

MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE INFOCUS

SPRING 2023



In This Issue . . .

Supporting First-Years
New CBE Professors
New Hebrew Textbook

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

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:

President Rich Gurgel meets
with a first-year student.

See story on page 4-5.

A *Doubly Positive* Narrative



By President Rich Gurgel

NWC '81, WLS '86

Whether a prospective student enrolls at MLC often boils down to a financial decision. Such financial concerns can overwhelm an otherwise strong inclination to study for ministry.

The #1 concern for prospective college students (and their parents) is the cost of college. Concerns about anticipated educational debt—and the financial aid packages colleges offer to keep debt manageable—are key factors in a student's college choice.

These upfront concerns about costs are frequently accompanied by a related post-graduation concern. Websites talk about a college's ROI—its return on investment. What will be the average income for the typical graduate from that college as they enter their vocation? If the ROI appears high, that eases concerns about taking on some degree of debt.

As MLC partners with our synod to recruit future gospel messengers, we have very good news about declining educational debt. What may surprise us is that MLC also has a much stronger ROI narrative than we've often shared! Let's look at both pieces of news.

Positive News, Part 1: MLC Educational Debt Is Coming Down

God has blessed MLC with considerable progress in reducing our graduates' average educational debt. In May 2019, the average debt for all MLC graduates was \$21,077. In May 2022, that average had fallen to \$16,937. That means MLC graduates carry about the same average debt as public university graduates. And they carry significantly less average debt than private college graduates.

You can see a compelling narrative begin: As God's people continue to bring gifts for financial aid, MLC is regaining a competitive advantage! It would be hard to overestimate the impact of this progress for prospective MLC students and their parents!

Positive News, Part 2: WELS Called Worker Compensation Has Gone Up

Is our story as compelling on the ROI side of the equation? Isn't it a reality that our graduates' potential income won't match that of many other vocations?

It's true that the WELS Compensation Guidelines list no six-figure salaries. But this is also true: We don't want to lure people to public ministry by waving high salaries before them. The apostle Paul has good reasons for warning us that a spiritual leader should not be "a lover of money" (1 Timothy 3:3). As we serve Jesus under the cross in public ministry, the greatest rewards have nothing to do with the financial bottom line.

Yet even from a purely financial perspective, MLC has a compelling ROI narrative to tell! Sometimes we've almost given the impression that those entering public ministry have taken a vow of poverty. They haven't! Especially in the last 25 years, lay leaders in our synod have led the charge to ensure that called workers receive a livable wage that corresponds favorably to those in similar helping professions. God's people understand that you don't muzzle the spiritual ox treading the spiritual grain (1 Corinthians 9:9)!

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



Christ's Love, Our Calling.

Why the News Is Sometimes Confusing

Here is where our narrative still gets muddled. Too often people get so fixated on the base salary listed in the WELS salary matrix that they fail to consider significant additional compensation. The WELS base salary has never represented the entire livable wage. Calling bodies also give their called workers additional compensation for housing, by providing either a housing allowance or an actual residence. This is a form of compensation that almost no one else, except active military, enjoys.

Here's an example. Picture a May 2023 MLC graduate assigned to southeastern Wisconsin. For that graduate, the WELS salary matrix suggests a base salary of \$30,987 to \$35,635. If the calling body does not provide a house, they would provide a housing allowance of \$16,488. That makes the actual salary range for that new WELS teacher \$47,475 to \$52,123.

How does that compare to the average starting salary for a public school teacher in Wisconsin? 2023 figures were not available at the time of publication, but in 2022, the starting salary range for a new Wisconsin public school teacher was \$34,687 to \$50,650, with the average teacher earning \$41,534.

In addition, when compared to other businesses, WELS congregations and schools usually cover much more of the cost of health insurance. That's additional compensation.

Here's the takeaway: Our MLC graduates are not compensated as second-class educators.

Let's Relearn Our Narrative

Yes, there's much more to the ministry recruitment story, but here's the financial bottom line to share with those considering ministry: God's people know how to give generously to support ministerial education. For that reason, student debt is going down. And God's people know that called workers need to be sufficiently compensated so they can stay focused on ministry. For that reason, compensation has gone up.

We want our prospective students and their parents to hear this news. This is a doubly positive narrative worth telling!

We Love to Tell the Story!

We love to talk about the mission and ministry of MLC!

Might we visit your congregation for an MLC Sunday? Might we present to your OWLS group, LWMS, or other organization?

We can preach, lead Bible class, and/or give a presentation on what's new at Martin Luther College.

As the WELS College of Ministry, we are **Pursuing Excellence under the Cross**, and we'd love to tell you how God is blessing our efforts and how you can partner with us in this important work.

We're grateful to the congregations that have recently hosted MLC Sundays: Peace LC-Milbank SD and St. John LC-Summit SD, Zion LC-Osceola WI, Martin Luther LC-Neenah WI, Ascension of Christ LC-Crossville TN, St. Paul LC-Tomah WI, St. John LC-Oak Creek WI, Saving Grace LC-Mobile AL, and Beautiful Savior LC-Marietta GA.

Please contact Christy at freycm@mlc-wels.edu to request a visit from us!

Now Accepting Thalassa Submissions

Martin Luther College has now begun accepting submissions for the 17th annual **Thalassa Prize**. This \$1,000 prize is awarded to the best photo-and-essay submission from an MLC student or graduate who has served in an international ministry.

DEADLINE:
April 30, 2023

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
mlc-wels.edu/Thalassa

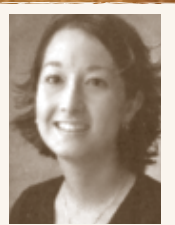
ALL PAST WINNERS: mlc-wels.edu/Thalassa



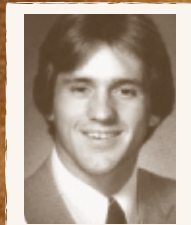
2022 WINNER: Alaina Qualmann MLC '23
Zambia

"Joy and Knowledge Come from the Lord"

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.



Kimberly Lacher
MLC 2003
Gilbert AZ



Gary Thoma
DMLC 1983
Lake Mills WI

SUPPORTING FIRST-YEARS

President Gurgel Welcomes Them to the Family



If you're a parent of a first-year student, perhaps your student has mentioned their meeting with the president.

President Gurgel schedules a 15-minute visit with every first-year and transfer student every year.

At a picnic table outside the Chapel of the Christ, or inside the cafeteria solarium, the president does his check-in. He arrives already knowing their hometown, high school, and intended major. From there, he asks about their family, their team and club involvement, their jobs, and how they're settling in. What led them to study for the public ministry? How have we made them feel at home and part of the family? What could we do better?

President and Pastor: One purpose of each visit dovetails with President Gurgel's personal mission statement. "Being president of MLC is not unlike being a parish pastor. I have a very real flock to support and nurture. I want to be

We're Family: The students' responses are encouraging to him. "I am very, very thankful that, almost without fail, students will reflect on how much MLC does indeed feel like a welcoming family to them. They clearly pick up on the common faith and focused purpose of MLC, from chapel to classroom, from campus activities to competition field."

Another item many students mention is the individual attention they get from the RAs (resident assistants). The RAs make it their job every year to help first-years adjust to college, but this year they're doing something extra: resiliency training. (See pages 6-7.) This training is one answer to the mental health challenges—anxiety, depression, loneliness—that have increased among college students in the last few years. And the students notice. "Again and again," the president says, "they speak of how supported they feel on our campus."

The students also enjoy telling President Gurgel why they decided to join the MLC family and study for ministry. "They regularly mention the encouragement of parents and

The visits give me a concrete way to say individually to each new MLC student that they are a brother or sister in Christ.

President Rich Gurgel

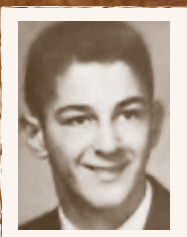
a shepherd who knows the name of every sheep God has entrusted to my care. I want to be able to call everyone in the campus family by name when I see them in the halls, at chapel, or in the caf."

After three years and 450 visits, that's a lot of names. But knowing people by name is important when you're a family.

"Our campus strategic plan is intentionally filled with references to MLC as a family of faith," he says. "The visits give me a concrete way to say individually to each new MLC student that they are a brother or sister in Christ."

grandparents, of called workers in their congregations or schools, and of lay members who spoke about seeing gifts in them. They also talk about the impact of concrete, hands-on 'taste-of-ministry' opportunities. It is quite astounding the many different paths and the many different encouragers God uses to bring each student to our campus."

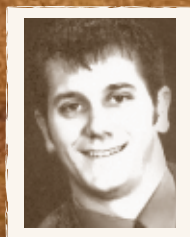
The "Magic Wand" Question: Another purpose of the visits is to assure each student that they have the ear of the president whenever they want it. President Gurgel initiates this through the "magic wand" question. He taps them with his pen—aka his magic wand—and tells them they are now



David Schmeling
NWC 1958
Milwaukee



Monica Thurow
MLC 1998
Watertown WI



Mark Schroeder
MLC 2003
Saginaw MI



Amy Palmer
MLC 2003
Oconomowoc WI



Pursuing Excellence

UNDER THE CROSS

President Gurgel meets with each first-year and transfer student every year. He wants to know every face on campus, and he wants to be sure they know they have a voice.

the college president. What would they do to make MLC a better place to study for the ministry?

"I remind them that our strategic plan is all about pursuing excellence under the cross at MLC," he says, "so we do want to discuss what could be better. Most students ask to think about it, and quite a few have gotten back to me by text, email, or just catching me on the sidewalk."

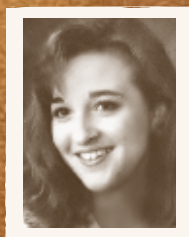
We're Here for You: These visits with the president are important because the students' experiences during their

first year are crucial to their feelings of comfort and safety as well as their decision to come back next year. MLC's freshman-to-sophomore retention rate is excellent when compared to the national average, but "for the sake of gospel ministry," the president says, "we want to be A+ instead of just 'very good.'"

He concludes: "We want every student to know that we at MLC care about them and want to see them succeed in their pursuit of ministry."



**Kermit
Habben**
NWC 1963
Raymond SD



**Pamela
Lenz**
DMLC 1993
New Ulm MN



**Daniel
Lewig**
MLC 2008
St. Petersburg FL



**Sarah
Pederson**
MLC 2013
Watertown SD

SUPPORTING FIRST-YEARS

Resiliency Training



I need to study for that exam, but first I have to finish my paper for that other class. And what time is practice today? Ugh, there goes two more hours! Oh, guess what? That guy asked me out for Saturday night! I should say yes. But then I won't get as many hours at work—and I need those hours. My tuition payment is due!

