

# MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE INFOCUS

FALL 2020



## In This Issue . . .

Our New President

MLC at 25 Years

†IWILL4U† Campus & COVID-19

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Haley Martin '24, Madison Rich '22,  
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# Thanksgiving . . . Not Sympathy!

By President Rich Gurgel NWC '81, WLS '86



"Wow, what a strange time to begin as a college president!" Since arriving in New Ulm in July, many people's conversations with me have begun with a statement like that. The speakers are displaying commendable sympathy as they put themselves into my shoes.

But I'm learning to respond to those statements differently than I did at first. No longer am I simply smiling and shaking my head in agreement. Instead, I'm learning to respond to words of sympathy with words of thanksgiving as I remember that God knows how to pour out blessings even in strange times. Many such reasons to be thankful are pictured throughout this edition of *InFocus*, but here are a few I'll mention:

- I'm thankful as I watch our students learn what it means to live out a selfless, servant-hearted mindset. The current challenges are a daily laboratory where they can practice what it means to put aside their own preferences for their ideal "college experience." They did everything they could to enable us to train for gospel ministry together on campus throughout this first semester. And, by God's grace, we were able to do that for ten weeks! Now, as you read this, we are finishing the semester online.
- I'm thankful as I observe our faculty's flexibility. They maximized beautiful fall days by holding class outdoors. Inside, they faithfully prioritized both student learning and student safety. And now they've worked hard to move yet again to completely online platforms. They are modeling the kind of appropriate flexibility that future ministry challenges will require from their students.
- I'm thankful as I see student leaders, staff, and faculty reimagine how we do things at MLC. As we replace long-repeated patterns that worked well enough in the past, often we're finding better patterns that may be a blessing to our life together on campus long after this pandemic is but a memory.

Our saving God is incredibly good to us! We see that in big ways, such as at his Son's cross and empty tomb. But if we're watching, we can see that in many small ways as well. God never wastes anything. He transforms all obstacles into opportunities for his gospel to mature us in faith and hope and love.

That's the developing story of this 2020-2021 school year. And for that, we do not ask for your sympathy. We ask you to join us in giving thanks!

*Please read more about our new president on pages 4-7!*

### On the cover:

The cross country runners are greeted by a welcoming campus family crowd Homecoming weekend.

MLC *InFocus* is published by Martin Luther College Mission Advancement Office and is distributed free of charge to students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and friends. Comments are welcomed and should be directed to [gaugerlf@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:gaugerlf@mlc-wels.edu) or Laurie Gauger, MLC *InFocus*, 1995 Luther Court, New Ulm MN 56073.

The mission of MLC is to train a corps of Christian witnesses who are qualified to meet the ministry needs of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.



The alumni photos at the bottom of the pages are from the anniversary classes of MLC, NWC, and DMLC: '41, '46, '51, '56, '61, '66, '71, '76, '81, '86, '91, '96, '01, '06, '11, and '16. Thanks to Alumni Director Steve Balza DMLC '93, who provided this random selection of alumni.



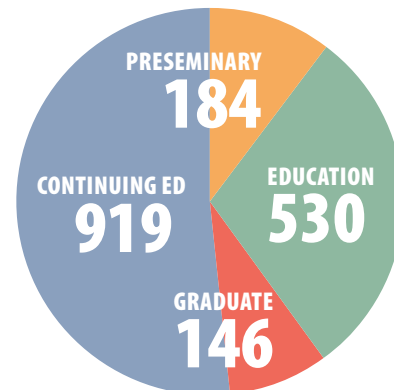
## FUTURE KNIGHT

Isabel Dorn, daughter of Tyler MLC '14 and Katelynn (Steinke) Dorn MLC '14 likes to keep up with campus news. She's hoping to connect with other members of the class of 2041.

## ENROLLMENT 2020-2021

**UNDERGRADS: 714**

**TOTAL: 1,779**



**51% Women 49% Men**

**99% Traditional Age Students**

## FIRST-YEAR STUDENT PROFILE:

**3.61** Average HS GPA

**24.4** Average ACT

**95** On-campus Faculty  
(tenured, adjunct, other)



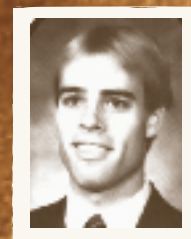
**Elizabeth Koester**  
DMLC 1956  
Hudson NY



**Michael Kampman**  
MLC 2001  
Rio Rancho NM



**Colleen Gunderson**  
DMLC 1966  
South Shore SD



**Steven Rosenbaum**  
DMLC 1986  
Saginaw MI

2020

# RICH GURGEL

PASTOR, PROFESSOR, PARENT . . .  
AND NOW *President*



Martin Luther College is pleased to announce the arrival of its new president, Rev. Dr. Richard Gurgel.

President Gurgel replaces President Mark Zarling, who retired this June after serving the college from 2007 to 2020.

President Gurgel brings decades of experience in both ministerial education and parish ministry, as well as 18 years of experience as an MLC parent. Rich and his wife, Sue, have five boys, all graduates of the college he is now leading.

**Pastor, Professor, Parent:** From 1999 to 2020, Gurgel served as a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) in Mequon, Wisconsin, where future pastors complete their ministerial training. There he taught Christian education, homiletics (preaching), and Christian doctrine.

In 2010, he was appointed WLS's first director of the Grow in Grace Institute, the continuing education arm of the seminary. There he partnered with people on and off campus to begin

retreats for pastors and wives, establish a mentoring program for new pastors, and make formal continuing education courses more accessible to pastors.

Prior to his tenure as a seminary professor, Gurgel served as the pastor of two WELS parishes: Gethsemane in Oklahoma City (1986-1992) and David's Star in Jackson, Wisconsin (1992-1998). He also served as an emergency instructor for one year while still a seminary student, teaching religion and language arts, and coaching basketball at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School in Jackson, Wisconsin (1982-1983).

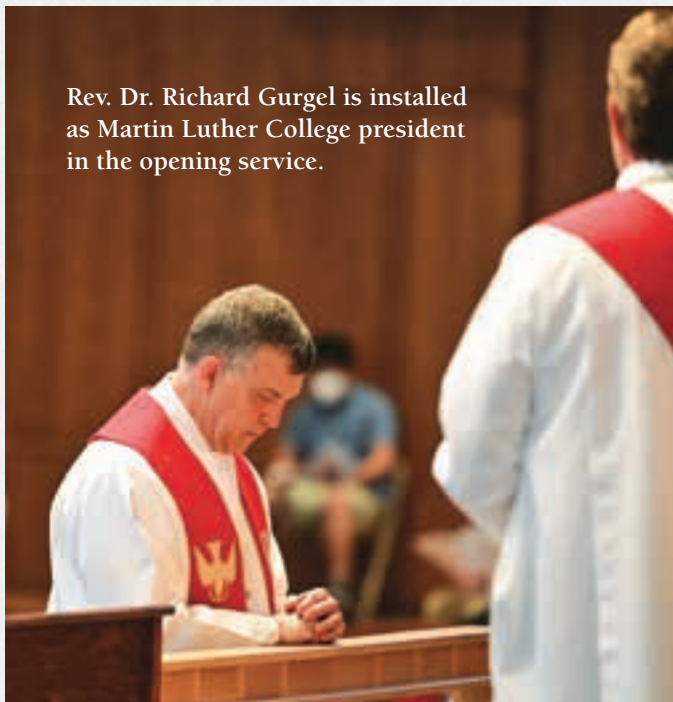
"God wastes nothing," he says. "At each place, God had so much for me to learn in order to be a blessing to those he called me to serve. That encourages me that he can help me through another (steep) learning curve as I serve with my new partners in ministry at MLC."

He brings another perspective to this call as well. For almost two decades, Rich and Sue were MLC parents, "making tuition and room and board payments to MLC and watching how our sons were blessed as they grew in Christian maturity on this campus."

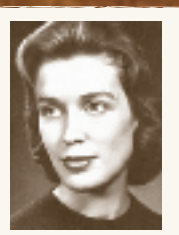
It is through these three lenses—pastor, professor, and parent—that Gurgel sees the college's blessings as well as its challenges.

**Blessings:** "Without claiming that we have the perfect worker training system in the WELS," he says, "we have many reasons to give thanks for the careful and thorough training we expect that the next generation of our pastors, teachers, and staff ministers will receive. Since almost every future called worker in our synod is part of the MLC family at some point, MLC is a pivotal part of maintaining that careful and thorough training. A rich heritage has been handed down to us, and now is our time to pass that on to others."

That rich heritage is founded on another blessing: the gospel itself. "As president, I also hope to guard our Lutheran understanding of the centrality of the gospel as it comes to us in the means of grace. If we lose our focus on the comfort and the power of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, then we lose the beating heart of our Christian faith and the power and strength to serve in the public ministry.



Rev. Dr. Richard Gurgel is installed as Martin Luther College president in the opening service.



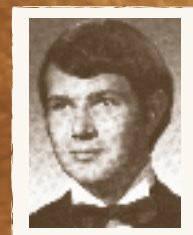
**Elaine Buss**  
DMLC 1961  
Appleton WI



**Don Dengler**  
NWC 1966  
Bay City MI



**Julie Detjen**  
DMLC 1986  
Combined Locks WI



**Thomas Westendorf**  
NWC 1971  
Bay City MI

"We are not all about creating Bible trivia experts on this campus," he continues, "but about raising up witnesses for Christ who have tasted and seen for themselves how good and gracious is their saving God. That love of Christ empowers faith and ministry."

**Challenges:** Also looming large in Gurgel's thinking and praying are three challenges the college faces: reducing student debt, enhancing campus facilities, and offering students the best education possible, one that simultaneously holds firm to the unchanging gospel and rises to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world.

- **Student Debt:** Regarding that first challenge, Gurgel wants to explore how the college can better collaborate with students, parents, donors, and the synod to reduce significantly the debt many students carry as they leave MLC.

"As a synod, we have a huge stake in raising up a new generation of well-trained and faithful called workers. We must do all we can to avoid sending students out with educational debt that will burden them for years in public ministry and hinder their ability to raise a family. We are in this together as a synod. There is much more that we can do."

- **Facilities:** The second challenge focuses on the campus itself. Gurgel would like to expand and update the aging buildings and infrastructure here on the hill. He sees this not only as an issue of good stewardship but also as an important factor in recruiting new candidates for the public ministry.

He says, "We need to remain an attractive option in an increasingly competitive market as high school students make decisions about the college they will attend. While it is only the gospel that can shape and form the next generation of servant-hearted leaders for our schools and churches, we do not want our campus and its facilities to become a deterrent to our ability to welcome them to our school."

- **Educational Excellence:** The third challenge is ongoing for every faculty member. "We must make sure we are equipping our students with an outstanding education that prepares them well to be ministers of the gospel in the 21st-century world. We have much to give thanks for, but we cannot close our eyes to where we can grow."

**A President's Prayers:** As President Gurgel takes the mantle, he does so in humility and prayer.

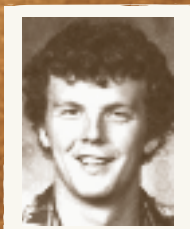
"I pray that God keeps me ever learning what it means to shepherd this campus with a humble gospel heart, in a way that

proves a blessing to all who call this campus their home (students, faculty, staff, and administration). For our students, I pray that God will continue to use our campus to grow within them humble servant hearts, like their Savior's, so that they stand out as lights in the darkness of a me-first world. For our faculty, staff, and administration, I pray that everyone who serves on this campus finds joy—under the cross—in that service.

"I have slowly learned," he continues, "that I will be of little use to anyone I've been called to serve if my own soul is not feeding daily on the width, height, length, and depth of the love of God that is in Christ Jesus my Lord. I have learned not to apologize for spending a considerable time each morning in Word and prayer so that God's grace may bless me and enable me, in whatever way he might please that day, to be a blessing to others."



