



# Κηρυξάτε

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

# PREACH THE GOSPEL







## 2018-19 EVENTS

<b>AUGUST 27</b>	Opening Service
<b>SEPTEMBER 17</b>	WLS Alumni Society Annual Meeting
<b>SEPTEMBER 17-18</b>	WLS Symposium on the Pastor as Shepherd-Leader
<b>OCTOBER 6</b>	Friends of the Seminary Day
<b>DECEMBER 9</b>	Christmas Concert
<b>JANUARY 7-18</b>	Winterim
<b>FEBRUARY 5-7</b>	Mission and Ministry
<b>APRIL 28</b>	Legacy Society Dinner
<b>MAY 23</b>	Call Day and Graduation Concert
<b>MAY 24</b>	Graduation

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ✠ Since Preach the Gospel began, Clif Koeller has donated his time, skill, and creativity to capture images of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. He has decided to step aside after this issue. We are thankful for his generosity in joining us on our mission.
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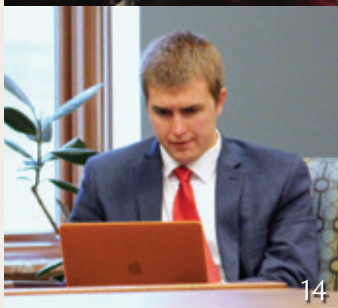
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# THE HOLY ORDINARY

Like Anna in the Temple, she was old and had outlived her husband. Her knees were creaky and she carried more pounds than she should have. It hurt her to walk. She had been the kindergarten Sunday school teacher for more years than anyone could count. But her time had passed, and she no longer had the joy of being among the first to tell God's mighty deeds to each new crop of little ones. One day, the pastor walked over to the church and happened to find her tucking little notes into the family mailboxes in the front hallway. He didn't think much of it at first, but later, after she left, he decided to look.

Quietly, with no fanfare of trumpets, she had been cutting newspaper clippings of the various milestones and achievements of her former students. "Miss S. is going to the U of M to study pharmacy." "Mr. Z. was named MVP for the state." "Announcing the engagement of Miss L. to Mr. M., with a wedding set for the 6th of June." On every clipping she had scrawled in her spidery handwriting words of encouragement and Christian love, "from your old Sunday school teacher."

Nobody had told her to do that. She was serving on no official social committee. No blue-ribbon



commission had decided that the church needed to encourage its youth more, or to foster a greater sense of community. She just did it, prompted by nothing more (and nothing less) than the general call of Christian love.

At such sights, God's angels in heaven above swing low in wonder!

The holy ordinary.

It's 3:45 a.m., and—right on cue—the snow begins to blanket the roads with a slippery mix. He gets out of his warm bed and drives to the seminary where he gets into the plow for the third time that week, making sure that the campus roads will be cleared, salted, and ready for the safe arrival of students and staff in two hours.



The holy ordinary.

Nothing special about preparing for this noon meal. The pots are the same, the pans are the same, the work is the same, the clean-up is the same. The same as 10,000 meals before, and (for all she knows) for 10,000 more to follow. Yet here she is again, showing the same love, the same care, the same faithfulness.

And angels pause in their flight.

Many eyes have seen it. A child's talents seem fit for pastoral ministry. Many mouths have said it. Gentle words from a mother, a father, a teacher, a pastor. Not all at once and not without many uncertainties along the way, there is kindled in the child a desire to be a pastor. The child becomes a man. Then a seminary student. What prompted the first step along this path? Who knows?! Does it matter? The fact is, now he's here. And even though his gifts may call him elsewhere over time (and there is no shame in that), he's here now, willing to test the proposition of whether God might use him in pastoral ministry.

And Satan falls like lightning from heaven.

The holy ordinary.





It is good to remember these things. We are so easily distracted by the glitzy and the glib. We are too often attracted, like little children, by the flashing of an object in the field. We leave the well-worn path and hike through the underbrush to discover . . . a broken bottle. We “carpe diem” only to clutch at straws. We mistake shadows for substance and substance for shadows. We rush after the new and the next big thing only to ignore the old, the tried, and the true. The brilliance of a great new program blinds us to the value of what our long and lasting purpose has always been. Our love looks more like a flash flood rather than a steadily flowing river.

There was no beauty or majesty to attract us to him. Nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was easily despised and overlooked. A man of suffering and familiar with grief. How could he be Messiah? He did not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. He drew all men to himself by dying. In so doing, he made holy even this most shameful moment in an ordinary, human life. He invested it with a weight of glory that far surpasses the greatest human achievement.

And angels stoop down to get a closer look.

So, let me speak a word in praise of the ordinary life. The unremarkable. The commonplace. Let me praise those whose lives express (as the hymn writer says) the hopes we confess. With countless, constant acts of love and mercy, without need for fame or recognition. Who, for the most part, are not even aware of the glorious things they do. Who only want to

fashion their earthly existence into an unbroken song of joy and gratitude—every moment of every day—to the one who loved them and gave himself for them.

Let me speak a word in praise for the ones who want to be a pastor in a society that doesn’t think much of pastors. To the teacher who gets up one more time even though yesterday didn’t go so well. To the parents who struggle to meet their children’s needs. To the employee who doesn’t get a lot of thanks from her boss but keeps plugging away, keeps doing her best. To the old woman immobilized by pain, waiting for death, yet lifting her eyes heavenward in silent prayer for others.

It’s not so much what we do, but who we do it for. And he tells us that when we show our love even with the tiniest cup of cold water, he will never forget it. He sees. He knows.

The holy ordinary! †

*Pres. Paul Wendland teaches  
New Testament.*





# The Hidden Glory of the Holy Ordinary...

## IN THE WORK OF GROW IN GRACE

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

As long as God gives me memory, I won’t forget the celebration of Reformation 500. On Saturday, November 4, 2017, I had the joy of preaching to over 400 of my brothers and sisters in Christ from the Michigan District’s Ohio Conference. They had gathered at St. Paul, Columbus, to celebrate Reformation 500 by being fed with Word and sacrament. The next day, the privilege repeated itself. This time it was preaching to 2,200 of my brothers and sisters in Christ at the Dow Events Center in Saginaw. As we sang the hymns, the thought stole across my mind that this was a taste of joining the thunderous heavenly chorus around God’s throne singing praise for his glorious grace in Jesus.

