

CATALOG

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

2026 – 2027



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Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) is to equip pastors for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod or for churches and cultural groups within its confessional fellowship.

In partnership with sister seminaries and theological training programs of its fellowship, WLS accomplishes that singular purpose with two distinct emphases:

- Primarily, WLS prepares men to begin pastoral ministry by providing the spiritual, theological, and professional training needed to enter that ministry.
- WLS also partners with pastors in their ministry—long pursuit of spiritual, theological, and professional growth in their various God-given vocations.

To carry out its purpose WLS has established the following objectives:

- to lead theological students and pastors in a reverent study of the inspired and inerrant Word of God so that they are able to understand and apply its Christ-centered message of law and gospel;
- to encourage theological students and pastors to grow in their personal faith through daily contact with the means of grace;
- to teach all the areas of the theological curriculum in a thorough and scholarly fashion, in full harmony with the Holy Scriptures and in conscious agreement with the Lutheran Confessions;
- to train theological students and pastors in the skills required for ministry in an ever-changing world;
- to instill in theological students and pastors the kinds of attitudes that will assist them as they carry out their ministry in the contemporary world, e.g.,

Confessional in stance
Evangelical in approach
Mission-minded in spirit
Culturally sensitive
Appropriately flexible
Zealous both to nurture and to equip the saints.

All the work of the seminary on campus, in field work, and in its service to the church, is focused on fulfilling these objectives.

General Information

ACCREDITATION

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (www.ats.edu) and is approved to offer the following degrees: MDiv and STM.

HISTORY

The Wisconsin Synod was founded in 1850 by pastors sent to America by European mission societies. The time was opportune because of the numbers of German immigrants coming into the state. Unfortunately, many of the synod's first pastors had not received sound Lutheran training. The synod's early growth was hampered because it lacked a steady supply of well-trained Lutheran pastors.

When Pastor John Bading was elected president in 1860, he began to promote the establishment of a seminary as a way to ensure both the quantity and quality of pastors that the growth of the synod necessitated. A growing number of pastoral vacancies in the year 1862 made the founding of a seminary imperative. Bading declared, "We must in our country, in our synod, establish a source from which workers will flow. If we wait with the founding of such an institution until we are rich, nothing will ever happen."

The synod responded positively even though money was tight and the Civil War was raging. The Theological Seminary of the Wisconsin Synod was formally opened in the fall of 1863 at Watertown, Wisconsin. Instruction in theology was initially given by Professor Edward Moldehnke, PhD, in the school building of St. Mark's congregation. On September 14, 1865, the synod's college (first known as "Wisconsin University," then as "Northwestern University," and eventually "Northwestern College") opened its doors, and for five years the seminary was operated in conjunction with it. Moldehnke resigned in 1866 and Adolf Hoenecke, who had been called to assist him, replaced him as seminary director.

In 1870 the students of the theological department were transferred to Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Missouri, in accordance with an arrangement made with the Missouri Synod to conduct a seminary jointly. The Wisconsin Synod was supposed to supply a professor but was not able to do so.

Eight years later the Wisconsin Synod reopened its own seminary, this time in Milwaukee, where it remained from 1878 until 1893. It was housed first in private residences and later in a remodeled building in Eimermann's Park, now 13th and Vine Streets.

An important milestone in the synod's history was reached in 1892 when a federation of the synods of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan was effected and Wisconsin's seminary became the federation's seminary. Because of increased enrollment, a new and larger seminary building was erected at 60th and Lloyd Streets in Wauwatosa and was dedicated in 1893. During the Wauwatosa years the seminary faculty began publishing a theological journal which today is known as the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*. The small Wauwatosa faculty soon produced a wealth of theological literature.

By the 1920s the seminary building in Wauwatosa was no longer adequate and the synod did not have clear title to the property. A building committee was tasked with finding a new location, hiring an architectural firm, raising the funds for the new campus, and paying off the synodical

General Information

debt. The synod was able to purchase an eighty-acre farm for \$25,000 just outside the west limits of the village of Thiensville, about fifteen miles north of downtown Milwaukee. The present building complex was dedicated on August 18, 1929. The service was attended by one of the largest gatherings of Wisconsin Synod members in history. The entire project was paid in full by the day of dedication.

Financial difficulties during the Great Depression and World War II meant that large numbers of graduates for a time were without calls into the public ministry. However, Wisconsin Synod expansion, beginning already in the war years and continuing through the 1970s, brought about the need for more pastors. Increasing enrollments resulted in faculty and campus expansion. Four professorages were included in the original campus construction. The seminary added a fifth in 1948, a sixth in 1953, and a seventh in 1955. As the synod authorized the calling of additional professors, four more professorages were built in the late 1960s and six more in the early 1970s. An additional home, designated as the president's residence, was completed in 2022.

In 1958 an addition to the main complex was approved to provide an office for the seminary president and secretarial staff. In 1963, the 100th anniversary of the seminary's founding, two new sections were added to the dormitory. In 1968 a library addition was completed providing space for a faculty room and a large classroom which soon became known as the multi-purpose room. A new auditorium/gymnasium was dedicated on October 5, 1986. The old gym was remodeled to provide three classrooms and space for the synodical archives in 1988. In 2019 those archives were moved to WELS Center for Mission and Ministry.

When the city of Mequon was incorporated in 1957, the seminary's address changed from Thiensville to Mequon. The synod changed the school's name to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1959.

The first annual mission seminar was held on campus in 1960. Students planned the seminars in consultation with mission board executives. Missionaries and mission board members made presentations with active student participation. These seminars continue to be held today under the title "Mission and Ministry."

In 2000, in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of WELS, the seminary hosted a symposium under the theme "Forward in Christ at the Dawn of a New Millennium." Since then, the seminary has hosted a symposium every fall, inviting pastors or professors of the synod to present essays on a common theme. Several hundred pastors join seminary students and faculty on campus for mutual growth and fellowship.

The Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) was started in 2003 to guide the training of non-traditional students from different cultures or different careers for service as pastors in the Wisconsin Synod and to provide opportunity for mutual encouragement with seminary programs in our fellowship around the world. As opportunities for service increased, the seminary, in partnership with the Board for World Missions and the Joint Missions Council, expanded the staff, culminating in the establishment of the PSI Team in 2016. In 2020 the seminary created an Admissions Committee to assist the president with the enrollment of second career students.

