

# CONCORD

*A Journalistic Ministry of Students at Luther Seminary*

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## Where are you going?

From Genesis to Revelation, and points between

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### Back to Berkely

*Melissa Afdahl reflects on her Luther semester*

### From Russia with Love

*Dan Lee reviews TMORA's Icon exhibit.*

### Mark the Calendar

*Seminary-wide silent auction and talent show Tuesday, March 28th*

**Plus: Lutheran Poetry Magazine seeks Poets - and we have some!**

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# CONCORD

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## Managing Editor

Marc Ostlie-Olson

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Readers are encouraged to interact with *The Concord* in a variety of ways. Articles and 'Letters to the Editor' are welcomed, as are less formal responses offered through the online version. All submissions should include the author's name, telephone number and, if applicable, class standing. Submissions should be received in our mailbox in the Olson Campus Center (701), at our office, Gullixson 10, or by e-mail.

The Managing Editors reserve the right to publish, edit, or disregard all submissions.

## Letter

# Thanks, Middlers, for the Manifesto

I want to commend the Middler students whose proposal for a revised M Div curriculum appeared in the Nov. 30 issue of the *Concord*. It is thoughtful and provocative. Its tone is open and engaging. Most important, it initiates a conversation that I hope will be joined by many of us in the months ahead. My own sense is that there is much to ponder in what has been proposed but I am more inclined at this point to offer an additional perspective than to respond to the specific recommendations of the proposal.

Several years ago the Leadership Division began a conversation in which readiness for ministry in any role would be assessed more on the basis of competency—as demonstrated in the creation of a portfolio—than on the basis of completing a certain number of courses. One of the ways to demonstrate competency, of course, is through the completion of courses, but the notion of competency opens up a much richer, fuller but also more labor intensive and complicated conversation. It is, nevertheless, a conversation worth continuing.

Contextualization is an equally complex issue, but one that needs to be approached in a fully comprehensive way. For example, most of the seminary community recognizes the importance of internship for M Div students preparing to be ordained pastors notwithstanding the disruptions and issues that come with internship. However, it has been difficult as a seminary to fully incorporate its meaning and importance into our overall structure. For instance, the curriculum discussion of the 1990s pretty much left internship alone, to some extent, out of a belief that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," but I think we missed an opportunity for a fuller conversation about contextualization.

The fact that the senior year is structurally very similar to the Junior and Middler years represents for me another missed opportunity. Granted, the content of the senior courses often builds on what was experienced on internship, but the structure of the year suggests that not as much has changed through internship as I think is the case.

Finally, I want to recall an experiment of the 1990s that actually took several forms and extended over a number of years. It had an on-campus version and an African one. The Integrated Quarter Program was labor intensive, thus costly and demanding, but it also fostered collegiality, creativity, and a form of contextualization that most participants valued. I think that there is much to learn from such efforts if we are serious about providing the best preparation that we can for the future leaders of the church. May the probing and the conversation continue.

Respectfully,

Randy A. Nelson, Director

Contextual Leadership Initiative.

## *Traveling Mercies.*

Where will you find yourself in January?

By Marc Ostlie-Olson, Managing Editor

**W**e have only eight pages for you this month. Apparently, in the middle of a semester packed with course requirements, reading, writing and complex thoughts, we're able to fill the issues of *Concord* with what overflows. Give us a couple of weeks off, however, and it seems like we melt into listlessness like last week's snow. January *Concord* - a short issue for a short month.

As you know, though, J-Term is anything *but* a month "off." This short term, sandwiched between the wide expanses of Fall and Spring semesters, has the potential to take you deeper than usual into a single subject, further down the rails on one of the trains of thought that make regular stops in Gullixson. For those traveling further from home, this month takes us off the hill a ways, deeper into the watery world that spreads out below and beyond Bockman. Israel/Palestine. Frogtown. South Africa. Chicago. Egypt. Mexico. Guatemala. North Minneapolis. Rural America.

The *Concord* is hereby seeking travel writing and images from students engaged in any and all of the unique and in-depth courses and experiences that this month offers. Whether your journey takes you across salt water, deep into downtown, or all the way from Genesis to Revelation, we want to hear about where you go, whom you encounter there, and what happens to you. February's issue will feature your reports and reflections on January's journeys.

Stay tuned in February for an interview on Gerhard Forde with Dr. Paulson, and for the March announcement of the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Lutheran Tract Contest. Travel well, friends, wherever the road takes you this month. God willing, we'll meet again soon.



### *Writing*

Consider submitting a journal entry or a post-trip reflection piece. Prose, poetry, analysis, scholarship, and commentary are all acceptable forms. Students from one group may collaborate on a contribution.

### *Images*

Share photos and/or drawings from your trip. Submitted images will be entered into a contest to be judged by an impartial seminary staff member. All entries will be published online. The winning image will be featured on the cover of February's print issue.

