



SUMMER 2025

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

GRADUATION WEEK AT THE SEMINARY

On May 23, 2025, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary held its graduation service. President Earle Treptow based his sermon on the class verse, John 15:5, and encouraged the graduates to declare their dependence on the Lord for life and for fruitful ministry.

This year, twenty-four seniors received master of divinity degrees. Two men received bachelor of divinity degrees through the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI). In addition, nine pastors received master of sacred theology degrees.

The synod's Assignment Committee met on campus on Tuesday, May 20, to assign candidates for the holy ministry to the synod's congregations, mission fields, and schools. At the assignment service on May 22, 2025, Professor Rob Wendland preached on Ephesians 6:10–20, urging the men whom the Lord had called into service as pastors to stand firm in the Lord as they preach and teach the Lord's saving Word.

After hearing encouragement from God's Word, the candidates, their families, and friends learned where they were headed to serve. In all, twenty-nine men were assigned. Of those, twenty-four were receiving their first call, including two PSI graduates. In addition, two graduates from 2023 were reassigned to a new field of ministry and three men were reassigned to their present field of ministry.

On Wednesday, May 21, during a separate evening service, thirty-seven men were assigned to congregations throughout the U.S., Canada, and the world to serve for their vicar—or internship—year.

ENROLLMENT PROJECTION

The 2025–26 school year will likely begin with an enrollment of approximately 155, which is about the same as the 2024–25 school year. The first-year class is likely to be about 32 students. Next year's second-year class is likely to be around 45, with the senior class at 41. At a time of high pastoral vacancies, we thank the Lord of the Church for the answers he is providing to his people's prayer for more workers in his harvest field.

POTENTIAL BUILDING PROJECT

A committee has been working with an architect and builder on a potential building project intended to enhance the seminary campus for a new generation of students. A new education center located between the library and the dormitory would provide six classrooms with ample outside light and of sufficient size to facilitate collaborative learning. Several of the current classrooms would then be turned into faculty offices, to promote increased interaction between professors and students and additional collaboration between faculty members. A new gathering hall connected to the auditorium would provide a place for students and their families to meet outside of the classroom to strengthen relationships and support one another on the road to ministry and beyond.

No specific timetable has been established for the project, though there's hope that it could all be built before celebrating a hundred years on the Mequon campus in 2029. Much depends on the support God's people provide for the project.





GROW IN GRACE COURSES: TWO TRUTHS AND TWO MYTHS

Grow in Grace courses come in a variety of formats, including in-person courses, online courses, and trips. Some of the in-person courses are in Mequon; some are in the districts.

We highlight two important truths about these courses. First, they are taught by instructors who desire the spiritual and professional growth of the pastors so they in turn can be a blessing to Christ's church. Second, there are many advantages to adult education, especially among pastors, and especially as they discuss theology as practical aptitude. Our courses enable pastors to learn from their instructor and from each other.

Perhaps you have heard or even verbalized two myths. Myth #1 goes something like this: "The STM program is for the academic types among us." Another version: "The STM program is for the pastors who are hoping to teach in our worker training schools someday."

That is not how we see it. The STM program was designed for pastors. The goal of the program is to help pastors grow in their ability to shepherd Christ's flock. This May, nine pastors earned their STM degree. When asked to reflect, their most common answer was this: "The program helped me grow as a Christian and as a pastor."

Myth #2 is similar: "When there is an option to take a course for credit or to audit it, I will take it for credit only if I know that I want to pursue the STM degree."

Again, we don't see it that way, and we are thankful many pastors don't either. In a two-year cycle, about 200 pastors will take a course for credit, even though there are only 35 pastors enrolled in the program. Taking courses for credit requires a significant investment of time and energy for assignments, but the payouts are tremendous. Inside of the "mouth-house" that is the church, dedicated study equips pastors to speak with greater knowledge, precision, confidence, and humility.



PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

a partnership of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
and WELS Joint Missions

Hakim Kon came to Canada in December 2022, to be with his wife Nyariek. It wasn't the first time God turned his life upside down. As a young man, he was impacted by the violence in South Sudan and decided long ago that he wanted to use his life to reach others with the words of God's mercy. When he got to Canada he was welcomed by the South Sudanese community and found our WELS mission in Surrey, British Columbia, serving people from the Nuer tribe. He started coming to church in early 2023 and was confirmed in the summer.

Hakim had some theological training and had done evangelism work back home in South Sudan. After getting confirmed in the summer of 2023, while trying to get settled with his wife in a new country and to pursue a cyber security degree, God turned his life upside down again. This time it was the call of his new congregation to be an elder and to consider training for ministry through the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI). He does some visitations, serves on the council, and occasionally preaches. In fall 2024, he began taking PSI classes.

Hakim continues to study full-time to get his cyber security degree, while also working construction to pay the bills. He is learning what it means that Jesus gives some to be pastors and teachers to build and equip his church for works of service. For a new husband, new immigrant, new student, new worker, and very recently new father, Hakim is adding "PSI student" to his list of vocations to be equipped to lead in the church. But he believes it is more than worth it: "I focus on the Lord because he continues to surprise me from time to time. His mercy and love changed my life. I have that confidence that he can use me to change others' lives."

The 2025—26 school year begins with an opening service at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 20, with classes starting on August 21.

