

Knights . . .
Called Workers . . .
Your Future . . .

IN THE MAKING



KNIGHTWATCH

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KnightWatch is published by Martin Luther College and is intended to inform, inspire, and motivate young people who are considering enrolling at MLC to prepare for public ministry in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

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MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE



Your Future . . . *IN THE MAKING*

It's decision time, isn't it? You're choosing a college, a career path, a future!

We know it can be tough, so we've created these 24 pages to help. Here you'll meet some young MLC graduates who are out in the world, serving their Savior as pastors and teachers. You'll also meet some current students preparing for ministry—called workers “in the making.”

These Knights share the kind of information you want to hear:

- How did they make their college decisions?
- What's it like to be a student at MLC?
- What opportunities will you have to study and play and grow at MLC?
- What's it like to be a young graduate with a new call?

One theme you'll hear again and again is that of surprise. So many current students are surprised at the endless opportunities MLC offers. Sure, we're a small college, but we have a big reach into the world! And so many graduates are surprised at how they're serving. God has called them to places and positions they never would have imagined when they were your age!

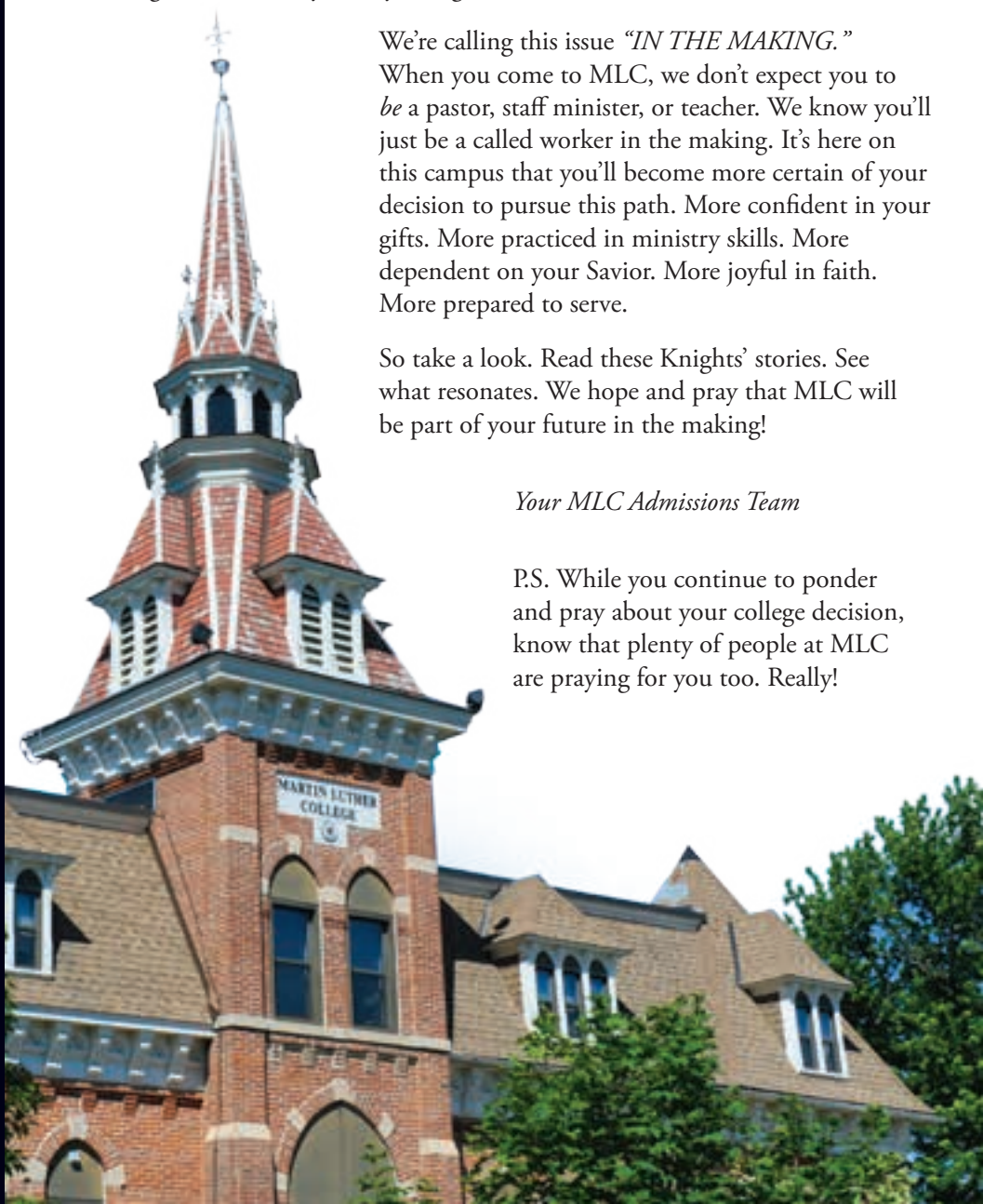
We're calling this issue “*IN THE MAKING*.”

When you come to MLC, we don't expect you to be a pastor, staff minister, or teacher. We know you'll just be a called worker in the making. It's here on this campus that you'll become more certain of your decision to pursue this path. More confident in your gifts. More practiced in ministry skills. More dependent on your Savior. More joyful in faith. More prepared to serve.

So take a look. Read these Knights' stories. See what resonates. We hope and pray that MLC will be part of your future in the making!

Your MLC Admissions Team

P.S. While you continue to ponder and pray about your college decision, know that plenty of people at MLC are praying for you too. Really!



LAILAH THABATAH

The World's Her Classroom



When spring break hits—or summer vaca—or just a longish weekend—Lailah Thabatah is out the door and on a plane, ready to share the Savior and her own servant's heart with strangers.

She's served on 10—yes, 10!—Daylight ministry trips as an MLC student. She's taught English in China, done hurricane cleanup in Puerto Rico, canvassed in Washington, taught VBS in Idaho, and led an art camp in NYC—and that's just the half of it.

"Ministry, outreach, and traveling are my passions, and Daylight is all of those put together!" she says. "You get to meet all different kinds of people. You learn so much, and you get to see how exciting and fun ministry will be."

Campus Pastor John Boeder calls Lailah a "Daylight volunteer extraordinaire," and he's channeled that enthusiasm into a job: Lailah is the student assistant for the program.

Teacher IN THE MAKING:

Medical school had always been Lailah's plan. "None of my family are called workers, I loved anatomy and science, and Minnesota just seemed too far

away for a Michigan girl." But with encouragement from MLS tutors and professors—especially Professor Rebecca Berg, Professor Andrew Naumann, and Tutor Justin Eternick—she says, "I took the plunge, and I immediately knew I made the right decision. MLC became home. You know all the students, and most of the professors know you by name and do everything in their power to help you succeed. You go to chapel every day, and you all have the same goal: to spread the Word of God. I love it here more than anything, and I can't wait to have my own classroom one day!"

