

TOGETHER



September 1, 2020

Ministerial Education schools open for fall


Many schools, colleges, and universities across the country have not yet reopened for in-person classes due to continuing concerns about COVID-19; in many cases, no date has been set when that will happen.

We are thankful that each of our four ministerial education schools began the fall semester with in-person instruction. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.; Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.; Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.; and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.; welcomed students back to campus last week and held their opening services. At each campus, measures have been taken to ensure that the campus environment will be as safe as possible for both students and faculty. Plans are also in place as to how to respond if anyone on campus contracts the virus.

We are also thankful that, despite the uncertainties caused by the virus, enrollments at three of the schools have held steady, with only some small declines. At the beginning of the semester, Martin Luther College enrollment is 713 (731 last year); Luther Preparatory's enrollment is 401 (402 last year); Michigan Lutheran Seminary's enrollment is 184 (196 last year). Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's enrollment has increased by 12 students over last year to 134.

At the opening services on each campus, new faculty members were installed in their new positions. You can find the names of the new faculty members on the website of each school.

Just as the gospel ministry and mission that God has given us has not stopped during these difficult times, so the training of future pastors and teachers continues by God's grace. We pray that God would bless all four schools with healthy and productive school years.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

WELS Prison Ministry reaches out during pandemic

The pandemic that hit the world this year has put many ministries in the position of making quick decisions about how to reach people in a socially distanced world. WELS Prison Ministry was no exception when, suddenly, jail ministry visits were indefinitely suspended. No longer could Prison Ministry volunteers go into jails and prisons to share God's grace with people who desperately needed to hear the good news, especially in a time of fear and uncertainty.

The Prison Ministry Committee got together to develop a plan to try to reach as many inmates as they could with God's Word. In mid-July, the Prison Ministry Committee authorized a significant outreach effort to offer its Bible correspondence self-study booklets to more than 2,000 correctional facilities due to the interruption in personal visits.

The mailing list consisted of facilities with which Prison Ministry has had interaction in the past. Over 75 percent of the facilities that have received mailings in the past have not received booklets in over two years. The breakdown is as follows:

- County Jail/Detention Center—955
- State Correctional Facility—1044
- Federal Correctional Facility—111
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement Facility—22
- Youth/Juvenile Offender Facility—46


Prison Ministry mailed a sample booklet and a brochure to the chaplains, activity directors, or program coordinators describing the booklets and inviting

them to order free copies for the inmates at their institution. They sent the booklet "A Broken-hearted Father" based on Jesus' story of the prodigal son as a great example of God's overwhelming love for his lost children.

The mailing is generating many new book orders. In the first four weeks the response has been over 36,000 booklets ordered by chaplains or others. In a typical year Prison Ministry has about 30,000 booklets printed. On average, the booklets cost about \$1 each to print, plus shipping. Prison Ministry sends the Bible study booklets to inmates and facilities at no charge.

The Bible study booklets are the backbone of Prison Ministry's ministry-by-mail program, which is facilitated by volunteers out of an office in New Ulm, Minn., as well as around the country. Each booklet has a Bible lesson and a test that inmates fill out and return to Prison Ministry. Then, a volunteer will correct the test, provide a message of encouragement, and send the next Bible study to the participant.

Reflecting on Romans 8:28 and how COVID-19 prompted unplanned initiatives for the ministry, Prison Ministry Administrator Mr. Dave Hochmuth, says, "People quote Romans 8:28 so much, 'God is working for good,' but God doesn't promise that 'the good' is going to be our good. The good he's doing might be for somebody else—and you might not see it. Our patient, even cheerful, endurance of painful trials may give us an opportunity to give a reason for the hope that we have. God can use that testimony to lead others to place their trust in Jesus."

Learn more about Prison Ministry's outreach work and how to support it at wels.net/prison-ministry. 

Second WELS Investment Funds video highlights ministry partnership

WELS Investment Funds is featuring its ministry partner Kettle Moraine Lutheran (KML), a WELS area Lutheran high school in Jackson, Wis., in its newest video.

Established in 1973, KML has been blessed by God with steady growth and increasing enrollment. In order to support that growth and provide more opportunities for ministry, the KML Foundation knew sound management of its investments was critical, because investments can provide a solid financial foundation to accomplish ministry goals.

So in 2013, the KML Foundation began entrusting its investments to WELS Investment Funds. "It was one of the best decisions we ever made," says Mr. David Bartelt, vice president of the KML Foundation. "They have kept our funds secure and made us good stewards of God's blessings."

Bartelt and the KML Foundation value how WELS Investment Funds aligns so closely with KML's ministry. Plus turning over the investment management to WELS Investment Funds allows the team at KML to focus on ministry, not on managing money.

Mr. Jim Holm, executive director of WELS Investment Funds, appreciates the opportunity to serve KML: "KML is one of several area Lutheran high schools that benefit from our cost-effective, professionally managed investment portfolios. By pooling our

God-given resources, we can take advantage of lower cost, institutionally priced investment opportunities that are not available to smaller investment accounts."

Holm continues, "As more WELS ministries, like the KML Foundation, invest in WELS Investment Funds, these cost benefits increase. It's another way WELS ministries can support each other."

Currently, WELS Investment Funds manages more than \$240 million for WELS and over 200 WELS-affiliated organizations, including congregations, area Lutheran high schools like KML, and other ministries.

Bartelt appreciates how the partnership with WELS Investment Funds helps KML achieve its ministry goals. He concludes, "I am so happy that we have made that relationship with WELS Investment Funds. Going forward I would encourage anybody to do the same. They are a great partner for us."

To see how WELS Investment Funds partners with the KML Foundation, view the second in a series of new WELS Investment Funds videos at wels.net/wif.

To learn how WELS Investment Funds can also be your strong partner in ministry, or for a free review of your organization's current investment portfolio, contact Executive Director Jim Holm at jim.holm@wels.net or 414-256-3206. 



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