

MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY (STM)

STM HANDBOOK

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY
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GROW_{IN}
GRACE

PARTNERING WITH PASTORS

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GROW IN GRACE

Since the year 2010, “Grow in Grace” is the name of the people who channel the resources of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) to serve the 1,300+ pastors of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and the pastors of sister church bodies around the world. Grow in Grace partners with pastors for spiritual and professional growth.

Grow in Grace has a director, an executive assistant, two WLS faculty advisors, and a marketing and events coordinator who serve pastors in four main ways:

1. By coordinating a formal continuing education program (STM program)
2. By providing informal continuing education resources and opportunities
3. By overseeing a 3-year mentoring program for newly-assigned graduates of WLS (Pastor Partners)
4. By planning and hosting annual celebration of ministry retreats for pastors who have served for 3, 10, 25, and 35 years.

When mentor-leaders, mentors, reviewers, writers, presenters, workshop leaders, worship leaders, and other support staff are counted, the number of people who serve as a part of the Grow in Grace team in these four areas comes to well over 100.

Grow in Grace has been called the continuing education arm of WLS or its institute of continuing education. Those terms might be misleading. Grow in Grace is not a separate entity from WLS, but a part of it.

WLS—with its governing board, its donors and supporters, its faculty and staff, its adjunct STM instructors, its rich resources, and its Grow in Grace team—seeks to equip, support, and show love to pastors, to the praise of our God and Father, through Jesus Christ, his Son, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

This handbook provides detailed information about #1 above: The STM program of WLS.

Send any inquiries about Grow in Grace or the contents of this handbook to growinggrace@wisluthsem.org.

PURPOSE OF THE STM HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to help pastors who are taking Master of Sacred Theology (STM) courses through WLS to understand how the degree program works and to make an informed decision about whether to pursue the degree.

Since the inception of Summer Quarter courses at WLS in the 1970s, the pastors of the WELS and other confessional Lutheran church bodies have been welcome to take for-credit courses at WLS without committing to earning the STM degree. The primary purposes of those courses are for pastors to grow and be encouraged in their faith and to grow in pastoral heart and skill for gospel ministry in their current place of service. The STM program is not primarily about earning a degree but about growth in the gospel and in gospel ministry. While the STM degree may prepare pastors for earning a doctoral degree in the future, the main purposes of the program are pastoral, not academic.

The STM program consists of more than 100 courses taught by the faculty of WLS and faculty-approved adjunct instructors. Each course offered in the STM program provides an opportunity for growth, and many pastors have taken the available courses that have interested them. However, those courses have been designed to achieve the educational goals of the whole program and the specific focus area into which they fit. One purpose of this handbook is to promote the STM program by making those goals and courses clear.

PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE STM DEGREE PROGRAM

Theological training at WLS is broad in scope, preparing men to serve in a variety of ministry settings, especially pastoral ministry in congregations.

The purpose of the STM degree is to help pastors to build on the training they have received in the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program at WLS and in ministry experience. The STM program helps pastors develop God-given gifts in a specific area of theological study with a clear application to advancing the cause of the gospel in their current callings and ministry context. The degree program also equips pastors to use available resources effectively and conduct theological research for the benefit of the church.

Because the Lord has given various gifts to all people, including pastors, and because pastors are called to develop and employ their gifts in their unique place of service, the STM program is designed to provide a focused yet flexible course of study for a variety of pastors.

The singular purpose of WLS is to equip pastors for the WELS or for churches and cultural groups within its confessional fellowship. WLS accomplishes that purpose, in part, through Grow in Grace, the continuing education department, which partners with pastors in their ministry-long pursuit of spiritual, theological, and professional growth.

While the WLS degrees aimed at entrance into the public ministry (MDiv, Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv), or Bachelor of Theology (BTh)) are intentionally broad in scope, the STM is meant to build on that foundation and to provide an active pastor with the opportunity to pursue a more focused, in-depth course of study.

The STM program has three main goals:

1. To encourage and equip confessional Lutheran pastors for a lifetime of spiritual and professional growth through formal and informal continuing education.
2. To preserve and deepen the six attitudes/commitments cultivated in the MDiv program:
 - Confessional in stance
 - Evangelical in approach
 - Mission-minded in spirit
 - Culturally sensitive
 - Appropriately flexible
 - Zealous both to nurture and to equip the saints
3. To partner with pastors for growth in nine areas of theology and ministry, with each pastor focusing on one of them.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE PROGRAM

Grow in Grace encourages pastors to grow through informal continuing education from the time they graduate until the time they retire and beyond. Grow in Grace also encourages and invites pastors to take formal continuing education classes whenever they are able. For those who are interested in the degree program, the best time for pastors to commit to earning the STM degree is between 3 and 20 years after they graduate.

The STM degree is designed specifically for pastors serving in WELS or in sister churches of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC), and who hold an MDiv, BDiv, or BTh degree.

Every year STM credits can be earned in face-to-face courses, in online courses, and in study tours. On occasion, church workers (e.g., teachers and staff ministers) and lay leaders who do not hold an MDiv, BDiv, or BTh have asked to participate in an STM course. On a case-by-case basis, such requests may be honored provided there is room in the course and with the understanding that the credits earned will not count towards a WLS STM degree and might not be recognized by other institutions of higher learning.

Such a request should be sent to the director of Grow in Grace at growinggrace@wisluthsem.org.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The STM program is a 24-credit program with the following requirements:

- All STM students must take two courses: Confessional Lutheran Hermeneutics in the Contemporary Context (2.0 credits); and Pastoral Theological Research (1.0 credit)
- All students must earn at least 12 credits in one of the nine focus areas. Included among those 12 credits must be the focus area core courses.
- Up to six of the focus area credits may be earned in directed study, a thesis, or a combination of the two.
- No more than 12 of the 24 credits may be earned in online courses.
- Credits earned in the program remain active (valid) for 12 years.
- One of the following requirements must be met to complete the program
 - A research and writing project/thesis (earns 1 credit for every 45 hours of work)
 - A portfolio project (does not earn credits)
 - A review examination (does not earn credits)

The nine focus areas:

- Biblical Theology: Old Testament (OT)
- Biblical Theology: New Testament (NT)
- Church History (CH)
- Education (ED)
- Missiology & Evangelism (ME)
- Pastoral Care (PC)
- Pastoral Leadership (PL)
- Preaching & Worship (PW)
- Systematic Theology (ST)

The faculty of WLS set, review, and revise the focus area goals and courses. Those focus area goals and courses appear in this handbook below. Between revisions of the STM Handbook, the most current information about the goals and courses of each focus area can be found at

<https://www.wisluthsem.org/grow-in-grace/stm-handbook-for-pastors/>.