But about twelve hours after the benediction, I found myself back in my quiet Mequon office correcting the outlines and sermons of my first-year preaching students. It was back to



repeating what can become the tired mantras of a preaching professor: “May I suggest quoting your text in your sermon?” And “I hate to mention it, but I am having trouble finding the gospel in your outline.” It was a jarring paradox between an invigorating glimpse of heavenly glory and the seemingly draining routine of the earthly ordinary.

But when I get caught up in trudging Eeyore-like through the routines of life and ministry, I am a blind and ungrateful fool. As this issue of *Preach the Gospel* shares, there is hidden glory begging to be seen in the ordinary—if only I look with eyes of faith.



Gathering with hundreds of fellow Christians to celebrate Reformation 500 was a God-given extraordinary glimpse of glory. But how foolish of me to get so caught up waiting for the next extraordinary celebration that I forget that there are far more opportunities to glimpse glory in the ordinary of each day. It is indeed the holy ordinary!

How powerfully Jesus proclaims that reality in the “sheep and goats” portion of his end time address in Matthew 25. After comforting us with the invitation he will speak to all believers on the last day (“Come, you who are blessed by my Father...”), Jesus goes on to speak words that reveal the unseen glory of the earthly existence we live right now.

As he speaks to the sheep about the fruits that were the evidence of their faith, note well the ordinariness of the examples Jesus uses as evidence that we were his believing sheep. He does not mention anything that would make headlines in any earthly newspaper or news network website or blog post. He talks about quiet mercy extended to those in need of the necessities of food, drink, and clothing. He speaks of time devoted and care given to comfort and encourage the sick and imprisoned.

But even though he is listing such ordinary acts of compassion, Jesus still stuns us. He stuns us by speaking of all these activities as if we had done them directly for him.

And suddenly things so mundane in the world’s eyes are transformed by Jesus’s extraordinary grace into the holy ordinary. Those ordinary things glow with the holy because he has



declared us righteous in him. And what we do is doubly holy because behind even the humblest brother or sister in Christ whom we serve stands the Lord himself. He receives every fruit of faith as if done directly for him.

This truth gives a glow of the holy also to what our seminary does through *Grow in Grace* as we seek to support and encourage WELS pastors. Our goal is not to raise pastors up in worldly greatness and prestige, but to strengthen them and support them as they carry out the holy ordinary tasks of their God-given callings.

This is a pastoral-ministry paraphrase of what Jesus says in Matthew 25. Jesus says to pastors: “I was that troubled teen who needed an ear to listen when I had disgraced myself and my family by my sin, and you were the mouth that forgave me!” “I was terminally ill and on my death bed in the hospital, afraid and feeling all alone at the approach of that last great enemy, and you came with a smiling face to speak the gracious Word of my God whose face was even in that moment shining on me.” “I was your son or daughter or spouse whose tears you dried when life’s disappointments had come crashing down on me and you were



not too busy to be a husband or father to give ear and listen as the evidence of the God who heard me too.”

*Grow in Grace* exists as your partner to help pastors find greater joy and delight in the holy ordinary of serving Christ as child of God and pastor, as husband and father.

That’s why Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, through *Grow in Grace*, oversees a mentoring initiative (Pastor Partners) that provides trained pastors to walk side by side with newly ordained pastors for the first three years of ministry. The mentors help those young pastors to find greater joy

in the holy ordinary of all their God-given callings.

It’s why we sponsor our annual Celebration of Ministry retreats for pastors and their wives each spring in San Antonio. We gather to celebrate what the world little notices or cares about: the wonderful holy ordinary things Jesus has for them to do as pastor and wife in our congregations.

It’s why we host courses on our campus and online and at satellite locations around the synod that help pastors to grow as teachers of God’s Word, as preachers of the gospel, as leaders in their congregations. For in all those pastoral tasks the world devalues, those pastors are carrying out holy ordinary tasks that make an eternal difference in our lives.

When you support the seminary with your gifts and prayers, you are taking part in just such encouragements for pastors to find what is extraordinary in the holy ordinary of their callings as children of God and pastors, husbands, and fathers. All of this may seem dull and ordinary by worldly standards. But in God’s eyes, you are partners in what is truly extraordinary. †

*Prof. Richard Gurgel is the seminary’s director of Grow in Grace and teaches homiletics.*





# PREPARING MISSION-MINDED PASTORS

August Pieper, who served as a professor at the seminary from 1902 to 1941, and as president from 1929 to 1937, readily acknowledged that three years of seminary classwork weren't enough. The seminary couldn't provide the future pastor with everything he needed to know to serve the flock purchased with the blood of Christ. In the opening paragraph of his 1906 essay, "Scripture Study as the Special Task of the Pastor," Pieper wrote the following about the training that candidates for the holy ministry received at the seminary: "The theological curriculum has only been able to offer them the most necessary things with respect to doctrine and practical skills. Therefore our candidates will never be sent forth into the ministry without the earnest exhortation that they be diligent in the continuation of their studies. For the faithful pastor, the entry into the ministry is not the end of study, but on the contrary only its proper beginning." From Pieper's perspective, the seminary served best when it focused on providing future pastors with the tools needed for a lifetime of Scripture study rather than endeavoring to teach them everything a pastor needs to know.

More than a hundred years later, the seminary faculty holds the same view. Professors recognize that they can't teach their students everything in a specific discipline, in part because of their personal limitations, but also because of the limited time they have with the students. The professors, therefore, commit themselves to teaching future pastors "the most necessary things with respect to doctrine and practical skills," while encouraging them to be lifelong



students, both of the Word and of ways to bring the Word to the people Christ has redeemed. Freed from the idea that content is the only thing that matters, professors focus on teaching future gospel servants how to study God's Word, how to assess situations in which the Word is to be applied, and how to grow in ministerial aptitude. They do so more by modeling an approach to the task than by providing a step-by-step guide or an itemized to-do list. In other words, the approach is as much *caught as taught*.

