



Κηρυξάτε

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

PREACH THE GOSPEL



"LORD JESUS,
YOU ARE MY RIGHTEOUSNESS,
I AM YOUR SIN.
YOU BECAME WHAT YOU WERE NOT
AND MADE ME TO BE
WHAT I WAS NOT."

**MARTIN LUTHER
REFORMER**
NOVEMBER 10, 1483 - EISLEBEN - FEBRUARY 18, 1546
DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY AT WITTENBERG
BIBLE TRANSLATOR AND EXPOSITOR
WRITER OF CATECHISMS AND HYMNS
PASTOR AND PREACHER



2017-18 EVENTS

AUGUST 23, 2017	Opening Service
OCTOBER 1-3	WLS Symposium on Reformation 500
OCTOBER 2	WLS Alumni Society Annual Meeting
OCTOBER 7	Friends of the Seminary Day
DECEMBER 10	Christmas Concert
JANUARY 3-16, 2018	Winterim
FEBRUARY 6-8	Mission and Ministry
MAY 24	Call Day and Graduation Concert
MAY 25	Graduation



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ✚ Heartfelt thanks to Clif Koeller for his dedicated efforts to capture images of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary with skill and creativity.
- ✚ Sincere appreciation for the authors and other contributing photographers who join in celebrating the mission God has given our seminary.
- ✚ A special thanks to Linda Buxa, communications coordinator, and Lori Guse, mission advancement coordinator.

Κηρυξάτε: Preach the Gospel—a magazine of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Prof. Bradley D. Wordell, managing editor; Prof. John P. Hartwig, Prof. James F. Korthals, editorial board. Editorial office: 11831 N Seminary Drive, Mequon WI 53092; (262) 242-8100.

© 2017 by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Printed in the USA. Reproduction of any original article or photo for use in a WELS church, school, or organization does not require permission of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Such use should credit the source.

Published annually under ISSN 1557-7279.






IN THIS ISSUE

VOL. 14

Five <i>Solas</i> Anchor the Reformation	4
Responding to the Continuing Reformation	6
Luther's Three Princes	8
Seeing Where the Savior Walked	9
Continuing Education Hits the Road	10
The Catechism—for You	11
The Seminary and the WELS Hymnal Project	11
Vicar in a Mission Setting	14
Greetings from CELC Sister Seminaries	16
We Are All Priests	18
Marriage in the Ministry	20
Using Technology to Reach and Teach	21
Where Do You Stand?	22

FIVE SOLAS ANCHOR



The seminary cornerstone is engraved with the three *solas* of the Reformation—*Sola Gratia*, *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fide*. By grace alone, by Scripture alone, and by faith alone. These are not simply fancy Latin terms meant to impress, they are the theological foundation upon which Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is built. These *solas* summarize the message that the seminary's students are trained to proclaim.

As we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, it is important that these Reformation truths remain the center of our attention. Yes, we give thanks to the Lord of the Church for once again bringing these truths to light through the work of his servant Martin Luther, but by his own admission Luther is not the center of attention. In 1521 while living at the Wartburg, Luther wrote his *Admonition to All True Christians to Guard Themselves against Sedition*. Here he expressed himself clearly, “Call yourselves Christians, not Lutherans. What is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine. Neither was I crucified for anyone. How did it come about that I, a poor, stinking bag of dung, should come to the point that anyone could give the children of Christ my godless name?”

While we give thanks for Luther, the focus in our celebration remains on what the Lord accomplished. We praise the Lord for restoring the *solas* to his people. But how many *solas* are there? The seminary cornerstone mentions three, but history records two more—*Solus Christus* or *Solo Christo* (Christ alone or through Christ alone) and *Soli Deo Gloria* (glory to God alone). The five *solas* articulate five fundamental beliefs of the Reformation, the pillars which the Reformers believed to be essential for Christian life and practice. All five quietly stood in opposition to the teachings of Roman Catholicism that had monopolized Christianity in western Europe for centuries and had obscured scriptural truths.

Sola Scriptura points to the Bible as the inspired and authoritative Word of God. It is the only source for Christian doctrine and it is accessible to everyone. In opposition to those who insist that Scripture can only be interpreted by sacred tradition, this *sola* recognizes

THE REFORMATION

that the Bible requires no interpretation outside of itself. The adjective (*sola*) and the noun (*scriptura*) are in the ablative case rather than the nominative case to indicate that the Bible does not stand alone apart from God, but rather that Scripture is the instrument of God by which he reveals himself for salvation through faith in Christ.

Sola Gratia teaches that salvation comes by divine grace—the undeserved love of God for sinners—not as something we sinners have in some way merited. This means salvation is an unearned gift from our God, given for Jesus’ sake. Grace is truly and always a gift of God. God is the sole actor in grace. Grace is always efficacious without any cooperation on our part.

Sola Fide teaches that justification—being declared righteous by God—is received by faith only, without any need for good works. Good works give evidence that faith exists, but good works do not determine faith. Martin Luther taught that faith is not a human response, rather it is the work of God through the means of grace. Faith is the righteousness of God that is accomplished in us through word and sacraments. Law and gospel work to kill the sinful self and to accomplish this new creation within us. The new creation within us is faith in Christ.

Everyone has some kind of faith—usually a faith in themselves. But we need God to continually destroy our self-righteousness. We need the faith that comes from God through law and gospel, Word and sacraments. In the document which became known as the opening salvo of the Reformation, the *Ninety-Five Theses*, Luther began, “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent’ (Matthew 4:17), He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” In that same document, Luther ended with “and thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace (Acts 14:22).”

Sola gratia and *sola fide* express the teaching of Ephesians 2:8-10, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”



Solus Christus emphasizes that Christ is the only mediator between God and man. Because there is salvation through no one else, the phrase is sometimes expressed in the ablative case, *solo Christo*, stressing that salvation is “by Christ alone.”

The final sola, *Soli Deo Gloria*, teaches that all glory is to be given to God alone, since salvation is accomplished solely through his will and action—not only the gift of the atoning work of Christ on the cross but also the gift of faith created in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit. The Reformers believed even the best person is not worthy of these blessings. We can only praise and give glory to God who is the author and sanctifier of faith and the good works which flow out of faith. The goal of all of life is to give glory to God, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation has focused a lot of attention on Martin Luther. In recent years there has been a larger than normal number of publications dealing with Luther’s life and his work, but don’t allow the message to be overshadowed by the messenger. Concentrate on the five *solas* of the Reformation. Such a focus will not only help us to understand the value of what happened 500 years ago, it will strengthen us as we continue to proclaim the wonderful works of God. †

Professor James Korthals taught Church History and Homiletics.

Responding to the CONTINUING REFORMATION

A 2008 graduate of WLS, I spent the last eight years as a missionary in East Asia. In August 2016, I arrived back on campus with my wife and 3-year-old son, having accepted the call to be the International Recruitment Director. The International Operations Group—a committee made up of leaders of home missions, world missions, and synodical schools—called me because the reformation continues to take place in and around the world. In some cases, churches and pastors are troubled by the direction the Lutheran church bodies to which they are connected have gone. In other cases, churches, pastors, or lay members want to be trained in the truth of God's Word, and they have discovered WELS. The needs are emerging from world missions and from here in the United States as well. Some of the requests are coming from Stateside refugee or immigrant groups; others are from the other side of the world. Sometimes there is a connection in both places. All of this led the Synodical Council to create the International Operations Group and approve my position.