No doubt about it: college can be stressful. Perhaps for the first time, students are dealing with college-level classes, homesickness, high-stakes time management, financial pressures, and ever-evolving relationships with roommates, teammates, friends, and professors. They may also be battling anxiety, depression, or loneliness.

What exactly is resiliency training?

Noah: Resiliency training is an initiative started by MLC to help students build an array of strategies to fight off the stresses of their lives and other mental health issues.

There are lots of ways that we do this. One is by meeting one-on-one with our individual mentees every two weeks just to check in on them and see how they are doing.

Another is the once-a-month training, where I meet with a group of 13 students, and we watch a video, discussing strategies on how to deal with issues that arise.

Can you tell us about one of those strategies?

Noah: One strategy that my group and I like to use is called "One Thing in the Moment," where we take a problem that

This training reminds students that what they're going through matters, and that there are people who care about them and want to help them through it—the most important person being Christ.

Noah Uhlenbrauck, Resident Assistant and Resiliency Mentor

To assist with these challenges, we asked Christian Family Solutions to train all our resident assistants (RAs) in the Resiliency Project. Now the RAs are passing along that training to the first-years in their residence halls. It's all part of empowering our family's formation and expanding our family's reach, two of the goals in our strategic plan, *Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross*.



To tell us more about resiliency training at MLC, we talked to one of our RAs and resiliency mentors, **Noah Uhlenbrauck** (St. Peter-Appleton WI).

we are having, and break down what we can do now, taking one thing at a time and not worrying about it all at once, which can easily leave you feeling overwhelmed.

Why do you think resiliency training is so important?

Noah: This training is giving these students skills that they need in an ever-changing, sinful world. But it also gives them skills they can pass along one day in their classrooms and congregations. As ministers of the gospel, they can help those they serve deal with difficulties in their own lives.

What have you learned while doing this training?

Noah: One thing I've learned is how to have genuine conversations with people. We all experience a lot of



**Joshua
Glowicki**
MLC 1998
Mayville MI



**Linda
Schaller**
DMLC 1973
Jenera OH



**Brent
Bitter**
MLC 1998
Oakfield WI



**Rebecca
Finke**
MLC 2008
East Brunswick NJ



Noah Uhlenbrauck (center) uses his lunch period in the cafeteria to casually check in with two of his mentees: **Josiah Guenther** (St. John-New Ulm MN) and **Josiah Smith** (St. Paul-North Mankato MN).

difficulty in our lives, and this group gives us a place where we can learn and grow together. It also has shown me that you can have fun even when you have serious conversations. There are always tons of laughs during our sessions, which is encouraging and makes us more willing to share with each other and help each other with life.

How has the training gone? Have you seen some positive results?

Noah: There are so many ways I have gotten to help students on campus. Through this resiliency training, students have opened up to me about issues they are having with their roommate, or being away from home, or even the test they are stressed about.

They have also shared how these strategies have been helpful to them. And even if the strategies don't work instantaneously for my mentees, they have expressed gratitude for just having someone who will listen to them.

What would you say is the most important lesson?

Noah: This training reminds students that what they're going through matters, and that there are people who care about them and want to help them through it—the most important person being Christ.

One passage I always like to share with them comes from John 16:33, where Jesus tells us: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."



Karl Schmugge
NWC 1983
St. Paul MN



Edith Draheim
DMLC 1968
Brillion WI



Martin Hahm
NWC 1963
Theresa WI



Sara Marquardt
MLC 2018
Guntur India

SUPPORTING FIRST-YEARS

A Chat with Ms. Scharf—and Wilson!



Director of Women's Services **Angela Scharf** meets with every first-year woman in the first semester—and more often than not, her sweet boxer mix, Wilson, comes along.

"It's a way for me to touch base with each of the women face to face," Ms. Scharf says. "See how they're

doing and make sure everything is going all right so far."

As they take a walk in Flandrau State Park or play a game of Skip-Bo, Scharf uses the time to really get to know them: what high school activities they were involved in, what they're

I want to encourage them to make the most of college.

Angela Scharf, Director of Women's Services

doing now, what they want to major in, what they've found challenging on campus, what their goals are.

"I want to encourage them to make the most of college," she says, "whether that means going out for choir or sports or just concentrating on the classes. I want them to intentionally live out their lives here as young Christian adults. And I hope they begin to see me as a resource, someone who listens and offers commonsense advice."



First-year men have similar conversations with **Tutor Nathan Savage** MLC '18, WLS '22 (pictured)—who sometimes brings his German shepherd puppy, Luther, along (puppy,

unfortunately, not available for photo). In their half-hour talks, Savage asks students how they're doing, what they like or don't like, what brought them to MLC, and what they might identify as a goal for their first year.

Retention of new students is a priority for all colleges, and at Martin Luther College we know that sometimes simple gestures of Christian love can go a long way. As a family in Christ, we make sure each student feels that they are welcome, they are seen and heard, and they belong.



Holy Week Devotions—Our Gift to You

7 + 1 Words from the Heart of God is MLC's newest devotion book created for you.

In this eight-day booklet, we explore the seven words of Christ from the cross—plus an additional word from the risen Christ for Easter. Christ's seven words from Calvary are particularly useful for revealing his heart. As he suffers, what are his thoughts bent toward? What is he most concerned about? What is he personally experiencing? His words give us a glimpse into the heart of the omnipotent God himself, who somehow feels sorrow and suffering as he defeats sorrow and suffering. Some words are somber. Some are sublime. Others signify victory. And all his words matter.

You may access these devotions in multiple ways at mlc-wels.edu/publications/seasonal-devotions.

- Read them online • Download a PDF • Listen to an audio recording by the author
- Request that we send them to your personal email on a daily basis, April 2-9



A New Hebrew Textbook

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים “In the beginning God created . . .”



Professor Thomas Nass has written a new textbook for first-year preseminary students, *Reading Biblical Hebrew*.

They are the first words in Genesis, the first words in the Bible, and the first words that junior preseminary students at Martin Luther College sink their teeth into—in Hebrew. **Professor Thomas Nass** NWC '77, WLS '82 (pictured left) is the one who opens the wonders of the Hebrew language to these young men.

Since 1995, Nass has been using *Biblical Hebrew for Beginners*, a textbook written by his predecessor, Northwestern College Professor Paul Eickmann, in 1994-1995, the last year before the amalgamation resulting in Martin Luther College.

A student named **Jonathan Schroeder** NWC '95, WLS '99 (pictured right), now pastor at Faith-Sharpsburg, Georgia, was tasked with typing the Eickmann tome.



The 1995 textbook has served WELS preseminary men well, but now it's time for a new beginning. Professor Nass is revising and republishing the book as *Reading Biblical Hebrew*.



“I’m not going to be around forever,” he says. “Someone is going to come and replace me. Professor Eickmann’s book is in a word processing program

that’s not even around anymore, so I thought it would be kind to put the textbook into Microsoft Word, so that the next Hebrew professor can do what he wants with it. Plus, I can add improvements that I have come upon in the last 28 years.”

The college received an Antioch Grant for the project, which enabled Nass to hire a preseminary senior named **Calvin Arstein** (*Cross of Christ-Boise ID*, pictured right) to type the book. Like Pastor Jonathan Schroeder, Calvin’s talents match the task. “Calvin is perfect for this project,” Nass says. “A wonderful gift from God.”



Nass also gives a shout-out to the current MLC juniors, who are enduring the first working draft of the revision, and to Dr. Mark Paustian, who is teaching additional sections of Hebrew this year to give him more time to work on the textbook.

Why do we need to create our own textbook? Almost every major academic publishing house markets a biblical Hebrew textbook. In fact, Eickmann used Weingreen’s text (Oxford University Press) for years before he wrote his own. But Nass explains that a few components are significantly better in Eickmann’s—and now his own—approach to teaching Hebrew.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים

Northwestern College Professor Paul Eickmann wrote *Biblical Hebrew for Beginners* in 1994-1995. It was used at MLC for 28 years.

Making the Transition: 1994-1995

Professor Paul Eickmann taught Hebrew to juniors and seniors at Northwestern College for 29 years (1966-95). When he announced in 1994 that he would retire at the end of the '94-'95 school year, the NWC board called Pastor Thomas Nass to replace him at the newly amalgamated Martin Luther College.

Although Nass already had experience as a Hebrew instructor at NWC from 1982 to 1984, he wanted further preparation and pursued a master’s degree in Hebrew at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in '94-'95.

Meanwhile, Eickmann was creating his textbook during his final year at NWC.

When Nass began at MLC in 1995, he was grateful for the new textbook. He made some edits during his first years, which resulted in Eickmann insisting that his name be added as an author. “But in reality,” Nass says, “it was Eickmann’s textbook”—a textbook he has now used for 28 years.

First, the grammar presentation is simpler in Eickmann/Nass than in some other books. "It's just enough for the beginning student. I think that some textbooks include too much detail right away, and that can overwhelm the beginning student."

Second, Eickmann presents the Hebrew verb differently in his text. "The verb is complicated in Hebrew," Nass says, "and Eickmann found a well-organized and manageable way to teach it."

And third, Eickmann incorporated simplified Hebrew Bible stories early on. "Other texts do not do this," Nass says. "They'll use illustrative sentences but not whole stories from the Bible." Already in lesson 12 of Eickmann's book, students are reading the creation story.

Nass has added even more stories in his revision. Every other lesson begins with a story, focusing on great Old Testament leaders like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Elisha, Ezekiel, and David. "Our primary goal is to read stories from the Bible, not learn Hebrew grammar," he says.

Because of the multiplicity of Bible translations out there, and because the laity is more educated now, we really do need pastors who know what they're doing when it comes to the original languages.

Professor Thomas Nass



Professor Thomas Nass has taught Hebrew at Martin Luther College since the amalgamation of Northwestern College and Dr. Martin Luther College in 1995.



Garrett Buch
MLC 2018
Manitowoc WI



Kayla Fager
MLC 1998
Gillette WY



Bradley Essig
MLC 2013
Lewiston MN



Rebecca John
DMLC 1988
Escondido CA



Professor Paul Eickmann (pictured) and Professor Cyril Spaude taught Hebrew at Northwestern College for 29 years (1966-95).

“We do learn the grammar, but we do it to support the reading and understanding of the Bible story. That’s why this text is called *Reading Biblical Hebrew*.”

