



WINTER 2026

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN IN PROGRESS

The seminary, with the permission of the WELS Synodical Council and Conference of Presidents, is in the quiet phase of a capital campaign named “Compelled: Honoring the Legacy, Shaping the Future.” Christ’s boundless love compelled those involved in the construction of the first seminary buildings on the Thiensville (now Mequon) campus almost a hundred years ago. Rather than “make do” with the Wauwatosa seminary built in 1892, they wanted to do better for the men preparing for service as pastors. They desired to provide an excellent learning environment, in buildings that would last more than a generation.

The proposed building project aims to follow in the footsteps of those who built in 1928–29. The seminary governing board and faculty want to do better for those who desire to be trained for pastoral ministry. The \$15 million project includes the construction of an education center with six new classrooms, all with ample outside light and updated technology, sized to support collaborative learning. Some of the current classrooms will be converted into on-site office space for faculty, to increase contact between professors and students and to foster collaboration between faculty members.

A student lounge will be built in the space connecting the current library to the proposed education center. In addition, a new gathering hall attached to the current auditorium will provide a

space particularly for students and their families to meet informally and strengthen relationships. The gathering hall will also be utilized to support on-campus events.

The Lord’s people have offered significant gifts to support the project, the first campus expansion since the building of the auditorium-gymnasium in 1986. The project will facilitate the seminary’s work of forming evangelical pastors, who will help shape the future of our synod.

Lord willing, construction will begin on May 26, the Tuesday following graduation. While there will be some disruption to campus life during construction, the builder is committed to minimizing that with careful planning. The expectation is that everything but the construction of new faculty offices will be done before the 2027–28 school year, assuming that gifts allow the project to begin at the end of May.

SECOND SEMESTER ENROLLMENT

There are 152 students enrolled at the seminary, 41 of whom are seniors. Two others will join them in being presented for assignment. After having 23 men available for assignment last year, it will be a great blessing to have 43 candidates this year. There could be as many as 44 assigned to serve as vicars during the 2027–28 school year, an increase over this year’s class of 37.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Mission and Ministry	February 3–5
The Seminary Chorus Tour	April 1–12
The Seminary Scurry	April 25
Vicar Assignment Service	May 20
Call Day	May 21
Graduation Concert	May 21
Graduation	May 22

GROW IN GRACE

Pastors know the importance of ongoing study.

The challenges are prioritizing study time in their busy schedules and having access to quality resources.

Pastors would do well to subscribe to a half dozen theological journals, but finding the time to read them can be a challenge—and subscriptions are not inexpensive.

That is why WLS provides every one of its active-pastor alumni with unlimited, full-text access to the Atla Religion Database with AtlaSerials Plus (Atla)—an extremely powerful theological research tool containing millions of peer-reviewed articles from more than 700 theological journals, including *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*.

To access this treasure trove, all a person needs is a WLS-issued Microsoft Office365, which costs \$20 per year. After that, no subscriptions, no paywall, no per-article fee, and no inter-library loan forms—just search, download, open, and read.

The powerful search engine is found on the seminary website > Library > Online Resources > Atla Database. Initial searches may yield hundreds of results. Searches can then be narrowed to find articles that match the individual's needs. Every month, Grow in Grace's digital newsletter, Grace Notes, highlights and recommends five articles from the Atla database.

This last month, the five peer-recommended, peer-reviewed articles included useful topics such as the theological assumptions of Christian evangelism, Christian counseling, the effects of the pandemic on Christian churches, practical evangelism efforts in local congregations, and sound biblical advice about how Christians can engage with people from the LGBTQ+ community. These articles serve pastors, church leaders, and the whole body of Christ. Pastors are encouraged to read them on their own and with their leaders and members.

The students and alumni of WLS are using the Atla database more each year. In the year ending on November 30, 2024, there were 3,813 full-text articles downloaded from the database. In the year ending on November 30, 2025, there were 5,650 full-text articles downloaded. That is a 48 percent increase.

As awareness and appreciation of this rich resource continue to grow, we expect usage to increase. These figures serve as one more indication that our pastors are always learning and growing.



PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE (PSI)

The war between Russia and Ukraine has caused numerous challenges in carrying out gospel ministry in these countries. How does one have face-to-face meetings with church leaders and theological students when professors and missionaries are not allowed to travel to either country? How do you have productive and consistent Zoom classes when electricity is interrupted by the bombing of the power grid?

For eleven days in November, Missionary Luke Wolfgramm, his wife Jennifer, and PSI Director Skip Goetzinger met in Astana, Kazakhstan, for instruction of Russian seminary student André Gudkov. André lives in Novosibirsk, Russia. He has been studying for the pastoral ministry since February 2017. Because of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, WELS called workers are not allowed to travel to Russia, so Astana serves as a convenient neutral location to meet, study, and share fellowship. André is expected to graduate from the PSI program in September 2026.

During the visit to Astana, Russian Synod (Soglasie Synod) president Alexi Feringer and his wife Galeena travelled to meet with the Wolfgramms and Prof. Goetzinger to discuss ministry in Russia, the potential ministry options for André upon graduation, and ongoing support by PSI in the training of future Russian pastors.

On the other side of the conflict/war, the Wolfgramms and Prof. Goetzinger had a productive Zoom meeting with the "Mykolaiv Brothers." Roman and Alexei are two PSI students residing in Mykolaiv, Ukraine. Roman has been asked to serve as the pastor of a small Lutheran congregation in Mykolaiv, with Alexei serving as his assistant. Both have recently enrolled in the PSI program and receive Zoom instruction from Missionary Wolfgramm. Classes are regularly interrupted by power outages due to the war, but flexibility and patience have served to keep classes moving forward. The PSI Team looks forward with eagerness to future classes with these two men.

*PSI is a partnership of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and
WELS Joint Missions*

