

## What is DOXOLOGY?

(From <https://www.doxology.us/us/>)

**DOXOLOGY**, a charitable nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation and Recognized Service Organization of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, is comprised of pastors, counselors and laity from various walks of life who are committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, especially as God gives it through the Holy Ministry.

**DOXOLOGY** offers an innovative program of advanced study retreats to strengthen pastors for the task of faithfully shepherding the souls entrusted to their care.

**DOXOLOGY** provides pastors with a unique study and renewal experience, rooted in the classic art of the care of souls (*cura animarum*) and informed by the insights of contemporary Christian psychology.

The primary purpose of our organization is to provide training, mentoring and consultation services for pastors seeking to enhance their ability to help people struggling with the ever-increasing personal, family and social complexities of contemporary life. The retreat training environment, grounded in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, ensures that pastors will be emotionally and spiritually refreshed and equipped by their participation. The Center provides a safe environment for clergy to reflect on their own spiritual and emotional health and assists them to review and enhance their professional competencies and skills as servants of Christ and stewards of God's sacred mysteries. DOXOLOGY strengthens pastors so they can more faithfully pastor others.

### DOXOLOGY IS THE ORGANIZATION AND A SHORTHAND FOR THE RETREAT

## DOXOLOGY events Faith has paid for Pastor Eichers to Attend

**Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019:** MISSION AMONG THE RUINS: TOUCHSTONES FOR MINISTRY IN A WORLD THAT HAS LOST ITS STORY with author and professor Anthony Esolen in Elm Grove Lutheran Church. *Christian households and churches alike are trying to figure out how to navigate a world that seems to have lost its direction on foundational matters of faith, interpersonal relations, sexuality, marriage and family. How do we communicate the biblical story of God's love in Christ Jesus to a culture that considers it outmoded and bigoted?* (<https://www.doxology.us/mission-among-the-ruins/>)

**Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> 2021 – Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>:** "TAKE HEART!"—A RESPITE RETREAT FOR PASTORS with Rev. David Flemming and Dr. Beverly Yahnke in Green Lake, WI. *This free retreat seeks to cater to the stresses and anxieties brought on by caring for God's people in the COVID-19 pandemic.* (<https://www.doxology.us/respire-retreats-for-pastors-take-heart/>)

**Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup> 2021 – Saturday, August 28<sup>th</sup>:** SPEAKING UP: CHRISTIAN CONFESSION IN AN AGE OF SEXUAL CONFUSION with Dr. Ryan T. Anderson and Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford at Trinity Lutheran Church in Davenport, IA. *There is widespread confusion in American culture regarding sex, marriage and gender which greatly complicates Christian life and witness. This Seminar prepares Christians to advocate confidently, purposefully and positively for the biblical vision of human sexuality within their families and in the public square not merely on religious freedom grounds, but as a matter of common sense, compassion and human flourishing.* (<https://www.doxology.us/speaking-up-christian-confession-in-an-age-of-sexual-confusion/>)

**Monday, July 11<sup>th</sup> 2022 – Thursday, July 14<sup>th</sup>:** DOXOLOGY Classic Part I: the Gathering at the Spiritual Life Center in Bel Aire, KS (outside Wichita). *The first event in the series, "The Gathering," invites pastors to*

*meet in a restful retreat setting from a Monday evening until mid-afternoon on a Thursday. The specific objectives of The Gathering are listed below. Participating pastors will be renewed through:*

- *Immersion in a worshipping community as the heart of the program's experience through the praying of the Daily Office.*
- *Affirmation of pastoral vocation, reflection and refreshment for ongoing pastoral work by exploring the essential habits and practice of the classic care of souls and the application of Christian counseling concepts.*
- *Enhancement of personal skills through didactic and discussion models to sharpen professional competencies essential to the art of counsel and care.*
- *Cultivation of essential tools and strategies for responding to the burgeoning personal needs of today's parishioners.*
- *Developing peer groups of pastors to sharpen skills in addressing matters of congregational casuistry from the perspective of shepherding souls.*
- *Creation of ongoing mentoring and coaching relationships between participants and consulting theologians and/or psychologists.*
- *Provision for facilitated conversations among pastor participants for interpersonal support and encouragement (the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers).*
- *Renewal of personal pastoral habits in prayer, meditation and ongoing pastoral growth.*
- *Consultation, help and healing for emotional and/or spiritual concerns.*

[\(https://www.doxology.us/classic-program/\)](https://www.doxology.us/classic-program/)

## DOXOLOGY Classic

Signing up for this retreat is committing to three individual retreats.