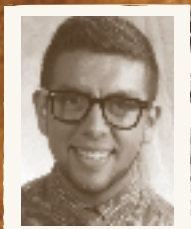
**Esther  
List**  
DMLC 1976  
Norborne MO



**Craig  
Morgan**  
DMLC 1981  
Watertown WI



**Amy  
Pundt**  
MLC 2001  
Globe AZ



**Santiago  
Botero**  
MLC 2016  
Bogotá, Colombia

2020



# RICH GURGEL

PASTOR, PROFESSOR, PARENT . . .  
AND NOW *President*

## Quick Facts: President Rich Gurgel



The Gurgels: Nathan, Ryan, Sue, Rich, Philip, Bradley, and Stephen

### Family

Rich's wife, Sue, taught kindergarten for the past 17 years at Christ Alone Lutheran School in Mequon, Wisconsin. They enjoy supporting their five boys with their God-given callings and families:

- **Philip** MLC '06 is the Hispanic outreach pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wisconsin. He and his wife, Christa, have two sons, Theophilus and Amadeus.
- **Bradley** MLC '08 is the principal and upper-grade teacher at St. Peter Lutheran School in St. Peter, Minnesota. He and his wife, **Bethany (Warnecke)** MLC '08, have four children: Kayla, Mason, Elianna, and Aiden.
- **Stephen** MLC '11 is the principal and grade 7-8 teacher at St. Paul Lutheran School in Rapid City, South Dakota. He and his wife, **Megan (Ziel)** MLC '11, have two children: Warren and Whitney.
- **Nathan** MLC '14 teaches physical education, business, accounting, and economics at Manitowoc Lutheran High School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.
- **Ryan** MLC '20 is continuing his pursuit of the pastoral ministry this fall at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

### Education

- B.A. Northwestern College 1981
- M.Div. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary 1986
- D.Min. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School 2010

### Ministry

- Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School 1982-1983
- Gethsemane-Oklahoma City 1986-1992
- David's Star-Jackson, Wisconsin 1992-1998
- Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary 1999-2020

### Hobbies

Hiking, biking ("I did the New Ulm circle tour twice in my first week here!"), theater performances, baseball ("I especially enjoyed coaching Little League and high school ball for about 25 years.")

### Music

Classical, sacred choral ("My favorite musical events by far each year have been the MLC and WLS Christmas concerts.")

### Books

Books on the art and science of preaching the gospel and on leadership in the public ministry, John Grisham novels, biographies, historical fiction

### Did you know?

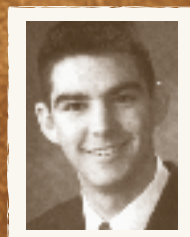
Achieving a longtime dream, President Gurgel became a certified Gallup Strengths Coach. He hopes to use that training at MLC—and later, in his retirement—to help people grow in all their God-given callings.



**Daniel  
Myers**  
NWC 1976  
Colorado Springs



**Jill  
Nass**  
DMLC 1981  
Watertown WI



**Nathan  
Smith**  
MLC 2001  
Zumbrota MN



**Lacey  
Bitcon**  
MLC 2006  
San Jose

## New President Meets New Students

Sometimes a newbie just wants to meet another newbie.

MLC's new president, Rich Gurgel (*pictured*), met with each first-year this fall to see how they were settling in and to hear about their paths to the ministry.

"I enjoyed hearing the stories from each of the first-years about the many different people God used to get them thinking about public ministry," he said. "Encouraging words from moms and dads led the way by far. Parents should never underestimate their God-given influence!"

"And there were also many stories of a teacher in grade school or high school, or the pastor of their home congregation, who also spoke a word of encouragement. Sometimes it's a single memorable conversation that got these young people thinking about serving in gospel ministry."



## First-Year Presidential Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to these first-year students who ranked #1 in their high school graduating class.

Carolyn Bauer  
California LHS

Josephine Bieberitz  
Luther Prep

Anna Borgwardt  
Winnebago LA

Daniel Buth  
Michigan Luth Sem

Zachary Cole  
Manitowoc LHS

Noah Cook  
Luther Prep

Elijah Dorn  
Illinois LHS

Owen Eubank  
Michigan Luth Sem

Brooke Flunker  
Winneconne HS-WI

Charis Glende  
Luther Prep

Stephanie Hintz  
Independence HS-TN

Abigail Kesting  
Kettle Moraine LHS

Leah Klammer  
Luther Prep

Jacob Leyrer  
Luther Prep

Kaitlyn Martin  
Kettle Moraine LHS

Carson Oestreich  
Pierce HS-NE

Nathan Pausma  
Winnebago LA

Kendra Rivera  
Michigan Luth Sem

Grace Russell  
Shoreland LHS

Matthias Sandman  
St. Croix LA

Joel Sauer  
Luther Prep

Kirsten Sayles  
Michigan Luth Sem

Katlyn Schwab  
Michigan Luth Sem

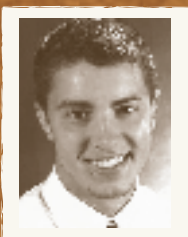
Matthew Springer  
St. Peter HS-MN

Claire Tomhave  
Luther Prep

Bethany Valleau  
St. Croix LA

Annaliese Wenz  
Shepherd HS-MT

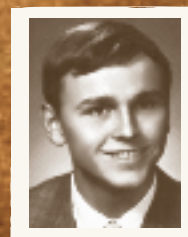
Hannah Westra  
Luther Prep



**Andrew Danner**  
MLC 2011  
West Saint Paul MN



**Jenna Bolda**  
MLC 2011  
Fall River WI



**Clarence Jenkins**  
DMLC 1971  
Essexville MI



**Ruth Mueller**  
DMLC 1971  
Winona MN

## † IWILL4U †



By Vice President Jeff Schone  
NWC '83, WLS '87

VP Schone shared the following thoughts in the MLC ParentsPage. Though directed to parents of first-year students, the article illustrates to all InFocus readers what life has been like on our campus this semester.

The Lord protects us, and he allowed us to meet in person, on campus, all the way to October 27.

At that point, we excused the students to go home, and we pivoted to online learning for the remainder of the semester.

One thing God accomplished was giving our students—your students—a willing spirit of cooperation and a positive desire to adapt for the benefit of the campus family.

Our theme on campus explained this gift from God, that through faith in Christ and by his power, “I will wear a mask for

you. . . . I will maintain a careful distance for you. . . . I will refrain from traveling off-campus for you. . . . † IWILL4U †.”

Notice that the † IWILL4U † slogan has a cross both before and after it. This is meant to communicate the power behind our life of sanctification and love, namely the love and redemption of Christ. This is also the truth about our Christian freedom, namely, that we are free to love and serve God and our neighbor, unbound by the chains of sin and guilt and condemnation.

In Christian freedom, then, our students showed concern for others by practicing masking and social distancing.



President Rich Gurgel removes his mask briefly to welcome viewers to the Homecoming Music Showcase. The president has consistently encouraged students, faculty, and staff to show concern for each other and to see the blessings in this strange semester.



At Orientation, MLC students made sure the first-years had a good time in spite of the pandemic limitations.

But don't picture them holed up in their dorm rooms. They were going to class—sometimes under the trees, worshipping in Chapel of the Christ, eating at the 24 new picnic tables, playing disc golf and ultimate Frisbee, enjoying “Knight Time” music and games at the new Augustana/Concord patio, and even taking a long bike ride with President Gurgel.

And the extra time spent in the fresh outdoor air put big smiles behind all our masks.

We're grateful to the Lord for his tender care, to faculty and staff for going the extra mile to keep campus safe as long as possible, and to our students for their obvious care and concern for others.



Harvey Witte  
NWC 1951  
Hutchinson MN



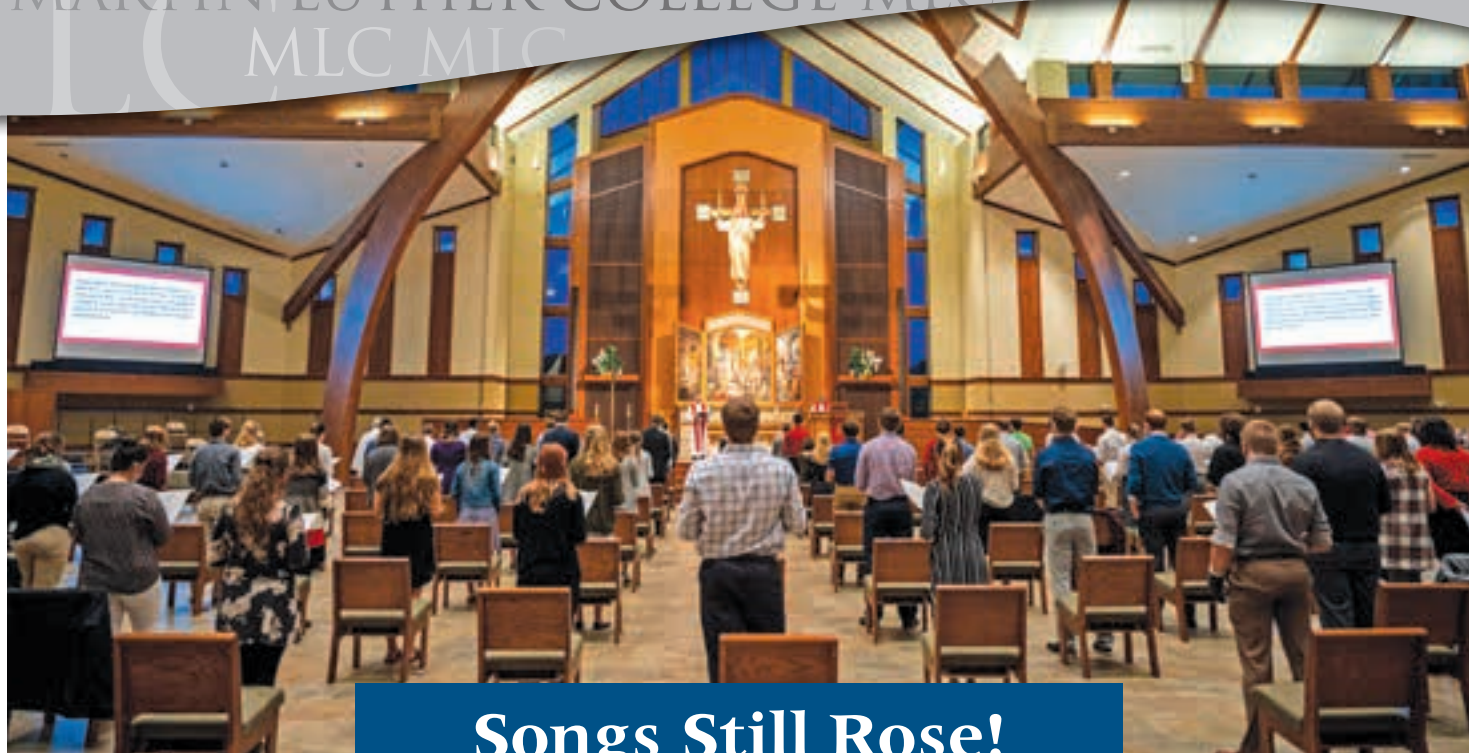
Sarah Swift  
MLC 1996  
Kent WA



John Parcher  
NWC 1956  
Flint MI



Stephanie Humann  
MLC 2011  
Federal Way WA



## Songs Still Rose!

The pandemic altered the look of Martin Luther College worship, but not the regularity. The campus family worshiped twice a day as we always have, and we added weekend worship to allow students to stay on the hill. Spacing and masking allowed for in-person singing and praying, and the students alternated worshiping in person and livestreaming worship from their dorm rooms.



## MLC Christmas Concert

The MLC College Choir, College Chorale, Women's Choir, Männerchor, Wind Symphony, and Hosanna Ringers present

Hymns and anthems to celebrate  
the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Light from Light Eternal.

Watch it in the comfort of your home  
Saturday, December 5, at 7:30 pm.

The concert will also be archived for later viewing at  
[mlc-wels.edu/streams/](http://mlc-wels.edu/streams/)



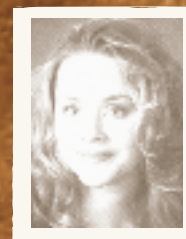
**Aaron Voss**  
MLC 2011  
Williamston MI



**Hannah Apt**  
MLC 2016  
Crete IL



**Thomas Trapp**  
NWC 1971  
New Ulm MN



**Michelle Horn**  
MLC 1996  
Fond du Lac WI

here on the

hill



## Play Ball!

### *Knights Adapt to Fall Sports Suspension*

We still played!

