

# INF OCUS

MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

SPRING 2025

## In This Issue . . .

- Preparing Your Future Pastors
- Future Teachers Get “Book Smart”
- New Associate Degree Approved
- Meet Our Internationals



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On the cover:

Senior **Jon Holtz** preaches for evening chapel.

# “MLC Recognized by Wall Street Journal as Shrewdest College in the Country!”



By MLC President Rich Gurgel NWC '81, WLS '86

No, that headline isn't real. Yes, in 2024 the *Wall Street Journal* listed MLC as the #1 college/university in the country for career preparation. But there's no shrewdness listing.

Would we strive to top that list if it did exist? Jesus does urge us in that direction.

In a shocking turn in one of Jesus' parables, a dishonest steward receives commendation from his defrauded master “because he had acted shrewdly” (Luke 16:8). Neither the master (nor Jesus) commends dishonesty. The master commends his servant's focused use of temporary resources to reach his goal of being welcomed into debtors' homes (Luke 16:4).

Then comes a second shocker. Jesus looks each of us in the eye and speaks these words: “For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings” (Luke 16:8-9).

There it is! Jesus longs for us “people of the light” to prove ourselves as shrewd as those “people of this world.” And we get to do that without frantic fear—and for a greater purpose.

We don't act in fear as if only our shrewdness ensures that our needs are met. That's how pagans operate (Matthew 6:32). Our Father gives us everything we need—since he's already given us Jesus (Romans 8:32).

And we act shrewdly with a far greater purpose. The world pursues shrewdness to enhance temporal bottom lines. We pursue shrewdness with “worldly wealth” to “gain friends” who in thanks to God will be a heavenly welcoming team!

Now, back to that imagined headline. This is a very challenging time for higher education in our country. About one college a week closes its doors. In that setting, MLC seeks, under God's blessing, to be A-list shrewd in handling “worldly wealth.” We aren't fearful that our doors will close—God provides us with synodical support and many generous individual donors. Instead, we seek top-level shrewdness to help us raise up a new generation of messengers who will be gaining friends for heaven!

That's why, in 2024, in partnership with synod leaders, we engaged experienced higher education consultants to analyze where we can be shrewder in how we operate as a college. Now, in 2025, we are implementing those recommendations, which will lead to stronger fiscal stability and operational efficiency—not primarily for a better bottom line, but for a mission that matters forever.

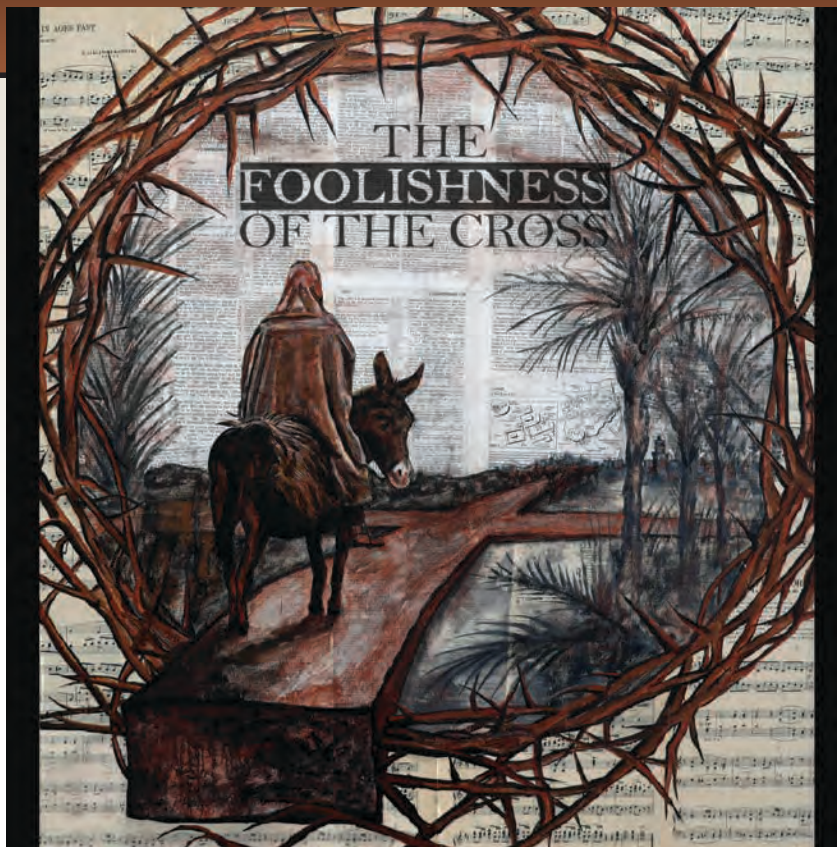
So, pray for God's blessings as MLC embarks on an aggressive effort to be “the shrewdest college in the country.” The *Wall Street Journal* may never notice. Heaven's welcome party will.

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 men and women to meet the public ministry needs of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.





## *Our Gift to You:* **Holy Week Devotions**

*The Foolishness of the Cross* is the newest digital devotion book we've created for you. It contains a devotion for each day of Holy Week, April 13-20, written by MLC faculty.

The cross of Christ is the setting for the greatest reversal in history—an altar of humiliation transformed into the ultimate stage and revelation of the King of kings. To the world, it seems absurd that God would save through weakness, suffering, and death. Yet believers come face to face with God in all his power, providential might, and glory nowhere as clearly as at the cross.

These devotions will help us see how the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

You can access the devotions conveniently in digital formats, beginning April 11. Scan the QR code, and then select whether you'd like to read them online in flipbook form and/or receive them as daily emails from us. Audio recordings of each devotion, as read by the authors, will also be available.



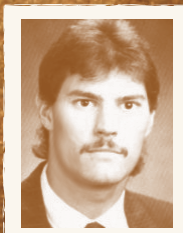
*We thank Michael Wiechmann, art instructor at Minnesota Valley LHS, for creating our thought-provoking image.*

## **MLC Sundays**

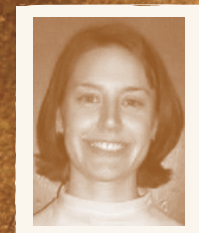
Could one of our professors visit your congregation for an MLC Sunday?

Our profs love to join parish pastors for a special Sunday where we focus on the gospel of Jesus and how MLC is training future pastors, teachers, and staff ministers to share that gospel. We can preach, lead Bible class, and give presentations on what's new at the college. Interested? Please contact Allison Bovee at [boveeae@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:boveeae@mlc-wels.edu) to request a visit from us!

The alumni photos at the bottom of the pages are from the anniversary classes of MLC, NWC, and DMLC: '60, '65, '70, '75, '80, '85, '90, '95, '00, '05, '10, '15, and '20. Thanks to Copy Editor Heidi Schoof DMLC '86, who provided this random selection of alumni.



**Andrew Pappenfuss**  
DMLC 1990  
Appleton WI



**Hannah Neubauer**  
MLC 2005  
St. Peter MN

# Prepare, Practice, Pray, Preach!

As we prepare your future pastors, they often tell us they're excited about their future vocation, but their knees get a little shaky when they consider stepping into that pulpit.

We know they'll get lots of preaching practice at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, but we want to give them a positive start here too. So they preach for evening chapel at MLC, and they prepare for it in a course with Dr. Mark Paustian called Advanced Christian Rhetoric.

We asked three preseminary students to tell us about this course—and to share their thoughts with prospective students who might be a little terrified about preaching too.

*If you know a high schooler or second-career gentleman who might be encouraged by this article, please pass it on!*



**Jon Holtz**  
(St. Paul-Appleton WI)

**He gets it:** When I was in high school trying to decide if I wanted to go to MLC, preaching was the thing I was worried about the most. So if you're in a similar spot—don't worry about it! Seriously, all of us were in the same boat at some point or another. Whether it's your hometown pastor, your favorite preacher, a random MLC senior, or maybe even the preaching professor—I'd be willing to bet they all had quite a bit of nerves when they started preaching. It's normal, and you'll find, in many ways, part of the fun.

**How he prepares:** My general process follows a little phrase we learned in our Advanced Christian Rhetoric (ACR) course taught by Dr. Mark Paustian NWC '84, WLS '88: Study yourself full (hours of digging into the text). Think yourself empty (spend some time thinking and freewriting all this stuff you're absorbing). Then write yourself clear (distill it down and revise it).

**And of course he prays:** Whether you're writing your sermon and asking for help after hitting a roadblock, or your hands are shaking and it's 15 seconds before you stand up in the pulpit, you'll get to experience the simple but undeniable comfort that bringing these things to your God in prayer provides.

**Psst:** I'll also let you in on a little secret: There are actually quite a few pastors on campus (aka guys that know how to write really good sermons). They are great sources to draw from, and they love it when you run stuff by them. I have used them often.

**He loves ACR:** This preaching class is awesome. It takes you step by step through the entire process of writing and delivering a message. This slow, detail-oriented pace not only makes the process a lot less daunting, but leads to a quality product that you're excited to share with people. And it's very collaborative. Everyone works together, bouncing ideas, offering advice, hyping each other up. Through experiences like this, you really start to form a cool bond with your classmates.



**Luke Wegner**  
(St. Marcus-Milwaukee)

**He's a memorizer:** I'm someone who wants to give my best at whatever I do, so I spend a lot of time preparing the message and memorizing it. You never want to forget a line or say the wrong thing, but thankfully, you get to have your message up there with you in case you lose your spot.

**When he's nervous:** I say a prayer. God is always with me, and he has gotten me through every nerve-wracking time of my life so far, so I know I can trust him, no matter the situation.

**What he learned in Advanced Christian Rhetoric:** This class's main goal is to help you write your chapel devotion. The second half of the class is a cool introduction to Christian apologetics.

When you're preparing to write your chapel, you don't just sit down and write about the first thing that comes to mind. Professor Paustian always reminded us to "marry the text," which really means to fall in love with the section of Scripture that you get to preach about. You want to know it so well and so intimately. You want to ask questions about the text and find answers. Then, once you have prayed a lot about it and have filled up your mind with so many ideas, you want to think them through so that they are clear and organized as thoughts. Then, after the lengthy brainstorming process, the actual writing process is so much easier because, at that point, you have already thought so much about it that you have a pretty clear idea of what you want to say.