Part I: The Gathering (7/11-7/14/2022) with just pastors

Part II: The Encore (Friday, 11/18– Sunday, 11/20/2022) with pastor and a lay leader (in Wichita)

Part III: The Grand Reunion (Friday, 7/21– Sunday, 7/23/2023) with pastor and his wife (in Wichita)

Faith Lutheran Church enrolled Pastor Paul Mundinger in DOXOLOGY Classic in Schuyler, NE in 2010. Dr. John Jaeger attended the Encore with Pastor Paul.

## DOXOLOGY Classic, Encore (11/17–11/20)

### Who, Where?

Eleven pastors from eight states including Texas, Alaska, and a missionary stationed in the Dominican Republic (yes, I know the D.R. isn't a U.S. State). Thirteen laymen attended, almost exclusively elders.

Spiritual Life Center in Bel Aire, KS, a Roman Catholic retreat center 11 miles northeast of the center of Wichita.

### Presenters

**Rev. David C. Fleming** is DOXOLOGY's Executive Director for Spiritual Care and a Collegium Fellow. He remains a part time pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, MI where he served as Senior Pastor from 1993–2019. He previously served in Warrenville, IL, a Chicago suburb, and is a 1986 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN. He serves on the Concordia University Wisconsin Board of Regents. Rev. Fleming co-wrote "God's Love at Christmas", the 2010 Advent/Christmas resource from Concordia Publishing House.

**Dr. Beverly Yahnke** is a clinical psychologist serving DOXOLOGY as the Executive Director for Christian Counsel. From 2010-2015, she was the Chair and Professor of Psychology at Concordia Wisconsin. Previously, Dr. Yahnke spent over 20 years in private practice serving church workers and their families in the clinical group she founded in Milwaukee. Dr. Yahnke has written numerous articles about psychology, education, and faith, and is a frequently invited speaker for clergy and educator conferences. In May 2016, Concordia Theological Seminary awarded her with the Doctor of Humane Letters Degree, *Honoris Causa*. She was elected by the 2016 LCMS convention to serve as a member of Concordia Theological Seminary's Board of Regents.

**Guest Presenter Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador** a 2014 DOXOLOGY grad, 1996 M.Div graduate and 2017 Doctor of Ministry graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, currently serves as Executive Assistant to the President of the South Wisconsin District of the LCMS in the areas of Mission and Mercy. For 25 years he served congregations in Northern Wisconsin, Southern Illinois and South Wisconsin. Most recently he served as Senior Pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Plymouth, WI. He also serves as Assistant Coordinator of Stewardship for the LCMS's Office of National Mission. He has chaired Stewardship Task Forces in Southern Illinois and South Wisconsin. He and Rev. Heath Curtis published a book in the Lexham Ministry Series entitled *Stewardship as Pastoral Care*. He has been married to his bride Jill, a gifted Lutheran educator and fantastic pastor's wife for 31 years. The Meadors have three children: Joseph (a Lutheran Educator in Edwardsville, IL), Bethany (a PT student at Concordia Wisconsin), and Andrew (a business major at St. Louis University.)

