



Lutheran Historical Society **Of the Mid-Atlantic**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Lutheran Historical Society announces A.R. Wentz Prize Winner

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic announces that the Reverend Benjamin Schaefer is the winner of the 2020 A.R. Wentz Prize in American Lutheran History for his paper "Avoiding the Hornet's Nest: Woman Suffrage and Synodical Conference Lutherans" in the award's PH.D./M.A. category. Schaefer serves as the pastor at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Redding, California and shared that he was humbled and honored to receive the society's Wentz Prize. Schaefer's paper topic was timely for 2020 given the centennial anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution giving women the right to vote. Schaefer's thesis indicated that "Biblical truth and cultural norms led most within the Synodical Conference to oppose the women's suffrage movement and its goals for society and the church, while those same voices praised the abilities and contributions of women." In addition, the society awarded honorable mention to Kristen Barnes, Alex Aakre, Christopher Royce and Matthew Borrasso for their papers.

Abdel Ross Wentz, for whom the award is named, was a leading figure in 20th century Lutheranism. From 1916-1956 he was a professor of Church History and later President of Gettysburg Theological Seminary. He was the first Vice-President of the Lutheran World Federation and the lead writer of its first constitution. The Wentz family established an endowment to provide prize money for the best historical paper on Lutheranism in North America. The prize can be awarded each year in two categories: 1) first degree seminarian and 2) M.A or PH.D. graduate students. The prize is in the amount of \$2,500. Read more about the prize and the work of the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic on its website: www.lutheranhistoricalsociety.com

Schaefer was born in Flagstaff, Arizona, and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota receiving further theological and pastoral training at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. After completing his seminary education and his vicarage at Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church in Reno, Nevada, he was ordained into the holy ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod at First German Lutheran Church in Manitowoc, Wisconsin in 2009. Following a nine-year pastorate at First German Lutheran Church, he has served as pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Redding, California for the past three years. He is also a member of the WELS Historical Institute Board. In 2020 he was awarded a Master of Sacred Theology in Church History from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. He is currently a graduate student with the University of Nottingham, England, pursuing a master's degree in Systematic and Philosophical Theology. Schaefer is married to Anna Zarling Schaefer and they have been blessed with five daughters.

The society also announces a call for papers for the 2021 prize. Any first-degree seminary student regardless of denominational affiliation and anyone enrolled in a degree program at the M.A. or Ph.D. level are eligible to apply. Paper topics should be history papers on some aspect of Lutheranism in North America. Full details can be found on the society's website. Questions can be directed to Pastor Stephen Herr, President of the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic, 717-334-5212, info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com or Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic, 61 Seminary Ridge, Gettysburg, PA 17325

Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic
61 Seminary Ridge
Gettysburg, PA 17325
www.info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com