When the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC) suspended all fall sports due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Knight athletes and coaches adapted quickly. Athletes in all eight fall sports—plus baseball and softball—began practicing.

Intrasquad scrimmages provided the competition our athletes craved, and, per the Minnesota Department of Health, a limited number of spectators were allowed. Games were also broadcast live via MLC Athletics KnightVision, so others, including parents and friends at home, could also watch.

Although the seasons didn't include UMAC competition, first-year athletes got a taste of athletics at MLC, while seniors

who will not be able to play in the spring had one last chance to compete in front of family and friends.

"Our goal," said Athletic Administrator **Jim Unke** DMLC '83 "was to give the student-athlete the best college experience possible under the circumstances. Our coaches did an excellent job of teaching while still letting the players have fun. We tried to make the intrasquad scrimmages as game-like as possible. I know everyone had fun."

As fall wound down, men's and women's basketball revved up. Both teams practiced until students went home October 27.

As of this writing, the UMAC has not determined whether intercollegiate competition will be permitted in the second semester.



## Congratulations, MLC Forum!

The MLC Forum wouldn't let a pandemic halt production this fall. They set out to present a "concert-ish" version of *Spamalot* to a socially separated audience by a cast of socially separated actors. Ultimately, because of the administration's difficult decision to pivot to online learning, the students could not perform the show as scheduled.

"While the show did not culminate the way we had planned," said Director **Erin Laabs** MLC '08, "we were blessed with eight full weeks of production, and the cast, staff, and crews deserve the highest congratulations for their hard work!"



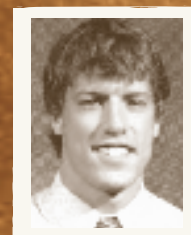
**Sarah Geiger**  
MLC 1996  
Belmont CA



**Harley Mathweg**  
DMLC 1941  
Markesan WI



**Barbara Keller**  
DMLC 1971  
Two Rivers WI



**Thomas Voss**  
MLC 2006  
Aurora CO

# A Different Kind of HOMECOMING

## TALENT SHOW:

Homecoming at MLC isn't quite right without a talent show! With careful social distancing and some acts performed outside, this year's program was still chock-full of dance routines, brain-bending mind tricks, musical acts, stand-up comedy, and the usual hilarious assortment of video skits.

**Levi Stelljes** (*St. Paul-New Ulm MN, pictured top left*) and **Sam Boeder** (*St. John-New Ulm MN, pictured bottom left*) hosted the show, delivering plenty of witty banter and an all-around great time!

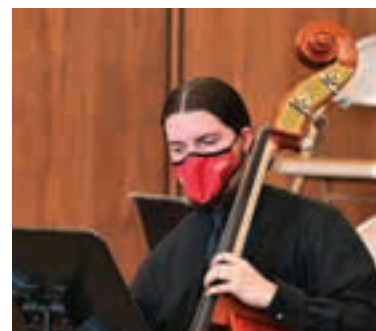


*talent*

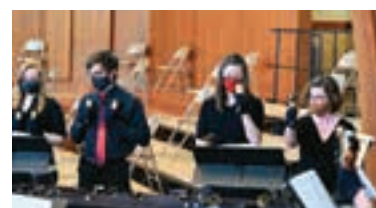


## MUSIC SHOWCASE:

Four choirs, Wind Symphony, and Hosanna Ringers presented a Homecoming Music Showcase to the campus family (live) and to parents and friends (livestreamed). Professor Jonathan Laabs, College Choir director, *pictured*, was grateful to have students on campus—and making music! "I cannot fully describe the joy of getting to spend time with these musicians and perform with them." Watch it at [mlc-wels.edu/music-showcase](http://mlc-wels.edu/music-showcase).



*music*



**Helen Malchow**  
DMLC 1981  
Prairie du Chien WI



**Elmer Hoffmann**  
NWC 1941  
Saginaw MI



**Hope Monthie**  
DMLC 1976  
Hudson NY



**Jonathan Werre**  
NWC 1986  
Ridgeway MN

## 1,000 Teachers Enroll in First Virtual Conference

When the world of education went from brick to click almost overnight last spring, WELS teachers adapted quickly—and so did Martin Luther College.

Preschool, elementary, and high school teachers across the synod employed emergency remote teaching strategies so their students could keep learning. But the teachers knew that once the emergency was over, once the semester was finished and they'd have time to plan more thoroughly, they could do even better.

**Could MLC Offer Assistance?** Some WELS teachers reached out to MLC's Continuing Education Office for guidance, so **Dr. John Meyer** DMLC '87 met with a team of MLC experts to consider how best to meet these requests. **Director of Academic Computing Rachel Feld** MLC '06, **Webmaster/Instructor Bob Martens** MLC '09, **Professor Dan Fenske** DMLC '87, and **Dr. James Carlovsky** MLC '10 quickly developed an online conference. Titled *OpenLearning@MLC: Beyond Emergency Remote Teaching*, the conference would be the first of its kind at MLC: virtual, open, and free.

"True online learning requires all sorts of planning and pedagogical adjustments that neither our MLC professors nor our WELS teachers had the time to do in the spring," said Feld. "We all made the best of a not-awesome situation. For our conference, we wanted the focus to be on taking what we learned from our experience in the spring and making it better in the fall."

According to the plan, MLC would present six online sessions designed to meet the needs of teachers at all levels. The sessions would be presented live and then archived for those not able to watch live.

The virtual conference was new. It was necessary. And with the help of Communications Specialist Valerie Fischer, it was launched. Within two weeks, 1,000 people had registered.

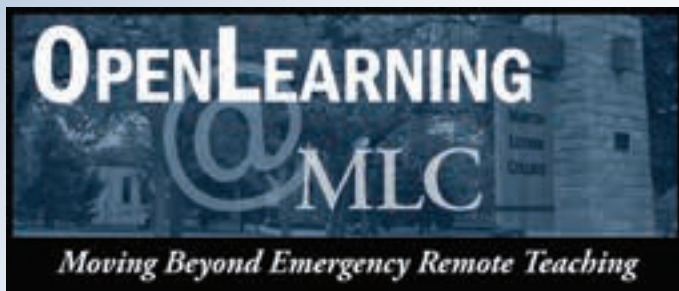


MLC faculty members Rachel Feld, Bob Martens, James Carlovsky, and Dan Fenske developed *OpenLearning@MLC*, a free online conference for WELS teachers, in a matter of weeks. "I was impressed with how quickly and enthusiastically our faculty acted to support Lutheran teachers," said Dr. John Meyer.

**One thousand teachers!** "Our WELS teachers were definitely superstars this spring," said Feld. "They went to amazing lengths to ensure their students continued to have a Christian education. The huge enrollment number in this conference just emphasizes their superstar-ness. Even though the last thing most teachers (myself included) want to think about is returning to online

**Open-Air Classrooms:** Health professionals say we're safer outdoors, and we take their word for it! Here **Professor Doug Lange** NWC '77, WLS '81 takes advantage of the beautiful weather and our beautiful campus to teach Biblical History and Literature in the chapel grove, and **Professors Kari Muent** MLC '99 and **Tingting Zhang Schwartz** teach Intro to Minority Cultures on the overlook.





#### Alternative Assessment for a Remote World

Presenters: Rachel Pierson & Dan Fenske

#### Digital Strategies for the Multi-Grade Classroom

Presenter: Alan Uher

#### Establishing and Enhancing School-to-Home Communication

Presenter: Rachel Feld

#### Digital Learning in Grades PreK-2

Presenters: Rachel Feld & Jen Mehlberg

#### Digital Learning in Grades 3-8

Presenters: Ted Klug & Rachel Feld

#### Digital Learning in Grades 7-12

Presenters: James Carlovsky & Dan Fenske

teaching in the fall, they tuned in to this conference to fill their online teaching toolbox for their students.”

With an upgraded Zoom account to accommodate all the connections, the session leaders presented their strategies and tips on June 16-17. “We’d thrown around the idea of 100 live participants being an amazing success,” Martens said. They had no idea that more than five times that number would tune in live, ready to listen and ready to chat. It was astounding. Feld said, “Whole faculties watched together (social-distanced, I’m

sure) and discussed how they can use what they’ve learned to make an online learning plan for the next school year, just in case. The dedication to their students and to serving their Savior is what makes our WELS teachers so fantastic.”

The Q&A periods at the end of each session were telling as well. “The Q&A told me that teachers used a lot of different tools and ideas last spring,” Martens said, “and they’re eager to share what worked and what didn’t in their classrooms.”

**Keeping the conversation going:** Looking ahead, the Continuing Ed Office hopes to expand on the original conference concept. “I’m excited about what might be possible when we can start having slower, more considered discussions around what we can do,” Martens said. “I’ve always been a huge fan of being open, sharing freely, and collaborating across the board so that we can get the best ideas in front of the largest number of people.”

More immediately, the conference organizers want to keep the current conversation going. They know that the conference was a springboard for discussions: Which tech tools are best? Why use a tech tool here and not here? How can tech augment, not replace, in-person teaching?

Most important will be listening to what teachers need. MLC wants to meet WELS teachers’ needs so that they can meet their students’ needs. “That’s how we as a synod can keep providing a high-quality, gospel-centered education to the students and families of our schools,” said Feld.

**For the sake of the gospel:** And the gospel, ultimately, is the most important part. “Even as the circumstances and delivery methods change, the Great Commission does not change,” said Martens. “So we humbly sit at the foot of the cross and ask how we can continue to reach out even during these difficult times.”





## New Advent Devotional for You

*The Jesse Tree* is MLC's newest Advent devotion book, our gift to you this Christmas. Written by MLC faculty members, its devotions for December 1-25 tell us about Old Testament believers who play important roles in the salvation story. Many of them are ancestors of Jesus—part of his family tree, his "Jesse tree." As Isaiah 11:1 says, "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit."

Each devotion is illustrated by a symbolic ornament designed by WELS artist Peter Schaeve.

If you'd like to use the devotion booklet as an Advent calendar, you can go online and download Jesse tree ornaments (either full-color or colorable!) and children's versions of the Bible stories, which were written by MLC education majors.

The booklet and all supplementary materials will be available after November 15 for ordering and online viewing at [mlc-wels.edu/publications/seasonal-devotions](http://mlc-wels.edu/publications/seasonal-devotions).

You may also want to sign up for daily delivery of the devotions to your email inbox.



## Ladies' Auxiliary Continues Generous Support

The MLC Ladies' Auxiliary could not hold their annual Auxiliary Day this year, but they chose their 2020-2021 projects and set a goal of nearly \$30,000 to fund them. Standing projects include Auxiliary Scholarships, Daylight outreach, and student travel assistance.

New projects include hymnals for Chapel of the Christ, solar and wind energy kits, fitness equipment, tarps for the football bowl, a Spanish Immersion Program grant, and library study carrels. Many members also generously support the MLC Food Shelf, which married MLC students deeply appreciate.

To see the new project list and make a donation, go to [mlc-wels.edu/ladies-auxiliary/projects/](http://mlc-wels.edu/ladies-auxiliary/projects/). And be sure to follow MLC Ladies' Auxiliary on Facebook!



## Community Chips In \$25,000

Once again, the New Ulm community chipped in to show their support of the college at the annual MLC Golf Classic.

Postponed until July 20, the community tournament hosted 94 golfers and raised \$25,303 for MLC—\$20,000 for student scholarships and the rest for campus projects, including a bike fix-it station for the New Ulm bike trail, which runs through our campus.

Dave Brown, Ken Paa, Tom Steinbach, and Billy Ditttrich (pictured) won the cup with a score of 59, and, in lieu of a formal dinner, all the golfers enjoyed safe to-go dinner boxes on the New Ulm Country Club patio.



# Two New Graduate Degree Programs

## *Designed to Meet the Needs of WELS Schools*

### MS EDUCATION - SPECIAL EDUCATION

*with MN Learning Disabilities Licensure*



This program is designed for teachers who want to serve learners with special needs in WELS schools.