ACR is wonderful because you and your whole class are each preparing your own unique chapel message on a different section of Scripture. So, while you're all in the process of learning how to write and writing your chapel, you get to meet, brainstorm, share ideas, and even practice your chapel in front of each other, getting feedback on what was good and what to improve. This was such a valuable experience for me. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

It's such an awesome experience and so cool to be coached and mentored by such amazing professors as Professor Paustian at MLC (*pictured with Luke*).

**Why he finds preaching so awesome:** The goal is never about what you want to say, but how you can illuminate what God is trying to say. You get to keep the focus on Jesus. You get to show what he's done for you and proclaim his gospel with joy. (So never forget to smile!) The truth is, you are always preaching to yourself first. In your study of your text, the law cuts your own heart, and the gospel heals it that much more. So later, when you get to preach about the text, you get to take the listeners on a journey similar to the one you yourself have already been on.



**Johannes Bourman**  
(Mt. Lebanon-Milwaukee)

**He knows God does the hard work:** When I was preparing for my devotion, I was wondering, "Who is this going to grab? Who is going to hear this message and let it inspire their lives?" The easy thing to do is put all the pressure on yourself, but in the end, the Word of God will reach the hearts of those who listen. Instead of worrying about yourself and how you'll "perform," keep in mind God is with you and will guide your words.

**How he deals with the fear:** Prayer. No amount of prayer is too much. He will bring you the comfort you need. And look to Scripture for help. If there is one passage that brings you the most comfort, memorize it and embed it in your mind and turn back to it.

**His process:** I first start asking questions. What message is the Holy Spirit sending to me? Why does this message matter to me? Are there any words that stick out? Any phrases? I assume that, even if it is a passage I've heard time and time again, I have more to learn. So I ask questions, and I look for answers.

**What Advanced Christian Rhetoric taught him:** ACR has helped me in understanding the heart of preaching. From reading articles and books, to writing and discussing our devotions in class, Professor Paustian helps guide us as we finally learn how to reiterate and announce Scripture.

**Preaching is hard but so worth it:** Hearing that God's Word reached the hearts of sinners like me . . . knowing that the Word of God satisfied the heavy hearts of sinners . . . It really is something special to work hard to understand a text and then help others understand the text and the blessings God provides.

# BOOK SMART



When teachers-in-training leave Dr. Jon Roux's Children's Literature course, they're "book smart" in all the best ways.

They've become familiar with the most important authors and books for children in grades PK-6. They understand what makes a high-quality book, what books they want in their classroom libraries someday, and what books are great for reading aloud. They've explored and critiqued all of the genres and text structures. They understand how reading improves

## Isaiah Loersch

(St. Paul-Onalaska WI)

2024-25 Emergency Teacher at Immanuel-Hutchinson MN

**What he loved:** Kiddie Lit was an all-time favorite class for me. Every class period, Dr. Roux started by giving us 10 minutes of personal reading time, which was a welcome mental break before diving into actual class. Allowing us that time also helped reinforce the importance of providing students with silent, sustained reading time during the school day. Also, it's pretty incredible how knowledgeable Dr. Roux is on the subject. If you've read a book, he probably has too, and he'd love to talk to you about it!

**What he learned:** Dr. Roux uses this class to expose students to a variety of children's literature. We didn't just read *Knuffle Bunny!* One of my biggest takeaways is how you can utilize children's literature in a classroom to teach. I used several picture books at the beginning of the school year in Hutchinson to facilitate discussions about things in my classroom. Talking out of turn, being kind to others, and putting forth our best effort were all conversations that began with reading a picture book.

**His favorite project:** The final project for the class was a readers' theater performance. We worked with our group to retell a classic fairytale while adding our own twist. We started with many versions of the fairytale, then made a script, assigning each person a character. Our twist was that our fairytale—Cinderella—took place at MLC. Some groups added music, sound effects, and costumes to their performances. In my own classroom in Hutchinson last fall, I did a Thanksgiving readers' theater, which my students loved. They ask me to do another one at least once a week!



## How he uses Kiddie Lit every day in his classroom right now:

I use the knowledge I learned from Kiddie Lit in my grade 2-4 classroom every day. I read aloud a chapter from our book during snack right before recess (*pictured*). We're on book #4 already! Seeing how invested students get while listening to the books we read together is incredible. Several have started reading a series because we read the first book together in class. Kiddie Lit was also beneficial as I planned for my first school year as an emergency teacher. I emailed Dr. Roux for advice in early August, and he helped me tremendously. My third and fourth graders read novels as part of language arts class. The guidelines I learned in Kiddie Lit helped me select books that will teach my students literary concepts while also being enjoyable to read. A huge part of the class that I try to instill in my students is a love of reading. Reading is a lifelong skill and shouldn't feel like a chore!



Titus  
Buelow  
MLC 2010  
Lansing MI



Kari  
Kemnitz  
MLC 2000  
Eldorado WI



Gregory  
Gibbons  
NWC 1975  
Saginaw MI



Susan  
Voigt  
DMLC 1985  
Daggett MI

comprehension and builds vocabulary. They've developed the habit of connecting literature to other school subjects and to the daily lives of their students. They've learned to read books as mirrors and windows: mirrors that help them reflect on themselves and windows that help them see into the lives and hearts of others.

All MLC early childhood and elementary education majors take "Kiddie Lit." We asked two of them to tell us about it.

## Emma Niebuhr

(Immanuel-Gibbon MN)

Senior – Elementary Education

**What she loved:** We began almost every class with personal reading time. Even though this took 10-15 minutes at the beginning of every class, it was well worth the time to set aside distractions and become immersed in a book. I loved the variety of genres we studied throughout the semester. I also enjoyed Dr. Roux's stories about meeting and becoming friends with several authors. That just shows how connections to people outside of the called ministry can still impact your classroom.

**What she learned:** My view of children's literature changed throughout the course. I experienced a wide variety of genres and useful books for my future classroom. Literature can provide a view of the world, or of fantastical worlds, in a variety of formats, including poetry, picture books, and graphic novels.

**Her favorite project:** For the contemporary realistic fiction project, I chose Pin-Up Pals for the book *Giant Pumpkin Suite*, written by Melanie Heuiser Hill. I created a short summary of each character and then used clothespins to attach AI-generated images of the characters based on the images I had thought of when reading the book. This project became a highlight after I heard feedback from the author! Ms. Hill commented that the images I chose to represent her characters were very similar to how she had imagined them.

**How she plans to use Kiddie Lit in her classroom someday:** This course changed my knowledge of how impactful children's literature truly is. It's crucial to provide a wide variety of literature in your classroom and to

## Other MLC literacy courses:

Teaching Literacy (Early Childhood Education)	Adolescent Literature
Teaching Language Arts	Teaching Communication Arts & Literature in Middle & Secondary Schools
Teaching Reading	

## Authors who've visited MLC include . . .

Avi	Kate DiCamillo
Gennifer Choldenko	David Geister & Patricia Bauer



regularly update the books you have. Dr. Roux also prepared us to find the reason for every book we use in our classroom and be prepared to share that reason with parents. I also hope to make author connections throughout the years and include author visits in my classroom.



*“As teachers, we’re living commercials for reading.”*

**Dr. Jon Roux** DMLC '95  
Children's Literature professor

*If you'd like Dr. Roux to present a workshop to your school faculty, parent organization, or community group, you can reach him at [rouxja@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:rouxja@mlc-wels.edu).*



**Hans Thomford**  
MLC 2015  
Chesaning MI



**Allison German**  
MLC 2010  
Allenton WI



**Randy Ott**  
NWC 1985  
Hemlock MI



**Marie Spaude**  
DMLC 1960  
Rollingstone MN

# Gemeindepädagogin on Campus

## MLC Grad Takes Her Degree Home to Europe

The last time **Rakel (Edvardsen) Drechsler** was on the MLC campus was 2005, when she was an international student from Norway, graduating with her degree in staff ministry.

In September 2024, she was here again, this time as a staff minister attending the WELS Staff Ministry Conference.

For three years, Drechsler has been serving at St. Trinity Parish in Leipzig, Germany, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church, the German Lutheran church body in fellowship with WELS.

We would call her a staff minister. In Germany, she's known as a *Gemeindepädagogin*. "It is sort of like a congregational teacher," she says. "It's a term that people understand even outside of our church body."

Her responsibilities involve ministry to women and children. "We have a monthly Bible study with the women," Drechsler says. "I oversee the Sunday School, visit elderly women in their homes, and organize hikes for the younger women. I've also led a few women individually through Bible information class." She also teaches a weekly Bible course to children in grades 1-3.

"My work has a relational emphasis," she says. "I try to look out for the needs of the women in my congregation and encourage them to serve God in the place that he has put them and with whatever gifts they have. In this kind of leadership role, quite a bit of time also goes into reflecting, praying, and studying the Word of God, even though it's often hard to put this into a calendar. But maybe that is part of what serving as a leader is: carrying people on my mind and my heart all the time."

The theme of the 2024 staff ministry conference was "Come and Go." Coming back to the community and college where she spent

four formative years of her life was emotional for Drechsler. "After I realized that I was going to get to come here, I didn't sleep for two nights. I was so excited." And once on campus, she became aware of how much had changed. "I realized that I've moved on. I'm not the student that I was 20 years ago."

Thoughts of going back home after the conference led to more reflection. "At the moment, I'm the only one in the German church who serves in this kind of public ministry."

That's why seeing so many staff ministers was uplifting. "It was fascinating and encouraging to see the great variety of people serving as staff ministers," she says. "When I came home, what stood out to me the most, though, was how grateful I am to get to serve in exactly the place that I am in, and it felt so good to realize that there still is a bridge between these different chapters of my life.

"So for my sake, the conference definitely served its purpose: 'Come and Go.' I was very happy to do both."

Adapted from "Conference Encourages Staff Ministers," *Forward in Christ*, December 2024, written by Rev. James Pope.

Students in MLC's staff ministry program graduate with a degree in practical theology, which prepares them to serve in positions such as minister of youth and family, discipleship, or Christian education. Students may choose to add a second major in education or parish music.