WHOM ARE WE SERVING?

The Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) Team is made up of Professor Allen



Jon Bare accepted the call to serve in 2016. He is pictured here with his wife, Kim, and their two children.

Sorum, PSI Director; Professor Brad Wordell, World Mission Seminary Professor; and myself as International Recruitment Director. This team is uniquely equipped to respond to the growing needs for pastoral training around the world. Some of that training is done in partnership with WELS World Missions. For example, the PSI Team is assisting Russia and East Asia with professors who teach needed classes for their seminary

program. The PSI Team is assisting in Indonesia and Africa with continuing education for current church workers in our fellowship. Other training is done in partnership with WELS Home Missions. Refugees from South Sudan are being trained in Renton, Wash.; Mankato, Minn.; and Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Chinese men are being trained in Des Moines, Iowa, and Vancouver, BC, Canada. Hmong men are being trained in Kansas City and the Twin Cities. Vietnamese men are being trained in Boise, Idaho. A Liberian man is being trained in the Twin Cities. The list keeps growing. There are also opportunities that overlap home and world missions. The Sudanese men who are being trained are taking the training back to refugee camps in Africa. Hmong pastors are traveling to Thailand, East Asia, and Vietnam to train pastors there. In Vietnam, there is a church body of 70,000 members with 600 pastors and evangelists. Many of these men have minimal training and are looking to WELS Hmong pastors to equip them to be Lutheran pastors.

WHAT'S MY ROLE?

As a member of the PSI Team, I assist with this training in whatever way is needed. This past year I have been

learning what the PSI does, meeting students, and getting my feet on the ground. I taught classes in Calgary, Vancouver, Seattle, Ukraine, Russia, Vietnam, and Albania. It was also a blessing to take part in meetings, attend a graduation, and conduct an ordination of three pastors in East Asia. I gave presentations at an international student conference and at the LWMS annual convention. I attended the CELC convention in Germany. It's been quite the year—and next year is already filling up with many equally exciting opportunities.

When I'm not traveling, I follow up with contacts, making sure that we know where our students are at in their studies. I also help our team



Pastor Bounkeo Lor, the WELS Hmong Asia Ministry Coordinator, met with and taught 60 leaders of the Hmong Christian Fellowship in Vietnam. This church body is asking for training to become confessional Lutherans.



Simon Duoth, a South Sudanese PSI student who lives in the Seattle area, says, "If God needs me to be a pastor, then I don't care where the church is. I will go where needed."

keep track of the progress of all these theological training programs, so that each student keeps moving forward. I do this by bringing visual charts to our weekly planning meetings. Whenever possible, I preach or talk about the work that PSI is doing, whether that's at LWMS conventions or mission festivals. The PSI Team is revising the PSI curriculum and processes to make sure they meet the needs of the students. In addition, I am studying for a doctorate in Christian education leadership.

As the reformation continues all around us, our PSI Team is committed to confessional Lutheran pastoral training around the world. May God continue to provide our seminary and our synod with the opportunities, the financial ability, the time, and the wisdom to meet this growing need. To him be the glory! 🙏

Jon Bare is the seminary's

International Recruitment Director.



Seminary student Andre (left) is being trained by Alexei, a national pastor in Russia.

LUTHER'S THREE PRINCES

Wise. Steadfast. Magnanimous. These three adjectives form part of the names of three German princes who played important roles during the Reformation. Frederick the Wise. John the Steadfast (also called John the Constant). John Frederick the Magnanimous. Frederick was the older brother of John, and John was the father of John Frederick. These princes were appointed by the LORD for such a time as theirs.

Frederick the Wise is the ruler of Saxony who gets the most screen time in the Luther movies. At the beginning you see him rejoicing in his relic collection and, near the end of the movie, giving orders for Luther to be captured and protected after his “Here I Stand” speech at the Diet of Worms. Frederick the Wise was interested in higher learning; he founded the University of Wittenberg in 1502. In a highly-charged political environment, Frederick was skilled at the games of stalling and playing dumb. But Frederick was no dummy. He had the profoundly wise and noble goal of protecting Luther and the gospel he had uncovered. Interestingly, Frederick the Wise and Luther never spoke in person, and the Diet of Worms is the only time they were in the same room. Frederick chose not to be told where Luther was taken after his “capture” (Wartburg Castle).

John the Steadfast

became the sole ruler in Saxony when his older brother Frederick died in 1525. Though not as gifted in financial management as his brother, John is credited with being the re-founder of

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is your seminary, and the gospel remains at the center of it. Praise God! How can you support it? With your prayers, with your offerings, and by encouraging your sons and grandsons to prepare for the pastoral ministry! Please use the enclosed envelope to support the training of faithful Lutheran pastors today. To support theological education with larger gifts or estate planning, call the seminary’s mission advancement office at 262-242-8100.



the University of Wittenberg. With Luther’s guidance, John recentered the university curriculum on the firmer foundation of God’s Word. Also, seeing the dire need for reform in the congregations, John took a leadership role in the church and urged Luther to visit and strengthen the churches. John showed his steadfastness when he was the first to sign the Augsburg Confession in 1530.

John Frederick the Magnanimous was the only one of the three princes to grow up in a Lutheran home. His love for and dedication to the truth was strong. Of the three princes, John Frederick had the highest price to pay for his faith. When the Lutheran armies lost to imperial forces one year after Luther’s death, John Frederick refused to deny or compromise the truths he had learned from the Scriptures. The emperor took away his electoral office and threw him in prison. Life in prison did damage to John Frederick’s health, and some would put his name on the list of Lutheran martyrs.

In Luther’s day, supporting theological education was largely the work of princes. In our day, it is the princely privilege of all God’s people. The world we live in needs the gospel! Like Frederick, let’s be as innocent as doves and as wise as serpents. Like John, let’s be immovable, standing steadfastly and constantly on the Word of God. Like John Frederick, let’s take up our cross and follow Christ, willing to lose our lives for him and for his gospel. †

*Professor Bradley Wordell
is the World Mission
Seminary Professor.*

The information about the three princes came from Reformation Lectures held at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (Mankato, MN) on October 27-28, 2016, and the book *Luther’s Protest* by John Braun (Northwestern Publishing House, 2016).

Seeing Where the Savior Walked

I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds” (Psalm 77:11-12). More than the excitement of travel, the experience of another culture, the sights, smells, and sounds of a new place—greater than all of this was knowing why we were there.

At the river Jordan we recalled how God led his people into the Promised Land on dry ground. At the ruins of Jericho we heard how this city’s proud walls fell at God’s command. We stood in the Valley of Elah where a boy defeated a warrior in the name of the LORD. Truly God’s works are praiseworthy!

But there was more. An ancient church commemorated the birthplace of the God who took on human flesh. The Sea of Galilee’s calm waters recalled the Lord of nature who stilled them. The Pool of Siloam still made visible the Savior’s compassion. From the Mount of Olives to Mt. Calvary to an empty tomb—every step of this journey spoke the praiseworthy deeds of God.

Seeing these sights firsthand, standing where biblical history unfolded, walking the steps of patriarchs and



prophets and apostles and Christ himself—it happened *here!* God’s power and justice, his love and mercy, his promises fulfilled and salvation accomplished—*here*.

