

2021 Distinguished Alumni Award Undergraduate

Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast, Jr. BA '86

Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. BA '86 serves as 16th president of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN (CTSFW) and professor of American Christianity and American Lutheranism. He joined CTSFW's Department of Historical Theology in fall 1996 after serving as pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, TN.



As CTSFW President, Rast launched a significant strategic planning process that resulted in the funding and completion of a new library, the tripling of the Seminary's endowment, successful audits of all business practices, and provision of a 100% tuition guarantee for all residential students steadying enrollment in the face of significant demographic challenges. He has worked to ensure CTSFW upholds its core values and vision in all it does in order to continue to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.

In addition, Rast regularly presents at workshops, retreats and conferences around the United States. He has represented CTSFW and the LCMS at numerous international conferences and by teaching in more than 24 countries throughout the world.

Currently commission chair, he has served on the LCMS's Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) since 2006 providing guidance and leadership in the areas of theology and church relations. He also leads as president and member of the Board of Directors for the journal *Lutheran Quarterly*. Rast has authored numerous articles and is currently writing a comprehensive history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for Concordia Publishing House. He also contributed to the *Concordia Historical Quarterly* as well as leading the Board of Governors for the Concordia Historical Institute (CHI). Rast was honored for his service by CHI with the Distinguished Service Award in 2012.

Rast earned his BA in Theological Languages from Concordia-Chicago (1986), an MDiv (1990) and STM (1995), both with a major in Historical Theology and a minor in Systematic Theology, from CTSFW. He received a MA degree (2000) and PhD (2003) from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. Rast received a Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* in 2017 from Concordia University Chicago.

When not teaching or traveling, Rast still enjoys the delving into history, especially from the Civil War era. He is a music enthusiast, but perhaps his favorite pastime is all things pertaining to railroads. The greatest joy of his life, however, comes from the time he spends with his family. He and his wife, Amy, have three children.