Rakel Drechsler was happy to reunite with her two staff ministry professors, **Dr. Lawrence Olson** NWC '79, WLS '83 and **Professor Emeritus James Pope** NWC '77, WLS '81 (now editor of *Forward in Christ* magazine).



**David Gosdeck**  
NWC 1965  
Kaukauna WI



**Miranda Maasz**  
MLC 2015  
Sleepy Eye MN



**Peter Buege**  
MLC 2000  
Wauwatosa WI



**Ruth Gieschen**  
DMLC 1960  
Fort Atkinson WI





## What You Need to Know About WELS Teaching Ministry Certification

### WHAT it is:

Coursework in theology for teachers in WELS schools (PreK-12) who graduated somewhere other than Martin Luther College.

### WHY it's important:

So that teachers can serve as gospel ministers to students and families with confidence and in doctrinal unity with the calling body and WELS.

### HOW it works:

All courses are online, but professors will travel to teach local face-to-face cohorts, if requested.

### WHO pays:

Generally, the calling body (congregation or school) pays the course tuition.

### HOW it's easier than ever:

MLC has streamlined the process in recent years to make enrollment and completion faster and easier.

If you're a WELS teacher who is not yet ministry-certified—or if you're the principal of a non-certified teacher—we're here to help! Reach out to Dr. John Meyer at [meyerjd@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:meyerjd@mlc-wels.edu), and we'll get you on the path to ministry certification! It's easier than ever before!

## APPROVED! New Associate Degree for Early Childhood Education

Great news! Our online Associate of Science (AS) in Early Childhood Education (ECE) degree for preschool teachers has been approved by our accrediting agency! This program is intended for adult learners, not traditional-aged college students, and we are enrolling students right now!

This 67.5-credit AS-ECE degree program is the final tier in our 4-Tier "Support at Every Step" program for early childhood educators. It qualifies individuals to receive a divine call to WELS early childhood ministries, though it does not provide licensure.

The course of study includes general education courses, early childhood professional courses, and ministry certification (theology) courses. All professional and theology courses are available online through MLC, and we can also help you earn your required general education credits.

As early childhood ministries continue to grow in churches across the country, they need more teachers—teachers who understand the fundamentals of early childhood education and who are well grounded in biblical theology. Our AS-ECE can prepare these teachers—yet another way Martin Luther College is meeting the ministry needs of the WELS.



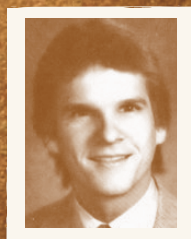
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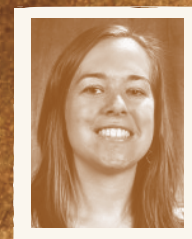
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**Kelly Krahn**  
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Oconomowoc WI



**John Hering**  
NWC 1985  
Yukon OK



**Amanda Koch**  
MLC 2010  
Downers Grove IL



# International Students at MLC

It should be quite a sight! In heaven, we'll be part of a great multitude that includes "every nation, tribe, people, and language" (Revelation 7:9).

At MLC, we're so grateful for that holy diversity—and unity—in Christ!

Every November we celebrate International Education Week. It's a time when our international students celebrate their heritage and share their culture with our whole campus family.

And the rest of the campus family shows them that they're a valuable part of the campus community.

We thought our *InFocus* readers might want to get to know some of our international students too. This year we have 12 from five different countries: China, Germany, South Korea, Spain, and Vietnam.

You can meet a few of them in the next few pages.

## NELLY DÜLL

Germany

Secondary Social Studies Education &  
Secondary English Education



***The United States is a place where I found my second family and where I really get to live out my faith.***

Nelly Düll did know about Jesus while growing up in Germany. In fact, she took religious education classes through 12th grade. But she never joined a church.

It was while working as an au pair for the Carswell family in Georgia that she joined a church—their church, Faith Lutheran in Sharpsburg.

The Carswells not only brought Nelly into their church, but they also pointed her to Martin Luther College. "I'd always dreamed of becoming a teacher," she says, "because of my love for working with children. The Carswells recognized this passion and encouraged me to explore MLC, knowing how important it was for me to share the gospel while teaching."

Her "second family," as she calls them, have supported her every step of the way. "Their encouragement was like a guiding light, illuminating my path and playing a significant role in my decision to enroll at MLC."

Back in Germany, her parents are supportive as well. "They're unbelievably proud that I go here and support me all the way. My mom is probably my biggest cheerleader at home, always checking in on my progress and encouraging me."

Nelly is loving her time here at MLC. "The community and learning environment at MLC are awesome," she says. "I also appreciate that everything we do is centered around Christ and God's Word."

As a double major in secondary social studies and English, she's already excited about her future. "I hope I get to teach many, many beautiful children of God and share with them my excitement for the English language and social studies—and my faith."

# CHAU BANG (LILY) DANG

**Vietnam**

*Elementary Education*



***I want to share Christ's love with others as my full-time job.***

God took the horror of the pandemic and turned it into a life-changing blessing for Chau Bang (Lily) Dang.

While she was at Wisconsin LHS, the pandemic hit. Lily was scared that air travel would be shut down, preventing her from going home. "My nightmare actually came true," she says. "The border between Vietnam and the United States was closed."

Fortunately, a family at WISCO took her in. "The Parsleys taught me how to scratch-cook, grow trees, play cards, and how to be a good person. They also took me to church very often, showing me how strong of Christian believers they are."

That summer she experienced a life-changing blessing: "my baptism—the moment that Pastor Brady Coleman at Siloah Lutheran Church poured the water on my head, indicating that I was officially in God's family. On July 19, 2020, I became a Christian."

Lily learned about MLC when she was here for the WELS National Choral Fest in 2021. "I fell in love with it." Now she's here, grateful to be surrounded by God's Word and God's people. "The people seem friendly and want to build connections as brothers and sisters in Christ," she says. "Living in a dormitory where everyone believes and trusts in one true God is really cool."

She's also excited about a future in the ministry. "It is essential to plant the seed of faith in a child's mind so that the Holy Spirit can grow the faith in their hearts," she says. "I want to share Christ's love with others as my full-time job."

# ZIYAN (ELIJAH) XU

**China**

*Elementary Education*



***I want to be a good man—improve my English, learn more about American culture, and grow in my faith.***

When Ziyang (Elijah) Xu's mom asked him if he'd like to go to high school in America, he jumped at the chance.

Partly, he admits, it's because he didn't enjoy the demanding nature of the Chinese educational system—the endless homework and the high-stakes exams. In American schools, he thought, "there would be less presh."

Since his grandmother is a Christian, and his uncle, Joshua Yu, is a pastor at St. John-Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, Elijah decided to go to a WELS high school. He spent his first year at Shoreland and then transferred to Luther Prep for the last three.

While at Prep, he took instruction from Pastor James Backus at St. Mark-Watertown, and was baptized and confirmed. "My friends and my uncle all came to my baptism," he says. "That was a fun day."

A visit to MLC his senior year confirmed his decision to come here for college. And now he loves it. Professor Huebner's math class is a favorite, and he likes Biblical History and Literature, which his Chinese/English Bible makes a little easier for him.

His parents are happy he's here too. They aren't Christian, but Elijah has hopes. "Like many people in China, they only work," he says. "They don't have time to believe and go to church." But on his last visit there, he did see a Chinese Bible on the couch. His mom said she likes to read it sometimes.

Meanwhile, Elijah wants to make the most of his time here. His goals? "I want to be a good man—improve my English, learn more about American culture, and grow in my faith."

# MAEVA LOPEZ VICENTE

**Spain**

*Elementary Education & Vocal Music Education*



***I didn't want to go to a college without the Word. And I didn't want to hide the Christian part of me.***

When she started at Wisconsin Lutheran High School her junior year, Maeva Lopez Vicente noticed that her friends had something she didn't.

It became plain when she talked to one about college. "I was so confused and stressed," she says. "What was my purpose? But my friend was never stressed. 'Why are you so calm?' I asked her. She said, 'I know I have value because I'm a child of God. And I know he has a plan for me.'"

That conversation made quite an impact. And then there was that chapel sermon by Pastor Phil Huebner about the comfort Jesus gives. "That really hit me too," she says.

Maeva wanted that comfort, that certainty. So she dove deeper into Christianity, singing in choir, taking catechism class, attending church. Eventually she was baptized and confirmed.

Her new thoughts about college pointed in a specific direction. "I didn't want to go to a college without the Word, because my faith was still young. And I didn't want to hide the Christian part of me." She also wanted to sing and to share the Word with others. All signs pointed to MLC.

Now she especially enjoys Biblical History and Literature. "Professor Stelljes is so happy all the time," she says, "always talking about the Savior and making connections to our lives." And she loves singing in choir, where "Professor Hermanson has such a big love for Jesus. Sometimes he'll stop in choir and say, 'Guys! Listen to what we're singing. It's so amazing.'"

As she works toward the teaching ministry, Maeva is taking it all in. "They're the kind of teacher I want to be."

# WEIHAN (MAGNUS) WANG

**China**

*Elementary Education*



***God paved my way and planned things out for me. . . . I know I will be okay because God said, "Fear not, for I am with you."***

Like many, Weihan (Magnus) Wang was hit hard by the pandemic. But two things have kept him strong: music and the God who gave him music.

Magnus inherited his love for music from his mom, who got him started on piano lessons at 5. At first, his relationship with the piano was "bittersweet," he says, but at 12, he really started loving it. That was the year he learned free styling and started a band—a band so talented they made it to Shanghai Disney Land.

Playing wasn't enough though. Magnus wanted to compose. Using his 61-key MIDI Controller, he's initiated 350+ projects on music software and released 100+ finished songs on YouTube.

"Songs are archived memories for me," he says. "Instead of writing love letters or diaries, I put everything in my songs."

Magnus is grateful to God for the gift of music—and for God's presence throughout his life. "I heard about Jesus from Pastor Brad Krause at Fox Valley LHS. I feel like I'm forgiven and walking under the sun. God paved my way and planned things out for me. He gave me obstacles and gave me blessings. He blessed me with friendship, hardship, and growth, but he never left me in the cold unattended.

"I know that God is alive and true," he continues, "and I really don't know what kind of life I would live without him. I know I will be okay. I will be fine. Because God said, 'Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.'"