One of the significant changes to the training program for future pastors was the addition of a vicar year for all seminary students in the early 1960s. In asking for the addition of that year, the synod expressed its desire that future pastors be given an opportunity to learn from an experienced pastor how to carry out ministry faithfully and evangelically. Vicars gained practical experience in preaching and teaching, in caring for souls, in visiting the sick and homebound, and in providing leadership in the congrega-

tion. While they picked up specific techniques and helpful practices in every aspect of ministry, they also learned by observing how the pastor, day by day, interacted with God's people and demonstrated his concern for them. In establishing a vicar year as a requirement for all students, the seminary prayed that future pastors would catch from their supervising pastor a gospel-centered approach to the ministry and a commitment to expending themselves in service to others day in and day out.

Thirty years later, the WELS Board for Home Missions (BHM) initiated the Vicar in a Mission Setting program, hoping to provide a handful of men in each class the opportunity to spend a year in a congregation whose primary focus was on reaching out to the community with the gospel. At the outset, the goal of the program was to prepare a small cadre of men who would be ready to serve either as church planters or as pastors of congregations that were being financially supported by the synod, whether that opportunity came immediately after graduation from the seminary or sometime later. The thinking was that men who had first-hand experience with a mission congregation would be better prepared to hit the ground running. They could pick up helpful tips and techniques for future ministry from mission-minded pastors. More importantly, however, they could learn simply by observing their supervising pastor in action each day. They would see, for example, how he engaged people in conversation, how he scheduled his time toward meeting people outside of the congregation, and how he patiently shepherded prospective members with the love of Christ.



The BHM has made a significant financial investment in the program over the years, heavily subsidizing the contributions made by the churches chosen to participate. Some of the congregations selected were missions by official designation, because they were receiving synodical subsidy for their ministry, while others were self-supporting congregations that remained focused on gospel outreach. In 2009, the seminary decided to work even more closely with the BHM in the program, committing in the range of \$250,000 per year in support. The seminary's contribution has allowed an average of twenty men to serve in an outreach-oriented congregation under a mission-minded supervising pastor.

The seminary sees great value in the program, not because it provides a future pastor with a ready-made package of programs guaranteeing congregational growth, but because it gives the vicar an opportunity to see the little things a pastor does to help a congregation focus on reaching people with the gospel. The vicar year is only a year. It can't provide a future pastor with every experience he needs, but that year can help him catch a gospel-centered, people-serving, outreach-oriented approach to ministry. That's applicable in whatever setting the Lord may choose to use him.



## SMALL THINGS IN THE BIG PICTURE

*Erik Janke (WLS '18), who served as a vicar in a mission setting, shares an example of a ministry lesson he learned:*

During my first week as a vicar, sitting at a bare desk, I read the introductory vicar materials. Among them was a short packet of information entitled "Vicar's First Duties." This booklet contained all the Sunday morning tasks to be completed at least a half hour before worship. Replace the microphone batteries; test the microphones. Make two carafes of hot coffee and cool the sanctuary temp down to 72 degrees. Unlock the doors and turn on

the lights. Set up the camera and pick up any errant scraps of paper or grass.

At 5:45 on Sunday morning, enthusiasm did not come easily. Between the sleepiness and the preaching nerves, I just wanted the minutiae done. Coffee carafes and camera work felt like lesser work. I wanted to pit the means of grace against the menial.

Once my eyes opened (metaphorically and literally), I could see the bigger picture. Details could not be separated from the bigger picture: sermon preparation can be critically undermined by a faulty microphone, blazing (or freezing) sanctuaries are at best a distraction to the Word, and neglected grounds communicate apathy or disorganization to guests and members alike. Faithful stewardship of the means of grace means caring about the details. The small things serve the bigger picture.

But there is still another bigger picture. The details did not function for the sake of busywork; they existed for the sake of people. They served the member and honored the guest. In the (even) bigger picture, they served God, who looks upon and favors even the smallest task (Matthew 25:40). †

*Prof. Earle Treptow is the seminary's vice president and teaches systematic theology and Old Testament.*





# THE COST OF EDUCATION – a Blessed Partnership

**I**t is a practical question: How do Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students pay for their education?

The first answer is you! As Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod members, you may be making regular gifts to the seminary without even knowing it. When your congregation submits its offering to the synod, you have—through your congregation—helped young men who are studying for the ministry. The seminary has received \$1 million annually in support from our synod. Depending on enrollment, this has resulted in a contribution of between \$10,000 and \$12,000 per student. This is a huge amount. Thank you! Please continue supporting our church body, which not only cares for its ministerial education schools, but also supports missionaries—and does so much more to bring the gospel to our world.

Yet students still bear a significant portion of their education's cost. Tuition is right around \$10,000 a year. There is an additional \$8,000 expense for dorm students. Married students have to pay for their own place to stay, for utilities, for food. All students have vehicles to fuel and service. With tuition and living expenses, most students have at least a \$20,000 responsibility for the nine months they are in school.

Where does that \$20,000 come from?

Because of the unique seminary schedule, with all classes held in the morning, students earn money as they work approximately 20 hours a week in the afternoons and evenings. On average this produces approximately \$725 a month, or about \$6500 over

## **GOD'S GIFT OF MONEY; Many Pathways for Partnership**

- Giving to our Seminary Scholarship Fund
- Creating an Endowment Fund which supports scholarships
- Supporting a student directly
- Encouraging your congregation to support a student
- Others?

nine months. But this amount alone does not cover the cost of education and living expenses. While summer income can help, students still may have at least a \$10,000 deficit when it comes to covering school year expenses.

Certain students and families are in a position to carry this responsibility on their own. For that we are most grateful to our Lord. In some cases, a working spouse makes it much more possible to cover seminary expenses. Yet a large number of our students need additional assistance.

