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### MANY THANKS FOR MANY GIFTS

On the Wednesday before Christmas break a special delivery was made on seminary hill. Nearly 150 wrapped and labeled gifts were unloaded into the dorm commons and carefully arranged on tables. There was a gift for each student (including most wives of the married students) as well as for every child of every student. An email message informed the men that these evidences of love and generosity awaited them. By the next day the gifts had found their rightful home in dormitory rooms and off-campus houses of our students.

This outpouring of kindness has taken place annually for over a decade now. It began as an effort of members of Peace in Hartford, Wisconsin. In time the annual gift-giving expanded to include six other WELS congregations. While the gifts are appreciated and enjoyed, their intrinsic value is not the important thing. The kindness, generosity, and desire to share encouragement to students preparing for the pastoral ministry are the important things. This is understood and appreciated by our students.

Other expressions of love are also visible on campus during the Christmas season. Congregations and individuals annually adopt a number of students and share the blessings they themselves have received. Again this year, for example, women from Faith in Antioch, Illinois, sent hundreds of dollars worth of gifts cards for grocery stores and other retail outlets. These were distributed among married students prior to their leaving campus for Christmas break. Still other groups and individuals send monetary gifts, gift cards, and donations to our food pantry. While the gifts are varied, the love they reflect is the same — the love of the Christ Child who gave himself to mankind. With these gifts, fellow believers are telling us they love the Savior and his gospel and care about future proclaimers of that gospel. For all of this we are grateful.

### STUDENT ADOPTION UPDATE

According to recent estimates, the population of the U.S. is at just under 308 million. Of these, about 5 million people – or 1.7% – are adoptees. Of children aged 18 and under, approximately 2.5% have been adopted. A lot of love and mutual blessings result from these adoptions.

At the seminary we observe lots of love and many blessings when students are adopted by benefactors. At this writing, 23 of our students have been adopted by congregations or by organizations and families within congregations. That represents about 14% of our student population (including vicars). The number and percentage of adopted students has been rising slowly yet steadily over the last years. For this we are grateful.

Blessings abound for both adopters and adoptees. In addition to the satisfaction of offering assistance to students as they complete their training to become pastors, those who adopt seminarians also enjoy a special relationship with the men and their families. Many exchange cards, photos, and personal letters throughout the year.

Students enjoy a variety of blessings as well. “When I came to the seminary my first year, I had no idea how I was going to afford the cost of school. I had debt from college tuition as well as a wife and two young children to care for (we now have three). When I was informed that a local WELS couple was going to adopt me and cover the cost of my tuition I was dumbstruck. I knew from past experiences that God’s people are generous, but I never expected something like this. This adoption has given me more time to spend with my family and my studies instead of at work. What a blessing for me now, but also for the congregation that, God willing, I will one day serve. My family is thankful for the blessings that are being harvested by this program.” — WLS student adoptee

Anyone interested in more information about adopting a student is invited to contact the seminary at (262) 242- 8100 or Prof. Forrest Bivens at [bivensf@wls.wels.net](mailto:bivensf@wls.wels.net).

## BOOK SIGNING

“All my life he has served me as mentor, professor, teacher, and friend. I am thankful he will be able to pass his knowledge on to the next generation — and continue to teach through the pages of this work.”

It was with these heartfelt words that President Paul Wendland introduced Professor Emeritus John C. Jeske at an event commemorating the publication of Jeske’s new book entitled “Treasures Old and New.” Students, faculty, family, and friends gathered in the dormitory commons for a book signing co-hosted by Northwestern Publishing House.

The book, 14 years in the making, began to take shape shortly after Jeske’s retirement from the seminary. Seeing a need for a gospel-centered book that encouraged daily work in the biblical languages, he began to pair readings from the Old and New Testament, along with short excerpts from the Confessions. A typewritten manuscript accompanied by carefully handwritten notes on the Greek and Hebrew emerged from this scholarship. In 2008, Pastor Tom Jeske, Prof. Jeske’s son, enlisted the aid of Dr. Glen Thompson, professor of history at Wisconsin Lutheran College, to help see the project through to publication.

Other members of our seminary family were also involved in the project. Jacob Behnken, a second year student, was instrumental in bringing the book to publication. According to Thompson, Behnken’s work as a research assistant was indispensable in completing the project. “His attention to detail and his careful work in overcoming the font problems were invaluable.”

While Behnken’s help was a blessing to the project, he also benefited from the experience. “It was a blessing not only to get to know Prof. Jeske during the course of this project, but also simply to have the opportunity to work with the biblical texts themselves. I am thankful that I was able to be a small part of making Prof. Jeske’s valuable work available to the church at large.”

Jeske taught and mentored an entire generation of seminary students during the 26 years he taught Old Testament on this hill. Thankfully, through this labor of love, his knowledge and love of God’s Word will be a blessing to generations more.

## WINTERIM

Students returned January 4th for Winterim — two weeks of elective coursework both on- and off-campus. Biblical Aramaic, Counseling Those Suffering from Addictions, Technology in the Parish, and Variety in Catechism Teaching are some of the on-campus courses available.

For the sixth year, students and professors traveled to Mexico for the Spanish Immersion Cultural Experience. This trip includes language classes, participation in a two-day pastoral conference, and visits to cultural and historical locations.

A study tour to historical biblical sights is also taking place for the second year. Three students and one professor from WLS are part of a larger group co-sponsored by Wisconsin Lutheran College. The 14-day trip, themed "In the Footsteps of St. Paul," includes stops at sites in Turkey and Greece with an optional Rome extension. More reports on both of these excursions will follow.

### **MLC WIND SYMPHONY TO VISIT CAMPUS**

The Wind Symphony of Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN, will present its winter concert here on Friday, February 5, at 7:30 p.m., in the auditorium. There is no admission fee but guests will have an opportunity to support the group with a free-will offering.

If you'd like to experience fine music and encourage young people preparing for ministry in our synod, this is a concert you won't want to miss.

### **NEWS AT A GLANCE**

January 18<sup>th</sup>, **Second semester begins**

January 30<sup>th</sup>, **Sem Gems retreat** at Grace Center

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, **Mission and Ministry** in auditorium

February 5<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm **MLC Wind Symphony concert** in auditorium

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 am **Seminary Chorus** sings at Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Pewaukee

February 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, **Midterm Break**

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