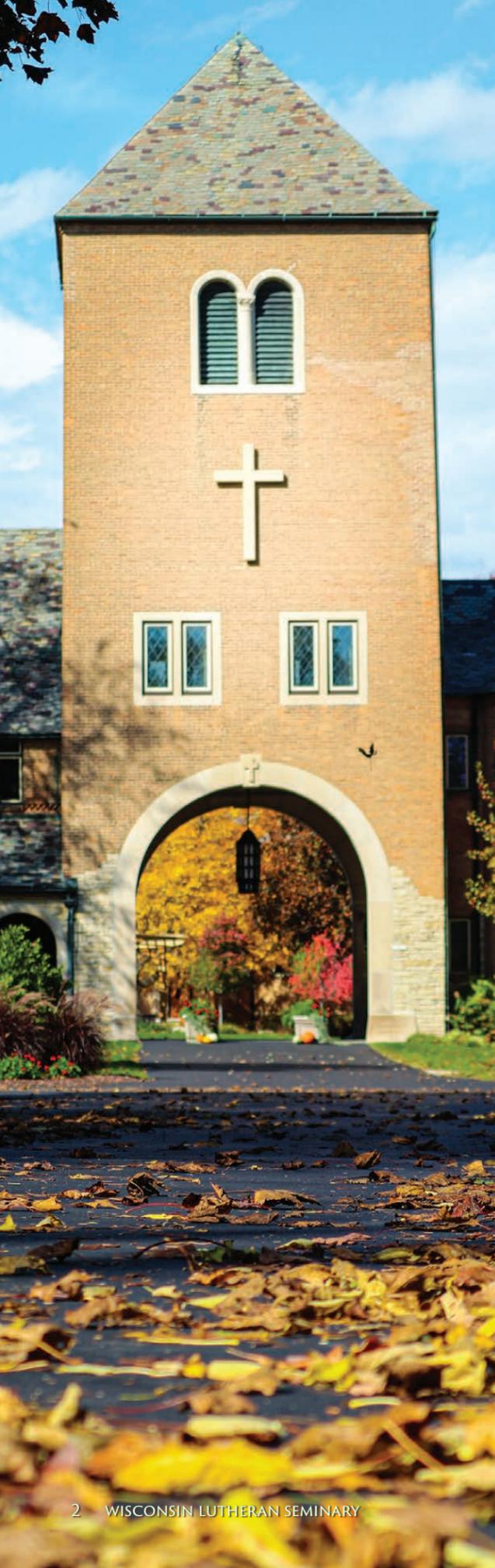




# Κηρυξάτε PREACH THE GOSPEL

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY





## 2021-22 EVENTS

- AUGUST 25** Opening Service
- SEPTEMBER 20** WLS Alumni Society Annual Meeting
- SEPTEMBER 20-21** Symposium
- DECEMBER 12** Christmas Concert
- JANUARY 10-21** Winterim
- FEBRUARY 8-10** Mission and Ministry
- MAY 26** Call Day and Graduation Concert
- MAY 27** Graduation

### ON THE COVER

Students walk from their classes in the administration building to lunch in the cafeteria.



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# THE CRITICAL CONNECTION

*I went to seminary and lost my faith.* That statement is a bit jarring, to say the least. Unfortunately, it is not hyperbole. More than one Christian has enrolled at a seminary, assuming that he would grow in faith in Christ, only to have the opposite occur. Instead of becoming more confident of the Lord's promises during their time in seminary, some actually lose their Christian hope.

In many cases, blame appropriately falls at the feet of the seminary. For instance, a seminary that does not keep Christ and his substitutionary work at the heart of its curriculum fails to center its students on the proper object of faith. Worse than that, such a seminary robs students of the peace and joy that come only from a living connection to the Savior.

The same could be said of a seminary that teaches that the Bible is not God's Word, but only the observations of fallible human beings. By undercutting Scripture's authority, a seminary like that casts out confidence and replaces it with uncertainty. Students learn not to focus on the promises of God in Christ, but on their many questions.

Thankfully, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's curriculum is Christ-centered. Jesus is at the heart of every course in all four branches of theology—biblical, historical, systematic, and practical. Thankfully, every professor believes, teaches,

and confesses that Jesus is the sinner's righteousness and that the Bible is God's own Word to human beings. The conclusion seems rather obvious: No one could attend classes at WLS and lose his connection to Jesus in the process.

That would be an illegitimate conclusion. The father of lies continually seeks to deceive every student who enrolls at WLS. In addition, the men who sit in seminary classrooms still have a sinful nature that hates God. Every last student, therefore, has the horrible ability to reject Jesus and his promises. It is possible for a student (or professor) at WLS to lose a living connection to Jesus.

When a student at the seminary does not lose his faith there is always only one reason: the grace of God. Faith is a gift that God alone gives. Faith in Jesus is a miracle of God's mercy, worked by the power of the Holy Spirit. The only way a seminarian can remain connected to Jesus and grow in confidence in the Lord's promises is if the Lord grants those blessings.

That's why the Lord instructs us to pray, "Your kingdom come." With that petition he teaches us that faith is not our work, but his. He reigns in our hearts, with his gifts of peace and joy, not because we are worthy, but because he is merciful.

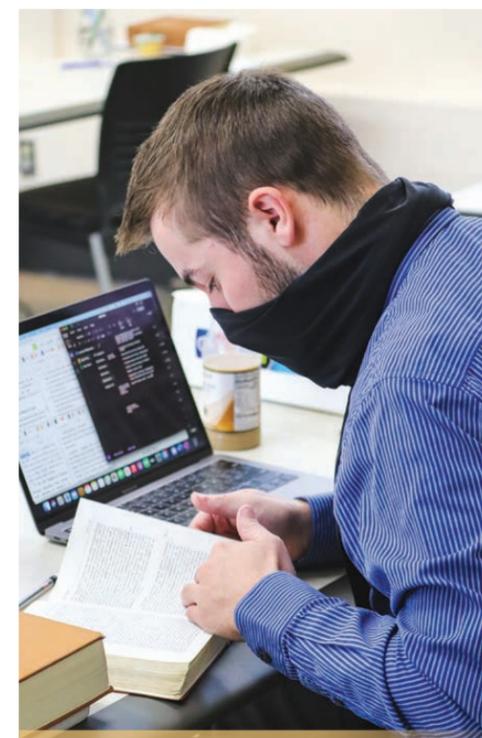
We know how our Father in heaven forms faith in the human heart. He chooses to send his Holy Spirit through the gospel in Word and sacrament. As the seminary family prays that the Lord will do what only he can do—keep each student connected to him—we also cling to his promise that he will work through his living Word to increase faith.

For that reason, the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are at the center of campus life. Each day, students and faculty gather for worship. They sit at Jesus' feet and listen to him speak through his messenger. Day after day they learn that their highest priority is to receive from their Savior the one thing necessary, just like Mary did (Luke 10:42).

Faculty and students gather at Jesus' feet not only in worship, but in the classroom as well. As they wrestle with verses in the Apostle's letter to the Galatians or study the doctrine of baptism or work through the scriptural teaching of original sin included in the Formula of Concord, they are learning from Jesus. Through his Word, the Lord builds students and faculty up in faith and keeps them connected to him.

Students spend twenty hours a week in the classroom. They expend just as much time outside of the classroom digging into the Scriptures to prepare for classes. While the workload is demanding, those enrolled at the seminary recognize the special privilege they enjoy. During their three years on campus, they get to dedicate themselves to the study of God's powerful Word in a way they may never get to again.

