

# WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

## ENROLLMENT

The Lord of the Church continues to answer the prayers of his people for more workers for the harvest field. The school year began with an enrollment of 134, with twenty-seven seniors, forty middlers, and thirty-seven juniors, for an on-campus enrollment of 104. Twenty-nine men are serving as vicars and one student is serving in an emergency call. While total enrollment is down from the beginning of last year (148), it remains higher than the average for the last ten years. Please pray for students and faculty alike, that God would grant them strength for the tasks he places before them and a commitment to the public ministry of the gospel.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

|                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| October 7      | Friends of the Seminary Day |
| November 20–24 | Thanksgiving Break          |
| December 10    | Christmas Concerts          |
| December 22    | Christmas Break Begins      |
| January 8–19   | Winterim                    |

## FACULTY CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN MINISTRY:

Paul Waldschmidt, Steve Pagels, Jon Micheel, Rob Wendland

## NEW *QUARTERLY* EDITOR

Professor Nathan Ericson, who serves as the seminary's library director and professor of Christian education, has been asked to serve as editor for *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, beginning with the Winter issue of Volume 121. The seminary's governing board will give final approval to the appointment at its fall meeting. Professor Ericson replaces Prof. Kenneth Cherney, Jr., who had ably served as editor since 2015. During Dr. Cherney's editorship, the *Quarterly* became a peer-reviewed journal, which resulted in articles being more readily available to a world-wide audience through the Atla Religion Database. The change in editorship became necessary when the WELS Board for World Missions asked Prof. Cherney to serve in a more active role in the mission projects of the Lutheran Church of Portugal.

## NEXT STEPS IN ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The seminary is seeking accreditation through the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), a group of more than 270 graduate schools of theology in the United States and Canada. During a self-study process of more than a year, the faculty worked its way through the Commission's Accreditation Standards and identified several concrete ways to strengthen the seminary's program of forming pastors and providing continuing education to those already serving in ministry. The faculty has had serious conversations about important issues and continues to discuss and prioritize the many recommendations that surfaced during the self-study process. Professor Kenneth Cherney, Jr., who has been leading the faculty through the accreditation process, will serve as the final editor of the self-study report, which will be submitted to the Commission on Accrediting by December 1. The seminary will, Lord willing, host a comprehensive evaluation visit for initial accreditation in mid-April 2024.



## THE PASTOR AS LIFELONG LEARNER

The seminary trains the pastors who will serve in the congregations of our synod. But pastors never graduate from learning. Let each of our pastors say, “I am a lifelong learner.” Let God’s people say to their pastor, “We want you to be a lifelong learner.”

There are many ways for pastors to keep learning—informal ways that are not a part of an academic program and formal ways that involve for-credit courses. Many factors will determine which ways a pastor will pursue, including the pastor’s current ministry context, his station in life, and his learning preferences.

The seminary provides resources and programs for pastors’ continuing education. Four times a year the Quarterly provides full-length articles, news and comments, and book reviews. Through Grow in Grace, the seminary’s continuing education arm, pastors receive monthly resources for informal continuing education, and they may also take classes in a formal continuing education program towards a master of sacred theology degree (STM).

The STM program is a twenty-four-credit program that allows pastors to earn a degree in one of nine focus areas. The program is designed for pastors to be able to complete the program in five to seven years. Credits remain active and can count towards the degree for up to twelve years.

Consider two statistics about the program. The first one is that about half of the 1300+ pastors of our church body have taken at least one STM course for credit. The second statistic is that five pastors received their STM degree at the seminary graduation service in May.

Those five pastors have told us how beneficial the program was for their learning and their ability to serve in ministry. But there is great benefit for those who take courses without completing the degree. A pastor gave this anonymous feedback after an online course this year:

*Through this course I have grown in my ability and my love of [the Bible’s original language]. I was introduced to great resources that I will keep using. I received encouragement for faith and ministry from my brothers in the class.*

In 2024 there are two opportunities for on-campus face-to-face courses: Winterim in January and Summer Quarter in June. There are also online courses in spring, summer, and fall. There is also an archaeological dig in the Holy Land.

For more details go to <https://www.wisluthsem.org/grow-in-grace/>

## PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

a partnership of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and WELS Joint Missions

In the last four weeks the seminary’s Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) office has received five inquiries from pastors asking how one of their members can pursue studying for the ministry.

Do you have a man in your congregation who shows spiritual leadership and could be encouraged to consider serving as a pastor? The members of the PSI team would love to hear about it and help him chart a course forward. The PSI team is working with three WELS pastors as they work with pastors who have left their denominations and are looking for a church body that teaches God’s Word in its truth and purity. They are moving closer to enrolling in PSI, joining WELS, and bringing their flocks along with them into our fellowship.

PSI is involved in the training of twenty students in Africa who are pursuing either a bachelor of divinity (BDiv) or a master of theology (MTh) degree. We are working with one student

in the Philippines and another in Japan as they pursue their pastoral courses. In one Asian country PSI is assisting in the training of about sixty Bible School students along with Bible School faculty, evangelists, and church planters. In a second Asian country PSI is helping with the training of twenty-four men studying to be pastors. In a third Asian country PSI is assisting with the training of five men studying to be pastors through six-week classes twelve times per year.

PSI continues to oversee the Vietnam Learning Center program and provides certificates for program completion. This past summer, the first group (fifty-five students) graduated from the program and are now enrolled in a continuing education program which will provide two classes a year. There are sixty new students in a second group and sixty-three in a third group. In Asia, PSI is assisting with the training of 274 leaders in total.

We thank the Lord of the Church for the men entrusted to our care and training. It is a privilege to work with men who are preparing to shepherd flocks all around the world and to focus their eyes on Jesus.

