

Our Church Workers are Trained to be Witnesses at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

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It is the sole purpose of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to train public servants of the Word, workers who will serve in our Lutheran Church as pastors, missionaries, and professors. This purpose is accomplished with the vast majority of its students. The Seminary no longer expects to reckon much with dropouts. When students enroll at the Seminary, their previous training has already shown that they have the particular gifts that are needed for the public ministry. Also a firm interest in devoting their life to this service has generally been established.

The Basis of Seminary Training

All the 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 the teaching is carried out in conscious harmony with our Lutheran Confessions as the correct understanding of the message of the Bible.

Only such students are graduated and recommended for the public ministry as finish their work in wholehearted agreement with this confessional position.

The Seminary's Program of Training

When our Seminary chapel was redecorated for the observance of the Seminary's centennial in 1963, the church decorator put four murals on the west wall, which by means of symbols fittingly set forth the four principal fields of Seminary. We shall use these murals to acquaint you more fully with your Seminary's training of public witnesses of the Gospel.



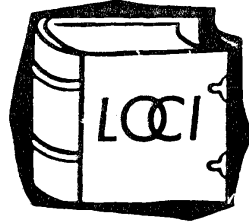
1. Bible Study

The Greek inscription of the scroll on the first mural carries our Savior's exhortation: "Search the Scriptures." Thorough, intensive, reverent study of the Holy Scriptures is the very heart of our Seminary training. No one can be a pleasing public witness of Christ unless with a believing heart he fully understands the whole message which our God and Savior would have us proclaim to sinful men for their salvation now and hereafter.

Certain fundamental books of the Bible are taught with special thoroughness in the courses of Biblical Interpretation. In the Junior class these books are *Genesis* and the *Epistle to the Galatians*; in the Middler year, they are *Ephesians*, the *Pastoral Epistles*, and a selection of *Psalms*; in the Senior year, portions of *Isaiah* and the *Epistle to the Romans*. In this study every individual word, phrase, and sentence is thoroughly examined and

considered on the basis of the original Hebrew and Greek texts. Intensive language study during their college training has carefully prepared our Seminary students for this work. When our pastors expound the Word of God in their preaching and teaching, they want to be certain that nothing in the way of content and emphasis has been lost in their message from Scripture. They also want to be able to assure all under their spiritual care that what they themselves read in their English Bibles is a faithful translation of the original text.

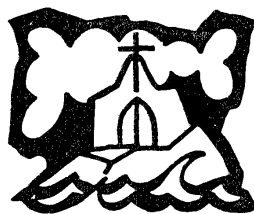
The remaining books of the Bible must of necessity be covered in a more cursory manner. This is done in the courses of Old and New Testament Introduction. Here emphasis is laid upon becoming acquainted at least with the detailed line of thought of all the other Biblical books. Everything that ought to be known about the inspired writer and the time and circumstances of writing is likewise studied. All this, too, is very helpful preparation for a pastor's lifetime work of Bible study.



2. Scriptural Doctrine

The second mural stands for the courses in Biblical doctrine and in the Lutheran Confessions. *Loci* inscribed on the book pictured in this mural is the Latin term for principal doctrines. The doctrinal courses represent another approach to the same goal of giving the public witnesses of the Gospel thorough knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. All the details of the principal teachings for Christian faith and life as taught, unfolded, and illustrated here and there throughout the Holy Scriptures are gathered together in this study. A systematic and comprehensive understanding of all the truths of God's message of salvation, won by such study, enables Christ's public witnesses to proclaim and to apply God's Word with authoritative conviction and certainty.

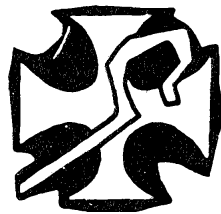
That our congregations may know what doctrines will be taught in their midst, they are ready to accept only such pastors as have a joyful willingness to subscribe to all the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church. Hence it is a vital part of Seminary training to study these confessional writings, so that each future pastor may gain the personal conviction that they set forth the true teachings of Scripture over against the maze of errors which the Church has had to reject in the past and which it must continue to reject in the present.



3. Church History

The church building in the third mural stands for those who throughout the ages have been gathered around Word and Sacrament. In this way the mural is to call the Church History courses to mind which are included in all three years of Seminary classroom study. Entrance requirements at our Seminary include a thorough knowledge of world history. At the Seminary, students are then guided to note how our God and Savior has ruled in grace and judgment amidst all that has happened in world history from Christ's ascension to the present; how He has made everything serve the one great purpose of gathering His Church of Believers through the Gospel from among all nations.

