



# WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

# ALUMNI

11831 N Seminary Dr • Mequon WI 53092

## Minutes

### Fourteenth Annual Meeting

Monday, September 20, 2021, 10:30 AM  
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chapel

#### Opening

President Mark Eckert opened the fourteenth annual WLS Alumni meeting at 10:32 a.m. with the reading of Psalm 122 and with prayer. President Earle Treptow greeted the alumni.

#### Welcome and Acknowledgement of Classes

President Eckert welcomed the alumni by decade. The oldest alumnus present was from the class of 1971.

#### Minutes of September 16, 2019

There was no annual meeting in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A motion was made, supported, and adopted to accept the minutes of the September 16, 2019, annual meeting.

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

Because there was no annual meeting in 2020, all officer positions and two positions for each committee were up for election. The assembled alumni cast written ballots. The results of the election were as follows:

- President: Mark Eckert (WLS 1984)—term ending 2023
- Vice President: Mark Luetzow (WLS 2003)—term ending 2022
- Treasurer: Richard Waldschmidt (WLS 1990)—term ending 2023
- Secretary: Nathan Ericson (WLS 2002)—term ending 2022
- Nominating Committee member: Gerhardt Juergens (WLS 2005)—term ending 2024
- Nominating Committee member: John Bortulin (WLS 2005)—term ending 2023
- Membership Committee member: Dan Heiderich (WLS 1998)—term ending 2024
- Membership Committee member: Kenneth Brokmeier (WLS 1988)—term ending 2023

#### Financial Report

Treasurer Rich Waldschmidt presented the WLS Alumni treasurer's report. **2020:** In the year ending June 30, 2020, WLS Alumni received \$4630 in gifts for the operating fund. We awarded two \$1000 scholarships. Net assets as of June 30, 2020, were \$2675, an increase of \$726. There were \$1270 in gifts to the endowment fund; together with market changes, the endowment

balance increased during the year ended June 30, 2020, by \$2392 to \$17,859. **2021:** In the year ending June 30, 2021, WLS Alumni received \$3766 in gifts for the operating fund. We awarded two \$1000 scholarships. Net assets as of June 30, 2021, were \$2285, a decrease of \$390. There were \$2676 in gifts to the endowment fund; together with market changes, the endowment balance increased during the year ended June 30, 2021, by \$8309 to \$26,168. A motion was made, supported, and adopted to accept the treasurer's report.

### **Awarding of Scholarships**

President Mark Eckert and Director of Continuing Education Tom Kock welcomed Senior Alex Lindemann and Middler Duane Backhaus, this year's recipients of the WLS Alumni scholarships. Both expressed appreciation for the gifts received.

### **Main Presentation (Pastor Jon Bare, Pastoral Studies Institute, WLS 2008)**

Pastor Bare gave background on the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) team and the work in which he and the rest of the PSI team are involved. He spoke about how we became involved with Hmong outreach in Vietnam, beginning with the formation of Christian churches in the 1990s through the missionary efforts of others. Without pastoral training in place, division arose during the 2000s. The Vietnam government witnessed disunity among Hmong Christians. In 2011, the Hmong Fellowship Church recognized the need for training and reached out to Pastor Bounkeo Lor in Kansas City after finding his sermons on the internet. In 2016, our Global Hmong Committee asked Pastor Lor to present Vietnamese Hmong outreach as a ministry for WELS to consider participating in; Pastor Bare, Professor Sorum and Pastor Lor traveled to meet with the Vietnamese Hmong leaders. Members spoke of the joy of knowing Christ that had come after their pastors received the training. In 2017, Pastor Lor was called to become a full-time worker for providing training in the Hmong church. Also in 2017, Vietnamese Hmong representatives visited the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. In 2018, the Vietnamese government declared that WELS would be the only group allowed to provide training to Hmong people-groups in Vietnam and gave permission for WELS to build an educational center. In 2019, an agreement was signed and land was purchased northwest of the airport in Hanoi. The land has been flattened and prepared for construction. Because of the pandemic, construction has not yet begun. In 2020, nine teacher assistants were installed, appointed by the 60 leaders who are being trained. We are proposing that another group of 60 men appointed by the church body will now receive training. In 2020, Pastor Joel Nitz was called to work with Pastor Lor in directing the training. (Pastor Nitz was present at our meeting and briefly addressed the assembly regarding his role.) Then Covid hit; while Pastor Bare was en route to Thailand he learned that training there would be cancelled, and soon training in Vietnam was also cancelled. Pastor Bare shared the design and purposes of the training building. Pastor Bare reported that WELS workers have been approved for religious worker visas in Vietnam. Recently the Hmong church has begun the process of approval as an independent church body. Training has begun on the Zoom platform even as it remains difficult for us to travel to Vietnam. Recently the Hmong church gathered for an 8-year anniversary service. The church has grown from 55,000 as of our first contact to now 135,000 members who are gathering on a regular basis. The Hmong church has built 6 new churches (without any funding from WELS). A rural training program has been established for local leaders to receive

training from Hmong leaders who have completed the training program; 800 local leaders are currently receiving training in local circuits and conferences. Six days ago, our teaching team was able to enter Vietnam. Because of the Delta variant of the Covid virus, group training is still happening on the Zoom platform rather than in person. Two more trips are planned for 2021. Pastor Bare shared messages prepared by the president and by members of the Hmong church.

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

Professor John Brenner read the roll of 26 WLS alumni, and one other man who served in the WELS ministerium, who had departed to glory since the 2019 WLS Alumni annual meeting. The alumni then sang hymn 551, "For All the Saints," stanzas 1, 4, 7, and 8. Professor Aaron Christie was the organist for the day.

### **Acknowledgements, Announcements, and Adjournment**

The date of the next annual meeting is anticipated to be Monday, September 21, 2022. A motion was made, supported, and carried to close the meeting. The fourteenth annual meeting of WLS Alumni adjourned at 11:43 a.m. with the singing of the doxology.

Respectfully submitted,



Pastor Nathan Ericson, Secretary

---

### **Related Documents**

- Minutes of the September 16, 2019, annual meeting;
- The Chronicler's Report of WLS alumni who departed to glory since the 2019 meeting;
- The WLS Alumni Treasurer's Report, which includes data from 2016 through 2021.