That was then, and this is now—but God’s great work continues. Christ’s gospel proclaims the enemy defeated and the path to the Promised Land opened. The Spirit gives sight to the blind and makes the dead live. God’s praiseworthy deeds continue still today—and they continue here. “What god is as great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples” (Psalm 77:13-14).

—Ben Berger



It was our last full day in Israel and we visited Mount Carmel. In 1 Kings 17, the prophet Elijah tells King Ahab that, because of his shameless worshiping of the god Baal, the Canaanite god of rain and thunder, there would be no rain in Israel for the next few years. We read the story in 1 Kings 18 of how God proved to the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel that he is the one true God. We read how fire fell from the sky and consumed the altar the prophet Elijah had set up, even consuming the water in the trench around it! And if that hadn’t proved it, God then sent *rain*. For desert climates, rain is *absolutely* essential.

The expression “water is life” was a reoccurring motif as we traveled

throughout Israel. The historical sites we visited attested to this fact of desert life: the well dug at Beersheba (possibly by Abraham), the pool of Bethesda, the water canals cut into the cliff-side of the Fortress Masada, the waters that flow from Mount Hermon, Hezekiah’s water tunnel, the ancient trading ports built by Herod in Caesarea along the Mediterranean Sea, the explosion of life along the Sea of Galilee. In desert climates, water is *especially* essential. The people in Bible times knew this all too well.

As a woman drew her daily water from a well in Samaria, she met a man who asked her for a drink of water. This started a conversation that would change her life forever. “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks

you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir, give me this water so I don’t have to keep coming back to this well!” she said. Jesus, however, was talking of a *different kind* of water, a water that wells up to eternal life. *Spiritual, living water* that only Jesus can provide.

As I looked out from the top of Mount Carmel, I could see all the places we had visited during our trip. What an amazing, humbling adventure it was. To interact with the history of our faith. To see the sites where salvation history took place. To walk the *very places* our Savior walked. And if the smile on my face wasn’t already big enough, it started to rain.

—Sam Jeske

Continuing Education Hits the Road

It's classic Luther. In talking about the wonderful power of the Word both to drive away the devil and to produce fruits in those who hear it, Luther comments:

"And shall we frivolously despise such power, profit, strength, and fruit—we, especially, who claim to be pastors and preachers? If so, we should not only have nothing given us to eat, but be driven out, being baited with dogs, and pelted with dung, because we not only need all this every day as we need our daily bread, but must also daily use it against the daily and unabated attacks and lurking of the devil, the master of a thousand arts." (The Large Catechism, p. 571)



It's vital for each Christian to keep growing in their understanding of the Word of God. Is it perhaps even more important for a pastor to keep growing? Luther seems to give that suggestion. And 500 years after the Ninety-Five Theses were nailed to the church door, that need for growth hasn't waned a bit.

Grow in Grace is the arm of the seminary that oversees our efforts to offer continuing education to pastors. Under the direction of Prof. Rich Gurgel, Grow in Grace plans Summer Quarter courses with both face-to-face and online options. The courses are geared to pastors, although some teachers and staff ministers take classes too. Online courses are offered in spring, summer, and fall; Summer Quarter takes place in Mequon during the last two weeks in June.

But a big change is on the way. Beginning in 2019, no summer courses will be offered in Mequon in the odd-numbered years. Those years, Summer Quarter will be held in 11 districts, at a site of each district's choosing. The Southeastern Wisconsin District will have the on-campus option even-numbered years.

Why this change? In two surveys of pastors, the highest-ranking reasons given for not attending Summer Quarter courses were "bad timing of the course offerings" and "location of the class offerings." Grow in Grace is attempting to address both of those concerns with this new approach. Prof. Gurgel is working with the district



presidents to communicate the change, get their feedback, and begin the process of planning the "when" and the "where" for each district.

In a sense this isn't new. The South Atlantic District hosted the first "Summer Quarter in the South" in 2000.

Beginning in 2001, Summer Quarters were held each odd-numbered year. Recently the North Atlantic District has taken the same approach. It has proven to work quite well in those districts. Our prayer is that it will work that well throughout our synod. †

Professor Thomas Kock teaches Education and Old Testament.



Q: How many courses will be offered in each district?

A: Ideally two courses per district.

Q: Will the courses be for credit?

A: Yes. But there will be an audit option for those who, for whatever reason, don't desire to earn credit.

Q: If a course I want to take is being offered in another district, could I attend?

A: Yes. We hope an additional advantage of this approach will be more cross-district fellowship.

Q: Will the courses in the districts be offered in late June, like the current Summer Quarter courses?

A: Not necessarily. Each district will choose its timing.

THE CATECHISM—FOR YOU

Luther's Small Catechism is well known and dearly loved. The chief parts of that text have helped train young and old in Christian doctrine for centuries. Yet as history marches on, challenges change and opportunities for application adjust. There is good reason to ask, "How do we best present unchanging truths to an always changing world *today*?"



Explanatory paragraphs explore difficult concepts with contemporary application. Finally, each of the 51 teaching units closes with a special *Connections* section, specifically designed for personal or family home devotions. These *Connections* sections dig deeper into a relevant Bible story, giving young and old the chance to discuss probing questions, applying God's truth to their lives.

Northwestern Publishing House, in partnership with professors from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, has published a new exposition of Luther's enduring confession. This edition is offered in honor of the 500th anniversary of the posting of the Ninety-five Theses and the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation. It seeks to retain the strengths of the familiar blue catechism while promoting a lifelong study of basic Christian doctrine.

While this catechism will serve well for confirmation instruction, its style of presentation also highlights the book's potential as a tool for home devotional study. The text flows more like a story than a set of encyclopedic entries.

A beautiful four-color layout compliments the Catechism's refreshed content and approach. Both in appearance and in substance, this anniversary edition of Luther's Small Catechism connects—and reconnects—precious souls of today to those precious truths of forever.

The Small Catechism is for you. It always has been. With this new edition, rediscover those treasures that are, and with God's gracious blessing always will be, the foundation of your faith. ✚

Professor Stephen Geiger teaches New Testament and Education.

The Seminary and the WELS Hymnal Project

Although many WELS worshipers still refer to *Christian Worship* as the "new" hymnal, the well-used book has passed its 25th birthday. The 2013 synod convention authorized a new hymnal project with the hope that the new book might be ready for congregations within ten years.

