

MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE INFOCUS

FALL 2022



In This Issue . . .

Betty Kohn Fieldhouse Dedication

Pursuing Excellence

Under the Cross

Focus on Scholarships

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Aberdeen, SD
Permit #200

Address Service Requested

1995 Luther Court
New Ulm, MN 56073



WRITER/EDITOR

Laurie Gauger DMLC '87

COPY EDITOR

Heidi Schoof DMLC '86

MLC PHOTOGRAPHY TEAM*

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Lime Valley Advertising, Inc.

Leah Matzke

Katherine Schmoller MLC '06

Office of Mission Advancement

VP for MISSION ADVANCEMENT

Mark Maurice

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

William Pekrul DMLC '80

ALUMNI RELATIONS DIRECTOR

Steve Balza DMLC '93

College Administration

PRESIDENT

Rich Gurgel NWC '81, WLS '86

VP for ACADEMICS

Jeffery Wiechman DMLC '90

VP for ADMINISTRATION

Scott Schmudlach DMLC '85

VP for ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

Theodore Klug MLC '97

VP for MISSION ADVANCEMENT

Mark Maurice

VP for STUDENT LIFE

Jeffrey Schone NWC '83, WLS '87

*Professor William Pekrul DMLC '80,

Natasha Cabeza MLC '24, Benjamin

Hahm MLC '23, Meghan Johnson

MLC '27, Ryan Kohl MLC '23,

Maddie Liebert MLC '26, Haley Martin

MLC '23, Kostia Skorenkyi MLC '23,

Bill Wang MLC '23, Grace Winkel

MLC '23

On the cover:

We dedicated the Betty Kohn
Fieldhouse on October 8.
What a celebration!

Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross All Over Campus



By President Rich Gurgel
NWC '81, WLS '86

MLC is finishing five months
under our new strategic plan:
Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross.

Throughout this edition of
MLC InFocus, but especially on pages 12-19,
you'll see how God has already been blessing such
Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross by our
students, staff, faculty . . . and by you, the
readers of *MLC InFocus* who support your WELS
College of Ministry with your prayers, gifts, and
words of encouragement.

What is some of that evidence you'll see on these pages? You'll see that we're
Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross as we . . .



Pursuing Excellence

UNDER THE CROSS



. . . **embrace our family's identity** (key initiative #1)
as a confessional Lutheran college dedicated to our singular
mission of providing men and women who are faithful and
qualified for gospel ministry. You'll see that as you read of
five MLC administration and faculty members serving on a
synodical task force addressing the growing need for teachers
in WELS schools that are enjoying significant growth.

. . . **empower our family's formation** (key initiative #2)
by building on the God-given strengths of our faculty and
staff, helping them to maximize their gifts for even more
meaningful and joyful service at MLC.



. . . **expand our family's reach** (key initiative #3)
by calling two new faculty members who will focus on
establishing MLC's Competency-Based Education program.
This program will provide a path to the teaching ministry for
non-traditional students across the country, many of whom
are already serving in our synod's schools in other ways.

. . . **endow our family's home** (key initiative #4)
by dedicating the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse, adding new
scholarships, and envisioning enhancements to the
Luther Student Center.



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
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.



MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE



And that's only a brief taste. As you read, you'll find one example after another of this pursuit of excellence. And even when you finish reading, please know there is much more going on across campus. While our strategic plan is intentionally brief—a single page that provides MLC with focus for our work—there are 40 faculty divisions and staff departments that have crafted the details of their own three-year and one-year goals as they **Pursue Excellence Under the Cross** in the unique campus roles God has them serving.

We do all this knowing that only what God blesses will prosper. Our goal is simply to provide our gracious Savior with multiple opportunities to bless our humble, faithful efforts. We know that God created the entire universe from nothing and saved us in Christ with no assistance from us. But when it comes to our stewardship of his gifts of resources and time, he typically does not choose to bless nothing. Instead, he delights to bless the work of those he loves in Christ as they strive to serve him with the gifts, opportunities, and strength he provides.

We know that the final result of our efforts rests in our Lord's hands. As a pastor once wisely reminded me, along with many fellow pastors in a pastoral conference devotion: "God is in the blessing and providing business. We are in the working and trusting business." As MLC seeks to continue growing in what it means to be faithful stewards with every opportunity and skill God gives us, we anticipate eagerly what blessings God will graciously choose to bring from that effort.

As you read this edition of **MLC InFocus**, that's what you will see. These pages are filled with evidence of just such blessings from God in multiple directions. Read. Enjoy. And then with your continued prayers, words of encouragement, and gifts, keep partnering with us in **Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross**.

God will astound us with the results!

Advent Devotions for You!

Word Made Flesh: THE HISTORICAL REALITY OF CHRISTMAS



This Advent, discover how the gospels of John the Elder and Luke the Historian record the details of the incarnation—God becoming man—in our devotion booklet *Word Made Flesh: The Historical Reality of Christmas*.

Each of the 25 devotions is prompted by a question about the historical accuracy of the Christmas account. Each reminds us that Christmas is not a sweet children's story or fairy tale. It is a historical event. In our skeptical times, John and Luke help us reaffirm the objective reality of Christmas.

We hope these devotions, written by MLC faculty members, will remind you that we need more than just a spiritual idea or inspiring story. We need a real flesh-and-blood Savior, one who stepped into human history, changing it—and us—forever.

Read or download the devotions at mlc-wels.edu/publications/seasonal-devotions.



The alumni photos at the bottom of the pages are from the anniversary classes of MLC, NWC, and DMLC: '48, '53, '58, '63, '68, '73, '78, '83, '88, '93, '98, '03, '08, '13, and '18. Thanks to Alumni Director Steve Balza DMLC '93, who provided this random selection of alumni.



Claire Czaplewski
MLC 2013
West Bend WI



Mackenzie Rothfuss
MLC 2018
Bay City MI

here on the

hill



MLC Governing Board Meets

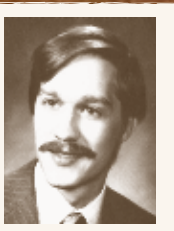
The Martin Luther College Governing Board conducted their fall meeting at MLC October 12-14. We thank these gentlemen for their work.

Back: Mr. Thomas Klaudt, Teacher Joel Lauber, Teacher Joe Archer, Teacher Andrew Van Weele, Rev. Peter Prange

Middle: Mr. Michael Valleau, Rev. Paul Prange (*advisory*), Rev. Geoffrey Kieta, Mr. Thomas Walters (*advisory*), Rev. Dennis Klatt (*advisory*)

Front: Pres. Richard Gurgel (*advisory*), Mr. Timothy Luetzow, Mr. Michael Krueger (*advisory*), Rev. Michael Lindemann, Teacher Paul Kelm, Rev. Aaron Mueller (*chair*)

Not pictured: Teacher David Uhlhorn and Mr. Steven Wasser



**Bradley
Ragner**
NWC 1983
Des Moines IA



**Elaine
Tullberg**
DMLC 1963
Moline IL



**Joseph
Kasper**
MLC 2018
Thomasville GA

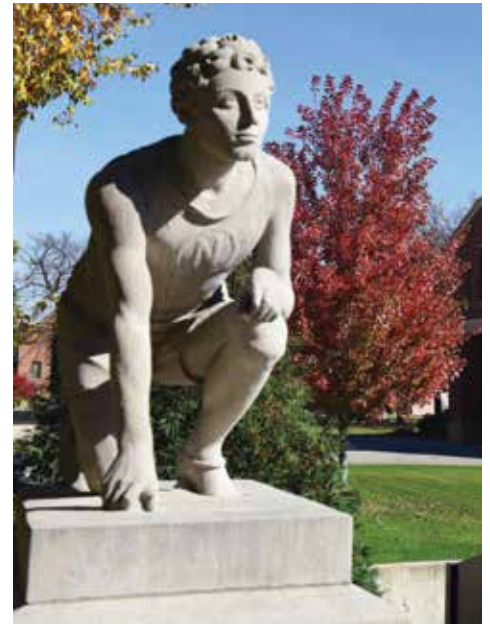


**Margaret
Polzin**
MLC 2008
Cudahy WI

Homecoming *Dream Come True*

Every Fun Run is led by the Sprinter, an MLC student who covers himself in white paint, in homage of the Sprinter statue (right), and sets the pace for the hundreds of other runners.

At a Sprinter Fun Run back in 2012, little **Camden Sulzle** (red shirt) told his parents that someday he wanted to be the Sprinter. At Homecoming 2022, his wish came true. This junior preseminary student from St. John-Redwood Falls, Minnesota, put on the paint and led the race.



CHRISTMAS AT
MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

DAWN
of
REDEEMING
GRACE

CHAPEL OF THE CHRIST

Saturday, December 3, 2022 at 7:30 pm
Sunday, December 4, 2022 at 4:00 pm



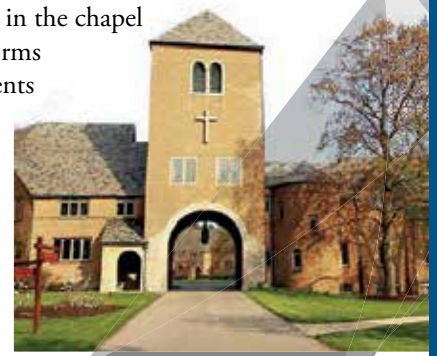
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT
ABOUT BECOMING A PASTOR?

You're invited to a
'Focus on Ministry'
at
Wisconsin Lutheran
Seminary

Sunday-Monday,
February 26-27, 2023

- Tour the campus & worship in the chapel
- Visit classes & stay in the dorms
- Meet current seminary students
- See what pastoral preparation is all about

LEARN MORE HERE!



**David
Valleskey**
NWC 1958
Detroit



**Melissa
Draeger**
MLC 1998
Watertown SD



**Benjamin
Carlovsky**
MLC 2003
Crystal Lake IL



**Catherine
Strunk**
DMLC 1968
Toledo OH

THE BETTY KOHN FIELD

Dedicated October 8, 2022



What a Homecoming Saturday!

On the morning of October 8, hundreds gathered to dedicate the new Betty Kohn Fieldhouse. We expressed our gratitude to our gracious God, to our many generous donors, and to Bob and Betty Kohn for their transformational gift.



Justin
Steinke
MLC 2018
San Antonio TX



Antonia
Schroeder
DMLC 1958
Kiel WI



Jay
Bendewald
NWC 1983
Spokane WA



Heidi
Kruger
MLC 2018
Mauston WI

Here Too We Celebrate Our Lord's Overwhelming Goodness!

An excerpt from President Rich Gurgel's dedication message



*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
(Psalm 139:14)*

This verse helps explain why Martin Luther College has used millions of dollars given by so many to build this Betty Kohn Fieldhouse. No, this is not our chapel, as some might almost imagine in a culture that at times does worship sports. The heart of our campus is and, I pray, always remains Chapel of the Christ, where we gather every day to be reminded that the heart of our lives is knowing the forgiveness of sins that is ours alone through the innocent life and sacrificial death of the eternal Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse also celebrates our Lord's overwhelming goodness! God has not only redeemed our souls, he has redeemed us body and soul. So we rightly also care for the gift of our bodies. We rightly seek to honor that gift through our athletic teams, in our intramural sports, in our physical education classes, and in providing time and place simply to exercise. And the training and activity that happens in this fieldhouse will be multiplied as our students go out into the ministry, where they also will teach the next generations to cherish how fearfully and wonderfully they are made, soul and body. . . .



Members of the football team thank God for the Betty Kohn.



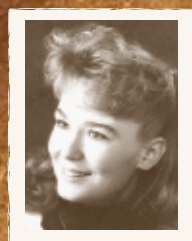
**Jonathan
Bare**
MLC 2003
Owosso MI



**Margaret
Carston**
DMLC 1973
Watertown SD



**Matthew
Rydecki**
MLC 1998
Stevensville MI



**Ginger
Drake**
DMLC 1993
Houston



MEET OUR DONORS: *Bob and Betty Kohn*

Betty now sings with the angelic choirs of heaven as she rests in eternity with Jesus Christ. Long before, she sang with the choirs of St. Matthew's Lutheran in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Bob and Betty later became members at Grace Lutheran in neighboring St. Joseph, Michigan, where I serve.

