



Κηρυξάτε PREACH THE GOSPEL

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY





2015-16 EVENTS

AUGUST 24, 2015	Opening Service
SEPTEMBER 21, 2015	WLS Alumni Society Annual Meeting
SEPTEMBER 21-22, 2015	WLS Symposium on Pastor as Teacher
OCTOBER 3, 2015	Friends of the Seminary Day
OCTOBER 6-8, 2015	Asian Conference
DECEMBER 13, 2015	Christmas Concert
JANUARY 4-15, 2016	Winterim
FEBRUARY 2-4, 2016	Mission & Ministry
FEBRUARY 17-18, 2016	Sudanese Conference
MARCH 23-APRIL 3, 2016	Seminary Chorus tour to Florida
APRIL 10, 2016	Legacy Society Dinner
MAY 19, 2016	Call Day & Graduation Concert
MAY 20, 2016	Graduation
JUNE 20-JULY 1, 2016	Summer Quarter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- † Heartfelt thanks to Clif Koeller for his dedicated efforts to capture images of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary with skill and creativity.
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Live and Change!

There are a million proverbs about change. Some speak of its inevitability, “Things must often change...” Others of its desirability, “If nothing changed, there would be no butterflies.” And still others are just downright cynical, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

Change can make us pensive, regretful, yearning for times gone by, times we won’t see again. I remember returning once, later in life, to Mwembezi, the place where I served my first call. Where two of my children were born. Everything was the same. And nothing was. It was as if I stood on the one side of a great chasm. On the other was my youth. I could see it, almost touch it and feel it. But I couldn’t cross over. “Seas between us braid hae roar’d.”

Pastors may have that feeling, perhaps, in returning to the seminary for the first time since their own graduation and call day. At first

everything seems the same. Then nothing is. “All the houses look the same. But who are those people in them? Brug, Bivens—those great stalwarts of my classroom days—retired? How can these things be? It just won’t be the same without them.” (And indeed, it isn’t!)

Then there are those changes—many bringing with them major blessings—that are far more difficult to detect because they are far less visible. Those changes weren’t “there” at seminary when we attended. What I mean is: WLS is being asked to serve in ways never before imagined. And even with traditional groups now somehow strangely altered. Who could have imagined that we’d be working with Peter Bur, a Sudanese refugee and pastor, living now in Omaha, but still eager to serve his people in their refugee camps in Ethiopia? Who would have predicted that we would have a traditional student body made up of men who grew up in Antigua or



The tower windows were replaced in 2015.

South Africa? Or spent years abroad in East Asia, Russia, Peru, or the Dominican Republic?

Who could have predicted—if they were born in the age of the telephone and the word processor—the rise of the smartphone and the tablet, or the impact of social media and of online learning upon our lives? As things change in the various fields in which our pastors live—bringing with them fresh opportunities to serve as well as new crosses to bear—how can we fashion a continuing education program that is responsive to what our men need today, not yesterday? We seek to meet that challenge.

In my day (how quaint and old I sound) it was a big deal when President Lawrenz went to Zambia to teach. We students even had a special send-off for him to mark the occasion. Now professors are gone so often to



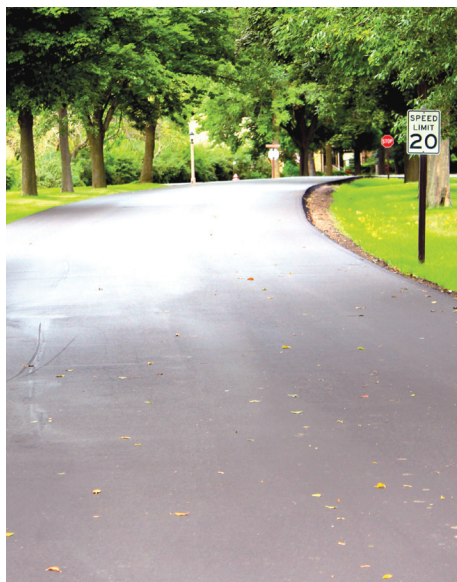
Many seminary events are livestreamed for those unable to attend in person.

teach here, there, and everywhere, that it has become simply part of the regular rhythm of seminary life. As national churches mature in our worldwide fellowship, more than ever they seek to partner with WLS and offer their pastors continuing education. Just this last April we marked a milestone in the development of our campus as a global seminary when ten men in Lusaka graduated with bachelor's degrees



awarded by WLS. This is only the beginning.

For all these positive blessings, we thank the God who changes not. And for all the ones that remind us of our mortality, or make us anxious as if the seminary today were utterly different from the seminary we once knew long ago, we take comfort in this: the more things change, one thing on this campus remains the same.



Thanks to generous gifts, the 40-year-old roads were replaced in 2014.

During the last year, numerous projects and changes have occurred on the seminary campus. Many of these were funded by the special anniversary offering and bequests. We are grateful for the gifts of God's people to keep the seminary campus up-to-date.

- Paving project of the roads
- New windows in the tower room
- New carpet in the library
- Updated streaming equipment
- New student chairs
- Updated landscaping
- Reinforcing the bridge
- Weight/exercise room renovation
- Remodeling of the basement canteen
- New seminary website

This is still a place where, above all, we aim to fill our men with the gospel, that their hearts may ring with it and their mouths sing with it, and their feet be shod with it to go to the uttermost parts of the earth. Men who have found their place of quiet rest, their permanent home, and eternal stability. So that they can preach to others in a world of change: "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58). †

Paul O. Wendland serves as president of the seminary and teaches New Testament.