Although the core curriculum has remained the same throughout the years, there have been additions to the seminary program. The seminary added a required vicar year of practical service under an experienced pastor in the field in the 1965-66 school year. There have been new courses in evangelism and counseling and an expansion of courses in Christian education. A two-week "Winterim" held after Christmas break was added in the 2003-04 school year to enable students to

General Information

participate in mission trips, trips to the Holy Land and to the sites and cities of St. Paul's missionary journeys, archeological digs, and intensive academic courses on campus.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary added a Summer Quarter Program for Continuing Education in 1972. In the ensuing years several different advanced degrees were offered. Currently, the Master of Sacred Theology (STM) is offered. The first director of continuing education was appointed in 2010 and Grow in Grace, the seminary's institute for continuing education, was begun.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The central seminary building complex resembles the architecture of the Wartburg Castle, where Luther translated the New Testament into German. The impressive seminary tower divides the building into two areas: the residence hall and dining hall lie to the west and the administration-classroom building, chapel, and library to the east.

On the west side of the arch the residence hall, consisting of eight units, can accommodate about 80 students. The dining hall contains the kitchen facilities and a dining area seating approximately 150. The mission advancement, Pastoral Studies Institute, and Grow in Grace offices are also located on this side of the arch.

On the east side of the arch, the administration-classroom wing contains the offices of the president, financial aid officer, dean of students, dean of chapel, the business office, and all of the classrooms. Attached to this wing of the building are the chapel, library, faculty room, and multi-purpose assembly room. Most worship services are held in the chapel, part of the original campus complex but extensively renovated through private gifts during the 2004-05 school year. The 200-seat chapel houses a baptismal font, a freestanding altar, a 25-rank Martin Ott pipe organ, and a Yamaha grand piano. The chapel is equipped to record and live stream worship services. It also allows for flexible seating. The chancel windows, reredos, and lectern from the previous chapel have been preserved in a preaching classroom.

The library was constructed in 1968, and in 1997 an online catalog was completed. The catalog is on the internet via the seminary's website. At present, the library contains over 60,000 physical items, including 4,000 rare books and 1,000 serial titles. The online essay file and other digital collections contain over 7,000 items. The library's collection of books and periodicals has grown slowly but steadily through budgetary funding and through generous gifts and bequests. The library provides bibliographic services not only to students and faculty, but also to pastors, teachers, and lay people throughout the synod. It also contains offices, work space, and private study rooms.

An auditorium-gymnasium with a seating capacity of 1200 was constructed in 1986. This building provides a venue for large worship gatherings and seminars, including the annual Christmas and graduation concerts, Call Day and graduation services, Mission and Ministry Seminar, and fall symposium. A Schimmel grand piano and a Rodgers electronic organ enhance worship in the auditorium-gymnasium. The building also provides facilities for intramural sports. It houses a weight room equipped with free and machine weights, treadmills, and other fitness equipment. Outdoor recreational facilities include a soccer field.

A map of the campus can be found on page 27 of this catalog.

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PAST AND PRESENT FACULTY AND PRESIDENTS

The following have formerly served on the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS):

(* Professor Emeritus; † Deceased)

Edward F. Moldehnke†	1863–1866	John C. Jeske†	1969–1995
Adolph Hoenecke†	1866–1870	Edward C. Fredrich†	1970–1991
	1878–1908	Joel C. Gerlach†	1971–1981
Eugen A. Notz†	1878–1902	Richard D. Balge†	1971–2002
August L. Graebner†	1878–1887	Martin O. Westerhaus†	1972–1995
Gottlieb A. Thiele†	1887–1900	David P. Kuske†	1973–2003
Reinhold Adelberg†	1897–1901	Paul E. Nitz†	1974–1997
John P. Koehler†	1900–1929	Armin J. Panning†	1975–2001
August O. W. Pieper†	1902–1941	Ernst H. Wendland†	1978–1986
John Schaller†	1908–1920	James J. Westendorf*	1982–2011
Hermann E. Meyer†	1915–1920	Leroy A. Dobberstein†	1982–1999
John P. Meyer†	1920–1964	John F. Brug*	1983–2015
William F. Henkel†	1920–1929	David J. Valleskey*	1984–2004
Gerhard H. Ruediger†	1921–1927	Wayne D. Mueller†	1984–1990
Frederic Brenner†	1929–1940	James P. Tiefel†	1985–2020
Max Lehninger†	1929–1952	Harold R. John†	1986–1998
August F. Zicht†	1931–1939	John D. Schuetze*	1997–2024
Paul W. Peters†	1939–1966	Alan H. Siggelkow*	1991–2010
Adalbert Schaller†	1940–1952	John M. Brenner*	1991–2021
Edmund C. Reim†	1940–1957	Forrest L. Bivens*	1993–2015
Carl J. Lawrenz†	1944–1982	John P. Hartwig*	1995–2020
Hilton C. Oswald†	1945–1960	Mark G. Zarling	1996–2007
Frederic E. Blume†	1952–1974	James F. Korthals*	1997–2017
Gerald O. Hoenecke†	1952–1978	Daniel P. Leyrer	1998–2016
Arthur P. Voss†	1954–1955	Richard L. Gurgel	1999–2020
Heinrich J. Vogel†	1956–1982	John C. Lawrenz†	2000–2004
Armin W. Schuetze†	1958–1990	Paul O. Wendland*	2001–2023
Martin Albrecht†	1962–1985	Paul E. Zell	2002–2017
Wilbert R. Gawrisch†	1965–1993	Michael J. Quandt	2007–2013
Martin W. Lutz†	1966–1971	Bill J. Tackmier*	2010–2025
Irwin J. Habeck†	1966–1984	Thomas D. Kock	2014–2021
Siegbert W. Becker†	1969–1984	Jonathan M. Bare	2021–2022

The following have formerly served as presidents of WLS: (* Professor Emeritus; † Deceased)

