Ph.D.*
Dean of Ministerial Formation
Gustav and Sophie Butterbach Professor of Exegetical Theology

THE CONFERRING OF EARNED DEGREES

The Presentation of the Candidates for the Degree of Master of Arts
Rev. Prof. Joel C. Elowsky, *M.Div., S.T.M., M.Phil., Ph.D.*
Dean of Advanced Studies
Frank and Valerie Fuerst Professor of Historical Theology

The Presentation of the Candidates for the Degree of Master of Divinity
Rev. Prof. Timothy E. Saleska, *M.Div., M.Phil., Ph.D.*
Dean of Ministerial Formation
Gustav and Sophie Butterbach Professor of Exegetical Theology

The Presentation of the Candidates for the Degree of Doctor of Ministry
Rev. Prof. Joel C. Elowsky, *M.Div., S.T.M., M.Phil., Ph.D.*
Dean of Advanced Studies
Frank and Valerie Fuerst Professor of Historical Theology

The Presentation of the Candidate for the Degree of Master of Sacred Theology
Rev. Prof. Joel C. Elowsky, *M.Div., S.T.M., M.Phil., Ph.D.*
Dean of Advanced Studies
Frank and Valerie Fuerst Professor of Historical Theology

The Presentation of the Candidates for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Rev. Prof. Joel C. Elowsky, *M.Div., S.T.M., M.Phil., Ph.D.*
Dean of Advanced Studies
Frank and Valerie Fuerst Professor of Historical Theology

THE CONFERRING OF THE HONORARY AWARD

The Presentation of the Recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award
Rev. Prof. David J. Peter, *M.Div., D.Min.*
Dean of Faculty

THE CONFERRING OF THE HONORARY DEGREES

The Presentation of the Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Divinity
Rev. Prof. David J. Peter, *M.Div., D.Min.*
Dean of Faculty

The Presentation of the Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Letters
Rev. Prof. David J. Peter, *M.Div., D.Min.*
Dean of Faculty

THE RECOGNITION OF A RETIRING PROFESSOR

Rev. Prof. Thomas J. Egger, *M.Div., Ph.D.*
President

THE CLOSING OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR

Rev. Prof. Thomas J. Egger, *M.Div., Ph.D.*
President

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION

*During the recessional hymn, please turn to face the cross as it passes you,
then face forward again when the cross reaches the back of the quadrangle.*

THE RECESSIONAL HYMN

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (*LSB 790*)

1 Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre -
2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is won - drous - ly
3 Praise to the Lord, who has fear - ful - ly, won - drous - ly,
4 Praise to the Lord, who will pros - per your work and de -
5 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me a -

a - tion! O my soul, praise Him, for He is your
reign - ing And, as on wings of an ea - gle, up -
made you, Health has be - stowed and, when heed - less - ly
fend you; Sure - ly His good - ness and mer - cy shall
dore Him! All that has life and breath, come now with

health and sal - va - tion! Let all who hear Now to His
lift - ing, sus - tain - ing. Have you not seen All that is
fall - ing, has stayed you. What need or grief Ev - er has
dai - ly at - tend you. Pon - der a - new What the Al -
prais - es be - fore Him! Let the A - men Sound from His

tem - ple draw near, Join - ing in glad ad - o - ra - tion!
need - ful has been Sent by His gra - cious or - dain - ing?
failed of re - lief? Wings of His mer - cy did shade you.
might - y can do As with His love He be - friends you.
peo - ple a - gain; Glad - ly for - ev - er a - dore Him!

POST-COMMENCEMENT MUSIC

Soli Deo Gloria

THE MARSHALS

Rev. Prof. Joel Biermann, *M.Div., Ph.D.*

Rev. Prof. Peter Nafzger, *M.Div., Ph.D.*

Rev. Prof. Mark Rockenbach, *M.A., M.Div., Ph.D.*

THE MUSICIANS

The Clarion Brass

Mary Weber, *trumpet*

Jason Harris, *trumpet*

Corbin Castro, *French horn*

Tom Vincent, *trombone*

Matt Kuebler, *tuba*

Conductor

Prof. Samuel Eatherton, *B.S., M.C.M., D.M.A.*

Kantor, The Kreft Professor for Music Arts

*Everyone is invited to remain in the Main Quadrangle for a cookie reception,
sponsored by the Seminary Guild, following Commencement exercises.
(In the event of inclement weather, the reception will be held in Koburg Hall.)*



See yourself at the Sem!