The program provides Minnesota licensure in Learning Disabilities both as a stand-alone license for existing WELS teachers and as an add-on for MLC undergraduates completing their ABS (Academic Behavioral Specialist) license.

Graduate students in this program follow a prescribed set of special education courses, complete a 12-week internship, and take two state-required licensure tests.

We've also coordinated the program with our undergraduate special education major, enabling undergrad students to earn their master's degree and specialty license at a faster pace and a lower cost.

"The need for special education teachers across the country is great, and our Lutheran schools are no exception," says **Professor Kelli Green DMLC '92** (education, *pictured*). "Our goal is to prepare fully qualified and licensed special education and intervention teachers. Being fully prepared enables teachers to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, and also improves the likelihood that the teachers will remain in the field."

"When parents choose our schools for the Christian education of their children, we want to meet their children's needs with fully qualified and licensed teachers who are ready to collaborate with a team in support of their children."

[mlc-wels.edu/graduate-studies/special-education-emphasis](http://mlc-wels.edu/graduate-studies/special-education-emphasis)

### MS EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION -

*Technology Director*



This program, designed specifically for WELS congregations and schools, provides current and aspiring technology directors with the practical knowledge and skills they need.

**Professor Rachel Feld MLC '06** (director of academic computing and online learning, *pictured*) explains: "We looked at the challenges WELS technology directors often face—infrastructure, technology integration, student privacy, device management, faculty training—and designed courses that address those challenges."

"We understand that our schools and congregations do not typically have dedicated IT personnel, yet technology is vital. A teacher who also acts as a technology director can provide the ideas, support, and encouragement that will align technology use with 21st-century educational goals and with our most important goal: sharing the gospel."

[mlc-wels.edu/graduate-studies/technology-director](http://mlc-wels.edu/graduate-studies/technology-director)

## MLC Graduate Degrees

### MS EDUCATION

- Educational Technology
- Instruction
- Leadership
- Special Education
- **NEW** Special Education w/MN Learning Disabilities Licensure

### MS EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

- Early Childhood Director
- Principal
- **NEW** Technology Director

### MA THEOLOGICAL STUDIES



# Christians and Race

## *Christian Discussion and Response: Race Issues in America*

By **Professor Thomas Hunter** DMLC '75, Director of International Services

People are talking about, or at least thinking about, recent events in our country. Some have questions; some have strongly held opinions; some aren't sure what to think or say or do.

I'd been approached by a variety of people—current students, past students, faculty, staff, community members—wanting to talk about race concerns after the deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, after the protests and the riots, after the intense tension and uncertainty.

So it seemed that now was an opportune time to engage people around us in this discussion. And concerned leaders from St. Paul's Lutheran Church in New Ulm felt the same way. They had an idea, and they put their idea into action. Let's talk!

They invited five members of the MLC family to lead a panel discussion titled *Christian Discussion and Response: Race Issues in America*. The live audience of about 100 people (masked and socially-distanced) proved the church's leaders were right: people want to talk about the issues.

Prof. Ben Clemons, the moderator of the event, rightly reminded us: *Race has been an issue we've struggled with in our country since its founding. While much progress has been made over time, there's still work to do, and progress happens best when Christian citizens engage with each other in civil and meaningful discussion guided by what God tells us in his Word.*

### **Now is a great time for discussion and understanding. But why here? Why in New Ulm?**

The moderator and all the panelists (student Kenton Fabian, International Services Coordinator Megan Kassuelke, Prof. Tom Hunter, and Prof. Tingting Schwartz) are all part of Martin Luther College, the WELS College of Ministry. Not only is now a great time for us to talk, but this is a great place to enter into a dialogue that focuses on a Christian discussion and response to race issues in America!

And, as one would expect, each participant not only shared information and first-hand experiences, but, more important, they applied select biblical references to help guide the discussion.

Megan Kassuelke referenced the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In it we are not only reminded to recognize who our neighbors are, but we are also challenged to show love to all of them, even though it might be difficult. It might be difficult to check our initial reactions and to be thoughtful and humble enough to recognize our own biases. But talking, listening, and striving for understanding is an important way Christians can reach out.

But are there people hurting in New Ulm? At MLC? Of course there are.

We might not see it; we might not understand it; we might not want to believe it; but there certainly are people who are hurting. And race can play a big part.

Prof. Schwartz explained what it feels like to be a Chinese immigrant this way: a fish swimming in water doesn't think much about water, but a fish out of water immediately knows things are different! At times, she has felt like a fish out of water.

Kenton Fabian shared that, as a young African-American man, he often finds himself looking over his shoulder and often wakes up feeling anxious, wondering what might happen today. He's not the only MLC student of color who has expressed such feelings. Nor is he the only student of color at MLC to have been subjected to disparaging racial comments. Sometimes these are unintentional, sometimes not; some have come from fellow students, some from the community, some from opposing fans at sporting events.

Having worked with international students from at least a dozen different countries, Megan Kassuelke and I can attest to the fact that race—more than nationality—does indeed impact lives.

So why provide a Christian Discussion and Response to Race Issues in America now? And why here? Well, talking *and listening* help us grow in understanding. And people are ready to talk. Our church leaders wanted to do it here to reach out to people around us in Christian love.

The 90 minutes on October 1 were not enough. The plan now is to take the 15 unanswered questions submitted by the live audience and answer them through a series of video podcasts sponsored by St. Paul-New Ulm. Watch for details!

**Watch the *Race Issues in America* panel discussion at [mlc-wels.edu/race-panel](https://mlc-wels.edu/race-panel).**

# Issues of Race in America

## *A Christian Discussion & Response*

Five members of the MLC campus family comprised a panel that led a free community discussion on race. St. Paul-New Ulm MN hosted the October 1 event with a live audience.

### MODERATOR:



**Professor Benjamin Clemons**  
*MLC Professor of Urban Educational Ministry*

### PANELISTS:



**Professor Thomas Hunter**  
*MLC Director of International Services*



**Professor Tingting Zhang Schwartz**  
*MLC Professor of Chinese*



**Megan Kassuelke**  
*MLC International Coordinator*



**Kenton Fabian**  
*MLC sophomore*

Watch the recorded event at  
[mlc-wels.edu/race-panel](http://mlc-wels.edu/race-panel).

# Christians and Politics

## *A Bible Study*

In November, many MLC students voted for the very first time. They've come of age in a highly charged political climate, where citizens are polarized and the media is bombarding them with information—some verifiable, some not. How does the Christian know what to believe, where to stand, and how to respond?

To help our students navigate the waters of American citizenship, President Gurgel asked a faculty-student committee to develop several small-group Bible studies and then train resident assistants to lead the studies in the residence halls.



Students searched their Bibles and discussed topics that were often more nuanced than they first realized.

- God's rule in two distinct kingdoms.
- The Christian's civic responsibilities.
- Distinguishing between biblical and secular justice.
- Voting in our own best interest vs. the best interest of others.
- What the Bible says about race, justice, poverty, abortion.
- How to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).
- Our attitude of repentance and God's forgiveness when we fail to get involved or make sinful, selfish choices when we do get involved.

Committee chair **Professor Nicolas Schmoller** MLC '06, WLS '10 (theology, Greek) said, "We want to equip our campus family, so that we each are able to speak with grace and love, even while many in our country have strong opinions and emotions regarding these subjects. The ultimate goal is that nothing hinders the gospel."

# Thalassa Prize 2020

*The Thalassa Prize is given to recognize a Martin Luther College student or graduate who expresses clearly and beautifully, in image and word, a personal reflection on a ministry experience overseas.*



## 2020 Winner: Micah Otto '19 *"The God She Thought She Knew"*

This is Bella—Bella the Buddhist. Bella was dressed up as the Devil for our Halloween party at my apartment in Southeast Asia.

"... and that's why God's love is so amazing!" I said amid our formerly secular conversation between sips of punch.

We were hosting this party just to make friends, but of course it's pretty much inevitable that He will get brought up in conversation if you talk to one of us Christians long enough.

Bella looked at me, puzzled, her red fabric horns bobbing as she cocked her head. "But ... doesn't your god send people to hell? That doesn't seem very loving." She continued to describe the god she thought she knew—a god who was hateful, distant, and quick to hold a grudge—a god she didn't want to believe in. Bella the Buddhist had been deceived by the very one she was dressed up as that evening.

"I don't want to believe in that god either, Bella. Now let me tell you about the God I *do* believe in ... about the God who is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love ... about the God who gave me everything and refuses to turn his back on me even when I fail to love him in return ... about *Jesus*, who died so that freedom from sin, death, and the devil wouldn't have to be earned, but freely given right into our hands. Tell me about the gods you don't believe in, and I'll tell you about *mine*—I'll tell you about *grace*."

Later, Bella opened up a Bible on our coffee table. "This is the type of Book where you want to skip to the good part," I pointed out. We turned to John. "For God so loved the world ..."

*Micah Otto served in Southeast Asia, doing mostly friendship evangelism. He has started his first year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary but is hoping to return to Southeast Asia.*

## 2020 Runner-Up: Camryn Biebert

### *From Mess to Made Clean Again* (excerpt)

These girls were in the process of making a piñata when it got very messy. The mix was all over their clothes, arms, and bare feet. Life is messy. No matter where you are in the world, every person has their own chaos to handle. If it's not visible on the outside, a quick look inward will reveal brokenness. . . . While we were in Mahahual, it was remarkable to think about how even though we had differences in our culture, in how we looked, and the language we spoke, we were united by our need for a Savior and the fact that we could all worship together, bringing our messes to our Father in heaven. Jesus has made us clean again through his misery on the cross. He now sees all of his dear children as his spotless lambs.

*Camryn Biebert '21 taught at Cruz de Cristo in Mahahual, Mexico, over the 2019 Christmas break.*



## 2020 Runner-Up: Gabrielle Steidl

### *Dios Es Amor* (excerpt)

On one of our first days in Mahahual, we taught the children at Cruz de Cristo the song, “Dios es Amor,” which translates to “God is love.” This song was stuck on a loop in our heads the entire trip. As we were jump roping or playing soccer at the park, you would hear the children humming the melody. As we completed math worksheets and English assignments, the song would always sneak its way in and could be heard throughout the open-aired church as it drifted into the streets of Mahahual. . . . “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.”

*Gabrielle Steidl '20 taught at Cruz de Cristo in Mahahual, Mexico, over the 2019 Christmas break. She's now teaching Spanish and English at Fox Valley LHS.*



## 2020 Runner-Up: Alaina Qualmann

### *A Taste of Heaven* (excerpt)

I once saw a glimpse of what heaven is like. It wasn't the poverty I witnessed in Lusaka, Zambia. It wasn't the cramped, dusty streets full of honking cars, people, and animals. The little glimpse of heaven came from every child that attends Kaunda Square School. Every child I met welcomed me with open arms. . . . It was as if we'd known each other forever. I am from the opposite side of the world. . . . I have a nice house and clean water. I always have electricity. I go to school every day and work a job at night. Those children live in a shack. They walk to get clean water and work to grow food. They consider it a privilege to go to school. However, we share the love for a baby born in Bethlehem, gratefulness for a sinless man who died on a cross in our place, and awe for the Savior who defeated sin, death, and the devil.

*Alaina Qualmann '22 served at Kuunika Lutheran School and Kaunda Square School in Lusaka, Zambia, in the summers of 2017 and 2019.*



## Same Jesus, Same Grace

We're celebrating 25 years of ministerial training at **Martin Luther College!**

We also recognize 150+ years of ministerial training in our synod:

**Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary** 1863-present

**Northwestern College** 1865-1895

**Dr. Martin Luther College** 1884-1995

## Homecoming Celebratory Service

During Homecoming weekend, the campus family celebrated the first of our anniversary services this year.

In this communion service, MLC President Rich Gurgel (*pictured, top*) presided, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary President Earle Treptow (*pictured, bottom*) preached on the theme of Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."



The service included a recorded video greeting from WELS President Mark Schroeder:

Twenty-five years ago when Martin Luther College was about to open its doors for the first time, there were so many questions.