When I first met Betty, she did not sing. She didn't even speak. She sat at a small table in front of a large window in the breakfast nook of the Kohn home. Across from her sat her faithful husband, Bob. Betty traced the placemat with her finger as Bob explained to me how she'd suffered a stroke years ago and had developed Alzheimer's.

One of the joys of being a pastor is to bring God's Word to people who can no longer make it to church. I sat and reminded Betty of her sins, which would have separated her from a holy God if it were not for Jesus. I resurrected the truths of the gospel cleansing that was hers because of her Savior. I placed that Savior's very own body and blood into her hands so she could eat and drink the pledge of her forgiveness.

This is the reason Martin Luther College exists, to train men and women who are qualified to meet the ministry needs of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and who are competent to proclaim the Word of God faithfully and in accord with the Lutheran Confessions in the *Book of Concord*.

This training is not simply theoretical. It is practical. Every graduate in ministry will use the hours of classroom instruction to fish for men and women like Bob and Betty Kohn. Every athlete who plays under the roof of the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse will impact other fish caught in the net of the gospel.

In addition to donating to the fieldhouse, Bob and Betty Kohn are donating to help Christian education at every level. At the time of this publication, a new gymnasium is going up at Michigan Lutheran High School. A new turf soccer field is

If you were to stroll the campus of Martin Luther College, you would discover places like the Chapel of the Christ, with an impressive organ fixed in a wide-open space where voices can ring like the angelic choirs of heaven. In the background you'd hear the trickle of the baptismal font, reminding you of the waters that wash us and make us righteous in God's sight.

Walk out those doors, and you'd see a new statue of Jesus called "The Fisher of Men," which reminds students of who called them and what the task is at hand. Turn right, and on the far side of the mall stands Martin Luther, pointing at the Scriptures, which directs students back to God's Word and reminds all of us that we're Lutheran. We stand with Luther now, 500 years later, on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now drive a few blocks away to find the new addition to campus, the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse. Betty Kohn? Who is that?

That is the name of a soul who was also baptized and made righteous. That is a fish who was caught by the gospel. Bob and Betty Kohn are supporters of Christian education much like Luther was. And they were children of God long before they were donors.



**Lance
Waege**
DMLC 1993
Mishicot WI



**Julie
Wilson**
DMLC 1978
Petaluma CA



**Bill
Natsis**
NWC 1978
Bay City MI



**Beverly
Gray**
DMLC 1988
Milwaukee

By Pastor Joshua Bishop MLC '09, WLS '13

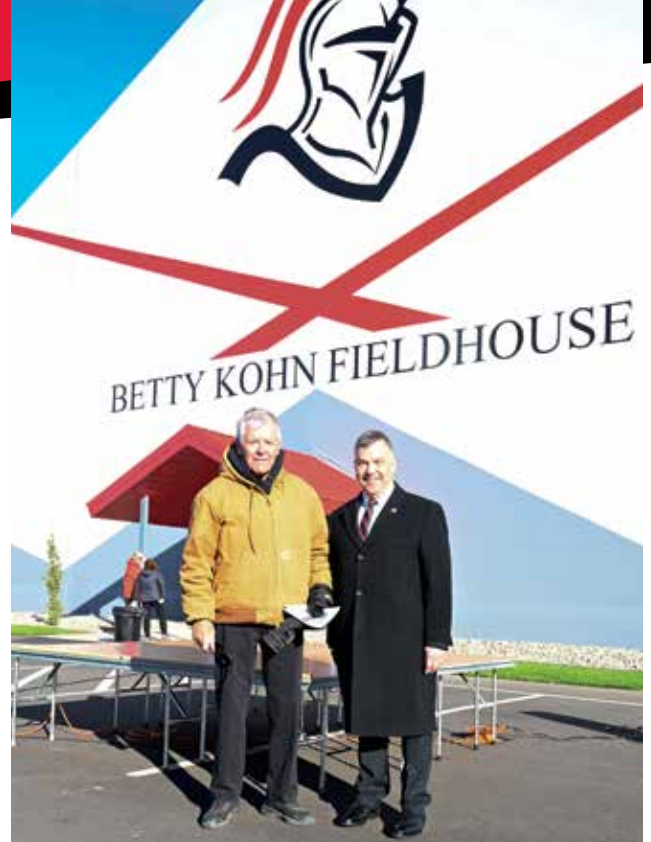
being installed and a gym has been renovated at Grace Lutheran School in St. Joseph.

God has blessed his church at large with the generosity of the Kohn family. Far before they were donors, they were souls, bought by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Lord decided to take Betty home to heaven in January of 2021, so she never saw the completion of the fieldhouse erected in her name. But the Kohn legacy will last for generations to come as many more join Betty singing the praises of God in heaven.

Pastor Joshua Bishop serves Grace Lutheran in St. Joseph, Michigan, where Bob Kohn is a member.

Pictured left: A few years ago, Bob and Betty Kohn participated in the grand opening of a Stevensville, Michigan, athletic field they funded. Betty passed away without seeing the MLC facility named in her honor, but Bob Kohn did attend the fieldhouse dedication.



Bob Kohn and President Gurgel



The Sprinter Fun Run—with 330 runners at MLC and another 218 runners worldwide—began and ended at the Betty Kohn.



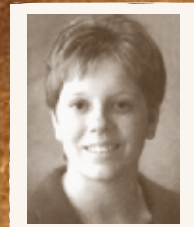
Michael Neumann
NWC 1993
Melstone MT



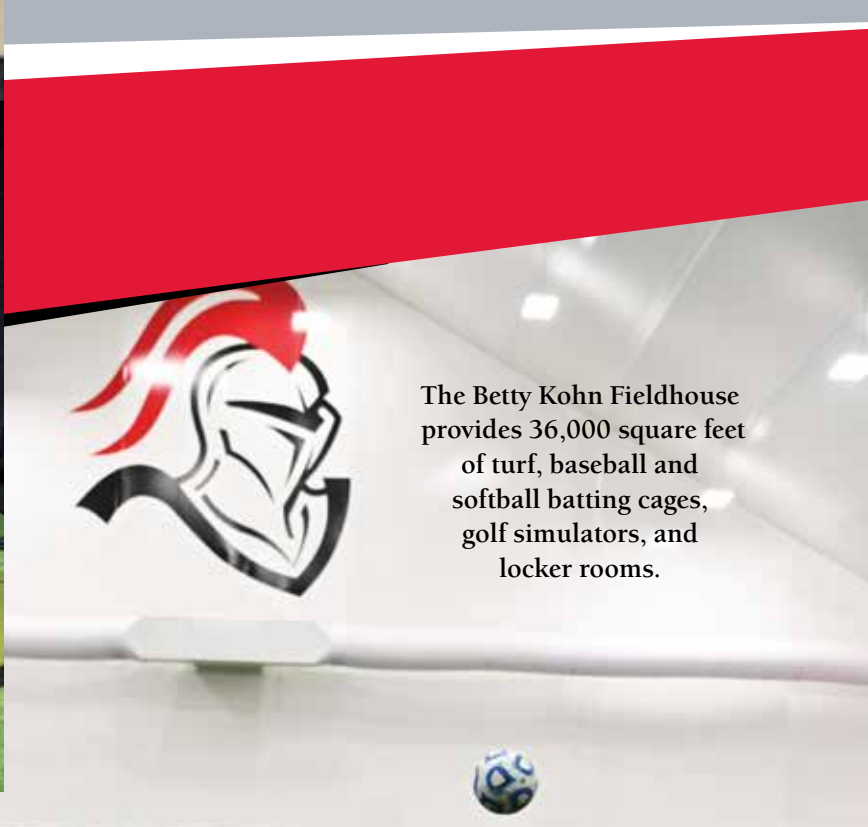
Barbara Miller
MLC 1998
Phoenix



Dennis Meier
NWC 1968
Fond du Lac WI



Mandy Pavelchik
MLC 2003
Oakfield WI



The Betty Kohn Fieldhouse provides 36,000 square feet of turf, baseball and softball batting cages, golf simulators, and locker rooms.



Alan Jeffers
DMLC 1968
Bloomington MN



Hattie Heller
MLC 2003
Madison WI



Eugene Kock
NWC 1963
Eau Claire WI



Debbie Cook
MLC 2013
Lenexa KS



Always an Advocate for College Athletics: Coach Jim Unke

For many years our athletic director, **Jim Unke**, had been advocating for enhanced athletic facilities on MLC's campus.

As a lifelong coach, Jim knew very well how a strong athletics program can help shape character traits that are essential in the ministry: leadership, work ethic, teamwork, sacrifice, sportsmanship.

And he knew that athletic facilities are also attractive to prospective students. High schoolers base their college decisions partly on what amenities the college offers. They want to spend four years on a campus that respects their gifts, including their athletic gifts, and offers plenty of space for development of those gifts.

So as the vision for the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse became a reality, Jim was thoroughly involved. He attended every weekly meeting with VP for Administration Scott Schmudlach and the architect, and he was onsite regularly during construction.

"We looked to Jim throughout the process," said VP Schmudlach, who's also Jim's brother-in-law. "He knew how the building should function. He knew what the locker rooms should look like. He knew how to ensure that all the amenities would serve athletic teams, PE classes, the student body as a whole, and the community. As colleagues—and as family—it was a really wonderful experience."

Jim saw the building take shape. He saw the first students step on the turf, pass footballs and soccer balls, drive golf balls with the simulator, and hit softballs and baseballs in the cages.

But God took Jim home before the dedication. After suffering a stroke, he passed into glory on July 30, 2022.

Have no doubt, though: he left his mark. The MLC campus family sees Coach Unke's touches everywhere on the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse, and he was in the memories of everyone at that dedication.

James Martin "Jim" Unke
1958-2022

On July 30, 2022, while actively serving MLC as athletic director, Professor Jim Unke was called to glory. Blessed to grow up in a Christian home, he was baptized, educated, and confirmed at Immanuel-Manitowoc, Wisconsin, before continuing his Christian training at Manitowoc LHS and Dr. Martin Luther College.

After spending a year as an emergency instructor at East Fork LHS-Whiteriver, Arizona, Jim completed his degree and was assigned to the teaching ministry—serving faithfully at St. Paul-New Ulm, Minnesota (1983-1987), and Lakeside LHS (1987-1997). In 1997, just two years after MLC was established, he accepted a call to serve as MLC's athletic director, physical education professor, and men's basketball coach. For the next 25 years, Jim worked tirelessly to provide MLC students opportunities to develop and use their athletic gifts to God's glory. He was instrumental in the planning of the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse. He oversaw all aspects of MLC sports, helped maintain and improve facilities, coached, taught, mentored, and modeled ministry to a generation of future pastors, teachers, and staff ministers.

He also served in many roles outside of his service to MLC, including commissioner of the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC).

Jim's wife, **Lori DMLC '84**, continues to serve MLC as an admissions counselor. Jim and Lori celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary this year. They were blessed with three children—**Daniel MLC '06 (Leah Morgan MLC '06)**, **Angela MLC '07 (Brian Schmidt MLC '07)**, and **Jacob MLC '12, '21 (Jenna Kerr)**—and 10 grandchildren.

A full obituary can be found at bit.ly/UnkeObit.

Memorials to MLC are helping establish a Jim Unke Scholarship Endowment Fund to provide financial aid for those studying for the public ministry at MLC. Watch for invitations to contribute on our website and social media.



Edwin Hahn
DMLC 1978
Kearney NE



Barbara Weyland
DMLC 1963
Mobridge SD



Jacob Lash
MLC 2018
Racine WI



Julie Zickuhr
DMLC 1993
Grant Park IL



Pursuing Excellence UNDER THE CROSS

We are now several months into ***Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross***, our new strategic plan. (See the president's message on pages 2-3.) Guided by its four key initiatives, we are forging ahead and asking God to bless us as we provide the highest quality ministerial education—at a cost our students can afford.

This plan is full of bold goals, but that's because Christ has given us a Great Commission—to share his gospel with the world. Take a look at some of our newest ventures in these pages.

Competency-Based Education: *It's a Go!*



Competency-based education (CBE) is a go!

We've received more than \$300,000 in grants from the Marvin M. Schwan Foundation, the Neumann Family Foundation, and the Siebert Lutheran Foundation. These monies have enabled us to begin calling for a program director and a course designer.

We're so excited to implement this mode of education that will assist individuals who want to be WELS teachers but cannot pursue the traditional four-year on-campus experience.