What kind of classroom? With an urban ministry/Spanish minor packed in her bag, she'd love to teach in an urban setting or even an international classroom—any place she can help break down a language or culture barrier so kids can hear the Word. "There are so many calls I would love to receive," she says, "but unfortunately, I can only get one."

Lailah's Advice for You: "PRAY. PRAY. PRAY. And don't worry, because no matter where you go, you'll have God in your life and somehow, some way, it will be the right decision. I'd also suggest to do what you love and have a passion for, not what makes you the most money. In my opinion, as a teacher trained at MLC, we are saving lives, little tiny human souls, through the Holy Spirit, and nothing gets better than that."



LAILAH THABATAH

MLS / Emanuel-Lansing MI

Junior

Major: **Elementary Ed**

Minor: **Urban Ministry/Spanish**

Activities: **Daylight student assistant, track, piano**



BECKY PRUSS

She's Got Grit



"Becky has been one of our ace pitchers the last two seasons," says Coach Matt Pearson. "She led our team last year in complete games, which speaks to her grit and endurance."

To grit, you can add humility and positivity. "She doesn't seek recognition for her accomplishments," Pearson says, "and as a teammate, she's amazing—very positive, very welcoming to the incoming frosh who are learning a new system, and very willing to give any teammate extra time practicing if they want."

Becky's just happy to play. "I'm so thankful for the opportunity to keep playing the sport I love! Through the months of practices, games, and being on the road, I've created such amazing friendships with the girls on the team."

Softball games aren't Becky's only road trips. In fall 2018, she traveled to Panama City, Florida, through MLC Daylight to help with hurricane relief. "This was such an eye-opening and life-changing experience," she says. "I was so amazed at the way their congregation—and Christians from all over—banded together to clean up and rebuild. It's a trip I'll never forget, and I'm so thankful we have opportunities like this at MLC."

Teacher IN THE MAKING: Becky says she always made her little brother play school. He sat at a desk and did her homemade worksheets while she supervised. Her senior year she really was a teacher. During study hall, she went to the nearby public school and helped students with their reading skills. "When I reflected on my day," she says, "I would always think about the fact that I couldn't share my faith with them. That's when I realized how much of a difference it makes to me to be able to share God's Word in my classroom someday. After that realization, MLC was the obvious and perfect choice!"

Looking ahead, she hopes to put her coaching minor to good use by being involved with school athletics. "I know how much my coaches have influenced me throughout my life, so I'd love to be part of that," she says. She'd also enjoy playing piano in her classroom or possibly even church. Basically, she's ready to run with a lot of things. She says, "There are so many school events I'd love to start at my future school."

Becky's Advice for You: "If you love helping others, have a passion for the gospel, and enjoy a family-like environment, MLC is for you! Consider the gifts God has given you and decide how you can best utilize those skills for yourself but also others. Be assured: if you choose a different route, you'll still have opportunities to share God's Word through your life! But I hope you'll come join us up on the hill!"



BECKY PRUSS

Winnebago LA / Redeemer-Fond du Lac WI

Junior

Major: **Elementary Ed**

Minor: **Coaching**

Activities: **Student Athletic Advisory Committee, piano, softball, Daylight, intramurals**

JARROD PFARR

If You're Not Having Fun, You're Doing It Wrong



BACK AT MLC

JARROD PFARR '14

Activities: Resident assistant, Forum, College Choir, Student Senate, Admissions assistant, track, women's volleyball student coach

Jarrod Pfarr's ministry at St. Peter in Appleton, Wisconsin, illustrates one of MLC's favorite taglines: "One Mission-Endless Opportunities."

His endless opportunities fall into these categories: assistant principal; athletics and activities director; basketball, volleyball, and track coach; musical director; Junior Choir director; curriculum developer; and worship team member. On the side (*ahem*), he teaches fifth grade—mostly religion, social studies, and language arts.

"I'm very passionate about many things," he says, "and I'm involved in almost all of them at St. Peter. I have amazing opportunities each and every day."

It's serious business, but it's fun too. "Each day I get to come in and work with a wonderful group of students who honestly just tolerate how ridiculous I am 90% of the time," he says. "I try to live by the idea, 'If you're not having fun, you're probably doing it wrong.'"

Although he teaches grade school, Jarrod mentors older teenagers too. Many of you met him when he spoke at WELS

Youth Rally last summer. And you'll soon come across his new launch, *Project 4:12*. "It's an online platform for student leadership," he says, "where young leaders can share opportunities, find encouragement to step out of their comfort zones, and explore ways to *Believe and Be Love* in our world. This generation has so much to offer, and I want to encourage them to go make a positive difference in their churches and educational communities."

Looking back, Jarrod recognizes mentors who helped him understand the value—and the fun—of ministry. He's so thankful for Pastor Dustin Sievert, Paul Strutz, Dan Schulz, and Charlie Kuether.

And he offers some humble advice to you too: "It took me a long time to figure out if ministry was right for me. This world also needs Christian doctors, plumbers, graphic designers, and accountants. Wherever your gifts lie, use them to their fullest.

"And enjoy the journey on which God will bring you," he adds. After all, if it isn't fun, you're probably doing it wrong.



JOEY LOESCHER

Leading Couple

First, they pretended to be engaged.

It was their first year at MLC, and Joey convinced Abby to try out with him for *You Can't Take It with You*. Abby had never acted before, but she gave it a shot.

They both landed roles—the leading roles—Tony and Alice, an engaged couple.

“It was easy to get in character as an engaged girl when I had such strong feelings for him off the stage,” Abby says.

“Since we’d been dating a couple months,” Joey says, “it was honestly a dream come true.”

Fast-forward to today, and Joey Loescher and Abby Lash really are engaged. Joey proposed while they were fishing on the Minnesota River, a flashback to their first date years earlier. The dream will come true this summer. (Save the Date: July 6, 2019.)

But it wasn’t all romance all the time for these two. Like all MLC students, they’re busy preparing for ministry—Abby for early childhood education and Joey for elementary and/or secondary vocal music education. And they’ve made full use of MLC’s offerings and opportunities to serve—Abby running cross country and track, Joey singing in College Choir and playing in Wind Symphony, and both of them working as resident assistants (RAs) in the dorms, serving on the Aulic Committee, and of course acting and leading in Forum. Last February, they took on leading roles of another kind in *The Crucible*, Joey directing and Abby producing. “Directing and producing *The Crucible* together—that one was a true test of our relationship!” she says.

Teachers IN THE MAKING: Abby has known since second grade that she wanted to be a teacher. Her biggest inspiration? Her mom. “Her love for teaching and the children she serves continues to amaze me,” Abby says. “I pray I will have the same dedication to my students and my Savior.” As an early childhood education major, Abby would love to teach God’s Word at a childcare center and maybe even serve as an ECE director. “Only God knows his plans for me,” she says. “We’ll see what he has in store. What a privilege that he uses us sinners in his work of spreading the gospel!”