Edward F. Moldehnke†	1863–1866	Edmund C. Reim†	1953–1957
Adolph Hoenecke†	1866–1870	Carl J. Lawrenz†	1957–1978
	1878–1908	Armin W. Schuetze†	1978–1985
John Schaller†	1908–1920	Armin J. Panning†	1985–1996
John P. Koehler†	1920–1929	David J. Valleskey*	1996–2004
August O. W. Pieper†	1929–1937	Paul O. Wendland*	2004–2019
John P. Meyer†	1937–1953		

General Information

General Information

The following currently serve on the faculty of WLS:

(Year indicates when professor started serving at WLS)

Professor Earle D. Treptow (2016), President	Systematic Theology
Professor E. Allen Sorum (2004)	Missiology, New Testament
Professor Stephen H. Geiger (2005)	New Testament, Education
Professor Kenneth A. Cherney, Jr. (2006)	Old Testament, Systematic Theology
Professor Joel D. Otto (2011)	Church History, Education
Professor Bradley D. Wordell (2015)	Old Testament
Professor Samuel C. Degner (2017)	Evangelism, New Testament
Professor Robert E. Wendland (2017)	Church History, Homiletics
Professor Steven J. Pagels (2019)	Systematic Theology, Homiletics
Professor Nathan R. Ericson (2019)	Education
Professor Aaron L. Christie (2020)	Worship, Homiletics
Professor Jonathan A. Micheel (2020)	Homiletics, Church History
Professor David F. Bivens (2020)	New Testament, Homiletics
Professor Joel A. Russow (2022)	Pastoral Theology, Systematic Theology
Professor Paul S. Waldschmidt (2022)	Education, Old Testament
Professor Harland H. Goetzinger (2023)	
Professor Noah M. Headrick (2023)	Old Testament, Homiletics
Professor Aaron M. Jensen (2025)	Systematic Theology, Homiletics

Administration

GOVERNING BOARD

(Year indicates end of current term of service)

Pastor Stephen G. Helwig, Chairman (2027)	Omaha, NE
Pastor Geoffrey C. Cortright (2028)	Vancouver, BC
Mr. Gregory A. Green (2028)	Omaha, NE
Mr. Thomas F. Kissinger (2028)	Pewaukee, WI
Mr. Clayton W. Raasch (2026)	Stillwater, MN
Pastor Eric E. Steinbrenner (2026)	Livonia, MI
Teacher Philip L. Stern (2026)	Freedom, WI
Pastor Karl A. Walther (2028)	Watertown, WI
<i>Ex Officio Member</i>	
Pastor Mark G. Schroeder	President, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
<i>Advisory Members</i>	
Pastor Jonathan R. Balge	Former Governing Board Member
Pastor Daniel P. Leyrer	President, Southeastern Wisconsin District
Mr. Brian A. Treichel	Business Manager, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Professor Earle D. Treptow	President, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Pastor Charles D. Vannieuwenhoven	Administrator, Board for Ministerial Education

COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

(First named is chairman)

Executive	Pastor Stephen Helwig, Pastor Karl Walther
Fiscal and Property	Pastor Stephen Helwig
Student Life	Pastor Jonathan Balge
Faculty Care	Gregory Green, Pastor Eric Steinbrenner
Academic Affairs	Philip Stern
Mission Advancement	Thomas Kissinger
Grow in Grace	Clayton Raasch
Pastoral Studies Institute	Pastor Karl Walther, Pastor Geoffrey Cortright

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Professor Earle D. Treptow	President
Professor Stephen H. Geiger	Vice President, Financial Aid Officer
Professor Robert E. Wendland	Secretary
Professor Joel D. Otto	Dean of Students, Recruitment Officer
Professor Nathan R. Ericson	Library Director, Managing Editor of <i>Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly</i>
Professor Harland H. Goetzinger	Director of Pastoral Studies Institute
Professor Bradley D. Wordell	Director of Grow in Grace
Professor Aaron L. Christie	Dean of Chapel
Professor Samuel C. Degner	Academic Dean
Professor Joel A. Russow	Campus Counselor
Professor Paul S. Waldschmidt	Director of Instruction
Professor Steven J. Pagels	Director of Student Field Services
Professor Jonathan A. Micheel	Registrar

Administration

PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE TEAM

Professor Harland H. Goetzinger
Professor E. Allen Sorum
Professor David F. Bivens

SUPPORT STAFF

Administration and Business

Brian Treichel Business Manager and Treasurer
Mandy Degner Accountant
Leah Leyrer Administrative Assistant to the President
Nola Zemlicka Faculty Secretary

Buildings and Grounds

Joel Zak Campus Grounds Supervisor
Link Gross Maintenance Supervisor
Justin Becker Maintenance
Dave George Painter
Kay Kieper Custodial Supervisor
Jeanette Guse Custodian

Food Service

Jeannie Goljenboom Director
Nicolette Goodrich Food Service
Tom Millot Food Service
Cindy Mieszala Food Service

Grow in Grace

Naomi Strusz Executive Assistant
Kim Workentine Marketing & Event Coordinator

Library

Laura Guzman Assistant Librarian

Mission Advancement

Sean Young Director
Barbara Rickaby Communications Coordinator
Christine Himm Raiser's Edge Coordinator/Event Planner

Pastoral Studies Institute

Nola Zemlicka Executive Assistant

Technology

Jeff Mitchell Technology Services Coordinator

Administration

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE FACULTY

(First named is chairman; president is ex officio member of all committees)

Admissions Committee	Treptow, Cherney, Headrick, Otto, Russow, Sorum
Catalog	Headrick
Continuing Education	Wordell, Cherney, Wendland
Curriculum & Instruction	Degner, Cherney, Russow, Treptow, Waldschmidt, Wendland
Educational Resources & Technology	Ericson, Geiger, Treptow, Waldschmidt
Preach the Gospel	Micheel, Bivens, Headrick
Scholarship & Financial Aid	Geiger, Christie, Otto, Pagels, Sorum, Treptow
Senior Thesis	Wordell, Degner, Ericson, Jensen, Treptow
Special Events & Lecture	Bivens, Christie, Jensen, Treptow
Strategic Planning	Pagels, Degner, Treptow, Waldschmidt
Student Field Services	Geiger, Otto, Pagels, Treptow

DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN

Education	Otto	Pastoral Theology	Degner
Historical Theology	Wendland	Systematic Theology	Pagels
New Testament	Geiger	Worship	Micheel
Old Testament	Cherney		

Admissions

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

An unimpeachable Christian character is a basic requirement for enrollment. Enrollment at the seminary also normally requires the applicant to have completed a baccalaureate program, with an emphasis on language—especially the biblical languages—and history, or to have earned its reasonable equivalent in college credits. A good working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is a prerequisite for seminary courses. In addition, the seminary expects that all students who have pursued the regular pre-seminary course will have the equivalent of three college years of a language other than the biblical languages of Greek and Hebrew.