WLS seeks to offer enough formal continuing education courses so that a pastor intent on earning his STM degree in the focus area of his choice could conceivably do so in 5 to 7 years.

EARNING STM CREDITS

There are a variety of ways to earn credits in the STM program:

- **Face-to-face on-campus courses:** On-campus courses include two weeks of Winterim classes in January and two weeks of Summer Quarter courses in June of even-numbered years. Face-to-face courses are the preferred way to earn credits, especially courses on campus. On-campus courses come with the following blessings: a beautiful campus setting, daily chapel, library resources, fellowship and recreational activities, and time away from regular life and ministry. In an effort to make Winterim and Summer Quarter courses affordable and enjoyable, WLS offers the following, room and lodging, lodging and meal package: one week in the dorm plus 14 meals in the cafeteria (three meals every weekday but no evening meal on Friday) for a cost of \$250/week.
- **Face-to-face off-campus courses:** Satellite continuing education events take place in the districts of WELS in odd-numbered years throughout the year. Participants at satellite events may audit courses. Those taking satellite courses for credit may have additional pre-course work and will have additional post-course learning activities.
- **Online Courses:** For those who live farther away, online courses are offered during Spring Online (beginning at the end of January), Summer Online (beginning in mid-June), and Fall Online (beginning in mid-September). These courses run for 8, 10, or 12 weeks, depending on the credit value. Participants can expect four to eight hours of work per week. The balance between synchronous and asynchronous activities may vary from course to course.
- **Trips:** With no additional cost for the credits, pastors may earn credits on WLS-sponsored trips. See focus area goals and courses for details. Participants will be asked to complete some pre-trip and post-trip learning activities.
- **Directed Study:** Under the supervision of an advisor, the pastor works on a practical ministry project in his place of service. Each credit earned requires 45 hours of active learning. Up to 6 credits may be earned. Approval of the project must be received in advance using the Directed Study Proposal Form. Note: the total number of directed study credits and thesis credits cannot exceed six. Note: if a student wants to work on directed study at the seminary when WLS classes are in session, the lodging and meal package mentioned above is an option.
- **Research and Writing Project/Thesis:** Under the supervision of an advisor, the pastor does theological research and writes a thesis. Each credit earned requires 45 hours of active learning. Up to six credits may be earned. The student must submit the Thesis Proposal form in advance. Note: the total number of directed study credits and thesis credits cannot exceed 6. Note: if a student wants to do thesis work at the seminary when WLS classes are in session, the lodging and meal package mentioned above is an option.

- **Other institutions:** A pastor may earn up to 4 credits from other institutions of higher learning with consultation and approval from his supervisor prior to taking each course.

In all of these “courses,” the syllabus will include detailed information about the goals, requirements, procedures, deadlines, grading, and grade weighting.

Generally, final assignments are due one month after the last day of class. One three-month extension may be requested by the student and approved by the instructor. At the end of that three-month extension (four months after the last day of class) credit for the course can no longer be earned.

Because the STM program is a master’s-level program building on the MDiv degree, a final course grade lower than B- will result in the course not being included in the student transcript.

Students are able to access their transcripts in the Student Information System and may request a copy of their transcript at any time. In January of 2023, the STM program shifted from a 32-credit (at 30 hours/credit) to a 24-credit (at 45 hours/credit) system. This means that for pastors who earned credits before 2023 determining the number of credits still needed to complete the program requires some careful calculations. Students may request those calculations at growingrace@wisluthsem.org.

FOCUS AREAS

The nine focus areas of the STM courses build on the theological training received in the MDiv program of WLS. Below you will see detailed information about each focus area. The introduction section is a one-paragraph description of the focus area and how it builds on the MDiv degree. The goals section includes specific knowledge goals, skills goals, and attitude/values goals. The courses section indicates core courses that must be taken by all who are pursuing their STM degree in this focus area and repeating elective courses. The “ways to earn credits” section is a prioritized list of learning opportunities for that focus area.

WLS tries to offer each core course in each focus area at least once every two years and each repeating elective course in each focus area at least once every three or four years.

These focus area descriptions, goals, and courses have been developed by the faculty of WLS in consultation with the Grow in Grace team. They have been shaped by the history of the program, by the continuing education of the instructors, and by the input of pastors who have taken or want to take STM courses. That input is received in various ways, including course and program evaluation forms. You may provide your input any time at growingrace@wisluthsem.org.

The faculty reviews and revises the STM program on an annual basis. What follows are the 2023 updates to the STM Handbook. Between revisions of the handbook, the most current information about the goals and courses of each focus area can be found at <https://www.wisluthsem.org/grow-in-grace/stm-handbook-for-pastors/>.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY: OLD TESTAMENT

Introduction to the Old Testament Focus Area STM Degree

The foundation of the STM degree with a focus in OT consists of courses in the exegesis of biblical books representing three literary categories: narrative/historical prose, prophetic literature, and poetry. Students increase their appreciation for the diversity of OT literature and develop an interpretive approach appropriate to each form, while integrating these diverse texts into a coherent, Christotelic theology of the OT that will inform their preaching and teaching. The program acquaints students with the history of biblical interpretation and with resources for the serious study of the OT, and it builds a student's ability to read (rather than simply decode) simple, connected prose in biblical Hebrew.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

By the end of this program the student will have done the following:

The text as Hebrew Bible

Hebrew Language

- Demonstrated an ability to read orally and translate, at sight, prose selected at random from Genesis to 2 Kings, as well as selections of simple poetry.
- Named specific insights from linguistics, and from the study of Hebrew as it developed over the biblical period, that bear significantly on the exegesis of OT text.

OT text and criticism

- Traced what is known about the history of the text from the moment of inspiration to the Masoretic Text as embodied in BHS (4th ed.).
- Evaluated critically the apparatus in BHS (4th ed.) with respect to a segment of text.

The text as ancient Israelite literature

Archaeology and geography

- Located significant events of the OT geographically.
- Distinguished between approaches to the relationship between archaeology and biblical studies.

Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) context

- Located the text of the OT in its ANE historical, literary, and cultural context.
- Identified what is unique about Israel and Israel's God.

Genre

- Distinguished features of the major genres found in the OT (narrative, law, prophecy, psalm, wisdom).
- Explained the significance of genre for OT preachers and expositors.

The text as sacred Scripture

History of interpretation

- Charted the ways in which a book of the OT has been read throughout history, with attention to “pre-critical,” historical-critical, and post-historical-critical approaches.
- Identified objectionable features of these readings where applicable.