JOEY LOESCHER

Kettle Moraine LHS / David's Star-Jackson WI

Senior

Major: **Elementary Ed**

Major: **Secondary Vocal Music Ed**

Activities: **Resident assistant, College Choir, Wind Symphony, Forum vice president, Aulic Committee, piano, organ, voice**





Instructor Erin Laabs, MLC's Forum advisor, knows that Abby will be an exemplary called worker. "When Abby produced *The Crucible* last year," Laabs says, "I was extremely impressed with her attention to detail, work ethic, and organization. I've advised this year's winter play staff to look back at Abby's materials, since it was an example of a well-run production. Besides her work skills, she's just a wonderful person! She always shows such love and concern for other people and for her responsibilities. My daughters can't wait for the times when Abby comes over to babysit. We will all miss her very much when she moves on in life!"

As for Joey, ministry's in his blood. His mom's a teacher, his dad's a pastor, and he has five brothers who attended MLC before him. "I can remember sitting in my second grade classroom with Mrs. Gustafson and thinking, 'This is awesome. I want to be a teacher when I grow up!' My other grade school teachers were fantastic as well, and then in high school I had four terrific band and choir directors. Their service to the Lord was inspiring to me, and I wondered if I might be used to serve God's children in a similar way." If the Lord would choose to use him in music or drama, Joey says he'll consider himself blessed—but he's also enjoyed student teaching in grades 5 and 7, so he'll be ready for anything.

Instructor Kathy Wurster thinks so too. She's been his voice instructor for four years and has had many conversations with him in his role as vice president of Forum. "Joey is incredibly thoughtful, hardworking, and kind," she says. "He has the heart of a servant, helping those around him. He's an excellent listener, takes constructive criticism and runs with it, striving for excellence in everything he does. It's been my honor and pleasure to get to know this young man. He will be sorely missed when he graduates."

Abby's Advice for You: "God knows how he will use you to accomplish his work! The public ministry is a wonderful way to do this directly, as you have the privilege of daily teaching and preaching God's Word to his lambs. However, any profession provides opportunities to serve our God and spread the saving gospel to others. God has given you unique gifts that may be fitting for the public ministry, but also may be fitting for another career. The body of Christ needs believers that serve in all different ways."

Joey's Advice for You: "It can be helpful to talk with current called workers about their joys and struggles because you might identify with them. More than anything else, listen to others recognize the talents you show. We hear from Psalm 139, 'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.' God gave us our gifts for his purposes, so pray for God's will to be done in your life, and be ready to use your gifts."



ABBY LASH

Shoreland LHS / First-Racine WI

Senior

Major: **Early Childhood Ed**

Activities: **Resident assistant, cross country, track, Forum, Aulic Committee, choir, piano**



MIRANDA MAASZ

Humbled by God's Sense of Humor



BACK AT MLC

MIRANDA MAASZ '15

Activities: **Student Athletic Advisory Committee, teacher's assistant (TA), volleyball, intramurals, piano, choir**

Growing up in tiny Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, Miranda Maasz never would have foreseen what she's doing today. She's surprised and humbled by God's wisdom—and his sense of humor as well.

"So many things have surprised me," she says of her ministry at Divine Savior Academy (DSA). "High School? Florida? MIAMI? I previously served in Waco, Nebraska, a town with a population of, yes, 236. Teaching in Miami? Yeah, right! Yet here I am, humbled by God's sense of humor and the opportunities he gives me to learn new things and to trust him.

"Also," she adds, "I never thought I'd see the day where I would teach a high school English class. My high school English teachers never thought they'd see that day either."

At DSA-Doral (a Miami suburb), Miranda also teaches social studies and coaches the JV squad of a volleyball program that won state this year.

Whether in the classroom or on the court, Ms. Maasz is grateful God's given her the opportunity to be a Christian mentor.

"I love being a role model for teenagers who are trying to figure out who they are and what their place should be in the world," she says. "I love being able to witness to mold-able, eager hearts every day at my job. I love when my students ask, 'Ms., why are you always happy?' and I can tell them, even on my bad days, 'Because I have Jesus in my life!' I love that God gives me small victories each day that allow me to see he is helping me make a difference in teenagers' lives."

Miranda's story is a lesson in trust. What you will be doing five or ten years from now may be something you never would have imagined. Embrace the adventure, and don't be afraid of the unknown.

"If you aren't yet sure what you want to do," she says, "you're not alone. You are a teenager! Even 25-year-olds don't have that figured out yet. God puts forks in our path, and we get to decide which fork to take. Choose the one that means joy. You will serve the Lord best when you are filled with joy! Not sure which path means joy yet? Choose MLC. What better place to figure out what your path is than where you're surrounded by people who will support you and guide you to your joy-filled path?"

MATT ZENG

Ready to Serve



He says he's not very athletic, but Matt Zeng is ready to serve it up in intramurals almost any night of the week. But his best service comes in more formal settings—as president of Student Senate. “It’s a fantastic opportunity to serve the school as well as our fellow students here on campus,” he says. “I’m really excited for this upcoming semester. We have a lot of great events planned!”

A servant’s heart is what Pastor John Boeder notices most about Matt. “His leadership comes from a willingness to take on responsibilities and carry them out faithfully,” Pastor Boeder says. “God has grown him as a leader during his time on campus, and I look forward to seeing how God continues to work in his life to make him a faithful pastor, one who is willing and capable of managing challenging situations.”

Pastor IN THE MAKING: “My parents came over as immigrants from China,” Matt says. “To make a long story short, somehow I ended up at a WELS Christian grade school and then Luther Prep. Throughout high school, my teachers and professors encouraged me and my classmates to consider the public ministry. One of my tutors, Matt Rothe, really encouraged me to give MLC a chance. My parents were supportive, and my mother prayed for me and encouraged me along the way. I don’t think I was one hundred percent sure even when I stepped onto campus, but I am now!”

As a child of immigrants, Matt says he could easily see himself in ministry abroad or ministry to immigrants. “I love the Midwest because this is where I’ve grown up, but I could go anywhere. I’m glad that it’s not my decision. I’m excited to see what God has in store.”

Matt’s Advice for You: “This decision may seem huge now, but in the grand scheme, it won’t define you or limit you. There are many ways to serve God, no matter where you go to school or what career path you choose. And it’s always reassuring to know that God is always working for our good, and he’ll put you where he needs you. He’ll take care of you.”



MATT ZENG

Luther Prep / New Life-Shoreview MN

Senior

Major: **Biblical Languages, Koine**

Emphasis: **Chinese for Pastors**

Activities: **Resident assistant, Student Senate president, intramurals, piano, chess club, Daylight**



RAQUEL FREESE

No Music Challenge Too Big

Running the summer music program at Christ-Marshall, Minnesota, presents more than a few challenges. Not only do you play organ for worship and coordinate vacation Bible school; you also teach 50 students a week, age 5-80, in piano, organ, guitar, and voice—all at a church where you're a stranger.

But according to Pastor Keith Schreiner, no challenge was too big for Raquel Freese: "I was very impressed with the quiet confidence Raquel displayed in all aspects of her work with us. She just picked up the ball and ran with it. When she played for worship services, it was as if she'd been doing it for more years than she's been alive, and she was very well prepared for VBS. Nothing seemed to be bigger than she was."