APPLICATIONS

The president of the seminary is the chief admissions officer of the seminary. All applications are processed by the president's office in conjunction with the seminary's Admissions Committee, when needed. Applications should be submitted well in advance of the opening date of the school year for which students hope to enroll.

The student applying as a graduate of Martin Luther College (MLC) is to submit his application with the endorsing signature of the president of MLC, together with a transcript of his college credits, following the established procedure at MLC.

Any MLC graduate who delays seeking admission to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary should contact the president's administrative assistant (leah.leyrer@wls.edu) by April 15 prior to the start of school in the year he wishes to enroll.

Any other potential student seeking seminary training in the United States from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod who has not received either a bachelor of arts degree or a seminary certification from MLC should contact the Admissions Committee through the president's office.

Students from other cultures or countries may apply through the seminary's Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI). To apply or request more information contact the director of the institute at psi@wls.edu.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary requires a Caregiver Background Check as a prerequisite for admission. The student from MLC will submit the appropriate forms along with his application through the office of the president of MLC. The PSI student will submit the appropriate forms along with his application through the office of the PSI director.

REGISTRATION

All enrolled MDiv students are expected to register in the business office by the end of the first full day of the first week in the fall semester.

Finances

STUDENT COSTS (2026-27)

The following student costs have been set for the current school year. Tuition, board, and room charges may be revised at any time as changing economic conditions may demand. Total costs may be paid in full during registration week or the student may elect the installment program consisting of nine payments, with the first one due at registration.

All Students	Annual	
General Registration	\$290.00	(payable at registration)
Tuition	\$14,625.00	(nine \$1,625.00 installments)
Dormitory Students		
Board & Room	\$10,710.00	(nine \$1,190.00 installments)
Off-Campus Students		
Noon Meals (Monday-Friday)	\$2,025.00	(nine \$225.00 installments)

The seminary's master of divinity degree program is approved for U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.

VICAR FINANCES

Since students cannot engage in outside gainful employment during their vicar year, all vicars receive a monthly stipend from August 15 through August 14. The amount of this monthly stipend is reviewed and set annually by the synod's Conference of Presidents. Vicar housing costs are subsidized, and provision is made for medical insurance covering the vicar (and his family). The vicar congregation reimburses him for the use of his vehicle on vicar assignments and for the cost of one round trip between his home and the place of vicarship.

GRANTS-IN-AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The seminary has funds from various sources available for grants-in-aid and scholarships. Gifts from individuals and congregations provide significant support. An additional source is earnings from the investment of bequests and gifts.

Academic achievement and campus service are the primary factors considered in the selection of scholarship recipients. Declared financial need is the basis of determining grant recipients. In recommending grant recipients and amounts, the financial aid committee invites student applications.

Upon recommendation of the scholarship and financial aid committee, the faculty awards grants-in-aid and scholarships in October and February. The governing board reviews these awards in its fall and winter meetings. In a typical school year, all of the student body receives financial assistance from school funds. For students with demonstrated financial need, financial assistance derived from all sources will, on average, cover the cost of tuition.

GIFTS TO THE SEMINARY

God's people support the gospel mission of the seminary in various ways. Congregational Mission Offerings (CMO) to the synod remain an important source of support. Individuals and groups often

Finances

choose to support the seminary directly. Gifts to the Seminary Fund provide support for the day-to-day operations of the seminary. Gifts to the Scholarship Fund help the seminary provide financial assistance directly to students.

Academic Policies

ACADEMIC RECORD

The seminary's grading policy is based on the conviction that a considerable variety and range of gifts find a place in the public ministry of the church, that almost without exception all of its students already possess such gifts, and that the emphasis in seminary training should therefore be placed on each individual student's faithful use of his particular gifts and talents. To help each student assess how he is using his gifts and talents, the seminary issues academic reports and distributes them shortly after the end of each semester.

Students are advised upon enrolling at the seminary that their academic grades for the various courses of each semester of seminary work are kept on record by the registrar in the event a student requires a transcript for prospective employers, scholarship applications, or future graduate study.

The school year is divided into two semesters of about eighty days each. The student's academic record is kept on the basis of this semester system.

GRADES AND RATING

The grades entered into the school records are to be understood as follows:

Grade	Percent	Grade Points	Description
A+	99-100	4.33	Outstanding
A	95-98	4.00	Excellent
A-	93-94	3.67	Very good
B+	91-92	3.33	Above average
B	87-90	3.00	Average
B-	85-86	2.67	Fair
C+	83-84	2.33	Below average
C	79-82	2.00	Poor
C-	77-78	1.67	Marginal
D+	75-76	1.33	Unsatisfactory; significant remedial work is needed to receive credit for the course
D	72-74	1.00	
D-	70-71	0.67	
F	Below 70		Failure; course must be repeated
I	Incomplete		Temporary grade granted upon request to a student who, for a cogent reason, has work that is incomplete; grade may be lowered if work is not completed at the time agreed on when the student requested this grade. Any incomplete becomes an F at the end of the following semester.

ENROLLING IN OTHER SCHOOLS

The seminary does not permit students to enroll in courses at other institutions during the regular school year. The faculty may grant a one-year leave of absence, preferably after his vicar year, to a student who wishes to pursue an approved course of study elsewhere.

Academic Policies

Academic Policies

TRANSCRIPTS

A transcript of credits will be issued to former students upon request to the registrar. There will be no charge for a student's first transcript, but a fee of five dollars is required for each subsequent transcript. Requests for transcripts should be made at least two weeks in advance of the date when they are needed.

GRADUATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF CALLS

Participation in the graduation service is extended to students who have satisfactorily completed the prescribed course of study and find themselves in confessional agreement with the public doctrine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The call into the pastoral ministry is issued through the Assignment Committee of WELS. Assignment lists can be viewed [here](#).