Christocentricity

- Clearly identified what promotes Christ with respect to every book of the OT under study.

Courses

Hebrew and Northwest Semitic Languages sub-area—at least 2 credits.

Qualifying courses:

- OT5166 Hebrew Institute [2 credits]
- OT5078 Biblical Hebrew as Communication [1 credit]
- OT5000 Biblical Aramaic [1 credit]
- OT5077 Linguistics for Exegetes [2 credits]

Exegetical sub-area—at least 4 credits, among which must be represented:

Historical/narrative area: one exegesis course on a book (or portion thereof) in Hebrew from Genesis–2 Kings; or 1–2 Chronicles, Jonah, Ruth, Esther, or Daniel

Prophets area: one exegesis course on one or more of the following books (or portion thereof) in Hebrew: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Poetry area: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Lamentations, Song of Songs, Qoheleth

Qualifying courses:

- OT5008 OT Readings: The Plague Narratives (Exodus 5–11) [1.5 credits]
- OT5108 Red Sea Crossing and Wilderness Wandering: Exodus 14–18 [1.5 credits]
- OT5181 Elijah: The Chariots and the Horsemen of Israel [1 credit]
- OT5281 Elisha: The Chariots and the Horsemen of Israel [1 credit]
- OT5038 Exegesis of Ecclesiastes
- OT5030 Exegesis of Job [2 credits]
- OT5057 The Message of Haggai– Then and Now [1 credit]
- OT5055 The Message of Habakkuk – Then and Now [1 credit]
- OT5049 The Message of Joel– Then and Now [1.5 credits]
- OT5132 The Psalms: Knowing Them Like the Back of My Hand [1 credit]
- OT5039 Exegesis of Song of Songs [1.5 credits]
- OT5044 Exegesis of Jeremiah [2 credits]
- OT5149 The Book of Joel – God’s Word for a Time of Crisis [1.5 credits]

Issues in introduction, interpretation, and application sub-area—at least one course recommended:

Qualifying courses:

- OT5068 Archaeological Dig Khirbet 'Auja el-Foqa [2 credits]
- OT5091 Biblical Geography [1.5 credits]
- OT5067 Jerusalem Through the Ages [1 credit]
- OT5064 The Canon Question [1.5 credits]
- OT5079 The Assyrian Period [1 credit]
- OT5093 The Babylonian Period [1 credit]
- OT5279 The Persian Period [1 credit]
- WR5021 Preaching Christ from the Old Testament [1 credit]
- OT5085 "Threads": Connecting the Old and New Testaments [1 credit]

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even-numbered years
2. Online courses (Spring, Summer, Fall)
3. Thesis
4. Winterim courses in January
5. Satellite courses in odd-numbered years
6. Study Tour
7. Guided research

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY: NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction to the New Testament Focus Area STM Degree

Welcome to the New Testament Focus Area of WLS's STM degree. There are many different ways to grow as we seek to serve our Lord. By choosing to focus in the New Testament, you will explore in even greater depth the life of our Savior and the communication of his victory to the world. Consider this focus area, more than anything else, as an opportunity to engage in coordinated in-depth contact with the Spirit's power in the presence of brothers, contact that seeks to bring you, both personally and as a shepherd, continued growth in faith and love.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

Any pastoral study of Scripture has as its ultimate goal—achievable only by God's grace and through his power—a personal growth in faith which is tied to immersion in God's love and absorption of the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This personal growth in faith, love, and knowledge leads naturally to energetic application of God's truth in the various circles of one's life: family, acquaintances, and congregation. It is our prayer that those pursuing an STM degree in the area of New Testament will find their in-depth study of God's word further equipping them for life and godliness.

On this path toward spiritual growth and growth in service, we will study, at various degrees of depth, a breadth of New Testament texts. This study will engage energetically with the original language of the New Testament: Greek. As STM students may bring various levels of Greek proficiency to this effort, course methodology will engage students where they are at, intending to increase skills as courses progress. All aspects of the language, from vocabulary to discourse level, will feature prominently in efforts to understand what the Spirit is saying. As context even beyond the text is relevant, STM students will have opportunity to grow in their understanding of geographical and historical features of the New Testament era.

Linguistic and contextual tools, while critical, are only a means to an end. As participants more precisely understand truths the Spirit is seeking to communicate, they are equipped with power and direction for engaging in personal spiritual battle and for helping others do the same. A careful handling of law and gospel is central. The Old Adam/New Man struggle characterizes our daily existence. The optimistic encouragements to sanctification shape our own approach to living a life that honors the Lord. As the Spirit strengthens and sharpens those spiritual skills among our STM brothers, focus will also fall on equipping shepherds to equip their fellow saints. Participants will share current challenges in ministry, working together to apply the Spirit's insights to our own day. Applications can be made to preaching, teaching, counseling, and witnessing. It is our prayer that pastors will see their study as bringing even greater clarity and focus to their planning for future ministry.

As the Spirit strengthens and sharpens both personal and shepherding spiritual skills, inner attitudes and faith perspective are core. In fact, divine shaping of attitude drives growth in practical use of God's truth. It is our prayer that through their study, STM students will foster a sense of awe, and humility, and appreciation, and dedication, and hope, and optimism, and commitment, and rededication to the blessed task of being gospel ministers. Such blessing comes only through the Means of Grace. How stunning, that in our engagement with words to be studied, one is in fact touching the very power of God for salvation—miraculous power for life and for godliness.

Courses

Required courses (these courses must be a part of every “New Testament focus” STM program)

- NT5031 Exegetical/Isagogical Study of 1 Peter [1 credit]
- One of the following three courses:
 - OT5091 Biblical Geography [1 credit]
 - Study tour to Turkey/Greece/Italy [3 credits]
 - Study tour to Israel/Jordan) [3 credits]

Courses considering individual New Testament books (at least 4 credits from this category must be part of every “New Testament focus” STM program)

- ME5028 Missiology in Acts [1 credit]
- NT5013 The Preacher Studies Romans 9–16 [1 credit]
- NT5020 Exegetical/Isagogical Study of Philippians [1 credit]
- NT5021 Exegetical/Isagogical Study of Colossians [1 credit]
- NT5028 Isagogical/Exegetical Study of Hebrews [1 credit]
- NT5030 Exegetical/Isagogical Study of James [1 credit]
- NT5036 Revelation: An Exegetical and Doctrinal Study [1 credit]