*All submissions are due, preferably via email to [concord@luthersem.edu](mailto:concord@luthersem.edu), no later than Midnight on Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>. All contributions published in the print version will earn \$25.*

# Home to Berkeley

## Graced with questions and ideas

By Melissa Afdahl, MDiv Senior

People have been stopping me throughout the semester to ask, “How is Luther different than PLTS?” I have been taking note over the past fifteen weeks. One of my goals in studying at Luther this semester was to dispel some of the rumors. There are rumors—not of the apocalyptic wars in Mark, but equally devastating. They run back and forth between our schools, “too liberal, too ecumenical”; “too Lutheran, too conservative.”

For me, a few of the myths have been dispelled. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that nearly 20% of Luther students are non-ELCA. The breadth of faculty perspectives that surface in the classroom still intrigues me. I hope you might come to Berkeley to dismiss a few myths of your own.

Any student who has taken pastoral care begins to wonder all the time. I wonder what would happen if more students participated in the exchange program between Luther and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. It is another move—an article in last month’s Concord mentioned the four moves required by seminary education. I will be making my sixth as I start internship.

It’s not easy to uproot for a semester or a year, but it has certainly been worth it for me. Experiencing theological education in another context has challenged my ideas about what it means to proclaim the Gospel rightly. In any milieu, it becomes easy to mistake culture for the truth. What does it mean when the Gospel sounds different in another part of the country

or the world? As emerging church leaders and pastors, perhaps the question to ask is, “How do I speak the Gospel so that it is heard?”

The truth of the matter is that Luther Seminary is the next closest seminary to PLTS. A whole lot of life is happening between Minnesota and California. The Western Mission Cluster has emerged to address this reality. What does it look like when Goliath and David team up for ministry? I haven’t seen iron-headed spears and bronze helmets yet; we don’t prance around with lyres at PLTS, but the analogy seems apt for the pairing of our seminaries.

I had the privilege of working in the Office of Seminary Relations the first part of the semester. I participated in the phone-a-thon that thanked donors participating in the Called and Sent campaign. A friend from PLTS joked about what would happen in Luther tithed to PLTS. That PLTS struggles financially is no secret, but unfortunately, the students feel the brunt of it.

As Lutherans, we talk a lot about law and promise. My first year at PLTS, the ability of Dr. Jane Strohl to twist a tale of her beagle Cher into an embodied movement of divine grace left me awestruck. And every story ends with “the third use of the law.” What I carry from Luther Seminary is the knowledge that the first and second uses of the law, too, are filled with grace.

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*“What does it mean when the Gospel sounds different in another part of the country or the world? As emerging church leaders and pastors, perhaps the question to ask is, “How do I speak the Gospel so that it is heard?”*

## *A Beautiful Read*

### Dan spends a day with the Icons

By Daniel Lee, Concord Staff Writer

Iconoclasts be damned, free admission to the largest collection of Russian art in North America is an opportunity not to be missed. While not as emotionally rewarding to the uber-Lutheran as an all-expense-paid trip to Holy Wittenberg, *Windows to Heaven*, a collection on loan from The Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, MA, provides a rare glimpse into a culturally and theologically rich tradition.

Stepping through the unassuming doors of The Museum of Russian Art in South Minneapolis, a visitor finds herself at a surprisingly diverse crossroads. Architecturally, the museum is a renovated Spanish Revival-stylized church which now boasts a comfortably modern and surprisingly effective artistic interior. Geographically, the former Mayflower Church sits a stone's throw from seven potholed lanes of concrete interstate in South Minneapolis. Artistically, the majority of the museum's pieces—born amid the great communist program to promote classical painting following the Russian Civil War—sit alongside a special collection of Russian icons - which are arguably anything but "art." Yet despite the many dissonant chords vibrating within this museum's walls, the open-minded visitor experiences a nearly seamless transition from the busy intersections outside to the calmingly artistic intersections within.

Of special interest to the Luther Seminary community is the current exhibit of Russian Iconography on display until January 14<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to the generosity of Luther alumni Jack Hustad, visitors from Luther can expect to receive complimentary admission to a worthy exhibit and

a book entitled *Iconostasis* by Pavel Plorsnsky. The exhibit represents icons dated from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Though the entire exhibit is well worth a trip (or at least a classy free date for you Bockmanites) there are several icons especially worthy of note as you explore the museum. The oldest—and arguable

the most fascinating icon—is that of "Our Lady of Tenderness" written Circa 1500. This icon, affirming much of the Greek tradition, shows the Holy Virgin and the Christ in a pose with checks touching. Additionally, check out The Dormition

of the Holy Virgin written late 17<sup>th</sup> Century, which has no traditional iconic border, the gilded St. Nicolas from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century and St. John the Baptist (from *Deesis*) written in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Finally, make sure you note the Resurrection-Descent to Hades with Feasts" from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The latter is particularly fascinating given the scene of Mary's dormition and the angel poised to slice off the hand of the man who would attempt to touch the Holy Virgin.