Curriculum

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

All training at the seminary is carried out in the light of the gospel under the full authority of the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. All teaching is carried out in conscious harmony with the Lutheran Confessions as the correct understanding of the Bible's message.

MASTER OF DIVINITY CURRICULUM

The master of divinity (MDiv) curriculum consists of a theological introduction and courses divided into four key concentrations: Biblical Theology, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology. Listed below are the general overview of each key concentration and the listing of classes contained therein. Courses numbered 1000–1999 are offered for juniors (first-year students); 2000–2999 for middlers (second-year students); and 3000–3999 for seniors (fourth-year students). Master of divinity classes are conducted on a semester basis from Monday through Friday in five fifty-minute periods each day. The school day begins at 7:30 a.m. and concludes at 12:30 p.m.

THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

Biblical Hermeneutics – As an introduction to biblical studies, this course examines the principles governing genuinely Christian interpretation of the Scriptures in their original languages. In the study of New Testament grammar, the student reviews the characteristics of Hellenistic and New Testament Greek, particularly as distinguished from classical Greek. The student also learns the basic principles of textual criticism so as to be able to use the critical text profitably. The text used for the study of the New Testament is that of the United Bible Societies. The critical Hebrew text of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* is used for the study of the Old Testament.

NT1010	Hermeneutics	
1st semester	3 credit hours	Bivens

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Biblical Exegesis – Thorough, intensive, and reverent study of the Holy Scriptures is the very heart of seminary training. No one can be a God-pleasing public witness of Christ unless with a believing heart he understands the message which our God and Savior has called us to proclaim to a world of sinners. Certain books of the Bible are taught with special thoroughness in exegetical courses. In this study, individual words and phrases, as well as literary structure, are examined on the basis of the original Hebrew and Greek texts. Intensive language study during his college training has prepared the seminary student for this work. Exegetical study of both an Old and a New Testament book occurs in each of the three academic years.

OT1001	Genesis I	
1st semester	4 credit hours	Headrick, Waldschmidt
OT1002	Genesis II	
2nd semester	3 credit hours	Headrick
OT2001	Selected Psalms I	
1st semester	2 credit hours	Headrick
OT2002	Selected Psalms II	
2nd semester	2 credit hours	Wordell

Curriculum

OT3001 1st semester	Isaiah 40-66 3 credit hours	Cherney
NT1011 2nd semester	Galatians 3 credit hours	Bivens
NT2010 1st semester	Pastoral Epistles 3 credit hours	Degner
NT2011 2nd semester	Ephesians 3 credit hours	Geiger
NT3011 2nd semester	Romans 1-8 3 credit hours	Geiger

Biblical Isagogics – Those books of the Bible that are not studied exegetically either at the seminary or during the student’s college years are covered in a more cursory manner. This is done in the courses in Old and New Testament isagogics (introduction). Here emphasis is on becoming acquainted with the overall scope of Old and New Testament Bible history. Students become familiar with the content and line of thought of the biblical books as well as the content of each chapter. The courses also cover what is known about the inspired writers and the time and circumstances of writing.

NT1018 1st semester	New Testament Isagogics I 5 credit hours	Geiger
NT1019 2nd semester	New Testament Isagogics II 4 credit hours	Degner, Sorum
OT2004 1st semester	Old Testament Isagogics I 5 credit hours	Wordell
OT3004 2nd semester	Old Testament Isagogics II 5 credit hours	Cherney

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Church History – Courses in church history are offered during each of the three academic years. Students study how our God and Savior has ruled in both grace and judgment throughout world history, from our Lord’s ascension to the present day. These courses emphasize that God has directed all things toward his one great purpose: gathering his church of believers from every nation through the gospel. Students learn to recognize how the erroneous thinking and sinful actions of people have repeatedly corrupted the message of law and gospel and hindered the building of Christ’s church. At the same time, they see how God, in his might and mercy, has continually raised up faithful confessors to expose error and to restore and preserve the pure proclamation of his saving Word. The study of church history sharpens discernment against subtle error and deepens joyful confidence in the gospel as the one power of God for salvation.

Courses in the Lutheran Confessions aim to give students a thorough understanding of the doctrinal content of the confessional writings and to demonstrate how they faithfully present the truths of Scripture. These courses emphasize the historical circumstances that led to each confession. Students learn the purpose and importance of confessions in the life of the church, as well as the meaning and significance of confessional subscription.

Curriculum

The Ecumenical Creeds and the Smalcald Articles are studied at Martin Luther College and are prerequisites for seminary work. Luther's catechisms receive focused attention within the Christian education curriculum.

CH1033 1st semester	From Pentecost to Pre-Reformation 5 credit hours	Wendland
CH1038 2nd semester	Augsburg Confession and the Apology 3 credit hours	Micheel, Wendland
CH2031 2nd semester	The Reformation Era 4 credit hours	Otto
CH3031 1st semester	Modern Christianity 4 credit hours	Otto
CH3038 1st semester	Formula of Concord 2 credit hours	Micheel

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Doctrines of the Lutheran Church (Dogmatics) – Students study the doctrines of Holy Scripture for four semesters in their middler and senior years. These courses help the student gain a thorough knowledge of the whole will of God for Christian faith and life. This intensive two-year study of Christian doctrine aims to give those who are preparing to become public ministers of the gospel a clear and comprehensive understanding of the truths of God's Word. This will enable them to preach and teach with the assurance, "This is what the Lord says." Students write several papers on topics of their choice. Opportunities are provided for German, Latin, and Spanish research.

ST2021 1st semester	Theology and Anthropology I 5 credit hours	Jensen
ST2022 2nd semester	Anthropology II and Christology 4 credit hours	Jensen
ST3021 1st semester	Soteriology I 5 credit hours	Russow, Treptow
ST3022 2nd semester	Soteriology II, Eschatology 5 credit hours	Russow, Treptow

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Christian Education – The seminary aims to produce pastoral candidates who can seize the numerous teaching and learning opportunities present in public ministry. The course in the junior year lays a foundation by teaching the principles and methods which are basic to Christian education at any level (child, youth, adult). In this context, Luther's Large Catechism is also studied. In the middler year students learn to apply these principles and methods as they prepare catechism lessons and youth and adult Bible classes. Students are also involved in supervised classroom teaching of catechism lessons in a Lutheran elementary school. In the senior year the emphasis is on developing and administering a comprehensive program of education in the congregation. One portion of the course concentrates on the program for adult education; the other focuses on the educational program for the entire congregation.

