



# CHARLES ST-ONGE

Profile ↓

**STATUS** Baptized servant of Christ (1973-Present)  
**VOCATION** Husband to Deborah (2000-Present)  
 Father to Olivia (5) and Sophia (3)  
 Ordained Pastor in the LCMS (2003-Present)

## Contact ↓

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**FACEBOOK** http://www.facebook.com/lutheranpastor

## Work ↓

**2008-PRESENT Associate Pastor**, Memorial, Houston, TX

Shares all preaching, presiding and visitation responsibilities with the senior pastor. Responsible for all audio, video and internet resources including weekly video broadcasts, special DVD and CD recording and editing, podcasts, social networking, and website maintenance. Started new junior youth, youth, and young adult ministries. Recruited and leads a large volunteer staff.

**2007-2008 Executive Director**, Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries

Worked with a team of lay volunteers to direct and expand the role of Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries, Inc., a local LCMS-related mission group. Expanded the donor database and overall contributions. Produced a video promoting PLM, created a website for all LCMS congregations and missions in Philadelphia, wrote grants to District and Synod for support, and coached missionaries and mission-driven congregations in refocusing their work.

**2003-2008 Pastor**, St. Mark's, Ridley Park, PA

Developed a website for the congregation, including weekly sermon broadcasts. Led a self-study process for the future of the congregation, and helped create a DCE position to increase the preschool's role as a mission of the church. Stalled and began to reverse attendance and membership declines.

**1996-1999 Transportation Engineer**, SAIC, McLean, VA

Worked as part of a nation-wide team to evaluate the impacts of a multi-million dollar project in four cities across the US. Served as chief editor of the final evaluation strategy document, and presented interim results at several conferences.

## About Charles ↓

Charles was born on December 31, 1972 in Ottawa, Canada. He was raised in the LCA-Canada Synod and, due to his father's work with the Canadian government, participated in the life of several congregations across Eastern Canada.

After high school in Ottawa, Charles enrolled at the University of Waterloo in Kitchener, Ontario. During this time he served on the ELCIC-Eastern Synod's youth ministry board and as publicity chair of the 1993 Eastern Synod Youth Gathering Committee. At university, as a resident of Conrad Grebel Mennonite College, Charles was exposed to, and became friends with, young people of many different Christian denominations.

After completing a Bachelor's in engineering, Charles considered pursuing theological studies. The cost, however, was prohibitive. When he found out that he had received one of two \$32,000 scholarships for graduate work in engineering, he decided to complete a master's degree in science at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. In 1997 Charles followed his thesis supervisor to the United States, working in Washington, DC as a consultant to the US federal government.

In the summer of 1998, Charles met and fell in love with Deborah Follstaedt at a Lutheran conference in Cincinnati. Deborah shared her deep commitment to Christ and to her LCMS roots with Charles, and through the Spirit opened his heart to a deeper commitment to the Scriptures than he had had growing up. Though he started seminary in the ELCA in 1999, Charles joined the LCMS shortly afterward in the spring of 2000.

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Deborah and Charles were married in August of 2000 at Concordia, Cincinnati.

Charles took six courses a term and a full set of summer courses at CTS-FW.. He was therefore able to begin vicarage in 2001, and graduated in 2003 at the top of his class. While at CTS he was recognized by his teachers and peers as a thoughtful writer and dynamic preacher.

Charles' background in science, his wide religious, cultural and national experiences, his bilingualism (French and English), his dedication to the mission of the Lutheran Church, and his love for young and old alike flow into his writing and preaching and enable him to connect the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a diverse audience.

## References ↓

### Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher

Professor of Homiletics, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN.

### Rev. Dr. John Brunner

Past District President, Eastern District, Franklin, NC.

### John Wittenmyer

Concordia Seminary Board of Regents, Memorial, Houston, TX.

### Rev. Thomas Engler

LCMS Urban Mission Director for Philadelphia, and former LHM coordinator in South Korea, Philadelphia, PA.

### Loretta Bungo

Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries Board Member, St. Mark's, Ridley Park, PA.

Contact information and more references are available if desired.