With that comes a unique challenge every seminarian faces: the temptation to approach their study of God's Word primarily as an academic exercise. They have been in school for so long that they have mastered the routine. They complete assignments, cram for tests, and wax eloquent in papers, but they may not always pause to ponder what God is saying to them as his children. Unhurried time with the Savior, during which they reflect on God's Word for their hearts and lives, may not find a place in their busy schedule. They may even feel a bit guilty allowing themselves that time of rest when they have so much work to do.



That's one of the ways a student could lose his faith while at the seminary. For that reason, we continue to pray that the Lord would send his Holy Spirit, through his Word, to strengthen both students and faculty in faith. We ask the Father, in his grace, to root and establish all at the seminary, so that they "may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Ephesians 3:18).

Professors encourage students to let personal devotional time take top priority. Training in a Christ-centered devotional life is provided each year, to equip men with practical tools. That training aims, above all else, to help future gospel servants see devotional time not as

something they must do for God, but as a wonderful gift from God, by which he strengthens their connection to the Savior.

Being connected to Jesus is at the heart of service as a pastor. That connection is far more important than the practical skills a pastor needs to carry out the ministry entrusted to him. A pastor certainly needs to know how to write a compelling sermon and how to preach it to the hearts of those who gather in the Lord's house. He needs to be able to teach God's people how to dig into God's Word and apply it to their lives. He needs to know how to care for the hurting, seek the lost, and equip the saints for lives of service.

All those skills, however, take a back seat to the pastor's connection to Jesus. Without a living faith in the Savior, a pastor's preaching and teaching will be nothing but the sound of a clanging cymbal. Only the one who is connected to the Savior can be the spiritual leader that God desires pastors to be.

Please join us in praying regularly, "Lord Jesus, graciously make the seminary a place where students and faculty remain connected to you through your life-giving, faith-strengthening Word." †

*WLS President Earle Treptow teaches systematic theology.*



# WE ARE BROTHERS

To capture the defining qualities of a seminarian's relationship to his fellow seminarians is a humbling task. So, let me give you a personal experience of what the "seminary brotherhood" really means. It's the story of my roommate Michael, a young man who quickly became one of the most influential relationships I would form on this campus.

When Michael first came to the seminary in 2019, his journey looked a bit different from the rest of us who were in our first year. He had come from our sister seminary in Indonesia and was taking a year of classes in Mequon before his graduation.

Because this was his first time acclimating to a foreign culture, while also operating entirely in a second language, Michael didn't say much at first. What he didn't realize was that those of us who had been together at Martin Luther College, and even those who were together through our four years at Luther Preparatory School before that, were acclimating to this new seminary culture, too.

Once he grew more comfortable speaking English and realized our growing bond as seminarians, Michael be'n to poke his head out more, to read through the Gospels in Greek with me for class, and even to share details about his family life in Indonesia and the unspeakable persecutions the Christians of his country face.

Michael's "big break" came when he participated in one of the entertainment nights our class was hosting. He played his part so enthusiastically that it seemed the whole campus family, which already felt a special kinship to Michael because of his smiling politeness, now wanted to be his best friend.



From then on, Michael experienced a wide range of American and seminary culture alongside his seminarian brothers. After a fresh snow, we took him sledding for the first time down the seminary hill. In January, he saw another part of the country on a mission trip to Texas, where he formed a special bond with other students. As imperfect people, we even grew to the point of sharing our struggles and comforting each other with the unchanging love of Christ himself. It was amazing the connection that was made in the space of just a few months.

The saddest day of the year came when, in the face of looming COVID shutdowns, Michael was scheduled to return to Indonesia months earlier than planned. What had started as a chapter in his life that Michael couldn't wait to finish was now ending too soon, and he didn't want to go. Michael, several of our classmates, and I spent that night staying up talking into the wee hours of the morning and helping Michael procrastinate on packing. To capture the memories of so many

months of new experiences together in a single good-bye couldn't be done, so a long last hug had to suffice. And, with that, Michael was gone.

I still walk past his old room wistfully, remembering and longing for those "good old days." That's the effect of the seminary brotherhood. That's what makes pastors tell me to enjoy my years here before they're gone. That's what has formed the lasting network of support for so many of our pastors around the world today. That's what keeps Michael and me in communication, even when we are half a world away from each other. In a world where disconnect and division are becoming more normalized and even encouraged, where the only guarantee is that everything changes, this message of the unity we all as Christians share in Christ fills a desperate human need as only it can do. That is the unity which alone will never change. †

*Christian Willick is vicaring at Beautiful Savior, Marietta, Georgia, during the 2021-22 school year.*

# A FAMILY EFFORT

"Dada!" As I turn the knob, my daughter Ellie's voice fills the air. Before I can even drop my book bag, she gives me a hug and says, "Dada, are you almost a pastor?" After an 11-hour day of school and work, my daughter's love points me back to my first callings as husband and father. It drives me to show my family Jesus' love in everything I do. Balancing the callings of husband, father, and seminarian have proven to be challenging and exhausting. Yet, it's the little moments the Lord gives that put it all into perspective.

Jesus gives those little moments in so many ways, and through so many people. No one has reminded me more of Jesus' presence than my wife, Abbie. Before I ever "suited up" as a seminary student, I stood before the altar at St. Martin's, Watertown, South Dakota, and placed a ring on the finger of the woman who has impacted me more than anyone. Don't get me wrong; I have learned so much about Jesus through my parents, my teachers, and my seminary professors. What sets Abbie apart happens in the moments easily unseen. Jesus shows his love every time Abbie shows me an insight in God's Word I didn't see before. He shows his compassion every time she takes

Ellie and Hallie in her arms and sings "Jesus Loves Me." He motivates me as I see her selflessness as a full-time mom. He reminds me that he is always here every time she prays for me and listens to my stresses and concerns. He inspires me when I see her resilience and love for our family. Being a seminarian can be hard, but being a seminarian's wife is a whole different challenge. Often, it's a challenge that goes unseen. Yet, Jesus never misses a second of it.

If all those little moments weren't enough, Jesus didn't stop there. Every morning at precisely 6 a.m., Abbie and I walk up the stairs, open two doors, and see two smiles that melt me every single day. About a half-hour later, we open the Bible and hear again what Jesus has done and will always do for us. Usually within seconds of closing the Bible, Ellie will start belting "Go, Tell It on the Mountain!" Hallie, who is one year old, will instantly respond with dancing and laughing. After singing and hearing my girls pray, I can't help but thank Jesus. Recognizing all I've gotten to learn humbles me. But even more so, I stand amazed that I have gotten to take my learning and share it



*"No one has reminded me more of Jesus' presence than my wife, Abbie."*

with my wife and my daughters. These are little moments that make all the difference.

The threefold calling of husband, father, and seminarian is challenging. It reveals more and more to me about who I am. More than that, it opens my eyes to all the little, powerful glimpses of grace

Jesus gives. Abbie, Ellie, and Hallie have sacrificed so much for me to pursue the ministry. Between school, work, and homework, time gets tight. But the Lord strengthens us through Christians whose love, prayers, and support, embolden family men like me to continue in the goal of serving Jesus as a spiritual shepherd. Thanks to so many who financially support the seminary, we never once wondered how to put food on the table.

Being a family man and seminarian is hard and I certainly couldn't do it myself. It is a family effort. It's a Christ-powered effort. The little moments with Jesus put it all into perspective. †

*Jonathan Lehmann is a 2021 seminary graduate. He was assigned to Christ, Clarksville, Maryland.*

# A SEMINARIAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PROFESSORS

A group of seminary students shuffles into the auditorium around 6:00 a.m. to play basketball before the school day starts. Along with them are a handful of professors. At 7:30 classes begin and one of the professors who was at morning basketball teaches a lesson with some of the same students he played with earlier that morning. Before chapel starts at 9:30, professors and students mingle. After chapel, during the designated flex hour, a senior meets with the professor serving as his thesis advisor. Later in the evening, there's an on-campus get-together. Professors and students all attend and enjoy each other's company outside of the classroom.

