



# Rockrohr News and Notes

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### Ministry Information:

Carl and Deborah Rockrohr are missionaries with

LC-MS World Mission  
1333 S. Kirkwood Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63122  
www.lcmsworldmission.org

Email:  
carl.rockrohr@lcmsintl.org  
deborah.rockrohr@lcmsintl.org

Website:  
www.rockrohr.net

*Our website has the latest news of our work and family!*



## Reflecting on Mercy and Grace Outpoured

*Deborah has written this article about a few select events. It has been very busy!*

We have reached the midpoint of the first semester at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane (LTS). The first quarter (Q1) of studies at LTS closed on 23 March, and both students and staff have enjoyed a two-week break from studies. Our classes continue through Q2 with final exams in June, but the mid-term break suggests we pause and reflect on what we have done, what has kept us busy since classes started on 7 February, and the blessing of the Lord's mercy and grace that has been woven throughout.

### Academic Life

On March 6 the deaconess students from the full time and part time tracks met together for about two hours for an afternoon tea. This was a wonderful opportunity for them to become better acquainted with each other, to share their stories, and for all of us to enjoy a sampling of favorite songs (introduced with a



*The fulltime residency deaconess students were able to meet with the part-time intensive course deaconess students to get to know one another and discuss topics.*

from their home cultures and languages. The 13 students gathered together for the tea (several were absent unavoidably) represented five countries and seven home languages.

Carl has been teaching Early Church History and Theological Orientation this semester. Both of these courses correspond to courses at the University of Pretoria (UP) and are offered for UP credit to students who qualify for UP admission under the joint partnership agreement between LTS and UP.

Carl has 6 students who have completed the 2-year "bridging course" and now have begun the 2-year "main course." One has qualified for UP

admission in this first year of the partnership. Our hope is that next year additional students will be able to benefit from this partnership and work toward earning a B.Th. from UP while also completing their pastoral training at LTS. Near the end of Q1 two "bridging course" (first-year) students were added to Carl's classes based on testing results from their academic skills course. Challenges for Carl in Q1 have included aligning his courses with UP outcomes, access to sufficient research/library resources for lecture  
*continued page 2*

## Mercy and grace Outpoured (cont. from page 1)



*Carl's induction. Carl and Deborah were inducted into their LTS positions during the first chapel service of the academic*

preparation, and helping the two new students catch up with the class. On the whole, Carl reports that the students have engaged well with the material and he has enjoyed lively conversations with them on the subject matter.

Carl has also been the assigned preacher for Matins on Fridays and enjoys the discipline of

regular sermon preparation. As we worship together in daily chapel and on Sundays we are becoming accustomed to hearing worshipers sing nearly everything in rich harmony, but the experience is no less joyful or inspiring even as it becomes familiar to our ears.

As Director of the Deaconess Programme at LTS, Deborah will readily tell anyone who is interested to hear, "I am for the women." Her interest and her responsibilities extend to all aspects of the living and learning environment as it impacts the deaconess students. Deborah has been

teaching two courses for the deaconess students: Introduction to Deaconess Ministry, and Theology of Lutheran Worship/Altar Guild. She also provides "Supervised Prep" for the deaconess students twice per week after lunch. The prep period encourages a regular discipline of study in addition to providing opportunities for students to ask questions as they study. Students have regularly used this time wisely and also have asked questions in nearly every prep period. The arrangement seems to be meeting its intended goal of supporting the academic endeavors of the deaconess students.

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## Graduations and Ordinations

Lutheran Theological Seminary is all about preparing Lutheran pastors and deaconesses for service, and doing so with the best education possible.

So it was a joy that on March 22<sup>nd</sup> three LTS graduates were ordained into the holy ministry of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. Bheki Ngobese, Silas Mogale, and Phenyo Mokgaimena.

Some LTS students are able to study for theology degrees at the University of Pretoria as well as study at LTS. We were also proud to witness the graduation of Eric Gbotoe and Peter Abia with B.Th. (hons).



## Mercy and Grace Outpoured (cont. from page 2)

Deborah's "extra-curricular" activities have included serving as note-taker for the various LTS Staff, LTS Board of Directors, LCSA Church Council and LCSA Property Trust meetings. Understanding differing accents and nuances of word usage has been a challenge, but the practice of reading back the minutes before the meeting closes allows for misunderstandings and other errors to be corrected on the spot and minutes to be approved. As a result of this practice, it only takes a few minutes of formatting for minutes to be finalized after a meeting, and chairpersons and participants alike have expressed appreciation for having minutes available for reference almost immediately. With the fears of gross errors (and possibly causing offense inadvertently) removed, Deborah has enjoyed serving the LTS and LCSA in this way.