# WENDA LIU

China

Secondary Science Education



## ***Growing up in China, I don't take Christianity for granted. It is a gift given by God.***

It was while Wenda was confined to a hospital bed that he and his family first met Jesus. He was in second grade when a high-grade fever sent him to the hospital. His family didn't belong to the Christian church, but Christians surrounded them with love. They brought flowers and gifts. They made meals. They held the family's hands and prayed. The doctors never found the cause of the fever, but after six weeks it simply disappeared.

Wenda says his family was deeply moved by this support, and they accepted the Christians' invitation to weekly Bible study to learn more about God and his Word. Shortly thereafter, the entire family was baptized.

Wenda later attended Manitowoc LHS, where his teachers and friends encouraged him to consider Martin Luther College. "I am especially thankful for my American family, the Ungemachs, for Mr. Nathan King, and for Professor Tingting Schwartz for encouraging me to go to MLC. They answered every question and doubt I had. They made me feel like I would have a great time at MLC—and I am!"

His family has been supportive as well. "They know they have nothing to worry about," he says, "because God is guiding every step of my way."

Being raised in a country where Christianity is repressed, Wenda has a deep appreciation for the faith he's received. "I don't take Christianity for granted," he says. "It is a gift given by God."

He's also appreciative of the opportunities in America—"especially for Christians to publicly express their beliefs," he says, "and for students to try different things. And," he adds, "I appreciate the Christ-oriented education offered here at MLC. It is such a blessing."

# All Nations

As future called workers, MLC students know they're called to make disciples of *all nations*.

The increasing diversity of our country presents a beautiful opportunity for them to fulfill this Great Commission of our Lord.

Some of our graduates will travel to different nations to share the gospel. Others will meet many different nations right in their American congregations and classrooms.

International students who come to the States can learn more about their Savior—at Lutheran high schools and churches and then at Martin Luther College—and then take the gospel back to their home countries.

If you'd like to financially support international students at MLC, we have a fund specifically for these students. Go to [mlc-wels.edu/donate](http://mlc-wels.edu/donate), click on the DONATE NOW button, and specify the **MLC International Student Aid Fund**.



**Eight of our international students participated in our student panel for International Education Week.**

# Students Bring Light of the Gospel Through “Daylight”



Daylight is an MLC program that takes our students to congregations around the country—and sometimes the world—where they serve by canvassing, teaching VBS, coaching sports Bible camps, assisting at worship, lending humanitarian aid, and more.

Daylight provides congregations and missions with energetic, enthusiastic student-servants, and it provides these students real-world learning, the kind that makes classroom learning really sink in. Every student at MLC is strongly encouraged to participate in at least one Daylight trip during their college years.

## Sharing Christmas in California

Seven students traveled as Daylight volunteers to Ascension-Escondido CA: **Hans Boeder** (whose home congregation is Ascension), **Marissa Buege** (Victory of the Lamb-Katy TX), **Isaiah Carlovsky** (St. Paul-New Ulm MN), **Eva Doeblner** (King of Kings-Garden Grove CA), **Matteah Gehl** (Cross of Christ-Kingman AZ), **Lindsay Hatton** (Bethlehem-Menomonee Falls WI), and **Charis Headrick** (Christ Alone-Thiensville WI).

The students canvassed the neighborhood, inviting children to a Christmas for Kids event, which they ran the next day. That Sunday they sang for worship and talked about the blessings of Martin Luther College at the Bible class.

“It was such a blessing seeing how engaged kids were,” said Matteah Gehl, “and how eager they were to learn about God’s Word.”

“It was an amazing experience to see ministry in a new setting,” said Marissa Buege, “and to connect with the community by canvassing and helping the kids learn about Jesus. I learned more about communicating with others as well as cooperating and using the gifts God has given us to serve his people—and how that may look different in different locations.”



**John Schultz**  
DMLC 1965  
Watertown WI



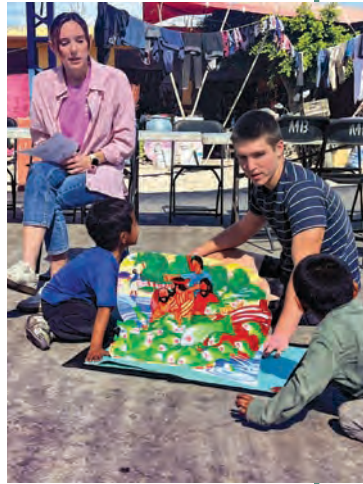
**Ruth Mann**  
MLC 2015  
Zillah WA



**Nathan Holz**  
MLC 2020  
Clarksville TN



**Janet Bitter**  
DMLC 1965  
Sheboygan Falls WI



## Mission Work in *Mexico*

Jacob Gabb (*St. Matthew-Oconomowoc WI*) and Maddie Liebert (*St. John-Appleton WI*) traveled to Mexico for their Daylight service. They presented a four-day vacation Bible school while working alongside John Kramer of Mission to the Children and WELS member Marli Camargo.

“We were reminded of the importance of bringing the gospel to *all nations*,” Maddie said, “and providing for the physical and spiritual needs of God’s children. We also witnessed a new church established in Cuernavaca and were blessed to worship with them! God is working for his kingdom!”

# MLC in the *National Rankings*

## #1 IN AMERICA

Martin Luther College was ranked #1 in America by the *Wall Street Journal/College Pulse* for “**Top 10 Preparation for a Career.**”

## #1 IN MINNESOTA

Martin Luther College was ranked the **#1 Best College for Education in Minnesota** and the #22 Best College for Education in America by Niche.com.

## 4.5 STARS

Martin Luther College earned 4.5 stars on *Money’s 2024 list of Best Colleges*. The scale tops out at 5 stars, which was only achieved by 54 colleges in the country.

## #4 IN AMERICA

Martin Luther College was ranked #4 on *Forbes Advisor’s Best Master’s in Educational Leadership Online Programs* in 2024.



**Kieth Kuschel**  
NWC 1970  
North Fond du Lac WI



**Rebecca Janke**  
MLC 2005  
Iron Ridge WI



**Lorenzo Aday**  
DMLC 1985  
Whiteriver AZ



**Wendy Weinrich**  
MLC 2000  
Royal NE

# She's Going to Be a Teacher

## —and CBE Is Making It Happen

It turns out that **Holly Sloan** (St. Paul-Onalaska WI) is a perfect fit for MLC's Competency-Based Education (CBE) program. She has a college degree, but it's not in education. She's already serving in a WELS school and would love to get her education degree, but she can't uproot her whole family and move them to New Ulm.

It's for people like Holly that we're developing our CBE program. We asked her to share her story with us.

**Holly, what's your background? Where did you go to school?** I grew up in Northern Wisconsin and attended public elementary and high school. After high school, I attended UW-Superior and earned a double major in biology and chemistry. Interestingly, I began my college career as an elementary education major.

**It's amazing that you were interested in education even back then! How did you use your science degrees?** After I graduated, I worked in microbiology and food safety for several years until my first child was born. I then took on the role of stay-at-home mom for eight incredible years. During that time, my husband and I welcomed our second child.

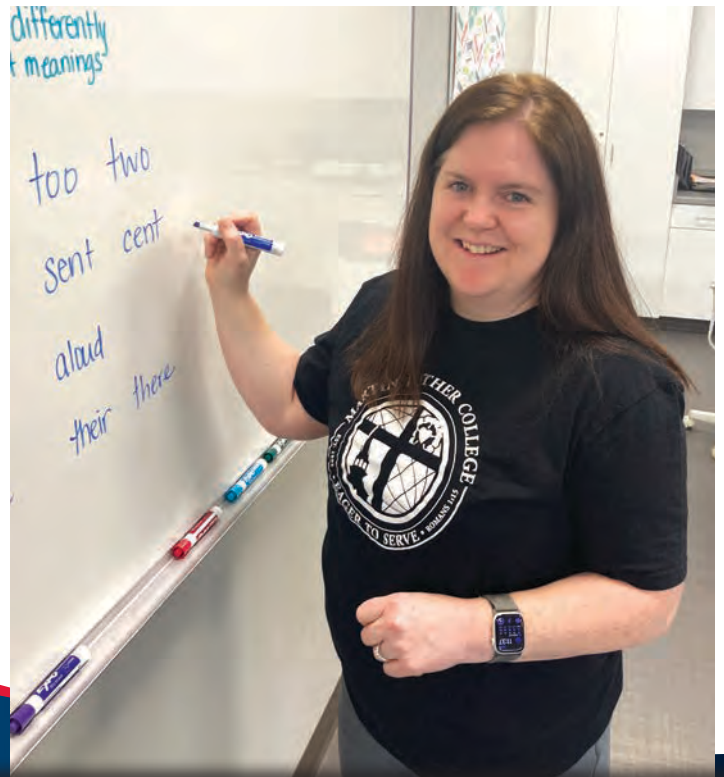
**When you went back to work, you didn't go back to microbiology, but turned toward education. Why was that?** Returning to work after being out of the workforce for eight years was daunting. When my youngest went to kindergarten, I saw that our school—St. Paul's in Onalaska—was looking for an educational assistant (EA) in the second-grade classroom, and I jumped at the chance. I had spent a lot of time volunteering at school, already knew the staff, and was looking forward to having the same schedule as my children.

**And then you decided that maybe you could do more. You could be a teacher. Right.** It wasn't even halfway through the year when the classroom teacher asked me if I'd ever considered becoming a teacher. The answer was yes, I had. She encouraged me to look into it. At that time, with two small children, it didn't seem like a realistic goal. In my five years as an EA, I worked with five excellent teachers, many

of whom tried their best to encourage me to get my teaching degree. In my final year as an EA, due to class sizes, I was only scheduled for half days. It was the perfect time to look into getting my teaching degree.

**That's when you reached out to Dr. LaGrow at MLC.** Yes, when I reached out to MLC, Dr. Nichole LaGrow told me about the new competency-based programs, specifically the Competency-Based Theology Education (CBTE) and the Alternative Pathway to Professional Licensure Eligibility (APPLE) programs that were about to begin. She helped me identify courses I could take before the program started to prepare myself and minimize the credits I would need to complete at MLC. Most of my general education courses would transfer from UW-Superior. I needed to complete four more before beginning my CBTE coursework: three at Western Technical College in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and one online at the University of North Dakota. I spent the year working at school in the morning, taking classes in the afternoon, and serving as a substitute teacher.