Plenty of things make Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary unique: the curriculum, the daily schedule, what

we're ultimately training to do. But what really makes the seminary different is the relationship between the professors and us, the students.

At the seminary, students have a relationship with their professors that's more than just teacher-student. There's certainly that aspect to the relationship, but since I've been here it has always felt like more than that.

In the classroom, professors take on the role of teacher, of course. But even in the classroom, it's evident there's a different sort of relationship between the professors and students. If someone were to attend one of our senior dogmatics classes, they would have seen this firsthand. President Treptow (first semester) or Professor Brenner (second semester) often began class with a discussion question

or by giving us something to read, and then together as a class we would wrestle with the ideas that were presented. Sometimes a whole class would go by without the professor saying much at all. Instead, they would serve as a moderator for the discussion, weighing in when we might have missed something important or needed some correction in a misunderstanding we had. Many class periods take on this dynamic.

Each of the professors also serves as an advisor to a certain number of students. Normally, a professor and his advisee are assigned to one another for the entirety of a student's time at the seminary. The professor and student meet occasionally to talk about how things are going, and often these conversations involve more than



academics. The professor and his advisee get to know each other on a personal level, but it's even more than that. The seminarian knows that he can ask his advisor questions about pretty much anything.

Senior year, seminarians return to campus after vicar year and begin writing their thesis, a detailed paper on a topic of their choice. Seniors, however, are not alone in the process. Each senior is paired with an advisor who assists them. For many, their advisor is a professor. During the first semester of the school year, it's not unusual to walk through the library and find a professor and a senior meeting in the library to talk about the paper.

The relationships go beyond classroom and academic settings. There are lots of chances for seminarians and professors to build relationships with each other outside the classroom. Intramural basketball is popular on campus, and every year four or five of the professors play with the rest of the student body. My junior year, President



Treptow and Professor Kock were both on my team as we cruised to the intramural championship. This year I didn't have any professors on my team, but it was still fun to go to games and watch Dean Otto launch three-pointers.

As a seminary family, we get together pretty frequently in the evenings to spend time together. In 2020-21, because of COVID protocols, things were a bit different, but it was still great to have some light-hearted fun in

the auditorium and remind ourselves not to take ourselves too seriously. The professors are always there and, in a lot of cases, end up being the ones who stay the latest, talking to us about things that have little to nothing to do with the seminary.

As I think about Call Day, it's comforting to know that the men who will be, Lord willing, recommending me for assignment don't only know me as a student, but they also know what I'm like outside of the classroom. They know my personality, my strengths and weaknesses, and the things I'm passionate about. That wouldn't be possible if it weren't for all the opportunities to build relationships with my professors through the years, both inside and outside the classroom. And as I look even further into the future, I look forward to maintaining those relationships as we serve together as fellow called workers in the public ministry. 🙏

*Daniel Schmidt is a 2021 seminary graduate. He was assigned as a tutor to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wisconsin.*



# WITNESSES AT WORK

As fun as it is to joke about, seminarians are not robots, nor are they monks. We don't spend our whole day in class, writing papers, and chanting songs. We don't work the fields of Mequon all day to provide our food. Believe it or not, seminarians are typical (well, most of the time) adults.

When school finishes for the day, I eat lunch and head off to work. My work boots replace wingtips and work clothes replace my shirt and tie. For the next four hours, I pour concrete light poles. My experience is normal for most guys at the seminary. When the school day finishes, many get in their vehicles and head to work.

Seminary students have a wide variety of jobs, ranging from painting to childcare to cooking. We work an average of 10-20 hours a week at our jobs on top of our studies and other commitments. While at times this schedule is taxing, jobs give students a chance to be part of the community and create connections with the people who live around them.

It's not too difficult for a seminary student to find a job when he arrives on campus. Many jobs are passed down from one class to the next. Some employers can name former employees who now serve as pastors from Africa to Alaska. Other jobs haven't had seminary students in the past, but are willing to hire because of the great reputation of our school and students. God has used

the seminary as a blessing to the community and the community has been a blessing to the seminary.

You might be thinking: All of this about work is great, but I thought the title of this magazine was *Preach the Gospel*. How does working outside of the seminary fit into that mission? How can you possibly spend almost the same amount of time at work as you do in the classroom? How can you talk about God's Word and evangelize when you have an N95 mask over your mouth? These are legitimate questions. In short, God uses us in our different vocations as witnesses both in what we say and in what we do.

Many seminary students' co-workers are not Christians, which gives us a chance to talk about God's Word and about what God has done for us. Often this does not take place the very first time

we meet someone, but after the relationship and connection has been formed. In some cases, there won't be an opportunity to explicitly share the gospel using words. But that doesn't mean that

seminary students are not providing a witness every day that they go to work. God also works through the example of his people. It's not uncommon to have someone ask, "What makes you different?" The answer to that question, of course, is the gospel. Without creating connections in the workforce, we wouldn't have the opportunity to cross paths with many people and share the good news of our Savior.

God grants us so many opportunities to make connections to those around us. Work is just one of those. He gives us a chance to be a witness in word and deed. In doing so, our words and actions echo the words of the Psalmist: "Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples" (Psalm 96:2-3). †

*Joshua Koelpin is spending the 2021-22 school year as a vicar at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.*



# THE VICAR AND HIS CHURCH

I'm sitting in a small booth across from a member. There's a plexiglass screen between us, and we're both wearing headphones. I'm trying not to speak too loudly into the microphone; it's very sensitive, and I don't want to blow their eardrums out. I had brought along some printouts so that they could follow along with a short devotion, but I quickly realized that I'd have to sing the hymns solo.



No, I'm not visiting a prison. I'm in a nursing home, experiencing firsthand the realities of ministering to God's saints during a pandemic.

It goes without saying that this year has been very different for vicars—those WLS students assigned to go out and serve for a year under an experienced pastor—in the midst of COVID-19. If you were to measure how many members I've met by how many hands I've shaken, the number would be three. If you were to measure how many members I could recognize at a glance, the result would be better, but not ideal: about 70 out of 300. That number goes down if they aren't wearing their "Sunday masks."

How am I supposed to make a connection with a congregation that has just barely started having in-person services again, a congregation where I have to meet some people through a plexiglass divider, a congregation where

I can't give people a warm smile or a firm handshake?

Fortunately, it's not all up to me.

First, there's my supervising pastor. As soon as you start talking with him, it's obvious that this is a pastor who has developed a deep relationship with the members of God's flock. Whether we're visiting shut-ins or preparing for Bible information class, he always has a story, the story of these peoples' lives. The triumphs and the struggles, the births and the deaths—he has been here through them all, and he makes sure I understand the story of each of God's children here. He extends that pastoral care to me as well; it can be as simple as chatting for a couple minutes between classes or as involved as spending a couple of hours to talk about a pastor's role in a funeral, but he takes the time to learn my story as well.

Then, there are the members. The first surprise was the number of cards lying on my desk when I arrived: here were people I had never met before wishing me well and giving me gift cards to get groceries for the first few weeks! Already my wife and I felt welcomed,

and that did not stop. When we needed help cooking our Thanksgiving turkey, the church custodian made sure we had everything we needed from the kitchen. When we contracted COVID and had to stay in quarantine for two weeks, members brought us apple pears and puzzles to help pass the time. And when one family found out that we were alone for Christmas Eve, they insisted that we join them for their celebration. We have been greeted with open arms, even though everyone has stayed six feet away!

But most important of all is our Savior. The only reason I have been able to make such strong connections in such a short time is because of our common love for Jesus. Though I have never seen some of their faces, though I have never gotten to shake most of their hands, I am united to the saints here through Christ's loving sacrifice, and that relationship has shown itself in so many ways. It is a connection that not even COVID can break. †

*Stanley Draper spent his vicar year at Our Savior, Brookings, South Dakota.*





In the spring, students and faculty participated in a softball tournament.