Broader New Testament topics

- NT5083 Greek Review Using Upcoming Pericope Texts [1 credit]
- OT5091 Biblical Geography [1 credit]
- NT5060 Confessional Lutheran Hermeneutics in the Contemporary Context [2 credits]
- NT5081 Preaching and the Parables [1 credit]
- NT5061 Maintaining a Lutheran Identity in a Postmodern World [1 credit]
- OT5077 Linguistics for Exegetes [2 credits]
- OT5085 “Threads”: Connecting the Old and New Testaments [1 credit]
- Study tour to Turkey/Greece/Italy [3 credits]
- Study tour to Israel/Jordan [3 credits]

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even-numbered years
2. Satellite courses in odd-numbered years
3. Winterim courses in January
4. Study Tour
5. Online courses (Spring, Summer, Fall)
6. Thesis
7. Guided research

CHURCH HISTORY

Introduction to the Church History Focus Area STM Degree

The foundation of the STM degree with a focus in CH consists of courses that examine the development of Christian thought across three basic areas of history: the patristics and early medieval, middle and late medieval, and the enlightenment to the present. Students will develop their understanding and appreciation for Christian church history. They will develop and nurture an appreciation for the gracious care God displays for his truth and Church from the time of Christ the Redeemer until Christ returns as Judge. The program acquaints students with the study of Christian church history and with resources for the serious investigation, evaluation, confession, and transmission of Christian doctrine.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

By the end of this program the student will have done the following:

Christian Church History as a historical record:

- Explained the main theological trends and developments in the Christian church across the three eras of history the program examines.
- Identified key actors in the theological and Christological debates of the first millennium.
- Traced the development of the New Testament Canon.
- Defined the key differences between the expressions of Christianity in the West, East, and north Africa.
- Described the political makeup of medieval Europe in the 15th–17th centuries.
- Explained the result of the Reformation on European politics.
- Traced the drift toward subjectivism in the centuries following the Reformation.
- Identified the developments in Roman Catholicism across the three eras of history.
- Outlined the developments in global Christianity across the three eras of history.
- Demonstrated how God has continued to raise up teachers of biblical truth in every age in opposition to the manifold attacks of Satan on Christianity.

Christian Church History as a development of Christian Doctrine:

- Evaluated the orthodox response to Gnosticism, Marcionism, Montanism, Sabellianism, Samosateneism, and Roman paganism.
- Evaluated the positions of key actors in the theological and Christological debates of the first millennium.
- Appraised the theology of each of the Lutheran confessions.
- Evaluated the various theologies to which the Lutheran confessions are a reaction.

- Critiqued the Roman Catholic Response to reformation in Europe.
- Explain the drift toward subjectivism in the centuries following the Reformation.
- Evaluated the confessional Lutheran response to Pietism, Rationalism, Liberalism, and Neo-orthodoxy.
- Outlined various hermeneutical approaches to Scripture and theology with an eye to the importance of the historical-grammatical approach.
- Described the appeal of Pentecostalism and American Evangelicalism.
- Analyzed various approaches to truth in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Christian Church History as truths to confess and teach:

- Demonstrated the conviction that confessional Lutheranism is “Christianity done the right way.”
- Formulated in layman’s terms why theological events and concepts in the history of Christianity are important for every Lutheran to know.
- Formulated artifacts that demonstrate the importance and relevance of confessional Lutheranism for our contemporary world.
- Developed learning activities for congregation members to engage essential theological events and concepts from Christian church history.
- Investigated strategies for reaching the lost in a society dominated by modern and postmodern thought.

Courses

1. Required Courses—all three are requisites for the CH STM Degree.

- CH5056 Confessing the Ineffable: Who is God? (Patristics and Early Medieval survey) [2 credits]
- CH5156 Confessing Justification by Faith Alone (Middle and Late Medieval survey) [2 credits]
- CH5256 Confessing the Power and Primacy of the Word (Enlightenment to Modern survey) [1.5 credits]

2. Church History sub-area—at least 4 credits in one of these areas:

Patristics and Early Medieval area: any course examining primary source material, people, and events from the Intertestamental Period through the Fourth Crusade.

Qualifying courses:

- CH5004 Readings from the Ante-Nicene Fathers [2 credits]
- CH5006 From Nicaea to Chalcedon [2 credits]
- CH5007 Post-Chalcedonian Christology [2 credits]
- CH5088 Themes and Theologians of Eastern Orthodoxy [2 credits]

Middle and Late Medieval area: any course examining primary source material, people, and events from the rise of Scholasticism through the Thirty Years War.

Qualifying courses:

- CH5039 Post-Reformation Lutheranism [2 credits]
- CH5037 Challenges Faced by the Post-Reformation Lutheran Church [1 credit]
- CH5038 The Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy [1 credit]
- CH5058 Chinese Church History [1.5 credits]
- CH5024 1520: The Reformation Blossoms [1.5 credits]
- Lutheran Heritage Tour

Enlightenment to Modern area: any course examining primary source material, people, and events from the middle of the seventeenth century to the present.

Qualifying courses:

- CH5066 America's Homegrown Religions [2 credits]
- CH5036 The Origins and Continuing Impact of Pietism [2 credits]
- CH5060 Vatican II and Modern Catholicism [2 credits]
- CH5035 The Radical Reformation [1.5 credits]
- CH5363 History of Lutheranism in America: 1940-Present [1 credit]
- CH5033 Cultism in America [1 credit]

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even-numbered years
2. Online courses (Spring, Summer, Fall)
3. Thesis
4. Winterim courses in January
5. Satellite courses in odd-numbered years
6. Study Tour
7. Guided research

EDUCATION

Introduction to the Education Focus Area STM Degree

In short, the ED STM program builds upon the MDiv program by emphasizing Christian education in the home and by fostering the pastor-teacher's continued professional growth in his current calling.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

- The student will give clear evidence he grasps the practical implications that growth in the gospel is the key element to any educational effort for Christians from birth to old age.
- The student will grow in his capacity to employ different methodologies to address different learning styles.
- The student will give clear evidence that he understands the vital importance of strengthening Christian homes so that Christian educational efforts at church/school are not divorced from the experiences those in his care have in their homes.
- The student will participate in a practicum, offering opportunity to employ and develop acquired insights and strategies.
- The student will give evidence of planning concrete ways to put to work the educational insights he has gained with those he has been called to serve.
- The student will give evidence of a commitment to continued growth as a teacher, recognizing that constant learning is at the heart of good teaching.
- The student will be equipped to offer a coordinated approach to Christian education.