While there are outside organizations which have helped support our students, the largest role has been—and will continue to be—played by brothers and sisters in Christ who contribute generously to the Seminary Scholarship Fund. When considering all sources of assistance, on average our students can receive between \$9,000 and \$10,000 in help. Some may need more than that. Others

are grateful that they need less. But in the end, the generosity of so many has permitted a blessed reality—almost without exception, our students leave the seminary with less debt than when they arrived.

Debt? Where did this debt come from? This debt is not primarily credit card debt or medical debt. Over 98% is education debt (this figure does not include auto loans). In recent years, the debt levels of our students have increased significantly. Ten years ago, the average amount was around \$15,000. Today, the average debt for a student who has significant debt is around \$30,000. In addition, the percentage of students with such





significant debt has increased from being about 50% of the student body to close to 75% of the student body. Important to note is that these numbers include the debts of wives. As over 50% of our student body is married, the effect of a wife's debt load is not inconsequential.

On the one hand, we are grateful that debt numbers are not higher than they are. At the same time, there are challenges associated with paying off such debt. Our students are generally required to begin paying off their government loans while at the seminary, so these challenges begin already here. The seminary views this as an opportunity, knowing that any progress students make while here speeds the eventual elimination of their debt.

Debt. Tuition. Housing. Automobiles. Food. And even a bit of money for fun. Our students face the responsibilities of



life which are common to many. We thank the Lord that he has blessed them with interest in ministry and with gifts for ministry, and we are eager to do everything we can to encourage them along their way.

Or perhaps better said, you have done so much to encourage them along their way. As we encourage our students to be faithful stewards of the gifts God has given them, we also pass along to our students the gifts you share from what God has given to you. Your money, which becomes their money, represents a partnership. Together we partner to prepare more and more witnesses for Jesus, who

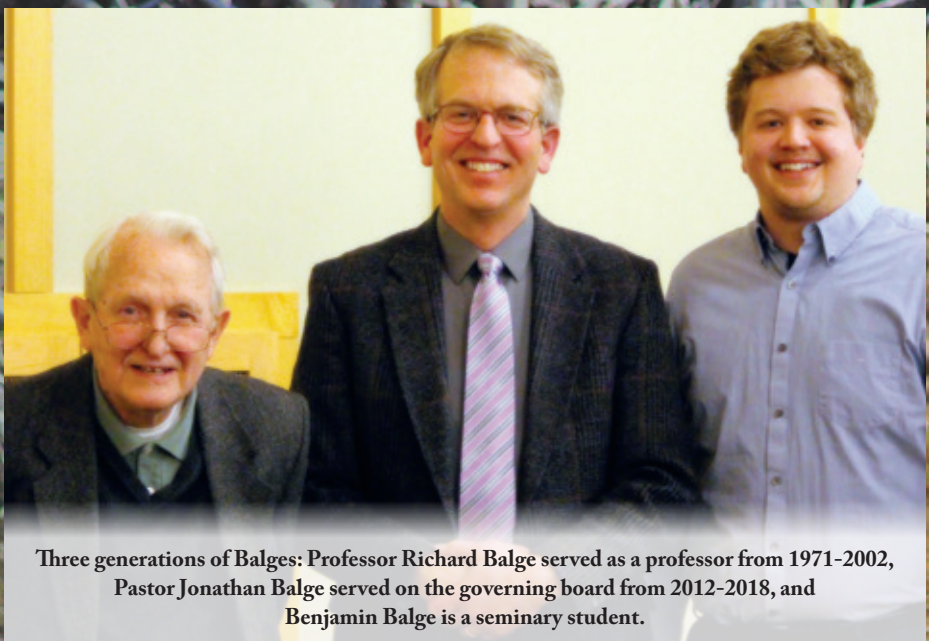
long to encourage you in your witness for Jesus, as we all look forward one day to seeing our Jesus. †

*Prof. Stephen Geiger is professor of New Testament and education and serves as the financial aid director.*



Students who have served in the military received scholarships from the Lutheran Military Support Group.





Three generations of Balges: Professor Richard Balge served as a professor from 1971-2002, Pastor Jonathan Balge served on the governing board from 2012-2018, and Benjamin Balge is a seminary student.



Students lead worship during chapel.



At Mission & Ministry, students hear from presenters about what support is available to them in the ministry.



*Around the Corner with John McGivern* produced a segment on Mequon and visited the seminary campus.



Yaffet Gabayehu doesn't let an injury stop him from participating in Arbor Day.





Attendees renew friendships at Friends of the Seminary Day.



Professor Samuel Degner was installed at the beginning of the school year.



Paul Wilde is excited to graduate.



Some of our food service staff on the bench installed as a remembrance of Kathy Gehrke, who worked at the seminary for 35 years and unexpectedly passed away this past school year.



Joel Hering does his best Luther statue impression.



# MORE ORDINARY THAN HOLY?

An ordinary school day at the seminary begins with each student putting on a cross-embazoned cape. Capes fluttering, the student body paces the hallowed halls of the seminary, chanting in Latin for a full hour. After reciting Luther's *Large Catechism* by heart in perfect unison, the students begin class. During the school day, students study the Bible without opening it, because they have it memorized. They pay attention perfectly, ask probing questions, and laugh at all the right times. When class ends, they leave the seminary with their halos glowing even more brightly than before.

Or not. A holy ordinary day at the seminary looks a lot more *ordinary* than *holy* most of the time. Yes, everyone is dressed up in suits and ties and they all sing as loudly as they can in chapel every day, but the students definitely do not have halos and they do not have the Bible entirely memorized—yet.

A student may arrive early, on time, or sometimes late for his 7:30 a.m. class. He'll carry his books and laptop in a backpack or briefcase and be prepared with a thermos filled with coffee or tea. (If he's really on top of his game,

he has also muted his phone. If his phone makes noise during class, he'll have to bring donuts for everyone the next day.) During his four 50-minute classes, he'll learn about church history, Christian doctrine, different books of the Bible, and how to be a pastor. After classes, he'll eat lunch with the rest of the student body in the cafeteria, then head to his part-time job before doing homework in the evening. The next day, he'll do it all over again.

The everyday routine of a seminary student looks pretty ordinary, but a closer look reveals God's gracious hand behind it all.