After falling out of a tree, this young owl was taken to a nature center and then returned to the seminary grounds.



Students help clean up campus on Arbor Day, an annual spring tradition.



Prof. Tom Kock leads a devotional life workshop for students and their wives.



Four new faculty members were installed at the start of the 2020-21 school year. From left, Prof. David Bivens, Prof. Nathan Ericson, Prof. Jonathan Micheel, and Prof. Aaron Christie.



Prof. Schuetze holds class outside in the courtyard.



Three generations of Balges—former seminary professor Richard, 2021 graduate Ben, and Jon, advisory member of the seminary governing board.



Daily chapel services took place in the auditorium this year to allow for better spacing during the pandemic.



Three Thomford brothers were assigned at the 2021 Call Day service. From left, Orie, Hans, and Luke.



After the assignment service, Lucas Callies and his wife Emily met with the district president to discuss the ministry at Good Shepherd, Cedar Rapids / North Liberty, Iowa.

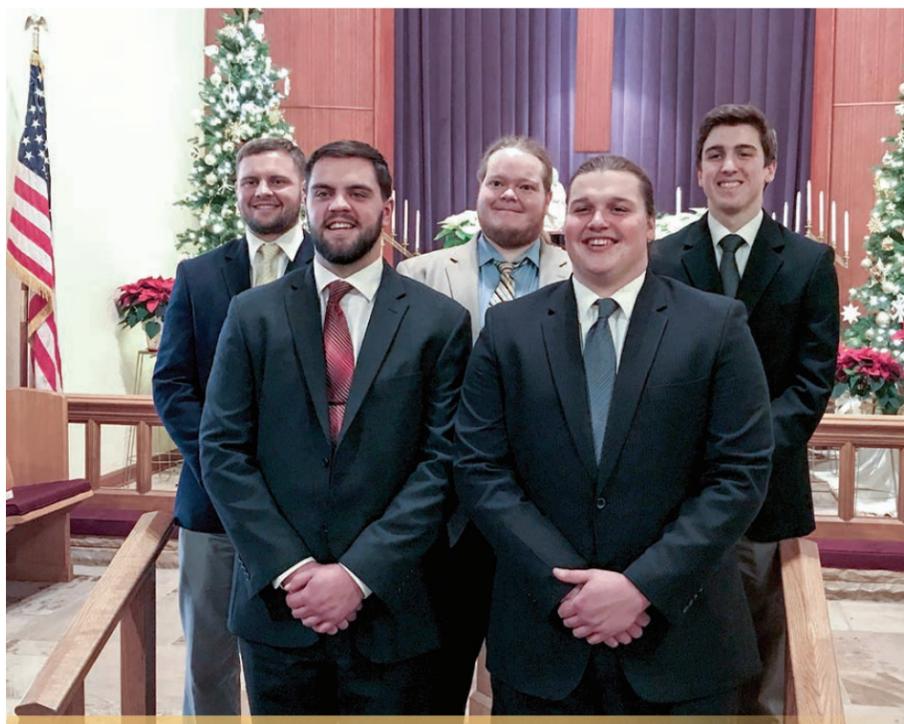
# A SEMINARIAN'S FIRST CHURCH

My whole life I had only known one church. Every Sunday from infancy to eighth grade my parents loaded up the car and took my siblings and me to St. Matthew's, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Over a fourteen-year span you get to know people pretty well and they get to know you, too! Every Sunday I could count on talking with someone who simply wanted to know what was going on and offer me a word of encouragement.

Little changed when I moved to the next town for high school. I would come home for the weekend and, not surprisingly, someone would ask, "How's it going over there?" Sure, the conversation had shifted slightly from St. Matthew's Cardinals basketball to Luther Preparatory School (LPS) freshman football, but the idea was the same: "How's life in Watertown? Are you hanging in there? Can we help?" The folks at church still cared.

That distance became greater when I moved six hours away to Martin Luther College, but the love was still evident. Cards, care packages, and tuition assistance checks came in the mail! And when I came back home—far more infrequently—kind words, thoughtful questions, and Christian encouragement still came out of the mouths of God's people at St. Matthew's. I had spent eight years away from St. Matthew's, but it felt like I never left. I always saw the love and concern for me, whether it was in the narthex at church or in the dorm rooms at LPS and MLC.

The spirit of love remained as I started at the seminary. I still receive financial assistance from my church, the conversations I now have at St. Matthew's reflect their interest in a seminarian's education, and the words of encour-



Five members of St. Matthew's, Oconomowoc, Wis., were enrolled at the seminary during the 2020-2021 school year. Front: Daniel Schmidt, Jacob Schlomer. Back: Jacob Schmidt, Barton Cox, Jonah Schlomer.

What could explain the generosity, love, and care of the people at St. Matthew's?

agement mean just as much to me now as they did when I was fourteen.

Let me share one example. The service had just ended, and I was greeting members. One individual shared that he was filled with pride and joy because a youngster that played baritone in the school band he directed ten years earlier had just shared God's Word with him from the pulpit! Nostalgic? Yes. Meaningful? Absolutely! I can't even begin to tell you how much a thought like that means to me and, ever since my journey towards ministry began, I've experienced many encounters just like that one.

It is difficult to portray the lifetime's worth of encouragement I have

received from St. Matthew's in a short article like this. As I consider the kindness and generosity of the people at St. Matthew's, the Apostle Paul's words to the Corinthians come to mind: "I know your eagerness to help. . . This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God" (2 Corinthians 9:2, 12). What could explain the generosity, love, and care of the people at St. Matthew's? The answer is simple and it's shared by all of God's people, no matter who they are or where they live: They love their Savior. They love God's Word; they treasure the Word as the way God brings and strengthens faith. And they appreciate that God gives gifts to his church in pastors and teachers to nourish that precious gift of faith. †

*Barton Cox served as a vicar at Abiding Grace, Covington, Georgia, during the 2020-21 school year.*

# ENCOURAGEMENT: A SUPERPOWER?

We grew up in parsonages. Both of our fathers were WELS pastors. Through much training in potlucks, Easter sunrise services, daylong Mission Festivals, and some teasing for being "PKs" (pastor's kids), we emerged as adults. Neither of us became called workers, but we knew we had a role to fill in our churches. We had memorized "Hark! The Voice of Jesus Crying" (CW 573). We also knew we had a superpower! Okay, not a superpower, but we knew something others didn't. We had an insider's view of life in a parsonage, life as a PK, life with dads whom God called to different ministries and moms who mirrored their love for Jesus by doing the work God set before them. Is that knowledge worth anything? How could we use it to serve others, specifically young, future called workers?

We belong to a small, urban church. When late summer rolls around, we see some young visitors in our church pews. *Hmmm, they're singing along. They seem to feel comfortable with standing and sitting.* After church, accompanied by eye rolls from our kids, we strive to make the "WELS connection." It does not take long to make those connections and get to know our Early Field Training (EFT) students. Some come with wives; some are single. Some are on a second career path. All are saying, "Here am I, send me, send me." They're training; they're ready!