Thank you for being here and for supporting our students during their preparations for serving God's church. Have you or someone you know ever considered serving as a pastor or deaconess? Please visit or share the link ask.csl.edu/register/Request-Information or scan the QR code. We would love to have a conversation about attending Concordia Seminary!

Acknowledgments

Text to "Thy Strong Word" © 1969 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110000082. Text to stanzas 3–4 of "Evening and Morning" © 1930 Augsburg Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110000082.

CANDIDATES FOR THE ALTERNATE ROUTE CERTIFICATE

These students have completed academic residency and will be eligible for certification and ordination upon completion of a one-year vicarage.

Matthew Evan Beaty
Michael A. Saxton
Craig Douglas Wenzlick

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

Cletus Alale Mumuni
¹Lucas Filipe Agliardi Becker
[§]Alyssa Rose Choate
²Omar M. Garza
[§]Rachel Claire Hart
Nicholas Kumbo Louis Jacinto
Celestino Berewete Zengbe Kaka
Lucas G. Moody

^{*§1}Ashley M. Nelson
^{*Kauê}Nevenfeld Paniz
^{§1}Ieva C. Russell
^{*§1}Christina Leigh Shaffer
Christopher David Shearman
[†]Jessica J. Thompson
^{*Benjamin}Mark Vineyard
Craig Douglas Wenzlick

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF DIVINITY

Davin Johan Alberson
Brett Anthony Arrasmith
Eric Rolf Bear
Ethan Matthew Boester
Micah Raymond Brown
Daniel Thomas Brummet
Daniel William Bueckman
Peter James Burch
Jonathan Thomas Chapa
Robert Edward Roth Choate
Timothy David Contreras
Sean Kieron Deming
Christopher Timothy Dhuse
Joseph Michael Eggerman
Mark Patrick Esser
Michael William Ewert
^{*†}Jacob Robert Friedrich
^{*3}Nathan Andrew Harkins
Ethan Daniel Hart
Benjamin Loren Andrew Heinz
Daniel Wayne Heitshusen

²Erik Lynn Johnson
^{*Wesley}Charles Johnson
^{*Alexander}C. Kauffman
Joel Lissy
Ethan William Luft
Noah T. Menke
Dylan Kenneth Meyer
Benjamin Thomas Oesch
Noah Alan Russell
[†]Peder Kristian Saethre
Jacob Raymond William Scheler
Sean William Sheppard
James Brock Stockland
Tanner Thomas Sutcliffe
Joshua Douglas Tegatz
[†]Daniel Charles Vanderhyde
Matthew Ernest Vathauer
Stephen Daniel Wareham
^{*Benjamin}Mark Wescoatt
Justin Steven Wood

* In absentia

† Pending completion of vicarage or summer course work

‡ Deaconess certification pending completion of internship

§ Deaconess certification granted

¹ Degree granted Aug. 16, 2024

² Degree granted Dec. 13, 2024

³ Degree granted Jan. 24, 2025

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

*Keith Dwayne Aschenbeck

Major Applied Project

Creating a Cultural Liturgy of Intentional Prayer: Leading Grace Lutheran Church into Greater Understanding and Engagement with the Surrounding Community

Matthew Jonathan Clark

Major Applied Project

Encouraging Conversation: Sharing the Oral History of Nepalese Refugees through Dialogical Preaching to Inspire Intercultural Collaboration

John Frederick Davis Jr.

Major Applied Project

Following the Mission Leader: The Value of Imitational Learning in the Training of Apostolic Church Planting Teams at Memorial Lutheran Church in Katy, Texas

²Robert Eugene Kraft

Major Applied Project

The Abusive Effects of Trauma on Leadership Styles and Performance

¹Kristopher M. Morris

Major Applied Project

“Lord, to Whom Shall We Go?” A Study of the Role of Confessor and its Usage Among LCMS Clergy

*²Victor Evan Morris

Major Applied Project

Preparing Spiritually Resilient Warriors in the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command

¹Stephen Mark Mundfrom

Major Applied Project

The Congregation in all Her Glory: How the History of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) Can Be Used to Teach Free and Living Church Polity