Nass feels that these particulars in the Eickmann/Nass textbooks make the study of Hebrew more enjoyable. “Those components have made first-year Hebrew something most students like better than they would with other texts. They’d be blown away by the amount of detail in some of the other books. It’s been a more enjoyable experience with our text.”

Some things will not change: Although the textbook will be different next year, the requirement that preseminary men learn Hebrew will not change. For more than a century—and for the foreseeable future—preseminary men in WELS have studied Greek all four years and Hebrew their junior and senior years. Then they have built on these skills at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Nass thinks that’s just as it should be. In fact, learning Greek and Hebrew may be more important now than ever, he says.

“Because of the multiplicity of Bible translations out there, and because the laity is more educated now, we really do need pastors who know what they’re doing when it comes to the original languages.”

He adds, “One thing I always say to students is this: Certainly, you can preach a sermon not knowing Hebrew, but you can be a more careful preacher—and a more confident preacher and teacher—if you’ve studied the original languages.”

Teaching Hebrew in WELS ministerial training

Hebrew professors since 1913

- NWC President E. E. Kowalke 53 years (1913-1966)
- NWC Professor Paul Eickmann 29 years (1966-1995)
- NWC Professor Cyril Spaude 29 years (1966-1995)
- MLC Professor Thomas Nass 28 years (1995-present)
- MLC Professor Kenneth Cherney 6 years (1998-2004)
- MLC Professor Mark Paustian 19 years (2004-present)

Hebrew requirements

- 1865-1904 2 years / 8 credits
- 1904-1971 2 years / 12 credits
- 1971-2023 2 years / 14 credits

WELS Translation Committees

For many years, Professor Nass has used his expertise in Hebrew on WELS translation committees. From 2009 to 2013, Nass was the secretary of the WELS Translation Evaluation Committee, which led the synod’s evaluation of Zondervan’s 2011 *New International Version*. In 2013, he transitioned to become the chairman of the WELS Translation Liaison Committee.

The Liaison Committee interacts with Bible publishers and gives suggestions for improving Bible translations. When Holman Bible Publishers was preparing the *Christian Standard Bible*, Nass and his committee sent more than 1,000 recommendations, and a high percentage of them were incorporated. In recent years the committee has been sending recommendations to the publishers of the NIV, knowing that at some point another revision will be coming.



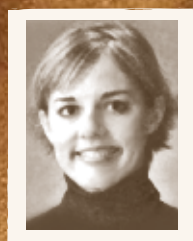
David Biedenbender
DMLC 1988
Menomonee Falls WI



Jane Freese
DMLC 1978
Plymouth NE



Steven Beilke
DMLC 1978
New Ulm MN



Lesley Johnson
MLC 2003
Tyler MN

Two New Professors Ready to Launch Competency-Based Education

We are many steps closer to launching our Nontraditional Education Program, which leverages Competency-Based Education. Taking the reins are two new professors of education who happen to be married, **Dr. Martin and Dr. Nichole LaGrow**.

Dr. Nichole LaGrow will serve as professor of education and director of Nontraditional Programs (CBE), and **Dr. Martin LaGrow** MLC '93, will serve as professor of education and instructional designer.



Dr. Nichole LaGrow, Program Director:

As director of the program, Dr. Nichole knows her list of responsibilities is long: “Initially, my goal will be to work with the CBE Committee, MLC leadership, faculty, and staff to design our competency-based curriculum and shepherd that program through licensure and accreditation

reviews with the support of VP **Jeff Wiechman**, Licensure Officer **Cindy Whaley**, and Director of Graduate Studies & Continuing Education **John Meyer**.

“While I enjoy these administrative elements of the director’s role, I am most looking forward to working directly with the students to support them as they engage with the program and pursue their calls.”

The directorship requires a great deal of skill, but God has made Dr. Nichole uniquely prepared. She’s earned a doctorate and five master’s degrees in areas that include literature, history, adult education, human resources, and business administration (MBA). (“I love to learn!” she says.) She’s currently working on her sixth master’s degree, in higher education law and compliance. And she’ll be completing her K-16 Teaching Ministry Certification through MLC as she begins her work here.

She’s also taught at the college level for 20 years, working with accreditation and licensure requirements, curriculum development, program assessment, and student support initiatives for a variety of academic programs—all areas vitally linked to a program built on Competency-Based Education.

One aspect of her background is an added plus: she did not grow up WELS or attend MLC. “In some ways,” she says, “I think that makes me the ideal person for developing this program. I understand the perspective of someone who may be new to the concept of a divine call. And as we are considering the curriculum, I’m making note of elements I am learning about being a called worker that we need to incorporate into the program.”



Dr. Martin LaGrow, Instructional Designer:

Dr. Martin LaGrow comes to us equally prepared. “As an instructional designer,” he says, “it’s my role to identify and creatively bridge gaps between teachers and learners, whatever those gaps may be. A program like this addresses two common challenges: distance and

time. When learners are not able to connect in person with the learning community, because they are too far away or their time is too limited, the learning experience needs to be delivered in a way that overcomes those obstacles. This requires a deep understanding of how learning and assessment work, as well as the technology tools and learning theories commonly used to facilitate learning.

“At MLC,” he continues, “the challenge is to identify the core learning objectives for a cohort of students who will be coming from various walks of life, evaluate where they already are in terms of those objectives, based on their previous learning and experiences, and then design a pathway for them to complete those objectives in an accelerated timeline—all without requiring them to pause their lives and relocate, a barrier to many who otherwise would consider entering the ministry.”

Dr. Martin is a 1993 graduate of DMLC (elementary education) and has earned several IT certifications, a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction, and a doctorate in instructional technology and distance education. *(Continued on page 14)*



The mission, drive, and purpose of the college and those who serve it are tangible. The desire to respect tradition while also embracing new methodologies is refreshing!

Dr. Martin LaGrow, Professor of Education and Instructional Designer

Competency-Based Education: What It Is and Why We Need It

The need for more WELS teachers is great. Some of our schools—especially urban schools—have seen explosive growth. After the assignments were announced on MLC Call Day in May 2022, 140 teacher vacancies remained unfilled around the synod. Our new nontraditional program will leverage Competency-Based Education, or CBE, to help fill this great need.

CBE is an online option that recognizes competence in a subject or skill through activities, assessments, and portfolios. CBE is intentionally designed to reflect the same high standards as our traditional programs. 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 their own jobs—some of which are in WELS schools.



Two New Professors Ready to Launch Competency-Based Education (continued)

Over 14 years of ministry, Dr. Martin served as a teacher at Siloah-Milwaukee and a teacher/principal at Our Savior-Longmont CO and Trinity-Kaukauna WI.

Feeling pulled toward technology, he earned several IT certifications, including Microsoft Certified System Administrator, which led him to a faculty position at Rasmussen College. He taught and administered their IT program across 20 campuses and online. Eventually he was recruited as senior academic services consultant for a company called Ellucian, a role that allowed him to visit college campuses from Harvard University to Guam Community College and help them to address their unique challenges in the implementation of technology for learning.

Dr. Martin can see clearly how his professional history will serve him well in his new role. “My time as a consultant, adjunct, and employee of dozens of colleges and universities has given me the opportunity to identify and resolve challenges in unique environments and contexts. Even though institutions are unique, the challenges they face often parallel each other, and my experiences have refined my approach to problem solving while also respecting unique traditions and heritages.”

High Hopes for Competency-Based Education at MLC:

This professor team is excited to dive in. As Dr. Nichole considers the Nontraditional Education Program at MLC, she’s reminded of 1 Peter 4:10: “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

“This nontraditional program,” she says, “provides a pathway to support those who have been called to serve later in life. It complements the work of our traditional undergraduate experience and ministerial certification



The LaGrows are eager to move to New Ulm and launch our new nontraditional program, Competency-Based Education.

programs and affords someone who is place-bound a means to engage in the training necessary to meet the needs of their local congregation. I am so very humbled to be tasked with facilitating this important work to support our members in their mission fields.”

“The need for workers is immediate,” Dr. Martin says. “Traditional students entering MLC with a plan to graduate and serve in four years (and sometimes longer) is a tremendous blessing for the future, but it can’t fix the empty classrooms and pulpits we face right now. If we can leverage flexible learning design to open doors for people who have the gifts to serve but not the flexibility in their lives to pursue a traditional degree, we can not only fill

I hear from people every week who want to become WELS teachers, who are willing to do the coursework to get their bachelor’s degrees and their ministry certification. But they cannot quit their jobs and uproot their families to come to New Ulm. In some cases, they are already working in a WELS school, as a teacher’s aide, for instance. CBE would allow them to keep working while they get their degree.

Dr. John Meyer, MLC Director of Graduate Studies & Continuing Education



those classrooms and pulpits with qualified candidates in the short term, but we can add future candidates that already have meaningful life experiences and outside credentials over and above the nontraditional ministerial training MLC can provide.”

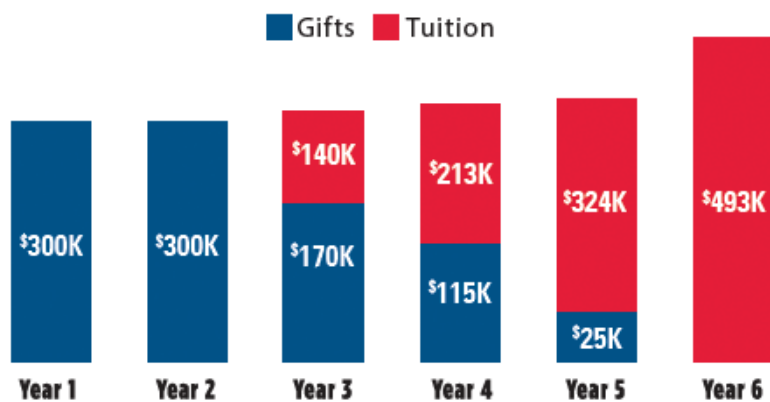
The LaGrows would like to express their gratitude to the many people who have already talked to them about the needs and hopes for this program at MLC. Dr. Nichole extends an invitation to continue reaching out. “Anyone who has thoughts, ideas, or inquiries about the CBE program, please reach out to us as we are already beginning to lay the groundwork!”

Ready for the Move to New Ulm: The couple visited New Ulm in May when Dr. Martin, already an adjunct professor in our Graduate Studies Program, participated in the graduation ceremony.