Brug & Bivens

TRANSITION TO RETIREMENT

Professors Forrest Bivens and John Brug were college ('67) and seminary ('71) classmates. Prof. Bivens served as a parish pastor for 22 years, first in San Jose, Calif., and then Saginaw, Mich., before coming to the seminary in 1993. Prof. Brug served as a parish pastor in Pennsylvania for seven years and as a professor at Dr. Martin Luther College for five before coming to the seminary in 1983. Bivens and Brug transitioned to retirement after serving 22 years and 32 years at the seminary respectively.

What changes have you seen in your years of ministry at the seminary?

BRUG: A big change is the impact technology has had on our work. The seminary had one daisy wheel printer and four Apple 2E computers when I came.

BIVENS: There's been a change in teaching too. Methodology wasn't talked about when I came here. You went to the classroom and taught as the sage on the stage.

We pay more attention to adult learning and teaching methodology now.

BRUG: Classes are much more organized and structured with various activities. It's no longer just lecturing through a notebook, stopping at the end of the period, and then the next class, "Now where were we?"

Have students changed over the years?

BRUG: Students don't read today like in the past. Many don't have a broad grasp of history and literature and culture. They have difficulty writing with a fine style. The decline of reading has affected our students in a negative way.

BIVENS: Profs can't make assumptions about broad knowledge—whether it's Bible knowledge or English literature or history. We can't use classical allusions in the classroom. No one will get it. It's not the students fault. It's our culture, our education.

What do you look forward to in retirement?



Professor John Brug

BIVENS: I have thought about Kingdom Workers volunteer opportunities in Central Africa or Southeast Asia. Whatever the Lord allows, I'm just going to wade into it.

BRUG: I would like to continue to teach Bible classes in congregations. I won't have to develop a lot of new material; I've already got a pretty good repertoire.

BIVENS: St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis., has asked me to preach once a month and do Bible class a couple times per month. It is encouraging that there are so many various opportunities to serve. I have decided to serve as a part-time administrator for the Pastor Partners Program for the seminary for about 20 hours per month.

BRUG: I look forward to going to conferences and seeing what the students I have had are doing in their ministries. Even at the seminary there are now many profs we have had as students. Prof. Tackmier has taken an interest in Aramaic and the inscriptions course. Prof. Kock is getting excited about geography and archaeology. Seeing what your students do is very interesting and enjoyable.

BIVENS: We have children and grandchildren who have not gotten to know their grandfather very well. We want to do something about that. We'll visit my daughter and son-in-law on Grenada and our son's family in Texas—preferably in winter.

How have you prepared for retirement?

BRUG: Financially it's a hard thing to prepare for. We have seen economic extremes in the last couple decades and one starts to think what sort of retirement will be affordable. You have to be flexible.

BIVENS: Investment counselors have asked me to consider how much I would need in retirement. I haven't answered those questions. That's God's business not mine. My job is to be a good manager of what I have now. If I

pay the Lord first and pay myself second and live on 75 percent of my income, that's what I plan on doing in retirement too.

BRUG: I haven't worried about boredom. I have always been interested in writing and reading. If I had five more lifetimes I wouldn't run out of things to study and read about. Although I have gotten rid of many, I am still keeping 600 or 700 books so I won't get bored.

As a seminary professor, retirement means moving out of your home. How do you and your wife feel about that?

BRUG: It'll be harder for Irene in some ways. After 32 years she has close friends, close ties at church. But we'll live close to our son and his family so that will make things easier.

BIVENS: Sue has filled her life since her retirement from teaching with activities with friends and family. For us it actually won't mean a move since we made that transition five years ago to a condo in Milwaukee. Our downsizing

took place then. We probably got rid of 75 percent of everything.

BRUG: Where we are moving, there is quite a bit of storage space so we don't have to get rid of much. It still takes a long time to go through our stuff because it is a chance to review our life. Irene brought me a newspaper she had saved from the 100th anniversary of the town where I was a pastor. And I had to read it.

Recommendations to colleagues approaching retirement?

BRUG: Relax and ask yourself how God wants you to best use this time. Consider the gifts God has given you, your family situation, and health concerns.

BIVENS: My advice would be to retire later rather than earlier. If you have competency, adequacy of health, you have your training, you are serving a purpose in the Kingdom, just keep on going. You can't ungong a gong. Once you retire it's pretty hard to come back and say wait a minute, I'd like to rethink this.

BRUG: On the other hand, if you feel a need to rest you shouldn't feel guilty. Whatever you have the privilege of doing now, cherish it, think twice before giving it up, but don't be afraid of moving in a different direction either. The Lord is always there to take care of you.

BIVENS: It is only by the grace of God that we were blessed with the education we got and were able to enter the public ministry. And it's by the God's grace that he has led us through those years. Why should it be any different in retirement? The grace of God will take us where he wants us to go and we leave that up to him. †



Professor Forrest Bivens

Professor John Hartwig teaches preaching and German and serves as library director.

STUDENTS' TRANSITIONS

to the Seminary

I was working as biomedical scientist when I decided to become a pastor. At the time, my wife, Dawn, and I were members at Ascension, Escondido, Calif. Because of our unique circumstance, I enrolled as a Pastoral Studies Institute student.

I worked full-time during the week and studied under the guidance of Professor Sorum and Rev. Aaron Glaeske during the evenings and weekends. The PSI program gave me valuable on-the-job training at Ascension and equipped me with the required pre-seminary coursework, including Greek and Hebrew.