**As you started taking these courses, God brought you a surprising opportunity. What happened?** Last spring, our school decided to adopt a departmentalized model for our grade 5-8 students starting in the fall of 2024. With that change, they needed someone



**Phillip Valdez**  
MLC 2015  
Chula Vista CA



**Crystal Carmichael**  
MLC 2020  
Shakopee MN



**Michael Staerkel**  
DMLC 1980  
Oshkosh WI



**Elsie Koutia**  
MLC 2020  
Glendale AZ



to fill the gap and teach grade 5-6 writing and grammar. When my principal asked me if I would be willing to teach part-time, I was shocked. I was not expecting to have such an opportunity. After many prayers, some long conversations, and the full support of my family, I decided to accept the call. I was excited to have the opportunity to teach but knew it would be a complete life change. Simultaneously beginning a new program through MLC and taking on a new teaching role would be challenging.

**That brings us to today. You're busy finishing the CBTE courses—the theology component of this process—even as you teach fifth- and sixth-grade writing and grammar at St. Paul's. How does that work?** I have three classes, and I teach four mornings per week. Being able to teach has been such an exciting opportunity and keeps me busy. When I'm not teaching, I'm working on homework of my own. I am finishing up Biblical History and Literature I and Christian Doctrine I through MLC. These classes have allowed me to deepen my understanding of the Scriptures and think critically about what I believe.

**Sometimes people think that CBE is a shortcut to the teaching ministry, but it's not really. It's an alternate pathway to the ministry that is still quite rigorous. Are you finding it to be a lot of work?** Carving out time to work on schoolwork has required intentional scheduling and a lot of late nights and weekend study sessions. At the beginning of the semester, we were told that for a 3-credit course, we should expect to dedicate at least 6 hours per week to coursework. I would say that this is accurate.

**Do you feel supported as you make it work?** Yes! The professors are very flexible and understanding. And I'm also blessed with many people who encourage and help me. It's a team effort. I could not do this without the flexibility of my family, the encouragement of my fellow staff members, or the support of my congregation.

**What's next?** I'll take another two theology courses during the spring semester and the final two over the summer. I will complete my theology minor at the end of this summer. Then I'll start the APPLE courses—the pedagogy courses—next fall. I'm looking forward to applying what I'm learning in my courses to my daily teaching practice.

**What are you most excited about?** I didn't attend a Lutheran elementary or high school as a child. The experience of working in a WELS elementary school and having my children attend one has shown me what an extraordinary gift it is for children to be immersed in God's Word each day and to learn through the lens of faith. I had always thought about becoming a teacher, and now I have the opportunity through the CBTE and APPLE programs. Considering the current teacher shortage, I had to ask myself: Why not me? Why not now?

## Quick Review of Terms

**CBE:** Competency-Based Education is an online, alternate pathway to the teaching ministry for adult learners. MLC's CBE program has two components, CBTE and APPLE.

- **CBTE:** Competency-Based Theology Education. This is our theology minor, which all WELS-certified teachers must complete.
- **APPLE:** Alternative Pathway to Professional Licensure Eligibility. This is our professional education program, our pedagogy (how-to-teach) courses. It also includes general education, required content, and field experiences.

To learn much more, scan the QR code to read Dr. Nichole LaGrow's blog.



## Please consider a gift to CPGP!

Like all our undergrads, full-time CBE students are eligible for the Congregational Partner Grant Program. Through CPGP, congregations designate grants for their students enrolled at MLC, and MLC matches their grants—up to \$1,600 for the 2025-2026 school year.

You can help MLC be the match! Give here:



## Fantastic News!

Our APPLE program has also been approved by our accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission! We'll soon be enrolling students for the fall 2025 semester.



**Paul Jacobs**  
DMLC 1970  
Winona MN



**Miriam Lemke**  
DMLC 1965  
Fairfax MN



**Craig Engel**  
NWC 1995  
Bay City MI



**Ruth Unke**  
DMLC 1975  
Greenfield WI

here on the

hill



## The Heavens Declare the Glory of God!

The Northern Lights make a beautiful appearance in mid-October.



## Putting the 'Fun' in Fun Run

The Sprinter Fun Run sees 670 participants—335 on campus and another 335 around the globe—from 17 different states, including Hawaii and Alaska, as well as Zambia and the Philippines!

Leading the pack is **Luke Wegner** (*St. Marcus-Milwaukee*), painted white to represent the Sprinter, and **Joseph Schultz** (*Zion-Rhineland WI*) dressed as Mario.

Aged 7 months to 70+ years, the “fun runners” all have a great time!





## Homecoming Talent Show

The house is packed and the crowd is loud! Two highlights: performances by **Hazel Wagie** (*David's Star-Jackson WI*) and **Jon Holtz** (*St. Paul-Appleton WI*) and his band One Sock, who welcome special guest **Professor Luke Thompson**. After all the fun, though, in line with tradition, the crowd quiets and finishes the night singing the common doxology in four-part harmony a cappella.

That's just how we do things here.



**Emma Schultz** (*St. John-Juneau WI*), **Kristen Kamps** (*St. John-Peshtigo WI*), and **Reba Schroeder** (*St. Peter-Sturgeon Bay WI*) show off their masterpieces at the outdoor Bob Ross Night.

Scan for more Homecoming photos



## Homecoming Win!

A touchdown by **Rees Roecker** (*Pilgrim-Menomonee Falls WI*) with only five seconds remaining gives the Knights a thrilling 21-14 Homecoming victory over Minnesota Morris.

**Drew Esmay** (*Trinity-Temple TX*, pictured) leads the defensive attack, garnering him UMAC Defensive Player of the Week. Esmay's excellent play continues all season, earning him UMAC Defensive Player of the Year as well as a spot on the D3Sports.com All-Region Team.

## More Than the Score

Debuting this year is a free series of faculty lectures presented just before Saturday home football games. Here **Professor Paul Koelpin** NWC '85, WLS '90 presents "Where Terror Never Rests."



here on the

hill



### Fall Fest

Pumpkin decorating, games, a cold brew coffee bar, and music by MLC garage band Last Dor make Fall Fest a great ending to a great October. Temps in the 60s and 70s for most of the month don't hurt!



### The President Wants to Meet with Me?

As is his tradition, President Gurgel meets with each first-year and transfer student on campus—as well as zooming with each off-campus Competency-Based Education student. “Meeting with the college president might seem intimidating at first,” said **Hannah Christensen** (St. Paul-St. James MN, pictured), “but there was nothing to worry about! President Gurgel was very kind and curious about my experience so far at MLC.”

Says the president: “We want every student to know that we care about them and want to see them succeed in their pursuit of the ministry.”



### Evangelism Day

**Ms. Shawna Mehlberg** MLC '08 of Divine Savior Academy-FL and Pastor **Jon Enter** MLC '00, WLS '04 of St. Croix Lutheran Academy-MN are two of many guest speakers at our November 6 Evangelism Day. Under the theme “United in Mission,” students get reenergized for sharing the gospel now and in their future ministries.





here on the

hill

## So Much Support

The MLC Ladies' Auxiliary holds their annual meeting and votes to fund \$32,000 worth of projects. Worship and various student and faculty presentations fill the day. *Pictured:* President **Connie Scharf** DMLC '75 passes the gavel to incoming president, Jackie Dalueg.



## “Tradition!”

*Fiddler on the Roof* has audiences raving this fall, which is no surprise since staging great musicals is a (ahem) *tradition* at MLC. **Zoe Scharf** (St. Paul-New Ulm MN) and **Ryan Boggs** (St. Luke-Watertown WI) lead the way as Golde and Tevye in the timeless classic.



## First-Years' First Field Experience

First-year education and staff ministry majors, like **Myra Liermann** (St. John-Manitowoc WI), complete their first Early Field Experience (EFE) on campus during J-Term. They enjoy exploring many different aspects of the teaching life and then preparing and teaching lessons to local children.



## Praising God for Our Holy Diversity—and Unity—in Christ

**Yi Le (Mary) Wang** (China) and other internationals let us “read” them at the Human Library event during International Education Week in November. Other events: morning chapel Scripture readings in Korean, Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, and German; a Chinese praise group; and the always-popular international dinners. Also featured are students who studied overseas, like **David Fenske** (Our Savior-Brookings SD, *pictured*), who spent a semester in Galway.



## And on Earth, Peace

MLC singers and instrumentalists present a stunning concert to usher in Christmas.

## Connecting with the Littles

Students from the MLC Early Childhood Learning Center learn about the puppetry used in Forum's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.



## Shooting the Lights Out

The MLC Knights women's basketball team started the season 9-0 at home. It's looking to be an incredible season. Catch the latest at [mlcknights.com](http://mlcknights.com).



*Pictured: Lauren Paulsen (St. Matthew-Oconomowoc WI) takes it to her Augsburg College defender.*

# God Is Our Refuge and Strength

MLC COLLEGE CHOIR SPRING TOUR | MARCH 15-23, 2025

Plan to see the College Choir on tour this spring. A special treat will be two joint concerts with the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chorus in honor of the 175th anniversary of WELS and the 160th anniversary of WELS ministerial education: one in Milwaukee and one at MLC.