From Raquel's viewpoint, "It was the best summer job I could possibly ask for. I got paid to live with a wonderful host and do many practical things I know I will do in my ministry someday, from teaching music lessons to organizing church events to communicating with families in the community."

The summer ministry job provided counterpoint to her MLC career, where she has especially enjoyed singing in College Choir and serving as music director for *Camelot* and rehearsal pianist for *The Sound of Music*. Next summer she'll be back in Marshall. And after that? She'll be ready for whatever musical challenge God decides to send her.

Teacher IN THE MAKING: Raquel adored every single teacher she had at Abiding Word-Houston. "I wanted to be just like them," she says, "so from a very young age I wanted to attend MLC, like they did." She's especially grateful for Christine Luecke and Pastor Mark Tiefel and his wife, Kate Tiefel, for their mentorship. Looking ahead, she says, "I am beyond excited to have my own classroom soon, where I get to share God's Word with children and watch their faith grow. I am also very passionate about church worship music. I have composed some music for congregational use, and I love all aspects of worship—from planning to accompanying to directing or participating in choir."

Raquel's Advice for You: "While my decision to go to MLC was very easy, I know that for many others, the decision is much more difficult. It's okay to be unsure of your future. Rest assured that the Almighty God already knows and holds you in the safety of his guiding hands. Listen to the advice of family and friends. If those closest to you believe you have the gifts to be a pastor, staff minister, or teacher, then you should strongly consider MLC. My years at MLC have been some of the best years of my life, and I would recommend it to anyone."



RAQUEL FREESE

Klein Collins HS-TX / Abiding Word-Houston

Senior

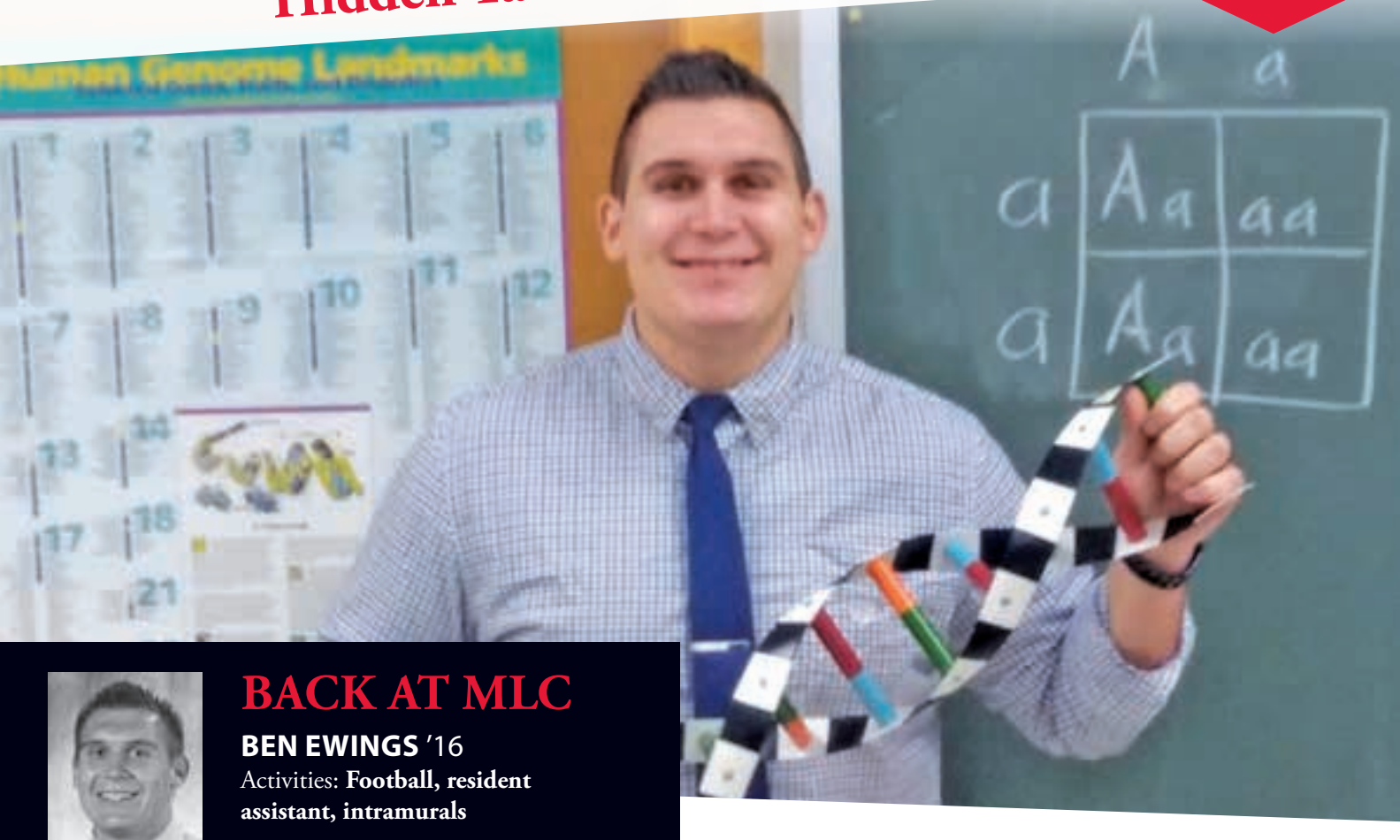
Major: **Elementary Ed**

Major: **Secondary Vocal Music Ed**

Activities: **College Choir, Wind Symphony, chapel praise ensembles, Forum, Anchor, piano, organ, voice, guitar**

BEN EWINGS

Hidden Talents



BACK AT MLC

BEN EWINGS '16

Activities: **Football, resident assistant, intramurals**

Sometimes God knows our gifts better than we do. That's what Ben Ewings has concluded as he walks through his daily ministry as a professor and coach at Luther Prep.

Ben always thought he was genetically determined to be an English teacher. He liked writing and literature, he loved the excellent English teachers he'd had at Lakeside, and he graduated from MLC as a secondary English ed major.

But at Prep—surprise, surprise—he was called to teach biology. Who knew God had hidden a talent for the sciences in his DNA? “I didn't really know what to expect,” he says, “but I've thoroughly enjoyed teaching one semester of bio, and I hope to teach it for years to come!”

What has *not* surprised Professor Ewings is how much he enjoys the daily interaction with students and how much he loves coaching. “I always dreamed about being a coach,” he says. “I learned so much from my coaches in my athletic career and have always wanted to help other athletes succeed in sports and in life.”

Though he played football for four years at MLC, at LPS he's the head wrestling coach. This is a relaunch for LPS—the last time the Phoenix had varsity wrestling was 2005-06—so Ben's starting his first year in a first-year program. “We have 35 guys out,” he says, “which is great for a first-year program. We're preparing young men to be hardworking wrestlers in the present, and hardworking spouses, called workers, and wrestling coaches in the future.”