## Recent Offices ↓

<b>2009-</b>	<b>Zone Counselor</b> , LWML Bayou City Zone, TX
<b>2007-2009</b>	<b>Philadelphia Pastoral Delegate</b> , Synod Convention
<b>2005-2007</b>	<b>Member</b> , Eastern District LCMS Nominating Committee
<b>2004-2007</b>	<b>Zone Counselor</b> , LWML Philadelphia Zone, PA
<b>2004-2007</b>	<b>Board</b> , Liberty Lutheran Services, Philadelphia, PA
<b>2004-2007</b>	<b>Board</b> , Lutheran Children and Family Services, Philadelphia, PA
<b>2004-2006</b>	<b>Board</b> , Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries, PA

## Formal Education ↓

<b>2000-2003</b>	<b>Master of Divinity (3.92 GPA)</b> Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN
<b>1996-1998</b>	<b>Master of Science (Engineering)</b> Queen's University, Kingston, Canada
<b>1991-1996</b>	<b>Bachelor of Applied Science (Honours)</b> University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada

## Continuing Education ↓

<b>2009</b>	<b>Symposium on Science and Technology</b> Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO
<b>2006</b>	<b>Basic Mission Planter Training</b> US Center for Missions, Irvine, CA
<b>2005</b>	<b>Church and State Issues from a Lutheran Perspective</b> Concordia Seminary - St. Louis, in Washington DC
<b>2003-2005</b>	<b>Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support</b> Completed all three years successfully

## Technology ↓

### VIDEOS WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED

<i>The Visual Gospel</i>	Artist Tom Dubois' "Triumphal Entry" Presentation
<i>What's Closest to the Heart</i>	The Gospel for Delaware County, PA
<i>PLM: Midwife for Missions</i>	Missions and Missionaries in Philadelphia, PA
<i>Mission for Liberia</i>	For Christ Assembly Lutheran Church, PA

View them at [www.intheway.org/resume.html](http://www.intheway.org/resume.html)

### WEBSITES CREATED AND/OR MAINTAINED

<a href="http://www.intheway.org">www.intheway.org</a>	Charles' personal website
<a href="http://www.lutherpedia.net">www.lutherpedia.net</a>	An experiment in global Lutheranism
<a href="http://www.mlchouston.org">www.mlchouston.org</a>	Create and maintain all podcasts and A/V material

**This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.**

*Jesus of Nazareth (John 6:29)*

## Did You Know... ↓

...though once a committed evolutionist, Charles now leads apologetics studies on the truth of the Scripture's account of creation.

...that in 2005, Charles was nominated by a Philadelphia mission congregation and ran for vice-president of the Eastern District.

...over the last 37 years Charles has lived in four Canadian provinces and five US states, in towns as different as Fredericton, NB and as large as Houston, TX.

...both of Deborah and Charles' children were adopted, their eldest from Russia and their youngest from a mother in Philadelphia who chose not to abort her child but place her in a Christian home.

...Charles is never happier than when an eighty year old lifelong Lutheran and a 17 year old new to the church both learn something new about Jesus' mercy from the same sermon.

...that he speaks fluent French and is learning Spanish.

## Publications ↓

- 2010 (TBD)**      **CPH, "SEE AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW"**  
Fifteen devotions
- 2009**            **HOUSTON CHRONICLE RELIGION PAGE**  
Regular religious leader contributor for [www.houstonbelief.com](http://www.houstonbelief.com)
- 2006**            **CONCORDIA PULPIT RESOURCES**  
Review of Richard Allen's [Preaching: An Essential Guide](#)
- 2005**            **CONCORDIA PULPIT RESOURCES**  
Two Sermons, for Lent 3 and 4  
Two Children's Sermons, Lent 3 and 4
- 2004**            **LOGIA JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY, EASTERTIDE 2004**  
Monograph, "Music, Worship and Martin Luther"
- 2003**            **CPH, "EMMANUEL: GOD WITH US"**  
Four Sermons and accompanying exegetical studies

## Radio ↓

- 2009**            **TRUTH ALIVE!, KKHT 100.7 FM, HOUSTON, TX**  
Special guest with Rev. Brian Runge
- 2008**            **DYING TO LIVE, KKHT 100.7 FM, HOUSTON, TX**  
Special guest preacher, November 2, 2009

## Sample Devotions ↓

### The Corinthian Congregation

#### 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Written for a collection of Advent devotions for several LCMS congregations

Having been an active member of well over a dozen congregations, I can say from experience that every congregation has its own "personality." Some are quiet, some are loud; some are friendly, some are hostile; some are like rabbits, "always on the go," some are more like turtles, plodding along. Why shouldn't that be the case? Each and every congregation is a "body," according to Paul, and together the members make up one unit, one unique "family," if you will.