Courses

Required courses:

- Adult Education Theory (examples would be Principles and Practices of Adult Bible Study, Part 1 and Part 2) [2.0 credits]
- Adult Education Practices (examples would be Principles and Practices of Adult Bible Study, Part 1 and Part 2) [2.0 credits]
- Catechism Theory and Practice [2.0 credits]
- ED5066 Adult Education as Communication [2.0 credits]

Elective courses:

- ED5040 Leading Teens and Young Adults into Spiritual Maturity [1 credit]
- ED5022 Teach Them to Your Children: Helping Parents Fulfill Their Spiritual Responsibility to Children [1 credit]
- ED5039 Educational Technology for the Catechism Classroom [1 credit]
- ED5090 Technology in the Parish [1 credit]
- ED5085 Luther and Education [1 credit]
- ED5084 Technology in Teaching [1 credit]

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even-numbered years
2. Online courses (Spring, Summer, Fall)
3. Thesis
4. Winterim courses in January
5. Satellite courses in odd-numbered years
6. Guided research

MISSIOLOGY & EVANGELISM

Introduction to the Missiology and Evangelism Focus Area STM Degree

The STM degree with a focus in ME is intended to build on the related courses the student took during his MDiv studies as well as his experience in the field. Courses in this focus area offer a mix of theory and practice: they allow the student to dig deeper into concepts he was briefly exposed to at MLC and WLS, such as apologetics; cultural analysis; worldviews; cross-cultural communication; community research; and evangelism planning, programming, and training. Courses are designed to provide immediate, practical impact for the student's ministry.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

By the end of this program, the student will have done the following:

- Located his evangelistic efforts—and those of his members or students—within the mission of God.
- Composed a plan for equipping his people for their place in that mission.
- Analyzed his target community and/or culture and composed a plan to effectively proclaim the gospel there.
- Grown in confidence as an evangelist, trusting that Jesus the prophet still arranges opportunities for him to evangelize and speaks through him when he does.
- Assessed different styles and methods of evangelism, with an eye toward those that best fit his personality and ministry as well as those of his people.
- Studied the missionary methods of Jesus and the apostles and applied them to his own ministry.
- Broadened his understanding of the concepts and vocabulary of missiology and evangelism.
- Participated in and evaluated a mission or evangelism experience.

Courses

Required courses:

- ME5002 Equipping Evangelists [1 credits]
- ME5028 Missiology in the Book of Acts [1 credit]

Elective courses:

- ME5003 Missio Dei [1 credit]
- ME5043 Developing a Mission Philosophy of Ministry: Balancing Community Involvement and Congregational Outreach [1 credit]
- ME5009 Revelation as a Pastoral Response to Social Justice Theory [1 credit]
- ME5050 Understanding the Worldview of Islam to Facilitate Your Witness [1 credit]
- ME5001 Bible Storying [1 credit]
- ME5004 Grafted to Grafting [1 credit]

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even-numbered years
2. Satellite courses in odd-numbered years
3. Winterim courses in January
4. Online courses (Spring, Summer, Fall)
5. Guided research
6. Other institutes
7. Thesis

PASTORAL CARE

Introduction to the Pastoral Care Focus Area STM Degree

The foundation of the STM degree with a focus in PC consists of courses in two areas: pastoral care in daily life and pastoral counsel in troubled times. Students increase their appreciation for the privilege of serving in the pastoral ministry, their understanding of the souls entrusted to their care, their ability to fulfill the duties of their ministry, and their gratitude for the goodness and mercy of the Good Shepherd. The program acquaints students with the study and with resources for serious investigation, evaluation, and encouragement in the care of souls.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

By the end of this program the student will have done the following:

- Treasured the Spirit's formation of a pastor's heart and work through regular use of the means of grace, prayer flowing from meditation on the Word of God, and endurance of spiritual attack.
- Applied Scripture with clarity and compassion to the struggles and for the strengthening of individuals, marriages, families, churches, and relationships.
- Articulated aims, emphases, and strengths of Lutheran pastoral care and counseling.
- Assessed spiritual issues and collaborative needs in a broad range of specific challenges (e.g., addictions, trauma, end of life decisions).
- Discussed the care of souls – for both pastor and people – across a lifespan of daily blessings, burdens, changes, fears, and sorrows.
- Examined resources and opportunities to encourage and equip the body of Christ in carrying out their vocations to the glory of God and in service to others.
- Practiced skills and scriptural application in pastoral counseling.

Courses

1. Required Courses – Both are requisites for the PC STM Degree

- PC5001 Pastoral Care in Daily Life [1.5 credits]
- PC5002 Pastoral Counsel in Times of Trouble [1.5 credits]

2. Sub-Area Courses – A minimum of four credits must be earned in each sub-area

Sub-Area 1: Pastoral Care in Daily Life (minimum of 4 credits needed)

Qualifying courses:

- ED5040 Leading Teens and Young Adults to Spiritual Maturity: Building a Bridge from Childhood to Adulthood [1.5 credits]
- PC5039 A Pastor Counsels His Members Through Marriage, Divorce, or Remarriage [2 credits]
- PL5080 Teaching Christian Leadership in Congregations, Classrooms, & Christian Homes [1 credit]
- ED5022 Teach Them to Your Children: Helping Parents Fulfill Their Spiritual Responsibility to Children [1 credit]
- OT5132 The Psalms: Knowing Them Like the Back of My Hand [1 credit]
- PL5027 The Theology and Practice of Stewardship [1 credit]
- ST5004 The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel [2 credits]
- ST5039 The Priesthood of All Believers: Our Calling and Our Challenge [1 credit]

Sub-Area 2: Pastoral Counsel in Times of Trouble (minimum of 4 credits needed)

Qualifying courses:

- PT7049 Caring for All God's Children: Addressing Abuse in the Christian Home [1.5 credits]
- ST5090 Christian Ethics [1.5 credits]
- PC9020 Helping Christians Obtain Treatment for Mental Illness [2 credits]
- PC5070 Medical Decisions and Dilemmas in End-of-Life Care [1.5 credits]
- PC5010 Mental Health Disorders: Support for Those who Suffer [1.5 credits]
- PC5022 Ministering to Those Suffering from Addictions [1 credit]
- PT7028 The Pastor and Bioethics [1.5 credits]
- PC5014 Turning Victims into Survivors: Counsel and Care for the Abused (Part 1) [1 credit]
- PC5015 Turning Victims into Survivors: Counsel and Care for the Abused (Part 2) [1 credit]
- MC5009 Revelation as a Pastoral Response to Social Justice Theory [1 credit]
- PL5002 Revelation: Spiritual Leadership in the Face of Challenge [1 credit]

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even-numbered years
2. Online courses (Spring, Summer, Fall)
3. Satellite courses in odd-numbered years
4. Thesis
5. Winterim courses in January
6. Guided research

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Introduction to the Pastoral Leadership Focus Area STM Degree