I hope you enjoy the show. And remember: icons are written, they are not artistic self-expressions; icons are venerated, not worshiped as idols; and though, as "leaders," we have all the "answers", it's acceptable to use your imagination once and a while. Have fun.

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**The Museum of Russian Art**  
5500 Stevens Ave South  
Minneapolis  
[www.tmora.org](http://www.tmora.org)

# *Lutheran Poets Wanted*

## ***Simul* – An Anthology of Lutheran Poetry**

**Magazine Needs:** *Simul* is an annual publication of poetry, and gladly accepts submissions from all those who identify themselves with the Lutheran faith tradition. The name of this yearly anthology reflects Martin Luther's observation that as children of God we are both fully saints and sinners simultaneously. It is the goal of *Simul* to reflect this paradox, and explore the complexity, beauty, and messiness of the human condition. Poems submitted need not be "religious," but they must be honest. Laughter and tears, faith and doubt, hope and despair all have their place in this unique publication. A 1-year subscription is \$10.99 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

**How to Submit:** Submit up to 5 poems at a time. Line length for each poem is 30 lines maximum (spaces between stanzas count as lines). No previously published poems. Simultaneous submissions are okay, as long as you notify *Simul* immediately upon acceptance elsewhere. Name, address, phone number, and e-mail should appear as header on top right of each page submitted. Poems should be flush left, single-spaced, with double spacing between stanzas. Poem titles should appear in all caps or initial caps about 6 lines underneath contact information. Include cover letter containing contact information, short bio, and previous publications if any. Reading period is year around, but for your poetry to be considered for the upcoming publication, we must receive your submissions no later than August 1, 2006. Generally, responses are sent within 3 months. However, if poems are being strongly considered for publication, it may take longer. Often, the editor will comment on rejections. *Simul* acquires first North American serial rights. This gives *Simul* the right to publish a poem for the first time in any periodical, but all other rights remain with the author. Must include (SASE) "self addressed stamped envelope" for response when you mail in your submission. Please address all submissions to the editor, Mark Odland.

Mark Odland, editor  
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*Mark Odland is an MDiv Intern*  
--MOO

**Reflections on John 12:1-8**

*Leave her alone.  
She is proclaiming to you my death.*

*Listen to her.  
I will send her to proclaim my rising.*

*You will always have the poor with you,  
You will always live among sinners,  
You are my beloved; sinners, each of you*

Maybe you are right, dear brothers, maybe you are right  
Perhaps I should sell *all* that I have and give it to the poor  
When then, I am poor, will you care for me?

When then, I have sold my inheritance,  
will you let me come into the house of the Lord  
or will you point to my poverty as proof of my sin?

Maybe you are right, dear brothers, maybe you are right

Perhaps it was a better thing, when my tithe was a tenth  
of the offering and I spoke only to children and old women  
Perhaps it was a better thing, to be obedient to the thief,  
to know my place and be glad for it

When then, I sold my inheritance for the pearl of truth  
about who I was created and called to be  
you pointed to my pride as proof of my sin

Am I not a beloved child of God?

Brothers, you don't even know me.  
Sister? Servant? Sinner?  
Do I exist only in relation to you?

Brothers, you don't even know him.  
Was he called to be king, to restore you to power?

Listen, he is dying for you to hear him.

-Jean Hay

# *Beat the End of Winter Blahs!*

*Community-Wide Auction/Talent Show*

*Tuesday, March 28, 2006*

*5:00-7:30 pm*

Sponsored by the Student Services Office, the Concord, the student council, and the Academic Dean's Office. All proceeds from the event will go to benefit Luther's international students as well as the Peace Palace ministry of Our Redeemer's Lutheran in Minneapolis and the St Paul Synod's anti-poverty and housing initiative. In addition to supporting and encouraging these ministries, we hope to foster community life on campus by including faculty, staff, and students. Spouses and families are especially invited as well.

Please plan to attend what will be a very entertaining evening. Also, consider a contribution to the auction – an item or service that best characterizes you.

## Donation ideas include:

Art or craft items

Toys

Specialty food items

Carpentry/handyperson services

Stoles, copes, and other vestments

Autographed books

A collection of your best lectures/sermons – on DVD!

Cabin weekends Theatre tickets

“Get out of meeting/class free” certificates

The more creative the better!

You may also consider collaborating with others to donate a larger item or service – a catered dinner, a skydiving excursion, choral serenade, etc. If you have any questions about donations, email or call one of the following contact people:

Faculty – Rolf Jacobson

Staff – Barbara McCauley

Students – Your student council representative

The silent auction is to open at 5:00, accompanied by live music and appetizers. The evening will conclude with a “talent” show highlighting the diversity of skills and abilities lurking beneath the surface of the Luther community. Several items will be auctioned off “live” during the talent show. Prepare to be tickled, shocked, and dazzled, albeit in an appropriately Lenten fashion.

Reserve March 28<sup>th</sup> on your calendar now. Look for further details and developments in the *Concord*, the *Noncord*, and *Inside Luther* as the date approaches.