



SPRING 2024

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

MISSION AND MINISTRY

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) held its 2024 Mission and Ministry seminar February 6–8. This annual three-day event provides students an opportunity to hear from a wide range of people in a wide range of ministry settings. It's another chance for them to see how their classroom lessons apply to real-world gospel work.

Attendees heard updates and stories from WELS World Missions, Home Missions, and Congregational Services under the theme of “We Will Walk in the Name of the Lord” based on Micah 4:5. Each day of Mission and Ministry offered eight breakout sessions, a keynote speaker, and highlights from World Missions, Home Missions, or Congregational Services. In a world that wonders which path is the right one for them, our witness is a bold and thunderous cry that we will walk in the name of the Lord, forever!

WINTERIM

During early January, Winterim—the two-week session between semesters—gives students who choose to stay on campus an opportunity to study in areas of personal interest not normally part of the seminary curriculum. This year more than fifty students participated in learning opportunities that took them off campus, whether to participate in outreach trips in Virginia, Texas, Arizona, and California, or a cultural immersion in Colombia. The students who participated came back to campus with increased zeal for the ministry that is, Lord willing, ahead of them.

Several pastors were also on campus to participate in courses offered through Grow in Grace. In addition, a group of students of the Pastoral Studies Institute gathered on campus for a week. Most Winterim courses are open to WELS/ELS pastors and to students from seminaries affiliated with WLS.

SECOND SEMESTER ENROLLMENT

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. That is always true. Sometimes it is also obvious to see. As we experience a high number of vacancies in our synod, we more readily recognize the need to pray for more workers for the harvest. The Lord has answered our prayers with an enrollment of 134 students. For the first time in several years, the enrollment at the beginning of the year and the enrollment at the beginning of the second semester are the same. There are 27 seniors, 41 middlers, and 37 juniors on campus, with 29 serving off-campus, 28 as vicars and one in an emergency call.

ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT

The Commission on Accreditation of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) recently reviewed the seminary's self-study report submitted December 1, 2023, and has authorized a comprehensive evaluation visit for initial accreditation April 15–18, 2024. Though the Commission considered the self-study promising, they also do not guarantee that accreditation will be granted following the evaluation visit.

END-OF-YEAR EVENTS

Assignment Service: May 23, 10 a.m.

Graduation Concert: May 23, 7 p.m.

Graduation: May 24, 10 a.m.





Since establishing a new Summer Quarter (SQ) pattern, where SQ travels to districts in odd-numbered years, SQ is back on the WLS campus for 2024. This means a greater variety of courses are offered (including courses for STM credits), on-campus lodging and food, as well as nightly fellowship opportunities. In addition, in 2024, SQ is offering new courses as well as new fellowship opportunities. Pastors should have received a promotional mailing in February. Registration for SQ opens March 25.

Here are the top ten reasons for pastors to consider attending SQ in 2024 (June 17–21 and June 24–28).

10. The SQ menu includes seventeen different courses, scheduled so that pastors can attend both weeks or only one.
9. This on-campus event happens only in even-numbered years. Your next chance would be 2026. Carpe diem!
8. The dorm-and-cafeteria-deal-of-the-century: A pastor can stay in the dorm and enjoy fourteen meals in the cafeteria for \$250 per week.
7. SQ provides access to the library, the gym, and our scenic 80-acre campus. Weather-wise, the second half of June is about as good as it gets in Wisconsin.
6. Flexibility: Take only one course or take several. (Any credits earned could count towards an STM degree.) Some pastors work on other projects or on strategic planning while they are here—a mini-sabbatical.
5. The fellowship of pastors: SQ provides opportunities to interact with other pastors in and outside the classroom. To mutual encouragement!
4. Meet pastors from our greater (global) confessional Lutheran fellowship. Learn with and from them. Encourage them.
3. There will be new enhancements in 2024, including three evening activities each week, making SQ an all-around-enjoyable event.
2. Daily chapel!
1. The faculty and staff of WLS are working hard to make SQ a unique opportunity for you to grow in faith, knowledge, zeal, and skill for gospel ministry.

PASTORAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

a partnership of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and WELS Joint Missions

We'll call him Pastor A. Basically, his church body left him. He understood what the Lord's Word said about marriage and gender, and couple relations reserved only for marriage. He understood all these issues because his church body's seminary had taught those biblical concepts to him based upon God's Word. Then, one day at his church body's annual convention, all of that was turned upside down and now everything and anything was acceptable. Pastor A's church body left him, along with many other pastors just like him.

Pastor A's congregation heard the news and they fully supported him in the search for a new church building in which to worship. That church building happened to be one of our WELS churches that was more than willing to open their worship space to this homeless flock. As a result, Pastor A. started having weekly meetings with the WELS pastor. They talked a lot about doctrine, and what the Bible says, and what WELS teaches and believes. Pastor A. eventually agreed to accept our invitation to join us for our Symposium on the seminary grounds in September. Pastor A. very much liked what he heard.

Pastor A. eventually found a larger space for his flock to worship, but he continued to meet weekly with the WELS pastor. They continued to talk about doctrine, and what the Bible says, and one day Pastor A. asked about the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) program at WLS and what he would have to do to enroll. The WELS pastor suggested that perhaps they use their weekly meeting time to start one of the PSI courses and see how things develop. The WELS pastor explained to Pastor A. that in order to be officially enrolled in the PSI program he would have to be in fellowship with us. Pastor A. told the pastor that since they had started meeting he hadn't learned so much since he left seminary. He wanted to keep meeting and studying.

We don't know how this is going to turn out. We pray that Pastor A. will see that ours is a church body that still teaches and preaches the Word of God in its truth and purity, without one day suddenly turning everything upside down. We pray that Pastor A. is brought into our fellowship and that our PSI Team has an opportunity to teach him, share the distinctly Confessional Lutheran truths with him, and ultimately call him brother. This is just one of the ways that PSI seeks to carry out its charter and walk with men of all kinds of backgrounds with the hope of training confessional Lutheran pastors. We don't know how this is going to turn out, but we pray that it does to the benefit of Pastor A. and his flock, and to the glory of God. We pray that this is your prayer, too.