What will this new college be like? How will it be organized? What will the curriculum be? Will it be able to continue to produce the number of candidates for ministry needed by the synod? How well will the students in the pastor track and teacher track get along? Will there be too many marriages by undergraduate students? Will the members of the synod embrace this new school?

Now, after 25 years, these questions have been answered. And we thank God that they have been answered in a way that demonstrates God's rich blessings on this school and on our synod. Today, 25 years later, MLC has been embraced and supported by the people of our synod as *our* WELS College of Ministry. Enrollment at MLC continues to be strong, with our WELS young people attending in good and consistent numbers to prepare for a lifetime of service in the church. The pastor track continues to produce young men who are well prepared for continuing at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary; the teacher and staff ministry programs produce graduates who are well qualified to serve our synod. Having future pastors, teachers, and staff ministers studying and working together on one campus builds relationships that will last a lifetime.

This anniversary is a time to say "thank you." First of all, we thank God for blessing this school and enabling it to carry out its purpose faithfully. We thank the faculty and staff of MLC for 25 years of faithful and dedicated service. We thank the students of MLC, now and in years past, for coming to MLC and saying, "Here am I, send me!" And we thank the members of our synod who have embraced and supported this school with their prayers and offerings.

We pray with confidence that God will continue to bless this school as it continues to prepare our future called workers to be ambassadors for our Savior.



WELS President  
Mark Schroeder

# Back in '95

*Observations from current faculty members who have served at MLC since its establishment in 1995*

## One College

In 1995 we were still operating with the principle that there were two colleges on one campus. I taught only Studies in Pastoral Ministry students. It took some time and negotiation to merge into a single college with distinct ministry tracks. At the same time, from a professor's perspective, the stories that there was great tension among and between faculty members were exaggerated. We were all finding our way, but there was a collegial atmosphere. We were all training servants for the church, and we lived under the grace and mercy of Jesus. Surely there were disagreements, but the gospel prevailed.

*Professor Paul Koelpin*

## A Tearful Goodbye

I remember the last NWC graduation. I was deeply moved by a spontaneous, rousing standing ovation as the faculty and students walked out of the gym for the last time. I don't know whether the applause was for the students, the faculty, or NWC—probably all three.

*Professor John Schmidt*

## Growing the Family

In 1995, one goal was to help everyone see the blessings of this amalgamation rather than only the challenges. I used the term "growing the family" when I would talk with colleagues. As pastors, teachers, and staff ministers, the amalgamation would allow us to better understand, support, and respect each other's ministry as we share the gospel with the world. In 2020, we continue to see that blessing magnified by God's grace.

*Dr. Cindy Whaley*

## Two Cultures

I was teaching Introduction to Minority Cultures at the time. I was thankful for the lab environment created by amalgamation, and often compared MLC amalgamation struggles to struggles between ethnic cultures. I think it helped students speak freely to each other about issues they were experiencing and begin to understand why they felt as they did. That was a blessing of year 1 (and 2, and 3, and 4, and . . .)

*Professor Thomas Hunter*

## Challenging Assumptions

When we came from Northwestern a big change was, no surprise, women. A female professor from DMLC asked me how things were going, and I said it was an adjustment having women in class. She asked for an example. "Well, I don't think I can use my carburetor illustration about writing anymore," I explained. She, with good cause, challenged my sexist assumptions and said that I should make no changes and just teach as I always have. It was good advice, sort of. Turns out my illustration had not been very helpful anyway, even for the guys, since they stopped using carburetors in cars years ago.

*Professor Brian Dose*

## A Warm Welcome

I appreciated the warm welcome by members of the DMLC faculty as they helped members of the NWC faculty move in and then invited us into their homes for dinner and an evening of fellowship.

*Professor John Schmidt*

## Determined to Be Pastors

There was a degree of energy and excitement from the newness of everything. And MLC records show that the retention rate of pastor students in the early years was at a height never again matched. The pastor students who came to New Ulm in the first years were determined to be pastors, and it was a joy to teach them. Thinking back, it is marvelous to reflect on how God launched MLC in 1995, and on how God has richly blessed MLC since its unsettled beginning.

*Professor Thomas Nass*

## Merging Athletics

Merging the Northwestern soccer team with the club team from DMLC was an exciting thing. I saw it as my responsibility to create an atmosphere that saw us as a single team—representing MLC. I think that happened. We did indeed compete as a single unit—there was buy-in as the players began to respect each other. The 1995 team was, honestly, a very good team—many good student-athletes.

*Professor Paul Koelpin*

## It's History Now

I was surprised this past year when a student told me that his topic for a history research paper was amalgamation. For our current student body and most of the current faculty, amalgamation is just another historical event in the history of our synod, an event that has been richly blessed by our gracious God.

*Professor John Schmidt*

## MLC Faculty 1995 - 2020

Prof. Daniel Balge  
Prof. Larry Czer  
Prof. Brian Dose

Prof. Joel Fredrich  
Prof. Thomas Hunter  
Prof. Paul Koelpin

Prof. Thomas Nass  
Dr. Lawrence Olson  
Prof. John Schmidt

Prof. Joyce Schubkegel  
Dr. Cindy Whaley

# Remembering the '90s on the Hill

## Two Graduates—from '96 and '97—Look Back

Both Northwestern College and Dr. Martin Luther College had long and storied histories. We know and believe that both legacies continue through MLC, but back in 1996, there were many who were unwilling to relinquish their allegiance to Northwestern or DMLC. It took a little while for that tension to go away . . .

Today, I would encourage all students to get to know schoolmates training for the pastoral ministry, teaching ministry, and staff ministry. Of course, you probably don't have enough time to make friends with everyone on campus, but what I'm saying is, don't stay in a bubble.

The more we get to know one another, the more we appreciate the gifts with which God has blessed our church body. We all have different roles to play in the body of Christ, but each role has equal importance.



**Rev. Brady Coleman** MLC '96  
Pastor, Siloah-Milwaukee



In the early 90's on the hill, we were some knuckleheads who went to class, played cards in the dorms, and did our best to leave MLC with a spouse lined up.

We surely did receive a solid education at MLC, preparing us to one day lead classrooms, fill pulpits, and serve our Savior no matter what we did in our futures.

But along the way, we dressed up in costumes for home basketball games, lived through the Great Centennial Fire of 1994, and created lifelong friendships.

Several in this group of guys (*pictured above*) have gotten together every summer since June of 1993. These WELS teachers and pastors, a public school teacher, and a U.S. Coast Guard Commander are my lifelong friends. Why? Because we share faith in the one true God and his Son Jesus Christ . . . and we met at MLC.



**Andrew Aguilar** MLC '97  
Superintendent, California LHS

## Student Senate 1995-1996



President  
David Koehler

### First-Years:

Daryl Johnson  
Stephanie Riley  
Bethel Bode  
Heath Lamb  
James Douglas

Debbie Shilling  
Paul Zarling  
Nathan Heyn

### Seniors:

Ryan Hill  
Jennifer Krause  
Tim Dolan  
Debbie Quandt  
Dave Mielke  
Mike Weigand  
Nicki Schmidt

### Sophomores:

Phil Miller  
Harmon Lewis  
James Buske  
Benjamin Lawrenz  
Darren Knoll

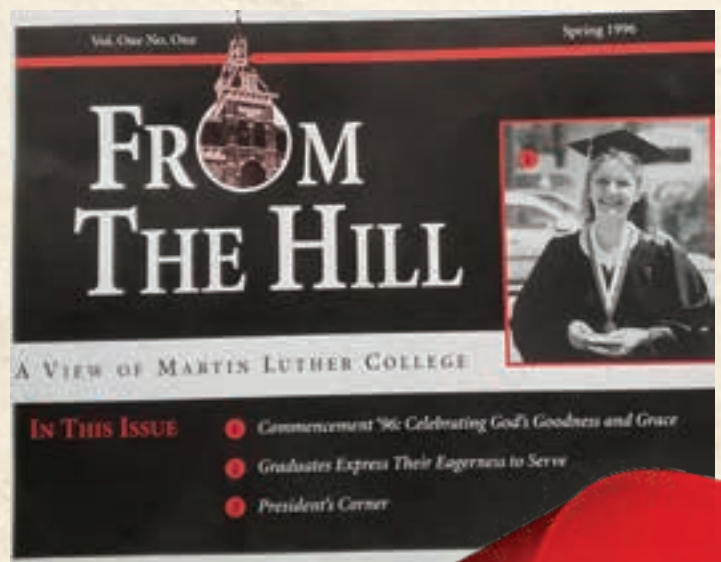
### Fifth-Year Seniors:

Craig Weide  
Greg Diersen  
Matt Moeller

### Juniors:

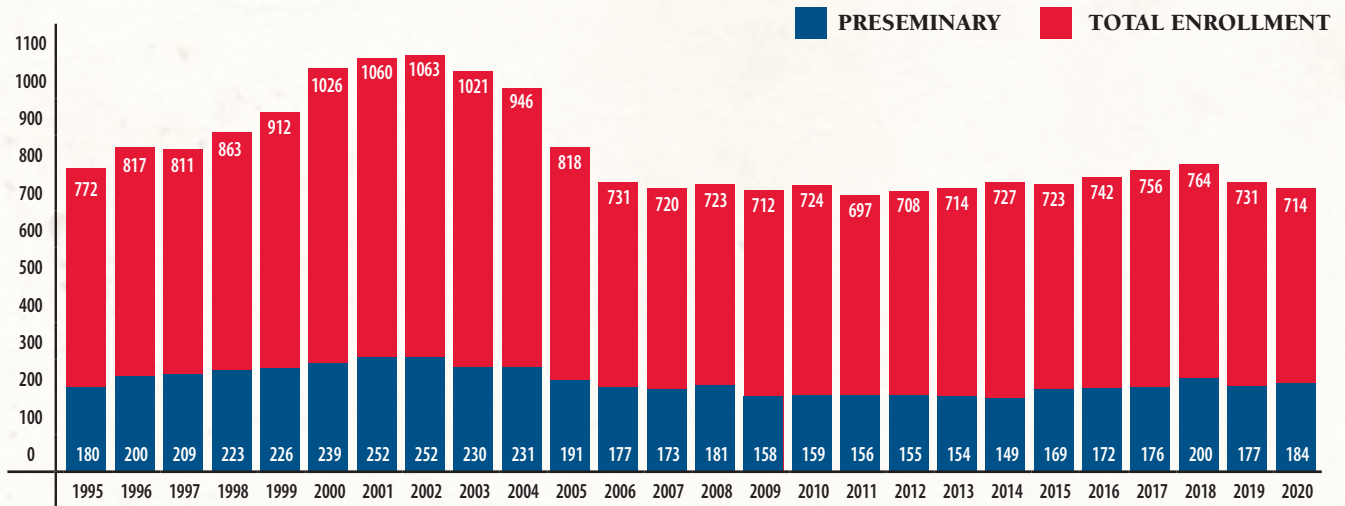
Jon Scharf  
James Hahm

## MLC Newsletter Spring 1996



# 1995-1996 By the Numbers

## Fall Enrollment 1995-2020

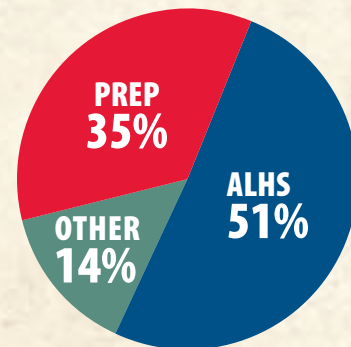


## Enrollment by High School of Origin

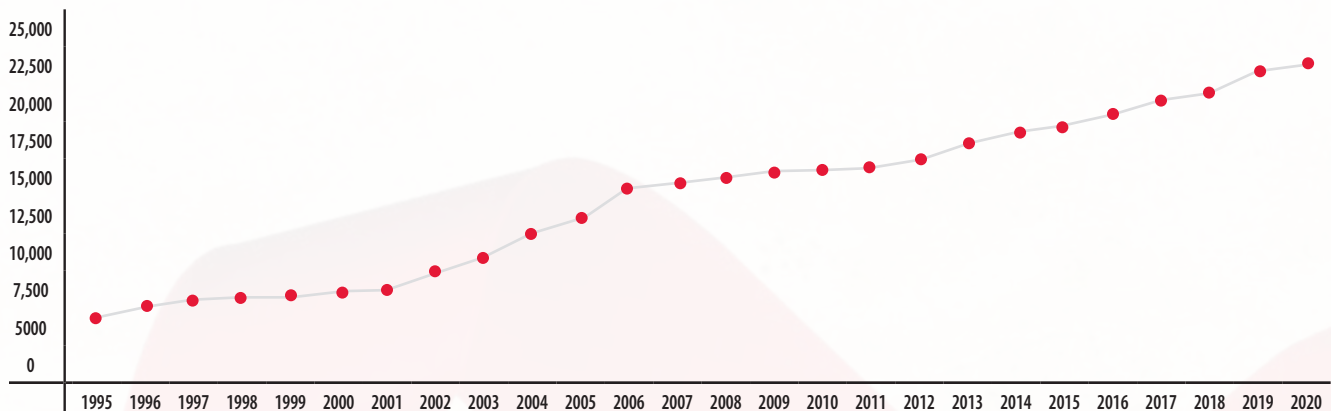
Students come to MLC from two preparatory schools (LPS and MLS), 25 area Lutheran high schools (ALHS), and countless other schools (public, private, online, homeschooled, etc.).

