

A DCE who loves her work



“I absolutely love it!” says Rebecca Rust of her work as director of Christian Education at historic Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Louis.

“I can’t believe that I have a ‘job’ that I want to go to every day. I couldn’t be happier with where I am or what God has me doing!”

Rust, is 2004 spring graduate of Concordia University, Irvine, Calif., who began her service at Trinity year as an intern. Her responsibilities include youth ministry and family life ministry.

As an intern, she took the challenge of organizing Trinity’s vacation Bible school. “Before each phone call ... I prayed that God would direct the conversation, lead the person according to His will ... and help me discern their strengths so we could make a proper fit, she says.”

“The greatest aspect of starting a ministry from scratch is watching God at work!” she says of her efforts to begin a youth program. “Something that constantly amazes me is the variety of other things that these youth could be doing with their time, yet they still come to Bible study on Wednesday nights. I believe that is solely the grace of God at work in their hearts and lives.”

Pastor David Marth said Rust brings great organizational skills coupled with personal spirituality. He said the addition of a DCE is helping the urban congregation build a holistic ministry in family life. The goal is to support the congregation’s work with other urban congregations and the Lutheran middle school they support.

Rust adds, “Concordia University provided me with confidence and skills and a solid Christian foundation to minister to, with and through people wherever I am. It wasn’t simply the classes that were offered, but the variety of opportunities to put my skills into practice as well.”

15 generations of pastors ... still counting

“Accentuate the positives for today: There are many ways a pastor can explore his individuality while serving as a pastor,” says Dr. Gregory Wismar, pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Newtown, Conn.

Pastor Wismar speaks from experience, having traced his family history and finding 18 forefathers who were pastors. His son, Eric, who graduated in May 2004, is the fifth generation from the Wismar family to graduate from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Gregory Wismar notes that the world is different than when he began his ministry in 1971 and when his father and grandfather began in 1936 and 1906, respectively. (One of his German forefathers served 54 years in the same parish; another served 40 years.) Every generation, he said, has to deal with different aspects in the life of the church.

This is an era when people change careers several times over their lifetimes, and Wismar believes the pastoral ministry allows opportunities for a man to explore many interests. For example, he composes music and serves as a musician while also serving his congregation.

“We don’t say it well enough, but to borrow a phrase from the military recruiters, ‘be all you can be’ as a pastor,” he said. “Today’s young person looks for that sense of potential. There are many ways to express one’s individuality.”

There was a strong sense of encouragement in his family. Wismar said his grandfather modeled a great sense of concern for the welfare and working of the church and “a great balance between learning and caring for people.”