Our transition to the seminary started in July 2014 when Dawn, our four-year-old son, Max, and I packed our car and spent two weeks driving from California to Wisconsin. Our

move has had many challenges and blessings. Returning to academia as a full-time student was one. Another challenge included settling my family in the Midwest. My new seminary family helped tremendously with those transitions.

After a year at the seminary, I am thankful I am able to study God's Word intensively at the feet of gifted professors and encouraging classmates. The training is connecting me closer to Jesus as I prepare for my future ministry.

The blessings transitioning from a PSI student to life at the seminary have far outweighed the challenges. It is a privilege to be a seminary student preparing for the pastoral ministry. †

Dean Ellis

I won't say that my transition from MLC was hard, but there were a few bumps along the road. I arrived at the seminary and suddenly realized I was beginning the final stage of my journey to pastoral ministry. While following the path through WELS ministerial education schools, it's easy to be swept along in the flow of things. During those years, I don't know if I myself ever stopped to think about the next step—it was always set out in front of me. At the beginning of my time at the seminary, though, the questions I had never really asked came all at once: Am I really *able* to serve people well as a pastor? Do I really *want* to do a pastor's work? How can I ever be the kind of pastor I've come to admire?

Combine those big questions with a new routine, new environment, new part-time job, and distance from college friends, and I had a doubt-filled week or two. However, I soon realized that many of my classmates were asking those same questions. It seems everyone asks them at some point. Over the next weeks, upperclassmen and professors encouraged us. Morning chapel devotions reminded us that though we are unworthy and imperfect, God in his grace chooses to use people like us to spread his saving Word.



Dean Ellis is a second-career PSI student.



Micah Plocher, a member of the class of 2018, is from Vassar, Mich.

Eventually, my doubts and fears faded away.

Once I settled into my new routine, I realized that Mequon is a really nice place, and I usually like my job. For all my friends who are far away, I'm now surrounded by a group of men I'm proud to call brothers training for the ministry. The transition to the seminary from MLC was an opportunity to refocus myself on exactly what I'm doing here. I pray that God would help me keep that focus on him and his grace during what I'm confident will be some of the best years of my life. †

Micah Plocher

*M*y transition to the seminary after serving for a year in Peru is becoming more and more common every year. Nearly 30 percent of the current Junior class arrived on campus after serving at least one year overseas.

to break up the eight-year program of study through MLC and WLS. I thought that would help me to stay strong in my studies. While I did not turn into some sort of super student immune to mental lapses, living and working in a foreign culture sharpened



Scott Henrich spent a year in Peru before attending the seminary.

Those brothers have been a significant blessing in my move back to the U.S. Although the geographic locations, languages, and cultures varied, we all shared in the similar joys and frustrations that come with mission work in a non-English speaking country. I spent a lot of my life in a foreign country because my dad was a missionary. It gave me great joy to see my friends grow through those same kinds of valuable experiences I had as a kid. To be able to share, and sometimes vent, to an understanding ear significantly eased my transition.

Academically, a 'gap year' can have advantages, but also disadvantage. An advantage is the motivation it can give. Part of my plan in going abroad was

my focus on the true urgency of what I study here at the seminary.

"But aren't you worried that you'll lose your biblical languages?" was a common question pre-trip and a potential disadvantage. Although that is a valid concern, there are so many online resources available now to keep up in Greek and Hebrew that the only real problem is making the time for self-study. So I arrived at the seminary a little behind where I finished at MLC, but not to a degree that it compromised my studies. Even more, the gains—fluency in Spanish, confidence in teaching, friendships, and especially the gospel work done through me—far outweigh a little bit of language rustiness. †

Scott Henrich

FROM PASTOR TO PROFESSOR

“Hi Tom. This is Paul Wendland calling. Did I catch you at a good time? I just want to inform you that you have been called to become a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary...”

It was as if a bolt of lightning had just shot through my body. I, frankly, am not real sure how the conversation went after that!

That conversation would prove to mark the beginning of the transition from parish ministry in Johnson City, Tenn., to seminary professor. What have been the challenges? The joys?

For me the biggest challenge has been leaving “my people” behind. Obviously it’s Jesus’ church; we’re all his people. And yet God chooses to work through us humans, so the bond that forms between pastor and parishioner is strong. I had spent 22 years in Johnson City, starting a new mission. About 75 percent of Living Word’s membership had been confirmed by me. That bond is oh-so-close! After moving to Mequon, it took me several months before I could make it through a worship service without tears—and they still come on occasion, as a hymn or text reminds me of a Living Word member or someone from the South.

The second challenge has been the switch from being a “generalist,” serving in all sorts of ways (preaching, teaching, visiting, counseling, evangelizing, etc.) to being a “specialist.” After 22 years in ministry, I had become fairly confident that I could do what needed to be done. But when you arrive here you realize how

much growing you need to do in order to really fill the needs of the young men as they prepare for ministry. It’s humbling and challenging.

The third challenge: Wisconsin weather. Ugh. As one of my former vicars put it, “As our forebears were coming across the United States, why didn’t they turn left?”

But the joys are many. To serve with such a great faculty is a wonderful blessing. To see the amazing dedication of the staff is inspiring. The students are highly motivated. Yes, they’re still sinners, too, but overall they are highly motivated and faithful.

There is one joy that rises to the top. It happens as I sit in chapel and look at the young men and just speculate. What amazing things will God accomplish through these young men? What challenges will they face? God chose to allow them to be born into

this era, and wove into them the desire and the gifts to serve as pastors.