CBE is an online option that awards degrees based on competence rather than credit-hours. It will work especially well for second-career individuals and unique urban people groups, allowing them to earn their college degrees while staying in their own communities and in their own jobs—some of which are in WELS schools.

One of the key initiatives in ***Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross*** directs us to expand our family's reach. CBE allows us to expand that reach to those potential teachers who cannot come to our campus. They cannot come to MLC, but MLC can come to them. We can help them fulfill their dream of becoming a WELS teacher—and make a dent in the teacher shortage we have in the synod.

Stay tuned! We'll keep you updated on how we are implementing this exciting new mode of education.



New Gift from Above: MLC's Dean of Chapel



"Every good gift is from above."

We've received a wonderful gift from our Father above in our new dean of chapel, **Jacob Behnken** MLC '08, WLS '12. He began his service at MLC in October.

In addition to being an ordained pastor and worship leader for 10 years, Behnken comes to us as an accomplished organist. He took his first organ lessons in sixth grade with Dr. Ed Meyer here on the hill. It was a bit of a drive from his home in Brookings, South Dakota, to New Ulm, but no worries. His father, who's a licensed pilot and flight instructor, flew him here every week in a little Beechcraft Bonanza.

"It was a 25-minute flight," Behnken says, "so usually we just flew here after school once a week. Dr. Meyer picked us up at the New Ulm Airport and dropped us off again after my lesson."

Gift from above indeed.

At MLC, Behnken continued organ lessons with Dr. Wayne Wagner and sang in the College Choir with Dr. Kermit Moldenhauer—while studying his Greek, Hebrew, theology, and all the other courses in MLC's preseminary program.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary saw him singing and playing organ as well, and upon graduation he was assigned to Good Shepherd-Midland, Michigan, where he served as pastor and worship leader for a decade.

One of the key initiatives in *Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross* directs us to embrace our identity as confessional Lutherans. That includes placing worship at the center of our lives. The Chapel of the Christ holds one corner of campus, and twice-daily chapel is a cornerstone of campus life. But Professor Behnken notes something really special about MLC:

"The amazing thing about a place like MLC is that really every part of our campus is a place of worship. Everything we do together on campus can be a spiritual act of worship in which we give glory to our Savior. That's evident in classrooms and on athletic fields, and most especially in our chapel.

"In the chapel," he continues, "we come together in public worship to sing our praises and confess our faith in Jesus. It's probably the most visible way that we worship together as a community."

But worship is not primarily about the praise of God's people, he says. "Far more important than what we are offering to God is what God is doing for us. With his gospel in Word and sacrament, he is feeding and nourishing our faith.

He is assuring us of his love and forgiveness and giving us strength to walk with him. I'm looking forward to playing a role in sharing with the students the strength and comfort God gives us in his Word."

In addition to coordinating our worship services at MLC—including daily chapels and special services for Evangelism Day, World Missions Day, Commencement, Homecoming, and so on—Professor Behnken will also teach Lutheran Worship.

He says he's especially looking forward to interacting with the students. "MLC is such a special place because of all the young people ready to offer their lives in service to the church," he says. "After just a few days on campus, I'm already amazed at the depth and variety of the gifts God has given them. As dean of chapel, I'm especially excited to be a part of putting those gifts to use in our public worship."

MLC has had excellent leadership in the planning of worship services in the past, but we're so grateful God has allowed us to have one person who can make worship his primary focus. Professor Behnken will devote the best of his time and gifts primarily to planning and preparing, coordinating and collaborating to make chapel worship both edifying for the campus family and an instructive model to our students, many of whom will be worship leaders themselves very soon.

"Chapel of the Christ is the very heart of our campus," he says, "because there we come into God's very presence as he equips us for our lives of service to him—both on this earth and for eternity. My prayer is that my work as dean of chapel can be a blessing for these students while they are preparing here on campus and as they go out to serve where God calls them."



Partners in Ministerial Education



MLC has a matching scholarship fund. If the student's home congregation gives him or her between \$100 and \$1200, MLC will match it.

God's people at St. John/St. James saw the need, stepped up to meet it—and exceeded expectations. They were hoping for \$4,800—the maximum that MLC would match for four students. The congregation donated more than \$10,000—making a substantial dent in these students' tuition bills . . . and a significant difference in their lives.

Reducing student debt is a major focus of **Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross**. One very effective tool is the CPGP. In 2022-2023, we matched more than \$600,000 in congregational grants, awarding a total of almost \$1.25 million to our students.

And we are looking for even bigger numbers. Each year, we are boosting the “match max” by 10 percent. In 2023-2024, we will match \$1,325 per student per year.

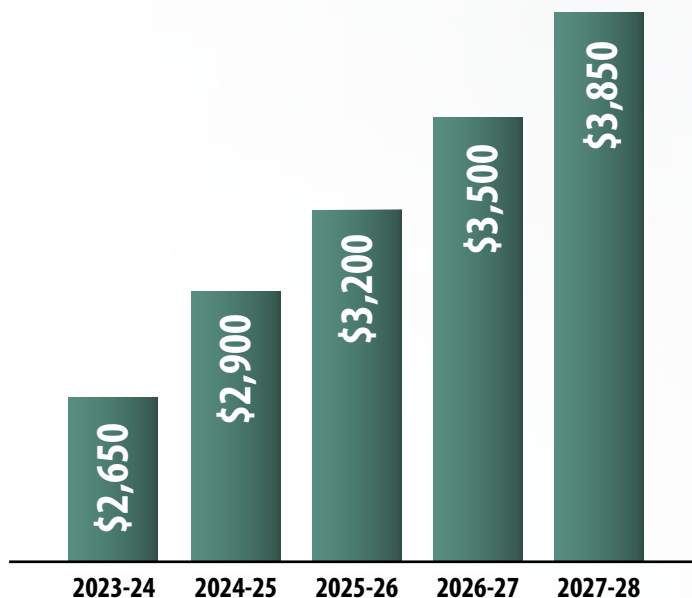
St. John/St. James Lutheran Church in Reedsville, Wisconsin, is not an especially big congregation, but they have very big hearts when it comes to ministerial education.

To support their four students enrolled at MLC, the congregation enrolled in the Congregational Partner Grant Program (CPGP). The congregation's president, Daniel Duchow, explained the situation clearly in the bulletin:

We've all heard about the shortage of pastors and teachers in our synod. . . . Right now the Baby Boomer generation is retiring. We don't have enough graduates to take the place of all these people.

Four of our congregation members are attending MLC. They plan on becoming called workers in our synod. This is a great blessing from our gracious God.

As we all know, the cost of education keeps going up every year. For the 2022-2023 school year, the cost for attending MLC will be \$29,400.00. The cost over four years is almost \$118,000. Approximately 75% of MLC students graduate with debt. This is a concern for our synod.



Is your congregation supporting your MLC students through CPGP?

What if you don't have MLC students here? You can still help! Your gift to MLC can help us match the congregational grants.

Yo soy el camino, la verdad y la vida



"I am the way, the truth and the life."

Spanish-speaking students worshiped Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life, in Spanish at a special early October worship service.

Pastor Abram Degner MLC '05, WLS '10, a missionary in South America, preached the sermon, and students **Juan D. Escobar** (*Divine Savior-Miami, pictured*) and **James Carter** (*St. Peter-Milwaukee*) served as readers.

This event, facilitated by the Cultural Engagement Center, was part of our Hispanic Heritage month. It was just one of many activities that help promote the goals of the CEC:

- To provide a welcoming space for our diverse students where they feel seen, heard, and valued.
- To support and advocate for our diverse students.
- To provide an engaging space for cross-cultural conversations and promote a stronger sense of community and mutual respect for our entire campus family.
- To encourage and teach cultural humility through intercultural awareness programs for all populations.

The CEC is a key component in expanding our family's reach, one of the key initiatives in ***Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross.***

Orden del servicio

Invocación:

*En nombre del Padre y del hijo
y del espíritu santo, amén.*

Order of Service

Invocation:

*In the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the
Holy Spirit, Amen.*



We're Renovating Luther Student Center

The Luther Student Center is used every day by every student—and it's more than ready for a renovation.

Our plans include an upgraded game room and movable furniture—lounge chairs, tables, whiteboards, mobile partitions—that allow students to customize the space to meet their own needs, whether that's working together on a project, enjoying a game, or just relaxing for an hour.

We're moving forward on this renovation! If you're interested in lending your support, please contact VP Mark Maurice or Resource Counselor Beth Scharf: **507.354.8221** / **mauricma@mlc-wels.edu** / **scharfbm@mlc-wels.edu**.



What's Holding You Back?

Ministry as a Second Career



For people like Mike Tracy and Marc Sandefur, a moment arrives when they say to themselves and their families, “Why not? Why am I putting this off? I want to serve God in the ministry.”

Mike and Marc are second-career students, people God leads to pursue the ministry after they’ve already spent years in other vocations—in the military, in corporate America, in service jobs. In fact, for them—and many of our nontraditional students—ministry can actually be a third, fourth, or fifth career.



Mike Tracy, for instance, served in the U.S. Air Force for 24 years and then worked in IT for another nine years before he decided he wanted to fulfill his childhood dream and pursue the public ministry.

“Since grade school,” he says, “I’ve wanted to somehow serve in the church. I found myself volunteering and holding positions

on church councils since graduating from high school in 1985.”

In 2018, Mike and his wife, Diane, decided it was time to move to New Ulm. “God placed the right influencers and resources into my life,” he says, “which made it clear that it was the right time.”

Mike was a full-time student for three years, graduating in 2021 with his staff ministry certification and his WELS Chaplaincy Certificate.

Both he and Diane worked on campus while he studied, Diane as an administrative assistant for the Congregational Assistant and Staff Ministry programs and he as a “student hire” in IT. (Read more about the couple’s journey in *Forward in Christ* at forwardinchrist.net/mike-tracy)



Marc Sandefur calls himself a fifth-career student. As a graduate of the University of Texas-Austin in aerospace engineering, he worked as a math teacher in high school and college, a computer programmer, and a pension analyst before enrolling at MLC this fall.

The idea of a new vocation as a staff minister took up residence in his mind during a five-month pastoral vacancy at his church, Abiding Faith-Fort Worth, Texas. “I was a member of the church council,” he says, “so I was involved with working with vacancy pastors, with finances, and with the call process. I even did the liturgy. Through all that, I saw that I would enjoy everything about being a pastor except the actual preaching.”

At a conference, he learned about MLC’s staff ministry program. He talked to a few staff ministers, including Mike Tracy, as well as the program director at MLC, Dr. Lawrence Olson, and decided to give it a shot.

Marc is just finishing his first semester here, but he likes it. He’s happy to do face-to-face instruction instead of online learning, and he’s finding that going to school Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and working Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday as a delivery person for Amazon is working out great.

To others considering this option, Marc says to give it a shot. “Don’t be intimidated about going back to school. I’m not the best student, and I need to work on my time management, but overall, it hasn’t been that difficult.”

Mike Tracy would agree. He thoroughly enjoyed his time at MLC, noting that as a more mature adult, he was actually readier for college. “I enjoyed college so much more the second time around,” he says. “It was no longer ‘I have to take this class,’ but ‘I get to take this class.’”

At his graduation in 2021, Mike Tracy received an assignment that put him on the other side of the podium, teaching and leading as a chaplain for Chaplains in Schools. His call encompasses a wide range of duties, including many different touch points with faculty, students, and families connected to the HOPE Christian Schools in Milwaukee and Racine as well as the Center for Urban Teaching (CfUT) summer schools. He leads weekly student chapels, assists with classroom management, lends spiritual support to staff (especially new staff, to increase retention), and maintains positive communications with parents and caregivers. He also lends called worker and member ministry support at Fairview-Milwaukee. And he’s started teaching grade 9-10 religion online through Brite Star Virtual High School.

“I am just so thrilled to be able to serve God’s children,” he says. “I can’t call it a job. It’s just too enjoyable, even with the moments of stress and occasional loss of confidence. It’s an awesome way to spend the time God has given me.”

MLC prepared him for this call, of course, and he’s quick to note that God has used all his life experiences—from his military service to his corporate employment to his parenting of a child with a disability—to ready him for ministry. However, he adds humbly, “I’m not sure I am prepared for anything but heaven. God equips me as he sees fit for the good works he has prepared in advance for me to do.”

And that's the message that nontraditionals like Mike and Marc would say to others who might be considering a second (or third, fourth, fifth) career in ministry.