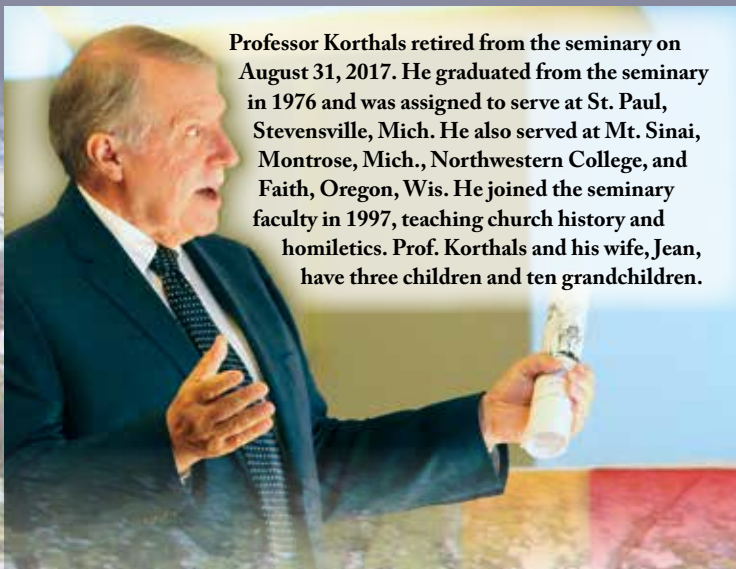
The seminary has a long history of being involved with hymnal projects. Professors John Meyer and August Zich served on the committees that prepared *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Anticipating the need to replace a worship book published in 1941, the synod created the Commission on Worship in 1965 and appointed seminary professor Martin Albrecht as chairman. Albrecht guided the commission through a lengthy process of evaluation that finally led to the 1983 convention resolution to prepare a new hymnal for WELS. Called in 1985 to succeed Albrecht on the seminary faculty, Professor James Tiefel was also appointed to replace him on the Commission on Worship and as a member of the Joint Hymnal Committee which prepared *Christian Worship*. After serving for 26 years, Tiefel resigned from the commission and was immediately appointed to the 13-member Executive Committee of the WELS Hymnal Project. He also serves on the project's Rites

Committee. Other faculty members are also involved. Prof. Otto replaced Tiefel on the Commission on Worship and serves as a member of the project's Hymn Committee. Professor Tackmier is a member of the Psalms Committee, and Professor Treptow serves on the Scripture Committee.

The close association of seminary and synod on worship-related issues has resulted in significant blessings for both. Seminary professors share knowledge and experience gained in teaching their courses and often supply the deeper and wider perspective which hymnal projects need. At the same time, seminary students gain information about the on-going project and experience new hymns and rites headed for the hymnal long before the book is published. Of course, students also enjoy the free hours they gain when their teachers are off-campus at hymnal meetings!

Many have said that public worship is the most important thing the Church does, for at worship universal priests and public ministers gather together to praise by proclaiming the gospel in Word and Sacrament for the sake of all: the lost and the found. ✚

Professor James Tiefel teaches Worship and Homiletics.



Professor Korthals retired from the seminary on August 31, 2017. He graduated from the seminary in 1976 and was assigned to serve at St. Paul, Stevensville, Mich. He also served at Mt. Sinai, Montrose, Mich., Northwestern College, and Faith, Oregon, Wis. He joined the seminary faculty in 1997, teaching church history and homiletics. Prof. Korthals and his wife, Jean, have three children and ten grandchildren.



Each year our Friends of the Seminary Day highlights the way gifts to the seminary support the worldwide mission of WELS.



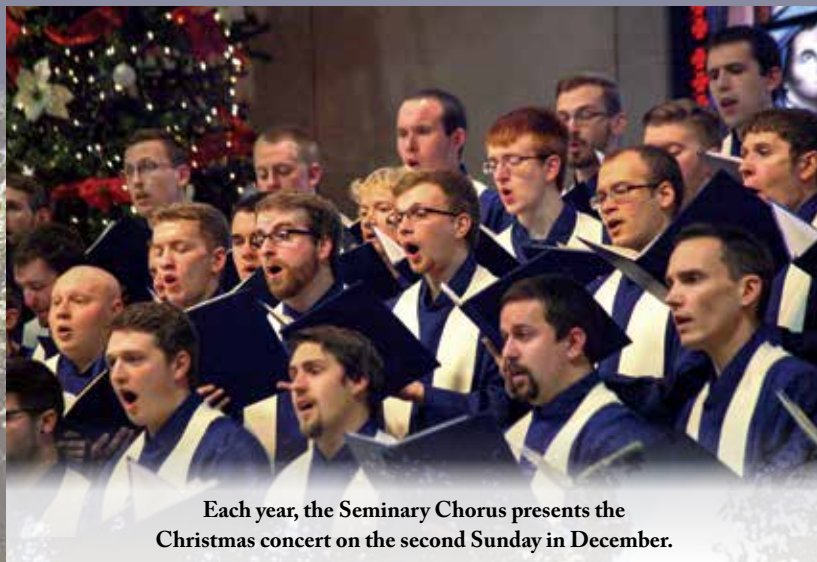
Professor Tiefel led a Winterim class. This two-week period allows students to take courses that are not part of the regular curriculum. Some also participate in travel opportunities or independent research.



For the 2017-2018 school year, this class is serving as vicars at congregations throughout North America. This year of internship gives students the opportunity to put their classroom lessons into practice.



After the Call Day service, Martin Luther College President Mark Zarling (right) prayed with the two men who serve as tutors at MLC.



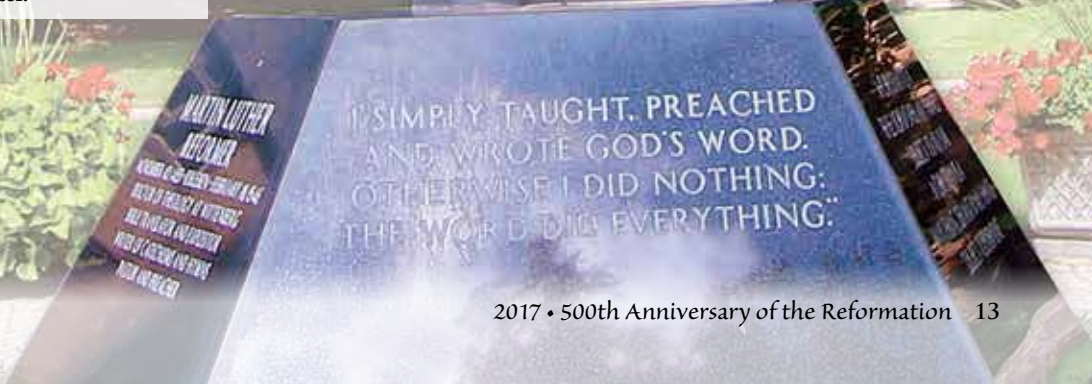
Each year, the Seminary Chorus presents the Christmas concert on the second Sunday in December.



Paul Spaude served as the seminary's senior recruiter. He visited Lutheran elementary schools and high schools, encouraging students to consider serving in the full-time public ministry.



Every year on Arbor Day students clean up the campus after a long winter.



VICAR IN A MISSION SETTING

It is hard to overestimate the importance of vicar year in the training of our pastors. During vicar year, each student puts into practice what he has learned in the classroom. Through the Vicar in a Mission Setting program, students serve in mission congregations or established congregations that have a mission mindset. When students spend one year seeing how evangelism plans are created and put into action, they realize how integral outreach is to ministry.

These experiences increase students' joy as they witness the gospel's impact in people's lives and deepen their commitment to share Jesus with everyone they meet.

DEAN ELLIS



Dean grew up in South Africa and spent time in Taiwan and Australia before landing in California for work. While a member at Ascension, Escondido, he decided to study to become a pastor and took courses through the seminary's PSI program. Last year, he served as a vicar at Beautiful Savior, College Station, Texas. He and his wife, Dawn, have one son Max.

What was the hardest part of adjusting to your vicar year?

The most difficult adjustment during the vicar year was becoming familiar with the unknowns. A familiarity with my community and my congregation has increased my confidence.

Have you found a new area of interest through this?

Yes! I am really enjoying the campus ministry at Texas A&M.

What has this congregation taught you?

I am learning about the great impact the Word of God plays in the lives of my members. I have been given the privilege of seeing the "lights go on" as the Holy Spirit works through the Word. I enjoy having the privilege of laying the gospel on the hearts of my friends in my congregation and on the hearts of my neighbors.