Where will they serve? Will some of them be world missionaries or home missionaries? Which of them will have special leadership skills, organizational skills, evangelism skills, worship skills? I’m getting to gaze at the future pastors of our church body! And—wow—I’m even getting to play a small part in training those men for ministry. That is an amazing joy, and to this point is my favorite part of the transition to the seminary.

Thankfully transitions are merely, well, transitory; God and his Word are eternal. Both the challenges and the joys of transition help to focus our attention on God’s unchanging grace. †

Professor Thomas Kock teaches education and Old Testament. He served as pastor of Living Word Lutheran Church in Johnson City, Tennessee from 1992-2014.



Professor Tom Kock joined the faculty in 2014.

FROM PROFESSOR TO PASTOR

*I*s the comfort zone disturbed? Do you have to struggle with uncertainty or fear? How does a former professor handle the change from the structure and routine of institutional ministry to the fluidity of planting a church with no existing nucleus? Do you miss the seminary?

These and dozens of questions have either originated from my own heart or from the curiosity of others I know and love. The answer is: some things are vastly different and some things are strikingly similar. I rejoice that through all the changes the Lord makes it clear it's not primarily about me or us as much as it is him.

Wherever you and I serve our Lord in glorious public ministry it can always be said and trusted: "He does all things well."

Whether I am sitting in my office in Mequon counseling a hurting advisee or whether I am in a rehabilitation center listening to a bedridden man who has been avoiding his spiritual needs for decades, I get to guide a person to the greatest caretaker of the soul. Whether I am creating curriculum for an isagogics class or for an entire community that desperately needs to connect with the Word of truth, I enjoy the privilege of teaching souls to know and rely on the one who is truth. Whether I am standing outside the dorm at WLS chatting with my students about public ministry or seated at the local café chatting with a 50 year old man who exclaims "I'm lost Mike, help me," I find each scenario to be most humbling in service to our King.



Pastor Michael Quandt served as a professor for six years.

I experienced innumerable joys as a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The sound Christian friendships, the privilege to instruct the troops, and the opportunities to be edified by Word and sacrament will always be cherished.

Yet transition arrived and impacted my life again. Now I experience anew the joys of serving on the front lines of pastoral ministry. Already in this setting I have held the hand of two Christian warriors who drew their last breath in living faith. I have had the opportunity to preach Christ crucified and risen to several dozen souls who have been lifelong captives to a theology that holds out no gospel. I have had the joy of one-on-one witnessing with storekeepers and wait staff here in southwest Utah. Additionally, whether as a WLS professor or now as a parish pastor, I have experienced numerous opportunities to learn and be encouraged at our conferences and workshops.

The transition from professor to pastor might suggest the nuanced differences outweigh the similarities by a wide margin. But one similarity binds our service to Jesus together as wonderfully as could be imagined. Jesus and his unconditional love have been given to us to share with others. The love of Jesus sustains and cares for his Church no matter what transitions come along.

Transition is no stranger to our Lord's Church. Having explored transitions and changes throughout the opening chapters of Ephesians, our dear gospel-partner Paul breaks out into appropriate and insightful praise: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" (Ephesians 3:20,21).

Jesus does all things well, especially as he goes with us into changes in our public ministries. †

Pastor Michael Quandt serves as pastor of Redemption Lutheran Church in St. George, Utah. He served as a professor at the seminary from 2007-2013.



Kendall and Laura Cook learned he would be serving at Norfolk, Nebraska.



Nathan Loersch was assigned to start a new mission in Michigan.



The seniors look over the assignment list.



Philip Hunter and his fiancée, Andrea Steinbrenner, talk with John and Sandy Wiley after the 2015 Call Day service. The Wiley's are members of Bethel, Menasha, Wisconsin, where Hunter was assigned.



Each year the Seminary Chorus presents its Christmas Concert on the second Sunday in December. Since its beginning, the choir has toured all across the United States.



Each year, the seminary leads groups of all ages on a tour of the 80-acre campus.



Teachers Nancy Beck Kanter and Jane Schlenvogt-Dew received a Master of Arts in Religion degree.



Every day, chapel offers the students an opportunity to worship the God they study and serve.

A PASTOR . . . THEIR PASTOR

*I*t was a cool day for July. I pulled into the parking lot for my first day of work as the pastor. I parked, grabbed a cardboard box of books from the back seat, and took a deep breath, excited for this new beginning. But where had this all started?

The idea of being a pastor had been in my head for a long time. My parents encouraged me ever since I was able to sing the words of the liturgy. But I hadn't made the pastor thing my thing. For the longest time I didn't know what I wanted to do. After much prayer and deliberation I decided: I want to be a pastor.

I knew what it meant—a lot of school. It meant dedicating myself to a life of no more weekends off and working over the holidays. I committed myself to the task, worked hard, and participated in many different ministry experiences along the way. Eventually, I graduated from MLC ready for the next step.

It was exciting to enter the seminary in the fall of 2010. I had so much to learn: the building blocks of Biblical Interpretation—the Lutheran way, a survey of the Gospels, how to teach, how to preach. It was all so invigorating! *"I can't wait until I'm a pastor and I get to use all this stuff!"* I thought to myself. Many nights, falling asleep at the desk, I wondered how the insights gleaned would be used at my first church or how a fact committed to memory would come up in my Bible Class on Sunday.



But I didn't know. I didn't know what stuff would be important. How could I? Sure, I knew all about Jesus and salvation. But the specifics? All I knew was that I was going to be a pastor. I didn't know how big my congregation would be, where it would be, or what kind of ministry it would be. Would I have an associate? So many questions.