"I would ask a question," Mike says. "What's holding you back? Take a look at all the disciples. I believe they all were second-career and from many different vocations. You have been gifted with experiences, training, and maturity that can attest to God's goodness, grace, mercy, and purpose. Jesus told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.' (Luke 10:2) There is plenty of work to be done. We need pastors, teachers, and staff ministers, and that doesn't just mean 20-year-olds. Moses was 80 when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt."

Chaplain Mike Tracy and a student in a Milwaukee school review the Bible story about the children of Israel crossing the Jordan. The child has recently asked to be baptized, so Mike is meeting with his parents.

We know that nontraditionals might face some interesting challenges when becoming full-time students—like being mistaken for a parent or underdressed professor, for starters, Mike says. But with gestures both large and small, MLC is committed to making them feel welcome. It's all part of expanding our family's reach, a key initiative in ***Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross***.

Interested? Go to mlc-wels.edu/nts to learn more. You'll find information about our campus, the New Ulm community, housing, and employment opportunities, as well as links to our programs.



Finding Solutions: MLC Faculty Serve on WELS Teacher Shortage Task Force

The challenge is simple: WELS needs more teachers. After Call Day 2022, about 140 classrooms across the country did not have teachers.

The solution may be complicated. To study and address the many issues surrounding the teacher shortage, **WELS President Mark Schroeder** and Commission on Lutheran Schools Director **James Rademan** have appointed a Teacher Shortage Task Force.

Five of the 15 committee members serve at MLC—appropriate because our mission is, in part, to prepare teachers for WELS classrooms.

The MLC representatives are President **Rich Gurgel**, VP for Academics **Jeff Wiechman**, VP for Enrollment Management **Ted Klug**, Dean for Education and Staff Ministry **Benjamin**

Clemons, and Director of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education **John Meyer**.

Dr. Clemons is eager to find solutions. "As we consider this challenging issue," he says, "the task force members realize there is no single answer or quick fix. Rather, we'll need to take action at a number of levels: identifying potential teacher candidates, increasing student financial aid, developing new ways to train nontraditional students, retaining called workers, and even examining the way we structure our schools."

Several of these avenues dovetail with MLC's own strategic plan, ***Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross***. We ask God's blessings on the task force's efforts!



President
Rich Gurgel



Vice President
Jeff Wiechman



Vice President
Ted Klug



Dr. Benjamin
Clemons



Dr. John
Meyer



Debt Numbers Are Down . . . The Future's Looking Up!

Great news!

The financial future is looking brighter and brighter for MLC graduates.

The numbers are in, and we can report that for *four straight years*, our graduates borrowed less money to pay for their education at MLC.

The average debt decreased four years in a row, with this year's graduating class seeing the biggest drop. Borrowers in the class of 2022 borrowed \$1,600 less, on average, than the class of 2021. That's substantial.

In addition, 1 out of 3 graduates in 2022 borrowed no money at all. They are leaving MLC debt-free.

Reducing student debt is one of the primary objectives in our strategic plan, ***Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross***, and we are making progress!

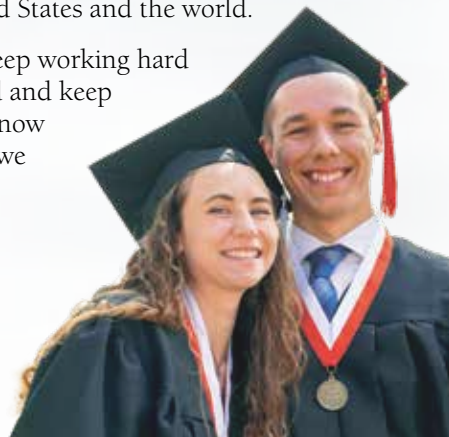
Congregations are giving more to the Congregational Partner Grant Program. (See page 14.) Families, organizations, and

other groups are establishing more legacy scholarships. (See pages 26-27.) And individuals like you are being led by the Spirit to give out of the goodness of your hearts.

These donors all understand the importance of raising up the next generation of called workers—pastors, teachers, and staff ministers who will share the gospel in congregations and schools across the United States and the world.

Please know that we'll keep working hard to boost our financial aid and keep our costs in check. We know how important it is that we offer an education of the highest quality . . . at an affordable price.

As those debt numbers keep going down, the future keeps looking up!



Taking Financial Wellness Training into the High Schools

The world of college financial aid can be complicated. We want to help.

In September, three MLC representatives made visits to four high schools. Financial Wellness Trainer Amber Barcalow, accompanied by Financial Aid Director Mark Bauer and Financial Wellness Coordinator JoElyn Krohn, gave presentations at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Shoreland LHS, Wisconsin LHS, and Kettle Moraine LHS. The MLC presentation was also streamed on the Luther Preparatory School website so LPS students and their parents could participate.

We've been doing these presentations for several years, not only for prospective MLC students but for all high school students and parents. In fact, we've offered one at MLC for all area students—from public, Catholic, Lutheran, and home schools—for more than 20 years.

We come ready to answer all the hard questions:

- What kinds of financial aid are available?
- How do we apply for financial aid?
- What's the FAFSA, and when do we need to complete it?

- What's the list price of college vs. the actual cost of college?
- How do students arrive at a healthy work-life balance, working to pay for college while still making summer memories and fully participating in college campus life?
- When do we have to start repaying loans?
- How do we start preparing for college payments now?

This is one way we are ***Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross***—taking the financial wellness training we already provide for MLC students and extending it to high school students and their parents. We know that beginning financial training earlier will result in college students who already have a head start financially.

Then, with God's help and the cooperation of students and families, we will be closer to reaching our June 2027 goals:

- No loans for first-years
- Low loans for graduates

Are you interested in bringing this financial training to your Lutheran high school? Contact Amber Barcalow at barcalam@mlc-wels.edu.



Building on God-Given Strengths

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us” (Romans 12:6).

President Gurgel has been engaged in meaningful conversations about gifts—spiritual, personal, vocational—with each of the MLC faculty and staff. This year he has begun 30- and 60-minute individual visits to discuss each worker’s gifts and how they apply them—or could apply them—in their service at MLC.



The visits focus on the popular inventory, the Clifton (formerly Gallup) Strengths Finder. As a Gallup-Certified Strength Coach, the president has the training to use the tool effectively. He also has about 10 years of experience discussing this inventory with some Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary faculty and staff and with every graduating WLS student as they embark on their first assignments as pastors.

Now he’s looking forward to similar discussions at MLC. Many employees here have already taken the inventory, and, if they have not, they can now, thanks to a generous grant from the MLC Ladies’ Auxiliary.

“We know that no human inventory is fully capable of capturing perfectly the uniqueness of how each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made,” President Gurgel says. “We also know that our weaknesses can also serve God’s gracious purpose, as 2 Corinthians 12:9 tells us. Nevertheless, this inventory, taken by over 28 million people around the world, can be a helpful tool, both to individuals on our campus and to divisions and departments who would like to maximize their gifts for service to our Lord.”

A key initiative in *Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross* is that we empower our family’s formation. We do this, knowing that our God has gifted each of us, and we want to give God the best his grace inspires in us with the unique talents he’s given each of us.

The president’s conversations are a concrete way to explore each faculty and staff member’s gifts and how they can best apply them, resulting in even more meaningful and joyful service.



New in 2024: J Term

Beginning in January 2024, MLC will offer a January Term—or J Term—between the first and second semesters.

Running for 2-1/2 weeks in January, this new term has the potential for many benefits for our student body.

One immediate advantage will be seen by junior education majors. They will be able to complete their public school clinical experiences in 13 consecutive school days, rather than one day a week for 13 weeks, as is the case now. “The pedagogical benefits of this change for education majors is immense,” said VP for Academics Jeff Wiechman. “And having those juniors fully on campus during the regular fall and spring semesters opens the calendar in many other ways—for all students.”

A key initiative in *Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross* is empowering our family’s formation. Faculty members are exploring other J Term options—for study trips abroad, for early field experiences, and for coursework of all kinds—that will serve our students, making them even more ready for ministry. “It’s an exciting change,” Wiechman said, “and we’re eager to maximize all the benefits for MLC students.”



Focus On Graduate Studies

Veteran Teachers Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross



This year 20 graduate students earned their master's degrees at Martin Luther College—seven with a Master of Science in Educational Administration, 11 with a Master of Science in Education, and two with a Master of Arts in Theological Studies.

*Pictured, front row: **Bradley Gurgel** (MS Ed Admin-Principal), **Andrea Baird** (MS Ed Admin-Principal), **Matthew Redfield** (MS Ed-Instruction), **ChiSeon Kim** (MS Ed-Leadership), **Cynthia Allen** (MS Ed-Leadership), **Elizabeth Poncelet** (MS Ed-Instruction), and **Justin Krause** (MS Ed Admin-Principal); back row: **George Kellermann** (MS Ed-Instruction), **Daniel Busch** (MS Ed Admin-Principal), **Dr. Kristen Meyer** (MA Theological Studies), **Eric Wolf** (MA Theological Studies), **Adam Pavelchik** (MS Ed Admin-Principal), **Nicole Lehman** (MS Ed-Special Education), and **Meredith Moeller** (MS Ed-Instruction).*

*Graduating in absentia: **Chelsea Bestram** (MS Ed-Instruction), **Joy Dorn** (MS Ed-Special Education), **Andrew Olson** (MS Ed-Instruction), **Zachary Seeger** (MS Ed-Leadership), **Seth Fitzsimmons** (MS Ed Admin-Principal), and **Adam Igl** (MS Ed Admin-Principal).*

As these graduates pursue excellence under the cross, they are an inspiration to the other 138 students working on their master's degrees. They are also a shining example to our undergraduates that education is a lifelong process.

And to all those—teachers, staff ministers, laypeople—considering graduate work at MLC, we encourage you to take a look at MLC's offerings. Think of a master's degree as an investment—in your students, your school, your church, and yourself.

MLC offers three degrees with eight emphases

MS IN EDUCATION

- Educational Technology
- Instruction
- Leadership
- Special Education (with or without Licensure)

MS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

- Early Childhood Director
- Principal
- Technology Director

MA IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES



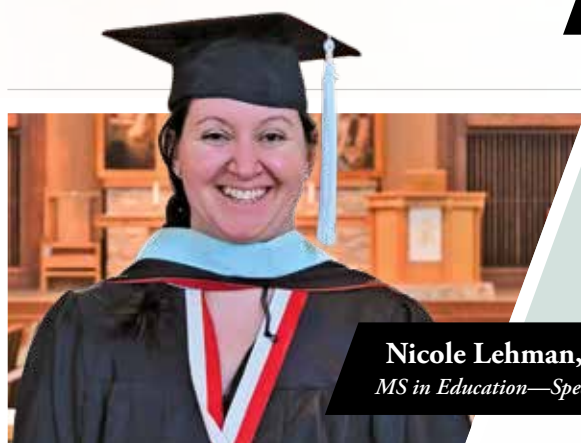
Why did these 2022 graduates choose MLC for their master's degree?

Here's what they had to say . . .

IMPACT YOUR MINISTRY

School Business Administration was my absolute favorite class in the principal emphasis program. Just really taking a hard look at how we provide what our schools need as far as staffing and resources. Taking a different approach to the way that we historically do church and school budgeting. It's just a very refreshing look at how to make the best of what we have with our resources and blessings.

Adam Pavelchik, 2022 Graduate
MS in Educational Administration—Principal



Nicole Lehman, 2022 Graduate
MS in Education—Special Education

GROW IN FAITH

I knew it was going to be Christ-centered and that our professors would be working for the same mission I was.

CONNECT PROFESSIONALLY WITH YOUR PEERS

I've been blessed to get to know so many fellow called workers throughout the program, so it really has changed the way that I relate to people across the synod. It's opened up some amazing blessings and opportunities that have been so much fun to see God develop for me.

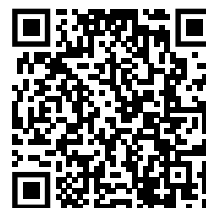
Dr. Kristen Meyer, 2022 Graduate
MA in Theological Studies



**GRADUATE
STUDIES**

MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

*Check out our Graduate Studies
homepage and watch the video to hear
more from the 2022 graduates.*



Get started on your master's degree today!
Contact Dr. John Meyer, director of Graduate Studies
507.354.8221 x398 or graduatestudies@mlc-wels.edu

Thalassa Prize 2022

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.



