

**TOGETHER**



October 1, 2019

## Equipping Christian Witnesses effort underway

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**M**artin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., is embarking on a two-year synodwide offering called “Equipping Christian Witnesses.”

Martin Luther College (MLC) is our WELS college of ministry. It prepares nearly all of our called workers, training teachers and staff ministers to serve when they graduate and providing college-level training to young men who will enroll at the seminary to prepare to serve as pastors. Our synod is experiencing a great need for more called workers, and that is what this effort intends to help address.


The offering will provide resources to increase recruitment efforts around the synod.

In addition to that, it will address one barrier to enrollment at MLC: the cost of education. Even though MLC strives to keep educational costs down (and is widely considered to be successful in doing that), the prayer is that this offering will assist in recruitment by providing additional resources for student financial aid, reducing the need for students to borrow for their education.

Another goal of this offering is to provide funds that will help the college improve its facilities, particularly student housing and recreation facilities. While certainly not the main motivation for studying for the ministry, campus facilities do play an important role in recruitment.

We pray that God will move the hearts of our congregations and their members to take part in this opportunity to support the important work that MLC is doing on behalf of us all.

To learn more, visit [mlc-wels.edu/mlc-campaign](http://mlc-wels.edu/mlc-campaign).

Serving with you in Christ,  
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

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## Seminary's annual symposium features apologetics

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Nearly 400 people attended Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's annual fall symposium from Sept. 21-22 in Mequon, Wis. Pastors from across the U.S. and Canada heard three papers presented on apologetics—responding to arguments hostile to the claims of Christianity and presenting positive arguments that vindicate the claims of Christianity.

The timely topic was chosen because the worldview of North Americans has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Christian beliefs and morals are becoming increasingly foreign and unfamiliar to the majority of people. Outreach approaches developed in the 20th century often don't result in engaging 21st-century prospects in conversation when a pastor is reaching out with the gospel. Three pastors who have ministered exclusively in the 21st century prepared this year's essays, and three seasoned seminary professors served as their sounding boards.

Rev. Michael J. Berg, class of 2005, began the symposium with his paper, "An Introduction to and Defense of Apologetics." "Apologetics at its best shows that Christians care. We care about the skeptic's questions. We care about the doubts of believers. We care about the future doubts of young believers," wrote Dr. Berg, a theology professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis.

Rev. Luke Thompson, a 2013 seminary graduate who serves at St. Paul, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, presented the second paper, "Disclosing the Hidden God: Confessional Lutheran Doctrine and Christian Apologetics." "The goal of the Lutheran engaged in apologetics is never to show how reasonable our faith is, but rather to point out that the unreasonable did, in fact, take place. There is nothing reasonable about Jesus dying and rising for my sins (the unempirical truths of justification and reconciliation), but that does not change the fact that it happened and was documented for my benefit (the empirical facts of the execution of Jesus of Nazareth and his bodily appearances)," he wrote.

For the final presentation, Rev. Justin Cloute, class of 2002 who serves at St. Luke, Watertown, Wis., spoke on "Apologetics in a Postmodern World." "Just 30 years ago, many Americans rarely encountered someone with a different worldview. Now, daily, with a couple of clicks on their computers or a swipe of their phones, they are brought into contact with people from a plurality of cultures, religions, and belief systems (narratives)," he wrote. "We can be sure that if parents, pastors, and teachers are not addressing the questions, others will be."

The video archive of the symposium is available as well as the written essays for those who are interested. 🌐

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