Vicar year was great, but only temporary. And when my classmates and I returned to campus we were all changed. Excited to be back, but more excited to become pastors. The entire year the elephant in the room at every senior gathering was assignment day. Where would my wife and I end up? A foreign field? Maybe a mission start? It became harder to pay attention in class. Anticipation.

Then that fateful day finally arrived. Everything in God's hands and completely out of ours, we slept well the night before and woke up with a nervous shared excitement. Where will it be? What's the name of our new church?

We sat next to each other and held hands and tried to pay attention to the sermon. Then the reading of the assignments began. He read fast. Before we knew it, this was no longer a game we played on long car rides. There was no more guessing. Here it is: "John Raasch. Salem Lutheran Church—Associate pastor. Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Southeastern Wisconsin District." That's it. That's where I'll become a pastor.

For men studying to become pastors and their families, the pastoral

ministry feels like an epilogue because the road to ministry is so long. But—this is where the transition begins—you realize that your time at college and seminary was actually the prologue to the main event.

So here I am. Outside the door with a box of books to bring into my office. I get to the door and realize that my key doesn't work. So this is what being a pastor is like: my secretary needs to let me in on my first day. But then I heard it: "Good morning, Pastor." Whoa. Is she talking to me? She called me, "Pastor."

And it kept happening. It's as if your first name has been replaced by a title. After all these years—I studied, and worked, and memorized, and sacrificed, and now, finally I'm a pastor.

But the transition isn't complete yet. Because even then I was still just "a" pastor. Then I overheard someone talking about me one day. They weren't gossiping and I don't even remember what the conversation was about, but they said something I wasn't ready for: "He's *my* pastor." And it dawned on me, *this* is it. I didn't want to be a pastor; I wanted to be *their* pastor.

I'm no longer my own. I'm their pastor. I'm no longer qualified by an indefinite pronoun. "That's *my* pastor." That sharpens my focus because I know I don't deserve it. It's a gift to call these people "my people" and to have them call me "their pastor."

I finally have the answers to those questions I asked. Do I have an associate? Yes. Where do I live? Milwaukee. Do I have a big congregation? I think I do. And this grace is no small thing. No one could ever approach this blessed life if they didn't have a good pastor themselves. I do have a good pastor. A good Shepherd is more like it. If the transition from "studying to be a pastor" to "their pastor" has brought anything into focus for me it's this: No one relies on grace more than a pastor. God be praised for the grace he shows through me. 🙏

*Pastor John Raasch serves at
Salem Lutheran Church in
Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*



John Raasch was ordained and installed in July 2014.

PROFESSORS EMERITI— *Where are They Now?*

This year Professors John Brug and Forrest Bivens joined the ranks of the “Emeriti,” the seminary’s retired professors. Where are the seven other members of this elite group and what have they been doing since they retired? Our professors emeriti were asked that question. What follows is a brief synopsis of what has occupied their time since leaving the ranks of the faculty. As you will see, retirement means many things to many people. But in all cases retirement still involves service as strength and opportunities allow.

ARMIN W. SCHUETZE

Years of service at WLS: 1958-1990

Present Hometown: Watertown, Wis.

After retirement he first served a vacancy for about half a year in Vermont. He has had a number of writing projects, including *Church-Mission-Ministry* in the *People’s Bible Teachings* series and co-authoring *WELS and Other Lutherans*. His major writing assignment was *The Synodical Conference – Ecumenical Endeavor*, which he completed in 2000. In January 2000 he left for Russia and spent three months teaching at our seminary in Akademgorodok. He also taught a Summer Quarter course at the seminary and did occasional preaching and conducting Bible classes in local congregations. In the last ten or so years he commented, “I continued simply as a loyal church member at Trinity, Watertown.”

ARMIN J. PANNING

Years of service at WLS: 1975-2001

Present Hometown: Port Washington, Wis.

He has been involved at his local congregation, helping with cleaning days and teaching a number of mid-week Bible Classes. He has attended Pastoral Conferences and District Conventions, presenting a paper at the local conference. He was re-elected and then fulfilled his term as CELC president. He found particular joy in going to those conferences, especially the one held in New Ulm, MN. In early retirement, he did some substitute teaching at the seminary. In February 2005 he accepted a one year call as Friendly Counselor for our mission work in Bulgaria. He also taught for six weeks in India. He authored *A Portrait of Peter and Life in the New Testament World*. He edited the updated edition of Meyer’s commentary on Corinthians. He wrote the prison ministry self-study for Romans.

LEROY A. DOBBERSTEIN

Years of service at WLS: 1982-1999

Present Hometown: Rapid City, S.D.

His ongoing service has consisted mainly of vacancy service and supply preaching. He has assisted with vacancies in Virginia, Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota, in addition to assisting in his home congregation. Over the 16 years of his retirement he has, on average, conducted services on about 30 Sundays per year. In 2000 he taught a Summer Quarter course at the seminary and later taught a course for pastors in Iowa. For the past 15 years he has done proofreading for Northwestern Publishing House.

RICHARD D. BALGE

Years of service at WLS: 1971-2002

Present Hometown: Thiensville, Wis.

He commented, “Lois and I searched for housing in four counties for ten months. Then the Lord found us a condominium about one-half mile from the seminary. I have done a bit of writing, delivered a conference paper, attended conferences and conventions and concerts, and helped celebrate family occasions. I give daily attention the Word of God and prayer.” Five years ago he had successful open-heart surgery.

DAVID P. KUSKE

Years of service at WLS: 1973-2003

Present Hometown: Jackson, Wis.