## "SUPER" ENCOURAGING WORDS & ACTIONS

The fields are ripe. The harvest is waiting. Our small church is a tiny field where seminarians can practice their training. Some are very comfortable in the pulpit. Others are still working on that skill. We are thankful for those that excelled with teen ministry when our kids were involved. Sure, sometimes those first Sunday mornings doing liturgy can be awkward. What is our role in all of this? How can we encourage with words, with prayers, with smiles, with meal invitations, with our bank accounts? We have seen our church family support seminarians with gifts of money and words of thanks. For one student whose family faced a prolonged hospital stay, our members jumped in with meals. We raised funds and worked with Christian Aid and Relief to help defray some of those medical expenses. Church members even helped with car rides to medical appointments. All these



During their first two years, all seminarians are assigned to local congregations for Early Field Training, where they participate in church life and gain ministry experience under the supervision of the local pastor. Pictured is Brenda DeMarce (left), who served as a baptismal sponsor at her husband Karl's EFT congregation, Community of the Faithful, Milwaukee.

seemingly simple, everyday acts of service help our future pastors as they train.

## "SUPER" PRACTICAL REALISM

When the seminarian brings a spouse with him, it is vital for us to support and encourage her as well. These wives are ready to "take the task he (God) gives" them. Together they serve the ripening fields. We remember one EFT student taking the time after church to sit and enjoy a doughnut with a retired pastor and his wife. The retired pastor's voice is difficult to hear; his wife struggles with Alzheimer's. Yet the young seminarian and his

wife sat, smiling, intently listening to stories. As PKs we have realistic memories of parsonages that needed adapting, emergency hospital visits, struggles in deliberating divine calls, and the strained relationships that can come from sharing law and gospel with sinners. "Success" in ministry, "success" in a pastor's family, "success" from God's perspective? That may take years—and some life experience and hindsight—to see, if at all. We can be realistic and understanding while encouraging EFT families (and all our called workers), reminding them that "success" is preaching the gospel in its truth and purity.

Thank God for EFT students! Our church family loves adopting them for a few years. We get updates on Call Day. We celebrate the birth of a child with them. We look forward to encountering those we had the opportunity to make the "WELS connection" with as they serve in different ministries. We know we will see them in heaven someday.

Is it a superpower that we PKs have—this ability to encourage our EFT students? Not really. Okay, not at all. Everyone in our church has it. God grants us all life experiences and relationships that shape us and give us opportunities to mirror the love of Jesus in our words and actions. While these seminarians are saying "Here am I, send me, send me" we can "be like faithful Aaron holding up the prophet's hands." Personally, we thank God for our parsonage childhoods, and we look forward to continued relationships with our EFT students as they jump into their own pastor's families. †

*Christopher and Kristin Snyder are members at St. Matthew, Milwaukee.*

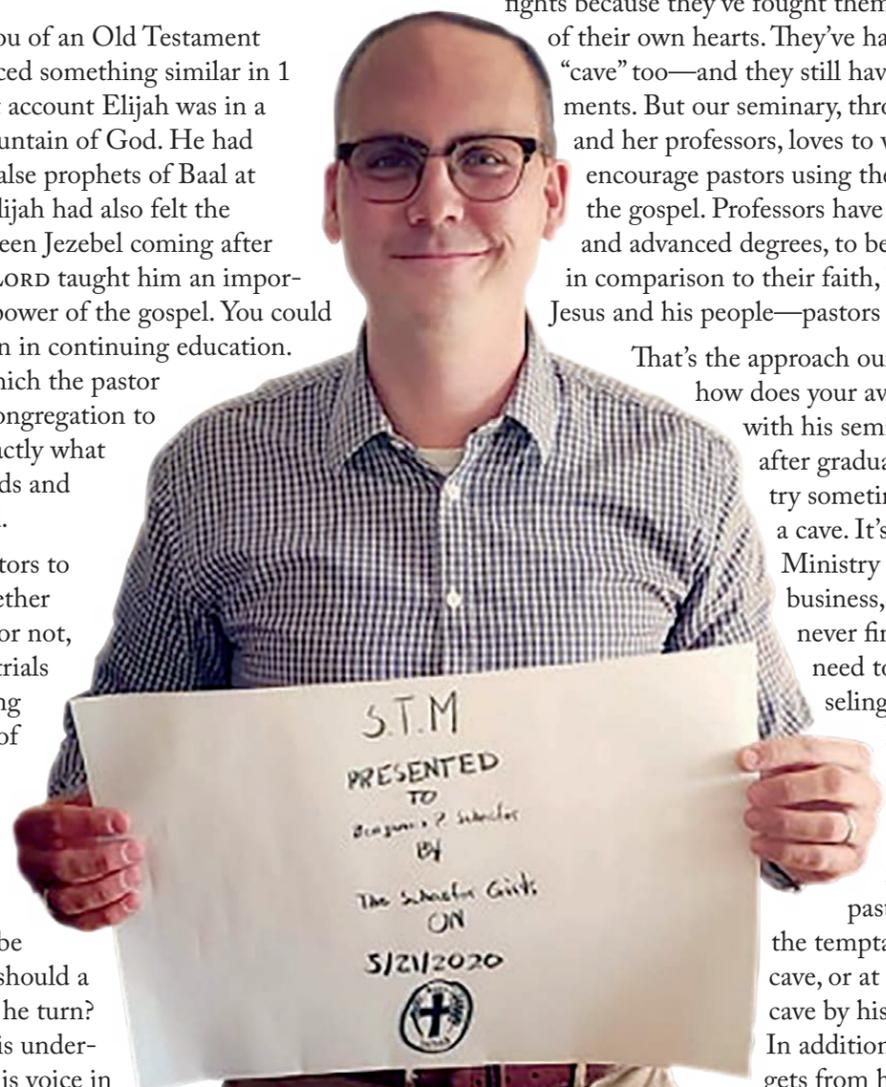
# OUT OF THE CAVE

A Lutheran pastor sits in his office, staring at his computer screen. A year of dwindling dedication and divisive decision-making stares back at him. This pastor has been struggling to get some traction for meaningful ministry.

First, he waits for some powerful change to blow through his congregation and shatter hard hearts before the LORD. But the LORD isn't in that "powerful change." Next, he tries an earthshaking program that is guaranteed to get the numbers up. ("Well, it worked at my friend's church over there!") But the LORD isn't in that either. So then, he tries some special upbeat music that he thinks will really set people on fire for Jesus. But the LORD isn't to be found there. Finally, the pastor turns from his screen and picks up his Bible. There he hears a gentle whisper, the word of forgiveness through Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for sinners. There is the LORD! That's what he needs and wants for his congregation.

Maybe this reminds you of an Old Testament prophet who experienced something similar in 1 Kings 19:9-13. In that account Elijah was in a cave at Horeb, the mountain of God. He had seen victory over the false prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel, but Elijah had also felt the murderous rage of Queen Jezebel coming after him. In the cave, the LORD taught him an important lesson about the power of the gospel. You could call it a powerful lesson in continuing education. The gentle whisper, which the pastor needs and wants his congregation to hear and believe, is exactly what the pastor himself needs and wants for his own soul.

It's all too easy for pastors to hide out in a cave, whether COVID-19 is raging or not, whether troubles and trials from Satan are afflicting him or not. The caves of self-doubt and self-interest, the caves of budgets, boards, and building projects—these are always near at hand, and they can be overwhelming. What should a pastor do? Where can he turn? The Lord Jesus calls his under-shepherd to listen to his voice in



the Word (John 10:27). An essential element for meaningful ministry is for a pastor to continue growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

That's why Grow in Grace continues to be a vital part of our seminary's mission. Grow in Grace exists to partner with pastors in the field to grow spiritually and professionally. Put another way, Grow in Grace invites pastors to come out of the cave and hear that gentle whisper.

In the scope of American Christianity today, our seminary is an anomaly. The professors who teach there did not seek out the accolades of a world obsessed with worldly degrees. They did not chase after positions or promotions. They are pastors who came to the classroom after having their hearts and ministries forged in the Holy Spirit's workshop, the local church. They bring a burning passion for souls and for being pastors. They know the battles every pastor fights because they've fought them on the battlefields of their own hearts. They've had their time in the "cave" too—and they still have those cave moments. But our seminary, through her leadership and her professors, loves to work with and encourage pastors using the still, small voice of the gospel. Professors have specialized training and advanced degrees, to be sure, but this pales in comparison to their faith, hope, and love for Jesus and his people—pastors included.