On average from 1995-2020, fifty-one percent of students came from ALHS, thirty-five percent from prep schools, and fourteen percent from other.

## Enrollment by High School Average 1995-2020



## Tuition, Room & Board 1995-2020



# MLC's Preseminary Program

## *A Passion for the Truth of Scripture*



**By Cameron Schroeder MLC '22**  
(St. Paul-Onalaska WI)

*By God's grace, WELS has been providing preseminary training for more than 150 years, 25 of them here at Martin Luther College. Cameron Schroeder, a preseminary junior, has some stories to tell about the training he's receiving. His words remind us how the Lord*

*of the Church has blessed us—consistently, continuously—with the truth of his Word and with professors who love that Word.*

Four years ago, Pastor Ross Stelljes sat across a table from a 16-year-old kid who had no idea what to do with his life. That kid happened to be me, and that moment was the first time I'd ever heard someone say I might have gifts for ministry.

In the hour that followed and in subsequent meetings, I heard the same call that countless men and women have heard before me: to preach Christ crucified to a world that's searching for hope. But who was I to carry this message? I'd just been licensed to handle a vehicle. How could I be entrusted with souls?

For me, the answers to these questions would slowly be revealed over the course of the next few years atop a hill in New Ulm. I'd like to tell you how my time at Martin Luther College has changed my life.

### **My time at Martin Luther College has changed my life.**

Now, with a dramatic opener like that, you might be expecting a long, linear redemption story about how I found myself in college, but that's not what this is. My experience with MLC has been much simpler than that. I'm just blessed to spend a few hours each day among excellent examples of what a called worker should be. As a college student who's paying a lot of money to learn things from my instructors, I couldn't ask for more than that!

I was privileged to have a Bible History and Literature class with Professor James Pope last year, and he taught me so many invaluable things about how messy evangelism can be.

He made me realize why all the foundational knowledge is so important—because you can't learn it all from the books.

No commentary or theological text is going to tell you what to say to the woman whose son just had a meltdown and left home, or to the young man whose new wife just died from lung cancer. However, with a deep knowledge of the gospel and a compassionate heart, we can approach these conversations with confidence and give potent advice and guidance from Scripture.

At MLC I've learned that understanding people is paramount. I'll never forget an experience I had as a passionate first-year trying to start a weekly worship session with some friends.

I was greeting the people who'd come to sing one Thursday evening when, all of a sudden, Dr. Mark Paustian walked into the room. He approached me and spoke one sentence that cut straight to my core: "I'm here to worship, not to critique."

### **I'm blessed to spend a few hours each day among excellent examples of what a called worker should be.**

How could this man diagnose my biggest insecurity and address it in just one sentence before we'd even met? Well, it turns out that just two years later he'd be teaching me the same skill in his Interpersonal Communication class.

Dr. Paustian has a tremendous store of knowledge when it comes to Scripture and communication, and he's always willing to discuss anything with me, whether it's a theory about people, the social climate surrounding worship, or how an extrovert like me can better understand introverted people like him. He's truly a student of the things he teaches every day, and it shows in the way he's willing to listen before offering wisdom.

When I think about professors with a visible fervor for their studies, a few other names come to mind. Professor Paul Koelpin made me more excited about history than I've been in my entire life. He drew parallels between the rise and fall of ancient kingdoms and common Bible stories. He emphasized that it's important for any society to be well versed in history because it helps us understand the present. Most of all, he pushed us to do our very best every single day.

What's the secret to getting students excited about learning? The formula is really quite simple. Passion begets passion.

I see the evidence of this in my own life as I take Symbolics class with Professor Nicolas Schmoller this semester. I grew



**Alexander  
Kirchenwitz**  
MLC 2016  
Weston WI



**Michelle  
Nowak**  
MLC 2006  
Munith MI



**George  
DeNoyer**  
DMLC 1966  
Chatsworth CA



**Elaine  
Bogenschneider**  
DMLC 1946  
Kewaskum WI

up WELS, but without strong family ties to the synod (despite what my last name may indicate). I never really understood the use of the Lutheran confessional writings in our church services and installations. It was in Symbolics class that I understood the importance for the first time. These texts restate key doctrines so everyone can plainly see what the Bible says about justification by faith, the sacraments, and the Trinity.

**Martin Luther College prepares pastors, teachers, and staff ministers to be the hands and feet of God in this broken world. Each one of us is equipped with a foundation of sound theology rooted in the inspired Word of God.**

I see a passion for the truth of Scripture in Professor Schmoller that is a blessing to every student who sits in his class—whether it's telling us he's a doctrine nerd on the first day of school or lighting up when we answer tough discussion questions.

These are just a few professors I've had the privilege of learning from in the preseminary program so far. As a junior, I look forward to three more semesters and plenty of other great experiences.

I couldn't possibly write about all the ways the wonderful men and women on the MLC faculty have affected me during my short time at MLC so far. Professor Paul Bases' fire for Spanish culture and ministry. Professor Mark Tacke's science tricks and captivating classroom antics. Professor Paul Grubbs's infectious love for the literary arts and his students. Professor David Scharf's astounding ability to make the grace of Jesus Christ

smack me in the face every time he delivers a chapel or sermon. I could go on and on, tossing out names, but I'd rather list the singular reason this all exists:

Because Jesus loves you and me. Jesus loved us enough to buy us back from the clutches of a fallen angel who was jealous for our souls. That message of grace, of a God who promises never to leave us or forsake us, is why we do everything we do at MLC.

Martin Luther College prepares pastors, teachers, and staff ministers to be the hands and feet of God in this broken world. Each one of us is equipped with a foundation of sound theology rooted in the inspired Word of God.

**Please pray for the mission of Martin Luther College.**

So please pray for the mission of Martin Luther College.

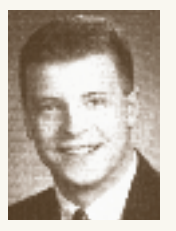
Pray that this year we stay open by the grace of God, even as other schools are forced to close their doors.

Pray every year for professors who pour themselves out to train up the next generation of called workers.

Pray for the students who feel weighed down by the day-to-day—by the lesson plans, the term papers, or the Greek quizzes.

Pray for the 16-year-old kids who sit across the table from recruiters and consider ministry for the first time.

Finally, pray for the thousands of souls who will receive the Word of God from these future called workers, that by the Holy Spirit they would be led to faith in Christ and the glorious promise of heaven.



**Paul Baur**  
NWC 1991  
New Ulm MN



**Patricia Airlie**  
DMLC 1961  
Detroit



**William Leerssen**  
NWC 1961  
Buffalo MN



**Ann Breikreutz**  
DMLC 1966  
Redwood Falls MN

## MLCAA Board Meets

The Martin Luther College Alumni Association (MLCAA) is made up of over 10,000 graduates and attendees of Martin Luther College, Dr. Martin Luther College, Northwestern College, and Martin Luther Academy/Dr. Martin Luther High School.

The MLCAA Board usually meets on campus over Homecoming. This year they met virtually October 2 via Google Meet.



## 2020-21 Board Members:

*Top Row: Steve Balza DMLC '93 (New Ulm MN) ex officio; John Boggs NWC '93 (Royal Palm Beach FL), Jaymie De Frain MLC '09 (Watertown WI), Abe Degner MLC '05 (Paraguay), Kelly Diersen DMLC '95 (New Ulm MN) financial secretary; Second Row: Emily Flatau MLC '22 (Appleton WI), Phil Hunter MLC '11 (Wesley Chapel FL), Kate Krieger MLC '10 (Milwaukee), Tonya La Duca DMLC '94 (San Jose), Jon Niemi MLC '06 (Watertown SD); Third Row: John Nolte DMLC '68 (Oshkosh WI), Jason Oakland MLC '00 (Neenah WI) president, Ben Priebe MLC '03 (Phoenix), Joel Russow MLC '06 (Tallahassee FL), Karl Schauland MLC '08 (Rockford IL); Bottom Row: Josh Schroeder MLC '20 (Milwaukee), Sarah Zahrt MLC '99 (New Ulm MN), Nathan Zastrow MLC '08 (Yakima WA); Not pictured: Dan Albrecht MLC '10 (Milwaukee).*



**Zachary  
VonDeylen**  
MLC 2016  
Friendswood TX



**Daniel  
Krause**  
NWC 1981  
Brookfield WI



**Melissa  
Beach**  
MLC 2006  
Saginaw MI



**Keith  
Siverly**  
NWC 1986  
Waukesha WI

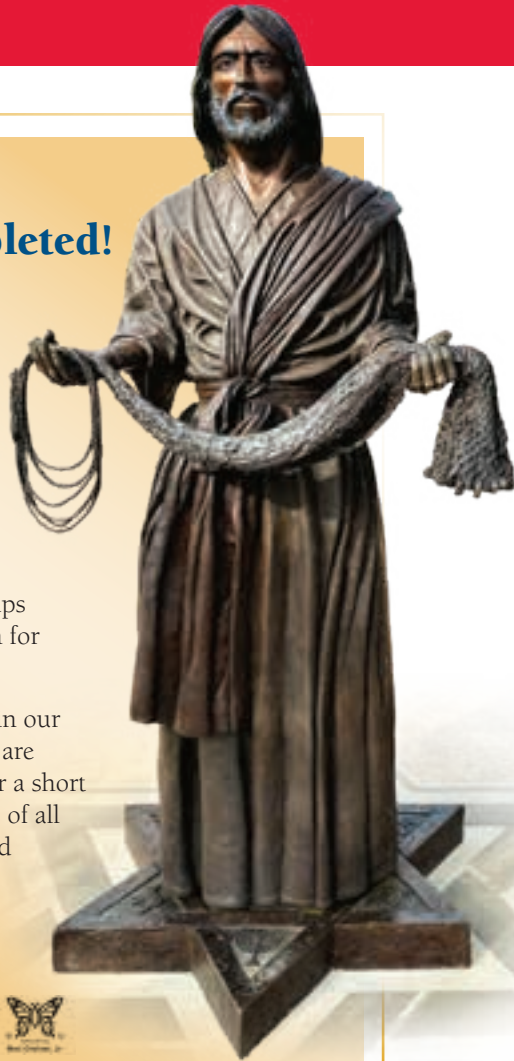
## Fishers of Men Campaign Completed!

The MLC Alumni Association expresses its sincere gratitude to the 500+ individuals and groups who generously gave to complete the \$100,000 *Fishers of Men* campaign.

The statue of Christ, "Fisher of Men," is on campus and is slated to be installed in spring. The first two \$1,000 scholarships have also been awarded. Watch for more on this in future issues!

To quickly boost the principal in our endowed scholarship fund, we are flipping our normal formula for a short time. For this school year, 70% of all gifts will go to scholarships, and 30% to our current project.

Lord willing, that will help us increase both the size and the numbers of the awards.



## Christian Worship Hymnal Project

In anticipation of the fall 2021 release of the new *Christian Worship* hymnals, MLCAA has selected 100 (or 200) hymnals and their corresponding resources as its current project.