He has served vacancies in remote WELS congregations for three or four months at a time in seven US states (Wisconsin, Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Michigan, Alaska, and Nebraska) and Toronto, Canada. He has authored three commentaries: *Romans 1-8*, *Romans 9-16*, *1 and 2 Peter and Jude*.



David Valleskey, Paul O. Wendland, Armin Schuetze and Armin Panning



James Westendorf and Alan Siggelkow



Richard Balge

ALAN H. SIGGELKOW

Years of service at WLS: 1991-2010

Present Hometown: Thiensville, Wis.

Since retirement he has served as a therapist with Christian Family Counseling, counseling people of all ages. "I have developed a specialty in geriatric counseling. The majority of my practice has been in counseling people with marriage problems and those suffering from addictions." He continues to serve as a member of the WELS Mental Health Needs Committee, the WELS/ELS Christian Therapist Network, the WELS Social Media Task Force, Conquerors through Christ, and Freedom for the Captives. He still serves as president of the NWC Alumni Society. He has presented to pastors' conferences on counseling topics. "I would still like to finish a book on pastoral counseling."

JAMES J. WESTENDORF

Years of Service at WLS: 1982-2011

Present Hometown: Johnson Creek, Wis.

Retirement equals vacancies. Since retiring he has filled vacancies at Beautiful Savior, Fayetteville, N.C. (December 2011-February 2012); St. Paul, Grant Park, Ill. (March-July 2012); St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb. (August 2012-April 2013); Prince of Peace, Traverse City, Mich. (February-August 2014); and St. Paul, Grand Junction, Col. (September 2014-March 2015). He has served as a supply preacher at Shepherd of the Hills, Duluth, Minn. (May 2013) and as a substitute teacher at the seminary (August-December 2013). More recently he has reviewed a revised translation of Proverbs done by the Holman Christian Standard Bible for the WELS Translation Liaison Committee.

DAVID J. VALLESKEY

Years of service at WLS: 1984-2004

Present Hometown: San Marcos, Calif.

"One of the joys of retirement is that I've had more time for family—for Janice and for the school activities of grandchildren." He has conducted Bible classes and preached at his congregation in Fallbrook, Calif. During the first five years of his retirement, he continued to do many of the things he had done while at the seminary: delivering a couple of district convention essays, conducting a number of satellite summer quarter and Pastors Institute courses, and giving presentations or essays at quite a few conferences.

During the last five years he has been covering pastoral vacancies close to 80 percent of the time, including a couple of vacancies which lasted one-and-a-half years. More recently he wrote a chapter, "Luther as a Pastor to Pastors," for the upcoming 2017 Luther 500th anniversary *Festschrift*. †

Professor James Korthals teaches church history and homiletics.

Becoming a Pastor's Wife

I looked at him across the table. He became real still and looked at me like he had something important to say. “I’m thinking about becoming a pastor.”

Although my husband was just my boyfriend at the time, somewhere in my head and heart I knew those words would affect me too, although at that time I didn’t know how. As I look back on that day seven years ago, I can’t help but think about the journey since then. In the five years since marrying in 2009, we would have five zip codes, live in three different states, and be blessed to serve several churches, all while studying, going to school, and working. The first five years of our marriage can be characterized by change . . . transitions . . . and more change.

The role I had as a seminary student’s wife was very clear. I worked full time to help support us. I tried to be understanding with all those late nights of studying. I drove with him to preach and nervously sat in the pew listening to those first sermons. Financial support, emotional support. Got it.

At graduation another sentence hit me like a ton of bricks.

“Brian Wrobel, from Holmen, Wisconsin. Zion, Gainesville, Florida. South Atlantic District.”

Florida was a change I wasn’t anticipating. I looked down at my three-week-old baby and honestly wondered, “How am I going to do



Brian, Caralyn, and Charlotte Wrobel

this? What’s my role in all this? How will I serve?” I knew my husband had a clear list of expectations, goals, and challenges, but mine were ambiguous.

The first few months in Gainesville proved exciting and challenging as I learned my new surroundings, grew into a new title and identity as “pastor’s wife,” met a host of people, and learned how to be a mother to a growing baby. I see now how God enabled me to cope. I learned that change happens much more easily when there’s a willingness to adapt, to be ready and willing to call a new state home and a new church home, to make new friends and learn to love a new “culture.” Serving in whatever area I was able and embracing a new

church family has allowed me to find a niche, to know my purpose.

It was a unique experience to throw up our hands, surrender all control, and hear where God would have us serve. We are still in transition in Gainesville, but the Lord has not left our side and continues to bless us. In all these transitions my God is my constant and our family has grown stronger together. When I couldn’t rely on what I know—familiar surroundings, established relationships—the Lord has given me a willingness and desire to grow closer to my husband, child, my new church home, and more importantly, to cling to my Savior whose Word and promises do not change. ✝

Caralyn Wrobel

SEMINARY 5.0, 6.0, 7.0 . . .

Windows 10. iOS 9. Android 5.0 Lollipop.

The version numbers keep going up. Whatever your current computer or smart phone operating system, you expect it soon to change. New features, greater stability, improved speed—technology aims for taller mountains to climb.

“I the LORD do not change”
(Malachi 3:6).

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17).

We praise the Lord for this. We pray that all teaching at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary reflects that which does not change: God and his inspired Word to humanity.

But what about that next version of Windows?

Technology has transformed our world. Technology has transformed the teaching and learning experience.

While a professor may still distribute notes in paper format, it's getting rarer. All students have access to Seminary Online, with a web page for every class. Professors upload



Students upload course material for Grow in Grace's online classes.

documents, students download them to use during class.