That's the approach our seminary takes, but how does your average pastor connect with his seminary, even years after graduation? Parish ministry sometimes seems like life in a cave. It's somewhat natural. Ministry is a busy, people business, and the work is never finished. Sermons need to be written, counseling needs to be done, Bible classes need to be prepped, meetings need to be held. The further into ministry a pastor goes, the greater the temptation to stay in the cave, or at least to cope in the cave by his own mechanisms. In addition, the further a pastor gets from his years at seminary,

the more professors retire or are called to other areas of the kingdom. For the pastor in the field, seminary isn't necessarily the place "where everybody knows your name" (to quote a popular oldie). Time marches on. The cave gets more comfortable.

Then again, the seminary faculty is, even today, "always glad you came." And the seminary is always thinking of new and effective ways to connect with pastors, to connect pastors with one another, and to connect pastors and professors alike to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lutheran Church is a confessing church, and that means we are not ashamed to connect with one another or confess to one another. The publications, email encouragements, formal and informal learning options, and more, all serve to meet pastors where they are in ministry. Saints and sinners at the same time, Lutheran pastors need the direction and comfort God gives in his Word. And the practical wisdom our Lord has imparted to his Church is worth sharing too. That's what the seminary continues to offer for pastors today. There are avenues for growth, ways to connect with fellow pastors, and plenty of knowledge to share. These provide a gentle invitation to come out of the cave.

Things may have changed dramatically since a pastor walked through the doors as a young seminarian. Things may change in a pastor's life, too, from ministry to family to experiences. But what has not changed is our need and desire for gentle gospel comfort in Jesus Christ. What has not changed is our seminary's commitment to the canonical Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Pastors today continue to receive excellent and edifying encouragement from our seminary. It is a connection that brings us, by God's grace, out of the cave. We have a gentle whisper to proclaim. †

*Benjamin Schaefer serves as the pastor at Mt. Calvary, Redding, California.*

**TOP 10** ways pastors can connect and come out of the cave:

- 10 Wander onto the seminary campus when you're around Mequon.
- 9 Subscribe to and read the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*.
- 8 Bring elementary students to "Grade School Day" at the seminary.
- 7 Read an online book review from *The Shepherd's Study*.
- 6 Take a course through Grow in Grace ([www.wisluthsem.org/grow-in-grace](http://www.wisluthsem.org/grow-in-grace)).
- 5 Talk to a recent grad in your area about "Pastor Partners" mentoring.
- 4 Study *The Four Branches* review with your local circuit.
- 3 Utilize the informal resources available for personal planning for spiritual and professional growth.
- 2 Set aside devotional time to read seminary e-mail encouragements.
- 1 Say a prayer of thanksgiving for the Lord's blessings to and through our seminary.



Because Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was not able to hold an in-person graduation service in 2020, Schaefer's family presented him with a handmade diploma during the online service.

# THE SEMINARY'S CONNECTION WITH THE PAST

Visitors to the seminary quickly notice that they're surrounded by the past. Literally.

If you sit in one of our classrooms, you'll notice framed pictures of graduating classes on the walls all around you. Visitors enjoy searching the photos to find their pastor and smile at how young he looks (and what fashionable hairstyle he was sporting). In one room I'm often in, I can see the fresh faces of three graduates who would later be my professors. In another, I see the century-old images of J.P. Koehler, August Pieper, and John Schaller, all previous seminary presidents and men behind the "Wauwatosa theology," named after the location of our previous campus. I see graduation photos of some of my old pastors, men God would use to encourage me to study for the pastoral ministry, men whose servant hearts I still try to emulate.

In a basement hallway, you can find the photo taken on the day in 1929 when our current campus was dedicated. You'll quickly notice something strange about the picture; towering trees fill our campus now, but in that old picture there's hardly a sapling in sight!

Our campus buildings themselves were designed to evoke the past. The architectural design was inspired by the Wartburg Castle, where Martin Luther, holed up for a time after being declared an outlaw, translated the New Testament into German. The bricks and wooden beams of our campus buildings remind us that we're connected to something stretching back in time hundreds of years.

## LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Our curriculum purposefully connects students to the past through its classes in church history. In their first year, students review over a millennium of history, from Pentecost to just before the Reformation. They learn how the good news about Jesus grew and spread throughout the world. They dig into the controversies about the Trinity



and the person of Christ, seeing how Christians of the past struggled to express the foundational truths of Scripture. They learn how God preserved his Word even as the Dark Ages enveloped most of Europe. Later in that first year of classes, students focus on the Augsburg Confession, the 1530 statement of faith that became the central confession of Lutheranism. They learn that early Lutherans made clear that they were teaching nothing new; what they taught was what had always been in Scripture, believed by Christians throughout history. In their second year, students delve into the Reformation Era, reading lots of Luther's writings and discussing

how he turned the spotlight on Jesus and his Word. In their final year of classes, seminary students study the tumultuous decades after the Reformation. It was then, in response to many controversies, that early Lutherans composed the Formula of Concord, again articulating what Scripture says. Students' final year also features a history of Lutheranism in America and modern Christianity, providing insights into how the current religious landscape—the environment in which new seminary graduates will soon be living and serving—came to be.

The point of studying history is not simply to memorize names and dates. The ultimate point is to see more clearly the grace-filled working of the Lord of history. Nations and empires rise and fall. The family of God seems to be thriving for a brief moment, but nearing extinction in the next. Yet the Lord's Anointed is living and reigning, and even the gates of hell will not prevail against his church or withstand its advance.

Studying history also gives a pastor a perspective that he will need. Let's say a pastor comes up with a novel way of saying or doing something for the kingdom. He will be wise to find out if someone else in Christian history has had a similar idea or plan. How did it work out for them? Did it bring blessings to people, or did some unintended

consequences overshadow it? Or let's say a pastor gets discouraged and begins to think that his work—and maybe all Christians' efforts to spread the gospel—is in vain. He will be wise to look back and discover that the gospel has survived through even worse times. There is reason for hope when the Lord of history is on your side!

## "REMEMBER YOUR LEADERS"

When we at the seminary look back at our history, we give thanks, particularly for the faithfulness of those who have served here. The past two years have seen two former seminary presidents depart to be with the Lord. Professor Armin Schuetze served on the seminary faculty from 1958 to 1990 and as president from 1978 to 1985. Professor Schuetze was called home to heaven in May 2020 at the age of 103. Professor Armin Panning served on the faculty from 1975 to 2001 and as president from 1985 to 1996. He departed to be with Jesus in April 2019. Both men led the seminary through changing times, and their faithful leadership blessed not only the students who were here during their tenures but all whom those future pastors would one day serve.

The past school year marked the conclusion of Professor John Brenner's three decades of service at the seminary. Professor Brenner will be remembered for his love of church history and his clear teaching of Christian doctrine in dogmatics and Lutheran Confessions classes. Many students will recall the "agree/disagree" questions he often asked to get them thinking deeply—questions that many pastors now imitate in their own Bible classes. And students will miss his readiness to joke around and share his signature laugh. He and his dear wife, Pat, plan to travel in retirement, with hopes of visiting the congregations of former students around the country. We praise the Lord for Professor Brenner's faithful service.

The seminary's connection to the past looks both backward and forward. "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word



Professor John and Pat Brenner. Professor (and former Dean) Brenner retired after 30 years at the seminary.