The Corinthian church might be said to have had a "personality disorder." They had a hard time "getting it together," so to speak, and Paul spends most of his first letter to the congregation in therapy with them. The family was having a hard time identifying right and wrong, knowing how to eat, figuring out how to have a discussion. Like the Supernanny, St. Paul helps the Corinthian family by stepping back, identifying problems, and offering solutions.

The chief solution for St. Paul is putting Christ and his sacrificial death on the cross back at the center of the Corinthian family's life. Jesus is the glue that holds the family together. He is the pattern for how to live together. He's the meal the Corinthians are to eat, and the content of the conversations they're to have with one another and with their God. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, with all their problems, because they are still a family of Christian saints. Not all churches have the same personality. But each and everyone is a family called together in the name of Jesus Christ.

*Let us pray:*

*Father, bind all families together as one in Jesus Christ crucified, and help Him be the pattern of their life together. Amen.*

**This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.**

*Jesus of Nazareth (John 6:29)*

## Sample Devotions ↓

**St. Thomas, December 21, 2009**

Written for a collection of Advent devotions for several LCMS congregations

*[Jesus] said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 21:27-28)*

Poor Thomas. Ask almost any Christian what word they associate most readily with "Thomas" and I'm almost certain the word would be "doubt." Doubting Thomas. Who wants to go down through history with a name like that?

I for one do not think believe such a name is deserved. Yes, Thomas was the one who doubted that Jesus had been raised, bodily, from the dead. Yes, he expressed his doubts so eloquently, exclaiming that unless he put his fingers in the nails holes himself he wouldn't believe Jesus was alive. Yes, he was the one chastised by Jesus with those famous words, "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 21:29). But Thomas was also one of the greatest Christian missionaries. Churches in Kerala State, India, attribute their founding to the preaching of Jesus by Thomas. He was stoned to death and stabbed with a spear by the upper class rulers of the area.

Thomas, in many ways, is a type of all Christians. At some point in our lives, we too have doubted the promises of Jesus. We may be torn by doubts even today. We may wish we could see the nail holes in Jesus' resurrected wrists, and put our hand in the side from which poured blood and water.

But in those moments of doubt the Spirit comes and guides us to the places where the blood and water of Jesus can be found: the font, the altar, and the Word preached even by Thomas. We go out into the world to proclaim the birth, death and resurrection of the Son of God. After times of doubting we still find ourselves echoing the words of Thomas, "my Lord, and my God!"

*Lord Jesus, when we doubt, come to us and bid us to stop doubting, and believe. Amen.*

**"Compassion"**

Written for a collection of Advent devotions for several LCMS congregations

*"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:29-32)*

If you've spent any time in the south of the United States, you are no doubt familiar with the all-purpose expression, "Bless his/her heart." The expression can mean so many different things, depending on how it's used. It may convey an explanation for someone's actions, "She never really recovered from that car accident, bless her heart." It may express sympathy: "He really misses his dad, bless his heart." Or it can be used to soften what is really a vicious comment: "That poor soul is as dumb as a brick, bless his heart."

Jesus says that what comes out of the mouth has first come out from the heart. What comes out of the heart, Jesus says, are "evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, [and] false witness" (Matthew 15:19). Paul might even be thinking of this teaching from the Lord, because he moves immediately from the problem of corrupting talk to concern for corrupted hearts from which come "bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor." These ought to be replaced by kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness.

"Compassion," in contrast to empathy, is a concern for the pain of others that leads to action. Having compassion does not lead one to merely wish someone else's heart be blessed; it means desiring to bring that blessing one's self. When St. Paul urges his readers to speak things that "build up" and "give grace," when he urges displays of kindness and tenderheartedness, he is evoking the virtue of compassion.

God in Christ is a compassionate God, a God who so wishes to bless our hearts that He would be willing to die in our place. God forgives us and shows us grace in Jesus out of compassion. At His return, when we arise to meet Him, we will at last know the full depth of that incomprehensible, unsearchable compassion for us.

**This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.**

*Jesus of Nazareth (John 6:29)*