It's all about developing students' talents—some already visible and some still hidden but begging to be discovered.

Ben's Advice for You: “Serving in the public ministry is a noble calling. I know that so much has been done for me by my former teachers, and especially by Jesus, the greatest Teacher. Working with students in many different settings—in the classroom, at athletic competitions, and in casual settings—gives you the opportunity to serve in these ways as well. If you enjoy school and enjoy interacting with people, why not give ministry a try?”



ABBY MEHLBERG AND

Ministry Is a Construction Business

They're not even 30, and they're starting a school.

When Abby Mehlberg and Alison Kolander graduated from MLC in 2013 with early childhood education degrees, they were not surprised to be assigned to prekindergarten and kindergarten ministries, Alison to Trinity-Kaukauna, Wisconsin, and Abby to Trinity-Marshfield, Wisconsin.

What they could not have foreseen, though, is that five years later, they'd end up together in Delray Beach, Florida, as the two-teacher faculty of a school still under construction.

Alison (*pictured on right*) was called in 2017 as director of Divine Savior Academy (DSA)-Delray Beach Campus. While the building was going up, she was going out, meeting families, promoting the school, and enrolling new students for the following fall. It's not a hard sell when you yourself are sold on the blessings and benefits of this ministry. "We're excited to offer the families around us an excellent education," says Alison, "while also meeting their spiritual needs."

When Abby (*pictured on left*) came to Delray Beach in the summer of 2018, she joined Alison in the construction business. The women assembled a lot of furniture while also constructing lesson plans and designing their classrooms. They also built relationships and constructed marketing platforms on social media. Abby says public relations, marketing, and social media are not the first things that come to mind when you're thinking about being a teacher, but they're important parts of ministry too.

Now they're up and running in a shiny new facility. They opened in fall 2018 with prekindergarten and kindergarten classes. Another grade will be added every year, beginning with first grade in fall 2019. And they're *still* building.

"I love building relationships with people," Alison says, "whether that's fellow teachers and staff members, children in the classroom, parents, called workers in other locations, or members of our congregation. It's a privilege to see God at work in his people and to show his love to others."

This is actually Alison's second building project. She may be young,



BACK AT MLC

ABBY MEHLBERG '13

Activities: **Resident assistant, intramurals, Anchor, piano, choir**



but she knows her soffit and fascia. “Being part of a brand-new ministry and a mission church setting from the beginning has been exciting,” she says. “It helped me think about new ways to do ministry. We’ve been blessed with the opportunity to build a beautiful facility our academy can use to provide families in our community with a high-quality Christian education for their children, and those families then become part of the mission field for our church.”

Divine Savior Academy-Delray Beach is one of four DSA campuses, two in Florida and two in Texas. The other campuses are in Doral (near Miami), in Sienna Plantation (near Houston), and in Santa Rita Ranch (near Austin). Doral is the first—and largest—campus. Santa Rita Ranch will open in fall 2020. The schools serve a combined student body of more than 1,000, and that number too is building. To educate these children, additional faculty members are called every year, and the odds are high that several of you reading this article right now will be among them one day.

“I’m excited about the whole mission of DSA!” Abby says. “We’re here to reach people in the community, provide them with an excellent education, and share God’s Word with them. I love getting to know each student as a child of God. And many of these children are hearing these Bible stories for the first time. It’s amazing to watch the Lord work through this ministry!”

Abby’s Advice for You: “MLC allowed me to make lasting friendships with others who share the same faith and interests as me! MLC fueled my passion for teaching and sharing God’s Word with others and equipped me with the knowledge and skills to do that!”

Alison’s Advice for You:

“I wasn’t sure about MLC at first either, but I knew I wouldn’t regret giving it a try. Visit the campus, talk to students and faculty, pray about how God can use your gifts to serve others. Being at MLC is a wonderful opportunity to be in God’s Word, learn from Christian professors, and build friendships with other people who know and love Jesus.”



BACK AT MLC

ALISON KOLANDER '13

Activities: **Student Senate, resident assistant, teacher’s assistant (TA), writing coach, handbells, organ, intramurals**



LEAH NASS

Teaching, Coaching, Adulting



BACK AT MLC

LEAH NASS '17

Activities: **Volleyball, basketball, Student Senate, Admissions Student Ambassador, volleyball & track coach at MVLHS, piano, choir, intramurals**

Leah Nass—she's the one wearing sunglasses—says one of the biggest surprises about her call as a teacher, coach, and dorm supervisor at California Lutheran High School is the adulting suddenly expected of her.

“Some days I just scratch my head and wonder, ‘Wow. I have all these high school kids looking to me to make a decision and to constantly be a good example. No pressure.’ At only 24 years old, that much responsibility can feel pretty surreal.”

Don't worry. She can handle it. While at MLC, Leah double-majored in elementary ed and secondary life science ed, she coached high school students in volleyball and track, and she took herself to London for a little study abroad. This teaching, coaching, and “dorm supe” stuff—like making sure kids get up on time, finish their homework, do their chores, and eat—she's got it.

And she loves it. “It might sound cliché, but I genuinely enjoy getting to know and helping the students,” she says. “For starters, the students help *me* grow as a person and a teacher, so helping them is the very least I can do to say ‘thank you.’”

“More important, in one year of teaching, it has become very clear to me that each student has been uniquely crafted by God. Not that I never knew that before, but talking with them, laughing with them, teaching them is just

like this awesome, daily testimony of God's creativity, power, and abundant grace.”

Though she's only been at Cal Lutheran a short time, she already knows that she enjoys counseling kids, helping them sort out their lives, even more than teaching them in the classroom. So she's started an online master's program in school counseling at Concordia University Wisconsin. “This will be a useful dynamic to add to my ministry,” she says. Already she applies the new psych concepts she's learning to her classroom teaching style.

As you consider your post-high school options, Leah understands the conundrum: “It's tough figuring out the rest of your life at 18. I myself never knew if I wanted to be at MLC until maybe sophomore or junior year of *college*. I wasn't sold on being a teacher—even while I attended MLC—but I don't regret attending for a second. I was given so many opportunities to grow as a person and grow in my faith so I could be better prepared to share that gospel message in non-classroom situations.

“Regardless of the career path you choose,” she continues, “God will work through you and give you countless opportunities to fulfill this exciting calling we all have as Christians. We make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.”

That's some very adult advice.

CHRISTIAN WILLOCK

Not One to Toot His Own Horn



Christian Willock is a little busy this week. And every week.

As a talented musician, he spends a fair amount of time playing French horn in the Wind Symphony, singing in College Choir, and handling the big bells in Hosanna Ringers. As a gifted scholar, he finishes his own homework and then goes on the clock as a writing coach and as a tutor in Greek, Hebrew, Chinese, and German. Oh, and did we mention he's the president of Anchor, our student community service organization, *and* the vice president of Student Senate?

You need to press a bit to get this kind of information. You see, Christian's not one to toot his own horn—except in Wind Symphony, that is.