2022 Winner: Joy and Knowledge Come from the Lord

Alaina Qualmann MLC '23

Picture books are often a form of joy and learning for many children. You grab a book and your children or grandchildren pile onto your lap, straining to see the pictures. The time you spend reading to those children creates a bond with them as they soak up what you are reading.

Students at Kaunda Square School in Lusaka, Zambia, adore picture books. However, it is a special opportunity for them to read books because the school has few. Books are not found in the classrooms, homes, or libraries. The books are kept in an office and brought out only on special occasions, including our visit.

The many children gathered around tightly, taking in the book. They did not push or shove one another when it was difficult to see the pictures. Instead, they stood quietly, taking in the joy and knowledge from listening to a book.

In Lusaka, it is a privilege for students to get an education. They want to learn in hopes of getting a quality job when

they grow up. However, these children already have all the knowledge they need. Proverbs 9:10 reads, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." If the students do not get to attend another day of school in their life or read another picture book, they have the wisdom they need. These children know the Lord and praise him all day long. Their joy is found in him, not in picture books. Nehemiah 8:10 says, "The joy of the Lord is my strength."

The children's joy is not from the rare opportunity to look at a book or the privilege of going to school. Their joy comes from Jesus, who died and rose. Their joy comes from the Lord, who cares, sustains, and loves them.

Alaina Qualmann served at two schools associated with the Lutheran Church of Central Africa. She and her teammates worked in the classrooms alongside teachers, observed, played, sang, and worshiped with the children. MLC's Cultural Engagement Center awarded Alaina \$1,000, half of which she designated to the Lutheran Church of Central Africa. This is the 16th annual Thalassa Prize awarded by MLC.

2022 Entry: My People

Anonymous

I wish you could pray with your brothers and sisters here, gathered in tight circles, speaking from the heart.

I wish I could show you my 17 first-graders, meeting in small groups at kitchen tables. The police keep shutting us down, but Christian education is a pearl of great worth.

I wish your heart could break with me and our Heavenly Father in the delivery room as my unmarried friend gave birth to a baby that won't be baptized . . . yet.

I wish you could come to our house on Tuesday night and eat with us at 7:30, exhausted after a long day at work. We read the Bible, then discuss the story and pray in our small groups. If you're a Christian, you lead your group. You stay late, enjoying everyone's company.

I wish you could attend my roommate's book club, reading and discussing Christian books with atheists and agnostics.

These pictures don't exist, aren't safe, or are too personal.

Instead, I can show you what I see every day. Not just a red blob on the map, not just [a government], not just [a political party]. People. People going about their daily routines, living and dying, kind and lost and incomplete, sought after by the One who broke our darkness. Some of them are His People, my People, our People, your People. Most of them are not . . . yet.

Pray for them, the ones who don't know or don't care or don't need Him. Pray for us, as the government boa constrictor squeezes tighter and tighter.

Hold on to his promise: The Lord will not forsake his people, he will not abandon his heritage. Even though tomorrow may be my last day here, even though some of you already walked that valley . . . he will remain.

2022 Entry: My Three Shadows excerpt

Tim Malchow DMLC '91



. . . One summer while leading VBS in Kyiv, these three little girls were my constant companions. Yuriy, the pastor, would joke when I walked through the door that my shadows were waiting for me. What a joy. During one craft session, the four of us sat at a small table and made paper flower pots. The petals of the flowers had blessings written on them. These kids were my blessing. Being able to share the gospel with dozens and dozens of Ukrainian children and adults was a blessing. I never could have imagined how God would bless my life when I decided to go and share the gospel in Ukraine in 2003. . . . Where are these three girls today? Are they fighting with their countrymen? Did they leave their country for safety's sake? Did Jesus already call them home? I rest my hope for these three, and all of my Ukrainian friends, with the words of our loving God: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Tim Malchow taught vacation Bible school in the cities of Kamyanets-Podilskyi, Kyiv, and Chernihiv for several years. In 2006-2007, he lived in Ukraine full-time, helping pastors and churches with their evangelism efforts, primarily in Kherson and Kyiv.

2022 Entry: Eyes of Hope excerpt

Kortney Behnke MLC '23



In Lusaka, Zambia, the children live in a world of uncertainties. They are faced with many questions every day: "Will my parents find work to do today? How much longer will my school uniform fit me? Will I even be able to go to school next year?" . . .

Even through these uncertainties and troubling times, the eyes of the children in Lusaka are filled with hope. . . .

Kortney Behnke served two schools—Kaunda Square and Kuunika Matero—in Lusaka, Zambia, in the summer of 2019. Both are associated with the Lutheran Church of Central Africa, which, along with WELS, belongs to the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference.

Martin Luther College has now begun accepting submissions for the 17th annual **Thalassa Prize**.

DEADLINE: April 30, 2023

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: mlc-wels.edu/Thalassa

ALL PAST WINNERS: mlc-wels.edu/Thalassa

Focus On Alumni

By Director of Alumni Relations Steve Balza DMLC '93



Alumni Say, "See You in September!"

Fall is a fabulous time for groups to gather here on the hill. The weather is mild, worship opportunities abound, the cafeteria is open for business, the campus is wrapped in color, and students are involved in their various activities. For these reasons, many groups schedule their reunions to occur in autumn.

This year, we were blessed to welcome gatherings from MLA 1977, DMLC 1971 (*pictured*), MLA 1972, and DMLHS 1959.

Is your class or affinity group (team, cast, etc.) looking to reunite and celebrate a milestone? The Alumni Relations Office is happy to support you and can offer those coming to campus a variety of services and assistance—during any month of the year!

Now is the time to start planning for 2023. Check out mlc-wels.edu/alumni/reunions/ to learn more and then contact us at 507.233.9135 or alumni@mlc-wels.edu to get the ball rolling today.

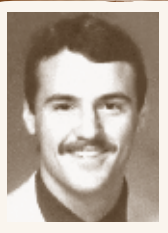


Hamilton in Minneapolis

The Alumni Relations Office invites graduates to join us at the Orpheum Theatre in Minneapolis for one of the 21st century's most sought-after shows: *Hamilton*.

The performance is Saturday, May 6, at 7 pm. Motorcoach transportation from MLC is an optional add-on and includes a stop at a suburban mall where attendees can enjoy dinner at the restaurant of their choice.

Limited spots are available. Tickets go on sale Saturday, November 12, at 8 am at bit.ly/MLCHamilton.



**Paul
Danuser**
DMLC 1983
Mesa AZ



**Rita
Putz**
DMLC 1983
Fond du Lac WI



**William
Russow**
NWC 1963
Woodland CA



**Monica
Biesterfeld**
MLC 1998
Crete IL



College Choir Heads to West Coast

The MLC College Choir recently completed a Midwest mini-tour that included stops at four Lutheran high schools and four congregations in five days.

This year's spring break tour will take more than 60 MLC musicians to Washington, Oregon, and California to visit our WELS churches and schools and share the gospel in song. A final on-campus performance of the concert is scheduled for March 19 in the Chapel of the Christ.

We invite and encourage you to attend a concert near you. Can't make it? You can watch the March 19 New Ulm concert, live or archived, at mlc-wels.edu/streams.

Why Give to MLC through MLCAA?

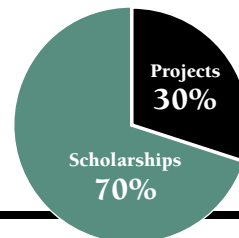
- ✓ The MLC Alumni Association is all about connection and support. It connects alumni via reunions, tours, and Homecoming events, and it supports MLC students.
- ✓ What makes the MLCAA different from other non-profits—even most alumni associations—is that *every dollar* (100%) you contribute to MLCAA gets *through* to its intended target: MLC and its students.
- ✓ Every gift sent to the MLCAA is allotted to scholarships (70%) and projects (30%). Student financial assistance is a priority in our strategic plan, *Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross*, and the MLCAA is stepping up to support that effort.



Scan the QR code to contribute to MLC through MLCAA.

THIS YEAR, GIFTS TO MLCAA SUPPORT

- ✓ **The Alumni Association Endowed Scholarship:** Established in 2017, the scholarship currently provides two \$1000 awards each year. We want to grow the fund so we can award more scholarships for larger amounts. See this year's winners on page 26.
- ✓ **TeqTables:** 15% of MLCAA gifts will go to fund two tables (for the LSC gym stage and the new Betty Kohn Fieldhouse) so that MLC students can enjoy this fun new activity.
- ✓ **Christian Worship: Psalter:** 15% of MLCAA gifts will fund this new worship resource, which will assist our students as they train to be WELS worship leaders.



GIFTS TO MLCAA

100% of your gifts go to MLC and MLC students.



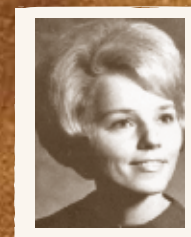
Stephen Mueller
NWC 1993
Greenfield WI



Sarah Couture
MLC 2018
Ottawa ON



Theodore Lambert
NWC 1968
La Crosse WI



Ronda Dallmann
DMLC 1968
New Ulm MN

Focus On *Scholarships*

MLCAA ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP



This scholarship fund was established in 2017 by the Martin Luther College Alumni Association (MLCAA). The MLCAA is made up of more than 10,000 graduates and attendees of Martin Luther College, Dr. Martin Luther College, Northwestern College, and Martin Luther Academy/Dr. Martin Luther High School.

These alumni share a common bond. Well-trained and prepared to share their Savior, they are committed to serving him however and wherever he chooses to use them. They continue to meet and encourage one another, and also to support and pray for the current students and ministry of MLC.

The MLCAA board meets on campus annually during Homecoming weekend to provide direction, plan events, coordinate funding efforts, and devise communication plans.

Income from this fund is currently distributed in \$1,000 grants to students with gifts for ministry who demonstrate financial need.



2022 RECIPIENT:

Nathaniel Brown

Dear Alumni Association,

I decided to come to MLC as a freshman in high school at Michigan Lutheran in

St. Joseph. . . I wanted to be a pastor and I was set upon it. Yet after my freshman year at MLC, I did not return and struggled to find my path before I realized my calling is truly in teaching. I love working with kids, and to be able to spread God's Word with them while doing it is a blessing. . . A gift like this goes farther than anyone would think. For the Alumni Association to gift me with this scholarship is really a gift from God. I thank every member of the association for this gift and blessing, and I hope to pay it forward.

Nathaniel Brown is a senior double-majoring in elementary education and physical education.



2022 RECIPIENT:

Tristen Goff

Dear Alumni Association,

Thank you for establishing the MLCAA Endowed Scholarship and choosing me to be a

recipient. I grew up in Las Vegas and attended Rancho High School. I did not grow up in a family with a WELS pastor or teacher. My family is relatively new to WELS, but after attending and later becoming a counselor at a WELS summer camp, I knew I wanted to do something that would allow me to spread the gospel and be around those who have the same drive. . . I decided to visit MLC and became quickly hooked. I have not been disappointed. The staff and friends I have made have brought me to a better understanding of my faith, and the passion for spreading the gospel grows each day. Your prayers and support mean the world to me.

Tristen Goff is a junior elementary education major.



Mark Weinkauff
MLC 2008
Mukwonago WI



Allison Leibner
MLC 2008
Tavares FL



Justin Wasser
MLC 2013
Salem OR



Barbara Lehman
DMLC 1978
New London WI

HOWARD L. WESSEL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



The Wessel family established this scholarship in 2019 in memory of Professor Howard L. Wessel (1933-2017), who served as a professor of education at Dr. Martin Luther College and Martin Luther College from 1964 to 1999.

Professor Wessel was called to Dr. Martin Luther College in 1964 to help launch DMLC's first off-site student teaching program. He served in various capacities during his tenure: as an education professor, as an off-site student teaching supervisor, and as director of the student teaching program from 1968 to 1999.

Professor Wessel's groundbreaking work in the education division is well known. Fewer people know that he was also an accomplished musician, and in his first calls to Fairmont and Red Wing, Minnesota, he served as a congregational organist and choir director. Because church music was one of Professor Wessel's great loves, his family established this scholarship to lend financial assistance to blossoming Lutheran church musicians, particularly those whose focus is the organ. The family prays that the scholarship may be a blessing to students for years to come.