NOAH WILLITZ



Noah grew up in Bridgeport, Michigan. He spent his vicar year at Victory of the Lamb, Katy, Texas.

How are you able to take your classroom lessons and apply them to real-life settings?

In all our classes, professors often say things like, "In your ministry, you'll find people who . . ." or, "Someday, someone in your church will do this . . ." Serving in a congregation has allowed me to replace

hypothetical situations with real names and faces. I often remember a specific piece of advice offered in the classroom and apply it to an interaction with the man standing in front of my desk or the woman lying in the hospital bed.

What has this congregation taught you?

I've been blessed to serve a very easy-going group of people. I tend to be the kind of person who always wants things done a certain way. When things don't go according to plan, my congregation has taught me to cling to the things that matter, but don't be afraid to be flexible when appropriate.

How have you been energized for ministry as a pastor through this?

Ministry is hard. We don't do it because it's easy. We don't do it because it's fun. My vicar year has been full of reminders that I'm not here for myself or my own sense of fulfillment. I'm here to serve God's people.

What was the hardest part of adjusting to your vicar year?

It was hard transitioning from a rigid class schedule to a more organic routine. Managing my own time and finding the best system for getting everything done was a challenge at first.

Any last thoughts?

Vicar year has shown me there are many areas of improvement that can only be filled with years of experience. Seeing my strengths and weaknesses in action has given me a heightened respect for the pastoral office and a more humble dedication to preparing for the ministry.

RUSSELL SCOGGINS



Russell Scoggins was born and raised in Austin, Texas. For the 2016-2017 school year, he and his wife, Amanda, lived in the Washington D.C. area where he served as a vicar at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.

How are you able to take your classroom lessons and apply them to real-life settings?

After spending four to six years in class speaking about sin and grace—which is awesome in and of itself—we finally get to speak about sin and grace with people outside the classroom. We get to learn the struggles that real people are going through and relate to them on a heart level. With our current educational system, ministry is largely a spectator's sport up until vicar year—and that's okay

because the ministry is a weighty task and takes careful education. Vicar year is the year we get to be “on the court” or “in the ring” and truly see and feel the wins and losses that real people go through and bring God's Word to them during those times.

What has this congregation taught you?

The Washington D.C. metropolitan area has a little over six million people. Here, on any given day, we drive past hundreds of thousands of people who are navigating through life without the true forgiveness, hope, and comfort that is found only in Jesus. On the one hand, that is a bit of a discouraging thought; on the other hand, it is motivation to keep moving forward and keep finding new ways to bring the Good News to those around us. There are almost an infinite number of barriers between you and others in the area: race, language, culture, or socioeconomic status. Even if it appears you have nothing in common with someone, you must remember that you have the need for a Savior in common.

What was the hardest part of adjusting to your vicar year?

It was challenging to adjust to doing four to six services on a typical weekend. However, the hardest learning curve has been getting comfortable and becoming confident using Spanish. My advice for those who took Spanish in college: find a way to keep using and improving your Spanish in case you need it!

Have you found a new area of interest through this?

I've become interested in metropolitan area ministry, typically not a strong point in our circles. Part of the reason for that is that it comes with many challenges—challenges we are still learning how to attack. It is important that we face those challenges since more and more people from all over the world are moving to large cities.

I have also become interested in addiction and counseling. I have some addiction issues in my own family, so I already had a soft spot for this area of ministry. This year I had the opportunity to work first hand with some who are fighting addiction. This is generally another area of ministry that our congregations don't touch. With the growing opioid problem in America, I think that it will be important for our churches to turn more attention to ministry to addicts in the coming years. After the seminary, I intend to continue study in addiction and counseling. †

Greetings from CELC SISTER SEMINARIES

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is blessed by our relationship with our sister seminaries throughout the world. Our faculty members have served as guest professors, and some of our students have been enriched by studying or serving

overseas for a semester or two. We enjoy this relationship as a part of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) which is made up of 31 member and associate member churches worldwide. Representatives

gather every three years for encouragement, fellowship, and an internationally-united voice. There are also regional CELC gatherings in Latin America, Africa, Europe, and Asia-Oceania. Each region sent us an anniversary greeting:



LATIN AMERICA

I thank God for the opportunity to write you. The words from Psalm 133:1 come to mind. "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" Although we speak different languages, our faith in Christ Jesus unifies us.

We are thankful for the work of the seminary, which prepared

pastors who were sent to Latin America and faithfully taught us the Word of God. Additionally, numerous doctrinal papers and studies have been translated and shared with our pastors in Latin America. These have greatly benefitted us as we learn to put into practice what Scripture teaches.

We do not have a physical seminary in Latin America as you do. However, we prepare pastors for ministry by teaching classes over the internet via Skype. We use a modified version of the curriculum developed by former LATTE missionaries. Though LATTE no longer exists, we continue to train others for ministry. We also use Academia Cristo to study with and train future leaders in our church.

Some of our confessional Lutheran brothers will be at the CELC convention in Germany this summer to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Congregations in each country will hold talks and celebrations during October that focus on Law and Gospel teaching. We pray the seminary continues to faithfully instruct brothers in the faith so that they don't just teach the Bible in the United States but elsewhere as well.

*Missionary Henry Herrera,
President of the CELC-Latin America*



AFRICA

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has been a blessing to the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) because through the Pastoral Studies Institute it trains, mentors, and equips confessional Lutherans in Africa. The provision of qualified pastors has cemented our partnership in the gospel. The teaching of the

true doctrine will continue. PSI has opened up new opportunities for training pastors in Africa through the introduction of the Greater Africa Theological Studies Institute (GRATSI).

The LCCA will join the fellowship of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Africa is co-heir of the Lutheran Reformation. We have inherited the true doctrine—by grace alone, by faith alone, and by Scripture alone.

Pastor Davison Mutentami



EUROPE

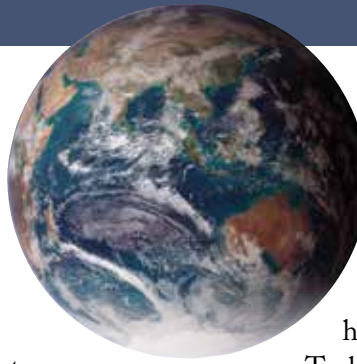
Hello! The congregation is a member of the Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche, which is a founding member of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference. Beside serving in the parish I'm also called to teach New Testament at our seminary in Leipzig. I also serve as chairman of the European Region of the CELC.

A number of small confessional Lutheran churches are united in the CELC Europe. We speak different languages and come from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine, and Germany. But the Holy Spirit has united us in the faith. We all confess the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture. That's why we also pledge ourselves to the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church as they present the sound teaching of the Holy Scripture and defend God's Word against error. That's the heritage we have from the Reformation. We want to pass it on faithfully to the next generations. How comforting is it to know: I have peace with God through Christ my Redeemer. I have been declared righteous because of the redeeming work of Christ!

The confessional Lutheran churches of Europe gather annually to encourage each other and to strengthen our fellowship by studying God's Word. We dedicated ourselves to the study of the Lord's Prayer during the past years, and now will concentrate on some of the doctrinal challenges at the beginning of the 21st century. This year we have the wonderful opportunity to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation with all our brothers and sisters of the CELC at the convention at Grimma. In addition, we have organized a series of lectures in Germany to inform the people of our country what the Lutheran Reformation really was all about. Unfortunately, the evangelical state churches of Germany have darkened the knowledge of the German people about the Reformation by many false teachings.