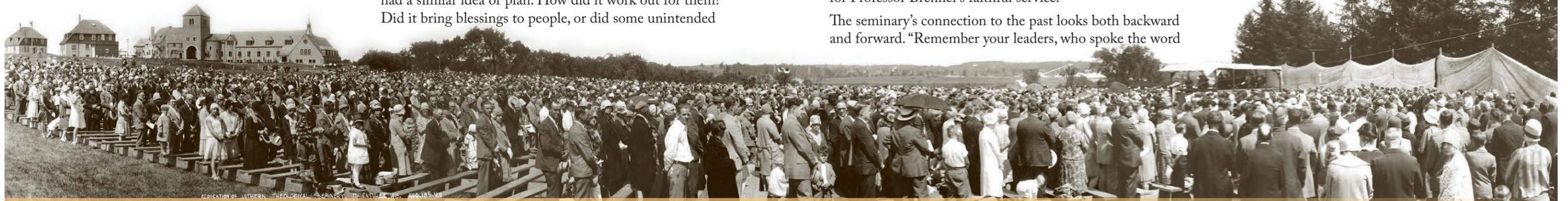
of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7). We look at our past, see the incredible ways the Lord has blessed us—even and especially in difficult days—and we give thanks. We look back to see faithful Christians, including those who have lived and served among us, and we recall how the Word of God came to us through their ministries. Yet we also look forward. We think of how we can learn from saints of the past and "imitate their faith" as we walk the road they walked before us.

When you're at the seminary, the past surrounds you—and what an encouraging thing that is! May our Lord guide us as he guided those who came before us. May we imitate their faithfulness as we move into the future. †

*Professor Jonathan Micheel teaches church history and preaching.*

At Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary a picture of every graduating class with its faculty hangs on a wall in a hallway or classroom. It is a visual record of how one generation tells the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. There were 17 professors and 55 classmates on my picture from 1981. I don't know exactly where the picture hangs in 2021, nor do I know the whereabouts of many of those 72, but I know that Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura is still where our seminary, faculty and students stand. Deo Gloria.

– Retired Pastor Bill Schaefer, WLS class of 1981.



# SUPPORTING THE FAMILY

When Carol Egelseer says the seminary feels like home, she means it—literally. Her father, Professor Frederic E. Blume, began teaching at the seminary in 1952 and she grew up on campus. She remembers taking piano lessons from students, sledding on the hills, and skating on the pond. She also recalls the day her father discovered honey running down the wall of his study; honeybees had taken shelter in the walls. “That’s how Dad became a beekeeper,” she says. “I was somewhat sheltered while growing up at the seminary, but everyone was always very kind and thoughtful. It was pleasant to have so many good-looking young men around!” she laughs.

On Dec. 17, 1974, the seminary family was shocked when Professor Blume died while teaching a class. “I have heard many anecdotes from former WLS students who loved learning from him,” she says. “I believe my Dad started teaching the course on pastoral psychology—the beginning of the concept of pastoral counseling, which

is so important today. I remember when he took a group of students to the prison in Waupun and they saw [serial killer] Ed Gein.”

While she loves the seminary because it was home, there’s so much more to it. “I am overwhelmed by the serenity of the campus and buildings. I love to picture all the professors and their families in their homes, and the students who are so conscientiously pursuing their goals to become ministers of Christ’s gospel. I am impressed with the instruction in sound Lutheran doctrine. I love to watch the morning chapel service online; students lead worship with confidence and professionalism,” she says. “Plus, it doesn’t seem like Christmas is complete unless we go to a concert—even one online!”

For all these reasons, she and her husband, Alan, believe “it is imperative that we support the seminary with prayers, offerings, love, and encouragement. If not us, then who?”

You don’t need to have been raised on the seminary’s campus to be part of

the family. Generous donors who support the seminary from around the country and the world are part of the seminary family, too.

Gifts to the Seminary Fund support the day-to-day operational costs of the seminary. The administrative offices, classrooms, dorms, and faculty housing require year-round work and the park-like 80 acres takes diligent stewardship. Technology needs to be consistently upgraded to accommodate online courses, livestreaming, and real-time video calls with international presenters—all of which has been especially vital the past year. A recording studio allows professors to expand the ways they are able to serve students. The Seminary Fund also supports the students’ early field experiences.

The seminary’s Scholarship Fund directly helps students—many of them with families—balance their studies and financial obligations. While the cost of education is around \$35,000 per student per year, two-thirds of those educational costs are covered through Congregational Mission Offerings—gifts from congregations who support the ministries within WELS—and gifts from individuals who give above and beyond their church offerings. Students are responsible for the remaining one-third, and even that expense is offset by additional financial aid. These gifts ensure that all students who want to study for the public ministry are able to do so.

Even better than being part of the seminary family is knowing that, by generously helping us prepare pastors to share the gospel, the Holy Spirit will lead more people to become part of the family of God. †

*Linda Buxa served as the seminary’s communications coordinator from 2013–2021.*



Not only are classes held on the seminary campus, but it is also “home” for professors and their families, as well as the majority of students. For many people, whether they have lived here or not, the seminary still feels like home.

*To support the seminary, visit [www.wisluthsem.org/friends/give](http://www.wisluthsem.org/friends/give). To discuss leaving a legacy, call 262-242-8100 or contact a WELS Christian Giving Counselor at 800-827-5482.*

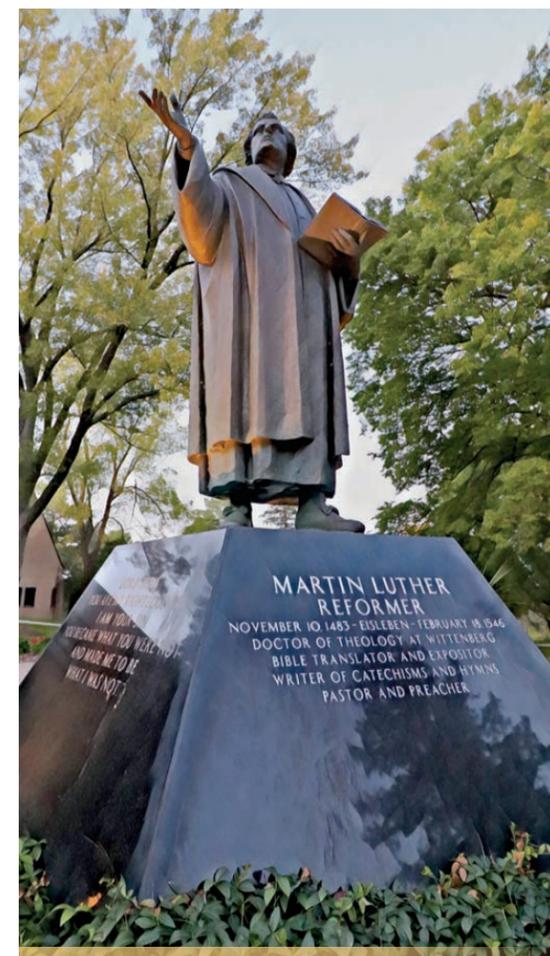
# THE SEMINARY & ITS FEEDER SCHOOLS

The people who founded Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary knew what a seminary for pastoral training should look like. Many of them had graduated from one. They set up the program just the way they wanted it, but quickly encountered a problem. They didn’t have enough students!

After just two years of very low enrollment, they decided to start a preseminary program at the college level to feed into the seminary. As recent immigrants, they were proud to design their program using the American four-year college model. But there were very few high school graduates in their geographic area at the time to feed into the college, so they set up a boarding high school program on the same campus as the college. The WELS ministerial education system was born.

More than 150 years later, WELS still has a ministerial education system made up of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, a preseminary program in the American college model (Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota), and two boarding ministerial education high schools. Those two high schools are often called prep schools, because every student at them is preparing for the ministry of the gospel. More than half of all WELS pastors still come through those two prep schools, Michigan Lutheran Seminary (Saginaw, Michigan) and Luther Preparatory School (Watertown, Wisconsin).