Scholarship winners are undergraduate education majors who demonstrate an ability and interest in church music, particularly the organ, and who demonstrate financial need.

2022 RECIPIENT:

Maria Werre



Dear Wessel Family,

I cannot begin to express my thanks for your gift through the Howard L. Wessel Memorial Scholarship! I want you to know that God has used you in a beautiful way to help

a very grateful student on their path to ministry. . . . I'm an elementary education major. I've been involved in music at MLC my whole college career. I've taken organ and voice and participated in Wind Symphony and College Choir. These experiences and the music instructors have been such a huge blessing to me. . . . and I'm eager to teach God's children in a classroom. I believe that music is one of God's most amazing ways of spreading his gospel. . . . I often pray that God will grant me the honor to positively influence the lives and faith of children. I don't just want to be a good teacher or music educator. I always want to point my students to their Savior and learn their full potential. . . . Thank you again so much for your generosity.

In May, Maria—now Maria Klatt—was assigned to play organ and piano and teach grades 1-2 at St. Peter LES in St. Peter, Minnesota.



When you establish a Legacy Scholarship, you can . . .

- Honor a loved one by naming the scholarship after them
- Support a specific area of ministry training that's important to you
- Specify whether the scholarship supports students based on their merit or their need
- Know that you are making a significant difference in students' lives
- Receive a personal thank-you letter from a scholarship recipient
- Receive special tax benefits
- Leave a lasting legacy at MLC
- Glorify the Lord of the Church!

We'll help you set it up.

Mark Maurice
VP for Mission Advancement
mauricme@mlc-wels.edu
507.354.8221 x386

Beth Scharf
Resource Development Counselor
scharfbm@mlc-wels.edu
507.354.8221 x241

WELS
Ministry of Christian Giving
414.256.3209



Dennis Leckwee
MLC 1998
DeForest WI



Emma Plocher
MLC 2018
Garden Grove CA



Jeffrey Loberger
MLC 2003
Manitowoc WI



Michael Koepke
MLC 2008
Saginaw MI

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

Dr. Bethel Balge (adjunct, piano) is performing in three ProMusica concerts at Chapel of the Christ this season: *Strings Attached* on September 25, *The Lunar New Year* on January 29, and *Brahms F minor Piano Quintet* on March 26.

Dr. John Boeder NWC '86, WLS '90 (theology) served as worship leader for the opening service and closing devotion of the National Education Conference in Pewaukee WI in June. He also served as worship leader for the opening service of the Minnesota District Convention in New Ulm. Finally, he was recently elected to the Minnesota District Mission Board.



Dr. James Carlovsky MLC '02, '10 (math, education) presented "Parenting in the Technological Age" at Beautiful Savior-Cincinnati OH July 25-26. He presented "Math for Middle School & High School: Math Conceptual Understandings and Connections" to the

Fox Valley Lutheran Schools on June 6. He presented "Mathematics Education for Today" at the Minnesota District Lutheran Teachers' Conference at MLC and "Saxon Math No Longer Publishes: Now What Do We Do?" at the Minnesota District Lutheran Teachers' Conference and the Wisconsin Lutheran State Teachers' Conference in October.

Dr. Benjamin Clemons MLC '03 (academic dean for education and staff ministry) presented "High Expectations Teaching in Diverse Classrooms" at the WELS Leadership Conference in Pewaukee WI in June.

Laurie Gauger-Hested DMLC '87 (writer/editor) wrote the lyric for "A Prophet Once Said," a commission for the Charlotte Master Chorale (North Carolina). She also saw publication of her hymn text "My Shepherd, You Were There" in the 2022 issue of *Motif*, the Creative Arts Journal of Concordia University Chicago, and her text "The Blood of the Lamb" in an anthem by Northwestern Publishing House (2022).

Dr. Timothy Grundmeier MLC '07 (history) moderated a roundtable discussion, "The State and Future of Lutheran Historiography," at the Lutheran Historical Conference at Concordia Seminary-St. Louis. He also served on the program committee for this conference.

Dr. James Grunwald DMLC '78 was promoted to Executive Director of the Amazing Grace Virtual Academy, an online

high school offering courses to 25+ Lutheran high schools and 50+ Lutheran elementary schools as well as families without access to traditional Lutheran high schools. He has also accepted an invitation by the National Council for Private School Accreditation to rejoin them as vice chair of the Technology and Distance Learning Commission and WELSSA representative.

Prof. Daniel Gawrisch MLC '08 (PE) presented the sectional "Moving to Learn and Learning to Move" at the Minnesota District Lutheran Teachers' Conference at MLC in October. He also presented a keynote address, "The ABCs of Movement: Building Foundations for Healthy, Active Lives," at the Nebraska/Dakota-Montana Teachers' Conference in Omaha in October.

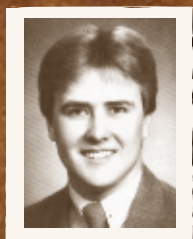


Professor Kelli Green DMLC '92 (special education) presented "Bridging the Opportunity Gap: Special Education in WELS Schools" at the WELS National Education Conference in Pewaukee in June, "Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for Nonpublic School

Professionals" as an inservice for Lakeshore Lutheran Schools at Manitowoc LHS in August, and "Educational Neuroscience for Teaching & Learning: Private School Professionals Edition" as an inservice at Westside Christian School-Madison WI in August.

Professor Grace Hennig DMLC '89 (music) serves on the task force for the Lutheran Institute for Music Education (LIME), a recent effort dedicated to assisting WELS teachers with music education. She participated in the WELS Worship Coordinator Round Table and presented "Infusing Music into the Elementary Classroom" at the Workshop for Music Educators, both events at Wisconsin Lutheran College in August.

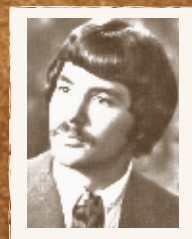
Professor Craig Hirschmann DMLC '84 (music) presented an organ recital for the Sioux Trails American Guild of Organists Summer Concert Series at Bethlehem-Mankato MN (ELCA) in July. In August, he played for worship, performed a mini-recital, and offered instruction to the organists at Grace-Oskaloosa IA. He presented "Organ Playing for Pianists" for the Chippewa Valley American Guild of Organists chapter in October. And he played for the organ dedication service at Zion-Rhineland WI in November.



Tom Kock
NWC 1988
Minocqua WI



Rachel Friend
MLC 2008
Westminster CO



Stephen Wright
NWC 1978
Bismarck ND



Trudy Hoeft
DMLC 1988
Saline MI

Instructor Megan Kassuelke (director, Cultural Engagement) earned certification as a licensed BrainStates Awareness Profile® consultant. This tool helps build inclusivity skills and positive intercultural relationships.

Professor Paul Koelpin NWC '85, WLS '90 (history) preached for the opening worship service of the North Atlantic District Convention in Chesapeake VA in June. He also presented several sessions at the convention on the topic of "Antinomianism: Account, Approach, Appeal, and Antidote."

Dr. Martin LaGrow DMLC '93 (adjunct, Graduate Studies) presented "The New Normal for Distance Education" to the Annual Trustees Conference of the Community College League of California in Dana Point CA.



Dr. John Meyer DMLC '87 (director, Graduate Studies and Continuing Education) saw publication of his brief "What Public School Administrators Should Know about Private Schools" in the textbook *The Administration and Supervision of Special Programs in Education* (5th ed.). He presented the sectional "Fostering a Formative School Culture" at the WELS Education Conference in Waukesha WI in June, and he also presented "Guiding Adaptive Change in Lutheran Colleges" at the Annual Conference of the Association of Lutheran College Faculties at Concordia University Irvine (California) in September.

Dr. Kari Muentz MLC '99 (social sciences) presented on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) at the National Education Conference in Pewaukee WI in June, the Dakota-Montana District Conference in June, and the Wisconsin Lutheran State Teachers' Conference in October. She also presented UDL as a faculty inservice at Nebraska LHS in August.

Professor Emeritus Dr. John Nolte DMLC '68 performed an organ recital for the dedication of a new electronic organ at St. Matthew-Appleton WI in August.

Dr. Mark Paustian NWC '84, WLS '88 (English, Hebrew) presented a Bible class series on uniquely Christian approaches to communication at St. Paul-New Ulm MN in April. He presented "What It Means to Be Christ's Ambassador" to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduates of 2017-2019 and their wives at their Celebration of Ministry event in San Antonio in April. He taught "Adult Education as Communication" at the Seminary Summer Quarter in June. He preached and presented a Bible study for the 75th anniversary of St. Paul LES-Livonia MI in September. He presented on spiritual wellness at the South Atlantic District Convention in Palm Coast FL in October. And he led a

marriage enrichment retreat called "Speak to My Heart" at Living Savior-Asheville NC in November.

Instructor Michael Plocher DMLC '93, MLC '16 (adjunct, education) spoke to educators and business leaders at a Project Lead the Way (PLTW) event sponsored by the New Ulm Business Resource Innovation Center (NUBRIC) in June. NUBRIC encourages all New Ulm schools to teach a PLTW STEM curriculum to support manufacturing/engineering needs of New Ulm businesses. Plocher spoke specifically about the PLTW STEM curriculum he teaches in the upper grades at St. Paul LES-New Ulm.

Professor Emeritus James Pope NWC '77, WLS '81 served a five-month vacancy at Grace-Crivitz WI and provided six months of assistance to St. Mark-Leesburg FL. In August, he accepted a retirement call to serve as executive editor of *Forward in Christ* magazine.

Professor Aaron Robinson MLC '96, WLS '00 (English, cultural diversity coordinator) presented "Why Not Us?" at the WELS Youth Rally in Knoxville TN in June. He also presented "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion from a Christian Perspective" at the Twin Cities Metro Teachers' Conference at West LHS in August. Finally, he presented "How to Serve a Diverse Community with the Gospel" at the North Atlantic Labor Day Retreat in the Berkshires in September.



Dr. Jonathan Roux DMLC '94 (education) earned his PhD in literacy education through the University of Minnesota. He successfully defended his dissertation, "Teachers Navigating Change: The Implementation of Standards into One's Planning and Teaching," in August.

He led a faculty inservice, "Revisiting the Art of Reading Instruction," at St. Mark-Bemidji MN in March. He presented "The Case for Writing Workshop" and "What's New in the World of Picture Books and Chapter Books?" at the Minnesota District Lutheran Teachers' Conference at MLC in October. He also presented "New & Classic Picture/Chapter Books for Your Classroom" at the Wisconsin Lutheran State Teachers' Conference in Milwaukee in October.

Professor David Scharf MLC '00, WLS '05 (theology) preached for the worship service and presented "The Doctrine and Practice of Stewardship" at the Arizona-California District in June. He preached and made presentations about MLC at St. Matthew-Appleton WI (April); Grace-Oskaloosa IA (July); Peach-Milbank SD and St. John-Summit SD (October); and Ascension of Christ-Crossville TN (November). He is a monthly writer for the *Forward in Christ* "Q & A" column, a regular contributor to *Grace Moments* devotions (Time of Grace-Milwaukee), and a member of the WELS Commission for Congregational Counseling.



Paul Siegler
NWC 1958
Brillion WI



Theresa Kramer
MLC 1998
Saginaw MI



Scott Stone
NWC 1973
Costa Mesa CA



Rebekah Leerssen
MLC 2013
Buffalo MN



FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

Professor Nicolas Schmoller MLC '06, WLS '10 (foreign language) preached for the mission festival at St. John-Sleepy Eye MN in September. He also presented to the congregation the story of the Lutheran Chapel Service, the weekly radio broadcast he hosts.

Professor Tingting Schwartz MLC MS Ed '15 (international coordinator; history/social science and secondary education) presented a keynote, "The Journey to Belong: Finding Commonalities and Bridging Differences," at the WELS Women's Ministry Conference at Luther Prep in July and at the LWMS Twin Cities Rally at St. Croix Lutheran Academy in October. She continues to lead Chinese Storytime and Process Art Play at Blue Earth County Library-Mankato MN.

Professor Emeritus Steven Thiesfeldt DMLC '74 is serving a one-year, part-time semi-retirement call as vice president at Michigan Lutheran Seminary after retiring from responsibilities at MLC last summer. Current responsibilities at MLS include supervision of instruction and leading the school in the development of a strategic plan.