"At first I saw Wind Symphony as a way for me to give of myself and my abilities," he says, "but Wind Symphony has given me so much more. Lasting friendships, two amazing conductors and role models (Professor Wurster and Professor Meissner), and the chance to join with fellow believers to make music to our one true God."

Pastor IN THE MAKING: "Though not a pastor himself, my Grandpa Rupnow was my inspiration," Christian says. "His selfless attitude of service and faithful love were great motivators, and I wanted that to be the hallmark of everything I did in my life as well. During my senior year at LPS, I did consider taking an extended path to the ministry and applied to a few other colleges out of curiosity. But God closed the doors of those other colleges in the form of much-needed non-acceptance letters, so I continued my path to the pastoral ministry at MLC right after high school.

"I would love to be involved with the music in my future congregation as a called minister—by playing organ, piano, French horn, or handbells, by singing, or by doing whatever is needed! Preaching sermons is also something I look forward

to. I've been privileged to deliver two sermons at our evening chapel, and both experiences were just as beneficial to me as they were to the peers I preached to."

Dr. Mark Paustian calls men like Christian an answer to prayer. "It's a remarkable thing to see how the prayers of the church are answered in the young men that show up at our door at Martin Luther College. You can see the pastor in them, more each passing semester. Christian Willock combines cheerfulness and a pleasing personality with a deep interest in the Word of God and a fascination with how to communicate Christian truth to the hearts and minds of people."

Christian's Advice for You: "God will use all of what you are—your interests, skills, passions, dreams—to put you in the unique position he has for you to fill: whether that's training to be a called worker at MLC, studying at another college, entering the workforce right away, or so many other options. Consider your strengths and desires, and take that to him in prayer, trusting that he may close some doors in order to lead you to the open doors of his purposes for you."



CHRISTIAN WILLOCK

Luther Prep / St. John-Wauwatosa WI

Senior

Major: **Biblical Languages, Classical**

Minor: **Confessional Languages**

Activities: **Wind Symphony, Hosanna Ringers, College Choir, organ, writing coach, language tutor, Anchor president, Student Senate vice president, Daylight**



JOE GRAUMANN

He's Got No Quit

Coach Paul Koelpin says Joe Graumann is humble and quiet—but tenacious. “He’ll beat players to a ball because he has the drive to get there first. He competes to the end. There’s no quit in his style of play.”

Joe’s tenacity paid off in conference-leading stats in three categories—goals (12), assists (8), and points (32)—and in multiple honors: Third Team All-North Region (United Soccer Coaches), UMAC Offensive Player of the Year, and First Team All-UMAC.

“I’m pleased for the recognition Joe’s received,” Koelpin says, “but he reacts with an embarrassed shrug when you talk about his accomplishments. He knows it’s not all about him—team and teammates come first.”

When interviewed, Joe never mentions the accolades he earned. He talks about his team. “It was a fantastic year, making the third straight appearance in the conference tournament. It was amazing playing the game I love with my Christian brothers and making memories I’ll never forget.”

Soccer is just one highpoint in Joe’s campus life. “A campus blessing I enjoy very much is the abundance of Bible studies,”

he says. “It seems like there’s a Bible study for every day of the week, whether they’re student-run or run by one of our tutors. Getting to dig into sections of the Bible and grow in knowledge and faith with my friends is amazing, and I will never take that for granted.”

As a future pastor, Joe plans to dig into Scripture his whole life. Coach Koelpin notes the parallels: “Joe has a desire to serve the church, and there are so many comparisons that can be made to athletics. The studies, like a soccer match, aren’t easy, so Joe knows that preparation for ministry requires ‘strict training.’ He needs to ‘always give himself fully to the work of the LORD’ because that type of effort is truly ‘never in vain.’”

Pastor IN THE MAKING: “I’m very glad I ended up coming to MLC,” Joe says, “and a lot of thanks and credit is due to my mom. Both my parents were very encouraging, but growing up and watching my mom serve as a called worker gave me a super positive outlook on ministry. My teachers at Lakeside Lutheran were very instrumental as well, especially Pastor Clark Schultz. He was my soccer coach at Lakeside, but—more important—he gave me lots of encouragement to use my gifts and pursue called ministry. I’m now in my junior year in the preseminary track, and I thank God every day for the opportunities here at MLC to praise him with the gifts and abilities he’s given us.”

Joe’s Advice for You: “Just give it a year at MLC and see how it goes. MLC is not only a great place to get a teaching degree or start on the pastor track, but it’s also a great place for young Christians to grow in their faith.”



JOE GRAUMANN

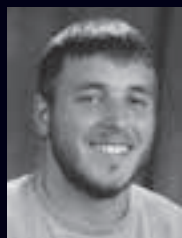
Lakeside LHS / Bethany-Fort Atkinson WI
Junior

Major: **Biblical Languages, Koine**
Emphasis: **Latin**

Activities: **Soccer, intramurals, usher crew, VBS/soccer camps in Canada and Alaska**

JAKE UNKE

He Gets an 'A' for Adventure



BACK AT MLC

JAKE UNKE '12

Activities: Basketball, football, talent shows (“but my talent was questionable”)

The second week of school, Jake Unke took his seventh and eighth graders on an adventure. They traveled five hours north from Divine Savior Academy-Sienna Plantation, Texas, to Camp Shiloh for an outdoor retreat (*pictured*).

Mr. Unke was diving into Adventure Education, a learning model that takes kids out of their comfort zones—and away from their devices—to break down interpersonal barriers and create a cohesive group. Jake explains that by removing the pressures and assumptions of social media, and by putting students together into awkward or difficult situations, they learn to work together, to trust one another, and to have fun. It’s teambuilding for teenagers. “My goal is to have students learn about their classmates on a deeper level,” Jake says, “and to respect one another as individuals who are blessed differently by God’s abundant grace.”

Jake explored Adventure Education during his first master’s program at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, and it’s become a highlight of his ministry. “I love the outdoors, and I get to take kids camping and on retreats to cabins on a lake. Does it get any better than that?”

The adventures don’t end when the bus leaves Camp Shiloh though. This is middle school, after all. “In grade 7-8, students are on a rollercoaster of emotions and hormones,” he says.

“I buckle myself into the same thrill ride every day, to endure all the highs and lows along with them. My role changes by the day: role model, father figure, shoulder to cry on, court jester, dose of reality . . . you name it!”

While he continues in this ministry, Jake is also working on his second master’s degree through the WELS 21st-Century Principal Cohort. “This is a synod-funded training program,” he explains, “for people who’ve been nominated for their leadership skills. I’ll receive a second master’s degree, an MS-Educational Administration through MLC, and I’ve attended national conferences and built relationships with other aspiring educational leaders within our synod. I was very honored to learn I’d been nominated. This program has truly been a blessing for my ministry!”

Mr. Unke’s advice for you is simple: “It doesn’t hurt to give MLC a try. I had no intentions of being a teacher when I enrolled at MLC. I simply wanted to continue competing in sports, and I knew that through MLC these opportunities would be available. By the end of my freshman year, I had such a tight-knit group of friends, there was no way I was leaving.”