The campus is not new to him, of course, because his father, **Dr. George LaGrow**, served for many years as professor of education at DMLC. “What struck me most,”

Dr. Martin says, “was the contrast between how much everything has stayed the same and changed at the same time! The mission, drive, and purpose of the college and those who serve it are tangible. The desire to respect tradition while also embracing new methodologies is refreshing! I look forward to the opportunity to share the warmth and community I felt returning to New Ulm last May!”

Dr. Nichole is equally excited to make the move: “When we visited campus, I immediately noted how warm and vibrant the MLC community is. I recall telling Marty several times what a special place MLC is. As we deliberated our calls, I was constantly reminded of the power of working toward the shared vision and purpose of God’s plan. Now, as we embark on making New Ulm our home, I am eager to be a part of the campus community.”



Calling for these two new positions has been made possible by gifts from donors and grants from the Marvin M. Schwan Foundation, the Neumann Family Foundation, and the Siebert Lutheran Foundation.

We have already received \$475,000, surpassing our Year 1 goal of \$300,000 and jumpstarting our Year 2 goal of \$300,000.



The Growing LaGrow Tradition

Dr. Martin LaGrow grew up in New Ulm. His father, Dr. George LaGrow (pictured top), taught on the DMLC campus from the late '70s through the early '90s.

Martin (pictured bottom) recalls a teachers’ conference keynote speech that his father made. In that speech, “Raising the Bar for Mission-Focused Ministry,” the elder LaGrow said, “*The quality of our efforts and performance can only be diminished by us. Not by outside circumstances, not by bad times—unless we choose to let them.*”

Today, the younger LaGrow says, “Embracing this can-do attitude and positivity, I believe that now is the time to open new doors and create new avenues for those who may wish to become called workers, but just need us to come and meet them halfway.”

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.



Serving Students for 55 Years: A Brief History of Luther Student Center

By **Clarice Fastenau** DMLC '61

The multi-purpose union was built in 1967. The \$1.5 million construction, funded by a WELS Missio Deo offering, was called Luther Memorial Union (LMU) in honor of the 450th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. It included a cafeteria/kitchen on the lower level; a student union with a TV room, game room (Joustabout), student mailboxes, meeting room, and snack bar; and a gymnasium/auditorium with a large stage for concerts and graduations, and locker rooms for athletes.

In 1994 the bookstore moved from the classroom building (Wittenberg Collegiate Center, or WCC) to the game room in the LMU. Offices for the campus pastor and others were added. The football coach's office was once a barbershop. At amalgamation in 1995, the name was changed to Luther Student Center (LSC). The Sprinter, a symbol of Northwestern College, found a resting place outside the LSC. Seals from Northwestern College and Dr. Martin Luther College were mounted on the walls.

Both the LMU and LSC housed office space for the yearbook staff, student newspaper, and Student Senate.

In 2015 the nurse's office was moved from the WCC to the LSC. The Round Table, which sold pizza and ice cream in the evenings, was temporarily transformed into an early childhood center in 2013 while a new early childhood facility was being built off campus. The snack shop closed, but the activity/lounge space remained. In 2020, that space—along with the special events room—became the Cultural Engagement Center. The cafeteria, made more accessible with an improved entrance area and elevators, is open to the public and is a popular dining spot for many in the community.

The LSC will see more changes beginning this May, but it will continue to be a very important feature of the MLC campus, a building at the heart of campus that is used by every student every day.



Next Renovation:

CHAPEL OF THE CHRIST LOWER LEVEL

In the coming months, we want to finish the lower level of the Chapel of the Christ to provide rehearsal and recital space for our student musicians. Here's why:

Of the 135 graduates in 2022, 128 sang in a choir, played in an instrumental ensemble, or took music lessons for at least one semester. *That's 95 percent.*

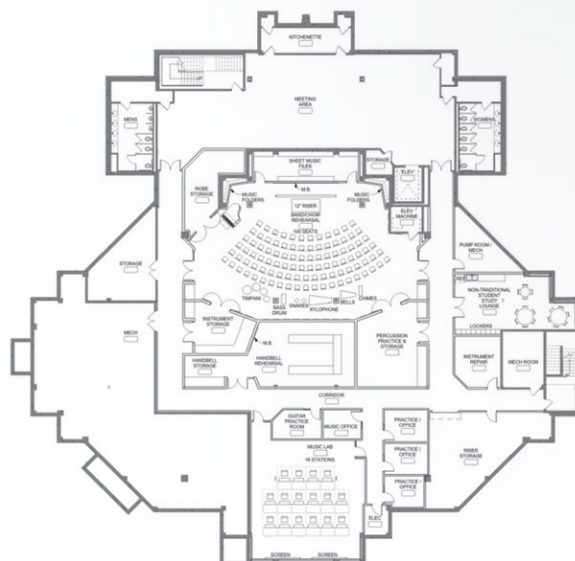
Some of these students are dedicating their lives to music ministry. They're majoring in vocal music, instrumental music, or parish music and hoping to one day serve your church or school as music teachers, worship leaders and planners, organists and pianists, band and choir directors.

They understand that music is a special gift of God, and that for millennia God's people have understood the power of music to sing the gospel straight into the heart.

We've been short of space for our student musicians for a long time. But the solution is right in front of us—in the lower level of the Chapel of the Christ. In fact, we've had plans for this space since we built the chapel 12 years ago—plans that include teaching studios and a computer lab for composition and theory students.

The centerpiece is a large recital and rehearsal room with state-of-the-art equipment, acoustical design, and much-needed storage for robes and instruments just steps away.

The first critical step in making this rehearsal space a reality for our students is to construct the necessary infrastructure. The estimated cost is \$250,000. Can you help?



"I appreciate my professors' pointing me back to the why of my musical training: to prepare for service in God's kingdom."

—Meg Stangl MLC '25



"At MLC, I've learned what music excellence looks like, and I've been equipped with what I need to succeed in my future ministry."

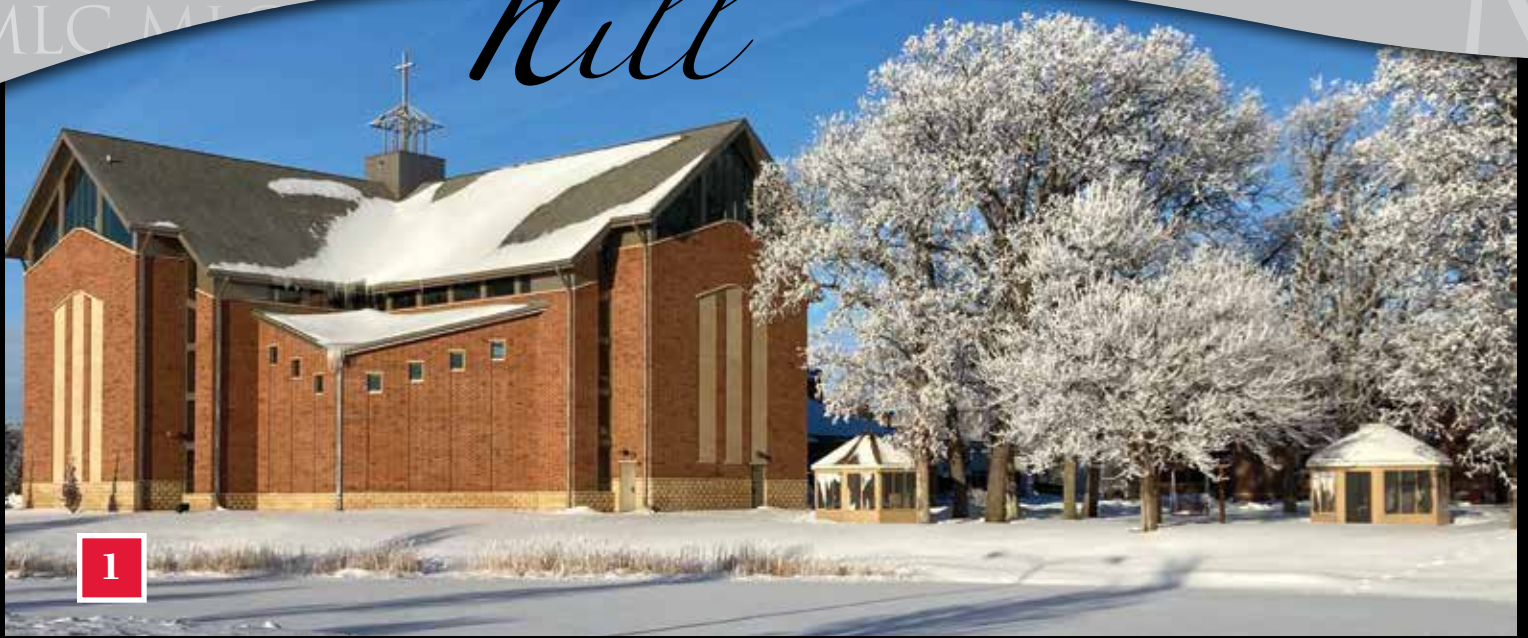
—Noah Ungemach MLC '24

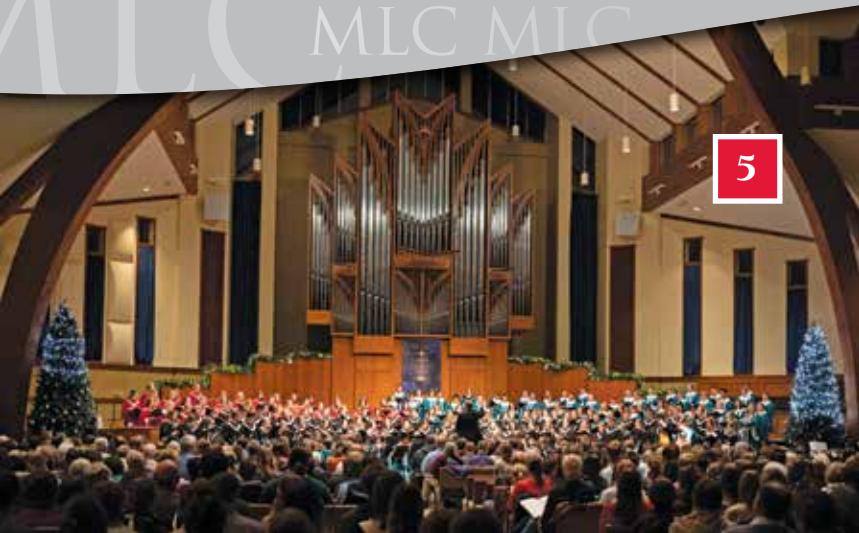


"By providing me with opportunities to grow in my abilities and to use my gifts, MLC is preparing me for my future ministry to God's people, young and old."