The partnership with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has proved to be a great blessing for the CELC Europe. Although we do our very best to train future pastors in the respective countries (besides our seminary at Leipzig, for example, there are also seminaries in the Ukraine and in Sweden), such a task has always proved to be quite challenging for our small Lutheran synods. The primary call of our seminary professors is to serve as parish pastors. It even is more difficult in other countries where most pastors work in a secular job to earn their living.

In Germany, we pray that the Lord will send more students to study for the ministry. Over the years we have been richly blessed by exchanging students with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Back in the 90s when I was still a student, Lukas Moldenhauer and Thomas Meisner from WELS studied at the seminary of the ELFK in Leipzig, while also many of today's pastors of the ELFK like Jonas Schroeter or



President Martin Wilde had the opportunity to go for a year to WLS. Summer Quarter has been another great blessing. For me it was always very strengthening and encouraging to study together with pastors from all around the world. WLS professors have also taught in Germany. Prof. Bill Tackmier was the first to come and to teach pastors from many European countries. President Wendland and Prof. Cherney have also served as visiting professors. Continued education is very important for those who are already active in the ministry. While you are called to feed the flock most of the time you can easily forget that it is equally important to be fed and to grow in grace. So we will pray that the Lord will not only bless the work of WLS in the training of future pastors but also all their efforts in providing means of continued education to those who are already serving in the ministry.

Pastor Holger Weiss, Schönfeld near Annaberg-Buchholz



ASIA-OCEANIA

WLS and Asian churches are becoming like a pair of chopsticks—working together to feed church leaders hungry for the gospel. Through its PSI program, WLS trains students from churches in Asia that are already members of the CELC, as well as students who are growing in their Lutheran understanding and character. In Hong Kong, WLS works closely with Asia Lutheran Seminary which has hosted many visiting professors through the years. Students come mainly from Hong Kong and East Asia.

Reformation 500 celebrations are shaping up in CELC churches throughout Asia. In Japan, members have been studying Luther's 95 Theses. Outdoor displays tell the Reformation story. Churches in countries like Japan and South Korea will gather locally for joint Reformation celebrations and learning activities. Chinese speaking leaders from churches entering the CELC will gather for two days in October to consider the significance of the Reformation for today's Asia.

Rob Siirila

May God continue to bless our fellowship in the CELC!
May His will be done among us and through us!

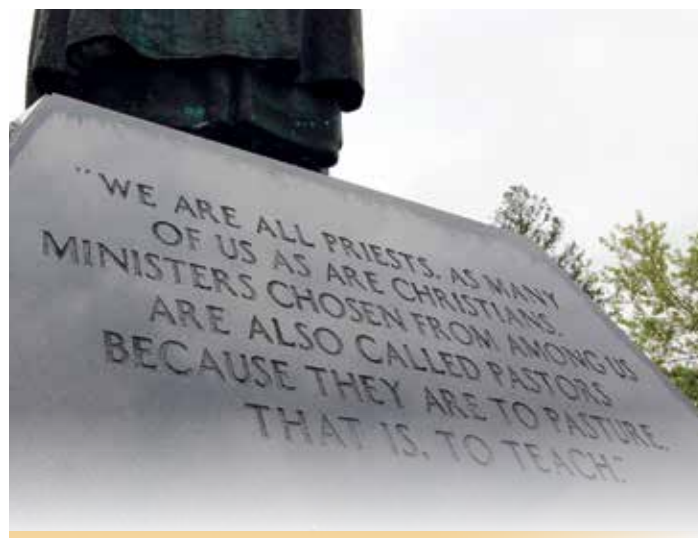
We Are All Priests

In the Old Testament Church, whose responsibility was it to serve as priests? The answer “the descendants of Aaron” is only partially correct. God chose the descendants of Aaron to serve as priests in *public* ministry. But ultimately, the LORD had given *every* Israelite the privilege and responsibility of serving as a priest in their personal lives. At Sinai he said, “Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me *a kingdom of priests* and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5,6).

We call this “the priesthood of all believers” (also known as “the universal priesthood”), and it’s older than Sinai. When the gospel was first proclaimed to Adam and Eve, this priesthood was established. From then on, every believer was to serve the LORD as a priest: offering spiritual sacrifices, bringing intercessions on behalf of others, and sharing God’s holy Word. They could serve, not because of anything meritorious within them, but because they were declared holy through faith in God’s gracious promise.

Take Noah, for example. He built an altar and offered sacrifices (Genesis 8:20). He testified to the truth, including to those outside his circle of family and friends (2 Peter 2:5). He was functioning as part of the universal priesthood.

Consider what the Israelites were saying to one another when they sang Psalm 105:1. “Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.” It was an encouragement to remember that praise, proclamation, and evangelism was their responsibility just as much as the responsibility of the clergy. They were part of the priesthood of all believers!



At Mission & Ministry, Pastor Clark Schultz, a teacher at Lakeside Lutheran High School, shares how he equips students to share their faith.

When God made Israel his chosen people, the universal priesthood largely was limited to that one nation. But through the prophets, God had promised an expansion. “Afterward, I will pour out my Spirit *on all people*” (Joel 2:28). God wasn’t promising to create a new priesthood that hadn’t existed before, but to return the priesthood of believers to all nations. “My name will be great *among the nations*, from where the sun rises to where it sets. *In every place* incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great *among the nations*,” says the Lord Almighty” (Malachi 1:11). We see this prophecy first fulfilled in the coming of the Spirit with power at Pentecost. We see it fulfilled today every time we witness a baptism. Baptism is, first and foremost, a cleansing from sin. However, it is also an anointing into the priesthood of all believers. Jerome, the great theologian of the fourth century, called baptism “the ordination of the laity.”

In the New Testament, the Lord’s desire for a universal priesthood is reaffirmed. Peter tells believers they “are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). In John’s Revelation, he recalls God’s words at Sinai. Speaking of true Israel, all those who share Abraham’s faith, he says, “[Christ] has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father” (1:6). Note in both of those passages, it’s not we who chose to be priests. It’s entirely God’s doing. You “are being built.” You were “made... to be.” When Christ called you to faith, he desired to save you from something—sin and hell. He also desired to set you apart for something—priesthood.

Then why have public ministers at all? If the priesthood of believers has always existed, why did God bother with the

Levitical priesthood? If every believer within WELS is a priest, why do we train and call pastors?

Let's be clear. We aren't the ones who established public ministry. That too is God's work. Scripture says, "Keep watch over... all the flock of which *the Holy Spirit has made you* overseers" (Acts 20:28). The Spirit is the one who pulls all believers into the universal priesthood. Likewise, the Spirit, working through the Church, pulls some into public ministry.

But why does Christ give us public ministers, if he has already made every believer into a priest? Here's God's answer: "Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13).



At Mission & Ministry, seminary students learn what materials and resources are available from WELS ministries to help them serve the universal priesthood of believers.

Do you understand what St. Paul is saying? We generally think that WELS has one seminary. Paul is telling us that really every congregation is a seminary, and every pastor is a professor. Christ "gave" us pastors to train us to serve better within our community as part of the universal priesthood. Paul says *that* paradigm creates the greatest unity within the Church and allows believers to achieve spiritual maturity.