Using the new *Christian Worship* in daily chapel services will help our future leaders, musicians, and educators become thoroughly trained in and knowledgeable of our synod's vast worship resources.

Please consider a gift to support the scholarship endowment and hymnal purchase. Online donations (credit card or ACH) can be made at [bit.ly/MLCAAlumni](https://bit.ly/MLCAAlumni). Checks can be made out to MLCAA and sent to MLC Alumni Association, 1995 Luther Ct., New Ulm MN 56073.

The college needs about 1,000 hymnals, so we hope that others (families, reunion classes, congregations, schools, individuals) will also adopt 100 hymnals (\$3,000). The goal is to purchase all 1,000 hymnals immediately upon their release.

If your group would like to claim 100, please contact Vice President for Mission Advancement Mike Otterstatter ([ottersmj@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:ottersmj@mlc-wels.edu) or 507.354.8221 x 386).

**amazon**smile

### Are You an Amazon Shopper?

Did you know you can donate money to MLC while you do your regular Amazon shopping? Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose Martin Luther College as your charity of choice. Then shop [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) instead of [amazon.com](https://amazon.com), and 3% of your purchases will go to MLC!

**Did you know?** 100% of every gift to MLCAA goes directly to the cause—70% to the endowed scholarship and 30% to the current project. All operational costs (mailings, meetings, events, etc.) are covered by proceeds from the annual alumni tours.



**Thomas Kuster**  
NWC 1961  
Wanatah IN



**Ju Yeon Moon**  
MLC 2016  
Seoul, South Korea



**David Grundmeier**  
NWC 1976  
Carroll IA



**Althea Zank**  
NWC 1946  
Lake Mills WI



## Black and Red Now Digitized

The *Black and Red*, Northwestern College's quarterly publication, has been digitized and is available at [mlc-wels.edu/history/](http://mlc-wels.edu/history/).

Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin (the current home of Luther Preparatory School), served as our synod's preseminary college from 1865 to 1995. The *Black and Red* was first published in 1897 when alumni of then Northwestern University urged the college to create an alumni publication.

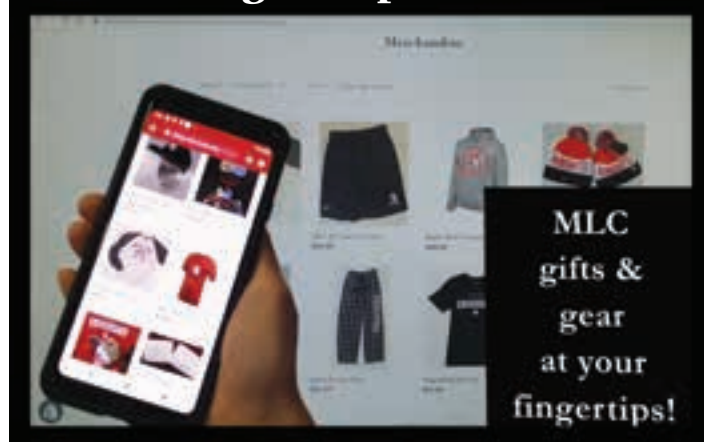
In many ways like our *MLC InFocus* (though more text-driven), the *Black and Red* shared subtle details of daily life, commentaries

on current affairs, results of athletic endeavors, graduate photos, alumni updates, and much more. Many a gifted writer gained experience crafting articles, penning commentaries, conducting interviews, and reporting on campus life.

The MLC Alumni Office wishes to thank MLC preseminary student **Ronny Nguyen** (*Crown of Life-West St. Paul MN*) for his hard work and dedication in uploading many years' worth of the publication. We hope NWC graduates and all others interested in learning a bit more about our predecessor school enjoy reading the *Black and Red*.



## Introducing...shop.mlc-wels.edu



**Shawn Herkstroeter**  
MLC 1996  
Loveland CO



**Carrie Hennig**  
DMLC 1991  
San Diego



**Douglas Weiser**  
NWC 1966  
Hazelton ND



**Michelle Grubbs**  
MLC 2001  
Minneapolis



Photo: Mel Anne Designs

## Meet the Presidents

### Northwestern College President John Braun (1993-1995)

John Braun (b. 1943) shepherded Northwestern College-Watertown WI through its final chapter with an appreciation for God's grace throughout the history of that school. He served as

president of the college for 1993-95, the years between the decision to close and its amalgamation with Dr. Martin Luther College-New Ulm MN. During that tough transition, he helped the campus family to remember and honor God's blessings to the college.

A member of Northwestern's centennial class of 1965 and a graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served as pastor at Redeemer-Tomahawk WI, Our Savior-Zion IL, and St. James-Milwaukee. He arrived back at Northwestern College (NWC) in 1984 with his wife, Sandy, and daughters, Jennifer and Katherine. Before he was called to head the college, Braun served as a professor of English and recruitment/admissions director. In all those roles, he was admired by his colleagues for his quiet but friendly spirit and his way with words.

John Braun embodies in a number of ways the curriculum and purpose of NWC—the liberal arts in service to the gospel. He has gone on after leaving Northwestern, as the hope was for all its graduates, to express that timeless message in timely ways. He has written a number of books, including devotional titles, a two-volume commentary on Isaiah, and a popular history of WELS, and he has edited many more as a vice president for Northwestern Publishing House. He has served as the executive editor for *Forward in Christ* since 2006 and has done major creative work for five films. He was a principal planner and contributor, in particular, for the full-length feature film *A Return to Grace—Luther's Life and Legacy*, which was produced for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and shown on national television.

For the 130th anniversary of Northwestern College in 1995, the theme was "Excellence to the End." That is a fitting title for the last chapter of a college and for a servant, both of whom enjoyed a great heritage and then moved on.

Written by Professor Brian Dose NWC '80, WLS '85



### Northwestern College

1865-1869 Adam Martin  
1869-1870 Lewis O. Thompson  
1871-1919 Dr. August F. Ernst  
1919-1959 Erwin E. Kowalke  
1959-1987 Carleton Toppe  
1987-1993 Robert J. Voss  
**1993-1995 John Braun**



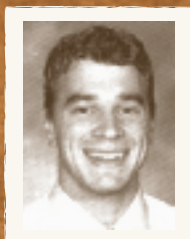
### Dr. Martin Luther College

1884-1885 Christian J. Albrecht  
1885-1893 Otto Hoyer  
1893-1908 John Schaller  
1908-1918 Adolph Ackermann  
1918-1920 Johannes P. Meyer  
1920-1936 Edmund Bliefernicht  
1936-1966 Carl Schweppe  
1966-1980 Conrad Frey  
1980-1993 Lloyd O. Huebner  
1993-1995 John Lawrenz



### Martin Luther College

1995-2007 Theodore Olsen  
2007-2020 Mark Zarling  
2020-present Rich Gurgel



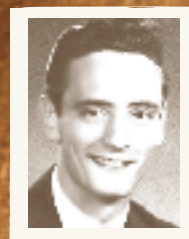
**Peter Gumm**  
MLC 2006  
Loves Park IL



**Amy Metevia**  
DMLC 1991  
Saginaw MI



**Stephen Naumann**  
MLC 2001  
Benton Harbor MI



**Johnathan Earl**  
DMLC 1961  
Adrian MI



## EQUIPPING CHRISTIAN WITNESSES (ECW)

*is a celebration of God's goodness as we recognize 25 years of ministry training at Martin Luther College and 150 years of ministerial training in WELS.*

Our promotion of ECW has been hindered by COVID-19 restrictions, and for a time we paused our appeals to show consideration for congregations and individuals who may be challenged by associated financial restrictions.

However, the needs for ministry recruitment, increased student financial assistance, and campus facility enhancements at MLC are still very real.



We're excited to announce that the WELS Conference of Presidents is allowing us to extend the campaign to June 2022, and we've asked them to help us make our needs known to congregations throughout the synod.

## Thank You!

We're so grateful to all those who have contributed—even during these unsteady times. We'd like to send a special shout-out to . . .

- The congregation that set aside a \$25,000 matching fund in their budget and then pledged that money to match congregational gifts dollar for dollar, with the hope of reaching \$50,000 for ECW.
- The congregation that ran its own campaign to raise \$500,000 for a building expansion and then added ten percent—\$50,000—to their goal for MLC's campaign. (*See this story in the Spring 2020 MLC InFocus.*)
- The congregation that combined a Called Worker Celebration Sunday with a focus on ECW.
- The congregations that posted photos of all their sons and daughters studying at MLC—an encouragement to younger members to consider the public ministry and an encouragement to all members to pray for more called workers.
- The congregations, elementary schools, and Sunday schools that made ECW their annual mission project.
- The congregations that invited us to preach and present ECW at their Synod Sunday, Christian Education Sunday, Worker Training Sunday, or Good Shepherd Sunday.
- The congregations that included ECW in their Stewardship Sundays.





## CPGP Making a Difference

An important pillar in the ECW campaign is the Congregational Partner Grant Program Matching Fund. The Congregational Partner Grant Program is serving about 600 students in 2020-2021. That's 85 percent of our student body! Each of those students received a grant from their home congregation of up to \$1,000 *plus* an MLC matching grant.

### Congregational Partner Grant Program 2020-2021

- 600** Students received grants
- 275** Congregations participated
- \$550,000** Gifts given by congregations and then matched by MLC
- \$1.1 M** Total assistance given

We're so grateful to these congregations, whose gifts not only eased the students' financial burdens but also encouraged them in their ministry preparation.

Good news! While tuition, room and board continue to rise every year, our average student debt in 2019-2020 was \$1,100 *lower* than 2018-2019.

We're hoping this is the start of a positive downward trend!

We thank every participating congregation and every individual donor. We also thank the Holy Spirit, who inspires you to "excel in this grace of giving."

Together, we can help ease the burden of college debt for our students.

## How Can You Help?

**Pray:** We'd ask you to pray! Pray boldly for more Christian witnesses. Pray for the success of this campaign. By God's grace, a successful campaign will . . .

- increase the number of students who pursue ministry training at MLC,
- expand the financial support we can give MLC students, and
- enhance our campus to better meet the living and learning needs of MLC students.

**Promote:** Please borrow one of the great ideas of those other congregations! Invite us to speak at your congregation. And be sure to make use of the many ECW promotional resources in your churches and schools. You can find casebooks and other print pieces, as well as videos and other digital assets, in our ECW Toolbox at [mlc-wels.edu/ecw-toolbox/](http://mlc-wels.edu/ecw-toolbox/).

Not sure about a speaker? Not sure what materials to order? Check with Beth at [scharfbm@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:scharfbm@mlc-wels.edu).

**Give:** Text the word CAMPAIGN to 507.223.4344.





## Rejoice with us!

Jesus Christ, Light from Light eternal,  
is born of the virgin at Christmas!

## Rejoice with us!

The students of Martin Luther College  
want to share that Light with the world.



God from true God,  
Light from Light eternal,

Born of a virgin,  
To earth he comes.

Only begotten  
Son of God the Father.

Oh, come let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.



Dear Friends,

God has certainly blessed us at Martin  
Luther College!

Despite a pandemic, our students continue  
to prepare for their futures as pastors,  
teachers, and staff ministers. They continue  
to worship and study, preach and teach, lead  
and serve.

And through it all, they immerse themselves  
in the Word, asking the Spirit to increase  
their faith and mold them for ministry.

Will you assist us in their ministry preparation?

Your gift will demonstrate your partnership  
with us as we train students to share the Light  
from Light eternal with all the world.



**Rich Gurgel**  
*President, Martin Luther College*

Give online at [mlc-wels.edu/donate](https://mlc-wels.edu/donate).  
Or text GIVE to 507.223.4344.

# FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

**Dr. Bethel Balge** (adjunct, piano) has been appointed executive director of the Mankato Symphony Orchestra.

**Valerie Bovee** (financial aid) completed the FAFSA Verification Credential through NASFAA.

**Professor James Danell** NWC '86, WLS '90 (German) chaired the fall meeting of the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations in Waukesha WI and presented "Luther's 1520 Treatises: *The Freedom of a Christian* and *Treatise on Good Works*" for the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Symposium in September.