Laptops become powerful tools for learning. Yes, they can be distractions too—our young brothers surely value, and pray for, God's gift of self-control! Students are able to take notes efficiently and then easily access the material for years to come. When a professor projects an image

onto a big screen, students can simultaneously see it up close on their own screen. They can access the Internet as they work at a collaborative learning activity. A professor can ask a question, and all class members can immediately submit answers that are electronically collected and projected onto the screen. Professors gain instant awareness into how the class as a whole is understanding, or not understanding, a point.

High-resolution projectors with speakers hang from every classroom ceiling. PowerPoint slides remain popular. But very flexible and dynamic screen experiences are also possible. With an iPad and a wireless link to the projector, one can flip quickly between a PowerPoint presentation, a relevant YouTube video, Greek or Hebrew Bible software, and a blank screen to write real time notes that all can see. These notes can be saved as a document file that students can access.

There's more. Our online course management software permits activity outside the classroom. Students can submit questions to professors in a chat-room. Online discussions take place. Collaborative commentaries are created. Daily assignments are uploaded for the professor to review in his office before meeting his students in the classroom.

Although technology has the potential to assist in many ways, there remains a desire to affirm John's words in 2 John 12: “I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.” Technology can assist. But we treasure the blessing of face-to-face interpersonal communication.

Technology marches on. But the God who doesn't change remains constant, our sure guide, no matter what the newest operating system might bring. †



Professor Stephen Geiger uses his iPad and wireless link to a projector to teach his courses.

*Professor Stephen Geiger teaches
New Testament and education.*

Transitions at the Seminary 19

Transitions in CONTINUING EDUCATION

Changes. To see the largest classes of continuing education students don't come to Mequon. Go to Buckeystown, Md., or Daytona Beach, Fla. The seminary travels to where pastors are. But sometimes no one actually travels. Our online course enrollment sometimes surpasses on campus enrollment.



Phil Huebner received a Master of Sacred Theology degree.

Our Mequon campus offers an unparalleled package of resources for study, worship, and fellowship. There's still great value in congregations making it possible for their pastor to study away from the pressures of their callings. Yet even when pastors come to Mequon, it's not the same old Summer Quarter. After listening to what pastors wanted and studying

programs of nine other seminaries, we revised the Master of Sacred Theology program to offer opportunities for focused study in eight areas. A repeating core curriculum in each area, electives, and directed study, enables pastors to concentrate on areas that fit their gifts or the needs of their calling. Even Summer Quarter's length changed. It's now two weeks instead of three, acknowledging how difficult it is for pastors to get away for longer.

Offering courses on campus, online, and at satellite locations isn't the whole story of the transitions happening through **Grow in Grace**, our institute for spiritual and professional



Each year, celebrations of ministry milestones are offered to recharge and encourage pastors and their wives.

growth. Continuing education efforts also seek to respond to the reality of discouragement in ministry and the resulting pastoral resignations. Nearly 2,000 men graduated from the seminary in the past 40 years. From 1970-2010 our synod experienced 544 pastoral resignations (about a 29% attrition rate).

Seeking to strengthen the support system for our graduates, the seminary hosts three-day retreats for pastors and their wives, marking 10 and 25 years since graduation. In 2016, the retreat for those who have been in the ministry for three years will be added. Plans also call for adding a retreat for those retiring. At the retreats, pastors and wives are surrounded by classmates and friends who face similar joys and challenges in ministry, and they are surrounded by the same Word and sacrament that first empowered them for ministry.

In 2011 we started a three-year mentoring program that paired experienced pastoral mentors with graduates. At present 49 trained pastors mentor 62 recent graduates. While we have much to learn to strengthen this initiative, it's already produced blessings. Not a single new pastor who remained active in mentoring has been lost to resignation.

Only God fully knows what transitions for continuing education the future holds. God grant that whatever the changes may be, they further strengthen pastors in their faith and in their gospel ministry. †

Professor Rich Gurgel teaches homiletics and serves as the director of Grow in Grace.



Through Pastor Partners, veteran pastors mentor graduates for three years.

HEALTH & WELLNESS AT WLS

*M*y class arrived on campus in 2011. Already in the first couple days of orientation, we were told about the slippery slope of succumbing to the “pastor’s belly.” Sitting at a desk day after day, trying to stay on top of both in-reach and outreach efforts, and the hours spent preparing a sermon every week could mean making time to exercise and preparing healthy food are often the first things to be sacrificed.

The benefits of physical health are easily underestimated in the life of a pastor. There is a connection between physical health and reduced stress, increased energy, improved mental health, and longer life. All of these help pastors serve more fully and faithfully.

This is why we were encouraged to begin forming healthy habits as soon as possible. The professors and staff remind us to live healthier lives and changes on the campus make it easier to follow through. In addition, a fitness expert has visited campus, speaking to the seminary family about the importance of an exercise program and a proper diet. We were able to meet with him individually and set up personal plans. He continues to offer individual advice and training to those who are interested.



In December 2014 the seminary basketball team won the annual Tip-Off Tournament at Concordia, Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

This is easier to accomplish now, since renovations were completed to the weight room to add room for more and newer equipment. This year it is no longer unusual to go into the weight room at different times throughout the day and find many people using it.

Physical fitness isn’t only about individual exercise, however. We also have intramural volleyball, basketball, and football seasons. This past school year, our seminary team won a basketball tournament in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Families get involved, too, by participating in the Call Day Prediction 5K run/walk, which has been taking place for years.



Some students choose to stand throughout classes to combat the effects of sitting.