ED1061 2nd semester	Principles of Christian Education 2 credit hours	Waldschmidt
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Curriculum

ED2061

1st semester

ED3061

2nd semester

Methods in Christian Education

4 credit hours

Ericson, Waldschmidt

Educational Programs for Children, Youth, & Adults

3 credit hours

Waldschmidt

Curriculum

Pastoral Theology – The courses in pastoral theology present the scriptural principles and their practical application according to which a Lutheran pastor will shepherd his congregation as he administers the work of the congregation; ministers to the sick and the dying; counsels the troubled, the distressed, the tempted, and the erring; and reaches out into the community with the gospel. Pastoral leadership, cross-cultural mission work, and stewardship also are emphasized. Special attention is paid to the vicar and his work in relation to the vicar’s supervising pastor and to his further studies at the seminary.

PT1042 1st semester	Foundations of Evangelism 1 credit hour	Degner
PT2041 2nd semester	Principles of Pastoral Theology 3 credit hours	Russow
PT2042 1st semester	Culture & Communication 1 credit hour	Degner
PT2081 2nd semester	Mission Perspectives 1 credit hour	Sorum
PT3041 1st semester	Pastoral Counseling I 2 credit hours	Russow
PT3044 2nd semester	Spiritual, Professional Growth 1 credit hour	Wordell
PT3045 2nd semester	Pastoral Counseling II 1 credit hour	Russow
PT3047 2nd semester	Parish Leadership 1 credit hour	Sorum
PT3048 2nd semester	Parish Evangelism 1 credit hour	Degner

Worship – Students are prepared for participation in public worship by means of courses that cover the traditional disciplines of homiletics and liturgics. Training in both areas begins in the junior year. The Function and Form of Christian Worship leads students to understand objectives of worship and principles that guide the forms of worship, with special focus on the historical and contemporary use of the Christian liturgy and the services of the Daily Office. Preaching in Christian Worship IA and IB covers homiletical theory and begins the training that will enable the student to prepare a text study, a basic and expanded outline, and a written sermon. As part of the course, each student writes two sermons on gospel texts and preaches them to the members of his class. After Easter, juniors are encouraged to preach their class sermons in congregations.

Training for preaching continues during the middler year in Preaching in Christian Worship IIA and IIB. After a review of basic theory and topics central to the contemporary task of proclamation, the students are introduced to the unique features of preaching on Old Testament narratives and New Testament epistles. Each student then preaches two sermons in a congregation, the first on an Old Testament narrative text, and the second on an epistle text.

Studies in worship and preaching are combined in the senior year in Preaching and Presiding in Christian Worship. The course includes a review of key liturgical and homiletical principles and includes opportunities for practical discussions concerning worship planning and leadership. Students are also introduced to narrative and inductive preaching styles. During the semester, students prepare one sermon that is preached in a congregation.

Curriculum

Except in cases of emergency, students are not to deliver any sermon that has not been approved by a member of the faculty or the pastor in whose church the sermon is to be preached.

WR1051-1052 1st & 2nd semester	Preaching in Christian Worship IA and IB 2 credit hours	Jensen, Micheel, Wendland
WR1071 2nd semester	The Function & Form of Christian Worship 3 credit hours	Christie
WR2051-2052 1st & 2nd semester	Preaching in Christian Worship IIA and IIB 2 credit hours	Christie, Headrick, Pagels
WR3051 1st semester	Preaching & Presiding in Christian Worship 2 credit hours	Christie/Micheel

SENIOR THESIS

Senior Thesis is a capstone project that allows the student to put to use research skills and methods that have been learned in his time at the seminary, further developing independent study skills, critical thinking skills, and writing skills that will be useful in ministry. In consultation with an advisor, the student pursues an answer to a specific research question in an area of theology that interests him. With his published thesis the student contributes to the body of knowledge surrounding Biblical studies and pastoral ministry. Work on the thesis is done over the course of both semesters. Three credits are awarded upon its completion during the second semester.

TH3300 1st & 2nd semester	Senior Thesis 3 credit hours	Wordell
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STUDENT FIELD EXPERIENCE

Early Field Training – An Early Field Training (EFT) program during their junior and middle years gives students a modest amount of practical experience under the guidance of pastors in the Milwaukee metropolitan area.

Vicar Year – After completing the middle year, all students are required to complete a full year of full-time training as a vicar in a congregation. This training is a mandatory part of the seminary curriculum and is administered under the supervision of a pastor in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) or a sister synod in collaboration with the seminary. The seminary grants forty academic credits to students who successfully complete the vicar experience.

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Conference of Presidents in consultation with the faculty. Students receive their vicar assignments through the Assignment Committee of WELS after they have been recommended for a vicarship by the faculty. The supervising pastor submits an evaluation of the vicar's service at the conclusion of the vicar year.

Student Assistants – Students may be engaged during the academic year by area congregations and ministries as part-time assistants through consultation with the seminary's director of student field services. After their first and second years, students have opportunities to gain ministry experience as summer assistants in various congregations and missions of WELS and sister churches. Pastors who supervise student assistants provide an evaluation of the student's service.

Curriculum

WINTERIM

In addition to the courses offered in the normal semester schedule, all master of divinity students are required to attend the two-week Winterim between the first and second semester and to enroll in the equivalent of three hours per day (i.e., thirty class hours over a two-week period). Students are permitted to enroll in more than three hours per day. Students are also permitted to audit additional courses if room is available. Faculty-approved mission trips, off-campus study, and directed study are also options. Costs for off-campus study are the responsibility of the student or the sponsoring group.

Some Winterim courses are also open to Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) pastors and pastors in fellowship with WELS. Credits can be applied toward an STM degree. Tuition costs, course selections, and room and board fees will be posted on Grow in Grace's website in mid-September. Interested pastors may register online or by contacting the Grow in Grace office (growingrace@wls.edu). If there is room in the dormitory, housing may be made available for those enrolled in a course(s). Contact the seminary for availability.