—Alicia Mengel MLC '24

here on the
hill





5

1 LET IT SNOW:

God sends us a beautifully frosty winter.

2 WINTER CARNIVAL:

Among a blizzard of activities, we enjoy ice and snow and a crazy talent show.

3 1,000 CLUB:

Kylie Wolf (*Immanuel-Greenville WI*) records her 1,000th set assist in October.

4 WELCOME, HS STUDENTS:

Students from Manitowoc LHS join almost 1,000 others in Focus on Ministry visits. These visits always include some fun at "the Betty."

5 CHRISTMAS CONCERT:

Music department presents "Dawn of Redeeming Grace."

6 CHAMPS AGAIN:

Women's cross country team nabs UMAC championship for second year in a row. **Maya Habben** (*Mt. Calvary-Flagstaff AZ*) takes first overall. Men are edged out in a tiebreaker and bring home second place.



6



8

7 E-DAY:

Twenty-six presenters share their expertise at Evangelism Day.

8 FORUM:

Talented students stage *Inside the Fourth Wall*.

9 BINGO!

About 300 students play for donated quilts, cookies, and almost \$5,000 in gift cards. Event sponsored by Ladies' Auxiliary.



9



10

10 MLK DAY:

Guest speaker Ronald Kelly keynotes our MLK Day commemoration in a day filled with worship and workshops.

11 WANT MORE MLC NEWS?

Get sports news from the weekly *MLC SportsPage* and campus activity recaps from the monthly *MLC Update*. Subscribe to both at mlc-wels.edu/publications/subscribe.



11

It's the “Principal” of the Thing

Strong Lutheran schools need strong principals. They need leaders who set the bar high for student achievement. Who create a Christ-centered culture. Who cast long-term visions for the future of their school and simultaneously handle the day-to-day details. Who supervise instruction, create a budget, and implement a marketing plan—all while maintaining meaningful relationships with faculty, parents, and students.



The principalship is a demanding calling—one that requires training. “The idea that a good teacher will automatically be a good principal is naive,” says Dr. John Meyer, director of MLC Graduate Studies and Continuing Education. “Being spiritually mature, organized, and friendly provides a good foundation, but skills like supervision, curriculum leadership, and communication require training and practice. Putting a nice guy in the role of principal and asking him to figure it out harms the school and the person. We want our principals to be in the best position for success from day one.”

That’s where the WELS Principal Credential Cohort comes in. This cohort is a cooperative venture of the Commission for Lutheran Schools and Martin Luther College to prepare teachers for the principal role. It was created to ensure that when a new principal steps into their role, they have the experience and training the call demands. Members of each year’s cohort are usually recommended by fellow called workers who recognize their leadership gifts, but any teacher with at least three years of experience can request to be admitted to a cohort as well.

The cohort experience is comprised of several components:

- being paired with a principal mentor,
- attending at least one national conference, and
- completing MLC’s master’s degree in educational administration.

As the name implies, these steps are completed with a cohort—a cadre of like-minded principals-in-training who take the journey together, sharing their own personal and professional experiences and encouraging one another along the way.



Jarred Beduze serves as assistant principal at Winnebago Lutheran Academy.

As further encouragement, cohort members take their first master’s course free of charge and then receive a 50% scholarship for all subsequent courses in the program.



One future principal’s story: Jarred Beduze MLC ‘17, has just completed the three-year program. “I joined the Principal Cohort program because I have a high interest in and a passion for administration,” he says.

“About three years ago, I was speaking with the principal of the school where I was serving at the time (**Ryan Wiechmann** MLC ‘98, *Northland LHS*) about his thoughts on me pursuing a master’s degree and how I could leverage that to improve upon my own professional capacity and to better serve the needs of the school.” Ryan immediately told Jarred about the Principal Credential Cohort and nominated him for it. Jarred’s application was accepted, and the adventure began.

As Jarred’s cohort took courses in MLC’s Master of Science in Educational Administration program, he enjoyed hearing the insights from his cohort and the veteran principals also enrolled in the courses. And he appreciated the relevance

“Putting a nice guy in the role of principal and asking him to figure it out harms the school and the person. We want our principals to be in the best position for success from day one.”

Dr. John Meyer, Director of Graduate Studies & Continuing Education

of all he was learning. As assistant principal at Winnebago Lutheran Academy, he says, “I was able to practice the things that I was learning immediately. Almost everything that I learned had an immediate application to what I was doing.”

It was the internship capstone that Jarred found most effective. “As I worked through the requirements of the internship,” he says, “I was able to put everything I had learned in the courses throughout my program into practice and experiment with my leadership to see what would work best.”

Jarred is first in line to encourage others to consider joining a Principal Credential Cohort. “If you are at all interested in administration, being a principal, or just being a leader, put yourself out there and join a cohort. You’ll make relationships with your colleagues in ministry that will be a blessing to you. You’ll learn so much that will benefit you, whether you are called to serve as the principal of a school, you are a leader as a teacher, or you lead in another role.

“The professional and spiritual growth that you gain through this opportunity will impact you for the rest of your life.”

Strong principals make all the difference. Dr. Meyer says he cannot emphasize enough the importance of strong principals. “A 2021 Wallace Foundation study concluded that principals *really* matter. Schools want the person filling the vital role of principal to be highly skilled so that their school, students, and teachers succeed.”

The WELS Principal Credential Cohort is one important step in identifying and training these highly skilled principals.

We are filling the 2023-24 cohort now!

If you’d like to nominate a candidate or yourself,
go to mlc-wels.edu/principal.



Is It Working?

The WELS Principal Credential Cohort is part of a broader, synod-wide effort to strengthen Lutheran schools by providing principals with adequate time, training, and compensation.

The efforts began in 2017. Now, after five years, what can we say? Are the efforts working? Do principals have more time, training, and compensation in than in 2017?

Yes!

TIME:

Principals now have **four additional hours** of Administrative Release Time (ART) per week, an increase from 13.8 to 17.5 hours per week.

TRAINING:

More than half of principals now have earned their master’s degrees, an increase from **41 percent** to **55 percent**.

COMPENSATION:

Congregations and schools now offer higher compensation. The average has increased from **\$44,100** to **\$51,600**.

Would You Like to Be a Principal If . . . ?

In 2015, we surveyed WELS male teachers.

We asked: “Would you be interested in becoming a principal?” **39 percent** said yes.

Then we altered the question: “Would you be interested in becoming a principal if you were provided adequate levels of training, time, and compensation?” **62 percent** said yes.

And when we asked younger teachers (0-10 years’ experience) the same question, **74 percent** said yes.

Providing principals with training, time, and adequate compensation makes a difference.

50 Years Ago, *DMLC Led the Way for Women's Sports in Minnesota*

Would you have thought that 50 years ago, little Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm would actually spearhead the movement toward women's collegiate sports in Minnesota?

It's true. At a time when few high schools or colleges had any interscholastic sports for women, DMLC led the way by implementing women's athletics—before the 1972 signing of Title IX.

In 2022, the world of sports commemorated the 50th anniversary of Title IX, which prohibits sex-based discrimination in education, including athletics. So we decided to look back at the beginning of women's athletics on this campus.

First Women's Interscholastic Team at DMLC:

The April 1967 edition of *Tower Topics* noted that 1966-67 was the first season of interscholastic play. The Luther Lancerettes played—and lost—three basketball games, one against Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter and two against Pillsbury Bible College in Owatonna. Marilyn Hilleman, PE instructor, coached the team of 16, and **Sue Post DMLC '71** and **Nancy Just Haferman DMLC '69** were captains. Spectator buses traveled to both away games.

What *Tower Topics* doesn't mention is that the team played by the women's rules: Six players were allowed on the court,



The 1967 Luther Lancerettes

with the three forwards staying in the forecourt, and three guards in the backcourt. Only forwards were allowed to shoot, and players could only dribble the ball twice before shooting or passing.

In 1970, the first year under Coach Sue Post, the women switched to the five-person men's style of play and finished the season 8-1.

First Women's Athletic Association in Minnesota:



DMLC was instrumental in forming the Minnesota Women's Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MWIAA), which boasted 21 member schools, under the leadership of DMLC's athletic director, **Professor Emeritus Gary Dallmann DMLC '66** (pictured left).



Professor Emerita Barb Leopold DMLC '74 (pictured left), who was both a DMLC athlete and, upon her graduation, a DMLC professor coach, recounted that AD Dallmann would conduct the in-person scheduling meetings by drawing lots. The entire year's schedule—volleyball, basketball, and softball—took just

about four hours to complete. "Dallmann was ahead of the game," said Leopold. "He saw the rise of women's sports on the horizon, which led him to develop and grow women's athletics at DMLC."

First Women's State Basketball Tournament:

DMLC hosted the first women's Minnesota state basketball tournament ever, on March 9-10, 1972, the year Title IX was signed. The tournament was held under the aegis of both the MWIAA and the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), which governed women's athletics before the NCAA took over a decade later.

Four teams participated in the inaugural tournament: the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota-Duluth, Mankato State College, and DMLC. DMLC had the deepest roster, with 14 players. All the coaches, game officials, and referees were women. The lone male on the program was the announcer.



Mark Cares
NWC 1973
Monroe MI



Karla Opperman
MLC 2013
North Branch MI



Andrew Carter
MLC 2018
Round Rock TX



Monica Rehberger
MLC 2018
Appleton WI

DMLC lost the championship game that year. But two years later the Lancerettes won first place in state in both basketball and softball.

Barb Leopold, **Gloria Lohmiller Polfer** DMLC '74, **Carol Bauer Stuebs** DMLC '74, **Kathy Deines Dittrich** DMLC '74, and **Gayle Gilmore Bauer** DMLC '73 were some of the mainstays of those first teams.

Coach Leopold Remembers: Barb Leopold was a member of several MWIAA championship basketball teams, both as a player and a coach. She was also a member of DMLC's inaugural softball team in 1971.

Leopold notes that their uniforms in the early years were a bit ragtag. The women would use the same uniforms for volleyball and basketball, while in softball, short-sleeve

got a boost: They were allowed to borrow the men's warmup jerseys.

Those years were filled with successes on the basketball court. Teams would play 15-16 games each season—and more if they continued to win. One of Leopold's most vivid memories is beating the University of Minnesota Gophers in basketball at "The Barn." Another is being invited twice to play a semi-pro team in Iowa sponsored by *Look* magazine.