* In absentia

† Pending completion of vicarage or summer course work

‡ Deaconess certification pending completion of internship

§ Deaconess certification granted

¹ Degree granted Aug. 16, 2024

² Degree granted Dec. 13, 2024

³ Degree granted Jan. 24, 2025

**CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY**

Robert Matthew Brown

**CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

John Philip Cima II

Dissertation

*Seeing Through the Incense Smoke: Understanding the Meanings of Ancestral Rites in Vietnam
for the Sake of a Pastoral Approach in Christian Mission*

Adviser: Rev. Dr. Douglas Rutt

Christian John Einertson

Dissertation

*Hæc est fides catholica: Toward a Tradition-Centered Theology
of the Lutheran Confessional Writings*

Adviser: Rev. Dr. Charles Arand

²Fredric Ryan Laughlin

Dissertation

Truth and a Song: The Role of Preaching in the Life and Legacy of Francis A. Schaeffer

Adviser: Rev. Dr. David Schmitt

Joshua Thomas Lowe

Dissertation

*Reason and all My Senses: Surveying the Post-Enlightenment Frame of Reason through
Contemporary Philosophy, Cognitive Psychology, and Cognitive Linguistics with Appropriations
for Christian Theology and Practice.*

Adviser: Rev. Dr. Joel Okamoto

Nicholas Donald Proksch

Dissertation

Theodore of Raithu's Preparation: Biblical Grounding for Metaphysical Terms

Adviser: Rev. Dr. Joel Elowsky

* In absentia

† Pending completion of vicarage or summer course work

‡ Deaconess certification pending completion of internship

§ Deaconess certification granted

1 Degree granted Aug. 16, 2024

2 Degree granted Dec. 13, 2024

3 Degree granted Jan. 24, 2025

THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARD

Awarded to graduates of Concordia Seminary who have rendered exceptional service in at least one of the following areas: parish ministry, mission field, preparation of workers or Synod service.

Dr. Gregory Seltz

Dr. Gregory Seltz serves as executive director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL) in Washington, D.C. In this role, he provides input, education, advocacy and resources in support of religious liberty, life and marriage. He works to build partnerships in the nation's capital on behalf of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's (LCMS) congregations, schools, universities and seminaries.

Seltz earned a bachelor's degree in New Testament–biblical languages from Concordia University Ann Arbor (CUAA), Ann Arbor, Mich. He holds both a Master of Divinity and a Master of Sacred Theology in Systematic Theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, where he later earned a Ph.D. in theology and culture. He also received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Concordia University Irvine (CUI), Irvine, Calif., in recognition of his work in urban ministry.

Seltz received his first call to serve as a mission pastor in Dallas, Texas. He later served a large congregation in Tampa, Fla., and was the founding pastor of Church For All Nations, the first new Lutheran mission start in New York City in more than 40 years. He also served as executive director of Life's Journey Ministries, an urban evangelism nonprofit in Manhattan. From 2000-11, Seltz was a professor of theology and director of the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center at CUI, where he oversaw the master's program in theology and culture. During his tenure, more than 75 pastors prepared for ministry in multicultural urban contexts, including Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish, Indonesian, Indian and African American communities.

In 2011, Seltz became Speaker of "The Lutheran Hour," Lutheran Hour Ministries' flagship radio program which reaches more than one million listeners on more than 1,800 stations in North America and through the American Forces Network. He served as the organization's spiritual leader, evangelist and ministry emissary with the LCMS and Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC).

An influential voice in church and society, Seltz is a frequent speaker on topics such as church and state, the public mission of the church, the two kingdoms, evangelism, cross-cultural ministry and pastoral leadership in an urban post-modern world.

He and his wife, Dr. Marie Yvette Seltz, have one daughter, Devin.

CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF DIVINITY

Awarded to clergy who have rendered outstanding service in church life.

Rev. Matthew Anker
Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa

Rev. Matthew Anker currently serves as president of Lutheran Mission–Australia (LM-A), a new confessional church body operating with the support and aid of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). He previously served as assistant to the bishop for International Mission for the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) from 2018–24, serving also as chairman of the Lutheran Overseas Partner Churches—Papua New Guinea and in numerous other capacities. Anker served as a pastor of the LCA for 22 years before resigning in 2024 due to the theological direction of the synod. He has been and continues to be a clear voice for Scriptural, confessional Lutheranism in Southeast Asia and Melanesia.