Jake also advises you to be ready for anything. The one thing he never expected to do as a teacher is to plunge toilets. “I don’t remember that in the MLC curriculum,” he says. But that’s okay. It’s all part of the adventure.



JON ENTER

No Such Thing as a Cookie-Cutter Pastor



BACK AT MLC

JON ENTER '00

Activities: **Student Senate, Admissions assistant and tour guide, choir, security guard, cafeteria worker**

Jon Enter learned long ago that there are a thousand different ways to be a pastor.

He encourages you to get beyond your own cookie-cutter view: “Don’t look only at the small cross section of pastors and teachers you know and think you have to be like them,” he says.

“Whatever your drive, your passion, that will be the focus of your classroom or your church. So if you’ve got a deep love for helping the homeless, or for working with the elderly, or for music, or whatever—we need you. We need all different kinds of preachers and teachers, so that the body of believers is stronger.”

Jon’s own passion is working with youth. He had a flourishing youth ministry as a parish pastor at Divine Savior-West Palm Beach, Florida, and served as district youth coordinator. This year he’s at St. Croix Lutheran Academy (*pictured*), working with teens throughout the day. “I now have a church of 101 seniors in religion class. And since the underclassmen are basically prospects, I figure I’ll have a 100% conversion rate. Of course, come graduation, I’ll also have 100% backdoor losses. But that’s okay.”

Pastor Enter knows the importance of this ministry. “Youth aren’t the future of the church. They’re the church *now*. We need to get them active now, or—statistically and sadly—we’ll lose them.” One way he strives to do this is by creating a safe space for teens. “Teens don’t care how you look or how cool you are,” he says. “They can smell bogus a mile away. But if you genuinely care about them, they begin to trust you. They share their fears and insecurities. They talk about their struggles in the faith. And we all can be honest about the complexities of life. God’s Word is black and white, but living in God’s Word is messy.”

Teaching high school is a big change for Pastor Enter, but it’s not the only surprising part of his ministry. He never would have imagined he’d flip on the TV and see himself guest-preaching on *Time of Grace*, a national worship program . . . or that he’d preach to 2,000 teenagers at youth rallies . . . or that he’d fly around the country, encouraging and leading and sharing Jesus.

So he encourages you to jump into this ministry adventure, where there are no cookie-cutter patterns, where you don’t know what surprises God has in store—maybe a TV ministry, or a Minnesota high school, or a church near the beach in Florida. After all, he says, “Someone’s gotta preach to the tan people.”

DEREK GULRUD

Servant-Leader



“Derek is the kind of student who will make a terrific called worker one day,” says his football coach, Professor Mark Stein. “He’s a well-rounded young man who plays left tackle on a Conference Championship team and the next day can play guitar to help lead worship in chapel. He has the servant-minded leadership a future minister of the gospel needs.”

Both football and guitar are ingredients in Derek’s busy life at MLC. He says football is a great sport. “You get to work hard but also have fun with your coaches and friends. I think the offensive line has the most fun, but maybe that’s just me. Some people think football is only a fall sport, but we’re in football mode year-round. With our awesome Olympic lifting program, we’ve come a long way.”

As a D3 athlete, Derek isn’t planning to go pro. “Coach Stein always says that the goal here is player development. I really like that. We’re going to be teachers and pastors one day, so we’re here to develop ourselves physically and mentally. We’re taught to be servant-leaders and to lead by example.”

Derek practiced some serious servant-leadership last summer, using both his athletic and musical skills across the continent. It started in June. He got back from the MLC Spanish immersion trip to Argentina at 2 am one night, and by 4 am, he was heading west with his guitar and fellow Knight and Lakeside alum, Dayne Kopfer. They led VBS in Missoula, Montana; then headed back east to Mississauga, Ontario, for soccer camp; then southeast a bit to Camp Chi Rho in Maryland for an old-fashioned summer camp. “Tents in the woods, no phones, just fun, kids, and God’s Word,” he says. “It did rain a lot, but it was awesome.” Then back to Black River Falls, Wisconsin, for another soccer VBS. “The summer was an experience unlike any other,” he says, “and we made connections all along the way.”

Teacher IN THE MAKING: Large animal veterinarian was Derek’s original goal—until he

realized you need to be good at math and science, which were not his strong suits. Music, on the other hand, was. He remembers the feeling of accomplishment at Choral Fest at Kettle Moraine LHS his junior year. “I looked out and saw all the directors standing up and applauding as loudly as they could. That’s when I decided, this is what I want to do someday. I want to be in their shoes and have pride in my choir because of the hard work they put in to praise God with their voices.” He’d also love to teach Spanish. “And,” he says, “if I could be an offensive line coach too, that would be icing on the cake.”

Derek’s Advice for You: “Many kids don’t like school. I can’t say that I loved it either, but what I did love was the relationships you make in school. As a teacher, you’re building relationships every single day—with your students and your faculty members. You can be an inspiration to a kid just like you. Why not give it a chance?”



DEREK GULRUD

Lakeside LHS / St. John-Waterloo WI
Sophomore

Major: **Secondary Vocal Music Ed**

Major: **Secondary Spanish Ed**

Activities: **College Choir, football, piano, voice, Daylight, VBS at home church, teach guitar**



JESSE STERN

Ministry Brewed Locally



BACK AT MLC

JESSE STERN '03

Activities: **Intramurals, tennis**

Pastor Jesse Stern serves two congregations in very different Colorado communities, and he's working hard to meet the gospel needs of both. He calls it ministry brewed locally.

He describes Boulder as "heavily spiritual, but decreasingly religious." His goal, then, is developing relationships—meaningful and repeated—and then "using those connections to connect hearts to Jesus." Two ways that Peace-Boulder initiates relationships: a community garden and a drop-in center for kids. "Think: a McDonald's play-place or a dog-park for children," he says.

At Our Savior-Longmont, where Jesse is vacancy pastor, they're working on a concept they call "Boomers & Beyond." Noting that other Longmont churches focus on youth and young families, Our Savior reaches out to "the venerable generations who have age-experience on their side," he says. Each session of Boomers & Beyond includes a Bible class and then a presentation by a local with professional, practical advice or a story and wisdom to share.

"Different communities," Pastor Stern says of Boulder and Longmont, "different spirits, different styles, different

dynamics . . . but the same powerful Word and wonderfully patient people.

"In a non-creepy way, people fascinate me," he continues. "Their histories and habits, their personalities and professions, their cultures and communities. It's a stunning thing to lean in to these wonderful communities and listen to what's on the heart, and listen for opportunities to lay the good news on hearts, hearts that so desperately need to hear what the Friend of Sinners has done for the world, for them. So it's about people . . . and something brewed locally."

Because he cares about people, Jesse invites you to text or call him to talk about your own journey. (Yes, he asked us to print his phone number: 720.315.0910.) And he encourages you not to be afraid to talk to others too—your peers, your pastors and teachers, your family, and especially "the One who knows his plans for you."