The STM degree with a focus in PL is intended to build on the student's MDiv exposure to the pastoral leadership course and discussions about spiritual leadership in the student's seminary career. This focus will also take advantage of the student's own experience in the field. Courses in this focus offer a mix of theory and practice.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

By the end of this program, the student will have done the following:

- Identified his own unique style of leadership that time, experience, and God have inculcated within him.
- Acquainted himself with the history of leadership paradigms and how these paradigms are still represented in the leadership literature and market today.
- Assessed the Transformational Model of Leadership as a social-scientific basis for thinking about what leadership looks like and is comprised of as it is carried out in the student's life.
- Developed a sound, Lutheran, authentic hermeneutical approach to using leaders in the Bible and their stories as the basis for talking about leadership and teaching leadership in a congregational setting.
- Composed a plan for equipping his people for spiritual leadership in their various vocations.
- Developed a core portfolio of Bible stories and Bible characters that present key leadership concepts appropriate for a congregational setting.
- Thought through the relationship of "business models" of leadership and the student's own approach to talking about leadership.
- Broadened his understanding of the concepts and vocabulary of the social-scientific study of leadership.
- Led, participated in, and evaluated a spiritual leadership training conference.

Courses

Required courses:

- PL5002 Revelation: Spiritual Leadership in the Face of Challenge [1 credit]
- PL5001 Using Bible Stories to Teach Leadership in a Congregational Setting [1 credit]

Elective courses:

- PL5004 Shared Leadership in a Multi-Cultural Setting [1 credit]
- PL5005 Developing a Mission-Minded Philosophy of Ministry [1 credit]
- PL5083 The Leadership of the Apostle Paul [1 credit]
- PL5080 Teaching Spiritual Leadership in Congregations, Classrooms, and Christian Homes [1 credit]

- PL5086 Congregational Strategic Planning [1 credit]
- PL5087 Congregational Organization and Management [1 credit]
- PL5027 The Theology and Practice of Stewardship [1 credit]

Note: Additional credits can be earned in any course offered by taking on additional assignments as negotiated with the instructor.

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even-numbered years
2. Satellite courses in odd-numbered years
3. Winterim courses in January
4. Online courses (Spring, Summer, Fall)
5. Guided research
6. Other institutions
7. Thesis

PREACHING & WORSHIP

Introduction to the Preaching and Worship Focus Area STM Degree

The STM degree with a focus in PW builds on MDiv courses in homiletics and worship. The courses in this focus area combine theory (including history) and practice. As students grow in their understanding of preaching and worship, class projects provide the opportunity to put their learning into practice in parish settings. Students may choose either a preaching emphasis or a worship emphasis; required courses will be determined based on this choice.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

By the end of this program the student will have done the following:

- Demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the history of worship among Lutherans and its impact on the future of worship.
- Displayed skill in blending strong worship resources from the past and the present with a clear sensitivity to the proclamation of the gospel.
- Demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the ebb and flow of the liturgical year and give evidence of how to capture that ebb and flow in both worship and preaching.
- Articulated a rationale for striving to improve preaching that honors both the efficacy of the Scriptures and the desire to grow as a faithful steward of God's gifts.
- Demonstrated a familiarity with the history of preaching and its impact on current gospel proclamation in the setting of Lutheran worship.
- Displayed the skill to use several sermonic forms and structures in ways that communicate clearly and proclaim the gospel faithfully.
- Displayed the skill to proclaim law and gospel with textual freshness and general gospel predominance in ways that clearly honor each text's context and unique place in salvation history.
- Given evidence of his understanding that growing in the science/art of presiding and preaching at worship is a ministry-long challenge.
- Given evidence of planning concrete ways to deepen the understanding of worship and preaching among those he has been called to serve.

Courses

Required courses:

- PW5001 Preaching the Word: Building on a Strong Foundation
- WR5009 Survey of Sermon Structures [1 credit]
- PW5051 The Western Rite: Its History and Use in Our Churches
- PW5042 Worship and Preaching that Celebrates the Liturgical Year

Elective courses:

- PW5021 Preaching Christ from the Old Testament [1 credit]
- WR5005 Freshness and Variety in Proclaiming Law and Gospel
- WR5070 Survey of the History of Preaching

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even- numbered years
2. Satellite courses in odd- numbered years
3. Guided Research (e.g., ministry project annotated bibliography, scholarly essay)
4. Online courses (Summer, Fall, Spring)
5. Thesis

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Introduction to the Systematic Theology Focus Area STM Degree

The foundation of the STM degree with a focus in ST consists of courses that examine the teachings of sacred Scripture on the basis of the passages in which they are revealed. Attention is also given to the habitus practicus and historical development of theology. Students increase their appreciation for every teaching of God's Word and further develop their ability to teach, defend, and distinguish doctrinal principles and practical applications. The program enriches students with the study of systematic theology and with resources for serious investigation, evaluation, confession, and articulation of Christian doctrine.

Goals (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude)

By the end of this program the student will have done the following:

Systematic Theology as Habitus Practicus

- Cultivated a deeper appreciation for every teaching revealed in the sacred Scriptures.
- Articulated the practical value for the doctrines of Scripture, with a focus on two to three doctrines.
- Demonstrated his ability and resolve to teach, defend, and model the truths of God's Word.
- Systematic Theology as Topical Exegesis.
- Recommitted himself to a continuing study of Scripture as the inspired word of God and the only foundation for Christian teaching and living.
- Demonstrated a growing mastery of the distinction between law and gospel.
- Distinguished between timeless principles and practical applications.
- Identified examples of the proper use and potential abuses of human reason in theological study.

Systematic Theology as Historical Development

- Traced the development of Christian doctrine, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, in the early church.
- Identified ancient heresies—as well as their modern manifestations—that have caused divisions within the body of Christ.
- Examined how orthodox Lutheran theologians reclaimed and organized the true teachings of Scripture, with a focus on two to three doctrines.
- Compared and contrasted confessional Lutheran doctrine with various contemporary Christian and non-Christian systems of religious thought.

Courses

Required courses:

- ST5004 The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel [2 credits]
- ST5031 The Doctrine of the Word [1 credit]

Elective courses:

- ST5065 The Bondage of the Will [2 credits]
- ST5090 Christian Ethics [1.5 credits]
- ST5046 Understanding Futurism and Dispensationalism [2 credits]
- ST5020 Biblical Christology [2 credits]
- ST5069 Fan God's Gift into Flame [1 credit]
- ST5039 The Priesthood of All Believers: Our Calling and Our Challenge [1 credit]

Ways to Earn Credits (prioritized)

1. Summer Quarter courses in even-numbered years
2. Online courses (Summer, Fall, Spring)
3. Guided research (e.g., annotated bibliography, scholarly essay, ministry project)
4. Thesis
5. Satellite courses in odd-numbered years

DIRECTED STUDY

For the pastor who would like to tailor a portion of his program to meet a very focused theological interest or ministry need that might not regularly or thoroughly be addressed in any STM course, the option is available to design a directed study project.