Physical health will never receive the same emphasis as spiritual training on campus. As Paul says, “For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:8). Health and wellness have some value, here we use it for the ultimate purpose of preparing ourselves to proclaim the gospel. 📖

Isaac Crass was assigned to be a tutor at Martin Luther College.



In spring, professors and students competed on the intramural flag football teams.

For further reading: For his senior thesis, Nathan Loersch wrote on “The Impact of Regular Physical Exercise on the Pastor and His Ministry.” You can find it at the essay file link on our webpage.

WLS: *A Global Seminary*

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary may be a small seminary located in Wisconsin, but it is making a global impact. “WLS provides a theological center where we can meet with our many pastor training partners from around the world to consult, to compare, to assess, to network, and to grow together in our skills and determination to send out men into ministry whose hearts are overflowing with the gospel of Jesus,” says Professor E. Allen Sorum, director of the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI).



Kirk Massey and his wife, Sheree. Kirk received training through the Apache Christian Training School and the Pastoral Studies Institute. He has been assigned to serve the Apache Mission Field.

PREPARING SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Through the PSI, the seminary offers pre-seminary and seminary classes for non-traditional students—including men from different cultures, English-speaking second-career students, and others who need flexibility in their schedule to train for ministry. Classes are offered through satellite training programs, local pastors, visiting professors, and courses at the seminary.

Last year, four men were enrolled through their home congregations. In addition, four Anglo pastors are working with South Sudanese spiritual leaders and partners who are refugees in North America.

Since PSI began in 2003, over 50 men have participated in the program. More than 30 have received diplomas and are now serving in Alaska, Thailand, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Texas, and Arizona.

FOSTERING COLLABORATION

As people have immigrated to North America, congregations have found ways to serve them and their spiritual leaders. The seminary has begun hosting conferences to bring these ministries together. Conferences are an opportunity for professors to speak on topics relating to spiritual and professional growth. In addition, plenty of time is allotted for participants to collaborate and review strategic plans for their mission and ministry.

In November 2014, an Asian Conference was held where Professor Stephen Geiger presented methods for teaching the Bible to adults. In June, Hispanics, Sudanese, and Asian church leaders came together for a “Tool Box” conference. Ethnic leaders, missionaries in the field, and professors facilitated discussions on how congregations can reach out to their neighbors.

NURTURING PARTNERSHIPS

Through the World Mission Seminary Professor, the seminary builds relationships with overseas ministerial education programs and provides opportunities for mutual encouragement. This allows Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) leaders and teachers to consult, assess, share resources, and network.

To serve those in Apacheland, Germany, India, Nigeria, and South Asia, WLS sends professors to teach in programs overseen by those missions and sister churches. Some national students who live overseas take WLS courses online. In other cases, the seminary partners with local seminaries to offer continuing education. This kind of flexibility allows the seminary to serve the diverse needs of the CELC.



Peter Bur met with refugees in Ethiopia.



In May, the first ten participants of GRATSI received their diplomas.

Another form of partnership takes place with the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA).

Since 2010, “GRATSI”—the Greater Africa Theological Studies Institute—has been jointly administered between the Lusaka Seminary and WLS. This program is designed for pastors who qualify to serve in leadership positions. In April 2014, the first ten men successfully completed their studies and received Bachelor of Divinity degrees from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary at a ceremony in Lilongwe, Malawi. Another cohort has begun and has finished two courses. WLS professors have also participated in the LCCA’s “Winter Week.” This continuing education program is available to all LCCA pastors and has been held in both Zambia and Malawi.

Since the program began, our professors have served as guest instructors in Apacheland, Zambia, Malawi, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Ukraine, Sweden, Mexico, Germany, Bulgaria, Colombia, India, Nepal, and Nigeria. In summer 2015, Professor Ken Cherney turned over his work to Brad Wordell who accepted the call after serving as a missionary in Japan.

WELCOMING DIVERSE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

While most of the seminary’s students follow a traditional path, not all do. Through PSI, students from all over the country and the world attend seminary classes in Mequon. Whether for a week, a month, or a school year, these students grow from spending time in the classroom with like-minded students. And the traditional students are inspired by studying next to those who live in places where being a Christian can bring concerns for their safety.

“In this mutual exchange and also by sharing students, we nurture the kind of relationships that bear important fruit,” says Professor Sorum. “These relationships allow us to

encourage each other in our commitments to our shared Reformation heritage and to our unique approach to and respect for Scripture. We sharpen each other.”

EQUIPPING STUDENTS

Becoming a global seminary means not only serving those around the globe, but also preparing our more traditional students to serve all people. Many now arrive at the

seminary with global experience—almost one-third have served in another country before beginning their studies. That love for all souls continues to be developed with early field experiences. During Winterim, students are offered the opportunity to participate in canvassing and outreach.

Also, each year two students are given a scholarship to audit Mandarin classes at Wisconsin Lutheran College. This allows them devote themselves first to their seminary classes, then to the Mandarin study without needing a part-time job. Peter Janke, who vicared in Holy Word, Austin, Texas, embodies this global awareness and spirit. In addition to Greek and Hebrew, he wanted to learn Spanish and Mandarin. “I would like the ability to evangelize to almost anyone in the world,” he says. “If I know English, Spanish, and Chinese well enough, I know that I can speak to over half of the world. I could tell anyone about Jesus.”

Telling anyone—and everyone—about Jesus. That’s what makes Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary a global seminary. †

Linda Buxa serves as the seminary’s Communications Coordinator.



One of the five pastors who serve the refugees living in Gambella, Ethiopia.



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