Between the two World Wars, many European immigrants joined WELS congregations. The population boom made WELS leaders nervous about having enough pastors—so nervous, in fact, that WELS considered opening a boarding ministerial education high school in every pastoral conference across the United States. The congregations in those conferences, however, wanted a broader Lutheran high school education for their students, so they opened their own locally-supported area Lutheran high schools



At each ministerial education school, a statue of Luther is placed prominently on the campus to remind students of their shared history and mission.

(ALHS). Those schools generally included programs to train students for the pastoral ministry, and soon their graduates also entered the pre-seminary program at the college level.

The men who teach at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary realize the great blessing they have in the WELS feeder schools. It’s very rare in church bodies around the world to have such uniformly well-trained people entering a seminary classroom. WLS professors give thanks to God every day for MLC, the prep schools, and the ALHSes.

The history of WELS pastoral education includes feeder schools no longer in existence: Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Northwestern Preparatory School, Martin Luther Preparatory School, Martin Luther Academy, Doctor Martin Luther College, and Northwestern College. We thank God for the faithful work of those schools and their quality graduates who still serve in WELS.

We give thanks that the Lord of the Church continues to supply our synod with young men who are willing to serve anywhere that the Church needs them, who believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, who treasure the precious Lutheran heritage of proclaiming the unconditional gospel that has been passed to our generation with remarkable clarity, and who present themselves for service as faithful ministers of the gospel who subscribe without reservation to the Lutheran Confessions.

We also give thanks for the congregations and their members who still think that the investment of energy and financial resources in the thorough preparation of candidates for the public ministry of the gospel is a sound and wise personal and synodical commitment. †

*Rev. Paul Prange is the WELS Administrator for Ministerial Education.*

# THE SEMINARY'S INTERNATIONAL FAMILY

Lam Nhial Luak has been a Nuer refugee since he was twelve. He fled South Sudan with his parents in 1990 in the middle of the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005). A new civil war keeps Lam and two million Nuer in this uneasy status. The Nuer's dream to return to their homeland is built upon a very thin hope. Every attempt at resolution, it seems, falls victim to corruption and tribal loyalties.

Lam's experience as a twelve-year-old refugee is typical. His father soon died of sickness in a camp. His mother, weakened by the war's burden, died while journeying between camps. At 15, Lam was on his own. He was set up with a new family, so to speak, in a camp dormitory with more teenage orphans.

Lam's uncle is Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) graduate and pastor, Rev. Peter Bur. Peter had instructed Lam's family in the Christian faith while they all lived together in Liat, South Sudan. Peter had heard that Lam's parents had died. Peter, at the time also a teenage refugee on his own, was on scholarship at a high school in Ethiopia. He invited Lam to live with him. When Peter completed high school, both he and Lam returned to the camp.

With Peter's assistance, Lam was able to rise above the hardships of his experience. Good grades in primary school earned him a scholarship to attend high school in a refugee camp in Ethiopia. His good grades there earned him a university scholarship. Lam was married in this time to Nyakong. Together they have six children, all born in Ethiopia but as refugees of South Sudan. From university, Lam enrolled in Mekane Yesu Lutheran Seminary, which prepares pastors for the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesu, a church body outside of WELS confessional fellowship.

Lam, however, wants to follow Peter into what Peter calls "the doctrine of the WELS." The PSI program that led Peter into the WELS pastoral ministry could not provide the same support to his nephew. Lam and Peter and the PSI—and the Global South Sudanese Committee (GSSC) that supports Peter's outreach to the Nuer—needed a partner.

That partner exists! The Rev. Dr. Kebede Yigezu, the founder of the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia (LCE), was received into fellowship with the WELS and the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference at our 2017

Synod Convention. That connection—a very close connection—was initiated through PSI visits to Ethiopia in 2014. Rev. Kebede is also the founder of Maor Lutheran Theological Seminary. The partnership is in place. With God's blessing, Lam will be the first to enjoy the benefits of this partnership but not the last. Maor will deliver the program that will equip Lam to serve as a Lutheran pastor in Africa.

When God blesses the outcome of this partnership, Lam will begin his service to the Nuer refugee community in the Gambela, Ethiopia region. This is not quite a plan. It is the vision of Uncle Peter Bur. This vision aspires to establish Lam as the solid Lutheran voice of the unconditional gospel in a local congregation, but also in a regional Bible Institute that will serve thousands of Nuer refugees in the Gambela region.

My first trip into the refugee region of Gambela, Ethiopia with Peter Bur was in October 2014. We worked hard just to get to Gambela, a community of 50,000 that exploded to 500,000 when the Nuer refugees crossed the border between their two countries. Since 2014, Peter and his WELS teaching companions have made annual trips into Gambela. We are training fifteen men there. The progress has been slow and, with COVID, interrupted. The broader witness of the WELS and the Nuer people desperately need this partnership created to train men like Lam for service.

Peter has high hopes for his nephew. Some might say that Peter is putting a lot of pressure on his nephew. But Peter insists, "Lam is a good follower of Jesus and a good listener. He is not bitter or violent in spite of his experience. Lam will be a good pastor."

Here is a bit more about Peter's vision for his people. He wants to reach the Nuer refugees now while they are refugees. Now is the time to reach them and teach them. This vision has traction. Right now, we have 16 churches in the Gambela region with over 5,000 members. When God blesses the Nuer with a way back home, they will go there with a confessional church made strong by and confirmed in their Lutheran faith through the ministry of their Bible Institute. May God smile upon this endeavor and keep Lam in his tender care. †

*Professor E. Allen Sorum is the director of the Pastoral Studies Institute.*

The first partnership between the PSI, the LCE, and the GSSC that sought to train Lam ran into obstacles. Our first partnership was separated by too many miles to accomplish its goal. Our partnership has since been expanded by our WELS missionary team in Central Africa, the One Africa Team (OAT). OAT provided a guiding hand and a stronger relationship, a stronger glue, to keep this dream of training Lam alive.

OAT team member Missionary Mark Panning was instrumental in creating a broader and closer partnership to prepare Lam for his ministry as a Lutheran pastor and educator. Missionary Panning explains his role in this project:

*I meet with Rev. Kebede once per week by Skype. We study God's Word and we pray. Then we talk about how the various agencies of WELS can work together with the LCE to share God's Word to the nations. We discuss how WELS can send visiting professors to assist the LCE in training future called workers, how we can provide materials, and how we can provide the financial resources that will make this training possible. COVID travel restrictions and ongoing civil unrest in Ethiopia have made it difficult for WELS missionaries and visiting professors to travel to Ethiopia. We are looking into alternate methods, such as online teaching.*

*Pastor Kebede and the LCE have always been eager to share in this work of training Lam and other Nuer brothers. From a human perspective, outreach to the Sudanese will probably not provide any material or earthly benefit to the LCE. Yet they are eager to do it because they want to be a part of Christ's Great Commission. They want to make disciples of all nations. Like Jesus himself, they have a burning desire to seek and to find all those who are lost.*

The OAT, when COVID restrictions lift, will work with the PSI and the GSSC to develop a seminary training program for the Nuer. OAT is already providing tremendous support and encouragement to another CELC/WELS partner in Africa, Rev. Mark Anariko Onunda. Rev. Onunda is delivering seminary training to the Nuer refugee community in Kakuma, Kenya. Again, such a partnership involving the PSI, the GSSC, and the Nuer is blessed to have the local strength and oversight of our missionary team that has served the Lutheran Church of Central Africa for almost 75 years. The OAT team leader, Missionary Howard Mohlke, expresses his commitment to our partnership when he says, "The One Africa Team feels blessed to be in a position to help facilitate such partnerships and ministry."





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