The dates for Winterim in the 2026–27 academic year are January 11–22, 2027.

Continuing Education

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY

Since 1904, the seminary has published a theological journal. Originally called *Theologische Quartalschrift*, it is now the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*. This journal is published by the seminary as a testimony of its theological convictions, as a public witness to the saving truths of Holy Scripture, and in the interest of the theological and professional growth of those whom the seminary is training for the public ministry and of those already active in this ministry. The managing editor is appointed by the governing board upon recommendation of the president, subsequent to election by the faculty. The rest of the editorial staff is appointed by the managing editor and ratified by the faculty.

SYMPOSIUM

Inaugurated in 2000 as part of the 150th anniversary of the Wisconsin Synod, the annual symposium attracts several hundred pastors who gather with seminary students and faculty to hear and discuss presentations on important church topics. Held on the Monday and Tuesday following the third Sunday in September, the symposium includes three essays, a festival service, and an evening of fellowship. Information about the symposium is available on the seminary's website.

GROW IN GRACE

The Grow in Grace office spearheads the seminary's efforts to partner with pastors in their lifelong pursuit of spiritual and professional growth. Grow in Grace provides opportunities and resources for two kinds of growth: informal (not for credit) and formal (for credit).

Grow in Grace offers the following for informal continuing education: A monthly digital newsletter called *Grace Notes*, a monthly digital newsletter called *Four Branches*, book reviews called *Shepherd's Study*, journal article recommendations called *Peer Reviewed & Peer Recommended*, study packets, a three-year Pastor Partners Mentoring Program, and Celebration of Ministry retreats. In odd-numbered years Grow in Grace coordinates a continuing education event in the districts of WELS. Every year in January, Grow in Grace provides a week of continuing education for pastors at Winterim. Those courses can be audited or taken for credit.

Grow in Grace also offers formal (for credit) courses in an accredited Master of Sacred Theology (STM) degree program. An STM degree can be earned in one of nine focus areas: Biblical Theology – New Testament, Biblical Theology – Old Testament, Church History, Education, Missions and Evangelism, Pastoral Care, Pastoral Leadership, Preaching and Worship, and Systematic Theology. Pastors can earn credits through courses at Summer Quarter on campus in June of even-numbered years, online courses offered throughout the year, and Winterim courses on campus each January. Qualifying credits from partner institutions and guided research or a thesis under the supervision of an advisor may also contribute to an STM degree.

More detailed information about these resources and opportunities can be found at <http://www.wls.edu/grow-in-grace>. Inquiries may be sent to the executive assistant, Naomi Strusz (Naomi.Strusz@wls.edu) or the director, Prof. Brad Wordell (Brad.Wordell@wls.edu).

Student Life

BOOKSTORE

The seminary operates a bookstore to provide students a place to purchase books for class and for their personal theological libraries. The books are offered on a minimum margin of profit. The student body elects a student bookstore manager who works along with the seminary business office in managing and overseeing the financial operation of the bookstore.

BUILDING A PERSONAL LIBRARY

While at the seminary, students will want to begin acquiring a personal library of the basic theological books needed by a pastor in the parish ministry. The book expenses of the individual student will vary, but a minimum cost of \$500 per year may be expected.

CAMPUS WORSHIP

Because the seminary believes that Christian faith and life are strengthened by and expressed in public worship, opportunities for worship are offered every class day during the school year. Many of the festivals of the Christian year are celebrated with full-length services in which faculty members are invited to preach. Evening compline services are held on Wednesday evenings, except during Advent and Lent. The seminary's dean of chapel oversees the campus worship life and is assisted by a committee of seniors and a student sacristan. Students and faculty members preside at regular services. Students and faculty also serve as organists, instrumentalists, cantors, and members of chapel choirs.

COMPUTERS

The campus wireless network provides student access to the library, the internet, the seminary's learning management system (SemNet), and email. Classrooms are equipped with presentation technology for sharing computer-generated materials with the class. There is wireless access to the network in the classroom building, dormitory, gymnasium, and the circle.

Every student is required to own a laptop computer that meets minimum performance standards to run Logos Bible software and that wirelessly connects to the campus network and the internet. For further information see the Logos FAQ at <http://www.logos.com/support/tech-faq>. All students who are living off campus are required to have a broadband internet connection.

Students are also required to have the following software programs for personal and classroom applications:

- Microsoft Office 365 (provided as a subscription while enrolled)
- Logos Bible software (provided as a part of enrollment package)

Student Life

EMPLOYMENT

Permission to accept regular employment is granted to students, provided this employment will not interfere with their studies and is undertaken with the knowledge and approval of the seminary administration. It is assumed that most students will work 15-18 hours per week during the school year to help meet their financial obligations. The place and the terms of employment are monitored by the dean of students.

FACULTY ADVISORS

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor at the beginning of the student's first year at the seminary. Under normal conditions the student has the same advisor throughout his time of enrollment. The faculty advisor meets with his students periodically. Additional consultations may be initiated either by the student or the advisor at any time as needed. During the vicar year the faculty advisor is in contact with both the student and the student's supervising pastor.

FOOD BANK

The married students operate a food bank through which food and other staples donated by individuals and congregations are distributed on an equitable basis to students who have need of them.

HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

The seminary does not offer a health insurance program of its own. Students will obtain health insurance either through their parents or on their own. The vicar program provides health insurance during the vicar year.

HOUSING

All unmarried students are required to live in the dormitory unless their parental homes are in the immediate vicinity. Each dormitory resident is provided with a desk, chair, shelves for books, closet space, bed, and mattress for use during his stay. Each dorm section lounge is furnished with a couch, chair, and a refrigerator. The dormitory is also equipped with a digital antenna and wi-fi internet service. The seminary does not provide housing for married students. Students who are married are encouraged to find housing as close to the seminary as possible. To assist married students with this, a designated student maintains a spreadsheet that contains known housing options. Noon meals are available for students who live off campus. Off-campus students who bring their own lunch are also encouraged to join the student body at the noon meal in the dining hall.

