



## Minutes

### Eighth Annual Meeting

Monday, September 22, 2014, 11:00 AM  
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chapel

#### **Opening**

President Paul Prange opened the eighth annual WLS Alumni meeting at 11:00 a.m. with prayer.

#### **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Classes**

President Prange welcomed the alumni by decade and made special note of those observing anniversary years of their graduation in multiples of 5.

#### **Elections (Vice President, Secretary, Committee Members)**

The assembled alumni voted to fill positions up for election on the WLS Alumni Executive Committee and Board. The following alumni were elected.

- Vice President: Timothy Dolan (2001)
- Secretary: Nathan Ericson (2002)
- Auditing Committee member: Daniel Voigt (1992)
- Nominating Committee member: John Bortulin (2005)
- Membership Committee member: Kenneth Brokmeier (1988)
- Investment and Grants Committee member: Jonathan Schroeder (1999)

#### **Future of Investment and Grants Committee**

President Prange mentioned that the executive committee will likely bring a recommendation to next year's annual meeting to disband the Investment and Grants Committee since all investments are managed well by the Seminary business office.

#### **Minutes of September 16, 2013**

The minutes of the September 16, 2013, annual meeting were adopted.

#### **Financial Report**

Pastor Rich Waldschmidt presented the WLS Alumni treasurer's report. During the year ended June 30, 2014, WLS Alumni received \$3910 in gifts. We were again able to award two \$1000 scholarships. Net assets at the end of the year totaled \$4202. Additionally, WLS Alumni

received \$300 in gifts to the Keruxate endowment fund. Together with market gains, the endowment balance increased by \$1534 during the year ended June 30, 2014, to \$8576.

### **Awarding of Scholarships**

President Prange welcomed Senior Philip Hunter and Middler Joshua Jensen, this year's recipients of the WLS Alumni scholarships. Both expressed appreciation for the gifts received.

### **Main Presentation (President Paul Wendland, WLS 1979)**

President Paul Wendland reported on the Heritage and Hope: Remembering and Rejoicing campaign that took place during the last year. One reaction he had: "I'm exhausted" from the traveling. But another reaction: It was the neatest thing to be able to meet with God's people in their living rooms and church basements, men and women who have a love in their heart for the work of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. President Wendland also reported the following:

We give thanks for the work of WLS Mission Advancement and our WELS Christian Giving counselors. These men are not just fundraisers, but men who recognize the people they meet with as people of God and who minister to them in sometimes unexpected ways. It brought a real sense of joy at being able to be part of this ministry.

What was going on in our country in the year 1863? Robert E. Lee was knocking on the doors of Gettysburg, home to another Lutheran seminary. But the tide of war was turning. In that same summer, President Bading begged the assembled convention to start a seminary. Why such an urgent request? There was tremendous German immigration to America—pious folk, but like sheep without a shepherd. Bading was being bombarded with many requests for help. With no assurance of an adequate supply from the mission societies, he saw a need to begin a seminary.

So the seminary started in a rented house in Watertown, Wisconsin, the Garden House. It didn't have much money. There were only two students that first year, and only one at a time. We embarked on an adventure of faith. The seminary moved to this campus in 1928, and we see how the Lord has blessed us. "Could our hearts be so cold as to not utter thanksgiving to the Lord who has blessed us so richly? The rocks would cry out if we did not."

What makes our training unique? The men who come here are already equipped with both Hebrew and Greek, so training in Scripture can begin immediately when they get to this campus. A debt we owe to our Area Lutheran and Preparatory high schools, and to our college of ministry, Martin Luther College.

So our motto is Heritage and Hope, not just looking back but also looking to the future. Just like so many people of the Bible rejoiced in God's salvation, saying "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good," we also rejoice.

In walking through these halls, we see a great cloud of witnesses in the class photos. Impressive for the men who study here. Impressive for us alumni also to see the rising generation.

With the special offering, WLS is trying to fulfill three promises: to our students; to

congregations; to next generation.

To students: Our students bear an increasing load of debt. Last year, the average debt of students was around \$18,000. This year, around \$27,000. This may be due to more married students in the current year, thus doubling the debt for some of those households. The seminary can't promise to pay off all that. But the seminary would like to make the promise that while a student is responsible for room and board, a student will not have to worry about the cost of tuition after all sources of funding are considered. The seminary has just recently begun to be able to keep this promise.

To congregations: We owe our congregations the best possible trained pastors we can make available. What do congregations say when asked what kind of pastor they want? Faithful to the word. Someone who relates to the people. So both skill in God's Word and skill in pastoral practice are valuable. The situation used to be that congregations with resources requested a vicar. Congregations are finding this increasingly difficult; the cost to participate in the vicar program is \$37,500 this year; some congregations reason that they might as well call a full time worker. WLS is now offering grants to congregations in partnership with Home Missions. Also, WLS selects vicar congregations on the basis of three things: an excellent mentor bishop with time to mentor; congregations with a strong lay leadership, men and women working in harmony with their pastor, so that vicars see a positive template for ministry; and congregations that are not simply looking inward but outward in its mission.

To the next generation: We enjoy the blessings of this campus and its sense of peace. These blessings came from the Lord through the offerings of past generations. We do not have an "edifice complex," but we do want to leave this beautiful place to the next generation.

How God has blessed the anniversary offering: with nearly one million dollars in the past year specifically for Heritage and Hope.

In closing, WLS asks for your prayers. Those at the seminary feel lifted up on a pillow of prayer. We are thankful for your support and prayers through the years.

### **Roll of Alumni Departed to Glory since Last We Met**

Professor John Brenner read the roll of 24 WLS alumni who had departed to glory since the 2013 WLS Alumni annual meeting. The alumni added to the list Robert Zink (Class of 1959) and Ryan Schlicht (Class of 2012). The alumni then sang hymn 551, "For All the Saints," stanzas 1-8. Professor Bill Tackmier served as the organist for the day.

### **Acknowledgements and Announcements**

President Prange gave an update on lunch and pointed out the availability of the Seminary 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary books, Jars of Clay (history) and Heritage and Hope (essays).

### **Next Annual Meeting of WLS Alumni**

Next year's symposium date and WLS Alumni meeting date have not yet been determined.

**Adjournment by Noon**

The eighth annual meeting of WLS Alumni adjourned with a blessing just before noon.

Respectfully submitted,



Pastor Nathan Ericson, Secretary

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**Related Documents**

- Minutes of the September 16, 2013, annual meeting
- The 2013-2014 WLS Alumni Chronicler's Report
- The 2013-2014 WLS Alumni Treasurer's Report