The students are guided to see how the erroneous thoughts and the sinful actions of men have been constantly at work in corrupting God's message of Law and Gospel and thus in hindering the building of Christ's Church. At the same time it becomes evident to them how God in His grace and might ever raised up staunch confessors to expose and oppose human error and to restore and preserve the pure proclamation of His saving Word. This study, too, grounds the future public witnesses of Christ in the truths of Scripture; it makes them sensitive over against all pernicious error; it confirms them in a joyful appreciation of the Gospel as the one power of God unto salvation.



4. Practical Theology

It should be quite evident that the shepherd's staff in the final mural stands for those Seminary courses which equip the future pastors with the practical methods of bringing the saving and sanctifying message of God's Word to young and old through preaching and teaching, and through public worship and individual counseling and pastoral care. The cross is a reminder that all these ministrations are to be permeated by the Gospel of our crucified Savior.

Homiletics covers the courses which acquaint the Seminary students with the principles underlying the preparation of effective sermons; at the same time they give him actual practice in writing such sermons and in delivering them before instructors and fellow students. In a similar way the courses in Catechetics make the student more aware of the best methods in imparting religious instruction, and again give him actual practice in teaching Catechism and Bible History lessons. Thus the future pastors are made proficient both to teach the young and old themselves and to guide and supervise the teaching of others. Liturgics and Church Music aim to give our students a proper understanding of the forms of public worship and the proper appreciation of what is best in Christian Music and in our treasure of Christian hymns as auxiliary means is proclaiming Law and Gospel.

The courses in Pastoral Theology present the Scriptural principles and the practical methods according to which a Lutheran pastor will want so lead a Christian congregation, minister to the sick and dying, counsel with the troubled and distressed, the tempted and the erring.

In Service Training

In a way, the fourth mural also includes an entire year of special training. After the completion of their second year of Seminary training all the members of a class are assigned to a year of practical training as vicars in some of our larger congregations. During this time they are active in preaching, in teaching, and in the various phases of pastoral work under the supervision and guidance of an experienced pastor. Sometimes they serve under similar supervision in a vacant congregation or as undergraduate instructors at one of our synodical worker training schools. Through such vicarage service the individual student becomes conscious of his strengths and his weaknesses. These are brought to the attention of the Seminary through the carefully drawn up vicarage reports of the supervising pastors and can be given judicious consideration during the final year of Seminary training.

Considerable opportunity to learn by doing to become public witnesses of the Gospel is also offered while the students are in attendance at the Seminary. They are enlisted to aid institutional missionaries in teaching children's classes; in congregations with multiple services they are often called upon to conduct the

liturgy and to assist at Holy Communion; they are frequently asked to serve as supply preachers; they are solicited to hold bedside devotions at convalescent homes; as members of the Seminary chorus or as individuals they take part in sacred concerts; especially in their Senior year, many of the students do part time church work in neighboring congregations which entails a great many phases of the public ministry.

In-service training also includes the week-long Mission Seminar which is being held for some years at our Seminary during the Epiphany season. The program is generally arranged by the Executive Secretaries of our Synod's Boards of Home and World Missions. Through student presentations, panel discussions, and visual aids of every kind the vast mission needs and mission opportunities in our country and throughout the world are vividly brought to the attention of our future pastors. These needs and opportunities are viewed in the light of our victorious Savior's great commission to be His witnesses, even unto the ends of the earth.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Purpose

The very specific purpose of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is to offer theological training for those who desire to enter the public ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod or of churches within its confessional fellowship. It is not established or maintained to serve merely or in part as a school of religion furnishing opportunity to anyone for specialized study in various fields of theology. It purposes to train all of its students to preach and teach the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ and to carry out the pastoral ministrations of the Christian ministry in accordance with the Holy Scriptures as the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God and in conscious agreement with the historical Confessions of the Lutheran Church. All of the theoretical and practical courses of the Seminary, as well as its vicarage program, are arranged to serve this purpose.

In addition to this prime purpose the Seminary endeavors in various ways to offer opportunity for theological and professional growth to those who are already active in the public ministry of its confessional fellowship.

