

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

WINTERIM

During early January, Winterim—the two-week session between semesters—gave students an opportunity to study in areas of personal interest not part of the regular seminary curriculum. Many students also participated in directed research and outreach trips.



Professor Bradley Wordell and a group of students spent a week with Pastor Aaron Bublitz and his congregation in Phoenix, AZ. They canvassed neighborhoods sharing God’s love and saving word with the Mormon community and many others. Professor Wordell commented, “Pastor Bublitz and

Heritage Lutheran were generous and kind in their support of this mission trip. Several members joined us on the streets several times throughout the week. In our recap session after the closing worship service, members indicated that the event was life-changing for them, too.”

CHURCH PLANTING COURSE

Recently, WELS Home Missions launched an ambitious initiative to plant a hundred new home mission churches over the next ten years. For the first time during Winterim, a group of students had the opportunity to participate in a course prepared and taught by WELS Home Missions, with Pastors Jared Oldenburg, Matt Rothe, and Mark Birkholz serving as the instructors. This new course offered a way to help equip men for the unique realities of planting new churches.

Since no community is the same and no mission church is the same, this course challenged seminarians to apply the principles of Confessional Lutheran mission work in several actual WELS mission fields through interviews and interactions with recent seminary graduates who are now serving in the first year of a new home mission. This course was neither a “traditional classroom” nor “boots-on-the-ground outreach” experience, but rather a church planting “lab course” that took place primarily in Fredericksburg, VA, at The Way Lutheran Church.

RETIREMENT

Professor Paul Wendland will step away from full-time service to the seminary at the end of this school year. Called initially as professor of New Testament and homiletics in 2001, he later accepted the Lord’s call to serve as president, beginning in 2004. After fifteen years in that role, he returned to the classroom full-time, eager to focus his attention on teaching for his final four years on campus. God be praised for the extraordinary gifts he gave Prof. Wendland and for the many blessings he showered upon the seminary and the synod through his faithful service! His zeal for the gospel, his servant’s heart, and his ability to work collaboratively with colleagues will be greatly missed.

The governing board will, Lord willing, address the faculty vacancy by calling a professor of Old Testament and homiletics.



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 23	Second Semester begins
February 7–9	Mission and Ministry
March 2–3	Midterm Break
April 6–18	Easter Break
May 25	Call Day
May 26	Graduation

MISSION AND MINISTRY

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will hold its 2023 Mission and Ministry seminar February 7–9. This annual three-day event provides students an opportunity to hear from a wide range of people in a wide range of ministry settings. It's another chance for them to see how their classroom lessons apply to real-world gospel work.

Attendees will hear updates and stories from WELS World Missions, Home Missions, and Congregational Services under the theme of "Go!" based on Matthew 28:19. Breakout sessions will highlight how each presenter's work carries out the command of Jesus (Matt 28:19) with the promise of Jesus (Matt 28:20). Each day of Mission and Ministry offers breakout sessions, a keynote speaker, and highlights from World Missions, Home Missions, and Congregational Services. Participants will find encouragement in the Lord's promise to empower his people to fulfill his Great Commission, no matter where they serve, whom they serve, or how they are called to serve him.



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CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY EVENT 2023

After back-to-back years of Celebration of Ministry Retreat cancellations (2020, 2021) followed by a Super San Antonio Celebration of Ministry Event (2022), Grow in Grace is back to the usual pattern of inviting four WLS graduating classes to celebrate a key ministry milestone in San Antonio, TX, this spring. Grow in Grace is inviting pastors and their spouses marking 35, 25, 10, or 3 years since graduation to a ministry retreat with their classmates and brothers and sisters in faith. Alongside a four-part Bible study, the retreat provides presentations and workshops aimed at those specific ministry milestones. In addition, two worship services create beautiful bookends to the retreats while allowing plenty of fellowship time in a beautiful location. These retreat pieces combine to create a beneficial retreat for the participating classes—the WLS graduating classes of 1988, 1998, 2013, and 2020.

PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

a partnership of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and WELS Joint Missions

NEW DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

Pastor Harland Goetzinger accepted the call to serve as the next director of the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) and as a member of the seminary faculty. Effective January 1, he has assumed the duties of this position. This call was necessitated by Prof. Jon Bare's decision to accept the call to be the president of Asia Lutheran Seminary. President Bare was commissioned for that work on January 15.

A 2001 graduate from the seminary, Pastor Goetzinger previously served St. Paul, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. He had also been serving as president of WELS-Canada, as chairman of the Canada Mission Board, and as a member of the WELS Board for Home Missions. "We thank God for giving us the right man at the right time, and we look forward to the blessings the Lord will bestow on Professor Goetzinger's labors," President Treptow said. The Goetzinger family will, as God wills, move to the seminary campus this summer.

SELF-STUDY

The seminary faculty has been actively working on a self-study this year. Professor Kenneth Cherney Jr. serves as the seminary's liaison with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and as chairman of the self-study steering committee. Three subcommittees have been assessing every aspect of the seminary's work, with the goal of improving the way men are prepared for service as pastors in WELS congregations and mission fields. The subcommittees have sought feedback from graduates of the seminary, synodical leaders, and members of WELS congregations.

An initial report will be completed, if all goes according to plan, by April. The plenary faculty will review the self-study, consider the recommendations offered, and ultimately endorse a final report. The seminary's governing board, which is responsible for ensuring that the seminary is carrying out the mission given by the synod, will also be asked to review the self-study. After both faculty and governing board have approved the report, it will be submitted to the ATS in the fall of 2023. That will lead, Lord willing, to an onsite evaluation visit by a committee of peer reviewers appointed by ATS in March or April 2024.