MISSION AND MINISTRY SEMINAR

A Mission and Ministry Seminar is held annually during the Epiphany season. This three-day seminar is intended to inspire the students for future ministry and to familiarize them with the various functions of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), including the services it offers the parish pastor.

Student Life

Three areas of ministry of the synod—congregational services, home missions, and world missions—are invited to make presentations and conduct workshops on the seminary campus during the three days of the seminar. Various WELS commissions and WELS-affiliated groups also set up displays for the students' perusal. The senior class plans for and administers the seminar, involving students from other classes as appropriate.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

New students are introduced to the seminary and its policies in orientation sessions that take place on the two days before classes begin. The dean of students organizes the orientation and sets the agenda. Students are welcomed to the seminary by the president. The financial aid officer presents pertinent information on the assistance program at the seminary. The director of early field training explains the program and its requirements. The dean of students introduces the advisor system and explains the materials in the student handbook. Information is also given about technology, the library, mental health and counseling services, campus worship and the Seminary Chorus, and time management. A brief evening orientation is also conducted for all wives of new students in early September.

RECRUITMENT

Students are involved in a variety of recruitment activities. The seminary hosts a number of tours throughout the year, for which students serve as tour guides. Once a year, the seminary hosts a grade school chapel service, which brings area grade school children to the campus for a chapel service and a tour. Additionally, students coordinate the "Seminary Scurry," a 5K run/walk held in the spring. Each year a senior is chosen by the faculty to serve as the Student Recruiter. In this role, he assists the seminary's Recruitment Officer with recruitment activities and visits area grade schools, area Lutheran high schools, and preparatory schools. He also assists when students from Martin Luther College or high school students visit the campus for overnight stays and organizes seminary students when they travel to Martin Luther College for recruitment purposes.

REGISTRATION OF STUDENT AUTOMOBILES

All students who bring a vehicle to campus must have adequate insurance for public liability (personal and property damage). A parking fee is included in the all-student general registration fee.

SEMINARY CHORUS

Membership in the chorus is open to all students without audition. The seminary's dean of chapel serves as the director of the chorus. Several rehearsals are held each week. The group presents its annual Christmas concert in two performances on the second Sunday in December and a graduation concert on the evening before the seminary's graduation service. In addition to appearances on campus and at local congregations, the choir carries out annual tours in the various districts of the synod. By its public concerts and appearances, the Seminary Chorus represents the seminary in the synod and seeks to set a standard for confessional church music.

Student Life

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

In view of the maturity that can be presupposed in seminary students, the affairs of the dormitory are predominantly regulated by the students themselves, with a minimum of consultation with the dean of students. The same principle applies in all areas of student life. The seminary endeavors to stimulate in the student body a sense of responsibility for carrying out its own encouragement and admonition. For consultation with the dean, the student body elects a student council consisting of the student body president and representatives from each class. The students also elect a treasurer. Besides managing the student body funds, he also receives and disburses their weekly mission offerings as designated by the students for special projects.

STUDENT MARRIAGES

Since the seminary desires to counsel students before marriage, all students who contemplate marriage (including vicars, those in emergency service, and those on leave of absence) are expected to consult with the dean of students. Students who plan to marry before registering at the seminary are expected to seek the counsel of the vice president for student life at Martin Luther College. In addition, the seminary hosts a special workshop on marriage and ministry for all students. Each year, all seniors and all married middlers are required to attend this workshop.

Since the seminary cannot assume responsibility for the housing and support of married students and their families, the student who contemplates marriage is asked to demonstrate that he has worked out a responsible plan for financial stability. No one can anticipate every emergency which might arise, but students who contemplate marriage are encouraged to include provision for unforeseen expenses in their financial planning.

Although the seminary recognizes that family obligations and emergencies will occasionally preempt a married student's time and energies, students who contemplate marriage are cautioned to remember that a consistent pattern of allowing family responsibilities to hamper the discharge of student responsibility will harm their preparation for the ministry and may establish a dangerous pattern for their future work.

STUDENT-ORGANIZED ATHLETICS

The seminary does not sponsor an organized athletic program. Nevertheless, an athletic facility is available for student use. It includes basketball courts, a racquetball court, and a weightlifting room with both free and machine weights as well as cardiovascular equipment. A portion of the campus has been allotted for soccer. Equipment for disc golf and pickleball is also available. Students elect an athletic director who organizes and supervises intramural competitions.

SYNODICAL PERIODICALS

The seminary encourages all students to become acquainted with the periodicals of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. For all enrolled students, subscriptions to the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* and *Forward in Christ* are included in the registration fee. This registration fee, paid during each of the three years a student is in residence at the seminary, also provides him with a subscription to the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* while he is serving his vicar year.

Maps

AREA MAP

[LINK TO AREA MAP](#)

CAMPUS MAP



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|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Chapel | 7. Pagels | 14. Treptow | 21. Headrick | SP. Student |
| 2. Library | 8. Christie | 15. Wendland | 22. Goetzinger | Parking |
| 3. Classrooms/
Administration | 9. Jensen | 16. Ericson | 23. Degner | P. Parking |
| 4. Dining Hall | 10. Waldschmidt | 17. Geiger | 24. | |
| 5. Dormitory | 11. Russow | 18. Bivens | 25. Parking | |
| 6. Gymnasium | 12. Otto | 19. Micheel | 26. Soccer Field | |
| | 13. Cherney | 20. | 27. Pigeon Creek | |

Seminary Office

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8100
Fax: (262) 242-8110

President

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8101

Correspondence Directory

earle.treptow@wls.edu

Business Manager

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8103
Fax: (262) 242-8110

brian.treichel@wls.edu

Mission Advancement

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8179

sean.young@wls.edu

Grow in Grace

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8181

bradley.wordell@wls.edu

Registrar

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8100

jonathan.micheel@wls.edu

Pastoral Studies Institute

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8215

psi@wls.edu

Library Director

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8111

Fax: (262) 242-8118

library@wls.edu

Dean of Students

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8106

joel.otto@wls.edu

Editor, Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly

11831 N. Seminary Dr.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8111

nathan.ericson@wls.edu

Bookstore

6717 W. Wartburg Cir.
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-8132

books@wls.edu

Student Body

6717 W. Wartburg Cir.
Mequon, WI 53092