Sat Mar 15, 7:00 pm	Martin Luther-St. Louis
Sun Mar 16, 9:15 am	Christ Alone-Dardenne Prairie MO (service)
Sun Mar 16, 7:00 pm	Beautiful Savior-Clarksville TN
Mon Mar 17, 7:00 pm	Christ Our Savior-Columbia TN
Tue Mar 18, 7:30 pm	Bethlehem-Carmel IN
Wed Mar 19, 7:00 pm	Peace-Loves Park IL
Thu Mar 20, 11:00 am	St. Paul LES-Muskego WI
Thu Mar 20, 7:00 pm	St. John's on the Hillside-Milwaukee <i>Joint concert with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chorus</i>
Fri Mar 21, 9:45 am	Wisconsin LHS-Milwaukee*
Fri Mar 21, 2:15 pm	Kettle Moraine LHS-Jackson WI*
Sat Mar 22, 7:00 pm	Christ-North St. Paul MN
Sun Mar 23, 10:00 am	Holy Trinity-New Hope MN (service)
Sun Mar 23, 4:00 pm	MLC Chapel of the Christ: Homecoming Concert
Sat Mar 29, 7:00 pm	MLC Chapel of the Christ <i>Joint concert with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chorus</i>



Scan for more information

\*Seating capacity only for high school students, faculty, and staff

## Now Accepting Thalassa Submissions

Martin Luther College has now begun accepting submissions for the 19th 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, 2025

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:** [mlc-wels.edu/Thalassa](http://mlc-wels.edu/Thalassa)

**ALL PAST WINNERS:** [mlc-wels.edu/Thalassa](http://mlc-wels.edu/Thalassa)



**2024 Winner:  
Embroidered  
Garments**

**Emily Rider  
MLC '18  
Southeast Asia**



**Dennis Pepperd**  
NWC 1970  
Flagstaff AZ



**Sarah Kranich**  
DMC 1985  
Deerfield IL



**Joel Neumann**  
MLC 2000  
Valentine NE



**Rachel Stegner**  
MLC 2005  
Grass Valley CA



# Old Main Entrance Campaign: *A Triumph of Generosity and Faith*

This architectural rendering illustrates how a new stairwell and covered entrance will address both safety and cosmetic concerns. Thanks be to God—this project is fully funded!



After many years of use, the Old Main stairway is crumbling and unsafe.

With joy and gratitude, we announce the successful completion of the Old Main Entrance campaign! Our generous supporters have given over \$620,000, significantly surpassing our goal of \$550,000!

We're grateful to all our donors, including WELS members and friends around the country, alumni, our own faculty and staff, and the New Ulm community.

By God's grace, the project is fully funded, so we will move forward with the final formal approvals and documents as we restore the entrance to Old Main.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you who contributed to this campaign. Your donations, prayers, and encouragement have made this possible. Above all, we give thanks to our good and gracious God in all things.

Any funds received over and above our goal will help defray unexpected construction expenses.

Thank you for your continued support and for being a vital part of the Martin Luther College community.



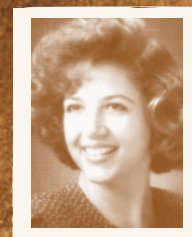
**David Meyer**  
NWC 1965  
Lake Benton MN



**Claire Wessel**  
DMLC 1990  
New Ulm MN



**Thomas Bauer**  
NWC 1980  
Bismarck ND



**Ann Romain**  
DMLC 1990  
Saginaw MI

# Focus On *Scholarships*

## FRED AND BERTHA SCHROEDER SCHOLARSHIP



The Fred and Bertha Schroeder Scholarship was started in 2011 by a grandson and has enjoyed the support of their extended family through the years.

**Friedrich Schroeder** (1871-1952) and **Bertha (Meyer) Schroeder** (1879-1961) raised a family of 10 children on an 18-acre farm

in Eitzen, Minnesota, and were faithful members of Zion Lutheran Church, which was adjacent to their farm. They instilled in their children a love for the Lord and for the ministry.

One of their children, Prof. Erwin Schroeder, served the Lord with a long tenure at Northwestern College. Out of 41 grandchildren, 13 have served in the pastoral ministry, and six have been trained as teachers. One of those grandchildren, Pastor Mark Schroeder, went on to become president of the WELS.

Even now, more descendants of the Schroeders are being trained as called workers at MLC, the WELS College of Ministry.

Fred and Bertha loved the Word and demonstrated that love often. As one grandson shared, "Grandma asked me to bring

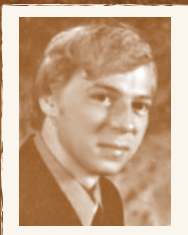
her the Bible and the hymnal one Saturday night so she could read the lessons assigned for the next day. When I asked her why she did this, she said, 'Because my hearing is not as good as it used to be, and I don't want to miss a single word that God has for me.' Like Mary at Jesus' feet, she was never too busy for God's Word."

Fred and Bertha faithfully laid the foundation for their family's faith. Their descendants give thanks for those who have gone before, who have endured the trials of this life, and who have put their hope in Jesus and his Word. That "faith of their fathers" has been handed down, along with the wonderful instruction they received at our synod's ministry training schools.

*Proceeds from the fund are distributed to students with financial need.*

*Right: Fred and Bertha Schroeder and their 10 children.*

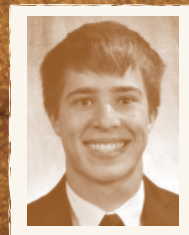
*Below: Some of Fred and Bertha Schroeder's grandchildren, many of whom have served in the preaching and teaching ministries.*



**Daryl Hanneman**  
DMLC 1975  
Sanborn MN



**Rebecca Balge**  
MLC 2010  
New Ulm MN



**Tristan Paustian**  
MLC 2015  
Racine WI



**Rachel Grebe**  
MLC 2000  
North Mankato MN

## LUEHRS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



This fund was established in 1966 by Arnold (1915-1991) and Helen Luehrs (1923-2010) in memory of their only child, **Deloris E. Luehrs** (1940-1956).

Deloris had planned to attend Dr. Martin Luther College to be a teacher, but she died at the age of 16 in a car accident.

“We felt, as she could not fulfill her goal, we would like to help others as much as we could,” said her mother, Helen. “May God’s blessing go with them as they carry on in Deloris’s memory.”

*Proceeds from the fund are distributed to students with financial need.*

*Many of those who knew Deloris in this life have since gone to join her in heaven. Yet this scholarship, which grew from tragedy, continues today, a touching tribute that has blessed countless students.*

## You Can Establish a *Named Scholarship*

A named scholarship, like the Luehrs and Schroeder scholarships, allows you to honor a loved one while supporting MLC students. Long after you and your loved ones are gone, the fund will continue to assist MLC students.

You can establish it in your own name or the name of a loved one you’d like to honor. You can choose to support a specific area of ministry training—like preseminary students or early childhood education students—or designate that the funds go to any student with financial need. You can receive personal thank-you letters from MLC students, enjoy tax benefits, and—most important—give glory to the Lord of the Church while leaving a lasting legacy at MLC.

We’ll help you set up your named scholarship! Contact **Mark Maurice** (mauricme@mlc-wels.edu / 507.354.8221) or **Sarah Gieseke** (gieseksm@mlc-wels.edu / 507.354.8221).



**David Kehl**  
NWC 1975  
Jackson WI



**Mary Falck**  
MLC 2020  
Germantown WI



**Greg Otterstatter**  
NWC 1980  
Milwaukee



**Sue Ferch**  
DMLC 1975  
Ashland KY

# Focus On *Giving*

## A Question Worth Wrestling With

By **Sarah Gieseke** DMLC '82  
Resource Development Counselor

In many ways, Ben and Tyla Martens are a typical WELS couple. They attend church regularly at Calvary Lutheran in Bellevue, Washington, and are enjoying every minute of their active family life.

But recently they began wrestling with a challenging issue, and they wondered: “What can we do about it?”

**The Issue:** The Martenses are acutely aware of the shortage of called workers. Like many congregation members all across the synod, they have felt the tension that comes from trying to fill a call. “A vacancy created a sense of limbo and unease because I wondered how long it would continue,” Tyla says.

Instead of letting the issue go, Ben and Tyla wondered what they could do about it personally. They prayed about it, wrestled with it, and got curious. Tyla feels that curiosity is the spark through which God sometimes opens people up to some creative answers.

**The Direction:** As they wrestled, they found themselves looking in one direction: to Martin Luther College.

They value the synod’s commitment to Bible-based doctrine and the consistent message that every called worker shares from the pulpit and in the classroom. Knowing that MLC trains the majority of our called workers, they wondered whether they could find the answer to their question by looking deeper into MLC.

**Their College Experiences:** As a 2005 graduate, Tyla knows MLC. She found a level of fellowship there that she feels is unique to our campus. Her professors connected with their students on a deeper level, and the entire student body was caring and accepting. She remains close with several MLC friends and says, “I didn’t realize at the time just how special it was.”

Meanwhile, Ben, a '98 graduate of Michigan LHS, went to Indiana’s Purdue University for degrees in computer science and math. While he received a solid education and made good friends, he missed the deeper, religious connection he had had with teachers and students at MLHS. He even visited some of them at MLC and wondered at times whether he should have gone into the ministry. In retrospect, though, he sees how he



Ben and Tyla Martens MLC '05 are generous supporters of MLC and members of the President’s Advisory Council.

now can use his skills and resources for the Lord even if he isn’t working directly in ministry.

**Their Decision:** As the Martenses thought about MLC, Tyla’s curiosity got her poking around the website. She discovered they could connect with the college through social media posts, publications, and valuable resources like the Advent and Holy Week devotions.

She also uncovered a variety of ways they could help the college, including supporting the food shelf, scholarships, tuition assistance, and Ladies’ Auxiliary projects and events.

As she observed, “Whatever interest you have, it’s there.”

Eventually the couple found an answer that fit them—a way that they could personally answer the question, “What can

we do about the shortage of called workers? They decided to give financially to MLC. Over the years, they've given many generous donations, directing their gifts to vital classroom instruction, essential student services, and facility maintenance—all the critical infrastructure that supports students on their journey to the public ministry. As Ben puts it, "Because the Lord has blessed us, we want to support the work the synod is doing in training people for the ministry."

**Working with MLC:** One thing that surprised Ben was the responsiveness of everyone he has dealt with. "I'm thankful for how easy MLC is to work with. It's easy to get answers and have a conversation with someone. They even came to visit us! And the flood of gratitude and personalized thanks was beyond anything I expected."

**To Others Who Wrestle:** The Martenses want to encourage others to wrestle with the issue at hand as well: the shortage of called workers and what to do about it.

"Start by praying," they said. "Talk to God. Lay the problem before him. And stay curious about the answers he may send—including options beyond the obvious."

If you decide on a financial gift, as they did, Ben suggests finding out whether your employer has a matching program to increase the impact of your donation.

"And talk to people," he says. "Help them understand the valuable work being done at the college."