### Living in the Lord's Timing

The shipment of our personal theological library arrived by sea and was delivered to us on March 19. In the Lord's timing, the truck arrived just as classes were dismissing and so we had many hands to help move

thirty-three 50-pound boxes off the truck and into our office. We are thankful that about a third (600 pounds) of the costs for this shipment were covered by our missionary budget. These books are essential tools for us to do our assigned work well. Carl's students will also benefit, as during Q2 we will make some books available for short-term loan as they complete required research papers. This resource may become more widely available to LTS students in the future, but for now we are testing ways to lend out books on a limited basis.

Speaking of the Lord's timing, we had been waiting for the "dust to settle" from the large influx of new students to see which space might be assigned to us for an on-campus office. Just one week before the books arrived we were assigned to a spacious room with *en suite* toilet and shower. It had been previously assigned to the volunteer missionaries (variously from Germany, South Africa and the U.S.) but they have now been given a small apartment in one of the houses and are happy to have more space and a kitchenette. Where would we have put all those books if they had arrived earlier?? Of

course, we are also very thankful to now have assigned office space on campus.

An added benefit to LTS of the current office arrangement is our agreement with the deaconess students to allow them access to shower facilities in the evening and early morning when we are not on campus. Previously, the eight women in Dube House (the deaconess residence) had shared a single full bath and half bath. They now have two full baths and a half bath during peak-demand hours. (Yep, they are happy.)

On April 2 we happily gave up our temporary rental car when we took delivery of a 7-seat VW Caddy. Similar to a mini-van, the seating capacity in the Caddy will allow us to take up to four students with us as we travel out to various Lutheran congregations on Sundays.

### Recent visitors for whom we give thanks to God:

1. *LCMS Volunteer missionaries Lee and Pat Hoffmeier from Southern Illinois District. They have helped at the seminary for five years in a row on 3 and 6 month tours.*
2. *Prof. John Pless from Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft Wayne, who taught an intensive ordination course in March. He was assisted by doctoral student Jacob Corzine.*
3. *Deaconess Grace Rao of LCMS World Relief and Human Care who taught an Advanced Deaconess Course for the intensive deaconess program in March.*
4. *Rev. Dr. Werner Klaen, from Germany, a frequent lecturer at LTS, who also taught an intensive ordination course in March.*
5. *District Presidents Rev. Timothy Scharr (Southern Illinois) and Rev. Brian Saunders (Iowa East). They gave presentations at the LCSA Pastors' Convention and visited various LCSA projects.*



*Ted is learning to play some of the sports popular in South Africa. In February and March he began to learn the game of Cricket.*

## Continued Support Needed for Budget

LCMS career missionaries are self-supporting. To be able to move to South Africa we raised 75% of our budget during our first six months. But we did not raise our entire budget.

Now 75% of our budget year has passed, and we have now begun to run in the red in our budget. The money we raised paid for 6 months of fund-raising costs and 3 months of on-field costs. We are now past the amount of money we initially raised.

We have had some additional donors in the last month, but in the next several months we need a number of new

congregational and individual donors to be able to stay in South Africa.

Fund-raising time is planned for two months out of every two years. Obviously, if we have to return early to do more fund-raising our work in South Africa will be hindered.

Once we have enough donors to support an entire year's budget, and if most of the donors repeat their donations each year, our budget will not be so tight. Right now it is.

If you or your congregation have not yet supported us, would you consider it? As this

issue's articles show, a lot of good things are happening at LTS, but we cannot work here without your support.

How to give support:

To donate by phone call: **1-800-433-3954** (Designate your gift "for the Rockrohrs.")

You can find the links for online giving at:

**[www.lcms.org/rockrohr](http://www.lcms.org/rockrohr)**

Or, make checks payable to LCMS World Mission with "Rockrohr" noted on the memo line and mail to:

**LCMS WORLD MISSION  
P.O. Box 790089  
St. Louis, MO 63179**

## Thank You and Please Forward Us!

It is important for our work that we keep building our base of readers, pray-ers and supporters. *If you think a friend would be interested in our work, please do forward the paper or email versions of our newsletter.*

Thank you again to the many folks back in the U.S. helping us in many ways. Some are praying, some are giving donations, some are

raising support for us, and some are taking care of our bills and other necessities of life. May God bless you!



**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.rockrohr.net](http://www.rockrohr.net)**  
**and**  
**[www.lcms.org/rockrohr](http://www.lcms.org/rockrohr)**