The only reason an ordinary young man wants to study to be a pastor in the first place is because he knows that he is holy in God's eyes through what Jesus has done. The support of God's holy people makes that studying possible, in ordinary ways made holy by Jesus.

A student may arrive at school wearing shoes donated (and polished) by a local pastor, a tie donated by a family in Canada, in a car given to him by his supportive family. He can afford to pay tuition to study the holy truths about God and to put coffee in his thermos only because of the gifts God's people provide him with financial aid. The notes he takes, the questions he asks, the homework he does—all of these seemingly ordinary things are holy in God's eyes through Jesus. Each of his classes, from 7:30 a.m. on, help him to know the truth about Jesus better and to better share Jesus with others.

Through each holy ordinary day, God is preparing seminary students for a ministry that may look much the same. The routines, the work, and the people may seem ordinary, but they will be holy in God's eyes through Jesus.

We don't need to wear cross-embazoned capes to know that. †

*Julius Buelow is a 2018 seminary graduate.*





# TEACHING AN ORDINARY CLASS

This is my sixth year of teaching at the seminary, so much of what I'm doing seems routine by this time. I've taught my three main courses (Genesis, Psalms, and preaching) often enough that I feel confident with them. Sometimes when I walk past the statue of Martin Luther on my way to the classroom for my first hour class, I'm reminded how long the Psalms have been taught to young men who are training for the ministry. Luther taught the Psalms several times during his years at the University of Wittenberg. He taught Psalms two days a week, just like I do. The class met the first hour of the day, just like my Psalms class sometimes does. (Okay, he started at 6:00 a.m. We don't start until 7:30 a.m.)



In the classroom I'm reminded how much has changed, though. I walk into a room brightened with electric lights. Our students use much less paper and pen than Luther's students, because

they all have laptops. I project much of what I'm teaching them on a screen. They follow along with the Hebrew text of the Psalms on their laptop screens rather than on paper pages. We have so many more resources available than Luther and his students had. The first time he taught Psalms, he didn't even have the Hebrew text. He taught it on the basis of the Latin text, and he even lectured to the students in Latin! Rather than laboriously looking up unfamiliar words in a cumbersome Hebrew dictionary, our students today simply have to click on the word and the computer opens the electronic dictionary to that word. At the click of a mouse, they can access some of the latest studies in the Psalms and even draw up high resolution photographs of the Psalm manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

But many things have not changed. We are doing the same ordinary work that Luther and his students were doing almost 500 years ago. We are sifting through every word of God's inspired Scriptures to mine even the subtle nuances in meaning from them. We still see some of the most comforting truths in them,



truths that Lutherans—and Christians in general—have always seen in them. I help my students discover what it means that Christ was begotten by his Father from eternity (Psalm 2:7), how he would die on a cross for our sins (Psalm 22), and how he would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:9-10).

Many seminaries today teach that the Psalms that foretell what Christ would do really were not intended as messianic prophecies at all. Many seminaries teach that the psalmists were speaking about the kings of Israel back in the days when they were written and that it was only later on, when the Israelites were disillusioned because their kingdom had been destroyed by the Babylonians, that they began to reinterpret these Psalms as referring to a future king—a much greater king than they had had in the past.

One of the ordinary things we do in the classroom is test such theories and rediscover why men like Luther (and Bible interpreters of all generations) have recognized that these prophecies cannot refer to anyone but God's incarnate Son. These are the "ordinary" things that we professors are helping these pastors-in-the-making to discover so that they can proclaim these wonderful truths to their congregations in years to come. †

*Prof. Bill Tackmier teaches Old Testament and homiletics.*





# PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

Sometimes people who want to become WELS pastors need a more flexible path to ministry, and Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) guides and assists these non-traditional and second career students in North America.

In addition, the seminary has opportunities to reach out worldwide. As congregations serve refugees and immigrants, they introduce the PSI Team to candidates for gospel ministry. In many cases, those spiritual leaders want training for themselves, and are looking for ways to serve the people of their home countries and to train leaders there. Christians living throughout the world contact WELS Board for World Missions for similar gospel training. Through a partnership with WELS Joint Mission Council, PSI evaluates and serves these groups, churches, and communities who want

Vlad Horpynchuk has wanted to be a pastor his whole life. As a member of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC), though, that wasn't going to be easy. In 2013-14, political struggles and religious persecution were making it hard for Christians. Vlad, then 20 years old, was made a deacon of his church in the middle of the night. Through the world missions relationship between WELS and our sister church in Ukraine, Vlad was connected to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Vlad's first task was to learn the biblical languages. To prepare Vlad for his studies here at the seminary, Professor Sorum used online courses and study sessions by Skype. To encourage and assist him, Rev. Jon Bare also made an in-person visit to Ukraine.

After working with the PSI team for a year and a half, Vlad and his wife, Mariia, began the process of applying for a student visa. They arrived at the seminary in the fall of 2017. Mariia's visa doesn't allow her to work, but "she



Pastor Bounkeo Lor teaches a worship class for the church leaders of the Hmong Church in Vietnam.

support, training, and connection to a church body that shares the good news that the Bible is true.

Through PSI, professors also teach and consult on curriculum at seminaries and Bible institutes around the world that are in fellowship with WELS.

Since the program began, faculty members have taught in Apacheland, central and south Asia, Ethiopia, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Portugal, and Zambia. Each year they serve well over 100 students.



Vlad and Mariia are spending four years in Wisconsin so he can return to the Ukraine and serve as a pastor.

likes it here because she understands we are here to do mission work, to be a servant of Christ," says Vlad. "I am blessed with a wise wife."

Vlad is also thankful for the blessings that come from being surrounded by other seminary students. "This is our holy hill. We are always meeting God-people who are sharing the gospel. It builds faith, makes you stronger," he says. "This is how the Holy Spirit works." He also enjoys being connected to a supportive brotherhood. "The spirit of seminary is that you are not alone," he says. "Someone will answer your call at midnight and not yell at you."

Vlad, who has a degree in economics, sometimes struggles in the classroom here. "I see how well students are prepared and cannot follow them as well," he says. "I sometimes feel like an anchor, making the class go slower."