## The Shepherd Society

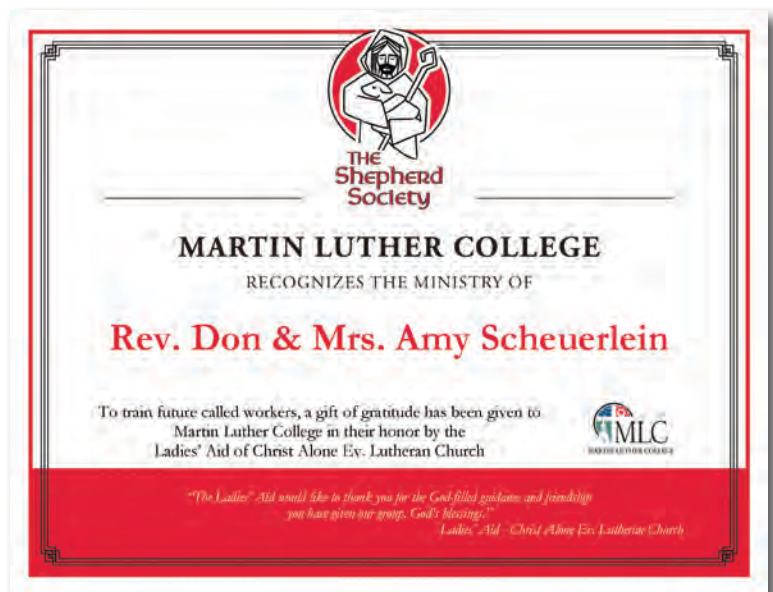
*Nominate a called worker who has made a difference!*

Founded in 2008, the Shepherd Society consists of called workers who've been recognized for making a difference through their ministries.

Anyone may nominate a pastor, teacher, or staff minister for the Shepherd Society by filling out an easy form and sending it to Martin Luther College along with a gift of gratitude (\$250 minimum).

In so doing, the donors support the training of future called workers at MLC. At the same time, they express their gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, and to the called worker who has shepherded them in a special way.

The called workers nominated for the Shepherd Society receive a commemorative plaque and a personal letter from the MLC president.



To see the full list of Shepherd Society members, go to [mlc-wels.edu/go/shepherd-society](http://mlc-wels.edu/go/shepherd-society). Consider making your own nomination to honor a called worker who has made a difference in your faith life.

## MLCAA Makes Big Changes

By MLCAA President **Jeremiah Drews MLC '09**



In October, the board of the MLC Alumni Association (MLCAA) examined current operations and deliberated how it could best fulfill its mission. After much discussion and prayer, the board decided that change was needed.

As an independent organization, MLCAA had extra administrative expenses and its donation process created more work for the college. With this in mind, the board decided to dissolve and become part of the MLC structure.

This does not mean the end of MLCAA! The MLCAA Board created an Alumni Fund at MLC. Alumni who have given to the MLCAA may continue giving to the Alumni Fund at MLC. The board will direct how MLC uses the money in this fund.

Under the new structure, it can continue to ensure that 100% of your donations go to the Alumni Scholarship and projects selected by the board, without the burden of extra expenses.

To give to the Alumni Fund:

- Scan the QR code and select “MLC Alumni Fund”
- Send a check made out to MLC (“Alumni Fund” on memo line) to Martin Luther College  
1995 Luther Court  
New Ulm MN 56073



## *Fiddler on the Roof* Reunion

The casts and crews from the 1978 and 1999 productions of *Fiddler on the Roof* reunited during musical weekend in November. They enjoyed this year’s musical performance, rekindled old friendships, and reminisced about their time on stage.



**William Radue**  
DMLC 1960  
Maribel WI



**Rachel Weimer**  
MLC 2005  
The Woodlands TX



**Joel Ehlert**  
NWC 1960  
Thiensville WI



**Jacalyn Ocampo**  
MLC 2015  
Linwood MI

# Class Reunions on Campus

In 2024, Martin Luther College was the site of four class reunions. These gatherings testify to the enduring bonds alumni formed in high school or college and inspire current students as they create their lasting memories at MLC.

If you have a reunion story to share or would like to plan a future reunion, please contact the Alumni Relations Office. We're here to help you reconnect and celebrate your time on campus.

Contact Michelle Markgraf at [alumni@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:alumni@mlc-wels.edu) / 507.233.9135.



**DMLC Class of 1974**



**DMLHS Class of 1959**



**DMLHS Class of 1964**



**MLA Class of 1974**

## Branson Tour

We're exploring the feasibility of a bus tour to Branson, Missouri, in November 2025 with Tom's Christian Tours.

**Dates:** November 10-14

**Pick-up cities:** Fond du Lac and La Crosse WI

**Cost:** About \$1,700 (Exact cost to be determined when we book the tour. Includes all hotel stays, daily breakfast, four dinners, two lunches, and five shows.)



Scan to sign up for more information.

## Upcoming Reunions

June 20-21, 2025 DMLC 1965

July 25-27, 2025 MLPS 1980

September 11-13, 2025 DMLHS 1960

September 19-21, 2025 MLA 1975 & 1976

October 17-19, 2025 DMLC 1975

September 15-16, 2026 DMLHS 1959

September 2026 DMLC 1966

TBD 2026 DMLC 1976



**Matthew Vik**  
MLC 2005  
Appleton WI



**Gayle Schultz**  
DMLC 1980  
Lewiston MN



**Roger Moldenhauer**  
NWC 1960  
Randolph WI



**Monica Reyna**  
MLC 2000  
Lake Mills WI



## Do You Remember?

This picture shows an event that happened annually. Who can tell us what's happening? Please send your answers to Michelle Markgraf at [alumni@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:alumni@mlc-wels.edu). Thank you!



### From the Fall 2024 issue:

This picture stumped our alumni! This is the chapel when it was on the first floor of Old Main.

## Alumni Commencement Dinner

**FRIDAY, MAY 16**

**HISTORIC NEW ULM TURNER HALL**  
(102 S. State St.)

All alumni and emeriti of MLC, its predecessor colleges and high schools, and their guests are invited to join us!

**4:30 Check-in & social hour (cash bar)**

**5:30 Opening prayer & meal**

Chicken Kiev, salad, potato, vegetable & dessert \$25

Children's meal: chicken tenders, salad & fries \$14

**6:00 Short presentation & social time**

**7:30 Commencement Concert**  
(MLC Auditorium)

Register here

*\*If you need assistance with the meal cost, please contact Michelle Markgraf at 507.233.9135 / [alumni@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:alumni@mlc-wels.edu).*



[mlcday.com](http://mlcday.com)



*We're so thankful for your support,  
and we can't wait to celebrate MLC Day 2025!*

## MLC Day is May 7!

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

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



# Meet the New Governing Board Members



## Jake Unke

MLC '12

(Middle and high school principal, Divine Savior Academy-Sienna TX)

“I am honored to be able to serve my alma mater after so many years of it being a blessing to my family. I am very excited to serve the students who

call MLC home, just as I did. I feel fortunate to be a part of MLC’s decision-making process to benefit the staff, students, and mission that MLC serves.

“It always seems like when the cards are stacked against you is when God is *able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine* (Ephesians 3:20). I am excited to see how God uses the current landscape of Christian postsecondary education to produce fruit for his kingdom. MLC is a necessary part of that and will no doubt be blessed in the process, though it will be in ways that may seem daunting right now. Embrace the unknown and trust God’s infinite wisdom.”



## Pete Snyder

NWC '90, WLS '94

(Pastor, St. John-Lewiston MN)

“Martin Luther College is our college of ministry. It would be difficult to overstate the vital role it plays in the work of our synod. I am happy to serve in God’s kingdom in whatever

way he calls and leads, but it is a special privilege and responsibility to be in this position. We are supporting our college and helping the MLC administration and faculty in whatever ways we can as they pursue excellence under the cross—carrying out the important work of training future pastors, teachers, and staff ministers to proclaim Christ to the nations.

“With the promises of God, the future is exciting, no matter what. The gospel of the risen Savior is the most exciting, powerful, and certain message that exists. Young people, gifted by God, who are pursuing a life of service in the public ministry is exciting. Faculty and staff, by God’s grace, rising up to the new challenges that our shifting and, in many ways, disintegrating culture brings as they prepare these young men and women to work in that culture, is exciting. And then it comes back again to our dear Lord and Savior, as it must. *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen* (Ephesians 3:20-21).”



## Karl Schultz

NWC '90, WLS '94

(Pastor, Zion-Rhinelander WI)

“The Lord has greatly blessed our synod and its members, as well as my own immediate and extended family, over many decades through MLC and its predecessors. I very much

appreciate the opportunity to serve in the present operation and future planning for our college. I am glad to be working with the other board members, the administration, and the faculty, all of whom God has blessed with many different talents and a sincere dedication to common Christ-centered goals.

“The opportunities we have to reach out with the gospel are only increasing. The harvest is plentiful, and the Lord has given us a wonderful tool in MLC, to continue to fulfill its mission while adapting to the changing needs of our congregations and schools. It’s exciting to consider how the Lord will prepare and train the next generations of pastors, teachers, and staff ministers for us.”



## Larry Seafert

NWC '92, WLS '96

(Pastor, St. Bartholomew-Kawkawlin MI)

“I am happy to serve on the board at MLC so that I might be better informed about the college and what it has to offer to our students who may be considering the ministry in one form or another.

“MLC is one of a kind, blessed by God. The blessings of God are exciting to watch and to experience as God transforms young people into called workers and prepares them for lives of service to his kingdom.”



# FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

**Professor Peter Baganz** DMLC '87 (history/social science) presented "The History of DMLC" to the New Ulm Junior Pioneers in February.

**Professor Jacob Behnken** MLC '08, WLS '12 (dean of chapel) earned his MA in psychology from Liberty University. In February, he presented the keynote, "God's Masterpiece: Inspiring Art and Music in Every Child," at the Lake Lutheran Teachers' Conference at Jerusalem-Morton Grove IL.

**Professor Emeritus Ronald Brutlag** DMLC '69 served as a trustee for the Brown County Historical Society and continues to serve on the New Ulm Historical Preservation Committee. He also serves on the board of the MLC Alumni Association and as chair of the MLC Emeriti Committee.