**Guest Presenter Rev. Dr. Gregory P. Schulz** is Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon. He is a husband, father, grandfather and a Lutheran pastor with over 40 years in the ministry, both in the parish and in higher education. A graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, he has earned doctorates in both theology (D.Min. from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana) and in philosophy (Ph.D. from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin). Dr. Schulz directs The Martin Galstad Institute for Lutheran Philosophy and hosts the website Lutheran Philosopher.com. Pastor Schulz is Adjunct Professor of Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, where he teaches in the seminary's Ph.D., Missiology Program. Professor Schulz has lectured and presented academic papers at major universities stateside and in Canada, and also at Oxford, Cambridge, and the University of Hertfordshire in the U.K., Hong Kong and in mainland China.

**Chaplain Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller** is pastor of St. Paul and Jesus Deaf Lutheran Churches in Austin, TX. He is the author of *Take They Our Life: Martin Luther's Theology of Martyrdom* (2019), *A Martyr's Faith for a Faithless World* (CPH, 2019), *Has American Christianity Failed?* (CPH, 2016) and *Final Victory: Contemplating the Death and Funeral of a Christian* (CPH, 2010). He is host of What-Not. The Podcast, posts videos on YouTube at wolfmueller1, and has a number of other theological projects that all end up on his blog, [www.wolfmueller.co](http://www.wolfmueller.co). Bryan is a member of the Doxology Collegium. He and his wife Keri live with their four children in Round Rock, TX.

## Topics Covered and Takeaways

### Plenary

- Putting the Best Construction on Everything
  - **Pastor:** If there's someone in the congregation with whom you disagree, start with common ground and work toward a shared goal.
  - **Dave:** God's people working together is best accomplished by practicing love for one another. We must take ownership of our own flaws when working with others.
- I Will Build my Church I
  - **Pastor:** As we receive Christ's gifts in the Divine Service, we are empowered to then show Christ to others as we go out into the world Monday through Saturday.

- **Dave:** The Church grows by Christ's authority, through hearing God's Word, and by the Power of the Holy Spirit.
- Congregational Stewardship Partnership
  - **Pastor:** Stewardship is just as much about spending wisely as it is giving generously.
  - **Dave:** Forget the three T's and concentrate on Word and Sacrament ministry.
- Mutual Encouragement
  - **Pastor:** Many churches are struggling with the same things with which we struggle: aging members, dwindling numbers.
  - **Dave:** One of the biggest challenges is to be proactive in prioritizing support for Pastor. If only pastors would take their time off; ask for help sooner.
- I Will Build my Church II
  - **Pastor:** Even though we may be tempted to imitate big box churches down the road, our Lutheran theology has what the world is craving.
  - **Dave:** Every Christian should be able to witness by work and deed. Lutheran strengths in evangelization include the Word of God and Christ, the Holy Sacraments, the sacred liturgy

### Pastoral

- The Problem of Suffering
  - Suffering is a primal acknowledgment that things aren't as they should be.
  - It is okay to be upset with God at times, He gives us the Psalms of lament to complain to Him in prayer.
- Valid and Certain in Heaven Also
  - Individual Confession and Absolution is not necessary for salvation, and if people are uncomfortable with it, that's perfectly fine, you don't need to change their mind.
  - A good starting point is setting up a regularly scheduled time for confession and absolution and if nobody shows up, just read a book.
- Suicide: Pastoral Responses
  - Previously men in their 70s and 80s were most likely to commit suicide, now there has been a sea change to younger people in their teens and twenties.
  - As you talk to people who may be considering suicide, keep in mind the specificity of their ideation, the more specific, the more urgent is the need for psychiatric care.

### Lay

- Life in the Stained-Glass Fishbowl
  - All marriages confront the same fundamental challenges. The pastor's marriage is regarded as a model for others.
  - The pastor's relationship with his wife is often predictive of his relationship with his flock.
- Care and Feeding of Pastors
  - Duties of the Pastor are defined in the Small Catechism.
  - Enhance our pastor's ministry by expressing appreciation for faithful preaching and teaching.
- Pastoral Depletion Hazards: Pastors live in a culture of criticism, and be aware of burnout.
- View from the Pew
  - Examine the church we serve; strengths and weaknesses.
  - Must continue support for continuing education.