When she was assigned to DMLC as a PE professor and coach, she didn't realize that she would also be the bus and van driver, the trainer, the laundry attendant, and the game manager. But that's how it was in women's sports.

Coach Leopold notes one more idiosyncratic custom. According to protocol in those years, the home team would

In 2019, Leopold received the National Association of Girls and Women in Sports Day Award of Special Merit for her contribution to women's sports in Minnesota.

T-shirts were complemented by unmatched shorts and cutoff jeans—and no helmets. She particularly remembers her basketball shorts: tie-dyed, with a zipper up the side. When the 1974 state championship basketball team traveled to South Dakota for the regional tournament, though, their look

supply cookies or bars for an after-game social event. She says they got to know their competitors on a different level. She misses that part of the early game. The sport took on an entirely new dimension as women's athletics became more competitive.

Fifty Years: When Title IX was signed in 1972, it marked the beginning of a new era in women's educational opportunities, including athletics. But thanks to people like Gary Dallmann and Barb Leopold, the DMLC women's athletic program was already off and running.

For many years now, MLC has offered eight women's sports—the same number as the men: volleyball, soccer, cross country, basketball, softball, tennis, track, and golf.

The athletes work hard. The competition is fierce. And no bars or cookies are served.

Special thanks to contributing writer, Professor Larry Czer DMLC '79, and to Professor Rebecca Cox DMLC '89, Senior Woman Administrator, who interviewed Coach Barb Leopold.



The 1972 State Tournament team



Frederick Panning
DMLC 1958
Gibbon MN



Rachel Nass
MLC 2008
Racine WI



Donald Habeck
DMLC 1968
Fond du Lac WI



Constance Lake
DMLC 1993
St. Joseph MI

Focus On *Donors*

From Harvest to Harvest

Don and Ruby Guhlke have harvested a lot of corn and soybeans on their Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, farm over the years. And in recent years, they've turned their eyes to another harvest—the one Jesus spoke about in Matthew 9:37: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”

Those harvest laborers include the men and women training to be pastors, teachers, and staff ministers at Martin Luther College. The Guhlkes' gifts to MLC are helping these students every day.

Don himself was not quite able to finish college. Halfway through his senior year, his 54-year-old father died of a heart attack, and all eyes turned to Don to take over the family farm. “That’s okay, though,” he says, “because I knew I was going to be a farmer one day. This just made it happen a little sooner.”

Don raised dairy cows for 20 years, and then sold the cows and concentrated on corn and soybeans for another 20 years. For the last nine years, he’s been renting his land to other farmers.

Not finishing college certainly hasn’t hurt him, at least in the math department. “I’m a numbers man,” he says. “I did well



The Guhlke farm in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota



on the farm. I didn’t spend like crazy. I saved. I invested. And now I’m able to give to others.”

He and Ruby have given several major gifts to the college, including donation of assets—in their case, farm machinery.

Don says, “We like to give to MLC because our great-nephew **Adam Dahle** (*St. Paul-Algoma WI*) attends here. He’s going to be a great pastor. I can’t wait to hear his first sermon!”

Indeed, MLC students have found a special place in Don and Ruby’s hearts. Most often they dedicate their gifts to student financial assistance. MLC Day—May 3 this year—is an annual giving day for them. They’re happy to support the matching funds for the Congregational Partner Grant Program on that day every year.

Resource Development Counselor **Beth Scharf** *MLC '00* enjoys working with the Guhlkes. “When you talk to Don and Ruby, you immediately sense what generous people they are. They assist their families and their church, and they’ve kept ministry at the heart of their legacy giving through the WELS Foundation. Through their home congregation in Sleepy Eye, they personally know the impact and importance of our WELS called workers. Now, having a great-nephew at MLC



Nelson Zimmermann
DMLC 1963
Glendale AZ



Heidi Nielsen
MLC 2018
Golden Valley MN



Timothy Zunker
DMLC 1993
Athens WI



Jeanne Gaulke
DMLC 1958
Garden City KS



training for the ministry, the support of our students hits home to them even more.”

Recently, Don learned of another connection to this campus. His church record revealed that he was baptized by Pastor Edmund Bliefernicht, who was filling a vacancy at St. John-Sleepy Eye when Don was born. *Pastor* Bliefernicht was also *President* Bliefernicht at Dr. Martin Luther College, 15 miles away.



Pastor Edmund Bliefernicht served Dr. Martin Luther College for nearly 40 years (1908-1947), 15 of those as president (1920-1935). During his tenure, he also filled a vacancy at St. John-Sleepy Eye MN, where he baptized a baby boy named Donald Guhlke.

Don and Ruby are givers. They give to the synod, to their church, to schools, to their family. “I especially like being able to help my grandkids,” Don says.

And they give in many different ways. In fact, they’ve helped other farmers learn about all the best ways to give. “Many of these gifts help us too,” Don says. “The tax-qualified donations—those help the college *and* us.”

While Don talks about the charitable giving that has become so important to him in his retirement, he also mentions his health issues. He’s had a fair share of obstacles—including heart attacks, triple-bypass surgery, and serious spinal issues. But “somehow God always lined things up so that I could get the surgery or whatever I needed,” he says.

“Miracle after miracle!” Ruby adds.

Don chuckles. “Yeah, God must want me around for something.”

Being here for their family. Serving their church and synod. Lending financial assistance to St. John-Sleepy Eye, to the WELS Foundation, and to Martin Luther College. Yes, that’s definitely “something.”

That’s another Guhlke harvest to celebrate.

Ways to Give to MLC

Individual Retirement Account (IRA):

Wonderful tax benefits for making gifts from your IRA if you are 70.5 years old or better! MLC can also be named as a beneficiary of your IRA or other qualified retirement plan.

Charitable gift annuity:

Just one of several giving options that also provide you with an income stream—and significant tax savings.

Donation of assets:

Gifting property, farm equipment, grain, and other commodities benefits us while also providing you with advantageous charitable deductions.

Life Insurance Beneficiary:

MLC can be named as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy.

Interested in learning more about any of these options?

Please contact us!

Mark Maurice

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

Beth Scharf

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

WELS Ministry of Christian Giving

mcg@wels.net
800.827.5482

The *WELS Foundation* helps God’s people to be faithful and generous stewards. MLC partners with them to assist in completing various types of charitable gifts that can benefit you and Martin Luther College.



Luke Wolfgramm
NWC 1993
Manitowoc WI



Monica Schmitzer
DMLC 1983
Frankenmuth MI



Kurt Troge
DMLC 1973
Appleton WI



Dawn Nollmeyer
DMLC 1988
Spokane WA

Focus On *Scholarships*

THE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS SCHOLARSHIP



This scholarship was established in 2022 by friends and fellow Martin Luther College classmates of **Aaron Strong** MLC '04, WLS '08.

Rev. Aaron Strong (1982-2022) faithfully served his Savior as a church planter and parish pastor for 14 years before receiving his crown of life on October 12, 2022.

After his graduation from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Strong established a new home mission, Shepherd of the Hills-Las Vegas, serving there from 2008 to 2015. From 2015 to the day he entered heaven, he served as an associate pastor at Grace-Milwaukee. He served with joy and enthusiasm, whether leading the Point of Grace campus ministry, serving at Grace in the Ward (Milwaukee's Third Ward district), or ministering in any number of ways at Grace's downtown campus and community. It brought him great joy to work among God's people, pursuing God's mission to share the love of Jesus one heart and home at a time. He was also an excellent singer and instrumentalist and used those gifts to edify God's people.

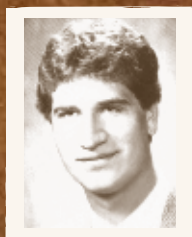
The friends establishing this scholarship met at MLC in August 2000 as they began their training to be called workers. They give thanks to God and honor Aaron with these words:

"We will always remember Aaron's joy for our Savior and his love for us all. Aaron was a down-to-earth and loving friend, son, brother, husband to **Abbie (nee Henke, MLC '04)**, and father to Hannah and Elijah. God blessed him with the ability to connect with anyone who crossed his path. His easygoing smile, his good-natured personality, the sparkle in his eyes, and his whole-hearted laughter created instant relationships. And through these relationships, he shared Jesus.

"Aaron always put others first. Even in his untimely death by a reckless driver, much of his tissue—skin, corneas, ligaments, etc.—was donated to save others.

"We want to honor the lifetime that Aaron spent joyfully and fully serving our loving, omniscient, and all-powerful Savior. Aaron was strong and courageous. We want the recipients of the Strong and Courageous Scholarship to have those qualities as well. As God told Joshua (1:9), 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.'"

Scholarship recipients are MLC sophomore, junior, and senior preseminary and education majors who apply for the scholarship and who demonstrate financial need. The recipients, furthermore, will be students who display interest and gifts in evangelism and who demonstrate the joy of serving through active participation in campus life and in their home congregations.



Kevin Westra
NWC 1988
Beaver Dam WI



Anneliese Spier
MLC 2003
Titusville FL



Matthew Doeblner
NWC 1993
Lindenhurst IL



Carolyn Hunt
MLC 2018
Cary NC

JIM UNKE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

You met the goal—and more!



MLC supporters honored the legacy of **Jim Unke DMLC '83** (*pictured*), our former professor, coach, and athletic director, with gifts to a new memorial scholarship fund.

To honor Jim's 25 years of service to MLC, the scholarship committee wanted to raise \$25,000 in 25 days. When the gifts were tallied, though, donors had given \$44,000!

Gospel ministry was of paramount importance to Jim, and this fund will assist students pursuing that worthy vocation. To read more about Jim and his years of service to God's people, we direct you to the article in our last issue of *MLC InFocus* at mlc-wels.edu/jim-unke.

Pictured above: **Head Men's Basketball Coach Greg Holzhrueter MLC '10**, scholarship committee chair; **MLC VP Scott Schmudlach DMLC '85**, Jim's brother-in-law; **Julie Schmudlach DMLC '86**, Jim's sister; **MLC Admissions Counselor Lori Unke DMLC '84**, Jim's wife; Dan Cline, scholarship committee member; MLC VP Mark Maurice. Not pictured: scholarship committee members **Galen Holzhrueter MLC '14**, **Ryan Kolander MLC '10**, and **Jay Wendland MLC '04**.

Watch this video honoring Jim's legacy and introducing the scholarship.