"We don't perceive him as an anchor. We are delighted to have him in class," says Sorum. "It's a blessing for our students to see how large our extended confessional family is. He has the full support of the entire faculty."



While Vlad may be the one in the classroom, Mariia is joining in other experiences. Sorum's goal is to give Mariia and Vlad a wide-ranging experience in mission training and expansion. In January 2018, Vlad and Mariia traveled to Reno with the Winterim outreach course. Vlad says regarding that trip, "if you aren't eager to start talking, you learn to overstep your personal barrier."

Vlad's level of discomfort with door-to-door canvassing is understandable. The canvassing done in his home country by "Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists makes Ukrainians unfriendly to people who knock on the door," he explains. Plus, "people might call police."

Now that he has had the experience of knocking on doors in the States, he feels "it's embarrassing to be shy to knock on the door." He had a range of experiences, from a woman who opened the door and started crying to also getting yelled at.

The goal for this trip wasn't to expose him to one tactic and say, "Vlad, you need to do what we do," says Sorum. Instead, "the value of Vlad's participation in this mission experience is that it will help him evaluate opportunities," says Sorum. "We want Vlad to



meet mission-minded pastors and members who will show him not just outreach tactics but also an outreach attitude. We want him to drink deeply of a kingdom-oriented attitude that crosses barriers and politics in order to expand the kingdom."

While Vlad and Mariia are enjoying the U.S., the human side of leaving home and missing family is still with them. "But it's like moving from one home to another home," says Vlad. That's because everyone they meet is eager to help. From donations of winter coats to wise advice, "no one here ever said, 'No, I will not share.' It's not so open in Ukraine. People in church here are eager to make you comfortable."

While the people at church are happy to serve Vlad and Mariia, he is serving the church as well. For early field

training, Vlad is serving at Christ Alone, Thiensville. He teaches Sunday school and helps with liturgy, which is a little different than the liturgy he's used to.

Also, to help WELS members understand what it's like for believers in the Ukraine, Vlad shares the story of Lutherans there. While most Ukrainians identify with the Orthodox church, he explains that before 1800, there were 30,000 Lutheran members. In 1939, leaders of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church were arrested and killed by the KGB, literature and buildings were confiscated, and many died in prisons and concentration camps. One pastor, Mykhailo Tymchuk, emigrated to the United States and dreamed of returning to revive the Church. In 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed, there was freedom to preach the gospel. Tymchuk died before he could realize his dream. However, shortly before his death, he gave his blessing to representatives of Thoughts of Faith, a mission society of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The church has been rebuilding since then. In addition, the ULC has been given the right to reclaim some of the church property that was seized by the Soviet government and used as warehouses or atheist museums.

Vlad, who has three years of studies remaining, plans to return permanently to the Ukraine after graduation to serve as a pastor in the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. Vlad and the PSI team have an additional long-range goal: "Vlad's study at the seminary has world-wide implications. Our prayer is that Vlad and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will work together in the future to provide pastoral training for more men in Ukraine who want to become Lutheran pastors," says Sorum. †

*Linda Buxa is the seminary's communications coordinator.*



During Winterim, students traveled to Reno, Nevada, to help with canvassing. Vlad and Mariia (front left) were part of these efforts.

# IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO

Keeping the seminary running is about so much more than simply maintaining a school building.

“I think of it as a small community or village,” says Curtis Wenthur, the seminary’s buildings and grounds director. He’s right.

Outside, the grounds crew keeps watch over 80 acres, which include two and a half miles of roads and 25 acres of turf, plus forested land, landscaped beds, trees, flowers, and bushes. To maintain all of this requires snow and leaf removal, weed control, tree maintenance, seeding and lawn care—as well as making sure street signs and lighting are adequate.

“Landscaping is a never-ending job,” says Wenthur. “It’s forever growing, dying, and coming back. Unwanted invasive species appear. Plus, there is storm and deer damage.”

The crew maintains the seminary’s main buildings. The original buildings, dedicated in 1929, include the dorm, dining hall, classrooms, and chapel. The library was built in 1968, and the auditorium in 1986.

“These all have heating and cooling plants, industrial hot water heaters, and slate roofs. We also maintain 981 windows, 43 bathroom areas, and hundreds of light fixtures,” says Wenthur.



These two members of the seminary’s grounds crew are ready to spread the gospel—and are capable of removing concrete for a new floor drain.

The team also maintains the 17 professors’ homes and two homes for world missionaries who are back in the States on furlough. This includes everything from gutter maintenance to remodeling and painting after professors have moved out and before new families move in.

That’s just what you can see. Underground are miles of private water lines, sewer mains, storm drains, phone and internet cabling, and fiber optics.

Finally, the team works to make sure everything is set for over 25 special

events held every year including symposiums, concerts, Mission and Ministry, Call Day, Graduation, and Summer Quarter. “It takes a lot of work keeping these 80 acres looking beautiful and maintaining the flavor and integrity of the architecture, while trying to modernize and keep up with the changing times,” says Wenthur.

The faculty and staff, students, and visitors to campus notice the effort. President Wendland recognizes that, for this crew, the daily work is much more than just a job. “I stand in awe over the people who work here,” he says. “They tend it as if it were the Garden of God. Everywhere you look, their love for the Word is on display.”

## STUDENT WORKERS

Student workers play a vital role, providing manpower for lawn cutting, tree removal, planting beds, early morning snow removal, or whatever else is needed. “Basically, if something needs to be done, they are the guys in the trenches getting it done,” says Dennis Sprenger, campus grounds supervisor. “We are the highway department and the forestry department, along with seasonal work that can be never ending. Prioritizing big projects along with daily maintenance is a constant juggling act.”



The student workers were part of a kitchen remodeling project in one of the professor’s homes.



# RUN A VILLAGE

But not many of the student workers come with experience. “I spend a lot of time teaching them all these different tasks, but they are quick to learn. After they earn their badge, they end up working on their own. Whether it’s removing all the leaves from 25 acres or cutting 25 acres of lawn in a day and a half—they work so hard. To say I’m proud of them is an understatement.” Sprenger sees his work not just as a job. “This is a ministry to me,” he says.