Do you want proof of that? Look at the Reformation. We celebrate its 500th anniversary with great fanfare.



When Christ gifts you with a graduate, you've been given a seminary professor, sent by Christ to train you to be his holy priest.

After centuries of being hidden, the pure gospel was restored. How? The Holy Spirit working through one man, Martin Luther? Ridiculous! The Holy Spirit worked through the universal priesthood. Luther's best move was to give the Scripture back to the people and to train them to use it. After that, the pope didn't need to crush one man. He needed to try and crush a nation of priests, literally.

Could we use a reformation of our understanding of the universal priesthood today? Absolutely. In my synodical capacity, I look at a lot of congregational surveys. We ask people to rank eight different ministry tasks in what they believe to be order of importance. In *every* church I've worked with, "equipping members for works of service" is ranked dead last.

People want their children to receive spiritual instruction. But suggest that the pastor train parents to do that rather than doing it himself, and you get funny looks. "That's part of his job!" People want their church to share the gospel with their community, but suggest that the way that happens is when the pastor trains them for personal evangelism, and you get objections. "What are we paying him for?"

If you think that way, realize you have made a departure from God's Word. For "*Christ himself gave . . . pastors . . . to equip his people for works of service.*" You need personal reformation, the repentance that the Spirit works in you through his Word. And you need doctrinal reformation. You should look closely again at what Scripture calls you over and over—a priest.

God has blessed WELS with a world-class seminary to train pastors who serve us in a public, representative capacity. Therefore, when Christ gifts you with a graduate from that seminary, realize you have been given much more than a servant, there to meet your needs. You've been given a seminary professor, sent by Christ himself to train you to be what Christ himself has made you—his holy priest. †

Jon Hein, pastor at Beautiful Savior, Summerville, S.C., serves as the Director of the WELS Commission for Congregational Counseling.

MARRIAGE IN THE MINISTRY

Martin Luther valued marriage and called it the principal estate after religion. About his own marriage, Luther commented, “I have been very happy in my marriage. I have a faithful wife.” Not only did Luther see the importance of marriage in society, but he also recognized the value of a strong marriage in the parsonage.

As the seminary prepares men to serve in gospel ministry, it also notes the need for a healthy marriage relationship. Whether students are married, engaged, single, or dating, the seminary strives to prepare men who can not only manage the household of God, but their own households as well. The topic of marriage and family life comes up again and again in the many core courses of the curriculum. Subjects such as Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles, Systematic Theology, and



Pastoral Theology all have key sections that deal with the marital relationship.

We also seek to strengthen marriages in ways that are not a part of the classroom experience. For those who are newly married or about to be married, the seminary ensures that each couple receives some form of premarital counseling and even offers such counseling on campus as a convenience to student couples. We

also offer professional counseling services to all students and their wives or fiancées at no cost. This helps members of the seminary family manage mental health or relational issues that can strain a marriage.

Students and their wives come from a variety of family backgrounds. In some cases, they had solid role models in the home; but in other cases, they did not. Helping them to heal from the hurt, to learn what positive husband and wife roles look like, and to gain skills for disciplining children and managing family life will work to build solid marriages for our future ministers. All of this seeks to reflect the strong emphasis that Martin Luther and God’s Word place on marriage. †

Professor John Schuetze, a licensed professional counselor, teaches Systematic and Pastoral Theology.

Marriage and Ministry Retreat

“I am not the typical WELS pastor’s wife.” This comment is often made during the Marriage and Ministry Retreat that the seminary conducts for student couples each February. Usually the woman is saying that she isn’t a teacher, doesn’t play the organ, and has no interest in leading the Ladies Aid. In the discussion that follows, Pastor Don and Mary Patterson point out that there is no such thing as the typical WELS pastor’s wife today. Pastors’ wives come from a variety of backgrounds, pursue any number of careers and vocations outside the home, and are involved in many different functions in the church. What a pastor’s wife does to serve her



Lord through the church will depend on her God-given gifts and abilities.

This is just one of many issues students and wives raise during this retreat which the Pattersons have led for the past several years. The seminary realizes that the wives are not their

students, but they do play a key role in their husbands’ success as pastors. This one-day retreat is another way the seminary provides opportunities for the wives to ask questions and gain information that will be helpful in their future role as pastors’ wives.

Using technology to reach and teach

Just as Martin Luther used the communication technology of his day—the movable type printing press—to spread his message across Europe, the professors at the seminary use today’s technology to reach and teach students on campus and around the globe.

In our classrooms. Daily, professors project presentations using the traditional method of connecting a laptop to a projector. They also have branched out to more interactive technologies. One professor uses Google Earth to soar over the cliff where the pigs ran after Jesus cast them out of the demon-possessed man. Students appreciate the technology available to them. “One thing I value with technology in ministry is the availability of resources, whether it’s looking to see how other pastors have addressed a sermon text or looking at the resources of a specific ministry such as Conquerors through Christ, Kingdom Workers, or Campus Ministry. I am connected with brothers and sisters who can assist me in many areas,” says middler Zach Steinke.

In offices or study spaces. Professors and students use the learning management system Seminary Online to share and access learning materials. Several professors record mini-lectures to prepare their students for an upcoming class. These lectures, shared on Seminary Online, highlight key points in the assigned reading for the evening. After students have watched the videos and completed the readings, they typically take short quizzes or participate in discussions about that material. Their responses to the quizzes help the professor tailor his presentation to make sure he hits concepts that need reinforcing the next time they meet. Discussions outside the physical



classroom lay the foundation for a deeper in-class discussion.

For research and sermon preparation, students and professors use Logos Bible Software. The software can increase the efficiency of their text study. It helps them quickly compare the analyses provided by multiple commentaries or lexicons, rather than pulling several books off the shelf to make the comparison. According to Professor Stephen Geiger, “Electronic biblical tools are not the answer to every dilemma. But, they can serve well as a pastor longs to understand God’s sacred Word better.”

Around the globe. Every summer WLS offers continuing education courses for pastors right here on campus. However, not every pastor can make the trip to Mequon. Since 2011, 25 of these courses have been offered online to pastors around the globe using Seminary Online. In the past six years, just under 200 pastors, from 31 states and six countries have taken at least one online course.

Professors who teach online do not simply transfer course materials used in their classrooms to Seminary

Online. Instead, they thoughtfully construct interactive learning activities and develop alternative methods of delivering course materials to keep their students actively involved in the learning process. While the pastors state they miss being on campus for classes, they also tell us that the interactions in these online classes can go so much deeper than they do in face-to-face classes. Pastor Ben Schaefer shares, “I was hesitant to take an online exegetical course, since Hebrew and Greek online seemed like a real chimera. But I quickly saw the ease and joy of translating online, discussing exegetical questions, hearing applications from brothers around the world, and growing in my love for Scripture. By God’s grace, learning really does happen online!”

Over 500 years ago, the printing press became accessible and Martin Luther used it to share God’s Word in Europe. Accessible computer technology became a reality about 40 years ago, and we now use it to train our students to share God’s Word around the world. What will the next 100 years bring? †

Dr. Sue Holtz is the seminary’s Director of Technology Integration & Support.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

We've seen the movie. We know the script by heart. The music swells and the brave monk says, "Here I stand!" He boldly faces down the assembled powers of church and empire—all arrayed against him. But now scholars tell us that he probably never said those words. That they are likely "alternate facts" composed later to enhance the myth of the man.