**Professor Greg Diersen** MLC '96 (science) graduated from the University of Minnesota with an MS-Applied Plant Science degree, his second master's degree. As part of his program, he spent summer 2019 researching soil microbial decomposition, and he presented a final project titled "Developing and Refining a Case Study in Physical

Geography for Pre-Service Science Teaching Training."

**Professor Rachel Feld** MLC '06 (director of Academic Computing & Online Learning) is the new technician for Lutheran Chapel Service, a KNUJ radiobroadcast service. She replaces Dr. John Nolte (Em.) DMLC '68, who retired after 32 years of service.

**Professor Daniel Fenske** DMLC '87 (science) published "A COVID-19 Response: Why We Should Be Teaching Evolution" in *Issues in Lutheran Education* in July.

**Professor Joel Fredrich** NWC '77, WLS '82 (foreign languages, theology) led a six-hour study on "Luther's Restoration and Defense of the Biblical Teaching of the Lord's Supper" for the Nebraska Pastors' Summer School at Gethsemane-Omaha in July.

**Laurie Gauger-Hested** DMLC '87 (writer/editor) was interviewed (virtually) by Manitowoc LHS's Worship, Music, and the Arts class in November about hymn writing. She also saw publication of her hymn "See, He Comes, the King of Glory" in the 2020 issue of *Motif*, the Creative Arts Journal of Concordia University Chicago.

**Professor Dan Gawrisch** MLC '08 (physical education) published an article, with co-authors K. A. R. Richards, V. N. Shiver, and M. D. Curtner-Smith, for the peer-reviewed journal *European Physical Education Review*: "Recruitment of Undergraduate Students in Kinesiology: Implications for Physical Education."



**Professor Kelli Green** DMLC '92 (education) facilitated training in Social-Emotional Learning at Salem-Greenville MN in summer 2020 and provided inservice training and ongoing consultation in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Tier 1-3 and Student Services at Minnesota Valley LHS during fall 2020. She facilitated a group discussion at the Autism

Society of Minnesota's Summer Symposium on Evidence-Based Practices for Supporting Learners with ASD and EBD in August, and she led the mental health sectional for teachers of grades 1-2 at the Minnesota WELS Teachers' Conference (online) in October. She participated in the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) Day of Advocacy at the Capitol on March 5 to advocate for continued collaborative efforts on behalf of students receiving special education services in Minnesota nonpublic schools. She published "Social-Emotional Learning in the Distance Learning Classroom" for *Issues in Lutheran Education* in April. Finally, she serves on the boards of the Christian Educators for Special Education and the Minnesota Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, and in a leadership role on the CLS WELS Special Education Task Force.



## Knight Sky

As darkness fell on Friday, September 18, more than 80 students gathered at the soccer field parking lot for some stargazing.

**Professors Greg Dierson** MLC '96, **Dan Fenske** DMLC '87, **Mark Tacke** DMLC '80, and **John Paulsen (Em.)** DMLC '74 used telescopes and green laser pointers to show students the fall constellations, Mars, Jupiter and four of its moons, and Saturn and its rings.

"The students were very excited to see these wonders of God's creation with their own eyes," said Paulsen. "While we were out there, the International Space Station made a four-minute appearance as well."

With the assistance of some 80-year-old German flak binoculars (pictured with Professors Fenske and Paulsen), the students could even see the Andromeda galaxy. Paulsen purchased these rare binoculars from Raymond Arbes, a New Ulm farmer, in 1975 for \$125.

"In World War II, they were used to spot Allied bombers coming to bomb Germany," Paulsen said. "The bombers' altitude and direction could be determined so that anti-aircraft guns (flak) could prepare to shoot them down. They're still in fine working condition, and they gave us a great view of the Andromeda galaxy."

# FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

**Professor Grace Hennig** DMLC '89 (music) was interviewed (virtually) by Manitowoc LHS's Worship, Music, and the Arts class in September. The class asked about her background, her education, and her work as a church musician and a composer of hymnody and psalmody.

**Professor Thomas Hunter** DMLC '75 (English, director of International Services) was invited to participate in the "Gathering for Gospel Cooperation in Latin America" conference, hosted by the WELS One Latin America mission team, at Divine Savior Academy-Doral FL in October.

**Dr. Robert Klindworth** DMLC '70 (education) was elected vice chair of the Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council and chair of the organization's Accreditation Committee. He also serves as the MLC representative on the WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools.

**JoElyn Krohn** (financial literacy coordinator) was certified as an Accredited Financial Counselor by the AFCPE. She also serves as the MLC Ladies' Auxiliary secretary.

**Dr. John Meyer** DMLC '87 (education, director of Graduate Studies & Continuing Ed) presented "Using a Cognitive Change Model to Plan for and Manage Change" at the EDUCAUSE Annual Conference Online in October.



**Dr. Lawrence Olson** NWC '79, WLS '83 (theology, director of Staff Ministry Program and Congregational Assistant Program) serves on the Administrative Committee for the WELS One Asia Team, which oversees mission work in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Dr. Mark Paustian** NWC '84, WLS '88 (English, Hebrew) presented "Overhearing the Gospel—Indirect Communication in the Scriptures and in the Church's Communicative Tasks" at a Pastors' Institute in Cincinnati in August. In October he led a conference in Juneau AK focused on apologetics: "Here I Stand: Lutherans Finding Their Voice in Apologetics." He's also the 2020-2021 author of "Preach the Word," a homiletics newsletter for WELS pastors.

**Professor David Scharf** NWC '00, WLS '05 (theology) taught "The Doctrine and Practice of Stewardship" (online) for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary this summer. He presented "God's Vision 20/20 for Your Future" at the Minnesota District Teachers' Conference (virtual) in October. He preached for MLC Sundays at St. John-Sparta WI (virtual), First-La Crosse WI, and St. Peter-Schofield WI; and he preaches and leads Bible study monthly at Christ the Lord-Cottage Grove MN. He also continues to serve as a contributing editor to *Forward in Christ*, and to create written and videotaped devotions for Time of Grace-Milwaukee.



**Professor Tingting Z. Schwartz** MS Ed MLC '15 (Chinese) presented three topics to more than 200 Chinese families in both China and the US via Zoom in August and September: "Brain Facts and Parenting Tips—Social-Emotional Learning and Executive Functions," "How to Raise Bilingual Kids: Bilingual Approaches and Biracial Identity Development," and "Creating a Language-Rich Environment at Home—Reading with and

Talking to Your Kids." Her article "Getting Educated on Anti-Racism and Breaking the Silence" received 13.6K reads in the Chinese-American community on her WeChat public account *Bilingualkids* in June. She also contributed another two articles on the topics of COVID-19 and racial discrimination against Asian Americans: "Coronavirus Has No Borders, But Culture Does" and "Coronavirus Has No Borders—Neither Does Bias."

**Professor Steven Thiesfeldt** DMLC '74 (science) served as a consultant to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the development of its strategic plan, *Proclaim God's Praise*. He also led a study at St. John-New Ulm MN, resulting in its strategic plan *Hope in the Lord*.

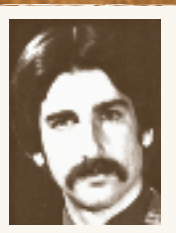
**Dr. Keith Wessel** NWC '87, WLS '91 (Latin, Greek) earned a graduate certificate in Philosophy and Ethics from Harvard University Extension School.



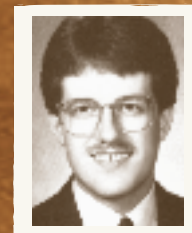
**Deric Pohlman**  
DMLC 1991  
Norfolk NE



**Meredith Milbrath**  
MLC 2011  
Owosso MI



**John Metzger**  
DMLC 1976  
Grafton WI



**Daniel Koeller**  
NWC 1991  
Milwaukee

## Welcoming New Faculty



**Richard Gurgel** NWC '81, WLS '86  
*President*

Please see pages 4-7 for a full biography.



**David Biedenbender** DMLC '88  
*Admissions counselor*

Dave previously taught at St. Paul-Brownsville WI, Manitowoc LHS, Mt. Olive-Overland Park KS, Minnesota Valley LHS, and Sienna Lutheran Academy-Missouri City TX. He has served MLC since 2017 as a part-time admissions counselor, PE instructor, and assistant coach. Dave earned a master's degree in educational leadership—sport management from Winona State University in 2018. He and his wife, **Cathy nee Schubkegel** DMLC '85, have four daughters: Sara, **Andrea (Van Sice)** MLC '14, '18, Christina (Wilke), and Hannah.



**Erin Keese** MLC '16  
*ECLC Lead Teacher*

Erin previously served at St. John's Learning Center-Dowagiac MI and St. Marcus-Milwaukee.



**Martín Santos** MLC '17  
*Admissions Counselor*

Martín previously served at Holy Trinity-Des Moines WA, Nebraska LHS, and California LHS. He married **Hailey Johnson** MLC '19 last summer.



**Jordan J.D. Uhlhorn** MLC '16, WLS '20  
*Instructor, Dorm Supervisor*

J.D. earned his Master of Divinity from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 2020.

## Meet Our New Governing Board Members



**Thomas Klaudt** is a member of St. Paul-Mound City SD. A graduate of Black Hills State University-Spearfish SD, he's a welder by trade and has been engaged in agriculture his whole life.

"The joy and privilege of being considered for this opportunity to serve really is a humble blessing, one I will not take for granted," he says. As he begins his term on the Governing Board, he says, "The Christian has to place God first. As long as the good news of Jesus and his salvation (the gospel) remains the main theme, I see MLC making the necessary changes in a blessed, positive way."



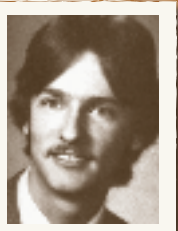
**Joel Lauber** MLC '06 serves as principal and grade 7-8 teacher at the school where he was assigned in 2006, Good Shepherd-Omaha. "MLC has always had a special place in my heart," he says. "The dedicated professors and close friendships I made there had a tremendous impact on me."

He's looking forward to serving on the board of an institution that provides for a crucial need. "Being blessed to work in the public ministry, I get to see firsthand the tremendous need for well-trained pastors and teachers in our synod. MLC does a wonderful job of equipping Christian young men and women to serve in an ever-changing world by building on the unchanging foundation of God's Word."

## Pulling Out All the Stops for 70 Years



Congratulations to **Professor Emeritus Ronald Shilling** DMLC '64 who hit a landmark in October 2020—70 years of playing organ for church! Professor Shilling began playing for church services when he was 8 years old. He continues to play at many different churches, including First Evan-Racine WI, where this photo was taken. DMLC alumni may also remember that Professor Shilling composed the music for *Alma Mater*, DMLC.



**John Kenyon**  
NWC 1981  
Seminole FL



**Laurie Radichel**  
DMLC 1986  
Prescott AZ



**Ronald Gusman, Jr.**  
MLC 1996  
North Hollywood CA



**Gerhardt Voigt**  
DMLC 1951  
Frontenac MN 35

# SPRINTER FUN RUN GOES WORLDWIDE



**900** REGISTERED RUNNERS

**23** STATES

**5** COUNTRIES  
GERMANY • PARAGUAY  
ZAMBIA • CANADA • US

**4** CONTINENTS  
NORTH AMERICA • AFRICA  
EUROPE • SOUTH AMERICA

A special MLCAA shout-out to top alumni volunteer **Sarah (Meyer) Zahrt** MLC '99 (pictured with her family below)!

Sarah's been a rock star on the MLCAA board for 10½ years—a record! As the Events Committee chair, she has tripled the attendance at the Alumni Reception and expanded the on-campus Sprinter Fun Run from fewer than 100 participants to more than 300. With this year's Worldwide Fun Run, she really hit the jackpot—over 900 registrations!



**Kurt Wittmershaus**  
Munich, Germany



**Faculty of Calvary LES**  
Dallas



**Horn & Kuschel Families-Olivia MN**



**Laurie Bame**  
St. Joseph MI



**Zahrt Family-New Ulm MN**



**Tom Moldenhauer-Bismarck ND**



**Maggie & Myah Massiah**  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