Objective

Reverent, thorough, and scholarly study of the Holy Scriptures and a clear apprehension and faithful application of its contents, most especially of its basic messages of Law and Gospel, are considered fundamental in realizing the Seminary's practical purpose of training and equipping men for the practical tasks of the public ministry. In every phase of its training program the Seminary strives to manifest fidelity to the Holy Scriptures, to give evidence of thorough scholarship, and to effect professional proficiency.

Policies

- 1) In collaboration with the Faculty the President shall determine the courses of study in keeping with the Seminary's purposes and objectives and shall assign them to the members of the Faculty. In case of disagreement among the members of the Faculty, the decision shall rest with the President. No major changes in the basic curriculum shall be made without the approval of the Board. Cf. Synod Constitution 8.07f.
- 2) To promote the work of the Seminary the President shall call and conduct regular meetings of the Faculty. At his discretion he may, or at the request of two or more Faculty members he shall, call special meetings of the Faculty.
- 3) An unimpeachable Christian character is a basic requirement for enrollment. In addition, enrollment at the Seminary requires that the applicant have completed a four year college course, with emphasis on language and history, or that he have earned its reasonable equivalent in college credits. A good working knowledge of the Biblical languages (Greek and Hebrew) are essential prerequisites.
- 4) It is understood that unmarried Seminary students are expected to live in the Seminary dormitory, unless their homes happen to be in the immediate vicinity.
- 5) In view of the maturity that can be presupposed in those who are pursuing terminal training for the public ministry of the church, the affairs of the dormitory are predominantly regulated by the students themselves with a minimum of consultation with the Seminary Dean.

- 6) These who have followed the regular course of pre-seminary ministerial training provided by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod are not permitted to enter marriage prior to their enrollment and during their first year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Exceptional cases are left to the judgment and final disposition of the Seminary Faculty and Board.
- 7) In accordance with the express judgment of its sponsoring Synod, the Seminary continues to discourage student marriages as much as possible, without, however, making celibacy a condition for study at this school. Enrolled students contemplating marriage after the end of their first year are required to seek the approval of the Seminary (see Procedures for detail).
- 8) The Seminary's policy in the matter of grading 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 enrolled students are already known to possess a required measure of such gifts, and that the stress in Seminary training should therefore be placed on each individual student's faithful use of his particular gifts and talents. While the students therefore receive grades in examinations and on their written assignments to aid them in gauging their faithfulness, the Seminary refrains from issuing report cards to students.

The individual student's academic grades for the various courses of each quarter of Seminary work are, however, carefully recorded in the Seminary records to make a Seminary transcript of his academic credits available at any time for future graduate work.

- 9) In the interest of professional proficiency students are permitted and encouraged to preach in public such sermons as have been reviewed by their Seminary instructors, but act until after the Easter recess of their Junior year. During their vicarage year the mandatory review of their publicly preached sermons is to be carried out by the supervising pastor. To meet exceptional circumstances any ordained pastor of our confessional fellowship may review the sermon of a Seminary student who is asked to preach under his authority.
- 10) All students are obligated to a full year of vicarage service under the supervision of the Seminary, normally to be served after the completion of the Middler year. Exceptions on the basis of valid grounds can only be made by joint resolution of the Seminary Board and Faculty.
- 11) It is the policy of the Seminary to have its students receive their full time vicarage assignments through the Assignment Committee of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod after they have been recommended for such vicarage service by the Seminary Faculty.

To meet an emergency at one of our Synod's educational institutions students may be released for full time vicarage service by action of the Seminary Faculty.

During the school year students may be engaged by congregations for part time vicarage service through consultation with and upon approval of the Seminary President.

- 12) Having completed the prescribed course of study, students of the Seminary are graduated as candidates for the public ministry, ready for appointment to church work within the fellowship of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