And an important closing note: "It's totally ok if you go to MLC and then decide to serve the Savior in another vocation," Jesse says. "Please, please, please don't feel ministry-guilty if that's what you decide to do!"

HEIDI KOSTRZEWA



Adding to the Beauty

Some students just make the world a little more beautiful. Heidi Kostrzewa does that in a dozen different ways.

Over Christmas break, she joined an MLC-sponsored hurricane cleanup team, restoring some beauty to areas of Florida devastated by wind and water.

On campus she's an officer of AIM (Art in Ministry club), which sponsors student art activities, including the painting of two murals and the giant Luther seal outside the Wittenberg Auditorium. "I like to consider us a beautification committee," she says.

As an RA (resident assistant), Heidi adds beauty to campus in other ways. "Heidi is the type of student who takes time for everyone," says Angie Scharf, women's services director. "She's intentional in her desire to connect, and she's known for doing the little things for the ladies on her floor, whether it be getting them a cup of Gatorade when they aren't feeling well or getting a group card going for someone who's lost a loved one."

Heidi also leads weekly Bible studies. "I love being able to give comfort to my classmates who are willing to share with me the personal troubles going on in their lives," she says.

Ms. Scharf sees that too: "When talking with Heidi, you can't miss seeing the love of her Savior in how she carries herself as a Christian woman. She encourages. She cares. She meets people where they are at and lets her faith shine."

Teacher IN THE MAKING: In high school, Heidi had visited MLC on a Focus on Ministry trip, and she instantly loved the campus and the town. But she was set on nursing and had been accepted into a University of Wisconsin school. During her senior year, however, something didn't feel right. "I was afraid that if I attended the UW school, my faith might take a back seat to my academics. My faith being of higher priority than the things the other college had to offer, I decided to attend MLC." She may still pursue a medical career later, but for now she's loving MLC—especially the Chinese program—and God willing, she's planning to teach in China after graduation. She's sure to add some beauty there too.

Heidi's Advice for You: "God doesn't need you to be a called worker. You might be surprised with this type of advice, but it's true. God doesn't intend for us to guilt ourselves into a career or line of ministry. Jesus says in Luke that if we keep silent, the rocks will cry out his message. So use your talents where you think they best fit. But also know that in whatever career you pursue, you are first called to live as a child and minister of Christ. He goes with you, and his message goes with you, wherever life takes you."



HEIDI KOSTRZEWA

WISCO / St. John-Wauwatosa

Senior

Major: Elementary Ed

Minor: Coaching

Activities: Art in Ministry, Anchor, resident assistant, Daylight, small-group Bible study leader, WELS Women's Ministry, track, soccer, choir, intramurals



EMILY SCHMIDT

Already in Teacher Mode

She already looks like a teacher, doesn't she? That's because Emily Schmidt has been in teacher mode for a long time.

On campus, Emily runs New Friends, a Jesus Cares organization for individuals with special needs. Every month, Emily and other MLC students welcome 50-100 of their "new friends" to a cafeteria supper, devotion, and craft. "This is such a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel with those who might not always hear it," she says, "and to remind them they're God's children, despite whatever labels the world puts on them."

Off campus, this June Emily will begin her third summer running a music program at Immanuel-Willmar, Minnesota. She teaches a weekly Bible Academy, plays organ, sings, directs choir, and—here's the big part—teaches weekly music lessons. Last summer she taught 85 lessons to 67 students, 58 of whom were non-members. Some drove 45 minutes for their lessons with her. "I get to witness to these students and their families, and work with the pastor to connect with prospective families," she says. "It's really been a wonderful learning experience."

Professor Adrian Smith, Emily's advisor and College Choir director, has noted Emily's service. "She's one of these students who show a true servant's heart in their work on and off campus," he says. "She's a gifted musician and is always looking for ways to continue growing and refining her skills in preparation for full-time ministry."

Teacher IN THE MAKING: Emily's wanted to be a teacher forever, citing her mom, Sharon (*nee* Becker) Schmidt, and her cousin Stephanie (*nee* Punke) Smith as role models. Her initial plan to major in elementary ed and early childhood ed was upended her junior year at KML when she got to direct the band. "That one experience changed everything," she says. Her 2020 diploma will now say elementary ed and secondary instrumental music ed. Looking ahead, Emily

knows God's in charge, but she hopes that congregational music is part of her call one day. She also hopes to continue with Jesus Cares Ministries, maybe even starting a chapter if her congregation doesn't have one.

Emily's Advice for You: "Don't discount something you're excited or passionate about. There are so many ways for you to serve in God's kingdom, whether through MLC or elsewhere, so find something you'll enjoy! If you're thinking about the education field, don't forget about MLC! We receive such a quality education, and I feel extremely prepared to step into my own classroom."



EMILY SCHMIDT

Kettle Moraine LHS / Crown of Life-Hubertus WI
Senior

Major: **Elementary Ed**

Major: **Secondary Instrumental Music Ed**

Activities: **Wind Symphony, College Choir, Forum, New Friends, praise ensembles, organ, voice, oboe**

JUSTUS MCKENZIE

Doing “Justus” to Ministry Training



If Justus McKenzie isn't memorizing vocables, chances are he's lifting weights or playing drums—all regular parts of his schedule at MLC.

Pictured, you see him playing drums at an MLC talent show, but more often you'll find him and his drums in Chapel of the Christ. “Playing the drums for chapel feels like such a blessing every time I get to do it,” he says. “I think of it as a way to worship, like David danced before God, and it's just amazing to share that with a chapel full of professors and students worshipping too.”

Look at that picture a little more closely, and you can see evidence of his time in the weight room too. It's a discipline that's served him well.

“Justus is one of those faithful students who has gained a good amount of self-discipline from his dedication to weightlifting,” says Dr. Keith Wessel, “and transferred that to his academics. I think especially of how he had to successfully navigate the waters of three different foreign languages (Latin, Greek, and Hebrew) during his junior year as he completed the requirements of his program.”

Pastor IN THE MAKING: Justus learned admiration for the pastoral ministry early—from watching his dad. “Every Sunday my family would go to the Bible class my dad leads, and I was always just in awe at how well he could communicate what God is saying to his people.” It was during a religion class with Pastor Dave Wenzel at FVL that it hit him: “I could actually share the gospel for a living. I never second-guessed being a pastor from that point on.”

Though he's often imagined himself teaching religion at a high school or in a big church packed with people every Sunday, “as time goes on,” he says, “I'm realizing more and more that the gospel is about spreading God's love to

individual people. I really love talking to people one on one and having a close connection with people that way. But I'll be so happy and feel so honored with whatever work God puts in front of me.”

Justus's Advice for You: “Just serve God in whatever you decide to do. Make your decision based on what God has done for you. Don't look for a way to change the world—look for a way to show Jesus to the world. “



JUSTUS MCKENZIE

Fox Valley LHS / Trinity-Neenah WI

Senior

Major: **Biblical Languages, Classical**

Emphasis: **Latin**

Activities: **Chapel praise ensembles, campus security team, intramurals**



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