



Rev Dr Samuel H Nafzger

Samuel H. Nafzger is Director of Church Relations, Assistant to the President, The Lutheran Church -Missouri Synod, St. Louis, Missouri.

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Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger

Distinguished Alumnus

The Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger was born and raised in Plainview, Texas. He is a graduate of Concordia High School and Junior College in Austin, Texas, and received a B.A. degree with high distinction from Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, Ind. (1961,). Following graduation from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis with a Master of Divinity (1965), he studied in Heidelberg, Germany, at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität (1965-66) on a DAAD scholarship. He earned a Th.D. degree in systematic theology from Harvard University (1980).

Ordained in 1967, he served parishes in Texas and Massachusetts. In 1973 he accepted a call to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s (LCMS) Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) and served as Executive Director from 1974 until his retirement in 2008. Following his service to the CTCR, he was asked to become the LCMS’ first Director of Church Relations, Assistant to the President (2008-10) and in 2010 to serve as an adjunct professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (2010-12). He also served as the first Executive Secretary of the International Lutheran Council from the time of its organization in 1993 until his retirement in 2011.

Nafzger is the author of many articles and essays in various publications and periodicals. He was co-editor of *Studies in Lutheran Hermeneutics* (1979) and the author of *An Introduction to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (1994). He is the general editor of the new dogmatics for the LCMS, *Confessing the Gospel: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology* (2017).

Nafzger has served as a frequent essayist throughout the U.S. and abroad and as guest professor at the Ingrian Lutheran Seminary in St. Petersburg, Russia. He served on the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue in the U.S. for round IX on Scripture and Tradition (1992-95) and round XI on Hope for Eternal Life (2005-10). He also was the LCMS’ official observer to the commission which formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1982-87).

In 1998 Nafzger was recognized by his alma mater, Concordia University in Austin, Texas, as one of its distinguished graduates. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters degree in 2004 by Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn., and a Doctor of Divinity degree by Concordia University, Irvine, Calif., in 2008.

Nafzger was married July 2, 1967, to Janis Schoppa, a Lutheran school teacher also from Plainview. They are the parents of four grown children and 13 grandchildren. Their daughter Heidi (Nafzger) Fields, is a

pastor's wife, librarian and music teacher at Immanuel Lutheran School in Valparaiso, Ind. Son Christian is an assistant U.S. attorney in Boise, Idaho. Their son Peter is an assistant professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and son Jonathan is an architect in Anchorage, Alaska. The Nafzgers now live in retirement in Washington, Mo.

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