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
mccg@wels.net
800.827.5482



John Melke
NWC 1988
Charlevoix MI



Katherine Radsek
MLC 1998
Yorkville IL



Marcus Birkholz
NWC 1968
Mankato MN



Emile Burgess
MLC 2003
Sacramento CA

MLCAA President Perspectives

MLC is blessed to have alumni who care deeply about their college. They serve as ambassadors for ministry in their classrooms and congregations across the country. Some take on additional tasks, including service on the MLC Alumni Association's Board of Directors.

Special thanks to three board members (*pictured*) who completed their term of service in 2022:

Jason Oakland MLC '00, **Ben Priebe** MLC '04, and **John Boggs** NWC '93.

After serving on the board for eight years (including the last four as president), **Jason Oakland** shared these thoughts: "One highlight during my time on the board has been watching the group grow and mature as an organization to the point of taking on a major campaign like 'Fishers of Men.' MLCAA is committed to tuition assistance with an endowed scholarship that will provide benefits in perpetuity. I also appreciate that 100% of every gift given goes to MLC—a huge blessing and a great way for alumni to support MLC."



Oakland's successor is **Phil Hunter** MLC '11 (*pictured left*). This incoming president is also eager to advance the association's impact on our beloved school and its students: "MLC alumni are spread far and wide, but we're united by our faith and our deep appreciation for MLC. I love that our MLC Alumni Association can fund campus projects and scholarships, and I'm excited to get even more alumni engaged with our college of ministry."

Do you know a graduate who is passionate about MLC and may be interested in serving on the MLCAA Board of Directors? Nominate them at bit.ly/MLCAA_Bd.



Jeff Gunn
NWC 1978
Phoenix AZ



Kathleen Schwartz
DMLC 1978
Kenosha WI



Jonathan Balge
NWC 1983
Mequon WI



Lynn Heschke
MLC 2008
Waupaca WI



Majestic Minnesota Alumni Tour

W/ELS members are invited to join the MLC Alumni Association's July 8-20 tour to Majestic Minnesota. Lord willing, this year's tour will take us to an oft-overlooked Midwest destination filled with fabulous flora, fauna, and waterfalls. Tour highlights include . . .

- WELS worship, daily devotions, and fellowship with Christian friends
- Lakefront lodging
- Ten nights on the shores of Lake Bemidji, Shagawa Lake, and Lake Superior
- Spectacular state and national parks—Itasca, Split Rock, Grand Portage, Gooseberry Falls, Temperance River, Voyageurs, Isle Royale
- Wonderful wildlife sanctuaries
- National Eagle Center, International Wolf Center, National Bear Center, Como Park Zoo
- Gorgeous gardens and waterfront walks
- Lake Harriet, Como Conservatory, Munsinger Gardens, Leif Erikson Park, Duluth Lakewalk
- Art and architecture—Minneapolis Institute of Art, Cathedral of St. Paul, Naniboujou Lodge
- History and heritage
- State Capitol, Soudan Mine, Grand Portage, Glensheen Mansion
- Walleye dinner, wild rice soup, Cossetta's Pizza, Betty's Pies, and lefse but no lutefisk!
- Temperate temperatures with average highs in the 70s and lows in the 50s

Learn more and register online at mlc-wels.edu/alumni/tours/ or contact **Steve Balza** at 507.217.1731 or alumni@mlc-wels.edu).

Thank you, Alumni!

The student body is grateful for two recent gifts from the MLC Alumni Association.



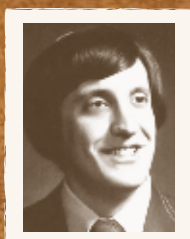
Copies of the new *Christian Worship: Psalter* were purchased for use in worship, choir, and classroom capacities.

Two Teqtables were also provided for student recreational use in the Betty Kohn fieldhouse and Luther Student Center gym stage. Teqsports are catching on around the globe. Think ping pong with a soccer ball or volleyball.



In addition, another \$10,000+ was received for the Alumni Scholarship Fund to support our students.

A heartfelt thank you to the many alumni who contributed to these projects!



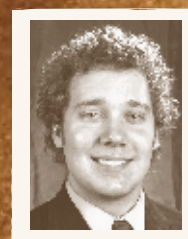
Mark Schulz
NWC 1978
Saginaw MI



Emily Swogger
MLC 2013
Eureka Springs AR



Samuel Jeske
MLC 2013
Milwaukee



Nathan Zastrow
MLC 2008
Mayville WI

The Road Well-Traveled

2023 MLC Wind Symphony Tour Schedule



Sun, May 14	St. Paul LC-North Mankato MN 8:00/10:30 am worship
	St. Croix LA-West St. Paul MN 7:00 pm concert
Mon, May 15	Luther HS-Onalaska WI 7:00 pm concert
Tue, May 16	Manitowoc LHS-Manitowoc WI 7:00 pm concert
Wed, May 17	Winnebago LA-Fond du Lac WI 7:00 pm concert
Thu, May 18	Westside Christian-Middleton WI TBD - demo concert
	St. John LC-Baraboo WI 6:30 pm concert
Fri, May 19	St. John LS-Baraboo WI 9:00 am demo concert



MLC Day is May 3!

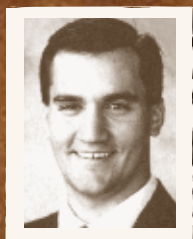
On this special day, we encourage friends of MLC across the globe to support the training of called workers by praying, sharing, and giving.

We'll also provide downloadable *Project Elijah* recruitment materials for teachers to use in their classrooms that whole week.

We're so thankful for your support, and we can't wait to celebrate MLC Day 2023!



mlcday.com



Alan Meihak
MLC 1998
Kasson MN



Kathryn Werner
DMLC 1983
South Shore SD



Samuel Lor
MLC 2018
Kansas City KS



Hedy Weiss
DMLC 1968
Neosho WI

Alumni Commencement Dinner

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2023 | CAFETERIA CONFERENCE CENTER

Alumni and friends are invited to join us for our annual dinner gathering on Friday, May 12. Your RSVP is free and saves your seat for the fellowship and presentations. Pay just \$5 upon arrival (cash or check to MLC) to enjoy a delicious cafeteria meal. In addition to the meal, you'll have time to visit with old friends, meet other alumni, and hear presentations on MLC programs and progress.

This year, any graduate from 1973 or earlier who RSVPs before May 9 will be our guest (no payment needed).

Registration and social hour kick off at 4:00 in the LSC Cafeteria Conference Center, with dinner and presentations to follow. The event will conclude in time to attend the 7:00 concert.

ECLC Director **Melissa Berg** MLC '03 will present "Feed My Lambs." VP for Enrollment Management **Ted Klug** MLC '97 will present "The Harvest Is Plentiful." And VP for Academics **Jeff Wiechman** DMLC '92 will present "The 411 on J-Term."

The Alumni Dinner capacity is limited, and RSVP is required. RSVP online at bit.ly/23Dinner or contact Steve Balza in the Alumni Office at 507.217.1731 or alumni@mlc-wels.edu to reserve your spot. For more information, visit the website at bit.ly/MLCAlumniDinner.



Then come back Saturday for the Commencement Service at 10:00 and the Call Service at 2:30, both in the gym. All are welcome, but seating is limited, so please arrive early.



Commencement Honors Recital

Friday, May 12 | 4:00 pm | Chapel of the Christ

Commencement Concert

Friday, May 12 | 7:00 pm
Wittenberg Center Auditorium

New Virtual Tour

Whether you've never been to campus . . . or you want to take a trip down memory lane . . . you'll love our new 360-degree virtual tour, created by **Luke Meihack** MLC '22 (pictured). Be sure to share it with prospective students too! mlc-wels.edu/admissions/virtual-tour



Justin Shrum
MLC 2013
Fresno CA



Janet Sievert
DMLC 1963
Fort Atkinson WI



Douglas Engelbrecht
NWC 1968
Watertown WI



Corinn Pyscher
MLC 2008
Saginaw MI

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

Randy Cox (assistant AD) is serving his second year on the Midwest Regional Advisory Committee for NCAA D3 Baseball.

Professor Rachel Feld MLC '06 (director, Academic Computing & Online Learning) served on the WELS School Accreditation team for Eastside-Madison WI in November.

Michelle Gartner DMLC '93 (event coordinator) served as the conference coordinator for the WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership in Chicago in January.

Laurie Gauger-Hested DMLC '87 (writer/editor) published a devotion on "Where Shepherds Lately Kneel" for the fall 2022 issue of *InTempo*, a newsletter of the Association for Lutheran Church Musicians. And a Christmas anthem for which she wrote the text, "The Long, Low Moan of Midnight," was premiered by the Schubert Club in St. Paul in December.

Professor Emeritus James Grunwald DMLC '78 attended the meeting of the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPA) in Orlando FL in January as a WELS School Accreditation representative. Grunwald also serves NCPA as the vice-chair of the Commission on IT and Distance Learning.



Professor Grace Hennig DMLC '89 (music) saw publication of her article "Sing the Psalms! Psalm 118" in *InTempo*, a newsletter of the Association for Lutheran Church Musicians. This is the first in a series of articles on psalmody in Lutheran worship.

Professor Paul Koelpin NWC '85, WLS '90 (history & theology) presented "The Powerful Word," a Bible class series on Luther and the Reformation, at St. Paul-North Mankato MN.

Dr. Nichole LaGrow (director, Nontraditional Education Program) co-facilitated a roundtable discussion on performing online teaching assessments for the Midwestern Higher Education Compact in January.

Professor Joel Pless WLS '86 (adjunct, Graduate Studies) completed six years of service to the Lutheran Historical Conference Board of Directors and was permanently appointed a commissioner to direct the National Registry of Historic Lutheran Places.

Professor Scott Schmudlach DMLC '85 (VP for Administration) serves on the WELS Religion Curriculum Task Force.



Professor Luke Thompson MLC '09, WLS '13 (theology) published an article on the hymn he co-wrote with **Kent Reeder** MLC '09, WLS '13, "Christ Begins," in the January issue of *Forward in Christ*.

Professor Emeritus Frederick Wulff DMLC '64 self-published his 12th book, *Travels with Fred with Emphasis on Travel Study Tours of DMLC and Martin Luther College*.

Presenting History

Professor Peter Baganz DMLC '87 (history & social science) led a group of MLC students in archival research of local history. On February 9, the students presented their research to a standing-room-only crowd at the Brown County Historical Society in New Ulm. The researchers (pictured with Professor Baganz) were **Joel Holz** (*Beautiful Savior-Clarksville TN*), **Noah Worster** (*Bethel-York NE*), and **Emma Holzen** (*Tree of Life-Cary NC*). Their research topics included 19th-century farming in Brown County, the 1881 New Ulm tornado, Brown County's first hospital, the building of the New Ulm Armory, and the founding of Dr. Martin Luther College.