Phil Loescher joined the crew in June 2017 and is one of those students who benefits from Sprenger’s experience and servant-leader attitude. “I’ve learned the joy of taking pride in my work,” he says. “Doing work efficiently and to the best of my ability is noticed. We’ve received many compliments from those who come to campus on a regular basis and from those who visit once every year.”

Still, the work isn’t easy. “The hardest project I’ve done—and the most rewarding—is the work we did at Prof. Robert Wendland’s house. We removed several trees and flower beds and put in soil and grass seed in their place.” He realizes that this hard work provides a short- and long-term service. “It looks really nice now and will be less of a headache for the professor and his family (and us) to keep up the property.”

Loescher, who graduated from the seminary in May 2018, sees how he will apply the lessons learned to his ministry. “I have gained a greater knowledge of grounds care, which will help in maintaining the church grounds and in being a leader for whatever maintenance crew we have,” he says. “My experience has also reinforced the importance of teamwork. In the ministry, as well as any area of life, it is important to utilize God’s gift of teamwork to accomplish a desired goal.” 📌

*Linda Buxa is the seminary’s communications coordinator.*

## BUILDINGS & GROUNDS STAFF

**Curtis Wenthur**  
*Buildings & Grounds Director*  
32 years

**Ted Saxe**  
*Maintenance Supervisor*  
13 years

**Dennis Sprenger**  
*Campus Grounds Supervisor*  
3 years

**Linda Wenthur**  
*Campus Grounds*  
21 years

**Three student workers**



Students and professors work together to remove leaves on Arbor Day.



Cutting fallen trees is all part of the job.



Dennis Sprenger and Linda Wenthur work to keep our grounds beautiful.



# THE HOLY EXTRAORDINARY IN THE LIBRARY

An article about the “holy ordinary” of the library? Impossible! Today’s seminary library is nothing less than extraordinary. You might think not much changes in the library world over time, but you are wrong about that. Long gone are the days of “Shh!” and “No food allowed.” Today’s seminary library is a gathering place—a gathering place with a purpose.

The first thing you notice, it’s no longer just a big room filled with row upon row of stacks. The main floor has been reconfigured. There are comfortable areas with couches and upholstered seating. Pull-up tables let you sit at a couch and work on a laptop in comfort. It’s like your den. But there are no afghans and throw pillows – we discourage napping (actually, napping is okay – we do discourage snoring, however). There are still individual carrels tucked into out-of-the-way places for those who want to study without distractions. And there are plenty of large tables where students can sit and spread out all their study materials or work on group projects together.

Students are not the only ones using the library. Professors meet here with students for advisor/advisee meetings, reviewing sermons, or maybe consulting with seniors on their theses. As the seminary faculty has skewed younger over the years, many professors have grade school children living at home. Home offices get configured for other uses and some professors are able to get more work done away



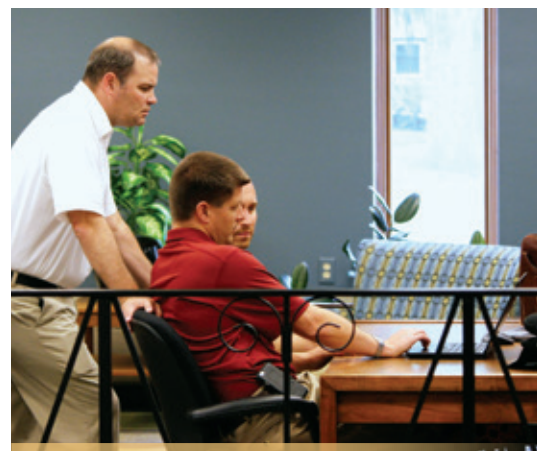
Our rare book collection allows students to read books in the original languages. The oldest book is from the 1400s.

from home. Our classroom building lacks space for faculty offices, so some have staked a claim to prime library real estate. We welcome that! And you always know where you’ll find Prof. Treptow.

The library isn’t just for the books and journals on the shelves. First-year students preach in class and lead worship in congregations. Second-year students need to preach their class sermons in

congregations and bring a recording of the sermon back to class for evaluation. Where will they get an alb to wear and the camera for recording the sermon? Check them out from the library. We have a dozen albs in all sizes and video cameras with tripods. Need a projector for an off-campus presentation? Check one out from the library. The same goes for a laptop if yours is in for repair, presentation pointers, voice recorders, microphones, headphones, projector screens, video cameras. Check them all out from the library. The library is also the place to find good bargains on used books. There are always a couple of carts of used books for sale—books we have received as donations that are not needed for the collection, or books we are weeding out of the collection.

The seminary library is blessed with a very rich collection, especially considering our size. We have over 50,000 circulating items and another 2,000 items in our reference section that never leave the library. That’s an important





distinction. Think of Bible commentaries, for example. When a class on the second half of the book of Romans is offered during Winterim or Summer Quarter, it's more than likely that all the Romans commentaries in the circulating stacks will be checked out. But there will still be Romans commentaries in the non-circulating reference section available for use in the library.

We maintain subscriptions to over fifty periodicals—mostly academic journals, but also more popular publications from other denominations—so our patrons can stay abreast of the latest research and news from the theological world. A deep collection of runs from over 400 periodicals allows our patrons to have the historical record of many groups at hand. The collection of rare books gives access to the original writings of the age of Lutheran orthodoxy—theologians such as Gerhardt, Luther, Calov, Chemnitz, Hunnius, and Baier, for example, from the 16th-18th century. The oldest book in our collection is a commentary by Nicholas von Lyra, written in 1487.

There's a lot in the library, yet the number of items is finite. Still our patrons have access to millions of scholarly articles through on-line databases. And our connection to the global library world allows us to access the circulating collections of most libraries in the United States through Inter-Library Loan (ILL). Seniors are the most prolific ILL users. Since 2012 a senior thesis has been a requirement for graduation. Each senior researches a topic of his own choosing and presents his results in a thesis. The library helps students obtain hundreds of items annually through ILL that are not available in our collection or on-line.