Professor Luke Thompson MLC '09, WLS '13 (theology) presented the keynote, "How to Use the Power of God," at a Northcross-Lakeville MN Youth Night event in April. He presented the keynote, "A Gospel for the Loneliest Generation," at the LWMS Minnesota Valley Circuit Rally at MLC in April. He presented "Open Doors for a Closed Culture" at the Minnesota District Convention at MLC in June. And finally, he presented "Speaking Like an Apostle" at the Institute for Lutheran Apologetics at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in August.

Dr. Keith Wessel NWC '87, WLS '91 (Greek, Latin) presented the essay "See How They Love One Another! Compassion Ministry in the Bible and Early Church to 300 AD" at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's Symposium in September.



Dr. Cindy Whaley DMLC '76 (education, licensure officer) presented "Multiage Teaching and Learning" at the National Education Conference in Pewaukee WI in June. She also served on the conference planning committee.

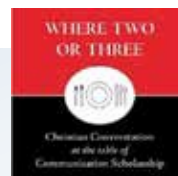
Dr. Jeffery Wiechman DMLC '92 (VP for Academics) presented "Competency-Based Education at MLC" and "Supervision of Instruction" at the South Central District Teachers' Conference at Calvary-Dallas in October.

Professor Tyson Zarnstorff MLC '05 (math) presented "Making Math Meaningful" at the Wisconsin Lutheran State Teachers' Conference in October.

PODCAST HOSTING

Where Two or Three

Dr. Mark Paustian cohosts this podcast dedicated to Christian theology and communication theory. New episodes focus on intrapersonal communications, negative apologetics, conflict, relational dialectics, and conversation.



PODCAST GUESTING

Dr. Mark Paustian

- *Raised with Jesus*: Jesus' teaching on worry based on Matthew 6

Dr. John Boeder

- *Impact*: Daniel 1, Daniel 2

MLC Professors Serving as Advisors to Master's Candidates (Seniors) at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

MLC PROFESSOR	WLS SENIOR	SENIOR THESIS
Daryl Hanneman	Wolf Parsons	"No Middleman Necessary: Equipping Pastors to Serve Persons with Physical, Mental, and Developmental Disabilities"
David Scharf	Nathan Savage	"Empowering the Priests in the Pew: The Shepherd Leader Delegates to Multiply Ministry"
Mark Paustian	Jonny Lehmann	"Free at Heart: A Lutheran Response to Writings on Masculinity by David Clines and John Eldredge"

MLC Professors Serving as Advisors to Master's Candidates at Martin Luther College

MLC PROFESSOR	MLC GRAD STUDENT	DISSERTATION
Keith Wessel	Dr. Kristen Meyer	"Timeless Yet Timely: An Examination of the Biblical Principle of Headship and Its Application"

Retired in 2022



Professor Joyce Schubkegel served as a professor of music at DMLC and MLC for 52 years, 1970-2009 as a full-time professor and 2009-2022 as a part-time adjunct instructor. Prior to her ministry here, she served at First Immanuel-Chicago (LCMS, 1958-1959), St. John-Wheaton IL (LCMS, 1959-1960), Concordia Teachers College-River Forest IL (now Concordia University Chicago, 1960-1962), Bethlehem-River Grove IL (LCMS, 1960-1962), Good Shepherd-Palos Heights IL (LCMS, 1962-1966), and Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers College (WELS, 1966-1970).

Schubkegel's 52 years of service makes her one of the longest-serving instructors on this campus, and her 64 years of service to the church inducts her into a special society, one including the first professor of DMLC, Godfrey Burk, who served on this campus 59 years (1884-1943), and President J. P. Meyer, who, in his 68-year ministry (1896-1964), served as DMLC professor for 14 years, two as president, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professor for 44 years, 16 as president.

Dr. Wayne Wagner, a colleague of Professor Schubkegel for many years, said: "One rarely meets someone with the exceptional combination of graciousness and conviction Joyce has. Whether in teaching, composing, worship, or routine daily activities, she shows kindness and caring while also reaching for excellence.

"Joyce faithfully attended to the tasks put before her, whether as a wife, mother, mentor, teacher, choral conductor, creative composer, or musical artist. Her highly organized manner served her and others well. Her impact on thousands of students through choir, organ, piano, teaching, and composing is immeasurable. As just one testimony to that, former students remained connected, either openly or sometimes in less noticeable ways.

"For many years, our offices were next to each other, which made stopping at the door to wish one another a good evening or weekend as we left for home (often late in the afternoon) a regular occurrence. Those moments regularly turned into longer talks. Joyce would express a kind compliment, concerns for students, ideas for serving the college better, and implications for the Church at large.

"Thank you, Joyce, for the many years of service not only to MLC, but to those everywhere whom your efforts touched. May retirement bring you much contentment and joy!"

Professor Emeritus Schubkegel is currently in Arizona, taking care of a family member with serious health challenges.

As her prayer for MLC students, Professor Schubkegel cites the first hymn she arranged for the DMLC Treble Choir, which they recorded for a *Chapel of the Air* radio broadcast 45 years ago, in September 1977:

**"Jesus lead you on, till your rest is won.
And although the way be cheerless,
may you follow, calm and fearless,
guided by his hand to our fatherland."**

New Called Workers at MLC



Jacob Behnken

*Professor of Music and
Dean of Chapel*

Jacob is a graduate of St. Martin LES-Watertown, South

Dakota; Great Plains LHS; MLC '08; and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary '12. He vicared at Faith-Antioch, Illinois. Upon graduation, he was assigned to Good Shepherd-Midland, Michigan, where he has served God's people for the past 10 years.

In 2007, Jacob married his high school sweetheart, Carrie (née Gosch, MLC '08). God has richly blessed them with four children: William (9), Amelia (7), Henry (4), and Matthias (1).



Melissa Berg

*Director,
Early Childhood
Learning Center*

Melissa attended St. Stephen LES-Adrian, Michigan, and public high school before enrolling at MLC as both an elementary and early childhood education major. She graduated in 2003 and was assigned to be assistant director and toddler teacher at La Crescent Christian Childcare Center-La Crescent, Minnesota.

In 2004, she was blessed to marry Timothy Berg. The couple spent the first 16 years of Tim's ministry in two different towns in South Dakota, where Melissa first stayed home with their three children—Hannah, Isaiah, and Chloe—and later returned to teaching in the second grade classroom. She also was able to serve as early childhood coordinator for the Dakota-Montana District during that time.

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

New Called Workers at MLC



Isaiah Degner
Professor of Spanish

Isaiah grew up in St. Peter, Minnesota, and graduated from Minnesota Valley LHS in 1999 and MLC in 2005 in the preseminary program with an emphasis in Spanish. From 2007 to 2022, he served at Fox Valley LHS, teaching Spanish and religion, and coaching track & field and cross country. In addition to teaching, Isaiah has been blessed to use his Spanish to assist churches in Arizona and Minnesota with outreach, to teach English as a Second Language and Bible classes in Puerto Rico, and to participate for the past 15 years in his church's Spanish ministry in Menasha, Wisconsin.

Isaiah has five siblings: Samuel, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary; Abram, a missionary in South America; Kaitlin (Hernandez), a Spanish teacher at Wisconsin LHS; Micah, a math teacher at Mankato West HS in Minnesota; and Ethan, a biology professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College.



Heath Dobberpuhl
Professor of Science

Heath grew up in Horicon, Wisconsin, and was a member of St. Peter-Kekoskee, Wisconsin. He attended St. Matthew LES-Iron Ridge, Wisconsin, and Northwestern Preparatory School, graduating in 1993. After graduating from MLC in 1998, Heath was assigned to Ascension-Escondido, California, as principal and upper grade teacher. After three years, he accepted a position to teach in Beijing, China, for one year. He then served Divine Savior-Shawano, Wisconsin, for a year and Zion-Hartland, Wisconsin, for four years as principal

and upper grade teacher. For the last 15 years, he has served Minnesota Valley LHS as a science teacher, registrar, and Knowledge Bowl coach. Heath earned a master's degree in education from MLC in 2008, and two additional master's degrees from Western Governors University: chemistry education in 2016 and physics education in 2020.

Heath married Stacy (Schaefer) in 2002, and they have been blessed with three children. Ruth is attending MSOE to study engineering. Mercy, a junior, and Noah, a first-year, attend MVL.



Rebecca Doering
Professor of Physical Education and Coach

Rebecca grew up in Lake Mills, Wisconsin, as a member of St. Paul and a 2016 graduate of Lakeside LHS. Upon her graduation from MLC in May 2020, she was assigned to Great Plains LHS, where she served as a member of the dorm staff, instructor, and head JV volleyball coach.

Rebecca has two siblings: Cassie is married to Brandon Schilling and serves at Little Town of Bethlehem Preschool in Carmel, Indiana. Kyle is a junior at MLC.



Halie Flores
Admissions Counselor

Halie attended Reformation LES-San Diego and California LHS, graduating in 2018. While at MLC, she emergency taught first grade at her home congregation in San Diego and was one of the first student teachers on the Apache Reservation in Peridot, Arizona.

During the summer Halie got engaged to fellow graduate Joshua Kren, a first-year teacher and coach at Fox Valley LHS.



Kayte Gut
Professor of Early Childhood Education

Kayte grew up in Wausau, Wisconsin, as a member of St. Peter Lutheran Church. She graduated from Northland LHS in 1997 and from MLC in 2002 with degrees in elementary and early childhood education. She was assigned to serve as an assistant director and 4-year-old lead teacher at Lambs of Grace Child Development Center-Charlotte, North Carolina. In 2005, she accepted a call to Abiding Word Lutheran Preschool-Houston, where, for 10 years, she served as director, first grade teacher, and athletic director. Ten years later, she accepted a call to serve as preschool director and teacher at Shepherd of the Valley-Westminster, Colorado. She completed her master's degree in educational leadership with an early childhood director emphasis in 2020.

Kayte's brother Justin MLC '01, '20 teaches at Trinity-Waukesha, Wisconsin. Her brother Kyle MLC '00 was called home to heaven in 2019. All three siblings were enrolled in MLC's master's program at the time and were excited to graduate together in 2020, but God decided Kyle would receive his eternal reward instead.



Paul Huebner
Head Football Coach and Recruiter

Paul was born in Milwaukee, and he attended kindergarten in Oklahoma City and the rest of grade school at Emanuel-West St. Paul. He graduated from St. Croix LHS in 2000 and MLC in 2006. During the 2004-2005 school year, he served as an emergency teacher at Northdale-Tampa, Florida, teaching grades 4-8. Upon graduation from MLC, he was

assigned to Shoreland LHS, where he taught upper-level mathematics, served as admissions director and math department chair, and coached football (16 years, 11 as head coach), girls' basketball (8 years as JV coach), golf (1 year), and track & field (8 years). He earned a master's degree in leadership and innovation from Wisconsin Lutheran College in 2019.

In June 2013 he married Heather Sriver. They have been blessed with three children: Kyla (9), Braxton (7), and Lukas (4).



Mya Kessler-Peshon
Teacher, Early Childhood Learning Center

Mya attended St. John LES-Lewiston, Minnesota, and public high school. She graduated from MLC in December 2021 and was hired as an assistant teacher at the Early Childhood Learning Center before receiving the divine call to be lead toddler teacher.

Mya and her husband, Ozzie Jr., have been married for two years and are expecting their first child in December 2022. She has twin siblings, Summer and Storm (13), and a brother, Logan, who is in heaven.



Adam Pavelchik
Director of Field Experiences

Adam attended St. Lucas LES-Bay View, Wisconsin. He graduated from Wisconsin LHS in 1999 and from MLC in 2003. He was assigned to Wisconsin Lutheran School-Racine, Wisconsin, where he served as assistant principal and second grade teacher until 2008. Adam then worked as an ESL instructor for the Kenosha Unified School District while earning his master's degree in education with an emphasis in teaching English as a second language from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. In 2015, he

accepted a call to serve as principal at Peace-Kissimmee, Florida, and in 2018, he accepted a call to serve as principal and technology coordinator at Mount Olive-Mankato, Minnesota. In 2022, he earned his master's degree in educational administration with a principal emphasis from MLC.

While at MLC he met his wife, Mandy (née Reehl, MLC '03), and they married in January of 2003. They have been blessed with two boys: Caleb (17, a junior at MVL) and Cooper (15, a sophomore at MVL).