- 13) It is the policy of the Seminary that its students, upon completion of their course of training, receive their call into the public ministry of our confessional fellowship through the Assignment Committee of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Assignments shall be made only to students who are recommended by the Seminary Faculty as candidates for the holy ministry.
- 14) The Board of Control and the Faculty of the Seminary will issue the Bachelor of Divinity degree to all graduates who have satisfactorily completed the prescribed course of study and have at least 192 cumulative grade points.
- 15) Graduation, as well as the Bachelor of Divinity degree, is extended only to students who upon completion of the required Seminary work find themselves in confessional agreement with the Seminary and who present themselves for assignment to the public ministry of its confessional fellowship.
- 16) It is the policy of the Seminary Faculty and Board to award available scholarships during the course of the second quarter of oath school year. While the Faculty and the Board reserve the right to make the selection of the recipients on their own initiative, they nevertheless welcome well-founded recommendations and applications on the part of students. Need, academic achievement, as well as other factors highly commendable in students training for the holy ministry, are taken into consideration.
- 17) It is the policy of the Seminary to offer Faculty staff members the time and the financial assistance which are required to pursue such graduate work as has been recognized by the ministration to be beneficial for their individual faculty assignments.
- 18) In the interest of the theological and professional growth of those whom the Seminary is training for the public ministry within its fellowship and of those already active in this ministry, and as a testimony of its theological convictions and a witness to the saving truths of Holy Writ, the Seminary Faculty is entrusted with the publication of a theological periodical, the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*.
- 19) In the interest of its additional purpose of offering opportunity for theological and professional growth of those who are already active in the public ministry of its confessional fellowship, the Seminary conducts an annual Fall Pastors' Institute, and is likewise ready, when feasible, to arrange for summer pastors' institutes in outlying districts of our Synod.
- 20) By building up its collection of theological books and periodicals and by expanding its library service in its new facilities, the Seminary library not only aims to undergird its course of instruction but also to serve in various ways those who are already active in the public ministry of our confessional fellowship.

Procedures

- 1) *Marriage Approval*: Enrolled students contemplating marriage must take note of the following regulations:
 - a) The Seminary will assume no responsibility for housing and maintenance for the student and his family;

- b) The Seminary will not accept family obligations of a student as an excuse for irregularity in his studies;
- c) The Seminary will demand a written statement from the parents of both the student and his bride that they fully approve the marriage;
- d) The Seminary must be given the assurance that the student, in case unforeseen expenses should occur, is in a position to meet them.
- e) A consultation of the student with the Dean is required.

- 2) *Special Admissions:* Since 1962 our Synod has entered upon an arrangement with Bethany College of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Mankato, Minnesota, by which this institution offers a special program of ministerial training whereby men over 21 years of age, especially also married men, who have not followed our Synod's regular program of pre-seminary training may acquire the necessary college credits to qualify for enrollment at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Enrollment in this program of special ministerial training requires a recommendation from our Seminary's Committee on Special Admissions. This committee consists of the President as chairman, the Registrar, and the instructor of Theological Encyclopedia. The committee makes its recommendations on the basis of the applicant's transcripts of his high school and college credits, three letters of reference, including one from his pastor, which urge and encourage enrollment, and the personal information given in filling out the formal application form.

Though the President is responsible for all admissions, other special admissions are also generally recommended to the Faculty upon consultation with the Committee on Special Admissions.

- 3) *Transcripts:* A transcript of credits will be issued to former students upon application to the Registrar. There will be no charge for a student's first transcript, but a fee of two dollars is specified for each subsequent transcript.

Requests for transcripts of credit should be made at least three weeks in advance of the date when these are needed and must in every case include the name and address of the institution or agency that is interested in evaluating the credit given. The transcript must be sent directly to this address; the applicant receives a copy for his own records.

- 4) *Vicarage Supervision:* The pastors of congregations and the heads of educational institutions to whom Seminary vicars have been assigned by the Assignment Committee of our Synod are expected to submit to the Seminary a filled-out vicarage report form furnished by the Seminary at the close of the period of vicarage service. Such reports are also required of pastors and heads of institutions who supervise part-time vicarages of Seminary students, if such vicarage service is to become a part of the student's academic record at the Seminary.
- 5) *Grading and Rating:* The grades entered in the school records are A, B, C, D, F, or Incomplete. These ratings are to be understood as follows:

- A (Excellent: 93-100) denotes outstanding achievement and superior application (3 grade points per hour).
- B (Good: 95-92) denotes a high degree of competence and considerable initiative; (2 grade points per hour).

- C (Satisfactory: 77-84) means that acceptable work has been done (1 grade point per hour).
- D (Passing: 70-76) indicates that, although the work has not been of Seminary quality, the course will not need to be repeated in some way in order to raise the grade (Credit, but no grade points).
- F (Unsatisfactory: below 70) denotes failure, and in some way credit must be earned for the course.
- Inc (Incomplete) means that the student has failed to complete some aspect of the course and will be given the opportunity to complete this work during the next quarter he is in residence. The initiative to do so must come from him, and failure to complete the work in the course in time will automatically change the Incomplete into an F.