The directed study should happen after the student has decided which focus area to concentrate his STM degree in and after he has been assigned an advisor.

The pastor will earn 1 credit for each 45 hours of work done on the study. He may earn up to 6 credits in directed study. Note that the number of credits earned in directed study plus the number of credits earned in a thesis may not exceed six.

The process for completing a directed study is as follows:

1. The student requests the detailed description of the directed study project and the STM Directed Study form at growingrace@wisluthsem.org.
2. The student submits the STM Directed Study Form with pertinent information.
3. Once approved and assigned an advisor, the student submits to his advisor his initial plan for study, including description, goal, bibliography, tangible final product, and timeline.
4. The advisor and student meet to discuss and revise the plan, establish clear goals, and set parameters for the project.
5. The student informs his advisor of progress and submits the final product by the established deadline.
6. The advisor resubmits the Directed Study form with all necessary information, including grade and number of credits earned. The cost per credit is two-thirds of the regular cost.

Another form of directed study can take place when a pastor who is taking a regular face-to-face or online course works with the course instructor's approval to produce a project or do further research that pursues the course's topic in a way that is beyond the regular course requirements. The procedures for such a directed study are the same as those listed above.

GRADES

Grade	Percent	Grade Points	Description
A+	99-100	4.33	Outstanding
A	95-98	4.00	Excellent
A-	93-94	3.67	Very good
B+	91-92	3.33	Above average
B	87-90	3.00	Average
B-	85-86	2.67	Fair
C+	83-84	2.33	Below average
C	79-82	2.00	Poor
C-	77-78	1.67	Marginal
D+	75-76	1.33	Unsatisfactory; significant remedial
D	72-74	1.00	work is needed to receive credit for the
D-	70-71	0.67	course
F	Below 70		Failure; course must be repeated
I	Incomplete		Temporary grade granted upon re- quest to a student who, for a cogent reason, has work that is incomplete; grade may be lowered if work is not completed at the time agreed on when the student requested this grade. Any incomplete becomes an F at the end of the following semester.

WLS uses the same grading scale for all its master's programs, including the STM program.

Because the STM program is at a master's level that builds on the MDiv degree, any final course grade lower than a B- will result in no credit earned and no record of the course in the student's transcript.

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is any use of language or an idea that came from someone else in which you fail to credit the source. This includes presenting text written by a generation system as your own—e.g., entering a prompt into an artificial intelligence tool and using the output in a paper.

Verbatim re-use of wording from an article, book, website, etc. is the most flagrant form of plagiarism, but it is not the only form. Reshuffling a source's words or swapping them for synonyms while keeping the source's thought the same is still plagiarism if you do not tell the reader where the thought came from. The only exception is information considered common knowledge. Examples of common knowledge: "רמא is a wayyiqtol from רמא in qal." "The 95 Theses were originally written in Latin." Neither of these statements needs a footnote.

Plagiarism can be inadvertent, resulting from sloppy notetaking while reading or researching. Plagiarism can also result from a decision to wait to add your citation data until after your paper is finished. By then, you may have forgotten what you thought of yourself and what you read somewhere else.

Consequences of plagiarism may include failure on an assignment, grade reduction, course failure, or other sanctions imposed at the instructor's or the seminary's discretion.

EARNING THE STM DEGREE

The following is a checklist for earning the STM degree:

- The student has taken the required STM Course: NT5060 Confessional Lutheran Hermeneutics in the Contemporary Context [2 credits].
- The student has taken the required STM Course: ED9091 Pastoral Theological Research [1 credit].
- The student has taken all core courses in his focus area.
- The student has earned at least 12 credits in his focus area.
- The student has earned enough credits from other focus areas to bring his active STM credit total to 24.
- The student has completed the STM program by writing a thesis in his focus area (earns credits) or by preparing a portfolio (does not earn credits) or by writing a comprehensive exam (does not earn credits).

A pastor who has completed all these steps has earned his STM degree.

For STM students who would like to graduate from the STM program and receive their degree at the WLS graduation service in May, all the requirements mentioned above must be completed by April 1.

A graduation fee of \$25 is payable to the WLS business office.

Pastors who have earned their STM degree are encouraged to receive their degree at the graduation service in May, if feasible. Their presence at graduation will be a visible encouragement for others to pursue growth through formal continuing education.

After earning the STM degree in one focus area, pastors are encouraged to keep taking STM courses as they are able. Some pastors may choose to “add another jewel to their existing STM crown” by earning 12 new credits in another focus area. Pastors pursuing that option should request a new STM advisor.

COMPLETING THE STM PROGRAM

This section provides detailed information for those wanting to complete their STM by writing a thesis, by creating a portfolio, or by writing a comprehensive exam. It should be noted that some focus areas do not lend themselves well to the comprehensive exam option; they limit the choices to either the thesis option or the portfolio option. As they approach the end of their STM program, pastors will want to consult with their advisor about which option is best.

Thesis option

The research and writing project/thesis is conducted under the supervision of an advisor, usually the STM advisor, in the focus area in which the student is pursuing his STM. He earns one credit for every 45 hours spent on the project. While the thesis project is usually done at the end of the pastor's pursuit of the STM, additional courses may be taken after the thesis project. Before writing a thesis, however, the pastor must have taken the Pastoral Theological Research course and the core courses in his focus area.

The process for completing the thesis project is as follows:

1. The student requests the more detailed description of the thesis project, the grading rubric, and the STM Thesis Proposal form at growinggrace@wisluthsem.org.
2. The student submits the STM Thesis Proposal form with pertinent information.
3. Once approved and assigned an advisor, the student submits an expanded formal proposal to his thesis advisor.
4. Once approved, the student researches and writes the thesis, following the SBL style guide.
5. The student successfully completes an oral exam with a first and second reader appointed by the Grow in Grace director and the STM advisor.
6. After suggested revisions the paper may be submitted for publication in the essay file of the WLS Library or Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly (WLQ).
7. The advisor resubmits the STM Thesis Form with all necessary information, including number of credits earned. The cost per credit is two-thirds of the regular cost.

Portfolio option

The portfolio project is a gathering of artifacts that demonstrate the student has achieved the stated goals of his focus area of the STM degree program. Those artifacts will include assignments and projects completed for the program. Artifacts produced during the student's pursuit of the degree but not submitted in STM courses may also be included if they demonstrate that the student achieved the focus area goals. The portfolio project should be done after the necessary 24 credits have been earned. No credits are earned in the portfolio project process.

