

For the final presentation, Rev. James C. Danell spoke on two of Luther's essays in his paper *"The Freedom of a Christian and Treatise on Good Works."* Danell, professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., noted, "It's in his treatise *The Freedom of a Christian* that Luther presents the biblical, reformation doctrine of justification by grace through faith. His treatise *On Good Works* speaks to the sanctified life of the believer that springs fundamentally from his justification through faith in Jesus."

The essays themselves are now available at wisluthsem.org. 

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Martin Luther College celebrates 25th anniversary


Twenty-five years ago when Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., was about to open its doors for the first time, there were so many questions. What will this new college be like? How will it be organized? What will the curriculum be? Will it be able to continue to produce the number of candidates for ministry needed by the synod? How well will the students in the pastor track and teacher track get along with each other? Will there be too many marriages by undergraduate students? Will the members of the synod embrace this new school?

Now, after 25 years, these questions have been answered. And, we thank God that they have been answered in a way that demonstrates God's rich blessings on this school and on our synod. Today, 25 years later, Martin Luther College (MLC) has been embraced and supported by the people of our synod as OUR WELS college of ministry. Enrollment at MLC continues to be strong, with our WELS young people attending in good and consistent numbers to prepare for a lifetime of service in the church. The pastor track continues to produce young men who are well prepared for continuing at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.; the teacher and staff ministry programs produce graduates who are well qualified to serve in our synod. Having future pastors, teachers, and staff ministers studying and working together on one campus builds relationships that will last a lifetime.

MLC used homecoming weekend as a time to mark its 25th anniversary. A special worship service was held on October 4, with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary President Earle Treptow delivering the sermon. The service included special music and choirs. A special concert took place on Sunday afternoon. MLC will be planning other anniversary events later in the school year.

This anniversary is a time to say "thank you." First of all, we thank God for blessing this school and enabling it to carry out its purpose faithfully. We thank the faculty and staff of MLC for 25 years of faithful and dedicated service. We thank the students of MLC, now and in years past, for coming to MLC and saying, "Here am I, send me!" And we thank the members of our synod who have embraced and supported this school with their prayers and offerings.

We pray with confidence that God will continue to bless this school as it continues to prepare our future called workers to be ambassadors for our Savior.

Serving with you in Christ,
 WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Home Missions funds three new missions

WELS Board for Home Missions met at the end of September and authorized funding for three new missions as well as two restarts. An additional congregation will receive support from Home Missions but no funding.

“Moved by the love of our Savior, Home Missions wanted to move forward because we know the Lord hasn’t directed us to just share the gospel when life is humming along but to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in difficult times as well,” says Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions. “Regardless of the circumstances in this world, God’s people know what their Lord has directed them to do—tell more people about the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. We ask the Lord to bless us to do just that.”

The new missions being funded include:

- **Amarillo, Texas:** Located 130 miles from the nearest WELS church, a group of 15 WELS members form the core group reaching out in Amarillo, Texas. The WELS pastor from Lubbock, Texas, comes to Amarillo twice a month to serve the members with God’s Word and his sacraments.
- **North Liberty, Iowa:** North Liberty, Iowa, is a multi-site ministry with Good Shepherd in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. A dedicated core group of 20 members began worshiping in July 2017 at the North Liberty Community Center. Home Missions funding will allow Good Shepherd to call a second pastor to help its outreach efforts.
- **West San Antonio, Texas:** Ten families from Our Savior, San Antonio, Texas, make up the committed core

group at this new mission, which began worshiping together in March 2020. They held three in-person services at an elementary school with an average of 40 people in attendance before the pandemic hit.

“My heart goes out to our young mission churches because they lost some momentum in reaching out to people who had shown interest in learning more about their Savior,” says Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, chairman of WELS Board for Home Missions.

“But our missionaries are resourceful and persistent and found ways to stay connected to them and reach out in creative ways with the gospel.”

The three restarts that Home Missions is now supporting include Dix Hills, N.Y.; Santa Clarita, Calif.; and Burlington, Iowa (unsubsidized).

For more information, visit wels.net/homemissions. 

New videos encourage married couples to “take a moment”

“Many things in our society, including our congregations,” says Rev. Donn Dobberstein, director of WELS Discipleship. “If we want solid congregations, healthy marriages are so important. Yet biblical marriage is under intense attack in our current culture.”

Rev. Tom Kock, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and an advisory member of the WELS Commission on Discipleship, agrees. “Every marriage has its moments,” notes Kock. “Moments of boredom or even some not-so-good moments. So every marriage needs moments of encouragement and

refreshment. That’s the thought behind Marriage Moments.”

Marriage Moments is a new series of videos in which one marriage thought is briefly explored and then one question or “for further thought” exercise is added—all in two minutes or less. Kock hosts the videos and uses Scripture to anchor each lesson. One new video is released each week, so couples can focus on that one aspect of their marriage for the week.

Karrie and Dave Balza, members at Divine Savior, West Palm Beach, Fla., have watched several of the videos together. “In our hectic, over-scheduled lives, it’s nice to have a bite-sized piece of God’s Word to place on your heart,” says Karrie. “We think the questions are the best part because they are a great way to dig deeper and really connect with your spouse.”

Although the videos were originally designed by the Commission on Discipleship for individual couples to use at home, Dobberstein encourages congregations to also consider how they could use these videos in their ministry, including as a tool for pre-marriage or marriage counseling or in small group Bible studies.

For more information or to subscribe, visit welscongregationalservices.net/marriage-moments. 

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary holds 2020 fall symposium

This year students and faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., attended the seminary’s annual fall symposium from Sept. 21 to 22. About 175 pastors and vicars

from across the U.S. and Canada joined via livestream to hear three papers presented on Martin Luther’s 1520 Treatises.

To commemorate the 500th anniversary of four important treatises from Martin Luther, essayists reviewed them, shedding light on what was happening in the world at the time and explaining why the truths emphasized are still essential for Christians today.

Rev. Jason Oakland, Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis., began the symposium with his paper, “Luther’s Call to Action: A Consideration of *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*.” He shared, “Luther felt compelled to write to the nobility because the church was simply not interested in reforming itself. In addition, he felt the nobility had every right to step in and work for change because they too were royal priests and, due to their vocation as leaders in the Empire, might be able to assist in bringing about much-needed change.”

Rev. Benjamin Schaefer, Mt. Calvary, Redding, Calif., wrote the second paper, “Breaking Free: Martin Luther’s *Babylonian Captivity of the Church in Context*.” He discussed how “Luther attacks the very heart of Roman power over Christendom, namely, the sacramental system. His thesis is that the faithful were trapped under the pope’s tyranny, and God’s gifts had been replaced by the traditions and laws of men. Rome was more concerned with power and prestige than they were with setting souls free. The Christian’s life from cradle to grave was locked in this system of control and coercion. Luther wrote this tour de force to combat the abuses prevalent at every level of the church’s work and worship—nothing was spared from Luther’s scathing rebuke.”