



July 8, 2022

Dear Lay Leader,

Greetings in the name of Jesus from your seminary in Mequon! At the end of May, we had the privilege of seeing another graduating class assigned into the pastoral ministry of our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

This next year will mark 10 years since your pastor's graduation from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. We are encouraging your congregation to mark this anniversary by making it possible for your pastor and his wife to attend a retreat Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is organizing. This retreat (*Renewed in Grace*) will be held Wednesday, April 12, through Friday, April 14, 2023, in San Antonio, Texas.

This retreat (and other efforts such as mentoring for new pastors) is part of a comprehensive effort by your synod to strengthen and encourage those serving us in pastoral ministry. Investing in the growth and encouragement of our pastors is an investment in ongoing gospel ministry, both for your congregation and for your synod!

Here are comments from some who attended previous San Antonio retreats:

- Everything was wonderful, from the relevant topics to the fellowship/free time to the accommodations! It's hard to pick a highlight from such a wonderfully planned event.
- The Bible studies renewed my eagerness to serve. The fellowship was wonderful; it was so fun to catch up with everyone. We hadn't seen anyone there since graduation.
- I was thankful that the themes focused on joy in the personal Gospel and support for ministry struggles; I had been worried that the emphasis would be more on improving one's ministry skills, etc. There is surely a time and place for that sort of thing as well, but after an occasionally exhausting Lenten journey it was wonderful to just come and hear the good news without any guilt-tripping about things that could be done better! Thank you for the joyful Gospel focus!

Of course, as someone charged with being a good steward of your congregation's resources, we realize that the cost of this retreat is an important part of the decision you make. **While final costs for the 2023 retreat will depend on finalizing contracts with our vendors**, we hope to keep the costs comparable to previous years' retreats. Here are the estimated costs:

- Two nights hotel: \$ 399.54 (Including taxes)
- Retreat registration (per couple): \$ 399.00 (Registrations after January 2023 will be \$450)
- Travel/airfare (base amount per couple): \$ 700.00
- Total cost: \$ 1,498.54

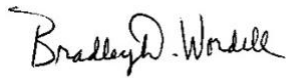
In the past, congregations have even gone above and beyond and gifted their pastors with the time to stay an extra day (or two) in San Antonio at the pastor's expense. As far as covering the costs, some congregations have simply put the cost into their budget. Others have used a door offering. Still others

have made the congregation aware of the opportunity and allowed members to respond with special gifts. You do what is wise in your situation.

Online registration will open in October, and we will send out further information to your pastor as that time approaches. We urge the leaders of your congregation to begin to discuss this opportunity to support your pastor's ministry. It is our prayer that with your congregation's support, your pastor and his wife will be among those who gather in San Antonio next year. More than that, it is our prayer that their attendance at the retreat proves a blessing to them and to you for many years to come!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or our event coordinator, Kim Workentine, at (Kimberly.Workentine@wisluthsem.org).

In Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bradley D. Wordell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Professor Brad Wordell
Grow in Grace Director