**Dr. James Carlovsky** MLC '02, '10 (education, math) presented "Screen Time: Finding a Healthy Balance for Kids and Teens" at St. Paul-Arlington MN in November. He led an MLC OpenLearning Power Hour entitled "Boost Your Productivity with Creative AI Tools" in November. And he led a training session with Grace in Action entitled "Reimagining Education with AI: Tools, Tips, and Transformative Ideas" in December.

**Dr. Benjamin Clemons** MLC '03 (academic dean, Education and Staff Ministry) attended governing board meetings for the Asia Lutheran Seminary in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in February.

**Professor James Danell** NWC '86, WLS '90 (academic dean, Preseminary Studies) chaired the spring meeting of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in February. On behalf of the CICR, he attended the WELS / ELS annual Doctrine Committee meeting in Mankato MN in January and participated in a series of online discussions with leaders of the Biblical Lutheran Church of the United Kingdom in early 2025. He also led a German Christmas service at Beautiful Savior-Clarksville TN in December and presented "Adolph Hoenecke: Spiritual Father of the WELS" at the Minnesota River Valley Pastors' Conference in February.

**Dr. Susan Decker** MLC '13 (English) became a Certified Wellness Coach through the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) in December.

**Professor Paul Grubbs** MLC '01 (English) led an in-service, "Cross-Curricular Reading Strategies for Secondary Students," at New Ulm Public HS in January.

**Dr. Timothy Grundmeier** MLC '07 (history) participated in a panel titled "Teaching History Beyond Our Comfort Zone: Engaging with Christianities in the Classroom" at the biennial meeting of the Conference on Faith and History, held at Samford University (Birmingham AL) in October.

**Kristen Hanevik** (administrative assistant) was named to the Bethany Lutheran College Volleyball Hall of Fame in October.

**Dr. Philip Huebner** MLC '03, WLS '07 (adjunct, Graduate Studies) presented "Home, Church, and School: Connected through Christ and for Christ," a keynote address, at the Arizona-California District Teachers' Conference in November. In January, he traveled with Wisconsin LHS students to Antigua to deliver gifts of computers and Bible study tools to the members of St. John's Lutheran Church and School.

**Professor Paul Koelpin** NWC '85, WLS '90 (history, theology) was commissioned to write an essay for the 175th anniversary of WELS. "O God, Our Help in Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come: Thoughts on the Value of Studying the Church's History" was published in the winter 2025 issue of the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*. A preview of the essay, "The Value of History," appeared in the February 2025 issue of *Forward in Christ*. He also presented "Post-Exilic and Intertestamental History and Themes" at the Red Wing MN Pastors' Conference in January.

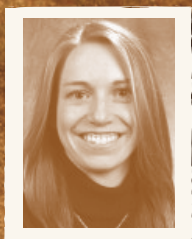
**Professor Emerita Dr. Carla Melendy** presented "STEM in PreK-K" at the Wisconsin Lutheran State Teachers' Conference in October.

**Dr. John Meyer** DMLC '87 (director, Graduate Studies and Continuing Education) presented "Trends in Lutheran Schools" at the Leadership Planning Meeting of St. Paul-New Ulm MN in January.

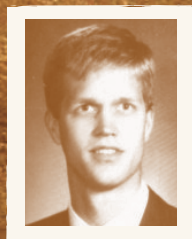
**Professor Thomas Nass** NWC '77, WLS '82 (Hebrew) participated in the meeting of WELS, ELS, and LCMS leaders in Florida in December. In January he taught a course for pastors on the book of Joel at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Winterim. Also in January, he presented "Lessons from Joel" to pastors' conferences in Baton Rouge LA and Omaha NE.



**Guy Marquardt**  
NWC 1990  
Appleton WI



**Joanna Kramer**  
MLC 2010  
Greenville WI



**Timothy Wempner**  
NWC 1990  
Marietta GA



**Micah Ricke**  
MLC 2010  
New Berlin WI

**Dr. Mark Paustian** NWC '84, WLS '88 (Hebrew, English) presented "Speak to My Heart," a five-session marriage retreat, in Waterford WI in November. He led a Bible study entitled "Where Two or Three" at St. John-New Ulm MN in November and December. He taught the course "Difficult Conversations: Interpersonal Conflict in the Life of the Pastor" at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's Winterim in January. Also in January, he presented the keynote, "The Power of Story: A Seminar for Developing Your Narrative Witnessing Playlist," at the Awake & Alive Winter Retreat in Brookfield WI and "Unleashing Our Callings," the keynote at a WELS Principals' Conference at Manitowoc LHS.

**Dr. Joel Pless** WLS '86 (adjunct, Graduate Studies) co-hosted a Wisconsin Lutheran College-Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary study tour of biblical Greece and Italy in January 2025.

**Dr. Jonathan Roux** DMLC '95 (education) presented the sectional "Get Roped into Writing!" at the Western Wisconsin District Teachers' Conference at St. Paul-Tomah WI in February.

**Professor David Scharf** MLC '00, WLS '05 (theology) presented "Tough Doctrines, Amazing Love" at the Pastor/Teacher Conference in Columbus OH (Michigan District) in January and "Just You and Jesus" at the Western Wisconsin District Teachers' Conference in February. In January and February, he also preached and presented for MLC Sundays at Immanuel-Greenville WI, Living Hope-Bloomington MN, Light of the Valley-Layton UT, and Living Hope-Wildomar CA.

**Professor Nicolas Schmoller** MLC '06, WLS '10 (Greek, theology) presented the keynote Bible study "Henceforth to Amend My Sinful Life: What Does This Mean?" at a five-college campus ministry retreat in Eau Claire WI in November.

**Professor Emeritus Steven Thiesfeldt** DMLC '74 served as a long-term substitute English teacher at Arizona Lutheran Academy in January.

**Instructor Elisabeth Urtel** (adjunct, fine arts) presented on the topic of women's vocation in the church to the women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya via Zoom in August. She also presented "Ye Lands, to the Lord Make a Jubilant Noise: The Formation of *The Lutheran Hymnal* as Told by the Norwegian Synod" at the Lutheran Historical Conference meeting in Baltimore in October. The paper will be published in an upcoming issue of *Lutheran Historical Conference Journal*.

**Professor Emeritus Dr. Wayne Wagner** DMLC '72 recently served as organ project consultant and as dedication service organist at Christ-Baxter MN and Mt. Calvary-Flagstaff AZ.

**Dr. Jeffery Wiechman** DMLC '92 (VP for Academics) presented "The Basics of Good Ministry Culture" at Good Shepherd-Burnsville MN in November. He also earned a "Coach the Coach" certification through Sibme.

As a member of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR), **Professor Nicolas Schmoller** (second from right) traveled to Uganda in July. He and Missionary **John Roebke** NWC '90, WLS '94 (*Lutheran Church-Malawi, far left*) presented a Bible study entitled "One Foundation: Determined to Agree" to support the leaders of the Obadiah Lutheran Synod (*pictured*). Schmoller also traveled to Chiang Mai, Thailand, in January to attend planning meetings for the WELS Asia One Team.



## On the Pods

### HOSTING

**Dr. Mark Paustian** and **John Wildauer** MLC '15 co-host *Where Two or Three*, where recent guests included **Professor David Scharf** MLC '00, WLS '05 ("Adult Education as Communication") and **Professor Paul Grubbs** MLC '01 ("A Christian View of Film and Mass Media").

### GUESTING

**Dr. James Carlovsky** guested on *WELSTech* ("AI Talk with Dr. James").

**Dr. Joel Pless** and **Dr. Glen Thompson** NWC '72, WLS '77 guested on *Let the Bird Fly* ("1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea").

**Instructor Elisabeth Urtel** guested on *With Reverence and Awe* ("The Involvement of the ELS with *The Lutheran Hymnal*").

**Dr. Mark Paustian** guested on four episodes of *Impact* hosted by **Mark Kjenstad** MLC '99 ("The Book of Ruth").



**Suzanne Tonder**  
DMLC 1980  
Bremerton WA



**Joshua Tomlin**  
MLC 2020  
Lannon WI



**Dana Twietmeyer**  
DMLC 1995  
Monee IL



**Stephen Kruschel**  
MLC 2005  
Redwood Falls MN

# 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. Many, many MLC students have an Elijah, someone who exemplified joyful ministry and encouraged them to consider ministry. Here are a few:



**Luke Wegner MLC '25**  
(*St. Marcus-Milwaukee*)

### HIS ELIJAH

**Pastor James Hein**  
MLC '04, WLS '08  
(*St. Marcus-Milwaukee*)

One of the main reasons that I came to MLC was my home pastor, Pastor James Hein. His sermons always spoke the gospel right to my heart, and that was something I wanted to do for other people too. (He also married me and my wife, Claudia *nee* Stuebs, *pictured*.) I didn't know if MLC would be the right fit, but I soon found out that the professors here care so much about their students and the Lord that they really pour their hearts into teaching and equipping the next generation of pastors and teachers. My professors always inspire me, and it's so cool to see them preach for morning chapel every day too.

**Elise Nolte MLC '26**  
(*Riverview-Appleton WI*)

### HER ELIJAH

**Jennifer Retzlaff DMLC '94**  
(*Now serving Divine Savior Academy-Sienna TX*)

Mrs. Jenny Retzlaff was the physics and engineering teacher and my track and field coach at Fox Valley LHS. She was an incredible role model of hard work and dedication, not only within the classroom and on the track, but through her evident love for Christ. I still remember her track "talks," which would start off with typical self-care reminders and would almost always finish with the comfort of our eternal goal of heaven. Her passion for the subjects she taught was contagious, and she was always willing to put in extra effort to help every student succeed.



**Jake Albrecht MLC '28**  
(*Christ Alone-Thiensville WI*)

### HIS ELIJAH

**Michael Albrecht DMLC '90**  
(*Heaven*)

Both of my parents [Michael DMLC '90, Heather DMLC '94] were teachers, so I've wanted to be a teacher my entire life. However, three years ago my dad passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. He was my hero, my greatest influence, and my rock. Coming to MLC and walking the same campus he walked was a very special thing for me. Ultimately, I want to continue to spread God's Word, just as my dad did to thousands. And I want to make a difference in someone's life and be able to help those who are struggling with any sort of problem, just as many people were there for me after my dad's death.