Behind the scenes, you might think the library is just an ordinary place, but we find the extraordinary there too. The amazing resources and programs of the library are managed by a surprisingly few number of people—Prof. Hartwig, Mrs. Dorcas Tackmier, Mrs. Brenda Tiefel, and an ever-changing stream of student library assistants. Mrs. Tackmier works full time, mostly at the circulation desk. She handles phone requests, helps students find items in the library, fills ILL requests, and recently jumped into



cataloging with eagerness. Mrs. Tiefel manages the current periodicals and shelves the books, making sure they are in the right place. After all, if a book is misplaced on a shelf, it is lost.

Students vie for the coveted library assistant positions. They are the ones who keep the library open in the evenings and on weekends. Behind the scenes the students do mundane but important tasks like putting new essays into the essay file, digitizing documents (they are currently working on making the *Gemeindeblatt* available to the public online), scanning materials for professors, recording essays for the online essay file, and whatever tasks come up on a daily basis. They also often select materials to send out to pastors who have asked the library to help them with resources for their assigned conference papers. There is always something new.

Next time you are on campus, be sure to stop in the library. We will personally show you around the place where extraordinary things happen every day. †

*Prof. John Hartwig serves as the seminary's library director and teaches homiletics.*





# WHAT DOES A PASTOR LOOK LIKE?

What does a pastor look like? For most kids, thoughts of a man in a robe, standing in a pulpit and talking about God usually come to mind. He wears a suit! He's tall! He's nice! He teaches God's Word! These are the answers I receive when I ask grade school students this question. But of the numerous answers to that question, there's one answer I've never heard from a young man, "A pastor could look like me!" Of course, I am not expecting this kind of response from grade school students. Most kids can't picture themselves in the public ministry as a pastor or teacher. Why is that? Well, frankly, most kids have never even thought in these terms before. They've never thought what it would be like to serve God as a pastor or teacher. This is one of the main reasons why WLS created the position of the recruiter.

The WLS student recruiter position was created in 2015. Each year a senior is chosen and offered the part-time job. The general purpose of this position is to talk about the joys of ministry and encourage young people to use their gifts to share the gospel in public ministry. For years, recruitment for the ministry on the grade school and high school level was covered primarily by WELS prep schools and Martin Luther College. The seminary level is so far removed from the age of grade school and high school students that it seemed impractical for there to be a recruiter at the seminary. However, it's proven to be worthwhile, as kids can now attach a face to the seminary and, in doing so, attach a face to the joys of the ministry. Thus, the seminary recruiter is not only a recruiter for WLS, but also a recruiter for our prep schools, area Lutheran high schools, and Martin Luther College. He's a recruiter for the ministry.



During the week, the recruiter spends his afternoons presenting at WELS grade schools and high schools in the area, scheduling and giving tours of WLS, and organizing on-campus recruitment events, such as the grade school chapel in the fall and the Seminary Scurry fun run in the spring. All these things are done with the hope that young men and women

might picture themselves, with the unique gifts God has given them, as full-time public servants of the gospel.

Are these efforts working? That's a hard question to answer. Like much ministry recruitment work, it's often unquantifiable. But, as in all aspects of the ministry, we know the results are not in our hands. In 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 Paul says, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." Yes, Paul is talking about converting hearts, but his words are no less true when talking about growing the desire in someone for public ministry. This too is the work of God.

A former WLS recruiter told me that if God stirs the heart of only one young boy to join pastoral ministry or one child to pursue teaching ministry as a result of this position, it is well worth it because of the thousands of lives he or she might touch through their ministry. I pray God uses this position to achieve his purposes. †

*Paul Koester is a 2018 seminary graduate.*





# WE PRAYED FOR A PASTOR LIKE THIS

I have been impacted by a number of ministers over the years. In my early years I didn't realize the importance of my pastors. Now I realize how much I relied on them to feed me. In youth, my thoughts and questions were shallow and self-serving. As I have aged, my thoughts and questions have deepened and matured. I look back on the men of God who have led me and know immediately which ones gave me the most nourishment. They are the ones who set my heart on fire for the Lord by being both good preachers and good shepherds. As preachers, they shared the Word from the pulpit with enthusiasm and emotion, instilling in me a desire to grow in my faith. As shepherds, they cared for me in my daily life when I needed someone to guide me in my struggles with the cares of this world. I have most loved the pastors who warmed my heart and soul from the pulpit, as well as fed and nourished me one on one.

For most of my life I lived in Wisconsin and always had a pastor to lead me. However, five years ago we moved to Tennessee and found that the nearest WELS congregation was two hours away. Driving that far to church is certainly not conducive to establishing a good relationship with a pastor. But, God is amazing! He opened doors for us, and



eventually we found ourselves involved in a small group working to establish a WELS congregation in Chattanooga. After several years and many prayers, our efforts were blessed by God. A new graduate from the seminary was assigned to lead us in establishing a mission church. Prior to this, I had been praying fervently for God to send us a "good shepherd and a good preacher." I held nothing back from God. I begged for someone who was faithful, humble, outgoing, full of enthusiasm, grounded in the Word, able to preach, and socially adept. And in his wisdom, God has seen fit to send us someone who appears to meet all those requests. In return, it is our goal, as members of the flock, to support him, love him, pray for him, and encourage him.

It is exciting to have a new mission church. It is also exciting to have a new pastor, especially one new to the ministry. We have an advantage in having someone with youthful enthusiasm. We will be able to watch him grow in his ministry and impact both those who are new to faith, and those of us seeking to grow in faith. Our mission congregation is blessed with people of all ages, and our new minister will impact everyone from youth to old age. He has already impacted me as I watch him reach out to make new disciples.

God does not put an age limit on coming to faith or growing in faith. The Word is meant to be sown and nurtured in people of all ages. As members of a congregation, we need to make sure our pastor also is nurtured, so he, too, can grow in faith. Ultimately, we all need to heed the words of the Great Commission and remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:20: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." †

*Mary Snyder is a member at  
Living Hope Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, Tenn.*







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