EVENT*	DATE	PROFESSOR	PRESENTATION
Dakota-Montana District Teachers' Conference	Jun '22	Professor Alan Uher	"Engaging the Disengaged"
St. Paul LS-Lake Mills WI inservice	Jun '22	Professor Alan Uher	"Supervisory Practices"
Nebraska District Teachers' Conference	Jul '22	Dr. Kari Munte	"Developing Expert Learners: Universal Design for Learning"
Minnesota District Teachers' Conference	Oct '22	Professor Kelli Green	"Setting Up the Learning Brain for Success"
Nebraska & Dakota-Montana District Teachers' Conference	Oct '22	Professor Kelli Green	"Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports for Private School Professionals"
Wisconsin State Lutheran Teachers' Conference	Oct '22	Professor Kelli Green Professor Kelli Green	"Special Education in Our Private Schools" "Differentiation for Real Classrooms"
Wisconsin Lutheran College class presentation		Professor Rachel Feld	"Technology and Early Childhood Education"
Arizona-California District Teachers' Conference	Nov '22	Professor Alan Uher Professor Alan Uher	"Intentionalizing God's Word in Every Subject" (keynote) "Hosting a Teacher Candidate in Your Classroom"
St. John LS-Milwaukee inservice	Dec '22	Professor Kelli Green	"Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports for Private School Professionals"
National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Annual Conference-Philadelphia	Dec '22	Dr. Kari Munte	"Kinesthetic Social Studies for Students with Disabilities"
St. Peter/St. Paul-Fond du Lac WI inservice	Dec '22	Dr. Kari Munte	"Teaching Social Studies: Unpacking the Social Studies Curriculum & Instruction"
WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership	Jan '23	Professor David Scharf Professor David Scharf Professor Luke Thompson	"Lutheran Leadership: What It Is and Why It's Important" (keynote) "Leadership Matters: How to Identify and Develop Leaders to Multiply Ministry" (breakout) "Thinking Differently"
Mankato Awake & Alive Conference	Jan '23	Professor Luke Thompson	"The Story You Live, the Difference It Makes"
Northern Wisconsin District Teachers' Conference	Feb '23	Dr. Jon Roux	"Thyme to Spice Up Your Grammar Instruction"
Western Wisconsin District Teachers' Conference	Feb '23	Dr. Jon Roux Professor Kelli Green Professor Kelli Green	"Children's Literature and the World of Music" "Understanding Basic Psychological Processes/ Executive Skills" "Empowering Students with ADHD"
Lakeshore Lutheran Principals' Conference-Manitowoc LHS	Feb '23	Dr. John Meyer	"Lutheran Principals for the 21st Century"
Men of His Word Conference-Kenosha WI	Feb '23	Professor Luke Thompson	"Being a Christian Man in a World Gone Crazy"
Metro Milwaukee Teachers' Conference	Mar '23	Dr. Jon Roux & Dr. Cindy Whaley Dr. Cindy Whaley Dr. Jon Roux	"What's Up with the Sciences of Reading?" (keynote) "Primary Reading Instruction" (sectional) "Middle/Upper Reading Instruction" (sectional)
New York College Learning Skills Association Annual Conference	Mar '23	Dr. Nichole LaGrow	"When the Well Runs Dry: Reaffirming the Importance of Self-Care"

*Other presentations given by MLC professors in 2022-2023 have been published in past issues.

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES



Four MLC professors have led the trip to the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory in Jamaica: **Professor Daniel Fenske** DMLC '87, **Dr. Roger Klockziem** DMLC '66, **Dr. Paul Boehlke** DMLC '61, and **Dr. Lawrence Olson** NWC '79, WLS '83. They've taught the course jointly with Wisconsin Lutheran College since 1995.

25+ Years of Marine Ecology in Jamaica

In January, the University of the West Indies in Jamaica recognized Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran College for their 25+ years of support of the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory.

Since 1995, MLC and WLC have jointly offered the course Marine Ecology at the laboratory, which is part of the University of the West Indies' Centre for Marine Biology and one of the premier marine biology research institutions in the Caribbean. Our course was one of the first undergraduate courses at the lab.

Dr. Lawrence Olson (pictured, right) has been an instructor on every trip, leading chapel and delivering lectures on the history and culture of Jamaica. He notes that one aspect of our course sets it apart from other university courses: Students study marine life within the context of the social ecology of the Jamaican people. They do ethnographic interviews with Jamaicans to see how they interact with their environment and how they view ecological issues.

"Those conversations," says Olson, "have a profound impact on the way students view their place in the mosaic of humanity."

The course will continue to be offered in MLC's new January term, which will be inaugurated in January 2025.



Jayden Koehler (St. Paul-Stevensville MI, pictured) noted the amazing creatures students saw in their snorkeling adventures: colorful eels, octopi, stingrays, turtles, starfish, and much more. But the highlight, she says, was being "in a place as amazing as Jamaica, studying God's creation with those of a common faith. It was truly one of the coolest things I have ever done."

Meet Your New Governing Board Members



Paul Kelm DMLC '86 is the vice principal and fourth grade teacher at St. John-Redwood Falls MN. He says he feels honored and humbled to serve as a new member of the MLC Governing Board.

As he helps lead MLC into the future, he is enthusiastic about the college's mission and purpose. "I'm very excited," he says, "that at MLC our synod's pastors, teachers, and staff ministers are being trained right now to serve him and their fellow man. I'm also excited to learn of MLC's plans for growth and for improvements that will help prepare workers for the next era of Christian education and church growth."



Timothy Luetzow is a member of St. Matthew-Oconomowoc WI and a semi-retired construction and business professional.

He considers it an honor to serve on the MLC Governing Board. "Many of the people who had the greatest influence on my life were—and still are—called workers.

It is an honor to be able to serve so that others can have and/or provide that same experience."

Observing the facilities and grounds with his builder's eye, he says, "It is a beautiful campus with some needed updates planned. It will be exciting to see those plans unfold as we encourage more people of all ages to consider a career in the ministry."



Peter Prange NWC '94, WLS '98 is lead pastor at New Life-Kenosha WI (south campus) and school pastor for Kenosha Lutheran Academy School.

He says, "I'm humbled by the opportunity to serve as the Southeastern Wisconsin District's representative to the MLC

Board, especially at a time when the worldwide harvest is so plentiful, but the workers remain few. Humanly speaking, the mission and future of Martin Luther College and our dear synod are inextricably linked to one another, so service on this board means service to the synod I love."

Noting MLC's strategic plan, **Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross**, he says, "I can see the efforts being made to strive for excellence under the cross. Entrusting MLC's future in faith to Jesus' hands under the cross will always remain a no-lose proposition because he lives."



Pursuing Excellence
UNDER THE CROSS



Steven Wasser NWC '92 is a member of Mount Olive-Appleton WI and a regional sales agronomist for Clesens, Inc.

He cites three reasons he is excited to serve on MLC's Governing Board: "First, because I am a graduate of one of MLC's

predecessor colleges, Northwestern College; second, because two of my daughters graduated from MLC; and third, because the future of the WELS and its success are in the hands of all the future graduates from MLC."

Although the future is ultimately in God's hands, he says, "It is up to us as believers to plan and prepare for this future. That is what MLC is all about, and I am privileged to be a part of this!"



Marley Zahn
DMLC 1963
New Ulm MN



Ronald Uhlhorn
NWC 1958
Darfur MN



Mara Thompson
DMLC 1973
Davenport IA



Philip Schupmann
NWC 1973
Moline IL

Passing the Mantle

You are Elijahs! Pastors, teachers, staff ministers, ministers of the gospel of all kinds, as you share the Word of God, you are doing the work of Elijah. And somewhere in your circle of influence is an Elisha, a young person who will take up the mantle of gospel ministry from you (2 Kings 2). Even now, they are watching you, wanting to imitate you, and waiting for a word of encouragement from you.

When we talk to MLC students about their journeys here, they almost always mention an Elijah, someone who exemplified joyful ministry and encouraged them to consider ministry. Here are a few:



Maya Price MLC '25
(St. Peter-Schofield WI)

HER ELIJAHS:

Jarred Beduze
MLC '17, '22

Shannon Schmidt

“Coach Schmidt (pictured with Maya) is an image of what I knew I wanted to be when I grew up: a coach, teacher, and mother.

“Mr. Beduze was my biggest influencer. He made appointments for me to meet with advisors at MLC. He set me up with opportunities to teach at a childcare center. And he constantly reminded me that I would be a great fit for MLC. I’m thankful for everyone at Northland LHS, and I want to encourage more people to pursue lifelong ministry—just like they did for me. MLC is a great place to be!”



Elena Brauer MLC '26
(Holy Trinity-Des Moines WA)

HER ELIJAH:

Chris Denney
MLC '06

“Mr. Denney (pictured with Elena) was an influential coach for me. He made basketball fun with his jovial personality and joking around during practice. At the same time, he kept things serious when needed and always worked to improve our team. He would get excited with us in our victories, and it was obvious that he believed in us. All this impacted me and made me want to teach and possibly be a coach just like him.

“His impact on me made me want to come here and have the same impact on other kids in the future, and maybe even be the reason why they come to MLC someday.”

Who Were Their Elijahs?

Will Shanks (St. Peter-Schofield WI): ➡ **Levi Dunsmoor** MLC '12 (his teacher at St. Peter-Schofield WI)

Carissa Avery (Christ Our Redeemer-Aurora CO): ➡ **Professor Rachel Feld** MLC '06 (her teacher at Bethany-Kenosha WI)

Joe Engel (St. John-Red Wing MN): ➡ **Pastor Jon Enter** MLC '00, WLS '04 (his teacher at SCLA)

Ruby Leins (Our Savior-Brookings SD): ➡ **Anna Swanson** MLC '19 (her teacher at GPLHS)

Kay Prigge (Faith-Rising City NE): ➡ **Phil Stern** MLC '86 (her teacher at Trinity-Waco NE)



K-8 teachers, watch for 2023 **Project Elijah** recruitment resources. We've created four days of easy-to-use devotions and activities to help your students think about becoming a pastor, teacher, or staff minister. We're asking you to be Elijah and “pass the mantle” to each Elisha in your classroom.

We recommend that you use them the week of MLC Day, which is Wednesday, May 3. But they will work anytime!