

Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr.—President

The Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. serves as the sixteenth president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and professor of American Christianity and American Lutheranism. Dr. Rast joined the Department of Historical Theology in the fall of 1996 after serving as pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, Tennessee (1992-96).

He received his B.A. in Theological Languages with a minor in Theology from Concordia College (now University), River Forest, Illinois (1986), and his M.Div. (1990) and S.T.M. (1995), both with a major in Historical Theology and a minor in Systematic Theology, from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. In 2000 he received the M.A. degree and in 2003, he successfully defended his dissertation, “Joseph A. Seiss and the Lutheran Church in America,” and earned his Ph.D. in American Church History from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

Dr. Rast is a member of the Board of Directors for the journal *Lutheran Quarterly*. He is the chairman of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) on which he has served since 2006. The CTCR provides guidance and leadership in the areas of theology and church relations. This includes doctrinal issues as well as social concerns such as divorce, gender identity and immigration.

He has authored numerous articles on a wide range of topics with special interest in the growth and expansion of Lutheranism in the United States in the mid to late 19th century. He is also working on an ongoing oral history project dealing with African-American ministry in both the LCMS and the old Synodical Conference.

In addition to serving at the Seminary, Dr. Rast regularly presents at workshops, retreats and conferences around the United States. He has represented the Seminary and Synod at numerous international conferences and by teaching in Argentina, Brazil, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, Russia, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic and elsewhere throughout the world.

His professional associations include:

- Editorial Committee, Concordia Historical Quarterly (2000-2010)
- President, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri (2001-2007)
- Board of Governors, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis Missouri (1995-2009)
- Commission on Doctrinal Review (1998-2001)
- American Society of Church History
- Concordia Historical Institute
- American Academy of Religion

In 2012, the Concordia Historical Institute (CHI) recognized him with the Distinguished Service Award for his dedication to Lutheran history, especially that of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and to CHI.

When not teaching or traveling, Dr. Rast still enjoys the delving into history, especially from the Civil War era. He is a music enthusiast, his iPod playlist includes genres, from Classical to Bluegrass...the more obscure the better. But, perhaps his favorite pastime is all things pertaining to railroads. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of locomotives, train stations and routes. He is a long-time member of the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society and models the Pennsy in HO scale from the year 1948.

The greatest joy of his life, however, comes from the time he spends with his family. He and his wife, Amy, have three children: Lawrence III, Karl and Joanna.