Nathan Savage
Dormitory Supervisor and Instructor

Nathan attended a public grade school in Phoenix. His family was not part of a church, but when he was in sixth grade, his grandpa (WELS) informed the local pastor, Rev. David Clark, that Nathan needed to be in confirmation class. Pastor Clark contacted Nathan's mother, and he was enrolled in the next public class. Two years later, on his confirmation day at Grace-Glendale, Arizona, he was encouraged by Pastor Clark to pursue the public ministry. He graduated from Luther Preparatory School '14, MLC '18, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary '22. During his vicar year, he served at Faith-Sharpsburg, Georgia, under Rev. Jon Schroeder.

Nathan has four siblings: Joshua (38), a US Navy corpsman stationed in Hawaii; Edward (38), a fleet vehicle sales representative for GM in Phoenix; Jessica (37), a U-Haul sales specialist in Phoenix; and Stephanie (36), a public high school English and speech teacher in Phoenix.



Hannah Scharf
Admissions Counselor

Hannah attended Lutheran elementary schools in Sebewaing, Michigan; Manitowoc,

Wisconsin; and Adrian, Michigan, before attending and graduating from Michigan Lutheran Seminary in 1998. She graduated from MLC in 2002 and was assigned to Bay Pines-Seminole, Florida. She taught there two years, and then served consecutive one-year calls at Luther Prep as a dorm supervisor; at Shepherd of the Valley-Westminster, Colorado; at Loving Shepherd-Brown Deer, Wisconsin; and again at Luther Prep as an English instructor.

Hannah is married to Pastor Nate Scharf. They have five children: Teddy (14), George (12), Hattie (10), Gus (8), and Ida (6).



Rachel Youngblom
Professor of Special Education

Rachel attended St. Paul LES-New Ulm, Minnesota, and Minnesota Valley LHS. She received her undergraduate degree in psychology from Minnesota State University, Mankato. In 2006, she married Karl Youngblom. From 2006 to 2009, she held positions at Minnesota Valley Education District in St. Peter, Minnesota, as a paraprofessional and braille transcriptionist. She earned her master's degree in special education in 2012, and her doctoral degree in school psychology in 2014, both from Minnesota State University, Mankato.

In 2014, Rachel and Karl moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where she worked in the Peoria Unified School District as a school psychologist. In 2016, she pursued her board licensure as a psychologist and joined the Young Mind Center. In 2019, she created her own company, North Star Psychology. Between the years of 2016 and 2022, she served as an adjunct faculty member at Minnesota State University, Mankato; Northern Arizona University; and MLC.

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

Professors Represent WELS in Europe

At MLC, we embrace our identity as confessional Lutherans—and we embrace our fellow Lutherans as well. This spring and summer, three pastor-professors—Jim Danell, Mark Paustian, and Keith Wessel—traveled to Germany, Scandinavia, and Albania to reinforce the bonds of fellowship with other confessional Lutherans and offer them encouragement as they share the gospel in their congregations and countries.



Dr. Keith Wessel NWC '87, WLS '91 traveled on behalf of WELS One Europe Team to visit our sister synods in Finland, Sweden, and Norway in July and August. He met privately with most of the pastors and had two presentations at the annual summer gathering of the Swedish congregations in Halmstad, Sweden.

Pictured from left: Pastor David Edvardsen, Nina Edvardsen (Egil's wife, David's mom), Pastor Egil Edvardsen (head pastor and bishop of LBK Norway), Liz Wessel, and Keith Wessel at St. Lukas Ev. Lutheran Church, Stavanger, Norway.

Dr. Mark Paustian NWC '84, WLS '88 traveled to the European Regional Convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference in Durres, Albania, in May. He spoke with pastors from churches in Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Norway, and Sweden, encouraging them in the gospel we share, and he presented two Bible studies: "Romans 8: Spiritual Wellness" and "Lessons from the Burning Bush."

Pictured, right: Some conference attendees in Albania. Mark Paustian is in the middle wearing the light blue shirt.



Professor James Danell NWC '86, WLS '90 represented WELS at the convention of our sister church body in Germany, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (ELFK). In his June 2-15 visit, this MLC German professor spent time with the president and vice president of the ELFK, the director of their seminary, the principal of their Lutheran elementary school, and the retired director of their bookstore. He also attended a morning of classes at their seminary and spent time with the family of a ninth grader who is spending a year in the United States at Michigan Lutheran Seminary.

"These are small, isolated groups," said Professor Danell. "It means the world to them to know that they are not alone. They cherish their connection to WELS and value the encouragement for gospel work that is communicated simply by our being there. These are wonderful people who love Jesus, love their church body, love their worldwide Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference fellowship, and want to share Jesus with everyone."

Pictured, left: Pastor Martin Wilde and Jim Danell in the sanctuary of his congregation in Weitenhagen.



Dale Schliewe
NWC 1973
Beaver Dam WI



Michelle Siewert
DMLC 1973
St. Joseph MI



Earl Heidtke
DMLC 1973
Jackson WI



Leigh Gibson
MLC 2003
West St. Paul
MN

DAWN of REDEEMING GRACE

Give online:
mlc-wels.edu/donate

Or text **GIVE** to
507.223.4344



Dear Friends of Martin Luther College,

As we see all the world's struggles, we are seeing evidence of the rapidly approaching sunset of God's time of grace for a fallen world.

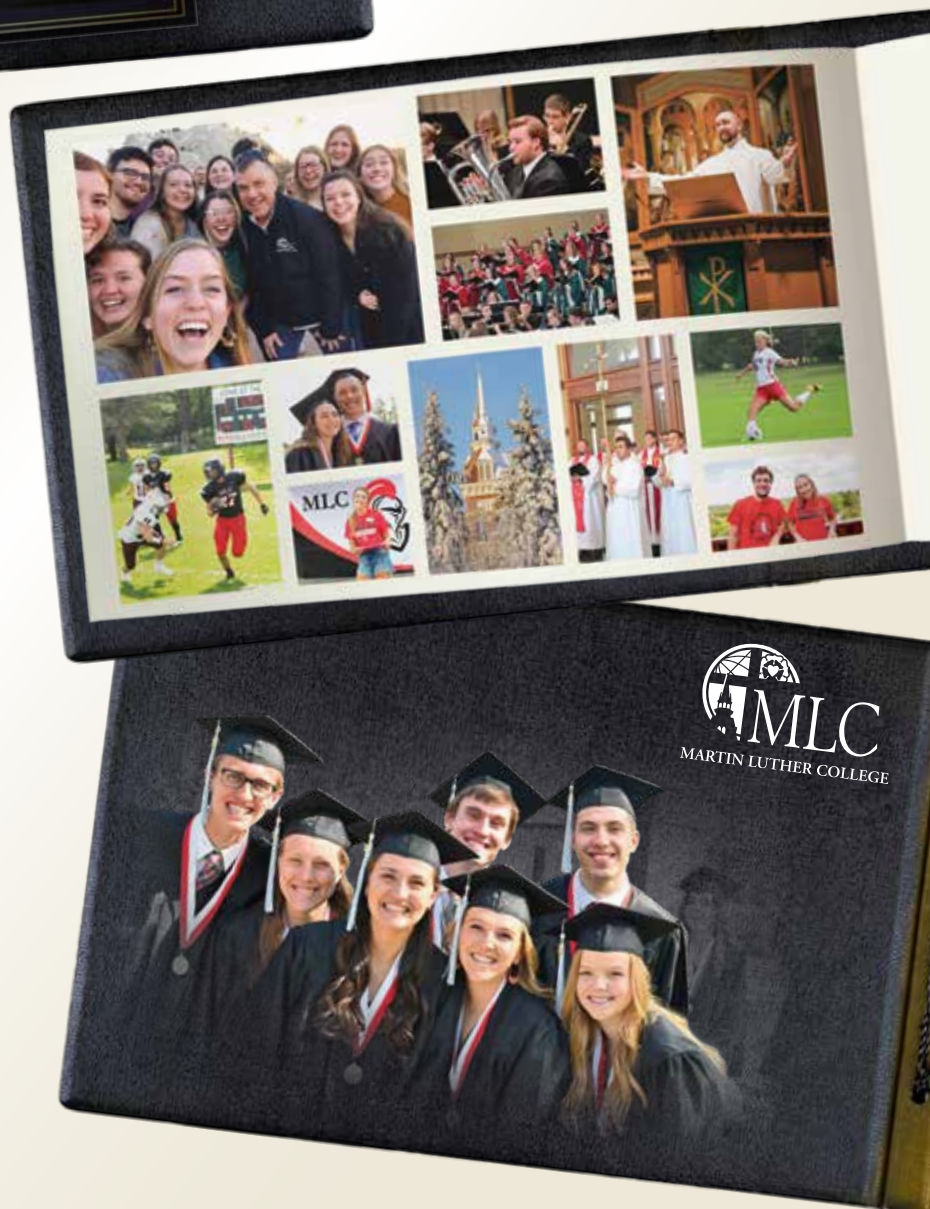
Yet contrast that sobering truth with this gracious reality: Christmas was the Dawn of Redeeming Grace. Every sinner who finds hope in that rising "of the sun of righteousness with healing in [his] wings" (Malachi 4:2) also knows that for every believer in Jesus, the sunset of God's time of grace for this world will usher in the dawn of a new heaven and new earth. There the Dawn of Redeeming Grace unfolds into never-ending day!

That is the joy of Christmas. That is also the reason Martin Luther College exists. We partner with you to send out faithful public ministers who—in your pulpits, classrooms, congregations, and beyond—will shine that light of Jesus' redeeming grace into your hearts and the hearts of many more.

Thank you for your prayers, your encouragements, and your gifts. God graciously uses us all to keep the Dawn of Redeeming Grace shining boldly and broadly!



Rich Gurgel
President, Martin Luther College



Doug Westenberg
NWC 1988
Watertown WI



Kevin Boushek
MLC 2008
Citrus Heights CA



Lindsay Hahn
MLC 2013
New Ulm MN



Edward Meyer
DMLC 1958
New Prague MN

Alumni Tours Are Back!

We have two trips in the works, and any WELS member is invited to join us.

One-Way from LA

The College Choir's spring break tour ends in Southern California. Instead of MLC paying for the bus to deadhead to Minnesota with the robes, risers, instruments, and empty seats, we are offering a *One-Way from LA* trip featuring some of the best of the West, March 1-12.

Highlights include Southern California sunsets, San Diego sites, a College Choir concert at California LHS, Hoover Dam, Grand Canyon West, Amtrak rail through the Colorado Rockies, and several state and national parks: Valley of Fire, Zion, Bryce Canyon, Capitol Reef, Canyonlands, and Arches.

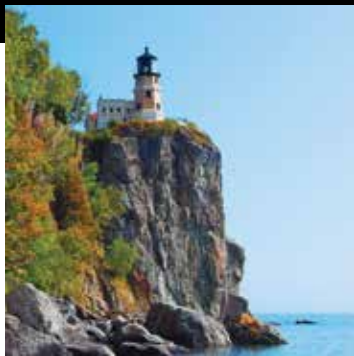


Grand Canyon West



Balboa Park-San Diego

Majestic Minnesota



Split Rock State Park



Grand Portage State Park

Looking further down the road (yet closer to home for some), a July 8-20 *Majestic Minnesota* trip will introduce travelers to Northern Minnesota's incredibly scenic shoreline and surprising wildlife variety—wolves and bears and moose, oh my!

Renowned state parks (such as Itasca and Split Rock) join Voyageurs National Park and Grand Portage National Monument as trip highlights. Twin Cities tours, an optional day trip to Thunder Bay, Ontario, or Isle Royale, Michigan, and waterfront resort stays will further enhance the “up north” experience.



Learn more and register for both tours at mlc-wels.edu/alumni/tours. You can also contact the Alumni Relations Office (alumni@mlc-wels.edu or 507.233.9135) with any questions or to request a printed brochure.

MLC Alumni Tours are offered by the MLC Alumni Association. Tours feature daily devotions, weekend WELS worship, Christian fellowship, and biblical perspectives provided by professors. Any revenue generated from the tours supports the Alumni Association's efforts to fund student scholarships and non-budgeted campus projects.



Peter Schlicht
MLC 2013
Black Creek WI



Sandra Edmonson
DMLC 1983
Albuquerque NM



Steven Jensen
DMLC 1988
New Ulm MN



Werner Lemke
DMLC 1963
Fairfax MN