

# knightwatch weekly



MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

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Luther HS / St. Paul-Onalaska WI

## The First Year

At some point during each student's journey through MLC, that special feeling hits. I'm not talking about the excitement of meeting a new batch of Christian friends, the anticipation of learning from brilliant professors, or even the contentment of the soul one experiences after feasting on chicken tenders in the caf. I'm referring to the butterflies that flutter in each of our stomachs as we await our first divine call!

While the terrific milestone of Call Day may mean the end of one's MLC or Seminary education, it's just the beginning of a crash course in real-world ministry. The first year out in the field is a unique learning experience all its own! Let's take a peek into the lives of two of our synod's newest called workers—Ms. Hannah Ruehrdanz and Pastor JD Uhlhorn.



This wasn't the year Hannah expected, but she's grateful for what God had in store.

**Hannah Ruehrdanz** wasn't planning on taking a call right after MLC. She expected to spend the year in Spain, pursuing her master's degree in Spanish education. But like so many of us with ideas about what 2020 would hold, Hannah realized she had to reconsider her plans. But God had it all figured out.

Hannah couldn't look past the irony of trading her Spanish studies for teaching English at Manitowoc LHS. "I couldn't have planned how God made it all work," she said. "Within a week of receiving the call, I accepted and moved to Manitowoc."

Ms. Ruehrdanz's background in Spanish and her sudden need to come up with an English curriculum resulted in a somewhat eclectic classroom experience for her students. She seeks to reach beyond the norms of what you might expect in a high school English class. She uses literature as a tool to tackle difficult social and political issues and to explore how faith in Christ changes our outlook on life.

"Fiction is rooted in the human experience," she said. "We tell stories to connect with people—to give us a lens through which to catch a glimpse of their perspective. That's one thing I love about teaching English—I get to challenge students to see the world in a new way."

**Pastor JD Uhlhorn**, or "Tutor" as he's better known on campus, has a gift. I've met four awesome tutors at MLC. Each was a fantastic young pastor fresh out of the Sem with plenty to offer as an instructor and as a dorm supervisor. But Tutor Uhlhorn is in a league of his own when it comes to his heart for the students he serves. He can often be found on the ultimate Frisbee field after class, hanging out at campus events, or even sitting down with students in the caf.

"It's fun to show up for students in whatever ways I can," he said. "I try to communicate that I was in their shoes not too long ago. I'm available and excited to talk about ministry or anything else that's on their minds."

The road to your first pastor call can be a long one, but Tutor Uhlhorn said gospel ministry is worth the wait. "When I heard I'd be serving at MLC, it was a bit surreal," he said. "The years of studying and the long hours at your desk really come into perspective when you begin to picture yourself serving Christ in your new mission field."



Tutor Uhlhorn receives some encouraging Scripture from Dr. Paustian as he is installed.