



SUMMER 2024

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

GRADUATION WEEK

On Friday, May 24, WLS held its graduation service. President Earle Treptow based his sermon on Galatians 2:20, which the seniors had chosen as their class verse. He focused the graduates on their story as people who have been crucified with Christ. Their sin has all been punished on him and Jesus has taken up residence within them. Therefore, they have “Christ for me” peace and “Christ in me” power as they serve the Lord and his people in public ministry.

This year, twenty-seven men successfully completed the prescribed program and received the Master of Divinity degree. In addition, two pastors earned Master of Sacred Theology degrees.

The synod’s Assignment Committee met on the seminary campus on Tuesday, May 21, to assign candidates for the holy ministry to the synod’s congregations, schools, and mission fields. At the assignment service on Thursday, May 23, Professor Brad Wordell’s sermon based on Psalm 87 proclaimed the glory of Zion, God’s holy city. The candidates for ministry and all believers have been adopted as citizens of Zion. The candidates were reminded that the Lord of the Church was sending them to serve in Zion. The citizens of Zion can always have hope, because the Lord Jesus will come back to take them to the heavenly Zion. The joy and singing of Christ’s holy people will have no end: “All my fountains are in you!”

After hearing encouragement from God’s Word, the candidates, along with their families and friends, learned where the Lord had chosen to send them. In all, twenty-seven men were assigned, including a graduate from the class of 2022. There were ninety-seven requests for pastoral candidates. In addition, five men were reassigned to their present field of ministry for an additional year.

On Wednesday, May 22, during a separate evening service, forty middlers were assigned to congregations in the U.S., Canada, and even one in Colombia, to serve for their vicar year.

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

The high number of vacancies in our synod, as evidenced by the ninety-seven requests for pastoral candidates that came to the synod’s Assignment Committee, leads to high interest in enrollment numbers at the seminary. The 2023–24 school year began with an enrollment of 134 and ended with an enrollment of 133. A larger incoming class will more than replace the twenty-seven graduates. Preliminary estimates call for a student body of 147 to begin the 2024–25 school year. Please continue to pray for workers who love the gospel and desire to use their lives to proclaim it to the world.

EQUIPPING PROFESSORS

The seminary’s governing board, in extending calls for new professors, places a priority on pastoral experience rather than advanced degrees. However, the governing board also regularly encourages those who are called to serve as professors to pursue continuing education, that they might be as well prepared as possible for the work entrusted to them. At present, nine professors are in formal academic programs and two others are weighing options. The seminary covers continuing education costs for faculty members, thanks to generous support from God’s people.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 17-28	Summer Quarter
August 21	Opening Service
August 22	Classes Begin
September 16	WLS Alumni Annual Meeting
September 16-17	Symposium
October 12	Friends of the Seminary Day



Pastoral Partners for Grow in Grace

Grow in Grace recognizes that continuing education is more than courses inside classroom walls. In fact, many pastors have expressed their appreciation for the informal resources Grow in Grace offers to pastors. This past year, Grow in Grace added new faces to the team of editors for our popular informal resources, Shepherd’s Study (our book review resource) and Four Branches.

Our two new Shepherd’s Study editors:

Philip Moldenhauer, a 2012 graduate of the seminary, serves as pastor at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Madison, WI. In 2022, he earned a Doctor of Ministry degree in the area of pastoral care from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN. Pastor Moldenhauer and his wife, Stephanie, have three children.

Pastor Moldenhauer’s encouragement to fellow pastors is, “Reading is a must for pastoral ministry: it helps pastors grow, keeps their preaching fresh, and contributes to their understanding of the world in which they are serving. Shepherd’s Study provides a platform to highlight some of those titles that I know will spark interesting conversations at circuit meetings and refine pastoral thinking in healthy ways.”

Jared Natsis, born and raised in Saline, MI, graduated from the seminary in 2019. He currently serves as pastor at Rock of Ages in Nashville, TN. He and his wife, Alisa (nee Retberg) have two children, Cordelia and Ezra.

Pastor Natsis shares, “The amount of resources available to us as pastors is astounding and, frankly, a bit overwhelming. Shepherd’s Study is a tool to help alleviate some of the stress of finding, researching, and finally (the hardest part!) choosing what to read.”

Our new Four Branches editor:

Pastor Aaron Jensen began this role at the beginning of this year. Jensen writes, “These articles are an easy way to brush up on some things you may have learned but forgotten, to learn some things that may be completely new to you, and even to become aware of topics you may be interested in exploring further. Thank you to those pastors who have shared their gifts, knowledge, and experience with us in writing these articles. We appreciate the time you have taken to edify and enrich us all, both spiritually and professionally.”

PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

a partnership of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and WELS Joint Missions

Watching the Holy Spirit work in the building of his Church is a fascinating and precious gift.

A British man served as a school principal and assistant pastor of a church body in Ethiopia. He had been having nagging doubts and questions about the theology of his church body. He encountered a WELS member while in Ethiopia and then in turn was connected with our WELS missionary team in London when he returned home. One conversation about confessional Lutheranism led to another, which led to another, which led the man to the conviction that he is at heart a confessional Lutheran. His desire? To work with the WELS missionary team in London, become a trained Lutheran pastor in fellowship both with WELS and

the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC), and found the Biblical Lutheran Church of the UK.

The PSI Team traveled to London in May to get to know this former pastor, who has a PhD in biblical languages. The members of the team came away with a sincere sense of appreciation for his strong desire to learn more about the Lutheran faith and his desire to share it with his fellow Brits. Almost all his biblical studies and knowledge of confessional Lutheranism have been acquired through his own study, which gives the PSI Team the privilege of deepening his knowledge of God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions and preparing him well, by the Spirit’s power, for developing a confessional Lutheran church body in England. This new friend from London will be on the seminary campus in June for two weeks of summer quarter classes.

Watching the Holy Spirit work in the building of his Church is indeed a fascinating and precious gift. To God be the glory, forever and ever!