A native of Australia, Anker's academic qualifications include a Bachelor of Economics from Monash University, Melbourne (1992), and a Bachelor of Theology (2000) and Graduate Diploma of Ministry (2002) from Luther Seminary, Adelaide, Australia.

Anker served as pastor to two parishes, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Mildura, Victoria (2003–07); and the Goulburn Murray Lutheran Parish, Victoria (2007–18) — a congregation that welcomed many refugee families from Africa. Anker ensured their spiritual, emotional and physical needs were met and was instrumental in the building of a new church to accommodate the congregation's growing needs as God blessed its mission and evangelism. Over the years, Anker has championed faithfulness to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions as a sessional lecturer at Luther Seminary (2004–06), as assistant bishop of the Victorian-Tasmanian District and member of the District Church Council, by providing leadership and consultation for the Committee for International Mission and the Committee for Cross-Cultural Ministry, and in many other ways.

Prior to the LCA's 2023 synodical convention, Anker met with several pastors and laypeople to plan a response to the ongoing and increasing pressure to introduce female pastors into the LCA. As the LCA continued down this path, Anker has consistently called fellow pastors and laity to the biblical and confessional truth, while promoting the important service women contribute to the church in many ways, himself having worked alongside the LCA's only deaconess. Together with this group of confessional pastors and laity, Anker helped establish LM–A to secure a future for confessional Lutheranism in Australia. Under Anker's tireless and selfless leadership, LM–A has seen numerous new congregations established and an increasing number of existing congregations, confessional pastors and faithful laypeople across Australia join LM–A in the promotion of the Gospel according to the Lutheran Confessions.

Anker and his wife, Laryssa, are adult converts to the church. They have four adult children and four grandchildren.

CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LETTERS

*Awarded to people who demonstrate creativity, courage and excellence in literary articulation
of the Christian faith.*

Dr. Christopher W. Mitchell
Doctor of Letters, Honoris causa

Dr. Christopher Mitchell serves as the general editor of the Concordia Commentary series at Concordia Publishing House (CPH), the publishing arm of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Since the series' inception in 1992, he has overseen the publication of 48 volumes totaling 33,894 pages. The scholarly series emphasizes close attention to the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts in their historical contexts, offering theological exposition in accord with the whole of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions to support the church's faithful proclamation of the Gospel.

A transplant from California to Wisconsin, Mitchell earned a Bachelor of Science in mathematics and physics in 1978 from the University of Wisconsin—Madison. Encouraged by his campus pastor to consider the pastoral ministry, he went on to complete a Master of Arts (1980) and a Ph.D. (1983) in Hebrew and Semitic Studies, with a minor in classical Greek, there.

Mitchell received his first call to serve as a parish pastor in Minnesota. After two years in congregational ministry he was called in 1989 to join CPH, where he has remained for more than three decades.

Among his many contributions to theological scholarship, Mitchell authored the Song of Songs volume in the Concordia Commentary series. He has worked closely with faculty from Concordia Seminary throughout the series' development. Contributors have included Dr. Louis Brighton (†), Dr. Horace Hummel (†), Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs, Dr. R. Reed Lessing, Dr. Bruce Schuchard, Dr. James Voelz, Dr. Timothy Saleska, Dr. Paul Raabe, and Dr. Andrew Bartelt. Forthcoming volumes are being prepared by Dr. Thomas J. Egger, Dr. Ronald Mudge, Dr. Kevin Golden, Dr. Adam Hensley, Dr. Jeffrey Oswald, Dr. Philip Penhallegon and Dr. Vilson Scholz.

Mitchell and his wife, Carol, married in 1977. They are blessed with two sons, a daughter-in-law and two grandsons.

THE FACULTY, ACADEMIC STAFF AND BOARD OF REGENTS

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*Director of the Center for the Study
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David R. Maxwell, *M.A., M.Div., S.T.M., Ph.D.*
Louis A. Fincke and Anna B. Shine
Professor of Systematic Theology
Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology

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Director of Certification

Joel P. Okamoto, *M.Div., S.T.M., Th.D.*
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