



FALL 2025

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

PROFESSOR AARON JENSEN INSTALLED

During the opening service on August 20, Rev. Dr. Aaron Jensen was installed as professor of systematic theology and homiletics. Prof. Jensen received his pastoral training at Luther Preparatory School (2003–2007), Martin Luther College (2007–2011), and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (2011–2015). He served his vicar year at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Green Bay, WI, under Pastor Jon Zabell. Since his ordination, he has earned a Master of Sacred Theology (STM) from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and a PhD in New Testament from South African Theological Seminary.

Prof. Jensen has served as associate pastor at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Adrian, MI (2015–2021), and as the sole pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Monticello, MN (2021–2025). He also served extended vacancies at Grace Lutheran Church in Tecumseh, MI (2018–2019), and Petra Lutheran Church in Sauk Rapids, MN (2023–2025). Since 2021, he has been part of the seminary's Grow in Grace team, initially as editor of *The Shepherd's Study* and more recently as editor of *The Four Branches Review*.



MOVING FORWARD WITH A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The WELS Synodical Council authorized the seminary to move forward with a capital campaign to support a proposed building project. The envisioned education center, which would provide six new classrooms with ample outside light and the space needed for collaborative learning, would connect to the current library and nearly close off the circle. A gathering hall attached to the current auditorium would provide students and their families a more comfortable place to meet than the dormitory basement, while also providing support for larger on-campus events. On-site faculty offices would facilitate more conversations between professors and students, as well as enhancing faculty collaboration.

The campaign, under the theme “Compelled: Honoring the Legacy, Shaping the Future,” is about to begin. As Christ's love compelled those who first built on the Mequon campus nearly a hundred years ago to do their very best for the preparation of future pastors, it also compels us to provide an excellent environment for a new generation of students. No date has been established to put a shovel in the ground, though construction would have to begin nearly immediately after the school year ended to minimize disruption of classes.

ENROLLMENT

The school year began with an enrollment of 153 students, about the same as last year, which was the highest in fifteen years. Forty-one of the students are seniors, which is the largest senior class in fifteen years. Thirty-seven men are serving as vicars. There are 45 students in the second-year class, the largest middler class in the last eighteen years. The first-year class has 30 students. Thank the Lord of the harvest for his answers to his people's prayer for workers!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 4: Friends of the Seminary Day
Oct 10–13: Midterm Break
Nov 21–30: Thanksgiving Break
Dec 14: Christmas Concerts
Jan 5–16: Winterim



PASTOR PARTNERS 15th ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the seminary's Pastor Partners Mentoring Program. It was begun as a pilot project in 2010 and was opened to all those graduating from the seminary in 2011. As of this summer, 247 WLS graduates have completed the three-year program. Another twenty-nine have participated for a shorter time. The vast majority of mentors and mentees testify to the program's value.

Every graduate this past May requested a mentor. All have received a mentor, or a Board for Home Missions (BHM) coach if they were assigned to a mission congregation. Tutors are assigned a mentor when they enter the parish ministry. This year there are a total of sixty-six mentors serving seventy-one mentees. Eleven mentors are new to the program. The others are veterans.

The annual mentor training seminar will take place September 23–24 following the WLS Fall Symposium. MLC President Richard Gurgel and Pastor Daron Lindemann will be the guest presenters. Both were instrumental in developing the program from the initial concept through its establishment. Their presentation will focus on the past, present, and future of mentoring through Pastor Partners.

PLANNING PASTORS

Courses are not the same as courses, of course, but they do have something in common: with planning they go better.

First, courses of food. With planning, the shopping and meal prep go better, and the meals, individually and collectively, are more likely to be delicious and nutritious.

Second, courses in continuing education (CE). With planning, they are more delicious, satisfying our desire to know and love more, and more nutritious, strengthening our faith and equipping us for works of service.

For such courses, planning is vital—by those who prepare them and those who participate. Our new tool for such planning is the Professional Development Plan (PDP) for pastors. The PDP is available on My WELS Cloud. Pastors will discuss and refine their CE plans at their circuit meetings this fall.

The data from the PDP will inform the seminary's efforts to prepare what pastors need and want. By their intentional and collaborative planning, pastors will make better use of the resources and courses available to them.

PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

a partnership of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and WELS Joint Missions

The Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI), a combined effort of WELS Joint Missions and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, teaches courses to PSI students around the world. Pastor Peter Schlicht of West Bend, Wisconsin, accompanied Prof. E. Allen Sorum on a recent trip to Latvia. Pastor Schlicht explains how this invitation came about:

“Ugis (a Latvian pastor) and I connected during 2024 Summer Quarter classes in Mequon. He invited me to come to Latvia. In the weeks that followed, he was very kind and sincere. A plan soon began to take shape with the guidance of Prof. Sorum.”

From July 31 through August 11, Pastor Schlicht preached in various Latvian Lutheran (CELC) congregations and taught his course, “Christ in the Old Testament,” to the Latvian pastors, pastoral students, and young men interested in studying with the group. Prof. Sorum taught a course on biblestorying as a format for devotions and evangelism. Pre-trip coordination enhanced both of their courses. Pastor Schlicht's musical abilities greatly added to the group's devotional and fellowship experiences. All participants enjoyed this opportunity even as it stretched into the late hours of the evening.

WELS in convention this past summer adopted a ten-year vision, the first point of which is to “forge a borderless global support network.” Pastor Schlicht's time in Latvia with fellow Lutherans is a superb fulfillment of this first objective of our vision. Pastor Schlicht reflects on the value of this borderless global support network in action:

“On the final Saturday, I spent some time with one of the theological students who shared with me that participating in the classes and singing hymns together was ‘just what I needed right now’ and that it is ‘easy to feel alone.’ Moments like this underscore the privilege of walking alongside these brothers in Christ and, if only in a small way, encouraging them to rejoice in Jesus and in our shared Lutheran fellowship.”