The process for completing the portfolio project is as follows:

1. The student requests the detailed description of the portfolio project and the Portfolio Application form at growingrace@wisluthsem.org.
2. The student submits the Portfolio form with pertinent information.
3. Once approved, the student gathers the artifacts (typically 5-7 of them), writes the cover sheet (typically 1-3 pages), and submits the portfolio to the STM advisor.
4. The student successfully completes an oral exam with a first and second reader appointed by the Grow in Grace director and the STM advisor.
5. The advisor resubmits the Portfolio Form with all necessary information.

Comprehensive exam option

The comprehensive exam provides an opportunity for the student to review the course material from the focus area courses he took and demonstrate his achievement of the focus area goals through an exam administered by his STM advisor. The exam should be written after the necessary 24 credits have been earned. No credits are earned in the process of preparing for and writing the comprehensive exam.

Some focus areas do not lend themselves well to the comprehensive exam option. For that reason, some focus areas limit the options for completing the STM degree to the thesis option or the portfolio option.

The process for completing the comprehensive exam is as follows:

1. The STM student requests the detailed description of the comprehensive exam at growingrace@wisluthsem.org.
2. The STM advisor provides a study guide for the student.
3. The STM advisor and student agree on a date for the writing of the exam.
4. The STM student prepares for and writes the exam.
5. The STM advisor grades the exam and submits the grade to the Grow in Grace office.

COMMUNICATION ABOUT STM COURSES

Grow in Grace shares information about upcoming STM courses in the following ways:

- The Grow in Grace portion of the WLS website: www.wisluthsem.org/grow-in-grace/.
- A monthly digital newsletter called Grace Notes, which goes to all email addresses in the database at 5:00 am Central Time on the second Tuesday of each month. If you would like to be added to that distribution list, send an email to growinggrace@wisluthsem.org.
- Continuing education sessions at Celebration of Ministry retreats
- Information mailed to WELS congregations and pastors
- Information distributed through other church channels (e.g., synodical reports, emails to circuit pastors)
- Two personal contacts each year to STM students who have been assigned an STM advisor

SECURING A FACULTY ADVISOR

Who serves as STM Advisors?

STM advisors are WLS professors assigned to STM students who are pursuing an STM degree in their area of theology. In some cases, the WLS faculty may assign an advisor who is a retired WLS professor or an STM adjunct instructor.

When and how are STM advisors assigned?

An STM student may request an advisor when he has decided which focus area he would like to pursue for his STM degree. It is recommended that students begin thinking about this after they have earned eight or more STM credits.

What do STM advisors do besides contacting their students twice a year?

Besides contacting their STM students twice a year with information about upcoming courses, an STM advisor also works with his advisee to design a roadmap for completing the degree. An STM advisor may also guide directed study and thesis work. An STM advisor also serves as first reader for the thesis or the portfolio and he leads the discussion during the oral exam. An STM advisor also prepares the study guide and writes and administers the comprehensive exam (or makes arrangements for the test to be proctored).

Until the time they are assigned an STM advisor, pastors who have earned STM credits will receive information only through the first channels mentioned in the previous section.

Pastors wanting to be assigned an STM advisor may send their request to growingrace@wisluthsem.org.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary library supports the study and research needs of the seminary students and faculty, as well as WELS pastors, teachers, staff ministers, and members around the world.

When school is in session the library is open as follows:

Monday–Thursday 7:30am–5:00pm, 6:30pm–10:00pm

Friday 7:30am–5:00pm

Sunday 6:30pm–10:00pm

The library is closed when school is not in session, including afternoons before longer breaks. See the WLS calendar for the school schedule or call the library at 262-242-8113.

On-campus face-to-face courses during Winterim (every year in January) and Summer Quarter (in even-numbered years in June) have the added benefit of daily access to the library and its resources.

STM students are encouraged to contact the library to have books or scanned portions of books sent to them by regular mail or email. An online request form can be accessed at <https://www.wisluthsem.org/resources/library/>.

Students may also contact the library at library@wisluthsem.org. Pastors can expect the library to respond to their inquiries within one business day when school is in session.

TECHNOLOGY

WLS uses the Moodle platform for its learning management. WLS calls it SemNet. STM courses and STM instructors will use SemNet to varying degrees, but almost all courses will use SemNet for some purposes, and many courses (especially online courses) will require almost daily use of SemNet.

To access SemNet all students must have a Microsoft 365 account. The cost for that service is \$15/year, payable annually to WLS through the Student Information System (SIS). This account provides students with the following benefits:

- Access to SemNet
- A wisluthsem.org email address
- Access from anywhere to the AtlaSerials PLUS database (thousands of theological and non-theological academic journals)
- Access to the Student Information System, their transcript, and self-registration for courses
- Single Sign-On access to all of the above

Students needing help with this technology may send inquiries to growingrace@wisluthsem.org.

TUITION COSTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

As of 2023, the 24-credit STM program costs \$400 per credit. An automatic discounted price of \$300 per credit is given when the congregation pays the tuition for their pastor's continuing education.

If the congregation is paying for tuition, the total cost will be 24 credits x \$300 = \$7,200. Compared to other master's programs and doctoral programs, this is very inexpensive.

There are ways to further reduce the cost of tuition:

- To incentivize formal continuing education for pastors who have been serving between 3 and 10 years, the first credit (\$300 value) for them is free when they attend on-campus Summer Quarter in even-numbered years.
- The tuition cost for for-credit students at satellite events in odd-numbered years is \$200/credit instead of \$300/credit.
- The tuition cost for directed study credits and thesis credits is two-thirds the regular cost.

For pastors who are funding their own continuing formal education, scholarships are available to help bring down the cost of tuition. The amount of the scholarship depends on scholarship fund balances and the number of requests; however, based on the recent past, pastors paying for tuition can expect to pay \$300/credit. Pastors seeking scholarship support for tuition are encouraged to submit their requests early.

To make on-campus face-to-face courses in January or June more affordable for pastors traveling from some distance, the following travel assistance may be awarded to those who apply: after the congregation or pastor has paid the first \$350 for travel (airfare, mileage to and from the airport, parking at the airport, ride to WLS, ride back to MKE), 50% of the additional eligible travel expenses may be reimbursed. Rental cars are not included. The amount of travel assistance depends on the number of requests. Early applications are encouraged. The application form can be requested at growinggrace@wisluthsem.org.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior,
Jesus Christ.

To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

(2 Peter 3:18)