I say, what does it matter? Because if Worms for us is merely a myth or a movie where we can vicariously stand in Luther's shoes to feel good about ourselves (Hey! I'm with him!) and put down others (Nasty old pope!), then it's not much good.

Because the real question that the historical Luther poses for the ages is, "Where do you stand?"

ABSOLUTE TRUTH

"I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture!"

By the measure of any age, Luther was an odd duck. He was not, as some later Enlightenment philosophers tried to make him, a hero who took the first step in freeing us from tradition and priestcraft in order to lead us to the broad sunlit uplands of reason. Clear reason for him was the logic of faith that served the Word alone and earnestly wanted to understand it. A single word from God made the whole world too small. The universe would dissolve into chaos before God's Word could.

Nor can he be claimed by the postmodern, post-Christian, post-truth age, where there is no substance, only shadow; no certainty, only opinion; no truth, only the man-made constructions of language and worldview. Luther knew very well the



misery of uncertainty. He was experienced in the struggle against the lying demons of his own feelings. He was often haunted by the question, "After all these learned people have spoken over many centuries, can you alone be right?" And he found his peace and his refuge in the objective testimony of Holy Scripture. For him, the Holy Spirit was no skeptic.

LIVELY TRUTH

"My conscience is captive to the Word of God"

"Doctrine"—the word itself conjures up images of severe-looking men, rummaging around in musty volumes of dense text, eager to suck the joy out of life. But for Luther, doctrine was life. That's because he studied the Scriptures expecting to hear God's voice. Then he mounted the pulpit eager to proclaim it. He knew its transforming power. It was not so much that he "grasped" the Word with his power and intellect. Rather, the Word seized him and took him captive,

because it was the Word of him "who gives life to the dead and calls that which is not, and it is" (LW 12:110).

It is this lively truth that gives us a new birth into a living hope. Unlike the uncertain hopes and the swiftly passing life of this world, this truth cannot be touched by death, tainted by sin, or tarnished by time. It does not "float on the heart like a duck on a pond" (WA 42: 452). It penetrates the whole person and permeates his existence. It may not change the world as we see it. But it does change the way that we see it, baptizing everything and giving it a new name. "The old has gone; the new has come."

TRUTH UNSEEN

"God [is] seen . . . through the cross" (Luther, Heidelberg Disputation, Thesis 20).

This certain, lively truth is a truth concealed within a deep paradox. When people try to find God through the clearly seen evidence of his powerful works of creation, he remains

deeply hidden, “dwelling in light unapproachable.” If man tries to find God this way, he inevitably fashions an idol for himself.

Only when God approaches man, wrapping himself in human flesh, hiding himself at the cross—only then can we know God. Because in this man we see God. In his weakness, we see God’s power, the resolute power of his love for poor sinners. By his wounds, we are healed. In his death, we find life. “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and no human mind conceived... God has revealed to us by his Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:9,10).

A society built on the empirical truths of science can’t help but see this as nonsense. It is ridiculous to people who seek to avoid suffering, not embrace it. What meaning can the cross have to a pragmatic nation whose motto has become, “It just works!” To them a spirituality more focused on the inner resources of the human soul, or proclaiming the good news of health and prosperity—that makes sense. Not a man whose face is so marred by suffering, we have to turn our heads away. How can he be God?

Yet there is no other! Which is why Luther proclaimed a truth unseen except by faith, “We preach Christ crucified!”

TRUTH TO SHARE

“I cannot and will not recant.”

The energy and purpose that the gospel gave Luther was astounding. He embodied the truth that “faith is a living, busy, mighty, active thing.” He didn’t just stand there. He was driven into the world by the truth he

confessed. The passion not just to get the Word straight, but to get the Word out can be seen, for example, in his lifelong project of translating the Bible into a common language of his beloved Germans—a language that didn’t really exist before his translation. It stands yet today as a towering monument of literary genius.

His pamphlets and broadsides poured out in a seemingly endless stream from Wittenberg. He took the printed page from being the sole possession of the rich man and the scholar and put it into the hands of the common man. Wittenberg was transformed from being a “small inconsequential market town on Europe’s eastern periphery to becoming Germany’s largest printing center in the 16th century” (*Brand Luther* xiii, 5). And we have said

nothing about his teaching, his lectures, his preaching, or the living example of his gospel-centered life.

More than anything this is the authentic mark of being a true son or daughter of the Reformation. The gospel cannot be reduced to a mere cultural or historical event in which we boast, as we cheer Luther on the screen for his bravery in standing there.

The gospel is God’s living voice. It cannot be contained. It changes hearts. It renews minds. It drives us on to help others into our joy. We can’t just stand here. We must keep going with it to all the world! To this end, God help us, Amen! †

Paul O. Wendland is the president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

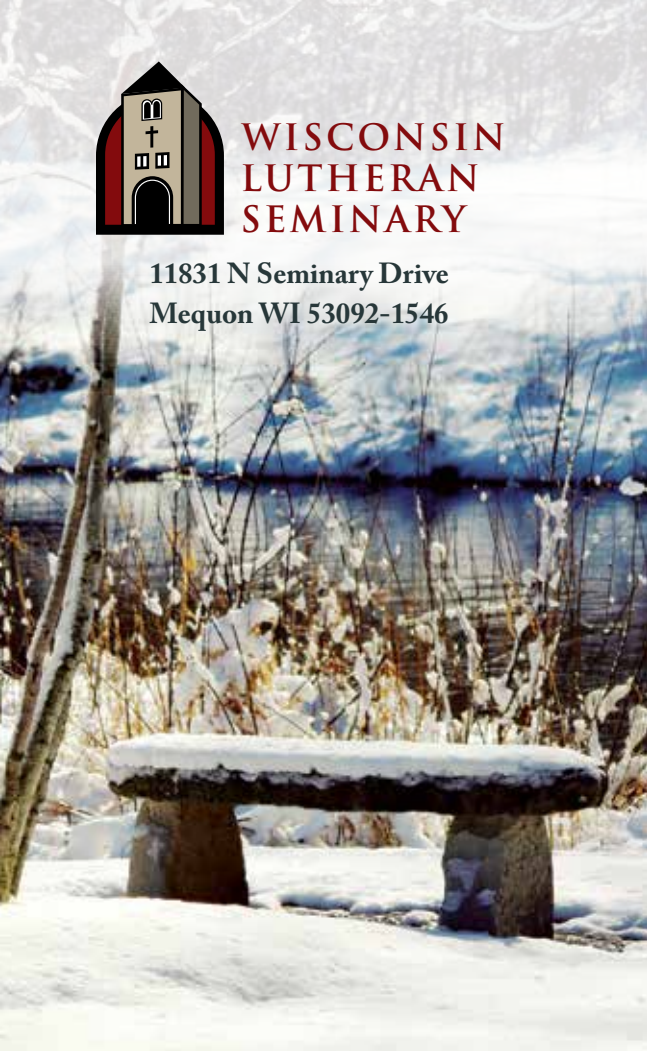




**WISCONSIN
LUTHERAN
SEMINARY**

11831 N Seminary Drive
Mequon WI 53092-1546

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Thiensville, WI
Permit No. 8097



WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

(262) 242-8100 ☎ fax (262) 242-8110 ☎ wls.wels.net

